

**35th Fighter Wing
Misawa Air Base, Japan**

Retiree Activities Office

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Retiree Activities Office Newsletter

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Articles appearing in this newsletter are compiled from local sources, newsletters received by the RAD, and from other military sources. Information has been edited and reprinted for the benefit of our retiree population. Our appreciation is extended to those agencies and newsletter sources.

No TRICARE Hike in 2011 Budget

Tricare recipients will see no increase in their premiums next year if Congress approves that provision of the fiscal 2011 defense budget request, as expected.

However, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates told reporters Feb. 1 that he wants to work with Congress to find ways to help control escalating military health-care costs that are consuming an ever-increasing chunk of the budget.

Noting the skyrocketing costs of the military health-care system -- \$19 billion in 2001 to \$50.7 billion in the fiscal 2011 budget request -- Secretary Gates questioned how sustainable the program can remain without cost controls or higher premiums.

"It's only going to go up," he said, with Military Health System officials estimating 5 to 7 percent annual cost increases through fiscal 2015. "And it is absorbing an increasing percentage of our budget."

Officials predict that the program will grow from 6 percent of the defense

budget to more than 10 percent by fiscal 2015.

"We absolutely want to take care of our men and women in uniform and our retirees," Secretary Gates said, "But at some point, there has to be some reasonable tradeoff between reasonable cost increases or premium increases or co-pays or something and the cost of the program."

There has been no Tricare premium increase since the program was founded in 1995, Secretary Gates said, adding that Congress has rejected recent Pentagon proposals for "very modest" increases. Expecting the same action this year, the Defense Department recommended no increase this year, he said.

"I ask anybody to point me to a health insurance program that has not had a premium increase in 15 years," Secretary Gates said.

Tricare benefits, he said, are "generous, as they should be for our men and women in uniform."

But Secretary Gates compared the \$1,200 average

out-of-pocket costs for a family of three under Tricare to about \$3,300 for the same family under a health maintenance organization plan in the Federal Employees Health Care Program.

"We see a lot of people coming back into Tricare because the benefits are so good and the costs are so low," he said

The Military Health System has 9.5 million eligible beneficiaries, including active-duty military members and their families, military retirees and their families, dependent survivors and certain eligible reserve-component members and their families.

Military Health System officials expect more eligible beneficiaries to continue returning to the Tricare system as costs of programs offered through their employers or spouses continue to increase.

The General Accountability Office recently found that more than 85 percent of retirees ages 45 to 49 and half of retirees between ages 60 and 64 had

access to other group health insurance, but chose Tricare instead.

As Tricare usage increases, so does the number of health-care visits that beneficiaries make, officials noted. Between fiscal 2005 and fiscal 2008, the average number of outpatient visits per enrollee increased from 8.7 to 9.97. Pharmacy use increased 5.5 percent over the timeframe.

Air Force Enlisted Village Update



For more information on other Air Force Villages and associated services, visit the Website:

www.airforcevillages.com

Air Force Villages, Inc.
 Air Force Village I, Inc.
 Air Force Village II, Inc.
 Air Force Enlisted Widows
 Community
 Air Force Villages Fund, Inc.
 AFV Services Corp.
 AFV Charitable Foundation
 Alzheimer's Care and
 Research Center Foundation

The Air Force Enlisted Village (AFEV) was founded in 1967 to provide a safe, secure and dignified place for indigent surviving spouses of retired Air Force personnel. The Village's primary goal and focus is to "Provide a Home," and financial assistance to these women. The surviving spouse with the greatest need is cared for first and none are refused assistance due to financial status. Surviving spouses requiring financial assistance live

Air Force Enlisted Village website
www.afenlistedwidows.org

here among peers sharing memories of Air Force life without the stigma normally associated with subsidized housing facilities. AFEV officials are reaching out to people interested in moving to their retirement communities by waiving certain fees. Two-bedroom upstairs apartments are available at Teresa Village. Advance fees are being waived for new residents who sign a lease before 15 APR. Advance fees will also be waived for new residents of Bob Hope Village who sign a lease before 15 APR. For more information regarding Air Force Enlisted Village communities, contact the admissions office at (850) 651-9422 to discuss eligibility requirements, or visit the AFEV Website

