



JUMP Presents

JUMP San Diego
Strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance through People-to-People Exchange

Date & Time:

Friday, January 23, 2026

Doors Open: 14:00 PST

Event Program: 14:30 to 15:45 PST

Venue: Pacific Room, Anchors Catering & Conference Center, Bldg. 3210, Yama St., San Diego, CA 92136

RSVP: Please email RSVP by end of Thursday, January 22 to Mr. John Seymour, Senior Program Officer, Sasakawa USA (jseymour@spfusa.org)

Keynote Remarks

ADM Ryo Sakai, 35th Chief of Staff, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force

Remarks

VADM John F.G. Wade, Commander, 3rd Fleet, United States Navy

Opening & Closing Remarks

Dr. Satohiro Akimoto, President & Chairman, Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA

Toast

RADM Takaaki Hayamizu, Defense and Naval Attaché, Embassy of Japan

Agenda

- 14:00** Doors Open with drinks available (30 min)
- 14:30** Opening by Dr. Satohiro Akimoto (10 min)
- 14:40** Remarks by VADM John F.G. Wade (5 min)
- 14:45** Intro of Keynote Speaker by RADM Takaaki Hayamizu (5 min)
- 14:50** Keynote Remarks by ADM Ryo Sakai (15 min)
- 15:05** Toast by RADM Takaaki Hayamizu (5 min)
- 15:10** Reception with drinks and light hors d'oeuvres (30 min)
- 15:40** Closing by Dr. Satohiro Akimoto (5 min)
- 15:45** End of Event

JUMP is made possible by financial support from the Embassy of Japan

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Speaker Biographies



Admiral Ryo Sakai (JMSDF, Ret.) was a surface warfare officer of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, who served mainly in the Fleet Escort Force at sea. He commanded JS Shirayuki (DD123), homeported in Yokosuka, and Escort Division SEVEN in Maizuru.

Flag officer tours included Commander Escort Flotilla ONE, Director-General of Operations and Plans Department (N3/N5) at the Maritime Staff Office, Commandant of Ominato, Kure, and Yokosuka Districts, respectively, and Chief of Staff, Maritime Self-Defense Force.

ADM Sakai retired in July 2024.

In Jan 2025, he became the first International Fellow at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey CA



Vice Adm. John F. G. Wade is a native of Port Washington, New York. He is a 1990 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy with a bachelor's degree in Economics. He also holds a master's degree in Information Systems Technology from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, and a master's degree in National Security Strategy from the National War College in Washington, District of Columbia.

A career Surface Warfare Officer, Wade has served at sea on Patrol Craft, Destroyers, Cruisers and Aircraft Carriers, completing multiple deployments and overseas contingency operations to include Desert Storm, Southern Watch, Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. He commanded USS Firebolt (PC 10), USS Preble (DDG 88), Destroyer Squadron 28, and Carrier Strike Group 12 embarked aboard USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72).

Ashore, Wade served on the personal staff of the Chief of Naval Operations; executive assistant to the director of the Quadrennial Defense Review Team; deputy executive assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; chief of staff to Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet; director of maritime operations, U.S. Fleet Forces Command; and, director of operations, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. He served with the Army's 10th Mountain and 82nd Airborne Divisions as commanding officer of the Joint/Interagency Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) – Khost, Afghanistan. Additionally, he commanded the Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center. Most recently, he commanded Joint Task Force - Red Hill which was established to safely and expeditiously defuel the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility in Oahu, Hawaii.

Wade assumed duties as commander, THIRD Fleet in June 2024.

Wade's personal decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Combat Action Badge, and various service, campaign and unit awards. He is also the recipient of the Vice Adm. E.C. Waller and Vice Adm. John D. Bulkeley leadership awards.



Rear Admiral Takaaki Hayamizu is a native of Ibaraki Prefecture and a March 1998 graduate of the National Defense Academy with a bachelor's degree in system engineering. His career began in March 1998 when he joined the Maritime Self-Defense Force as an officer candidate.

