



(U) Spanning The Globe...Misawa to Menwith Hill: Part 1

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(U) Note from SIGINT Communications: This is the first of a two-part article.

(U//FOUO) It took only one PCS and my husband announced that he was officially a "field rat." This proclamation is even more amazing given that our first PCS was to Misawa, Japan. We completed four fabulous years in Misawa in May 2003 (yes, I said "fabulous" and "Misawa" in the same sentence) and are now stationed at Menwith Hill, in England. Misawa and Menwith Hill are no doubt unique, but each has its advantages.

(U) Professional

(U//FOUO) By comparison, Misawa is a small site (fewer than 25 NSA civilians) while Menwith is a large site (several hundred NSA civilians). Misawa offers the opportunity to take on added responsibility well beyond grade expectations and to effect change throughout the site. The advantage of a large site is the diversity of the opportunities available, and Menwith is not lacking in its breadth or depth of opportunities. As a computer scientist, there are opportunities to develop operational or administrative software solutions, tackle challenging problems in the emerging development environment, work as a system engineer or project manager, or lead teams of military, civilians and contractors doing technology related jobs.

(U) Travel

(U) When it comes to travel (one of our passions), both locations offer limitless possibilities that are as diverse as the professional environments. Misawa and Menwith are both considered "remote", Misawa being 450 miles from Tokyo and Menwith being 200 miles from London, yet both locations are connected to their respective capital by rail, air, and highway. The difference is in the cost and availability of each.

(U) We found travel around Asia from Misawa to be expensive (the cost of getting to and from Tokyo adds \$300 per person to any trip). Still, we vacationed in Guam, Alaska, Australia, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Hawaii (5 times and 4 islands)! Within Japan, we visited Tokyo (too many times to count), Hiroshima/Miyajima (2 times), Sapporo (2 times), Kyoto/Osaka/Nara (I wish more than once), Hakodate City, Oga, and Sendai/Matsushima. This does not include our frequent day trips to sites and locations within a couple hours drive of Misawa. We truly enjoyed the unique and exotic activities (snowshoeing), sites (Big Buddha), sounds (flutes, cymbals and drums at the Nebuta Festival), and smells (drying squid and seaweed).

(U) In our first 6 months in England, we have gotten off to a relatively slow start as we have just driven to Edinburgh, northern



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Wales and the Lake District for weekenders. Fear not, we are planning trips to London, Paris/Normandy and Rome before the end of this year. So far we have found that travel in Europe is significantly cheaper than in Asia as a result of the explosion of low-cost airlines in Europe. The local travel around England, Scotland and Wales is also a bargain when compared to Japan. The challenge here is deciding where to go!

(U//FOUO) If you are thinking of applying for a field position, see the [Extended Enterprise Vacancy Announcements](#). Also, see the NSA Daily [article on Field Recruiting Events](#).

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