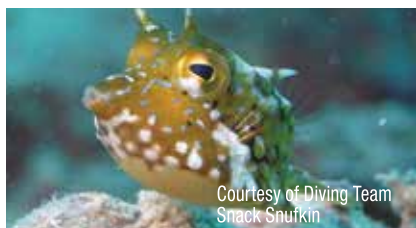
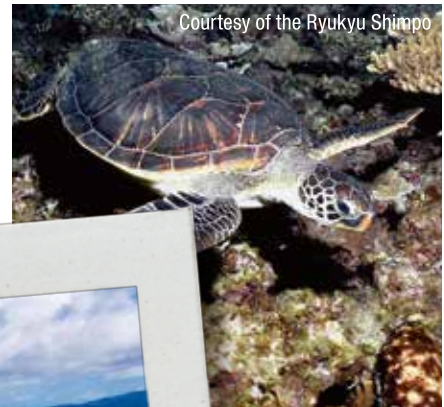


# A Message from Okinawa: The Reality of U.S Military Bases



**INTRODUCTION**

Roughly seventy percent (70%) of all designated U.S. military facilities in Japan are concentrated in Okinawa Prefecture, occupying about fourteen percent (14%) of its main island. Stemming from these massive military installations, incidents, accidents, noise pollution, and environmental problems not only profoundly impact the daily lives of Okinawan people, but its presence has also impeded the prefecture's economic development. The current situation regarding the issue of U.S. military bases in Okinawa is such that not only are historical aspects and the relationship between the bases and the local economy not fully understood, but there are also various misconceptions. We hope that reading this brochure will encourage you to think about this issue.

**CONTENTS**

1. History of U.S. Military Bases in Okinawa
2. U.S. Military Bases in Okinawa Today
3. Issues Stemming from the U.S. Military Bases
4. The Relocation of Futenma Air Station and the Construction of the New Base in Henoko

Russia  
3000km  
Mongolia

2000km

1000km

People's Republic of China

Philippines

0 1000km

0 500mile



**Okinawa's Geography, Nature, and History**

Okinawa Prefecture is to the east of the Asian Continent and on the western edge of the Japanese archipelago.

The prefecture consists of 160 large and small islands (48 inhabited) dotting a vast ocean stretching about 1,000 km (approx. 621 miles) from east to west and about 400 km (approx. 249 miles) from north to south. The islands are located in a subtropical oceanic climate and have an amazing natural environment that includes beautiful coral reefs and precious wildlife.

Historically, the Ryukyu Kingdom was established in Okinawa in 1429, and for 450 years until it became a prefecture of Japan in 1879, it ruled the islands of Okinawa and developed its own unique culture through trade and exchange with China, Southeast Asian countries, and other regions.

Okinawa Prefecture's current land area is approximately 5,639,217 acres (about 0.6% of Japan's total land area) and is home to a population of about 1.47 million. The prefecture continues to develop, driven primarily by the tourism industry, and recorded approximately 10.76 million visitors in 2025.

It is in this context that, of all the area throughout Japan that is exclusively designated for U.S. military use, 70.3% is concentrated in Okinawa Prefecture.



## 1945: The Amphibious Landing of U.S. forces on Okinawa Island

Okinawa, with its rich natural beauty and unique culture, was the site of one of history's bloodiest and fiercest ground battles fought in the Pacific War. The lush islands were reduced to ashes by a devastating barrage of bombs and naval gunfire, referred to as the "Typhoon of Steel."

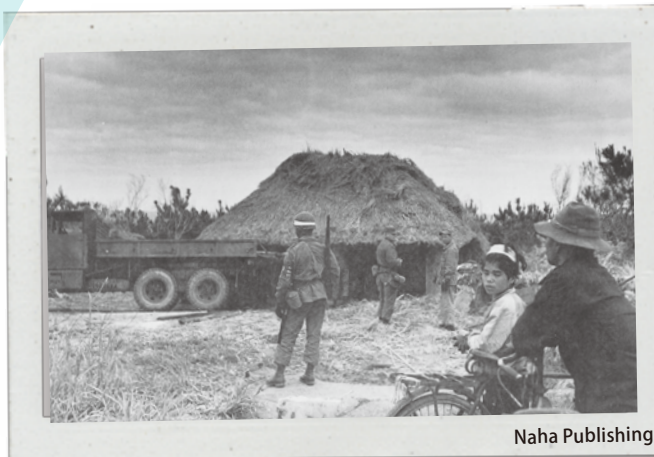
It is estimated that approximately 10,000 tons (about 22 million pounds) of unexploded ordnance were left behind during the Battle of Okinawa, and as of 2017, it is believed approximately 1,856 tons (about 4.09 million pounds) remain buried.



Courtesy of the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum



Courtesy of the Okinawa Prefectural Archives



Naha Publishing

## 1945: Construction of Futenma Air Station

The U.S. military, after landing on Okinawa, forcibly confined residents to internment camps and seized their land to construct new bases one after another. Residents had their land taken away without question. Those who lost their land were unable to return to their hometowns, even if they wanted to, and had no choice but to settle in the areas around the bases.

## 1960: U.S. soldiers marching through the streets in Okinawa under U.S. rule

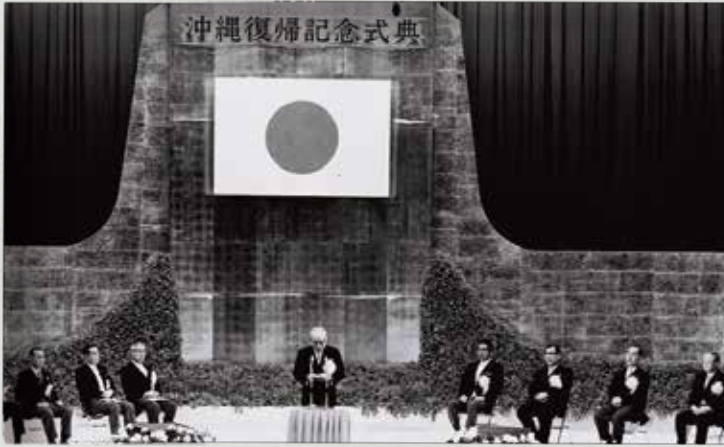
After the war, Okinawa remained under U.S. administration for 27 years, until its reversion to Japan in 1972. During this period, the Japanese Constitution did not apply to Okinawa, and the territory was unable to send representatives to the National Diet until 1970.

