

“Air Force 101”

A Handbook for Air Force Spouses



U.S. AIR FORCE

This handbook is not designed to answer all your Air Force questions. We hope to provide you with enough information that you know *what* questions to ask, and *who* to ask them of. And to understand the answers, when you get them!

I'd like to thank everyone at bases around the world who supplied essential information used in this handbook!

A special thanks to all the spouses on AF Crossroad's Spouse Forum at www.afcrossroads.com, for showing me what questions to answer – and giving me a lot of the answers themselves! You're all terrific! Our Air Force active duty members couldn't accomplish their mission without your caring, support, hard work and adaptability.

The information in this handbook is accurate to the best of my knowledge. If anyone finds that any of these facts are not correct, please let me know, and I'll make the necessary corrections.

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The Ten Commandments of a Military Spouse

1. Thou shalt not write in ink in thy address book.
2. Thou shalt not covet choice assignments.
3. Love thy neighbors from other branches of the service no matter how superior the Air Force may seem.
4. Honor all thy benefits for as long as they all shall live.
5. Be thou kind and gentle to retired, white-haired Commissary, Exchange, and Thrift Store customers, because someday thou too will be a retiree.
6. Thou shalt not threaten to, or kill thy children or spouse when your spouse is TDY.
7. Thou shalt look for the best in every assignment even though the best may refer to “most childhood diseases in one year” or “record snow in one month’s time”.
8. Thou shalt remember all thy friends from all thy assignments with holiday greeting cards, for thou never knowest when thou may wish to spendeth the night with them while enroute to a new duty station.
9. Thou shalt not curse your spouse when s/he is TDY during moving days, holidays, birthdays, or anniversaries.
10. Thou must never arrive at a new duty station and constantly speaketh about how much better thy last base was.



Military Acronyms

AAFES: Army Air Force Exchange Service; also called BX

AB: Air Base (overseas)

ACC: Air Combat Command

ACSC: Air Command and Staff College

AD: Active Duty (the military member)

ADSC: Active Duty Service Commitment

AEF: Aerospace Expeditionary Force

AETC: Air Education Training Command

AFAS: Air Force Aid Society

AFAF: Air Force Assistance Fund (charity fund raising for AFAS)

AFB: Air Force Base

AFI: Air Force Instruction (regulations)

AFIT: Air Force Institute of Technology

AFLC: Air Force Logistics Command

AFOQT: Air Force Officer Qualifying Test

AFMC: Air Force Materiel Command

AFSC: Air Force Specialty Code

ALS: Airman's Leadership School

AMC: Air Mobility Command

AMN: Airman

ANG: Air National Guard

APO: Air Post Office

ARC: American Red Cross

ASAP: As Soon As Possible

AT: Annual Tour

AWC: Air Warfare Center

AWOL: Absent Without Leave

BAH: Basic Allowance for Housing

BAS: Basic Allowance for Subsistence

BAQ: Basic Allowance for Quarters

BDUs: Battle Dress Uniform; also called cammies (camouflage)

BMT: Basic Military Training

BMOC: Big Man on Campus (the General)

BOQ: Bachelor Officer Quarters

BPED: Basic Pay Entry Date

BX/PX: Base Exchange (AF); Post Exchange (Army)

CC: Commander

CCAF: Community College of the Air Force

CCF: First Sergeant

CCMSGT: Command Chief Master Sergeant, formerly known as the Senior Enlisted Advisor (SEA)

CDC: Career Development Course

CDC: Child Development Center

CE: Civil Engineer

CFC: Combined Federal Campaign (charity fund raising for multiple charities)

CINC: Commander-in-Chief

COB: Close of Business

COLA: Cost of Living Allowance

CONUS: Continental United States (the contiguous 48 states)

CPO: Civilian Personnel Office

CSS: Commander's Support Staff

DECA: Defense Commissary Agency

DEERS: Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System

DEROS: Date Estimated Return from Overseas

DFAS: Defense Finance and Accounting Service

DITY: Do-It-Yourself Move

DLA: Dislocation Allowance

DOB: Date of Birth

DOD: Department of Defense

DOR: Date of Rank

DOS: Date of Separation

DPP: Deferred Payment Plan

DS: Dependent Spouse

DSN: Defense Switched Network (worldwide telephone system)

EAF: Expeditionary Aerospace Force

EFMP: Exceptional Family Member Program

EPR: Enlisted Performance Report

EQUAL: Enlisted Quarterly Assignment Listing

ETS: Expiration of Term of Service

EWB: Enlisted Wives Club (title being phased out in favor of ESC)

ESC: Enlisted Spouses Club

FLT: Flight

FM: Family Member

FSC: Family Support Center

FS: Family Services

GOV: Government Owned Vehicle

GS: General Schedule (Civil Service worker)

GSU: Geographically Separated Unit

HHG: Household Goods

HOLA: Housing Overseas Living Allowance

HQ: Headquarters (generally wing commander's office)

IAW: In Accordance With

IG: Inspector General

JAG: Judge Advocate General (legal office)

JFTR: Joint Federal Travel Regulation

KISS: Keep it Simple, Sergeant

LES: Leave and Earning Statement

MPF: Military Personnel Flight

MRE: Meal, Ready to Eat

MSS: Mission Support Squadron

MTF: Military Treatment Facility, or base clinic/hospital

MWR: Morale, Welfare, and Recreation

NAF: Non-Appropriated Funds

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NCO: Non-Commissioned Officer

NCOIC: Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge

NLT: Not Later Than

OCONUS: Outside the Continental United States (overseas tour, includes Alaska & Hawaii)

OHA: Overseas Housing Allowance

OIC: Officer in Charge

OJT: On the Job Training

OPR: Office of Primary Responsibility

OPR: Officer Performance Report

ORE: Operational Readiness Exercise

ORI: Operational Readiness Inspection

OSI: Office of Special Investigations

OTS: Officer Training School

OWC: Officers' Wives Club (title being phased out in favor of OSC)

OSC: Officers' Spouses Club

PACAF: Pacific Air Forces

PCA: Permanent Change of Assignment

PCS: Permanent Change of Station

PCM: Primary Care Manager

PFE: Promotion Fitness Exam

PFMP: Personal Financial Management Program

PME: Professional Military Education
POA: Power of Attorney
POC: Point of Contact
POV: Privately Owned Vehicle
PRP: Personal Reliability Program
RAP: Relocation Assistance Program; also known as Relo
RIF: Reduction in Force
ROTC: Reserve Officer Training Corps
RSVP: Respond if you Please (expect yes or no)
SATO: Scheduled Airlines Ticket Office
SBP: Survivor Benefit Plan
SEA: Senior Enlisted Advisor, now known as the Command Chief Master Sergeant, CCMSGT
SGLI: Serviceman's Group Life Insurance
SKT: Skills and Knowledge Test
SOP: Standard Operating Procedure
SORTIE: A flight or single flying mission
SOS: Squadron Officer's School
STEP: Stripes for Exceptional Performers
SSN, SSAN: Social Security Number
SF: Security Forces
TA: Tuition Assistance (program for active duty members)

TAFMSD: Total Active Federal Military Service Date, the date the member came on active duty.
TAP: Transition Assistance Program
TDY: Temporary Duty
TDP: TriCare Dental Plan
TLA: Temporary Living Allowance
TLE: Temporary Lodging Expenses
TLF: Temporary Living Facility
TMO: Traffic Management Office
TO: Technical Order
TSP: Thrift Savings Plan
UCI: Unit Compliance Inspection
UCMJ: Uniform Code of Military Justice
UTA: Unit Training Assembly
USAF: United States Air Force
USAFE: United States Air Force – Europe
VA: Veteran's Administration
VAQ: Visiting Airman's Quarters
VHA: Variable Housing Allowance
VOQ: Visiting Officers Quarters
WAPS: Weighted Airman Promotion System
WG: Wage Grade (Civil Service worker)
WIC: Women, Infants, and Children's Program
ZULU/GMT: Greenwich Mean Time

For definitions of military acronyms and terms, go to:
<http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/>

Common Military Phrases

Accompanied Tour: Tour of duty with family members.

Active Duty: Member is on active duty.

Advanced Pay: Payment before actually earned.

Alert: Emergency call to be ready.

Allotment: Designated payment by member to bank or individual.

Allowance: Pay and special compensation.

Article 15: Disciplinary action.

Benefits: Medical, dental, commissary, BX.

Blues: Dress uniform.

Commander: The officer in charge of an entire unit of military members.

Commissary: Base grocery store.

Chain of Command: Leadership structure.

Chaplain: Military minister, priest, rabbi, or pastor.

Civilian: Refers to civilian employees who work for the Department of Defense.

Code of Conduct: Rules by which military members must live.

Colors: National and unit/organizational flags.

Company Grade: Lieutenants and captains.

Core Values: Integrity, service and excellence

Courts-martial: Trial system within the military.

Deployment: Military or civilian employee sent on a mission without family members.

Dining In: Formal dinner for military members only.

Dining Out: Formal dinner for military members and spouses.

Dislocation Allowance: Allowance received for PCS move.

Enlisted/NCO: An individual who is not commissioned. Either an Airman (rank of E-1 to E-4) or an NCO (non-commissioned officer, rank of E-5 to E-9).

Esprit de Corps: Morale within unit or organization.

Family Advocacy: Program that addresses family issues and concerns.

Family Services: Non-profit official AF organization staffed by volunteers.

Family Support Center: An AF organization that assists commanders by helping individuals and families adapt to the changes and demands of military life.

Field Grade: Majors, Lieutenant Colonels, and Colonels.

Formation: Gathering of military in a prescribed way.

Gear: Equipment used by military and civilian employees.

GI Bill: Education entitlement.

Grade: Corresponds to pay level of military/civilian employee (e.g., E-3, GS-4).

Guard member: Military member of the Army or Air National Guard.

Hazardous Duty Pay: Extra pay for duty in hostile area.

Housing Office: Responsible for managing base housing.

ID Card: Identification card issued to legally recognized member of military family.

Junior Enlisted: Staff and Technical Sergeants (sometimes also called lower enlisted).

K-9: Dogs trained for military force service.

Last 4: The last four numbers of a person's Social Security number.

Leave: Approved time away from duty.

Mess Dress: Formal attire: short jacket equivalent to "white tie and tails".

MilMod: The military plan to upgrade the personnel data system that contains all military personnel records, "Military Modernization".

MilPDS: The Military Personnel Data System; used interchangeably with MilMod.

Noncommissioned Officer (NCO): An individual with the rank of Staff Sergeant (E-5) through Chief Master Sergeant (E-9).

O'Club: Officer's Club

Officer: An individual who has a college degree and is commissioned, holding the rank of Second Lieutenant (O-1) through General (O-10).

Orderly Room: Squadron administrative office. The new name for the Orderly Room is Commander's Support Staff.

Orders: Spoken or written instructions to military/civilian members (usually for TDYs, deployments, or PCS).

Power of Attorney: Legal document permitting a person to act on behalf of another.

Protocol: Customs and courtesies.

Quarters: Government housing.

Rank: Official title of member (also relative position within a military grade, such as sergeant or captain).

Remote: An overseas assignment, usually for 12 to 18 months; families cannot accompany sponsor.

Retreat: Bugle/flag ceremony at end of the day.

Reveille: Bugle/flag ceremony at the beginning of the day.

Roster: List of members by name.

Ruffles and Flourishes: Musical honor for general officers and equivalent ranking officials.

Senior Enlisted: Master Sergeant and above

Separation Pay: Pay for unaccompanied duty, in effect after the 30th day the military member is separated from his or her family.

Shirt/First Shirt: First Sergeant.

Short Timer: Person with short time left on active duty.

Sick Call: Specific block of time for medical attention.

Space A: Space Available (referring to aircraft space)

Sponsor: The person who is salaried by the government; also, a person assigned to assist newly arrived personnel to a base.

Subsistence: Food allowance.

Sure Pay/Direct Deposit: Member's or civilian employee's guaranteed check to bank.

Tech School: Formal school training for a military job.

Unit: Group of military members, both officers and enlisted personnel, assigned to work together with a common purpose and goal.

Wing Down Day: A day off for military members; not counted against leave; all aircraft are grounded, sometimes for safety or training reasons, as designated by the Wing commander.

Military Time

1:00 am = 0100 “oh-one hundred” or “oh-one-hundred hours”

2:00 am = 0200

3:00 am = 0300

4:00 am = 0400

5:00 am = 0500

The above times are also known as “oh-dark-thirty”

6:00 am = 0600

7:00 am = 0700

8:00 am = 0800

9:00 am = 0900

10:00 am = 1000 “ten hundred” or “ten hundred hours”

11:00 am = 1100

12:00 noon = 1200

1:00 pm = 1300 “thirteen hundred” or “thirteen hundred hours”

2:00 pm = 1400

3:00 pm = 1500

4:00 pm = 1600

5:00 pm = 1700

6:00 pm = 1800

7:00 pm = 1900

8:00 pm = 2000 “twenty hundred” or “twenty hundred hours”

9:00 pm = 2100

10:00 pm = 2200

11:00 pm = 2300

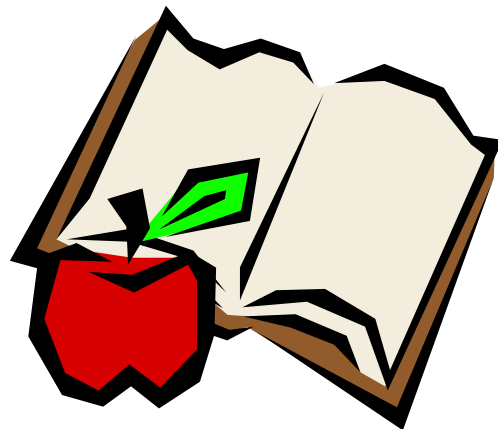
12:00 midnight = 2400



Military ABC's

These ABCs are used to avoid any uncertainty about how things are spelled, when communicating over the phone or radio. Often, letters can sound alike – “F” can sound like “S”, so using the military ABCs removes any doubt!

A = alpha
B = bravo
C = charlie
D = delta
E = echo
F = foxtrot
G = golf
H = hotel
I = india
J = juliett
K = kilo
L = lima
M = mike
N = november
O = oscar
P = papa
Q = quebec
R = romeo
S = sierra
T = tango
U = uniform
V = victor
W = whiskey
X = x-ray
Y = yankee
Z = zulu



Operations Security

Operations Security is governed by AFI 10-1101. According to the AFI, “OPSEC is the process of identifying critical friendly information and analyzing friendly actions related to operations, acquisition, and other activities to identify those actions that can be observed by potential adversaries and determine indicators that could be collected and synthesized to derive critical information in time to be useful to an adversary and eliminate or reduce to an acceptable level the vulnerabilities of friendly information to adversary exploitation. OPSEC is not a collection of specific rules and instructions. Rather, it is a methodology applicable to any operational activity.”

What does this mean, in English?

The success of military operations, the lives of servicemen and women in harm's way and the lives of your children and yourself may be jeopardized by seemingly small bits of unclassified information from telephone conversations, e-mails and small talk.

Picture a large jigsaw puzzle with many pieces. Sometimes two pieces fit together and sometimes they don't. Pieces that don't fit are set aside until a match shows up.

In operations security, every bit of information is a puzzle piece. When alone, some information might seem unimportant. But, when matched with others, the entire picture is complete. The enemy can analyze these bits of information to put together the big picture of military action in any operational environment.

Our growing reliance on electronic communications has become the singular greatest threat to OPSEC. It has had an alarming by-product with what we are comfortable discussing in open, unprotected areas - the local barber shop, restaurants, sporting events, etc.

Bottom line? We must balance our fundamental right to freedom of speech with our responsibility to deny critical information to our adversaries. Jealously guard information you possess, including unit participation, troop movements and locations, deployment/return dates, equipment locations, operational status of equipment, mission taskings and leadership movement. "If in doubt, leave it out" of your conversations. It is an old cliché but, "loose lips do sink ships." A little effort will make it much harder for our adversaries to gain valuable information regarding Air Force military operations.

If you'd like more information on operations security, communications security, or the kinds of things you and your family shouldn't be talking about “in public”, contact the Operations Security Office on any military installation.



Force Protection Conditions

What follows is a brief explanation of Force Protection conditions. The specific measures (such as ID card checking) carried out under each condition can vary from base to base, in the continental U.S. and overseas. If you have questions about Force Protection conditions, talk to the Security Forces personnel at your base.

Alpha

There is the threat of possible activity against the base or resources under operational control of assigned/hosted units. Increase your vigilance against a possible local threat against USAF resources.

Bravo

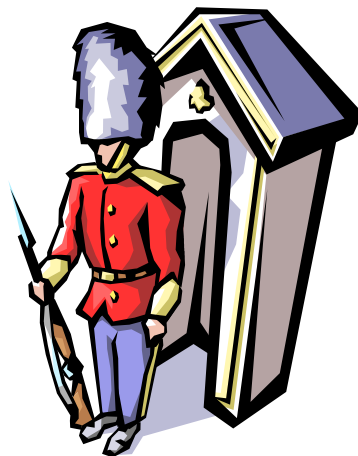
There is the increased and more predictable threat of possible activity against the base or resources under operational control of assigned/hosted units. Maximize your vigilance against a possible local threat against USAF resources. Know who does and doesn't belong in your work area.

Charlie

An incident occurs or intelligence is received that indicates imminent terrorist acts against the base or resources under operational control of assigned/hosted units. Secure all work areas and implement 100% identification and entry control procedures for all facilities. Look for suspicious activity and report it.

Delta

A terrorist attack occurs at the base, or intelligence is received that indicates terrorist attack will be directed against the base, or against resources under operational control of assigned/hosted units. Secure all work areas and implement 100% identification and entry control procedures for all facilities. Look for suspicious activity and report it.





FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

Family Support Centers offer support and aid to all Department of Defense employees and their families. They exist at all active military installations (Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marine Corps) and at many of the active guard/reserve bases. Therefore, support and assistance are available to you through any of the centers, at any installation. Be aware that the centers can be referred to by different but similar names (Air Force = Family Support Center; Army = Community Service Center; Navy/Marine Corps = Fleet and Family Support Center), but the services they provide are pretty much the same.

Family Support Center primary programs include:

Air Force Aid Society (AFAS) The Air Force Aid Society promotes the Air Force mission by assisting Air Force members and their families during times of financial difficulty. Although assistance is decided on a *case-by-case basis*, Air Force Aid can frequently provide assistance in the form of no-interest loans and grants for things like emergency leave travel, funeral expenses of immediate family members, relocation expenses, emergency car repairs, and basic living expenses (food, utilities, rent). In addition, AFAS provides funding for many Family Support Center programs such as Bundles for Babies, Nursing Moms (loan of \$200 to help pay for breast pump rental or purchase), Respite Care Program, Give Parents A Break Program, Car Care Because We Care, disasters (AFAS will supplement if necessary after the Red Cross assists), Childcare for Volunteers, and Child Care for PCS. In addition, AFAS sponsors the General Henry Arnold Education Grant Program (a \$1500.00 education grant to eligible applicants), and Spouse Tuition Assistance (for those stationed overseas).

Relocation Assistance Program (RAP) The Relocation Assistance Program provides relocation services to all DoD personnel for the purpose of easing the stress of moving from one location to another, stateside or overseas. The program provides Smooth Move briefings for both stateside and overseas moves, which are informational workshops to help prepare individuals and families for moving. Attendees learn time, energy, money saving and cultural adaptation tips that will greatly reduce the stress associated with military relocation. The Relocation Assistance Program may also have a variety of classes to help you adjust to the area and local culture. Clients have access to an automated database called SITES, which contains current information on Worldwide Military Installations (information on schools, taxes, laws, employment outlook, housing, and much more!); plus, access to books, videos, and computer software that will help them plan their trip. The Relocation Program also provides vouchers for Child Care for PCS, a program funded by the AFAS, which pays for 20 hours of childcare per child on both ends of a PCS move (dependent upon childcare availability). Also available is Family Services (also called the Loan Locker/Closet), which has essential household items to loan when household goods are

packed and being shipped. Items available to be borrowed vary from base to base, so check to see what is available at your base. Volunteers often run family Services. The Airmen's Attic may also fall under the Relocation Assistance Program, and has household goods, clothing, and other items available free of charge for E1 through E5s (grade levels may vary from base to base). Donations of items in good condition are accepted and are provided free of charge to those that need them.

