

OBON 2015

Returning personal items to their families.
個人の遺留品をご遺族の元へ



EVERYONE HAS A FAMILY
誰でも一人一人に家族がいます

OBON 2015 - OBON 2020

As we enter this year, the 70th anniversary of peace between the people of Japan and the people of America, we see our efforts growing and becoming more understood.

We have been contemplating our next step which is intended to bring our service to more people in other countries. This month we are pleased to announce our upcoming plans.

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OBON 2015 Meets **OBON 2020**

When OBON 2015 began our efforts back in 2009 we needed a deadline to help focus our attention. The 70th Anniversary of the end of the war seemed perfect. Thus we became "OBON 2015". However, in these past years we've realized two important facts.

First: We realized the need to make this effort truly international. We are contacted by veterans in other countries and this made us aware of *Yosegaki Hinomaru* in Canada, England, Australia and New Zealand, to say nothing of those in India, Russia and the Philippines. This fact has caused us to expand our vision in order to reach everyone.

Second: While the Japanese see the 70th anniversary as a major timeline in history, the Euro-American culture is more aligned with recognizing the 75th anniversary. We like quarters.... 25th, 50th and 75th....we assign precious gifts to these....Silver, Gold and Diamond.

These two facts brought the year 2020 into clear focus for OBON 2015.



The year 2020 will be a very significant year for the people of Japan. Not only will this year mark the 75th anniversary since the beginning of peace, but it will also mark the return of the Olympics to Japan.



These Olympics have been moved forward more than two months from the earlier games. They are now scheduled to begin on July 24th and end on August 9th. The decision to hold the Olympics earlier seemed almost too perfect for our purposes. The 2020 Olympics will conclude precisely during OBON season.

These facts have caused OBON 2015 to expand our vision for another five years. In other words, we have just now begun our efforts.

(The 1964 Tokyo Olympics were held in October)

Thank you for your Support

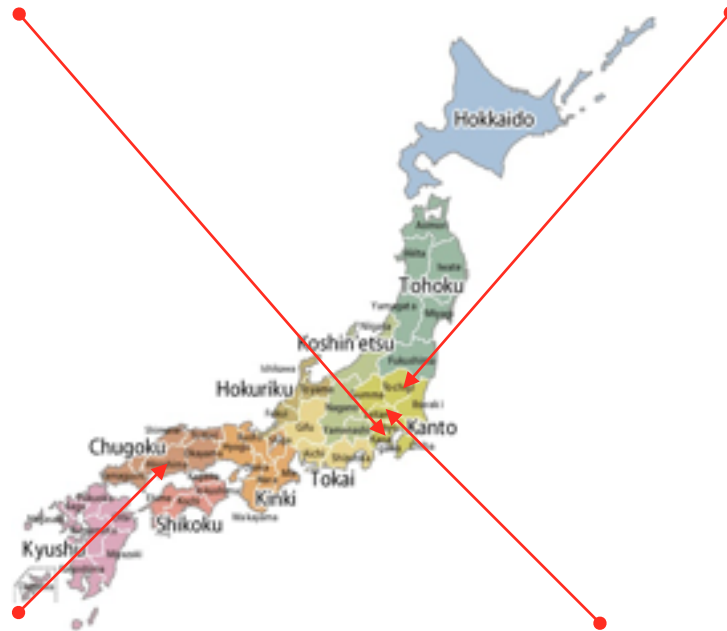
OBON 2015 is pleased to announce another five flags were returned during the month of January / February. Each flag is like a pebble tossed in a lake, with ripples spreading out in all directions.



Soldier's name: Mr. Renzo Eisha. Returned to his daughter in Tokyo prefecture.



Soldier's name: Mr. Yoshio Kanaya
Returned to his relatives in Japan.



Soldier's name: Mr. Yoshinori Tasaka. Returned to his older brother (93 years old) and relatives in Hiroshima prefecture.



Soldier's name: Mr. Michitaro Okada
Returned to his brother-in law in Saitama prefecture.

“TAIWAN”

OBON 2015 received a *Yosegaki Hinomaru* inscribed with writing that clearly wasn't Japanese. It was immediately recognized as being Taiwanese handwriting.

Taiwan had been a territory under Japanese control since 1895. During these several generations the Taiwanese had absorbed many traditions and customs from the Japanese, including the unique tradition of the *Yosegaki Hinomaru*. More than 200,000 Taiwanese young men served in the Japanese military and before leaving home their families and friends provided them with signed flags. (see photo below)

A cooperative search was carried out between Japanese and Taiwanese; within several months a grandson was found who wants this item returned to their family. **OBON 2015** is proud to restore this personal item to our friends in Taiwan.



Taiwanese soldiers with Yosegaki Hinomaru

This Yosegaki Hinomaru will return the soldier's grandson in the Tongluo Township

HEARTFELT

One of the most surprising discoveries OBON 2015 staff has made during the past five years is learning how many Americans are in possession of items they sincerely want returned to Japan. The items they have were brought to America during a very different era, and now the world has changed.

Many people tell OBON 2015 staff that if it were the other way around...if their husband or father or brother had been killed in some foreign land and their personal property taken away...there is no question that the family would very much appreciate having it returned to them.

And so, OBON 2015 receives many items from like-minded people who merely want to do what they believe is a decent, humane act of respect for our fellow man.



“For many years my mother and I struggled with finding the right thing to do with this flag. We know it should not be kept hidden or locked away somewhere because it was special. When someone mentioned an organization that was dedicated to returning these flags to the families, I knew in my heart that was what I should do. I hope and pray that this flags return serves as a source of comfort and appreciation for their loved ones service to their country. OBON 2015 is doing a truly remarkable job in their efforts and I am both humbled and honored to have taken part in this process.”

Mr. Robbie M.
Prairieville, LA

The Scholar's Corner

This beautiful Yosegaki Hinomaru contained the soldier's name and also it contained the name of a company. This additional detail is always helpful in advancing our search. In this case the company name is so well known that one has a wikipedia page and the other possesses its own web site.

Uruga Dock Company: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uruga_Dock_Company

Sumitomo Heavy Industries, Ltd.: <http://www.shi.co.jp/english/index.html>

Ship construction in this area began many centuries ago; the Uruga Dock Company was founded in 1869 and later merged with Sumitomo Heavy Industries, Ltd. in 2003.

Company records allowed us to identify the gentlemen below.

Soldier's name: Mr. Yoshio KANAYA



Mr. Shunosuke FUKUSHIMA
retired from the Sumitomo
Heavy Industries, Ltd.
on January 31st, 1959.

*OBON 2015 researchers
tracked down every name
and found details about
several who signed this flag.*

Mr. Takeshi YOSHIDA
retired from the Sumitomo
Heavy Industries, Ltd.
on September 30th, 1959.

Mr. Tomekichi TANI
retired from the Sumitomo
Heavy Industries, Ltd.
on April 30th, 1954.

Contact OBON 2015

OBON 2015 needs your support. Please.

OBON 2015 is an affiliate of Astoria Visual Arts,
a 501(C)3 non-profit organization.
Please send your tax-deductible contributions to:

AVA/OBON 2015
P.O. Box 282
Astoria, Oregon 97103

Your contributions will help us reach more families
and return more personal items.

If you have a flag, or know someone who does, please contact OBON 2015. We will gladly answer any questions and fully explain our process. It will give us great pleasure to research the flag in your possession and return it to its proper family.

OBON 2015
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