

Balancing Work and Family Life

MOD and the USFJ have been making efforts for the employees to balance their work and personal lives. Now we introduce a male employee who acquired Child Care Leave.



USAF Kadena Air Base
18th Civil Engineer Squadron
Fire Alarm Dispatcher
Mr. Ota Yasutaka

At present, what kind of work do you do?

I work as a fire operator. We dispatch necessary emergency vehicles for urgent response to the aircraft taking off and landing from/on Kadena Air Base, firefighting activity on base and emergency incidents of servicemembers and civilians on and off base (including local people on base).

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I took Child Care Leave for 60 days as my 3rd child was born. As I have never taken Child Care Leave before, I could spend valuable time seeing my child grow every day and experiencing difficulty of childrearing and housework. I appreciate that my supervisor approved my leave readily even though we work in shifts. Though we work in shifts and have night duty and the actual work day is long, I feel fulfilled that I have enough holidays and time to spend with my family.

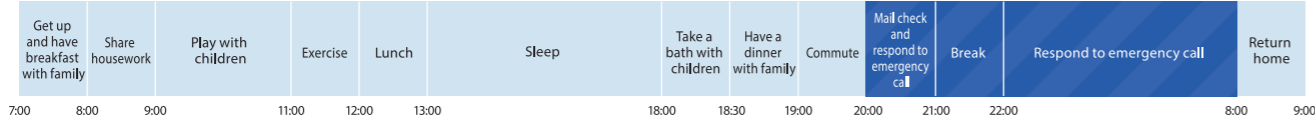


Camping with family

Advice to who intends to be an USFJ employee

As we often work with US civilians and servicemembers on base, it may be pleasant for those who like to utilize their language proficiency and those who like to be familiar with different culture. Moreover, enhancing one's skill enables one to switch to various jobs, it is worth challenging in this workplace.

One Shift Schedule (one shift in Night Duty) * There also is a shift in daytime.



Hourly Pay Temporary Employment (HPT) System

HPT employees exist as a form of employment only in the IHA and are employed for not to exceed 1 year to do temporary duties or to support permanent employees.

You can become a permanent employee by making use of the working experiences as HPT!! It is a perfect part-time job opportunity for those studying English in college! You can practice English conversation while working!!

- Leave** Annual Leave, Child Medical Care Leave, etc., is granted.
- Employment Period** The employment period is not to exceed one year. (The total employment period counting from the date of initial hire does not exceed three years.)
- Job Title** Counter Attendant, Cook, Sales Clerk, etc.
- Workplace** Retail stores or food courts at US bases

Comments from HPT Employees



Counter Attendant (30's)
I enjoy meeting young co-workers while I raise my child.

Counter Attendant (20's)
I could break through a psychological barrier particular to Japanese people and enhance my communication skill.



Sign Machine Operator (40's)
It is possible to select work hours flexibly. As there are various job titles on base, if one feels "This job is unsuitable for me," it is possible to shift to another job!

Sales Checker (60's)
"America in Japan" is to the point! There are active exchanges beyond age, gender and national origins.



Janitor (60's)
There is a system that recognizes employees 4 times a year and appreciate the accomplishment of us working behind the scenes. I feel worth working.

Customer Service Clerk (50's)
It is easier to take leave here than in Japanese companies.

Child Development Program Trainee (40's)
I am pleased to learn American culture and approach the children of native English speakers as I communicate with the children every day. I feel improvement of my English proficiency more than ever!

Hotel Desk Clerk (20's)
I had difficulties at first as I had little experience in English conversation, but I learned gradually through support from my co-workers. I will do my best to improve myself.

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Counter Attendant (50's)
Welcoming customers at the friendship festival is one of my favorite duties.

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)

