The fight for war reparations

1898 – The United States acquires Guam from Spain as part of the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Spanish American War.

1941 – The U.S. expects an attack by Japan on Guam, which is governed by the U.S. Navy. Islanders witness Japanese reconnaissance missions in the spring and summer.

October-November 1941 – U.S. citizens and military dependents are evacuated and the island's defense is left to fewer than 600 servicemembers.

Dec. 8, 1941 – Japan invades Guam during the same offensive that targets Pearl Harbor. Japanese forces pummel the island; U.S. defenders surrender within hours.

December 1941-July 1944 – Japan occupies Guam. Islanders endure atrocities at the hands of Japanese forces.

July 1944 – The U.S. bombs Guam's capital and recaptures the island with a bloody beach invasion that costs the lives of 1,438 servicemembers.

1945 – The U.S. military pays $12.7 million to Guamanians in the aftermath of the occupation.

1950 – Guam becomes an unincorporated territory of the U.S. Residents are granted U.S. citizenship; the island gets a non-voting representative in Congress.

1951 – The U.S. and Japan sign the Treaty of San Francisco, which officially ends World War II and puts the U.S. in charge of administering war claims against Japan.

1971 – The U.S. pays war reparations to Micronesia.

1983 – A Guam congressional delegate proposes the island's first war reparations bill.

1988 – Congress approves reparations for native Alaskans who were relocated during World War II. Guam is cut out of the legislation because the island legislature rejects payments as too small.

2004 – The Guam War Claims Review Commission finds that the territory is still owed about $126 million in reparations.

2009 – The Senate offers a compromise limiting claims. It fails and reparations are cut from the defense bill.

September 2010 – The Guam legislature issues a resolution saying war reparations should be paid as a condition of U.S. military buildup on the island.

November 2010 – Guam's congressional delegate is re-elected and says war reparations are still her top priority. Her bill, rejected the previous year, is part of the proposed 2011 defense budget awaiting Senate approval.

SOURCE: Staff reports; Micronesian Area Research Center

Stars and Stripes