

“Air Force 101”

A Handbook for Civilians New to the Air Force



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!

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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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

FERS: Federal Employees' Retirement System

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

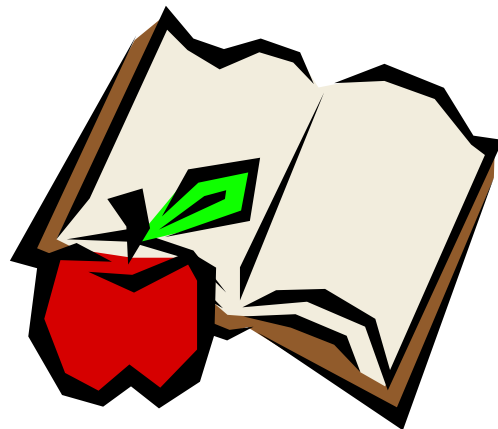
12:00 midnight = 2400



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

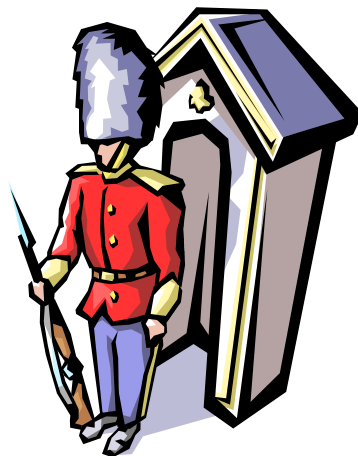
There is the increased and more predictable threat of possible activity against the base or resources under operational control of assigned/hosted units. Maximize your vigilance against a possible local threat against USAF resources. Know who does and doesn't belong in your work area.

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 military 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/FSCHOME.PAGES.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 for military families. 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!

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

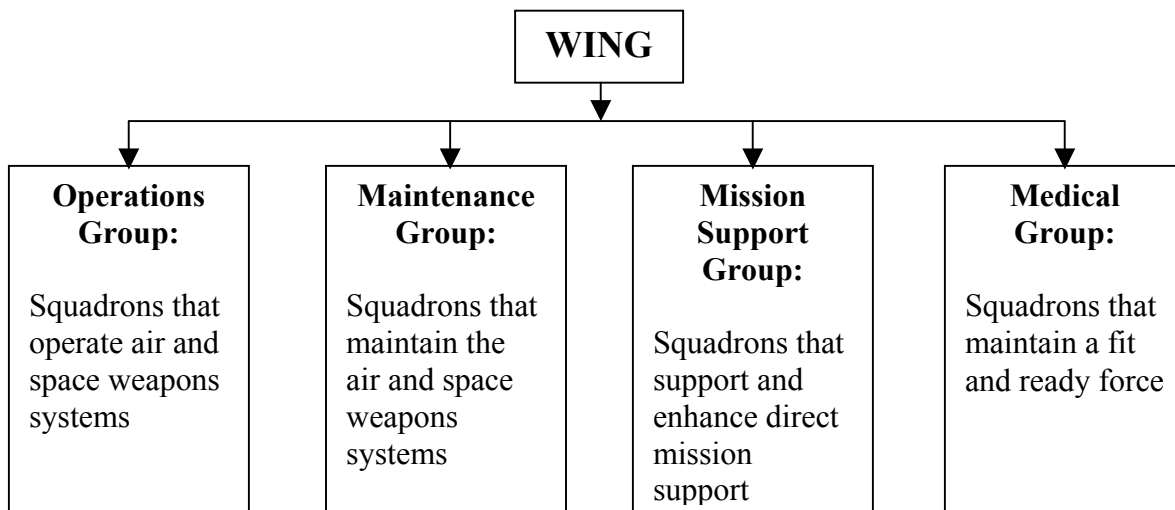
Squadrons are divided up into smaller elements of flights, usually performing specific missions.

