



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
PACIFIC AIR FORCES

18 APR 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR CONCERNED RELATIVES

FROM: 35 FW/CV

SUBJECT: Status of Misawa Air Base Residents

In the days since the historic Japan earthquake of 11 March 2011, much concern has been expressed by the family members of Airmen, Sailors and Soldiers stationed at Misawa Air Base. The purpose of this letter is to assure our family members in the United States that the residents of Misawa Air Base are completely safe.

The 11 March earthquake occurred at 1446 Misawa Time. Misawa Air Base suffered only very minor physical damage from the earthquake, and thankfully, suffered no notable injury to any resident. At worst, the residents of Misawa Air Base were inconvenienced by a two-day total loss of electricity followed by a five-day partial loss of electricity to the installation. As electricity was restored, family housing was the first to receive power ensuring the best-possible quality of life for our residents.

All of Misawa watched in sorrow as the results of the tsunami disaster became evident. The losses suffered by our hosts and neighbors in the affected areas have been devastating. In no small amount, the events at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear reactor captured the full attention of civil and military leadership at every level. Misawa Air Base is fortunate to rest some 232 miles North of this power plant, and also benefits from favorable wind patterns that carry any radioactive release away, rather than toward our installation. At no time has Misawa Air Base been in danger of exposure, nor do we expect to be. The physical laws of distance and weather patterns reduce the likelihood of airborne contamination traveling to Misawa to very small numbers. Regardless, as soon as the incident occurred, the Misawa Air Base installation commander (along with all installation commanders on the island of Honshu) ordered air, water and food sampling to ensure that the effects of radioactive material were not being felt at Misawa. To this date, we still conduct daily sampling and I am happy to report that, as expected, no contamination whatsoever has arrived at Misawa Air Base.

In closing, I should like to inform you that I too am a husband and father. My wife and daughter live with me as residents of Misawa Air Base, as does the installation commander's family. I can assure you that, as parents and military leaders, responsible for all the lives at Misawa Air Base, if there had been the slightest threat to our population, we were prepared to and would have taken immediate action to protect them. The protection of our forces and their families was the paramount concern throughout the events of March 2011. Rest assured, we have taken proactive steps to ensure that.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Van A. Wimmer, Jr.", is positioned above the typed name.

VAN A. WIMMER, JR., Colonel, USAF
Vice Commander
Misawa Air Base Installation and 35th Fighter Wing