

RYUKYU ISLANDS CIVILIAN LICENSE PLATES  
ISSUED UNDER U.S. ADMINISTRATION  
1945-72



會主 島袋盛春氏

昭和自動車商会



日乃出自動車商会

1935 OKINAWA

THE FIRST POST-WAR CIVILIAN PLATE DESIGN APPEARS TO BE SIMILAR  
TO THE JAPANESE STYLE THAT WAS USED PRE-WAR.

## **EARLY POST-WAR DATA 1945 TO 1950**

**HEADQUARTERS RYUKYUS COMMAND  
MILITARY GOVERNMENT  
APO 331**

24 March 1947

**MG DIRECTIVE  
NUMBER 11**

**SUBJECT: Motor Transportation, Operations and Maintenance**

**TO: Chiji of Okinawa Gunto**

1. With the establishment of a Central Okinawa Administration, the responsibility for the proper functioning of Motor Transportation has been placed on your office. The Okinawan Director of Public Works, under whose jurisdiction Motor Transportation has been placed, is responsible directly to you and his subordinate forces in Transportation have direct responsibility to him.

2. All vehicles of American or Japanese manufacture in the hands of Okinawans are property of the United States Government. Vehicles issued to the Civilian Administration are for public use in the rehabilitation of this island. Vehicles in the hands of individuals (Civilian Administration Officials or otherwise) are unauthorized. It is directed that you through your agencies, seize and deliver all vehicles in the hands of Okinawan individuals to the Director of Motor Transportation, Military Government.

**IT WOULD APPEAR THAT BETWEEN THE END OF THE WAR AND 24 MARCH 1947 THERE WAS LITTLE OR NO CONTROL ON ANY PRIVATE VEHICLES STILL OPERATING ON OKINAWA. THERE WERE PROBABLY VERY FEW SURVIVING CIVILIAN VEHICLES AND VIRTUALLY NO GAS TO OPERATE THEM SINCE IT WAS ALL CONTROLLED BY THE U.S. MILITARY AT THAT TIME.**

**IF THEY HAD ANY LICENSE PLATES THEY WERE PROBABLY PRE-WAR OR WAR TIME JAPANESE PLATES.**

**EFFECTIVE 1 APRIL 1947 ALL PRIVATE VEHICLES ON OKINAWA WERE CONFISCATED AND TURNED OVER TO THE AMERICAN MILITARY GOVERNMENT FOR MILITARY/CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT USE ONLY AND CONTROLLED THROUGH MOTOR POOLS.**

ON 17 NOVEMBER 1950 MG DIRECTIVE NUMBER 11 WAS RESCINDED.

THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF OKINAWA WAS TURNED OVER TO  
USCAR (UNITED STATES CIVIL ADMINISTRATION OF THE RYUKYUS)

HEADQUARTERS, MILITARY GOVERNMENT  
OF THE RYUKYU ISLANDS  
APO 331

17 November 1950

MG DIRECTIVE  
NUMBER 16

SUBJECT: Rescission of MG Directive

TO: The Chiji of Okinawa Gunto

✓ MG Directive Number 11, subject: "Motor Transportation, Operation and Maintenance", dated 24 March 1947, is rescinded.

BY DIRECTION OF THE MILITARY GOVERNOR:

DISTRIBUTION:  
B & C

JOHN H. HINDS  
Brigadier General, U. S. Army  
Deputy Military Governor

**RYUKYU ISLANDS PLATE #1  
1950-1953**

**THE MAN IN THE BACK SEAT ON THE LEFT IS SHUHEI HIGA, WHO WAS APPOINTED FIRST CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE RYUKYU ISLANDS IN 1952. THE PLATE DESIGN WAS USED BETWEEN ABOUT 1950 AND 1953. THE PHOTO ITSELF WAS TAKEN AT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE RYUKYU ISLANDS EXECUTIVE BUILDING WHICH WAS OPENED ON 1 APRIL 1953. THE #1 PLATE WAS PROBABLY ISSUED TO THE CAR USED BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE HIGA. FROM THE 1950 TO 52 PERIOD THERE WAS AN OKINAWAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE WHICH WAS THE DE FACTO CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT AT THAT TIME PERIOD. WHO MAY HAVE HAD THE #1 PLATE IN THE 50-52 PERIOD IS UNKNOWN. THE RYUKYU ISLANDS PLATE DESIGN CHANGED IN 1954, IT IS ASSUMED THAT THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE GOT A NEW DESIGN PLATE FOR HIS CAR. THE BEST GUESS AS TO TIME FRAME FOR THE PHOTO IS AFTER 1 APRIL 1953 AND SOMETIME BEFORE THE NEW PLATE DESIGN CAME OUT IN 1954.**







