

## The Basic Concept of the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum

In late March 1945, a fierce battle such as has rarely been seen in history took place on these islands. The "Typhoon of Steel" that lasted for ninety days disfigured mountains, destroyed much of the cultural legacy, and claimed the precious lives of upward of 200,000 people. The Battle of Okinawa was the only ground fighting fought on Japanese soil and was also the largest-scale campaign of the Asia-Pacific War. Even countless Okinawan civilians were fully mobilized.

A significant aspect of the Battle of Okinawa was the great loss of civilian life. At more than 100,000, civilian losses far outnumbered the military death toll. Some were blown apart by shells, some finding themselves in a hopeless situation were driven to suicide, some died of starvation, some succumbed to malaria, while others fell victim to the retreating Japanese troops. Under the most desperate and unimaginable circumstances, Okinawans directly experienced the absurdity of war and atrocities it inevitably brings about.

This war experience is at the very core of what is popularly called the "Okinawan Heart," a resilient, yet strong attitude to life that Okinawan people developed as they struggled against the pressures of many years of U.S. military control.

The "Okinawan Heart" is a human response that respects personal dignity above all else, rejects any acts related to war, and truly cherishes culture, which is a supreme expression of humanity. In order that we may mourn for those who perished during the war, pass on to future generations the historic lessons of the Battle of Okinawa, convey our message to the peoples of the world and thereby contribute to establishing permanent peace, we have hereby established, displaying the whole range of the individual war experiences of the people in this prefecture, the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum.

1975 (partially revised April 1, 2000.)

Okinawa Prefecture



Old Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum



### GENERAL DIRECTIONS

#### Bus Directions

- ① Naha Terminal — Itoman Terminal line
  - Bus No. : 89.
  - Fare : 500 yen (one-way).
  - Bus Frequency : every 20 minutes.
- ② Change bus to : Itoman Terminal — Gyokusendo line.
  - (Bus stop) (Heiwa-kinen-koen-mae)
  - Bus No. : 82.
  - Fare : 400 yen (one-way trip).
  - Bus Frequency : one bus every hour.

#### Taxi Directions

- ① Naha — Itoman, Mabuni (Peace Memorial Park).
  - Distance : approximately 22 km.
  - Fare : 3,000-3,500 yen (one-way trip).

### ADMISSION INFORMATION

Hours of Operation : 9 AM-5 PM. (Admission until 4:30 PM).

Closed : December 29 - January 3.

Admission Fee

Category	Individual	Groups (over 20 persons)
Adults	300 yen	240 yen
Children	150 yen	100 yen

(Permanent Exhibition)

# Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum



*Conveying our Hearts of Peace to the World*



Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum.  
614-1 Aza-Mabuni, Itoman City, Okinawa Prefecture 901-0333  
TEL 098-997-3844 FAX 098-997-3947

## INFORMATION

### Entrance Hallway

Welcome to the museum.



### Peace Memorial Hall

This 231-seat multipurpose hall may be used for lectures, film shows and various performances.



### Conference Room

This conference room can seat up to 100 persons. It may be also partitioned into smaller rooms for various meetings.



### Special Exhibition Room

The room with a 226-square-meter floor space is equipped with showcases and panelboards that may be used for photo and art exhibitions.



### Information Library

The library provides a wide range of information related to peace. In addition to books and magazines, visitors may watch videotapes of eyewitness accounts of survivors of the Battle of Okinawa, and other audiovisual materials on the theme of peace.

In the reference corner, personal computers provide detailed information concerning the exhibits and records deposited at the Museum, comprehensive explanations about each exhibition room, and peace-related teaching materials.



### Reference Room

By just touching the monitor screen, a wide variety of information related to peace is available in this room. The database includes detailed explanations of the exhibits as well as information on instructional aids.



