

DOCA 2009 SOUTH KOREA-JAPAN

THE DEFENSE ORIENTATION CONFERENCE ASSOCIATION, INC. (DOCA).

DOCA is a non-political, non-partisan, non-profit association which provides, with the assistance of the Department of Defense (DOD), continuing education for members in matters pertaining to national security, international relations and pertinent economic and social insights. Because we DOCA members pay our own way, DOCA also provides, at no cost to tax payers, a permanent medium for cooperation between its members and the DOD and encourages its members to pass on information learned to others. Don Regan, loyal DOCA, responds with this reflection.

DOCA traveled on special order TB-072 cut jointly by the DOD and DOS which for its travel to the far east June 14-27, 2009 to visit South Korea and Japan, read in part: "This is a joint Department of Defense – Department of State coordinated message and constitutes DOD and DOS approval of the DOCA travel and itinerary requests, . . . Visitors should be accorded status as guests of the Department of Defense while visiting U.S. military installations. Visitors may be granted access to military installations and briefings on an unclassified basis, consistent with local security measures. Military air and group transportations are authorized only as part of military/diplomatic tour and may only be offered if such transportation does not interfere with official missions".

DOCA's staff did a great job of preparing pertinent, detailed backgrounders for Korea, Japan and North East Asia as illustrated by vividly portraying the China, Japan, Korea, Russia quadrangle athwart a vital commercial artery and strategic battleground. This diagram portrays the situation:



Northeast Asia, containing our allies Korea and Japan, is a commercial corridor and strategic hot spot. We started our briefing in Korea.

SOUTH KOREA - SUNDAY JUNE 14-ASSEMBLY

Leaving the International dateline behind somewhere in the Pacific, and finding Incheon's airport considerably more hospitable than did MacArthur's troops some 50 years ago, our DOCA team assembled above the Han river in downtown Seoul, Korea (an amazing vantage point for this Lt. USNR. whose last visit to Korea was in the early fifties, when there was hardly any Seoul left standing on the river banks). New members were welcomed, brief business conducted, and our week visiting the US embassy, military bases and the DMZ was outlined.

Also, some of us had time to visit the former Korean emperor's palace grounds and the adjoining National Museum where we got a glimpse of the history which preceded Korea of today.

As part of Asia, the peninsula's roots and populace predate by many centuries the western calendar. Typically, tribes roamed, but then for many years (1391-1910) the Korean peninsula preserved itself as a homogenous Sino-centered kingdom successful in repelling other invaders and providing breathing space in which arts, culture and language flourished, i.e. Hangeul: During what is called the "3 Kingdom" period, Hangeul was created. In 1446 King Sejong (aka professor Henry Higgins) had sympathy for the common, illiterate people of the Kingdom. To remedy this and raise his countrymen at all levels, he invented and oversaw the teaching of Hangeul which in all of history is the only language with a known time of creation inventor, and clear purpose. The language, with 17 consonants and 11 vowels, when

strung together with machine gun rapidity, would have been difficult even for Professor Pickering. Too bad Lerner and Loewe weren't alive then to produce the Asian version of *My Fair Lady*.

Unfortunately for the many generations who have occupied this peninsula, it has historically been the pathway over which invading armies have trod. From 1910 – 1945 Japan, after smashing the Imperial Russian presence and pushing China west, occupied the Peninsula as its Colony.. Understandably, the Museum showed little of this period.

MONDAY JUNE 15 THE U.S. EMBASSY. SEOUL

U.S. EMBASSY:ROK-MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE; EMBASSY RECEPTION

First stop is UNC/CFC/USFK (United Nations Command: ROK-US Combined Forces Command; United States Forces Korea)

As a lesson pertinent to our nation's position in the world today, the vibrant, purely democratic Korean economy/state is necessarily built on a strong military foundation. Obviously, without this foundation all that the rest of the world would know about Korea is Kimchi, not Kia or Hyundai.

To this lowly Lt whose memories of 1950's Korea included mustering at 0600 at the Yongsan parade ground to troop the colors with honor guards from the 15 nation UN Force, and whose only means of travel to Taegu and Pusan was a hedge hopping Piper Cub, this crowded peninsula, crisscrossed with super highways and high speed railways, and dotted with industrial and shopping centers and other elements of the World's 13th largest economy raised the question: How was this possible? Many recipients of this memo are old enough to remember why, but many are not, so a brief look backward is appropriate. This foundation, built with blood in the 50's, has grown to maturity. The following table illustrates this transformation:

	1962	2007
GDP	\$2.3 Billion	\$970 Billion & Growing
Per Capita Gross National Income	\$87	\$20,500
National Resources:	Almost none; agrarian society.	Still no coal, iron, etc, but universally literate, well educated, entrepreneurial population.
Exports	Crops	Cars (Kia & Hyundai), semi conductors, mobile phones, consumer electronics, chemicals
Seoul	A few buildings and a river	A bustling, hustling 12 million plus modern metropolis.
Political System	Military Dictatorship (Syngman Rhee)	Since 1987- Participatory democracy with strong president serving a single 5 year term and a unicameral legislature.
Transportation	Foot, Ox, 3 wheel motorcycle	Cars and trucks, bullet train, super subway, Asiana & Korean Airlines – all running on schedule.
Roads	Few	Many. Seoul street congestion= Manhattan at rush hour.
International	Unknown orphan	Diplomatic relations with 188 Nations.
Military	Brave, but small & under equipped (high school & college students saw action during North Korean invasions.	670,000 and 3,400,000 active and reserve Navy, Marine, Army & Air – highly trained and ready to fight (as one Gunny said “I’d stand shoulder to shoulder with those bastards anytime, anywhere against any enemy” – the ultimate war fighter and ally).

