

(Re)Collection Newsletter

A Women for Genuine Security Publication

March 2008



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About Recollection

(RE)Collection is a newsletter that illuminates the work of those committed to a culture of peace. (RE)Collection developed from the collaboration of U.S. based activists who are part of the WGS connection. WGS envisions a world of genuine security based on justice, respect for others across national boundaries, and economic planning that meets people's needs, especially women and children. WGS work toward the creation of a society free of militarism, violence, and all forms of sexual exploitation, and for the safety, well-being, and long-term sustainability of our communities. Email: recollection@genuinesecurity.org

Editorial Staff

ELLEN-RAE CACHOLA: Ellen-Rae is a graduate student, archivist, technology activist, and cultural worker. She has been part of the International Women's Network Against Militarism as one of the Hawaii delegates since the 2004 meeting in Manila. Currently, she is in San Francisco studying at the California Institute of Integral Studies in the Social and Cultural Anthropology Program. Her specializations are diasporic identities within Asia-Pacific demilitarization movements, cross-cultural and multi-issue organizational building, and intersections of militaristic and capitalistic cultures.

ANNIE FUKUSHIMA: Fukushima is a doctoral student in Ethnic Studies and a Designated Emphasis in Gender, Women & Sexuality. Fukushima's research connects gender, migration, visual culture, social movements, and transnational feminisms. As a scholar activist Fukushima is the founder of a grassroots initiative, SAFEHS (Students & Artists Fighting to End Human Slavery). She is also a first team responder to human trafficking with SAGE, the Programs Coordinator for Narika at Berkeley, a student outreach and educational program on issues of sex exploitation, domestic abuse, human trafficking and intersecting violences that impact the community, co-organizer for the San Francisco Fight Human Trafficking Meet Up, a grassroots meet up whose goal is to fight human trafficking through education, volunteers with Asian Women's Shelter, San Francisco and serves as the Board of Advisor for Chinese Adoptee Links International. Her scholarly activism also includes her participation in various working groups including: The Visuality & Alterity Working Group, Graduate Asian Pacific Islander Collective and Lyric: Women of Ethnic Studies.

MAIKIKO JAMES: Maikiko is a Bay Area born and bred Artist/Activist and is the progeny of activist parents, stepparents and godparents. She spends her daytimes in development and grantwriting, and her nighttimes performing, playwriting, and screenwriting. She graduated from NYU with a degree in Dramatic Writing and Asian Pacific American Studies.

AILEEN SUZARA: I'm a second generation Filipina American, environmental justice advocate, and member of the Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity (FACES). Hawai'i and the Philippines are two landscapes that first opened my eyes to militarism and its impacts on our bodies, cultures and environment. I believe that women's voices and creativity are among the most powerful, elemental forces in existence.

Country Reports

Compiled by Ellen-Rae Cachola

GUAM

Asking the wrong questions on the build-up

February 15, 2008

Marianas Variety

Instead, the underlying questions and concerns are mostly those of the military itself and some of the more powerful business people. They include underlying questions like "how can we get enough people to do the building and who would cause the build-up the least trouble?" not, "how much will inequality grow during the build-up?"

<http://recollectionwgs.blogspot.com/2008/02/asking-wrong-questions-on-build-up.html>

Guam's Women Leaders Say No to U.S. Military Build-Up

Date: Mon, 11 Feb 2008 16:17:15 -0800

From: Deborah Berman Santana <santana@mills.edu>

Maga'haga, a short film that documents the meeting, shows how the decision to increase the U.S. military presence on Guam is being made without the consent of Guam's people. The film also illustrates the unwavering strength and resistance of the island's women.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SW5aFuW5MDM>

Plastic Recycling on Guam

February 11, 2008

Famoksaiyan Friends

Recycling of plastic bottles is now possible on Guam

<http://recollectionwgs.blogspot.com/2008/02/plastic-recycling-on-guam.html>

Join us for a historic trans-pacific call on CNMI federalization issues- 2/11

February 11, 2008

Bill Omnibus bill S. 2483 Title 7, if enacted, will greatly impact CNMI's labor and immigration practices as well as the indigenous and foreign worker community in the islands. Foreign workers make up one-third of the island chains' population and hail from Asian countries such as the Philippines, Bangladesh, China and Indonesia. Many of them have been long time residents of CNMI. If enacted, this bill could require all foreign workers regardless of length of residency in the islands to return to their home countries with no hope of accessing a pathway to citizenship.

