

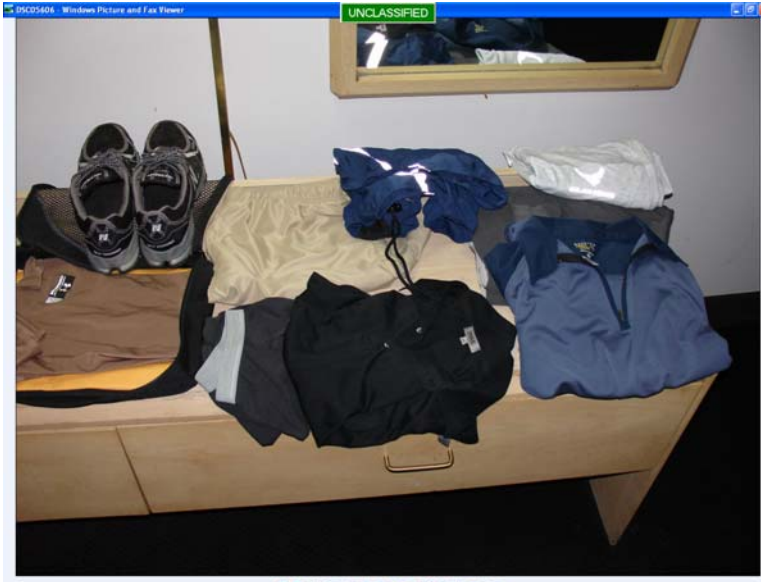
## Deployment preparation notes for radiologists

- 1) This is intended for many audiences; however, I will attempt to keep future radiologists deploying to harms way the baseline theme. This may help those at a GSU (Geographically Separated Unit) such as USU (Uniformed Services University) in that there are unique challenges one may face i.e. not having a weapons officer, nor a government travel card POC that understands you cannot have a card expire in theater, etc.
- 2) Pre-deployment phases: review
  - a) AEF cycle, Bucket, hard tasking, itinerary, orders. If you have read this far, you likely know these terms well and can skip this section.
  - b) USU specifics
    - i) Deployment training (other than radiology specific training) takes two solid weeks of dedicated deployment mindset to complete correctly (and eventually safely for your protection in theater). Some training comes as a surprise, for example, CST (Combat Skills Training, two full days) was arranged last minute.
    - ii) Some GSU (Geographically Separated Units) do not require annual CBRNE/EOR (full day), LOAC, SABC, etc., so these will hit hard once you have the hard tasking. The M9 CADM training (full day) is now only required for deployers.
    - iii) I work in a joint environment and many folks would ask prior to departure “do you have orders?,” perhaps thinking that was the sure thing you were going. Those not familiar with the AF AEF cycle and buckets don’t realize that the bucket and hard task are the linear precursor to orders. Orders are usually not cut until 10 days prior, and everything else is set, you are tasked, as you were in the bucket. Next thing everyone knows, you are out the door with loose ends that you have tried cleaning up the prior months (continuity binders, SOP’s, coverage for classes, etc.).
      - (1) The bucket is determined (ideally six months in advance) based on selected names from a selected base where taskings will come down from the AEF center.
  - c) Keep in mind “on-line” training is not as strait forward as readiness made it sound. I could not access 95% of the secure links I was sent, not even with the pseudo-cac readers and the .mil address we have at USU. I went to Andrews and had someone sign in for me and spent one full day on LOAC, SABC, SATE/IA, CTIP (Combat Trafficking In Persons), etc. These are not trivial and should not be rushed.
    - i) Other training one may not immediately consider is the usual annual requirements that creep up because they may expire during the deployment. This includes ACLS, BLS, SATE/ IA, etc.
  - d) Medical clearance takes longer than it does; I know, I used to be in charge of those areas in as a deputy commander of Aerospace Medicine. Forget one-stop shopping PHA, especially at a GSU. Do not try to get a PHA at a GSU, unless you want to do everything twice like I ended up doing (except immunizations).

