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Ambassadors, Apples, and Adversaries:

American Military Narratives of the U.S.-Japan Alliance

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy in East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies

by

Carl A. Gabrielson

Committee in charge:

Professor Sabine Frühstück, Chair

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March 2024

The dissertation of Carl Gabrielson is approved.

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March 2024

Ambassadors, Apples, and Adversaries:

American Military Narratives of the U.S.-Japan Alliance

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by

Carl A. Gabrielson

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation took shape across a period that included tremendous personal and global upheavals, and there were many points along the way where it seemed it would never come together. The fact that I am able to write this page now is due to the support, guidance, and care of the numerous individuals and institutions who helped me find ways to keep moving forward.

First, I must thank my committee, Sabine Frühstück, ann-elise lewallen, and Paul Amar, for their guidance, encouragement, and patience. I am grateful for the other mentors I collected along the way as well: my co-panelists Tanaka Masakazu, Marro Inoue, Nate Smith, Mattias van Ommen, and Chris Nelson; my host scholar and co-panelist Satō Fumika; my link to the Okinawan intelligentsia, Yamazato Katsunori; and especially my research host, writing mentor, and cat-sitter, Tom Gill.

Second, I have the utmost gratitude for the individuals who shared their experiences and perspectives with me, to the Public Affairs and Community Relations offices that granted me access to military bases across Japan, and in particular to my contacts in the U.S. Department of State and at Camp Sanders,[1] without whose endless invitations and introductions my time in Okinawa would have been a lot less interesting.

Fieldwork for this project was only possible due to the generous financial support of the National Science Foundation/Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Summer Institute Fellowship, the Japan Foundation Dissertation Fellowship, The America-Japan Society Visit and Study in Japan Grant, and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Short-Term Research Grant. Working to make these grants function were the patient and skillful administrators of the International Affairs Office at Hitotsubashi University, the Office of Research at Meiō University, and the Research Support Division at Meiji Gakuin University.

No graduate student should be without a therapist, and I was lucky enough to have two: Ron Alexander and Kalli Talafus kept me from quite literally losing myself in my work and my problems.

I am indebted to Linshan, Tim, Amanda, Nora, Chu-wen, Keita, and my colleagues in the Graduate East Asia Research Society and the Reinventing “Japan” Colloquium for being fantastic sounding boards and helping to keep me accountable as I researched and wrote this beast.

Eugene, Christina, Rachel, Keene, Mary, Naomi, Karen, Megan, Chloe, Sophie, Chris, Vincent, Addison, Yared, Kristina, Josh, Roger, Zoe, Kat, Tal, Kai, Wona, Liz, Jason, Briko, Paul, Kelly, and so many other friends kept me grounded and regularly reminded me that I could find pleasure and meaning in my life outside of (or even in spite of) academia.

[1]Camp Sanders is the name I have given to an aggregation of all of the U.S. Marine bases in Okinawa in order to protect the anonymity of my Marine-affiliated interlocutors.

Finally, my biggest thanks go to my family, Bob, Chris, Holly, and Matt, who supported me without condition or expectation; to Aldrin, the greatest cheerleader I have ever had; to Clawdia, a constant source of joy in my life; and to Naoya.

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ABSTRACT

Ambassadors, Apples, and Adversaries:

American Military Narratives of the U.S.-Japan Alliance

By

Carl A. Gabrielson

How does the U.S. military make use of the foreign cultures into which it has inserted itself? Based on twenty-two months of ethnographic fieldwork on and around U.S. military facilities in Japan (host to over 100,000 American military personnel and family members), this dissertation argues that military policy generates narratives for American troops' self-identification and aspiration vis-à-vis the local culture that are ultimately detrimental to the U.S.-Japan Alliance. Specifically, it identifies four such narratives and their consequences: First, American troops are told they are ambassadors in a bid to get them to spend more time outside of the bases. I conclude that this is a means of shifting responsibility for troops' mental well-being and morale onto the Japanese communities surrounding the bases and that it makes some Japanese feel they are being forced into complicity with American militarism. Second, military narratives divide troops into "good neighbors" and "bad apples" in a move that both isolates the "bad apples" from cultural and historical patterns of behavior (and thus absolves the military of responsibility for those patterns) and rewards personnel for good intentions and the appearance of good deeds regardless of the often-problematic consequences of their altruistic efforts. Third, American troops adopt the mantle of samurai as a means of replacing the aspirational fantasy at domestic bases of being "super-citizens" (Lutz 2001, 236), naturalizing U.S. military deployment in Japan in a

way that encourages the widespread dismissal of all forms of Japanese masculinity. Finally, Okinawans—residents of the prefecture most impacted by the military—are painted as adversaries to the U.S. military's goals and operations, sorting them into binaries of good/pro-base/Japanese and bad/anti-base/Okinawans that deny the complexities of their relationships with troops, bases, the United States, and Japan. This is the first ethnographic study of how forward-deployed military bases navigate and utilize local culture and contributes to scholarship on the constitutive interplay between interpersonal and international relations, highlighting how imperial and Orientalist legacies inform the everyday functions and expressions of alliance.

NOTE ON ROMANIZATION

For the most part, Japanese words in this text are Romanized following the rules of the Revised Hepburn system, with some exceptions. Japanese words and names that are regularly used in English follow the conventions of the English press for recognizability (e.g., “Tokyo,” rather than “Tōkyō,” as macrons over elongated vowels are not typically included in the English spelling). Japanese people’s names are also Romanized according to Revised Hepburn, except in cases where the individual in question uses a specific romanization of their choosing, such as Ooshiro Hiroshi. Finally, Japanese names are given in Japanese fashion—surname first, with no comma separating surname from first name—unless the individual has indicated a preference for the conventional English order, such as Masamichi Inoue (cited as Inoue, Masamichi), or the publication for which they are cited lists them in western order.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter I: Introduction

Preface

The International is personal.

- Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*

I read Cynthia Enloe's *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* in 2009, during my master's program at the University of Hawaii. By then, the book was already a classic, having not only brought feminism into the field of international relations, but done so in a way that made both feminism and international relations feel more accessible to a novice like myself. I wish I could say that its imperatives to approach militaries with a feminist curiosity and view international politics as a force constituted by individual stakeholders had sunk in immediately; i.e., that I began questioning the role and position of the U.S. military bases in Hawaii then and there, or that, when I moved to Tokyo after I graduated, I was already curious about the continuous deployment of over 50,000 American troops to bases in Japan. Unfortunately, I was not so sharp. Like it has been for many others, the U.S. military was all but invisible to me: I knew about it historically, I knew that I wanted it out of Iraq and Afghanistan, and I knew that people in Okinawa often protested the fact that they were stuck with too many bases, but none of these things felt personally relevant to me. I never even took notice of the U.S. bases in the Tokyo area until April 2011, when I was hired to teach U.S.-Japan Relations at Lakeland University Japan, an American two-year college in the heart of the city.

Originally conceived as a feeder school that would funnel Japanese students into Lakeland's home campus in Wisconsin, Lakeland had evolved into an alternative path for anyone in Japan who was not attracted to the Japanese university system or otherwise wanted to have their classes taught in English. By the time I started working there, international students made up about a third of its enrollment, including the children of diplomats, young entrepreneurs hoping to get hired by the Tokyo branches of global Fortune 500 companies, and, notably, a contingent of former U.S. troops hoping to use their G.I. Bill benefits[2] without leaving Japan. This meant that in a given semester, my class could include American veterans who had served in Japan, Okinawans who grew up near U.S. bases, South Koreans who had served alongside the U.S. military in their country, biracial American-Japanese children with one military parent, and Japanese students as unconcerned as I had been about the U.S. troops stationed in Japan, to name just a few of the possibilities.

Faced with such a complex variety of stakeholders, I had to get serious about the demographics, missions, and impacts of the bases very quickly, if only to keep up with the experiences and opinions of my students. Still, in my young leftist elitism, I was dismissive of the former troops themselves and did not think of them as having much impact on Japan. Instead, I lumped them together with everyone else as I focused on imparting what I saw as my course's "shadow syllabus"—the unstated goal of my course—mythbusting stereotypes of and from Japan, particularly by exposing Orientalist

[2]The "G.I. Bill" is the colloquial term for the system of benefits offering money for college to U.S. military veterans.

thought in American media and scholarship and denouncing Japanese nationalist rhetoric of homogeneity and hyper-uniqueness (the so-called *Nihonjinron*).

