

FREMD HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNUS HONORED FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION MILITARY RECOGNITION



Captain Tae Kim (Photo courtesy Tae Kim)

District 211 recently started a new tradition to honor alumni for the service they have given to their country.

Captain Tae Kim, a 2001 graduate of Fremd High School, was honored and thanked for his service by the Board of Education at its April 9 meeting. Kim is the sixth alumnus to be recognized for his service, and started the meeting by leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

Kim joined the Army following high school graduation and was a cadet at the United States Military Academy at West Point from 2001 to 2005. He served as an Army Aviation Officer (UH-60 & MQ 1C Pilot) in Alabama, Republic of Korea, Arizona, and Afghanistan (OEF) from 2005 -2013. From 2013 to present, he resigned from active duty and serves in the Illinois Army National Guard as an Army Aviation Officer.

He received honors including the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medals, Korea Army Commendation Medals, Army Achievement Medals, Korea Army Achievement Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the 2011 Unmanned Aircraft Systems Unit of the Year Award as Company Commander.

While his career in the military has several highlights, Kim said being a company commander for a new unit was something that defines his career. In 2009, he was instrumental in building a company from the ground up, including recruiting his team, establishing regulations, purchasing aircrafts, and working with civilians. Though it was a challenge, he said creating something from the ground up was something that many never get to experience in the military. He remains friends with many that were on his team today.



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In high school, Kim was on the swim team, the water polo team, and played golf. He credits the commitment and time management skills he learned during his time at FHS for making his transition to West Point easier.

“Those four years were some of the most challenging times that I have had,” he said. “When faced with challenges at West Point or in the military, they seemed not as daunting. When I was on the swim team and going through it, I didn’t think of how hard it was, but looking back I realized what a time commitment that was as a high school kid.”

Kim has talked to many high school students that consider joining the military after high school. He said he shares his experiences and advises them that the military is not for everyone.

“I tell students what my experience was like, and more importantly I tell them about the things that I learned and gained from my experiences,” he said. “I am hard pressed to find another occupation or career path that you have so much responsibility and challenges early in your career. There is no downside to that. You may go to a combat zone, but you are well trained and prepared. It is such a great learning experience, that I find it hard and difficult to pass up.”

The Board of Education will continue Military Recognitions for District 211 graduates who are serving in the military. To recommend a District 211 graduate currently serving in the military for a recognition, please email the [D211 Post editor](#) with the graduate’s information, including which District 211 school they attended.