

Situation Normal... All BAF'd Up

By Brian B Donaldson

It's wonderful being at BAF. Oh... I forgot, when using an acronym, one must define that acronym. So, BAF stands for Bagram Air Field. Now I may continue. It's wonderful being at BAF. A thriving community of maybe 20,000+ with a good half of them being military. This is a wonderful little air field with its loop road that covers 8.5 miles. A wonderful place that has a marvelous PX or BX or whatever one wants to call it that will always short change you (items are \$x.98 or \$x.97 and you do not get the pennies back) and give you cardboard coins in exchange for hard currency.

There was a time when the military used script to prevent real money from being black marketed. No worries about that here at BAF. But you know, the feel of cardboard POGS on one's person tells one that they are rich beyond compare. Just try using them in the states.

Back to wonderful BAF with all these people and maybe one car for every pair of individuals. This includes the little high velocity unladed swallow, er... I mean gator that move at a killing speed of 5 mph. And those wonderful highly maintained roads with speed holes rather than speed bumps. Wonderful BAF where the highest speed authorized is 15 mph, and you had better buckle that seatbelt or your unladed swallow will be confiscated by the Security Forces, or Military Police, or, well for a better name, we'll call them the BKK, or BAF Keystone Kops.

It has always amazed me that the military, like the civilian counterparts, come up with some "interesting" rules. Let's take the seat belt rule. There is a sign in front of the BX/PX/Whatever that tells everyone the use of seatbelts is mandatory, yet trucks can carry passengers in the beds without seat belts, or any safety gear what so ever. OK, I totally understand this concept. I mean, 15 miles per hour is a death defying speed and God knows we don't what the passengers in the vehicle to get hurt. Who cares about the other 10 or 15 cargo-gers in the bed of the truck, inshalla.

Now, the BKK have decided that all vehicles have to be registered on BAF. Hmmm... I thought they WERE already registered. Ah... if they are, then they must be re-registered. So this new rule because ever so apparent to us when a group of BKK tried to impound our car, which by the way, was full of US Mail. So, we were asked to bring the car down to the BKK station and register it. Sure enough, as soon as we walked in with all the paperwork in hand, the BKK snatched the keys away and said we cannot have it back until tomorrow. It was going to take that long to enter the data in the computer. (It is rather funny how one can subscribe to an internet news letter in seconds, but it takes days, nay, weeks to unsubscribe? I digressed, sorry.)

Well, a quick phone call to our local Base Ops and a little kowtowing (no pogs involved) and what do you know, we get the car back in the same condition when it was placed under arrest; dirty. However, thank the gods in all the galaxies it has been blessed with a piece of... green tape? That's it? Green tape 5 ½" x 2 ½" with a quarter section cut out? A marvel of modern technology this is. I looked ever so carefully for

a serial number or a registration number to show that indeed this car was officially sanctioned by the BKK. But nary a number did I see. So disappointing.

Well, at least I can say I feel much safer now, knowing that the BKK has allowed me safe passage. I understand that there is a Memorandum of Agreement with the local Taliban, who by the way drop mortars on our wonderful BAF all the time, that cars with a piece of green tape are exempt from being targeted. Yes, thank God there is a piece of green tape on my car, not any green tape, but an official green tape. I can sleep peacefully now, ever so peacefully.

Finally, I say without hesitation that the bumper sticker I saw this morning is ever so true, and sums it up nicely...

“Situation normal, all BAF’d up!”



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