

Untiring Exercise Support



By Elizabeth Stoeckmann

Supporting the warfighter takes consistent, coordinated and concerted planning in order to provide seamless execution, for exercises or contingencies.

When it comes to exercises in the Pacific region, it's 24/7 for Defense Logistics Agency Energy.

"We have a constant exercise cycle here in the Pacific," said DLA Energy Pacific Operations Associate Director Ralph Wells. "We're usually building up for one, drawing down from another ... and often more than just one."

For example, during the month of August, Energy Pacific had been active across half the globe with exercises: ramping up for Amphibious Landing

Exercise in the Philippines, wrapping up a second Philippines exercise, provisioning Red Flag Alaska, monitoring Pacific Pathways and augmenting both Pacific Sentry in Hawaii and Ulchi Freedom Guardian in South Korea.

"The operational tempo in the Energy Pacific ensures we focus on the warfighter and directly implement the director's strategic goal to place the

Marines disembark an MV-22 Osprey on the flight deck of the amphibious dock landing ship USS Germantown during a personnel transfer for Amphibious Landing Exercise 2015. Regardless of where the warfighters are operating or exercising in the Pacific area of responsibility, DLA Energy Pacific provides fuel when and where they need it. Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Amanda Gray

warfighter first,” said DLA Energy Pacific Director of Customer Operations Ron Nelson. “We routinely communicate with our customers, and we know their mission success heavily depends on fuel being available when promised.”

In order to provide the best possible support, Energy Pacific leaders said they send a customer operations representative to the final planning exercise workshops to foster relationships and explain capabilities and constraints to better develop a support and sustainment plan of action to assist for a successful exercise.

“Energy Pacific strategically engages with the customer throughout the entire planning and execution process by interacting with U.S. participating forces, international and industry partners, or reaching back to headquarters,” said DLA Energy Pacific Operations Chief Stewart Clarke. “These efforts all help to align Energy’s initiatives for better results.”

While Energy Pacific works directly with the customers for exercises planning, they also deliver fuel from its defense fuel support points or international partners.

Specifically, Red Flag Alaska included more than 80 different aircraft from seven participating countries. The training focused on simulated combat integration of international forces in a realistic threat environment designed to improve interoperability. Over 1,400 sorties were flown,

using more than 2.4 million gallons of jet fuel provided by DLA Energy’s DFSP partners at both Eielson Air Force Base and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

Also, Orient Shield, a component of Pacific Pathways, has the option to obtain fuel from a DLA Energy international partner such as the government of Japan through a fuel exchange agreement. Focused on developing tactical interoperability under field conditions, this battalion-level exercise involves the Army and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force. In 2014, for example, this agreement supplied 30,000 gallons of jet fuel.

Besides fuel, Energy Pacific also provides personnel to augment on-the-ground staff for exercises or contingencies.

In one instance, during Pacific Sentry, Energy Pacific assisted the U.S. Pacific Command’s Joint Petroleum office in the Logistics, Engineering and Security Cooperation directorate in identifying procedures and developing preparatory roles.

“The strategic movement of fuel around the world’s largest ocean is no small feat; it takes organization and collaboration to make the provisioning appear seamless,” said DLA Energy Eastern Pacific Subarea Petroleum Officer Air Force Maj. Tyson Daw.

Hence, the civilians and reservists who came from DLA

Energy’s Operations Center at the McNamara Headquarters Complex, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, learned this first-hand during their deployment to Hawaii, he added.

Similarly, Energy Pacific supported UFG through training and fuel coordination. This exercise served as the capstone event for all service components to demonstrate their ability to defend the Republic of Korea in mutual cooperation with their Republic of Korea counterparts.

“DLA Energy’s role in the largest computer-aided exercise in the world is to leverage multiple capabilities to simultaneously support joint force requirements,” said DLA Energy Pacific at Korea Commander Army Lt. Col. Wheeler Manning.

“The significance of Pacific Sentry and UFG are tied together as they build upon each other and they provide the combatant commander and sub-unified commanders the opportunity to make hard decisions, test assumptions and practice plans in an exercise environment,” said DLA Energy Pacific Commander Navy Capt. Christopher Bower.

Exercises specifically allow the organization to strengthen relationships, inform new customers of its capabilities and services offered, and most importantly, allow improvements to be made to better support the warfighter, he added.

“Regardless of where the warfighters are operating or exercising in the Pacific area of responsibility, they need fuel,” Bower said. “Energy Pacific works tirelessly to get them a quality product when and where they need it.”

In this manner, he said the region lives DLA Energy’s vision – supporting combatant commanders, providing fuel around the world, and deploying side-by-side with its customers. 



An amphibious assault vehicle, assigned to the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, departs the well deck of the amphibious dock landing ship USS Germantown during PHIBLEX15. DLA Energy Pacific has a constant exercise cycle in the Pacific focusing on the warfighter and the director’s strategic goals. PHIBLEX15 is an annual bilateral training exercise conducted with the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Amanda Gray



A Republic of Korea Air Force F-16D Fighting Falcon taxis prior to launch at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, Aug. 4. DLA Energy Pacific provided more than 2.4 million gallons of jet fuel in Red Flag-Alaska 15-3, a Pacific Air Forces commander-directed field training exercise for U.S. and partner nation forces, providing combined offensive counter-air, interdiction, close air support and large force employment training in a simulated combat environment. Photo by Air Force 1st Lt. Elias Zani