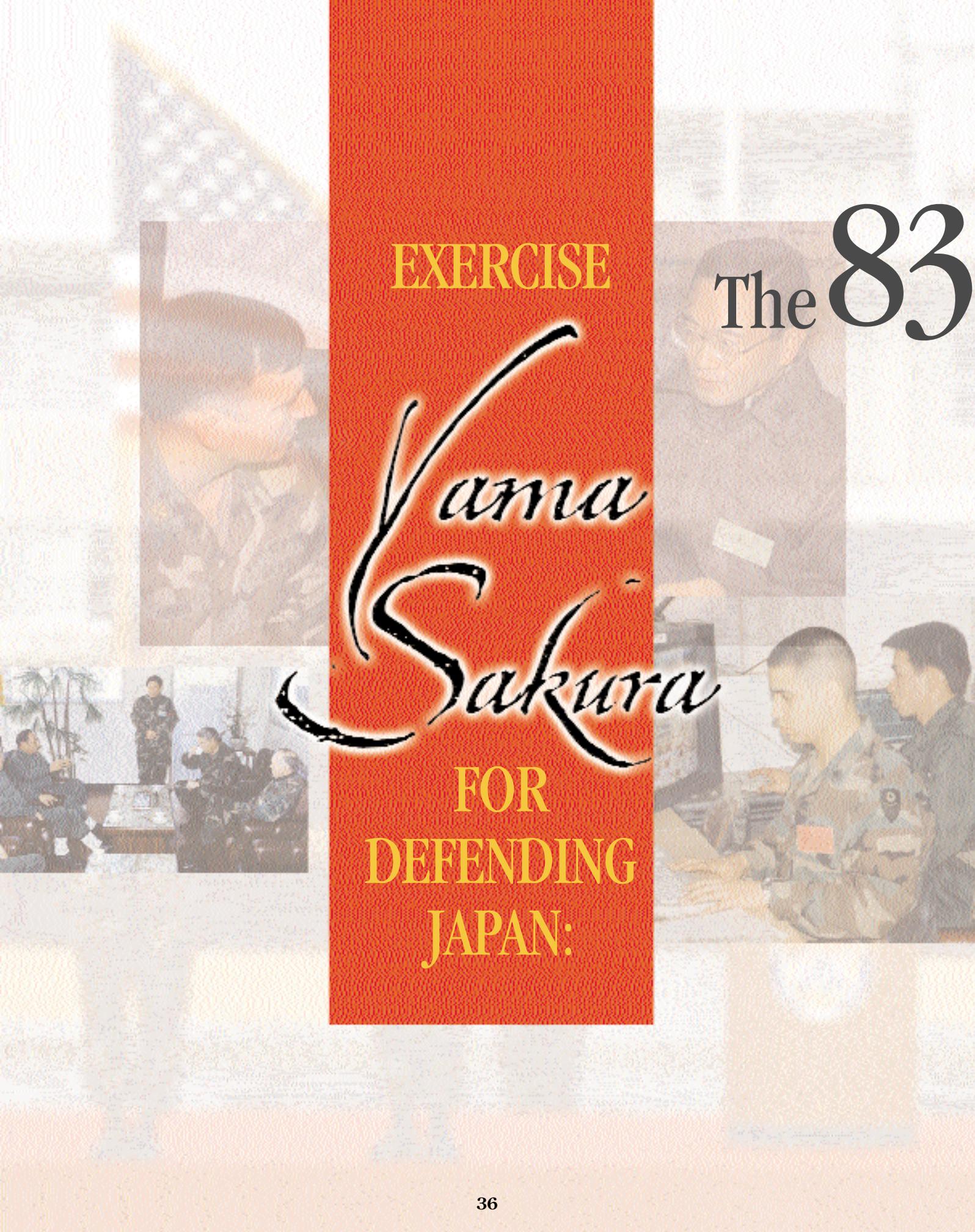


EXERCISE

The 83

*Yama
Sakura*

FOR
DEFENDING
JAPAN:



