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# HIMEYURI

Peace Museum

## Museum marks 30th anniversary with renovation projects

Himeyuri Peace Museum was founded in 1989 by the Himeyuri Alumnae Association. Since its opening, former Himeyuri students have taken on roles as witnesses and chroniclers of the war experience.

In 2004, 15 years after the museum's opening, the founders, foreseeing a day they could no longer tell their stories at the museum, decided that renovations would be needed so that the exhibits would be understandable even without their in-person retelling. Fifteen years have passed since that realization and, as memories of the war fade, opportunities for younger generations to talk with survivors steadily dwindle. Comments such as, "I can't relate" or, "I have no understanding of war" are becoming more frequent from museum visitors.

To make the exhibits more accessible to such people, the museum will be undergoing its second renovation and will be reopened on July 22, 2020.



Planning meeting for the renovation



Meeting with former Himeyuri students and founders

### What is going to change?

The story of the Himeyuri Student Corps will not change however:

- ◆ An exhibit called, "Himeyuri students' lives after the war" will be added
- ◆ A timeline of the Himeyuri students' war experiences will be included, with captions describing what they felt in each scene
- ◆ New pictures, drawings and movies will be added to give viewers and visitors a clearer understanding
- ◆ Finally, we will introduce a multilingual audio guide system and adding English subtitles to testimonial movies



Himeyuri students in front of a dormitory room

## Special Exhibition in the museum lobby “The Himeyuri Peace Museum over 30 years: A retrospective”

This celebration of our 30th anniversary started the first day of 2019. It is a retrospective of the museum’s 30 years in nine pictures: opening day, a field trip to battle sites, the 2004 renovation, and the leadership change from survivors to museum staff who never experienced war.

### Himeyuri Peace Museum marks its 30<sup>th</sup> year

The Himeyuri Peace Museum reached its 30th anniversary in June, 2019. Since the opening day, June 23, 1989, over 2.2 million people have visited the museum.

February 6, 2018  
Former Himeyuri students who worked at the museum and staff members



### Himeyuri Alumnae Association establishes their museum

For a long time after the war, the Himeyuri survivors never shared their experiences. Finally after 40 years past since the end of the war, the survivors stood up to establish their own museum.

April 10, 1988  
A signature campaign for permission to show the inside of the cave next to the Himeyuri monument

### The Himeyuri Peace Museum begins

The Himeyuri survivors have told of their war experiences to museum visitors because they have felt a responsibility to pass on to future generations memories of the Battle of Okinawa to honor friends who lost their lives.

Kikuko Miyagi giving a talk to visitors in 1994



### Survivors participate in a field trip to war sites

The Himeyuri survivors conducted a bus tour to visit war sites where the Himeyuri Student Corps was sent during the Battle of Okinawa. They planned the project, invited participants and guided the tour themselves.

March 31, 1991  
Fumiko Higa, describing the situation as it was at the Yamashiro Headquarters cave

### Exhibition: Remembering the Student Corps

Ten years after the opening, the museum held an exhibition themed around both male and female members of the Okinawan Student Corps. During the exhibition's opening, those who had belonged to other student corps stood up to tell their stories.

June 24, 1999  
Eiki Ishikawa, former Iron Blood for the Emperor Student Corps member



Before the renovation:  
The first exhibit "Eve of the Battle of Okinawa"



After the renovation:  
The first exhibit "Youth of Himeyuri"

### Accessible exhibits for when the survivors can no longer tell their story

Himeyuri survivors aim to build a museum accessible to younger generations for the day when they cannot give personal accounts of their experiences.

April 13, 2004  
Reopening the museum

### Telling the Himeyuri story with an animated feature film and picture book

It is difficult to find words to tell the Himeyuris' war experience to children, even for the survivors, therefore, various artists and staff members created an animated feature film and picture book—a project that was six years in the making.

The Himeyuri picture book was published in 2011  
The animated feature "Himeyuri" was produced in 2012



### The first Peace Lecture by museum members with no war experience

70 years after the war, staff members who worked with survivors took on the role of peace lectures. This was the start of a new lecture program.

June 13, 2017  
Akiko Nakada giving a lecture to students

### The baton is passed from the survivors to the next generations

Yosiko Shimabukuro, the 7th director and former Himeyuri student, retired and Choukei Futenma, who never experienced war, became the new director, ushering in a new era for the museum.

March 30, 2018



## Himeyuri Peace Research Center begins an exhibition project in Hawaii

Himeyuri Peace Research Center, which was established in 2017 as an auxiliary organization of the museum, began an exhibit project to bring the Himeyuri story to our American sister state, Hawaii. This exhibition will be held in 2021 as a part of an international cooperative action. As a first step, staff members from the Center visited Hawaii for the first time from August 29 to September 5. The purpose of this trip was to meet Hawaii representatives with connections to Himeyuri, for meetings and to participate in a lecture program.

