

Tapping Out

"TAPPING OUT" is the way that Airmen are released in an orderly fashion from formation. It can be an emotional experience but remember, the AF just looks at it as just an orderly way to disburse the Airmen so there is not total chaos.

There are two opportunities to "Tap Out" your Airman. The opportunities come at the end of the Airman's Coin Ceremony and the Graduation Parade. The Airmen will remain at parade rest until someone either comes up and taps them on the shoulder or hugs them.

Just as a clarification - just because someone touches your airman does NOT mean that they are tapped out. If your airman gets bumped by someone (as traumatic as it may be), they're not tapped out. All they have to do is go back to attention & wait for you. It's not like TIs are watching & as soon as an airman is touched, they're considered "tapped out" and therefore, can't stand at attention. If they know you're coming they will wait. Otherwise after most of the Airmen have been released then the TI releases the rest of the Airmen from formation.

WHO GETS TO "TAP OUT"?

Well generally what we've noticed is if the Airman is married the tap out is Spouse for the Coin Ceremony and then Parent for the Graduation. But it can be vice versa and in the end you want to make sure that you focus on making the weekend and the moments very special for the Airman.

Most find it works out best if they arrange who will tap out at what ceremony so that both are comfortable and happy. This is definitely not the time to get into a tug-of-war over your Airman. Some have simultaneously tapped out their Airman to share the moment which works out really well.

Anyone can tap out the Airman. Children, cousins, friends, nieces....anyone can do it. We just recommend that you prearrange who will tap out so all are prepared.

WHAT IF AN AIRMAN HAS NO FAMILY/FRIENDS COMING TO TAP THEM OUT?

Unfortunately not every Airman has family/friends coming to graduation due to various reasons. Our suggestion is to continue the AFWM mission of positive support & encouragement and ask your Airman (preferably prior in either a letter or phone call) if they have a Wingman that needs tapping out. It's a great way to share the experience and if you are financially able it would be great to invite them along with you for the weekend. Again, just ask your Airman and they will let you know.

WHAT ABOUT THE BAND AND/OR FLAG FLT?

The Band FLT will need to put up their instruments after both ceremonies before you are able to greet them. It is not an "official" tap out but more like a greeting. We have more info on that here for band flight <http://afwm.org/life-during-bmt/band-flight/>

The Flag FLT only participates in the Graduation Parade and just like the Band FLT will need to put up the flags before being greeted by family/friends. We have more info on that here for Flag Flight <http://afwm.org/life-during-bmt/flag-flight/>

HOW WILL I FIND MY AIRMAN TO TAP HIM/HER OUT?

Everything at both ceremonies is well announced as to what to do. The announce the TRS/FLT numbers as they come in so you will know which TRS to look for your Airman. Just listen and watch as they walk

by. They also give out maps to let you know where the TRS/FLT will be standing.

PLEASE remember other families are trying to tap out their airmen. Once your airmen have been tapped out, don't block others by standing around chatting. They don't want to stand out on the retreat pad or the parade grounds any longer than necessary and it isn't respectful of the other families.

Again our strongest recommendation is that if there are multiple people wanting to share in the Tap Out experience that you really consider the best way to make it a special moment for everyone. Remember this weekend is all about the Airman and what will make it a great weekend for him/her.