Transition Assistance Program (TAP) TAP is a congressionally mandated program designed to assist personnel/families who are separating or retiring from the military, as well as DoD civilians adversely impacted by downsizing or reduction in force (RIF). The emphasis of this program is on job search and transitional preparation, rather than job placement. This program is administered through mandatory pre-separation counseling, employment related workshops and seminars, and one-on-one appointments for individual assistance. Congress requires that all personnel be afforded "Pre-separation Counseling" 180 days prior to separation or retirement, but no later than 90 days prior, except in the case of short notice separation. However, personnel can receive this counseling up to 1-year prior to their date of separation or retirement. During this counseling, personnel are advised of any/all available benefits and entitlements, plus programs available to assist them in the retirement/separation process and to educate them on employment processes. To properly prepare departing personnel, the TAP personnel provide a recurring Transition Assistance Seminar, which is primarily employment based. Personnel are educated on employment related processes to include knowledge and insight on transferable skills; understanding want ads; networking for employment; electronic job search; resume and cover letter preparation; understanding interviews and interviewing; career planning; self-assessment; financial planning; dressing for success; doing company research; and negotiating serious job offers. In addition, the Department of Labor briefs on their employment programs, and the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) covers VA programs, to include both disability compensation and vocational rehabilitation. Anyone who will be looking for employment upon leaving the military should attend this seminar; this offer also includes spouses.

Career Focus Program (CFP) CFP is also known as the Employment Assistance Program. It assists spouses and other authorized personnel with obtaining local employment. The CFP manager works with area employers and various other organizations to gain job referrals for clients. Participation in this program enables you to increase your marketability and employability through assessments, development of job search skills, and career planning. The program offers workshops on local job search, resume preparation, interviewing techniques, and image enhancement. Some managers maintain job listings of the jobs being advertised in the local area, plus access to numerous websites containing job banks. This program can also assist clients wanting to target Federal civil service employment, or positions with the Base/Post Exchange and the Non-Appropriated Fund (NAF) activities. If you are looking for a job in the local area, this is the program for you.

Volunteer Resource Program (VRP) This program assists individuals in finding volunteer jobs that suit the clients' interests and career goals, as well as assisting local and base communities in staffing their volunteer needs. Program personnel may also sponsor fund raising efforts to gather funds to help support the program. Under this program, personnel volunteering on base receive free childcare with an on-base provider. If the volunteer is working in Family Services or the

Red Cross, the childcare can be with an on-base provider or the base Child Development Center. The childcare is funded by the Air Force Aid Society, and the number of weekly hours of childcare paid for will vary from base to base. Check with the Volunteer Resource Program manager or the Air Force Aid Society Officer for more information about childcare.

Personal Financial Management Program (PFMP) PFMP provides education, information and counseling in the area of personal financial management to any ID card holder. PFMP also has basic budgeting, check writing and credit card education provided through mandatory newcomer's financial training for enlisted personnel with less than 4 years of service. Customers are provided essential personal financial management techniques and information designed to enhance their ability to make informed consumer choices. This is done through educational workshops, consumer affairs literature, briefings at Commander's Calls and Special Emphasis Groups, individual and family one-on-one financial counseling sessions, computerized financial programs, and individualized Squadron Financial Management training programs.

Family Life Education (FLE) The Family Life Program provides assistance regarding individual and family concerns. It provides a range of prevention and enrichment services designed to strengthen your adaptability to the demands of military life. Programs offered enhance individuals by helping them to anticipate and meet challenges throughout the stages of the family life cycle. To meet your needs, program managers coordinate the need for various programs and then develop and initiate them. They provide individual assessment and referral to on/off-base agencies/professionals for personal, marital, or family issues and concerns. They also coordinate and present a variety of skills-based workshops relating to family life.

Family Readiness Program (FRP) This program provides assistance and support for individuals, families and leadership during deployments and separations (both TDY and remote tours). The program goal is to empower families and single military members to help themselves, not to make them dependent upon the helpers. Every possible means will be used to ensure that the well being, morale, and welfare of AF families is maintained due to deployment of forces away from their families. Families of both active duty and reserve will be assisted as they depart from, arrive at, or settle near the installation without their sponsors. It provides pre-deployment planning through individual assistance, group briefings, and information packets. In addition, individual assistance or discussion groups are offered, to look towards reunion with realistic expectations. This program may also coordinate arrangements for personnel evacuated from other Department of Defense locations.

Information & Referral (I & R) The Information & Referral Program provides clients with information about installation and community resources; it is a link between customer needs and available service providers. I & R provides appropriate and useful referrals to link people in need, with the agency or service that will alleviate their need, and then conducts follow-up to track progress of the individual to ensure they have been served and their needs have been met. The staff educates clients, thereby enabling people to build their own decision-making and problem-solving skills, and advocates on behalf of customers as necessary. The staff networks with the National Alliance of Information and Referral Services (AIRS) to ensure that the I & R program remains current with the latest technology and procedures. They also maintain

membership in local agencies so as to keep informed of newly created agencies/services and to stay abreast of the latest information/assistance being offered in the local community.

The **Resource Center** provides clients with access to resources in the area of transition, relocation, and job search, as well as email access for family members of those deployed or TDY. The Resource Centers are equipped with computers, laser-jet printers, numerous software programs, and Internet access to job banks and transitional sites. Hard-copy reference material and video programs for individually paced and self-directed learning may also be available for checkout and review in your home. Staff members are available to assist customers in the use of computer programs; insight and expertise are also available on a variety of subjects. If you don't have a computer, or if yours hasn't arrived yet (or has been packed for shipment), we have one you can use.

For a listing of Family Support Center web pages, go to:
<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/famops/FSCHOMEPAGES.htm>



Other Useful Base Agencies

The **Base Legal Office** can provide powers of attorney, notaries, wills, assistance with paperwork for reimbursement on household goods claims, divorce and dependent care issues, Soldiers & Sailors Civil Relief Act, debtor-creditor issues, consumer law problems, veterans' reemployment rights, landlord-tenant and lease issues, tax assistance, and involuntary allotment issues. They cannot assist AF members or their families with establishing commercial enterprises, criminal issues, ethics violations, Law of Armed Conflict, issues the Air Force has an interest in, legal concerns of other parties, drafting or reviewing legal documents, or representation in civil court.

The **Thrift Shop** is managed by many different agencies depending on your base--enlisted spouses, officers' spouses, etc. You can put your item(s) on consignment and receive your asking price less a percentage to the organization managing the Thrift Shop. This percentage is often used to fund scholarships and other base programs.

Family Advocacy is part of the Medical Group, and has many marriage and family programs such as anger management classes, parenting classes, counseling and referral, prevention services, and pre- and post-natal care classes. They also provide interpersonal and organizational conflict resolution. They have the New Parent Support Program, which helps in a variety of ways, such as breastfeeding guidance, and nurse home visits. Family Advocacy also does reassignment clearances for families enrolled in the Special Needs Identification and Assignment Coordination Program (SNI) (formerly known as the Exceptional Family Member Program, EFMP). They ensure that the families' needs can be met at a new assignment. Family Advocacy is the agency responsible for investigating reports of domestic abuse, and provides recommendations for intervention services if the domestic abuse is substantiated. They do not give advice to commanders for legal action.

Life Skills Support Flight is also part of the Medical Group, and can provide mental health counseling and referral, stress management programs, and drug and alcohol abuse counseling. They may sponsor support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and groups for those who have been sexually or physically abused, as well as groups for families who have a disabled member. The Life Skills Support Flight is also the point of contact for Critical Incident Stress Management, and can provide debriefings and one-on-one assistance for those who have experienced a traumatic event.

The **Patient Advocate** at the medical facility on base is there to handle any concerns or complaints you have about medical staff members and your care. Some facilities have a single designated Patient Advocate; other facilities handle concerns and complaints within each department. Ask any medical facility staff member who the Patient Advocate is, and you will be directed to the appropriate individual.

The base **Education Office** can provide educational counseling, information about U.S. colleges and universities all over the world, and assistance with financial aid and scholarship information. They have a variety of resources to help you find the right educational program for your needs, including distance education, local area colleges and universities, and on-base educational

programs. They also administer many of the active duty training programs, such as Career Development Courses (CDCs), and leadership correspondence courses.

The **Inspector General (IG)** investigates any fraud, waste and abuse complaints, mismanagement, and violations of law, Air Force instructions, or policy. The complaint must show recognizable wrong, injustice, error, or violation in order for action to be taken. The subject of your complaint must be an Air Force program or person. The IG functions as the advocate, fact-finder, and honest broker in the resolution/mediation of complaints and related non-criminal investigations. Individuals should attempt to resolve fraud, waste and abuse issues and personal complaints at the lowest possible level, using command channels before elevating them to the next higher level or to the IG. Complaints must be reported within 60 days from date of occurrence, unless there are extraordinary circumstances or special Air Force interests to justify an investigation after the 60-day deadline. The sooner a complaint is filed, the better the chances are to resolve the matter.

The base **Housing Office** is your first point of contact for any issue to do with housing, both on- and off-base. They have listings of available houses and apartments for rent off-base, and they maintain the waiting list for on-base housing. If you are looking for off-base housing, it is always a good idea to check with the Housing Office first, and get information about any areas that may be off-limits to military personnel. They can also assist you with the lease for off-base housing, in particular the “military clause”, which, if included in the lease, can get you out of a lease if on-base housing becomes available, or if you receive orders to move before the terms of the lease are up. If you live in base housing, the Housing Office will give you information about who to call for any maintenance problems. The Housing Office can also keep you informed about the status of housing privatization (see the section about Housing for more information).

Services Squadron (or sometimes a division of a group or wing) is the agency that runs the Clubs on base, as well as most of the “fun” facilities, including the gym, the golf course, the travel office, the bowling center, most of the non-name brand eating places like snack bars and the Dining Facilities, and the library. They are also in charge of the Child Development Center, the Youth Center, and the Family Home Daycare program. They will have an Outdoor Recreation/Outdoor Adventure program, and may have recreational equipment for rent, as well as outdoor activities, classes, and trips – for instance, rock climbing classes, or snowmobiling trips. The base Skills Development Center also falls under Services, where you will find a framing shop, wood shop, arts and crafts area, and also an auto shop where you can do your own vehicle maintenance and repairs indoors for a low fee. The services offered by Services Squadron may vary base by base, so check and see what’s available on your base!

If you are not sure where to go to for assistance, contact the **Information & Referral** person at the base **Family Support Center**. He or she can help direct you to the appropriate agency!

Base Exchange (BX) and Commissary



Base Exchange

The Base Exchange's mission is to provide quality merchandise and services of necessity and convenience to authorized customers at uniformly low prices; and generate reasonable earnings to supplement appropriated funds for the support of Air Force morale, welfare, and recreation as provided by Services units at locations supporting Air Force personnel. In 2001, the Army and Air Force Exchange System (AAFES) provided \$278 per service member in dividends back to bases worldwide, and over \$90,000 in savings bonds for academic achievement of Army and Air Force children.

Authorized customers can shop AAFES on-line at <http://www.aafes.com/> -- this site also has information about local Base Exchanges, coupons, sale advertisements, employment, sales of military clothing, the Mystery Shopper program, and more!



Commissary

Base Commissaries are operated by the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA). "DeCA's goal is to deliver the premier quality of life benefit for our military efficiently and effectively. *Premier* means customer savings of at least 30% over the commercial sector, with sales increase over the next several years, more innovations that serve our customers, and more attractive stores that match the military family needs. *Efficiently and effectively* means reducing our unit costs of output while assuring that the benefit performance delivered is improved."

Commissaries are required by law to sell items at prices set only high enough to recover item cost, with no profit or overhead factored into item price, and their pricing procedures adhere rigorously to this legislative requirement. Because the commissary charges you what it costs them, prices will vary from commissary to commissary, depending on local costs. You will see a 5% surcharge added onto your grocery bill. This surcharge covers the operational costs – cashier's salaries, electricity, etc. Surcharge is calculated on the total price before coupons are subtracted.

Tipping baggers – Baggers are not commissary employees, and work for tips only. There is no "hard and fast" rule about how much to tip baggers. You are under no obligation to use a bagger at all (you can bag and carry your groceries yourself), and if you do use a bagger, you have no obligation to tip them. An informal survey of spouses on AF Crossroad's Spouse Forum shows that tipping \$1 to \$5 is average, depending on the number of carts or total price of the groceries, and the service or attitude of the bagger. "Change" is the usual tip (\$1 or less) to baggers at the express lane when you carry out your own bags. At any rate, tip the baggers what you can afford!

If you go to <http://www.commissaries.com/> you can get information about sales, the locations and floor plans of commissaries, employment, recipes, and even a shopping list creator!

Air Force Chain of Command

Commander In Chief, President of the United States
Secretary of Defense
Secretary of the Air Force
Air Force Chief of Staff

Organization of the Air Force

Air Force Instruction 38-101

Major Commands

A major command (MAJCOM) is a major subdivision of the Air Force, assigned a major segment of the USAF mission. They are directly subordinate to Headquarters, US Air Force and possess the full range of staff functions needed to perform required tasks.

Air Force Major Commands

ACC - Air Combat Command, HQ: Langley AFB, VA
AETC - Air Education and Training Command, HQ: Randolph AFB, TX
AFMC - Air Force Material Command, HQ: Wright-Patterson AFB, OH
AFRC - Air Force Reserve Command, HQ: Robins AFB, GA
AFSC - Air Force Space Command, HQ: Peterson AFB, CO
AFSOC - Air Force Special Operations Command, HQ: Hurlburt Field, FL
AMC - Air Mobility Command, HQ: Scott AFB, IL
PACAF - Pacific Air Forces, HQ: Hickam AFB, HI
USAFE - United States Air Forces in Europe, HQ: Ramstein AB, Germany

Wings

A wing has a distinct mission with significant scope. It is responsible for maintaining the installation or has several squadrons in more than one dependent group. A wing has approximately 1,000 to 5,000 assigned members. There are three types of wings:

Operational Wing: A wing that has an operations group and related operational mission activity assigned to it. An operational wing is capable of self-support in functional areas like maintenance, supply, and munitions, as needed.

Air Base Wing: A wing that performs a support rather than an operations mission. It maintains and operates a base. An air base wing often provides functional support to a MAJCOM headquarters.

Specialized Mission Wing: A wing that performs a specialized mission and usually does not have aircraft or missiles assigned to it. For example, intelligence wing, training wing, and so on.

Groups

A group is level of command below the wing. It is a tactical echelon without significant staff support that usually has two or more subordinate units and approximately 500 to 2,000 assigned members.

Squadrons

The squadron is the basic group in the Air Force. A squadron may be either a mission unit, such as an operational flying squadron, or a functional unit, such as civil engineers, security forces, etc. Squadrons vary in size according to responsibility, but usually have 50 to 750 assigned members.

Flights

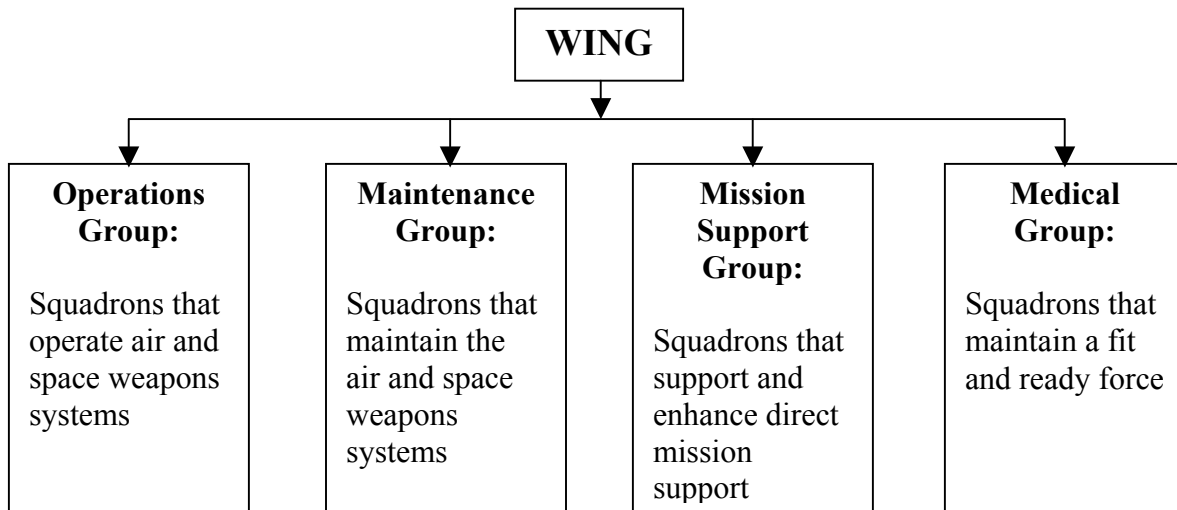
Squadrons are divided up into smaller elements of flights, usually performing specific missions.

Centers

A center is a named unit that performs a specialized mission. A primary characteristic is that it performs most of its mission within a large complex at one location; for example, air logistics centers and test centers.

Air Force Wing Organization

The wing structure furthers the Air Force's abilities to sustain home station operations and rapidly deploy for worldwide operations.



A good place for more information about Air Force bases and commands is the January issue of Airman Magazine, which is published every month. Each unit on base gets a few copies, but they're available on-line, also. The January issue every year has all kinds of terrific information about the Air Force. Go to Airman Magazine at <http://www.af.mil/news/airman/indxflas.html> enter, and click on "Back Issues", then go to the January issue for the year.

Aerospace Expeditionary Forces (AEFs)

Since the end of the Cold War, with one-third fewer people and two-thirds less overseas basing, the Air Force has deployed four times more frequently to respond to increasing international requirements. In the post-Cold War era, the Air Force found that increased operational tempo affected readiness, retention, recruitment and modernization efforts.

Expeditionary Aerospace Force (EAF) is the Air Force's vision for the 21st Century to organize, train, and equip to deploy ready forces for operations that are likely to happen, while remaining ready to meet national crises. EAF also helps create a mindset and culture that embraces the unique characteristics of aerospace power -- range, speed, flexibility, and precision. The vision of EAF is implemented by the ten Aerospace Expeditionary Forces (AEFs).

Each of the 10 AEFs is a cross section of aerospace capabilities that can be tailored to meet a theater commander-in-chief's requirement to accomplish a desired effect. Included are the entities of 10 combat AEF lead wings, and five Lead Mobility Wings (LMWs).

The AEFs ensure the Air Force meets the deployment needs of the affected theater commander-in-chief by providing the capability to deploy the right mix of forces at the right time. The LMWs provide the same type on call capability for non-combat contingencies like humanitarian or disaster relief operations.

As a total Force organization, a typical AEF consists of a full spectrum of aerospace capabilities to meet operational, maintenance, and support requirements, and is balanced, flexible, and sustainable. It is also tailored to meet Commander-in-Chief requirements. It is responsive, capable of deploying to conduct broad range operations with minimum warning time. A full AEF includes about 175 aircraft, necessary support equipment and about 15,000 Air Force personnel. Each AEF draws forces from across the future Total Force. This includes the Air Reserve Component, the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve. The objective is to pre-identify as many deployable people and assets as possible in order to distribute deployment loads.