www.afenlistedwidows.org

AFEV is composed of **Teresa Village** in Fort Walton Beach, Fla., and **Bob Hope Village** in nearby Shalimar. Both are only minutes from Eglin Air Force Base and Hurlburt Field. Also Located on the Bob Hope Village campus is **Hawthorn House**, a 64-apartment assisted living two-story facility which features all the amenities of a top-of-the-line complex. Bob Hope village consist of 224 one-bedroom apartments and 32 two-bedroom apartments. Each apartment comes equipped with appliances, but you bring your furnishings to make it your own. There is a swimming pool, hot tub, and a 29,000-square foot Community Center. Teresa Village has a combination of two-story apartments and single level buildings plus a swimming pool and a 4,920-square foot Community Center. There are 101 two-bedroom first and second floor apartments; eight one-bedroom first floor apartments and seven three-bedroom houses. There are no elevators, so residents must be able to negotiate stairs. Each apartment comes equipped with appliances, but you bring your furnishings to make it your own. For both villages there is a monthly fee which covers water, sewer, garbage, maintenance, security costs and basic cable. Electricity, telephone, premium cable and internet services are

the resident's responsibility.

Surviving spouses applying for long-term residence at Bob Hope or Teresa Villages must be at least 55 years of age, have a valid identification card and must be able to live independently. Those who can no longer safely live on their own are now able to be at home in the Hawthorn House. Surviving spouse of enlisted members who served in other branches of the military are admitted on a space-available basis, but aren't eligible for financial assistance. Temporary housing is available to spouses of enlisted members who die or who are killed on active duty. Adult dependents - typically parents of active duty members or their spouses - are eligible for permanent housing on a space-available basis. For Admission to both villages all applicants must be ambulatory, able to live independently and possess a valid military ID card. Additional documents required for all admissions include:

Marriage Certificate
 Spouse's Birth Certificate
 Proof of Retirement –
 Orders or DD214

Death Certificate of Sponsor (surviving spouses only)

Enlisted Air Force retired couples become eligible when the retired member is 55 and the spouse is at least 55. Surviving spouses whose enlisted sponsors



AF Enlisted Village Continued

served in other branches of the service are admitted when space is available; however, they are not eligible for financial assistance. Younger applicants in need, whose active duty sponsor has just died, may be admitted for up to one year. Applicants are encouraged to complete the required Admission Form (including all medical information and doctor's signature) and submit them as soon as they meet the age criteria since applicants are placed on the waiting list in order of completed application date. There are two waiting

lists—one for surviving spouses and one for couples. Surviving spouses requesting financial assistance should contact the Admissions Department at (850) 651-9422 for more information. In case of a dire need situation, some of the criteria may be waived for admission to any of the villages. To receive an application for admission to Bob Hope Village or Teresa Village, or for more information, call the AFEV's admissions department at (850) 651-9422 or (800) 258-1413.

Application forms for admission for Hawthorn House can be downloaded at

www.afenlistedwidows.org/repository/HawthorneHouseApplication.pdf.

Hawthorn House applicants must also submit a medical form signed by a physician within 60 days of moving in. The form can be downloaded at www.afenlistedwidows.org/repository/HH%20Medical%20Form.pdf. Widows of retired Air Force enlisted members may be eligible for subsidized rent.

Surviving spouses requesting financial assistance should contact the Hawthorn House Admissions Department at (850) 651-3013 for more information. (Note: Special dietary needs can be met by the facility). Hawthorn House applicants must meet certain medical and physical ability requirements, details of which will be provided on inquiry with the Hawthorne House admissions office. [Source: www.afenlistedwidows.org Feb 2010]

TRICARE Information and Help

Have a question on how Tricare applies to your personal situation? Write to Tricare Help, Times News Service, 6883 Commercial Drive, Springfield, VA 22159; or tricare-help@militarytimes.com

In your e-mail, include the word "Tricare" in the subject line and do not attach files. You can also get Tricare advice online anytime at www.militarytimes.com/tricarehelp. For basic information refer to the latest Tricare Handbook at www.tricare.mil/mybenefit/Download/Forms/Standard_Handbook_LoRes.pdf or call your regional contractor. Following are some issues addressed in recent weeks by these sources:

(Q) **Can my older wife get**

Medicare before I do, or does Tricare make her wait for me to get Medicare first? If she can get Medicare sooner, can she also get Tricare for Life at that time?

(A) Social Security, not Tricare, determines eligibility for Medicare. To learn when she will be eligible for Medicare and how to apply, your wife should call Social Security at 800-772-1213. When retired Tricare beneficiaries entitled to Medicare Part A are enrolled in Medicare Part B, and their DEERS records are updated to report enrollment in Part A and Part B, Tricare automatically makes them eligible for Tricare for Life, regardless of age.

(Q) **Will transition to Tricare for Life (TFL) impact on my family's Tricare**

Prime coverage? I will be 65 this year and become eligible for Tricare for Life. My wife, daughter, and I have been under Tricare Prime and it has met our health care needs. But now, as soon as I get Tricare for Life, I become ineligible for Tricare Prime and get switched to Tricare Standard against my will. Not only will I have the additional expense of Medicare Part B, but under Tricare Standard, we will start incurring deductibles and cost shares that we don't have under Tricare Prime. Is there a way we can keep Prime when we get TFL?

