

Japanese flags begin journey home

By KYLE SPURR
EO Media Group

Before sending their young men to serve in the military during World War II, Japanese families prepared small flags signed by family members and friends for the soldiers.

Each Japanese soldier carried at least one flag with them onto the battlefields.

Once they were discovered by American soldiers, the flags became highly prized treasures of war and were brought back by the thousands as souvenirs, according to Rex Ziak, an historian and author from Naselle, Wash.

"Capturing a flag is one of the highest accomplishments on a battlefield," Ziak said. "It's hardwired into their heads that if you get a flag it's an amazing accomplishment."

Now 70 years later, many American veterans and their families are realizing the souvenirs are actually personal items that belong to Japanese families. In most cases, the flags represent the only surviving trace of the young men.

Individual efforts have been made by veterans in recent years to return the flags, called Yosegaki Hinomaru.

Ziak and his wife, Keiko, are organizing the efforts through their Astoria-based nonprofit group, OBON, a humanitarian movement that receives the flags from American veterans and their families, searches for the flags' origins and returns them back to Japanese families at no cost.

The nonprofit movement, affiliated with Astoria Visual Arts, is the first of its kind.

"This is very unique. These items were taken, and now 70 years later, they are being sent back to Japan as a symbol of reconciliation and love," Rex Ziak said.

On Monday, OBON and members of the 41st Infantry Division — National Guard units from the Northwest that served in World War II — hosted a returning ceremony at the Barbey Center at the Columbia River Maritime Museum in Astoria. Five flags were ceremoniously passed to OBON, which will attempt to connect them with families in Japan.

"All the people who cared about that person, all the people who thought about him,



Ed Bartlein, a WWII veteran and member of PNP-41st Signal, is helped up by Rex and Keiko Ziak, right, before handing over the Yosegaki Hinomaru flag he collected during the war at the OBON 2015 Returning Ceremony at the Barbey Center Monday.



Rex Ziak addresses the crowd during the OBON 2015 Returning Ceremony.

were going to war with him," Rex Ziak told the audience about the flags.

Rex Ziak founded OBON — named after the Japanese season when ancestors' spirits are honored — in 2009, the same year he married.

Keiko Ziak, a native of Japan, experienced first-hand the joy of a flag returning home.

Her grandfather died in Burma during World War II and disappeared without a trace. Her family never had closure until the son of a Canadian military memorabilia collector returned her grandfather's flag to the family.

For the Japanese, and for most other cultures, an item such as a flag means more than its material value. The flag symbolized Keiko Ziak's grandfather coming home. It is hanging in a family shrine at her uncle's house in Japan.

"It's a miracle that happened," Keiko Ziak said. "I passed that story on to Rex. He researched it and we found out that so many miracles could happen."

More than 2 million Japanese soldiers died in World War II, including over 1 million missing in action. The staggering numbers mean there are just as many unclaimed flags.

So far, Rex and Keiko Ziak have collected about 100 flags, of which 30 have been claimed by Japanese families.

Plans dropped for big wind farm in north-central Oregon

BEND (AP) — Plans for a big wind farm in north-central Oregon have been scrapped, state regulators say.

The Brush Canyon Wind Power Facility would have had as many as 223 turbines in Sherman and Wasco counties, The Bend Bulletin reported Friday.

It would have been in an area of 76,000 acres, or 119 square miles.

The turbines that have spread across the windy Columbia plateau in recent decades have benefited from two government initiatives: requirements by West Coast

states that utilities include alternative energy among their energy sources and a federal tax credit based on turbine production.

But in December, the U.S. Congress let lapse the tax break enacted in 1992 to nurture the fledgling wind industry.

The Brush Canyon proposal had its origin like many in the Northwest, proposed by the North American arm of a European or Scandinavian utility company, in this case the German firm E.ON AG.

"We don't know why they pulled out, but it's not unusual,"

said spokesman Rachel Wray of the state Department of Energy. "We've had a number of projects pulled over the last couple of years. Some that had gone a ways through the process, and others that were a lot less far along. It really varies."

Calls and messages from The Associated Press to the company's Chicago office and German headquarters were not immediately returned.

In Central Oregon, some were happy and relieved at the decision, saying the project was far too big and disruptive.

