

11. Current Status & Mission

The Kadena Air Base facility on land from Kadena Town, Chatan Town, and Okinawa City, has double runways (one with length 3,689 m. & width 91 m; one with length 3,689 m. & width of 61 m.) with a 300 meter overrun. It is the busiest US Air Force facility in the Far East. The facility is home to the 18th Wing of the 5th Air Force under the Pacific Air Forces, and in combination with the missions of numerous tenant organizations, Kadena Air Base's comprehensive capabilities include air defense, counterattack, strategic, air-lift, support, observation, and aircraft maintenance.

The flagship unit of the 18th Wing is the 18th Operations Group, consisting of the 44th and 67th Tactical Fighter Squadrons flying F-15C/D Eagles, the 909th Air Refueling Squadron, the 961st Airborne Air Control Squadron and the 3ast and 33rd Rescue Squadrons and many other commands.

Runway operations are in the northwest part of the base while family housing in the southeast area. To the southeast of the tarmac are parked the F-15 C/D Eagles, engine testing facilities, and an aircraft washing facility for smaller planes. Northwest of the tarmac in Kadena Town's Yara, Kadena, and Mizugama districts is the parking for the larger Air Force planes as well as the Navy's Okinawa air command. Here are the Air Force's KC-135R Stratocaster refueler planes, the E-3B early warning aerial command craft, the HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue helicopters, and maintenance facilities and large and small wash racks for medium-sized and larger aircraft. Here too the Navy parks its P-3C Orion anti-submarine warfare planes, P-8A Poseidon anti-submarine reconnaissance and EP-3 electronic reconnaissance aircraft next to Navy maintenance

facilities, and hangers for smaller Navy aircraft.

MC-130 aircraft operations were relocated on December 16, 1996, from a point in the Navy area barely 50 meters away from the civilian residential neighborhoods, to the northwest corner of the main tarmac. A noise berm was completed on July 11, 2000.

On August 1, 2003, Okinawa City announced its agreement of plans to have naval aircraft and support operations relocated to within its own boundaries, and on February 10, 2009, the Japan-US Joint Committee agreed to relocate Navy airfield operations (hangers, taxiways, maintenance hangers, etc.) to the side of the runways away from Kadena Town, and preparatory construction is now underway.

Since December of 2013, the Navy hangers have held six P-8 deployed as successors to the P-3C aircraft. The smaller wash racks for smaller aircraft were relocated in May of 2006 to the F-15 parking areas, while the medium-sized and larger wash racks were moved in September, 2008, to the (L-11) area for larger USAF planes.

At the end of December, 2006, 600 Army soldiers and 24 Patriot Missiles (PAC3) were deployed to Kadena while in February, 2007, twelve F-22 Stealth fighters were initially temporarily assigned for the first based outside the US proper, with this basing followed by extended assignments from January to October of 2014, and from January to April, 2015.

Also from January to April of 2015, 250 personnel and 12 F-16 Fighting Falcons of the 115th Fighter Wing of the Wisconsin Air National Guard have been deployed at Kadena Air Base.

Aircraft Deployed to Kadena Air Base



FA-18D Hornet combat attack fighter



F-22A Raptor fighter aircraft



AV-8B Harrier II ground-attack aircraft



F-16C Fighting Falcon fighter aircraft



EA-6B Prowler electronic warfare aircraft



MV-22B Osprey transport