## 1955: Construction of New Bases

Even after the end of the Pacific War, whenever the U.S. military deemed new bases were necessary due to changes in the international situation—such as the outbreak of the Korean War—they used armed troops to drive out residents with "bayonets and bulldozers," demolish homes, and destroy farmland to construct these new bases.



Courtesy of the Naha City Museum of History



Courtesy of the Okinawa Prefectural Archives

## 1972: Okinawa's Reversion to Japan

Upon Okinawa's reversion to Japan in 1972, the National Diet passed a resolution stating that "measures should be taken to promptly reduce and reorganize U.S. military bases in Okinawa in the future."



Courtesy of Photo: Kyodo News

## 1996: SACO Agreement

In response to the outburst of anger among Okinawan residents following the rape of an elementary school girl by three U.S. soldiers in Okinawa the previous year (1995), the Japanese and U.S. governments agreed to the full return of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma. (Former Prime Minister Hashimoto and former U.S. Ambassador to Japan Mondale hold a joint press conference.)



Courtesy of the Okinawa Times

## May 2015: Okinawan residents oppose the relocation of Futenma Air Station within Okinawa Prefecture.

The people of Okinawa have clearly expressed their opposition to Marine Corps Air Station Futenma remaining in Okinawa Prefecture rather than relocating somewhere else. Even now, 80 years after the end of World War II, approximately 70.3% of the total area of U.S. military facilities in Japan is concentrated in Okinawa Prefecture, which accounts for only about 0.6% of the country's total land area.

Most of the U.S. military bases in mainland Japan occupy plots of land that were Imperial Japanese military installations before the war. However, the U.S. military in Okinawa not only appropriated public land, but also forcibly seized private land as well. To this day, Okinawa has never once voluntarily offered land to the U.S. military for the construction of bases.