The AEF cycle defines the policy and procedures by which these forces will rotate through scheduled deployment requirements. AEF pairs will fill 90-day eligibility periods during which their constituent units will deploy forward or remain at home in an on-call status. After 90 days the next two AEFs take up the load. During the eligibility period, AEF units will fill all scheduled combat and combat support deployment requirements worldwide.

The AEF cycle provides roughly ten months of "normal" duty. During this normal duty time, units can bring equipment and training up to date. People get quality time with families and leaves can be scheduled. Skills and upgrade training and exercises can be accomplished. Professional military education, enlisted promotion testing and continuing education can occur with minimal interruption. Units would conduct the day-to-day business of gaining and maintain proficiency and combat readiness. AEF members will know when they are "in the window" for deployment, when they will be in spin-up for deployment, and when they will be in normal status. They can plan their lives accordingly. The 15-month schedule, Total Force integration and the force management rules should provide predictability, stability and leveling to AEF members.

The 10 Aerospace Expeditionary Forces:

388th Fighter Wing	Hill AFB, UT
7th Bomb Wing	Dyess AFB, TX
3rd Wing	Elmendorf AFB, AK
48th Fighter Wing	RAF Lakenheath, England
355th Wing	Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ
20th Fighter Wing	Shaw AFB, SC
27th Fighter Wing	Cannon AFB, NM
28th Bomb Wing	Ellsworth AFB, SD
2nd Bomb Wing	Barksdale AFB, LA
1st Fighter Wing	Langley AFB, VA

The five Lead Mobility Wings:

43rd Airlift Wing	Pope AFB, NC
60th Air Mobility Wing	Travis AFB, CA
22nd Air Refueling	McConnell AFB, KS
319 Air Refueling Wing	Grand Forks AFB, ND
92nd Air Refueling Wing	Fairchild AFB, WA



Major Air Force Bases Around the World

UNITED STATES:

ALASKA

Eielson AFB (PACAF)
Elmendorf AFB (PACAF)

ALABAMA

Maxwell AFB (AETC)

ARIZONA

Davis-Monthan AFB (ACC)
Luke AFB (AETC)

ARKANSAS

Little Rock AFB (AETC)

CALIFORNIA

Beale AFB (ACC)
Edwards AFB (AFMC)
Los Angeles AFB (AFMC)
Travis AFB (AMC)
Vandenberg AFB (AFSPC)

COLORADO

Schriever AFB (AFSPC)
Peterson AFB (AFSPC)
USAF Academy (DRU)
Buckley AFB (AFSPC)

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Bolling AFB

DELAWARE

Dover AFB (AMC)

FLORIDA

Eglin AFB (AFMC)
Hurlburt Field (AFSOC)
MacDill AFB (AMC)
Patrick AFB (AFSPC)
Tyndall AFB (AETC)

GEORGIA

Moody AFB (ACC)
Robins AFB (AFMC)

HAWAII

Hickam AFB (PACAF)

IDAHO

Mountain Home AFB (ACC)

ILLINOIS

Scott AFB (AMC)

KANSAS

McConnell AFB (AMC)

LOUISIANA

Barksdale AFB (ACC)

MARYLAND

Andrews AFB (AMC)

MASSACHUSETTS

Hanscom AFB (AFMC)

MISSISSIPPI

Columbus AFB (AETC)
Keesler AFB (AETC)

MISSOURI

Whiteman AFB (ACC)

MONTANA

Malmstrom AFB (AFSPC)

NEBRASKA

Offutt AFB (ACC)

NEW JERSEY

McGuire AFB (AMC)

NEVADA

Nellis AFB (ACC)

NEW MEXICO

Cannon AFB (ACC)
 Holloman AFB (ACC)
 Kirtland AFB (AFMC)

NORTH CAROLINA

Pope AFB (AMC)
 Seymour Johnson AFB (ACC)

NORTH DAKOTA

Grand Forks AFB (AMC)
 Minot AFB (ACC)

OHIO

Wright-Patterson AFB (AFMC)

OKLAHOMA

Altus AFB (AETC)
 Tinker AFB (AFMC)
 Vance AFB (AETC)

SOUTH CAROLINA

Charleston AFB (AMC)
 Shaw AFB (ACC)

SOUTH DAKOTA

Ellsworth AFB (ACC)

TENNESSEE

Arnold AFB (AFMC)

TEXAS

Brooks AFB (AFMC)
 Dyess AFB (ACC)
 Goodfellow AFB (AETC)
 Lackland AFB (AETC)
 Laughlin AFB (AETC)
 Randolph AFB (AETC)
 Sheppard AFB (AETC)

UTAH

Hill AFB (AFMC)

VIRGINIA

Langley AFB (ACC)

WASHINGTON

Fairchild AFB (AMC)
 McChord AFB (AMC)

WYOMING

Francis E. Warren AFB (AFSPC)

OVERSEAS:**ASIA**

Andersen AFB, Guam (PACAF)
 Kadena AB, Japan (PACAF)
 Kunsan AB, South Korea (PACAF)
 Misawa AB, Japan (PACAF)
 Osan AB, South Korea (PACAF)
 Yokota AB, Japan (PACAF)

EUROPE

Aviano AB, Italy (USAFE)
 Incirlik AB, Turkey (USAFE)
 Lajes Field, Azores, Portugal (ACC)
 Ramstein AB, Germany (USAFE)
 RAF Lakenheath, U.K. (USAFE)
 RAF Mildenhall, U.K. (USAFE)
 Spangdahlem AB, Germany (USAFE)



What to expect when your spouse is at Basic Military Training (BMT)

The training is designed to be tough, to instill self-discipline, confidence, and teamwork in each recruit. Short nights and long days are the norm. Training begins at 0500 (5am) and usually ends at 2100 (9pm) with "Lights Out". Trainees will have military training, academic training, and physical training six days a week, and will spend any "available time" studying for their academic tests (while waiting for a haircut, in line for clothing issue, or prior to lights out).

Trainees may not be contacted during training - this is an intense training program with only six weeks available. You *may* write letters to your trainee, ask for his/her address when they call you during one of their few breaks. Trainees do not have access to: the Internet, e-mail, or incoming phone calls during the training cycle.

Trainees may be contacted in the case of family emergencies such as:

- Death in the immediate family.
- Serious illness in the immediate family.
- Birth announcement (wife of male trainee)

You should contact your local Red Cross agency office to make contact with a trainee; you will not be able to contact the trainee directly. When notifying the Red Cross, be sure you know the active duty member's unit and Social Security number. Providing the name and phone number of a medical staff member who can verify the emergency helps speed up the notification process.

Graduation week (the 6th week of training) is the ONLY time basic trainees are allowed to have visitors. Visitation will be Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. You are required to sign-in and request visitation at the times indicated on the "Schedule of Events".

IMPORTANT: Airman may NOT be available for visitation during all visiting hours due to training requirements. Every effort will be made to allow you to spend the maximum allowable time together, however, training requirements must always take precedence. Also, Base Liberty and Town Pass are privileges that must be earned by airmen and can be denied at any time for disciplinary reasons. We appreciate your understanding of the importance for this.

TOWN PASS: Visitation within the San Antonio City limits between 9am and 8pm, normally on the Saturday following graduation parade.

VISITATION: Airmen in the last week (6th) are eligible for visitation, Thursday through Sunday ONLY

We strongly recommend you talk to your airman and get an idea of their schedule for the upcoming day. Airmen must be on base liberty in order to leave the Reception Center with visitors. If not, they must remain on the Reception Center grounds. Airmen receive only one Town Pass during BMT. This pass is granted on the Saturday following their graduation parade. This pass, however, may be denied for disciplinary reasons. On Town Pass day, visitors must arrive at the Reception Center at 9:00am. *If your airman has mandatory appointments on Saturday morning, it is up to them to fulfill all of these military responsibilities.*

After visitation, drop your airman off at one of these locations: the Reception Center, either of the two Mini-Malls, the Bowling Alley, or the Gateway Chapel. *Please note: You are not permitted in the training squadron parking lots.*

- Airmen must remain in uniform at all times and maintain a professional, military appearance and their behavior must always remain above reproach.
- Airmen are also forbidden to use tobacco products, drink alcoholic beverages, or drive a vehicle.
- Airmen should also avoid displays of public affection (“PDA”, public display of affection) and compromising situations.

THURSDAY

- Attend one of the four visitor briefings (10:00, 12:00, 1:30 or 3:00 pm)
- 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. - Sign-in at the BMT Reception Center to request visitation (refer to BMT terminology)
- 5:00 p.m. - LIMITED visitation due to potential training requirements
- 8:00 p.m. - Airmen are due back inside their dorms

FRIDAY

- 7:15 a.m. - Events briefing (BMT Reception Center auditorium)
- 7:45 a.m. - Buses depart from BMT Reception Center to the Parade Grounds
- 9:00 a.m. - Graduation parade begins
- 10:00 a.m. - Buses depart to the Reception Center (Airmen released for base liberty--they may ride back with you)
- 8:00 p.m. - Airmen are due back inside their dorms

NOTE: Please help ensure your airman returns to their dorm on time. They need to check in by the posted deadline. Being late WILL result in disciplinary action for the airman. Schedules are subject to change during holidays.

SATURDAY

- 9:00 a.m. - Airmen are released to the BMT Reception Center for Town Pass
- 8:00 p.m. - Airmen are due back inside their dorms

SUNDAY

- 6:30 a.m. - Church Services begin (different services are scheduled at various times--if you and your airman plan to attend church, you must attend your airman's designated service for that denomination).
- 9:00 a.m. - Airmen are released to the BMT Reception Center for base liberty
- 10:00 a.m. - Sunday Brunch at the Gateway Club -- Open to all visitors. (Ends at 1:00 pm)
- 6:00 p.m. - Airmen are due back in their dorms

Dress casually for ceremonies (bring comfortable shoes). Summer temperatures are often in the mid to upper 90s or higher. There's no limit on the number of guests for ceremonies. Please make hotel and transportation arrangements before you arrive.

Air Force Technical Training

The mission of technical training is to train and graduate highly qualified disciplined airmen to carry out the mission of the U.S. Air Force. The training schedule is very intensive, and requires additional study during “off-duty” time. Family members must understand that the active duty member’s success during technical training and in the Air Force depends on their performance in tech school. Students may not be able to spend as much time on family matters as they, or their families, wish. Please remember that the restrictions and limitations on the student’s time will ease as they progress through their training, and support your student in any way you can. Students are encouraged to phone their families as often as possible, but their time may be limited because of academic requirements. Families may call their student – students are permitted to have cell phones (but cannot have them in class).

During the first two to four weeks in tech school, the student’s “off-duty” time is rigidly controlled. If you want to visit your student while he or she is in tech school, it is best to wait until later in the training. If students have difficulties with any portion of their training, their activities during their off-duty time can be restricted, even in later stages of their training. It may be difficult to get into on-base lodging during a visit, and off-base hotels and motels can be expensive; transportation might also pose problems. If you visit your student, plan ahead to be sure that you have financial, lodging, and transportation matters covered.

The family can move to live with the student, but the Air Force will not pay for the move unless the spouse and children are on the student’s orders, AND the technical training course is longer than 20 weeks. Even when the family is authorized to live with the student, the student is required to live in the dorms on-base for at least the first month of training. When the student is allowed to live off-base with the family, he or she will still have to devote most of the time to studying. If the training course is *shorter* than 20 weeks, and the family wants to pay out of their own pocket to live with the student, the training squadron commander must authorize the student to move out of the dorms once the initial month of training has been completed.

The AF will pay married students Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) while they are in tech school. If the course is under 20 weeks long, the amount of BAH paid will be based on the zip code of where the family is living. If the course is over 20 weeks long, the BAH will be based on zip code of the base where the student is located, no matter where the family is living.

When the student graduates from tech school, the AF will pay to ship the family’s household goods, but there are many variables to consider. Be sure to check with the Traffic Management Office (TMO) to find out exactly how this will be handled. Basically, the AF will ship household goods from where the family is living (the “home-of-record”, where the student lived when he or she enlisted), and also ship the student’s things from tech school to the next base. If the family was on the student’s orders and authorized to live with the student at tech school, then the AF will pay to ship the household goods from the tech school location to the next base. If the family elected to move to the tech school location at their own expense (or moved back home with other family members), the AF will pay to move the household goods, BUT the cost must not exceed how much it would have cost to ship from the home-of-record. If the actual cost exceeds the cost to ship from home-of-record, then the student must reimburse the AF the difference.

Air Force Officer Training School (OTS)

Officer Training School is located at Maxwell AFB, Alabama, and provides a 12-week program basic officer training program, designed to commission 1,700 officers annually. The Basic Officer Training program at OTS is the gateway to the Air Force officer corps. OTS helps prepare the trainee for leadership challenges they'll face as officers in the Air Force. Family members of students at OTS are eligible for medical care under TRICARE. To ensure they receive the proper care, the trainee must first make sure they are enrolled in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment System (DEERS). See the section "Married to the Air Force" in this handbook for information about getting enrolled in DEERS.

What to expect when your spouse is at OTS

Officer Training School is a rigid program, both academically and physically, to prepare the trainee for life as a commissioned officer. The program is 12 weeks long and is broken down into "lower class" (first six weeks) and "upper class" (second six weeks) status. Training begins at 0500 and "lights out" is at 2300. The day is structured, especially while in lower class status and will include physical training, academics, drill (marching) and mandatory study time.

Upon arrival, the officer trainee will be given the opportunity to make a brief phone call to a family member to assure them of their safety. Throughout OTS, the trainee does have access to telephones but the tough academics do not allow much free time, especially while in lower class status. Officer trainees may not have cell phones but there are phones on every dormitory floor that can be used to make calling card, collect or DSN calls. It is highly recommended to write letters to your trainee; you'll be able to get their address within the first few days. Care packages with food and any other homemade goodies are welcome, but make sure to include enough for a flight of 15-16 people to share. Care packages are placed in the lounge for everyone to enjoy; food isn't allowed in the trainees' dorm rooms. If you live near Maxwell AFB, you may be able to go to the on-base post office and mail care packages for free! In addition, the trainee will eventually have an email account through Maxwell AFB and may be contacted this way as well.

If you live near Maxwell AFB, you will be allowed to attend church with your trainee throughout the entire 12 week program. If the service you wish to attend is offered at the Chapel on-base, you will have to meet your trainee and attend there; if your services are not offered on-base, your trainee can meet you at an off-base church.

Once the trainee reaches upper class status, he or she will have the opportunity to begin earning privileges based on their performance. Demerits are issued and the extent of his or her privileges is based upon them. Towards the end of the 12-week program, your trainee *may* earn privileges that allow weekend visitors or the ability to go off base, but there is no guarantee until Thursday of that week.

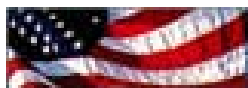
If your trainee has no prior military service, he or she will find out where you'll be stationed between weeks seven and nine. If your trainee has prior service, he or she should already have the assignment before arriving at OTS. The last three to four weeks of OTS will allow ample

time for your trainee to call your new base for information, set up the transportation of your household goods and to get a sponsor. The sponsor can be very helpful in getting you good information, helping to set up temporary housing, as well as giving you a tour of the base when you arrive. Your sponsor can also answer your questions, so make sure your trainee gets one.

Friends and family can arrive at Maxwell any time during the week of graduation but is only guaranteed to see the trainee on Thursday and Friday. Thursday afternoon is family-oriented and the OTS staff gives welcoming slide shows, briefings and tours of the area before you can greet your trainee. This welcoming coincides with a separate event for the trainees, after which you may spend time with your trainee. On Friday morning, there will be two ceremonies: a graduation, which will be a smaller, more intimate ceremony for your trainee and the other members of his or her flight, followed by a parade where the entire class marches for all friends and family members. Both of these are very special events so you'll want to be sure to have a camera to take pictures. Times and locations for these events vary so make sure to get this information from your trainee on Thursday. Childcare may not be available, so you may want to make appropriate arrangements ahead of time if you have young children.

On-base lodging fills up quickly for graduation, so your trainee will need to book early during OTS. He or she *may* be told when rooms may begin to be held; be sure to check so you can book as early as possible. Because on-base lodging does fill up, many visitors stay in off-base hotels. The most popular areas are those in Prattville, a ten-minute drive up I-65 from Maxwell AFB.

The website for Officer Training School: <http://ots.afoats.af.mil/>



USAF OFFICER TRAINING SCHOOL

Air Force Flying Training

Air Force pilot candidates normally begin with introductory flight training (IFT). In IFT, civilian instructors provide 50 hours of flight instruction to pilot candidates who must complete requirements for a private pilot license. IFT is not required if the candidate already has a private pilot license.

Pilot candidates then attend either Euro-NATO joint jet pilot training (ENJJPT) or joint specialized undergraduate pilot training (JSUPT).

ENJJPT is located at Sheppard AFB, Texas. The entire course lasts about 54 weeks. Students learn with, and are taught by, U.S. Air Force officers and officers from various air forces of our European allies. Student pilots first fly the T-37 mastering contact, instrument, low-level and formation flying. Next, they strap on the supersonic T-38 and continue building the skills necessary to become a fighter pilot.

JSUPT students accomplish primary training in the T-37 Tweet at one of three Air Force bases -- Columbus AFB, Mississippi, Laughlin AFB, Texas, or Vance AFB, Oklahoma; or may also fly the T-34C Turbomentor at Naval Air Station Whiting Field, Florida. Joint training is conducted at Vance AFB, NAS Whiting Field, and in the T-6A Texan II at Moody AFB, Georgia for students from the Air Force and Navy.

During the primary phase of JSUPT, students learn basic flight skills common to all military pilots. Students will use the Joint Primary Aircraft Training System during the primary training phase. The aircraft portion of JPATS is the T-6 Texan II, which is being phased in as the primary trainer replacing the Air Force's T-37 and the Navy's T-34C.

After the primary phase of JSUPT, student pilots elect one of several advanced training tracks based on their class standing. Track select will be one of the most significant events in the student pilot's life. This is a moment he or she will never forget. During track select, the student pilots are first notified of what aircraft they will get for follow-on training. The most important thing to remember is that ALL assignments are good ones. The student pilot has EARNED the right to track select. At track select, you may hear others in the audience rooting or moaning for different aircraft. This does not signify what type of assignment it is. People feel very strongly about their aircraft and differences of opinion are definitely in the eye of the beholder. They may have dreamed about and used their very best effort to get their top choice. It may help the student to talk to experienced pilots. Many pilots do not receive their first choice of aircraft but go on to stellar, rewarding and enjoyable careers in another aircraft. Most pilots realize later that there is a reason things work out the way they do. The important thing to focus on is that the student has accomplished something that few are able to do and is now amongst a group of elite Air Force warriors.

Prospective airlift and tanker pilots are assigned to the airlift/tanker track and train in the T-1 Jayhawk at Columbus AFB, Laughlin AFB, or Vance AFB. Student pilots headed for bomber or fighter assignments are assigned to the bomber/fighter track and train in the T-38 Talon at Columbus, Laughlin or Vance. Students assigned to the multi-engine turboprop track fly the T-

44 turboprop trainers at NAS Corpus Christi, Texas, and will eventually fly the C-130 Hercules.

Those students selected to fly helicopters are assigned to the helicopter track and fly the UH-1 Huey at Fort Rucker, Alabama.