**DATE OF PHOTO IS IN QUESTION**

**"BUSINESS DELIVERY"**

**NOTE THAT PLATE NUMBER IS ALSO PAINTED ON THE TRUCK**

**BELIEVED TO BE A MILITARY TRUCK LOANED BY THE U.S. MILITARY GOVERNMENT  
TO THE OKINAWAN CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATION.**

**BETWEEN 1950 AND 1953 IT APPEARS THAT PLATES WERE ISSUED IN THE PRE-WAR  
JAPANESE STYLE. NOTHING IS KNOWN AT THIS POINT AS TO WHERE THEY WERE  
MANUFACTURED AND WHO CONTROLLED THE ISSUING OF PLATES.**



1950



1952





1952



1953



468 昭和27年12月 那覇市  
【提供】高橋文生(福岡県)



1950-53



1950-53





1950-53





ISHIKAWA OKINAWA



1953

**THIS IS AN UNRECORDED PLATE THAT APPEARS IN 1954 DATED PHOTOGRAPHS  
THERE IS NOTHING ON THE PLATE TO INDICATE IT IS FROM THE RYUKYU ISLANDS.  
IT HAS A NUMERICAL CODE NUMBER WITH A DASH AND THEN FOUR NUMBERS.**



**PHOTO FROM A GROUP OF PHOTOS BY AN AMERICAN  
SERVICE MAN ON OKINAWA IN 1954-55**

ADDITIONAL PHOTO OF THE 1954 #-#### PLATE  
THIS PHOTO WAS PART OF A GROUP OF PHOTOS TAKEN AT ITOMAN ON 9-24-54



NOTE THAT BOTH TRUCKS HAVE THE 1-#### PLATE

**PHOTOS OF THE 1954 #-#### PLATE ON VEHICLES**

**FROM A GROUP OF KNOWN 1954 PHOTOS**



**2-#### ON BUS**



**3-#### ON CAR**





PHOTOS OF THE 1954 ##### PLATE ON VEHICLES

BOTH THE 1954 MILITARY PLATE AND THE 1954 CIVILIAN PLATE ARE SHOWN  
PROVIDING ADDITIONAL CONFIRMATION THAT THE ##### PLATES ARE FROM 1954.



ERNEST GORDON "BLACKIE" BRADFORD PHOTOGRAPHS

## LAND TRANSPORTATION

The Highway Transportation Law and the Vehicle Transportation Law became effective on 17 December 1954. Subject laws provide regulations for registration and mechanical safety inspections (by authorized service stations) for all motor vehicles licensed by the Government of the Ryukyu Islands. Official inspection windshield stickers have been received from Japan and will be issued by stations performing the vehicle inspections. In conjunction with the passage of these laws, the system of vehicle registration in use by the Government of the Ryukyu Islands has been revised for more efficiency in the registration of vehicles and the issuing of license plates. New license plates to be issued by the Government of the Ryukyu Islands are being manufactured locally of aluminum material and have black numbers on a white background. The use of Government of the Ryukyu Islands centralized facilities for the registration of motor vehicle was offered to the Ryukyus Command, Fort Buckner, for the registration of all U. S. Forces privately-owned vehicles on Okinawa, as a means of reducing costs to the U.S. Government.

### 1954 USCAR REPORT

17 DEC 1954 PLATE DESIGN CHANGE  
JUST PRIOR TO THE ISSUE OF 1955 RYUKYU ISLANDS PLATES



## 1955 TO 1959 PLATE DESIGN



1955



1955 - 1959,  
Commercial Vehicle

1958



Mr. Masakazu Sesoko, Manager of the Okinawa Farmer's Exchange, presents orphanage with fresh vegetables.



THE PC CODE IS UNKNOWN AT THIS TIME



1959

### **RYUKYU ISLANDS PLATE CODES**

**NUMBER USAGE STARTED IN 1960**

**NUMBER AND LETTER STARTED ABOUT 1965, BUT THE EXACT DATES FOR PLATE DESIGN CHANGES ARE NOT KNOWN.**

- |                          |                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>1 Truck</b>           | <b>A ?</b>          |
| <b>2 Bus</b>             | <b>B Private</b>    |
| <b>3 Car</b>             | <b>C Commercial</b> |
| <b>4 Small Truck</b>     | <b>F Foreign</b>    |
| <b>5 Small Car</b>       | <b>G ?</b>          |
| <b>6 3 Wheel Truck</b>   |                     |
| <b>7 3 Wheel Car</b>     |                     |
| <b>8 Special Use</b>     |                     |
| <b>9 Heavy Equipment</b> |                     |

**THE SAME NUMBER CODE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN USED FOR ONE YEAR IN 1954, SEE THE PREVIOUS SECTION ON 1954 PLATES.**



## FOXPLATES DATA



1960-67



アメリカ製が主流だったタクシー業界だが、1955年のメーター制の導入とともに日本製小型車が増加するようになった。1960年9月  
Taxis were mostly US model vehicles but more smaller Japanese models appeared after meters were installed in 1955. (Sept 1960)