YONGSAN

Next stop, Yongsan, Headquarters US Forces Korea, where General Walter Sharp, Commander UNC/CFC/USFK welcomed us aboard and launched immediately into a strategic briefing focusing on all

of Northeast Asia of which our presence in and alliance with Korea is a fulcrum.

General Sharp presented his Command's three priorities:

1. Be prepared to fight and win in defense of the ROK, a priority constant and unchanged since 1953:
2. Strengthen this vital alliance to ensure that there is no degradation in the ability to defend or deter against North Korea or any other hostile aggression.
3. Improve the quality of life for USFK, fighters and families, so that Korea will become a military station of choice.

This briefing concluded with an assessment of North Korea's military capabilities (the world's 4th largest armed force, 1,200,000 active duty plus 5 million reserves operating 1,700 aircraft, 800 naval vessels and over 13,000 artillery systems, which while somewhat aged and unsophisticated include an 80,000 person special operations force, judged by our experts among one of the best in the world. While our analysts agree that North Korea is incapable of sustaining a general offensive, it will remain, and be sustained, as one of China's client states (while a peninsula wide plebiscite would immediately and overwhelmingly unite the North and South under a democratic regime), China is unwilling to tolerate a Western participatory democracy as its immediate neighbor.

We moved seamlessly from our military headquarters to the situation room of the U.S. Embassy in Seoul where we were greeted by Bill Stanton (BA, Phi Beta Kappa Fordham; MA, PhD University of North Carolina), Deputy Chief of Mission, an old Asia hand who uses his key and PhD to understand and help defend our strategic goals. "Bill" (as we were asked to address him) led a surprisingly candid, concrete, and cordial session featuring presentations from the Embassy's First Secretaries (Economic; Trade; Political; Piracy; and Military).

To continue our cultural exchange and for sustenance we climbed to the Dragon Hill Lodge (one of the classic ☆☆☆ US Military R&R hotels), where the tissues were amply restored amid centuries old surroundings, enabling us to enjoy a windshield tour of the entire Yongsan facility.

ROK MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

Refreshed, we moved on to the ROK Ministry of National Defense for a view from the top -Sang Hee Lee. ROK's 41st Minister of Defense led the briefing, and again we enjoyed a candid Q&A session.

After returning to the base for a quick shower, we returned to the Dragon Hill Lodge for a formal Embassy, Military reception and dialogue.

TUESDAY, JUNE 16 – US ARMY GARRISON HUMPHREY AND OSAN AFB

USFK is now leaving metropolitan Seoul. The move, several years in planning and now underway, accomplishes two goals: (i) consolidations of US forces while improving quality of life for war fighters and families; and (ii) return urban real estate to ROK ownership. Because dependents and diplomats are and will remain key components of the U.S. long term presence, the hubs are placed outside of PDRK artillery range. In addition, the speed and agility element built into the consolidation plan enables relocation of the non combatants ASAP (24-26 hours in the unlikely event of another invasion from the North).

HUMPHREY

As Headquarters, USFK not only positions the 8th Army to fulfill its many missions, but also replaces Quonset huts, butler buildings, barracks and BOQs of WWII et seq fame with a free market financed, ☆☆☆ master planned community as our main garrison in Korea – well done!

OSAN AFB

For the second half of our DOCA daily double we moved from up the road to Osan, one of our most forward air outposts. Osan bristles with readiness and security men, women and machines.

Our comfort level, on site, as well as back home, must be high as our war fighters and their unmatched equipment are poised to deter and defend 24/7 USFK lives its mission: be ready to "fight tonight and win decisively".

Osan's pedigree compels a historical footnote. When the UN forces retook the Peninsula, AF fighters and ground support aircraft needed a forward place to land. Enter USAF aviation engineers who in 2½ months of 24/7 days laid 9000 horizontal feet of 24 inch thick runway, which with minor upgrades is still in service today.

U-2; F-16, A-10 describes our airborne alphabet afternoon. OSAN has them all and we toured each and met the men and woman who fly them.

U-2: As we approached the runway, we were amazed to see a U-2, wings flapping like a seagull, come in to land on its tricycle-like landing gear. (photo stirringly snapped from our bus by DOCA's Cathy Ann Paige) We went into its hanger where Major Matt Edwards, pilot of today's Dragon Lady Mission, guided us, starting with the pilots' full \$250,000 pressure suit without which he couldn't survive above 60,000 feet, and in which he lives for 12 hour flights. We walked around and peered inside this USAF modern (1950s) miracle of aerodynamics, still strategic and still the hardest plane in our stable to fly and land (65feet long with a 105foot wingspan).



