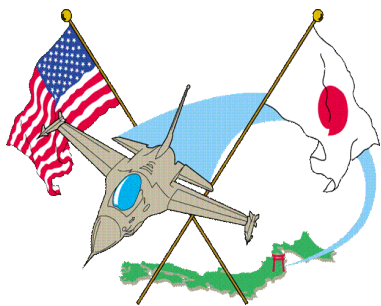




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Misawa AB Retiree Activities Office Newsletter

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Articles appearing in this newsletter are compiled from local sources, newsletters received by the RAO, and from other military sources. Information has been edited and reprinted for the benefit of our retiree population. Absolutely no commercial gain is derived from this publication. Our appreciation is extended to those agencies and newsletter sources. Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of any agency of the U.S. Government.

VA States Goals

Improving the veteran experience is at the top of the list of priorities for the Veterans Affairs Department. Literally.

Displayed in the lobby entrance to VA's Washington, D.C., headquarters is a large poster board emblazoned with the image of former President Abraham Lincoln and 12 breakthrough priorities." The poster board is signed by dozens of VA employees, signaling a renewed commitment – as Lincoln called for in his second inaugural address – "To care for him who shall have borne the battle." VA Secretary Bob McDonald announced the new priorities to Congress in early 2016, but work to improve the veteran experience began in earnest shortly after McDonald was confirmed by the Senate in mid-2014.

One of McDonald's first major actions was hiring Tom Allin as the agency's first chief veteran experience officer.

Allin, who previously served as the CEO of a large Asia-based foods company, brought private sector experience to an agency mired in national scandals, disability claims backlogs and bureaucracy. "We excel in bureaucracy, and I'll put our bureaucracies up against yours any day," Greg Giddens, acting chief acquisition officer for VA, said Tuesday. "But the secretary came in and saw us as an organization that looked at ourselves from the inside out. He challenged us to think about how VA looks from the outside in, and how veterans look at VA. Veterans don't see VA as an organization chart; they see it as an organization that is supposed to focus on their needs."

tomer experience stalwarts of the private sector like Amazon and Disney – very few federal agencies are – but VA officials say they're on the right track. VA recently launched a beta version of www.vets.gov, a website site that intends to eventually give veterans single sign-on access to thousands of online services. The single site is a response to the troubling confusion Allin said he experienced shortly after he was hired, when he learned VA has upward of 1,000 different websites pertaining to veterans' needs. If a veteran tries searching on Google, "it's just about impossible to get something done," Allin said last August. VA also began consolidating its 950 toll-free numbers to VA facilities and health centers to simplify the process by which veterans reach contact centers. Additionally, VA is modernizing its approach to contact centers, striving for a "unified experience for veterans," Giddens said, which means "collecting and securely sharing" the right data sets.

VA's effort to improve the veteran experience has had other effects, too. The disability claims backlog, which once topped 600,000, has been reduced to 75,000, its lowest rate since VA began measuring the statistic in 2009. By the end of 2016, vets who enter a VA medical center will have their clinical needs addressed within the day, under VA's new targets. Another goal is to provide veterans a faster decision when they appeal compensation decisions. Ninety percent should have an answer within a year.

Source: Veterans' Administration Website

Misawa AB Retiree
Activities Office

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35th FW/CC

Col Travis B. Rex
35th FW/CV

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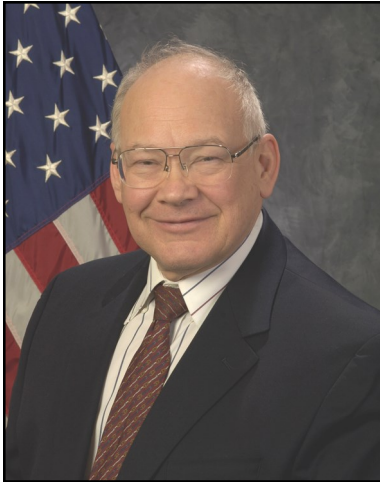
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AVA may not yet be on par with cus-



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New Base Commander



Colonel R. Scott Jobe

As Col Timothy Sundvall's Misawa tour ends and he moves on to a staff position at the Pentagon, Col R. Scott Jobe assumed command of the 35th Fighter Wing and Misawa Air Base last week.

Before coming to Misawa, Col Jobe was Division Chief, J53 Deliberate Planning and the Air Force Element Commander, U.S. Southern Command. Prior to this he was the Commander, 455th Expeditionary Operations Group, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing, Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. He is a graduate of the Dwight D. Eisenhower School of National Security and Resource Strategy at National Defense University, Ft. McNair, Washington DC.

