

Commander's Connection



"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**.*

Q I live in base housing and have noticed a big problem. Emergency responders

are traveling through base housing at very high speeds. I know they have a job to do and there is a sense of urgency, but we have to remember there are children who play outside.

With the speed I have seen the responders drive, someone can get hurt.

At my last base, Operating Instructions indicated security forces could only drive 10 mph faster than the speed limit. Is it the same here?

A I greatly appreciate you expressing a concern that is certainly shared by most base-housing residents. You are absolutely right. The security forces OI specifically states that patrol pursuits and responses will not exceed more than 10

mph of the posted speed limit with due regards for public and pedestrian safety. Additionally, other emergency responders (i.e., fire trucks and ambulances) follow the same guidelines. The 20th Security Forces Squadron re-emphasized the need to be more conscious of speed when responding to all incidents particularly in residential areas. Thanks for your concern.

Kudos

A sincere thank you to two young Airmen at Shaw who took the time to change a tire for an elderly lady in 100 degree temperatures during the day. These gentlemen are "la creme de la creme."

Paid in full? We are still in debt to our vets

By Lt. Col. Dan Swayne
20th Fighter Wing Safety Office chief

It seems quite often there are news articles about our nation's World War II veterans passing away. I suppose in my fast-paced life, I didn't think about how it all affects me personally.

Last month, my wife's grandfather, a WW II veteran passed away. This month, my grandfather passed. He was an Army Staff Sergeant from 1943 – 1946 and a veteran of both the European and Pacific theaters. He was a great storyteller, but he never said much about "the war." A life-long friend of his once told me he'd turned down a battlefield commission because he was afraid they'd send him to the rear. He wanted to continue as a platoon sergeant with his men at the front. He always placed the greater good above personal ambition.

The only real "war story" he ever told me was almost accidental. It was the summer before my senior

year at the University of Pittsburgh. I was visiting my folks for a few days to make some money for the upcoming school year. My "Pap," as we called him, stopped in to see me. Ever since I was a young boy, Pap's firm handshake included a dollar bill for me in his hand. It was his tradition and this time was no exception.

As I swept the garage, he asked how things were going in school and especially how things were working out in Air Force ROTC. I said I got a "pilot slot," but I wished I could make enough money to start flying lessons. I really wanted to get accepted to the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training program, but a private pilot's license was almost a must.

He said, "Will \$500 give you a good start?" I initially turned it down, but he insisted and agreed to let me pay him back after I entered active-duty service.

After leaning against a post for a minute or two, he said, "You know if you have to go to war, and I hope you never have to, I think flying an airplane is the way

to do it." He gave me a detailed description of lying in a muddy ditch in France, shelling all around, as he watched a U.S. Army Air Corps P-38 Lightning fight two ME-109s above him. The Lightning shot down one German plane and chased the other Eastward before returning to strafe the German lines. "Lending my grandson \$500 is a small price to pay to keep him out of a muddy ditch in combat," he said.

A year and a half later, I stepped off the stage at my commissioning ceremony wearing shiny gold bars and carrying orders to report to ENJJPT in three weeks. My Pap was there with the usual feel of paper in the palm of his hand, but it wasn't money this time. It was a hand-written note that read, "Congratulations Lieutenant, consider your debt paid in full."

All Americans owe WW II veterans a debt. The world would be a very different place if not for their service and sacrifice. We cannot afford to let them down. Pap, thanks for letting me off so easy, but the debt is still outstanding. I'm up to the task.

The Shaw Spirit

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Know what you need before you deploy

By Maj. Bill Mann
20th Logistics Readiness Squadron
Operations officer

During my aerospace expeditionary forces rotation, I deployed to the area of responsibility as the Logistics Readiness Squadron commander. Before departing, I was a bit apprehensive about what to expect. Did I really need to take so many bags with me? How long would it take to get there? Of course, my biggest concern of all: what would the living conditions be like for my four-month deployment?

I had a lot of questions and concerns prior to deploying. They are probably the same concerns some of you are having as you get ready to depart for an AEF rotation. Hopefully, I can put some of your concerns to rest. Here are some lessons I learned prior to deploying.

Complete all out-processing requirements.

There is a lot of preparation required for any deployment. Each step is necessary to ensure you are ready to leave your job, base and family for an extended period. A lot of time and effort should be put into out-processing as each step is required to ensure you are ready to deploy.

Take all required equipment on your deployment.

Once I picked up all mobility bags, my weapon and personal bag, I had five large bags to take with me. I had no idea how I was going to carry all these bags around while traveling.

The mobility bags, helmet and flak vests were a necessity for the deployment. Surprisingly enough, there were people who deployed to the AOR without either. Don't leave home without your individual protective equipment.

Level 4 Individual Body Armor is required in

some locations out of the country and is stored and available there through the deployed LRS. We don't have IBA on hand at Shaw because the priority is to ship these assets to bases in the AOR. Other countries only require flak vests. Your unit deployment manager should be able to work with the 20th LRS to acquire flak vests. If you are going to a base that requires IBA, you will still be required to have a flak vest for protection while traveling to your final destination.

Be patient while traveling to your deployed location.

During one AEF rotation, many people from Shaw traveled by bus to Baltimore to meet their rotator. The Traffic Management Office uses buses to transport people to Baltimore or Atlanta because the airlines won't guarantee they can carry the large amount of baggage we travel with.

Most bases will have a BX.

The size and amount of merchandise they have will vary, but there will most likely be a BX at all deployed locations. The BX's inventory depends on how reliable re-supply is at any particular time. Check with your deployed unit to see what their BX has available. You may be able to reduce the amount of personal items you pack.

Mail service is reliable.

It can take up to two weeks for mail to get to your deployed location or back to the states, but it is reliable. A lot of different people will be handling your mail, so pack it well and make sure the sender and receiver addresses are clearly marked.

Winter weather in the AOR is bad.

December through February is the wet season. It's not only wet, it's windy. When it rains in the desert, it usually rains hard and the water makes large puddles. Work centers and tents flood. Mud will be tracked everywhere. Gore-Tex coats, pants and socks will be

in high demand, and very difficult to get at deployed locations. It will also be cold, so pack thermal underwear. Better yet, mail it so you can save some room in your baggage.

Always think safety first.

Many of the bases in the AOR have been in use for a year or more. Road systems are developed. Some will even have street lights. Don't let improvements fool you. Pay close attention to vehicle traffic around you. A lot of the heavy equipment used at deployed locations is not made to maximize visibility from the driver's seat. During night hours, always have a reflective belt and flashlight when moving around the base.

Make contact with the person you are replacing before you leave your home base.

That person has been at the deployed base for four months or more. They can make recommendations on what additional items you will need to bring to make your stay more comfortable.

Look after your buddy.

Being deployed for several months is a difficult task. People react to these conditions differently. Some excel and will be completely comfortable. Others could become depressed and have a more difficult time adjusting, especially, during the holidays. Look after the people you work and live with. If someone seems to be having problems, stay in-touch and help them through the difficult times.

An AEF deployment is a significant event in most military people's lives. There are many unknowns to deploying into a war zone. The stresses of deployment can be minimized by communicating with those who have deployed before. Talk to those down range that you'll be replacing. They will have many lessons learned from their deployment. There is no such thing as a "dumb question" when it comes to deploying.



JULY 30 SOLUTION

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