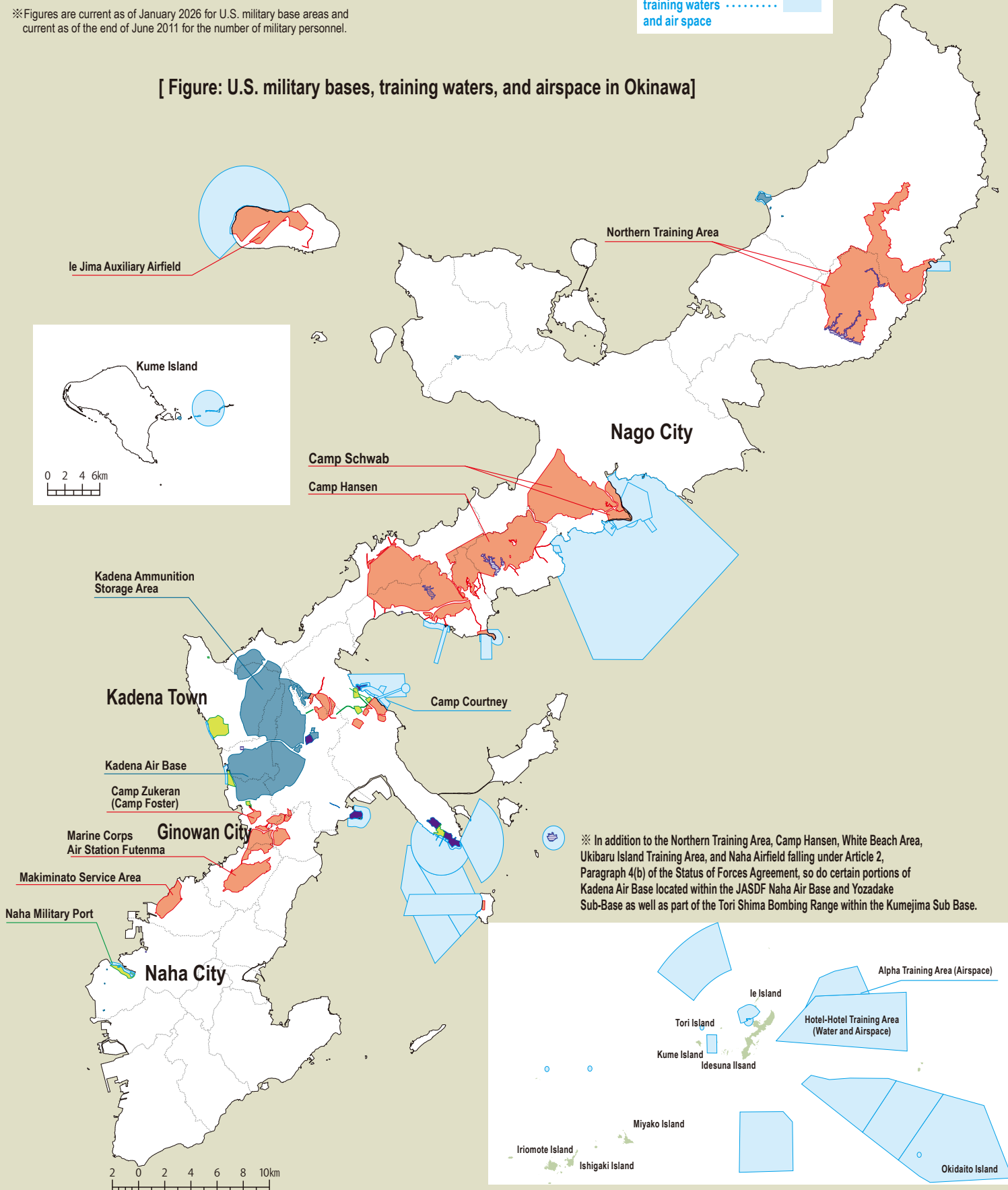
# U.S. Military Bases in Okinawa

- Number of designated U.S. Military exclusive-use facilities: 31
- Area: 45,602 acres
- 8.2% of Okinawa prefectural land
- 14.4% of Okinawa main island
- Designated water areas for training: 27 (13,575,461 acres)
- Designated air space for training: 20 (23,577,740 acres)
- Number of military personnel in 2011: 25,843 (70.4% of all military personnel in Japan)

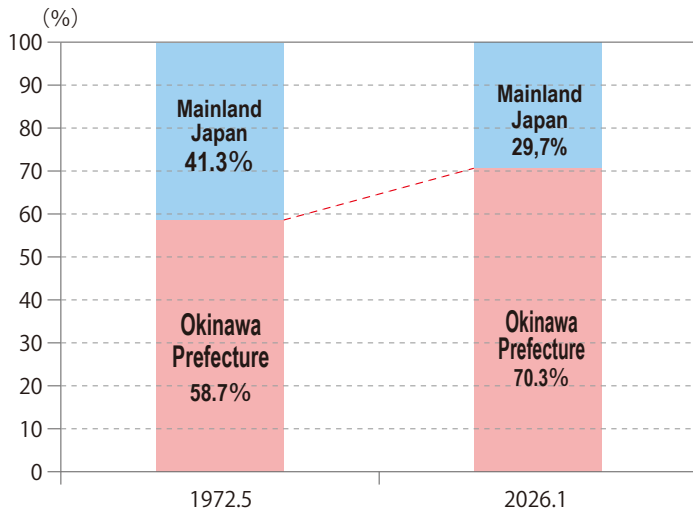
※ Figures are current as of January 2026 for U.S. military base areas and current as of the end of June 2011 for the number of military personnel.

Legend	
U.S. Army	
U.S. Navy	
U.S. Marine Corps	
U.S. Air Force	
U.S.-Japan Status of Forces Article II 4 (b) facilities and areas	
Designated as training waters and air space	

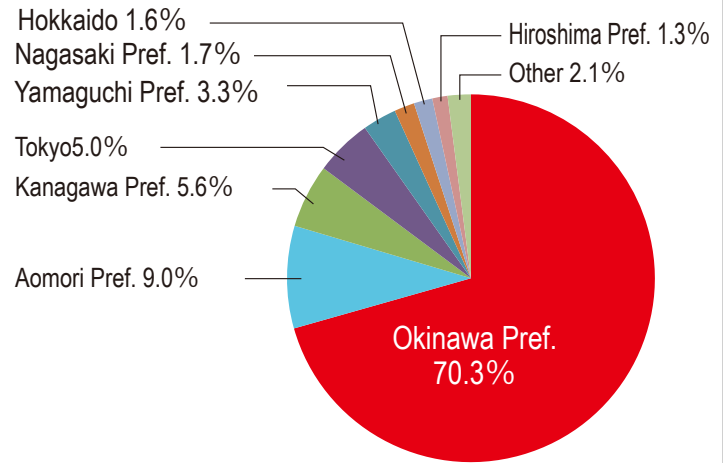
[ Figure: U.S. military bases, training waters, and airspace in Okinawa ]



■ Change in percentage of area exclusively used by U.S. Forces Japan (after Okinawa's reversion to Japan)

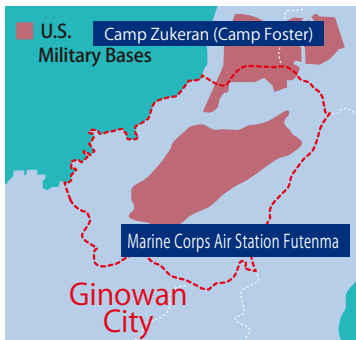


■ Percentage of area exclusively used for U.S. military facilities

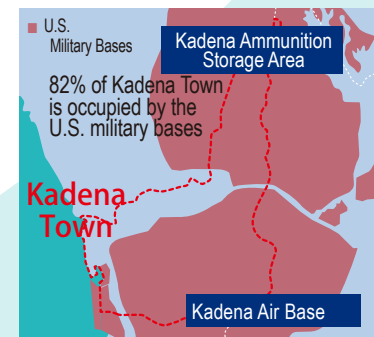


In 1972, when Okinawa reverted to Japan, the prefecture accounted for approximately 58% of the total area of U.S. military facilities nationwide. However, as the consolidation and downsizing of U.S. military bases on the mainland progressed more rapidly than in Okinawa, 70.3% of the total area of U.S. military facilities nationwide is now concentrated in Okinawa Prefecture, which accounts for only about 0.6% of Japan's total land area.

This has forced the 1.47 million residents of Okinawa Prefecture to live next to U.S. military bases.



Located in the heart of Ginowan City, home to nearly 100,000 residents, Futenma Air Station occupies one-quarter of the city's total area. It has been described as "the most dangerous base in the world."



Kadena Air Base is the largest U.S. Air Force base in the Far East. The noise produced daily by aircraft at this base has had a tremendous impact on the surrounding environment of local residents.

