



the
QUARTERDECK

Fall 2015

COLUMBIA RIVER MARITIME MUSEUM



Crab pots set for the season, Astoria, Oregon
Photo courtesy of Michael Mathers

From the Wheelhouse

Once again the *QuarterDeck* is graced with the fine work of the national award-winning photographer Michael Mathers, who lives in Astoria. These images are part of the new exhibit “Inside Astoria” now on display at the Museum. The photographs capture the mood and character of Astoria and the Lower Columbia River. It is said, famously, that a picture is worth a thousand words. Certainly that is true in the case of the photo on the opposite page: the words “Crab pots stacked in front of a crumbling brick wall” do not capture the powerful beauty or the “feel” that the image evokes. Michael Mathers has given us rich portraits of our local world that allow us to appreciate the art and beauty present in our everyday environment. It is a great honor for the Museum to show his work.

Beyond the beauty of Michael’s photography is the fact that he has documented the details of what today’s Astoria and its riverfront look like. Just as we marvel at the fine historical images of buildings, fish boats, piers, and Astoria’s working waterfront from long ago, so too will Michael’s images be equally important in telling today’s story of Astoria and its maritime culture to future generations. I am reminded of this when I think about years of walking to work in Portland, being confronted one day with an empty lot where only the week before had stood a beautiful old building. To my chagrin and dismay I could rarely remember clearly the details of the building that was now gone. So Michael’s work is of paramount importance, recording the detail of today’s Astoria to serve as a cultural memory for us in the future.

Just as the photographs of Michael Mathers capture the history of Astoria and the Columbia River, in a similar vein, the images accompanying the article about the Yosegaki Hinomaru flags offer us a unique emotional and local view of World War II in the Pacific. The excerpts from “The Souvenir – A Daughter Discovers Her Father’s War” by Louise Steinman, along with photographs from the Museum’s archives

and those collected by Rex and Keiko Ziak of the OBON SOCIETY, present the moving story of Japanese flags that were taken as souvenirs during combat and then returned decades later to the Japanese families of those fallen soldiers.

I think you will agree that the images in this *QuarterDeck*, whether they be the photographs taken in and around Astoria, or the beautifully calligraphed flags of the exhibit, give us all deeper knowledge and broader, artistic appreciation of our local world and our particular war-time history.

Sam Johnson
Executive Director

On the cover:

Workers finish painting the Astoria Bridge this fall. See page 15 for more details on a truly amazing one-of-a-kind exhibit.

Photo courtesy of Michael Mathers

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Chicagoans On Saipan-The roof of their dugout provide a lounging place for these men from the Windy City who fought with the 27th Division in the battle for Saipan. Displaying some of the souvenirs taken in the fighting, they are; front row, left to right, Pfo. Harry Shiberolo, 20; Pfo. Jack Groene, 24; Pfo. John S. Klepadlo, 25; second row, Pvt. Ed F. Howard, 29; Pfo. Manuel Batshaw, 29; T/4 James G. Happ, 30; Sgt. George J. Webber, 29; T/4 William M. Malloy, 35; Pfo. Peter Iwachniuk, 23; Pfo. Tony Rodeghilero, 34, and T/5 David Coslow, 22. (U.S. ARMY Signal Corps Photo)

From the Museum Collection

The Souvenir

A Daughter Discovers Her Father's War

by Louise Steinman

Chapter excerpt from *The Souvenir: A Daughter Discovers Her Father's War* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Press)

© Louise Steinman 2001, 2002, 2008

Louise Steinman's American childhood in the fifties was bound by one unequivocal condition: "Never mention the war to your father." That silence sustained itself until the fateful day Steinman opened an old ammunition box left behind after her parents' death. In it she discovered nearly 500 letters her father had written to her mother during his service in the Pacific War and a Japanese flag mysteriously inscribed to Yoshio Shimizu.

Setting out to determine the identity of Yoshio Shimizu and the origins of the silken flag, Steinman discovered the unexpected: a hidden side of her father, the green soldier who achingly left his pregnant wife to fight for his life in a brutal 165-day campaign that changed him forever.

Her journey to return the "souvenir" to its owner not only takes Steinman on a passage to Japan and the Philippines, but also returns her to the age of her father's innocence, where she learned of a tender and expressive man she'd never known. Steinman writes with the same poignant immediacy her father did in his letters. Together their stories in *The Souvenir* create an evocative testament to the ways in which war changes one generation and shapes another.

