

Commander's Connection



Photo by Airman 1st Class Susan Penning

Col. Philip Ruhlman briefs first-term Airmen Tuesday at the Military Equal Opportunity Office.

"Commander's Connection" is a link between Col. Philip Ruhlman, 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**.*



I live in base housing and have a problem with my neighbor. If we watch TV quietly or speak at a normal volume, my neighbors will complain we're being too loud. I am very respectful to others. I do not play my stereo or TV above a normal volume. This all happens during normal daylight hours. Can something be done?



I ask all of Team Shaw to remember many military members work night shifts and sleep during the day.

Some individuals may also have babies who sleep during the day. I encourage all housing residents to be courteous to their neighbors and adhere to the housing requirements. It's also important to remember we are responsible for the conduct of our dependents. Residence in family housing is a privilege, not a right. The Shaw AFB Housing Brochure, Chapter 5, paragraph 5.3, *Good Neighbors*, states quiet hours in the family housing areas are Sunday through Thursday, 10 p.m. - 6 a.m.; Friday, Saturday and holiday hours are 11 p.m. - 6 a.m.

Country song hits patriotic note, says it all

By Lt. Col. Lee Taylor
20th Equipment Maintenance Squadron commander

When I was a young lieutenant, I was frequently asked, "Are you going to make a career of it, Lt.?" to which I replied, "I'm not staying a day past 30, unless they ask me nice!" Now that I have a few more miles on the odometer, I am asked, "Are you retiring after 20?" Well, I will hit my "20" in about 60 days.

Since my dad died last year, my brother has wanted me to start farming, my wife wants to stop moving and my son is about to live in his fifth house. He's only six years old. After two years commanding a squadron with more than 600 members, I have to admit I'm feeling my age a bit more than I did a couple of short years ago. So why, you may ask, do I want to stay?

For years, when anyone asked me that question, I said, "The fact that you would ask the question means you won't understand the answer." It's not a great response, but I think it's accurate.

Earlier this year, about the time my daughter was born, a new song started playing on the radio and now I think I have even a better answer to give. Have you ever heard a song that perfectly expresses something

you've been trying to find the words for? This song hits the nail on the head. My son loves to sing it with me, maybe because dad gets choked up while he sings along.

It's called "American Soldier," and it's about all of our nation's soldiers, past and present, and why they do what they do.

"I don't do it for the money," the tune goes, "There are bills I can't pay. I don't do it for the glory, I just do it anyway. Providing for our future is my responsibility. Yeah, I'm real good under pressure, being all that I can be."

During this part, I am singing directly to my son and daughter. It's a tough world out there, and I want them to grow up in a country as secure as it was when I grew up.

"I will always do my duty, no matter what the price," the song continues, "I've counted up the cost, I know the sacrifice. I don't want to die for you, but if dyin's asked of me, I'll bear that cross with honor, 'cause freedom don't come free!"

I don't think my six-year-old really understands what's being said here, and that's probably a good thing. I don't want him to be scared when dad has to get on a plane and go somewhere.

Some of my relatives think my son and daughter are the reasons I should retire. "You have to think about your family," they say. They don't seem to understand I am thinking about my family, and about what the world they will live in will be like if we don't take on the burden now of protecting them from the wolves at the door.

The song continues, "I'm an American Soldier, an American. Beside my brothers and my sisters, I will proudly take a stand. When liberty's in jeopardy, I will always do what's right! I'm out here on the front line, sleep in peace tonight! I'm an American Soldier!"

My son really gets into this part -- and hearing his little voice singing about doing what is right gets me right through the heart. I hope he still gets into it when he's old enough to understand what it means. I don't know if he will ever be in the military, but you don't have to wear a soldier's uniform to have a soldier's values.

If you haven't heard the song, feel free to drop by some time and I'll play it for you. I have to warn you, I will be singing along, and I might get choked up, because I see my children's future when I sing "I'm an American Soldier!"

The Shaw Spirit

Shaw Air Force Base editorial staff

Col. Philip Ruhlman.....20th Fighter Wing commander

Capt. Mark Gibson.....Public Affairs chief

Staff Sgt. Lee Watts.....Internal Information chief
earl.watts@shaw.af.mil

Staff Sgt. Alicia Prakash..... Editor
spirit.editor@shaw.af.mil

Airman 1st Class Susan Penning.....Staff writer
susan.penning@shaw.af.mil

Ms. Adriene M. Dicks.....Correspondent
adriene.dicks@shaw.af.mil

Information intended for the *The Shaw Spirit* must be submitted Thursday the week prior of intended publication. Direct e-mail correspondence to spirit.editor@shaw.af.mil, call (803) 895-2018, fax (803) 895-2017 or mail to:

20th Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office

517 Lance Ave., Suite 107

Shaw Air Force Base, S.C. 29152-5041

The Shaw Spirit is published by the Camden Media Co., a private firm in no way connected with the U.S. Air Force, under exclusive written contract with the 20th Fighter Wing.

This civilian enterprise Air Force newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services.

Contents of *The Shaw Spirit* are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Air Force. The appearance of advertising in this publication, includ-

ing inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsement by DoD, the Air Force or the Camden Media Co., of the products or services advertised.

Everything advertised in this publication shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other non-merit factor of the purchaser, user or patron.

