



October 9, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR RETIREES

Minutes of the October 2020 Bi-monthly membership meeting of the Misawa Military Retirees' Association (MMRA)

1. The meeting was held on Tuesday, October 6th at 1700 In the Gray Room of the Tohoku Enlisted Club, with presiding officers: President-Paul Sayles, Vice President-Toby Fanelli, and Secretary-Joseph Roginski, and 6 general members.
2. Joe Roginski read the minutes of the August 2020 meeting which were accepted and approved by the membership.
3. Old Business:
COVID-19
 - a. Hospital – Paul Sayles reported that the base hospital no longer has the check point at the entrance, but they still want you to wear your mask and use the hand sanitizer before entering the main building.
 - b. Joe Roginski reported that Hokkaido is no longer a travel restricted area and persons from Hokkaido can now enter the base without a waiver or a 14-day quarantine. Travel to most areas of Japan are now open except parts of Tokyo, Osaka and Okinawa. All public transportation is also open to use by USFJ personnel.

(Secretary Note-The COVID-19 category will be carried as an open item until the crisis is declared over.)

4. New Business
 - a. Paul Sayles announced that the first Patient Family Committee meeting was held last week. Prime topic of the meeting was TRICARE changes coming in 2021. (Closed)
 - b. Referring to the problems caused by two survivors passing away without instructions or a will as described in the previous minutes, Paul Sayles reminded everyone that the RAO can store wills and instructions in a secured locked cabinet, and to please keep those instructions current. (Closed)
 - c. TRICARE Select – Joe Roginski explained how TRICARE Select will affect overseas retirees, in that retirees and families living overseas who are now in the TRICARE Overseas Program (TOP), which consists of retirees under 65 and not in MEDICARE Part B, will as of January 2021 be in TRICARE Select Group A and will have to pay a monthly or annual fee \$12.50/month single, \$25/month family. Retirees who are age 65 and over are in TRICARE For Life but must be paying into MEDICARE Part B which is about \$115/month. In both cases, if the retired member or survivor declines TRICARE Select or MEDICARE Part B, they lose their TRICARE claim eligibility. However, all retirees, family and survivors are still eligible to use the MTF (Medical Treatment Facility), i.e. the base hospital on a space-available basis. (Closed)
 - d. Cecil Hahn asked what to do if he does not have the new Medicare ID card because they are not mailed overseas. Paul Sayles replied that you can still use the old card, and the only difference is that the new card has no personally identifiable information, such as SSN or DOB. A member also said that the Federal Benefits Unit at the American Embassy in Tokyo may be able to send a new card. (Closed)

- e. Paul Sayles reported that the Dr Hardin, who replaced Dr Trefflich has arrived and working. Paul said he will invite the new doctor to a meeting in the near future. He also said that Dr Taves will be leaving this month, but he thinks the replacement will not be here until the end of the year. A member reported that there is a new TRICARE person in the office, and it will take some time for that person to gain experience. (Closed)
 - f. Joe Roginski reported that flu shots are now available. He commented that the flu shots reduce the risk of getting the flu which indirectly protects us from Covid in two ways, one being that if we avoid the flu, we keep our resistance stronger and more able to resist Covid, or worse, getting Covid while already infected with the flu, and the other, that the flu vaccine also contains corona viruses, which may give us slight immunity against the Covid corona virus. (Closed)
 - g. Joe Roginski reported that the Michinoku Bank has stopped accepting international direct deposit and will reject all international direct deposits on and after 1 March 2021. The bank sent out letters to all account holders who receive international direct deposit to change their accounts to another bank as soon as possible. Joe said the RAO is contacting all the persons we know that have direct deposit to the Michinoku bank and are assisting them in processing the change. He asked that all who know of retirees or survivors who use the Michinoku bank for depositing their SSA or SBP or retired pay to contact our office for assistance. (Closed)
 - h. Ray Eberhardt reported that there were major price increases at the Consolidated Club and wanted to know the reason. Joe said he would inquire with someone in Services for details. (Open)
5. Financial Report- Dave Barton, the MMRA treasurer was not able to attend the meeting and there was no financial report available. The secretary will send the financial report to all the nine attendees for their perusal and approval, and upon approval, issue a revised meeting minutes.
6. There being no further business, it was moved and approved to close the meeting, which closed at 1740. The next bi-monthly meeting will be at 1700 on 1 December 2020 in the Club Tohoku Gray Room.

Joseph Roginski
Secretary, MMRA