My husband and I were finally close to finishing the (seemingly interminable) task of clearing out my parents' condo. We taped some boxes shut and prepared to leave. Then I remembered the storage locker in the underground garage. We took the elevator down. An unmarked key on Dad's key ring opened the padlock to the locker.

In the dim light, I identified a collection of odds and ends. A motley box of my old

theater props, a spare soup pot, Grandma's everyday dishes, two frayed beach chairs, a bicycle missing a front tire. At the bottom was a rusted metal ammo box. I tried to pick it up, but it was too heavy. I tried to open it, but the hasp was stiff. We hauled the box towards the light and together prried it open. I had a vague memory of having seen this artifact once before. Inside the rusted box were stacks of yellowing air-mail envelopes. These were all addressed to my mother in my father's handwriting. Hundreds of them. The faded dates on the envelopes were 1941 - 1945.

Under one bundle of letters was a manila envelope postmarked March 3, 1945 and stamped on the back with some kind of an official seal:

Pursuant to provisions of War Dept. Memo W/370-3-43, 22 July 1943, and of Headquarters, USAFFE Circular No. 21, 5 March 1944, the bearer Norman Steinman PFC 32983436 of this certificate is entitled to retain in his possession or to mail the following: 1 Japanese flag.

I opened it and found a slippery piece of white silk, folded in eighths. I held it up to the light. Pinpricks of daylight showed through the fragile fabric--tiny holes where the fine strands had given way. The orange-red disc in the center was faded. Brushed over the surface were Japanese characters, and speckled among them, faint drops of red-brown. Could they be blood? Spooked, I quickly refolded it and put it back in the envelope, back in the box.

Months later, after we finally sold the condo, I brought the ammo box and its contents home to my Hollywood apartment. The letters, by their sheer quantity, were intimidating. They lay in their inelegant sarcophagus like a reproach. The abundance of them was alarming. When I occasionally plucked one out to read, it detonated a landmine of longing for my father. The flag remained in its manila envelope buried under the piles of correspondence, too disturbing to contemplate.

However, as time wore on, a shift

Meet Louise Steinman as part of the *Past to Present* series free to Museum members. Louise will be sharing her story at 10:30 a.m., and will be available after to answer questions, hear stories, and sign her book *The Souvenir* available in the Museum Store. The Souvenir is \$15.95 or \$14.35 with your members' discount.

When: Tuesday, February 2nd 2016

Time: 10:30 - 12:00

Free for Museum Members and paid admission; \$5 for presentation only



Photo courtesy of Lloyd Hamrol

occurred. The contents of the metal box, initially frightening, began to draw me in. At odd moments, I'd pull the box out from my closet and read a few letters. I noted a cast of characters—"Dr. Orange," Hal Rubin, Morrie Franklin, someone named Sam Wen-grow. Who were they? I began to realize that the metal box contained a story, many stories. Tales of fear, bravery and kindness, the mundane and the heroic intertwined.

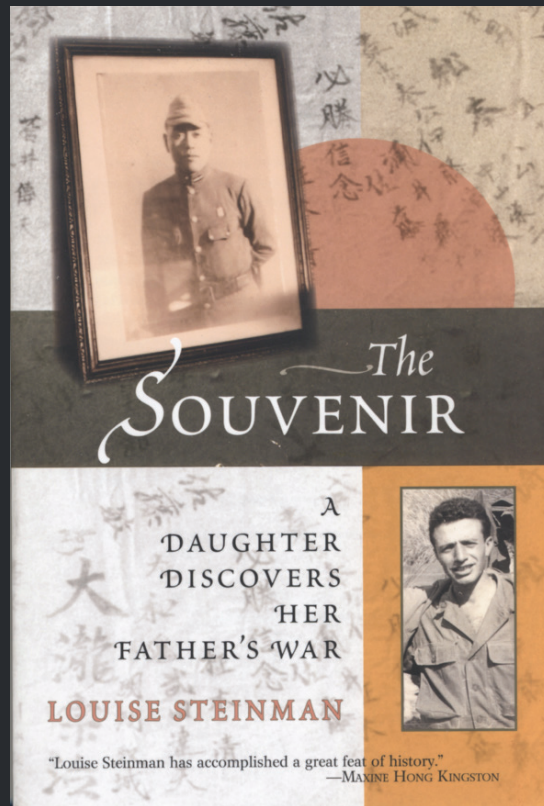
I'd take out the flag to examine it, running my hands gently over its shimmering surface, folding it up and placing it back in its envelope. For months it didn't occur to me that the Japanese characters actually meant anything. They were just mute forms, swirling across the surface of the silk.

