

Request for Information Regarding the Remains of War Dead in Sunken Ships

Recovery of Remains by the Japanese Government

The Japanese Government began the systematic recovery of the remains of approximately 2.4 million Japanese war dead overseas in 1952. DNA from recovered remains is analyzed in order to return the remains back to the bereaved family when other identifying information, such as artifacts, is available.

To date, Japan has recovered the remains of approximately 1.28 million persons. However, as more than 70 years have passed since the end of the war, information about the remains of Japanese war dead provided by wartime comrades and other sources has been decreasing. In response, since 2006, Japan has expanded its efforts to gather information about un-repatriated remains with the cooperation of private sector organizations and through record searches at archives and libraries overseas.

As part of these efforts, the Act on Promoting the Recovery of the Remains of Japanese War Dead (Act No. 12 of 2016) was enacted in March 2016. The Act formalizes the recovery of the remains of war dead as a state responsibility and establishes an “Intensive Implementation Period” through 2024.

In accordance with the Act, the Government of Japan promotes the recovery of remains in concert with the Japan Association for Recovery and Repatriation of War Casualties (JARRWC), an incorporated body for gathering information on Japanese war dead and recovering their remains.



Recovery of remains from a sunken ship



Routine recovery operation (at Northern Mariana Islands)

Request for information regarding the remains of Japanese War Dead

About 300,000 of the 1.12 million unrecovered remains are contained in sunken ships, with approximately 100,000 in the Central Pacific area, including Chuuk (Truk) Lagoon.

The Japanese Government deems that the recovery of remains from sunken ships shall be effected to the extent possible when remains are exposed to public view or when their dignity is impaired, while allowing for technical and safety considerations.

Please provide information regarding any remains spotted within sunken ships, or reports of the presence of remains, to the contact below. Your cooperation is deeply appreciated.

Contact: Embassy of Japan in the Republic of the Marshall Islands