



U.S. ARMY OKINAWA

★ TORII STATION ★



LEGAL ASSISTANCE

• 652-4332 / 4742 • BUILDING 218, ROOM 220 •

GOOD REASONS TO HAVE A TOURIST PASSPORT

As many Soldiers know, they do not need a passport to come to Japan, and they do not need one to go back to the United States provided they are in possession of official travel orders and a valid Military ID. The purpose of this article is to encourage Soldiers and their dependents to obtain a Tourist Passport even if they don't think that they need one - and especially if they have an "Official" Passport. If you want to get married on Okinawa, sponsor visitors from third countries, tour/travel to other places in Asia while you are on this side of the world, it is a good idea to obtain a U.S. Tourist Passport. Travelers without U.S. passports sometimes have to expend additional time and money to prove their U.S. citizenship or they can be denied services or entry into a country.

A U.S. Tourist Passport can come in handy even if you already own an Official Passport. An Official Passport can only be used for official travel. Note that when traveling on orders some places like Taiwan do not recognize the use of Official Passports and will not let you transit through the country using the U.S. Official Passport.

A U.S. Tourist Passport is not only an important travel document; it is evidence of U.S. citizenship. Many of you will find times when you need to prove that you are a U.S. citizen. As most of you know, being a Soldier in the U.S. Army does not prove that you are a U.S. citizen. If you were born in the United States, your original birth certificate is also evidence of citizenship; while for others, it is a Certificate of Naturalization or the Consular Report of Birth Abroad.

We have many Soldiers that decide to get married in Japan. One thing that you need to prove when you get married is citizenship. If your proof is a birth certificate, you will need to get your birth certificate translated into Japanese (time and money). If your proof is a U.S. passport, you don't need to get it translated. Others want to invite (sponsor) friends or family to visit Okinawa from countries that require a Japanese tourist visa. Once again, proof of citizenship is demanded by the Japanese Embassies and Consulates in these countries.

Finally, a U.S. Tourist Passport will allow you to travel to countries that do not have an agreement with the United States to let you fly with only your ID card and orders. It is much more convenient to have a passport handy when you are planning such a trip and can make the travel process much simpler. If you're uncertain as to what you need in order to travel, there are people and resources available to you. U.S. Tourist Passports can be requested through the Military Personnel Division (MPD) located in Room 233, Building 216, Torii Station. The Torii Station Passport Office also acts as your subject matter expert for issuance of all types of passports (Official, Diplomatic, No-Fee Regular, Tourist, and Service). They can also provide information and guidance on visa matters.