It was after a lecture on just those topics in my second year at Lakeland that a former sailor approached me to say that he believed that the mandatory cultural orientation he had undergone upon arrival at Yokosuka Naval Base (just over an hour from Tokyo Station by train) had reinforced a lot of the Orientalist tropes I had identified in class. Suddenly, I was curious, perhaps in the way that Enloe had always wanted me to be. A base the size of Yokosuka would likely teach more Americans about Japanese culture in a month than I could teach at a university in a year, and it was just one base—and not even the biggest! This idea planted the seed of my research, though I admit my initial response was a mix of pettiness and optimistic opportunism: the U.S. military was undermining my personal pedagogical mission at a scale of tens of thousands of Americans every year, but if I could get them to adjust the contents of their cultural education, then they would be achieving my mission for me, and at that same scale. This was something international, and I took it personally. I finally understood what Enloe had meant: militarization can be insinuated into any aspect of our daily lives, catching us unawares if we are not watching for it and becoming permanent if we fail to challenge it. Now finally paying attention, I was fascinated and frightened to find that something as mundane as learning about another culture was being militarized. Not only that, but this thread of militarization was also taking a deeply gendered approach by promoting Orientalist categorizations of Japanese culture as soft, feminine, and naïve. The more I learned, the more I began to see that I had my own personal stakes in the matter: first,

as an educator committed to fighting racism and promoting meaningful cultural exchange; and second, as an American taxpayer underwriting not just the overt violence of American deployments abroad, but also the more subtle assertions of superiority and disrespect directed even at our closest allies. Naturally, these were nothing compared to the direct, tangible forms of American militarism experienced by some of my students, or the troops currently or previously stationed in Japan, or the Asian Americans who are affected when those troops bring what they learned in Japan back to their families and friends, or the Japanese people whose lives are tied to the bases through proximity, employment, economics, love, sex, fear, discrimination, and so on. Trying to understand those stakes, and to address the ways that American military interactions with and interpretations of Japanese culture affected those stakeholders, became the starting point for this dissertation.

Overview

I started this project with the aim of uncovering how the U.S. military—as both a passive context and an active mediator—affects the ways that American military personnel abroad experience and understand the culture into which they have been deployed, and then how those experiences and understandings on the ground affect the overall structure and execution of the international relationship that has brought them to that place. For nearly eighty years, Japan has accommodated the largest number of American troops outside of an active warzone, and early failures to predict Japanese

behavior and strategy during the Asia-Pacific War were what sparked the very idea of culture as an object of interest for military intelligence (Price 2008), making it the ideal place to situate this investigation. Over the course of my fieldwork, I found that American troops and other base personnel made sense of their personal place in the international politics of the U.S.-Japan Alliance by telling themselves and each other stories about what they—as Americans and as military members—both represented and should aspire to be. These stories were embedded in military logics and propagated within and across bases through official as well as unofficial channels, to the point that I was as likely to hear them in a commander's radio address as I was when chatting with a teenage marine outside a convenience store. The more I heard these stories, the more I recognized the ways that they worked to skew the balance of power in favor of themselves over the Japanese, whether by scapegoating them, feminizing them, or claiming to be misunderstood by them. This dissertation examines those stories, arguing that the ways that military members imagine themselves, each other, and the Japanese people surrounding them—ways often structured or suggested by official military materials and/or handed down via military oral tradition—detrimentally affect the U.S.-Japan relationship. As I will show, these militarized framings of American troops and Japanese civilians have contributed to attempts to weaponize Japanese culture, enabled the bases to deny responsibility for servicemembers' crimes and misbehaviors, degraded and dismissed Japanese masculinities, and generated hierarchies that place Americans over Japanese, Japanese with base access over Japanese without, and mainland Japanese over Okinawans. Following Enloe (2014), the personal is

international, and these interpersonal practices not only impact the U.S.-Japan alliance, but set a precedent for similarly problematic interpretations of other cultures to occur elsewhere. Given that "[the] US controls about 750 bases in at least 80 countries worldwide" (Hussein and Haddad 2021), a military propensity for identity-building at the cost of denigrating local people through programs framed as promoting cultural education and international communication risks generating and cementing cultural and racial hierarchies and paints the United States as an imperialist power.

Americans in Japan with the U.S bases, my military interlocutors told me, are all ambassadors tasked with maintaining good U.S.-Japan relations; they are good neighbors to the Japanese, except for a few bad apples who do not represent the rest; they are the spiritual successors of mythic samurai because they are the only great warriors left in Japan; and they are unfairly judged based on the defamation spread by anti-base adversaries. Accordingly, I have broken my argument down along these lines. In Chapter II, I begin where most incoming military orientation and indoctrination sessions begin, with the idea that Americans on U.S. bases are all ambassadors. I examine the ways that bases train their personnel in ambassadorship via mandatory cultural training and intercultural communication orientations and courses, concluding that the lack of accountability of these trainings and their focus on making Americans feel welcome and comfortable stem from a desire to shift responsibility for the morale and mental health of troops to the communities outside of the bases and Japanese culture in general by encouraging personnel to see going off-base as a solution to all of their personal problems. This approach makes Japan a scapegoat when a

servicemember's needs are not met and, as one activist pointed out to me, makes any Japanese person who shows kindness or hospitality to a member of the U.S. military complicit in American militarist agendas. I connect the production of military "ambassadors" to the strategic doctrine of cultural knowledge as a force multiplier, arguing that this application of cultural education to morale over intercultural communication illustrates how military processes of producing cultural knowledge of hostile countries have been applied to the weaponization of culture among America's allies as well.

Next, I examine the labels that U.S. military personnel align with what they see as appropriate and inappropriate behavior: "good neighbors" and "bad apples." I find that these labels are deployed to make sense of the unplanned and unmediated intimacies that occur between the bases and their Japanese neighbors: the former implies ownership and belonging for U.S. bases in Japanese neighborhoods and celebrates all American efforts at neighborliness, regardless of how they are evaluated by the actual Japanese neighbors in question. The latter attempts to isolate crimes and other negative incidents from the institution, both freeing it from responsibility and rejecting the notion that such incidents could be part of a larger pattern. I conclude that this framing of military behavior serves as a protective layer between U.S. troops and Japanese civilians, attempting to mitigate the unavoidable intimacy between the two groups. This intimacy risks exposing troops to recognizing or empathizing with Japanese experiences of the bases that could call into question their justifications for remaining in Japan, so

the rhetoric of good neighbors and bad apples provides a tool for dismissing those experiences as mischaracterizations of the U.S. military and its servicemembers.

Chapter IV asks what becomes of Japanese troops—and Japanese masculinity in general—when American military personnel appropriate the title of "samurai." I argue that, in the absence of the "super-citizen" logic used to make troops feel heroic inside the U.S. domestically (Lutz 2001, 236), military personnel use the samurai label to establish the superiority of American military masculinity over all other masculinities in Japan, both casting themselves as fantastical warriors and anchoring their contested presence in Japanese tradition. This results in a blanket feminization of Japanese men (in American military perceptions) and heightens a sense of entitlement to privileges including sex with Japanese women.

I focus Chapter V specifically on Okinawa, where contact between American troops and Japanese civilians is both most prevalent and most contested, using one military interlocutor's reference to Okinawans as "adversaries" to probe how the U.S. military treats resistance and how both American and mainland Japanese strategists selectively employ the concept of Okinawan difference to feign allyship and enact discrimination. I begin by contrasting what base-affiliated sources told me about anti-base activism in Okinawa with my own experiences interviewing activists and participating in demonstrations, arguing in the process that the trend of both military and scholarly discourse to categorize Okinawans as pro- or anti-base merely frames their identities as reactions to the U.S. military rather than recognizing the complexity of their lives and the ways that they appropriate military ideas and resources for their own use. I trace

this binary thinking to a history of American and mainland Japanese policies that have oscillated between treating Okinawa as grateful host or contentious colony—and indeed, as either integral to Japan or independent and unique—according to whichever position is most beneficial at the time. This exposes how individual aspects of the complexity of Okinawan experiences and positions continue to be singled out and magnified to simultaneously confirm opposing military expectations of Okinawans as welcoming and resentful.

