

## Welcome to the 65th Air Base Group!!!



Welcome to the 65th Air Base Group, Lajes Field, located on the beautiful island of Terceira, Azores (Portugal) - home to bullfights, painted tiles, and cows wandering up the middle of the streets.

Terceira is one of the nine inhabited islands of the Azores Archipelago and is located in the North Atlantic Ocean, about 2,300 miles east of Washington D.C., and about 900 miles west of Lisbon, Portugal. Lajes Field, known as the “crossroads of the Atlantic” provides an important mid-Atlantic link for U.S. and Allied Forces to Europe, Africa, and Middle East. Terceira was the third island discovered by the Portuguese giving the island its name, which means “Third”. Terceira has beautiful hills and water is everywhere. The local people of the island are warm and friendly, and eager to try to speak English with you, but enjoy your effort to speak Portuguese.

We have a very proud and tight family here at Lajes, we are a Group of three squadrons and three flights with 585 dedicated professionals. You will hear the words “6-5 in the Fight” over and over. This represents our commitment to enabling expeditionary movement of war fighters, warplanes, and global communications to Combatant Commanders supporting joint, coalition, and NATO operations--promoting regional partnerships. We conduct our operations and take care of our team with pride. Our team is composed of United States military and civilian personnel; and Portuguese local nationals. As our guest, you are now a member of “Team Lajes.” We hope you find this information helpful.

### What you actually want and need to know!

This place is BEAUTIFUL! Hills and water everywhere you look! It almost seems unfair for it to be a remote! There is a lot to do outdoors, lots of amazing food and some of the best wine in

the world. By necessity, you will be out and about in another culture which, is amazing! People are very nice and even willing to struggle through the language barrier to help us. For stuff that can be produced here on the island (meat, wine, services, and locally produced items) it is relatively inexpensive! For things that they have to ship to the island (shoes, gas, etc.) this can get more expensive, similar to stateside prices.

### **Prior to Departure:**

1. Review your PCS orders - JFTR authorization is 25%
2. Contact your sponsor via email or phone

To Call a DSN from the US: 00-351-535-(last 4 of DSN)

### **Temporary Base Access Requirements** (CAC are for computer access only)

- Full Name
- Passport Number and Country of Passport

The permanent Base Access Pass can be started at Pass & ID (MUST be in uniform and have CAC).

**Note:** Other forms of ID are also accepted for temporary base access.

### **Uniforms**

**NO** clothing sales store on island! Bring extra items, especially if you think you will be promoted. The Laundry and Dry Cleaning operation on base might have some ABU stripes (free).

### **Uniform Requirements**

- Service dress and other blues combinations
- PT clothing to include pants and jacket (it gets cold and windy)
- Mess dress (if you have one)

**Note:** Highly recommend to pack an extra uniform in your carryon bag (luggage can be misplaced).

## **Where to Live**

Everyone lives off base (local economy), you can drive from one side of the island to the other in about 35-45 minutes depending on cow traffic, and nothing on the island is “far away”.

### **Locations** (not all inclusive)

**Praia da Vitória.** 5-10 minutes from base. Many military personnel who are assigned to Lajes Field live in Praia da Vitória. There are a number of restaurants, bars, a couple of different beaches, festivals, bullfights, etc. within the general vicinity.

**Biscoitos.** Country life, beautiful living, 20-25 minutes from base. Beautiful swimming holes and coastline.

**Porto Martins.** 15 minutes from base. Some people refer to this as 'little America'; nice houses, some even with 110v and 220v outlets, and A/C.

**Angra do Heroísmo.** 25-30 minutes to base. Very historical, lots of shopping, beach, and huge festivals.

## **Housing Office:**

Mr. Hélio Perpétua and his staff will assist you in every step of the way during house hunting. All details are handled by housing to include the scheduling of viewings appointments (EXTREMELY helpful and efficient). Pickups/drop offs for viewing appointments scheduled by housing will be done by the Landlord at the Main Gate, the housing office even assists you if there is a language barrier (most landlords speak English).

Websites such as [www.homes.mil](http://www.homes.mil) and Airbnb provide some good options. You can message homeowners with properties listed on Airbnb and ask them if they are interested in renting to American Military for 12 months.

You are authorized 10 days in lodging. However, if you are actively searching for a house and not being overly picky or waiting a housing inspection, you can stay longer.

Furniture will be provided by the housing office (i.e. tables, beds, transformers, etc.) and a small loan closet (i.e. pots, pans, dishes. etc.) is available at the AFRC (Bldg T-112).

## **Cell Phone/Internet**

Contact your phone carrier for international service options and conduct a cost estimate. If cancelling service, make sure to bring an unlocked phone. Pre-paid SIM cards are available at MEO (on-base) for around 10.00 euro a month and cell phone service can be added to internet/cable plan afterwards (if desired).

