

2004 Secretary of Defense Environmental Award

CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT



Mr. Takeshi Ukon

35th Fighter Wing
Misawa Air Base, Japan





INTRODUCTION

The 35th Fighter Wing (35 FW) is the host unit at Misawa Air Base (MAB), the northernmost U.S. air base in Japan. The only combined, joint service installation in the Western Pacific, MAB is located on the shores of Lake Ogawara in Misawa City in the Aomori Prefecture.

The wing’s mission is to “help defend Japan and promote regional security in the Pacific by providing forward presence, deployable forces, and quality mission support.” The Environmental Flight at MAB functions to help the wing succeed in all mission requirements while preserving and enhancing the precious “...natural and cultural resources that exist in and around the base through effective environmental planning and reducing health and safety risks created by past operations, thereby enhancing Misawa’s living and working environment.”

BACKGROUND

Mr. Takeshi Ukon serves as the Cultural Resources Program Manager at MAB. He develops solutions to preserve the cultural resources located in and around the installation while assisting the 35 FW and tenant units to successfully meet the challenges of Air Force (AF) and Department of Defense (DoD) missions. Mr. Ukon incorporates a business background with his personal knowledge of Japanese culture to implement an innovative, creative, and prize-winning Cultural Resources Management Program that is beneficial to both the AF and Japan.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

As program manager, Mr. Ukon is responsible for the identification, protection, and recovery of Japanese artifacts located across installation grounds. As the mission of MAB evolves to meet new DoD requirements, Mr. Ukon is charged with the unique challenge of recovering and restoring any historical artifacts that are discovered during installation modernization. Delicate and proper handling of sensitive ancestral issues allows for continued

improvement of relations between the governments of the United States and Japan.

AWARDS

Mr. Ukon has been recognized for cultural resource preservation achievements throughout 2004, earning awards from squadron level to Air Force wide.

RECOGNITION OF ACHIEVEMENTS	
•	2004 AF General Thomas D. White Cultural Resources Management Award (Individual)
•	2004 AF General Thomas D. White Environmental Quality Award (Overseas)
•	2004 Pacific Air Forces General Thomas D. White Cultural Resources Manager of the Year
•	2004 Pacific Air Forces General Thomas D. White Environmental Quality Award (Overseas)
•	2004 Civilian of the Year (Category II) 35th Fighter Wing
•	2004 Civilian of the Year (Category II) 35th Mission Support Group
•	2004 Civilian of the Year (Category II) 35th Civil Engineer Squadron
•	2004 Sustained Superior Performance Award for the 35th Civil Engineer Squadron

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

OVERALL CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Mr. Ukon completed a comprehensive, up-to-date cultural resource plan, combining information and data collected over the last five years. The plan now includes detailed information for the 5,000+ acres comprising Misawa’s main base and Draughton Range. Cataloging and mapping of all known cultural resources and endangered species enabled environmental studies to merge with engineering decision making to form the Geographic Information System (GIS) databases, which are part of Misawa’s stellar GeoBase program. Never before has environmental data been so readily available at the planning, programming, and engineering levels at MAB.

Mr. Ukon spearheaded an environmental makeover at Misawa. His innovative idea led to the incorporation of natural resource and vegetation inventories, underground storage tanks, hazardous waste accumulation points, oil/water separators, hazardous material points, and historical structure locations in the GeoBase system. Linking this information provides for effective stewardship over Misawa’s resources as

the environmental attributes are now an integral part of project planning and execution.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

An element of the Cultural Resources Management Plan at MAB includes the documentation and mapping of historic buildings and structures located on Misawa. These buildings must be catalogued to avoid demolition of historic structures that are valuable cultural resources to the host nation and the installation.

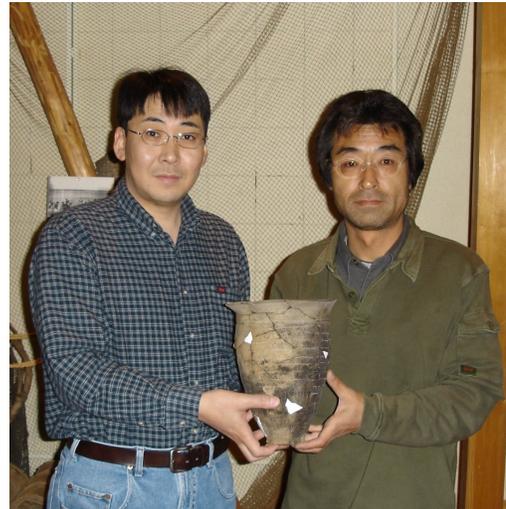
Based on discussions of possible historic structures by local Japanese, Mr. Ukon conducted a base-wide research project to determine eligibility and significance of pre-World War II era facilities. He reviewed real property documents dating back to the beginning of the 20th century when Misawa was under the control of the Japanese military. He then conducted informal interviews with elderly Japanese around the MAB area to accurately categorize buildings that are still standing. One such building was determined to be a replica of an early aircraft carrier on which the Japanese Zeros practiced dive bombing runs.