Residents of the high-desert town Antelope were anticipating that construction traffic would increase traffic by 600 percent, Mayor John Silvertooth said.

"It's like a doctor telling a patient he's in remission, or waking up from brain surgery and hearing everything was a success," he said.

Antelope's population is now about 50. It was larger in the 1980s, and got a lot of attention, when thousands of followers of the Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh tried to establish a political power base on a commune that was eventually forced out.

Oregon's marijuana director confirms he has been terminated

PORTLAND (AP) — The official hired to lead Oregon's preparations to regulate recreational marijuana said Thursday that he has been fired.

Tom Burns confirmed his termination in an interview, The Oregonian reported.

Burns oversaw the rollout of the state's medical marijuana dispensary program. He was tapped last December to direct marijuana programs for the Oregon Liquor Control Commission.

He declined further comment, referring questions to commission Executive Director Steven Marks, who was not immediately reachable for comment. The liquor control commission's chairman, Rob Patridge, declined comment, calling it "a personnel matter."

The agency's licensing director, Will Higin, will take over the job until a permanent replacement is found, the newspaper said.

Burns' departure will not affect the timeline for drafting rules for the new industry, the agency said.

A voter-approved marijuana initiative requires the liquor control commission to come up with regulations for growing, testing and distributing marijuana. Sales are expected to begin early in 2016.

The news surprised legislators and marijuana advocates.

"I don't know how we're going to get through this without him," said state Sen. Ginny Burdick, D-Portland. Burdick co-chairs the House-Senate committee on implementing Oregon's new recreational marijuana law.

She said she was shocked and disappointed, calling Burns "the most knowledgeable person on marijuana policy in the state."

Anthony Taylor leads Compassionate Oregon, a group that advocates for medical marijuana patients. He said Burns worked hard to build consensus as director of the dispensary program.

"His ability to interface with the Legislature, and being able to lay out a case for what we are trying to accomplish here, was pretty good," Taylor said.

In his previous job, the 61-year-old Burns worked at the Oregon Health Authority and was in charge of developing regulations for stores that distribute medical marijuana.

New rules for recreational marijuana must be in place by late 2015, and the state must begin accepting applications from growers, processors and retailers by January 2016.

Corrections

The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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AccuWeather.com Forecast

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Mostly sunny, breezy and cooler	Sunny and pleasant	Partly sunny and mild	Cooler with spotty showers	Mostly cloudy with a few showers

PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

62°	41°	66°	41°	71°	44°	57°	38°	56°	35°
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HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

65°	39°	70°	41°	72°	44°	62°	37°	60°	35°
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ALMANAC

PENDLETON

through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	73°	43°
Normals	57°	37°
Records	76° (1952)	23° (1975)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.95"
Normal month to date	1.24"
Year to date	2.50"
Last year to date	4.00"
Normal year to date	3.75"

HERMISTON

through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	75°	38°
Normals	61°	37°
Records	76° (1930)	15° (1944)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.39"
Normal month to date	0.78"
Year to date	1.45"
Last year to date	2.50"
Normal year to date	3.02"

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	6:44 a.m.
Sunset tonight	7:18 p.m.
Moonrise today	1:08 p.m.
Moonset today	3:08 a.m.

Full	Last	New	First
Apr 4	Apr 11	Apr 18	Apr 25

REGIONAL FORECAST

Coastal Oregon: Clouds and sun today. A brief shower or two across the north; pleasant in the south.

Eastern and Central Oregon: Cooler today; a shower in spots in the south and upper Treasure Valley.

Western Washington: Mostly cloudy today. A brief shower or two; only in the morning across the south.

Eastern Washington: Clouds and sun today with a shower in places; mostly sunny across the south.

Cascades: Intervals of clouds and sunshine today; cooler in central parts.

Northern California: Partly sunny today. Clear tonight. Plenty of sunshine tomorrow.