### **Most Force Support buildings on base offer free WiFi.**

For off-base internet service, two main companies provide WiFi/cable/phone for around 40.00 euro a month. Within the city limits of Praia, MEO provides fiber, anywhere else on the island, NOS offers a faster streaming speed.

### **Post Office (T-324)**

Average mail delivery time is 1-6 weeks (Prime included)

Monday-Tuesday-Thursday-Friday: 1000 - 1730

Wednesday: 1000 - 1400

U.S. Holidays - Closed

### **Tips for inbound:**

1. A sponsor may request a mail receptacle for an inbound up to 30 days prior to arrival (orders required).
2. If PCSing from another APO location, you can send uniforms and pro gear required for official duty "MPS."  
\*\*Mailing other items in conjunction with a PCS that are not pro gear (household goods) requires postage to be paid at the outbound Post Office. \*\*
3. Mail receptacle is only authorized for individual use. Any mail not addressed to the owner receptacle will be returned to sender.

For questions, please contact the Post Office via email: [65cs.postoffice@us.af.mil](mailto:65cs.postoffice@us.af.mil) or call 314-535-1203/3434

### **In-Processing**

Everything is walking distance and could be accomplished within 2 days. Many offices are 1 person deep (**consider lunch times prior to visiting**), so there is more flexibility and time to accomplish in-processing.

### **Military Personnel Section (T-112)**

Monday- Friday: 0900 - 1500

Wednesdays, U.S. Holidays & Family Days: Closed

Must be in uniform and bring PCS documents provided by losing base

\*Right Start is a MANDATORY appointment and should be attended within the first 30 days of arrival (scheduled by AFRC rep).

### **Finance (T-112)**

Monday- Friday: 0900 - 1500

Wednesdays, U.S. Holidays & Family Days: Closed

The Finance Office offers one-on-one service for all your financial needs. Once you arrive, you will want to visit them as soon as possible to complete your travel voucher. Completing your

travel voucher will ensure that you are paid timely for your travel expenses and also be used to update some of your military pay entitlements.

Most common allowances:

- **Cost of Living Allowance (COLA).** A non-taxable allowance designed to offset the higher overseas prices of non-housing goods and services. This allowance can fluctuate.
- **Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA).** OHA is paid to Service members living in private housing at overseas duty stations. It is used to pay rent and utilities.
- **Move-In Housing Allowance (MIHA).** A one-time entitlement paid for move-in housing expenses.
- **Temporary Lodging Allowance (TLA).** TLA is to partially reimburse a member for lodging and meals.

Visit the DTMO website for current rates: [Click here](#)

Currency used off-base is Euro. Currency used on-base may be USD or Euro depending on the facility you are visiting.

Please contact the Finance Office if you are planning to have your dependents visit. The length of their stay may affect your Family Separation Allowance\* and your housing entitlements\*\*.

\*DODFMR Vol 7A, 270302. A. FSA-R. Credit continues to accrue while the member's dependents visit at or near the member's PDS, but for no longer than 3 continuous months. Facts clearly must show that the dependents merely are visiting (not changing residence) and that the visit is temporary and not intended to exceed 3 months.

\*\*AFMAN 65-116V1, 26.28.1.3. Dependents Visit Member receiving FSH-O/FSH-B. If a member is visited at the PDS by all dependents, member must certify date of their arrival, purpose, and expected length of visit. After they depart, member must certify date of departure and, if more than three months from date of their arrival, reason for extension of visit.

\*\*Per JTR 100601, 3. FSH-O or FSH-B continues uninterrupted while a Service member's dependent visits at or near the Service member's PDS, but not to exceed 90 continuous days. Circumstances must clearly show that the dependent is not changing residence and that the visit is temporary and not intended to exceed 90 days.

### **Special Financial related considerations (Not CPTS)**

- **NO** cash cage on-base
- **NO** check cashing capabilities
- 2 ATMs available on-base (euro only) with a 0 – 5 % exchange rate/fee (check with your financial institution for specific rates). Some financial institutions specialize in military banking and international transfer needs (convenience might have a cost)

## **Rent Payment Options**

1. Pay with cash from the ATM (see above).
2. Consider the use of an international transfer app such as (i.e. Transferwise, Revolut, etc.), low fees and will potentially allow you to facilitate completely electronic transfers (No cash transactions) from US banks to Portuguese banks. [Click here](#) for YouTube video/details.
3. Open a Portuguese Bank Account (NOT hassle free) considerable amount of paperwork to get an account up and running here in the Azores (approximately 6 weeks) and you'll need some help from our LNs to smooth the process unless you speak Portuguese.

## **Automobile**

POV shipment to Lajes is AUTHORIZED. The roads, streets and parking areas are much narrower (typical for European countries). Parking is done typically on the street, keep this in mind if shipping a larger vehicle (i.e. truck, SUV). However, having a reliable vehicle is very important, all personnel live off base. Automatic cars here are rare, you'll probably learn drive a standard while you are here!