<http://recollectionwgs.blogspot.com/2008/02/join-us-for-historic-trans-pacific-call.html>

Activists bare report on GI atrocities against Japanese

By Mar-Vic Cagurangan

Marianas Variety News Staff

Report written by Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence is relevant to the island of Guam as it prepares for arrival of 8,000 Marines from Okinawa. Histories and contemporaries of military abuses by Japanese and U.S. armies link Okinawa and Guam.

<http://recollectionwgs.blogspot.com/2008/02/activists-report-on-gi-atrocities.html>

HAWAII

Are We Eating Genetically Modified Organisms? Hawai'i Consumers Deserve the Right to Know!

February 27, 2008

Please ask Senators Jill Tokuda and Ron Menor to pass SB3232 and SB3233. SB3232 would require labeling for all genetically engineered whole foods sold in Hawaii. SB3233 would compel companies to reveal the location of test plots and production of genetically engineered crops."

http://salsa.democracynaction.org/o/642/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=23285

JAPAN

U.S. warship Nimitz makes port call in Sasebo

The Japan Times: Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2008

The U.S. Navy nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Nimitz made its first port call at Sasebo, Nagasaki Prefecture, on Monday.



Local organizations protest the port call of the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Nimitz at Sasebo, Nagasaki Prefecture. KYODO PHOTO, [The Japan Times](http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20080212a7.html)

<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20080212a7.html>

U.S. base proponent takes Iwakuni mayoral race

By Eric Johnston

Yoskihiko Fukuda defeats Katsusuke Ihara in the Iwakuni mayoral election. Fukuda's plan for economic revitalization includes subsidies from Tokyo, including additional U.S. troops.

<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20080211a5.html>

Japan Leaders angry over alleged rape by US Marine

Agence France-Presse

Posted date: February 12, 2008

Another act of sexual violence in Okinawa compels Prime Minister Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura to rethink U.S. military location plans.

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/world/view/20080212-118440/Japan-leaders-angry-over-alleged-rape-by-US-Marine>

U.S. Marine accused of raping a 14-year-old girl in Okinawa Prefecture

February 12, 2008

Case of Staff Sgt. Tyrone Hadnott who was accused of raping a Junior High School girl in Okinawa. Hadnott was arrested and senior officials of Okinawa Prefecture met U.S. consulate to prevent recurrences of violence by U.S. military forces.

<http://www.hawaiiistandard.com/2008/02/12/us-marine-accused-of-raping-14-year-old-girl-in-okinawa-prefecture/>

JAPAN *cont.*

Urgent Appeal for Information About Military Crimes and Bases November 7, 2007

An email message asking for help on information between military bases and crime world wide. This is because American soldiers raped a 19 year old girl in Hiroshima. Simultaneous to when Iwakuni base is planning a major expansion.

<http://recollectionwgs.blogspot.com/2008/02/urgent-appeal-for-information-about.html>

KOREA

Press Statement: Denouncing the Seoul Metropolitan City Government's Water Privatization Plan

August 10, 2007

The Joint Action against Water Privatization in Korea held a press conference on 17th October against Seoul City Government's plan to corporatize and privatize city's water.

<http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article7991>

OKINAWA

A Message from the Women of Okinawa February 21, 2008

Okinawan women respond to another rape of an Okinawan, junior high school girl by U.S. soldier. We protest the sexual violence against an Okinawan girl by a U.S. Marine. We demand withdrawal of the U.S. military from Okinawa

<http://www.counterpunch.org/cpnews02212008.html>

Protests spreading in Okinawa over alleged rape by U.S. Marine Feb 12, 2008

NAHA, Japan

Protests continued to spread Wednesday in Okinawa Prefecture in the wake of the alleged rape by a U.S. Marine of a 14-year-old girl over the weekend.

http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D8UPEO9G0&show_article=1

Federal Judge Rules Against U.S. Defense Department Plans for Airbase in Habitat of Okinawa Dugong; Species Considered Cultural Icon by Okinawan People

San Francisco Judge Marilyn Hall Patel today issued a final ruling in Okinawa Dugong v. Gates, N.D.Cal., C-03-4350, finding the Department of Defense in violation of the National Historic Preservation Act and requiring it to consider impacts of a new airbase on the endangered Okinawa dugong in order to avoid or mitigate any harm.

<http://www.earthjustice.org/news/press/2008/federal-judge-rules-against-us-defense-department-plans-for-airbase-in-habitat-of-okinawa-dugong.html>

Translated Statement of OWAAMV (Okinawan Women Act Against Military Violence) February 13, 2008

The OWAAMV protest the sexual violence against an Okinawan girl by a U.S. Marine and demand withdrawal of the U.S. military from Okinawa.

