

Career Plans & Career Advancement

There is an internal recruiting system (*) and an internal training system for employees of U.S. Forces Japan. Here, we interview a senior employee who has accumulated work experience using these systems.

* Internal recruiting: a recruiting system in which only the employees of the U.S. Forces Japan can apply for jobs.

Q1. Please tell us the reason for working as an employee for the U.S. Forces Japan

When I was at university, I neglected job hunting and was a "freeter" (working part-time jobs), as we were called in the past. I came to learn of Japanese recruitment at Yokota Air Base through an acquaintance and applied for a job at the Kanto Lodge (*1) Hotel
*1 A short-term accommodation facility in Yokota Air Base. Visitors are also allowed to stay here. Used for military business trips or transfers.

Q2. How did you move from the first job as a Hotel Desk Clerk (IHA) to your current employment in Contracting?

(After being employed at the Kanto Lodge, information about employment within the bases became easily accessible (*2), and when I came to learn of recruitment for the Contracting Section, I applied for it with my colleague. It was the time before the introduction of the Internet or SNS.

*2 Refers to information about job notices posted in Yokota Air Base Personnel Department. (internal recruiting).

Q3. What kind of job is your current Contracting position?

I am involved in goods and services contract work with respect to requests from all kinds of units at the base.

Since these costs are funded by the taxes of the American people, it is necessary to procure the appropriate quality and quantity in accordance with their intended use at a fair price, and, if the amount that has been settled by the sales of each unit or by some of the welfare facilities is exceeded, it is a rule to select the supplier through competitive bidding in accordance with the law.

Q4. I heard that English is indispensable for your job, but how did you master English?

When I was working at the hotel office, I can say that I learned Basic English conversational skills at work, as my duties included telephone coordination numerous times every day as well as over-the-counter customer service. Moreover, upon moving to the Contracting Section, documents on specifications related to laws and regulations and construction-related materials became my educational resources. The creation of documents also became my primary task.

Q5. You have accumulated a lot of working experience, but how did you improve your career?

Beginning with the newcomer training program when I first started my job, I was sent for specific training over several years and my skill level improved (*3)

Also, as I was promoted, I acquired certification for being able to execute a fixed amount of the U.S. budget after evaluation, and based on my work experience and examination results, I was selected.

It goes without saying that I received help from my supervisor and colleagues as well as senior employees.

*3 At that time, the management system involved going to multiple training classes conducted at home and abroad to learn practical work in the department. This continued for the initial 1-2 years upon employment.

As for skills related to purchasing, it is essential to pass exams held after the respective training and to obtain a course completion certificate by acquiring credits for areaspecific subjects. In doing so, I could obtain Skill Level 1 and Level 2 certifications.

Q6. What kind of training did you attend?

We received classroom-style training for approximately one week to one month, which included the fundamentals of procurement practices, laws, accounting fundamentals, price analysis, and contract negotiations.

Q7. With respect to working at the U.S. military bases in Japan, when do you feel a sense of satisfaction?

Our achievements may be considered to be those goods and services that are enjoyed every day by the troops and organizations that request them.

In that sense, I think it is a serious job with not much visibility. I feel rewarded when I can contract and deliver the goods and services requested by each unit by the deadline according to the procedures established by law.

Q8. Do you use your previous work experience in the current job?

There are many chances to do so.

To handle such a wide variety of goods and services, imagination, market research, and coordination of human relationships are also essential.

Q9. What are the good points of working at the U.S. military bases in Japan?

It involves a short commute because the workplace and my residence are nearby. There are no transfers.

I can contribute not only to the convenience of the U.S. military and civilians, but also to the mutual business and employment opportunities between U.S and Japanese companies that have contracts for receiving orders.

Q10. Finally, I would like anyone currently thinking of working at the U.S. military bases in Japan to say a few words

You go on to overseas business trip every day! There are various jobs for which you can use not only your English skills, but also your interests and expertise. Please come to Yokota Air Base!!

Interview

Yokota Air Base 374th CONTRACTING SQ
Contractor / Negotiator (General)

Mr. Kiyotaka Keisuke

Work History :

Jan.1992	Hotel Desk Clerk
Apr.1993	Management Intern
Nov.1996	Purchasing and Contract Specialist
Feb.2002	Contract Specialist
Aug.2019	Contractor / Negotiator (General)

