
Bagram News Express



Fighting Terror, Building Peace

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Couple spends first anniversary in unlikely place

By Staff Sgt. Samuel Morse
455th Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — Marriages with military members are never easy. Marriages where both partners are military prove to be even more difficult at times. When each spouse is in a different branch of the military, challenges arise that can be almost impossible to overcome.

One couple seems to have made this work. Air Force Capt. Vanessa Mahan, an F-15E Strike Eagle weapons systems officer, and Navy Lt. Larry Mahan, a naval aviator, have gone against the odds and just celebrated their first anniversary on the other side of the world.

The couple met during Aviation Preflight Indoctrination in Pensacola, Fla. The close proximity was short-lived though, and the new couple was split; Larry to Washington, and Vanessa to the 335th Fighter Squadron, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C. The Mahans settled into life under the strain of a long-distance relationship.

The couple remembers the constant barrage of comments such as “it will never work,” but were determined to see the

relationship through.

Making it work was easier said than done.

“We make an effort to see each other as much as possible,” said Vanessa, “which means lots of time in airports and lots of money spent on plane tickets. When we are both stateside, we’ve made a commitment to talk multiple times a day, even if it’s just to say ‘hi.’”

Deployments also proved to be a challenge, making it even harder to stay in touch.

Earlier this year, Vanessa deployed to Bagram Air Field. The Mahans knew they’d have some overlap - time where both of them would be at Bagram at the same time, but also knew it would only be for a short while.

Vanessa’s commander with the 335th FS, Lt. Col. James Jinnette, had mentioned the possibility of extending Vanessa’s deployment by a few days to allow her more time with her husband. In a case of “hear what you want to hear,” Vanessa followed up, asking for an extra month or two.

By chance, there was an opening in the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing for a deputy chief of wing plans. Seizing the opportunity, the leadership of the 335th FS and 455th AEW worked together to make the extended deployment happen. The 455th AEW gained a deputy chief of



Naval aviator Lt. Larry Mahan and his wife, Air Force F-15E Strike Eagle weapons systems officer Capt. Vanessa Mahan celebrate their first anniversary over iced tea here September 1, 2008. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Samuel Morse/Released)

wing plans, and the Mahans gained a few precious months together.

On Sept. 1, they celebrated their first anniversary together here with a lunch of pizza and iced tea. The informal nature didn’t matter to them, because if it wasn’t for the efforts of their commanders, this anniversary celebration would have never happened face-to-face.

The couple’s time together was not limited to the ground. In some cases, they remember being in the same operation together. They were flying in different aircraft, at different altitudes, but both were working towards the same goal in Operation Enduring Freedom.

“It’s awesome. I can’t wait to tell our kids about that,” said Vanessa.

Don't get deported

By Maj. Eddie Taylor

379th Air Expeditionary Wing / Host Nation
Coordination Cell chief of immigrations

Editors note: This article from Al Udeid Air Base highlights some important information for military personnel traveling to, from, or through Qatar for official duties or R&R leave.

Deportations are on the rise at Al Udeid Air Base for those personnel traveling through Qatar while performing their official duties, awaiting another flight, or even on rest and relaxation leave.

Military personnel are guests in the State of Qatar and therefore have to follow and respect their laws. The Qataris allow U.S. military personnel to immigrate in to their country on orders or common access cards as long as it has the member's social security number on the back. If it is not, or if personnel are U.S. government contractors, then they have to have a valid passport and visa to immigrate. Once properly immigrated in, personnel are clear until it is time to leave. This is where most problems lie. People must properly emigrate out of Qatar on the same documents they immigrated in on — if they immigrated in on CAC/orders, then they must emigrate out on CAC/orders. If they immigrated in on their passport/visa, then they must emigrate out on the same passport/visa.

For those arriving at Doha International Airport, the Qatar Immigration staff there will sometimes direct people to buy a visa even though they have a CAC or military orders. The Host Nation Coordination Cell at Al Udeid is working to ensure the rules are evenly applied at Al Udeid and DIA to ensure all U.S. DoD personnel with CAC/orders are allowed to immigrate in using them. Until this is done, personnel are advised not to argue with the QI staff. Additionally, they should ensure HNCC Immigrations (DSN 318-437-6108) is notified that they had to buy a visa to immigrate in to Qatar. These people must keep the visa current; otherwise, they

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Services Info

- ◆ First Run Movies: Sunday, Wednesday and Friday at 1000L and 1500L.
- ◆ Capoeira/Brazilian Martial Arts: Sunday from 2000L to 2200L and Tuesday from 1630L to 1830L.
- ◆ Abs Workout: Monday through Friday at 1215L.
- ◆ Salsa: Monday from 2030L to 2230L.
- ◆ Texas Hold'em: Tuesday at 1900L, Thursday at 1330L, and Saturday at 1330L and 1900L.
- ◆ Dominoes: Tuesday at 2100L
- ◆ Reggae Night: Wednesday from 2000L to 2300L.
- ◆ Spades: Thursday at 1800L.
- ◆ Blackjack: Thursday at 2100L.
- ◆ Bingo: Friday at 1900L.
- ◆ Hip Hop/R&B Night: Friday at 2030L.

Absentee Voting

It's recommended that you register/request an absentee ballot at least 45 days prior to the election. However, from the AOR it's recommended that you send in your request at least 60 days prior.

