

MEDALS AND MEMORIES MINUTES

"Cadets taught me how to fly. I never knew how high it would take me." Chris Hadfield, Canadian astronaut



Air Cdt. WO2 Alex Harmsen

Photo: Sabrina Byrnes, Northumberland News

July 8, 2009, as the city of Oshawa lay beneath him, Air Cadet Warrant Officer second class, **Alex Harmsen** of

Cobourg, could see into his future. He had just logged his first solo flight in a Cessna 172 as part of a flying scholarship he had earned. One of 82 Air Cadets selected from across Ontario, Alex will log enough hours during the summer course to qualify for his Transport Canada Private Pilot Licence and his Royal Canadian Air Cadet wings. Alex has another year of school at Cobourg District Collegiate Institute East, where he scored an 97% average in the grade 11 International Baccalaureate program. Last year Alex earned his glider licence at Loyalist College and in April 2009 he spent 12 days with the Canadian Network for the Detection of Atmospheric Change in that organization's Northern Experience program. He earned his arctic berth as Ontario's representative in a nationwide application. Having scored first in Ontario in the national University of British Columbia Science Challenge, probably helped. Alex Harmsen's recent experiences have taught him about Canada's Armed Forces, Arctic history, culture and climate change, navigation, meteorology and airmanship. He told a reporter recently that he's interested in pretty much everything. With his solid character building background and his eyes set on becoming an aerospace engineer so that he may be in the forefront of designing new space flight technologies—the sky's the limit for Alex Harmsen.