(A) Your loss of Tricare Prime eligibility and automatic transfer to Tricare Standard can't be avoided. It's part of the legal requirements for TFL. Under TFL, Tricare Standard acts as a free Medicare supple-

ment. You cannot choose to keep Tricare Prime. Your transition to TFL and transfer from Prime to Standard will have no effect on your family's Tricare Prime enrollment. You will be the only one affected. Your daughter may continue under Tricare Prime until she loses Tricare eligibility at age 21 (age 23 if a full-time college student), or until she marries, whichever comes first. Your wife continues under Tricare Prime until she becomes entitled to Medicare and TFL at age 65. At that time, she'll have transfer to Tricare Standard under the TFL program, just as you had to.

[Source: Navy Times James E. Hamby Jr. column 22 Feb 2010]

New Law Makes Absentee Voting Easier Overseas

On October 28, 2009, Congress enacted the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act. This legislation amends existing law regarding overseas voting in federal elections, and should make voting easier for overseas Americans.

New Procedures for 2010

Beginning with the November 2010 general election, and for all subsequent general, special, and primary elections, states will be required to mail out ballots at least 45 days prior to an election for a federal office. This requirement may cause some states to select earlier primary dates in order to comply with the 45-day mailing deadline, or to request waivers due to special circumstances.

In addition to mailing ballots to overseas voters, the states will be required, at the voter's request, to provide registration forms, absentee ballot request forms, and blank ballots via fax or email. However, each state's laws determine whether ballot requests or voted ballots can be returned via fax or email. The new law prohibits states from rejecting marked ballots based on notarization, paper size, or paper-weight requirements. The witnessing requirements of individual states remain in place.

Overseas Absentee Ballots

Effective immediately, states will no longer be required by federal law to continue to mail election materials to overseas addresses (even when they

are determined to be invalid) for two complete general election cycles on the basis of a single ballot request. It will now be up to each state to determine how long to continue to send out election materials before requiring overseas voters to submit new ballot requests. This change, sought by local election officials, should greatly decrease the volume of voting materials sent abroad to addresses where Americans no longer reside.

In light of these changes, the Department of State recommends that all U.S. voters residing abroad request absentee ballots from their local election officials at the start of each calendar year, and whenever there is a change of address, change of e-mail address, or change of name, by completing and sending in a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA.) To locate information on your specific state's requirements, and to obtain an on-line version of the FPCA, please visit www.fvap.org. FPCAs may be mailed to your local voting officials in the United States via international mail or from any U.S. embassy or consulate. Many states allow U.S. citizens overseas to submit the FPCA by e-mail or fax.

The Department of State strongly encourages all U.S. overseas voters to provide e-mail addresses or fax numbers on their FPCAs to enable local election officials to transmit election materials in

the fastest manner available, which should then allow sufficient time for the return of voted ballots. For information regarding your specific state, please visit www.fvap.org.

Emergency Ballots

The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) serves as an emergency ballot for the November general elections for federal offices, although some states also permit its use for elections for state and local offices. Beginning in January 2011, the new law allows use of the FWAB for primary, special, and runoff elections for federal offices. Voters who request an absentee ballot in advance of their state's ballot request deadline, but who fail to receive an official ballot from local election officials in time to vote, should complete the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot and send it back to local election officials in time for it to be counted. An on-line version of the FWAB, together with instructions for its use, is available at:

www.fvap.gov.

Questions?

The Voting Assistance Officer at the Tokyo Embassy is also always available to answer questions about absentee voting. To contact the Voting Assistance Officer, send an e-mail to:

tokyoacs@state.gov.

For SOFA status personnel, please contact your installations Voting Assistance Officer for assistance or more information.





Base Hospital Not Equipped for Long-term

Retirees who choose to live in another country need to consider their choice very carefully, especially when it comes to long-term and specialized health care.

In Japan, we have the Japanese National Health Insurance System and the regional long-term care insurance programs. Additionally, we have our medical benefits under Tricare and our access to the Military Treatment Facilities (MTF).

Here in Misawa, we have been very fortunate to have an excellent (although limited) base hospital with dedicated, understanding staff to meet our immediate health care needs.

However, lately the hospital staff and its resources have

been strained when they have tried to meet demands for which they are not prepared to provide.

Overseas MTFs are there to meet the immediate needs of the active-duty military and DoD staff and their families. Military retirees and their families are also served by these MTFs, primarily on a space-available and priority basis. Even though the rules state that we are served 'space-available' we retirees have always received the best and timely care the hospital can give. The problems arise when we ask for care that the hospital is not designed to give—specifically—long-term geriatric care.