Colonel Jobe entered the Air Force after graduating from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville with a B.S. in Electrical Engineering and earned his commission through the ROTC program in 1993. He attended Pilot Training at Sheppard, AFB, Texas, and F-16 Initial Qualification at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. His first operational assignment was with the 69th Fighter Squadron Werewolves, Moody AFB, Georgia. Other assignments include: Kunsan AB, Republic of South Korea, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, AL, and Headquarters Air Force, the Pentagon. He served as the Commander of the 16th Weapons Squadron, Nellis AFB, NV. He has led flying missions in Operations SOUTHERN WATCH, NOBLE EAGLE and ENDURING FREEDOM.

Col. Jobe is a Command Pilot with over 2,400 flying hours primarily in the F-16.

DFAS Director's Message

We know you're retired, but in this issue we are going to talk to you about some of the work required to manage your military retired pay.

Once you've retired from military service, it's natural to think that everything is settled and that your pay will always arrive on time, in the proper amount and deposited in your bank account. While you may feel it's time to kick back and relax, there's still the job of protecting your financial security and the financial well-being of your loved ones.

The bottom line is you have to take an active role in managing your pay account; and now is the

best time to set up your routines to make that job easier. First, you know you have to file your taxes every year. Since there are still a few more weeks in tax season, in this issue we're including articles on how to get your tax statements for last minute filers who've misplaced their 1099R.

But after filing your taxes, one of the most important things you can do is, if you have elected SBP coverage, make sure your beneficiaries understand the nature and extent of the coverage, and what to do in the event they ever have to make a claim. In this newsletter, right after the article on ways to get extra copies of your 1099R, we are offering an article on educating your SBP beneficiary in this way.



TRICARE and VA Issues

Specialty Referrals

Many TRICARE Prime beneficiaries receive primary care from providers in military hospitals and clinics. Occasionally, they may need to receive specialty care. When this happens, they must receive a referral from their primary care manager (PCM).

Getting a referral makes sure your regional or overseas contractor authorizes the care before you make an appointment. TRICARE rules require that if the care you need is available at a military hospital or clinic near you, and there is space available, you will be referred there first. Military hospitals and clinics have 90 minutes to accept urgent referrals and two business days to accept referrals for routine care. If your local military hospital or clinic does not accept the referral within that time, you will be referred to a network provider near you.

Your regional contractor will send a letter with the name and location of your specialty provider. The letter will also tell you what care is authorized, the length of time you are authorized to receive that care, and the type and number of visits you are allowed before you need another referral.

Before making an appointment with the specialty care provider, call your regional contractor 3-5 days after the PCM enters the referral to check the status. Try to take copies of your medical records, x-rays and lab results with you to see the specialist.

Check this website for numbers.

<http://www.tricare.mil/callus>

If you are overseas and are referred to a host nation provider,

be sure to coordinate your care through your overseas <http://www.tricare.mil/plans/enroll/tpo.aspx/contractor>.

VA Claims Processing Issues

The Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General (OIG) says the VA is improperly shredding documents related to veterans benefits claims, and says the problem is "systemic" throughout the VA. The OIG released a report 14 APR that said the controls put in place by the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) are "not effective," and aren't stopping VA regional offices, or VAROs, from "potentially destroying claims-related documents."

The report was done after complaints that VA officials in Los Angeles were shredding mail related to claims. After making recommendations to the Los Angeles office, the OIG examined 10 VA offices around the country to see if there were similar problems. "VBA's controls were not fully effective in preventing VARO staff from destroying claims-related documents at six of the 10 VAROs, where we performed unannounced inspections," it said. "We found that 69 of 155 claims-related documents (45 percent) — which VARO staff had not matched to veterans' claims folders — were improperly scheduled for destruction." "As we identified problems at six of the 10 VAROs, we concluded this is a systemic issue within VBA," it said.

The OIG said that of the 69 claims documents that were about to be shredded, 11 either affected or had the potential to affect benefits claims. While the rest didn't,

the report said those documents were still required to be included in veterans' claims folders. The OIG said the problem shouldn't be underestimated. "[T]he potential effect on veterans should not be minimized," its report said. "Considering that there are 56 VAROs and if weekly shredding is conducted, it is highly likely that claims-related documents at other VAROs are being improperly scheduled for destruction that could result in loss of claims and evidence, incorrect decisions and delays in claims processing."