RADM Hayamizu became an ensign in March 1999, and assumed the role of lieutenant commander in January 2009. In July 2011, he joined the Plans and Program Division of the Maritime Staff Office (MSO). In July 2012, RADM Hayamizu was elevated to the rank of commander. In May 2013, he joined Air ASW Helicopter Squadron #25, and assumed the role of chief of Air ASW Helicopter Division #251 in March 2014.

In March 2015, RADM Hayamizu joined the Assignment Division at MSO, and was elevated to chief of the Assignment Division at MSO in December 2018, where he led projects that applied Artificial Intelligence (AI) to human resource management. In April 2021, RADM Hayamizu served as the commanding officer of the Air ASW Helicopter Squadron #22.

RADM Hayamizu's overseas travel experience includes his time at the U.S. NWC (Maritime Staff Operators Course) from July 2010 – June 2011, and continues with his current assignment as the defense and naval attaché at the Embassy of Japan in the United States of America beginning in August 2023.



Dr. Satoshihiro Akimoto is chairman of the board and president of Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA (Sasakawa USA). He joined the organization in January 2019 and brings with him experience in the areas of business, research, dialogue, and exchanges between Japan and the United States.

Prior to joining Sasakawa USA, Dr. Akimoto was senior vice president of Mitsubishi Corporation, and his career has included roles at Mitsubishi International Corporation, Hughes Electronics, DirecTV Japan, Massachusetts Corporation for Educational Telecommunications, Keidanren USA, Japan Society and Mt. Fuji Dialogue.

On top of his responsibilities at Sasakawa USA, Dr. Akimoto is a contributing writer for *The Japan Times*, associate fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in the UK, a contributing commentator for the Okazaki Institute in Japan, and a Japan Advisory Committee member of the Salzburg Global Seminar in Austria.

Dr. Akimoto received a PhD in sociology and a MA in East Asian studies from Harvard University, as well as a BA in law from Keio University. He also received a certificate in Russian studies from Leningrad State University (currently St. Petersburg State University).



JUMP presents

Transitioning to an Operational Alliance: Bilateral Implications of Upgrading U.S. Forces Japan to a Warfighting Command

Date & Time:

Monday, January 26, 2026, 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

Venue:

Breckenridge Hall Room 235, Marine Corps University, 2076 South St, Quantico, VA 22134

Welcome:

Brigadier General Matthew Tracy (USMC), President, Marine Corps University

JUMP Introduction:

Dr. Satohiro Akimoto, Chairman and President; Director of JUMP; Sasakawa USA

Panel Discussion:

Panelists

Brigadier General Matthew Tracy (USMC), President, Marine Corps University

Colonel Satoshi Masaka (JGSDF), Military Attaché, Embassy of Japan

Mr. James Schoff, Senior Director, US-Japan NEXT Alliance Initiative, Sasakawa USA

Moderator:

Dr. Satohiro Akimoto, Chairman and President; Director of JUMP; Sasakawa USA

Agenda

- 1:00 PM Welcome by **Brigadier General Matthew Tracy (USMC)**
- 1:05 PM JUMP Introduction by **Dr. Satohiro Akimoto**
- 1:10 PM Panel Discussion: *Transitioning to an Operational Alliance: Bilateral Implications of Upgrading US Forces Japan to a Warfighting Command*
- 2:30 PM Symposium Concludes
- 2:35 PM Light Reception at **Blackjack's Lounge**
- 3:30 PM Light Reception Concludes

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Biographies



Brigadier General Matthew Tracy (USMC) assumed the role of Commanding General, Education Command and President, Marine Corps University on 11 June 2024.

Brigadier General Tracy's command assignments include Platoon Commander and Executive Officer with 3d Battalion, 8th Marines; Company Commander with the Chemical Biological Incident Response Force and 2d Battalion, 3d Marines; Commanding Officer of Recruiting Station Chicago; Battalion Commander of 3d Battalion, 3d Marines; and Commanding Officer of the 4th Marine Regiment. He has combat experience in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq and supported humanitarian relief operations in Albania, Turkey, the Philippines, and the United States.