## MURIBUSHI MAGAZINE DATA

1954-62

1960



DC 1964-65



DC 1964-65



**DC 1964-65**



**RYUKYU POLICE CAR 1964  
# 8 SPECIAL USE PLATE**

**FOXPLATES DATA**



**1968-72**

**MURIBUSHI MAGAZINE DATA**



**1963-65**



**#4B - PRIVATE TRUCK  
DC 1966-67**



**#9G HEAVY EQUIPMENT  
DC 1966-67**





#5A - TAXI  
1963-64



甲子園ベスト4入りした興南高校の那覇市内凱旋パレード。1968年8月31日  
A victory parade to celebrate the Konan team's placement in the top 4. Aug 31, 1968

#3B - PRIVATE CAR  
1968

## FOXPLATES DATA



1968-72



1968-72



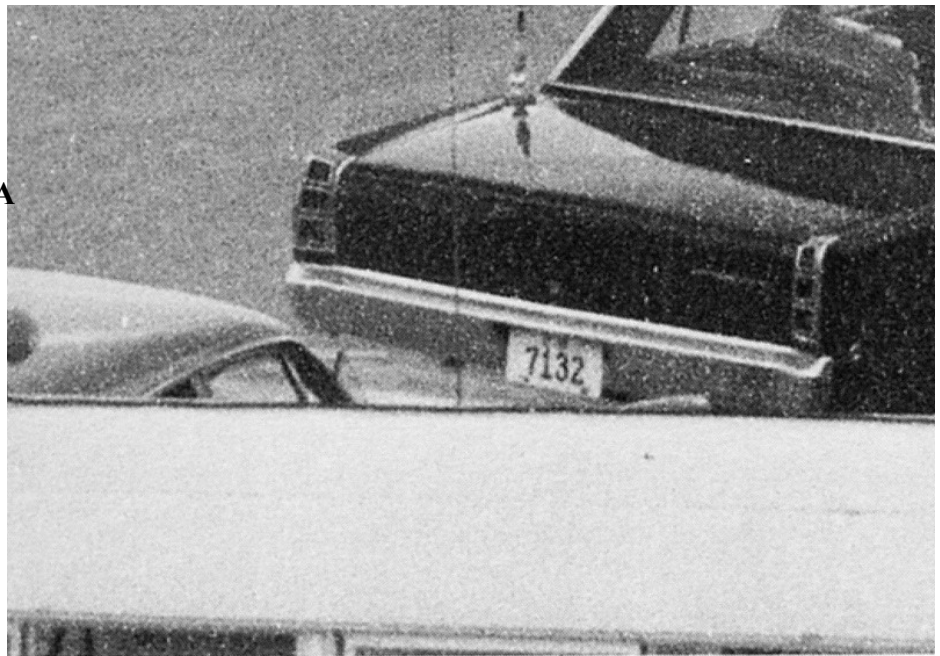
コザ市 (現・沖縄市) の商店街では、親善ショッピングデーと銘打ち、米軍人・軍属を対象にした客寄せキャンペーンを展開していた。1969年  
Koza's 1969 campaign to attract US military shoppers. It called itself the "Friendly Shopping City".

1969

## MURIBUSHI MAGAZINE DATA



1966-72



兵器の移送 毒ガス撤去闘争にともない、米軍は沖縄  
冬張の中で55日間におよんだ。致死性ガスの移送だけに  
形となった＝1971年

1971



**VARIOUS SOURCES OF RYUKYU ISLANDS LICENSE PLATE  
DATES OF USE BETWEEN 1955 AND 1972 INDICATE THAT THE  
EXACT DESIGN CHANGE DATES ARE UNKNOWN**



1955 - 1959, Priv. Vehicle



1955 - 1959, Commerical Vehicle



1955 - 1959, Priv. Vehicle



1960 - 1967, Private Vehicle



1960 - 1967, Private Vehicle



1960 - 1967, Business Vehicle

[www.worldlicenseplates.com](http://www.worldlicenseplates.com)

8/2013

**WORLD LICENSE PLATES. COM PUBLISHED DATES**



1954-62



1963-65



1966-72

**MURIBUSHI MAGAZINE SEPT/OCT 2011  
PUBLISHED DATES**

## JAMES FOX PLATE DATES



1955-59



1960-67



1968-72



1968-72



1968-72

**NO PUBLISHED DATA AVAILABLE ON RYUKYU ISLANDS LICENSE PLATES  
USED BETWEEN 1950 AND 1954.**



**NO PUBLISHED INFORMATION ON THE 1950-1953 PLATES**



**NO PUBLISHED INFORMATION ON THE 1954 PLATE**

**DC PREFIX DATES ARE PHOTOS I TOOK ON OKINAWA WITH  
APPROXIMATE DATES. I WAS ON OKINAWA FROM 1963 TO 1967.**