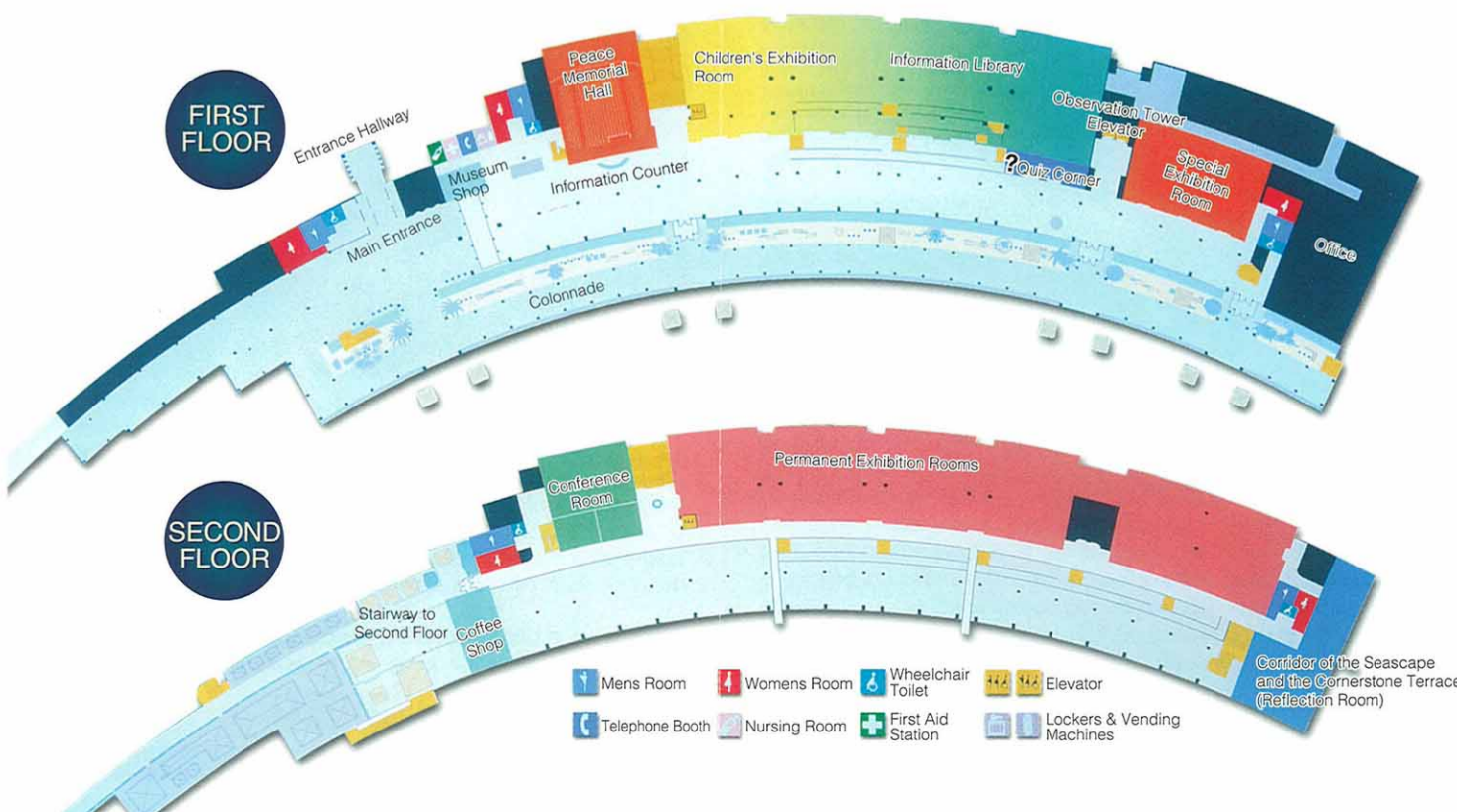
### Audiovisual Booths

There are five AV booths where eyewitness accounts of the Battle by survivors and peace-related videotapes may be viewed.



### Quiz Corner

Find more about Okinawa—about its history, culture, natural environment and the Battle. Choose any topic you would like to be quizzed on. There are three levels of questions according to difficulty—the elementary, intermediate and advanced. The computers are operated by only touching the screen.





In order to nurture peace-loving generations for the future, this room is divided into three sections offering various exhibits and instructional aids to give children an occasion to think about peace. The first section (Nuchidu Takara, Life is a Treasure—Children of the World) introduces 18 children from different countries who speak, through video in their own language, about their schools, their friends and the games they enjoy playing. The second section, (The World Today) focuses on global issues as well as our daily concerns—such themes as full-scale wars, regional conflicts, human right issues, environmental pollution, and bullying problems—making children to think about why these things occur and how they can be prevented or addressed.

The third section (Warabina—Children's Playground) offers opportunities to help children discover common ground through games played in different countries and at the same time recognize their cultural differences. Children may touch the exhibits in the section.

The room provides an occasion to discuss peace among friends and between parents and children.



The World Is One!  
Eighteen children from different areas and countries welcome visitors to the museum.



"Unending Poverty" is one of the themes in the section, In the World Today.

Exhibition Room III The Battle As Seen by Residents

### Battleground of Hell

Avoiding a decisive battle in the Shuri area, the defending Japanese army chose to withdraw to the southern part of the island to wage a bloody war of attrition.

Subsequently, the Japanese troops were cornered at the southern tip of the island and were wiped out. In the end, the area turned into an inferno where civilians and troops fled from one cave to another in a desperate scramble for life. In some caves, Japanese soldiers slaughtered civilians, or forced them to commit mass suicide. Some residents died of starvation. Outside, hell broke out as artillery fire, mortar shells and flame throwers killed Japanese troops and residents en masse.



▲ Residents taking refuge in a cave. A mother pressing her hand over her baby's mouth to prevent it from crying under the threatening eyes of a Japanese soldier.



▶ Enlarged photographs of victims at battle sites, and ragged clothes partially burned by flame throwers.



