

Commander's Connection



Photo by Capt. Mark D. Gibson

Col. Philip Ruhlman introduces the IG team chief who will present coins to exceptional Team Shaw members.

"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*.

Kudos

To the Command Post, 20th Security Forces and Civil Engineer Squadrons:

I would like to say thank you. My family and the base housing neighborhood I live in would like to express appreciation for the work that crews cleaning/clearing the worst debris did after the tornado. We also want to say thanks to those who restored power so quickly. We thought we'd have to pull out chainsaws, help clear debris and were prepared to "camp" inside or go to billeting/motels for the evening, but your fantastic teams had the roads clear, largest debris gone and power restored, all before nightfall. I'm glad my family can "brag" on how the military takes care of its own.

Patriot Day: a time for remembrance

By Dr. James G. Roche
Secretary of the Air Force
and Gen. John P. Jumper
Air Force Chief of Staff

WASHINGTON -- The following is a Patriot Day message from Secretary of the Air Force Dr. James G. Roche and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper:

"On the third anniversary of Sept. 11, 2001, the world will remember those tragically lost (because of) the heinous actions of terrorists in New York, the Pentagon and Pennsylvania. These were attacks against freedom, democracy and humanity that carried a high human toll as citizens from the United States and many other countries lost their lives.

"This Patriot Day, we honor the memories of those lost, and we pay tribute to those answering freedom's call to combat terrorism around the world.

"Your efforts over the last three years have been phenomenal. You continue to professionally safeguard the skies of America. You have dispersed al-Qaida and toppled the Taliban government in Afghanistan. And, you were instrumental in ending a cruel regime in Iraq and ensuring that a new, democratic government could take root.

"Our superior total force of active duty, Guard, Reserve and civilian Airmen continue to brilliantly answer America's call to defend peace and freedom. Our country is confident in your capabilities and proud of your service.

"Unfortunately, on this, the third Patriot Day, our mission is not complete. Those who indiscriminately killed more than 3,000 people on Sept. 11, are still dedicated to terrorizing our nation and the world because we value life, believe in liberty and welcome democracy as the people's voice.

"Let's remember those who are deployed in harm's way to defend the American way of life. And, let's ensure their families are taken care of while they're away from home.

"As Airmen, our cause is just and noble. Our country depends on us to stay the course.

"Thanks for all you do for America and our Air Force. May God bless you, and may God bless America."

You're going to kill someone or yourself, stupid!

By Lt. Col. Christopher Tancredi
43rd Airlift Wing

Pope Air Force Base, N.C. -- Recently, the wing here had a rash of driving-under-the-influence charges, on and off base. Someone is going to kill him or herself or someone else.

I know what you are thinking: "Not me." Everyone says that, but it happens. What if it is you who kills an innocent person, child or loved one? Can you live with that? I can't imagine waking up and looking in the mirror and realizing I hurt an innocent bystander because I did something stupid.

By now, we have all gotten the message on DUIs: they can't be tolerated. And we have all heard how devastating a DUI charge can be on your career. So let's take a minute and look at a few career-limiting consequences.

If apprehended off base, you could receive jail time. Your license will be suspended. Average costs run between \$2,000 - \$3,000 for increased fines and court costs. And your insurance will go up...to pos-

sibly \$8,000 a year. Ouch! As a side note, if you or any of your passengers have an open container of alcohol, you each get charged with one insurance point and the offense is counted as an alcohol incident, throwing you into a higher-risk category.

For on-base DUIs, commanders can reduce ranks and impose fines. The damage to your record is significant and extremely difficult to overcome. You immediately lose about 20 Weighted Airman Promotion System points due to the referral enlisted performance rate. Best case, it will take five years to overcome the points lost for promotion.

The final cost is an altered reputation and loss of pride for you and your organization. Your reputation is marred, as you have let yourself, your unit and your Air Force down. Your unit's character is suddenly questioned because of one member's actions.

There are multiple safety nets out there to help you avoid this life-changing event. Plan ahead if you choose to drink. Not only could it save you money and a lot of trouble, it could save lives.

The Shaw Spirit

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