Finally, I conclude by looking to the future, examining American and Japanese plans for the future of the alliance and their respective stances on regional security and reflecting on how the personal and interpersonal consequences of the military narratives of ambassadorship, neighborliness, samurai masculinity, and adversarial Okinawans become constitutive elements in those plans and stances.

The U.S. Military in Japan

The United States Forces Japan (USFJ) consists of "approximately 54,000 military personnel, 45,000 dependents, 8,000 [Department of Defense] civilian and contractor employees, and 25,000 Japanese Workers" (U.S. Forces Japan, "About USFJ"). All branches of the U.S. military are represented in Japan, with the majority coming from the U.S. Navy (approximately 19,000 personnel) and the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) (approximately 18,000 marines) (Ibid.). The USFJ is spread across 85 facilities covering approximately 77,000 acres of Japanese territory (Ibid.), 70.6% of which is in the tiny

island prefecture of Okinawa, itself "only 0.6% of the total land area of Japan" (Okinawa Prefectural Government Washington D.C. Office - Official Site, "Base-Related Data").

The USFJ identifies the U.S.-Japan Alliance as "the cornerstone of peace, prosperity, and freedom in the Indo-Pacific region," and states that its mission is to set "conditions within Japan to ensure U.S. service components maintain a lethal posture and readiness to support regional operations" (U.S. Forces Japan, "About USFJ"). Despite its lack of mention in the USFJ's mission statement, the defense of Japan is also a key function of the USFJ; the language of the *Treaty of Mutual Cooperation between Japan and the United States of America* (in effect since its ratification in 1960) states that America is allowed to station troops and maintain facilities in Japan "[for] the purposes of contributing to the security of Japan and the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East" (Article VI). Though the U.S. military has never been called on to mobilize to protect Japan, it has used Japanese bases as staging grounds for actions in areas such as Southeast Asia and the Persian Gulf and as Rest and Relaxation destinations for troops deployed to combat zones.

Americans in Japan under the aegis of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) are covered under the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) between the U.S. and Japanese governments, meaning that they may present military orders instead of passports when entering and exiting the country, they have greatly expanded limits on the goods that they can bring into the country with them, they receive their driver's licenses from the U.S. military rather than any Japanese authority, they can own guns, and in many circumstances they are eligible to be prosecuted for crimes by the U.S. military rather

than the Japanese justice system, even if the crime in question was committed outside of a military base.

Troops can be stationed in Japan for as little as six months—as with the thousands of marines sent to Okinawa annually for training under the Unit Deployment Program (Marines.mil, "Current Operations")—or as long as three years for those accompanied by family. Though bases are designed to be self-contained communities with housing, restaurants, shopping, schools, places of worship, gas stations, and recreational facilities such as bowling allies and movie theaters, some troops opt to live "on the economy" (i.e., in the Japanese communities outside of the bases) and receive a substantial housing allowance to do so.

The military is a diverse organization, with the layers of branch and rank added on top of the more typical differences in class, race, education level, and gender. The military is more ethnically diverse than America's civilian population, though it is heavily unbalanced toward male members, who make up over eighty percent of active duty personnel (Department of Defense 2020, 7). During most of my fieldwork, President Donald Trump's ban on trans servicemembers was in effect, which officially curbed gender diversity and potentially made many other members of the LGBTQIA+ community feel threatened, so I chose not to ask my military interlocutors to disclose their sexuality or gender identity. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of materials and presentations that I encountered were geared toward a presumed cisgender heterosexual male audience, with imagery focusing on associating visibly American men with weaponry and physical activity coupled with references to Japanese women often

couched in descriptions of Japan as exotic or explanations of Japanese manners. Speakers, commanders, and interlocutors generally employed the word “spouse” with the clear implication that it meant civilian wives of male servicemembers, and events or activities geared toward spouses mainly involved gendered activities such as grocery shopping or making crafts with kimono fabric, all during typical working hours. Belkin (2012) suggests that women and LGBTQIA+ servicemembers have been subjected to the mechanisms that impose and propagate a military masculinity culture centered on idealized images of heterosexual men. Thus, most of my interlocutors, including the female servicemembers and base employees that I spoke with, described the military as an organization of heterosexual males.

Asian Americans make up less than five percent of the U.S. military, compared to roughly seventeen percent for Black members and seventy percent for Caucasians (Department of Defense 2020, 7). This is relevant to my study in that these small numbers meant that none of the orientation, education, or volunteering events that I joined that were small enough in scale for participants to interact with the instructors or each other included any Asian-American participants whose reactions to the depictions of Japan and Asian included therein I could ask about or observe. As a white person myself, I am thus dependent on the work of other scholars to postulate on the effects of the militarization of Japanese cultural knowledge on Asian Americans.

As part of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) between Japan and the United States, the Japanese government covers approximately 75% of the basing costs for the USFJ, with a budget of $8.6 billion allocated to that purpose from 2022-2027 (Craft 2022). This

funding covers expenses such as labor costs for Japanese base employees, maintenance and improvement costs for base facilities, relocation costs for personnel moving to or from Japan, and rent payments to Japanese owners of military-occupied land. The Japanese government also pays for any fines incurred by the U.S. bases for violating late-night aircraft noise restrictions and covers any damages awarded to Japanese citizens and municipalities by civil courts in base-related lawsuits.

Japanese employees of U.S. bases are recruited by the national government's Labor Management Office (LMO, often pronounced "elmo" or "erumo"), then employed under the Ministry of Defense, but supervised by Americans or other Japanese on the bases. They are unionized, but the union chiefly works on Japan-facing issues such as achieving parity with other types of Japanese public employees, as the unions are not allowed to communicate directly with the bases or the U.S. government (Yonaha Eizō, Okinawa district chairman, All Japan Garrison Forces Labor Union, interviewed by the author, May 2019).

Anti-base activism among Japanese is most prevalent in Okinawa, though I observed small demonstrations at major bases near Tokyo as well. Activists protest the bases for a number of reasons: many associate U.S. troops with violent crime and believe their punishments to be overly light; U.S. bases are responsible for chemical leaks and other environmental problems; the aircraft constantly taking off and landing at airbases are notoriously loud and disruptive; the possibility of aircraft crashes, explosions, and other hazards makes many feel unsafe living near the bases; some question the constitutionality of the presence of the bases and the Japanese government funding

maintaining them; some see the bases as targets that draw the attention of America's enemies to Japan; particularly in Okinawa, some base land has been seized from its rightful owners, making land rights and access to ancestral homes and family graves a recurring issue; some protest the bases for occupying prime real estate that could be used to develop the local economy or opened up to improve traffic conditions and overland transportation options; and many are committed pacifists who protest the bases because they are against war in general. Every activist that I interacted with protested for a combination of these reasons, rather than just one.

It is worth noting here that, due to Okinawa's status as a former colony, uniquely long experience of American occupation, and disproportionate amount of American troops and facilities, I have intentionally singled it out many times throughout this dissertation. Thus, discussions of "Okinawa" can be assumed to apply mainly or exclusively to Okinawa only, references to "Japan" indicate the entirety of the nation including Okinawa, and "mainland Japan" means all of Japan *except* Okinawa. This style is informed by the contemporary U.S. military custom of differentiating between Japan and Okinawa as separate deployments and, for example, producing separate publications for *Stars and Stripes: Japan* and *Stars and Stripes: Okinawa*. However, rather than adopting the USFJ's customary use of the preposition "on" when referring to Okinawa (e.g. the phrase "bases on Okinawa"), I use "in," (e.g. "bases in Okinawa"), as "on" is not used for sovereign territories like Japan, but is used for individual bases (e.g. "on Kadena"), and Okinawa is part of the former and should not be treated as the latter.

Historical Background

The history of the U.S. military in Japan begins when Commodore Matthew C. Perry used threats of violence to force a meeting with the Shogun—then ruler of Japan—in 1853, starting a chain of events that would lead to unequal treaties between Japan and various Western powers and a violent revolution that placed a group of forward-thinking samurai in power behind a figurehead emperor: the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Under the new Meiji leadership, Japan began a campaign of rapid modernization wherein the new Empire of Japan attempted to achieve political, legal, military, technological, scientific, cultural, and economic parity with those same Western powers that had imposed unfair treaties on it.