Most recently, Mr. Ukon secured \$60,000 to thoroughly document the significance of a low frequency radar antenna commonly known as “The Elephant Cage”. The antenna was used by the United States throughout the Cold War to intercept information and keep the U.S. and its allies on top of the intelligence battle. Eventually, this antenna will be removed due to the large amount of space the facility occupies in comparison to the size requirements of new, more advanced, technologies. Misawa and the AF will be ready for destruction of the antenna without having to wait for researchers to properly document details of the structure because of preplanning initiated by Mr. Ukon.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

In an effort to identify artifacts possibly located on installation property, Mr. Ukon single-handedly organized a multifaceted approach to recover ancient pieces located on MAB. A renowned Japanese archeologist was contracted to research and dig in areas identified as

potential dwellings of early Japanese ancestors. Once items were uncovered, Mr. Ukon took the artifacts to the local authorities for proper documentation of the findings.



Mr. Takeshi Ukon (left) and Mr. Masayoshi Nagao, Chief Archeologist, Misawa City Office, Board of Education Section, hold a restored 1,300-year old Nara Period artifact recovered on MAB.

During this process, he presented a plan for the Misawa Board of Education to initiate their own excavations to recover Japan’s precious cultural resources. He leveraged the recovery effort by employing the services of up and coming Japanese archeologists that completed archeological digs in support of research projects. This partnership approach proved to be both cost effective and successful in the quantity of artifacts recovered.



An archeological excavation being completed by the Japanese Board of Education. The board is a regular partner during artifact recoveries on MAB.

He also expertly managed the Tengumori Valley Archeological Survey project, a \$75,000 endeavor that netted more than 7,000 artifacts. The volume of this



recovery effort has kept a local Japanese artifact reconstruction team busy for over a year reassembling the treasure from past generations. In the Tengumori project, Mr. Ukon included a plan to mitigate siltation and prevent erosion in site excavation, diligently protecting the current natural environment surrounding dig sites.

CURATION

More than 200 reconstructed artifacts gathered from MAB sites were given to the Japanese government and prominently displayed for public appreciation at the Misawa Ancestral Museum Exhibition of Archeological Artifacts. The museum displayed these artifacts starting in November 2003 and throughout 2004. The presentations were observed by more than 15,000 visitors. This was the first Japanese community display of artifacts recovered from MAB. The event proved to be such a success that it has been scheduled as an annual exhibit to highlight recent findings.

Mr. Ukon was honored by the museum when asked to translate the artifact display storyboards from Japanese to English, so MAB residents could learn more about the history of Northern Japan with bilingual storyboards. Misawa's Family Support Center added the museum stop to the newcomer's local area tour, so new base personnel could obtain an appreciation and understanding of their host nation's ancient culture.



A community display of ancient Japanese civilization clay pots and tools that were found on Misawa Air Base.

CULTURAL RESOURCES AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

As Cultural Resources Program Manager for the 35 FW, Mr. Ukon is charged with promoting public awareness and education of the cultural resources on MAB. Through innovative approaches that advocate for the preservation of cultural resources, he has given local school children, base personnel, and the surrounding community unique hands-on experiences to learn more about the culture around them.

Mr. Ukon prepared a comprehensive bilingual slideshow briefing that teaches environmental stewardship principles to Japanese school students in the surrounding communities of MAB. He furthered his cultural resources teachings while working in conjunction with a local Japanese archeologist to develop an educational tutorial that introduced students to the intricacies of crafting Jomon Period pottery. However, Mr. Ukon's message extended beyond the importance of cultural resources and emphasized pollution prevention and natural resources conservation as well.

Mr. Ukon partnered with the Misawa Base Exchange to recognize winners of a drawing contest in honor of Earth Day values. He opened the competition to both school students and home-school children to make sure that every child was given the opportunity to participate in this fun and educational contest. The competition theme was Earth Day and its personal meaning to each entrant.

The contest generated more than 350 entries. Space was secured near the entrance of the Base Exchange for the display of the 350+ drawings. This resulted in the children's Earth Day message being displayed to the entire MAB community in an interesting and colorful format. Generous prizes were presented to ten students whose drawings were judged to be the most creative. The first place winner's drawing was printed on reusable canvas grocery bags distributed by Mr. Ukon outside the Misawa Commissary on Earth Day to promote the importance of Earth Day, pollution prevention, and environmental stewardship.

Mr. Ukon enthusiastically develops and implements distinctive programs to motivate installation personnel and residents of the local area to be active stewards of cultural resources and the environment.



COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Mr. Ukon adamantly supports collaborative practical projects among installation personnel, Airmen families, and Japanese citizens. These events encourage greater community relations, cultural understanding, and educational opportunities for all involved.

Campaigning for pollution prevention and environmental preservation, Mr. Ukon led an expedition of 500 Japanese and Americans to Misawa Fish Port for a beach clean-up event. He used this event to highlight Japan's reliance on the Pacific Ocean as a primary source of fresh food. The event was recognized by the Aomori Prefecture governor as one way in which Misawa Airmen are giving back to the community.