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
7th Bomb Wing
3rd Wing
48th Fighter Wing
355th Wing
20th Fighter Wing
27th Fighter Wing
28th Bomb Wing
2nd Bomb Wing
1st Fighter Wing

Hill AFB, UT
Dyess AFB, TX
Elmendorf AFB, AK
RAF Lakenheath, England
Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ
Shaw AFB, SC
Cannon AFB, NM
Ellsworth AFB, SD
Barksdale AFB, LA
Langley AFB, VA

The five Lead Mobility Wings:

43rd Airlift Wing
60th Air Mobility Wing
22nd Air Refueling
319 Air Refueling Wing
92nd Air Refueling Wing

Pope AFB, NC
Travis AFB, CA
McConnell AFB, KS
Grand Forks AFB, ND
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)

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)

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)

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)



Defense Accounting and Finance Service

The Defense Accounting and Finance Service has a comprehensive website about civilian pay. For more information, go to: <http://www.dfas.mil/>

“myPay”

myPay offers on-line access to your civilian 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

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).



Federal Benefits Programs for New Federal Employees

As a new employee there are some decisions that you will need to make, most within 31 or 60 days from your appointment date. See the information on these decisions at the beginning of the benefit descriptions below.

- Flexible Spending Accounts
- Health Insurance
- Leave
- Life Insurance
- Long Term Care Insurance
- Retirement Program
- Designations of Beneficiary

Flexible Spending Accounts

You have 60 days from your entry on duty to sign-up for Flexible Spending Account(s), or until October 1, whichever comes first. Applications for the current calendar year are not accepted from October 1 through December 31. If you wish to enroll after October 1, you will need to do so during open season for the following year.

The Federal Flexible Spending Accounts Program (FSAFeds) allows you to pay for certain health and dependent care expenses with pre-tax dollars. You may choose to make a voluntary allotment from your salary to your FSAFEDS account(s). You will not pay employment or income taxes on your allotments and your employing agency also avoids paying employment taxes.

FSAs are not carried over from one Plan Year to the next, so each fall during the annual open season, you must make a new election for the upcoming Plan Year.

Two FSAs are being offered to eligible employees:

- A Health Care FSA (HCFSA), through which you may use pre-tax allotments to pay for certain health care expenses that are not reimbursed by FEHB or any other source and not claimed on your income tax return. The maximum amount you may set aside in any tax year is \$3,000 and the minimum is \$250.
- A Dependent Care FSA (DCFSA), through which you may use pre-tax allotments to pay for eligible dependent care expenses. The maximum amount you may set aside in any tax year is \$5,000 (\$2,500 if you are married and filing a separate income tax return) and the minimum amount is \$250.

Health Insurance

You have 60 days from your entry on duty date to sign-up for a health insurance plan. If you don't make an election, you are considered to have declined coverage and you must wait until the next open season to enroll.

VERY IMPORTANT: Enrollment is not retroactive, and it cannot be made effective the day you enter on duty as you must have been in a pay status during some part of the pay period that precedes the one in which your enrollment becomes effective. Once this requirement has been

met your enrollment will become effective on the first day of the first pay period that begins after your employing office receives your enrollment request. Thus the earliest that your health insurance can possibly become effective is the beginning of the pay period that begins after the pay period in which you are hired. You cannot be reimbursed for any medical expenses incurred prior to the effective date. You need to consider this in canceling any other health insurance coverage you may already have, and for scheduling of doctor visits or tests.

The Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHB) is one of the most valuable benefits of Federal employment, but coverage is not automatic — you must select one of the more than 100 available health plans in order to be covered.

Although you have 60 days to make your election, it is to your advantage to make this election soon in order to be covered in case of accident or illness. There is no retroactive coverage of your expenses prior to the effective date of your coverage. The policy will begin coverage on the effective date, however, and will cover expenses occurring on or after that date, even for conditions occurring before that date.

Premium Conversion is a “pre-tax” arrangement under which the part of your salary that goes for health insurance premiums will be non-taxable. This means that you save on Federal income tax and FICA taxes (Social Security and Medicare taxes). In most cases, you'll also save on State income tax and local income tax. The payroll office will sign you up for Premium Conversion automatically. You don't need to fill out a form. You do have a choice, though, to waive premium conversion despite the savings.

Leave

Most Federal employees earn both annual and sick leave. Annual Leave is used for vacations, rest and relaxation, and personal business or emergencies. New full-time employees earn 4 hours of annual leave each 2-week pay period. When you have 3 years of service this increases to 6 hours every 2 weeks, and at 15 years it increases to 8 hours every 2 weeks. Most military service counts toward the time required to go into the next higher annual leave category. Most employees can carry over no more than 30 days of annual leave into the next leave year.

Sick Leave is used for

- personal medical needs
- care of a family member
- care of a family member with a serious health condition
- adoption related purposes

Full-time employees earn 4 hours of sick leave every 2 weeks. You can accrue this leave without limit.

