

Tapping Out

"TAPPING OUT" is how 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 MTIs are watching and as soon as an airman is touched, they're considered "tapped out." If they know you're coming, they will wait.

WHO GETS TO "TAP OUT?"

Generally, if the Airman is married, the tap out is by his/her spouse for the Coin Ceremony and a Parent for the Graduation (or vice versa). In the end, you want to make sure that you focus on making the weekend and the moments special for your Airman.

Most find it works out best if they arrange who will do the tap outs so that everyone is 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 or done a group hug to share the moment. Just be careful not to jostle the other Airmen nearby yours.

Anyone can tap out the Airman. Children, cousins, friends ... anyone can do it! We just recommend that you prearrange who is doing what so all are prepared. Also, be sure to designate someone as the picture-taker ... you don't want to miss that photo opp!

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

Unfortunately, not every Airman has family/friends coming to graduation. 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 who needs tapping out. It's a great way to share the experience. 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 away 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: <http://afwm.org/life-during-bmt/band-flight/>

The Flag FLT only participates in the Graduation Parade. Just like the Band FLT, these Airmen also need to put away the flags before being greeted by family/friends. We have more info on that here: <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. They 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

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by. They also give out maps to let you know where your TRS/FLT is 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. Be respectful of the other families.