

Stuff USMC Service Chief Program members need to know

In the summer you wear Charlies. In the winter you wear Bravos. Don't get caught off guard by the time change if you are here during that period. In the winter it gets cold so at least bring a tanker jacket or a wooly pulley. Bring your Alpha jacket in case you go the Pentagon for a brief. I brought a set of cammies just in case there was a demo out in the field but I never wore them. I also brought a nice suit and tie for the group dinner that the program members have with the Director at the end of the program. As far a luggage goes, since you are active duty military, you don't have to worry about paying for the second and third checked bag.

If you are not in the local DC / Quantico area then you will stay in the apartments. They are nice. Towels and bed linens are provided. You get a starter pack of soap, shampoo, and detergent but when you run out you have to get your own. There is a full set of plates, forks, spoons, knives, and glasses. There is also a full set of pots and pans for you to cook with. There is a dishwasher and a washer and dryer in your room as well. There is a wired internet connection for you to plug into. For wireless, bring your own wireless router if that is important to you. There is a TV for the living room and a TV for the bedroom. You may have a roommate but you each get a master bedroom with a bath room so you are not sharing the head. There is a wired phone and a phone number provided. Your mail is kept for you in a keyed mailbox in the lobby. Large packages are kept for you by security personnel in the lobby until you can pick them up.

You really don't need a car. The Virginia Square metro stop is literally 10 steps from the back door of the apartment complex. If you have a car, you can get a parking decal and park underneath the apartment complex. DARPA is a one minute walk from the apartment complex lobby.

Take the extra time and complete the SF-86 for your clearance even if you already have a TS-SCI clearance. If you don't do it ahead of time, you will have to scramble and do it again anyway. You might want to check that the clearance arrived before you get here.

As far as travel is concerned you will be gone about 70% of the time. To help coordinate your travel, two contractors, Christine and Brad, will do all of your travel paperwork and coordination for you. Just tell them where and when and they will get everything into DTS and make your hotel and airline reservations for you. If you are TAD for the SCIP program, your per diem is settled on a monthly basis. You don't get Arlington TAD per diem when you travel to another city, you get that cities per diem so don't think you get three months of Arlington TAD money. If you can, make sure you have internet access to your government travel charge card account before you get here. You need your credit card statement to enroll on the GTCC Citibank website. Save every receipt even if it is below \$75 because they want them. I recommend you stay in the same hotel for all of your TAD trips because the consistency is nice. The Hampton Inn was by far the best hotel. It has the cleanest rooms, a gym, free internet, and free breakfast.

How do you know where to go? For the first week or so, you will sit in on briefs that the program managers give to the Director. You will also get briefs from each of the four division heads about the programs in their section. From this broad perspective, you will get an idea about which programs are of interest to you and then you can start to schedule meetings with individual program managers about their programs. They want to talk with you so don't be bashful in asking for a meeting. They are busy individuals so coordinating a meeting with them can be challenging due to schedule conflicts. At the end of your meeting with the PM, ask them if there is a cool demo for you to see. If there is, get a POC and call the performer. (At DARPA, contractors, government labs, non-profit agencies, or anyone who does work for a PM are called performers.) You don't have to meet with a PM first, but it is common courtesy to call or e-mail the PM before you call a performer who is working for them. Since there will be ten or eleven program members all doing some sort of coordinating, our group found it helpful to put individual program members in charge of cities or states and make them the coordinator for that area. Your group may have a better idea. By the way, to get you started your first trip is usually scheduled for you by the last program members group and is one of the two mandatory trips that the program members "must" go on with Mr. Earl. The other trips are what either you or the program members as a whole will schedule. You can pick the trips and the programs you want to see but you are not working on any projects...you are just visiting the contractors that are working the projects for the program managers. You will see a pattern develop that is generally followed from class to class. There are performers that every class seems to visit because they are cool. However, that does not limit anyone from visiting a performer that they specifically want to see.

There is a barber (Ballston barber) and a dry cleaner (Ballston cleaners) right next door to each other within a five minute walk up the road on Fairfax drive. The barber charges 14 bucks and the dry cleaning for a uniform is about 10 bucks. DARPA will not reimburse you for your dry cleaning. Ft Myer is the closest base with a commissary and it is not really within walking distance while carrying groceries. You can get a haircut there too. Ft. Myer also has an Army PX and a USMC MCX in the same general area. Ft. Myer also has a nice gym facility. There is a gym on the 19th floor of the apartment complex but it only has two treadmills, a sitting bicycle machine and two stair steppers, some barbells and a pull down machine. It is a small room but it works.

For food, there is a Giant grocery store within walking distance (five minutes) and there is also a mini mart at the base of the apartment complex next to a Starbucks. The commissary is a much better bargain if you can get someone to drive you there.

A large mall is one metro stop away from you at Ballston.

When you check in at DARPA you get a laptop and a blackberry for your use while doing government business. You can take them TAD with you. The computer guys set up a VPN for you so you can get into DARPA e-mail via outlook with your laptop when you are TAD.

What can you do to prepare? Read the read aheads that you download from the sharepoint site. Brad or Christine will coordinate to get a sharepoint account ready for you. Browse through the DARPA website and take the virtual tour. There is a National Geographic documentary all about DARPA that is really helpful in getting the basics down about DARPA. Also, contact Col T.C. Moore, the DARPA USMC liaison, or his contractor Steve Urban, and he will give you access to another USMC specific sharepoint website that has good gouge including pictures of the apartment complex.

If you fly into Dulles, take the airport sponsored taxi to get to the apartments. It is between 40-45 bucks so have cash available for the taxi, get a receipt, and claim it on your travel voucher by giving the receipt to Brad or Christine. If you fly into Reagan, then the taxi is between 15-20 bucks. You can also take the Metro from Reagan if you like. Take the blue line to Rosslyn, then take the orange line towards Vienna and get off at the Virginia Square stop. The Metro runs until midnight except on Friday and Saturday when it stops at 3am. Once you get to DARPA and you start to travel on a regular basis, Brad or Christine will give you a \$10 Metro card for you to use to get to the airport and back. The only time we took a taxi is when we had an early morning flight and the Metro was not open in the morning to take us to the airport.

By the way, this is one of the best deals in the Marine Corps. Congratulations.

S/F

Major Tim McLean, USMC