

World War II Artifacts

The Government of Japan recognizes that the original owners (or their family) would greatly appreciate the return of articles lost during World War II. That is why we are promoting the return of those artifacts. To facilitate the return of these artifacts the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of the Government of Japan will attempt to locate the original bearer of a WWII artifact or surviving kin of the original bearer provided the party requesting the investigation agrees to tender the item to the Embassy of Japan without demand for compensation, if and when the search is successfully completed. Please be aware that the online auction or sale of WWII artifacts (especially on articles on which the names of the war dead are clearly visible) would deeply offend the feelings of the war bereaved. The Government of Japan would greatly appreciate your cooperation in refraining from the sale or purchase of such articles.

The procedure for the return of such artifacts is as follows. As stated in 3.below, please do not send the item to Embassy or Consulate General before the investigation is completed:

1. Email, mail, or fax the completed REQUEST FORM to Consular Office of Japan in Portland along with photos or photocopies of the artifact. Any identifying markings should be enlarged and clearly legible. Complete details, including how and where the item was recovered, are crucial to the success of the investigation and should therefore be described in full on the REQUEST FORM. In the absence of inscriptions indicating the name and address of the original bearer of the artifact or aforementioned details, reaching a conclusive outcome will be highly unlikely. Please be advised that all photos and photocopies of the artifact(s) cannot be returned.

Email:

ryojiportland@se.mofa.go.jp

Mailing Address:

ATTENTION: WWII Artifacts

Wells Fargo Center, Suite 2700, 1300 SW 5th Avenue, Portland, OR 97201

FAX:

503-224-8934

2. The materials will be forwarded to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare for investigation. Investigation typically take several months, but in some cases may take a year or more to complete.
3. You will be notified as soon as the investigation is conclusive. You will then be asked to send or bring the artifact(s) to Consular Office of Japan in Portland. Consular Office of Japan in Portland will only receive the actual items at this stage of the process and only if

the item has been traced back to its origin. Due to rigid legal codes, military swords must be sent directly from the individual requesting the investigation to the original bearer of the artifact or their surviving kin.

4. Consular Office of Japan in Portland can only accept requests from individuals residing within its jurisdiction, which includes Oregon and Southern Idaho. Those residing in other areas are asked to contact their regional Consulate office (<http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/jicc/consulate-guide.html>)

Should you have any further questions, please contact Consular Office of Japan in Portland by phone or email.

Phone:

503-221-1811 (Ext 319)

Email:

ryojiportland@se.mofa.go.jp

Request for Investigation of Lost Articles: PDF

Request for Investigation of Lost Articles

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is responsible for investigating the identity of the original owner of artifacts left behind by former members of the Japanese armed forces. If a person identified as the original owner of the item matches records held by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, we will contact the original owner (or their family members) and ask if they remember the item and would like the article returned. If the original owner (or their family) would like the article returned, we will contact the party currently in possession of the article and continue the process of returning the article to Japan.

We would like to add that our services are available only for inquiries requested by third parties with good intentions, not involving any reward, monetary or otherwise. In the event that an article has been sent to this office, but no original owner can be identified, we will return the artifact to the sender.

Parties requesting the repatriation of an article must fill out and return the attached questionnaire, together with a photo of the article. Please be advised that the investigation may require a considerable amount of time to complete. We kindly ask for your patience and understanding in this manner.

※ If the original owner (or their family) is located, the requester will be asked to send the article(s) to Consular Office of Japan in Portland (if you reside in Oregon and Southern Idaho) so they can return the article(s) through the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

If you reside outside the DC, MD, or VA area, you will be asked to send the article(s) to your local Japanese Consulate instead.

We regret that the requester may not return the article(s) directly to the original owner, except in the conditions mentioned below.

According to the Firearms and Sword Control Law, the returning of a sword (katana, saber, etc.) must be authorized by the Board of Education and Public Safety Commission in the Prefecture where the original owner (or their family) resides. Filing for this authorization must be conducted

by the original owner. In these cases the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is not involved and therefore the requester must send the article back to the original owner directly.

1. Date of Request

Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

2. Name of person making request ("The Requester")

Full Name _____

Current Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Email _____

3. Lost Articles (include number of items)

Please note the Lost Article(s) below

4. The circumstances in which the article(s) was/were obtained

Person who obtained the article(s) (_____)

Relationship to yourself (_____)

Date it was obtained (_____) • unknown

Place it was obtained (_____) • unknown

How was it obtained Received from survivor

Obtained from person who died in war

I just found it

Unknown

Other (_____)

Please provide any further information that might be helpful in this investigation. Please include as many details as possible.

5. In case the original owner is found (please circle yes or no):
- a. Do you intend to return the article(s) without payment or compensation, if and when the original owner (or their family) decides to accept the articles?
 - i. Yes, I intend to do so.
 - ii. No, I do not intend to do so.
 - b. Do you intend to return the article(s) even if the original owner (or their family) does not wish to share their personal address with you (the requester)?
 - i. Yes, I intend to do so.
 - ii. No, I do not intend to do so.

✘If you answered – “No, I do not intend to do so” to question 5a or 5b, we regret that the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare will not be able to proceed with the investigation.

6. Do we have permission to give your address to other parties for the purpose of improving the process of investigation? (Please respond for each organization or group)
- a. Providing your address to relevant prefectural government offices:
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - b. Providing your address to the original owner (or their family):
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No

7. The person who is currently in possession of the lost article(s):

(Please list only if different than “The Requester”)

Full Name _____

Current Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Email _____

8. The person to contact with the results of the investigation:

(Please list only if different than “The Requester”)

Full Name _____

Current Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Email _____