Participation in the Gender Field Advisor Course
Northern Rescue 2015 — Disaster Relief Exercise for GSDF Northern Army
Admiral Kawano, Chief of Staff of the Joint Staff, Met with General Worapong, Chief of the Thai Defence Forces
Admiral Tomohisa Takei, Chief of Staff, MSDF, visited Canada and the United States
Horyu Temple
Participation in Red Flag — Alaska

Fuji Firepower Review 2015

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On August 23rd, the annual Fuji Firepower Review was held in the Hataoka District of the East Fuji Maneuver Area located in Gotemba City, Shizuoka Prefecture. The Head of the GSDF Fuji School, LTG Hiroyuki Watabe, served as the officer in charge of the training; and the Head of the Fuji School Brigade, MG Kazuo Komori, served as the commanding officer of the training corps. Defense Minister Gen Nakatani; Chief of Joint Staff, ADM Katsutoshi Kawano; GSDF Chief of Staff, GEN Kiyofumi Iwata; MSDF Chief of Staff, ADM Tomohisa Takei; ASDF Chief of Staff, GEN Harukazu Saitoh; and officials from the U.S. forces made an inspection of the review. The scenario for this year’s exercise was to recapture remote islands occupied by an enemy force, with the GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF demonstrating their joint operations capabilities in front of a crowd of approximately 26,000 onlookers.

Approximately 2,300 personnel from various units took part as well as 70 armored vehicles and tanks, 60 artillery, 20 aircraft, and around 600 other types of vehicles. Some 36 tons of live munitions were used (costing around 390 million yen in total) for the exercise.

The exercise consisted of two parts. In the first part, live shooting exercises were carried out as a way of introducing some of Japan’s mainstay defense equipment. In the second part, under the scenario of recapture of remote islands, the exercise was carried out in three stages: troop deployment, mobile deployment, and recapture.

At the stage of troop deployment, ASDF F-2 fighter jets carried out missile attack based on information of enemy vessels collected by MSDF P-3C patrol aircraft. Against enemy vessels approaching to remote islands, GSDF’s surface-to-ship missile and multi-purpose missile were fired. At the stage of mobile deployment, following the reconnaissance activity using motorcycles and reconnaissance helicopters, an advance unit flew down from a transport helicopter and secured pivotal place by performing attacks and moving forward. They then conducted logistic support of supplies for units. At the recapture stage, following forced breakthrough by a reconnaissance unit, a firepower attack unit conducted artillery preparation. Subsequently, a heliborne unit, a tank unit, and other units performed their attacks. The units then broadened military accomplishments showing off more attacks.

Shortly after the review, one MV-22 Osprey, new transport aircraft, flew over the East Fuji Maneuver Area for showing its capability. This Osprey belongs to the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma (Ginowan City, Okinawa) and was conducting training of taking-off and landing at the Maneuver Area and other locations.

Fuji Firepower Review is the only live fire exercise by the GSDF open to the general public. This year marks the 57th commencement of the annual Fuji Firepower Review since the first in 1961.
An instructor at the Japan Peacekeeping Training & Research Center (JPC), Major Takaaki Tanaka, participated in the Gender Field Advisor Course from August 24th to September 4th, held by the Swedish Armed Forces International Centre (SWEDINT).

A Gender Field Advisor (GFA) refers to a staff member responsible for providing recommendations to commanding officers on how to use a gender perspective in operations and activities.

GFAs have already been incorporated into NATO operations. GFAs, who can be either male or female, have been taking an active part in Afghanistan and Iraq to make local operations more effective and efficient.

This particular Gender Field Advisor Course was attended by a total of 31 participants, including 12 males (including Major Tanaka) and 19 females, from 21 countries, including the U.S., Canada, Australia, Kenya, and Uganda, etc. It seems like that NATO countries are especially seeking the ways of how to play the GFA roles effectively within the activities of their military operations.

Major Tanaka learned that Australian Forces, which have sent 3 officers to this course, are trying to introduce a gender perspective into their military activities.

The SDF is also examining the assignment of GFAs as part of its future international peace cooperation activities. Major Tanaka will utilize what he learned from this course in lessons at JPC and also work to introduce and spread the role and approach of GFAs, which is still a new concept in Japan, to a wider audience at the SDF and the MOD.

The ASDF took part in the United States Air Force combat Exercise “Red Flag Alaska” from July 27th to August 28th. Hosted by the United States Air Force, this exercise is held in Alaska to take advantage of its excellent environment for military training. The exercise, which is held in a competition format, involves all aspects of aerial combat, from planning at a commanding headquarters to the deployment and return of aircraft. Approx. 310 personnel from the ASDF participated in this exercise aiming at enhancing the tactics and combat skills of units and the bilateral operational capabilities of Japan and U.S. Forces.

From July 27th to August 28th, the ASDF deployed six F-15s and two KC-767s to Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska, the U.S., and one E-767 and three C-130Hs to Joint Base Elmendorf–Richardson for the duration of the training where the aircraft were involved in drilling of air-to-air combat, aerial refueling, and tactical air transportation.

This year marks the 19th participation from the ASDF since 1996.
The Northern Army of the GSDF carried out the disaster relief exercise called “Northern Rescue 2015” from August 26th to 30th with the participation of local governments and the relevant organizations in Hokkaido. It was the first time to conduct disaster drill associated with large-scale field training exercise in Hokkaido.

The purpose of the exercise is to improve the coordination basics with municipalities and effectiveness of joint response capabilities between the SDF, the USFJ, and others in case of Subduction Zone Earthquake around Japan Trench and Chishima Trench. It is important to improve effectiveness of capabilities between the SDF, the USFJ, and others in case of Zone Earthquake around Japan Trench and Chishima Trench.

The exercise was held on the supposition of Subduction Zone Earthquake around Japan Trench and Chishima Trench (single type in Hokkaido), triggering a large tsunami. Participating personnel carried out a series of field training exercises ranging from the immediate rescue phase in cooperation with the local governments to stage of the emergency recovery and livelihood support.

Participating forces in the exercise included the GSDF led by the Northern Army, MSDF, ASDF, local governments and related organizations in Hokkaido, as well as USARJ, the U.S. 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force, and the Australian forces.

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located in Ikoma City, Nara Prefecture, Horyu Temple is a Buddhist temple established by Prince Shotoku. The temple is believed to have been constructed in the year 607 and in 1993 it became Japan’s first UNESCO World Heritage Site because of its status as the world’s oldest surviving wooden buildings. The temple spreads across its expansive approx. 187,000m² grounds, comprising a number of structures, including the South Gate, East Gate, Central Gate, Kondo Hall, clock tower, and passageways. Many of these ancient structures have been designated as national treasures. Most well-known is the Japan’s oldest five-story pagoda.

On either side of the Central Gate stand Japan’s oldest Kongorikishi statues (Guardian statues). The complex comprises a number of famous ancient buildings that are not only heritage structures, but also house a large amount of artwork, such as Buddhist statues, paintings and furnishings designated as national treasures. Horyu Temple is one of the most prominent old temples where tourists visit one after another without end.

In Nara City, away approx. 20km from Horyu Temple, the ASDF Nara Air Base is located. The base is also location of the ASDF Officer Candidate School, where ASDF personnel are trained in the qualities of an officer and to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for fulfilling missions as a junior officer. As the only SDF facility located in Nara Prefecture, the ASDF Nara Air Base is engaged actively in exchange and interaction with the local community.