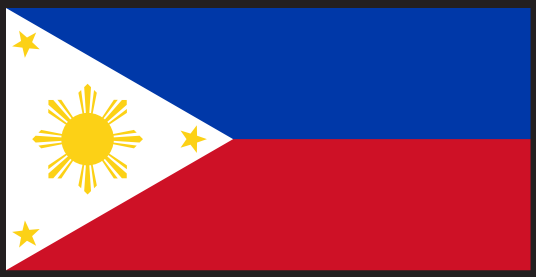

PACAF facilitates Integrated Air Missile Defense SMEE during Balikatan 24

By MSG John Reeves

The Pacific Air Force's Pacific Integrated Air & Missile Defense Center, with support from the U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Army, and the Philippine Air Force facilitated an inaugural multilateral and joint service subject matter expert exchange in preparation for Balikatan24 at Clark Air Base, Luzon City, Philippines April 22 through 26.

The classes taught during the exchange centered on the facilitation and universal understanding of IAMD. The USINDOPACOM mission of IAMD calls for the United States to seamlessly integrate with allies to enable freedom of maneuver and power projection to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific. To do so, IAMD uses a network of interconnected systems to augment surface-to-air defenses and effectively complement kinetic fire solutions.

In late March 2024, the PIC led and conducted a Defense Design Working Group for 52 joint members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines geared towards developing an IAMD-centric exercise plan for Balikatan 24. The result was a list of what the attendees deemed critical to protect the defense of their nation. The methodology was based on how each asset selected was necessary, how vulnerable, susceptible, and recuperable it was to an attack, and finally, how likely a specific nomination is to attack.

The PIC then hosted USSPACECOM's Joint Ballistic Missile Training and Education Center to present its 4-day Joint IAMD Course, which provided attendees with the basic concepts and understanding of IAMD in multi-domain operations. A second 4-hour course focused on decision-making processes for AFP and U.S. senior leaders in the IAMD enterprise. Both course groups comprised leaders from the U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, Philippine Air Force, Philippine Navy, and Philippine Army.

Finally, using the recent Iranian attacks on Israel as a baseline for a multilateral and joint IAMD architecture, the PIC brought together a diverse audience of 175 multilateral attendees with members of each US Service, members of each Philippine service, along with the Royal Australian Air Force, and observation from three members of the Japanese Air Self Defense Force, to provide insight on how their particular service and capabilities play a significant role in the IAMD defense architecture and enterprise.

The attendees also got an up-close look at the US Army's PATRIOT weapon system. The 1st Battalion, 1st Air Defense Artillery Regiment, provided a tour and answered questions for the attendees at their deployed site on Clark Air Base.

The overall intent of the 3-week event was a means to coordinate, integrate, and synchronize IAMD capabilities to protect what the Joint Forces Commanders deem as his most critical assets, along with a complex communication plan constructed between all of the attending units during the LVC portion of BK 39-24. The C2 dynamic, broken down by regions and sectors, relies primarily on passing critical information through lateral and vertical units with the net result of delegating authorities to execute possible threats. This concept is being exercised for the first time in a US-Philippine bilateral architecture.

"From ballistic missiles to cruise missiles to one-way attack drones to quadcopters, IAMD is a more complex and challenging problem than ever before," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Keegan Dale, the 13th Fighter Squadron Commander, who is serving as the Commander of BK's 13th Air Expeditionary Group. "Every country and service bring unique IAMD capabilities to bear. We must integrate and learn from each other in training if we expect success in combat."

Balikatan 24:

Joint Integrated Air & Missile Defense Exchange

Location: Clark Air Base, Philippines

Service members from the Armed Forces of the Philippines, U.S. Military, and Japan Air Self-Defense Force stand in front of the Patriot M903 Launching Station belonging to Bravo Battery, 1-1 Air Defense Artillery, as part of the week-long Joint Integrated Air And Missile Defense exchange during Exercise Balikatan 24 at Clark Air Base, Philippines, April 25, 2024. BK 24 is an annual exercise between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the U.S. military designed to strengthen bilateral interoperability, capabilities, trust, and cooperation built over decades of shared experiences. *(U.S. Army photo by Maj. Trevor Wild)*

U.S. Army Capt. Rishad Readus, assistant operations officer, 38th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, speaks to the multilateral attendees of the Joint Integrated Air And Missile Defense exchange during Exercise Balikatan 24 at Clark Air Base, Philippines, April 25, 2024. BK 24 is an annual exercise between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the U.S. military designed to strengthen bilateral interoperability, capabilities, trust, and cooperation built over decades of shared experiences. *(U.S. Army photo by Maj. Trevor Wild)*

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Christian de Jong, Bravo Battery, 1-1 Air Defense Artillery, 38th Air Defense Brigade, explains the capabilities of the AN/MPQ-65 Radar to the multilateral attendees of the Joint Integrated Air And Missile Defense exchange during Exercise Balikatan 24 at Clark Air Base, Philippines, April 25, 2024. BK 24 is an annual exercise between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the U.S. military designed to strengthen bilateral interoperability, capabilities, trust, and cooperation built over decades of shared experiences. *(U.S. Army photo by Maj. Trevor Wild)*

Royal Australian Air Force FLGOFF Ash Johnston, an air battle manager with 2 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, discusses Integrated Air & Missile Defense systems with U.S., Australian, and Philippine service members during Exercise Balikatan 24 at Clark Air Base, Angeles, Philippines, April 22, 2024. BK 24 is an annual exercise between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the U.S. military designed to strengthen bilateral interoperability, capabilities, trust, and cooperation built over decades of shared experiences. *(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Nayomi Koepke)*