

Tempe, Arizona
April 20, 2009

The Honorable Steve King
U.S. House of Representatives
Via Fax 202.225.3193

RE: **Hearing on:** the Treatment of Latin Americans of Japanese Descent, European Americans, and Jewish Refugees During World War II. Wartime Treatment Study Act, H.R. 1425, held on Thursday 03/19/2009 - 12:00 P.M.

Dear Representative King:

In response to the comments and questions brought up during the cited hearing, first and foremost I must affirm, as a WWII German American internee, **I have neither asked for reparations nor have I requested an apology.** The only thing I am seeking is to clear the stain on my family's name. Messrs. Fonte and Horowitz talk of Fascists, Nazis, and Bundists, my father was not a Bundist, not a Nazi, nor a Fascist!

As you noted millions of dollars have been spent researching the internment and relocation of Japanese Americans, **not one red cent of government funds** has been spent on researching the internment of German Americans. Instead we have had to spend personal funds and battle the Department of Justice (DOJ) to obtain German American internment records. The DOJ has employed every technique possible to obfuscate, delay, redact, and misplace German American internment records, including soliciting unsubstantiated opinions from Peter Black, Senior Historian, at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). The comments from Black were used to initiate a smear campaign to damage the chances of our bill, the Wartime Treatment Study Act, from proceeding forward. The DOJ sought out Black, a Senior Historian, at the USHMM to comment on records maintained by the DOJ. Senior Historian Black issued an off the record opinion which was broadcast by the media wire services with the malicious intent of influencing public and congressional opinion against the bill.

During the hearings held by the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC), the precursor to P.L. 100-383, The Civil Liberties Act of 1998, Japanese Americans and their supporters claimed they were interned because of their race while German Americans were interned for cause. Former Representative Norman Mineta added to the deception when he declared we did not lock up German Americans. Neither of these statements is true. Both Japanese Americans and German Americans were interned because they were of the nationality of the enemy! These intentional deceptions were designed to place a dark cloud over the heads of German American internees, many of whom are deceased and cannot defend themselves.

Additionally, during the hearing you asked two questions:

1. How did the War change destinies?
2. What would have happened to some if they were drafted instead of interned?

Destinies:

Dale Barker (late publisher of Zavala County Sentinel newspaper), WWII wounded veteran was exchanged for a German American interned at Crystal City, Texas. Mr. Barker was pretty grateful that his destiny included being exchanged. How many other servicemen or American civilians' lives were improved when their destinies changed on the backs of internee exchanges?

Mrs. Lea Lunz (teacher at Crystal City internment), who taught both Japanese American and German American children, was often asked by family and friends how she could possibly teach the little "Japs" and "Nazi" children, while her husband was serving in the United States Army. As destiny would have it, Mrs Lunz' spouse, a German American, served in Germany with the U.S. Army, where his head was almost blown off. Mr. Lunz survived and Mrs. Lunz cared for him the rest of his living days while continuing to teach the children of the Crystal City Texas internment camp.

Mr. Werner Ahrens a German seaman who had been interned volunteered to join the U.S. Army—served in the Philippine Islands.

Max Enninger, a German émigré, who served in battle in Germany during World War II. At the war's end, Enninger met his destiny when he was told by his superiors that he was being shipped to Austria as he would not be allowed to serve in Germany!

JACHMAN, ISADORE S. Medal of Honor Recipient. Rank and organization: Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army, Company B, 513th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Place and date: Flamierge, Belgium, 4 January 1945. Entered service at: Baltimore, Md. Birth: **Berlin, Germany.** G.O. No.: 25, 9 June 1950. Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty at Flamierge, Belgium, on 4 January 1945, when his company was pinned down by enemy artillery, mortar, and small arms fire, 2 hostile tanks attacked the unit, inflicting heavy casualties. S/Sgt. Jachman, seeing the desperate plight of his comrades, left his place of cover and with total disregard for his own safety dashed across open ground through a hail of fire and seizing a bazooka from a fallen comrade advanced on the tanks, which concentrated their fire on him. Firing the weapon alone, he damaged one and forced both to retire. S/Sgt. Jachman's heroic action, in which he suffered fatal wounds, disrupted the entire enemy attack, reflecting the highest credit upon himself and the parachute infantry.