The OIG blamed "unclear and confusing" policies for the scheduled destruction of documents. Concerned Veterans for America said the problem is just the latest piece of evidence that the VA's internal problems are causing real problems for vets. "What this report makes clear is that these systemic issues plaguing the Veterans Benefits Administration, and the agency as a whole, have very real impacts on veterans across the country," CVA spokesman John Cooper told the Washington Examiner. "Many veterans are waiting months, even years, for their benefits, and now we learn that even more of them may be at risk of delayed benefits because VA employees are improperly handling, or just flat-out destroying, their claims documents," he said. "At what point will VA leadership get serious about fixing these problems?"

Both articles courtesy of TRICARE News Release at

<http://www.tricare.mil/>



This and That— Items of Interest

DD-214 Online

It's official; DD-214s are NOW Online. Please pass on to other vets. The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided the following website for veterans to gain access to their DD-214s online: <http://vetrecs.archives.gov> or try <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records>. This may be particularly helpful when a veteran needs a copy of his DD-214 for employment purposes. NPRC is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files.

Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents. Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the online web site. Because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized. The new web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating the records centers mailroom and processing time.

*Courtesy of National Archives
www.archives.gov*

POW/MIA Recoveries

"Keeping the Promise", "Fulfill their Trust" and "No one left behind" are several of many mottos that refer to the efforts of the Department of Defense to recover those who became missing while serving our nation. The number of Americans who remain missing from conflicts in this century are:

World War II (73,515) Korean War (7,841), Cold War (126), Vietnam War (1,627), 1991 Gulf War (5), and Libya (1). Over 600 Defense Department men and women

- both military and civilian - work in organizations around the world as part of DoD's personnel recovery and personnel accounting communities. They are all dedicated to the single mission of finding and bringing our missing personnel home. For a listing of all personnel accounted for since 2007 refer to <http://www.dpaa.mil/> and click on 'Our Missing'.

If you wish to provide information about an American missing in action from any conflict or have an inquiry about MIAs, contact:

- Mail: Public Affairs Office - 2300 Defense Pentagon, Washington, D.C. 20301-2300, Attn: External Affairs
- Call: Phone: (703) 699-1420
- Message: Fill out form on <http://www.dpaa.mil/contact/contactus.aspx>

Family members seeking more information about missing loved ones may also call the following Service Casualty Offices: U.S. Air Force (800) 531-5501, U.S. Army (800) 892-2490, U.S. Marine Corps (800) 847-1597, U.S. Navy (800) 443-9298, or U.S. Department of State (202) 647-5470.

Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency

Veterans' ID Cards

On July 20, 2015, the president signed into law the Veterans Identification Card Act of 2015. This act allows Veterans to apply for an identification card directly from VA. The VA identification card will allow Veterans to demonstrate proof of service for discounts at private restaurants and businesses. It should be noted that the identification card is different from a Veteran Health Identification card or a DoD Uniformed Services or retiree ID card. As such, the VA identification cards cannot be used as

proof of eligibility to any federal benefits and does not grant access to military installations. When available, veterans will be able to request an ID card from VA for a fee. VA is currently making plans to implement the new law in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible while protecting veterans' personal information. We estimate that VA will be able to implement the program in 2017. The cost of each card has not yet been determined. In the meantime, Veterans who would like an identification card that displays their military service do not have to wait until VA implements the new law. You have several options:

- You can access and print a free Veterans identification card through the joint VA/DoD web portal, eBenefits. This paper identification card serves as proof of honorable service in the Uniformed Services, as defined in laws about the Department of Defense (DoD). Veterans can get a free eBenefits account by going to: <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage>.
- Your driver's license or state identification card can carry a Veteran designation. This option is currently available in 49 states, along with Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. We expect the 50th state, Washington, to offer this service in August 2017. Veterans wanting more information should contact their state department of motor vehicles or state department of Veterans affairs at <http://www.va.gov/statedva.htm>
- Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care can obtain a free Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC). For more information, please go to <http://www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/vhic/index.asp>.
- Veterans who have retired from military service can receive an identification card from DoD. For information on obtaining or renewing such a card, please contact your nearest DoD identification card facility. You can find the location of these facilities through this link: <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/appj/site>

Courtesy of www.blogs.va.gov

See more about Veteran's ID Cards on Next Page



Items of Interest

Veterans' ID Card Update

Several Veterans have reported to the VA that they were unable to locate the above-mentioned self-service using the eBenefits web portal and there was also confusion regarding the process to request the upgraded eBenefits premium (free) account access.

An eBenefits premium account unlocks this and other additional VA benefits and service.