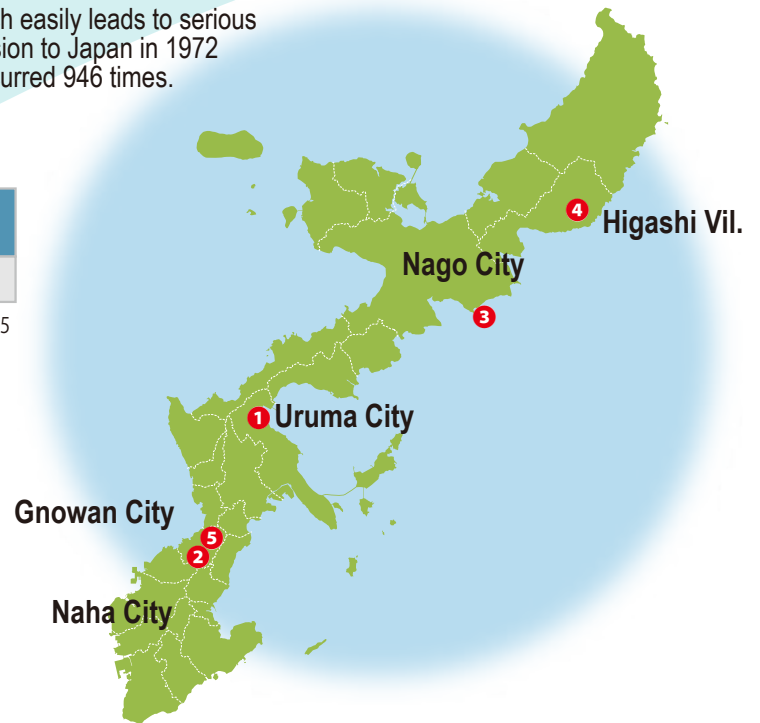
## ( 1 ) Training Accidents

Incidents and accidents related to U.S. military bases are common occurrences in Okinawa Prefecture. Among the most serious are aircraft-related accidents which easily leads to serious incidents resulting in loss of life or property. Between Okinawa's reversion to Japan in 1972 and the end of 2025, accidents involving U.S. military aircraft have occurred 946 times.

### ■ Number of Accidents Involving U.S. Military Aircraft\*

Crashes	Emergency landings	Other	Total
49	707	190	946

\*From Okinawa's reversion to Japan (1972) until 2025



Courtesy of the Ryukyu Shimpo

### 1 1959: U.S. Air Force F-100 crashed into Miyamori Elementary School

A U.S. Air Force fighter jet crashed into Miyamori Elementary School, which was located in Ishikawa City (currently Uruma City) in the central part of Okinawa's main island, killing 17 people, including 11 children, and severely injuring 210 people.



Courtesy of the Ryukyu Shimpo

### 2 2004: A large helicopter crashed into Okinawa International University

A CH-53D Sea Stallion, a heavy-lift helicopter assigned to Futenma Air Station, struck the main building of Okinawa International University in Ginowan City, crashed, and burst into flames.



Courtesy of the Okinawa Times



Courtesy of the Ryukyu Shimpo

### 3 2016: An MV-22 Osprey crashed near community

An MV-22 Osprey (stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma), the deployment of which the people of Okinawa have strongly opposed, crashed near a community in Nago City.

## ( 1 ) Training Accidents



Courtesy of Akira Nishime

### 4 October 2017: Large helicopter makes emergency landing on private property and catches fire

A CH-53E Super Stallion, heavy-lift helicopter assigned to Futenma Air Station, made an emergency landing in a grassy field approximately 300 to 350 yards from a private residence in Higashi Village, where it subsequently caught fire.



Futenma Daini Elementary School

### 5 December 2017: A window from a large helicopter fell onto an elementary school playground

A window from a CH-53E Super Stallion heavy-lift helicopter fell onto the schoolyard of Futenma Daini Elementary School, which is located right next to Marine Corps Air Station Futenma. Physical education class was in session in the schoolyard when the window fell. It is only a miracle that no one was hurt. If the window had fallen and hit the children standing not far away, they would have been seriously injured or even worse.



Courtesy of Ginowan City

## (2)Crimes

### ■ Number of criminal arrests of U.S. military affiliated personnel\*

Felonious Offenses (Murder, rape, etc.)	Violent Offenses (Assault, injury, etc.)	Larceny Offences	Intellectual Property Offences (Fraud, counterfeiting, etc.)	Moral Offenses (Gambling, public indecency)	Other	Total
<b>600</b>	<b>1,144</b>	<b>3,097</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>1,204</b>	<b>6,409</b>

\*From Okinawa's reversion to Japan (1972) until 2025

**6,409 criminal offenses, of which 600 are violent crimes including murder, robbery, and rape, have been committed by U.S. military personnel, civilian employees, and others with SOFA status during the period from Okinawa's reversion to Japan in 1972 through the end of 2025.**



Courtesy of the Ryukyu Shimpo

### 1995: Rally protesting the rape of an elementary school girl by U.S.

An incident in which a young elementary school girl was abducted and raped by three American soldiers has sparked outrage among the people of Okinawa Prefecture who have suffered from the impact of military bases and crimes committed by American soldiers for half a century since the end of the war.



### 2016: A prefectural rally to protest the rape and murder of a local woman by a U.S. military base worker after his arrest and indictment.

A U.S. military base civilian worker was arrested in a case where the body of a local woman was found. He was prosecuted for charges of rape resulting in death, abandoning her body, and murder. The incident has reignited the intense indignation of the people of Okinawa.

The cases cited here represent only a small fraction of the incidents and accidents caused by the U.S. military in Okinawa. Because Okinawa Prefecture, which accounts for only about 0.6% of Japan's total land area, is home to vast U.S. military bases representing approximately 70.3% of Japan's total area of U.S. military facilities, incidents and accidents have been recurring for many years. Deep-seated distrust has been ingrained in the Okinawa people on account of the repeated incidents and accidents caused by U.S. military personnel since the post-war period when Okinawa was under U.S. administration. The Okinawa Prefectural Government believes that to prevent such incidents and accidents from being repeated it is essential to reduce the excessive burden of U.S. military bases.