His staff assignments include Future Operations and Plans Officer at United States Marine Corps Forces, Pacific and Future Operations Officer at United States Special Operations Command. On two separate occasions, he served as Assistant Chief of Staff, War Plans (G5) and Operations (G3) for III Marine Expeditionary Force. He most recently served at Headquarters, Marine Corps as the Future Operations Branch Head within Plans, Policies, and Operations.

Brigadier General Tracy's military education includes The Basic School, Expeditionary Warfare School, College of Naval Command and Staff, and College of Naval Warfare. He is a graduate of the Maritime Advanced Warfare School.

His awards and decorations include Legion of Merit (with gold star), Bronze Star (with valor distinguishing device), Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (with two gold stars), Navy Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (with two gold stars) Combat Action Ribbon (with gold star), and various unit and service medals and ribbons. He was the 2006 recipient of the Leftwich Award for leadership.



Colonel Satoshi Masaka (JGSDF) serves as the Military Attaché at the Embassy of Japan in the United States. He has made his career as an infantry officer in the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) with 20 years of service. Recently, he served as a general staff officer in the Intelligence Division of the C4 Systems & Intelligence Department at the Ground Staff Office for the Japan Ministry of Defense in Tokyo. From 2017 to 2020, Masaka served as a budget planning officer at the Department of Finance in the Administration Division of the Ground Staff Office at Camp Ichigaya, Tokyo. He was in charge of both requesting and allocating the budgets for all components of the JGSDF. Masaka then attended the United States Marine Corps University in Quantico, Virginia as an international military student.

Upon his return to Japan, he continued his studies first through the Joint Staff Course at the JSDF Joint Staff College and then at the National Institute for Defense Studies.



James L. Schoff is senior director of the US-Japan NEXT Alliance Initiative at Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA. As leader of this initiative, Schoff fosters networking and the development of joint recommendations involving a wide range of policy and technical specialists, in and out of government, to stimulate new alliance connections across foreign, security, and technology policy areas. The purpose is to help improve the alliance and how it serves shared interests, preparing it for new challenges in an increasingly complex and fluid geostrategic environment.

Previously, Schoff was a senior fellow and director of the Japan Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace for nine years, following two years as senior adviser for East Asia policy at the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense. At the Department of Defense, he supported strategic planning and policy development for security cooperation with Japan and the Republic of Korea. Schoff's career spans thirty five years working in the fields of business, education, government, and the non-profit sector, all related to Japan, East Asia, and the U.S.-Japan alliance. This includes six years living in Japan and one year in Saipan.

Schoff has written extensively on East Asian security, foreign policy, and emerging technology issues. Sample publications include: Allied on AI Assurance: Technology to Enhance AI Security & Safety (Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA, 2024) Modernizing US-Japan Command & Control Relationships for New Challenges | NEXT Alliance Conference Summary: Tokyo 2023 (Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA, 2023) China and the New Role for Economic Security in the US-Japan Alliance (Sasakawa Peace Foundation, 2022), A High-Tech Alliance: Challenges and Opportunities for U.S.-Japan Science and Technology Collaboration (Carnegie, 2021), U.S.-Japan Technology Policy Coordination: Balancing Technonationalism With a Globalized World (Carnegie, 2020), Uncommon Alliance for the Common Good: The United States and Japan after the Cold War (Carnegie, 2017), and Tools for Trilateralism: Improving U.S.-Japan-Korea Cooperation to Manage Complex Contingencies (Potomac Books Inc., 2005).



Dr. Satohiro Akimoto is Chairman and President of Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA. He is also a contributing writer for The Japan Times, an Associate Fellow for the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, and a contributing writer for the Okazaki Institute in Tokyo.

Dr. Akimoto received his Ph.D. in Sociology and M.A. in East Asian Studies from Harvard University, a certificate of Russian studies from Leningrad State University, and a B.A. in Law from Keio University.