REGIONAL CITIES

	Today			Sun.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	57	46	sh	59	47	pc
Baker City	58	30	sh	64	30	s
Bend	57	31	s	64	34	s
Brookings	58	45	pc	60	46	pc
Burns	59	27	pc	65	30	s
Enterprise	55	30	sh	61	32	s
Eugene	63	39	pc	67	42	pc
Heppner	61	35	s	66	36	s
Hermiston	65	39	s	70	41	s
John Day	56	35	pc	64	39	s
Klamath Falls	59	29	s	65	31	s
La Grande	60	34	pc	64	33	s
Meacham	51	30	pc	60	31	s
Medford	65	42	pc	71	44	s
Newport	56	42	pc	58	44	pc
North Bend	58	43	pc	62	46	s
Ontario	64	33	pc	67	36	s
Pasco	67	40	s	70	41	s
Pendleton	62	41	s	66	41	s
Portland	62	45	c	66	46	pc
Redmond	59	30	s	66	32	s
Salem	62	41	pc	67	43	pc
Spokane	59	40	pc	58	41	s
Ukiah	55	30	s	62	32	s
Vancouver	62	44	c	65	45	pc
Walla Walla	63	46	pc	68	46	s
Yakima	66	39	pc	69	40	pc

WORLD CITIES

	Today			Sun.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	75	46	s	74	53	pc
Hong Kong	78	69	s	78	71	c
Jerusalem	73	54	c	69	48	pc
London	57	48	pc	55	44	r
Mexico City	69	50	pc	71	47	pc
Moscow	41	26	pc	39	30	sf
Paris	60	50	r	55	50	r
Rome	64	44	s	64	48	pc
Seoul	59	39	pc	63	38	pc
Sydney	75	62	s	77	64	pc
Tokyo	64	51	pc	64	54	r

WINDS

(in mph)	Today	Sunday
Boardman	WSW 15-25	WSW 6-12
Pendleton	WSW 15-25	W 6-12

UV INDEX TODAY

0 3 5 5 3 0

8 a.m. 10 a.m. Noon 2 p.m. 4 p.m. 6 p.m.

0-2, Low 3-5, Moderate 6-7, High; 8-10, Very High; 11+, Extreme

The higher the AccuWeather.com UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.

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NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

Yesterday's National Extremes:

High 97° in Palm Springs, Calif. Low -5° in Land O'Lakes, Wis.

NATIONAL CITIES

	Today			Sun.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Albuquerque	80	44	s	78	47	pc
Atlanta	53	32	pc	59	48	s
Atlanta City	39	22	c	41	36	s
Baltimore	42	22	c	48	34	s
Billings	72	40	s	66	44	s
Birmingham	48	32	c	62	52	pc
Boise	60	36	pc	65	40	pc
Boston	36	24	sn	40	31	pc
Charleston, SC	59	41	s	59	41	s
Charleston, WV	39	20	c	54	39	pc
Chicago	36	24	s	46	33	sh
Cleveland	28	19	pc	46	34	pc
Dallas	81	54	s	82	60	s
Denver	77	41	s	65	42	pc
Detroit	37	20	c	46	34	sh
El Paso	87	52	s	87	60	pc
Fairbanks	46	20	pc	47	20	pc
Fargo	50	39	pc	57	31	pc
Honolulu	85	70	pc	85	70	pc
Houston	80	58	s	81	64	s
Indianapolis	39	23	s	49	36	c
Jacksonville	63	39	c	62	42	s
Kansas City	52	37	pc	67	37	pc
Las Vegas	90	59	s	87	59	pc
Little Rock	51	39	pc	73	55	pc
Los Angeles	82	60	s	79	58	pc
Louisville	45	25	pc	59	41	c
Memphis	46	36	c	68	54	s
Miami	76	59	s	78	61	s
Millwaukee	37	26	s	44	34	sh
Minneapolis	41	25	s	54	32	pc
Nashville	48	25	s	60	47	pc
New Orleans	71	58	s	77	64	s
New York City	41	25	sf	45	36	s
Oklahoma City	78	52	s	78	48	s
Omaha	54	38	s	63	35	s
Philadelphia	43	25	c	46	36	s
Phoenix	95	65	s	95	67	pc
Portland, ME	38	22	sf	41	29	pc
Providence	40	24	sn	42	30	pc
Raleigh	48	26	pc	53	39	s
Rapid City	79	36	s	65	36	s
Reno	73	42	pc	74	43	s
Sacramento	80	51	pc	84	51	c
St. Louis	47	32	pc	61	38	c
Salt Lake City	71	40	s	68	39	pc
San Diego	7					