

# Guam awaits WWII reparation

*Elderly residents hope for U.S. recognition of abuses suffered during Japanese occupation*

By James Brooke

New York Times

**M**ERIZO, Guam >> In July 1944, American warships were bobbing on the Pacific horizon when a squad of Japanese soldiers swept through this old Spanish fishing port. Jogging down sandy alleys and bursting into stucco homes, they rounded up 30 villagers, all known for their ties to the United States.

"They didn't want any leaders to be around when the military landed," Ignacio Cruz said as he recalled the roundup he watched as a 17-year-old. "Then they machine-gunned them, they grenaded them, and if they found them surviving, they bayoneted them."

"Dad got killed, and a lot of young babies were brought up without fathers," continued Cruz, who grew up, joined the Marines and became the village mayor, the post his father once held. "I managed to survive, and go to school, and build a house for my mother and continue my education."

With the 60th anniversary of Japan's World War II surrender tomorrow, Cruz, who is now 78, and other elderly Guam residents hope American politicians will go beyond solemn speeches and act to compensate them for abuses they suffered under Japan's 32-month occupation.

Often overshadowed by the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, Japan's occupation of this American island started Dec. 10 and continued until U.S. soldiers returned to Guam on July 21, 1944, a date celebrated as Liberation Day.

With 83 congressional sponsors supporting the Guam World War II Loyalty Recognition Act, a House bill introduced in April, momentum for compensation is building.

A 1951 treaty between the United States and Japan absolved Japan of future individual American war claims, which



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**Ignacio Cruz, shown outside his home in Merizo, Guam, watched Japanese soldiers kill his father during World War II.**

means American taxpayers would be asked to pay for abuses committed by Japanese soldiers on American nationals on American territory.

The bill was introduced by Delegate Madeleine Bordallo, a Democrat, who is Guam's non-voting representative in Congress.

Compensation for the Guamanians would be roughly comparable to the compensation paid to Japanese Americans who were interned in the United States during the war.

**UNDER THAT PROGRAM**, each claimant was paid \$20,000. Over its 10-year span, 82,250 Japanese-Americans were paid a total of \$1.65 billion.

The Guam compensation program would cost about \$135 million: \$12,000 to each of the roughly 9,000 survivors of the occupation, and lump sums of \$25,000 to children of about 1,000 Guam residents killed by Japanese occupation forces.

"It has been 60 years," Bordallo said Wednesday in an interview. Hers is the latest of 11 bills submitted on the issue since 1983. "We have tried time and time again."

The Bush administration has not taken a public position on

the bill. But David Cohen, deputy assistant secretary of the interior for insular affairs, the only administration official to have testified at congressional hearings on the issue, was not encouraging in testimony last summer.

Cohen, who arrived on Guam on Thursday for other business, would only say this on the bill's prospects: "It is a challenging issue, especially in this fiscal environment."

Guam officials have asked the State Department to ask Japan for a formal apology. They did not include the request in the bill for fear of creating diplomatic problems.

In 2003 President Bush signed legislation authorizing the appointment of the Guam War Claims Review Commission. The result was a collective convulsion for older residents.

On an island of 160,000, 8,300 people petitioned to testify before the commission.

Often speaking in Chamorro, the Spanish-influenced dialect of Guam's native people, elderly witnesses painted a picture of Japanese colonial occupation that turned progressively violent against anyone suspected of sympathies with the United States.

## Asians harbor mixed feelings about old foe

Associated Press

**MABALACAT, Philippines >>** Even now, 60 years later, it's an arresting sight: a life-size statue of a Japanese kamikaze pilot next to a former U.S. Air Force base.

Yet as the Philippines and the rest of east Asia remember the Japanese surrender on Aug. 15, 1945, the statue commemorating the first suicide pilots seems to sum up their ambivalence toward Japan's imperial era of aggression and brutal occupation.

Some have protested about the fiberglass statue since it went up 10 months ago, while others see in it an act of forgiveness. But it's also a recognition of the power of the yen: Japanese tourists flock to the airfield to see the World War II museum and honor the pilots who took off from here on their one-way missions against the advancing U.S. Navy.

Japan, the world's second biggest economy, has a gigantic economic footprint in the region. Trade with other east Asian countries totaled \$1 trillion for the year ending in March. Last year China replaced the United States as its biggest trading partner.

Japan is the biggest buyer of Philippine exports, and the two states are negotiating a free-trade agreement.

In China and South Korea, which bore the brunt of wartime aggression, anti-Japanese sentiment erupts periodically, stoked by perceptions that Tokyo has never fully atoned for its wartime conduct. The big issue this year was Japanese school textbooks that detractors say whitewash wartime atrocities.

At the same time, many Asian countries look to Japan, home of the main U.S. force in east Asia, to serve as a counterweight to China's rising might.