



Retiree Activities Office

Yokota AB, Japan

Newsletter



Vol. 3, Issue 4

July/August 2017

A publication of the Yokota Retiree Activities Office (RAO) whose mission is to support the base commander in providing information and assistance to military retirees, their family members, and surviving spouses residing in the local area. Articles appearing in this newsletter are compiled from various government sources. Information has been edited and reprinted for the benefit of our retiree population. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information herein, no absolute guarantee of accuracy or currency can be given nor should be assumed.

DFAS offers call-back service option:

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service has a new option for callers dialing 800-321-1080 during peak service hours such as on pay dates and during tax season. They can request a callback if there is a wait time longer than one minute. Call Back Assist gives customers the option to press "1" and request a callback instead of waiting on hold, or press "2" to continue holding.

Customers who opt for a callback can enter the phone number they wish to be called at and hang up without losing their place in the call wait line. When it is their turn, the Call Back Assist system will call them and connect them to a customer service representative.

DFAS officials say this system has been in place on a limited basis for some time, and has been so successful that the Cleveland Care Center recently expanded it to the annuity, garnishment, retired pay, Marines, and casualty call types. These are the complex subjects where the representative needs to do more research to resolve the customer's inquiry.

When Customer Care Center representatives receive a callback connection, they will wait until the customer is on the line, greet the customer and proceed normally like any other call.

Many of you reading this are saying to yourself's this call-back option probably won't apply if you are calling from an overseas telephone number.

However, if you are using an internet based telephone service such as MagicJack, Vonage, etc. and have a US area code telephone number it should work.

If anyone tries this call back service from Japan, and it works, let the RAO know. (Source: AF Retiree Service's RAO Program Letter)

SSN to be Removed from Medicare

Cards: The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is readying a fraud prevention initiative that removes Social Security numbers from Medicare cards to help combat identity theft, and safeguard taxpayer dollars.

The new cards will use a unique, randomly-assigned number called a Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI), to replace the Social Security-based Health Insurance Claim Number (HICN) currently used on the Medicare card.

CMS will begin mailing new cards in April 2018 and will meet the congressional deadline for replacing all Medicare cards by April 2019. CMS has kicked-off a multi-faceted outreach campaign to help providers get ready for the new MBI.

For more information go to: <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/ssnri/index.html> (Source: www.cms.gov)

Summer Safety Tips: Summer has arrived so here are a few safety tips to help our retiree community stay safe and healthy. Those of you who have lived here in the Kanto Plains for awhile know just how hot and humid it can get.

- When possible, avoid outdoor activities during midday, when the sun's rays are strongest.
- Cover up with clothing and a wide-brimmed hat to protect exposed skin.
- Drink plenty of cool, non-alcoholic fluids.
- Seek shade.
- Wear sunscreen and lip screen with a sun protective factor (SPF) of 15 or higher. The higher the better. Remember to reapply it as needed. (Source: Various)

When to Update your DFAS Account:

DFAS recommends reviewing your retired pay account at least once a year to make sure your information is up to date. It might be useful to review a copy of your annual Retiree Account Statement (RAS) each December. Below are a few examples of situations in which you might need to update your account information.

If You've Switched Banks or Opened a New Account: Your banking information is perhaps the most important thing to keep updated. DFAS relies on you to tell them where to send your payments. The sooner you update your direct deposit information, the less likely your payment will go to the wrong place.

Always make sure that your payments are going to your new account before you close out your old account. It can take up to 30 days to process a direct deposit change request. Closing out your old account before DFAS has updated your bank information can result in missing and returned payments.

If You Move to a New Home or Relocate Temporarily: You need to update your mailing address whenever it changes. Even if you are only going somewhere warmer for the winter, you should let DFAS know. We're always mailing letters, account statements, and other important information you won't want to miss.

If You've Married, Divorced or Added to Your Family Changes in the size of your family can affect several aspects of your retired pay account. You should first [update your Arrears of Pay Beneficiary](#), the person who receives your final payment when you die.

If you chose the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) when you retired, you might also need to [update your SBP beneficiary](#). Life changing events often increase or decrease the amount of your SBP premium. You should send documentation such as divorce decrees, death certificates and marriage certificates to DFAS as soon as possible. Late notification of a change in your life can result in debts to you or your family.

Other Things to Consider: Take some time to look at your allotments every so often. You might find that you want to [start, stop or change the deduction](#) amount on one of them. Also, take note of any allotments going to insurance companies, particularly when moving. If you forgot to give your insurance company or other potential allotment recipients your new address, they may continue to send important mail to your old address. (Source: www.DFAS.mil)

374 AW Vice Commander Briefed on Retiree Activities: A couple of weeks ago, at the RAO we had the pleasure of briefing Col Sergio J. Vega the new 374 AW Vice Commander on the Retiree Activities Program here at Yokota.

He is appointed by the 374 AW Commander as the Active Duty Coordinator for the Retiree Activities Program here at Yokota.

Col Vega arrived at Yokota in May from his previous assignment as Chief, Deliberate Planning Division, Headquarters U.S.Southern Command, Miami, Fla. (Source: 374 AW PA)

Route 16 Restaurant to Offer Trial 24 Hour Dining on Weekends: The Route 16 restaurant will be offering 24 hour weekend dining for a 3 week trial period, 7 - 23 July. This trial period will only apply for the weekend Friday - Sunday. Normal operation for Monday - Thursday. Open to all US/ Japan patrons. At the end of this trial period usage will be looked at for determination as to whether to continue or not

Forces Support Squadron will host a kickoff event on Friday 7 July from 1600 - 2000. There will be a live DJ with music on the patio; adult "giveaways and games to include 2 iPads; children's "giveaways"; "menu giveaways" and a bouncy castle for the children.

374th Medical Group Closure Dates:
11 July 1200-1630: MDG Change of Command
18 July: Training Day

The Urgent Care Unit and Inpatient Clinic will remain open during these times. (Source: MDG Facebook Page)

Yokota Military Retiree Association:

The YMRA will hold its next monthly breakfast meeting on 8 July at 0900 in the enlisted club dining room.

These meetings are open to all military retirees regardless of branch of service, their spouses, and widows of retirees. Breakfast is provided free when you order before 0830. The business side of things starts at 0900.

Your comments concerning articles you see here, or questions concerning military retiree benefits and services are always welcome.

The RAO is located in building 535. Contact us by email at: yokota.rao@us.af.mil. By DSN phone 225-8324, from off base (042) 552-2510 ext. 58324. If you call during non-office hours, leave a message and we will get back to you. The RAO is normally open 0900-1500 Monday thru Friday, closed holidays and family days.