One day, on a seemingly mindless impulse, I searched through my Rolodex at work. My job then was at an under-funded city arts center, coordinating theater and dance programs. I found the telephone number of a Japanese performance artist named Rika Ohara.

I didn't explain to Rika why I needed to see her. Nevertheless, she agreed to come to my office anyway. She was a striking young woman. Her head was shaved, and her delicate features were not disguised by the loose-fitting slacks and oversized flannel shirt she wore. Her thumb and forefinger were stained tobacco-yellow. She was one of the few who still rolled her own smokes.

We sat outside on a bench, shaded from the sweltering sun. I opened the envelope and gently pulled out the flag. "I found this with my father's things after he died," I said. "He fought in the Philippines. He must have found this on a battlefield." She looked at the flag but didn't say a word. "I'd like to know what these characters mean," I said. She listened, but she didn't answer right away.

I sat holding the flag on my lap as Rika plucked tobacco from a tin and placed it precisely on the crease of a cigarette paper. She daintily moistened the gummed edge, then formed it quickly into a smoke. She placed it in her mouth and lit up. At last she glanced up from her task and took the flag from me in her small fine hands.



She looked at it silently for what seemed like a long time. Whatever she was thinking, she didn't let on. Perhaps I should defend my interest in this ghoulish artifact, I thought. I didn't know how my father had come to have the flag. I refused to assume the obvious: that he'd taken it off a dead soldier. Yet I felt a rush of shame.

Finally, her fingertips still caressing the flag as if she were reading Braille, Rika turned to me and said, "This is a good luck banner, given to a Japanese soldier when he goes into battle. Perhaps when he leaves for duty overseas. It says here: 'To Yoshio Shimizu given to him in the Greater East Asian War—to be fought to the end. If you believe in it, you win.' That's what it says. The other characters on the flag are names." She gingerly handed the flag back to me. Her cigarette had gone out. She calmly lit up.

I wanted to ask my father about the flag, about Yoshio Shimizu. Norman Steinman didn't know his enemy had a name. And, I was pretty damn sure, he wouldn't have wanted to know.

Louise Steinman is curator of the award-winning ALOUD series at the Los Angeles Public Library and co-director of the Los Angeles Institute for Humanities at USC. She is the author of three books: *The Souvenir: A Daughter Discovers Her Father's War*; *The Knowing Body: The Artist as Storyteller in Contemporary Performance*; and *The Crooked Mirror: A Memoir of Polish-Jewish Reconciliation*. She will be a winter 2015 writer-in-residence at the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation in Captiva, Florida. Her work appears, most recently, in *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, and on her *Crooked Mirror* blog.



Edward J. Bartlien, 41st Signal Company, 41st Infantry Division returned two flags.

From the Museum Collection

A Peaceful Return

The Story of the Yosegaki Hinomaru



Flanked by his mother and father and surrounded by family and friends, another young man, with Yosegaki Hinomaru in his hands, sits for one last portrait before leaving home.

Photo courtesy of OBON SOCIETY

The Columbia River Maritime Museum is proud to open a new exhibit, *A Peaceful Return: the Story of the Yosegaki Hinomaru*. It tells how US veterans from WWII with Japanese flags taken from the battlefields of the Pacific are now trying to return them to the Japanese families of those lost in the war. This new exhibit was done in partnership with a non-profit group called The OBON SOCIETY.

Japanese soldiers in World War II carried with them into battle a very personal memento: Yosegaki Hinomaru. These flags, covered with signatures and well-wishes for a safe return, were given by family and friends to their loved ones as they were sent off to war.

American soldiers in World War II collected these flags from the bodies of Japanese combatants to take home as souvenirs. Now decades later, many veterans and their families are realizing that these flags might be the only tangible evidence of a beloved family member lost in a war fought long ago.

The owners of these flags never made it home from the war, but through the efforts of the OBON SOCIETY some of their flags are returning to their families.