We all benefit from the pictures this marvel makes and takes. There are no words to paint such pictures or convey the awe one feels at the still current competence embodied in this plane and its pilots.

F-16: Next, we moved to a nearby hanger housing a combat ready F-16, and had a first-hand briefing from its pilot and ground crew. F-16 be nimble, F-16 be quick, was their interpretation of the Fight Tonight readiness mission.

A-10: Today's fact filled adventure ended with a walk around and glimpse into the infantrymen's best friend, the A-10 aka "hedgehog", the agilest bird in the sky. Pilot, Major Bradley, USAF, with justified pride, guided us in and around this tank destroyer, troop supporter. He reports that grunts on the ground offer daily prayers to the gods who overruled Secretary McNamara's attempts to kill the A-10.

As a well deserved reward for an intense day of study and discernment before returning to home base, our DOCA driver detoured to an on-base pub where we slaked the thirst with a few frosty mugs before the long trip home.

Summary – First 2 Days: Yesterday, our hosts painted the big North East Asia military and political picture for us. Today we traveled the canvas on which this picture will be painted.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17-KOREAN NATIONAL CEMETERY (ROK'S ARLINGTON)

Day 3 started with respect and solemnity. The DOCA delegation was met by leading members of the Korean military who led us through this expansive burial ground, solemn tribute to the people whose blood preserved and nourished the Republic. We marched behind DOCA president, Peter Carter, and joined with our hosts in a formal wreath laying ceremony.

Fittingly, this portion of our piercing look into the Korean character ended as we exchanged salutes with the all Korean service (Navy, AF, Marine, Army) Honor Guard.

As we departed, the vision of the fresh red and yellow flowers which each marked many of the thousand graves and the memories of the Korean and American blood jointly shed in creation and sustenance of this



republic will long linger.

KOREAN WAR MUSEUM

After suitable time for reflection and photographs, as noted above, we resumed our military cadence, formed up, and were guided through the ROK War Museum by Mr. Ha, director and curator, who led us orally and pictorially from June 25, 1950, the date picked by the North Koreans for the invasion, through the armistice and into today's continuing hostile situation. Mr. Ha's emotion filled narrative ebbed and flowed as we moved from defeat to victory to ultimate rebirth. In two hours we barely scratched the surface, but viewed at the end, perhaps the most poignant exhibit and hopefully a harbinger of the future, the statue of the 2 brothers (North and South) divided by war but united by family and heritage.

LUNCH - US NAVY HANGSON

Of course the best chow on the peninsula is served up by the Navy. Our group was given a table in the Navy Club banquet room where we were fortunate enough to participate in a time honored military exercise, Hail and Farewell, as the incoming were greeted and the outgoing feted. If the Honorees could measure up even close to the accolades they received, our Army (yes, as the ultimate gesture of camaraderie, the Navy allows army personnel to partake of its recreational facilities) is in good hands.

ROK-MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE ("MOFAT")

Putting a diplomatic flair at the end of the business part of this third day, our completely satiated team reluctantly left the Navy Club and assembled for some more briefings from the ROK viewpoint. Our briefer, fresh from a phone call with President Lee who was at the summit in Washington D.C. examined and capsulized the length, strength, and depth of the US/ROK partnership. Again, the level at, and warmth with which we were ushered into the Ministry verifies the bonds which bind ROK and USA.

Naturally North Korea (PDRK) was a key topic. The current situation ("crisis'?) involving threats based on a 3rd world country's nuclear blackmail (an old Kim Jong Il trick as he passes the bludgeon to his third son), which, without the nukes, would be merely belligerent blustering, provided the text for our talks. Even with all of Seoul sitting well within the North's artillery range, no one seems worried and life, all but the tortured traffic, moves resolutely ahead.

THURSDAY, JUNE 18 UNITED NATIONS COMMAND PANMUNJON

We packed up early and headed north to the DMZ, created by the Armistice of 1953 (which North Korea now disavows). We disembarked a few feet inside South Korea and, accompanied by our Marine escorts and New Zealand guards, stepped into the conference room where the border runs precisely down the middle of the treaty signing table. Less than 2 feet away glowered a young North Korean military man who obviously earned a bonus giving us James Cagney tough guy stares. Being Irish, I scowled back and contemplated offering him the universal single finger salute, when due to advanced age and admonished by our Marine guard, I was apparently not deemed worthy of kidnap, so returned safely to sanctuary of the South Korean side.

Lunch was at the only Swiss Chalet in the DMZ – home of the Swiss component of the United Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC), another 1953 armistice anomaly composed of 4 "Neutrals" (Switzerland, Sweden, and Soviet puppets, Poland and Czechoslovakia). NNSC still exists even though Czechoslovakia doesn't and Poland is now a member in good standing of the free world. The Commission meets weekly, but only the Swedes and Swiss have attended for the last 14 years.

