

# Cope Nor

Photography by Jim Haseltine, Text by Brandon Conradis



**Pacific Air Forces drilled in February with airmen from Japan and Australia in this two-week exercise.**

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*During a Red Air mission at Cope North, Lt. Col. Doug Kline of the 18th Aggressor Squadron maneuvers an F-16. It carries a range instrumentation pod, an ALQ-188, an inert AIM-9M, and two 370-gallon fuel tanks.*



**I**N February, members of the US Air Force, the Japan Air Self-Defense Force, and the Royal Australian Air Force convened on the Pacific island of Guam for Exercise Cope North. The two-week exercise, staged out of Andersen Air Force Base, focused on air combat operations, humanitarian aid, and disaster relief. Since 1978, Cope North has served to strengthen ties between the US and its primary Pacific allies, Japan and Australia. For the first time, South Korea sent observers. More than 1,700 airmen participated in the exercise, hosted by Pacific Air Forces.

**I11** Japanese F-15Js acquire fuel from the JASD's KC-767A tanker. This was the first time Japan supplied air refueling aircraft to Cope North.



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**I2I** SSgt. Justin Phillips, SrA. Casey Darnell, A1C Derek Cabrera, and SrA. Luis Sanchez (l-r) prepare to install a laser guided seeker on an inert bomb. **I3I** 96th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron B-52 pilots—Capt. Robert Jeffrey (left) and 1st Lt. Kyle Fluker—return to Andersen after a sortie. **I4I** Maj. David Graham, an 18th AGRS F-16 pilot, scans the horizon for his adversary in an air-to-air engagement.



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*111* A B-52H from the 96th EBS patrols the Pacific Ocean. The squadron deployed to Andersen in October 2012 as part of US Pacific Command's continuous bomber presence. The unit returned to Barksdale AFB, La., two months after Cope North. *121* Two 96th EBS crew chiefs, A1C Dylan Drake (left) and A1C Jeremy Gorman, monitor an engine start-up. *131* Capt. Michael Hansen, a radar navigator from the 96th EBS, searches for targets using the Litening targeting pod. *141* SSgt. Alexander Wheeler, A1C Anthony Rodriguez, SrA. Daniel Babis, and A1C Zachary Christy (l-r) begin loading an AGM-158 JASSM missile onto a B-52. *151* JASDF crew members get ready to refuel an F-2 fighter after a mission.

**11** A Japanese E-2C Hawkeye patrols near Guam. The turboprop airborne early warning and control (AEW&C) aircraft was one of three types used to provide the air picture of the area during Cope North.

**12** Hansen (left) and Capt. Daniel Dukes helped the B-52s get to the target and acquire it. Here, they are at work in the navigators' station during the mission phase of an exercise. **13** The RAAF KC-30 tanker refueled Australian F-18A+ aircraft in the exercise. **14** An RAAF E-9 AEW&C aircraft awaits its next sortie. **15** In preparation for the day's mission, SrA. Ian McMilan (left) and SSgt. Kristopher Woodhull, both from Eielson AFB, Alaska, review paperwork for an F-16.







*1* Fluker of the 96th EBS in a B-52 cockpit. *2* Radar navigator Hansen checks over a Litening targeting pod. Manufactured by Northrop Grumman, the Litening system uses laser imaging sensors, superior image processing, and digital video output to provide aircrews with an effective way to spot targets at long ranges during any time of the day. *3* Several 18th AGRS F-16s line up on the ramp, the first two preparing for takeoff. The F-16 has proved itself as a powerful and effective weapon in multiple roles: air-to-air combat, suppression of enemy air defenses, and air-to-ground attack.





111 A JASDF F-2 and F-15J steer away from each other. The product of a joint Japan-US development program, the single-engine F-2 carries bombs and missiles among its armament. Barely visible on the F-15J's left wing: an air-to-air missile. The JASDF debuted its F-15J in 1981. 121 Capt. Jake Whitlock, an electronic warfare officer from the 96th EBS, prepares for another sortie while working with one of the B-52's onboard computers. 131 A US Navy EA-18G Growler breaks away from a 44th Fighter Squadron F-15C based at Kadena AB, Japan. The F-15C carries an inert AMRAAM. 141 During his preflight walk around, Maj. David Graham from the 18th AGRS installs the puck into his range instrumentation pod.





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111 An Air National Guard C-5 from Martinsburg, W.Va. (left), and a C-17 from JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, are prepped on the ramp at Andersen for their next flights. 121 Jeffrey, the B-52 pilot from the 96th EBS, goes down the preflight checklist for his mission. 131 A1C Robert Knife, A1C Charles Ezeike, and SSgt. Billy Campbell (l-r) load a drag chute into a B-52. 141 Awaiting its next mission, an E-3 AWACS from Kadena sits next to an E-3 from JB Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

As the US refocuses and bolsters its military efforts in the Pacific, the importance of Exercise Cope North continues to grow. ■