<http://recollectionwgs.blogspot.com/2008/02/okinawa-women-protest-statement-against.html>

PHILIPPINES *cont.*

Filipina to file rape case against US serviceman in Japan February 27, 2008

A Filipina allegedly raped by a US serviceman in Okinawa is to take her case to a Japanese court, the Department of Foreign Affairs said Wednesday.

http://globalnation.inquirer.net/news/breakingnews/view_article.php?article_id=121553

US Troops: Terrorizing Women and Children Enlivening Prostitution February 22, 2008

Press Statement

Due to the Visiting Forces Agreement, another shooting occurs in Sulu, killing 9 people. The fact finding Mission of the Citizens' Peace Watch reveal that Filipino and American soldiers fired at civilians.

<http://recollectionwgs.blogspot.com/2008/02/us-troops-terrorizing-women-and.html>

Rage against Rape, Rage against US Bases and War February 21, 2008

Kaisa Ka

Kaisa-ka sends solidarity to survivor and family of recent Okinawan rape. They link the presence of US troops to rapes of women and children. To keep soldiers in "fighting form," they must also have "rest and recreation."

<http://recollectionwgs.blogspot.com/2008/02/rage-against-rape-rage-against-us-bases.html>

"What are they hiding?" Knocking on a US base's door in Zambo, a citizens' group is shut out February, 19, 2008

Press Release

Members of a citizens' fact-finding mission walked up inside Camp Navarro in Zamboanga City and confirmed the presence of a little known fortified US military base with communication facilities inside the Philippine military camp.

<http://recollectionwgs.blogspot.com/2008/02/what-are-they-hiding-knocking-on-us.html>

Philippines on alert over protest

An assassination plot is attempted to scare people from coming to the protests on Arroyo's corruption scandal. Bilateral trade between China and the Philippines could be affected company because Chinese company ZTE Corp gave kick backs to an election chief and Arroyo's husband if they could clear a national broadband contract for the company.

<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/8935C1FC-090D-47D8-9364-7344C2C25F67.htm>

Philippines Update

February 9, 2008

Militarisation of Philippine mining ensue as turf wars between "rebels" and company guards.

<http://www.minesandcommunities.org/Action/press1864.htm>

Thousands Protest Against Philippines' Arroyo 2008

By Manny Mogato
The Star Online

Thousands of people rally against Arroyo for corruption during her election. However, political analysts say the president's position appears safe due to support from the military and the lower house of Congress and the apathy of many Filipinos, who are sick of the political merry-go-round in Manila.



A child holds a placard calling for the ouster of Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo during a demonstration along a street in Quezon City, Metro Manila February 14, 2008. (REUTERS/John Javellana) http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2008/2/15/worldupdates/2008-02-15T160054Z_01_NOOTR_RTRMDNC_0_-319661-2&sec=Worldupdates

Philippine military recruits residents to defend mines near their communities

February 5, 2008

By Carlos H. Conde, International Herald Tribune

In response to attacks on mining companies by insurgent groups in the Philippines, the military has agreed to recruit and train residents in communities near the mines as a defence force for the companies. The use of these militias, said Clemente Bautista, of the Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment, "will only result in more human rights violations against communities, civilians, and organizations opposed to mining operations."

<http://www.ihb.com/articles/2008/02/05/business/mine.php>

AFP proves 'ugly American' incident

January 26, 2008

Philippine Daily Inquirer

Car accident involving a U.S. soldier stationed in Mindanao for Balikatan exercises leaves the victim at the scene and not paying for his medical expenses.

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/regions/view/20080126-115026/AFP-probes-ugly-American-incident>

Solon [congresswoman] hits plan to allow mining firms to have militias

January 31, 2008

By Fernan Marasigan, Reporter, Business Mirror

"Military activities threatened the Lumad and peasant communities in the towns of Tago, Cagwait, Marihatag, San Agustin, Lianga and San Miguel in Surigao del Sur, who are actively opposing the mining operations," Ilagan said.

<http://www.minesandcommunities.org/Action/press1864.htm>

Another Cordilleran murdered in Canada-report

January 24, 2008

By Vincent Cabreza, Northern Luzon Bureau

Migrant worker Arcelie Laoagan from Sagada, Philippines was allegedly found dead behind a church in Calgary, Alberta. Philippine Overseas Employment Administration has records of Laoagan in Hong Kong, but not to Canada. This case ties to Jocelyn Dulnuan, another Philippine migrant worker murder in Mississauga City. Police arrested two Latin American immigrants for the murder.

