

Regulations proposed for WWII internees to collect reparations

By Carolyn Skorneck
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department proposed regulations Thursday to distribute \$1.25 billion in reparations to about 60,000 Japanese-Americans who survived internment during World War II.

About 120,000 American citizens and permanent resident aliens of Japanese ancestry were affected by the evacuations from the West Coast. The department said that only about 60,000 people are eligible for the \$20,000 payments.

The oldest survivors must be paid first.

The Civil Liberties Act of 1988, authorizing the payments, became law last August. Congress has not yet appropriated funds.

Under the law, payments go to those confined, held in custody, relocated or "otherwise deprived of liberty or property" from Dec. 7, 1941, to June 30, 1946, because of U.S. actions based on their Japanese ancestry.

To be eligible, said Robert Bratt of the department's Office of Redress Administration, "you had to be living" when then-President Reagan signed the law, Aug. 10, 1988.

"But people are dying at a rate of about 200 people per month. If your

parent died after Aug. 10, 1988, then you're eligible as a survivor," said Bratt.

The first recipient would be the surviving spouse, followed by children and parents, if there are any, he said.

The department is responsible for dividing the \$20,000 equally among several children, he said.

Each member of a family evacuated and interned will be compensated, so a family of four still surviving would receive \$80,000, Bratt said.

Compensation also will go to Japanese-American soldiers who lost property or were unable to visit with their interned families, according to the proposed regulations.

Spouses or parents of non-Japanese descent who went to the internment camps to be with their families would not be compensated under the 1988 law. The department has started working on new legislation to allow such payments, Bratt said.

About 80 such people were interned, and the department estimates that 40 are still alive.

The proposed regulations, to be published in the Federal Register, will be open for 30 days of public comment. The department would not say when it expects final regulations to be issued.

6/9/89