Despite adopting Western institutions at a breathtaking pace and achieving military successes against both China and Russia, Japan was not considered an equal of the great colonial powers of the era, who came together repeatedly to restrain it, restricting Japan's access to Korea (the Triple Intervention of 1895), limiting the growth of its navy (The Washington Naval Treaty, 1922), and refusing its proposal that racial equality be built into the charter for the League of Nations (Shimazu 1998, 114). When Japan began its invasion of China in 1931, the other colonial powers with interests in China spoke up in protest of the annexation of Manchuria, but did little to censure Japan until 1940, when news of Japanese brutality in Nanjing inspired the ABCD Encirclement, in which America, Britain, China, and the Dutch (and Australia) froze Japanese assets and cut off exports of war materiel.

Faced with dwindling supplies of key resources like fuel, steel, and rubber, the Imperial Navy proposed venturing south into colonized Southeast Asia to capture the materials needed to continue the war with China. With most of the colonizers focusing their attention on the conflict in Europe, the biggest obstacle to this plan in the Pacific was the U.S. Navy, prompting the attack on Pearl Harbor, which, it was hoped, would buy Japan enough time to create a fait accompli in Southeast Asia that conflict-averse America would rather accept than go to war over. This proved to be a miscalculation, as it launched the U.S. whole-heartedly into the war, leading to an extremely racialized conflict in which both sides made massive propaganda efforts to glorify themselves and demonize the other with arguments rooted in biological determinism (Dower 1987).

The U.S. military first arrived on Japanese[3] soil in April 1945, and has been there ever since. The Potsdam Declaration, released by the leaders of the U.S., Britain, and China on July 26 of that year, plotted out how the occupation of Japan would be carried out after Japan surrendered, and once that surrender was secured, an occupying force of hundreds of thousands of mainly American troops began arriving and building or appropriating offices, barracks, airstrips, and all manor of other facilities necessary for policing and demilitarizing Japan.

Over the next seven years, under the leadership of American General Douglas MacArthur, the Allied Occupation selectively instituted democratizing policies and values—while still limiting freedoms to criticize the Occupation itself and repressing

[3]The only land battle fought within "Japan proper" was the Battle of Okinawa, in which the colony-turned-prefecture was sacrificed by the central government's military strategists to buy time to plan the defense of the main islands (Siddle 1998, 117).

Communism wherever possible—including the ratification of an American-written constitution that stripped the emperor of his political role and banned Japan from ever waging war or maintaining military forces. In 1950, spurred on by heightened American anxieties about the possible spread of Communism in Japan and open conflict on the Korean Peninsula, Occupation leadership commissioned the National Police Reserve, a force of armed Japanese that closely approximated a military.

In 1951, with the Korean War escalating and MacArthur and other American strategists hoping to direct their attentions there, documents were signed that would formally end the Occupation but allow the U.S. military to continue stationing its forces in Japan "to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East and to the security of Japan…" (Security Treaty Between the United States and Japan, Article I). Soon after regaining its independence, Japan expanded the National Police Reserve into the National Safety Forces before finally establishing it as the Japan Self-Defense Forces in 1954. The JSDF has since gradually expanded into a well-equipped and well-funded military-like force, though the postwar constitution continues to make its existence complicated and contested.

Okinawa had not been explicitly included in the Potsdam Declaration's delineation of Japanese territory, granting the Americans who had been occupying the island chain since the Battle of Okinawa ended in June 1945 leeway to declare the area a protectorate under U.S. administration—essentially divorcing it from Japan and claiming it for the United States. Unfettered by the assumed impermanence of the mainland Occupation, American forces seized land with "bayonets and bulldozers" (Rabson 2012)

to build major military installations, taking advantage of Okinawa's strategic location near China, Taiwan, and Vietnam. The Ryukyus, as America was calling Okinawa, developed in very different directions from mainland Japan, as the main focus of infrastructure and investment was on convenience and strategic value for the U.S. military. National health care, world-class public transportation, government support for private industry, and other hallmarks of Japan's postwar reconstruction entirely passed over American-governed Okinawa, leading to a massive development gap between the two.

The first major challenge to the U.S.-Japan Alliance came soon after mainland Japan regained its sovereignty. A group of residents in Sunagawa Village in western Tokyo began protesting the expansion of neighboring Tachikawa Air Base in a struggle that eventually led to a court case (Sakata v. Japan) questioning the constitutionality of the U.S. bases. In 1959, the Tokyo District Court declared the entire U.S.-Japan security treaty unconstitutional, leading to an escalation of the case to the Japanese Supreme Court. The Supreme Court overturned the previous decision but did not rule on whether the alliance was constitutional, instead excusing itself from further debate by declaring that matters of international relations were not for the courts to decide.

The alliance was shaken again when the original U.S.-Japan security treaty expired in 1960. U.S.-backed conservative leaders in the Japanese government moved to renew the treaty—albeit in a new form that made the partnership both more equal and more aligned with United Nations definitions and policies regarding national security—spurring a massive, sometimes violent protest movement across Japan, to the point that

then-U.S. president Dwight Eisenhauer canceled his visit to the country. Facing widespread disapproval—largely on the grounds that allowing the U.S. bases did not fit with the spirit of the postwar constitution and made Japan complicit in the escalating violence by U.S. forces in Vietnam—Prime Minister Nobusuke Kichi used police actions and the general chaos of the protests to prevent socialist politicians from interfering in the ratification of the new treaty, and it came into effect in June 1960, further solidifying the American military's right to station troops in Japan.

Meanwhile, in Okinawa, American administrators worked to encourage a sense of Ryukyuan identity and culture independent of Japan (Koikari 2015). However, this failed to stymy the movement to reunite Japan and Okinawa, which many Okinawans hoped would lead to a reduction in the number of U.S. troops stationed there. Top-level negotiations between the U.S. and Japanese governments—with no Okinawan representatives present—led to an agreement by which Okinawa was given over to Japanese control in 1972, but without any change in the disposition of the U.S. bases there. Though many Okinawans felt betrayed by this failure to demilitarize, the overall sentiment was one of celebration. Tokyo was happy with this agreement for continuing to keep the majority of U.S. troops and their accompanying crimes, accidents, and noise sequestered in the distant prefecture, and Washington was thrilled to have a new Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) by which much of the expense of maintaining their bases would be covered by Japanese tax dollars and Okinawan complaints about the bases would be redirected to the Japanese government, eliminating any risk of direct accountability to the communities surrounding those bases. Essayist and politician Yara

Tomohiro has referred to the resulting state, in which the U.S. has the right to ignore Okinawans and the Japanese government refuses to acknowledge their concerns, as creating a "freedom disparity" between Okinawans and mainland Japanese (Yara 2018).

Perhaps the greatest challenge to the U.S.-Japan alliance occurred in 1995, when a group of American servicemembers in Okinawa kidnapped, raped, and abandoned a Japanese junior high school student. Outcry over the incident, and over the military's initial decision to prosecute the rapists in its own internal court system rather than turn them over to Japanese authorities, led to nationwide protests and worldwide media backlash against the U.S. bases (Angst 2001). In particular, this event galvanized activism in Okinawa, expanding protests to other base-related issues such as environmental damage, aircraft noises, crashes and other safety issues, and land ownership (Inoue 2017). In response, the American and Japanese governments created the Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO), which proposed moving many U.S. marines away from highly urbanized southern Okinawa.[4] Marine Corps Air Base Futenma, an airstrip surrounded by densely packed Okinawan neighborhoods,[5] was identified as a top candidate for relocation, spawning an official plan to develop a Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF). However, the chosen location, Oura Bay,[6] is a fragile ecosystem and one of the last known habitats of the Okinawan dugong, a critically endangered aquatic mammal with special cultural significance to Okinawans. In addition, moving marines to

[4]Interestingly, the perpetrators of the sexual assault were stationed at one of the more rural bases in northern Okinawa.

[5]In 2003, then-U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld called Futenma "the most dangerous military base in the world" for its potential for endangering civilians (Lummis 2018A).

[6]The U.S. military had been entertaining plans to build facilities at Oura Bay since 1966 (McCormack and Norimatsu 2018, 92).

the north did not address the desire shared by many Okinawans to have the overall number of troops reduced (Yoshikawa Hideki, director of the Okinawa Environmental Justice Project, interviewed by the author, September 2018), so this project has been met continuously with heavy protest and has spurred several prefectural elections and referenda to express that the majority of Okinawans disapprove of it. Despite continued protest and numerous structural setbacks that experts had pointed out before construction even began (e.g., Lummis 2018B), at time of writing, the construction is ongoing.