After upgrading to an eBenefits premium account, users can download the proof of service (the free Proof of Service letter) by following the below instructions:

- Log into your account on the eBenefits homepage <<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage>>
- At the top of the page under the eBenefits logo, hover your mouse over the "Manage" tab. In the dropdown that appears below it, click on "Documents and Records."
- In the left column on the following page, click on "VA Letters."
- At the bottom of the following page, click on "Veteran Proof of Service."
- Print.

There is a short YouTube tutorial at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QojXqc_TwUk&feature=youtu.be.

This video explains how to easily gain premium account access.

Courtesy of VA Vantage Point

Editor notes: After creating your eBenefits account, you have to set up a premium account with a DS logon. I'm a retiree and have the blue ID card, which in a way proves that I'm a veteran, as stated in the article on the preceding page. So, getting a Veteran's ID is really for Veterans who are not retirees.

I created a DS logon and when I logged in, the system asked for an email address for my profile. Three times I added an email address and each time the site locked up when I clicked "submit". -LM

Japan, U.S. Agree on Civilian SOFA Criteria

Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, Defense Minister Gen Nakatani, U.S. Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy and Lt. Gen. John Dolan, commander of USFJ met recently to discuss changes to the U.S.-Japan Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), specifically, who should and should not be designated as protected by the SOFA. This meeting was brought about in response to a number of recent incidents including a murder.

The two governments agreed to decisively narrow the range of personnel who make up the civilian components of the U.S. military under the SOFA.

The SOFA stipulates the status of the military and other personnel stationed in Japan and the handling of criminal jurisdiction. The result of this meeting effectively expands the jurisdiction of Japan's judicial authority.

According to this agreement, the civilian component will be divided into four categories and the SOFA qualifications of employees of private companies will be more clearly defined according to the needs of the U.S. forces and the occupations of the employees. It also affirms that U.S. citizens with resident status in Japan will be excluded from the civilian component, meaning if you live here, you will not get SOFA if you work for a DoD contractor, and that you have to be specifically and officially invited by the U.S. Forces in Japan to be given SOFA coverage.

Much more work is required to further define the specific occupations that would fall under the SOFA, and the two governments have agreed to compile a document detailing the latest agreement with the aim to having a new and legally binding document between the two governments.

Source: *Yomiuri Shinbun*, submitted by "T" Tinnirella.

Survivor Benefit Plan Update

There have been some recent changes in the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) law, so if you are currently covering your former spouse, or have ever covered your former spouse through the SBP program, please make sure you read the article on the Former Spouse Coverage SBP Open Season.

In addition, we have provided an article on what child annuitants must do in order to maintain their SBP coverage. If you have potential child beneficiaries under the plan, this is information you should review and share with them.

We've added some information to help you update the email address you have on file with us, where to seek help using *myPay*, and your pay dates for 2016.

I hope you find the information in this issue useful. I know we all want to keep your retired pay safe, secure and easy for you to manage!

Courtesy of March 2016 DFAS Newsletter

AVOID PROLONGED SUN EXPOSURE

It's summertime! Protect your skin and keep it healthy this summer with these 4 tips!

* *Limit time in the sun.* Try to avoid being in sun during peak times when the sun's rays are strongest (10 a.m.-4 p.m.)—even if it is cloudy out.

* *Use sunscreen.* Look for sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of 30 or higher. It's best to choose sunscreens with "broad spectrum" on the label. Put the sunscreen on 15 to 30 minutes before you go outside and reapply often.

* *Wear protective clothing.* A hat with a wide brim can shade your neck, ears, eyes, and head. Look for sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of the sun's rays. If you have to be in the sun, wear loose, lightweight, long-sleeved shirts and long pants or long skirts.

* *Avoid tanning.* Don't use sunlamps or tanning beds. Tanning pills are not approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and might not be safe.

Courtesy of <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/>



OBITUARIES



Eric J. Redeemar
May 23, 1959—May 5, 2016



Edward F. Pearson
October 26, 1934—June 1, 2016



Jack R. Harlan
July 26, 1930—May 19, 2016

Eric J. Redeemar was a long-time resident of Misawa, and was working at the base air terminal at the time of his passing.

Eric was born in Memphis, Tennessee, and studied Marketing and Management at Christian Brothers University in Memphis.

Mr. Redeemar enlisted in the Air Force in Memphis on November 14, 1980 into the Combat Arms Training and Maintenance Craftsman career field. Eric attained the rank of Technical Sergeant (E6) and retired in Misawa after 20 years of service.

