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OBON SOCIETY Recognized for its Contributions to Japan-U.S. Relations by Japan's Minister for Foreign Affairs



On January 21, 2016, the Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle recognized one organization for its contributions to Japan-U.S. relations. In a ceremony held during the New Year's Reception at the Official Residence, Consul General Masahiro Omura presented Rex and Keiko Ziak, founders of OBON SOCIETY, with the Foreign Minister's Commendation in Honor of the 70th Anniversary of the End of the War.

OBON SOCIETY (formerly OBON 2015) is a non-profit organization established in 2009. Since then the organization has actively assisted in the return of *yosegaki hinomaru*, or war flags, and other artifacts and memorabilia belonging to Japanese soldiers to relatives in Japan. Last year their efforts were acknowledged by the Japanese government when the couple traveled to Japan with a group of U.S. veterans and met with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. With the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, OBON SOCIETY's work has been

recognized as an important symbol of reconciliation, mutual understanding, and friendship between our two countries.

The Foreign Minister's Commendation in Honor of the 70th Anniversary of the End of the War has been awarded to 28 individuals and 14 groups nationwide in recognition of their outstanding achievements in and contributions to the promotion of good relations between Japan and the United States.