

F-15 Pilot Speaks to Clarinda Students in Conjunction with Upcoming Fly Iowa Festivities



CAPTAIN JOEL HEMPHILL pilots an F-15 Eagle during a performance with the United States Air Force West Coast Demonstration Team. Captain Hemphill will be speaking to students at Clarinda High School, Clarinda Middle School and the Clarinda Academy during assemblies on Friday, Sept. 9, prior to participating in Fly Iowa on Sept. 10-11.

By KENT DINNEBIER

Clarinda students will have the opportunity to meet the next best thing to an astronaut on Friday, Sept. 9, when F-15 Eagle pilot Captain Joel Hemphill visits local schools to present a series of assemblies in conjunction with Fly Iowa 2005.

Captain Hemphill is scheduled to meet with students at Clarinda High School, Clarinda Middle School and the Clarinda Academy prior to presenting an F-15 flight demonstration during the Fly Iowa Air Shows on Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 10-11.

A member of the United States Air Force West Coast Demonstration Team, Captain Hemphill is one of only two pilots in the nation qualified to present the flight demonstration.

"The school administration is thrilled that the Clarinda students will have the rare opportunity to see what the price of freedom really is and to get a personal look into the role the military plays in defending that freedom," Fly Iowa Air Show Coordinator Steve Mowery explained.

The son of former Clarinda resident John Hemphill, a 1964 graduate of Clarinda High School, Captain Joel Hemphill received a Bachelor of Science in Aeronautics from Miami University of Ohio before joining the Air Force.

Captain Hemphill has logged about 1,200 flight hours including

900 with the F-15 and 130 combat hours.

During his career Captain Hemphill has been awarded the Air Medal, the Aerial Achievement Medal, the Air Force Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal and the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

Besides the F-15 Eagle, Captain Hemphill has also piloted the T-3, T-37, T-38 and AT-38 during his career.

"Captain Hemphill is thrilled to be able to present these assemblies in the town where he has his roots and is looking forward to giving the students in Clarinda a unique look at the functions of one of the most impressive military aircraft the United States has at its disposal," Mowery said.

Besides sharing his knowledge of the F-15 and his personal experiences as a pilot with the United States Air Force, Captain Hemphill is also expected to discuss the importance of patriotism and the qualifications a student needs to become an officer in the United States Armed Forces.

Captain Hemphill will also be accompanied by his six-person flight team and will be explaining the features of such equipment as his flight suit, pressure suit and night vision goggles.

While the assemblies promise to be a rare and entertaining experience for all of the Clarinda students, Mowery realizes the most important aspect of the programs are the educational benefits they will provide to the students.

Since Captain Hemphill epitomizes the type of officer the United States Air Force is looking for, Mowery feels the students will get an understanding of the strong educational background and moral fiber one needs to excel in the Armed Forces or any career.

"I hope the students realize that if they display a similar determination and willpower, any

of them has a shot at being just as successful in their career as Captain Hemphill has been in his career," Mowery explained.

Another educational opportunity will be offered to area students in conjunction with Fly Iowa on Saturday, Aug. 27.

An Aviation Camp will be held at the Clarinda Municipal Airport and is being organized by The Science Connection.

"We are doing this as part of the Fly Iowa project and we hope to encourage the students to attend events during the Fly Iowa weekend with their families," Rozann Seela explained.

The Aviation Camp will feature a morning session for students in kindergarten through third grade from 9 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.

Then, an afternoon session will be held from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. for students in fourth through eighth grades.

"The purpose of the camp is to give area kids an understanding of how flight takes place," Seela said.

Students wishing to participate in the Aviation Camp must register with the Clarinda Chamber of Commerce, located at 115 E. Main St. in Clarinda (712-542-2166), prior to the event. The cost of the Aviation Camp is \$10.

While the purpose of Fly Iowa is to teach young and old alike about the development of aviation and the role it plays in the world today, the activities are also intended to be entertaining for all ages.

Therefore, the Children's Cockpit will be open for younger children from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 10-11.

The Children's Cockpit will feature a wide variety of children's entertainment including a bounce castle, barrel train rides, face painting, an activity booth sponsored by The Science Connection, United States Navy Recruiters will sponsor a football toss game, Sonic Boom Flights will have two M-4 flight

simulation ride capsules and a Civil War reenactment video with presenters will be shown.

Finally, representatives from an area chapter of "The Young Eagles" will be in attendance at Fly Iowa 2005 on Sunday morning, Sept. 11, to provide free rides to children in order for them to get a bird's eye view of life.

The EAA program is open to children between the ages of 8 and 17, and is designed to provide them with a chance to explore the vastness of the sky.

This program has allowed over 1 million children to experience the awe and wonder of flying with wings of eagles over the past several years. This year, famous movie star and pilot Harrison Ford heads this elite national group.

"These pilots are graciously giving their time and the use of their aircraft for this experience. They deserve a round of applause for making a donation like this. There will be two pilots and aircraft giving rides periodically throughout the morning," Mowery concluded.