

Military role in Okinawa suicides approved

by UPI

TOKYO -- Japanese textbook publishers may use "forced" in describing the military's role in mass civilian suicides during the 1945 Battle of Okinawa if it is explained. The approval of the request from six publishers was issued Wednesday by a textbook authorization council, Kyodo news service reported. The report said the council did not alter its opinion that saying the suicides were "forced by the military" could create misunderstanding. But it also noted "from the perspective of residents, it can also be considered that they were driven into suicides." The textbooks should, however, carry background while using the "forced" reference, the report said. The controversy began in March after the education ministry announced the textbook council may delete references that the military had "forced" the mass suicides. That was based on a finding there was no evidence the suicides resulted from the military's direct orders. "I can't give it full marks, but I see that the ministry did extend acceptable consideration to this issue," Okinawa Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima said responding to the latest ruling, Kyodo said. A textbook reform group said the ministry had succumbed to political pressures, "leaving a serious blot that affects the foundation of the screening system."

Copyright © 2007, by United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

Military role in Okinawa suicides approved by UPI