We were pleased, but not surprised that the Swiss remain in charge of entertaining and feeding dignitaries such as our DOCA delegation. Their jovial chef prepared lunch. Dialogue with our several hosts revealed that the universal Swiss and Swedish sense of humor follows their soldiers into battle, witness their prize statue sculpted out of a beer keg and Swiss silverware: a pig with eagles wings destined to fly when the North Koreans become reasonable.

Our DMZ day concluded with a hike into one of the 4 North Korean invasion tunnels dug under the DMZ but discovered and blocked by the ROK. The tunnels which could accommodate tanks and artillery were 6 feet tall at their highest. This correspondent was able to amble unscathed down the dank passageway by

following the sound of helmet bumping the overhead, followed immediately by suitable expletives uttered by John O'Donnell, who at 6ft 5in was the DOCA lead man honor guard.

Observations as we withdrew from the DMZ south: The Southwest side of the 4 lane highway was resplendent with buildings, motels, crops, and even a dune buggy course. On the other side of the highway, tucked inside the barbed wire strung fence, were guard posts every ¼ mile, manned 24/7. Blocked on and under the ground, and incapable in the air, the North might still try the river.

SOUTH KOREA CONCLUSIONS

1. The Republic of Korea, a truly participatory democracy with a vibrant economy, anchors, with US assistance, the free world's strategic Northeast Asia region.

2. The ROK/USA partnership/alliance is built on a firm foundation, has popular support (in spite of demonstrations etc. . . expected in a free society), is based on values shared with the US as well as mutual deterrence, and has long legs.

3. The 15 Nation UN Command remains intact and influential with troops on the ground – perhaps the best ever evidence of how that body could work.

4. BOOM – the threat from the North, fostered by dictator Ill Kim (sic) is real, but as the *Economist* in April 2009 opined is most likely another generation tired old trick with political rather than military aims. Query: How long can an absolute Monarch, no friend of the Magna Carta, continue to eat caviar, drink Courvoiseur and drive a Mercedes while 90% of his subjects subsist in poverty?

5. China will keep Ill Kim (sic) on a leash – it doesn't want war and it doesn't want the Korean peninsula to unify and produce a democracy on its south east border.

6. With China on the prowl and Russia renewing its growl, the US/ROK alliance, buttressed by our physical presence on the peninsula, gives enduring evidence of the steel which stands ultimately in the U.S. military backbone.

7. Our troops work well with ROK as one gunny observed "I'll stand shoulder-to shoulder with these S.O.B.s anytime, anywhere, against anybody".

8. The enduring expression, given sincerity and a firm handshake by Major General Kim, Choon Soo, Ass't Chief of Staff, UNC, as we departed Korea:

"Kachi Kapsi Da!" = We go together!

Team DOCA's consensus was that "kachi kapsi da" is more than a phrase; it's a solid bet in the future with an ally/partner which will weather storms, political, internal, and external (Northeast Asia Region) as far as we can see into the future. The Republic of Korea is a true friend, a fierce ally, and like Colombia in our hemisphere, a full participatory democracy which is:

- Well led
- Vital to our strategic interests; and
- A valiant and valuable ally.



JAPAN DAY 1 THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2009

We headed south towards Tokyo, safely out of range of shells from the PDRK's 13,000 artillery pieces, only to find, as headlined in the *Japan Times* on our arrival that North Korea's missiles are pointed at Japan. It must be that the Ill Jong (sic) family is tracking team DOCA.

On arriving at Narita via Asiana (world class airline), we were met, organized, shaped up and briefed in typical Marine fashion by Major Neal Murphy USMC, our guide for the next 7 days. We bunked at the 5 star New Otani, one of the world's largest and most complex hotels boasting 12 restaurants and enough pools to keep a school of dolphins satisfied for a week.

Keeping the Northeast Asia Regional focus, this week's agenda transitioned seamlessly from USFK to USFJ.

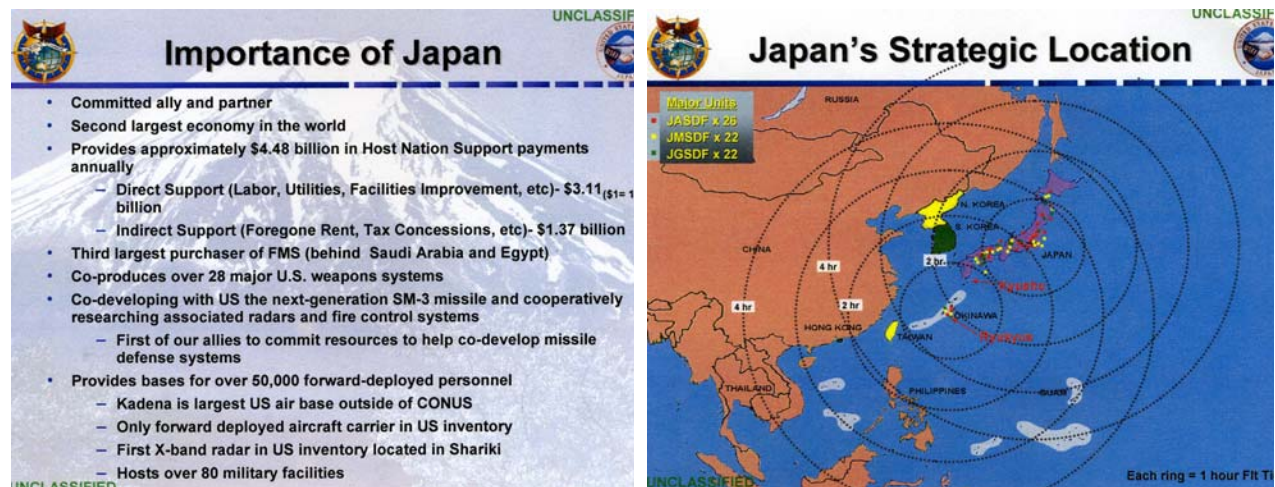
JAPAN DAY 2 FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 2009-YOKOTA AIR BASE