- e) Processing Readiness Unit (PRU), TMO, and other travel processes are different everywhere you go, and there have been many changes in last two years. Not sure what to tell you about this one, except follow the directions from readiness. You may get an itinerary and tickets last minute (and not in that order). PRU is usually a two day prior to departure thing.
- 3) Week prior to departure:
- a) Allow lots of time for several more trips to the mobility warehouse for CST bag return, A1 bag pickup, DCU stuff, and lastly, your weapon (take your 522 and orders as your ticket). Keep in mind it takes an afternoon (for you and a government driver) to haul the weapon to the facility (Navy for USU) for form and serial number verification, then to the armory (usually open 24/7) for pick up the day of departure.
  - b) Make sure you get a JPTA (Joint Patient Tracking Application) or other CHCS type account well before you leave your base. It may be several days before you get email established in your deployed setting, and you need a .mil and a commander sign-off (as well as SGH) before you get the account. JPTA is where we put our reports on inpatients You do not want to show up and have to sign in under someone else' account. <https://jpta.fhp.osd.mil>
  - c) In addition to packing checklists you will get from various sources; be sure to tailor your own. I have included one I developed over time since this was my fourth time to the Middle East (out of about eight deployments total). I have checklists for 2 week, 30 day, 120 day deployments, down to what I put in what backpack and what pocket. This may seem a bit much, but when you prepare your 72 hour carry-on (see figure), you may realize why. We ended up using ours about 100 hours en-route. Some folks did not have civilian clothes and had to wear military clothing while in Virginia for several days. Many folks bought clothes; so a little preparation goes a long way, and is cheaper. I have known flight docs to live off their 72 hour bag for weeks just when things were starting a few years back.
- 4) Departure day: underwhelming really, you are in some surrealistic state where your spouse (or significant other) says (or at least you recall) “why don’t I drive, you have too much on your mind.”
- a) Drop off at the armory, anticlimactic really, but that is where you and your weapon are inseparable, no magic moments after that new umbilical cord.
  - b) Off to your AOD (Airport Of Debarkation); the fun just begins: hurry up and wait.
- 5) En-route (so to speak): seemed endless, but somehow everyone kept their sanity.
- a) Many were seasoned deployers; knew not to expect anything, but be ready for chaos. Actually it was controlled chaos in that over 800 deployers were on hold for potentially days, some uncomfortably close to home, yet on the verge of the battlefield.
    - i) Just to put things in perspective: after 6 hours in the terminal and many announcements (boy cried wolf comes to mind), one seems to get hundreds of light brown desert camies attention “indefinite delay, hotel arrangements will be made, as there is at least a 24 hour delay.” The plane smelled of fuel to the point nobody could board to evaluate the smell without choking.

- b) We were all pleasantly surprised how quickly the terminal handled three broken aircraft simultaneously. All 800 were placed in hotels across southern VA without fail, within 2 or 3 hours. No complaints, yes sir, where do I go. As one of three full-bird Colonels I was wondering what kind of accountability we would have to track, but this became exceedingly simple with one simple maneuver: a recall roster approach. Myself, another Colonel, a Major and the LT (responsible for more than anyone) had a system and structure in place to account for our 40 troops in seconds; if need be. Within hours we had a command center (hotel lobby with a posted; update, go figure), an accountability chain that negated rumors and positively communicated our status at any minute. Even the “onsies and twosies” had a go-to officer to turn to if need-be.
  - c) Why the accountability chain? Think Kobar towers; even though we were still in the comfort of CONUS; many did not get the word they should also travel with at least one set of “civies” we were as real a target as learned in AT training. Many had to be reminded of the “do not disturb, TV on loud and lights on” mantra. Good time to reinforce these basic doctrines.
  - d) You will enjoy much of this (and some not so much).
- 6) Helpful hints
- a) Badge: many folks (including myself) wore their ID cards in a plastic folder that hung around their neck, or on their left arm. I realized over a few weeks that not everyone did this, and found the requirement was only in Qatar. I just used a small wallet since whoever checks your ID wants to see the back also.
  - b) Also, take lots of photos and print them in a book (by kodak, your only choice here) a month before you leave and have folks sign it.
- 7) Redeployment (coming back home)
- a) Make sure your Unit Travel rep (in MCC or admin?) has your CAC expiration date, your entry date. This is your ticket out (besides a complete out-processing checklist).

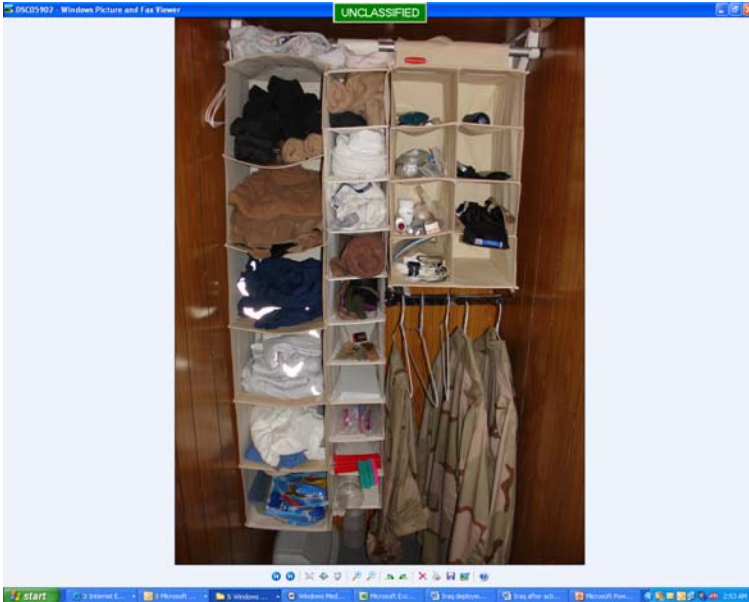
Figures:



Example 72 Hour pack/ carry on civilian clothes/ male:



Deployment departure, Norfolk terminal:



How I use shoe/ sweater closet holders for organizers:



We were lucky to get a C-17 to Balad, this photo taken while en route (in Baghdad).



Typical U-2 condition uniform. Being in shape is a prerequisite; this weighs a ton (so it feels like). What we wear to and from work while in U2 posture