

Metal on Thai beach likely to be rocket, not plane part

By Mari Yamaguchi
The Associated Press

TOKYO — A Japanese rocket maker says a large piece of metal that washed up on a beach in Thailand is likely part of a rocket launched by Japan, not the missing Malaysian plane.

The discovery of the metal sparked speculation that it might be from Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, which disappeared almost two years ago.

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries said the metal piece is “highly likely” to be part of a Japanese H-IIA or H-IIB rocket that was launched from southern Japan, based on an initial examination of photos and videos of the object.

Company spokeswoman Sayo Suwashita said officials are trying to determine which rocket and its launch date. Rocket debris falls into the ocean after every launch, and most is collected, but sometimes pieces can be found some distance from the launch site, including in foreign waters, she said.

Thai air force and civil aviation authorities said they were unaware of the statement from Japan, while the agency within the Transport Ministry that investigates aviation accidents was



unavailable for comment.

Japan has launched H-IIA and H-IIB rockets since the 2000s. The most recent H-IIA launch was in November 2015.

Flight 370 took off from Malaysia in March 2014. It lost communications and made a sharp turn away from its Beijing destination before disappearing. It is presumed to have crashed in the southern Indian Ocean, far away from Thailand.

The debris was found on the eastern coast of southern Thailand's Nakhon Si Thammarat province, about 370 miles

south of Bangkok on the Gulf of Thailand.

Malaysian transport minister Liow Tiong Lai said the search for the missing jet, which carried 239 people, is ongoing in the Indian Ocean and that its second phase is expected to be completed by June. Australia has led a multinational search that has so far cost more than \$120 million.

Aviation experts from Malaysia visited Nakhon Si Thammarat to inspect the metal piece, after which the Thai air force flew it to Bangkok for further

METALLIC MYSTERY. Thai people look at a large chunk of metal found on a beach in Nakhon Si Thammarat province, Thailand. A Japanese rocket maker has said the large piece of metal that washed up on a beach in Thailand is likely part of a rocket launched by Japan, not the missing Malaysian plane. The discovery of the metal sparked speculation that it might be from Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, which disappeared almost two years ago. (AP Photo/File)

examination.

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau announced that the search of 46,000 square miles of seabed where the Boeing 777 is thought to have crashed had been set back after a ship lost its sonar equipment.

The *Fugro Discovery*, one of three ships conducting the search, towed its side-scan sonar unit into a mud volcano that rose 7,200 feet from the sea floor, the bureau said in a statement.

The ship lost the sonar unit plus 14,800 feet of cable. The ship is now making a six-day journey to the Australian port of Fremantle to collect new cable and will continue the search with spare sonar equipment, it said.

Associated Press writers Grant Peck in Bangkok, Eileen Ng in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Rod McGuirk in Canberra, Australia, contributed to this report.

This issue's
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30 Years of Doing Good Things

“Chinese American: Exclusion/Inclusion”

Through May 1, 10am-5pm (Mon-Sat), noon-5pm (Sun), Oregon Historical Society Museum (1200 SW Park Ave, Portland). View “Chinese American: Exclusion/Inclusion,” a travelling exhibit that chronicles the complex history of the Chinese in America, from the early days of China trade to the history of Chinese immigration and the life of Chinese Americans. The display looks at the challenges of immigration, citizenship, and belonging that shaped both the Chinese-American experience and the development of America as a nation. Admission to the museum is free for Multnomah County residents and all Oregon school groups. For info, call (503) 222-1741 or visit <www.ohs.org>. To learn more, visit <www.chineseamerican.nyhistory.org>.

“Do You Know Bruce?”

Through Sep 4 (Tue-Sun), 10am-5pm, Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience (719 S King St, Seattle). Learn about Bruce Lee — including his impact in media during a time of racial stereotypes and barriers — at “Do You Know Bruce?” Part two of the display, “Breaking Barriers,” tackles Lee’s larger-than-life impact in the media and film industry. From “The Green Hornet” to *Enter the Dragon*, Lee defied stereotypes, broke barriers, and transformed media perceptions by insisting on playing roles of real people rather than of Chinese male caricatures. The exhibit features a new collection of Bruce Lee collectibles and personal belongings, highlighting the stories behind his iconic and lesser-known onscreen roles. For info, call (206) 623-5124, or visit <www.wingluke.org> or <www.doyouknowbruce.com>.

“Finding Your Roots”

Feb 2, 8-9pm; repeats Feb 4, 1-2am; Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB). Watch an episode of “Finding Your Roots,” a program that explores the family histories of architects Maya Lin and Frank Gehry as well as business mogul Richard Branson. To verify showtimes, call (503) 293-1982 or visit <www.opb.org>.

Presidential Medal of Freedom

Feb 2-19, 10am-5pm (Mon-Sat), noon-5pm (Sun), Oregon Historical Society Museum (1200 SW Park Ave, Portland). View the Presidential Medal of Freedom — the highest civilian award in the United States — of Minoru “Min” Yasui (1916-1986), the first Japanese-American attorney in Oregon. Yasui is known for his courageous stand against military orders that resulted in the forced removal and imprisonment of more than 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry during World War II. The medal was received posthumously from President Barack Obama on November 24, 2015. Admission to the museum is free for Multnomah County residents and all Oregon school groups. For info, call (503) 222-1741 or visit <www.ohs.org>.

“Tsunagu: Connecting to the Architecture of Kengo Kuma”

Feb 4-29 (Mon-Fri), 9am-5pm, Center for Architecture (403 NW 11th Ave, Portland). View “Tsunagu: Connecting to the Architecture of Kengo Kuma,” an exhibit highlighting the designs for the Portland Japanese Garden’s \$33.5-million “Cultural Crossing” expansion project. The centerpiece of the expansion is Kuma’s design for a Cultural Village of three LEED-certified buildings to house a learning center, library, gallery space, and traditional tea café. The display features

project images and construction drawings as well as an interactive use of space focusing on the philosophy of continuity in Kuma’s work: continuity between nature, natural materials, and Japanese tradition. For info, call (503) 223-8231 or visit <www.cfapdx.org>.