JUMP Presents

The Importance of the U.S.-Japan Alliance in the Indo-Pacific

Date & Time: Tuesday, February 3, 2026, 18:00 – 21:00 EST

Venue: Hall of Valor (Marshall Hall, 500 Anderson Dr, Lexington, VA 24450)

Master of Ceremonies:

Col. David Gray (US Army, Ret.), Director, Center for Leadership and Ethics, Virginia Military Institute

Welcome:

Dr. Joel Christenson, Director, John. A. Adams '71 Center for Military History & Strategic Analysis, Virginia Military Institute

JUMP Introduction & Moderator:

Dr. Satoshi Akimoto, President & Chairman, Sasakawa USA; Director of JUMP

Panelists & Speakers:

Adm. Ryo Sakai (JMSDF, Ret.), former Chief of Staff, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force

Lt. Gen. Larry Nicholson (USMC, Ret.), former Commanding General of III Marine Expeditionary Force in Japan, USMC (Ret.); Distinguished Senior Fellow (Non-resident), Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA

Col. Satoshi Masaka (JGSDF), Military Attaché, Embassy of Japan

Agenda:

- 18:00** JUMP Reception (30 min)
Opening by Col. Gray (5 min)
Remarks by Lt. Gen. Nicholson (5 min)
- 18:30** Dinner (60 min)
Welcome Remarks by Dr. Christenson (5 min)
- 18:35** JUMP Introduction by Dr. Akimoto (10 min)
- 19:45** Remarks by Adm. Sakai (15 min)
- 20:05** Panel Discussion (55 min)
- 21:00** End of JUMP Event

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JOHN A. ADAMS '71 CENTER
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AND STRATEGIC ANALYSIS



Biographies:



Admiral Ryo Sakai (JMSDF, Ret.) was a surface warfare officer of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, who served mainly in the Fleet Escort Force at sea. He commanded JS Shirayuki (DD123), homeported in Yokosuka, and Escort Division SEVEN in Maizuru.

Flag officer tours included Commander Escort Flotilla ONE, Director-General of Operations and Plans Department (N3/N5) at the Maritime Staff Office, Commandant of Ominato, Kure, and Yokosuka Districts, respectively, and Chief of Staff, Maritime Self-Defense Force.

ADM Sakai retired in July 2024.

In Jan 2025, he became the first International Fellow at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey CA



Lieutenant General Lawrence D Nicholson (USMC, Ret.) retired after 39 years of active duty service to our nation in October of 2018 as the commanding general of III Marine Expeditionary Force in Japan. He was born in Toronto, Canada, and commissioned after graduating from The Citadel, in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1979. From 1980-1990, he served as an infantryman in the First Marine Division, and as a series and company commander at MCRD San Diego. From 1990-1993, he served at the US Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. Additionally, he has served as a United Nations observer in the Middle East in 1994-95, at NATO HQ in Brussels, Belgium from 2002-04, as the commander of the Warlords of 2nd Bn 2nd

Marines from 1999-2001, and as the senior military assistant to the deputy secretary of defense in the Pentagon from 2010-2012. LtGen Nicholson earned a master's degree from the United States Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, KS. and is a 2002 graduate of the NATO Defense College in Rome, Italy.

Multiple combat tours include service as the G-3 (Operations) of the 1st Marine Division in Ramadi, Iraq, during 2004-05, and as the commander of the 5th Marine Regiment in Fallujah, Iraq, 2006-07. He commanded Task Force Leatherneck and the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, from 2009-2010. He later returned to Afghanistan in 2012 as the CJ-3 operations officer for the ISAF Joint Command (IJC). LtGen Nicholson commanded the famed 1st Marine (Blue Diamond) Division at Camp Pendleton, California, from 2013-2015.

