

Seymour Johnson Air Force Base



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by Airman 1st Class Marissa Tucker
4th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

4/23/2009 - SEYMOUR JOHNSON AIR FORCE BASE, N.C. – The 333rd Fighter Squadron hosted children and families from the Make-a-Wish Foundation of eastern North Carolina April 17.

The 12 deserving children and families experienced a day in the life of an Airman here, said Capt. Duane Vollmer, 333rd FS.

"It's a great thing when you can make a dream come true for a child who has been through so much, when all they want is to experience what you do every day," Captain Vollmer said. "It's very humbling."

The group experienced a military working dog demonstration, toured the flight simulators, tried on gear used daily by aircrews, and had an up-close look at an F-15E Strike Eagle.

"I loved the night vision goggles," said Ian Caldwell, 6. "Pilots are so cool!"

One of the parents was really appreciative of the visit and praised the Lancers for making it memorable. Terry Phillips, parent of 10 year old Corbin Phillips, said she was grateful to the Airmen who were so patient and caring with her son who has a learning disability.

"Corbin loves airplanes, and for him to be able to experience this tour in a quiet atmosphere with no rush was just amazing for him," she said. "We all appreciate it so much."

The group ended their visit with a trip to the flight simulators, where the children could "fly" the Strike Eagle, but not before they all became honorary members of the Lancers squadron.

Kim Conard, a volunteer with the foundation said the visit was a once in a lifetime experience for some of the families, because many of them have no connection with the military.

"Were so grateful to the base and the Lancers for allowing us to come and showing everyone such a great time," she said. "The children will never forget it."

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Ian Caldwell, 7, and Joseph Montague, 8, experience a simulated take-off on an F-15E Strike Eagle simulator at the 4th Training Squadron here at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C., April 17, 2009. The visit was sponsored by the Make a Wish Foundation, which grants wishes to children with life-threatening medical conditions. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Marissa Tucker)

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