Life Insurance

If you're in a FEGLI-eligible position, you're automatically enrolled in Basic life insurance, which is effective on the first day you enter in a pay and duty status UNLESS you waive this coverage before the end of your first pay period. You do NOT get any Optional insurance automatically – you have to take action to elect it.

You have 31 days from your entry date to sign up for any Optional life insurance. If you do not make an election, you are considered to have waived optional insurance. No proof of insurability is required for the Basic insurance you get upon being hired, or any optional insurance you sign-up for during the first 31 days. Proof of insurability may be required for insurance changes after that time.

The Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program (FEGLI) offers:

- Basic Life Insurance — equal to your annual basic pay, rounded to the next higher \$1,000, plus \$2,000.

Plus three types of optional insurance:

- Option A, Standard — in the amount of \$10,000.
- Option B, Additional — in an amount from one to five times your annual basic pay (after rounding up to the next \$1,000).
- Option C, Family — provides coverage for your spouse and eligible dependent children.

Long Term Care Insurance

You (and your spouse, if you're married) have 60 days from your entrance date to apply for Long Term Care Insurance using the abbreviated underwriting application with only a few health-related questions.

If you apply AFTER the 60-day period, you will have to use the long underwriting application with numerous health-related questions, and possibly a review of medical records and/or an interview with a nurse.

The Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) provides long term care insurance for Federal employees and their parents, parents-in-law, stepparents, spouses, and adult children. If you're newly employed in a position that conveys eligibility for FEHB coverage, you can apply for long term care insurance, even if you don't enroll in the FEHB Program. Check with your human resources office if you are unsure about your eligibility.

Long term care insurance is NOT just for older people. Forty percent of the persons receiving long term care are working age adults between the ages of 18 and 64, with many of these people receiving it as they recover from an accident or crippling disease. The cost of the insurance is based on your age when you apply – the older you are when you apply, the higher the premiums. Certain medical conditions, or combination of conditions, will prevent some people from being approved for coverage. Not everyone who applies will be approved for the insurance coverage.

Retirement Program

If your appointment confers eligibility for the Federal Employees Retirement System your agency will automatically enroll you in this program. You do have an important decision to make, however.

You have 60 days from your entrance date to sign-up for a Thrift Savings Account. This is an important part of your Federal retirement package. Your contributions will begin no later than the first full pay period after your agency accepts your election.

If you don't sign up within the 60 days period, you can sign up during one of their twice-yearly open seasons (April 15 through June 30 and October 15 through December 31).

Almost all new employees are automatically covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). FERS is a three-tiered retirement plan. The three tiers are:

- Social Security Benefits
- Basic Benefit Plan
- Thrift Savings Plan

You pay full Social Security taxes and a small contribution to the Basic Benefit Plan. In addition, your agency will set up a Thrift Savings Plan account for you and will automatically contribute an amount equal to 1% of your basic pay each pay period. These Agency Automatic (1%) Contributions are not taken out of your salary, and your agency makes these contributions whether or not you contribute your own money to the TSP.

You are also able to make tax-deferred contributions to the TSP and a portion is matched by the Government. The agency contributions are not taken out of your salary; they are an extra benefit to you.

Designations of Beneficiary

If you die while you are a Federal employee, payments will be made in a particular order set by law from:

- Life Insurance (FEGLI)
- Unpaid Salary
- Thrift Savings Plan funds
- Retirement Lump Sum

Standard rules determine who is eligible to receive these payments. If you are satisfied with the order of payment for that program, you do not have to take any action. But if you want these funds to go to someone else, you need to file a Designation of Beneficiary for that program.

For more details on these programs, go to:
http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/new_employees.asp

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a retirement savings and investment plan for Federal employees. Congress established the TSP in the Federal Employees' Retirement System Act of 1986. The purpose of the TSP is to provide retirement income. The TSP offers Federal employees the same type of savings and tax benefits that many private corporations offer their employees under "401(k)" plans.

The TSP is a defined contribution plan. The retirement income that you receive from your TSP account will depend on how much you and your agency have contributed to your account during your working years and the earnings on those contributions.

The TSP is one of the three parts of your retirement package, along with your FERS Basic Annuity and Social Security. Participating in the TSP does not affect the amount of your Social Security benefit or your Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) Basic Annuity.