After retiring from active duty, LtGen Nicholson served as a vice president for execution and leadership for the H.T. Hackney Company in Knoxville, TN, until July of 2022. Today, he serves as a senior mentor and highly qualified expert for the Joint Staff travelling globally in support of large scale exercises. Additionally, he serves as a distinguished senior fellow for the Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA, is on the advisory board for Spirit of America, and serves on several veterans



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focused non-profit boards. He and his wife Deborah enjoy spoiling their nine grandchildren and hiking in the beautiful Smoky Mountains of Tennessee.



Colonel Satoshi Masaka (JGSDF) serves as the Military Attaché at the Embassy of Japan in the United States. He has made his career as an infantry officer in the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) with 20 years of service. Recently, he served as a general staff officer in the Intelligence Division of the C4 Systems & Intelligence Department at the Ground Staff Office for the Japan Ministry of Defense in Tokyo. From 2017 to 2020, Masaka served as a budget planning officer at the Department of Finance in the Administration Division of the Ground Staff Office at Camp Ichigaya, Tokyo. He was in charge of both requesting and allocating the budgets for all components of the JGSDF. Masaka then attended the United States Marine Corps University in Quantico, Virginia as an international military student. Upon his return to Japan, he continued his studies first through the Joint Staff Course at the JSDF Joint Staff College and then at the National Institute for Defense Studies.



Colonel David Gray, Ph.D., (US Army, Ret.) assumed duties as Director of the Center for Leadership and Ethics in August 2014. He manages the Center's programs to enhance the Corps of Cadets' leadership, character, and ethical development, as well as challenging them through an annual series of conferences on topics of national and international importance.

Col. Gray is a 1980 Honors Scholar and Distinguished Military Graduate from Western Illinois University. He has earned masters and doctorate degrees in military history from The Ohio State University and a masters degree in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College. Col. Gray was selected as a Federal Executive Fellow at Brookings Institution from 2003-2004.

During his military career, Col. Gray exercised executive leadership in command and staff positions of increasing responsibility across the globe. He commanded progressively larger units from an infantry platoon through a multi-functional brigade combat team. His overseas deployments included Haiti, the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq. He commanded the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) in Iraq from 2005-2006. He worked as an operations officer and strategist during tours on the Joint and Army Staffs in Washington D.C.

Col. Gray has served as a faculty member and academic leader at several public and non-profit educational institutions including: West Point, University of Maryland, Valley Forge Military Academy and College, and The Ohio State University. He served as Chair and Professor of Officership at the Simon Center for the Professional Military Ethic at the United States Military Academy. Col. Gray joined VMI after serving as the Director of Strategy and Campaigning at the Saudi War College in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Col. Gray's research and publications focus on topics in modern military history, policy/strategy, and leadership.



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Col. Gray and his wife Karen reside in Lexington. They have three daughters: Stephanie, Jennifer, and Megan.



Dr. Joel C. Christenson is Associate Professor and Director of the John A. Adams '71 Center for Military History and Strategic Analysis. Prior to joining the VMI faculty he served as Senior Historian in the Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), where he worked on the Secretaries of Defense Historical Series and coordinated long-term historical research and publishing. Before joining OSD he worked in the Policy Studies Division of the Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State. He holds a Ph.D. in American history from West Virginia University, where his research examined the origins of U.S. naval and military advising in Latin America. Prior to his doctoral work, Joel worked as a Senior Defense Analyst for the U.S. Government Accountability Office, and as a Research Assistant at the Institute for Defense Analyses. He is a distinguished graduate of VMI (Class of 1999) and holds master's degrees from the University of Kentucky and George Mason University, as well as a Command and Staff Diploma from the U.S. Naval War College.



Dr. Satoshiro Akimoto is chairman of the board and president of Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA (Sasakawa USA). He joined the organization in January 2019 and brings with him experience in the areas of business, research, dialogue, and exchanges between Japan and the United States.

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Dr. Akimoto received a PhD in sociology and a MA in East Asian studies from Harvard University, as well as a BA in law from Keio University. He also received a certificate in Russian studies from Leningrad State University (currently St. Petersburg State University).



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