

Students take free flight for fun and future

The invitations issued through advertisements to fly with the military often receive little response. However, an offer for a free flight with a fighter pilot enticed 37 University students to Mahlon Sweet Field, to check out the Marines' aviation orientation program on Oct. 25 and 26, and another crowd of University men will most likely reserve spots when the pilot returns this spring.

The offer wasn't open to female students because they aren't allowed to join the aviation program.

"The Department of Defense doesn't allow women in combat positions, and all Marine aviation positions are combat positions. So it's not that we don't want them, we just aren't allowed to hire them," says Capt. B.J. Toynbee, the chief selection officer for the Marines in Eugene.

The men who participated flew with Capt. Mike Healy, who is stationed at the 12th Marine Corps district in Treasure Island, Calif. Healy took students up in pairs, in a Mooney 231, a small six-cylinder aircraft.

He discussed operation of the aircraft, explained the uses of the instruments, and then let each of the participants take over at the wheel.

Healy demonstrated various acrobatics, including simulated tactics that would be used in bombing.

"We get some (participants) who don't qualify. They're either out of shape physically, or they just don't have the right attitude. But we promised to give everyone a flight, and that's what we'll do," Healy says, realizing that some who take the flight aren't sincere about wanting to join the Marines.

Junior Nick Beres was one student who was simply out for a good time.

"I thought it would be neat to go up and do some acrobatics," Beres says. "I just thought it would be fun."

However, Beres was one of many students sent away because the time ran out and bad weather set in, Toynbee says.

But Healy will return with the same program in the spring, and those who missed out will have another chance for the free flight.

Those who did go up for the 40-minute flight gave mixed reviews.

"The flying was fun, but when he started to show how you dive bomb, that really got me," says Mitch McCoy, a senior telecommunications and film major.

"I'm really glad I went because now I know I don't want to join the military," he says.

McCoy took the Marines up on their flight offer because he is interested in aviation, and as a senior, he's looking for post-graduation options.

"I loved the flight, but it really made me realize that Marines are in the business of killing, and I just don't want to learn how to kill."

On the other hand, freshman Steve Bodine was impressed with the flight and the program.

"I just went to check out my options," says Bodine. "The flight was a good experience, and they weren't pushy about signing me up for the program."

Healy estimates that the cost of the flight orientation program runs about \$50,000 a year to operate the aircraft, pay for fuel, and cover his expenses.

Healy travels to 10 states, recruiting and giving flights to potential aviators.

"It's cost effective because we get a chance to see what the guys are like. We find out immediately if they don't like flying or if they're going to be ill," Healy says.

The free flight was offered to expose male students to the platoon-leaders class, an officers training program for men and women. Aviation is just one avenue that men can pursue in the program and is one option women are excluded from because it is a combat position.

"We don't require military science classes, hair cuts or any obligation to join," Toynbee says. "We do require the students to attend a pizza party once a month that serves as an information base."

Our students can withdraw from the program any time," Toynbee says. "They don't even make a decision on whether they want to join until they graduate," unlike the ROTC program, a college training program offered by the U.S. Army.

All students in the program get \$100 a month, as well as \$2,200 for attending a 10-week officers training school in the summer. Once they become seniors, participants get 25 hours of flying time worth \$1,400.

Stories by Diana Elliott

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Military's presence draws opposition

Although their ideologies clash, Capt. B.J. Toynbee, the chief campus recruiter for the Marines, and Ron Phillips of the Alliance to Counter Militarism agree on at least one thing. Both men believe that opposition to the military on campus has subsided this year.

However, Phillips is concerned that the media is buying into a recruitment scheme by providing the military with free advertising and calling it news.

"You see it in high-school newspapers, college newspapers and in the city media. Society in general is leaning towards militarism," says Phillips.

As an example he cited the Emerald, which ran two articles about campus military activities recently; one told of a military film, and another announced a Marine flight orientation program to recruit pilots.

But while Phillips is frustrated by toleration of militarism, Toynbee is enthusiastic.

"We've seen a larger number of interested students this year," Toynbee says. "Students are much more career-oriented compared to last year."

Meanwhile Margie Boyd, of Students Opposed to Registration and the Draft, believes opposition to the military is on the rise.

"By all means, the activity that has occurred this year has already outstretched what happened last year," Boyd says.

Boyd is referring to the informal coalition she has participated in, which tries to counter-balance the presence of military recruiters in the EMU lobby. The coalition's goal is to gather together people opposed to the military in the lobby whenever the recruiters are there, usually Wednesdays and Fridays, Boyd says.

"We're just offering an alternative presence," Boyd says. "We're not trying to stop them. Our purpose is to make people notice what's happening," she says. "They shouldn't assume that what the military stands for is OK."

"Last year they (the recruiters) were here only sporadically, now they are here every week," Boyd says.

"But there is increased concern so it's getting easier to get people to show up," she says.

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