
9-21-2021

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 21, 2021

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Marine Wife: “I Just Continually Prayed” During Afghanistan Withdrawal

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- As the Afghanistan evacuation dominated media headlines at the end of August, some held a very personal stake in the news. Especially when a bomb took the lives of 11 U.S. Marines, one Navy Corpsman and one Army soldier on August 26.

[Jeff Reep](#), director of [Career Services](#) at Cedarville University, is the father of Captain Aaron Reep, a Marine Corps company commander deployed in Afghanistan. Aaron has served for nine years. He returned safely home Monday, Sept. 20 to a hero's welcome from wife, Jenn, and their three daughters.

Jenn had to stop watching the news when the story of the bombing broke. “I just continually prayed,” she said. “It was the only thing I could really do for my husband.”

During the current deployment, Jeff has relished the mixed blessing of being able to see his son’s family more often, as they left their home in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and came to live alternatively with him or her parents in Springfield, Ohio. “Aaron believes, like we do, that he’s where the Lord wants him,” Reep said. “We trust the Lord for his safety.”

Jenn supports her husband both in spirit and through technology. Though logistically difficult, the couple relish their infrequent opportunities to catch up. Aboard a ship, Aaron can only communicate by email, but in port he can text daily through WhatsApp.

“The first six weeks of deployments are the most intense adjustment,” Jenn said, “but once I get used to it, I can truly look forward to phone calls or being able to text him.”

During the two weeks when Aaron was in Afghanistan, however, the family had to be satisfied with only four texts from him.

“The day before the bombing outside the Kabul airport, Aaron said he would be working at a gate,” Jenn said, “but he didn’t say which one.” Aaron and his men, stationed only 100 meters from where the bombing happened, hadn’t slept in four days and were working on pure adrenaline. When the report came in that 13 U.S. service members had been killed at Abbey Gate, there was nothing the family could do but pray he was safe and wait for updates.

They had to wait until the next day, when they finally got a text saying he was safe.

“I can’t adequately express my thanks to the Lord for protecting Aaron that day,” Jenn noted. “My heart breaks for the families whose loved ones gave the ultimate sacrifice.”

Whatever happens, Jenn supports her husband, and this heartens Jeff. “She’s all in,” he gratefully noted. “She doesn’t suggest that he consider getting out. She recognizes that he’s doing it for a career and believes that it’s where the Lord wants him. That his wife supports his choice comforts me.”

Both father and wife rely on faith to bring them peace during turmoil. “If he’s where the Lord wants him to be,” Jeff said, “he’s just as safe in Afghanistan as driving down the road in Ohio or North Carolina.”

Although the Afghanistan evacuation was turbulent, Jenn emphasized that the family found strength in Aaron’s commitment: “My husband wouldn’t have wanted to be anywhere else but there, serving our country.”

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,715 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is one of the largest private universities in Ohio, recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and high student engagement ranking. For more information about the University, visit cedarville.edu.

Written by Brendan Rowland