Nineteenth Air Force also provides follow-on training for most Air Force pilots in their assigned aircraft. Pilots assigned to fighter aircraft complete the introduction to fighter fundamentals course at Sheppard AFB, or Moody AFB, flying the AT-38C, and then move on to train in either the F-15 Eagle at Tyndall AFB, Florida, or the F-16 Fighting Falcon at Luke AFB, Arizona. Altus AFB, Oklahoma, hosts training for pilots assigned to C-5 Galaxy, C-141 Starlifter, KC-135 Stratotanker or C-17 Globemaster III aircraft. Aircrews assigned to fly the C-130 train at Little Rock AFB, Arkansas, and pilots assigned to fly MC-130 Combat Talon, HC-130 aircraft, UH-1N, MH-53 Pave Low or HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopters receive their training at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico. Keesler AFB, Mississippi, provides training for pilots assigned to the C-21, and the Army at Fort Rucker provides training in the C-12 Super King Air.

In addition to pilot training, Nineteenth Air Force provides joint specialized undergraduate navigator training. JSUNT is conducted at Randolph AFB, Texas and NAS Pensacola, Florida, and provides training for Air Force, Navy and Marine student navigators. Students at Randolph complete training in the T-43A and move to follow-on assignments in transport and tanker aircraft such as the C-130 and KC-135.

Students at NAS Pensacola, complete primary and intermediate training in the T-34C and T-1 aircraft, and then enter the one of two tracks in the next phase. Students in the strike track will serve as navigators in the B-52 Stratofortress or as weapon systems officers in the B-1B Lancer. Navigators assigned to the B-1B attend a special training program at Randolph. Students in the strike/fighter track will receive follow-on assignments in the F-15E Strike Eagle as weapon systems officers and attend special training in the IFF course.

What to expect when your spouse is in Pilot Training

Acceptance into pilot training marks an initiation into a unique society--the society of Air Force pilots. Your spouse's determination and aspirations resulted in his or her entry into pilot training.

Pilot training will be one of the most challenging times you will have ever encountered. The program is intensive and demanding, and the standards are high. The student pilot will literally spend almost every waking moment either in training or studying. Close to 100% of the student pilot's attention and effort will be devoted to their training.

Succeeding in pilot training will take a strong commitment from both partners. If you are engaged, it is strongly encouraged that you wait until the end of pilot training to get married. Couples also need thoughtful discussion before choosing to start a family during pilot training. The student pilot will be extremely focused on training and won't have the time and attention necessary to be an active parent.

The spouse can be immensely supportive to the student pilot. Handling household chores, shopping, laundry, cooking and errands may not sound like a joy, but it will remove a large burden from the student pilot. Your spouse is graded on *everything* from tests to attitudes. A poor attitude from lack of sleep or external concerns will be noticed and will definitely affect the student's training. You can make a huge contribution to his or her training by keeping the home running smoothly.

You need to be very understanding and tolerant of the student pilot's study needs. Very, very few student pilots are able to succeed on their own. Student pilots are strongly encouraged to form study teams. This means the student will not be at home much. It will be very difficult and may seem daunting at times, but the student will be spending more time with his or her fellow students than with you. After 12-hour days of training, the student will need to study 2–3 hours every day and more on weekends. You need to understand that the student pilot will be able to give very little time and/or attention at home while they are training to be pilots.

Student pilots are not authorized to take leave during training except under extreme circumstances. The same rules will apply during any type of training throughout his or her AF career. Exceptions:

- Death of an immediate family member
- Federal holidays concurring with a weekend
- Christmas breaks – during no fly periods
- A medical emergency – including birth

Spouses are encouraged to form support groups to cope with loneliness and isolation, and for companionship. You may find yourself in an area that is completely different from the one you came from. You're away from your family and friends. Spouses can help each other get through this time by planning outings, get-togethers and a phone network.

What if you can't find the support or help you need from the other students' spouses? DO NOT be ashamed or afraid to ask for help. Do not suffer alone. Family problems can greatly affect the student pilot's career. In the Air Force, the member is performing a service for our country. This means that oftentimes, the member has to put the Air Force's needs before family. The Air Force does not think you are not important. The Air Force realizes that family members have a great supporting role that can be difficult, too. The Air Force has many programs and services to assist family members. Your Family Support Center is a great resource with many programs available. Family Advocacy can help you cope with family concerns. The base Chaplain is an excellent person to go to. You do not have to be of any particular faith or have a religious background at all. The Chaplain will help any who need help, even if you just want someone to listen to you. The Chaplain will keep confidentiality, but if there is an urgent need, the Chaplain will request additional assistance from other base agencies. The Chaplain may request that the student pilot be granted emergency leave, but does not have to reveal the circumstances.

You may find yourself with a lot of free time as pilot training consumes your spouse's life. Many spouses will want to work. The Family Support Center has a staff member to assist you in finding work. Other opportunities include volunteering at base agencies or with the base

Spouse's Club. You may want to use this time to continue your education. The base Education Office can assist you with determining your needs and desires.

You are strongly encouraged to attend any functions or events you're invited to. Military protocol can be confusing at first. If you have any questions, ask a more experienced AF spouse for advice.

At times, student pilot training will be difficult. It is important to understand that this is the foundation of your spouse's career, and you have a major role in building this foundation. A strong commitment and seeking all available support will benefit you both and help you to succeed.



Married to the Air Force!

The following items should be completed as soon as possible after marrying an Air Force member. The active duty member must accompany the new spouse, or provide a specific power of attorney to the new spouse, if he or she cannot be there.



1. DEERS Enrollment and ID Card issue, at the base ID card office. Required documents:

- Marriage Certificate
- Picture ID, such as driver's license
- Social Security card
- If there are stepchildren, the following documents are required:
 - Parents' marriage certificate
 - Divorce decree with custody information
 - Child's birth certificate
 - Child's Social Security card
- If there are adopted children, the following documents are required:
 - Final adoption decree
 - Child's birth certificate
 - Child's Social Security card
- If there are wards entrusted by court order, the following documents are required:
 - Child's birth certificate
 - Legal degree from a US court of competent jurisdiction
 - Child's Social Security card
 - The sponsor must also certify that he or she has had legal custody or will have custody for at least 12 consecutive months, and that dependency and residency requirements are met.

NOTE: Marriage certificates, divorce decrees and birth certificates must be certified. Copies are permissible. A 120-day temporary ID card may be issued until the certified copy of the marriage certificate or birth certificate is received.

The Department of Defense requires mandatory disclosure of the social security number in order for family members to be enrolled in DEERS and receive Uniformed Services health care.

2. TriCare Enrollment, at the base TriCare office, and Dental Plan enrollment (if desired)

3. Establish new medical records, at the base Military Treatment Facility

The Air Force member should also:

1. At MPF:

- Update DD Form 93, Record of Emergency Data (this can also be done on-line at <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/vs/default.htm> - see the section in this handbook on Military Personnel Records)

- Name change (if applicable)
 - Update MILPDS
 - Update Dog Tags (if applicable)
2. At the unit orderly room/commander's support staff:
- Change BAS/BAH entitlement (if applicable)
 - Update address (if applicable)
 - Indicate beneficiary on Servicemember's Group Life Insurance
 - Complete AF Form 357, Family Care Plan (if applicable)
3. At Finance/Military Pay:
- Finalize change to BAS/BAH entitlements (if applicable)
4. At the Legal Office:
- Update or change wills
 - Get powers-of-attorney if the military member is deployable

Many new spouses do not know that military retirement pay ends when the member dies. If the member has an accident or serious illness and dies right after retiring, the spouse will not receive the retirement pay. The Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) is an option so that the spouse can receive a portion of the retirement pay if the member dies after retirement – a premium is withheld from the retirement pay, and the surviving spouse will get a percentage of the retirement pay. It's important that spouses know about the SBP at the beginning; the Plan is not the best option for everyone, and some military families may want to explore other options to plan their financial future. Talk to the Casualty Assistance Officer at your local MPF, or look at the website: <https://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/sbp/benecatspouse.htm>

Getting a new Social Security Card

For complete information, and to download forms, go to http://www.ssa.gov/replace_sscard.html -- this website also has directions to all locations where you can apply for your Social Security card, including directions on how to get a new Social Security card overseas.

In addition to completing the form you need to furnish identification:

- To get a replacement card, you usually need one identifying document. Your replacement card will have the same number as your old card. Some documents that are acceptable as proof of identity are:
 1. Driver's license
 2. Marriage or divorce record
 3. Military records
 4. Employer ID card
 5. Adoption record
 6. Insurance policy
 7. Passport
 8. Health Insurance card (not a Medicare card)
 9. School ID card

- For a name change on your card, you also need documentation that shows your old name and your new name. Your new card will show your new name but will have the same number as your old card. Your old Social Security card can NOT be accepted as evidence of identity.
- For a new card, you will need to provide documents that show your age, citizenship or lawful alien status, and who you are; for example, a birth certificate and a school record. If you have downloaded the form, additional examples are listed.
- NOTE: The Social Security Administration cannot accept photocopies of documents. You must submit original documents or copies certified by the custodian of the record. Notarized copies are not acceptable.
- If you were born outside the United States, you also generally must show proof of U.S. citizenship or lawful alien status.

Applying for a new Social Security card for a child

It's easy to apply at birth. When you give information for your baby's birth certificate, you'll be asked if you want to apply for a Social Security number for your baby. If you say "yes," you should provide both parents' Social Security numbers. The Social Security Administration will assign your baby a number and mail the Social Security card directly to you.

If you wait to apply for your baby's number at a Social Security Administration office, you'll need to:

- fill out an application (you should provide both parent's Social Security numbers);
- show evidence of your child's age, identity and citizenship; and
- show evidence of your identity.

The Key Spouse Program

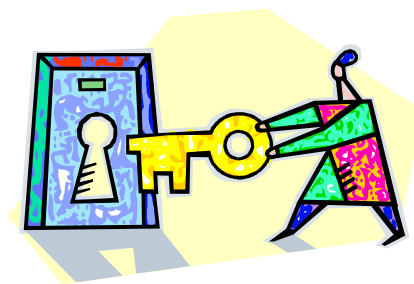
The Key Spouse Program is a unit-based volunteer outreach program; it is a collaborative effort between the unit, the volunteer and the Family Support Center. It is designed to enhance existing family readiness services by providing unit commanders the option of implementing a volunteer-based information and referral network to support unit family issues.

The overall aim of the Key Spouse program is to enhance spouse awareness of and connection to appropriate installation resources. The spouse volunteers serve as links between spouses and families of deployed service members, unit commanders and first sergeants, and other community services and off-base agencies.

By maintaining on-going communication between the Key Spouses and families of deployed members via telephone calls, e-mail messages, newsletters, and social gatherings, it allows waiting families to remain connected with the military community and reduces their sense of isolation.

Waiting families report fewer personal problems during separation due to this connection with their sponsor's squadron, and spouse complaints of dissatisfaction with the AF have decreased since the beginning of the Key Spouse Program.

For more information about the Key Spouse Program, contact the Family Readiness personnel at your base Family Support Center or your unit first sergeant.



The Military Spouse Resource Center



"The [Department of Labor] is dedicated to helping the spouses of active duty military personnel. We want to open up our training programs and placement services to these worthy partners in our military preparedness. Sometimes the availability of training and a good job for a spouse is the difference between a service member staying or leaving the military."

Elaine L. Chao, Secretary of Labor

The Military Spouse Resource Center (MilSpouse.org) is a U.S. Department of Labor sponsored web site designed to assist the spouse of any active duty member of the U.S. Military or the reserves.

Their mission is to provide easy access to information, resources, and opportunities related to education, training, and employment within the United States.

MilSpouse.org will be extending services to military spouses directly through this site and through partnerships with other organizations and the U.S. Department of Labor's local One-Stop Career Centers.

The website has links to provide information about military bases, relocating, job information and opportunities, and education and training information (including a large education financial assistance database).

<http://www.milspouse.org/>



Military Personnel Records virtual Military Personnel Flight (vMPF)

The virtual Military Personnel Flight (vMPF) website is a website for AF member's use. It provides AF members with a wide variety of personnel-related information and enables AF members to access official data regarding their AF employment that previously could only be accessed through either the Military Personnel Flight (MPF) or Commander Support Staff (CSS). Promotion and assignment information are a couple key areas that can be accessed. In addition, a member can get a color picture of their authorized ribbons to take the guesswork out of putting together their ribbon rack. Members can update their Emergency Data Card on-line, in addition to many other actions that can be accessed through the site. vMPF files are updated in "real time", so all data is current.

In order for military members to access their vMPF account, they need to sign up for an account on the AFPC website. Click on this link and follow the sign-on instructions:
<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/vs/default.htm>

Military Pay

1. Direct Deposit

Direct Deposit is the electronic transfer of your pay to a bank account. It is the fastest and safest way to get your money. All military members are required to have Direct Deposit.

2. Types of Pay

There are many categories of pay and this can become complicated. Some are taxable and some are not. Not all of the details on the many types of pay are given below, so if you have a question or need more information, talk to a representative at your finance office.

Basic Pay. The amount of basic pay is determined by the length of time in the service and by pay grade. All service members receive basic pay.

Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS). BAS is a non-taxable allowance for food. Officers receive this allowance regardless of grade. Enlisted personnel may receive this allowance based on the availability of government mess (dining facility), or if authorized to mess (eat) separately when government mess is available. Normally, enlisted personnel who live in dorms are required to eat in dining facilities on their bases and therefore would only be entitled to partial BAS.

Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH). BAH is a non-taxable allowance for housing. The amount of BAH is determined by rank and by whether or not there are family members. It is authorized to assist members by defraying housing costs when not assigned government quarters. The BAH rate varies by grade, family status and location. This allowance partially reimburses military personnel for their housing expenses if they live in civilian communities. A service member with a family who lives in government family-type quarters is not entitled to BAH. A service member without a family who lives in the dorms receives partial BAH.

Clothing Allowance. Enlisted personnel are issued clothing (uniforms) when first inducted into the Air Force. They also receive an annual replacement clothing maintenance allowance. (This is always in an End-of-Month paycheck, usually the month of the enlistment anniversary) This allowance enables them to care for and replace their uniforms.

- Officers receive an initial allowance to purchase military clothing and do not receive a replacement clothing allowance.
- For certain duty assignments, officers and enlisted members may receive an allowance for civilian clothing.

Other Pay. Talk to a representative at your finance office about pay for special situations such as deployments, overseas or temporary assignments. Example of other pay include:

- *Family Separation Allowance* is paid during extended periods of family separation. It begins when the active duty member is separated from the family for more than 30 days, and is paid as a monthly allotment. It is prorated at \$3.33 a day.

- *Overseas Housing Allowances* are paid to help with the higher cost of housing in foreign countries.
- *Cost of Living Allowances* are paid to help with the higher cost of living in foreign countries.
- *Enlistment/Reenlistment Bonus* may be paid for critical skills. To find out how much these bonuses are, and when they will be paid, call the Military Pay section of Finance at your base.
- *Voluntary/Involuntary Separation Pay* helps with the transition from active duty.
- *Aviation Career Incentive Pay* may be paid to aeronautical rated officers.
- *Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay* is for certain hazardous assignments, including demolitions work, flight duty, exposure to certain toxic items, and parachuting.
- *Hostile Fire/Imminent Danger Pay* is for service members serving within an officially declared hostile fire/imminent danger zone.
- *Hardship Duty Pay* is payable at \$50, \$100, or \$150 per month depending on location. Contact finance for those locations authorized to receive this.

3. Pay Withholding

Federal Income Tax. Service members pay Federal income taxes on their basic pay, on their proficiency pay, and on other special pay. Generally, allowances (BAS and BAH) are tax exempt. The service automatically withholds the appropriate amount from each paycheck.

State Income Tax. Service members pay state income tax only to the state of their legal residence, regardless of where they are stationed. For most states, the service automatically withholds the appropriate amount from each paycheck. Non-military income is taxable in the state in which it is earned. Because state laws are varied and complicated, you should discuss your situation with the Legal Assistance Officer.

Social Security Tax. Only basic pay is taxable for Social Security. The service automatically withholds the appropriate amount from each paycheck.

Medicare Tax. Only basic pay is taxable for Medicare. The service automatically withholds the appropriate amount from each paycheck.

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). You can contribute up to 8 percent of your basic pay each pay period to your TSP account. If you contribute to the TSP from your basic pay, you may also contribute from one to 100 percent of any incentive pay or special pay (including bonus pay). For more information about TSP, see the “Thrift Savings Plan” section that follows.

4. Allotments

To help service members take care of their financial responsibilities, the military allows them to make allotments. Allotments are portions of pay specifically set aside to be sent to specific places and to specific people for family support and to pay debts. For instance, allotments can be made to provide support for family members, buy U.S. Savings Bonds,

make charitable contributions, and pay for life insurance. There are other ways an allotment can work for you, so see your Finance Office for assistance.

5. Garnishment of Wages

- The Federal law now allows garnishment of military wages to pay for child support or alimony. In other words, military pay is subject to legal process. Once there is a court order directing a person to pay child support or alimony, the military can withhold part of his/her salary to cover these payments. Local laws will be followed to decide how much money, if any, will be withheld, up to the maximum amount allowed by the Consumer Credit Protection Act (between 50 and 65 percent).
- Some states do not allow garnisheeing the wages of the head of a household except for non-support of family members. However, in those states not allowing pay to be withheld, Federal law allows garnishment for past amounts owed, as well as current amounts owed. So, if a service member has not paid court-ordered support for several years, and is called to active duty, the person owed support can garnishee the service member's pay. The military will withhold part of the military salary until the amount is paid.
- The Legal Assistance Officer can offer advice, but cannot represent military personnel in a pay garnishment situation. If the garnishment appears valid, it will be honored by the finance office.
- Service members can avoid being taken to court and having their wages attached by being sure they have met their moral and legal obligations.
- If the service member is over-paid any pay and/or allowances in error, his/her military wages can also be garnisheed to re-pay the government the amount over-paid.

6. Payment While Away

- The military requires that your pay be sent automatically to your bank account (checking or savings).
- You can arrange to have the bank transfer money to a checking or savings account and make electronic transfers to pay bills such as rent, mortgage, or utilities.
- If you are married, establish a joint checking account so your spouse can pay bills and provide for the household. For the money you need while deployed, you can set up a separate deployment checking account and have the bank transfer funds to take care of incidental expenses while you are deployed.
- If you are deploying, be sure to get a *specific* power of attorney through the legal office, so your spouse can receive LES's and have questions answered about your pay while you are deployed. Finance cannot help spouses without one!



Leave and Earning Statement (LES)

- Each month, service members receive a Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) showing their pay for the preceding month and any changes that will affect their pay for the current month. *A service member may not receive an LES for the first 3 or 4 months on active duty, and LESs can be delayed when you're PCSing.
- The LES breaks down their pay so that service members can determine how much they earned for basic pay and pay for special assignments, what allowances they received for food, housing, and clothing, as well as what deductions were taken out of their pay for allotments, insurance, and taxes.
- If you have been overpaid, you must repay the debt. You will receive a notice on your Net Pay Advice Form. See your Finance Office if you have questions regarding your pay.
- REMEMBER: The LES you receive each month tells you about your pay for the preceding month. Carefully review this statement to make sure that there are no errors.
- If you have not received an LES, you can request a printout from your finance office. This printout is normally 4 pages long and has exactly the same information as the regular LES.

Entitlements: Pay is based on rank and length of service. Earnings include basic pay, basic allowances, and incentive or special pay.

Deductions: These include your allotments and taxes. As for all citizens, money is withheld each month for the payment of federal and state taxes (where applicable). The amount of tax paid by an individual is based on the total pay for the year and the number of exemptions claimed. Basic allowances for subsistence and housing are not taxable. Deductions for the Servicemember's Group Life Insurance are shown here, as well as the Montgomery GI Bill deduction of \$100 a month for the first 12 months of enlistment.

Allotments: These are the portions of pay set aside for family, institutions, etc.

Summary: The EOM (end-of-month) pay is the take-home pay – the difference between your earnings and your deductions.

Personnel and pay information: This provides summaries of pay information for the calendar year.

Remarks: Any changes in pay or leave status are noted here. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO READ THIS SECTION! There may be information directly related to your pay here!

