



Young blood for AAPA in Rex008

It seems not so long ago that Rex announced the creation of a new professional pilot academy under the Rex Group back in November 2007. Fast-forward to March 2011, and we have a change of name – the academy is now called the Australian Airline Pilot Academy (AAPA) – and it has a brand-new state-of-the-art campus.

So far, we have seen several classes of cadet pilots graduate from the academy and commence flying with Rex as commercial pilots.

AAPA Rex008, the eighth batch of cadet pilots, began training at AAPA on 29 November 2010. After an intensive selection process, 10 successful cadets were offered placement in the program.

The new cadets will undergo ab-initio, live-in flight training for eight months. After this time, provided all of them complete the training adequately, each cadet will graduate with a commercial pilot licence with a multi-engine instrument rating. Employment in the Rex Group will be offered to each cadet on satisfactory completion of the program.

To meet the Rex Group's demand for qualified pilots, the AAPA Rex Cadet Program has been expanded to enable three cadet intakes every year.

As required by the Rex management, a new training syllabus focusing on multi-engine aircraft training for SAAB endorsement has been introduced. In addition, individual cadet performance will be reviewed by senior instructors at regular intervals during training. Rex will thus benefit from having highly trained cadets join the Rex ground school after their eight-month process at AAPA. ☺

Above: Front row (L-R): Scott Gregory, Erin Sheppard, Tysen Dye, Elliott Well and Rasit Baykara. Back row (L-R): Adam Tsui, Matt Duthie, Ryan Melville, Joel Burkin and Hayden Godwin.

Below: Rex008 class in progress.



We speak to two newcomers, Rex008 cadets, to find out more.

ERIN SHEPPARD

Q. Why did you choose the Rex Cadet Program?

A. Since I was about 14 years old, I have spent hours and hours in the right-hand seats of Piper Navajo Chieftains and Mojaves (types of aircraft) while on school holidays. My mum was working as a flight nurse with a private company based out of Bankstown, so I went with her. Having flown with about 25 different pilots who were working with my mum, I began to learn what it takes to be a good and professional pilot. The stand-out attributes that I saw were positive and professional attitudes, high safety standards, and pride in their work.

Out of the 25, probably only eight of those really stood out and exhibited these traits – these pilots were my role models. I believe I saw the best and the worst of aviation over the five years I flew with my mother's crew, witnessing what I believe to be important things for becoming a professional pilot. With this in mind, I set out to find a professional flying school that would ensure my flight education would meet these standards.

The Rex cadetship, where pilots fresh from beginner training go into the right-hand seat of a 34-seat turbo-prop, was what I wanted to do. I knew that if Rex were going to put their students with 200 hours' flight experience straight into the airline, they had to be as good as any pilot with 2,000 hours' experience. There is no giving students a chance just because they don't have as many hours as others; they have to be given the best training to ensure they become the best pilot they can be.

Q. How has your time in AAPA been so far?

What do you most like about AAPA?

A. Plain and simple: I love it here. I have never before enjoyed going to class from 8.30am to 4.30pm and then going back to my room and writing up notes; that has now changed. Though the theory can be pretty intense and we cover a lot in each lesson, the instructors are easy to get on with and they're always there, willing to help out when needed.

The thing I like most about AAPA is how everything and everyone makes you feel at home. The little things, like how friendly people are, the gym, the pool – and the food is great!

Q. Besides a pilot license, what would you like to achieve in this eight-month study period at AAPA?

A. I would like to grow into a professional and a role model, like the pilots who were role models for me. I'm really after that sense of achievement more than anything. I really wasn't that into school and I definitely didn't perform as well as I could have. I see that my parents were a bit worried about how well I was going to handle the theory involved with flying, but I think I proved to them how much it means to me when I got my private license back in June and I passed the two commercial exams. It wasn't until I decided I wanted to be a pilot when I was 15 that I actually felt like I had dreams and goals to achieve. I got really excited about growing up and I'm really looking forward to starting a life for myself.



Above: Erin Sheppard in uniform at the commencement of her cadetship.

RYAN MELVILLE

Q. Why did you choose the Rex Cadet program?

A. Having had a passion for aviation from a young age, I commenced researching the avenues available to a budding professional pilot while I was still in school.

I found that the Rex Cadet pilot program offered a structured, coordinated syllabus that is able to accelerate my goal, with an airline that has a reputation for being one of the world's leading and most experienced regional carriers.

The Cadetship provides me with the opportunity to be part of a team from the outset, which is something not experienced by many students studying privately. The Australian Airline Pilot Academy (AAPA) offers an accomplished ground and flight training curriculum, experienced instructors, and modern facilities not found at most other training establishments. I also value the opportunity to live on the residential academy grounds, which grants convenient access to the training facilities and provides an environment conducive to concentration and focused learning.

I am very appreciative of the investment made by Rex in the training of its cadet pilots, which far exceeds that of the majority of other airlines and ensures that I have a structured and financially stress-free career pursuit within the aviation industry.

Q. How has your time at AAPA been so far? What do you most like about AAPA?

A. The first two weeks consisted of full-time ground training in preparation for flight operations over the coming months. I am thoroughly enjoying my experiences here so far. The training staff has proved to be not only helpful and welcoming but also extremely knowledgeable, and I have found myself learning a great deal, even in subjects

Right: Ryan Melville is welcomed to AAPA.

I have researched in previous studies. The other AAPA staff members have also made the transition very smooth, and never fail to greet us with a smile and a chat, or a delicious hot meal.

The course members have all bonded surprisingly well, considering our variety of backgrounds, and I am already finding that course cohesion and group study are helping me greatly with the large workload involved with a course of this nature.

Q. Besides a pilot license, what would you like to achieve in this eight-month study period at AAPA?

A. One of the values that has been stressed since our arrival has been professionalism, and the differences between a professional pilot and a license-holder. This mentoring has helped me to view my prospective career from another angle and assisted with my conscious decision-making abilities. Upon completion of this course, I hope to be able to call myself – and be seen by others as – a professional pilot and a valuable member of the Rex team. 

