

Application for Research on Lost Artifacts

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan (MHLW) conducts investigations into the original bearers of WWII artifacts and facilitates the repatriation of these artifacts to the surviving kin of Japanese soldiers. With your help and consideration, the artifacts previously held by Japanese soldiers in WWII will be returned to the bereaved family members.

Our investigations of WWII artifacts are limited to cases in which all of the following apply: (1) the original owner can be identified by name or other information indicated on the relic(s), (2) the investigations are not carried out with the expectation of any form of monetary compensation or other rewards (i.e., the applicant consents to returning the relic(s) without receiving any payment in exchange), and (3) the applicant agrees to returning the relic(s) even if the original owner or the concerned parties do not wish to disclose their contact information to the applicant.

When requesting to open an investigation into a wartime relic(s), please fill out this “Application for Research on Lost Artifacts” form and send it to the Planning Division of Recovery of the Remains of War Dead, Social Welfare and War Victims’ Relief Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan (MHLW). Please attach corresponding photographs of the relic(s) including full shots of the relic, shots of from the top, bottom, right and left. Photos of the reverse side of the relic(s) should also be included, as well as any photographs with key information on the artifact such as any Japanese characters which could be evidence for our research. (We do not accept requests for investigations without this form. Please do not send the relic(s) to us by mail until we give you written confirmation. Also, please note that applicants cannot return the relic(s) directly to the bereaved family.)

※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 applicant must send the article back to the original owner directly.

Applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Therefore, please note that sometimes it will take more than a couple of months to receive a reply back concerning your inquiry. We request your understanding regarding this matter.

Inquiries to:

Investigation Group, Planning Division of Recovery of the Remains of War Dead
Social Welfare and War Victims’ Relief Bureau
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan
Telephone: 81-3-5253-1111 (extension: 4523)
E-mail: suishin@mhlw.go.jp

1. Date of Request

Month ____ Day ____ Year ____

2. Applicant

Full Name: _____

Current Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

E-mail: _____

3. Lost Artifact (number of artifact(s))

Description of lost artifact(s): _____

Number of lost artifact(s): _____

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

Person who obtained the artifact(s): (_____)

Relation between the applicant and the discoverer: (_____)

When it/they was/were obtained:

(_____) • Unknown

Where it/they was/were obtained:

(_____) • Unknown

How it/they was/were obtained: From a war survivor • Directly from the war dead • Simply came across it or found it • Unknown • Others (_____)

Please provide any further information that might be helpful in this research.

(Example: If the relic(s) was/were collected by a war survivor, information about the location where the survivor had been sent to fight).

5. Communication after the original owner is identified (Please circle one of the answers).

(1) If the bereaved family or other concerned parties wish to receive the relic(s) back, will you be willing to return it without receiving any payment in exchange?

a. Yes

b. No

(2) If the bereaved family or other concerned parties do not wish to disclose information about their address or other information to you, we cannot disclose their name and any contact information to you. Will this be acceptable to you?

a. Yes

b. No

(3) If the bereaved family or other concerned parties wish to receive the relic(s), the applicant cannot directly return the relic(s) to the bereaved family (The applicant sends the relic(s) to the MHLW). Will this be acceptable to you?

a. Yes

b. No

* MHLW cannot conduct the investigation if you choose “b. No” for 5-(1), (2) or (3). We request your understanding in this matter.

6. For research purposes, we may disclose your information (your address, etc.) to the concerned parties (the relevant local government and the bereaved family). Will this be acceptable to you?

a. Yes

b. No (if no, we will not disclose your name, address or other information to the concerned parties.)

7. Current holder of the lost artifact(s) for safekeeping

(Please fill in the below only if the current holder is different from the applicant.)

Full Name: _____

(Relation with the applicant): _____

Current Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

E-mail: _____

*** When the bereaved family or other concerned parties are identified, the applicant will be asked to contact the current holder and request him/her to return the artifact(s). Please**

~~note that for some cases, we may directly contact the current holder of the artifact(s).
Therefore, please provide us the detailed information about the current holder.~~