Explanations of Sections on the LES:

NAME (LAST, FIRST, MI) – Member's name.

SOC SEC NO – Social Security Number.

GRADE – Numeric pay grade (i.e., Airman First Class = E-3).

PAY DATE – Base pay computation date that reflects all creditable service for pay purposes (also known as BPED).

YRS SVC – Years of service for pay.

ETS – Expiration Term of Service. The date that a member is scheduled to complete the current term of enlistment or obligation.

BRANCH – Branch of service (i.e., AF or ARMY).

ADSN/DSSN – Number used to identify the servicing finance office or disbursing activity.

PERIOD COVERED – The pay period.

ENTITLEMENTS – The money the member has earned by type and amount. It includes all pay and allowance earned (e.g., basic pay, basic allowance for quarters, clothing allowance, etc.).

EVEN \$ (ENTITLEMENTS) – The unpaid money amount brought forward from the “previous” month. When the check is sent to an address, it is always paid in even dollar amounts. The remainder will be brought forward to the next month.

DEDUCTIONS – Deductions charged against military pay entitlements, indicated by type and amount.

EVEN \$ (DEDUCTIONS) – The unpaid money amount for the “current month”, which will be brought forward for the next month. When the check is sent to an address, it is always paid in even dollar amounts.

MID-MONTH PAY – The amount of mid-month payment received for the current month when the member’s pay option is twice a month.

ALLOTMENTS – Designated amounts of a member’s pay which is authorized to be paid to a designated allottee.

TOT ENT – The total of all entitlements before taxes and allotments are deducted.

TOT DED – The total of all deductions.

TOT ALMT – the total of all allotments.

NET AMOUNT – Net or take home pay for the member.

CR FWD – Amount carried forward to the net pay period.

EOM PAY – Amount due member after subtracting amount carried forward from the net amount.

LEAVE

BF BAL – Number of leave days member has at the start of the fiscal year or current enlistment (if this year).

ERND – Leave earned this fiscal year or enlistment.

USED – Number of leave days used this fiscal year.

CR BAL – Current leave balance (BF BAL + ERND – USED = CR BAL).

ETSBAL – Number of leave days, to include current balance, which can accrue until ETS.

LOST – Number of leave days lost the prior fiscal year.

PAID – Number of leave days the member has cashed in after 9 Feb 76 (not more than 60 days during career).

USE LOSE – Number of leave days that will be lost if no more leave is taken before 1 Oct.

FED TAXES

WAGE PERIOD – Federal wage earned this period that is subject to federal taxes. Allowances are not taxable.

M/S – Married/single (tax filing status).

EX – Number of exemptions.

ADD’L TAX – Additional Federal tax withholding.

TAX YTD – Federal income tax withheld this calendar year.

FICA TAXES

WAGE PERIOD – Current FICA wage earned.

SOC WAGE YTD – Social Security wage earned year to date.

SOC TAX YTD – Social Security deductions calendar year to date.
MED WAGE YTD – Medicare wage earned year to date.
MED TAX YTD – Medicare deductions year to date.

STATE TAX

ST – State tax code.
WAGE PERIOD – Current state wage earned.
WAGE YTD – State wage earned year to date.
M/S – Married/single tax filing status.
EX – Number of exemptions.
TAX YTD – State income tax withheld calendar year to date.

PAY DATA

BAH TYPE – A code that correlates to the BAH type, i.e., with dependents, without dependents, partial or single.
BAH DEPN – A code for the primary dependent of the member for BAH purposes (e.g., Spouse).
BAH ZIP – The postal zip code for the BAH computation.
RENT AMT – Housing cost for BAH computation.
SHARE – Number of military members sharing expenses.
STAT – The indicator that reflects whether the member is renting (R), or a homeowner (H).
JFTR – Joint Federal Travel Regulation code for overseas station allowance calculation (COLA, etc.)
DEPNS – Number of dependents authorized for overseas station allowance.
2DJFTR – Same as JFTR. Used when member has been granted a special entitlement.
BAS TYPE – Type of separate rations received.
CHARITY YTD – Charitable contributions this year.
TPC – Training Pay Category code. The code that indicates the pay status for Guard or Reserve member.
PACIDN – The eight digit Army Personnel Administration Center Identification Number code.
REMARKS – The remarks area will continue a line by line explanation of changes to the account throughout the month.

NOTE: This same information is located on the LES printed out by the finance office, however, the information is spread out over 4 or 5 pages. Any finance technician can help you with interpretation.

Explanation of Net Pay Advice Statement (Statement of mid-month pay)

MEMBER'S NAME AND ADDRESS – Member's name and address.
SSN – Social Security Number.
ADSN/DSSN – Number used to identify the servicing finance office or disbursing activity.
PAY DATE – The scheduled mid-month pay date.
ACCOUNT NUMBER – The account number of the financial institution where the mid-month payment was deposited, if applicable.
NET PAY AMOUNT – The dollar amount of the mid-month payment, if applicable.
YOUR NET PAY WAS FORWARDED TO: The name and address of the financial institution to which the mid-month payment was forwarded, if applicable.

LES

DEFENSE FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING SERVICE MILITARY LEAVE AND EARNINGS STATEMENT																
ID	NAME (LAST, FIRST, MI)		SOC. SEC. NO.	GRADE	PAY DATE	YRS SVC	ETS	BRANCH	ADSN/DSSN	PERIOD COVERED						
	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX		999-99-9999	E7	780102	20	990831	AF 7		1-31 JUL 98						
1			2	3	4	5	6		8	9						
ENTITLEMENTS 10			DEDUCTIONS 12				ALLOTMENTS 14				SUMMARY					
	TYPE	AMOUNT	TYPE	AMOUNT			TYPE	AMOUNT			+ AMT FWD .00 16					
A	BASE PAY	2394.30	FEDERAL TAXES	278.45			COMB FED CAMPAIGN	10.00			+ TOT ENT 3,379.76					
B	BAS	230.33	FICA-SOC SECURITY	148.45			DISCRETIONARY ALT	194.00								
C	BAH	755.13	FICA-MEDICARE	34.72			AFAF ALLOT	3.00			17					
D			SGJL FOR 200,000	17.00												
E			AFRH	.50												
F			DENTAL	7.64												
G			MID-MONTH-PAY	1344.55												
H																
I																
J																
K																
L																
M																
N																
O																
											- TOT DED 18 1,831.31					
											- TOT ALT 19 207.00					
											= NET AMT 1,341.45					
											20					
											- CR FWD 21 .00					
											= EOM PAY					
											22					
											1,341.45					
	TOTAL	3379.76		1831.31				207.00								
		11		13				15								
LEAVE	BF BAL	ERND	USED	CR BAL	ETS BAL	LV LOST	LV PAID	USE/LOSE	FED TAXES	WAGE PERIOD	WAGE YTD	M/S	EX	ADDL TAX	TAX YTD	
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		31	32	33	34	35	36	
FICA TAXES	WAGE PERIOD	SOC WAGE YTD	SOC TAX YTD	MED WAGE YTD	MED TAX YTD	STATE TAXES	ST TX	WAGE PERIOD	WAGE YTD	M/S	EX	TAX YTD				
	37	38	39	40	41		42	43	44	45	46	47				
PAY DATA	BAH TYPE	BAH DEPN	BAH ZIP	RENT AMT	SHARE	STAT	JFTR	DEPN	2D JFTR	BAS TYPE	CHARITY YTD	TPC	PACDN			
	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60			
REMARKS: YTD ENTITLE 23999.17 61 YTD DEDUCT 3407.32 62																
63																
BANK SECURITY SERV FED CR UN ACCT # 98765432-10										BAH BASED ON W/DEP, ZIP 78150						
64										65						

DFAS Form 702, MAY 92 DFAS Form 702, MAY 92

(See next two pages for explanation of numbered blocks)

LES BREAKOUT

Block 1	Members' name.
Block 2	Members' social security number.
Block 3	Members' grade/ rank.
Block 4	Pay date (date of enlistment).
Block 5	Years of service.
Block 6	Estimated time of separation.
Block 7	Branch of service.
Block 8	Members' station of assignment identification code.
Block 9	Period covered by statement.
Block 10	Members' total entitlements identified by type.
Block 11	Total entitlements before deductions.
Block 12	All mandatory deductions identified by type.
Block 13	Total deductions.
Block 14	Members' elected deductions identified by type.
Blocks 15	Total allotments/deductions.
Block 16	Amount due member from previous pay.
Block 17	Total pay entitlements.
Block 18	Total amount of mandatory deductions.
Block 19	Total elected deductions/allotments.
Block 20	Total due member this pay period.
Block 21	Amount carried forward.
Block 22	Actual amount to be deposited.
Block 23	Number of leave days brought forward from previous fiscal year.
Block 24	Number of leave days earned in current fiscal year.
Block 25	Number of leave days used in current fiscal year.
Block 26	Current leave balance.
Block 27	Leave through estimated time of separation.
Block 28	Leave lost from prior fiscal year.
Block 29	Number of leave days sold.
Block 30	Number of leave days that must be used before the end of the fiscal year.
Block 31	Amount of taxable wages for the current month.
Block 32	Total taxable wages year to date.
Block 33	Marital status for federal tax purposes.
Block 34	Number of exemptions for federal tax purposes.
Block 35	Additional Federal tax withholdings.
Block 36	Total amount of taxes deducted year to date.
Block 37	Amount of taxable wages for the current month.
Block 38	Total taxable Social Security wages year to date.
Block 39	Amount of Social Security taxes paid.
Block 40	Total taxable wages for Medicare year to date.
Block 41	Amount of Medicare taxes paid year to date.
Block 42	State of legal residency identification code.
Block 43	Taxable wages subject to state tax in current month.
Block 44	Taxable wages subject to state taxes year to date.
Block 45	Marital status for state tax withholdings.
Block 46	Number of exemptions used in computing state tax.
Block 47	Amount of State tax paid year to date.
Block 48	BAH rate (with or without dependents).

Block 49	Dependent identification.
Block 50	ZIP code of residence for BAH purposes.
Block 51	Amount of rent paid each month.
Block 52	How many other people reside at your residence.
Block 53	Indicates owning or renting.
Block 54	Oversees country code for COLA.
Block 55	Number of dependants for COLA.
Block 56	Oversees country code for dependants.
Block 57	Ration type.
Block 58	Charitable deductions year to date.
Block 59	Army country code.
Block 60	Pass code for Army deployment.
Block 61	Year to date gross entitlements (if all taxable).
Block 62	Year to date taxable deductions (if all taxable).
Block 63	Any comments from DFAS-DE on entitlement changes; also used for local comments.
Block 64	Identification of bank for sure pay deposit and account number.
Block 65	Information on BAH and basis for entitlement.

The most common areas for members to have problems with pay can be prevented by checking the following areas on the LES:

- ETS block – shows the date the AF thinks you are scheduled to get out. The pay system cuts off your pay as of the discharge date noted here, no matter what the personnel computers say. The Remarks section on the LES will warn you that you're due to separate.
- Grade block – shows your pay grade. If it's too low, your pay will be shorted. BUT if it's too high, you'll get overpaid and eventually you'll see the overpayment taken out of your pay, leaving you suddenly short of pay.
- Check your grade and years in service against the base pay shown on the current pay chart. Make sure your basic pay is being computed correctly.
- If you find anything wrong on your LES or in your personnel record, start by contacting your orderly room or commander's support staff and see if they can fix it. If not, go to the local Military Personnel Flight (MPF) or finance office. If none of these work, call the pay Call Center at DSN 665-2949/5000 or toll free 1-800-558-1404 or email contact.center@randolph.af.mil.

“myPay”

myPay offers on-line access to your pay information, providing faster enhanced services, security, accessibility and reliability to all customers worldwide. myPay allows you to manage your pay information, leave and earnings statements, W-2s, and more.

With myPay, you can:

- View, print, and save leave and earnings statements
- View and print tax statements
- Change federal and state tax withholdings
- Update bank account and electronic fund transfer information
- Manage allotments
- Make address changes
- Manage U.S. Savings Bonds
- View and print travel vouchers
- Control Thrift Savings Plan enrollment
- View and print retiree account statement
- View and print annuitant account statement
- Provide report of existence
- Update certificate of eligibility

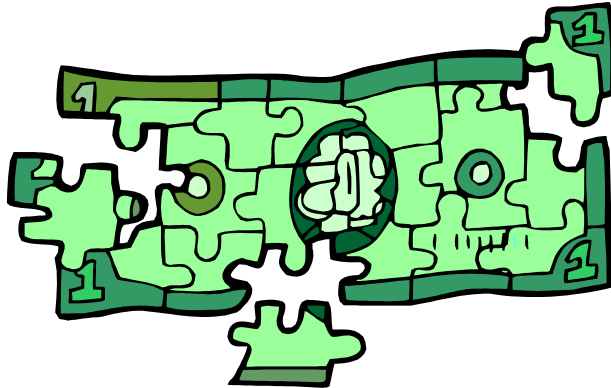
Go to <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.asp> or call Customer Service at 1-877-363-3677 for a PIN. Assistance is available on-line, or call 1-800-390-2348 Monday through Friday, 0700 to 1930 (Eastern Time).



Pay Charts

The Office of the Secretary of Defense has a good website that explains the basics of military compensation. Go to: <http://www.dfas.mil/money/milpay/index.htm> and click on “Current Rates” to see pay charts for all ranks. There is also other pay information at this website.

Another good place to look at the current pay charts is in the January issue of Airman Magazine, which is published every month. Each unit on base gets a few copies, but they're available on-line, also. The January issue every year has the new pay charts (and more terrific information). You can find Airman Magazine at: <http://www.af.mil/news/airman/indxflas.html> Enter the site, and click on “Back Issues”. Click on the January issue for the current year, then go to the “Database”. You will find pay charts under the “Military Pay” section.



Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a Federal Government-sponsored retirement savings and investment plan. Congress established the TSP in the Federal Employees' Retirement System Act of 1986. The purpose of the TSP is to provide retirement income.

On October 30, 2000, the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (Public Law 106-398) was signed into law. One provision of the law extended participation in the TSP, which was originally only for Federal civilian employees, to members of the uniformed services.

The TSP is a **defined contribution** plan. The retirement income that service members receive from their TSP account will depend on how much they have contributed to the account during their working years, and the earnings on those contributions.

The TSP offers the same type of savings and tax benefits that many private corporations offer their employees under so-called "401(k)" plans. TSP regulations are published in title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 1600-1699, and are periodically supplemented and amended in the Federal Register.

Active duty members can contribute up to 8 percent of their basic pay each pay period to their TSP account. If they contribute to the TSP from their basic pay, they may also contribute from one to 100 percent of any incentive pay or special pay (including bonus pay) they receive, up to the limits established by the Internal Revenue Code.

What are spouses' rights under the TSP?

The law gives certain rights to the spouse (including a separated spouse). The TSP must take these rights into consideration when the service member withdraws or borrows from their account.

The TSP will take action to prosecute any participant who denies (or attempts to deny) his or her spouse these rights by, for example, forging the spouse's signature.

- **Borrowing from the TSP account** — If service members are married, they must obtain the consent of their spouse before they can receive a TSP loan. (The spouse's consent does not make him or her a co-signer of the loan or obligate the spouse to repay the loan.)
- **Making an in-service withdrawal** — The service member must obtain their spouse's consent to an in-service withdrawal, regardless of the amount, before the withdrawal can be approved.
- **Making a withdrawal after separation from military service** — After the service member separates from service, spouses' rights provisions apply only if

the account is more than \$3,500. If the service member is married, the spouse is entitled to a joint and survivor annuity with 50 percent survivor benefit, level payments, and no cash refund feature. If the service member chooses a withdrawal method other than the prescribed survivor annuity, the spouse must waive his or her right to that annuity. If the service member does not elect the prescribed annuity, or does not obtain their spouse's waiver by the date on which they are required to make an election, then TSP is required to purchase the prescribed joint and survivor annuity for the service member and their spouse with the TSP account. If the service member does not provide the necessary information for the TSP to purchase an annuity, the account will be declared abandoned.

Are there any exceptions to the spouses' rights requirements?

Under certain circumstances, an exception may be granted to the spouses' rights requirements. To apply for an exception, complete Form TSP-U-16, Exception to Spousal Requirements, and submit it with the required documentation to the TSP Service Office at the address on the form. Get Form TSP-U-16 from the TSP Web site or from the base TSP representative. The following chart summarizes the TSP spousal requirements and exceptions.

Spouses' Rights		
Activity	Requirement	Exceptions
Loan	Spouse must give written consent to the loan.	Whereabouts unknown or exceptional circumstances.
In-Service Withdrawal	Spouse must give written consent to the withdrawal.	Whereabouts unknown or exceptional circumstances.
Post-Employment Withdrawal*	Spouse is entitled to a joint life annuity with 50% survivor benefit, level payments, and no cash refund feature unless he or she waives this right.	Whereabouts unknown or exceptional circumstances.

* Spouses' rights apply only to accounts of more than \$3,500.

How does a court order affect the TSP account?

In addition to the above spouses' rights provisions, the TSP account is subject to certain matrimonial court orders. These are court decrees of divorce, annulment, or legal separation, or

the terms of court-approved property settlements incident to any court decree of divorce, annulment, or legal separation. In order to be considered qualifying and thus enforceable against the TSP, the order must meet the requirements stated in Board regulations (5 C.F.R. Part 1653). The account is also subject to the enforcement of legal obligations to make alimony and child support payments, and to satisfy judgments against the service member for child abuse.

If the TSP receives a document that purports to be a qualifying order or legal process for the enforcement of back payment of alimony or child support, the account will be frozen for loans and withdrawals. In order to authorize payment from the account, a qualifying court order must clearly identify the TSP account and must describe the award to the spouse, former spouse, or other party in such a way that the amount of the award can be definitively calculated. If the service member has two TSP accounts, the court order must clearly identify the account to which the order/award applies.

Designating the TSP contribution into funds

Once service members are enrolled in TSP, they can elect to divide the TSP contribution among five different investment funds. A description of the funds follows.

1) The Government Securities Investment “G” Fund

This fund is known for being the safest investment of the five funds since the only way it will lose money is by some catastrophic event -- say if the federal government defaults on its loans. But with low risk usually comes a lower interest rate or rate of return. For instance, this fund has gone up more than 6 percent in the past 10 years. In some investment circles, it's safety and earnings make it comparable to a savings account. The G Fund invests in specially issued short-term, non-marketable U.S. Treasury securities.

2) The Fixed Income Index Investment “F” Fund

Essentially, the F Fund is higher risk than the G Fund, but is still considered a low-risk investment because it is spread over many generally stable investments. Even if a corporation were to declare bankruptcy, the loss would be minimal. According to the TSP web site, this fund has gone up more than 7 percent in the past 10 years. Putting one's money into the F Fund is an investment in the Barclays U.S. Debt Index Fund, which tracks the bond-market. A mathematical model determines the amount in which this fund distributes investor's money amongst the various types of U.S. government, mortgage-backed, corporate and foreign government sector securities.

3) The Stock Index “C”, “S”, and “I” Funds

These funds give TSP participants the opportunity to diversify their investments among a broad range of stocks. In addition, because the C, S, and I Funds are invested in broad-based *index funds*, they provide the opportunity to earn the relatively high investment returns that are sometimes available from stocks, while at the same time lessening the effect of poor investment performance by an individual company or industry.

Furthermore, the TSP stock index funds have relatively low investment management fees and trading costs.