The money that you save and earn through your TSP account will provide an important source of retirement income. You may begin contributing to the TSP within a 60-day period from the date the Federal Government first hires you. Once you become eligible for agency contributions (i.e., the second open season after you are hired), you will receive Agency Automatic (1%) Contributions whether or not you are contributing to your account. If you are contributing to your account, you will also receive Agency Matching Contributions at that time. These matching contributions are a principal benefit of the TSP. If you do not make an election within the first 60-day period you are employed, you must wait until an open season to do so. The two open seasons are April 15 through June 30 and October 15 through December 31. Generally, elections are made effective during the last month of the open season.

Your TSP benefits can significantly increase your retirement income, but starting early is important. If you start to contribute to your TSP account as soon as you are hired, the earnings in your account will compound over a longer period of time. Also, if you make certain to contribute your own money early on, you will not miss out on Agency Matching Contributions once you become eligible for them.

To find out more about your FERS Basic Annuity and how the TSP fits into your total retirement plan, contact your personnel office.

For more information about your Social Security benefits, contact your personnel office or the Social Security Administration.

For more in-depth information, go to: <http://www.tsp.gov/>



The Air Force Civilian Personnel System

The Air Force Personnel Center maintains a comprehensive website that includes employee benefits and entitlements, career programs, individual personnel records, and more. Go to <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil> and click on the “Civilian” link.

You may not be able to access this 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.



Moving Time – PCSing and Packing Out

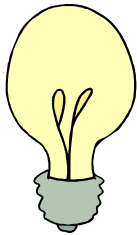
When You're "Packing Out" - Moving Survival Tips

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!
- 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.



Some items you may want to remember to bring with you:

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.

Here are some suggestions for things to include in your final box:

Cleaning supplies
Broom, mop, dustpan, sponge, light bulbs
Can opener
Flashlight
Hangers
Clock radio
Lamp
Phone
Coffee pot, filters
Toilet paper, paper towel
Paper plates and cups, plastic knives, forks,
spoons

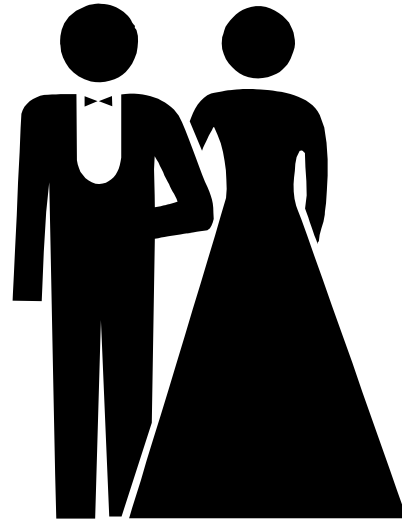
Pot, frying pan
Kitchen knives
Trash bags
Scissors
Bed linens for the entire family
Bath towels
Extra sheets for temporary curtains
Hammer, screwdriver, nails
Extension cord
Soup, dry cereal, crackers, peanut butter and
jelly
Shampoo, soap

You can find out more about PCS moves at: <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/pcs/pcs.htm>



Protocol

As an Air Force civilian employee, you may 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 employee, it is important to know the protocol of the military world, which is a combination of tradition, etiquette, and courtesy.



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 (Mayor 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

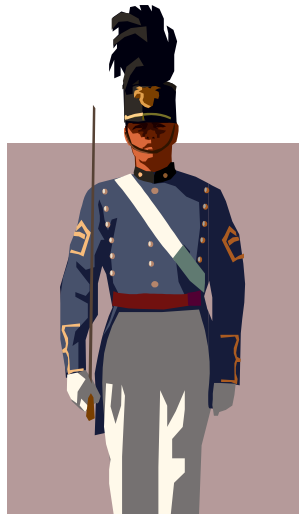
receiving line. By tradition, the relieved commander seldom attends the new commander's reception. Dress for a change of command is usually business suit/informal, but may also be casual.

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

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 Civilian Personnel System: <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil>

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

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

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

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

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

Defense Accounting and Finance Service: <http://www.dfas.mil/>

Family Support Center web pages:

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

Guide to Federal Benefits Programs for New Federal Employees:

http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/new_employees.asp

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

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

Permanent Change of Station for Civilians: <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/pcs/pcs.htm>

Social Security Administration, Social Security card information:

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

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