

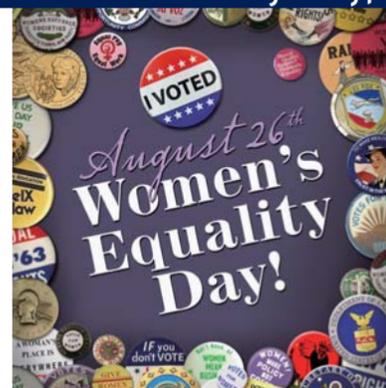
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# Team Kadena fuels joint operations training for Army, Marines



U.S. Army Aviation Battalion Japan UH-60 Black Hawk pilots and crew chiefs inspect their aircraft prior to flight during a battalion collective training exercise Aug. 1, at Kadena Air Base.

(U.S. Air Force photos by Senior Airman John Linzmeier)

## By Airman 1st Class Greg Erwin

18th Wing Public Affairs

**8/1/2017** — Members from the U.S. Army Aviation Battalion Japan and the 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) converged on Kadena July 31, through August 3, for a battalion collective training exercise.

The exercise tested the unit readiness to respond to planned and unplanned contingencies, and they used Kadena and 18th Logistics Readiness Squadron fuels management flight to make sure those operations could be completed.

“We come down here to do joint training with the 1st Special Forces Group because they’re the only Army maneuver group in Japan that we can work with,” said U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jimmy Kafer, a pilot for the USAABJ. “It gives us a chance to do training in a field environment, and an opportunity to do confined area landing, sling load operations, and airborne operations.”

The USAABJ used UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters for the exercise due to its versatility of use. UH-60s are capable of use for cargo sling load, parachute jumps, as well as medical evacuation and VIP transport.

The 18th LRS fuels management team is the lifeline to flight operations. Without the fuel, flight operations cannot happen, and members like U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Jerald Hickmon, 18th LRS fuels distribution supervisor keep operations moving.

“We enable units to maintain flight ops through fuel support by supporting any and every aircraft that comes through, whether it’s diesel or gasoline,” said Hickmon. “We make sure they get the fuel, because without us they wouldn’t be able to fly.”

The UH-60s used by the U.S. Army are similar to HH-60’s stationed at Kadena, but the obstacles of working with different units made the job a challenge for the 18th LRS Fuels team.

“One of the obstacles for fueling some of these special ops aircraft is they have the blades running,” said Hickmon. “We have to have specialized, qualified people for the hot refueling, and we have to position our guys out there prior to them landing.”

Last year alone, the 18th LRS Fuels team distributed over 40 million gallons of fuel during operations, at an estimated cost of \$88.8 million. The unit vehicle inventory consists of 57 vehicles, including the 40 R-11 Refuelers that are ready, on



(U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman John Linzmeier)

▲ Airman 1st Class Jacob Gillis, 18th Logistics Readiness Squadron fuels distribution operator, and U.S. Army Sgt. Jose Giron Aviation Battalion Japan crew chief, refuel a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter during a collective training exercise Aug. 1, at Kadena Air Base.

call and prepared to service aircraft at a moment’s notice.

Kafer and other members of USAABJ successfully completed their training thanks to Team Kadena’s capabilities and mission readiness.

“I don’t think we’d be here and be able to do what we do without your support,” said Kafer. “If we didn’t have that level of support, it would have been a much more difficult transition to be able to do mission support here ourselves.”