We chose to live our twilight years in a foreign country.

When we made our choice, we were expected to have made an informed decision, and planned responsibly for our life within the unique circumstances of our living here. That means that we should know that the local MTF, while a great benefit, is still limited, and that we must have plans in place to deal with the inevitable for ourselves and our families.

If you are not under SOFA and haven't joined the Japanese health-care system and the long-term care system, and you intend to spend the rest of your days here, then you must act responsibly for the sake of yourselves, your families and your fellow retirees, to make the appropriate care arrangements.

If you are not willing or able to get into the local care systems, you should include a plan for eventual return to the U.S. at some point in your future so that you can avail yourselves of the care available under Tricare, Medicare, the Veteran's Administration as well as the MTFs.

Continued strain on the limited resources of our local MTF could cause a decrease in the availability and quality of medical care for us all.
—JR

More On TRICARE! New Handbook Update

Hot off the press and filled with helpful tips and information, the newest Tricare Standard and Extra handbook is now available to all Tricare Standard beneficiaries. The 68-page handbook includes information on accessing routine, urgent, and emergency care, as well as Tricare's prior authorization and referral requirements. Also provided are sections on what's covered by Tricare Standard's health and pharmacy benefits, and how to coordinate Tricare with other health insurance. Information on claims, appeals, grievances, reporting fraud and abuse and much more can

also be found in the new Tricare Standard handbook. Tricare Standard and Extra are available to family members of active duty service members, retired service members and their families and others including those who purchase Tricare Reserve Select. With Tricare Standard, beneficiaries manage their own health care and have the freedom to seek care from any Tricare-authorized provider. Tricare Extra provides discounted cost-shares for seeking care from network providers. The "Tricare Standard Handbook: Your Guide to Using Tricare Standard and Tricare Extra" is available now on the Tri-

care Smart Site at www.tricare.mil/standardhandbook

Tricare Standard beneficiaries can expect to see the annual Tricare Standard Health Matters newsletter, containing the latest updates and information about their benefits, in their mailbox in March 2010. Receiving the newsletters from Tricare is one more reason to keep personal information current in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). Along with address or phone number changes, both active duty and retired beneficiaries should update their DEERS entry

with any changes to their families (birth, adoption or death), changes in sponsor status, marriage, divorce, or when they become eligible for Medicare.



TRICARE Dental

Good oral health is an important part of maintaining overall health, and a military retiree's access to dental coverage does not end when they hang up their uniform. With the Tricare Retiree Dental Program, retired servicemembers can purchase affordable dental coverage for themselves and their eligible family members, say officials.

The Tricare Retiree Dental Program is available worldwide to retired servicemembers who receive retirement pay, "gray area" retired National Guard and Reserve members who are entitled to -- but not yet receiving -- retirement pay, and Medal of Honor recipients. Children up to age 21, or 23 if they are full-time students, and the

spouses of these retirees are also eligible for the retiree dental program.

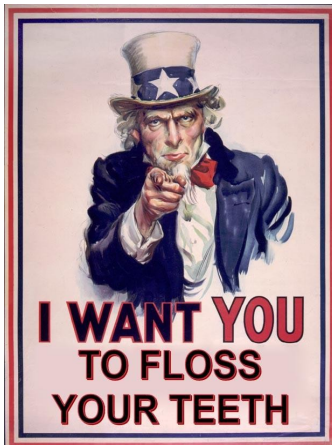
Participants in this voluntary plan can get dental care from any licensed dentist within the program's designated service area; however, visiting an out-of-network dentist may require participants to pay higher out-of-pocket expenses and file their own claims.

The Tricare Retiree Dental Program is a premium-based plan administered by Delta Dental and it has cost shares for certain services after beneficiaries reach their \$50 per-person deductible. Most preventive, diagnostic and emergency dental services are covered or available for cost-sharing immediately after enrollment, but some

services including orthodontics, dentures and crowns are available with a cost-share only after 12 months of continuous enrollment.

The monthly premium rates vary based on the retiree's location and the number of people covered by the plan. These premiums are automatically deducted from retirement pay.

Those interested in the Tricare Retiree Dental Program may enroll online, by telephone or by mail. Visit www.trdp.org <<http://lyris.dmasa.dma.mil/t/2365656/4617084/9768/0/>> and click "Prospective Enrollees" for more information on rates and benefits. (Courtesy of Tricare)



Time to Update DEERS?