The next key moment in the relationship between the U.S. military and Japanese civilians began in March 2011, when a massive earthquake and ensuing tsunami caused meltdowns at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. As the situation unfolded, the U.S. government explicitly called into question the Japanese government's information on and approach to the meltdowns, insisting that American experts be given access to the Prime Minister and that the U.S. military be involved in managing the disaster (and thus momentarily insinuating a lack of faith in their ally) (Hodge et al., 2011). At the same time, the Pentagon launched Operation Tomodachi (Japanese for "friend"), in which American troops aided with search and rescue operations, delivering supplies to evacuees, and reopening transportation lifelines. This was the USFJ's most active involvement in Japan since the end of the Occupation, and widespread Japanese media coverage of the valiant efforts and life-saving results of the American troops led to a huge spike in public approval ratings for the U.S. bases in Japan.

Finally, also worthy of a brief mention is the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020. At the pandemic's outset, USFJ personnel were instructed to follow the U.S. military's emergency guidelines rather than the far stricter measures imposed by the Japanese national and Okinawan prefectural governments. Military members patronized businesses that were off limits to Japanese and other foreigners and continued to have public gatherings—particularly on American holidays like the 4th of July—leading Japanese critics to accuse them of exacerbating the spread of the disease and lacking concern for the health and safety of the public (e.g., Kuhn 2020, McCurry 2022).

Prior Scholarship

In linking the everyday acts and consequences of identity formation and cultural education among the U.S. military in Japan to global security agendas and transnational processes of militarization, my project draws upon works from a wide variety of fields. For starters, most contemporary scholarship on the U.S. military in Japan has come from political science. Oros (2017) and Samuels (2007), for example, have explained the importance of American bases to Japan's security strategy. As they are concerned primarily with the actions and intentions of the two governments and other governments that could act as potential threats to them, neither focuses heavily on how Japanese people feel about the alliance and their place in it, so their works serve to establish the larger political background within which I locate my study. Others have probed the question of why Japanese resistance has failed to oust the U.S. military, such

as Calder (2007), Cooley (2008), and Yeo (2011), who point to either the strong support or weak resistance of Japanese and Okinawan political elites, or Kawato (2015), who questions the potential for resistance in civil society. These works ask important questions about the role of human concerns in base politics, but their focus on abstract actors and theories of alliance or resistance distances them from the lived experiences of the Japanese people who interact with the bases. I address this gap through ethnographic research that highlights the personal aspects of the international and exposes the shortcomings of categorizing Japanese purely as pro- or anti-base. Le (2021) grounds his work more in everyday life by factoring in cultural values, historical trends, and social issues. However, his work is chiefly about Japan's domestic militarism, whereas I show here that the U.S. military similarly grapples with those values, trends, and issues when framing how American troops understand and interact with Japanese culture.

In anthropology, important work has been done on the role of military bases as physical nodes of militarization, though focused mainly on how militarization works around bases inside the United States. Lutz (2002), in her pathbreaking analysis of Fayetteville, North Carolina, has shown that the military-civilian division, both as an abstract concept and as a physical barrier between base and town, is an illusion. She argues that military bases and the purportedly civilian communities around them are inextricably, symbiotically linked, which in turn suggests that war and militarism can now be said to be constitutive of American social life. By expanding this work to look at American bases abroad, I am able to show that, rather than insinuating itself into civilian social life,

militarization at foreign bases functions by internalizing and repurposing the local culture. Building on Lutz's work, MacLeish's (2013) ethnography on and around Fort Hood shows that bases are channels through which war and militarism become natural parts of American life by inscribing themselves onto human lives and human bodies in ways that ignore distinctions between "military" and "civilian," or "on base" and "off base." These distinctions take on a new dimension in Japan, where the fence between on- and off-base is often viewed from both sides as a national boundary, insinuating entitlements and differences between the two sides that underplay or ignore the intimacy and bodily connections created by their close proximity. Gillem (2007) does focus on America's foreign bases, but as a geographer, he is primarily interested in how their physical built environments directly and indirectly influence the communities outside of their fences. While I found that physical environment and proximity are integral to understanding how military Americans interact with Japanese civilians, my focus on military-mediated narratives of Japan and Japanese people exposes how those environments are used in military identity building—namely, to establish bases and base personnel as good neighbors and both emphasize and justify their presence in Japan.

Concerning programs and policies that actively promote militarization, Cynthia Enloe's (1990) remarkable use of feminist perspectives to reinvent political science (quoted in the epigraph) was the first to expose processes aimed at the militarization of everyday activities and objects. I link her focus on the banal—bananas (1990) and soup (2000), for example—to the militarization of cultural knowledge outside of combat zones, extending it from the mundane to the exotic, such as sumo wrestlers and historical

costumes. In contrast, Roberto González (2010) has pointed to military attempts to appropriate the discipline of anthropology itself as a means of making cultures militarily fungible (see also Stone 2017). Like these works, at time of writing, all available anthropological studies on the use and depiction of foreign cultures by the U.S. military have focused on applying cultural knowledge in regions of active conflict, such as Afghanistan and Iraq, with no comparable examinations of the militarization of culture in allied nations that host large contingents of American troops, such as Germany or South Korea, besides my own. By exploring how the military has similarly attempted to instrumentalize Japanese culture, I reveal that it has been applied to such purposes as addressing the mental health and morale concerns of servicemembers and propping up American military masculinity.

Emily Gilbert's (2015) demonstration of the tremendous problems caused when American troops have attempted to tactically employ economics (in forms ranging in scale from cash payments, to microfinance loans, to infrastructural investments) in warzones has similarly enhanced my understanding of the military habit of appropriating authority over seemingly non-military fields without valuing expertise in those fields. I have found this same phenomenon in the ways that base personnel teach Japanese culture to troops or base volunteers teach English to local Japanese, both with no expectation that the students will learn anything and no oversite over the content of their lessons.

Scholarship on the intersection of Japanese and American militarisms incorporates anthropological, historical, and political science perspectives. McCormack et al. (2018)

reveal that top-level political figures in the national government are willing to circumvent democratic processes in Okinawa in order to carry out the security agenda of the U.S.-Japan Alliance, essentially militarizing local politics. I link this to a pattern of the U.S. military and Japanese government casting Okinawa as both ally and adversary, as it demonstrates that Okinawans are seen as Japanese enough to bear the burden of Japan's national defense, but not Japanese enough to exercise democratic self-governance.

Frühstück's (2007) ethnography of members of the JSDF shows that complex feelings about Japan's role in the Asia-Pacific War force militarization in Japan to take a different shape, with the military trying to mask its inherent violence and appear the same as other social institutions, rather than making those institutions appear to support the military (see also Satō 2004, 2010, 2013). This then bleeds into USFJ public relations efforts, which have adopted child-like, feminine, and sometimes sexualized aesthetics from Japanese manga and anime to make American bases and troops feel less threatening and more attractive (Frühstück 2017). I complicate this discovery by showing that this outward-facing feminization happens concurrently with internal moves to establish American military masculinity as superior to Japanese masculinity by appropriating the title of samurai, forcing the bases into a balancing act between telling the Japanese that they are nonthreatening and telling themselves that they are legendary warriors. This aspect of conflicting inward and outward images allows me to expand upon Belkin's (2012) work on how the construction of an unachievable and contradictory model of military masculinity serves as a control mechanism for troops of

all genders by exploring how this infantilization of troops to the Japanese public is often not revealed to the troops themselves, leading some troops to misinterpret how Japanese people treat them in order to preserve their own masculinity. Yoneyama (2016) further argues that the trauma of an imagined national emasculation by the United States via the postwar constitutional ban on having a military drives many masculinist conservative politicians in Japan to push for constitutional revision and rearmament, a trauma that I have found to be exacerbated by this American claim to be Japan's only modern-day samurai.

Edward Said (1979) has famously argued that Asia has historically been imagined as feminine in contrast to a masculine West. Ralston (1998) links this process to militarization, connecting the Orientalism-inflected treatment of Asian women by soldiers to both homophobia and anti-Asian racism in the United States. My study finds that such Orientalist thinking has been institutionalized through formal processes of military knowledge production and dissemination about Japanese culture, and that Japanese nationalist tendencies and the desire to please and entertain American troops leads even cultural instructors of Japanese nationality to promote said knowledge. On the one hand, I connect this to early postwar precedents for military institutionalization of Orientalist beliefs via Shibusawa's (2010) discussion of American campaigns to reimagine Japan as a harmless, feminized ally, showing that this process continues today, at least inside the military. On the other hand, I demonstrate not just the longevity of this pattern, but also its flexibility by contrasting the instructors' pro-military self-Orientalization with Angst's (2001) depiction of anti-base self-feminization

among Okinawan protestors who metaphorically cast the U.S. military as a male rapist and Okinawa as a young female victim in the wake of the 1995 gang rape incident.

