

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/Consulate General 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. Request the APPLICATION FORM (Word, PDF) for Research on Lost Artifacts by email.

Email:

seikatsuanzen@dt.mofa.go.jp

2. Complete the APPLICATION FORM and send it by mail or Email to Consulate General of Japan in Detroit 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 APPLICATION 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.

Mailing Address:

ATTENTION: WWII Artifacts

400 Renaissance Center, Suite 1600, Detroit, MI 48243

3. The materials will be forwarded to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare for investigation. Investigations typically take more than six months, but in some cases may take a year or more to complete.
4. You will be notified as soon as the investigation is conclusive. You will then be asked to send or bring the artifact(s) to Consulate General of Japan in Detroit. Consulate General of Japan in Detroit 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.

5. Consulate General of Japan in Detroit can only accept requests from individuals residing within its jurisdiction, which includes Michigan and Ohio. Those residing in other areas are asked to contact their regional Consulate office (<http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/jicc/consulate-guide.html>)

➤ **For further inquiries regarding the return of articles lost during World War II:**

Please contact the Investigation group, Planning Division of Recovery of the Remains of War Dead, Social Welfare and War Victims' Relief Bureau, **Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare (MHLW)**.

Telephone: +81-(0)3-5253-1111 (Ext. 4523)

E-mail: suishin@mhlw.go.jp

<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/0000039987.html>

*You can find the English version at the bottom of the link above.

➤ **MHLW's project "The surveys for the return of the wartime articles to war-bereaved families"**

This fiscal year, MHLW is working with Nippon Izokukai (Japan War-Bereaved Families Association), contractor of this project, and its subcontractor, Obon Society* to facilitate the return of wartime articles to war-bereaved families.

*Obon Society acts as an overseas support services subcontractor of this project for Nippon Izokukai.