Jacobs Family which was destroyed by internment. My father registered for the draft at Local Board #221, Brooklyn, N.Y. My brother and I collected 3 tons of material

for the War effort. My destiny was to be expatriated to a war-torn starving Germany. We arrived in Bremerhaven, Germany aboard the S.S. Aiken Victory. We were “greeted” by American soldiers armed to the hilt with machine guns, grease guns, carbines, and pistols. They shouted obscenities at us while we came down the gang plank; then they loaded us into Army 2.5 ton trucks, I was forced to sit at the back during freezing weather...there was no protection from the elements. Fifty miles later at Bremen, Germany we were loaded into boxcars, with no facilities, no heat, and the soldiers constantly shouting at us. Then in this stench-filled, frigid boxcar we were transported for some two nights and three days to Ludwigsburg, Germany. From there I was taken to a prison, thrown into a cell, all alone. When the U.S. Army guard would take me to eat, I had to walk with hands upon my head, and he would shout “Shut up, you little Nazi.” when I tried to tell him I was an American. And then he would say, “If you don’t behave, we will hang you from the hangman’s tree!” The destiny of Art Jacobs an American child was to experience the horrors, trauma and devastation of war; I met starving women and children; and those who were in Buchenwald...

In 1947, when I was but 14 years old, I left my parents in Germany to return to the country of my birth, the country I love. Mr. King, perhaps you should ask - how would Art Jacobs, the 14 year old American child's life, have been different if he was not separated from his mother for 11 years? Do you have children? Just imagine for a moment one of your children experiencing my destiny during WWII. Then tell me with a straight face that my internment experiences were harmless and benign.

There were many families who were interned who suffered worse—most Americans can not even imagine how it was to be shipped to a Germany under siege!

Draft vs. Internment

Often sons of internees were serving in the military while their parents were locked in internment camps. Fred Braemer, bombardier of the lead plane in the Doolittle Raid, demonstrates the contradictions of the WWII enemy alien internment program. Braemer was one of many who had a father/stepfather interned. Erich Braemer was a German American interned at Ft. Lincoln, Bismarck, North Dakota. He was arrested by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on December 9, 1941 in Seattle, because he was on the FBI’s Custodial Index—an index that was declared useless by Francis Biddle, U.S. Attorney General. Internee Braemer was released from internment on April 6, 1942, twelve days before the historic Doolittle Raid. Apparently, the Roosevelt administration was not interested in Erich's internment information reaching the media. If the raid failed or succeeded, the potential for the media to exploit or investigate his father’s internment might have been damaging. Fortunately, the raid, was a success for American morale and war bond fundraising. Lucky for Erich, his son was now an American hero, hence his internment was cut very short, particularly in comparison to others who had sons serving. Even those who had sons who fought in the Battle of the Bulge were not assured release. Notice that even today, 67 years after the Doolittle Raid, the father of one of the Raiders kept the stigma of internment quiet so as to not tarnish the family name.

During WWII enemy aliens were required by law to register for the draft and they did. To even suggest that German Americans would have preferred internment over military service is a hypothetical that is totally unsubstantiated. Few men, with any sense at all, are anxious to go to war but that does not mean they prefer the utter boredom and isolation of internment. Obviously, most Americans do not know what it is like to be behind barbed-wire. It is horrible to have nothing to do mentally or physically, to know that those you love are anxious about you, to be anxious about them, and yet have no way of working towards your release day after stultifying day. Here is what Senator McCain wrote to me. McCain message:

Mr. Jacobs, I hope you understand my true belief that you and I share a common bond. And in the future, I hope that we may further share each other's thoughts. I look with pride to a nation's future that rests on those that endured hardship, and those who seek to preserve its memories.

German American men, who were of military age, were subject to the draft during WWII. By law, they should have been treated like all others eligible for the draft, no different.

Mr. King, despite all of consequences of internment I remember the Gold Star mothers of my neighborhood in Brooklyn. Their sons and daughters died for us, all of us, so that we could have freedom, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—rights that were denied to my family!

In conclusion, I want you to know that in October 1951, I enlisted in the United States Air Force; in December 1962 I received my commission from the President of the United States; in June of 1973, I retired as a Major after almost 22 years of honorable service to my country, the United States of America.

Sincerely,

Arthur D. Jacobs
Major, USAF Retired
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CC: Congressman Dan Lungren (Fax: (202) 226-1298)