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/news/breakingnews/view/20080124-114566/Another-Cordilleran-murdered-in-Canada-report>

Statement on the Death of Cherrie Ann-Guzman-Coleman
November 19, 2007

The Philippine Network on Peace and Security calls on the Okinawan and Japanese authorities to investigate the death of Cherrie-Ann Guzman. Also, they call upon Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to assist in determining the actual cause of death and to protect and promote the well being of their citizens working in military facilities around the world.

<http://recollectionwgs.blogspot.com/2008/02/statement-on-death-of-cherrie-ann.html>

UNITED STATES

Rape in the U.S. military: How a fraternal culture and a habit of blaming the victim leave sexual violence unexamined and unpunished

January 30, 2008

By Lucinda Marshall

Anne K. Ream's recent Op-Ed sheds much needed light on how the U.S. military continues to trivialize rape and sexual assault committed by members of the armed forces.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-oe-w-marshall30jan30.0.510658.story>

Gender and U.S. Bases in Asia-Pacific

Ellen-Rae Cachola, Lizelle Festejo, Annie Fukushima, Gwyn Kirk, and Sabina Perez | March 14, 2008

Editor: John Feffer

<http://www.fpif.org/fpifxt/5069>

Disclaimer: These country reports do not reflect the scope of what is occurring in the network, only updates that have been sent via email and translated into English. If you would like to read more details on the country reports, click the titles of each article to be redirected to online news articles or our (Re)Collection blog:

<http://recollectionwgs.blogspot.com/>

To submit an article or press statement, please send to recollection@genuinesecurity.org.

Myla was a migrant from the Philippines who migrated to Hawaii at the age of 16 years old. Soon after graduation she enlisted herself to join the army reserve in spite of her dreams of becoming a nun at the Daughters of St Paul. Because of her language capabilities of being able to speak both Tagalog and Sebuano the military targeted her. Myla is in a family where there are “too many to count” that have been recruited into the military, starting as early as the Vietnam War. Myla joined the military because of the benefits.

In 2005, Myla was deployed to Iraq. E-mails from the sisters at St. Paul shared with Myla’s family conveyed that she was scared about going to Iraq and was surely going to enter the order as soon as she finished serving her duty in Iraq. She had also been in school for years working on her Associates degree that she never acquired.

Before Myla was deployed to Iraq, her cousin said, “The day she was deployed she called us and her voice

Country Highlight – Hawai`i

10,459 Miles From the Hot War: How Hawai`i Is Impacted During Militarized “Peace”

By Annie Fukushima

“Militarism means that a system of governance relies on the use of violent force to defend national borders and enforce foreign policy” – Darlene Rodriguez

“Militarism is a melding of socio-economic-political interests that operates as a nationalist engine, known as the military-industrial-media-congressional complex... It is a culture with tenets of patriarchy, hierarchy” – pete shimazaki doktor

A mini-survey [1] of different Hawai`i residents and their perceptions of how militarism impacts Hawai`i students/people resulted in a diversity of definitions of what militarism means: it is the exploitation of one nation-state over another that includes the exploitation of the indigenous/locals, it is a part of the everyday, it impacts families, it depends on notions of “protecting” the dominant nation and occupied territories, it is an expression of imperialism, and it is an institution.

91% of participants felt that the current war does not keep us/U.S. safe where the “war against terror” in fact breeds terror” and another interviewee conveyed, “They only keep political & economic & patriarchal values ‘safe’ in a non-sustainable manner”. Those that felt safe responded that it was because the war was not in our own backyard; they were also part of the 55% who knew less than 4 people recruited into the military.

How far is militarism from Hawaii’s own backyard? Recruitment tactics have made their way into the everyday through the methods of: family, campus recruiters and tablers, the local recruitment center, “Drill Team” members of the JROTC, Junior ROTC, pizza parties sponsored by recruiters, ad campaigns, in-class presentations, and recruiting stunts that include, but not limited to: rock climbing, push-up/pull-up contest giveaways, hallway banners, military band concerts, memorials, video games, and commercials.

Survey questions were divided to direct inquiries at educators as well as at the person in the everyday. While the educators surveyed knew at least 4-5 students that were recruited or “more than I know”, the racial diversity of students recruited ranged, with Asian and Pacific Islanders (PIs) the most heavily targeted with white students close behind [2]. Such a statistic is not surprising for Asians (40%) and Whites (28%) that constitute majorities in Hawaii, however, PIs only constitute 9% of the local population suggesting that these populations are heavily targeted. But the tactics are not merely innocent. One interviewee shared his experience: “I’ve sat in and observed recruiting pitches: they actively employ tactics of fear and intimidation. For example, the recruiter calculated the realities of a minimum wage paycheck compared to a list of monthly expenditures that clearly exceeded the capacity to survive on a minimum wage paycheck.” While the benefits are promoted, what is at stake is clearly not. Another interviewee shared: “I think that while the military promotes the benefits of the military, they don’t say what the long-term effects will be for people deployed. And there is not enough support for the families.”

