

Bilateral runway repair enhances partnerships

35th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

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Members of the 35th Civil Engineer Squadron (CES) and Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) 3rd Air Wing counterparts participated side-by-side in a live-fire and rapid airfield damage repair team exercise hosted by JASDF at Draughton Range, Japan, Aug. 1 - 4, 2022.



The exercise kicked off with the 35th CES Explosive Ordnance Disposal flight creating craters on a mock airfield scaled to runway specifications. The exercise assessed Misawa's ability to perform Agile Combat Employment (ACE) across a range of military operations in a complex and dynamic international security environment.

“Doing this exercise together makes us a more capable, versatile and more interoperable unit, supporting the whole ACE construct, and overall makes us better partners,” said U.S. Air Force Col. Christopher Fuller, 5th Air Force Logistics, Engineering and Force Protection (A4) director. “Enhancing capabilities and military relationships maintains a strategic alliance with the Japanese.”

U.S. and Japanese partners worked alongside each other repairing the craters while observers from both countries took notes on the differences in procedures. This ensures better understanding for future repairs that may require both parties.

“The Air Force is out here to demonstrate how we work runways and for JASDF staff to take notes on how we do it,” said U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Alexander Manco, 35th CES Pavement and Equipment section chief. “We watch how they do the process and hopefully we improve each other's efficiency on how we conduct rapid airfield damage repairs.”

Exercises like these embody the mission to provide worldwide deployable forces, protect U.S. interests in the Indo-Pacific and defend Japan with sustained forward presence and focused mission support.

“As we conduct these exercises, it enables us to respond in real-world scenarios more effectively,” said JASDF Capt. Junichiro Matsushita, Civil Engineering Section, Logistics Division, Northern Air Defense Force. “Looking forward, we would like our Japan and U.S. forces to align even more by conducting exercises together and strengthening our ability to restore and repair aircraft functionality.”