

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

Our Final Year

The most heart-warming part of this work is hearing how many Americans feel the desire to return personal items back to the Japanese. Practically everyday someone contacts OBON 2015 who has a *Yosegaki Hinomaru* they want returned back to Japan. What's most interesting is how many American veterans - some even residing in nursing homes - feel the need to return the items they took as souvenirs from the battlefield.

Table of Contents

Page 2: Admiral Caldwell

Page 3: A New Video

Page 4: A Father's Flag

Page 5: A Father's Flag

Page 6: The Scholar's Corner

Page 7: Contact OBON 2015

An Admiral returns a Yosegaki Hinomaru

“This flag didn’t rightfully belong to me, it belonged to the town or the family”

Rear Admiral James F. Caldwell inherited a Yosegaki Hinomaru from his great uncle Jay Chase, a naval officer during WWII.

Aware of the importance these personal items have to the Japanese family, Admiral Caldwell passed this flag into the care of the Japanese Consul General in Hawaii so it could be returned to Japan.



Admiral Caldwell said, “This flag didn’t belong to me, it belongs to the town or the family. It’s meaningful to Japan, it’s meaningful to the town, and it’s meaningful to the family of the soldier to who it belonged.”

Admiral Caldwell did not know how it great uncle obtained the flag but said, “My great-uncle was a good man, and although World War II was hard on him, I know he would want the family to have the flag.

Consul General Shigeeda was deeply moved by Admiral Caldwell’s generous gesture and remarked that it was an important act towards reaffirming the relationship between the two countries who were once enemies but are now close and trusted allies in the Asia-Pacific region.

OBON 2015 NEW VIDEO

OBON 2015 is pleased to announce a *new* video available for viewing on YouTube.



The video begins with a look at the close relation between the people of Japan and America.....



...then acknowledges the brutal and destructive war that broke out between these the two nations.



However, despite nearly seventy years having passed both nations continue to expend a great deal of time and energy searching for the remains of soldiers who are missing in action. To the family of a missing soldier any personal remains becomes a meaningful heirloom that they feel contains the spirit of the missing family member.



To Watch go to YouTube and search OBON 2015 "Do Unto Others"or click on the hot link in the email....or type www.youtube.com/watch?v=07oABxxseVA

“THE FIRST TIME I HAVE FELT MY FATHER...”

A Yosegaki Hinomaru is returned to a soldier's son.

(Below) Tomio Aikawa was drafted into the navy, leaving behind two young children and his pregnant wife, seen below on the right. As was the custom of the times his *Yosegaki Hinomaru* is tied across his chest.



(Below) January 3rd, 1944 the family met at a naval yard for a quick family reunion. A family portrait was taken showing Tomio holding his one month old baby son Hiroshi for the first time. (the infant, barely visible in his father's arms, is wearing a white cap.)



Tomio shipped out later that year and disappeared in the war off Saipan on July 8th.

Decades later a Japanese dance instructor residing in the United States was given this flag by a friend. Knowing this was a personal family item she contacted OBON 2015 and the search began.



