

SEARCH AND RECOVERY EFFORT
FOR
REMAINS OF WORLD WAR II DEAD

"THE DIG"

The Konko-Kyo Group from Japan will be conducting their 14th Annual Recovery Effort on Okinawa. The objective goal of the group is to thoroughly comb the designated areas for remains and artifacts, to return them to surviving families. They also want to properly entomb the remains and render the area free of all war remains.

The American community here on Okinawa has again been invited to participate in this recovery effort. The only requirement is a little hard work and a willingness to share something of yourself.

The basic search and recovery is directed at the remains and personal belongings lying on the ground surface, in the fields, wooded areas, and in the caves. No area can be overlooked.

Guidelines

1. Look for boots, shoe soles, canteens, belts, soap dish, tooth brush, glasses, inkan (Japanese character stamp of family name), fountain pen, watch, ID tag or dog tag, helmet, sabre, bayonet, rifle, pistol etc. Many of these items were engraved with a name and/or unit.
2. Remember there was heavy fighting here on Okinawa with bombs exploding everywhere, so you may or may not find bones all in the same area. Bones found on the surface are often fragmented and scattered; yet one small bone on the surface can, at times, lead to an excavation of an entire skeletal corpse. Surface bones are normally found a grayish-white color. Please take it slow, be complete, and thorough.
3. Upon locating any remains, check with the group leader prior to disturbing the bones to determine whether the remains are war dead or ancestral remains. Team leaders can be reached best by blowing your whistle with several long and continuous blows. Aerial Interment, an Okinawan custom, placed the bones in burial urns under rock overhangs and near entrances to caves. These remains often fragmented, appear white, smooth surfaced, and sometimes extremely brittle. If there is any doubt, consult with the experts in the field before disturbing any remains.
4. In handling the bones and artifacts, please treat them with the utmost care and respect. DO NOT remove bones from the area until the Japanese have taken pictures of the bones as they lay. The Japanese will provide a white ceremonial sheet to place them on. They will also make offerings, light candles, and a short prayer will be said.

5. If a corpse is located with complete or near complete body structure in an isolated location, search the entire area completely in a circular pattern for at least 10 meters. Uncover the surface leaves and brush for this area. An article unearthed one meter below a corpse once led to the identification of a body.
6. When bones are found in mass inside one particular cave or one particular spot, gather them together and have the group leader or Japanese expert determine the number of bodies recovered. Determining should be left to experts when remains are fragmented and scattered over an extensive area.
7. Remains unearthed by farmers and land developers are often found in piles at the edges of cultivated fields and land development sites. These are easily overlooked by searchers.
8. Other areas to pay close attention to are: behind small hills, in depressions, near medium and large size rocks, at the bottom and near the base of cliffs, in the middle of a clump of trees, on the sides of and just over the tops of hills, and at the base of trees with roots above the ground. Don't forget to look in the trees as well. Try to think like you are the one being chased. Where would you hide or seek cover from the enemy and enemy fire?

Searching the Caves

1. Never enter the cave alone.
2. Use a flashlight and study the interior of the cave as much as possible before entering.
3. In a deep cave, burn a candle to detect carbon dioxide or carbon acid gas. If present the candle will burn low or go out.
4. When space in the cave is too limited to allow more than a few people, the first person entering the cave will take pictures of the interior before disturbing anything.

Unexploded Ordinance

1. DO NOT TOUCH ANY UNEXPLODED ORDINANCE ! This rule applies to even as small an ordinance as a hand grenade. Whenever an explosive object is sighted, warn your group members, mark the spot with red tape, and call the group leader. All sightings of ordinance will be reported to the command center for plotting on maps and later pickup by ordinance experts.
2. In 1978 and 1985, a grenade in a brown ceramic casing was found. This particular grenade, Chibidan (a tiny shell), contained colorless, odorless, but lethal gas, capable of causing instant death. These grenades are round and may also be white or "olive drab green" in color.

3. In 1984, an ordinary knee-mortar casing containing white phosphorus was found. Similar to an incendiary shell in its content, a drop of its solution is caustic enough to burn through the flesh. Water will extinguish the smoldering phosphorus.

4. The Japanese soldier customarily carried a few extra hand grenades, saving them for his own self destruction (Jiketsu). An isolated corpse, which appears previously untouched, and most of the corpses found in caves, will bear hand grenades. THESE GRENADES ARE STILL ACTIVE. Careless handling of these hazardous objects is strictly prohibited.

Safety

1. Although still in semi-hibernation, HABU'S can become a serious hazard once disturbed. Use all precautions.

2. The sickles and hand rakes have sharp edges and points. While carrying and using them, please be careful. The blades of cogon grass and points of coral cause cuts and bruises. Be careful.

