

Aircraft Accidents

Kadena's citizens live in constant fear and anxiety of US military aircraft accidents. According to the statistics on US Forces related aircraft accident statistics (as of March 31, 2014) issued by the Okinawa Prefectural Government, 449 (92.2%) of the total 487 accidents after Reversion to Japan occurred at Kadena Air Base. The lives of local Kadena citizens are always at risk. The following table outlines the most serious incidents at Kadena Air Base.

Timeline: Major Kadena Airbase Incidents & Accidents

Date	Outline of Accidents
June 30, 1959	A KAB F-100 Super Sabre jet fighter crashed into Miyamori Elementary School in Ishikawa City; then exploded and burned. 17, mostly school children, were killed and 210 injured.
Dec 20, 1962	A KB50 aerial tanker crashed on take-off into Kadena's Yara district. 2 were killed, 8 injured, and three homes completely destroyed in the ensuing fire.
May 19, 1966	KC-135 aerial refueler crashed (on the boundary of former Koza City and Kadena Village). One villager killed.
Nov 19, 1968	A B-52 Flying Fortress crashes while landing. (16 Kadena citizens injured, 365 buildings including the school were damaged.)
May 19, 1987	A KAB F-15 Eagle fighter crashed into the sea, east of Okinawa main island.
March 14, 1989	A HH-3 Rescue helicopter from KAB's 33rd RQS crashed into the ocean off Ie Island during training. Two crew were rescued but three were lost.
September 1, 1993	A 33rd RQS HH-3 helicopter crashed while travelling on the runway, one crew member killed, four injured.
April 4, 1994	A F-15 Eagle from KAB's 44th Fighter Squadron crashed shortly after take-off into the GOJ hosted USFJ in Shirakawa, Okinawa City. (The pilot ejected safely)
Oct 18, 1995	A KAB F-15 Eagle fighter crashed into seas south of the main island of Okinawa.
May 30, 1997	A KAB F-15 Eagle fighter blew its canopy during take-off. The aircraft immediately returned and there was no collateral damage from parts falling off the plane.
June 4, 1999	An USMC AV-8B Harrier attack craft from MCAS Yuma (Arizona) crashed during take-off, and burst into flames at the runway edge. The pilot escaped safely.
August 21, 2002	A KAB-based F-15 Eagle crashed into seas south of Okinawa main island.
Jan 17, 2006	A KAB F-15 Eagle crashed into the sea northeast of Okinawa main island.
August 25, 2006	A KAB-based F-15 Eagle fighter accidentally dropped a training flare bomb on the Army Oil and fuel storage Facility near Route 58.
December 24, 2008	A Kadena Aero Club Cessna C-172 crashed into Nago City's Makiya district sugar cane fields.
May 28, 2013	A Kadena based F-15 Eagle fighter crashed into the water training area located east of the main island of Okinawa.
August 5, 2013	An HH-60 helicopter from KAB's Rescue Squadron crashed in flames into Camp Hansen, killing one crew member.
March 4, 2014	The canopy windshield of KAB F-15 Eagle blew during flight above the water training area. The aircraft made an emergency return without its canopy shield.

Environmental Contamination Accidents

There are constant spills and leaks of aviation fuel and synthetic detergents from the U.S military, contaminating underground water and water ways. One well known incident is Kadena's dangerous "Burning Wells." Aviation fuel first surfaced in well water in (Kadena's) Yara district May of 1967. Similar contamination was identified in other Kadena Town areas in June, 1968. Water drawn from the polluted wells reportedly caught fire when exposed to open flame. While later, some contamination was mitigated by natural attenuation to the extent that water can now be utilized for vegetable gardening, some wells remain covered even today, and can be used for nothing.

In August of 1998, the local press covered the testimony of a former US military employee that waste petroleum oils, including PCB, had been routinely discharged into the fresh water reservoir near Kadena Marina inside the base during the 1970's. This news generated a huge social outcry.

In March, 2007, came a spill of 4,000 gallons (equiv. 76 drums) of jet fuel. While the KAB authorities contained the local spill, the issue came when KAB failed to report the accident to the local community for a week despite the existence of an agreed upon notification system.

In September of 2010, 780 gallons (approx. 2,950 liters) of JP-8 jet fuel spilled from a fuel storage tank on Kadena Air Base. A repeat incident of another 40 gallons (about 151 liter) of JP-8 was spilled inside Kadena Ammunition Storage Area in December of the same year.