

I'm Roy Soejima, age 59, family evacuee #15622 and veteran of both World War 2 - 442nd Regt. Combat Team and the Korean War. Also served in the reserves for 6½ years and I've worked for Kaiser Aluminum & Chemical Co. for 34 years, the last eight as production foreman in metal control. I'm on total disability now due to open^{HEART} surgery and I would like to relate my experiences during World War 2 and shortly afterwards.

When the war broke out I was doing Business as the Tillamook Point Oyster Co. in the growing and selling of oysters on Tillamook Bay on the Oregon coast. I was as shocked and stunned about Pearl Harbor as the rest of the nation was but I soon found out in a couple of days how we were hated even though we were American citizens. I had just delivered some oysters in Astoria, Oregon when I got caught in a blackout so I went to a phone booth to call my mother that I couldn't get home that night but before I could even call they grabbed me and locked me up in jail. Without any charge whatsoever, or due process of law- I was never so humiliated and shamed in my life. See exhibit #1

Three months later two fellows came to our place-called us all kinds of names and threatened the four of us with bodily harm if we didn't leave within a short time. We asked the sheriff for protective custody and barely had time to leave with just our pickup and few personal belongings. I lost most of my equipment, the oysters, the business and some personal belongings. Therefore you might say I had to evacuate twice under threat of force then and the regular evacuation that followed in May. See exhibit #2

The Portland Assembly Center really stunk because livestock shows were held there and it became a sort of "tourist" attraction for the curious and racists who drove by to see the Japs in the cage and hurl insults. This

experience really affected our family especially my younger sister and brother to be cooped up and humiliated by our fellow citizens. In one respect relocation centers were better for they were located in the desert where others never ventured.

Also when I was in the service in World War 2 our religious freedom was suppressed for being a Buddhist. For I was told at the induction center at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana that I had to choose between a Catholic or Protestant to be put on my dogtag in case I got killed and wanted a service held. I know there were many other Buddhists in the service then but the army then didn't have any Buddhist Chaplains or tried to get any. Possibly they figured this would be a good way to convert some of us which they probably succeeded. By the way this problem was corrected by the time I got called into the Korean conflict six years later.

After the war, even thou a veternan, I ran into many cases of discrimination especially in housing, jobs and promotions. After working 3 or 4 years at Kaiser Aluminum, we were told that they didn't want any Jap- foremans around and that didn't improve until about 1965 when foreman jobs, engineers, etc. were accepted for minorities.

In closing I hope that with all the evidence presented by many individuals the commission is big enough to admit the U.S. government made a gross error by putting us in camp when they let the German and Italian aliens go scot free. I further believe that there should be some form of financial redress for all of us that were put in camp for the mental anguish and humiliation we had to endure, the lost businesses, farms, jobs, professions and wages that were forced upon us and moving us away from our natural enviroment and home. Wages in camp were only meager. See exhibit #3

Even thou all thes indignities were forced upon me during World War 2, I harbor no bitterness now towards the government and health permitting

would be again willing to help the war effort if that ever came about. Our family served 100% for my brother Ben served in World War 2 and my younger brother Bryan in the Korean War.

In the future I certainly hope that no other race or group has to go through what we did in this great democracy of ours.

Ray H. Sojima

[REDACTED]
Spokane, Wash. 99202