Great Decisions lecture series

Feb 5, noon, Portland State University, Academic and Student Recreation Center, Room 001 (1800 SW Sixth Ave, Portland). Attend “Middle East Alliances,” a free talk held as part of the World Affairs Council of Oregon’s Great Decisions lecture series. For info, call (503) 274-7488 or visit <www.worldoregon.org>.

Asian food market tour

Feb 6, 11am-4pm, East Portland. Join Indonesia-born chef Surja Tjahaja for a tour of markets specializing in fresh, inexpensive vegetables, seafood, and other Asian food in the Portland area. The tour, which features ideas for the upcoming Lunar New Year, includes a gourmet Asian lunch. For info, meeting location, or to register (by February 1), call (503) 656-8910. To learn more, visit <www.chef2go.biz>.

“Tsunagu: Kengo Kuma’s Architecture of Relationships”

Feb 6, 2-4pm, Portland Art Museum (1219 SW Park Ave, Portland). Attend “Tsunagu: Kengo Kuma’s Architecture of Relationships,” a free lecture and discussion by professor Botond Bogner and Kengo Kuma exploring the architecture surrounding Kuma’s first public project in the United States — the “Cultural Crossing” expansion project now under construction at the Portland Japanese Garden. For info, or to make a reservation (required), call (503) 223-1321 or visit <www.japanesegarden.com>.

“Sites of Meaning: Caring for Asia’s Cultural Heritage”

Feb 6 & Feb 13, 9:30-11am, Seattle Asian Art Museum (1400 E Prospect St, in Volunteer Park, Seattle). Attend “Experimental Preservation in the Anthropocene” (February 6) and “Buddhist Painting: A Fragile Inheritance” (February 13) as part of the “Saturday University” lecture series. The series — this year themed “Sites of Meaning: Caring for Asia’s Cultural Heritage” — is presented by the Seattle Asian Art Museum, the UW Jackson School of International Studies, and the Elliott Bay Book Company. For info, or to buy tickets, call (206) 654-3210 or visit <www.seattleartmuseum.org/gardnercenter>.

“Uprooted”

Feb 11-June 19, 11am-3pm (Tue-Sat), noon-3pm (Sun), Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center (121 NW Second Ave, Portland). View “Uprooted: Japanese American Farm Labor Camps During World War II,” an exhibit that tells the story of Japanese Americans who worked as seasonal farm laborers, many in the sugar beet industry, during World War II. The display features images from federal photographer Russell Lee’s documentation of Japanese-American farm labor camps near the towns of Nyssa in Oregon and Rupert, Shelley, and Twin Falls in Idaho; interpretative text panels; and a short documentary film featuring firsthand accounts about life in the camps. For info, call (503) 224-1458 or visit <www.oregonnikkei.org>.

“Game Masters”

Feb 13-May 8, 9:30am-5:30pm (Tue-Sun), Oregon Museum of Science & Industry (1945 SE Water Ave, Portland). View “Game Masters,” an exhibit that takes visitors through the evolution of gaming, from arcade classics such as *Missile Command* and *Pac-Man*, to iconic console-based games *Mario*, *Sonic the Hedgehog*, and *Zelda*, through to current indie hits like *Real Racing 2*, *Minecraft*, *Machinarium*, and more. The display features more than 125 playable games as well as an in-depth look at the game designers through rare original game artwork, 2-D objects, and revealing interviews. For info, call (503) 797-4000 or visit <www.oms.edu>.



ZERO TAKES FLIGHT. Mitsubishi’s legendary Zero fighter flies during a test flight at an air station in Kanoya, Kagoshima prefecture, southern Japan. One of Mitsubishi’s legendary World War II fighter planes took to the skies over Japan. While rented Zeroes have flown in Japan on occasion in the past, this was the first for the widely used Model 22 of Mitsubishi’s A6M fighter with its round wingtips. (Hiroko Harima/Kyodo News via AP)

World War II Zero fighter flies over Japan

By Miki Toda
The Associated Press

KANOYA, Japan — One of Mitsubishi’s legendary World War II fighter planes took to the skies over Japan last month.

The restored “Zero” fighter made a brief flight to and from a naval base in southern Japan. Decorated former U.S. Air Force pilot Skip Holm flew the aircraft.

Zero fighters were considered one of the most capable fighter planes in World War II, rivalling the British Spitfire. Their long range allowed them to play a prominent role in the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. Only a few are still in operating condition.

While rented Zeroes have flown in Japan on occasion in the past, this was the first for the widely used Model 22 of Mitsubishi’s A6M fighter with its round wingtips.

This particular plane was found decaying in Papua New Guinea in the 1970s. It was owned by an American until Japanese businessman Masahiro Ishizuka purchased it and brought it to Japan last September.

“I wanted for the people of Japan and especially young people to know about this Zero airplane, as well as those who are old who remember the past,” Ishizuka said. “Each of them should have different thoughts and perspectives on this, but I just want people to know how Japan has developed its technology.”

Japanese see the aircraft both as a symbol of their country’s technological advance and a reminder of the harrowing history of the war. In the last phase of the fighting, they were used for kamikaze attacks.

Kamikaze pilots took off from the same airfield as the flight last month — Kanoya Naval Air Base on the island of Kyushu.

Under its previous American owner, the plane made an appearance in the Hollywood movie *Pearl Harbor* and at various events in the United States.