For return rates and more information about the C, S, and I Funds, go to <http://www.tsp.gov/uniserv/features/chapter09.html#top>

Find more details about the Thrift Savings Plan at <http://www.tsp.gov/index.html>



Moving Time – PCSing and Packing Out

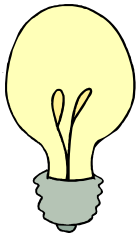
When You're "Packing Out" - Moving Survival Tips

Some tips to remember:

- Packers will pack anything not nailed down. If you don't want the trash in your trashcan shipped to your new base, be sure to empty it before the packers come! Put the pet's food and water bowls aside or they'll get packed, too. Some of the active duty member's records must be hand-carried. And if you got a newcomer's welcome package about your new base from your sponsor don't let the packers box that up, either. The info in that package will come in handy as soon as you arrive at your new base!
- The movers must seal everything in crates before they leave your house. Do not let them take un-crated boxes and tell you they will crate them at the warehouse! You should witness them seal the crates, and the seal numbers go on the paperwork.
- Put the items you DON'T want packed in a bathroom or closet clearly marked "DO NOT PACK", or lock them in your car.
- Have your own inventory of all your items, and list the serial numbers for those things that have them. Take pictures of all of your belongings. If you have to file a claim and you have a picture, you are much more likely to get replacement value instead of depreciation value. For items that are high value but you would not have receipts for (such as wedding china), you may also submit a letter from a third party (such as a friend or relative) certifying that these items were in your possession and they saw them in your house. The reason for this is because boxes will not be labeled "12 place settings of Noritake china, Gold Ring Pattern with 5 piece serving set". They are more likely to be labeled "China".
- The packers will note the condition of items on their inventory; for instance, if the couch is worn, or a dresser is scratched. Sometimes they will note "scratched" for an item that is nearly new. If you do not agree with the packer's assessment of the condition of an item, have them correct it. If you have problems with this, or concerns about how the packers are noting the condition of many of your household items, call the Traffic Management Office and ask them to send an inspector out.
- It can sometimes be difficult to keep an eye on all that's going on when the movers are packing everything up. The active duty member is released from duty to help with this; do not let the supervisor insist that the member report to work. You can also ask for help from friends, if there's a large crew boxing all your things. Use the "Child Care for PCS" program (see below) if you have young children. Packing up is a hectic time; if you know your kids are safe and well cared for, you have one less worry on moving day!



- Do NOT pack battery-powered items with the batteries in them, no matter what shipment they're in. Pack the batteries separately, or buy new batteries at the new location. If a battery-powered item is jiggled in shipment and turns on, the box that it's in may be destroyed to be sure that there's not a bomb in it!
- If you're moving overseas, be aware of the voltage and cycle differences, and the different sized plugs, depending on the country you're moving to. Although you can run your American clock radio off a transformer, if there is no adjustment for the cycles, the clock won't keep the correct time! The same is true for microwaves and other electric items with timers (coffeepots, bread makers, etc.). American (and Canadian) voltage is 110/120 volt, 60 cycles; nearly everywhere else is 220/240 volt, 50 cycles. Most newer electronic items that are dual voltage automatically adjust the cycles, but older items may not. Check the technical information on the back of your electric item if you're not sure! Adapter plugs can be purchased at your new location.
- Adapter plugs differ according to the country you're in. Even though England and Germany have the same voltage and cycles, the size of the plugs are different. Don't try to buy any adapter plugs until you get to your new location.



- You can take your lamps overseas, but don't bring the bulbs. Buy new light bulbs for the correct voltage, and adapter plugs, at your overseas location. You do NOT need to use a transformer for a lamp! (FYI, if you're living off base and paying your electric bill, transformers use a lot of electricity when they're turned on, even if you're not using the appliance that's plugged into them!)
- Your American telephone may or may not work in your new overseas location, and if it does work, you might need a telephone adapter plug. Ask your sponsor if you should bring your American phone to your new base!
- If you are going to buy electric items at your new overseas location, check out the Thrift Shop first. Many people will sell their locally purchased electric items, adapter plugs, transformers, extension cords, etc. in the Thrift Shop, because they can't use them back in the States (or in a different overseas country). You can save money by getting these items "used" at the Thrift Shop instead of buying them new at the Base Exchange or from a store in the local economy.
- The Loan Locker or Family Services at the Family Support Center has essential household items you can borrow for free. Nearly all military bases will have this service available, and you can check out dishes, pots and pans, irons and ironing boards, baby items, etc. The exact items available vary by base, so ask your sponsor what items you'll be able to borrow at your new location. If you can borrow these items, you won't need to pack them in your Unaccompanied Baggage!

- The Air Force Aid Society has a program called “Child Care for PCS”. They will pay for 20 hours of child care, per child, on both ends of a PCS move! Check with the Family Support Center Relocation Office to get a certificate for this program.
- If you have irreplaceable items, such as family heirlooms, jewelry, photographs, etc., you may want to pack these up and hand-carry them, or mail them yourself (with appropriate insurance). You can also elect to leave anything irreplaceable with family members. If you decide to let the movers pack up special items, you might want to look into getting supplemental insurance to cover these things in case of damage or loss. The moving company is responsible for paying you to fix or replace every-day items, but will not reimburse you for repairs or replacement of a rare or expensive heirloom.
- Shipping a pet has its own “ins and outs” – check with the Family Support Center Relocation folks for more information!

Unaccompanied Baggage: This shipment is sent when your new assignment is overseas. These are the items you will need immediately upon arriving at your new destination. It is packed separately from your household goods, and will be transported more quickly than your household goods. BEWARE: there is a weight limit for Unaccompanied Baggage. Check with the Traffic Management Office (TMO) to find out what your limit is! You could be living off the items in your Unaccompanied Baggage for two months or more, depending on where your new assignment is. This will be the last shipment packed up aside from your suitcases (TMO calls your suitcases “Accompanied Baggage”).



Clothing (consider climate of the new location)
 Bedding for each family member
 Sleeping bags
 Air mattresses
 Shower curtain and hooks
 Bath towels
 Couple sets of curtains
 Travel iron
 Travel alarm
 Battery powered radio
 Electric frying pan
 Most frequently used spices
 Stove-to-table serving dishes
 Flatware
 Kitchen knives
 Can opener, bottle opener
 Plates/bowls/glasses/mugs (plastic is best!)
 Spatula, serving spoon
 Dishtowels
 Potholders

Extension cords
 Coffee pot
 Broom, dustpan
 Lamps (a battery operated one can come in handy!)
 Phone
 Cookbook
 Sewing kit with scissors
 First aid kit
 Basic household tool kit
 Sporting gear appropriate for the season (skis, tennis racquets, etc.)
 A few “homey” items-family scrapbook, etc.
 Mixer
 Food processor
 Card table and folding chairs
 Hobby items and toys
 Sewing machine
 Infant and toddler equipment – playpen, stroller, etc.
 Computer



Accompanied Baggage: This includes your suitcases, carry-ons, children’s backpacks, and so on – all the items you’ll take on the plane and/or pack in the car. Depending on which airline you fly on, the number, size, and weight of suitcases and carry-ons may vary, so once you get your tickets, check and see what your limits are.

Passport (for overseas travel)
Important family documents; birth certificates, medical records, school records
Address book
Road maps, travel books
Newcomer’s welcome package from your new base
Medicines and prescription drugs (make sure you won’t need refills enroute!)
Valuable jewelry
Camera equipment
Travel iron
Electric curlers, curling iron, hair dryer
Portable battery-powered radio
Travel alarm
Pocketknife
Games for car/plane travel

Games, toys, cuddlies to keep children occupied. Don’t forget the security blanket!
Seasonal clothing; umbrella, raincoat, walking shoes
Clothing; seven days supply for each family member will save on trips to the laundromat
Military uniforms!
Hobby and sports gear; jogging clothes, running shoes, swimsuits, etc.
Picnic gear; cooler, thermos, blanket (doubles as a tablecloth for on-the-road picnics)
Flashlight, matches
Toilet paper, paper towel
First aid kit

Household Goods (HHG): This is the bulk of your shipment, and includes all your furniture and everything that’s not in your Unaccompanied and Accompanied Baggage. The total weight that the Air Force will pay to ship depends on the active duty member’s rank and the number of family members that are living with him or her, AND where you will be stationed. The “total weight allowance” includes how much the Unaccompanied Baggage weighed, but not the weight of the Accompanied Baggage. A good “guesstimate” for how much everything in your house weighs is to figure on 1,000 pounds per room (not

including bathrooms, unless you have furniture in your bathroom!) Add extra if you are shipping a fridge, washer and/or dryer, or if you have a lot of books, or other heavy items. You cannot ship your fridge, washer, or dryer to some locations, so be sure to check with TMO if you have any questions! A motorcycle can also be shipped in Household Goods – it’s not counted as a shipped vehicle, but the weight is included as part of your Household Goods (check with TMO for preparation necessary before shipping)! If the active duty member has a good number of “professional” items, such as manuals, books, and equipment that are necessary for his or her job, these can be shipped separately under a different (additional) weight allowance. **TIP:** pack a set of bedding with each mattress. By the time you get the beds unpacked and set up, you’ll be too tired to search for the box with the sheets and blankets!



The Final Box: This is the last box or boxes of your Household Goods that is packed. Be sure that this box (or boxes) are the last ones in the truck or crate, so it will be the first one unloaded at your new location. This is especially convenient for “door-to-door” military moves, saving you the trouble of plowing through the entire shipment for essential items.

Cleaning supplies	Pot, frying pan
Broom, mop, dustpan, sponge, light bulbs	Kitchen knives
Can opener	Trash bags
Flashlight	Scissors
Hangers	Bed linens for the entire family
Clock radio	Bath towels
Lamp	Extra sheets for temporary curtains
Phone	Hammer, screwdriver, nails
Coffee pot, filters	Extension cord
Toilet paper, paper towel	Soup, dry cereal, crackers, peanut butter and jelly
Paper plates and cups, plastic knives, forks, spoons	Shampoo, soap

For information about Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates, Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA), Cost of Living Allowance (COLA), Dislocation Allowance (DLA) and Per Diem rates, go to <http://www.dtic.mil/perdiem/rateinfo.html>. *Be sure to request DLA from your new base’s Finance Office as soon as you arrive. This allowance is not always automatically disbursed!



Protocol

Many times during the military member's career you will be invited to attend all sorts of ceremonies, from promotions and changes of command, to formal dinners and retirement functions. Knowing a little about protocol can make you feel more comfortable and confident. To quote from the Protocol Primer, "Protocol is an adherence to customs, tempered with a touch of common sense, good manners, and a concern for others". As an Air Force spouse, it is important to know the protocol of the military world, which is a combination of tradition, etiquette, and courtesy.



Spouse dress code

The invitation will usually indicate the type of attire. When in doubt, call the host of the event and ask what the appropriate dress will be. What the military member is required to wear to an event can also be a good indication what sort of civilian clothing would be appropriate.

Very Casual:

- Corresponds with type of function (barbecue, hayride, sporting event, etc.). Usually jeans or shorts, t-shirts, sweatshirts, etc.
- For very casual events, the military member would probably also be wearing civilian clothing.

Casual:

- The casual civilian dress at military official functions is typically what would ordinarily be worn to work on a day-to-day basis. For civilian guests from outside the military community, appropriate attire could range from slacks and open neck shirt to business suit.
- At civilian casual functions, dress for men will normally be a short or long-sleeved open-neck shirt, perhaps a sweater or sports coat, but not tie. For ladies, any casual dress, slacks, pants suit, blouses, and long or short skirts are appropriate.
- Military members would wear the "duty uniform", usually either BDU's, the light blue shirt with or without tie, or flight suit, depending on the duty section.

Sport Coat and Tie:

- This is the next stage up the ladder towards more formal attire and would be appropriate for some icebreakers or dinner at the commander's quarters. For men, this means a sports jacket or blazer with color-coordinated slacks and tie. Women have the option of wearing an appropriate dress or a dressy slacks outfit.
- When the invitation specifies "sport coat and tie" the military member would usually be expected to wear civilian clothing, also.

Business Suit/Informal:

- This form of dress most closely equates to "informal," and for men, should be a dark (subdued) suit with a tie. It can include three-piece suits as well. Women should wear business suit, or a dressy, street-length or "Sunday" dress.
- The military counterpart to "business suit" is Service Dress uniform. The types of military functions where the Service Dress uniform is appropriate include ceremonies, parades, reviews, retirements, official visits of civilian dignitaries, changes of command, and afternoon receptions.

Formal:

- Also known as "black tie". For the active duty member, this is the Mess Dress or Semi-formal uniform and is appropriate attire for functions like dinings-out, some commander's holiday/New Year's receptions, and military weddings (if you're one of the participants), and various civilian "black tie" affairs like charity or holiday balls.
- The civilian equivalent to the Mess Dress uniform is a dinner jacket or black tuxedo with black bow tie. Appropriate attire for the ladies would be long or short evening dress.

Types of Ceremonies and Events

There are a variety of Air Force ceremonies and events. If the invitation has an RSVP or "Please respond", you should reply within two days of receiving the invitation, or by the "respond by" date if one is indicated. Do not assume that your children are invited to a function unless specifically indicated. At "public" events, such as unit barbecues, etc., children should be well behaved. The following is a brief description of the most common ceremonies.

Awards and Decorations

The Air Force presents many levels of awards in recognition of service or achievement. The commander's timely presentation of the appropriate decoration at a "public" ceremony greatly enhances the value of the award to the recipient and is a plus for the entire unit.

Award/Decoration ceremonies range from formal reviews to presentation at commander's call to much smaller informal office ceremonies, depending largely on the recipient's desires. The basic elements of this ceremony include the reading of the official orders and the presentation of the award or decoration. Dress for these occasions ranges from casual to business suit/informal.

Receiving Lines

The word reception means the act of receiving or greeting. A receiving line is a practical and efficient way to accomplish this greeting. In the Air Force, receiving lines are frequently used to greet a new commander and spouse after his or her change of command ceremony, at commander's receptions honoring local civic leaders, or at traditional holiday receptions.

Receiving lines are preceded by an announcer, whose responsibility it is to announce or introduce guests to the host. Normally, the commander's aide or protocol officer acts in this capacity. The announcer stands just to the side of the host and introduces the next guests in line.

- No eating, drinking, or smoking in the receiving line (there will be a small table before you get to the reception area to put your food or drinks on).

- When going through the line, do not shake hands with the announcer. Give him/her your rank and last name, i.e., Major and Mrs. Smith, official title (Major and Mrs. Tom Jones), or Mr. and Mrs. Brown. Always provide your name even though you know the announcer. Memories fail at times.
- A gentleman precedes his lady through the line at *official* functions, ladies first at all others.
- Never engage in extended conversation in a receiving line—you'll add to the congestion for those in the line behind you. Do not hesitate to repeat your name to members of the receiving line.
- Since receptions by nature are usually formal, the formal attire described above is usually appropriate.

Dinings-In and Dinings-Out

Formal military dinners are a tradition in all branches of the United States Armed services. The dining-in and dining-out represent the most formal aspects of Air Force social life. A dining-in or dining-out is designed so that members of an organization can have a good time together as a unit. Very formal and serious ceremonies are included in the dining-in and dining-out, but various forms of skits or entertainment are also be included to add merriment to the evening. There are “rules of the mess”, which are usually printed on the program. The rules are designed to conform to tradition and promote levity. Violators of these rules are subject to the wrath and mischievousness of Mister/Madam Vice President of the Mess. Assigned “penalties” are humorous, and are carried out with all assembled watching.

- The dining-*in* is a formal dinner for the members of a wing, unit, or other organization. The "combat dining-in" is far less formal because of the dress requirements and more informal atmosphere. The dining-in is usually reserved for military members only; however, civilians are sometimes included when they are working members of the unit.
- The dining-*out* includes spouses and guests.
- Officers wear the mess dress uniform. Male civilians should wear appropriate black tie dinner dress. The proper dress for civilians should be clearly stated in the invitation. Retired officers may wear the mess dress or civilian attire. For enlisted members, mess dress or the semi-formal dress uniform is worn.
- Long dinner dresses or evening clothes for female guests are appropriate when attending a dining-out.
- Pregnant military women may wear appropriate civilian attire.

Promotions

Promotion ceremonies can be as simple as reading the order and pinning of the insignia and as complicated as having multiple activities occurring (presentation of certificate of promotion; presentation of a General Officer's flag; presentation of General Officer uniform items to include belt, weapon, etc.) Sometimes the promotee's spouse is invited to help “pin on” the new rank insignia. As in Award and Decoration ceremonies, dress for a promotion ceremony can range from casual to business suit/informal.

Change of Command

The change of command ceremony is a clear, legal, and symbolic passing of authority and responsibility from one commander to the next. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the new commander will most likely host a reception immediately afterward, which may include a

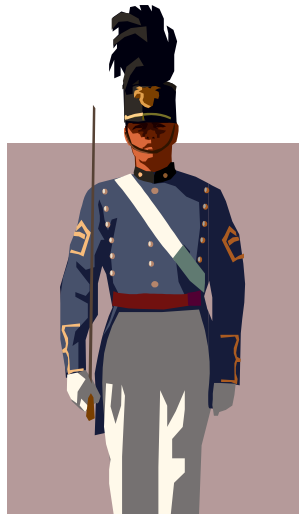
receiving line. By tradition, the relieved commander seldom attends the new commander's reception. Dress for a change of command is usually business suit/informal, but may also be casual.

Retirement

Recognition of members who are retiring from a career of long, faithful, and honorable service is one of the oldest traditions of military service. Each retiree should leave the service with a tangible expression of appreciation for his/her contribution to the Air Force, and with the assurance that they will continue to be a member of the Air Force family in retirement. The retiree's spouse is honored in the ceremony as well. The retiree's children may also be invited to attend the ceremony, but younger children will require supervision because the retiree's spouse will be included in the ceremony. Guest's children are not invited to this formal event. Attire is business suit/informal.

Other events

You may be invited to a variety of other events and gatherings, such as teas, coffees, Reveille and Retreat, activation and inactivation of units, and ribbon cutting ceremonies. If you are stationed at a base that also has Army or Navy personnel, you may be invited to events specific to those services. If you have any questions about these events, don't hesitate to contact the host or hosting unit.



The Air Force Symbol



The U.S. Air Force symbol honors the heritage of our past and represents the promise of our future. It retains the core elements of our Air Corps heritage -- the "Arnold" wings and star with circle -- and modernizes them to reflect our aerospace force of today and tomorrow.

The symbol has two main parts. In the upper half, the stylized wings represent the stripes of our strength -- the enlisted men and women of our force. They are drawn with great angularity to emphasize our swiftness and power, and they are divided into six sections, which represent our core competencies -- aerospace superiority, global attack, rapid global mobility, precision engagement, information superiority, and agile combat support.

In the lower half are a sphere, a star and three diamonds. The sphere within the star represents the globe. It reminds us of our obligation to secure our nation's freedom with Global Vigilance, Reach and Power. The globe also reminds us of our challenge as an expeditionary force to respond rapidly to crises and to provide decisive aerospace power, worldwide.

The area surrounding the sphere takes the shape of a star. The star has many meanings. Its five points represent the components of our one force and family -- our active duty, civilians, Guard, Reserve and retirees. The star symbolizes space as the high ground of our nation's aerospace force. The rallying symbol in all our wars, the star also represents our officer corps, central to our combat leadership.

The star is framed with three diamonds, which represent our core values -- integrity first, service before self and excellence in all we do. The elements come together to form one symbol that presents two powerful images -- at once it is an eagle, the emblem of our nation, and a medal, representing valor in service to our nation.

