



# Greetings

from Chief of Staff,

**Koku-Jieitai**

Japan Air Self-Defense Force

To all the visitors to Koku-Jieitai's website, let me express the greetings of the season and best wishes for the New Year. I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your great support for Koku-Jieitai throughout the past year. Thank you for a lot of heartwarming encouragement, which gave us a tremendous boost.

First of all, I would like to extend my condolences to those who lost their loved ones in the Noto Peninsula Earthquake, occurred on January 1, 2024, causing extensive damage to Ishikawa and other prefectures in Hokuriku region and Niigata Prefecture. I also express my sympathy to everyone affected by the earthquake.

In the wake of the earthquake, Koku-Jieitai has been engaging in disaster relief activities under the Joint Task Force, with the Commander of Central Air Defense Force as its core. We will continue to make efforts, focusing on livelihood support activities for people the disaster-affected areas.

In the meantime, due to Russia's continued aggression against Ukraine and the destabilized situation in Africa and the Middle East, 2023 was an unusual year for Koku-Jieitai as we dispatched our cargo aircraft twice to transport Japanese nationals overseas.

Also, for the area surrounding Japan, we continue to face an unpredictable, severe, and complicated security environment, as exemplified by North Korea's repeated launches of ballistic missile and the like and joint flights by China and Russia.

In such a situation, Koku-Jieitai worked on strengthening air defense capability as 2023 was the first year to fundamentally reinforce its defense capabilities, after the National Security Strategy was formulated in 2022. In addition to enhancing bilateral response capability with our ally, the United States, we have been committed to boosting cooperation with like-minded countries; the first bilateral exercise in Japan with France and Italy and the first overseas deployment training of F-35 fighter jets to Australia. Japan's cooperation with Australia and the U.K. is expanding at various levels, including the conclusion of Reciprocal Access Agreement, which facilitates mutual access and cooperative activities.

July 2024 marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Koku-Jieitai. In order to achieve and strengthen the seven pillars of defense buildup stated in the National Defense Strategy, we, both officer corps and enlisted corps, will continue to work with even greater speed to procure equipment, develop systems, and promote education and training, and thus build up "Koku-Jieitai with both strength and kindness."

Furthermore, along with enlarging and deepening training for enhancing deterrence and response capabilities of Japan-U.S. Alliance, we will promote initiatives which contribute to the realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" by strengthening cooperation with like-minded countries so that we can respond to common regional issues and various situations on a daily basis.

Koku-Jieitai will play our role to ensure the safety of the sky and the stable use of space this year as well. We would like to ask for your continued understanding and cooperation with Koku-Jieitai.

I wish the visitors to our website good health and happiness.

Jan 11, 2024

General UCHIKURA Hiroaki

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

