

Commander's Connection



Photo by Staff Sgt. Josef Cole

Col. Sam Angelella presents Airman 1st Class Eric Hay, 20th Component Maintenance Squadron, with an Air Force Commendation Medal Aug. 27 for his part in saving a local youth from drowning.

"Commander's Connection" is a link between Col. Sam Angelella, 20th Fighter Wing commander, and the Shaw community.

Questions or concerns that can't be resolved through normal channels can be called in and recorded at 895-4611 or e-mailed to commandersconnection@shaw.af.mil.

*Callers should leave a name and telephone number in case questions need clarification. Comments of general interest may be published in *The Shaw Spirit*.*

Kudos

I want to thank several people for the wonderful hospitality shown to my children and me recently. We moved here from Hill Air Force Base, Utah, two weeks ago, and the air conditioner upstairs stopped working. The same day, my only vehicle broke down right next to the 20th Security Forces building. Thankfully, the SF personnel assisting us were willing to help. I didn't catch their names and feel terrible I can't thank them personally. Master Sgt. Robert Moreland from the 20th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron was wonderful in making sure we got home okay, had everything to assure I had reliable transportation and extended an offer of help in any way possible should I need it again. I cannot express my thanks enough to all of the people who helped and checked up on us and for your offers of help in the future should I need it. Thank you so much. Tara Goltry

Taking pride in the city of Shaw

By Lt. Col. James Johnson
20th Mission Support Group deputy commander

Shaw has a reputation for excellence known throughout the Air Force. Whether it's our pilots proving suppression of enemy air defenses, our maintainers providing world-class maintenance support, mission support personnel proving superior expeditionary combat support or our health providers ensuring medical readiness of Team Shaw members and families, Shaw is consistently recognized as among the best in the Air Force.

While our mission focus is paramount, Shaw is home to more than 5,000 military personnel and their families. To support these personnel, Shaw, like most cities, offers an array of services -- everything from fire protection, law enforcement and medical care to food and library services. While these services address essential functions of the base, there are many things that we, the citizens of Shaw, can do to make our community the best it can be.

First, we can all do more to keep Shaw clean. This can be as simple as picking up paper or trash where you work or live. If you live in base housing, you can pick up newspapers, base papers or other forms of litter blown by the wind from trash cans or pick these items up off the lawn of vacant quarters. We can also recycle as much paper or plastic products as possible to reduce waste and protect our environment. In fact, recycling bins are placed throughout the base for your convenience.

We can be good citizens and obey the laws of the base. By obeying posted speed limits, not drinking and driving and showing courtesy to other vehicles, we significantly enhance the safety and

security of all Shaw citizens. While operations tempo places considerable stress on families, we can do more to extend a hand of friendship to our neighbors. If we recognize a family is having difficulty of any kind, we can encourage them to take advantage of the various services offered through our medical group before matters reach the boiling point.

Since first impressions are often lasting impressions, we can all make a better effort to improve the appearance of our areas simply by cutting the grass. The state received above-average rainfall this year and the grass is constantly in need of cutting. Cutting your grass more than the once a week requirement for base residents and, perhaps, cutting the grass of your neighbor, if they are deployed or out of town for an extended period of time, will enhance the appearance of your neighborhood and base.

We can also take care of the facilities we work in by cutting the grass between the weekly grounds maintenance by the base contractor. This will keep your work area looking sharp. Bottom line, we all should want to make our base look good all the time, not just when distinguished visitors are here.

As I mentioned, Shaw has an outstanding reputation for mission accomplishment. Because of our mission, role in hosting 9th Air Force/United States Central Command Air Forces and close relationship with Sumter and neighboring towns, Shaw is constantly in the limelight. Shaw provides all the essential services of a city; however, the base can only be as good as we, its citizens, are willing to make it. With your help and involvement, we can make Shaw shine not only for our mission focus, but as a community as well.