He worked as a field technician for BAE Systems Information Technology and for the Maytag Aircraft Corporation as an AMC Passenger Service Representative.

Mr Redeemar is survived by his sister, Betty Sims of Memphis and long-time companion, Tomoko Asai.

Ed Pearson was a regular fixture of the Misawa community, having lived in Misawa since 1965. Born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, he enlisted in December 1951, and served 20 years in the Air Force as a food services technician. Edward retired in Misawa as a Staff Sergeant on 31 December 1971.

Mr. Pearson is survived by three grown-up children from his first marriage, who live in the United States, and his wife of 10 years, Eiko Pearson, who is from Hachinohe. Ed was also married to Aiko Pearson of Misawa, who passed away in 2003, for 35 years.

Ed is well-remembered for his animated participation in our retiree association meetings.

Chief Petty Officer Jack R. Harlan served from 1948 to 1969 in the Navy, mostly on diesel submarines. His shore duty assignments included New London, CT; CINCLANT Fleet at Norfolk, VA; Guantanamo, Cuba; Key West, FL; and London, England.

His sea duty was on the submarines-USS Diablo, USS Tigron, USS Sea Dog, USS Grampus, USS Runner and USS Scorpion, to name a few.

He saw sea duty under the North Pole, Suez Canal, Panama Canal, the Mediterranean, Atlantic, Pacific, Indian and Arctic Oceans.

Jack is survived by his daughter Cynthia Vehle, a DoDDS teacher in Misawa and two sons stateside.

Access to retiree publications of each service:

Army Echoes: www.army1.army.mil/rso/echoes.asp

Navy Shift Colors: www.shiftcolors.navy.mil

Air Force Afterburner: www.retirees.af.mil/afterburner

Marine Corps Semper Fidelis: www.manpower.usmc.mil/portal/page/portal/M_RA_HOME/MM/SR/RET_ACT/SemperFidelis

Coast Guard Evening Colors: <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/psc/ras>

OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS

2016 Memorial Day Retreat Ceremony



The 35th Fighter Wing held its annual Memorial Day Retreat on 27 May 2016, 1630, at the Risner Circle. There were flight formations representing the various units on the base Air Force and Navy. The Misawa Retiree Community also was well represented at the retreat. In addition, the retirees were able to display the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration Flag. We are extremely proud to be a Commemoration Partner and will continue to highlight the Vietnam War and the sacrifices of our military services. *By Dave Barton*

2016 Vietnam Commemoration Ceremony



The Retiree Activities Office in conjunction with the Misawa Exchange held a 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration event in the Exchange Lobby on 25 and 26 May 2016. This event was the kickoff for our yearlong commemoration of the Vietnam War. The RAO has been accepted as a Commemoration Partner through the Department of Defense, Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer, Major General James Jackson, USA, Retired. It is our honor to work with the Department in recognizing all Vietnam War era veterans. We plan on having additional displays around the base and recognition ceremonies with the pinning on of the official Commemoration Pin. Thanks to all who came out and viewed the posters, fact sheets, and books on the many contributions made by the various services to the War effort. *By Dave Barton*



AD Hoc Company Builds The New VA On-Line Site

It was October 2013 when the Obama administration triumphantly flipped the switch on Healthcare.gov, the landing page for the White House's landmark domestic policy achievement. It promptly crashed. As administration officials absorbed the extent of the catastrophe, they realized they had to go outside the usual government channels to get the site up and running. That's when they brought in Paul Smith, a politically minded coder with a handful of successful startups behind him.

Smith immediately asked to see the results of the monitoring tools identifying where the system was clogged. He was met with blank stares from the bureaucrats in the room. So he downloaded a cheap tool from the Internet and — breaking probably every government tech regulation in the book — plugged it into the system to see what he was working with. The entire screen lit up bright red with errors, matching the color of the faces of millions of people trying to log on to buy affordable health care insurance, as well as the faces of health policy wonks wondering if Obamacare itself had just crashed and burned. Smith and his team of outside coders ultimately turned Healthcare.gov around, in a rescue that has become a case study in rapid tech recovery. The group was thrown together so quickly that they were known only as the Ad Hoc team.

Today, Ad Hoc LLC (they went ahead and made it their company name) has a new job that, in some ways, makes the Affordable Care Act turnaround look easy. They're taking on the Department of Veterans Affairs. Smith's team won a contract this month to develop Vets.gov, a new website (<https://www.vets.gov>) that consolidates the department's services in one online location. The goal is to let veterans access all of their VA benefits online in one place and with a single login. Ad Hoc will build on a beta version of Vets.gov that the team created in November.

