



Brenda Wren Photography

Captain and Mrs. W. Merritt Ainslie

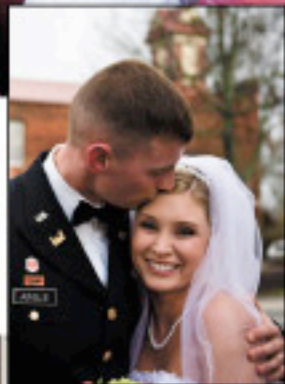
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Love...

NEAR AND FAR

In the Spring of 2006, U. S. Army Captain Merritt Ainslie, a native of Madison, was stationed in Heidelberg, Germany and little did he know that a young woman whom he'd never met would be renting his home in Madison along with two of her friends and would become his wife! Megan Malcom Ainslie grew up in Monroe, graduated from the University of Georgia and received a job teaching kindergarten in Madison. Megan's roommates, Kerry and Amanda, had grown up with Merritt and repeatedly said, "Megan, you really need to meet Merritt." Megan's response to her friends was "okay, yeah, yeah, whatever". Megan's roommates and Merritt's brother, Andrew (who just happened to be married to Amanda's sister), were all thinking along the same line.... these two would make a great couple! The only kink in introducing the pair was that Merritt was living in Germany while Megan was back home in the good ole' U.S.A.! Amanda emailed Merritt a photograph of Megan taken with Merritt's newborn nephew. She included Megan's email address. From that moment, Megan and Merritt emailed for several weeks and talked on the phone for hours and hours at a time. Then in July, the couple had their chance to meet face to face. Merritt was scheduled for training in Lawton, Oklahoma so Megan flew out to meet him. As Merritt waited for Megan, he held a sign for her which said "kiss me". From that weekend on their relationship blossomed and in October, Megan flew to Germany to visit with Merritt. On Megan's first night in Heidelberg, Merritt took her up to an old castle overlooking the town. As Megan snapped photos of the beautiful site around her, Merritt led Megan to a gazebo in front of the picturesque castle. Once inside the gazebo Merritt hands her a bag explaining this is a belated birthday present, "just a little something". From inside the bag, Megan pulls out a bottle of wine, two wine glasses, and a box of Heidelberg chocolates. As she opens the chocolates, to her surprise sits a ring box. Merritt gets down on one knee and proposes.

An exciting twist to the proposal was that Megan, unknowingly, carried her own engagement ring across the Atlantic to Merritt! Before she left for Germany, Merritt's mom gave Megan a few items to take to him..



One of these items was a pencil case. Mrs. Ainslie instructed Megan to guard it with her life because in it contained things Merritt's grandfather wanted him to have. Inside the pencil case was a diamond ring. The ring Megan carried was actually a loaner ring from Greensboro Jewelers. Merritt did not want to delay the engagement but wanted to have the perfect, custom made ring. While Megan was in Germany, Mark Blanton, owner of Greensboro Jewelers, was designing a beautiful custom ring just for Megan.

After the wedding date was set, the Malcom's and the Ainslie's had five months to plan the wedding and many decisions were to be made. Megan and Merritt registered gift items such as Magnolia Lane's UGA ceramic salad bowl and oval platter at Carmichael Drugs in Monroe. The couple also chose the Lenox China pattern "Opal Innocence" and Lenox Tuscany Classics barware. The couple's wedding guests, friends and family were able to purchase those lovely pieces at Carmichael Drugs and Whidby's Jewelers of Madison. Brenda Winn Photography would take the wedding photographs. Time flew by and the bridal party and families arrived at The James Madison Inn, located in the heart of downtown Madison, for the weekend festivities. The afternoon of the wedding began with thunderstorms, quarter-sized hail and tornadoes but that did not bother Megan! As soon as she began to walk down the aisle of the First United Methodist Church of

Madison, the sun began to shine through the windows. Megan's Uncle Don, who was her minister in Monroe, married the couple at this church where Merritt grew up.

Garden Gate Florist, located in Monroe and Athens, beautifully decorated the sanctuary of the church with two large urn arrangements, mixed greenery adorning the choir railing, and made the bridal and bridesmaids bouquets.

The flowers in the church and bouquets consisted of pink parrot tulips, dark pink miniature calla lilies and bouvardia, pink peonies and garden roses and lime green hydrangeas accented with silver bullion wire.

After the ceremony, the reception was held at The James Madison Inn Conference Center. Kellie's Catering, from Bowman, created a true southerner's meal. The wedding guests enjoyed pork tenderloin, chicken, a yummy mash potato bar, served with green beans and southern squash casserole. A special moment was shared when Megan surprised her grandfather by dancing with him to "You Are My Sunshine" a song he sang to her

as a small child. The newly married couple drove off from the reception in Megan's hot blue Ford Mustang! As the festivities came to a close Megan and Merritt looked back and agreed everything about their wedding just fell into place. The couple is looking forward to how great their life will be once Merritt returns home from his tour of duty .

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