Air Force Rank and Insignia

(Has no rank insignia)

Airman Basic, AB, E-1



Airman, Amn, E-2



Airman First Class, A1C, E-3



Senior Airman, SrA, E-4



Staff Sergeant, SSgt, E-5



Technical Sergeant, TSgt, E-6



Master Sergeant, MSgt, E-7



First Sergeant, 1st Sgt, MSgt, E-7



Senior Master Sergeant, SMSgt,
E-8



First Sergeant, 1st Sgt, SMSgt, E-8



Chief Master Sergeant, CMSgt,
E-9



First Sergeant, 1st Sgt, CMSgt, E-9



Command Chief Master
Sergeant, CCM, E-9



Chief Master Sergeant of the Air
Force, CMSAF, E-9



Second Lieutenant, 2Lt, O-1



First Lieutenant, 1Lt, O-2



Captain, Capt, O-3



Major, Maj, O-4



Lieutenant Colonel, LTC, O-5



Colonel, Col, O-6



Brigadier General, BG, O-7



Major General, MG, O-8



Lieutenant General, LTG, O-9



General, Gen, O-10

The Air Force Assignment System

In order to be sure you access the most up-to-date information about assignments, please visit the applicable websites, listed below.

If you have specific questions about assignments that are not answered at these websites, contact your local Military Personnel Flight for more information.

<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/> -- Air Force Personnel Center

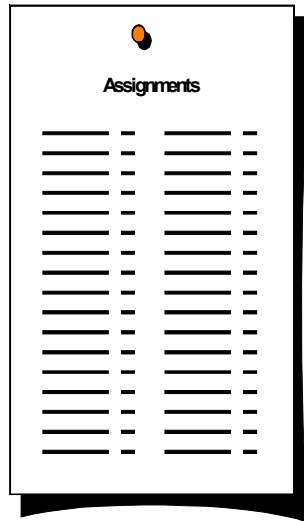
<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afashome/> -- Air Force Assignment System

<http://afas.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afas/default.htm> -- Officer assignments

<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/enlisted/default.htm> -- Enlisted assignments

You may not be able to access these websites unless you are on a government computer – from a .mil or .gov computer! You can use the computers in the Resource Center at your base's Family Support Center.

The Air Force Instruction that governs all assignments is AFI 36-2110.



Follow-on Assignments after Remotes

If active duty members are selected for an unaccompanied overseas assignment of 15 months or less, AND they have or are eligible to obtain retainability in the Air Force, then they may request their follow-on assignment. Retainability requirements depend on many variables; check with your Military Personnel Flight for what these are. Members may request up to 8 continental US (CONUS) locations and 8 overseas locations for a follow-on assignment.

- If the member is currently on an accompanied overseas assignment (but not currently assigned in Alaska or Hawaii), he or she may ONLY request Alaska or Hawaii as a follow-on *overseas* assignment. The member can NOT request any other overseas assignment unless the spouse is a citizen of that country. Family members are not command sponsored at overseas assignments and are not eligible for any base or military benefits when the active duty member is not assigned there. In some cases, the gaining command MAY approve command sponsorship while the member is on the remote assignment; check with your MPF for more information.

The Air Force will only pay for the family to relocate to the follow-on location. The member may elect to move the family at his or her own expense to a different place (such as, close to parents). The AF will then pay to move the family from this new location, but will not pay more than the maximum amount it would have cost to move the family from the previous base. The Air Force will not pay any storage fees of household goods, but the member may elect to do that at his or her own expense. If the member asks for the Air Force to pay for a move to a different (not follow-on) location, or for storage expenses, then the follow-on assignment will be canceled.

The family may or may not be permitted to remain in on-base family quarters at the previous location, depending on the base policy. If the family is NOT permitted to stay in on-base family quarters, then they are authorized to move off-base (but within the local base area) at government expense.

The family may move at government expense to the follow-on assignment *before* the active duty member leaves for the remote, but there are limitations to this when the follow-on assignment is overseas. The family will NOT be command sponsored at an overseas location until the member arrives, and regulations may not permit the family to move unless command sponsorship is pre-approved.

The needs of the Air Force always come first. The follow-on assignment may be cancelled for certain reasons, such as promotion, change in mission, the base was closed or the unit was deactivated, etc.

If the member elects NOT to have a follow-on assignment, they are authorized to relocate their families to any place in the CONUS that they wish before they leave for the remote assignment, and storage of household goods is also authorized, all at government expense. They may also elect to relocate their families to Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, or any territory or possession of the United States; however, because these locations are considered overseas, the member must apply for Family Member Travel, and the family members must be medically cleared before they move.

To get more information about remote assignments and family moves, call Outbound Assignments at the Military Personnel Flight on your base. The regulation that governs assignments is AFI 36-2110.

Medical and Dental Benefits



Tricare is the military health care program for active and retired service members and their families. It is important that you become educated about your TRICARE benefits. TRICARE Service Centers are available throughout each region to provide information and assistance on the TRICARE program. Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinators (BCAC) are also available at each Military Treatment Facility (MTF) to assist with health benefit issues.

It is very important that active duty members notify their commanders if they have a family member (spouse or child) that has a special medical condition or situation that requires ongoing medical care.

Active duty members are not automatically enrolled in Tricare Prime; they must enroll each time they PCS to another base. Once an active duty member adds a spouse, the spouse automatically has Tricare Standard, unless they elect for Tricare Prime or Tricare Extra. At most military treatment facilities, anyone with Tricare Standard is seen on a space available basis.

The order in which patients are seen are as follows:

1. Active duty members
2. Active duty family members with Tricare Prime/Plus
3. Retirees/retiree dependants with Tricare Prime/Plus
4. Anyone with Tricare Standard. Standard patients may not be space available at all bases, so the spouses will have to contact their local Tricare Service Center to find out.

TRICARE STANDARD

Tricare Standard is the same as the old CHAMPUS program with the same benefits and cost-sharing structure. It gives you the greatest freedom of choice but at the most cost to you personally. When they go in for a doctor's visit they would just show their military ID. Under Tricare Standard, you can only be seen on a space available basis on most bases. You can see a civilian doctor that accepts Tricare Standard/Champus. The cost for Tricare Standard is as follows:

Family of E-4 and below: \$50/person or \$100/family (per year) and a 20% cost share of Tricare allowable charges.

Family of E-5 and above: \$150/person or \$300/family (per year) and a 20% cost share of Tricare allowable charges.

Retirees and retiree family members: \$150/person or \$300/family (per year) and a 25% cost share of Tricare allowable charges.

Once the deductible is met, the only cost the beneficiaries would have is the cost share.

The charges listed above apply to outpatient care. There is a different co-pay of \$12.72 per day for inpatient care. The cost for retiree inpatient care is \$417 per day or 25% of the total institutional charge, whichever is less, plus 25% of professional charges.

TRICARE EXTRA

Tricare Extra is just a 5% discount off the cost share percent. The beneficiaries would have to get a provider directory from their local Tricare Service Center for a list of Tricare Extra doctors.

TRICARE PRIME

Under Tricare Prime you have priority access at a Military Treatment Facility. In order for the spouses and children to be Tricare Prime, either the active duty member or the spouse will have to fill out a Tricare Prime Enrollment Application. You will need to know the active duty member's Social Security Number in order to sign-up for Tricare Prime. Under Prime, the beneficiary would choose a Primary Care Manager (PCM) at the Military Treatment Facility. They will see that doctor for all their basic health care. If they need to see a specialist, their PCM will write a referral/consult for them.

“Access Standards” ensure that folks enrolled in Tricare Prime receive care in a timely manner. The standards are as follows:

Emergencies must be seen.....immediately (if emergency services are available on base)

Urgent Care must be seen.....within 24 hours

Routine visits must be seen.....within 1 week

Wellness visits must be seen....within 4 weeks

Specialty visits must be seen....within 4 weeks (at PCM discretion)

If a specialty appointment cannot be scheduled within 30 days at the Military Treatment Facility then they will refer the patient out to a specialist who is a network provider civilian.

Under Tricare Prime, you may be able to choose to have a civilian provider as your Primary Care Manager. HOWEVER, each region has different rules, so the beneficiary needs to check with that region. All referrals/consults for specialty care will be referred back into the military.

The cost to enroll in Tricare Prime is as follows:

Active duty family members, \$0

Retirees & family members, annual enrollment fee of \$230/person or \$460/family

If a Prime beneficiary sees anyone for routine care other than their Primary Care Manager, it is called POS -- point of service, which has a \$300 deductible per person or \$600/per family and then a 50% co-payment. This means that the beneficiary would pay the deductible and at least 50% of the costs.

For more information, go to <http://tricare.osd.mil>

EYE EXAMS

Routine eye exams are covered under Prime. You may have your eyes examined once every two years as a family member. Tricare DOES NOT cover the contact lens exam, contact lenses, or glasses/frames. That is an out of pocket expense.

PRESCRIPTIONS

The only other co-payments that active duty family members would have is for prescriptions. If they get their prescriptions on base there is no charge. However, the co-payment for prescriptions if using a network pharmacy off base is \$3 for generic and \$9 for brand name for a 30 day supply. The National Mail Order Pharmacy provides a 90 day supply at the same cost.

ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILDREN

Children are eligible for Tricare until they turn 21, unless they are a full time student, then it is 23. The active duty member would have to take proof of the child's student status to their local DEERS Military Personnel Flight to determine eligibility. If a spouse's or child's military ID card expires, they will be disenrolled, and they would have to reenroll. Children MUST get a military ID card when they turn 10, or they will show ineligible and will not be seen on base. All patients must have a valid military ID card, and show eligible in DEERS.

MEDICAL CARE WHILE TRAVELING

If a beneficiary is traveling and needs to be seen, here are the procedures:

Emergency -- go to the nearest emergency room. Within 24 hours, call the toll free number on the back of your card to get authorization for that visit. It is not mandatory that you do that in an emergency; however, if the hospital doesn't bill the claim as an Emergency/ER room visit, then it will go Point Of Service (see above for cost). An emergency is threat of loss of eyesight, limb, life, and requires immediate treatment.

Urgent care – Conditions requiring urgent care should be seen within 24 hours but don't require care in an emergency room. If you or a loved one need medical care after hours, but the case is not life threatening, contact your Primary Care Manager.

If you are hospitalized while traveling, you or a family member must contact the toll free number on the back of your TRICARE Prime card within 24 hours to get an authorization for hospitalization.

If you are traveling and have to pay for a prescription or a visit out-of-pocket, you can submit a claim to Tricare for reimbursement. You may not get all your out-of-pocket expenses back, but you should receive some reimbursement. You can get the claim form from the local Tricare Service Center. You can get claims (and other) information on-line from www.tricare.osd.mil.

As a beneficiary, please make sure that your information in the DEERS system and the Tricare system is updated. If you move, change phone numbers, the active duty member gets promoted, etc., you need to update DEERS and Tricare.

DENTAL COVERAGE

The TriCare Dental Program (TDP) for active duty family member dental care is covered by United Concordia in the U.S. Their toll free number is 1-800-866-8499. In order to use this benefit, you must be enrolled with them. You can pick up the forms and handbook at your local TriCare Service Center. The cost for one family member is approximately \$8 per month; for more than one family member it is approximately \$20 per month. Fees increase slightly each year, the exact amount is posted on their web site under the “Paying for the TDP” link. The initial payment has to be mailed to them, or you can enroll on-line through their web site. After the initial payment, it is taken automatically out of the active duty member’s military pay.

For more information, go to their web site: <http://tricare.osd.mil/dental/>



Housing Information

ON-BASE HOUSING

You can apply for base housing a month before your arrival at your new base. Simply take a copy of your PCS orders into the Housing Office where you are currently stationed, and they will give you the advance application to complete. Your effective date of application for housing at the new base will be the first day of the month prior to your arrival.

If you are arriving from an overseas remote tour where family members were not authorized, you must make application for on-base housing within 30 days of your arrival to receive credit back to the date you departed for your remote assignment. If you made advance application, contact the Housing Office of your new base to be sure they received your orders sending you on your short tour and that you have gotten proper credit.

If you or your spouse are pregnant, and the child will increase your bedroom entitlement, you may request placement on the waiting list for the entitlement which you will be authorized upon the child's birth. You must furnish housing with a statement confirming pregnancy. The number of bedrooms you are authorized in base housing may vary from one base to another, depending of the number and size of housing units available.

You may have to find temporary housing off-base. If you reach the top of the on-base housing waiting list before your lease or rental agreement expires, you will remain on the top of the list until such time as you can accept on-base housing without breaking your agreement. Because the waiting lists times change so often, and are different from base to base, call the Housing Office of your new base to find out what the current waiting times are. You will usually be given your choice of two or three units to live in, but if you turn all of them down, you will give up your place on the housing list.

There are certain rules and regulations you have to abide by when you live in on-base housing. These rules may include where you can park, what days you can water your lawn, the maximum length you can let your grass grow before cutting it, and noise restrictions. The Housing Office will give you a booklet of these regulations when you sign for on-base housing. Be sure you read through it, and ask questions if you have any. When you leave the base, you will have to be sure that your on-base housing passes a cleaning inspection. The standards for cleaning may vary somewhat from base to base, but generally you will be expected to do a very thorough cleaning job, including floors (wood, tiled, and carpeted), walls, and appliances. You can often pay someone to clean your house for you; if you opt to do this, however, it can be costly. Be sure to get a written guarantee from the paid cleaners that they will be there during the inspection, and that the house will pass the inspection. If there are any damages to the housing unit (for example, if the puppy chewed the door jambs), you will be expected to pay for repairs.

OFF-BASE HOUSING

Housing Offices maintain lists of apartments, house rentals, and homes that are for sale by owners. They may also have flyers of Realtor listings. The lists may be picked up anytime during normal office hours. It is not usually necessary to have your lease or rental agreement reviewed, but if you desire a review the base legal office can assist you.

For your protection you may want to try and negotiate a military clause into your lease, which states that the landlord will let you out of the lease if you receive PCS orders, or if you are offered on-base housing. Be sure and make a list of discrepancies when you move in and get it signed by the landlord. This may help you get your deposit back when you move. Contact the Housing Office if you have any questions about off-base housing.

PRIVATIZATION OF BASE HOUSING

Many bases are turning over control of the base housing to civilian contractors. When this happens, you will pay rent to live in on-base housing. You will be paid your Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), and your rent will be the amount of your BAH *minus* 110% of the average utility cost (based on square footage of your housing unit). Base homes will be renovated to install appropriate insulation and utility meter(s), and you will pay for your own utilities out of the remainder of your BAH. If you are very energy-efficient, you may even have money left over from your BAH after you have paid rent and utilities! When housing privatization will go into effect varies base by base, so check with your base Housing Office.

Some Housing Offices have a web page on the base's home page. Air Force bases' home pages are usually in this format: www.basename.af.mil -- for example, www.hill.af.mil for Hill AFB, Utah. You may have to click on the Air Base Wing (ABW) link on a base's home page to find the Housing Office link. You can also get information about base housing from that base's SITES package, located at <http://www.afcrossroads.com/dodinstall/index.htm>.

Family Support Centers may also have information about housing availability, and many offer home buying, home financing, and home selling classes. Go to <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/famops/FSCHOMEPAGES.htm> to find the web pages of Family Support Centers.



Assorted Air Force Tidbits

The National Security Act of 1947 became law on July 26, 1947, and created the Department of the Air Force, headed by a Secretary of the Air Force. On September 18, 1947, W. Stuart Symington became Secretary of the Air Force, and on September 26, Gen. Carl A. Spaatz became the USAF's first Chief of Staff. We celebrate September 18th as the Air Force's birthday!

Air Force Mission

To defend the United States through control and exploitation of air and space.

Air Force Vision

Air Force people building the world's most respected air and space force - global power and reach for America.

Air Force Core Values

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Eric W. Benken

Transcript of remarks from the "Core Values" video, which is shown to all airmen attending basic military training.

Integrity, service and excellence. These simple words epitomize the core values of our military profession.

The foundation is integrity, fortified by a commitment to the service of our country, and fueled by a drive in excellence in all that we do. The Air Force recognizes integrity first, service before self, and excellence as its core values. These are values every member must believe in, and more importantly, must live by.

We start with integrity because it is the essential element or the foundation on which other values are built. It's being honest with others as well as with yourself, and doing what's right at all times. Integrity remains the very bedrock of the military profession. Service members possessing integrity will always do what's right, regardless of the circumstances, even when no one is looking. They will make no compromise in being honest in small things as well as great ones.

Next is our military service -- an uncommon profession -- that calls for people with an enduring commitment and dedication to the mission. It requires us to have a sense to service before self. Each member must realize his or her needs are secondary to the needs of our great country. This is a 24-hour-a-day commitment, and one that requires many personal sacrifices. Personal goals are important and often coincide with Air Force goals. However, there is no room for personal agendas that interfere with the needs of the U.S. Air Force or the interests of our government.

This brings us to excellence, our third core value. Military members have been entrusted by all Americans with our nation's security. This encompasses many things, among which is the care of the resources of our nation, the most treasured of which are the lives of those who serve. This makes competence or excellence in all things we do paramount. Doing the very best you can is not just a professional obligation, it's a moral one as well.

Integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all things we do. These core values serve as our road map and set the standard for our behavior. They serve to remind us of the importance of

the profession we have chosen, the oath we took, and the demands placed upon us as members of the profession at arms. Learn these lessons well. They will serve you well in your professional career and your personal life.

“The US Air Force exists for one reason, and one reason alone. That is to fight and win America's wars when called on to do so. That's the only reason we exist as an institution. The Air Force is not a social actions agency. It is not an employment agency. The Air Force Academy does not exist to provide a first-class education to some of the brightest young men and women in America. It exists to produce leaders of our Air Force.” - General (retired) Ronald Fogleman

The Blue Air Force Uniform

As early as 1945, long before the Air Force became an independent service, its leaders were looking at the possibility of obtaining a distinctive new uniform. By 1946 it was clear that it would be some shade of blue. In January 1948, President Truman approved a new uniform for the Air Force, but Congress would not approve the funding. In January 1949, the Air Force and Army addressed the issue again. This time there would be no extra costs. The blue cloth would be introduced as a normal replacement procurement in 1950.

On 18 January 1949, President Truman again approved a distinctive blue uniform for the Air Force. A week later (25 January) the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Hoyt Vandenberg, spread the word that the blue uniform had been approved and would be available for distribution by 1 September 1950.

Why are men's coat buttons on the right? They were placed there for better access to drawing their swords, which were hung on the left side. It was more efficient to place the buttons on the right side so a threatened soldier could reach for his weapon with his fighting hand while his left unbuttoned his garment.

Speaking of buttons, what's the origin of those confounded ornamental buttons on the sleeves of some uniforms? Several sources agree that the original purpose of ornamental buttons was to keep soldiers (or homesick midshipmen on their first cruise) from wiping their noses on the sleeves of their dress uniforms.

The first uniforms that could be called such in the present sense of the word were those fitted for the household troops of Louis XIV (1600's). By 1700 almost all soldiers in Europe wore uniforms. Prior to the seventeenth century, soldiers conformed to the civilian dress of the time and were distinguished only by their military arms and equipment. The armies of the old Roman Empire did not wear a true uniform. They did, however, present a somewhat uniform appearance by virtue of having helmets, body armor, shields and weapons of a more or less standard design.

Did you know commissioned officers wore chevrons long before noncommissioned officers did? Inverted gold chevrons were used by the British Army up until 1830. Their use in the U.S. Army appears to have come into vogue at West Point in 1817. Since 1832, only noncommissioned officers have worn chevrons, except at West Point.

Ever wondered where trouser cuffs came from? Introduced about 75 years ago, the fashion came about out of the wearer's desire to keep his garments out of something messy. For the wrist cuff, this something was food. For the trouser cuff, the offending substance was probably mud. After long years of slogging around with soiled trouser legs, men finally got the bright idea to roll them up and out of the mud. It wasn't until just before World War I the improvisation became a fad and tailors began to sew cuffs in place.

The first "clothing allowance" probably went to recruits in 15th century England who were given an allowance for "coat money" (in addition to the "conduct money" to cover their travel to join their units).

The oldest uniforms still in existence are those worn by the Papal Guard of the Vatican (said to have been designed by Michelangelo) and those of the "Yeomen of the Guard" raised by Henry VII in 1485 (the "Beefeaters" of the royal guard today).