What's stunning is that a website like this didn't exist before. The agency has its standard VA.gov, but that's

more of an organizational site than a services-oriented hub for veterans. Until now, the nation's roughly 20 million veterans have been accessing their VA benefits online through at least 1,000 different websites, according to VA officials.

Smith said he's been told it's closer to 1,400. "When I first heard the number, I had this, like, 'that can't be right' moment," Smith told The Huffington Post. "It's extraordinary."

Asked to compare Obamacare's once-tortured website with the VA's lack of centralized online services, Smith said the two projects couldn't be more different. His team is building Vets.gov from scratch, whereas the administration had already created Healthcare.gov. The Ad Hoc team's role back in 2013 was less about writing code and more about organizing a site that wasn't ready for large amounts of traffic. If only the administration had been working with software engineers from the private sector from the beginning, Smith recalled thinking, Healthcare.gov would have turned out so much better. That's the realization that prompted him to launch Ad Hoc LLC with his colleague Greg Gershman two years ago.

They learned from the Healthcare.gov debacle that there's "an enormous gap" between consumer technology being used by private sector startups and what is being used by the government. "We recognized companies are still going to be contracting with the government, and they need to be able to bring in people who have that modern software tech development experience," Smith said. "With Vets.gov, we have the opportunity to build something new ... And be 10 times more impactful than the traditional procurement practice in government."

So how do you even begin to condense 1,000 websites into one? Smith said their strategy is to build the central site in "an entirely new way" for a government agency, by tackling

small chunks at a time and having veterans themselves test out each stage. Once the team gets feedback from those vets, they'll plug that information back into the overall project and then move on to the next chunk. And then again. And again. And again. The biggest challenge will be staying focused on what veterans say works best for them, Smith said, versus what government officials or programmers think is best. "That's why we're here, to really build something for them," he said. "Through their eyes, for their needs." The new contract, which employs a handful of companies led by Ad Hoc, gives Smith's team a year to build out the basic site and make it more comprehensive. If all goes as planned, VA will renew Ad Hoc's contract for another two years to keep expanding the site. Smith said he feels personally invested in this project's success. "I want the site to be a delightful experience for veterans. I want them to start to have trust in their system and feel like their requests are responded to quickly and accurately," he said. "We loved working on the beta site. People at the VA were excited. Everyone was excited. It felt good. It felt like this is the right way to build software."

Huffington Post reached out to Scott Davis, a program specialist at the VA's Health Eligibility Center in Atlanta and a past whistleblower on VA mismanagement, to ask what he thought the biggest problem is for veterans trying to access their benefits online. He said that vets applying for health care online often end up filling out multiple applications, and the most commonly used form is a PDF that can't be downloaded. Huffington Post went ahead and asked Smith if he could fix that. He was already on it. "I'm aware that there are PDFs at the end of the rainbow," Smith said. "We're going to build forms and services that take a veteran to a meaningful place, not just another dead end."

Courtesy of the Huffington Post



International Direct Deposit Now Possible For DFAS and SSA Benefit Payments

International Direct Deposit (IDD) is available to U.S. military retirees and survivors living in eligible locations overseas. IDD electronically deposits funds on the first business day of the month to your foreign bank.

Enrolling in IDD For DFAS Payments

Complete the form for International Direct Deposit Enrollment (SF1199-I) and mail it to the appropriate DFAS address below:

For Retirees:	For annuitants, beneficiaries and survivors:
Defense Finance and Accounting Service U.S. Military Retired Pay P.O. Box 7130 London, KY 40742-7130 Fax: 1-800-469-6559	Defense Finance and Accounting Service U.S. Military Annuitant Pay P.O. Box 7131 London, KY 40742-7131 Fax: 1-800-982-8459

For Social Security (SSA) Payments

Assuming you live in Japan, complete the form and mail it to the American Embassy in Tokyo, at the following address:

American Embassy Tokyo
 1-10-5 Akasaka, Minato-ku,
 Tokyo 0107-8420
 Attention: Federal Benefits Unit

For MPS users:
 American Embassy Tokyo
 Unit 9800 Box 114
 APO AP 96303-0114
 Attention: Federal Benefits Unit

Make sure the form is accurately completed and signed. Incorrect or incomplete enrollment forms will be returned unprocessed for correction, delaying your enrollment. Typed forms are preferable. Always make a photocopy of the form before you send it in.

General Information...

If you currently have your payment sent via direct deposit to a stateside financial institution, do not close that account until you have verified receipt at your international bank. Otherwise, your pay will be returned to the payer, causing additional delays.

