

“Greetings from Chief of Staff, Koku-Jieitai”

Thank you for browsing our website. The weather is warming up and we can feel spring in the air. I hope you are staying safe and healthy.

This year marks 10 years since the Great East Japan Earthquake. I would like to express my condolences to 22,000 people who lost their lives or went missing in the earthquake and tsunami that occurred ten years ago on March 11. My thoughts are also with those still in suffering and pain who lost their loved ones, friends, homes, property, and jobs.

On this occasion, I had an opportunity to meet with Gen Shneider, the Commander of Fifth Air Force. On the 10th anniversary, I would like to take this opportunity to once again express my respect and appreciation to the members of the Koku-Jieitai who were brave enough to respond to the unprecedented disaster, and to our friends of the US Air Force who quickly, strongly and kindly reached out to Japan when we were in the middle of catastrophe and in great pain.

During the meeting, Gen Schneider and I looked back on the cooperation between the Koku-Jieitai and the US Air Force in the Operation Tomodachi. I conveyed my deep appreciation to him for the US supporting Japan as a true friend in the time of unprecedented national crisis. We must remember the friendship and gratitude we had at that time. No matter how hard the situation is, the Koku-Jieitai and the US Air Force are certain to continue to protect the stability of the skies and space together as friends.

I must also add that, last month, a tragic plane crash in the U.S. claimed our promising young pilot. My heart goes out to his family and friends during this heartbreaking time. Amid the sorrow, we will unite to ensure safety and fulfill our missions.

We look up into the sky 24/7, and will carry out our mission to protect the peace and security of Japan. I hope you will continue extending the same understanding and support to the Koku-Jieitai this year ahead.

The Reliable Koku-Jieitai Is Just by Your Side
Looking Up at the Sky and Space 24/7

March 11, 2021

General IZUTSU Shunji

Chief of Staff, Koku-Jieitai (Japan Air Self-Defense Force)