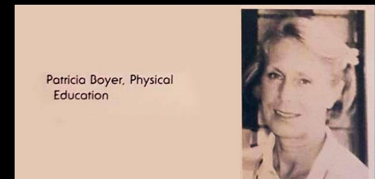


What are the odds? 26 years later, Army War College links teacher, student

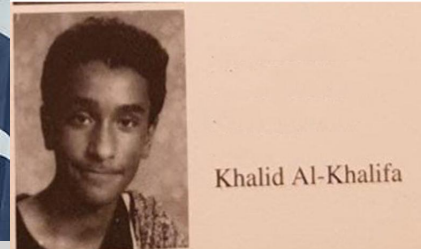
By Robert Martin, USAWC 06 September 2019



Patricia Boyer greets Lt. Col. Khalid Al Khalifa at the finish line after completing the Harrisburg triathlon



Mrs. Patricia Boyer while a teacher at Bahrain Middle High School where she taught health and physical ed.



Lt. Col. Khalid Al Khalifa as a student at Bahrain Middle High School

"What are the odds?" is pretty much the catchphrase of coincidences, and one that's relevant at the Army War College where teacher and student meet again after 26 years.

"The coincidence of meeting her again after 26 years is unbelievable," said Bahraini Lt. Col. Khalid Al Khalifa. "The way I found out that my sponsor, Pat Boyer, was my teacher 26 years ago in Bahrain is when the International Fellows [Office] sent me Boyer's email allowing us to introduce ourselves."

Al Khalifa emailed an introduction to her and Boyer replied with a mention that she had lived in Bahrain for 38 years.

There was a sentence in her email that said she was at the Bahrain School, and then it clicked -- wait -- 38 years in Bahrain? It was, my goodness, Pat Boyer my 9th-grade health teacher.

"I can't believe it's her," he said, running around telling everyone in his family, his friends from school. "I don't think there was anyone I didn't tell."

The Bahrain Middle High School is part of the Department of Defense Education Activity located in the city of Manama. Students are from military and Department of State families and English speaking Bahraini children.

"I always thought after teaching thousands of students, I would meet one of my students one day," said Carlisle resident Pat Boyer. The first thought in her mind was, "Wow, it finally happened," she said, after learning that Khalid was her student 26 years ago in Bahrain.

"It was just so amazing I emailed her back to get her phone number so I could talk to her," said Al Khalifa.

"I gave her a call from Bahrain. We talked about many things, catching up. When I finally got here and went to visit her at her home, it was a very pleasurable moment to see her after all this time. I had this picture in my mind, but the picture was back from school," said Al Khalifa. "She hasn't changed much. Even her composure and the way she spoke reminded me of the classes I took with her."

Al Khalifa shared with her his plans to run a triathlon in Harrisburg. But Pat had just had knee surgery.

When he finished the triathlon, he was surprised to see her at the finish line cheering him on. It was such a nice gesture on her part, said Khalid, who was grateful for the kindness.

"I don't feel like she is my sponsor," said Al Khalifa. "More like a family member you have not seen for a long time. I am looking forward to the rest of the year to make more memories."

"I feel very comfortable with Khalid. Meeting his wife and children, this connection makes me feel like we are family. It isn't often that you meet your students again as young adults. This is an unusual and pleasant experience for us," said Boyer.

"When I first met him here in Carlisle, he came to my house in this big pickup truck, jumped out of it, and came over and just gave me a big hug," she said. "We just have this bond, as adults, now."

After such a long time Boyer says it was difficult to remember details of Khalid, but does remember him being a unique student and very nice to others.

“I am very proud of Khalid for his achievements, an army officer who will graduate from the Army War College, a triathlete, with love for a healthy life style,” she said. “I would like to think I had something to do with it all since I would have encouraged athletics and health in my classes.”

Al Khalifa is an Infantry Officer of Bahrain Army, studying with U.S. military officers in the graduate program of Strategic Studies at the U.S. Army War College.

Pat Boyer was a Department of Defense DoDDS teacher for 48 years, 38 years in Bahrain, and retired in 2013. She has been an International Fellows community sponsor for the last five years.

The International Fellows (IF) Sponsorship Program is a key part of the Army War College's efforts to assist IF as they transition to life in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Sponsors assist our Fellows in understanding U.S. culture and customs as they become integrated into the community.

For questions concerning sponsorship, please contact Ashlea Cordell-Lowe, Ashlea.r.Cordell-lowe.civ@mail.mil.