The International Direct Deposit Enrollment (SF 1199-I) can be downloaded as a .pdf from DFAS, SSA, RRB, DTIC and other organizations. You can also obtain this form from your RAO.

Currency-Your payment will be converted from U.S. dollars to local currency two business days prior to the U.S. payment date, using a wholesale exchange rate. IDD puts your money directly into your local bank in local currency.

WHERE TO SEND YOUR TRICARE CLAIM

■ **Non-active duty, TRICARE Pacific** send to TRICARE Overseas Program, P.O. Box 7985, Madison, WI 53707-7985 USA

□ TRICARE For Life (TFL) claims in the United States and U.S. territories (American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands) send to WPS TFL, P.O. Box 7890 Madison, WI 53707-7890 USA

Source: The 2011 Publication for TRICARE Standard Overseas Beneficiaries

For TRICARE Overseas Program information, forms and assistance you can contact the Misawa Air Base TRICARE Office at 226-6000 (from off base 0176-77-6000) or visit the office at the base hospital.

Birthdates of our Military Services

- US Army—June 14, 1775
- US Navy – October 13, 1775
- US Marines—November 10, 1775
- US Coast Guard—August 4, 1790
- US Air Force—Sept 18, 1947

Social Security Administration Offers Disability Benefits

Did you know that many disabled veterans and wounded warriors may qualify for Social Security disability benefits, in addition to their Veterans Affairs benefits? For info go to www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityfacts



リタイヤー米軍人の車パス制度が 変わりました

今まで毎年5月定年退職米軍人とそれらの家族が一般米軍人と同じように丸いステッカーをもらって車の前窓にはって自由に車でベース出入りができました。

しかし、今年から何かの理由で三沢基地の警察部の司令官がその制度をやめて、これからリタイヤー米軍人と家族等は一般日本人パスを作らなければならないようになりました。

リタイヤー米軍人事務所(RAO)スタッフの私とデーヴさんが一所懸命今までのようにいろんなめんでもみあったがけっきょくだめでした。ほかの在日米軍基地では一般米軍人の同じように丸いステッカーがもらえるが三沢基地は変わりました。

だが、その一般日本人の車出入りパスをもらうのは簡単です。必要な書類をそろえて、ゲートの向かいのパスセクションに行けばその場でパスをもらえる。パスセクションは月曜日から金曜日朝7:30から3時(1500時)まで営業しています。第2と3の窓口を利用して下さい。スタッフは早いし、親切です。月曜日はかなり込み合ってるのでその曜日行かないほうが良いと思います。

必要な書類

軍のIDカード

自動車の車検査証

自動車損害賠償任意保険証明書

自分の個人自動車保険契約書

今年の自動車税支払い領収書

新しいパスは作った日から一年有効です。色はみどり、四角い形。紙ですからラミネートか何かのケースを使ったほうが良いと思います。ベースに入る時、必ずそのパスとIDカードを見せればOKです。

質問や問題がある場合、遠慮なくこのオフィスに連絡を。

RAOの連絡は電話 0176-77-4428 か 5675.

メールなら misawa.rao@us.af.mil

手紙なら: 033-0012 Aomori-ken, Misawa-shi

Hirahata #64, Misawa Beikugunkichinai

35 FW/CVR (RAO) Attn: MSgt Roginski

東京のアメリカ大使館に年金の局があります。アメリカの年金の相談は直接大使館の年金局にお電話して下さい。

Federal Benefits Unit (アメリカ大使館連邦年金部): 03-3224-5055



Still Serving!



Hello fellow retirees and fellow RAOs staff. Here is the 2nd quarter 2016 edition of the Misawa Air Base RAO Newsletter. Lee Martin and I hope that you find useful information and interesting articles within.

The regulation governing Air Force RAOs recommends, but does not require, a newsletter, and there is no recommended frequency.

We at the RAO are charged with the responsibility of getting information to you, our retired military community. Compiling a newsletter is one of the best ways to get information out to you but, frankly, it is a hell of a lot of work. Lee Martin and I ask for your help. We actually have a huge retired community around Misawa, including the six prefectures of Tohoku and territory of Hokkaido, representing all services and all the wars since WWII. You are a treasure of information and history. Don't let it all pass with you without sharing. Anyone can provide information, opinion, history, or even a good story. We will gladly edit and include your contributions in your newsletter. Contact us if you want to contribute.