6th Transportation Battalion Role

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Asia-Pacific Defense FORUM
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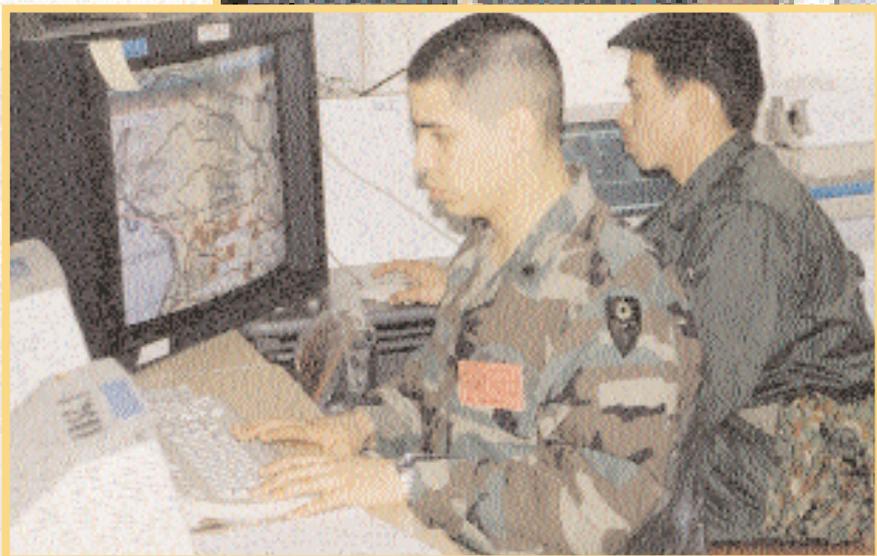
YAMA SAKURA is an annual, bilateral command post exercise that simulates Japanese-U.S. military operations required to defend Japan. Every January, one of the five regional Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) Armies is joined by U.S. Army I Corps to conduct the exercise in Japan and the U.S. The first YAMA SAKURA was held in 1982 with a total of 570 U.S. soldiers participating. In YAMA SAKURA XXXIX, held in January 2001, more than 1,300 U.S. soldiers participated. This included U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard soldiers deploying from 32 U.S. states, as far away as New Jersey and as close as Hawaii.

The key to success in YAMA SAKURA is the bilateral operations and interaction between the two countries' forces. The three commanders involved – Lt. Gen. Mitsuo Sakudo (Commander, JGSDF Western Army), Lt. Gen. James T. Hill (Commander, I Corps), and Maj. Gen. Alan D. Johnson (Commander, U.S. Army, Japan) – stressed the importance of bilateral cooperation and cultural interaction.

Lt. Gen. Sakudo said he “would like to see us strengthen the mutual trust we have built by face-to-face contact, while gaining an understanding of the differences between our national traits, culture, traditions, defense policies and operational doctrine.” Maj. Gen. Johnson observed, “You not only share ideas and learn from each other, but you also build special relationships and enhance the already solid foundation that has given us peace and regional security for so many years.”

The U.S. Army's 836th Transportation Battalion (836th TB) based at Yokohama, Japan, has the U.S. military experts in port and water terminal operations in Japan. As such, they are key participants in any peacetime or wartime operation. Members of 836th TB experienced YAMA SAKURA's bilateral cooperation first hand, right from the beginning of the exercise planning conferences. Capt. David J. Preston, Battalion Operations Officer, coordinated frequently with the JGSDF logistics personnel regarding such matters as: port information and accessibility, Main Supply Route (MSR) information, vessel convoy security from the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force

Capt. David J. Preston, USA, serves as the Operations Officer, 836th U.S. Army Transportation Battalion, Yokohama, Japan. He participated in the Gamer Cell at Fort Lewis, Washington, for Exercise YAMA SAKURA XXXIX held in January 2001.



Japanese and U.S. soldiers operate side by side in this 39th command post exercise to test bilateral defense plans.

(JMSDF), and the negotiations for unilateral and bilateral ports and MSRs.

During the exercise, the members of the battalion in Japan interacted often with their JGSDF counterparts. This interaction was beneficial to both countries' military personnel as they shared ideas and learned from each other. Lt. Col. Kathi L. Kreklow, Commander of the 836th TB, described the bilateral experience by saying, "Our Japanese counterparts were gracious hosts. Not only did we work to

build on the already solid foundation that we enjoy between our two countries, but the Japanese community also opened their homes to us. They demonstrated their cultural disciplines and taught us the common courtesies of day-to-day living in Japan."