The 20th Fighter Wing commander and public affairs office are the determining authority as to whether a particular item will appear and its placement within the paper.

All copy submitted will be edited to conform to Air Force and local policy and style standards. All photos are U.S. Air Force photos unless otherwise noted.

Direct classified ads to Camden Media Co. at (800) 450-1437 or fax (803) 432-7609 or e-mail skaress@ci-camden.com. All are run on a space-available basis.

Classified ads may also be dropped off at *The Shaw Spirit* office in Bldg. 1122.

I am not a mailbox! An avid Shaw cyclist gives tips for the road

By Master Sgt. Erik Singletary
*20th Fighter Wing
inspections superintendent*

Road cycling has become a popular sport in the past few years. I believe that is due in part to the inspiring successes of Lance Armstrong, a National and world champion cyclist, two-time Olympian, five-time winner of the Tour De France and cancer survivor. The Air Force's new policy on physical fitness may also be a contributing factor.

Here at Shaw, there are at least 15 avid cyclists I know of, and countless other folks who just get out and ride with their families. We all deserve a place on the road.

South Carolina, like every other state, allows bicycles on the street, as long as a few simple rules are followed. Below are some tips both cyclists and motorists should apply.

Cyclists should never be more than two abreast and must abide by the rules of the road, just as vehicles do. Cyclists have to stop at stop lights and use hand signals.

Helmets are mandatory when cycling on base. However, the 20th Fighter Wing Ground Safety Office encourages cyclists to wear helmets at all times when riding, regardless of age or whether you are on or off base.

No matter how many miles you have ridden or how good a rider you are, the unexpected can happen.

Helmets are a necessity. The well-ventilated designs available today can, in fact, be cooler than wearing no helmet at all. The vents scoop air and force it down on the scalp, which helps keep that Carolina sun from scorching you.

One good piece of advice: Don't just go out and buy the cheapest helmet you can find. First and foremost, it should fit. Find a helmet that fits your head with the minimum amount of padding added. Some brands come in as many as five different sizes. Also, look for helmets with some sort of adjustment on the back of your head. This feature will ensure the helmet stays in place during a fall and will keep it from bouncing down over your eyes when the going gets rough. Make sure every member of your family has a helmet with this feature.

Drivers: remember, cyclists are people, not some inanimate object on the side of the road, such as a mailbox. When approaching a cyclist from behind, there should be no reason to honk your horn. We can hear your car. The horn may just startle the cyclist and cause them to flinch, which can lead to an accident.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Susan Penning

Master Sgt. Erik Singletary, a cyclist who averages 150 miles per week, encourages both motorists and cyclists to respect the rules of the road.

Motorists should slow down a bit and give cyclists room. Half a lane is plenty and much appreciated.

Many street cyclists are going much faster than you may think, so don't rush to pass then turn right, crossing their path. Judge the rider's speed carefully and show a bit of patience.

Most riders choose to ride on

lightly traveled road, but must often use more heavily-traveled streets to reach their destination. All parties should just remember to practice caution at all times.

Cyclists, remember to always wear a helmet.

Drivers, give cyclists the room they need to enjoy the outdoors and see the Southland.

Mobile devices: restricted while in uniform

By Master Sgt. Thomas Carver
20th Medical Group first sergeant

"Can you hear me now?" Everyone has become familiar with this phrase. On television and radio stations, we are constantly bombarded with commercials advertising which mobile phone rate plan is the best.

I guess it's a sign of the times; mass communication, no wait...instant communication. We've evolved into the "gotta have it NOW!" generation. We're all victims (or should I say willing participants?) in this master scheme. Cell phones, pagers, e-mail on the go, walkie-talkie phones; you name it. If it's newer, better and faster, we've got to have it.

Pencils and paper have been replaced, it seems. I guess I'm a little old fashioned. I go through my kitchen cabinets with a pencil and paper and write down a shopping list before I go shopping. When I get there, I always see somebody shopping via cell

phone; someone pushing their cart down the aisle, cell phone attached to their ear, calling home to find out what they need to buy.

Have we gone too far? Once I saw a woman wandering through the grocery store, aimlessly talking to herself. I know for a fact at least four people stopped and asked her if everything was alright. We didn't notice she was talking on a hands-free cell phone.

Well anyway, yes, there is a point to my rambling.

Cell phone and beepers are readily available, inexpensive and make for better communication. However, when in uniform, their use is restricted.

Air Force Instruction 36-2903, Dress and Personal Appearance of Air Force Personnel, states beepers and cellular phones will be worn clipped to waistband or purse, or carried in the left hand. They are prohibited unless required to perform duties.

I see people walking around base in uniform

chatting away on their personal cell phones. I hear them ring during Commander's Calls and briefings. I see people leaving a building and heading for their cars talking on their cell phones.

Nothing could be so important as to warrant talking constantly on a cell phone. When you're going home at night and the second you exit the building, you've got your cell phone at the ready, what can't wait until you get home? Unless someone is calling you to tell you a giant asteroid is about to crash into South Carolina, I think your call can wait.

So, the next time you're impatiently tapping your foot on the floor, waiting on your popcorn to pop and screaming at the microwave, "Hurry up, I haven't got all second," try and remember to enjoy life, slow down and wean yourself off your cell phone and beeper.

So, let's review: Beepers and cell phones are prohibited while in uniform unless required to perform duties. 'Nuff said!