## (3) Noise Problems Caused by U.S. Military Bases

In Okinawa Prefecture, the presence of vast U.S. military bases results in daily aircraft noise, which has a significant impact on the living environment of residents living near the bases. In cooperation with affected municipalities, Okinawa Prefecture measures the level of aircraft noise around Kadena Air Base and Futenma Air Station. Every year, the levels recorded at many of these monitoring stations exceed the measurements prescribed by environmental standards for a healthy living environment

The table below shows how 2024 decibel levels typical of those measured at monitoring stations extend far beyond the degree mandated by Japan's environmental standards. The peak noise level at these stations is comparable to what a person would experience in close proximity to an aircraft engine, while the annual average of peak noise levels is akin to being inside a loud noisy factory.

### U.S. military aircraft noise levels(excerpt)

Air Base	Monitoring Site	Average Daily Frequency of Noise Occurrences	Maximum Level	
			Annual Maximum	Annual Average
In the vicinity of Kadena Air Base	Sunabe Chatan Town	49.5 occurrences	116.7dB	94.5dB
In the vicinity of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma	Ue-ojana Ojana Ginowan City	44.9 occurrences	124.4dB	90.8dB

Decibels	Noise Levels (Reference)
120	Level near an aircraft engine
110	Level 2 meters in front of a car horn
100	Level under a railway bridge as a train passes over
90	Level inside a loud factory

※ Source: "Commentary on Noise Regulation Act," Air Conservation Bureau, Environment Agency.



Osprey flying low altitude



Visiting aircraft flying into Kadena Air Base (F-35 fighter jet)



Osprey night flight



Courtesy of the Ryukyu Shimpo

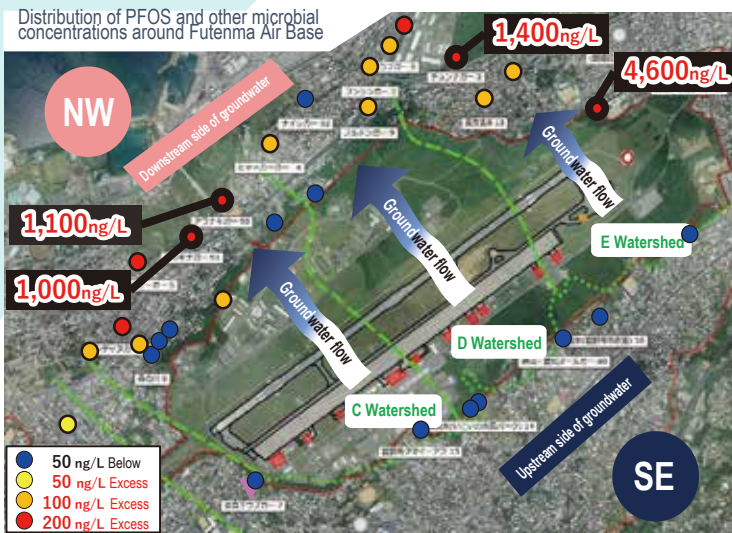
Moreover, despite the agreement reached by the governments of Japan and the United States to limit nighttime and early-morning flight operations and restrict flights over densely-populated areas where schools and hospitals are located, this arrangement only calls for best-effort targets, asking the U.S. military to do so "to the extent possible." The reality is that these agreed-upon measures are not strictly observed. Knowing what is actually happening here, no one could say any sort of effective measures are in place to reduce aircraft noise pollution.

Okinawa Prefecture has urged both the Japanese and U.S. governments to strictly comply with flight restrictions and take other meaningful action to reduce aircraft noise.

## (4) Environmental Problems: PFOS and Other Contaminants

There are concerns regarding the impact of environmental issues stemming from U.S. military bases on the health and living environment of the prefecture's residents. High concentrations of PFOS and other perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS\*1) have been detected in rivers and spring water near U.S. military bases. Since concentrations are higher downstream than upstream of the bases, it is highly likely that the bases themselves are the source of the contamination. Although the Okinawa Prefectural Government (OPG) has requested for on-site inspections within the bases, these requests have been denied. The U.S. military's refusal makes it difficult to identify the cause of such contamination as well as implement any countermeasures. For that reason, OPG continues to call for on-site inspections, and urges the national government to investigate and determine the cause and implement remediation measures.

Rivers and groundwater in areas around the bases are vital water sources. Water treatment plants, in particular, incur high costs annually to pay for treatments to reduce the high concentrations of PFOS and other contaminants.



High concentrations of PFOS and other contaminants have been detected on the downstream side (as shown on left) of groundwater flowing through Futenma Air Station.

### Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS\*1):

Is a collective term for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl compounds, comprising more than 10,000 individual substances. Among these, PFOS and PFOA are known to be highly resistant to environmental degradation and they accumulate over time. PFOS has been used in firefighting foams and semiconductors, while PFOA has been used in firefighting foams and textiles; however, international regulations restricting their use are currently being implemented.