The 836th TB participated in YAMA SAKURA XXXIX at two locations: Camp Kita-Kumamoto on the island of Kyushu, Japan, and at Fort Lewis, Washington. Its role at Camp Kita-Kumamoto was to be

the port operator and Single Port Manager in support of the U.S. Army's 9th Theater Support Command (9th TSC). The role at Fort Lewis was to control all vessel and port operations for the exercise.

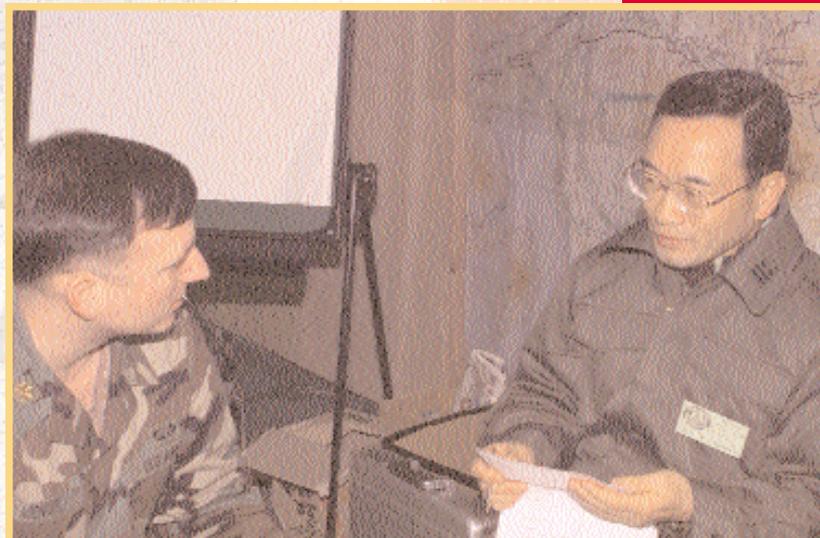
This simulation exercise is basically conducted using two cells – the Player Cell (located in Japan) and the Gamer Cell (located at Fort Lewis, Washington). The members of the Player Cell "play the game" and make the operational decisions. The members of the Gamer Cell operate the simulation equipment and execute the orders given by the Player Cell. The Western Army of the JGSDF was Japan's participant, augmented and assisted by U.S. Army I Corps in defeating the enemy and successfully defending Japan.

The Single Port Manager, Lt. Col. Kreklow, monitored and controlled all exercise port operations in Japan. This included monitoring available staging areas at the ports and making decisions based on the various events inserted by controllers into the exercise to keep it realistic.

Throughout the exercise, the 836th TB members in the Player Cell provided guidance on port operations and logistical



The annual command post exercise YAMA SAKURA in Japan brings together U.S. officers from HQ I Corps and U.S. Army Japan with Japan Ground Self-Defense Force officers to simulate military activities for the bilateral defense of Japan.



A Japanese and U.S. officer coordinate during the 39th YAMA SAKURA command post defense exercise conducted in Japan.

issues for the 9th TSC, including providing constant guidance and assistance regarding a myriad of logistical issues to the reservists who made up the 9th TSC.

The 836th TB also manned the Gamer Cell to control all vessels and port operations for the exercise. They informed the Player Cell when the vessels arrived in port, what equipment was discharged, and when the vessels departed. The 836th TB Operations Officer, Capt. David J. Preston, also used his experience from the 7th Transportation Group to control the Army Watercraft Units and operations for the exercise. The Army Watercraft Units were used to deliver vital supplies throughout the exercise area, enabling the warfighters to keep fighting. He also served as the U.S. Army Japan (USARJ) shift Officer in Charge (OIC) in the Gamer Cell. As shift OIC, he was responsible for the execution of all echelons-above-corps support for the exercise.

This was the first year that the battalion assisted in the Gamer Cell for YAMA SAKURA. The decision was made to make the vessel play realistic and effective, because the personnel controlling the vessel play must have a requisite knowledge in vessel and port operations.

By improving the vessel play, USARJ benefited by observing doctrinal port operations and “playing by the book.” The 836th TB personnel benefited by receiving realistic, challenging contingency planning and training.

In a contingency, like the defense of Japan, the 836th TB will represent the 599th Transportation Group and support U.S. Forces Japan and USARJ as the Single Port Manager and port operator. Exercise YAMA SAKURA provides the battalion an excellent opportunity to exercise these roles, train its key personnel, and improve its contingency planning and proficiency, while making a vital contribution to the defense of Japan. □

**YAMA
SAKURA**