

Commander's Connection



Photo by Airman 1st Class Susan Penning

Col. Ruhlman receives tips on proper wear of a parachute harness from Airman 1st Class Will Tomcik, 77th Fighter Squadron.

"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 picked up a lot of branches and set them out by the curb in front of my house. The base personnel who are responsible for picking up debris have passed it by. Why?



Thank you for doing your part to improve the appearance of Shaw housing. In this case, the Accompanied Housing Brochure states the occupant's responsibilities for refuse collection and disposal, including bundling smaller tree branches in a neat manner. Unbundled branches will not be picked up. If you experience any problems with refuse or recycling collection, contact our Civil Engineer Service Contract Section at 895-9716.

Air Force celebrates 57 years

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

WASHINGTON -- Happy birthday to the Airmen of the world's greatest air and space force! Our 57 years of history may be short, but they are packed with astounding accomplishments. We've broken the sound barrier, expanded military operations to the reaches of space, ushered stealth technology and precision-strike capability into modern warfare, delivered humanitarian aid to austere locations, jointly won the Cold War and provided decisive air and space power for

wars in Korea, Vietnam, the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq. Your dedication to excellence, your integrity and your faithful service is recognized and appreciated by all Americans.

Since our inception in 1947, America's Air Force has flown lead in defending peace and freedom around the world. That legacy was made possible by millions of professional Airmen dedicated to accomplishing critical missions with total success.

Today, you are the torchbearers of our legacy. You are per-

forming remarkably across the globe delivering aid to people in need and defending and protecting our great nation from emerging threats and new enemies. Your competence, dedication to the mission and pride of service is renowned.

We know you also have wonderful families who support your long hours and deployments away from home. We are grateful for their support.

You represent the strength and patriotism of our great nation. America is proud of our Air Force because of you. Thanks for your service and again, happy birthday!



Leadership proves vital during Cope Thunder

By Lt. Col. David Stilwell
77th Fighter Squadron commander

The 77th Fighter Squadron deployed 16 F-16s and 227 personnel to Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, during August to participate in training called Cope Thunder. The Gamblers were greeted with unseasonably high temperatures, beautiful cloudless skies and record-setting forest fires.

Smoke from the fires was detected as far away as Chicago. The in-flight visibility for take-off and landing, when we did fly, usually hovered around one mile, which meant the squadron's young wingmen weren't allowed to get airborne. The adverse impact on health drove the wing commander to direct that everyone minimize outdoor activity.

Those of you who've been in charge of any number of personnel can sense the danger in that equation: Lots of time, not much to do, and plenty to drink. But we had no adverse disciplinary events during our entire stay in Alaska.

Just luck? Hardly. There were two keys to the success of this trip. The first was strong NCO and senior NCO leadership right from the start. These

great leaders established standards right away. A visible leadership presence can really squelch bad ideas.

The greatest key to success was the concept of "I am my brother's keeper." One of the original rules laid down for the deployment was we would always maintain mutual support. The buddy system kept the overindulgent out of fights; it provided a sanity check for the person yelling "Hey! Watch this!" and it took the keys when someone thought they were okay to drive. It kept at least one curious Airman from attempting to pet the cute moose calf with mama cow standing right there watching intently.

Senior supervision is key to smooth operations both at home and on the road, but supervisors can't be in all places at all times, nor should they. Leadership development begins the first day you put on a uniform; checking on your suite mate at tech school or your table mate at pilot training is the most basic and effective form of leadership. Whether deployed downrange or here at home, on duty or off, you are always in a position to guard and guide your peers. Regardless of rank or position, every day you are presented with opportunities to take care of each other. You really are your brother's keeper.

The Shaw Spirit

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