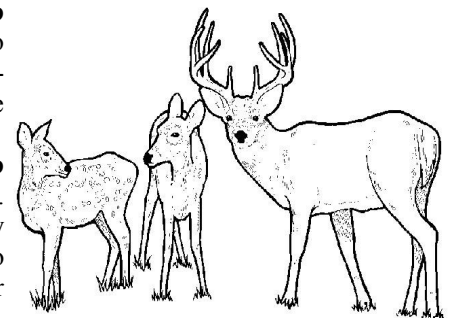
TRICARE beneficiaries living overseas should keep an eye on their mailbox for critical information about how the new TRICARE Overseas Program contract affects them. To make sure the information reaches them, beneficiaries living abroad need to update their Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) records as soon as possible. Contact information can be updated in DEERS (1) in person--find the nearest ID card office online, by phone at 1-800-538-9552 (1-866-363-2883 TTY/TDD), by faxing at 1-831-655-8317, or by mailing

address changes to DMDC Support Office, 400 Gigling Road, Seaside, CA 93955-6771.

Online you have two options for updating personal information online:

Visit the **DEERS Web site** and follow the steps to update your address, e-mail address and phone numbers online.

Via the **Beneficiary Web Enrollment Web site**. The site is linked directly to the DEERS database, so when you update your information via this portal, it not only updates DEERS, but also with your regional contractor. (Courtesy of military.com)





More Customers Using MyPay

When the Defense Finance and Accounting Service first launched the myPay Web-based pay account system in 2000, less than 500,000 military, military retirees, annuitants and federal civilian employees were listed as online users. Today that number includes 3.7 million users with access to pay account information, tax statements and the ability to update their bank, personal and allotment information instantly and, most importantly, securely.

Currently, more than 2.6 million myPay users have accessed their 2009 tax statements online, thereby avoiding the delays and possible security risks of regular mail delivery.

Last November, DFAS officials implemented a myPay security enhancement requiring users to establish new login credentials, including personalized login IDs and passwords. The agency has posted step-by-step instructions in both text and video at the myPay site (<https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx> <<http://lyris.dmasa.dma.mil/t/2366454/4617084/9800/0/>>) and its public Web site (www.dfas.mil <[\[lyris.dmasa.dma.mil/t/2366454/4617084/9801/0/\]\(http://lyris.dmasa.dma.mil/t/2366454/4617084/9801/0/\)>\) to help customers set up their new information. Currently, 82 percent of myPay accounts have been updated with new login information.](http://</p>
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"While some might view 82 percent as a positive, I'm concerned that some of our customers don't appreciate what myPay provides," said Richard Gustafson, DFAS principal deputy director.

Mr. Gustafson said myPay is a useful tool, and customers can be confident that their information is protected.

"We want to help our customers become educated customers, to partner with us to make sure all aspects of their pay -- from what they are due to how it is delivered -- are as accurate as possible," he said.

Users of myPay have greater control over their pay accounts and can make changes to vital information in a very secure environment. Some of the options within myPay include:

- Download, save and print pay account information from military retired or annuitant account statements.
- Download, save and print

annual tax statements such as 1099Rs.

- Verify and update postal and e-mail addresses.
- Verify and update bank account information for direct deposit.
- Start, change or stop financial allotments.
- Make changes to federal or state tax withholding amounts.
- Change user names and passwords to keep accounts secure.

While the options may vary from one customer category to another, all myPay users can establish alternate login credentials for use by family members, tax preparers or others they trust to view account information and download tax statements.

"The myPay system has been with us for a while," Mr. Gustafson said. "Our security enhancements have been developed to counter threats to our customers' personal and financial information. The growth in what can be accomplished has reflected the needs and wishes of many recipients of our payroll services. In short, myPay gives them a way to avoid the risks of postal delivery of their information, and a way to

really shorten the amount of time it takes to update information in our pay systems.

"But the bottom line is still how these users view the importance and worth of myPay," he said. "Do they understand their role in keeping their financial information current and accurate?"

While DFAS maintains some of the more traditional methods of submitting changes to customer information or inquiring about pay issues such as fax, call centers and mail, the myPay system provides a faster and more efficient means to communicate with their payroll service provider.

