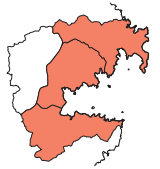


The Self-Defense Forces Are Our Heroes

Our Thanks for the Courage to Live



▲ Self-Defense Forces Northern Army personnel gave a Japanese drum performance at Minamisanriku Recovery Market, which came to be held on the last Sunday of every month. With their withdrawal from Minamisanriku approaching, they put on a powerful performance.

Self-Defense Forces personnel conducted a wide range of activities throughout Minamisanriku until August 2011. They interacted with the local community in many ways, both at evacuation centers, when events were held, and also during times of water supply, emergency food distribution, or bathing. Personnel from Okinawa taught children in Minamisanriku how to play an Okinawan instrument called the sanshin and played with the children during free time in between operations. They also worked carefully to salvage a large number of photographs and mementos from the debris.



▲ Banners expressing gratitude to the Self-Defense Forces were put up all over town.

We were all able to express words of gratitude to the personnel for their painstaking work in such an intense situation. Also, although we also wanted to express our feelings by offering them something material, it was impossible, which was distressing for all the people of Minamisanriku.

The wholehearted devotion with which the Self-Defense Forces personnel worked on their operations motivated us greatly to also persevere—to not give up. The Self-Defense Forces became our heroes.

Photo courtesy of Ground Self-Defense Forces Northern Army