After arriving in Honolulu, the delegation met with relatives of Harry Shinichi Gima, who had donated money to the Himeyuri Alumnae Association in order to buy the land where the Himeyuri monument was erected in 1954. On August 31 and September 1, the Okinawan Festival, the largest ethnic festival in Hawaii, was held at the Hawaii Convention Center. At the festival, we shared a small space with the Center for Okinawan Studies, which is an auxiliary organization of the University of Hawaii, to introduce the museum and our activities to Hawaii-born Uchinanchu. Additionally, we arranged to meet relatives of

Chiyoko Oyadomari at the genealogy section of the festival. Oyadomari sensei, who had lived in Hawaii until the age of ten, was one of 18 Himeyuri teachers who accompanied students to the battleground. We also visited Castle High School to learn about a Himeyuri themed student play performed at the school in 2009. Ms. Meyer, the teacher who directed the play, told us that the play was a tremendous achievement in Hawaii.

At the University of Hawaii'i at Manoa, with the support of the Center for Okinawan Studies and the Hamilton Library, we had an opportunity to hold a small event in the library, which included our peace lecture and testimonial video of a Himeyuri survivor. An explanation of why we want to build relationships and bring a Himeyuri exhibition to Hawaii was added after the lecture. Thanks to all the people who supported this trip, the team accomplished great things on this visit.

\*This project is supported by Okinawa Prefecture and the Okinawa Art and Culture Society



Himeyuri's mini exhibition at the Hamilton Library



The Himeyuri Peace Lecture conducted by Director Futenma



At the Okinawan Festival with Professor Ishida (Center for Okinawan Studies, University of Hawaii)



Chairman Nakahodo with Professor Kina (University of the Ryukyus) interpreting at the talk session

## ICOM conference attendees visit the museum

On September 8, 24 attendees of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) conference, which was held in Kyoto, took an excursion to Himeyuri Peace Museum. After Choukei Futenma, the director and curator, gave a short explanation about the Himeyuri Student Corps and the museum, attendees spent time viewing the exhibits. Erik Somers from Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies in the Netherlands was in attendance and met with us for the first time since the INMP conference in 2017. Additionally, we met Teresien da Silva from the Anne Frank House and reminisced about our visit to the House. We also showed our special exhibit to the attendees. In this exhibit, Dr. Somers's and Anne Frank House's pictures are featured on panels. Everyone seemed to enjoy the panels and our accompanying story. Some expressed interest in the Himeyuri renovation project.



Participants listen to the director's message



At special exhibition room dedicated to peace museums

## The first movie competition was held

As a new approach to peace education, the Himeyuri Peace Research Center started a film contest in 2018. The goal of the contest is to answer the question that what we can do to pass the war memory on to the future generations since more than 70 years have passed and the number of survivors has been gradually decreasing. For the first contest, themed "Himeyuri Student Corps," freestyle films were collected from the public. Although, unfortunately, none of the entries won the Himeyuri Peace Prize, members of the selection committee watched every film with interest and gained much insight regarding messages for peace from young generations.

We hope this contest will provide an opportunity for everyone to ponder, learn and speak out through filmmaking—a medium which remains one of the most essential tools for the transmission of information today.

The contest will be held in 2019 as well. The 2018 results and comments from the selection committee can be found here:

[http://www.himeyuri.or.jp/JP/etc/01\\_movie\\_contest.pdf](http://www.himeyuri.or.jp/JP/etc/01_movie_contest.pdf)



"Hitchhike to Peace" won the special prize



Selection Committee members

Also, you can view the film won the special prize here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QGMsD3R2toY&feature=youtu.be> .

## The 2019 Commemoration Ceremony

The June 23, 2019 Commemoration Ceremony was a solemn event. This year, about 400 people were in attendance, including family members of the deceased, Himeyuri Alumnae and other supporters of the museum. Generational changes of attendees were clearly visible from the younger generations in attendance. As the museum is in its 30th anniversary year, there was much interest and attention from the media. As they did last year, chorus members from Itoman High School performed a “Requiem Concert” before the ceremony, and the venue filled with their song.

This year, museum staff members conducted the bulk of the ceremony, taking on such roles as MC and opening and ending speeches in place of former Himeyuri students who had done so in previous years. The museum staff will faithfully conduct the ceremony from now on.



Former Himeyuri students and staff welcome guests



Attendees offering incense to the deceased

## Support for the Junior Study Tour Program

On August 1, as one part of Okinawa Prefectural Youth Program: Uchina Junior Study, consisting of 16 children of Okinawan immigrants from America, Canada, Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina, New Caledonia and Australia, as well as 17 students from Okinawa, visited the museum. After viewing the exhibits with curator, Noriko Koga, they were able to ask questions, watched the animated feature “Himeyuri” and participated in a group workshop. Through the workshop, they learned about the Battle of Okinawa and took an opportunity to understand different values and think about what is needed to make a more peaceful world.



Participants joining in a workshop

## Himeyuri Fieldwork for Parents and Children

On July 27 and August 10, the museum held a summer program, “Himeyuri Fieldwork for Parents and Children,” for the second time. This year, seventeen children and parents from Okinawa and other prefectures participated.