This exhibit was a project the Museum considered from many different perspectives. Ultimately it is a very personal story that touches the lives of both US and Japanese soldiers sent to fight each other in the Pacific during WWII. Our Naval History gallery features exhibits that tell of the contribution to the war effort by the sailors aboard U.S.S. *Astoria*, CA-34 and CL-90. It also features the actual bridge from a Fletcher-class US Navy destroyer, the *Knapp*. We recently added elements that tell of the role the shipyards along the river played in supporting the war effort. The decision to add the Yosegaki Hinomaru story to the gallery came down to one persuasive point which would be the impetus for the entire project: that this is what US servicemen who fought so bravely in the war in the Pacific wanted. We talked with



“Keiko Ziak chats with four of the six WWII veterans who accompanied the OBON SOCIETY to Tokyo last August in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the end of the war. (L to R) Eldon Shields, Dallas Britt, Paul Boeger and Ed Johann. In the foreground is a Yosegaki Hinomaru Dallas Britt personally returned to be analyzed and hopefully returned to the family.”

Courtesy of OBON SOCIETY

veterans of WWII who had collected these flags from the field of battle, and listened to how much they now wish for these flags to be returned. For them, as well as the Japanese families that are contacted, it is a healing—a closure for those whose lives were so dramatically impacted by a war that ended 70 years ago.

The Astoria based non-profit group, OBON SOCIETY, founded in 2009, receives these artifacts, analyzes, documents and researches their place of origin. When the family is located these heirlooms are returned to the wives, brothers, sisters and children of missing soldiers at no cost to them. This is a monumental task with personal items now arriving from around the world and from across America, but with a team of dedicated researchers in both America and Japan, the OBON SOCIETY has been able to return over 40 flags directly to

the families of those lost in the war.

The founders and executive directors of the OBON SOCIETY, Rex and Keiko Ziak, have worked tirelessly to return these items and correspond with veterans and family members.

In recognition of the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII last August, Rex and Keiko Ziak returned 70 flags back to Japan. Their story gathered attention from around the world as they traveled accompanied by six WWII veterans who served as unofficial ambassadors of peace and reconciliation. The Ziaks met with and deliver these flags to Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Join the Columbia River Maritime Museum, in collaboration with the OBON SOCIETY, to witness *A Peaceful Return: the Story of the Yosegaki Hinomaru*, a new exhibit now open in the Naval History Gallery.

Mr. Tsukashima of Tokyo breaks into tears upon being reunited with his brother's Yosegaki Hinomauru. They had been the best of friends and shortly before leaving home the two brothers had visited a photo studio to have a portrait. That cherished photograph had been his only connection with this lost brother until this moment when he repeatedly exclaimed, "You have finally come home."



Mrs. Moriguchi vividly remembers when her fifteen year old brother Shiichiro was drafted and sent to war. Her father had passed away and Shiichiro was the only man in the house. Now, seventy years later, she is reunited with the Yosegaki Hinomaru and the spirit of her lost older brother.

Returning battlefield souvenirs provides both the American and Japanese families with the opportunity to peacefully reconcile the past, heal wounds to the heart and find closure.



Photo courtesy of OBON SOCIETY

OBON SOCIETY

The OBON SOCIETY, headquartered in Astoria, Oregon, receives these battlefield souvenirs and analyzes them for clues. Then, working with a team of researchers and Japanese government agencies they conduct a careful search throughout Japan for living family members. After relatives are successfully located, these family heirlooms are returned at no cost to you or the family in Japan.

If you have an item you would like to consider returning, please contact staff at:

OBON SOCIETY
P.O. Box 282
Astoria, Oregon 97103
Contact@OBON2015.com



Surrounded by his family, and with a Yosegaki Hinomaru in his hand, a young man sits for a family portrait before leaving home to serve his country

Photo courtesy of OBON SOCIETY



WWII veterans Harold LaDuke and Dallas Britt along with OBON SOCIETY staff in Japan accompany Keiko and Rex Ziak as they meet with Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe last August 4th in Tokyo. Accompanying Prime Minister Abe are cabinet level advisors and directors of various agencies that work with bereaved families. In the fifteen white boxes are seventy Yosegaki Hinomaru the Ziaks returned on this historic occasion.

Photo courtesy of OBON SOCIETY

4

2

10M

8

6

4

2

9M

8

6

4

2

8M

8

6



Photo courtesy of Michael Mathers

Work of Photographer Michael Mathers featured in New Exhibit

Inside Astoria —an exhibit featuring the work of local photographer, Michael Mathers

Once again Michael Mathers has offered to share his photographic artistry and perspective with our museum visitors. This time the subject is one that is intimately familiar to many of our members - Astoria itself. Michael has gone from door to door around town and asked permission to photograph the views from inside looking out on the town. He says “Everyone in Astoria has a view. I’ve just captured that view, that perspective, and printed it to share with others.” Some are quite unique and unusual, some familiar but unexpected, others breathtakingly beautiful. He takes us inside shipping containers, homes, businesses, warehouses, living rooms, bedrooms, and

backseats and shows us the view from those locations. The exhibit is an archive of contemporary culture and life in this city at the edge. It’s a point-of-view look at Astoria and its environs from a variety of perspectives. Michael gives us an “Inside” look. Come and see how well you know this community. The exhibit opens Friday, November 13, 2015.

