



Retiree Activities Office

Yokota AB, Japan

Newsletter



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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.

USO Open for Business: In January, the USO opened its temporary center in Tower 2080 (across from the Library). They will remain at this location until their permanent center is ready later this year. Services provided by the Center are free of charge to all active duty members and their families, military retirees and their families and surviving spouses.

A couple of the RAO staff paid a visit to the USO center last week and were given a tour of the facility by the Center's Operations Specialist, Ms. Ashley Phillips. The center is currently opened Monday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 10AM to 7PM, and Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10AM to 10PM. Ms. Phillips said the goal is to stay open daily from 10AM to 10PM. With the exception of a couple of positions, the center is manned by volunteers.

A host of services are currently provided such as Hulu, Netflix, Apple TV, computer games, free snacks and drinks, a lounge to relax in, internet access via computer terminals, and free Wi-Fi to connect your own devices. Stop by the Center and talk to the staff to see what else is provided or that you may want to see provided. You can also visit the USO Facebook page at USO Yokota to see what events are being planned and for changes in the hours of operation.

The USO provides the center and its services free of charge to the Yokota Community, but it requires the help of volunteers. This is a good opportunity for members of the Retired community to get involved. Contact Ms. Tiffany Scott who is the Field Program Coordinator or Ms. Ashley Phillips for more information. They can be reached via telephone at DSN 225-6861, or email: usoyokota@gmail.com.

Yokota Tax Center is Filing Returns:

As mentioned in our previous newsletter, the Yokota Tax Center opened for business on 30 January and will continue preparing and electronically filing tax returns until 15 June which is the last day filers living overseas can file without requesting an extension.

Tax returns are prepared free of charge for active duty, military retirees, widows, and civilian employees. The operating hours are Monday through Thursday. Closed

during holidays and exercises.

Morning appointment schedule - 0800, 0910, 1020

Closed for Lunch - 1130-1230

Afternoon appointment schedule - 1230, 1440, 1550

Telephone numbers to call for an appointment: DSN 225-4926/4927, from off base 552-2510 ext. 54926/54927
The available appointment slots each day are based on the number of volunteers that will be working that they. As the tax season approaches the April 18th (This is not a typo, see below) filing deadline, the number of clients wanting appointments will increase. Please schedule your appointment as soon as possible.

The regular tax return filing deadline is April 15. However, due to the Washington D.C. Emancipation Day holiday falling on a weekend for the second year in a row, the tax filing date has been moved to Tuesday April 18th.

U.S. Citizens and others who are required to file a U.S. tax return and are living overseas receive an automatic 60-day extension to file a tax return. However, the caveat here is if you think you are going to owe any taxes for the 2016 tax year, you must at least pay the taxes due by the April 18th deadline. If not, you could incur a penalty in addition to the taxes owed. (Source: Yokota Tax Center, IRS.gov)

Would You Like to Help Preserve a bit of Yokota History? The 374 AW History office has a large collection of 35mm photo slides left over from the pre-PowerPoint days. Thousands of Yokota and Wing moments frozen in time reside in the history office.

Mrs. Tasha Hairston, Wing Historian, with the help of the 374 CS recently set-up scanning equipment, which will allow those 35mm slides to be digitized. Photos of Yokota that have not been seen in decades are waiting to be rediscovered and the wing needs your help.

Digitizing the photos is a time consuming, but a rewarding effort. If anyone, would be interested in volunteering some time towards the effort, please contact the History Office. This is another good opportunity for members of the Retired community to get involved. Some of you who were stationed here at Yokota and have lived in Japan for decades might come across a photo or two of yourself.

The History office is located in B314, 1st floor, Rm 119 and Mrs Hairston may be contacted via e-mail at (tasha.hairston@us.af.mil) or by phone at 225-7604. (Source: 374AW)

Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Notes:

A Spouse Acquired after Retirement When No

Spouse at Retirement: A member, unmarried on the date of retirement, who later marries may provide SBP coverage for the first spouse acquired after retirement. The election request must be sent to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service and must arrive there prior to the first anniversary of the marriage.

DFAS cannot honor a request received after the first anniversary of the marriage. The marriage must last for at least one year before the member's spouse becomes eligible to receive the annuity. As an exception, the new spouse becomes an eligible beneficiary upon the birth of a child of the marriage born before the first anniversary.

If the member fails to elect SBP coverage for the first spouse acquired after retirement, divorces that spouse or that spouse dies, and the member later remarries, the member cannot elect coverage for that subsequent spouse because he/she failed to elect coverage for the first spouse acquired after retirement.

Non-Resident Alien Tax on SBP: Non-resident alien SBP beneficiaries living in foreign countries are subject to a withholding tax by the U.S. government on their monthly annuity. The withholding tax rate is 30 percent of the payable annuity.

The tax levy is not part of the SBP laws but results from individual tax treaties between the U.S. government and various foreign countries. The 30 percent is a fixed tax that must be withheld by DFAS; however, there may be tax treaties with individual countries that reduce or eliminate the 30 percent tax rate.

The US and Japan have such a tax treaty and submitting form W8BEN to DFAS will eliminate or reduce this tax. For more information, contact the Retiree Activities Office.

How to reach the RAO:

Located: Bldg. 535, Rm. 108

Office hours: Monday - Friday 0900 - 1500 (Subject to availability of volunteers)

Telephone: DSN: 225-8324

Telephone from off base: (042) 552-2510 ext. 58324

Voice mail: Leave a message if calling after normal operating hours

E-mail: yokota.rao@us.af.mil

Catch us on Facebook at @RAOYokotaJapan

Previous editions of the RAO newsletter can be found at: <http://www.yokota.af.mil/RetireeActivities.aspx>

Widows' Support Luncheon: The next quarterly Widows' Support Luncheon is scheduled for 17 March from 1200-1400 in the auditorium of the Airman & Family Readiness Center (A&FRC), Building 535.

This luncheon is sponsored by the Airman & Family Readiness Center (A&FRC) and is open to widows of military retirees as well as widows whose spouse passed away while on active duty.

This luncheon serves as a venue for the widows to get together and share experiences, and to let them know that they are still part of the overall military family.

If you know of a widow who is not aware of this luncheon please pass this information on. For additional information call Mr. Tom Determann at the A&FRC at 225-8725, or the RAO at 255-8324

Yokota Military Retiree Association:

The YMRA will hold its next two monthly breakfast meetings on 4 March and 1 April 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.

The YMRA normally meets the first Saturday of every month at the enlisted club.