The participants walked to the Ihara First Surgical Cave from the museum, got a firsthand view of the caves and learned about the tragic events that occurred there during the war. A curator described how many people had hid in the cave when a bomb hit and how they all had to flee as the US army closed in. Participants were able to touch an actual shell fragment from that time to feel its weight and jagged edges and perhaps get a glimpse of the terror of the shelling.



Guiding the Ihara First Surgical Cave

## Skills training for Okinawa interpreter-guides

On October 26, the museum once again gave a lecture on how to lead tours of the Himeyuri monument and museum as a part of the Okinawa interpreter-guides’ training course. This time, participants included 19 Chinese interpreters. As they did in the previous training, participants watched a documentary video of Himeyuri survivors and took part in a tour guided by curators inside and outside the museum.

In response to a museum staffer’s question regarding the level of interest held by Chinese tourists about the Battle of Okinawa or peace education, a participant answered that “without political perspectives, visitors would benefit from learning about the harsh reality of the war as see from the civilians’ point of view. There are many schools in Hong Kong that would see trips to Okinawa, not as peace education, but life education. The history of Battle of Okinawa is a significant lesson about the importance of life.” On the questionnaire, they left comments like “the survivor’s message ‘there is no war for peace’ was profound” and, “please add Chinese text to the exhibits and a Chinese audio translator.” We will refer to these valuable suggestions to the museum.



Guide-tour by a curator



Participants listening to a curator’s presentation

## A look back at April 2018-March 2019 from a statistical viewpoint

### The number of visitors

- The total visitor count was 530,087 (25,459 fewer than the last year). The monthly average was 44,174 and 1,414 daily (excluding June 23, Commemoration Day, and a temporary closure day due to a typhoon). Foreign visitors numbered 6,480 (587 more than the last year).
- The total number of visitors since the opening was 22,724,247 people.

### Number of monthly visitors

- The greatest numbers were reached from October to December, when many school trips visited Okinawa. The total number for those three months was 220,339, or about 42 percent of this year’s total.
- The lowest numbers were from July to September, with 73,802 visiting over those three months, or about 14 percent of this year’s total.



## Notice: Museum admission fees will be changed

Thank you very much for your support and patronage. Due to an increase in consumption tax in October and expenses incurred during the museum's renovation, the admission fees will be modified as listed below. We sincerely appreciate your understanding and continued support.

		Before	After
Individual	Adults	¥310	<b>¥450</b>
	High school students	¥210	<b>¥250</b>
	Middle and elementary school students	¥110	<b>¥150</b>
Group *20 or more	Adults	¥280	<b>¥400</b>
	High school students	¥190	<b>¥200</b>
	Middle and elementary school students	¥100	<b>¥110</b>

\*The museum will be closed **from July 10 to 21 in 2020** due to renovations

## Museum information

### Himeyuri Peace Museum

671-1 Ihara Itoman City, Okinawa 901-0344

Phone: +81-98-997-2100 (098-997-2100 within Japan)

Fax: +81-98-997-2102 (098-997-2102 within Japan)

URL: <http://www.himeyuri.or.jp/>

Email: [himeyuri1@himeyuri.or.jp](mailto:himeyuri1@himeyuri.or.jp)

### Hours

Open daily  
from **9 am to 5:25 pm** (last admission at **5 pm**)

### Admission Fees

Adults | ¥310

High School Students | ¥210

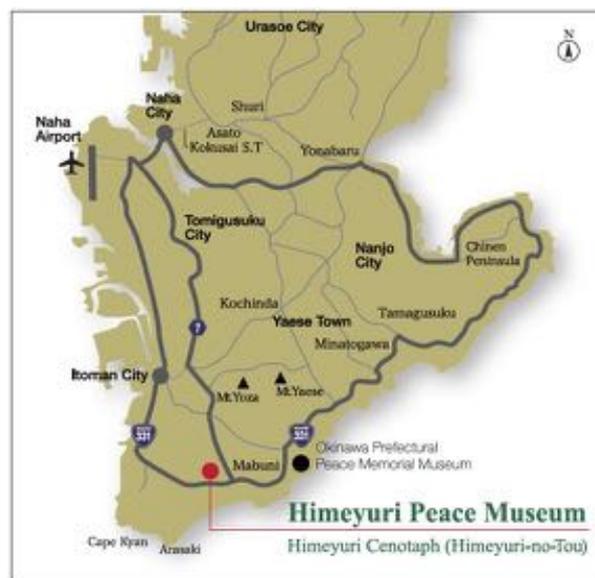
Elementary and Junior High School Students | ¥110

<10% discount is available for groups of 20 or more>

Himeyuri's promotional video is now available on YouTube



Scan QR to view



### Directions

[From the Naha City Bus Terminal]

Take the #89 or #34 bound for Itoman (approximately 30 minutes). Transfer at the Itoman City Bus Terminal to the #82, #107, or #108 and get off at the "Himeyuri-no-Tou Mae" stop (approximately 15 minutes).

[By car]

Approximately 40 minutes by car

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