Oil drums from the former soccer field in Okinawa City

### Chemical Substance-Induced Environmental Problems

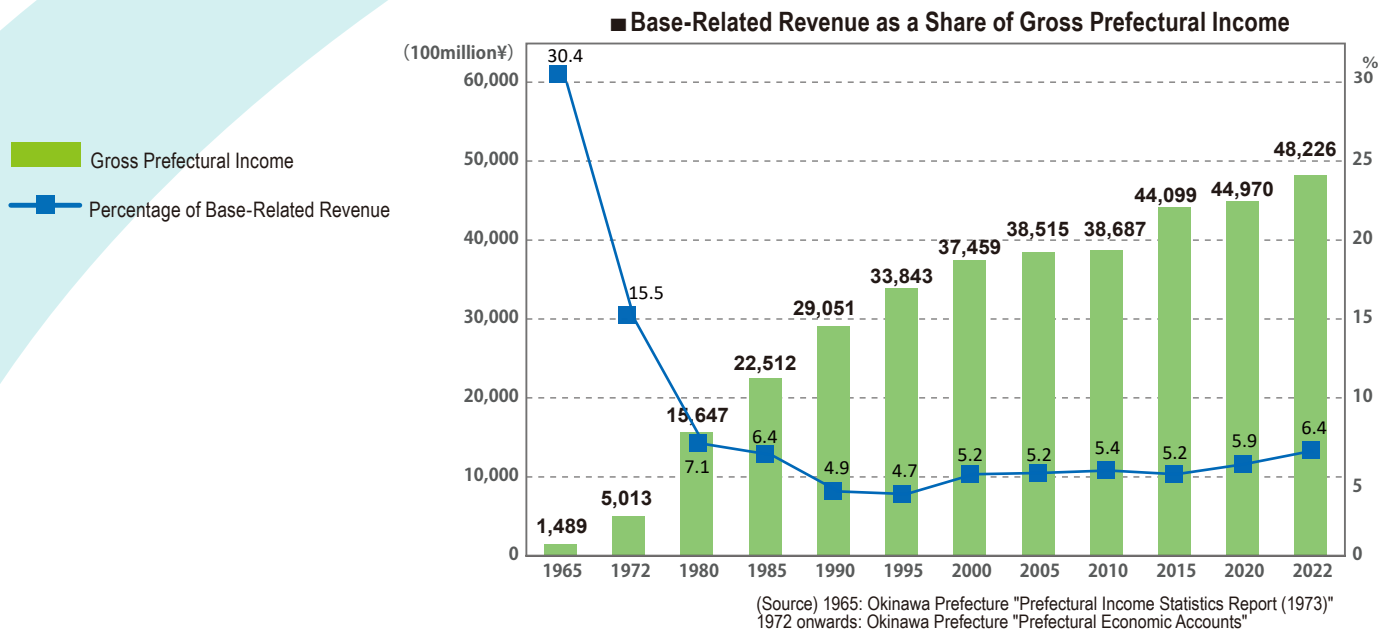
Chemical substance contamination is not just confined to active U.S. military bases but has also impacted former base sites that have been returned to Japan. There have been cases where drums containing tar-like substances have been discovered underground on returned sites, and cases where harmful substances such as lead (Pb) and hexavalent chromium (Cr (VI)) have been detected in soil samples at levels exceeding environmental standards.

## (5) Relationship Between the Okinawan Economy and U.S. Military Bases (Obstacles to Economic Development)

U.S. military bases do not function as companies or other economic entities, so even though the economy of Okinawa has grown, the percentage of U.S. military base-related revenue to gross prefectural income has declined dramatically. Okinawa's economic reliance on the bases is limited.

Areas where U.S. military bases have been returned have experienced significant economic growth, and further development is anticipated with the early reversion of bases that both governments of Japan and the U.S. have pledged to return.

The presence of U.S. military bases is the biggest obstacle to Okinawa's economic development in terms of urban functions, transportation systems, and land use, and the idea that Okinawa is dependent on U.S. military bases is a complete misconception.



Before Okinawa's reversion to Japan in 1965, base-related revenue accounted for 30.4% of gross prefectural income. This figure fell to 15.5% immediately after reversion in 1972, declining significantly ever since to a mere 6.4% (310.1 billion yen) in 2022. Any base-related revenue has a limited influence on the prefectural economy today.

**Major developments are also anticipated using land occupied by bases slated for future return.**

U.S. Military Land Set for Return	Direct economic effect (100 million yen/year)			Number of induced jobs (people)		
	Before return	After return	Magnification	Before return	After return	Magnification
Camp Kuwae	40	334	8x	351	3,409	10x
Camp Zukeran	109	1,061	10x	954	7,386	8x
Marine Corps Air Station Futenma	120	3,866	32x	1,074	34,093	32x
Camp Kinser	202	2,564	13x	1,793	24,928	14x
Naha Military Port	30	1,076	36x	228	10,687	47x
<b>Total</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>8,900</b>	<b>18x</b>	<b>4,400</b>	<b>80,503</b>	<b>18x</b>

Productive redevelopment of land currently occupied by U.S. forces but scheduled for return in the future is projected to generate approximately 18 times the direct economic impact and create a corresponding number of jobs.

## (5) Relationship Between the Okinawan Economy and U.S. Military Bases (Obstacles to Economic Development)

### ① Naha Shintoshin district



Courtesy of Okinawa Times



Direct economic impact      5.2 billion yen/year  
 Number of people employed      168

▶ 163.4 billion yen/year (32 times greater)  
 ▶ 15,560 (93 times greater)

### ② Kuwae&Kitamae districts



Courtesy of Okinawa Times



Direct economic impact      300 million yen/year  
 Number of people employed      0

▶ 33.6 billion yen/year (108 times greater)  
 ▶ 3,368 (new jobs created)

### ③ Site of the Former Awase Golf Course

Awase Golf Course was returned in 2010. Shortly after that in 2013, the Kitanakagusuku Village Awase Land Readjustment Association launched the land readjustment project.

The project has steadily progressed in line with the vision of creating a new community serving as a hub for regional exchange and a new look for the village. Four principles have guided the work: (1) develop parks and green spaces to create a pleasant environment, (2) establish medical and sports facilities to promote health and wellness, (3) promote tourism with a resort shopping mall, and (4) create a hub to protect the community against disasters buttressed by a hospital, commercial facilities, sports facilities, and Liquefied natural gas(LNG) infrastructure.



Courtesy of Awase Land Readdjustment Association Kitanakagusuku Vil.