"The changes customers submit via myPay are effective immediately," said Dawn Coulter, the agency's e-commerce director. "Rather than waiting for the fax machine or mail to get the information to DFAS, then waiting for a payroll technician to input that information into the pay system, address changes, new bank account information or other data become effective the moment the customer hits the submit button." (Courtesy of DFAS)

Apply to Adopt a Military Working Dog

After completing their service, some military working dogs are made available for adoption. The adoption law gives priority to their handlers, then to civilian law enforcement agencies and finally to the general public. An Adoption Suitability Test—given and videotaped

by the dog's handler -- is required by the DoD to determine if the animal is suitable for civilian adoption. To request an application, send an e-mail to (mwd.adoptions@lackland.af.mil) or call 210-671-5874. Additional information is available at the Military Working Dog Adop-

tions website (<http://www.militaryworkingdogadoption.com/index.html>) or at the DoD Military Working Dog School website: (<http://www.lackland.af.mil/units/341stmwd/index.asp>) (Courtesy of military.com)





Get Your Primary Ballots On Time

The Federal Voting Assistance Program wants to remind all military and overseas voters to submit their ballot requests for the May, June and July State Primaries. All members of the U.S. Uniformed Services, their family members and citizens residing outside the U.S. who are residents from these States and have not yet submitted a registration and ballot request - Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) for the 2010 calendar year, should do so as soon as possible. The FPCA ballot application and instructions for the above States are available at www.fvap.gov/FPCA. Click on your State on the map and follow the instructions to register and request an absentee ballot. Some States allow submitting the FPCA by fax or email in addition to regular mail.

Send your FPCA to your election office to ensure you have enough time to receive, vote, and return the ballot! For more information, visit FVAP at: www.fvap.gov. (Courtesy of military.com)

Are Your Affairs In Order?

If you died in your sleep this morning, would you have gone to bed confident that your family had been sufficiently informed of what to do when the inevitable happens? Would they know where to find your papers? By "papers" we mean, your will, insurance, annuities, investments, your discharge documents, etc.? Getting it together after a death in the family is pretty hard, and having this information in a safe, convenient location will help your spouse and any assisting persons. It is even harder if your spouse or surviving family member is not a native English speaker (as often the case for many of us retirees living overseas), so sufficient, clear and concise instructions for your spouse to be able to take care of business is the best gift you can leave behind. (More than once I have personally seen not only the tears of loss but the fear in the eyes of a spouse who has absolutely no idea what to do or to whom to turn for help.)

We here in the RAO mention this all the time about ensuring that birth certificates, retirement orders, DD Forms 214, insurance policies, SBP documentation, Social Security cards, wills,

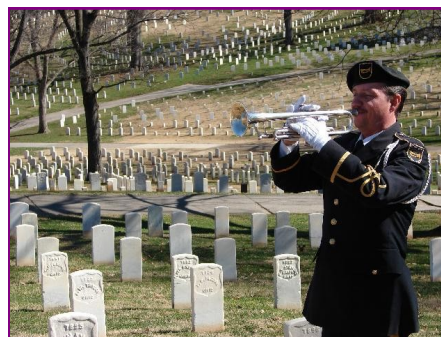
lists of savings and investment accounts and any other monetary assets and other death benefits are documented and up to date and in a safe place where your family can get them in case of your death.

Putting all this documentation together in one place so your family knows where it is and can access it immediately, if the occasion arises, will make things go much more smoothly and quickly in processing benefits and entitlements for your spouse and children. Don't put your survivors in a position where they are unable to provide all your personal data to the casualty assistance officers and the RAO. Human nature being what it is we always believe it will not happen to us and we still have time. The sad thing is we never know how much time we really do have.

I can't emphasize it enough that you need to consolidate all your important papers in one place and sit down with your spouse and children and discuss their benefits and what needs to happen when you are no longer around. I know it isn't the most pleasant topic of conversation around the dinner table, but believe me if you truly love them you will

take the time to do this for them. Don't wait thinking you have time to get it all done. Wills should be updated every time there is a change in beneficiaries or life event; you should be reviewing your will at least yearly to ensure currency. Also, ensure that you always have life insurance in effect, whether SGLI, VGLI or a commercial policy. Don't cancel one without another one being current. Keep your current pay statements, financial investment reports, as well as all documents in a fire proof box. Make sure someone in the family knows where the documents can be found.

Any death is a tragic event. Don't make it anymore tragic by leaving your family unprepared to continue their lives without you. Stop by the RAO or go to our webpage at: <http://www.misawarao.org> and download a survivors checklist to ensure you've taken care of everything today. (This article incorporates parts of a previous article written by our former director, CMSgt (Ret) Dave Barton.) -JJR





Your Retired Activities Office Staff



NEW DIRECTOR

Retired MSgt Joseph Roginski took over as Director of the Retiree Activities Office in March. Many of you know Joe from his previous position as the Japan Regional Director for USA Federal Credit Union, and their Misawa Branch manager. After almost 25 years with the credit union, he decided to bring it to a graceful end. Before the credit union, Joe spent 20 years in the Air Force, 17 of them in Misawa, for a total of 42 years in Misawa and counting. While working at the credit union, he began assisting our retirees and widow population, well before there was an RAO. He hopes to continue to be an asset to the community with his fluency in Japanese and desire to help all who need assistance.

