

Gokoku Shrine

Miyazaki Gokoku Shrine is one of 52 Shinto shrines across Japan that enshrine the souls of soldiers and other military personnel killed in wars since the Meiji Restoration of 1868. The first such shrine was Tokyo Shokonsha (present-day Yasukuni Shrine), which was established in 1869 to honor those who fell in the service of the emperor during the civil war that brought about the Meiji Restoration. An imperial order set up similar shrines throughout the country soon after. The movement to build a shrine to the war dead in Miyazaki was delayed until the early 1940s, because of a lack of consensus locally that stemmed from the fact that Miyazaki Prefecture had been created by combining a number of feudal domains ruled by different samurai lords. Construction of the shrine began as a result of the rising death toll during World War II. Construction had barely begun in August 1945, when the war ended with the surrender of Japan. The subsequent occupation by the Allied powers meant that construction stopped, and Miyazaki Gokoku Shrine was finally finished in 1955, following the end of occupation in 1952. The shrine now honors the souls of more than 40,000 individuals born in Miyazaki. Some of their belongings and other items donated by the families of the deceased are displayed in a small museum on the shrine grounds.