Salutes

Nothing is more embedded in the military culture than saluting. All services teach this in their basic officer and enlisted training programs, and it is reinforced throughout the service member's career.

No one knows for sure the origin of the hand salute. Many references point to the knight's symbolic gesture of raising his visor to reveal his identity as a courtesy on the approach of a superior as its origin. We do know that from earliest times, the right (weapon) hand has been raised as a greeting of friendship. The origin of our hand salute may derive from the long established custom for juniors to remove their headgear in the presence of superiors. In the



British Army as late as the American Revolution a soldier saluted by removing his hat. As the British soldier's hat became more cumbersome, the act of removing the hat degenerated into a gesture of grasping the visor. The following entry in the "Order Book of the Coldstream Guards," dated 3 September 1745, supports this view: "The men ordered not to pull off their hats when they pass an officer, or to speak to them, but only to clap up their hands to their hats and bow as they pass." Over the years the practice evolved into something like our modern hand salute.

No matter what its origins, the hand salute today, while it varies across the globe, says in effect "I greet you." Returning the salute says in turn "I return your greeting." The gesture is always friendly and rendered cheerfully and willingly. It is rendered with pride and as a recognition and sign of respect between comrades in the honorable profession of arms.

Why Silver "Ranks" Gold

At the start of the American Revolution, officers in the Continental Army wore no rank insignia; it soon became apparent that some means of identifying the officers was required. As an expedient, field officers were ordered to wear red cockades (ornaments or rosettes) on their hats, captains wore yellow or buff and lieutenants were provided with cockades of green. In 1782 Washington implemented a system where epaulettes would be worn by officers as indicators of rank: major generals wore epaulettes with two stars on each shoulder, brigadier generals epaulettes with one star on each shoulder, field graders a plain gold epaulette on each shoulder, captains wore a single epaulette on the right shoulder, and subalterns wore one on the left.

In 1821 this practice was abolished in favor of using chevrons to denote rank. Chevrons for officer rank did not last long (except at West Point, where they're still used today to designate cadet officer rank), and in 1832 epaulettes came back. (This was also when the spread eagle was adopted as the insignia for full colonels.) Infantry officers wore silver epaulettes; all others wore gold. For example, an infantry colonel wore a gold eagle on his silver epaulette, and all other colonels wore silver eagles on gold.

In 1836 the shoulder strap replaced the epaulette on field uniforms. It had a border of silver or gold depending on the color of the epaulette it replaced. The leaf and bars appeared at

this time, but the colors were not fixed—officers wore gold insignia on silver-bordered shoulder straps and vice versa. In 1851 all epaulettes and shoulder strap borders became gold and the insignia on the epaulettes were silver. Majors and second lieutenants wore no rank insignia—they were distinguished only by the type of fringe on their epaulettes. Rank insignia on shoulder straps were silver for all officers down to and including lieutenant colonels; captains and first lieutenants wore gold insignia.

When epaulettes were abolished in 1872 and replaced with shoulder knots, which had no fringe, it was necessary to devise some insignia to distinguish the majors from second lieutenants. So the gold leaf was adopted to denote majors, and that's why lieutenant colonels wear silver leaves and majors gold. At the same time the color of the bars for junior officers was changed to silver. The second lieutenant still wore no insignia, and was only distinguished by the shoulder strap or knot.

Finally, in 1917 the second lieutenant got some "respect" and the Army decided to adopt a new insignia for him. The plan called for the least disruption to other rank insignia, so it was decided to follow the color precedent established in devising major's insignia and adopt the gold bar for the second lieutenant.

Why is silver, rather than gold, used for higher ranking officers insignia? Because the "gold" was actually brass, a less expensive metal than silver.

Military Rank

A Lieutenant General outranks a Major General, but a Major outranks a Lieutenant. Why is this?

This and other anomalies trace back to the fact that both the U.S. Army's organization and rank structure were adopted by the revolutionary colonists from their European mentors, who, in turn, adopted their military designations from the concepts and language of the Romans. Tracing back to historic beginnings of the commissioned scale, the word "Lieutenant," through French from two Latin words (*locum teneris*), is a phrase which means "holding in place of." Thus a lieutenant acts in the absence of a "Captain."

At one time a "Captain" and "Colonel" ranked equal within emerging European armies of the 17th and 18th centuries. Both ranks headed bodies or columns of troops on the march; *caput*, for "Captain", in Latin means "head" of a body, while *columna* describes "column" of troops, which spawned our word "Colonel."

Not until the 18th Century did the rigid distinction between captain and colonel come into being. Organizationally, by that time, two different sizes of troop bodies existed--the captain headed the smaller company-sized unit, while the colonel commanded a group of companies formed together into a regiment.

With regiments expanding to 10 companies, a lieutenant colonel's rank emerged. He not only served in lieu of the colonel but was needed to command the left of the regimental line of a 10-company front. In other words, the colonel's span of command required a lieutenant colonel because the 10-company front often extended beyond the bugle calls and the signals of the flag, both of which were always regulated by the colonel.

Between the captain and the colonel was the "Major", a rank of French/Latin origin, which indicated a higher degree of authority than the rank of captain, since "Major", deriving from the word *magnus* means "something greater" than a captain.

Before 1900, the major's job in the U.S. Army seldom entailed authority over a body of troops on the march; in camp, he remained a staff officer, the tactical expert, and troop trainer.

When the battalion structure was superimposed on a 12-company regiment, a major often had command of this unit. However, apart from the question of authority, somehow in its passage from its Latin origins the one-time adjective "Major" became a noun standing for authority, as "Sergeant" or "General." In fact, there once was a rank in Europe of "Sergeant-Major-General" which eventually lost the word sergeant.

In the United States "Sergeant" is found only in the noncommissioned ranks, but its meaning has to be explained to shed light on the ascending commissioned ranks. "Sergeant" in classical language may have been a lawyer's term, coming from *servientumor serviens ad legem*, "serving at law." Shortened and used as a noun, it meant server or servant. When hyphenated with "Major," the military rank expands to mean "bigger servant or server" and further expands to the better server of the "General" when the latter title is added.

With the word "General" introduced, we can begin to understand why a Lieutenant General came to outrank a Major (Sergeant) General at a time when organizations of greater size came into being. Simply stated, the concept is that a lieutenant general acts in the absence of a "full" general; and the major general is the principal *servientum* to the "full" general. Eventually, a third hyphenated general officer rank of brigadier general was created to command a brigade, when this size of unit was needed to control the march or camp of several regiments.

With the advent of the 19th Century's combined armed teams, infantry, cavalry, and artillery arms, with supporting technical services and administrative units, and the consequent emergence of Divisions, Corps, and Field Armies, the rank of "General" with its several meanings and its various uses in combination with other ranks became strongly associated with these higher commands.

"General" or *generalis* relates to the Latin *genus*, meaning kind, origin, birth, or whole. It early took on a class distinction denoting a patrician of high birth. By medieval times, the adjective "general" was widely used in conjunction with legal, religious, military, or political terminology. "Attorney-general," for example, implied that the official in question was of superior rank and had wider and greater sphere of authority in his field than any other lawyer. The "General Officer" in the military area was superior in authority to other military officers. By 1700, the title "General Officer" was shortened to "General," without losing the meaning of "final or full" authority. Today it continues to cap the hierarchy of rank in the United States forces.

American Military Decorations



The U.S. was very slow in establishing a system of military decorations. The first American decoration was developed by George Washington in 1782 when he had the "purple heart" created. It was to be awarded for "singularly meritorious action" and consisted of a small purple cloth heart to be worn over the left breast. Three were awarded in 1783, but records show no others since then.

In December of 1861, Senator James W. Grimes of Iowa introduced a bill that resulted in the establishment of a Medal of Honor for Navy enlisted men. This is the first decoration formally authorized by the American government to be worn as a badge of honor. The Army followed suit in 1862, and officers were declared eligible for the medal in 1863.

The criteria for presenting the Medal of Honor were very much lower in our early wars than they are now. It wasn't until 1902 that steps were taken to establish lesser awards. The Distinguished Service Cross was established in 1918 for "extraordinary heroism in military

operations against an armed enemy" under circumstances not deserving award of the Medal of Honor. Between the World Wars, a "pyramid" of fifteen distinct awards for valor and merit was established, with the Medal of Honor on top. Campaign medals and their ribbons were not authorized until 1905.

Some little known, but interesting facts concerning the Medal of Honor:

- Five men have won two Medals of Honor. In 1918 the regulations were changed to prevent any one person getting it more than once.
- Although awarded "In the name of Congress," this decoration is properly known as the "Medal of Honor," not the "Congressional Medal of Honor."
- Former soldiers and airmen who have won the Medal of Honor are entitled to an annual pension of \$120 on reaching the age of 65.
- There is no basis in fact that enlisted men holding the Medal of Honor are entitled to a salute from officers. Although it is customary for the junior to initiate the exchange of salutes, it is completely proper for the superior to salute first. It's possible that after some commanding officer saluted a Medal of Honor winner, the word got around that this was expected of all other officers in the command.

RHIP (Rank Hath Its Privileges).

RHIP refers specifically to those special courtesies which persons of junior rank or status extend to their "seniors." When you extend a verbal courtesy (such as "Sir") or physical courtesy (such as a salute) to a senior, you are not just acknowledging that senior's service longevity or age; you're also acknowledging a privilege the senior has earned and therefore has a right to expect from you. It is an acknowledgment of authority; it is also an acknowledgment of respect that reflects positively on both you and that senior. Rank of course has its obligations - not the least of which is to see that one's subordinates' rights are respected; and that they get the privileges they deserve.

High Flight, by John Gillespie Magee, Jr. (written on 3 Sep 41)

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silver wings;
Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds-and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of - wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hovering there
I've chased the shouting wind along and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air.
Up, up the long delirious, burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace,
where never lark, or ever eagle flew;
and while, with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God

Magee was born in Shanghai, China, of missionary parents -- an American father and an English mother, and spoke Chinese before English. He was educated at Rugby school in England and at Avon Old Farms School in Connecticut. He won a Scholarship to Yale, but instead joined

the Royal Canadian Air Force in late 1940, trained in Canada, and was sent to Britain. He flew in a Spitfire squadron and was killed on a routine training mission on December 11, 1941. The sonnet above was sent to his parents written on the back of a letter, which said, "I am enclosing a verse I wrote the other day. It started at 30,000 feet, and was finished soon after I landed." He also wrote of his course ending soon and of his then going on operations, and added, "I think we are very lucky as we shall just be in time for the autumn blitzes (which are certain to come)."

The Air Force Song, by Robert Crawford

Off we go into the wild blue yonder,
Climbing high into the sun;
Here they come zooming to meet our thunder,
At 'em boys, give 'er the gun!
Down we dive spouting our flame from under
Off with one helluva roar!
We live in fame or go down in flame, hey!
Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!

Minds of men fashioned a crate of thunder,
Sent it high into the blue;
Hands of men blasted the world asunder;
How they lived God only knew!
Souls of men dreaming of skies to conquer
Gave us wings, ever to soar!
With scouts before and bombers galore, hey!
Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!

Here's a toast to the host
Of those who love the vastness of the sky,
To a friend we will send a message of his brother men who fly
We drink to those who gave their all of old,
Then down we roar to score the rainbow's pot of gold
A toast to the host of men we boast, the U.S. Air Force!

Off we go into the wild sky yonder,
Keep the wings level and true.
If you'd live to be a gray-haired wonder
Keep the nose out of the blue!
Flying men guarding our nation's border,
We'll be there, followed by more.
In echelon we carry on, hey!
Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!

Web Sites

Please be aware that .mil and .gov websites *may* block access unless you are going to their website from another .gov or .mil computer. You can use the computers in the Resource Center of your base Family Support Center if you encounter this problem.

Air Force Link: <http://www.af.mil/>

Air Force Crossroads: <http://www.afcrossroads.com/>

Military acronyms and terms: <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/>

Family Support Center web pages:

<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/famops/FSCHOMEPAGES.htm>

Base Exchange: <http://www.aafes.com/>

Commissaries: <http://www.commissaries.com/>

Airman Magazine: <http://www.af.mil/news/airman/indxflas.html>

Air Force Officer Training School: <http://ots.afoats.af.mil/>

Virtual Military Personnel Flight: <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/vs/default.htm>

Survivor Benefit Plan: <https://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/sbp/benecatspouse.htm>

Social Security Administration, Social Security card information:

http://www.ssa.gov/replace_sscard.html

Military Spouse Resource Center: <http://www.milspouse.org/>

myPay - LES online: <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.asp>

Pay charts: <http://militarypay.dtic.mil/pay/bp/index.html>

Thrift Savings Plan: <http://www.tsp.gov/>

Air Force Personnel Center: <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/>

Air Force Assignment System: <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afashome/>

Officer assignments: <http://afas.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afas/default.htm>

Enlisted assignments: <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/enlisted/default.htm>

TriCare: <http://tricare.osd.mil>

TriCare Dental Plan: <http://tricare.osd.mil/dental/>

DoD Installations information (“SITES”): <http://www.afcrossroads.com/dodinstall/index.htm>

Air Force Aid Society: <http://www.afas.org>

Army Emergency Relief: <http://www.aerhq.org/>

Coast Guard Mutual Assistance: <http://www.cgmahq.org/>

Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society: <http://www.nmcrcs.org/>

American Red Cross: <http://www.redcross.org>

Frequently Asked Questions

What are orders?

Orders are the official documentation that authorize and specify the dates and destinations for a PCS, TDY, or other travel for an individual or family.

What is the difference between an accompanied and unaccompanied tour?

An accompanied tour is when the active duty member can take their family with them to an assignment that is usually at least 36 months. An unaccompanied tour is usually 12 to 24 months long and the active duty member goes alone. This is also referred to as a remote tour.

What is Space A travel?

Space A stands for space available, and refers to “stand by” travel using official government flights. In most cases, the active duty family members cannot travel unless they are accompanied by the active duty member, and the travel is to or from an overseas area. Space A travel has a priority system that assigns a category to each person standing by. Active duty members on orders have the highest priority. If you take Space A travel, make sure you either have time to wait for available seats, or else have enough money to take a commercial flight in case you get bumped by someone with higher priority.

Can spouses of officers and enlisted be friends?

Yes. Remember that when spouses are civilians they don't wear their active duty spouses' rank.

Is it true that anything our family members do can negatively impact the active duty person's military career?

It depends. We all have problems and make mistakes. However, if there are recurring issues (such as check bouncing, family violence, juvenile truancy) that are not being remedied, then it will certainly reflect negatively on the active duty member because of the mission interference.

What do they have at the commissary?

The commissary has all the things a regular grocery store has. The baggers work only for tips. There is a 5% surcharge added to your bill to cover overhead (such as cashier's salaries, electricity, etc.) because all commissary items are sold at cost only.

What do they have at the Base Exchange (BX)?

The BX carries many items that a regular department store does. Catalog and special order items are available at the Customer Service desk. You can put items on Lay-away, and you can also apply for a STAR card (base exchange credit card).

What do they have at the Shoppette?

The Shoppette has many of the same items you would find in an off-base convenience store. The Class VI (liquor store) is located there, and you can also rent videos and DVDs at many Shoppettes.

What is the/a sponsor?

A “sponsor” can mean two things:

1. “The” sponsor of a military family refers to the active duty member. “The” sponsor’s (active duty member’s) social security number is needed to gain access to many military privileges, such as medical care, the BX, and commissary.
2. “A” sponsor is an active duty member assigned to help a military family when they are PCSing to a new duty station.

What is DEERS?

DEERS stands for the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System. This is a database of everyone who is eligible for military benefits. It includes all the branches of the military (Army, Navy, and Marine Corps as well as Air Force), and is accessible by personnel specialists at any military base. For instance, if you need medical care while traveling, but the closest military base is a different service, your eligibility can be verified by looking up the active duty member’s social security number in DEERS. You must be enrolled in DEERS to get an ID card, so when you marry an active duty member, this is one of the first things that must be done. Remember to enroll your newborn child as soon as possible! Enrollment can be done at the Military Personnel Flight (MPF). Certain paperwork is required, such as marriage certificate, birth certificate, etc. Check with MPF before you go in!

In Case of Emergency...

If you or someone in your family has a personal emergency, here are some guidelines to follow. Emergency, in this context, is usually defined as a life-threatening injury or illness, or a death. When in doubt, contact the First Sergeant, the Air Force Aid Society office, or the American Red Cross.

For *medical* emergencies involving life, limb, or eyesight call 911 immediately.

If you are at your home base...

- If your active duty spouse is with you, they should first contact their First Sergeant. If the emergency occurs after duty hours, and it **absolutely, positively** cannot wait until the next duty day, the First Sergeant can be contacted through the base Command Post (call the base operator to get connected through).
- If your active duty spouse is TDY or deployed, you may still contact the First Sergeant if you feel comfortable doing so. The First Sergeant can give you assistance and advice on the best way to handle the emergency.
- Visit or call your Air Force Aid Society, <http://www.afas.org/>. AFAS offices are located at all Air Force Bases, worldwide. Most are located in the Family Support Center.

If you are away from your home base, but near another Air Force Base:

- You may receive assistance at any Air Force Base. Again, most Air Force Aid offices are in the Family Support Center.

If you are away from your home base, but NOT near another Air Force Base:

- The Air Force Aid Society has reciprocal agreements that allow you to receive assistance through these other agencies:

Army Emergency Relief (located at Army installations) <http://www.aerhq.org/>

Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (located at Coast Guard installations) <http://www.cgmahq.org/>

Navy - Marine Corps Relief Society (located at Navy installations) <http://www.nmcrcs.org/>

American Red Cross Chapters (located throughout the United States) <http://www.redcross.org/>

In order for the active duty member to be allowed to take emergency leave because of a family emergency, the American Red Cross often has to confirm the nature of the emergency. If your family calls you about an emergency, ask them to contact their local chapter of the American Red Cross. Their local chapter will transmit a message to the closest American Red Cross chapter to your base (sometimes located on base) describing the nature of the emergency. Notification can go more quickly if the Red Cross has the unit and social security number of the active duty member.

Emergency leave for the active duty member may be granted for an emergency involving immediate family members. The unit First Sergeant or Commander may allow emergency leave in other cases, depending upon the circumstances.

Please note, the Air Force will NOT pay for travel for personal emergencies. Many overseas bases have policies to help reduce the cost of returning the continental United States, but there are still costs to the family. The Air Force Aid Society can give loans to help pay for emergency travel, but these loans must be repaid. Whenever possible, it is wise for Air Force families to have an emergency savings for true family emergencies.

Emergency Worksheet

AF member:	SSN:
Unit:	Duty Phone #:
Commander:	Phone #:
First Sergeant:	Phone #:
Base Command Post (24 hour operations; emergencies <i>only</i>)	Phone #:

Spouse:	SSN:
Work address:	Work Phone #:
Supervisor:	Phone #:

Family Support Center/Air Force Aid Society:	Phone #:
Casualty Assistance Officer:	Phone #:
Local Red Cross Office address:	Phone #:

Immediate Family Member Information	
Name:	Phone #:
Address:	
Name:	Phone #:
Address:	
Name:	Phone #:
Address:	

Bank/Credit Union:	Phone #:
Address:	Account #: PIN #, Password:
Bank/Credit Union:	Phone #:
Address:	Account #: PIN #, Password:

Important documents (such as birth certificates, wills, etc.) are located:
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- Attach:
- Copies of Life Insurance Policies
 - Copies of Car Insurance Policies
 - Copies of Homeowners/Renters Insurance Policies
 - Copy of active duty member's orders
 - Copies of ID cards
 - Copy of DD Form 93, Record of Emergency Data
 - List of credit card account numbers, issuing bank, bank phone number