Learn Japanese!

Learn Japanese or improve your command of the language at the Misawa International Center. Classes every Tuesday. There are also Spanish language classes, and KOTO (Japanese traditional stringed instrument) classes. Do all this and more at the Misawa International Center. They also have consultation and support for relations with Japanese neighbors, living in Japan, and understanding customs and social rules. Call 0176-51-1255 or e-mail: misawa44@net.pref.aomori.jp



NEW DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Retired TSgt Everett (Tony) Watkins is now the Deputy Director in the Retiree Activities Office. Tony joined the RAO in mid-2009. After he retired from the USAF, Tony worked for a number of years for AAFES as the manager of the Furniture Mart. A very personable individual with a strong desire to help, Tony very generously does additional volunteer time three days a week with the Medical Group at the Optometry Clinic.



NEW MEMBER OF STAFF

Retired MSgt Shawn Smith, who hails from Junction City, Louisiana, joined the staff of the RAO this April. Shawn is the founder and pastor of the Greater Love Missionary Baptist Church, (near Misawa Airport). Reverend Bishop Smith is the person who made it possible for us to change our hours to five days a week. He also speaks some Japanese and is very experienced at 'administering to the flock', and we will no longer need to invite a chaplain to our events because we now have an in-house chaplain!



From The Editor....

Greetings from the newest in a growing line of editors of the RAO Newsletter. I am a novice (my first time) at compiling, editing and publishing a newsletter. Consequently, there may be errors or omissions. If I get it wrong, please call or e-mail me at the RAO. Suggestions for improvement will be greatly appreciated. "With the help of my friends" I will do my best to continue to produce the 'top notch' newsletter we are used to, and make it even better as I gain experience.

Joseph (Joe) Roginski (-JJR)

In The Local Community.....

Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month

May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. Please come out, support, and celebrate our heritage with an Asian Cuisine Food Tasting, APAHM Bake Sale, and Cooking Demonstration just to name a few events. The annual banquet will be held on May 27th. POC is TSgt Villanueva at 226-2978

American Day 2010

June 6th (Sunday) by the main gate, Civic Center, City Hall Park (Train Park). Shopping and snacks, souvenirs, shows, games, etc. all there for you. Enjoy this annual festival of friendship and sharing with our Japanese neighbors.

Misawa International Association

The MIA offers various activities at the International Center through their international friendship group. Make new friends, socialize, have fun, party together, sharing language, customs, and good feeling.

DIRECTOR RETIRES

CMSgt Dave Barton will be leaving us for a while to take a well deserved long vacation in the 'states. He will be visiting family and friends but will not be out of our thoughts. Dave took over as Director in June 2009. He has worked with the Misawa AB RAO since its inception in February 2000 and was instrumental in getting us up to speed and setting up a fine office. Since he will be out of the area for an extended period, he decided to step down as director. We anticipate his continued involvement with the RAO and we will be seeking his assistance as well. Thanks, Dave, for a great job! You will be missed.



CMSgt (Ret) Dave Barton

MMRA Meeting Schedule

All meetings are held at the Tohoku Enlisted club Gray Room at 1700 hours.

6 April 2010

1 June 2010

3 August 2010

5 October 2010

7 December 2010

MMRA

The **Misawa Military Retirees' Association** held elections on 6 April with the following results:

President - **Joe Stevens**
 Vice President -
Herman "T" Tinnirella
 Secretary - **Paul Sayles**
 Treasurer - **Everett Watkins**

The Association is a non-profit IRS recognized, tax exempt organization. Funds raised are mainly used to support retirees and their survivors in times of need, and also to support the base community. To name a few examples: the MMRA assisted one survivor with a \$400 grant for winter fuel oil, granted emergency funds to the survivor of a retiree who was killed in a traffic accident, donated funds for Haiti relief, supported Special Olympics, supported VFW Patriot's Pen essay contest at Sollars Elementary School, and even provided refreshments to the Japanese vehicle tax collectors who come to the base for a week from Towada City, and more.

If you are interested, please join us on the first Tuesday of even-numbered months at the Tohoku Club Gray Room at 1700 hours. Dues are just \$20 a year. Dues and donations are also accepted at the Retiree Activities Office, in room 210 in building 653 if you cannot make a meeting or would like to make a donation to our survivor's assistance fund.

"Space A" Still an Option

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, Ill. – Retirees who dream of globe-trotting can make these dreams come true with space-available travel.

Space-A travel is free with the exception of customs or federal inspection fees on some chartered commercial air service missions. Air Mobility Command aircraft fly all over the globe and often have open passenger seats available.