For those who served in the region the legendary Tachikawa AFB, long time basketball champs of the Pacific is no more – merged into Yokota, headquarters of the USFJ (Japan).

USFJ COMMANDED UPDATE BRIEFING

As we have become accustomed on this hegira, our USFJ briefing was held in the Yokota command briefing center and was led by a real Marine, Brigadier General John Toolan, Deputy Commander, USFJ just arrived back from an all night briefing in Washington DC.

Among the slides Brigadier General Toolan presented was the following pictorial analysis of Japan's importance:



U.S. military strength in Japan is about 37,000 ashore and 13,000 afloat, and U.S. forces are dispersed among 88 facilities located on Honshu, Kyushu, and Okinawa. Total acreage of U.S. bases is approximately 77,000 acres. USFJ bases and facilities range in size from a several thousand acre training area to a single antenna site.

On mainland Japan there are seven different bases/posts: USAFJ Yokota and Minsawa; USAJ Camp Zama; USMC Camp Fuji, Iwakuni AFB; USNJ Yokosuka, Atsugi, and Sasebo.

The balance of this week was visits to several of these bases, briefings with command personnel, and dialogue with troops on the ground.

Q & A WITH BRIGADIER GENERAL TOOLAN AND STAFF

- Biggest general problem: In Japan, as in U.S., political will to match our military capability and readiness. Government now in transition.

- Biggest current problem (obviously): North Korea's actions and intentions, While this is a form of wake up call for Japan, both Japan and Korea naturally and necessarily look to the U.S. for decisive action, for actions such as de-nuking the North.
- Japan's offensive (even nuclear) role? Not in the near future. Protection will remain in the U.S. for offensive capacity and long range nuclear umbrella (Japanese polls show that as many as 70% of its people profess to be pacifists).
- Japan and Korea, despite lingering animosity, are and should remain part of the U.S./Japan/Korea/Australia/New Zealand family of free nations.

"Gooooood Morning Jaaaapan". Our mid-morning treat was a visit to Armed Force Network (AFN) for performance by DJ Ian Anderson USN (aka the "bitter bald guy" reminiscent of Airman Adrian Cronauer of Vietnam fame); plus a live TV newscast and a make up of that almost century old staple *Stars and Stripes*.

Lunch Break: Yokota Samurai Dining Facility with ten airmen at the award winning Enlisted Men's dining facility. Food was varied and good, but the dialogue with more examples of some of the best and brightest was much better.

After lunch we visited the 36th Airlift Squadron C-130 ("Hercules") Static Display. The aging work horses were built starting in 1954. They can still take off fully loaded with mercy mission or war-fighting necessities from a pool table and land in your driveway, as their proud crews proudly boast. New models are joining the fleet and soon all pilots will be older than the planes they fly.

The walk around was followed by a pictorial briefing of the amazing things these cargo carrying monsters have done and continue to do, as personified by the 374th Airlift squadron ("the samurai warriors") (Please note the international cross culturalization which underscores the alliance.

The intense briefings, fortunately, were not followed by any exam, instead Brig. Gen Toolan bookended the day by hosting a social hour with USFJ personnel in the Officers Club's Samurai Lounge (where else?). Then back to the New Otani for some badly needed horizontal time in preparation for tomorrow's maneuvers.

DAY 3 SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 2009 CAMP FUJI

In keeping with our Marine mission, today's muster orders opened as follows:

- 0530 Wake-up call
- 0600 Board FSS Bus to Combined Arm Training Center, Camp Fuji (CATC).

First, a little Central Japan history:

A long time ago Mother Nature burped, producing "Fuji-San", Japan's national symbol, the top half of which on a sunny day such as the 20th, rose in pristine whiteness above the clouds. Fuji-San in person surpasses the stately post cards ubiquitous throughout the world.

Nestled securely and almost anonymously on the plains and in the ravines located at its base, Camp Fuji is also heir to the culture of several centuries of Tokagowa samurai who trained there.

As we bused on board after a picturesque ride through the countryside, we were greeted and briefed by Major Powell USMC (CATC's XO) representing the 200 uniformed marines who staff and operate the entire program from its U.S. owned 309 acres to the 12,000 acres (privately owned) and 20,000 acres (prefecture owned) maneuvering and live fire training areas.