## (1) Dangers of Futenma Air Station

Futenma Air Station is located in the heart of Ginowan City, a dense urban area that is a vital transportation crossroads connecting the Okinawa main island's heavily populated central and southern regions. Many schools, public facilities, homes, and other neighborhood amenities are situated around the base. (10 elementary schools, 5 junior high schools, 4 high schools, and 1 university)

After viewing Futenma Air Station from the air, former U.S. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld is reported to have recognized it as "the most dangerous base in the world." The surrounding vicinity has repeatedly been the site of accidents over the years, including one in 2004 where a large military helicopter crashed and caught fire on the campus of the university right next to the air station, and the 2017 accident where an 8-kilogram window frame fell off a U.S. military helicopter right into the middle of a neighborhood elementary school yard when children were outside for physical education class.

After the window frame incident, a covered emergency shelter was constructed in the schoolyard. Children should never be exposed to danger in schools. They should be able to learn in an environment where they feel is always safe and secure.

Residents in the surrounding area of Futenma Air Station subjected to aircraft noise that continue daily into the night, have had their patience and burden pushed beyond their limits.



Figure: Aerial photograph of Futenma Air Base and location of schools



A U.S. military helicopter crashed into the grounds of Okinawa International University (Ginowan City) in 2004.



Ginowan City Futenma Daini Elementary School parts falling accident(2017)

### Futenma Before the U.S. Military's Arrival

Before the war, the area where Futenma Air Station is now located used to be a thriving community dotted with numerous small settlements throughout. There were municipal offices, schools, post offices, hospitals, inns, and general stores.

During the Battle of Okinawa, U.S. forces that had landed on the island forcibly seized the land to build Futenma Air Station while the residents were either evacuating or being sent to internment camps.

When the people returned, they found their communities gone, replaced by a U.S. military base. Even if they wanted to go home, there was no longer any home to return to, so they had no choice but to settle in the areas around Futenma Air Station.

## (2) Environmental Impact

Okinawa Prefecture is calling on the governments of Japan and the U.S. to both eliminate the dangers posed by Futenma Air Station as soon as possible including the immediate suspension of operations—and to realize its relocation outside the prefecture or overseas, as well as its early closure and return.

Recognizing the dangers posed by Futenma Air Station, the Japanese and U.S. governments devised a plan to relocate the facility. However, the plan they proposed involved reclaiming the beautiful waters of Henoko and Oura Bay in Okinawa to build a new base.

Henoko's Oura Bay, the site proposed for constructing the new base, is an extraordinarily biodiverse marine environment. Over 5,300 species have been confirmed to inhabit these waters, among which 262 are endangered species including the dugong which has been designated a national natural treasure.

Nineteen academic societies, including the Ecological Society of Japan, have highlighted in a joint statement the ecological significance of this marine environment. In addition, Japan's Ministry of the Environment has designated the central and northern coast of Okinawa, including Henoko and Oura Bay, as a "marine area of high importance from the perspective of biodiversity." It has also designated the "Oura River and its estuary" as a potential candidate site that meets the international criteria for a Ramsar Convention wetland.

Moreover, Mission Blue, an environmental NGO headquartered in the United States and led by world-renowned oceanographer Dr. Sylvia Earle, has recognized Oura Bay and the surrounding sea as a significant biodiversity hotspot, home to rare blue coral colonies, dugongs, and thousands of other species. In October 2019, Mission Blue declared the area the very first Hope Spot in Japan.

We believe the natural environment of Henoko and Oura Bay is a precious heritage to be preserved and passed down to future generations.



Henoko and Oura Bay before reclamation work



The sea and fish of Henoko



Dugong

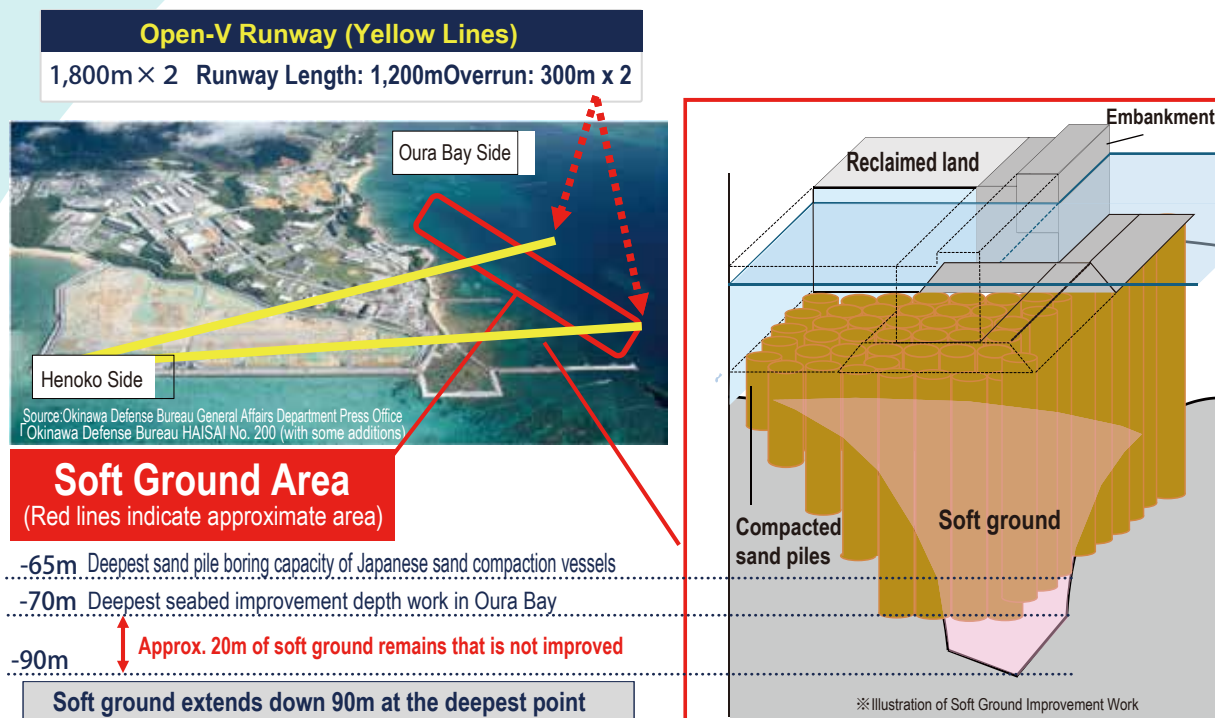
## 4 The Relocation of Futenma Air Station and the Construction of the New Base in Henoko

### (3) Soft Ground

Construction of the new base at Henoko faces very serious problems with the land reclamation work itself. The seabed of Oura Bay, where construction of the new Henoko base is underway, is characterized by extensive areas of very loose and weak “soft ground.”