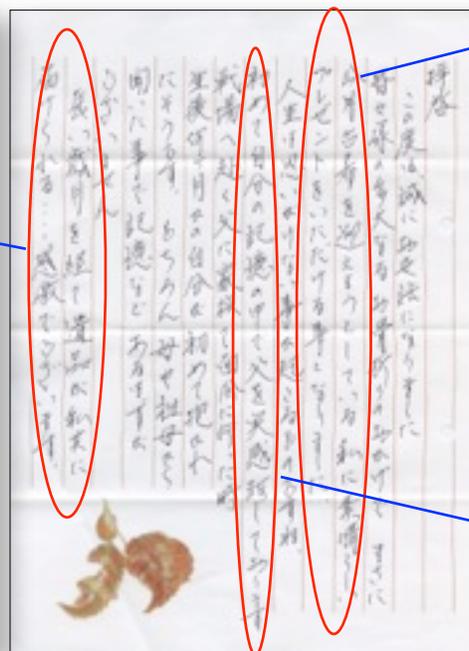
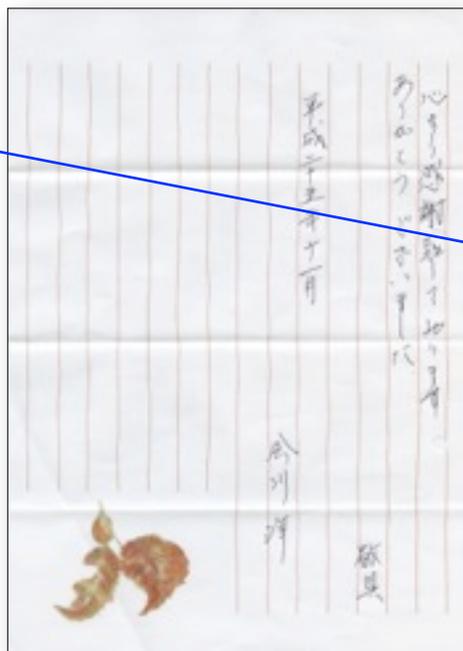
“THE FIRST TIME I HAVE FELT MY FATHER...”



O BON 2015 researchers deciphered the writing and found the family. The flag was sent to a local shrine and finally, after 69 years, it was reunited with the family.

The one month old baby who had been photographed in his father’s arms 69 years earlier, now had an object that had been carried next to his father’s body and had been with him when he died. This son, Mr. Hiroshi Aikawa, later wrote O BON 2015 a letter of gratitude.

It is an overwhelming joy to receive these remains after so many years have passed.



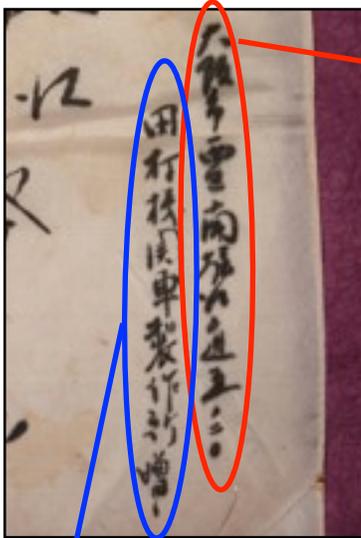
this will be the best present for my upcoming 70th birthday this month.

In my entire memory, this is the first time I have ever felt my father next to me.

The Scholar's Corner



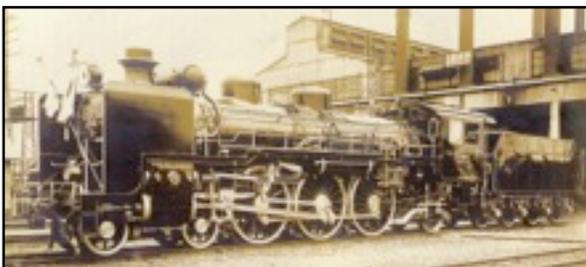
Finding a family sometimes involves pursuing the smallest of details. Our researchers take every clue into consideration. However, this particular hinomaru contained an address and the mention of a railroad which at first seemed like promising clues, but led our scholars on a wild-goose chase for many months.



The address was pinpointed in the city of Osaka; 5-20 Minami Horie-Dori. However, upon examining city maps (made in the years before the war) the address led to a residential area bordering a shipyard. Volunteers walked the streets searching; scholars dug through archives, but nothing conclusive could be found.



The second clue named the TAMURA LOCOMOTIVE MANUFACTURING COMPANY. This led to an exhaustive search through Japanese railroad museums, transportation archives and heavy industry looking for that company's location. However, after months of searching there was no mention of such a company ever existing. Our scholars were baffled.



After nearly 18 months of searching the family was found. Upon questioning the 92 year old brother of the missing soldier OBON 2015 discovered the railroad mentioned was, in fact, the name of an obscure toy manufacturer that sold model trains. The reason the address appeared on the flag remains a mystery, but it is assumed the location had something to do with the toys.

Contact OBON 2015

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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