Ames (2016) links historical works on U.S. cultural influence to present-day Okinawa by demonstrating that material culture from U.S. bases has become a normal part of everyday life for most Okinawans today, a premise I build on by showing how some Okinawans leverage military materials, connections, and privileges to further their own agendas. These individuals complicate earlier works on Okinawan identity by transcending the pro-base/anti-base binary, setting them apart from the works that are centered on their interlocutors' stances on the U.S. bases, including Nelson (2008), who uses dance and performance to highlight how Okinawans build identity and community in the shadows of the bases, and Inoue (2017), who explicitly links Okinawan class-based and generational identities to base politics.

Ames (2010) also discusses the Okinawan women who pursue romantic or sexual relationships with American troops, showing that while they are often grouped together and ostracized or even racialized by other Okinawans, their choices often represent acts of conscious resistance to Okinawan social norms. Forgash (2020) and Miyanishi (2012) both look at marriage between Okinawan women and USFJ men, with the former exploring how couples navigate the physical, cultural, and metaphorical obstacles represented by base fences, while the latter exposes how Okinawan wives experience and are affected by the inherent violence of their husbands' jobs. While romance, marriage, and sex were not the focus of my research, they were still present in the background of my study, and so to this conversation I can contribute an analysis of the

military's rhetorical technique of absolving itself of all responsibility for the mistreatment of Japanese partners by claiming that bad apples do not spoil the barrel.

Aside from some short works by Tanaka (1999, 2004), the parts of Gillem's (2007) aforementioned project that concern Japan, and Frühstück's (2007, 2017) sections dedicated to the interplay between American and Japanese forms of militarization, contemporary research on American military influence in Japan has heavily favored Okinawa. In response to these scholars of past and present military influence in Okinawa and across Japan, this dissertation addresses both the widespread, diffuse forms of American militarization that affect all of Japan and the specificity and uniqueness of Okinawan roles and experiences in those processes.

Methods

Research for this project was primarily ethnographic, carried out over three trips to Japan: June-August 2017, September 2018-August 2019, and June 2022-January 2023. I conducted over forty formal, semi-structured interviews and dozens more informal interviews. These included servicemembers from the "top brass" down to recent recruits; servicemembers' family members participating in cultural courses and orientations offered by the bases; Japanese and American civilian employees of American bases; retired military members formerly stationed in Japan; base public affairs and community relations specialists; representatives of the U.S. consulate in Okinawa; current and former members of the JSDF; Japanese and American instructors

and volunteers in charge of teaching Japanese culture and language to Americans on the bases; American teachers and volunteers and Japanese students from English classes offered by the bases; Japanese officials from communities adjacent to bases; Japanese civil servants responsible for recruiting Japanese employees for the bases as well as those involved in addressing complaints from those employees about their working conditions; Japanese entrepreneurs whose businesses primarily served the bases; leaders of the labor unions for Japanese base employees; Japanese and American self-identifying anti-base activists; the station chief of the American Forces Network's television and radio channels in Okinawa; Japanese and American (and one British) scholars and journalists researching the bases; a Japanese documentary filmmaker making a film about base issues; a group of Japanese Buddhist monks and lay practitioners visiting bases as part of a "Peace Walk;" the late Okinawan novelist Tatsuhiro Oshiro, who won the Akutagawa Prize for his novella depicting the power imbalances between Okinawa, Japan, and the United States in the 1960s; and many others. Interviews were conducted in English, Japanese, or a mixture of the two, based on the preferences of the interviewees.

I also engaged in over 400 hours of participant observation, joining free English courses taught by the bases; Japanese language and culture classes and orientations offered on bases for American personnel; anti-base protests and symposia; networking lunches for Japanese businesspeople to meet base officials; "open base" events, such as friendship festivals and holiday parties, where Japanese people were allowed to enter one section of an American base; U.S. consulate-sponsored board game events where marines

would play games with Japanese children in English; American troops' volunteer visits to retirement homes and afterschool daycare centers; base-sponsored street and beach trash-collecting events; a grand re-opening held by a local chamber of commerce to attract troops to a newly-refurbished barber shop outside of a base; a mangrove-planting event for Earth Day in which U.S. marines and Japanese municipal officials dug in the mud with Japanese preschoolers; a "peace flotilla" that protested American and JSDF bases from aboard small boats; a sushi-making lesson for servicemembers offered at a local community center; a class where Japanese volunteers taught American base personnel how to play with Japanese toys; an appreciation ceremony for Japanese base employees that featured the base commander in a slapstick silent film jokingly illustrating the difficulty of the Japanese employees' various jobs; a demonstration of American military police attack dogs organized for the entertainment of a small group of Japanese base employees; and others besides.

I was able to join one particular base-organized weekly English course for over nine months, during which time I volunteered as a helper and occasional as lead instructor, allowing me to interact with a wide variety of Japanese participants, the rotating set of American volunteers (mainly servicemembers, but some spouses), the base's Japanese Community Relations Specialist, and several members of base leadership.

I also consulted a wide variety of textual and media sources that reflect how the US military bases and their host communities perceive and describe each other. Bases regularly produce welcome guides, lifestyle magazines, web pages introducing regional history and culture, official social media posts regarding events and activities, press

releases, language textbooks, and pamphlets describing local customs or attractions, to name just a few examples of what I was able to gather from the U.S. military. Additionally, I closely followed *Stars and Stripes*, the U.S. news organ that is based in (but not managed by) the U.S. military. *Stars and Stripes* has a bureau office in Tokyo and publishes new online Japan-related and Okinawa-specific content daily, in addition to its weekly hard copy Pacific edition. I also read both Japan's national newspapers and Okinawa's local newspapers[7], since Gushiken (2017) has pointed out that the two sets differ markedly in tone when covering base-related issues.

I joined Facebook groups for servicemembers to celebrate Japan and groups to rant and complain about life there, as well as groups for Japanese pro-base enthusiasts and for anti-base activists. Finally, during all my long hours driving up and down the Okinawan coastline from my host university and apartment in the north to the bases in the central and southern parts of the island, I listened to American Forces Network Radio, including its public service announcements about good behavior for servicemembers, its explanations of Japanese culture and customs, and its advertisements for community events both on and off the bases.

My access to military bases and events was largely brokered through the Public Affairs office at each base, though interventions from higher up the food chain, including two base commanders and a U.S. Foreign Service officer at the Okinawa consulate, helped to expedite my entry. On most bases, I was accompanied by an escort from Public Affairs

[7]It is very common for Japanese newspapers to publish many of their articles in English, particularly when the news relates to international issues, as with stories on the USFJ. Since most of the articles that I read for this project during my fieldwork have since been translated, I have focused on citing English translations and quoting from English versions when possible.

who showed me around, vouched for the legitimacy of my visit, and ensured that I did not enter sensitive areas. Many of these officials also actively attempted to direct my project towards portraying the military in the most favorable light. They offered pre-approved perspectives on the bases and their relationships with surrounding communities, scheduled which sections of the base evaluations I was allowed to join, and sometimes dictated who I was allowed to interview while on base. Additionally, on one occasion, a Public Affairs official briefed two of my participants immediately prior to an interview and then debriefed them directly after—presumably to establish limits for what could be discussed and then verify that those limits were obeyed, and on another occasion, a Public Affairs official sat in on an interview and recorded it. While these interventions placed certain limitations on my study, I have compensated for them to the best of my ability by conducting dozens of informal interviews not arranged through Public Affairs, followed uncensored discussions on social media, obtained textual materials used at cultural orientations, and fact-checked all information received directly from Public Affairs. Also, because my interview questions were relatively mundane and lacked controversial or traumatic elements, most participants were very forthcoming even when being critical of the military. I have nevertheless concealed the identities of the vast majority of my interviewees, naming only those who gave me explicit permission to do so.