3. An aid station with registered nurses and a doctor will be at the headquarters.

Conduct

1. As adults, one would think that we would not have to mention how to act and behave. But nonetheless, I must mention it. Every year someone does or says something to embarrass the Americans and Japanese as well. Continued inappropriate behavior will result in the Konko-Kyo Congregation refusing to allow the Americans to participate in this most worthwhile project. All of the people invited here are hand picked by me, and I feel confident that your behavior and attitude will be impeccable. Remember we are the ambassadors for the United States Air Force and the United States of America, please conduct yourself in a manner consistent with good judgment, cooperation, and friendship toward the Japanese.

2. If your behavior is deemed inappropriate, you will be escorted out and asked to leave.

3. In a classic case of how a few people can "spoil the broth" for everyone, the efforts of several Americans last year were devoted more toward gathering artifacts in lieu of searching for remains. This naturally upset the Japanese, for a canteen or toothbrush with a name etched on them, might lead to the identification of a nearby set of remains.

4. At all times, remember that we are here at the invitation of the Japanese people and will operate according to their customs. If in doubt as to how to handle any situation, consult with the Japanese group leader.

What to Bring

1. Each participant should bring the following:

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| a. <u>Backpack</u> | f. <u>Flashlight</u> |
| b. <u>Canteen of water</u> | g. Three-prong garden tool* |
| c. <u>Work gloves</u> | h. Rope-clothesline, not plas. |
| d. Mosquito repellent | i. <u>Back lunch</u> |
| e. Whistle | j. Camera |

2. Clothing should be work clothes (jeans etc.), boots, and a change of clothing. All gear should be stowed in a backpack to leave both hands free for working. The change of clothes can be left in your vehicles.

3. The Japanese group will provide yellow helmets, which must be worn by all participants.

ITEMS STRICTLY PROHIBITED *****

* 1. Alcoholic beverages *

* 2. Metal Detectors *

* 3. Military uniforms *

Departure

We will depart the parking lot in front of the Butler BX promptly at 0645 on 11 and 12 February 1990. We will be taking Highway 58 south to Cave of the Virgins or Himeyuri no To (Memorial). This is the gathering place for everyone. This operation will take place regardless of the weather, so don't be discouraged if it's raining. Please arrive early enough so we can get a head count and vehicle count before we start out.

Other Activities

At 0800 all will meet at the Cave of the Virgins, hats will be distributed, and a short welcoming of the Americans speech, and prayer for good luck will given. We will then be transported to the dig site. From 0900 to 1200 we will search for remains. From 1200 to 1300 will be lunch in the jungle/dig area. At 1300 the search will continue until about 1500 when everyone will head back.

At the conclusion of the second day, there will be a brief memorial ceremony held at the crypt atop Mabuni Ridge (Peace Memorial Park) to consecrate the remains. All American participants are cordially invited to attend this emotional and memorable ceremony.

There will be an after-the-dig dinner party for all the Japanese participants and a few Americans. There is a limited amount (30) of American tickets available at \$20.00 per ticket. The dinner will be at a restaurant in Naha. The dress is nice casual.

The results of the search and recovery will be documented with photographic data and a booklet will be compiled covering the recovery effort. They would appreciate any comments you may have to be included in this booklet. The names of all participants will be included in the booklet in English.

Lastly, I would like to express my thanks to you for your willingness to participate in this effort. The camaraderie and genuine friendship you will find will be very rewarding. Don't feel discouraged if you don't find very much. At the least you will make some new friends and have an experience shared by just a few. If further information is needed, please call me at DP 43591, or home phone 635-6280.

LES ASHE
313th Medical Group, Team Leader

Every year someone dies or gets something so serious the Americans and Japanese at war. Continued inappropriate behavior will result in the United States government refusing to allow the Americans to participate in this most worthy effort. All of the people invited here are well respected by us, and if you continued that your behavior and attitude will be respected. However, we are the ambassadors for the United States of America and the United States of America. Please conduct yourselves in a manner consistent with your dignity, cooperation, and respect toward the Japanese.

If your behavior is deemed inappropriate, you will be escorted out and asked to leave.

In a classic case of how a few people can ruin the effort for everyone, the efforts of several Americans have been severely hampered by the gathering attitude of a few of our American comrades. This attitude is what the Japanese call "a rotten apple spoils the bunch." We have a high regard for the identification of ourselves as Americans.

While I'm here, remember that we are here at the invitation of the Japanese people and will operate accordingly. If in doubt as to how to handle any situation, please consult your Japanese group leader.