The Misawa Fish Port clean up is an annual event for people of all ages to pitch in and help save our environment.

Mr. Ukon also organized an annual baby salmon release with area communities that gave school children another option to enhance the environment. More than 200,000 baby salmon were released into a nearby river, ensuring the availability of salmon for the future.

In addition, Mr. Ukon facilitates a rice planting and harvesting event. Each spring he coordinates a rice planting day where Americans meet with local rice farmers to learn about the cultural significance of rice and to lend a hand with planting it. To add to the understanding, he then organizes a rice harvest in which Americans can participate in the cutting, drying, and hulling of the rice.



Mr. Ukon organized a rice planting day involving the local farmers and personnel from Misawa Air Base.

The events, taking place at different times of the year, bring both cultures together in an experience highlighting a subsistence method vital to the Japanese way of life.

Additionally, each year Mr. Ukon donates his services as translator for the U.S. Navy sponsored Oirase Gorge Clean-Up. This once-a-year spring cleaning helps the national park show off all 14,826 acres of national beauty she has to offer. This cooperative effort of AF and Navy talents enhance community relations and foster international friendships in Japan.

ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT

Along with cultural events, Mr. Ukon enthusiastically supports any installation-sponsored endeavor that will enhance the surrounding setting. He proactively volunteers to serve as head coordinator of various environmentally enhancing initiatives.

One major project organized by Mr. Ukon was the first ever Base Beach Clean-Up. School students were once again invited to participate in a concrete approach to environmental stewardship. The clean-up was an activity incorporated with Memorial Day festivities. His innovative hands-on philosophy to teach students about the importance of caring for the environment received many compliments from educators and children alike.

By employing a wide spectrum of activities, contests, events, and archeological excavations, Mr. Ukon radically advanced MAB's cultural resource programs through public awareness and education. His innovative means stand as a prime example of fusing community involvement with scientific knowledge to create environmental enhancement for all.



MISSION ENHANCEMENT

Extremely dedicated to the preservation of cultural resources in and around MAB have led Mr. Ukon to actively promote for environmental issues to be carefully considered during base modernization decision making.

Mr. Ukon's initiative to incorporate environmental attribute files into the GIS databases as part of the GeoBase system, which made them immediately available to planners and programmers for future facility sitings, tremendously increased environmental forethought at MAB. Through this data sharing, he has directly affected the launch and recovery capability of American and Japanese aircraft. This was particularly apparent in a recent proposal to install a new JP-8 hydrant fuel system through a previously untouched portion of the base. Due to the cultural resources data previously loaded into GIS, he received notification of the system proposal at the very earliest stages of the project planning process. He then expediently executed a \$100,000 archeological survey and recovery project to clear the site and prepare it for the mission critical fuel system project. His plan called for a leading American archeology team to perform the necessary excavation and retrieval work while the Japanese Board of Education provided technical expertise on local artifact issues. The international team accomplished the survey and recovery project quickly and ensured the mission proceeded on schedule, thus paving the way for a new efficient fuel system to be installed.

CULTURAL RESOURCES COMPLIANCE

As MAB does not fall under Environmental Protection Agency jurisdiction, Mr. Ukon is responsible for meeting compliance guidelines set forth by the Japan Environmental Governing Standards. Each of Mr. Ukon's projects far exceeds standards set forth by the host nation.

Regular meetings and open dialog with Misawa City's Chief Archeologist have created a strong sense of trust in MAB's cultural resources protection programs and have led to tremendous support from regulators for accomplishing

archeological investigations well ahead of project execution schedules.



From left to right: Archeologist Peter Glumac, Ph.D., Chief Archeologist from Misawa City Board of Education Masayoshi Nagao, and Misawa Cultural Resource Manager Mr. Ukon at an excavation site on Misawa Air Base.

SUMMARY

Mr. Ukon masterfully managed MAB's Cultural Resources Program through the use of cutting edge GIS technology that saved countless hours of coordination between project planners and programmers by placing information in an easily accessible, effortless-to-navigate format. His vision of American and Japanese archeologists working cooperatively resulted in the recovery of approximately 7,000 artifacts across 17 dig sites. More than 200 artifacts were placed on exhibition at a Japanese museum and were viewed by more than 15,000 people. Sponsoring unconventional children's contests, he educated 350 kids about the importance of Earth Day and its global significance. He secured \$60,000 to document the historical significance of a Cold War antenna used by the United States to intercept sensitive information, preserving this piece of history for future generations. His dedication to the flying mission success was evident by his expedient delivery of a \$100,000 archeological survey and recovery project which ensured the timely construction of a new JP-8 hydrant fuels system project.

Mr. Ukon is an asset to the environmental program at MAB and is a vital team member of the 35 FW. His dedication to preserving the environment and sincere interest in educating the public about cultural resources make Mr. Ukon the most outstanding Cultural Resources Program Manager in the Air Force.