Families impacted by militarism often have a long genealogy of members serving in the military [3] where family members or friends in the military, in which those who knew someone in the military, 27% knew “too many to count” or estimated that 75% of the people that they know have been recruited into the military or discharged. While the numbers are based off a particular survey based on networks, what these numbers suggest is that those who are impacted by militarism from having a range of family members recruited into the military, are people heavily affected: 82% of those surveyed knew of an immediate family

was very different. She sounded as if had aged 20 years as her voice had dropped several pitched. Her voice was almost unrecognizable and I suspect she was very scared."

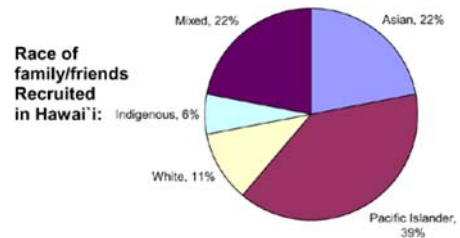
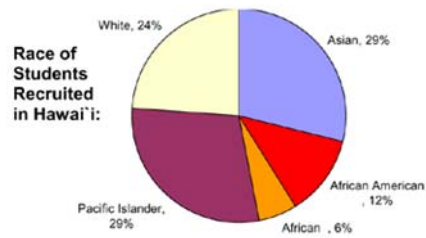
Myla served the Army Reserve Military Intelligence Unit in Iraq. When asked by family, "from what it says in the news, that sounds really bad", Myla responded: "not that bad... just interview people". She was in Iraq for only for a month. On December 24, 2005, Myla was killed by a Rocket Propelled Grenade that struck the armored humvee she was riding in. She was 24 years old. She died on the way to the hospital on the road to Kirkuk. Her family doesn't know what her mission was.

We thank the family of Myla for sharing this story with us.

Resources:
DMZ Hawaii:
www.dmzhawaii.org

CHOICES Hawaii
www.myspace.com/hoiceshawaii

Maui Peace Actions
www.mauipeace.org/



member in the military [4].

While anyone and everyone is targeted for recruitment, the recruiters are not racist in who can join, what do the statistics of who does join say? Similar to the findings on educators and their students, a majority of those heavily targeted by the military are Pls (including Filipinos). 36% of those surveyed conveyed that those they knew who were recruited, were recruited out of high school (27% were 17-18 years old when recruited). A younger interview informs us: "Most kids are forced into it because they leave High-school without a plan, and have no way to make money, so why not go to the military and serve our country?" Pls are also the most economically disenfranchised group in Hawai'i.

The linking of race and class with recruitment is necessary in order to understand why more Pls join the military. The military promotes benefits, in which 82% of those surveyed conveyed the reason for their family/friends joining the military were economic, other reasons included personal beliefs, a sense of "honor"/patriotic duty, and limited career choices. Although some conveyed that the military made family/friends more "disciplined" and for some, even more "adventurous", or they met their wives, others experienced increased secrecy, the breaking a part of families (divorce), members suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, the inability for fathers to be fathers, and for Kanaka Maoli [5] increased displacement of their people in which many that join the military do not return. One interviewer conveyed, "Overall, 90% of them are not pleased with it, or the way the military treats them. A few guys who were released from the reserves are still under contract, and can be called back in. They were also deployed for over a year, and it doesn't help them find work, or return to their previous situations."

In order to understand how militarism is a complex institution that makes its way into our homes on the television and newspapers, and even into our leisure time as advertisements exist in theater, for the people of Hawai'i, "Hawai'i's economy is based off the military, tourism, and a tiny bit of exports, it affects everyone." And the long term effects it has are generational, where an interviewee conveyed: "If we do not support and educate our youth, it will perpetuate another generation saturated with militarism."

And while the cycles are astounding, this survey is only a beginning of conversations that are to be had. While 100% of those surveyed also knew of someone deployed to the Middle East, other countries included: Cuba, Germany, Guam, Japan, Korea, Philippines, UK, Vietnam (72% knew of someone who had been deployed to Asia, and 18% to the Pacific Island). We can not understand what is going on in the Middle East without recognizing the role the Asia-Pacific plays in militarism.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Method of snow-balling was used to conduct survey, 11 interviews total. Of those surveyed, 36% were students, 36% were teachers/educators, and 27% were other occupations including coordinators, Information Technology workers, or workers in social services. 64% of the participants are female, and the age range was from 18 to 45, with 28 years old being the average age. Their race is diverse, Asian (27%), Pacific Islander (27%), White/Anglo-Whites (9%), Mixed (27%), and unknown (10%). All participants are kept confidential.