-JJR

MMRA Notes

1. Membership dues are \$20 a year. If you have not paid your dues for 2012, please call the RAO or e-mail the RAO and talk to Dave Barton, the acting MMRA Treasurer. The Treasurer will arrange to collect your dues and record it in the financial report.
2. Donations to the Misawa Military Retirees' Association are greatly appreciated. Dues and donations are used for the operations of the organization, charitable activities, community activities, assistance grants, and assistance in the case of death in the family. ALL funds go to the community except for the snacks served at the bi-monthly meeting.

The Misawa Military Retirees Association (MMRA) 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. These meetings are your forum to voice your opinions, concerns, questions and suggestions, and get information about retiree and survivor issues and support on Misawa Air Base. 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 join our group, share your experiences and skills, contribute to the community. The time you give to your fellow retirees and their families may someday come back as assistance to you or your sur-

MMRA Meeting Schedule

All meetings are held the first Tuesday of even-numbered months at the Tohoku Enlisted Club, Gray Room at 1700 hours.

2 February 2016

5 April 2016

7 June 2016

2 August 2016

4 October 2016

6 December 2016

NEXT MEETING—TUESDAY, 2 August

SERVING THE RETIRED MILITARY COMMUNITY IN NORTHERN JAPAN



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Exchange: 0176-7788255-7 plus last 4 digits (*)
 HRO: 7460 (*)
 Manager: 7401(*)
 Gas Station: 7428 (*)
 Express (main base): 7433 (*)
 Express (North Area): 7435 (*)
 Base Operator: 226-1110 (0176-77-1110)
 Chapel: 226-4630 (0176-77-4630)
 Command Post: 226-9880/9881 (0176-77-9880)
 Commissary Officer: 226-3482 (0176-77-3482)
 Community Bank: 226-4070 (0176-77-4070)
 Credit Union Navy Federal: 226-4954 (034-580-0506)
 Emergency Room:
 Non-Urgent: 226-6647 (0176-77-6647)
 Emergency- 911 / Off Base 0176-53-1911
 Fitness Center: 226-3982 (*)
 Golf Course: 1-281-657-1563 (*)
 Law Enforcement: 226-3600 (0176-77-3600)
 Library: 226-3068 (0176-77-3068)
 Medical/Dental Appointments
 Medical: 226-6111 (0176-77-6111)
 Dental: 226-6700 (0176-77-6700)
 Misawa Clubs
 Admin: 1-281-675-1560 (*)
 Catering: 1-281-657-1560 (*)
 Misawa Inn (Air Force Lodging) (*)
 Front: 222-0282 (0176-66-0282)
 Reservations: 222-0284 (0176-66-0284)
 Navy Gateway Lodging: (*)
 Front Desk: 226-3131 (0176-77-3131)
 Reservations: 226-4483 (0176-77-4483)
 Navy HRO: 226-4674 (0176-77-4674)
 Pass and Registration: 226-3995 (0176-77-3995)
 Red Cross: 226-3016 (0176-77-3016)
 FSS Auto Center "Pit Stop": 226-9486 (0176-77-9486)
 FSS HRO: 226-3108/9275 (*)
 Taxi: Official: 226-3328 (0176-77-3328) (*)
 Base Commercial (Kichi Cab): 1-469-375-7479 (*)
 Fm Off Base—0176-53-6481 (*)
 Theater: 1-469-375-7450 (*)
 Veterinarian 226-4502 (0176-77-4502)
 Weather Forecast: 226-3065 (*)

Numbers that begin with "1" require special dialing. When dialing from a cell, 03-4580-0135, wait for voice, then dial the number. For 226-222 numbers dial 0176-66 (for 222) or 77 (for 226) then the last four. (*) means use the Phone Tree

RAO mailing address in Japan

033-0012 Aomori-ken, Misawa-shi, Hirahata 64
 Misawa Beigun Kichi-nai 35FW/CVR

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 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 RAO is open Monday through Friday from 0900 through 1500 hours however, volunteers sometimes have to be out of the office. We are located in Room 210, Bldg 653. Please call or e-mail before visiting to make sure a staff member is available when you come to the office. 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, and who have limited English language skills, may contact us and talk with MSgt (Ret) Joseph Roginski, who is bi-lingual. He may be reached at 09040450149 after hours.



35th FW/CVR
 Unit 5009
 APO AP 96319-5009
 Phone: 011-81-176-77-4428/5675
 DSN: (315) 226-4428/5675
 Email: misawa.rao@us.af.mil
 Cell Phone: 090-4045-0149

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

<http://www.misawarao.org>

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 or currency can be given nor should be assumed.