The soft ground extends across approximately 66 hectares or roughly 60% of the area in Oura Bay slated to be reclaimed. At its deepest point, the soft ground extends 90 meters below sea level. What that means is that to construct the new base, largescale ground improvement work is required, which will involve driving in more than 70,000 piles, including sand pillars with a diameter of 2 meters.

As the ground improvement project progresses, the seabed is expected to rise as much as 14 meters in some areas, which is estimated to devastate the surrounding marine environment. Additionally, because the area sought to be reclaimed is a mixture of soft and hard ground, the sea bottom will sink unevenly over the long-term, a process known as differential settlement. This will likely require a tremendous amount of money to manage and maintain. Furthermore, directly below and near the planned construction site are two seismic faults. Experts warn these faults may become active, meaning the risk is high that an earthquake may strike.



**【Location of Soft Ground】**



2025  
70,000 piles need to be bored to reclaim land off Henoko



2025  
Ships start to transport sediment into Oura Bay

**(4) Issues of Democracy and Local Autonomy: Prefectural Referendum Results, Proxy Execution, and Initiatives at the United Nations**

The vast majority of Okinawa residents are strongly opposed to relocating Futenma Air Station within the prefecture. This clear stance has been repeatedly demonstrated in the past three gubernatorial elections, where the pros and cons of the new Henoko base served as the central point of contention.

Furthermore, in the 2019 prefectural referendum held to vote on the Henoko land reclamation project, an overwhelming majority—comprising approximately 70% of the total votes, or 434,273 residents—expressed their opposition to the reclamation. Regrettably, the Government of Japan has consistently ignored this democratic will of the people and continues to force the construction work forward.

Regarding the construction of this new base in Henoko, the Governor of Okinawa holds the authority to approve land reclamation. In November 2021, the Governor officially disapproved an application submitted by the Okinawa Defense Bureau (a regional bureau of the Central Government) to modify the construction methods following the discovery of an extremely soft seabed. The disapproval was based on numerous critical issues, including unresolved technical challenges posed by the fragile ground and its severe environmental impact.

In response, the Government of Japan filed a lawsuit for “proxy execution” demanding that the Governor approve the application. By stripping the Governor of Okinawa of his administrative authority, the Central Government bypassed the prefecture and approved the modification themselves in December 2023.

This act of proxy execution unilaterally strips the Governor of his rightful administrative powers. It completely tramples upon the democratic will of the majority of Okinawan residents and disregards the principle of local autonomy guaranteed under the Constitution of Japan.

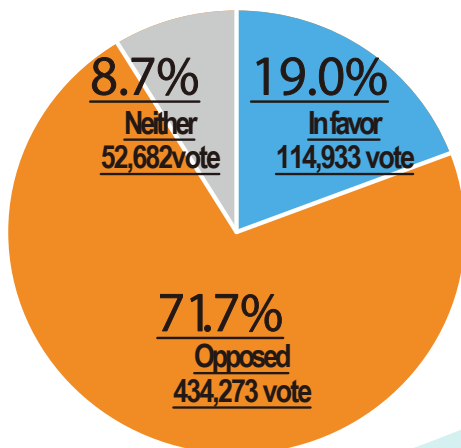
Following the proxy execution, the Okinawa Prefectural Government sought consultations with the Government of Japan regarding detailed engineering designs and environmental preservation measures, engaging in seven separate rounds of talks. However, the Central Government unilaterally terminated these discussions, claiming that “consultations had been fully exhausted,” and immediately commenced construction work authorized under the proxy execution.

The Okinawa Prefectural Government has long maintained that the Henoko new base issue must be resolved through dialogue. We have persistently urged the Government of Japan to adopt a democratic stance and pursue a solution through mutual discussion.

In September 2023, the Governor attended and delivered a speech at the United Nations Human Rights Council and its side events. The purpose was to broadly inform the international community not only about the current burden of U.S. military bases borne by Okinawa, but also about the urgent need to resolve the Henoko issue and other base-related challenges. Crucially, the Governor emphasized that these are not isolated issues for Okinawa alone, but universal challenges concerning fundamental human rights, democracy, and environmental protection.

The Governor’s speech drew significant attention and was widely covered by various domestic and international media outlets.

**Prefectural Referendum on the land Reclamation for the construction of the U.S. Military Base in Henoko**



※ The figure above excludes invalid ballots (0.6% or 3,497 votes).



2023  
Governor of Okinawa addresses the United Nations.



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The Okinawa Collection houses resources on the history of the Ryukyu Kingdom and Okinawa Prefecture, emigration to North and South America, the Battle of Okinawa, contemporary Okinawan politics, economics, and social movements, U.S. military bases in Okinawa, issues concerning the Senkaku Islands, Shimakutuba (Okinawan language), literature, religious traditions, anthropological studies, educational materials, gender issues, traditional dyeing & weaving, and more.

Approximately 7,000 items

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【Photo: Okinawa Collection】

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Information on U.S. military bases in Okinawa  
(English ver.)  
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