[2] See diagram "Race of Students Recruited"

[3] Air Force (12%), Army (35%), Army Reserves (6%), Marines (6%), National Guard (23%), Navy (18%),

[4] Extended family member (54%), includes: Grandfather, Uncle, Nephew, Father's Partner's Children, Cousins, brother-in-law); Peers (73%); and neighbors (18%). Numbers do not add up to 100% because the number is based on the percentage of interviewees that know extended family member, immediate family member, peer, or neighbor in the military.

[5] Indigenous Hawaiian.

Insight Interview

Gwyn Kirk

Interview by Maikiko James

Gwyn Kirk is a teacher-writer-activist-scholar concerned with gender, racial and environmental justice in the service of genuine security and creating a sustainable world. She is a co-founder of Women for Genuine Security.

1. Briefly, what is militarism?

I think of militarism as a collection of institutions, investments, culture and values. It's much bigger than war; war is the apex, the climax, the point of all the preparation. Militarism is the underlying system that generates wars. Its components are economic, systemic, people's investments, patriotism, and also political investments or beliefs.

2. Where, who, what, how do you come from? (interpret as you wish)

Being from North of England, I think that does give me a critical perspective on the U.S., coming from outside. In the early eighties, women started a Women's Peace Camp at Greenham Common. A group of women saw an announcement in the paper that nuclear weapons were to be based on this formerly common land, then a USAF base. So they organized this walk, from Cardiff to Greenham. It took them 2 weeks. When they got to the gates of the base, they had a letter for the commander, but he would not come out and talk to them. At some point somebody said to them, "You can stay there as long as you like, but it's not going to make any difference." So they decided to stay. It lasted for about 15 years. I first went there in 1982.

My father was a conscientious objector in WWII. My parents had no direct connection to the military, but virtually every British family lost someone in that war, so that was a connection.

In 1981, for a brief time, I was a roadie for a punk band. They were called Poison Girls. The lead singer called herself Vi Subversa. She was in her late 40s at that point. They played in grungy venues; they made zines and flyers about disarmament, animal rights, reproductive rights, sexism. It was a kind of popular education. I first went with them to Greenham.

3. Which cause, issue, group of people or organization is currently closest to your heart?

WGS. What I love about WGS are the stories of women's daily lives and how they're affected by US bases. Also, thinking about ways to organize that empower us, and making our opinions matter. There are two things we talked a lot about at Greenham. One was the structure of domination. The same dynamic is involved in domestic violence or rape, so you can make this very clear connection from personal violence to international-scale violence. The other issue was the fence. The base was about 9 miles around the perimeter, and there was a fence all around it. We're supposed to stay on our side of the fence, and not to ask what goes on on the other side, even though our tax money pays for it. The fence was a powerful symbol of this separation.

Women did a lot of direct action at Greenham, including cutting down the fence. Often in those actions, people don't talk about their vulnerabilities, but we decided that we needed to talk about that, so we could take better care of each other.

4. Do you think women have a different responsibility in global politics or relationships?

At grassroots level, there are many more women in peace and environmental organizations than men. In mixed groups, women don't always get into the leadership positions. I don't think it's because women are closer to nature than men. I do think it's the way women have been raised to think of themselves as people in relationship, whether it's with children or family or the wider community. One of the women at Greenham said to me, "You know, I'm supposed to be responsible for my kids and get them inoculated against the measles or the mumps but what's the point of that if the wider world is so hell bent on military options. I'm supposed to keep them safe. But I can't do it in this really major way."

What is the key to creating a strong relationship with a colleague from another country?

Being able to listen, going out of your way to meet people, going to places they want to take you to. Trying to understand what they're telling you and why it's important to them. Keeping up your end of any agreement, doing what you said you'd do. Consistency, continuation, not forgetting. When Margo (Okazawa-Rey) was in Korea on a Fulbright Fellowship, one of the women she met said to her, "People come from the US to do projects, and then we never hear from them again." There's recognizing the time and effort women devote to teaching us about their situations, and what one owes as an outsider, about reciprocity.