I went through base officials in order to meet with cultural orientation instructors, base commanders, and community relations specialists. Aside from those cases, in which my interlocutors were approved by Public Affairs offices, I mainly interviewed people that I

recruited through participant observation. This included students and teachers of the English classes where I volunteered, co-volunteers at other events, activists and municipal officials at protests, newcomers undergoing orientation, scholars at symposia, and so on. I also reached out directly or via mutual connections to some more public figures, such as military radio host Mari Gregory, fashion designer Kakazu Yoshinari, journalist Jon Mitchell, and novelist Tatsuhiro Ōshiro.

I personally have no military background and had never spent any significant time with military personnel or on military facilities prior to this study. When meeting with Japanese interlocutors, I often had to specify that I had no military affiliation, particularly when in Okinawa, based purely on my appearance as a white man. Most people, upon finding out that I was not with the military, were either relieved that they could speak critically without causing offense or were simply indifferent. Most American base personnel and their families were extremely friendly and forthcoming, but recognized right away that I was an outsider. Most of the time, that meant that they would be careful to explain new terminology and patiently answer my clarifying questions. However, in a few cases, I was met with suspicion and asked outright if my intention was to make the military look bad, to which I responded that any problems I discovered would be opportunities to improve the organization and strengthen its ability to build ties between the bases and Japanese communities. Participants and gatekeepers often also asked me for my opinion on whether the U.S. bases should be in Japan, sometimes insinuating that my credibility as a researcher would be compromised if I said no. My standard response was that I was not so naïve as to suggest that the U.S.

bases could and should pull out of Japan in the near future, but that I felt the questions of how Japanese territorial sovereignty and the pacifist article of the Japanese constitution applied to the presence of American bases inside Japan warranted further thought, and that I felt the current base construction project in Okinawa should be halted in accordance with the clearly-expressed will of Okinawan voters.

Chapter II: Ambassadors

Figure 5: Educational materials depicting basic Japanese vocabulary adorn the walls of the dedicated cultural education classroom on Camp Zama. Photo by the author.

In 2006, in an article on his thoughts on how to better execute the occupation of Iraq, U.S. Army General David H. Petraeus wrote "Observation Number 9, *cultural awareness is a force multiplier*, reflects our recognition that knowledge of the cultural 'terrain' can be as important as, and sometimes more important than, knowledge of the geographic terrain. This observation acknowledges that the people are, in many respects, the decisive terrain, and that we must study that terrain in the same way that we have always studied the geographic terrain." (Petraeus 2006) This was not lip service. Within

a year, the army had launched the Human Terrain System (HTS), a program that embedded social scientists in military units in Iraq in order to help commanders gather information on cultural differences and communicate with locals more effectively and appropriately (U.S. Army, "HTS Home"). At the same time, mock Middle Eastern villages were constructed in military training areas across the United States and populated with Iraqi refugees to simulate interactions that could aid in identifying and locating insurgents (See for example Der Derian 2009 and Stone 2017). Both of these undertakings represent the allocation of a tremendous amount of money, labor, and coordination, particularly since both were dependent on their ability to recruit non-military individuals, relocate them, and train them to perform as Afghan villagers, insurgent sympathizers, bereaved family members, and so on. Around this time, the U.S. Air Force also began producing Expeditionary Culture Field Guides, pocket-sized handbooks to the cultures of over seventy countries that are distributed to personnel in all branches of the U.S. military bound for or located in those countries(Air Force Culture and Language Center, "AFCLC Field Guides"). Unlike the HTS and the mock villages, field guides were also made for allied countries such as Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines, suggesting that even cultural knowledge of *allied* cultures could enhance troop effectiveness.

This chapter derives its title from the umbrella logic under which most cultural education and volunteering programs held by the military take shape: that all military-affiliated Americans in Japan are ambassadors, and must behave accordingly.[8] The

[8]This phrase was extremely prevalent in both my observations of cultural courses and my interviews with American base personnel and can also be seen in writing on official base websites such as the installation

concrete expectations of this ambassadorship are never concretely explained, though one can pick up various implications from the tone and position of the speaker: that you must do your best to represent your nation; that it is important to smile and be friendly; that your actions have international consequences; that the maintenance of smooth relations between Japan and the U.S. rests on your shoulders; that you are under observation by two governments; that you occupy a prestigious position; or that you are encouraged to try to understand Japanese people and culture. Despite its lack of explicit definition, the label of ambassadorship is used not only as an expression of the cultural-knowledge-as-force-multiplier doctrine (asking troops to bolster local public support for the military by avoiding faux pas), but also to justify making cultural education compulsory (as training for ambassadorship), in addition to ascribing an authoritative title and sense of importance to what could arguably be seen as basic standards of acceptable behavior.

Enloe defines militarization as "a step-by-step process by which a person or a thing gradually comes to be controlled by the military *or* comes to depend for its well-being on militaristic ideas. The more militarization transforms an individual or a society, the more that individual or society comes to imagine military needs and militaristic presumptions to be not only valuable but also normal." (2000, 3; emphasis in the original) Applying this definition to Petraeus's position that the production and distribution of so much cultural knowledge by the military and its affiliated

page for Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (The main U.S. naval facility in Japan), which states "We are guests in Japan and we're all ambassadors" under the heading "Special and Critical Installation Information" (Military Installations, "Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka").

organizations contributes directly to American military power suggests that the militarization of cultural knowledge via base cultural education programs represents the normalizing of militaristic presumptions about other cultures via military control of how they are taught and represented.

The militarization of cultural knowledge production and its consequences have not gone unnoticed by the scholarly community. Stone (2017) has described a similar valuing of fostering feelings of heroism over portraying culture accurately in simulations designed to teach American troops how to interact with Afghani women. She has labeled the experience of the Afghani refugee women tasked with performing in the simulations as "living the laughscream," (Ibid.) as their job suggests complicity with violence against their fellow Afghanis and potentially reenacts their own past traumas but follows a script so unrealistic that it strikes them as absurd. Brown (2008) states that military attempts at cultural education in the Persian Gulf during the early 2000s " [reveal] more about U.S. perceptions than "reality." [Their] first effect is to create a fictive, homogenous, and predictable culture…" (445) One consequence, Brown continues, "is to portray as alien—read "culturally driven"—some Iraqi reactions that a soldier or Marine might otherwise find intelligible or normal…maintain[ing] the vision of the military's own operations—including house searches, detentions, and roadblocks—as tactical imperatives, in and of themselves inoffensive." (Ibid., 446) In other words, the cultural knowledge produced by the military in these instances is coming not from the cultures in question but from the military itself, and is thus unsurprisingly geared toward confirming military biases, sugarcoating military tactics, and improving military morale.

The U.S. military's deployments of cultural expertise in occupied areas and active combat zones can also have more direct negative consequences for the subjects of that expertise. In 2007, the American Anthropological Association's Executive Board published a statement condemning the HTS, describing the program as an "unacceptable application of anthropological expertise" for its many patently unethical dimensions and its potential to endanger the people being studied by identifying them as targets for military actions (American Anthropological Association Executive Committee, "Human Terrain System (HTS) Project.").

All of this important work on the militarization of cultural knowledge has focused on its applications in the context of war or military occupation, but it is important to note that Petraeus did not differentiate between knowing the cultures of America's enemies and the more innocuous forms of military cultural knowledge, like field guides and cultural orientations designed to help acclimate troops to life among America's allies. Thus, this chapter centers on the questions of how cultural knowledge of a nation with which the United States is not at war—in this case, Japan—can become a force multiplier, and how that militarized cultural knowledge can affect the attitudes and perspectives through which the Americans to whom it is imparted imagine and engage with the local people.

My findings are threefold: first, the quality of the education provided—as measured by the accuracy of the information, how students and teachers are evaluated, and the applicability of the content to people's jobs and private lives—is surprisingly poor. Lesson contents often appear random or meandering, participants receive certificates of completion without having to demonstrate that they have learned anything (or, in some

cases, without having attended the full workshop), and most instructors feel that it is unreasonable to expect their students to learn anything complex and instead focus on making the courses fun. As I will show, the net result of this approach matches Brown's: namely, the creation of a "fictive, homogenous, and predictable culture" (2008, 445) that reinforces existing stereotypes and underpins military justifications for its presence and actions. Furthermore, like the women who experienced the "laughscream," Japanese responsible for cultural instruction laugh at the absurdity of their materials, but they encourage their students to laugh as well, making Japan more an object of humor than an object of study. While this approach did not conjure up personal traumas for any of my interlocutors (as it had for some of the Afghani women), it did push Japanese purveyors of culture to confront their own complicity in American military violence. However, since the training was geared toward improving their quality of life in an allied nation with no active combat, they did not feel that they directly contributed to or were at all affected by military violence. Thus, most adopted a positive view of American security policy, making their role in it a point of pride.