Military retirees with a retiree ID card and who are eligible to receive retired or retainer pay, will fly as Category VI passengers. Missions can be rerouted, delayed or cancelled for a variety of reasons: weather, maintenance or higher priority missions – so you need to be flexible. Plan for any potential delays and added expenses for stays, especially in high-cost areas. There are four different methods for signing up for Space-

A travel: in person at the passenger terminal or remotely via telephone, fax or e-mail. Sponsors must provide their name and information on all traveling dependents, and their desired destination(s).

Retirees can also use the DOD-chartered airlift missions for Space-A travel, if seats are available. Although retirees cannot visit their grandchildren in Iraq or Afghanistan, they can travel to Germany if the aircraft transitions there.

If traveling overseas, retirees should know the restrictions of the host country. For example, retirees traveling to Germany are not authorized to purchase items in the base exchange, but they can go off base and shop in the local community. Status of Forces Agreements restrictions, U.S. State Department Travel Advisory guidelines, the Foreign Clearance Guide and passport and visa requirements are all necessary items to research.

-www.military.com

New Hours of Operation

The RAO is now open five days a week, Monday through Friday from 0900 to 1500. There may be times when nobody is available due to wing meetings, appointments, working a member outside the office, etc. If no one is in, please leave a message on the door, or at 226-4428, or e-mail us at rao@misawa.af.mil. We will get back to you ASAP.

35th FW/CVR
Unit 5021
APO AP 96319-5021
Phone: 011-81-176-77-4428/5675
DSN: (315) 226-4428/5675
Email: rao@misawa.af.mil
Cell Phone: 090-4881-9183



35th Fighter Wing
Misawa Air Base, Japan

Still Serving!

The Misawa Air Base Retiree Activities Office is an official activity organized in accordance with AFI 36-3106. The office is here to assist retirees from all military services in the Tohoku and Hokkaido regions of Japan. We can provide assistance in pay, taxes, social security, and personal/casualty affairs as well as many other matters the retiree may need help with. We provide a focal point for retirees and/or their survivors with questions/concerns and work closely with the active duty community. Through the office and the activities of the Misawa Military Retirees Association we are able to provide assistance to indigent widows in the area with fuel, food and living expenses. The office is supplied and equipped through organizational funding, while being staffed entirely by volunteers.

The office is open Monday through Friday from 0900 through 1500 hours. We are located in room 210, Bldg 653. If you are unable to contact the RAO in an emergency, you may contact the Casualty Assistance Representative in the Airman & Family Readiness Center, 226-4735 or from off base, 0176-77-4735. Japanese Nationals requiring assistance, who may have limited English language skills, may contact us and talk with MSgt (Ret) Joe Roginski, who is bilingual.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

[HTTP://MISAWARAO.ORG](http://MISAWARAO.ORG)



Lodging Front Desk: 222-0282 / 0284 (reservations)
Command Post: 226-9899
Law Enforcement: 226-3600
Emergency Room: Non-Urgent- 226-6647
Emergency- 911 / Off Base 53-911

Medical/Dental Appointments- - -

Medical: 226-6111

Dental: 226-6700

AAFES General Manager: 616-3780

Commissary Officer: 226-3823

USA Federal Credit Union 226-4954

Anthony's Pizza: 616-6300

Pizza Hut: 616-5000

Clothing Sales: 616-8709

Fitness Center: 226-3982

Library: 226-4083

Misawa Clubs- - - -

Enlisted: 616-1889

Officer: 616-1891

Base Theater: 616-8701

Taxi- - - -

Official: 226-3328

Non-Official (Kichi Cab): 616-5438

Weather Forecast: 226-3064

Note: When dialing from off base, local area, dial 66-xxxx instead of 222/616-xxxx, and 77-xxxx instead of 226-xxxx.

Outside local area add 0176.

MISCELLANEOUS NUMBERS

Misawa Military Retirees Association meets bi-monthly on the first Tuesday, of even months, at 1700 hours, in the Tohoku Enlisted Club's Gray Room. All military retirees regardless of service affiliation are welcome as members. We are your voice to the active duty community and help to support the many retiree programs on the base. We also provide assistance in emergencies to retirees and surviving spouses in times of need. Come out and help support our efforts.





SERVING THE RETIRED MILITARY COMMUNITY IN NORTHERN JAPAN



This publication is written, edited and published by the Misawa Air Base Retiree Activities Office, for the retired community in northern Japan. The information or comments herein do not necessarily represent the position or opinion of the DOD, USAF or the 35 FW. While every effort has been made to assure the accuracy of the information herein, no absolute guarantee of accuracy can be given nor should be assumed.

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