5. What are you most hopeful about?

The world could be organized in a very different way, many people know this and are working on it small ways. It's really just a matter of using the resources we have and using our talents, creativity, imagination etc. to organize things differently. I'm very inspired by people who are doing pieces of this work. What we're up against is huge, I guess it doesn't do underestimate that, but it's not where I want to focus my attention. I'm much more interested in things people are doing that are working.

6. Does being from the UK shape your perception of the US military in any way? How?

I don't have any respect for it, not having absorbed that, growing up. Nowadays, I do say "we" —I've been in the US for 20 years—but I never had to pledge allegiance to the flag as a child, for example. But I'm still learning what the British military and British colonialism have done to others. Women from the Pacific came to Greenham and really yelled at us, "Where were you when..." And there was a whole list of atrocities. Those women challenged us, rightly, "We know more about your history than you do."

7. How did the WGS network get started?

Well, a longer version of this story is on the website. In a nutshell: after meeting women in Korea in 1994, Margo and others organized a speaking tour for two of them in the US. I was somewhat involved in that too. Then, in '96, a group of women from Okinawa came to the US on a Peace Caravan. I saw a brief article in the SF Chronicle about it. Martha (Matsuoka) and Debbie were involved in organizing a meeting in Berkeley where the women talked about military violence against women and environmental destruction caused by the US military presence in Okinawa. Margo and I went, and signed up to get more involved. After hearing all these stories, we wondered whether women from Korea and Okinawa were talking to each other, and women from the Philippines too. We applied for a little grant to cover fares and women from Okinawa agreed to host a meeting in 1997.

The next year we met in DC, because that's where they wanted to go. In the States we know how difficult it is to get attention there, even though it's so important symbolically. I'd say we didn't get a whole lot of attention, but we made some good connections. We held a Congressional briefing sponsored by Barbara Lee and John Conyers. Congressman Conyers came, not just his aides. He told us, "Until you can organize yourselves so that some members of this House lose their seats over this issue, you won't get anywhere."

8. What do you think is the network's ultimate objective?

A genuinely secure world. (Laughs a little). You know, one tends to think in terms of end points, another way of looking at it is, what is the process? The network's objective may be more of a process: to grow in depth and knowledge of each other, not necessarily in size, though that may happen. To model a group of women coming together across very significant boundaries, inequalities, lines of difference. Chandra Mohanty speaks of a "common context of struggle"; it's more than solidarity, it's about US women working out our own opposition to US militarism. If we can work together in a way that doesn't reproduce inequalities that would be a big step. The Network should be a vehicle for women's voices, creativity, expression.

9. What do you think it would take to get the general public to be aware of the effects the US military has on countries where it continues to maintain bases? What do you think it would take to get it to care?

Information, a massive public education campaign. By itself, though, information doesn't change people. Meeting people and coming to care about them does; being challenged by people who matter to us. It's important to think about yourself as a person who has every right to know what's happening on the other side of the fence. Individualism is terrible in that we think we're only responsible for our own survival. And then there are all the distractions. There's something people are hungry for, and right now, in the US, it's "satisfied" by shopping or getting thin, or whatever. Relationships, creativity, those matter.

10. What are key components of United States military or foreign policy that need to change in order to achieve genuine security?

What do you think would be most effective in creating this change?

The US is only one nation, so, first, US dominance and ideas about power hierarchy have to go. Then, redistribution of wealth - this planet still has an incredible ability to provide what people need, and the potential to heal given the right treatment. There is enough for everyone to eat, not enough for people's greed. Revolution is what's needed, revolutionary thinking that is, not the kind with barricades.

11. What are the most important aspects of a genuinely secure society or world?

Everyone having access to the necessities of life; being able to develop our full human potential, using our creativity, imagination. We're hindered so much in the current system that I don't think we know what full human potential is. More than basic human security it's really about thriving. The UN Development Project model defines four elements of security - economic, environmental, respect for culture, protection from avoidable harm, and everything beyond natural disasters is avoidable.

12. What is personal about this work for you?

I do this because it makes me feel alive, and it brings me into contact with other people who are really alive, and that's a fantastic gift. It's also led to great opportunities. Once I was with a group in Vieques. We jumped into the sea in a place with marvelous phosphorescence that glowed when you moved, so it looked like little stars. And I thought, "Here I am from the North of England with people from so far away, it's amazing." Another time, I went to the top of Mauna Kea with Hawaiian activists. Just before the sunrise they started chanting, and at the same moment the sun started coming up over the horizon. It was like they chanted the sun up. What comes out of these experiences is a sense of deep connection to the earth. This world is a miracle - it really is worth saving.

Calendar March 2008

Compiled By Aileen Suzara

Exhibit: "Women On War"

When: February 15-March 29, 2008.