You can register and request an absentee ballot by submitting a Federal Post Card Application which is available online at www.fvap.gov. The application must be mailed directly to your local election official and those addresses are provided on the website above. The application can be mailed postage free by writing FREE MAIL where a stamp would go or it can be mailed in the FVAP postage paid envelope found on the website above.

If you do not receive an absentee ballot then there is the option to use the Federal Write-in-Absentee ballot which is also available online at the website above.

Be Smart, Do your Part...VOTE!

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will start incurring daily fines upon its expiration. By notifying HNCC, we can work to get the visa closed out before it expires and help get people immigrated in on their CAC/orders.

Key points to remember:

- Follow all rules/procedures when processing in to Al Udeid (if you are in a group, don't be a straggler — stay with the group and listen to PERSCO/Immigrations Reps).

- Emigrate out on the same documents you used to immigrate in (CAC/orders, passport/visa, etc.)

- When departing Al Udeid, keep the boarding pass which should be stamped by QI, this will suffice as proof that you properly emigrated out. Bring it back next time you come to Al Udeid.

- Aircrew must also follow Immigrations/

Emigrations rules and laws. Ensure your aircrew orders are stamped by both PERSCO and QI when departing Al Udeid and keep the copy as your proof that you emigrated out properly and bring it back next time you come to Al Udeid.

- Remember you are not on U.S. territory, you are a guest in Qatar. Be respectful/courteous, follow the procedures/rules, and keep your documentation when leaving.

- Don't show anger, make jokes, stare, or anything else that may be considered disrespectful to our hosts. You can, and likely will, be deported for these infractions. Losing your temper will only make a bad situation much worse.

By following these guidelines, military personnel can ensure their next trip to Al Udeid will be a smooth one. If you have any questions concerning Qatari immigrations/emigrations, feel free to contact the HNCC at Al Udeid at DSN 318-

News Briefs

NATO MEDALS

As AEF 3/4 comes to a close, most, if not all, military personnel should have received a NATO Medal for their tour of duty here at Bagram. If you have not received your medal by the time you depart Bagram, please utilize the email address/phone number below to check on the status. The medal submission process can take up to 90 days for approval and distribution back to the PERSCO team. The new PERSCO Team POC's for the NATO Medal will be Staff Sgt. Amethia Dandy and Tech. Sgt. Richard Jones. To follow-up on the status of your medal, you can reach them at DSN 318-431-4409 or 455emsg.persco@afghan.swa.army.mil

RESTRICTED AREA ESCORT TRAINING

If you are a holder of an Air Force Restricted Area Badge that has an open area with a number in it and or a letter E you are asked to attend a training session in order to receive an escort official competency card. Training classes are being held Monday through Friday each week throughout September and October from 0800 to 0900 at the Enduring

Faith Chapel Annex. All personnel departing Bagram by Oct. 31 are exempt from the class. Beginning Nov. 1 ESFS Restricted Area Entry Controllers will be checking for your Escort Certification/Competency Card, which is provided to escorts after training. If you have not attended the class by then, your flight line escort privileges will be revoked until you get the required training and card. Questions can be directed to Pass and ID at 431-2232.

COMBAT PUSH EXTENDED HOURS

Combat Push times have been extended starting through Sept. 20. New times are Monday, Wednesday and Friday in the Camp Cunningham Rec Tent from 0900L/0430Z to 1100L/0630Z and from 2230L/1800Z to 0030L/2000Z. Services, Comm and PERSCO will be available to sign outprocessing checklists. Personnel must complete Post Deployment Health Questionnaire on-line and pick up medical records at Flight Medicine/Public Health before coming to Combat Push. For more information call 431-4409.

EAGLECASH

All deployed personnel (military, civilian and contractors) utilizing Air

Force finance office services within the USCENTCOM AOR are required to have an EagleCash Stored Value Card and highly encouraged to use it. Additionally, the Bagram Finance Office has set-up a full-service EagleCash Card Center at the Friday Bagram Bazaar for your use and convenience. The Center has an EagleCash kiosk and a cashier to sign-up new card applicants and to exchange a check for uploaded EagleCash funds. Please sign-up for your EagleCash Card today.

COMBAT O

Combat Orientation is Thursday at 0900Z/1330L at the Enduring Freedom Chapel. This is a mandatory briefing for all Air Force personnel assigned to Bagram Air Field. Newcomers must attend the briefing within a week of their arrival. Accountability is tracked and will be forwarded to the 1st Sergeants at the end of the Week.

BATTERY DISPOSAL

Used batteries of any type should be turned in to supply for proper disposal -- do not throw them away in the trash. Expired batteries can be used by the enemy as part of explosive devices.



[US AIR FORCE 61st ANNIVERSARY DINNER]

HOST: BrigGen Mike Holmes
Commander, 455th AEW

DATE: Thursday, 18 September 2008

TIME: 1800L (doors open at 1745)

LOCATION: MWR Clamshell at Four Corners

GUEST SPEAKER: BrigGen Tod Wolters

Deputy Commander, CSTC-A PMA

DRESS: Uniform of the Day

(No PT Uniforms or Shorts)

Seating Limited, RSVP Required
Please contact one of the following representatives

MSgt Linda M. Blankenship

318-431-2024

linda.m.blankenship@afghan.swa.army.mil



1Lt Laurie E. Ross

318-431-4026

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