

U.S. Navy, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force complete Mine Warfare Exercise 2JA



U.S. Navy Avenger-class mine countermeasures ship USS Chief (MCM 14) and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force coastal mine sweepers JS Kuroshima (MSC-692), left, and JS Miyajima (MSC-690), back right, conduct a group sail during Mine Warfare Exercise 2JA, July 20, 2026. 2JA is part of a year-long series of bilateral exercises between the U.S. Navy and JMSDF to strengthen interoperability and increase proficiency in mine countermeasure operations. (U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Jacob Kinneary)

SASEB0, Japan – The U.S. Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force conducted Mine Warfare Exercise 2JA 2026 off the coast of northern Japan in Mutsu Bay, July 9–24.

MINEX 2JA is part of an annual series of exercises held between the U.S. Navy and JMSDF designed to increase proficiency and strengthen integration in mine countermeasure operations. This exercise builds on previous iterations of the JA series, including MINEX 1JA, which took place from Feb. 1–Feb. 10. During the 15-day bilateral exercise, participants worked together to clear simulated minefields, exercising unit-level tactics such as mine hunting, detection, and neutralization.

“It is always an honor and a privilege to work alongside our host-nation partner and continue to build on our powerful relationship within the mine countermeasures community,” said U.S. Navy Capt. Scott G. Wells, commodore, Mine Countermeasures Group 7. “We have been conducting the JA series with the JMSDF for decades, and we remain dedicated to advancing our collective capacity in this critical operational capability.”

Working in unison, JMSDF Mine Warfare Force and Commander, Task Force 77 commanders directed coordinated mine hunting, mine sweeping, and mine neutralization tasks. This training allowed all participating units to refine communication protocols and tactical procedures in a combined environment while maximizing their collective maritime capability.

Avenger-class mine countermeasures ship USS Chief (MCM 14), personnel from Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 5, and staff assigned to MCMGRU 7 comprised the participating U.S. Navy units. JMSDF participants included Mogami-class frigate JS Niyodo (FFM-7), Uraga-class minesweeper tender JS Bungo (MST-464), Awaji-class ocean minesweeper JS Awaji (MSO-304), Hirashima-class coastal minesweepers JS Hatsushima (MSC-606), and Sugashima-class coastal minesweepers JS Izushima (MSC-687), JS Aishima (MSC-688), JS Aoshima (MSC-689), JS Miyajima (MSC-690), JS Kuroshima (MSC-692), and diving tender YDT-02. Aerial and operational support was provided by JMSDF Kawasaki P-1 and P-3C maritime

patrol aircraft, mine countermeasures helicopters (MCH-101), and multiple embarked JMSDF Explosive Ordnance Disposal units.

CTF 77 directs mine countermeasure assets in the clearance of sea mines to ensure the free flow of commerce by sea and the freedom of movement for U.S., allied, and partner nation vessels during peacetime and in conflict.

The exercise took place within the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. U.S. 7th Fleet, the Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific.