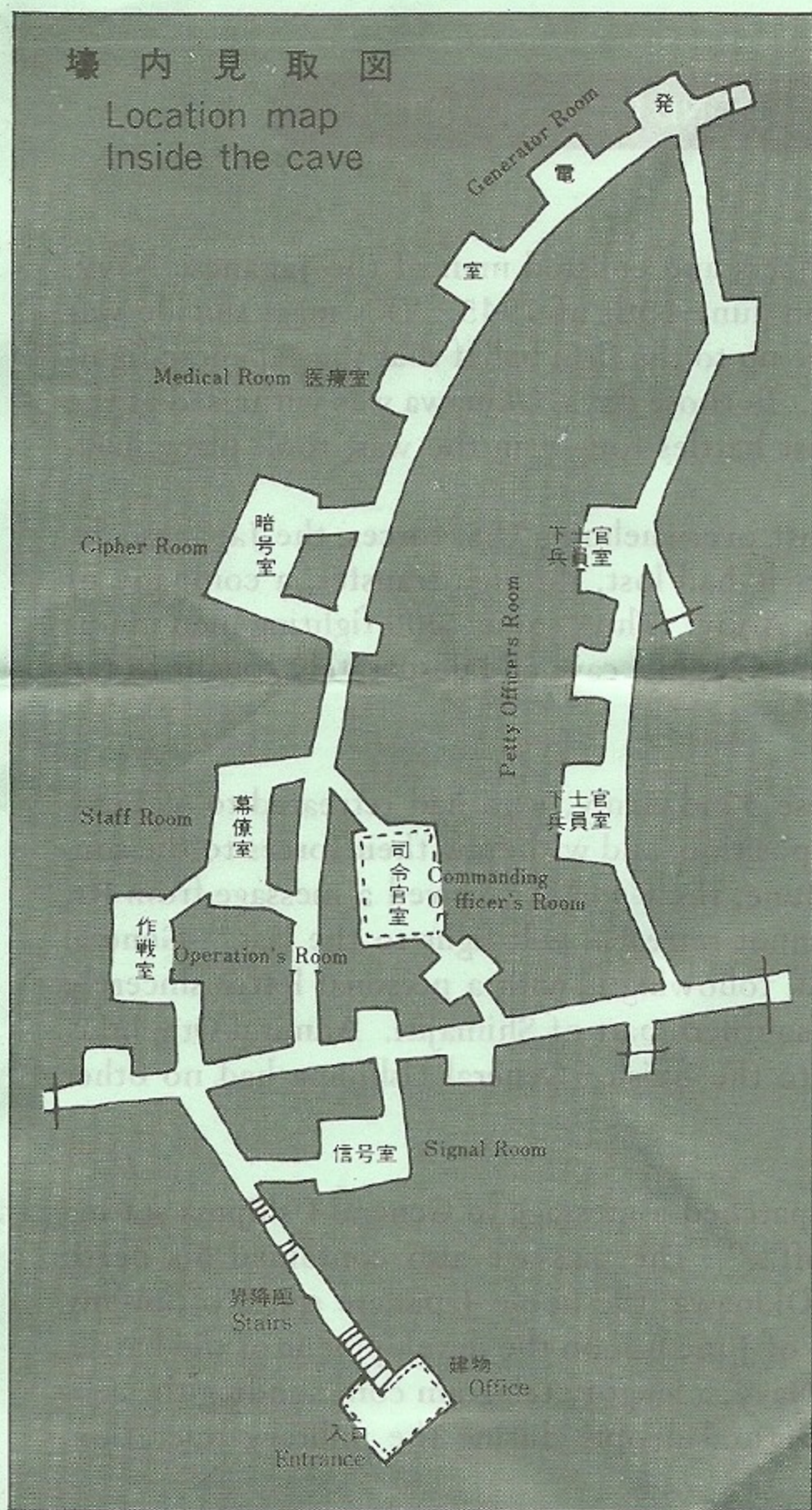


壕内見取図

Location map
Inside the cave

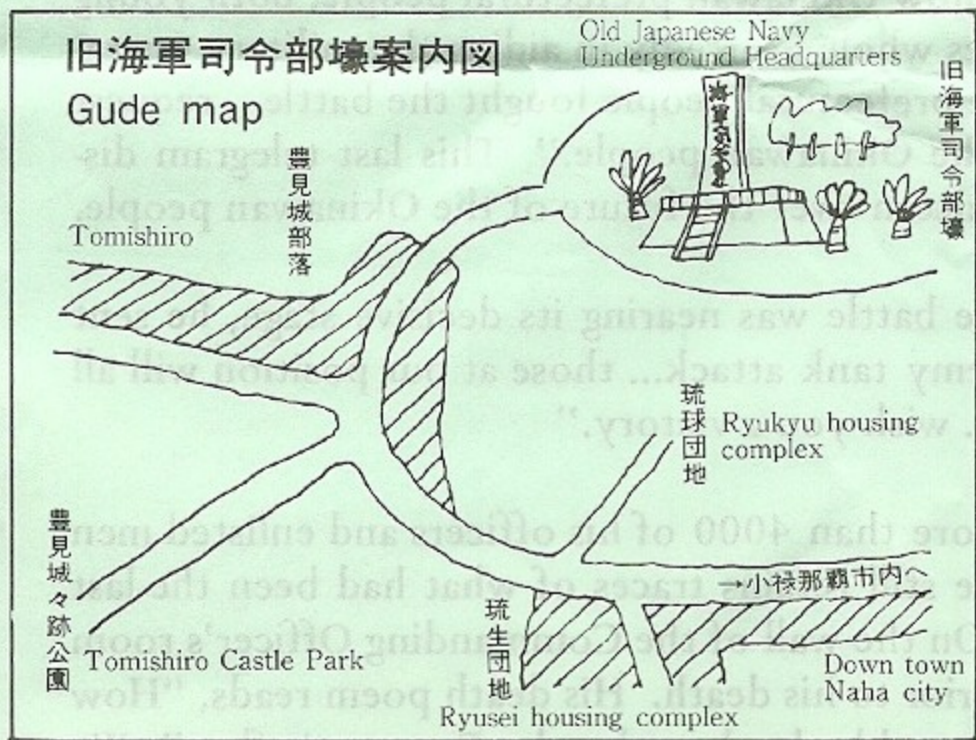


旧海軍司令部壕案内図

Gude map

Old Japanese Navy
Underground Headquarters

旧海軍司令部壕



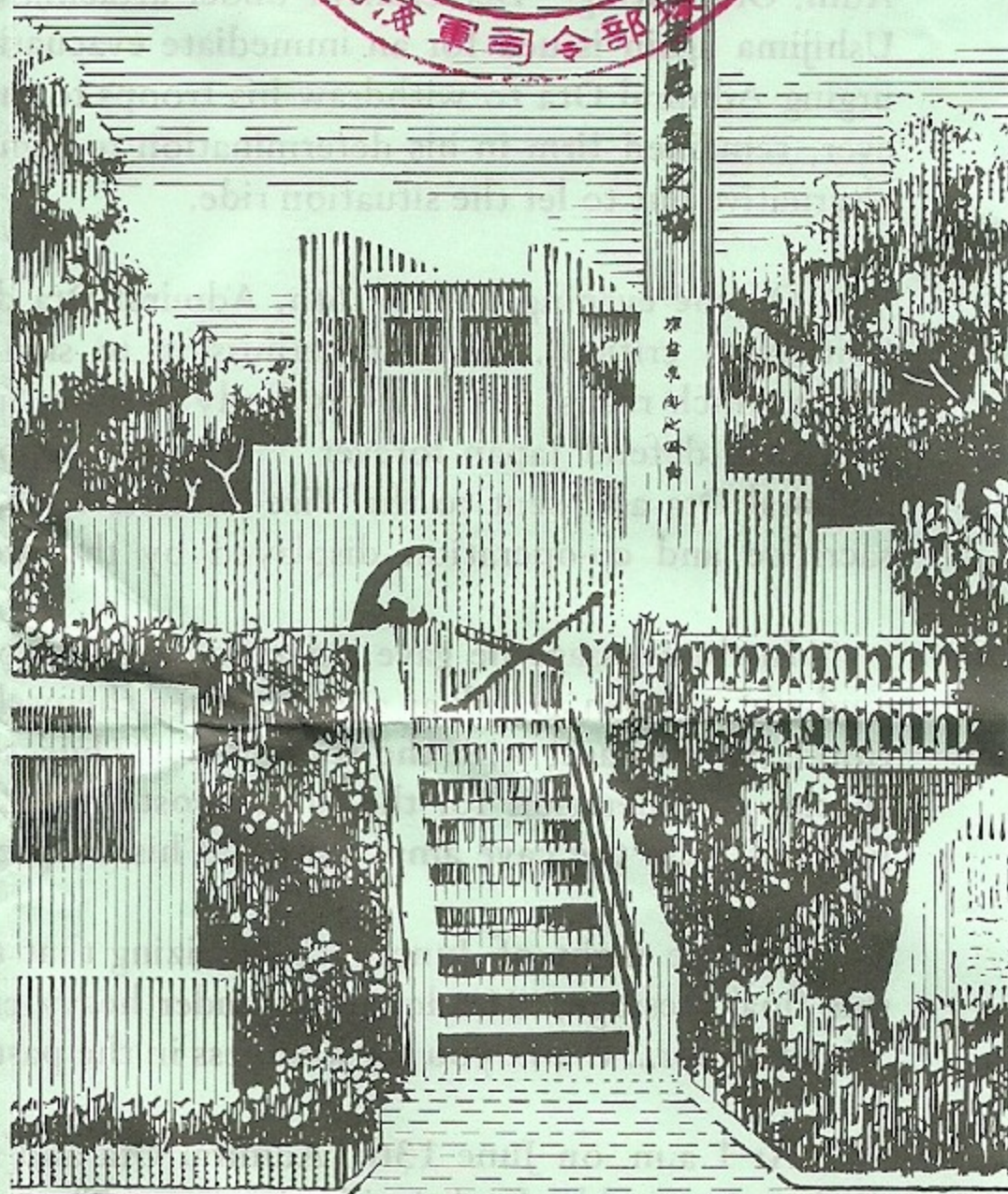
●Tourist Bus Service (Commercial bus)

●To the Old Southern Battlefields

Tourist office → Old Japanese Navy Underground Headquarters →
Itoman city → Himeyurino-to → Konpakuno-to → Kenjino-to →
Mabuni Hill → Gushichan → Gyokusendo Cave → Naha city
(about 4 1/2 hrs)



Old Japanese Navy
Underground Headquarters



Old Japanese Navy
Underground Headquarters

236 Aza Tomishiro, Tomishiro-son, Okinawa Prefecture, Japan
Tel: 0988-50-4055

Okinawa Tourism
Development Corporation

1 Asahimachi, Naha City
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OLD JAPANESE NAVY UNDERGROUND HEADQUARTERS

This is a spot where approximately 4000 officers and enlisted men of the Japanese Navy, led by Rr. Adm. Minoru Ota committed suicide, on June 13th of 1945. This mass suicide was committed in an underground cave, to faithfully live up to the firm belief that the Japanese fighting man would prefer death to dishonor by capture. In those days, Okinawa was witnessed as the last battlefield of World War II, one of the fiercest battles fought in the war, took place here.

In more than 80 days of savage struggle against overwhelming U.S. forces, the Japanese detachment had suffered severe losses. Even worse, it had lost, through transfer, a company of 2500 men strong to the command of the Japanese Army. Thus, some 4000 fighting men minus sufficient arms to defend themselves, sheltered themselves in a cave and desperately fought to the finish, some using handmade spears.

Commanding General Ushijima of the Japanese 32nd Army, who had retreated to Mabuni, ordered the detachment to evacuate their present position, and withdraw their forces to the southern part of Shimajiri. However, on the 5th of June, the General received a message from Rr. Adm. Ota stating, "Detachment under attack... cannot retreat... will fight to the last." General Ushijima again issued for an immediate evacuation, following it with a personal letter sincerely urging Admiral Ota to withdraw his troops to the southern part of Shimajiri. Admiral Ota, however, remained firm in his determination to fight to the finish. General Ushijima had no other alternative but to let the situation ride.

On the evening of June 6th, Admiral Ota dispatched a message to General Ushijima stating "Situation critical... request permission to sign off..." The message also contained his death poem which reads, "Even if my body perishes in Okinawa, the noble Japanese spirit within my soul shall defend Japan forever." With this report of June 6th on the development of the battle, Admiral Ota also sent to the Vice-Minister of the Navy, a lengthy telegram commending the self-sacrifice and co-operation displayed by the prefectural people during the military operation.

In the message he gave a detailed account of how Okinawan prefectural people, both young and old, women as well as men, devoted themselves whole-heartedly in aiding the military operation. His message, with the statement, "Thus, the prefectural people fought the battle... request special consideration for the future posterity of the Okinawan people." This last telegram dispatched from the cave amply showed his deep concern over the future of the Okinawan people.

On the night of June 11th, realizing that the battle was nearing its decisive stage, he sent this final message, "Headquarters under heavy enemy tank attack... those at our position will all die in honor... thank you for kindness in the past... wish you a victory."

At 1 a.m. on June 13th, Admiral Ota and more than 4000 of his officers and enlisted men died an honorable death inside the cave. The cave still retains traces of what had been the last Japanese fort, constructed with hoes and picks. On the wall of the Commanding Officer's room you can see a poem written by Admiral Ota just prior to his death. His death poem reads, "How could we rejoice over our birth but to die an honorable death under the Emperor's flag." We earnestly urge you to kindly express your sympathy for those Japanese comrades who died heroically for their homeland, and also to pray for a just and lasting peace for a world that will see no such further tragedy.