The POV delivery timeline is around (5-8 weeks), pick up is on-base (scheduled with LRS).

If purchasing a U-Plated (imported for U.S. personnel) vehicle all you do is go to Pass and ID Registration and do the bill of sale (both must be present). If the vehicle is P-Plated, you will have to go to the Automobile Registry Office in the Court House (Largo Conde da Praia da Vitória, 9760-438) down town Praia - both must be present, you have to take your ID, your tax identification number and 65.00 euros in cash. The average cost of a decent 'island bomb' is about \$1,000-\$2,000 (car standards are much lower than stateside). Most inexpensive cars are late 90s models, small and a little scary going 65 on the Via Rapida (the main highway that connects one side of the island to the other or Praia to Angra).

Car rental is available for approximately 15.00 - 30.00 Euros per day, prices WILL increase during the high season (summer). Rental can be done online, at the airport or in downtown Praia.

**CAUTION:** Most companies do not offer refunds for early returns.

\*\*\*Contact the AFRC rep **FIRST** and discuss available options. Conducting research is encourage but it is NOT recommended to take action without a second opinion (i.e. sponsor, AFRC, etc.). A Facebook group (Official Lajes Island Bombs) is available and access is granted by the AFRC rep upon verification of need (restricted to Lajes personnel only) - A similar website was created to take advantage of Americans.

### **Driver's License Requirements (24-72 hr turnaround)**

- First and last name
- State and license #
- Expiration date
- DEROS date
- Motorcycle Rider Yes or No

A Legal Office Memo is required if the license is expired or will expire while member is still stationed at Lajes.

### **Motorcycles**

The use of motorcycles or ATVs as a primary mode of transport is not recommended as rain is often and unpredictable.

### **Motorcycle Riders Requirements:**

- Completed Basic Riders Course (BRC)
- Got an Endorsement on license
- Completed the Initial CCs brief
- Updated MUSTT account
- Have all your PPE

**Note:** All motorcycle safety training must be completed prior to arrival to Lajes (Not available on island)

### **Vehicle Registration (Conducted at Pass & ID)**

Monday-Friday: 0800-1145 & 13:00-15:30

Weekends and Portuguese Holidays: closed

DSN: 314-535-4786

### **Imported Vehicles:**

- U.S driver's license/ Lajes Form 13 (local DL)
- Proof of insurance (valid in Portugal)
- Vehicle shipping documents (AF 733)
- **60 days to get vehicle inspected**

**U.S. Vehicles:**

- Valid US & Local Driver's License (LF Form 13)
- Valid CAC card/CCI (Personal Base ID)
- Valid Inspection
- Valid Insurance (valid in Portugal)
- Pass & ID Vehicle Registration

**P-Plated Vehicles:**

- Valid U.S. & Local Driver's License (LF Form 13)
- Valid CAC Card/CCI (Personal Base ID)
- Valid Inspection
- Valid Insurance (valid in Portugal)
- Livrete (Portuguese Title- green color)

**Vehicle Inspection Requirements (MUST haves)**

- Rear fog light
- Reflective tape (Trucks and SUVs)
- After-market tinted windows are NOT authorized (removal at owner's expense)

**Car Insurance**

USAA and GEICO offer international policies. Insurance is typically inexpensive but you MUST specify that you are in the Azores and not on mainland Portugal. Local insurance companies are available for "P-plated" vehicles.

**Fitness Center (T-333)**

Monday-Friday: 0600 - 2100

Saturday-Sunday: 0900 - 1700

Amazing ocean view, maintain or reach any fitness goals with a very low foot traffic (No need to fight for equipment or space)

**Amenities:**

- 24/7 Access (CAC registration required)
- Free WiFi
- Outdoor Recreation Equipment (i.e. bikes, golf clubs, etc.)



### **Ocean View Commons (Bldg T-319)**

Sunday – Thursday: 0600-2100

Friday – Saturday: 0600-2300

Primary facility for food, and place to go for quality of live events such as Entertainment (AFE) shows, live bands, themed parties, classic gaming tournaments, cooking workshops and other monthly events.

Off island trips and other adventures are available at special pricing through the R4R program (reduced price – 60-70% less). Additionally, the Top Atlantico Travel Agency provides services for all your traveling needs.

#### **Meal Times:**

Breakfast: 0600 - 1100

Lunch: 1100 - 1330

#### **Amenities:**

- Free WiFi
- Movie theater room
- Video gaming zone
- Computers with high speed internet

### **Laundry & Dry Cleaners (Bldg T-207)**

Monday-Friday: 1000 – 1800

Weekends and PT Holidays: Closed

#### **Services available:**

- Embroidery
- Fluff Dry (wash, dry and fold - low cost)

### **BX/Commissary/Barber Shop**

Closed Sundays and Mondays, Expectation management is Key!