Where: Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts, 2868 Mission St., San Francisco, CA.

About: The exhibit features artwork of wars past and present, seen through women's eyes.

More info: www.missionculturalcenter.org

Conference: "Postcolonial" Futures in a Not-Yet Postcolonial World: Locating the Intersections of Ethnic, Indigenous and Postcolonial Studies

When: March 5-7, 2008.

Where: University of California, San Diego, CA.

About: Hosted by UCSD's Department of Ethnic Studies, the event brings together scholars and activists whose work discusses intersections of ethnic, indigenous and postcolonial studies.

More info: futures0308.blogspot.com

Exhibit: Celebrating International Women's Day: Women Empowered

When: March 7, 2008. 6-7pm.

Where: World Affairs Council, 2nd Floor Auditorium, 312 Sutter St., San Francisco, CA.

About: Phil Borges' photography exhibit depicts women from Afghanistan to Ecuador who are enriching their lives and those around them.

More info: World Affairs Council, 415.293.4600, www.itsyourworld.org

23rd Empowering Women of Color Conference, "decolonizing creativity: Fiery Womyn, Fierce Expressions"

When: March 8, 2008. 930-530pm.

Where: UC Berkeley, Martin Luther King Building, Berkeley, CA.

About: EWOC is the longest running annual women of color conference in the US, featuring a diversity of speakers, workshops, networking opportunities, artists, and performers.

More info: ewocc.berkeley.edu

Rally and Nonviolent Direction Action at Richmond Chevron Refinery

When: March 15, 2008

Where: Chevron Refinery, W. Cutting and S. Garrard Blvd., Richmond, CA

About: Organized by Greenaction, West County Toxics Coalition, Amazon Watch, and more, the action supports Richmond community efforts to stop the expansion of Chevron's refineries, and highlights corporate connection with the war in Iraq.

More info: Jess Bell, jessicambell@gmail.com, 415-425-8837

United For Peace and Justice 5TH Anniversary of the Iraq War

When: March 19, 2008

Where: Washington DC and national events.

About: Mobilizations mark the 5th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

More info: www.unitedforpeace.org

Its My Life: Alternatives to Military

(Re)Collection e-newsletter

When: Wed. March 26th 7-9 PM

Where: American Friends Service Committee 65 9th St San Francisco, CA 94103

About: Newsletter & Book launch with free food and drinks, opportunities to build relationships, and Inter-organizational Collaborative Projects

More info: recollection@genuinesecurity.org

Pilgrimage to Sacred Sites of API Immigration on the Sacramento River Delta

When: March 29-30. 830 am-6pm.

Where: Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta area, CA.

About: The Delta pilgrimage honors and remembers transnational migration and rural labor experiences, with a focus on Chinese and Filipino migrant laborers of 1860-1940s. More info: <http://www.psr.edu/pa>. Contact Rev. Debbie Lee at

dlee@psr.edu

Face2Face Solidarity Trip to the Philippines – Accepting Applications

When: April 15 priority deadline.

About: Organized by the Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity (FACES), the annual 10-day summer trip seeks to build awareness and meaningful solidarity around shared Philippine and US environmental justice issues.

More info: Download application at www.facessolidarity.org

Peace Vigil

When: Ongoing every Tues. and Thurs. 12-1pm.

Where: Oakland Federal Building, 1301 Clay St., Oakland, CA.

About: The vigil calls for public awareness and an end to the war in Iraq. Sponsored by AFSC, Berkeley Women in Black, East Bay Coalition for Support Self-Rule for Iraqis, and friends.

More info: (510) 655-1162

End Internet Trafficking Community Forum

When: April 2008, TBA

Where: San Francisco Bay Area, CA.

About: FAIR Fund, Barnaba Institute, Students & Artists Fighting to End Human Slavery, and Love146 are collaborating to combat modern day slavery on the internet.

More info: www.safehs.com

“War, Empire, and Culture” Symposium

When: April 11-12, 2008

Where: Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX.

About: The symposium investigates the political and economic dimensions of wars in American and global contexts, and the representation of wars in different cultural forms, genres, and media.

More info: english.ttu.edu/complit/cfp.html

Launch Party

for two great new resources!

Wed. March 26th 7-9 PM

American Friends Service Committee
65 9th St. San Francisco, CA 94103
(Near Civic Center BART)

"It's My Life:

A Guide to Alternatives After High School

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(Re)Collection

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Free Food and Drinks

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Meet other folks interested in building alternatives
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Sandra Schwartz at 415-565-0201 ext. 24
recollection@genuinesecurity.org
visit: www.genuinesecurity.org

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