*Long ago, our Ryukyuan ancestors,  
who cherished peace above all  
Crossed the ocean to engage in trade  
with countries of Asia.  
The ocean, the source of all life,  
and a bridge of peace and friendship,  
Still touches the heartstrings of  
Okinawan people.*

Exhibition Room I Road to the Battle of Okinawa

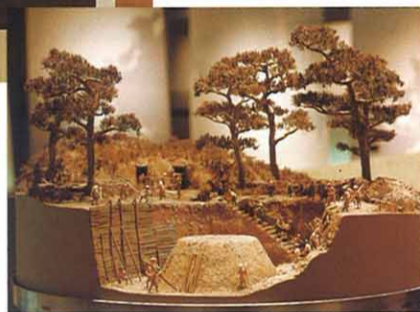
The Meiji Government executed the "Ryukyu Disposition" with threats of force against the Ryukyuan court, and annexed the kingdom as a prefecture of Japan. Consequently Okinawa became rapidly japanized under the assimilation policy aimed at making the Okinawans as faithful subjects of the Emperor.

On the other hand, Japan, in a great rush for modernization, adopted a policy to "enrich the country with a strong army", expanding armaments and setting out to invade its neighboring countries. The national war effort escalated into the Manchurian Incident, the Sino-Japanese War and the Asia-Pacific War, in which Okinawa became the last battle ground of the so-called "15-year war" that started in 1931..



◀ Scenes of people working, of towns and villages of the Meiji (1868-1912), Taisho (1912-1926) and the early Showa (1926-1945) eras are shown on a three-screen monitor.

▶ A miniature model showing Okinawan people mobilized for the construction of air bases and encampments.



Exhibition Room IV The Battle As seen by Residents

### Testimonies (Eyewitness Accounts)

There remains little material evidence to tell what actually befell the civilian victims during the Battle. Only persons who could tell the truth on behalf of those residents who died against their will are the survivors of the Battle, whose minds had long been closed to others because of their tormenting memories of the war, gradually started to talk about their experiences in order that their testimonies may be passed on to the future generations.

These testimonies speak the very truth of history.



▶ Room of War Testimony. First hand accounts of war by persons who were in various parts of the islands, evacuation areas in mainland Japan and Taiwan, and overseas areas where islanders emigrated to. Videotaped interviews are also shown in this room.



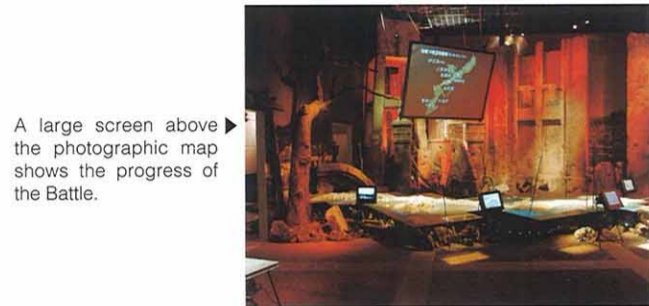
Exhibition Room II Battle of Okinawa As Seen by Okinawan Residents

### The Typhoon of Steel

The Japanese army and the U.S. forces threw all their might into the Battle of Okinawa, unfolding the bloodiest scenes of battle. By dint of superiority in materiel, the invading forces indiscriminately bombed the central and southern parts of the island from the air and the sea. This "Typhoon of Steel" lasted about three months, claiming the lives of more than 200,000 civilians and soldiers and even changing the landscape of the island.



◀ The progress of the Battle of Okinawa on the whole and specific local combats are shown on a large screen using monitors and laser light on a three-dimensional map.



▶ A large screen above the photographic map shows the progress of the Battle.



▲ Demolished houses and buildings are reproduced in the area surrounding the map.

Exhibition Room V Keystone of the Pacific

Okinawa's postwar history began in the refugee camps in 1945. A few years later, as the Cold War tensions rose between the U.S. and the Soviet, Okinawa was turned into a vast military base complex. Land was confiscated, and people were oppressed. Their resentment found vent in the sweeping, island-wide movement for reversion. Even now, after the Cold War ended, regional or ethnic violence continue to occur in many parts of the world. The lessons of the Battle of Okinawa will be dispatched to every corner of the world through the Cornerstone of Peace.



▶ A street scene of a town near a military base in the Vietnam War era in late 1960's. An A-Sign (Approved) bar, souvenir shops and a papa-san mama-san shop are reproduced here.



◀ Interior of a local shop.

*Whenever we reflect upon the realities of the Battle of Okinawa  
We think nothing is more brutal, more degrading than war*

*In the face of these horrifying experiences,  
No one could approve of, much less glorify, war.*

*To be sure, it is human beings that would start a war,  
But what is more important is,  
Is it not we, human beings, who could endeavor to prevent it?*

*Since the battle ended, we have detested all kinds of war,  
Determined to build an island of peace.*

*This is our unwavering principle  
That we have come to cherish,  
In return for a price too high to pay.*