Limited AAFES facilities, only 2 gas pumps on-base (1 type of gas), basic items are available and most nutritional needs or other requirements can be supplemented by purchasing from the local economy (Continente or Guarita.) or by online shopping.

**NO clothing sales available on island!**

## **Off-base Food & Shopping**

The local food is amazing! Grocery shopping is easy off base. They have, in general, the same items that any local grocery store or convenience market would carry. Also, the quality of the meat, bread and wine is better for a lower price. You can also find clothing, small appliances, really anything you want/need. The price for these types of things will be comparable to the states.

## **Medical Care**

Two Independent Duty Medical Technicians (IDMT) advice and assist with medical care at Lajes Field. The IDMTs will assess your condition, treat you or place a referral to hit up the local hospital either downtown Angra Do Heroismo or some of the smaller clinics in Praia. In short, if you have a serious injury you will get seen by a doctor or medically evacuated to the closest Military Treatment Facility (Ramstein). A local Nurse Ms. Elia Abreu and TRICARE specialist Ms. Fatima Almeida will take care of you for any local doctor or hospital visits. For Sick-call or less serious stuff, most of your care can be done in-house. There is a local dentist that can check you out while you are here at Lajes if necessary.

**Please ensure all medical requirements are made current prior to your arrival at Lajes, preferably within 60 days of arrival.** This includes HIV testing, Flu Shots, PHA, Dental, Optometry (prescription updates) Immunizations, and any occupational health related requirements like audiograms or those necessary for you to accomplish your job. Please be mindful most of these tests cannot be accomplished at Lajes.

## **Medications**

Make sure you have all of the prescription medication that you might need with you upon your arrival to Lajes Field. That means **you will need a full year supply**. Resources are limited in the island and it is imperative to have all your medications prior to arrival.

## **Dependents and TRICARE**

The Medical Aid Station is NOT responsible for the care of visiting dependents, they have limited resources and limited capabilities, please coordinate visits via International SOS, contact your local TRICARE representative before scheduling visits to the island to get a better understanding of how they will be covered. **Command Sponsored** dependents are entitled to care and arrangements can be made for their care off base, please ensure your dependents have all medications for the duration of your assignment.

## **Flying Here (if procuring personal tickets/Not SATO)**

Visitors can be on island for up to 90 consecutive days. The easiest route begins from Boston to the island (identifier: TER for Terceira Island, the island that Lajes Field is on...) or to Ponta Delgado island (identifier: PDL, the airport at the neighboring island of Sao Miguel). They fly direct to Lajes Field (Terceira Island) weekly. Other than that, expect to have a long travel

process going through Lisbon. This isn't a big deal, but the direct flight will make it very easy. You will have to search for this flight from BOS to TER/PDL. If you put airport XXX to TER/PDL, it may not show this flight. So in essence, you have to fly to BOS and then fly BOS to TER/PDL and it must be booked this way (baggage will need to be re-checked).

**Notes:**

1. A notarized letter allowing your spouse or guardian to **depart** Portugal with your child/children is a Portugal customs requirement. The process is simple but it is recommended to contact the Legal Office in advance for details and availability.
2. The "Flying here" paragraph is intended for dependent/visitor travel only. Military travel is handled by SATO at outbound location and might follow other guidance not covered on this document.

**Pets (authorized)**

Contact the AFRC Liaison at DSN: 314-535-4138 for guidance.

**Special considerations:**

- Layover if traveling through Lisbon (6 hrs or more)
- Pre-coordination with Veterinarian at Lisbon
- Pet-friendly rooms are not available on-base (pet-sitting/off-base kenneling required)

**Very Important Phone Numbers**

- BDOC (65 ABS): 295-573-222
- Emergency (Off Base): 295-571-911 (On Base is Just 911)
  
- POLAD (Political Advisor): 963-835-056
- Referral Management Nurse: Medical Liaison: 961-379-617
- First Sergeant: 964-565-917
- MFLC: 967-435-590
- SARC: 966-677-266
- Chaplain: 964-335-471
- JAG: 964-078-882

**Last but not least,**

Welcome again. This is a beautiful assignment! The on base resources are enough to sustain us here on the island but don't worry... Off base you can get everything that you will ever want and need!

P.S. If you would like to know a little more about Lajes Field, please feel free to browse the links below:

For 65th Air Base Group Information:

<https://portal.usafe.af.mil/sites/65ABG/SitePages/65th%20Air%20Base%20Group.aspx>

The 65th Force Support Flight:

<http://www.lajesfss.com/index.php/p/40/65th-force-support-squadron-lajes-field-azores/>

History of Lajes Field:

<http://www.lajes.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-110621-022.pdf>