Helmets and flak vests on we mounted Humvees and toured shooting ranges, EOD (Explosive Ordinance Demolition) sites and tactical vehicle operating areas, several of which were in use by JGSDF troops and helicopters.

Next, First Sgt. Bogart, a 7 year veteran of EOD ops conducted a thorough briefing of EOD equipment, people, and mission. This man; a product of two years schooling, two tours in Iraq, and one year in the Republic of Georgia, walked us through several robotic and long distance detonators.

To compliment our Fuji fun , what else but an MRE?

Sample MRE menu (Put hot dishes in plastic envelope – pour water (of any kind) in cover jackets 2 minutes = hot chicken & rice!)

- Chicken Marengo
- Mexican Rice
- Vegetable
- Ice tea
- Jalapeno Cheese
- Short bread cookies
- Skittles
- Moist towelette

Which, after a quick dash to the PX, was accompanied by copious quantities of "Jarhead Red" bottled by David Firestone USMC and Central Coast, CA. Jarhead Red Profits go to Marine dependent services.

Our Camp Fuji finale, hosted by a JMSDF team, was the tour (photo below) of its urban warfare training buildings – specially constructed to give our troops the basics on how to stack, enter, and clear a structure with minimal harm to civilian shields in this necessary warfighting technique.



DAY 4 SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 2009

DAY OFF! – Time for touring, bullet train to Kyoto, pachinko, or reflection.

DAY 5 MONDAY, JUNE 22, 2009- CAMP ZAMA

US ARMY, JAPAN (USAJ)

Our Blackhawks were down - never lifted off. After consecutive days of solid sunshine old man weather decided to pull down the early morning cloud curtain, and the UH-60 Blackhawk's scheduled to pick us up at Hardy Barracks in Tokyo were grounded. So back to the bus to Camp Zama for our USAJ briefing.

Camp Zama (Formerly the Japanese West Point) history intrigued but didn't evoke any warm thoughts in our traveling company, as we learned Japanese Army history from 1920 to 1945.

After a windshield tour of the whole base we visited the K-9 compound to observe attack, explosive, drug search, and guard dogs go through their paces.

Lunch provided another opportunity to eat with and learn the personal history and vision of young army enlisted personnel, most of whom had one or more deployments in combat areas.

After lunch our Team was given a command briefing – in the forward command center in which deployment decisions are made by Major General Wierczinski, who wears 2 hats: USARJ (Japan) and I Corps (when deployed). Topics ranged from situations in Iraq and Afghanistan (positive moves by locals), U.S./Japan relations and military preparedness, multi-abilities to deal with any action Ill Kim (sic) might take, and ultimately – the situation today on Teheran's streets which, in the General's personal belief, is a direct result of the participating democracy, personal and communication freedoms Iranians can and do see in neighboring Iraq. In the General's 30 year career he has never seen such a dynamic force unleashed. He also credited decisions made by the DOD and the military in the 90s to re-position our military from a cold war machine to mobile, crisis reaction forces with command coordination among the branches and ability to act cohesively and concurrently in ways which didn't exist 10-20 years ago.

An unexpected, emotional highlight came at the end of our day in the person of Tsuriji Akiksa, one of 20 remaining Japanese to survive Iwo Jima. Dressed in a blue business suit he journeyed 5 hours to join us and narrate his experience from Navy Signal School to deep within a cave to surrender (all of his cave-mates committed hari kari) to being nursed back to health by US Corpsmen. This treatment led to respect, even love for the USA and its people. Thus, his constant effort to repay kindness by meeting and thanking visiting US groups. He said his sentiments are universal among his generation of Japanese, perhaps a key reason for our good relations today. Amid handshakes, bowing and tears, he left signed copies of his surrender papers. Domo arrigato.

DOCA/JDS (JAPAN DEFENSE SOCIETY) RECEPTION

Day 5 concluded with a formal reception with DOCA's Japanese counterpart – the JDS, which was established in 1965 by five of Japan's distinguished economic organizations, Japan Federation of Economic Organizations (Keidanren), Japan Association of Corporate Executives, The Japan Federation of Employers' Association, The Japan Chambers of Commerce and Industry and The Industry Club of Japan. Headquartered in the plush six story Industry Club of Japan, the JDS's 750 active members are supplemented by 140 distinguished economists who assist its mission of enhancing the spirit of national defense among the Japanese People, promoting mutual understanding between the people and the Self Defense Forces thus contributing to the peace and prosperity of Japan.

The 17 person receiving line which greeted our traveling team was headed by Kazuo Tsukuda, Chairman Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, and included executives from a few other minor companies such as NEC, Hitachi, Kawasaki Heavy Industries, and Nippon Express. Joining in the ceremony was the U.S. highest ranking officer in Japan; Lt. General Rice USAF who helicoptered down from Yokota to emphasize the ongoing shift of power and commerce to the Northeast Asia Region. Lt. General Rice, an astronaut and B-2 pilot, is a superstar. He delivered a brief, but brilliant welcome and then turned the meeting over to mingling, mixing, and matching of ideas and good wishes. A fitting ending to a full day.

