

Miramar Community Leaders Forum
August 15, 2009

The Community Leaders Forum was dark this month, so I thought readers might enjoy a human-interest story about a young lad who wants to be a Fighter Pilot and his interaction with the military.

A couple of weeks ago I became engaged in a conversation with a gentleman about the same time as an F/A-18 streaked overhead. That one-plane air show prompted this gentleman to mention that his son really wanted nothing more in life than to be a Fighter Pilot. He told me that his son was 17 and just entering his senior year in high school. His son had spoken with a USAF recruiter who basically told the young man to just “go away” that he was too young for the Air Force.

I simply told this gentleman that his son had only made the mistake of talking to the wrong branch of service and that he should tell the Marine Corps about his desire to fly jets and see if they might be interested.

I made a couple of phone calls and then picked up this man’s son and escorted him to Miramar. I spent a couple of hours with him at the Marine Corps Air Museum and we went over every inch of all the aircraft displayed there. We went over how flight control surfaces work to make the aircraft perform the maneuvers commanded by the pilot.

We then met with a Marine Corps squadron commander who let the young man fly the F-18 simulator for an hour under the squadron commander’s personal instruction. He was then given a tour of the flight line, got to see Miramar’s aircraft up close and had everyone of his many questions willingly answered by the squadron commander.

This senior officer then promised the young man that he would write letters of recommendation for him, help him with his college applications and provide all possible assistance to the young man to receive an ROTC scholarship to the college of his choice.

Though I left out the names of the individuals intentionally, I thought the community would appreciate the genuine concern the Marine Corps had for this young man who is now totally inspired to become a US Marine Corps Fighter Pilot.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey C Frederick