20th Fighter Wing Mission Statement

To provide, project and sustain combat - ready air forces



ANY CHALLENGE, ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

The Shaw Spirit

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Forming an airman from the ground up

By Senior Airman Damaine Threatt
20th Fighter Wing command post

When I first enlisted in 1999, I really didn't know what to expect. I heard countless fables about how the training instructor would shout relentlessly, from how you made your bed to how you weren't breathing right. Needless to say, I had my reservations about the whole deal. These stories, along with some others, didn't keep me from having the kind of mindset I knew pretty much everything there was to know about the Air Force, as well as basic training. The only problem was no one seemed to tell the TI, and he wasn't as confident in my Air Force knowledge as I was. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out my TI and I had a few run-ins, and I have no shame in admitting I lost each and every "battle" with him. I made it out of basic training on time if you can believe it, but not without the threat of being recycled.

Then it was on to technical training school at balmy Keesler Air Force Base, Miss. I was there for approximately six months for air traffic controller training. One of the things I can remember vividly was the fact they gave us young airmen the one thing we so easily took for granted ... our freedom. Slowly, as we moved up in phase, we were given the "privilege" of being out past nine o'clock at night. I viewed it as them giving us just enough rope to hang ourselves. I felt as if they were setting us up, knowing we would inevitably take advantage of our new found "freedom." I'm willing to admit I ventured a little, but never to the point that it would jeopardize my career.

Fittingly, just as I thought I had this Air Force thing licked, I PCSed to Moody AFB, Ga., and

guess what -- I knew everything. Yeah right, that attitude didn't exactly go over very well with my new co-workers, especially the mid-tier leadership. There was this thing called "tact" I had yet to learn, and because of this I found myself on the fast track to what I called a "24-hour discharge."

This is what I called it when the discharge paperwork is expedited, so you feel like you're out the door in a day. I was that airman who always had something to say about everything, and I didn't really care too much about my delivery. The only thing that mattered to me was getting my point across. I had the best intentions; I just didn't know the right way to express them. When they say your hardest time in the military is your first year at your first duty station -- they aren't lying.

A funny thing happened to me between the time in question and the present. It was what is referred to as a blessing in disguise. I was withdrawn from the air traffic control career field, which to someone who had only been in the military for only about a year and a half was the equivalent to the end of a career. Luckily, my commander saw enough in me to recommend me to join the base honor guard that had been starting a new full-time program. This gave me the opportunity to see the other end of the spectrum. I had the honor and the privilege of laying to rest the veterans and retirees in the south Georgia and



north Florida area. One really eye-opening experience was the Group Development classes the Honor Guard Superintendent had every Wednesday morning after the "mandatory fun" that was our physical training. These classes basically were our own personal airman leadership school, where we discussed certain scenarios in an open forum. I gained volumes of knowledge and wisdom in these classes. This is basically when I grew up not only as an

airman, but also as a man.

I would be on the full-time team for a good two years until the time I was to retrain into the command post career field, so off I was to a familiar place. You guessed it, balmy Keesler. Believe it or not, I found myself being like a mentor, too. I found the younger airmen had the same feelings and mentalities I had when I was in their very place. It wasn't like I was trying to be a mentor to these students; they gravitated to me based on the fact I could relate to how they were feeling, living in the same dorm just two years ago. Isn't it funny how life works in circles?

Now, I'm here at Shaw. I'm a senior airman who hasn't been here very long and I actually feel a little "old" when I see new airmen coming in fresh out of high school. The crazy thing about it is that I'm only 23 years old. A lot can happen in three years. Who knows, one day I may put on staff sergeant and I'll have a troop exactly like I was.



Airman on the Street



"What do you think of the new fitness standards?"

Master Sgt. Joseph Whetstine
20th Mission Support Squadron



I think the run, push-ups and crunches are going to be a better fitness measurement.

Staff Sgt. Ken Burd
20th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron



This should bring about a lot of change, but I believe it will be for the better.

Airman 1st Class Rachelle McGrew
20th Comptroller Squadron



It's going to be more challenging, but it is something the Air Force should do.

Maj. Steve Granger
20th Fighter Wing



I believe it's a good change. It will give us an extra incentive to get out there and stay fit.