DAY 6 TUESDAY JUNE 23, 2009 FLEET ACTIVITIES YOKUSKA (FAY)

As is Camp Zuma to the Army, Yokuska is to the Navy. Built in 1871 at the mouth of Tokyo bay with the assistance of the French Navy, Yokuska was the head of Imperial Japan's navy (ship building, fuel storage, gun factory, naval air station and home port to the fleet). On August 30, 1945 what was left of it surrendered to and was occupied by the 6th Marines and the Navy.

By 1950 Yokuska had become the 7th Fleet's advance port, maintenance and repair station, and R & R outlet. It remains so today. (Aside: the 24/7 BOQ poker game, which I left temporarily in 1957, was still going, but DOCA duty called, so I cashed out and said thanks).

Yokuska, the base, consists of a 560 acre facility and is the largest and one of the most strategically important bases in the U.S. military. Yokuska, the harbor, is Westpac home to the 7th Fleet.

Yokuska's third component is HQ U.S. Navy forces, Japan USNJ (comparable to USARJ, visited yesterday at Camp Zama). USNJ is the principal coordinator with JMSDF (Japanese Maritime Self

Defense Force) as our strategic ally. We were briefed in the Admiral's command conference room located in a stately building built in 1926 which survived intact. Its current use fits well into the US/Japan cultural accommodation and strategic alliance. This wide ranging session covered activity, threats, Chinese navel growth (submarine and carrier construction), North Korea and Ill Jung (sic), and Tri Partite alliances (US/Japan/Korea; US/Japan; US/Korea; Japan/Korea).

From Yokuska, the base, we were piped on board the USS Blue Ridge (LLC 19) built in 1970 especially as a command and control platform for the fleet. Since 1979 the Blue Ridge has been forward deployed to Yokuska and, as modernized, is still the oldest command ship in the Navy. She serves as the flagship of Commander 7th fleet. Led by the tallest Chief Bos'n mate in the Navy we climbed a few ladders to Admiral's country where, in the briefing room, we were greeted by the XO who orally rowed us through the multiple roles which the Fleet fulfills on, over and under the seas in the Northeast Asia and West Pacific AOs.

To simulate us on the front line we were led through a confidential (but not classified) visual overlay briefing of the 7th Fleet today, 23 June 2009. Via the display we followed 81 ships, 242 aircraft on station and in action today. (Reagan and George Washington carrier strike groups, Boxer and Essex amphibious groups, areas (aka North Korea); and heightened tension, i.e. a Chinese surface group which yesterday sortied north of Japan),

An unexpected and pleasant side note was a chance meeting with an Aussie Lt. Commander, in summer whites (shorts) who is on the Admiral's command staff – he's enjoying the service and confident about the future of our joint efforts (“no worries, mate”)

USS SHILOH (CG67)

From command central to battle readiness we moved directly from the Blue Ridge to the Shiloh an Aegis class ballistic missile defense cruiser also one of the most versatile ships whose keel was ever laid, capable of any mission on the surface.

Captain Mathew E. Locklin, newly installed captain of the Shiloh ushered us into the officers ward room, introduced his XO and several junior officers and chiefs & presented a command briefing of the ships components, listening and looking capabilities, offensive weapon systems and missile complex – wow, what an array.

We broke into small groups and were permitted to inspect this amazing miracle of modern warfare from stem to stern. Of particular note to the several formerly serving sailors in our DOCA group was the complexity and configuration of the CIC (combat information center), updated from WWII and Korean models. When asked, Captain Locklin noted that computers have eliminated one CIC position - that of the radarman skilled at writing with grease pencil backwards on the large Plexiglas display boards.

The Officer's Club on the hill being no more, we lunched at the new Admiral Arleigh E Burke (aka 31 Knot Burke) Officer's Club.

Then on to a briefing by the commander and XO of JMSDF Yokusuka with more history from our former adversaries and now, in no small way because of the respect earned by our military might, firm allies. The JMSDF is and was supportive of basing a nuclear carrier (Washington) and nuclear armaments (trident subs) in Yokusuka, even in the face of opposition (sometimes violent) from local politicians, many of whom we learned monitor U.S. Congress sessions and committee hearings in hopes of picking up negative or anti-U.S. statements, which, unfortunately, are frequently made by some shortsighted U.S. politicians.

After a lively Q&A session with USNJ's Japanese counterparts we went further back into history and toured the Imperial Japanese flagship, the Mikasa, which earned its country's entrance into the early 20th century's bevy of belligerent nations by annihilating the Russian fleet in 1905 at the battle of Tsushima;

Conclusion: history aside, the U.S. is much better off having Japan as an ally rather than an adversary (e.g. offhand comment from a senior U.S. navy person: “If they were given the green light, the Japanese Navy, even with its limited resources, could kick China's xxx”)

Minds saturated with facts, imaginations piqued with unique, eye opening experiences, and hearts calmed by one on one dialogue with decisions makers tasked with maintaining the military strength, which history proves is the only sure means to peace, we were relaxed enough for some R&R.