News and Notes

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The QuarterDeck

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● The Columbia River Maritime Museum Store has joined the ranks of the Nation's finest institutions in several ways recently. After winning the 2015 National Visual Merchandising Award in April, Visitor Services Manager Blue Anderson was asked to give a presentation to the Museum Store Association in Las Vegas.

The National Visual Merchandising Award was presented for the special exhibits store created for *Envisioning the World: The First Printed Maps 1472-1700*. Blue was responsible for creating the innovative design, inspired by the Museum's founder Rolf Klep in creating her "Curator's Corner."

● We have a great start to the new year planned, welcoming author Michael J. Tougias to speak on January 2, 2016. Mr. Tougias is the author of several sea-related books and will talk about *The Finest Hour* (now a Disney movie slated to be released in January) and his more recent work *Rescue of the Bounty*. We welcome Louise Steinman on February 2nd. Ms. Steinman will be talking about her intimate and powerful story that will make the Yosegaki Hinomaru story come to life with her work *The Souvenir*.

● The Education Department launched two new initiatives this past spring. First Sunday Family Program series offers family activities led by museum teachers the first Sunday of every month. The goal of this program series is to provide regular opportunities for family programming throughout the year. The activities developed for the first six months of this series were directly tied to themes of the museum's Galapagos 3D movie.

The other new initiative launched during this time period is our First Friday Nights series. First Friday Nights are an entertaining, casual, and social experience for all ages on the first Friday of each month that includes a mix of live music, skills demonstrations and hands-on activities. During the summer months, the program was held out on the museum plaza and included film screenings in addition to the live music and activities. Attendance for these events has been steadily growing, building the museum's reputation as a Friday night destination.

● Classes offered at the Barbey Maritime Center continued through spring and summer. Topics for classes included Maritime Woodcarving, Northwest Native American Basketry, Bronze Casting, Leather Work, Bentwood Boxes, and Botanical Drawing of Native Plants. This year, in addition to day long weekend classes, the museum instituted shorter weekday sessions to help create more opportunities for attendance.

● In August the museum held its second annual Teen Art Week. This program engaged teen audiences in a week long workshop that included visits to local studios and art making activities. The week culminated in an art exhibit curated by the teens themselves.

● Beginning January 5, 2016 and running each consecutive Tuesday through February 23, the Education Department will present its annual lecture series *Past to Present: Columbia River Maritime History*. Each Tuesday, a different speaker will present on a range of topics related to various facets of maritime history.

Planned Giving

At sea, an anchor to windward provides stability in a storm, and secures a vessel and its crew in difficult weather. Much like an anchor to windward, planned gifts such as bequests, gifts of real estate, and charitable trusts, provide security and benefits to donors and the Maritime Museum. Please consider a planned gift to the Museum.

For further information on how you can provide a lasting legacy to the Museum please contact Sam Johnson, Executive Director at 503-325-2323.



A family enjoys the reading room as part of our new education programs.

Photo courtesy of Don Frank

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12/18/14 thru 9/15/2015

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Rick White and Desiree Wells

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Lawrence Wood
Ronald and Patricia Wouda
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Craig Yamasaki
Aaron and Vickie Yusem
Dave and Kathleen Zunkel

In Honor of

12/18/14 thru 9/15/2015

[Arnold Curtis](#)

The Paul Sr., Paul Jr., and
Christopher Curtis Families

[Mrs. Allen V. \(Natalie\) Cellars](#)

in honor of her 90th birthday
Anne Barbey

[Peter and Noydena Brix](#)

Page H. Lee

Memorials

12/18/14 thru 9/15/2015

[Alice Ala](#)

Angora Hiking Club

[Fred Antilla](#)

Angora Hiking Club

[Douglas De Emmons](#)

Mr. and Mrs. Dagfinn Meyer

[David B. Bergman](#)

Douglas W. Crandall
Karen and Joe Kelly
Mrs. Bruce A. Link and Family
Donald E. Link
Donald R. Link

[Mildred Copeland Burlingham](#)

Jean Burlingham

[Richard Tallant Carruthers, Jr.](#)

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