Thus, before returning to Tokyo we detoured along a windsurfing beach to the famous Kamakura Buddha and Shrine, after which we hoisted a few in respect and headed home.

Once in Tokyo we survived a ninja attack (O'Donnell bumping his head several more times in the secret tunnel leading to the sake and steak hideaway), finished dinner, and readied for our last day.

DAY 7 WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 2009 DIPLOMATIC DAY

As a wrap to an extensive military briefing, the last morning was devoted to diplomacy. We braved a downpour to get to the U.S. Embassy where, in the absence of an ambassador (yet to be appointed), we went straight to Jefferson conference room for briefings from each Section chief:

1. Political- uncertain times in Japan, new parties rising, new coalition government may be formed.
2. Security (Military) – An interesting twist on the North Korean threat – it's pulling the U.S. and its allies closer together while encouraging Japan to expand its global perspective.
3. Mutual Defense Assistance Office- Sales of military goods, licensing Japanese Companies to manufacture military goods and update of military aircraft (will the F-22 be released to Japan?? – if not F-15s).
4. Economy - Not surprising, Japan is affected by and is working its way out of a slump. U.S. & Japan efforts to increase Japan's GDP. This Section focuses on free trade, which efforts appear to be bearing some fruit in Washington. Promotion of U.S. agriculture exports (50 U.S. trade groups are active in Japan, making some dent in the historically rigid, protective agricultural trade barriers. i.e. recently opened market for U.S. beef.)

Joining us live and available for Q&A via satellite connection
were heads of stations from Hokaido and Okinawa

5. Hokaido-Sapporo: Industrialization; more efficient agriculture; tourism featuring great skiing. Sapporo/Tokyo 90 minute flight one of the world's busiest routes (i.e. NY/DC; LA/SF).
6. Okinawa- Super strategic location; large military presence (see overlay below). On this formerly independent island (400 years ago annexed by Japan, beating out the Chinese), is Kadena, our largest forward airbase. Big issue: maintain long term military presence and mollify political opposition by compressing and relocating from urban south (except for Kadena) to the less populated, mountainous, northern training area.



The briefing concluded with a lively Q&A session, with candor approaching that of Tokyo's Korean Embassy counterparts:

- Productivity vs. Unionization (declining problems as unions lose strength and younger people more into work force).
- Big picture; big problem- “optimism, future holds promise as U.S./Japan relations continue to mature.
- Tri-lateral Cooperation- U.S./Japan; U.S./Korea; U.S./Korea/Japan and Japan/Korea (Traditional animosity lessening; Korean opposition now a loud but shrinking minority. Tri-lateral and bi-lateral military and economic cooperation grows and becomes colloquial.
- United front against North Korea; consensus, again positive).

MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

From the U.S. embassy we took a rain soaked trail alongside the Imperial Palace, past the British Embassy, then the Yakasuni Shrine (The memorial to Japanese 1920-1945 war dead, the existence of which and visits to by the prime minister are diplomatically sensitive, particularly with Chinese and Korean people).

We then cleared security at the Japanese Ministry of Defense and were ushered to the top floor of building A/18F, where, in sharp contrast to dining at Camp Fuji on MREs, we were treated to a delectable white glove service lunch starting with fresh abalone and maintaining that epicurean level throughout.

Well and politely fed we moved to building A/14F for a briefing by the Defense Director/Japanese Forces. Q&A provided further detail to topics discussed earlier today and reinforced USFJ/JMSDF continuing cooperation.

After lunch we moved to Ickigaza memorial hall, seat of the staff's war time office and museum of war crimes trials held there. Another memory stirring event.

GRAND FINALE

For our closing event we moved up to the 11th story penthouse residence of Donald J Post, Service Minister U.S. Consulate, whose wife served an excellent catered Italian dinner as we mingled with and learned more about Japan and Japan/U.S. from embassy staff and several of the command officers (most particularly, again, Brig. General Toolan, USMC, still most recognizable as such in his civvies) we met during the week. A fun and fitting conclusion to our 2 week odyssey.

JAPAN- CONCLUSION & HIGHLIGHTS

- 64 years after VJ day the U.S. and Japan are mature business, political, and military partners, Macarthur laid a solid foundation.
- U.S. and Japan's mutual best interests will, despite political pressures and economic competition, keep us allied and progressive partners.
- Japan and Korea each recognize mutual self interest which should, eventually and as generations change, overcome centuries of animosity.
- Similarly, the U.S./Japan/Korea tri-partite alliance, astride Northeast Asia works and will endure.
- Even though Japan has the world's 2nd and Korea the 13th economies, Seoul's streets are 3 times more crowded than Tokyo's, with almost no smog.
- Continuing the experience of prior DOCA excursions, the briefings quality, training, readiness, character, commitment, and dedication of U.S. warfighters and support personnel is obvious, refreshing and even awe inspiring.

Two sub-points of this observation:

The depth of our society's moral values continues to produce many capable of becoming the best and brightest.

There is a long waiting to enlist and reenlist in all branches.

Thanks to all hosts for the many and varied opportunities – Go DOCA!