This pride attached to American affiliation in Japan links to my second observation: many cultural education programs encourage both instructors and participants to see themselves as superior to Japanese civilians by constructing hierarchies of American over Japanese, on-base Japanese over off-base Japanese, and pro-military Japanese over anti-military Japanese. Instructors depict Japanese anti-base protestors and other Japanese who are unenthusiastic about the U.S. as lacking the cosmopolitanism and sophisticated outlook on geopolitics that can only be gained through working closely

with American troops. At the same time, their focus on making Japan feel silly and comfortable leads to depictions that cater to American expectations of Japan as exotic, weird, traditional, subservient, and generally inferior. By generating feelings of American superiority under the guise of cultural education, cultural educations can thus encourage Orientalist and white supremacist attitudes—whether conscious or unconscious—toward Asia and Asians that translate to prejudice and structural inequality. Though instilling hierarchies via proximity to American-ness does not identify local people as targets like the HTS does, it nevertheless perpetuates systemic forms of violence, if not physical forms, making militarization of allied cultural knowledge production unethical as well.

Third, despite the low quality of cultural education programs, the military nevertheless utilizes Japanese culture as a force multiplier—this despite the fact that no military force should be applied to or directed at Japan. In contrast to dedicating cultural education programs in Afghanistan to helping troops root out insurgents, for example, programs that provide cultural knowledge about Japan are employed as a key mechanism for maintaining the mental health and morale of the troops by making them feel comfortable and competent in experiences and interactions with Japanese people, culture, and environments outside of the bases. As I will show, base leaders at all levels regularly assign "going off base" as a panacea for homesickness, boredom, lack of job satisfaction, and other mental and emotional conditions that negatively affect job performance, and thus training in what they describe as "ambassadorship" focuses not on understanding or respecting Japanese culture so much as making it feel

nonthreatening and fun. This mirrors the training sessions observed by Stone (2017) that led inevitably to military participants locating insurgents and thus feeling a sense of heroism and accomplishment regardless of whether they had actually learned or applied any useful information about Afghani culture.

Finally, the chapter concludes—in the spirit of ambassadorship—by considering how this comfort-focused, low quality, bias-reinforcing approach to cultural education affects U.S.-Japan relations writ large.

Indoctrinating Ambassadorship: The Forms, Functions, and (Lack of) Results of Military Cultural Knowledge Programs

Because none of the bases official that I spoke with was ever able to supply a concrete definition of what it means to be an ambassador, I have instead focused on how they prepare personnel to be ambassadors, as ambassadorship was regularly listed by those same officials as an intended outcome of bases providing cultural education. In Japan, the U.S. military's investment in cultural knowledge includes mandatory cultural orientations (sometimes called "courses," "briefings," or "indoctrinations," depending on the base) for newly arriving troops, their family members,[9] and American civilian employees. During my fieldwork, I was able to join these cultural orientation courses on seven different bases ranging across all four of the major branches of the military. The

[9]While spouses and other adult family members were always required to attend, bases had a variety of different policies regarding children. Among those that offered orientations for children, some just required all children over a certain age to attend alongside their parents, while others offered optional orientations specifically for children.

length, style, and contents of cultural orientations varied widely from base to base. At some bases, they were under an hour long, while at other bases, the cultural orientation was an intensive course that could take three to five eight-hour days. Both the short and long orientations were preceded or accompanied by presentations from various offices around the base concerning quotidian topics such as fire safety and base recreational facilities. Base commanders or other high-ranking personnel nearly always made a brief appearance to greet the newcomers, with some staying long enough to discuss the role of U.S. bases in Japan in protecting Pacific sea lanes and thwarting the spread of communism. One commander, for example, told the assembled attendees that the United States Forces Japan are "on the frontiers of freedom, but you don't have to live a frontier lifestyle," evoking the Cold War attitude that proximity to China, Russia, and North Korea placed them at the edge of what many Americans have dubbed the "free world." Commanders' remarks in these instances never failed to include mention of the idea that military Americans "are all ambassadors" at least once.

Most personnel undergo these orientations soon after arrival, but I did observe several cases of troops who were not allotted time for the orientation until several months into their stay—or, in one case, mere weeks before the soldier in question was meant to return to the U.S.—due to their commanding officers assigning other tasks to them first. Some bases even have a classroom space set aside specifically for the orientation, complete with Japanese traditional crafts, posters giving the names of colors and body parts in Japanese, Tokyo subway maps, images of former emperor Akihito, or other such items adorning the walls (see fig. 1). Every orientation that I attended was taught by

paid employees, most often Japanese base workers who were assigned specifically to this task or to a combination of orientations and optional courses in Japanese language, crafts, cooking, and so on. When paired with the mandatory nature of the courses, the fact that there are employees and often spaces dedicated specifically to orientations illustrates that bases commit significant amounts[10] of both money and labor hours to the cause of cultural knowledge.

Some of the newcomer personnel that I met were already fans of Japanese pop culture before arriving and felt that their exposure to anime and manga had equipped them with some prior knowledge of the culture, and a small number of others told me that they (or, more often, their spouse) had used Google or YouTube to try to introduce themselves to Japanese culture ahead of being stationed there. Those that I spoke with from both of these groups exhibited more enthusiasm about being in Japan but the knowledge they possessed did not deviate significantly from the content of the bases' courses. Because servicemembers do not have the final say in where they are stationed, many did not choose Japan and had no interest in Japanese culture prior to arrival. Thus, aside from the rare cases where someone had been stationed in Japan at some point earlier in their career, most participants in the courses entered with the same baseline (lack of) knowledge about Japan.

[10]At the time of my observation in 2017, Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (a U.S. Navy base south of Tokyo) had a population of approximately 25,000 personnel (Military Installations, "Base Overview & Info"), roughly eighty percent of which had been required to attend orientations for three to four full workdays upon arrival, and the base had two full-time Japanese employees responsible for teaching the orientations on a weekly bases, teaching culture and language courses, and translating and interpreting for servicemembers.

At most bases, the content of orientations is not observed by base leadership other than when they themselves take the course—and in some cases high-ranking leadership are excused from taking the courses altogether—so most instructors reported that there was little oversight regarding what and how they taught. The one exception to this was in 2016, after Okinawa-based journalist Jon Mitchell published orientation slides and scripts from marine corps orientations in Okinawa that he had obtained via a Freedom of Information Act request. The documents Mitchell released included disparaging remarks about Okinawan people and culture, prompting leadership at bases across Okinawa not only to order significant changes in their orientation contents, but also to invite local and national government officials to review those contents and verify that the right changes were made (Mitchell 2016). The instructor responsible for all orientations at one base in Okinawa told me that this was the only time anyone had come to observe the course, and that the new guidelines resulting from the visit had been as vague and general as the previous ones, once again leaving the details up to the instructors, with no follow-up to see if or how they had been implemented. In my assessment, while it was clear that efforts had been made to improve the disrespectful and condescending tone of the old presentations, Okinawan base orientations that I observed still skewed toward fostering ideas of American superiority over Okinawans (and Japanese more generally), a tendency which will be discussed further below.

Though some instructors that I spoke with did receive a list of general topics to cover—including bullet points like etiquette, history, or local foods—from base leadership, my interlocutors indicated that decisions regarding how and to what degree these topics

are introduced, what aspects of them are included, how much time is spent on them, and what the remaining class time focuses on are left to the instructors themselves. At some bases, this results in a specific course format passed officially or unofficially down from instructor to instructor, but in others the instructors feel very free to make whatever changes they see fit. Though they offer their courses under the auspices of the cultural-knowledge-as-force-multiplier doctrine, every instructor that I interviewed throughout Japan told me that their chief intention was to make personnel feel comfortable leaving the base and experiencing Japan, a sentiment echoed in interviews with their supervisors and base commanders. Additionally, instructors of the longer courses shared one other goal: they wanted their orientations to be fun. For some, this was about creating a positive image of Japanese or Okinawan culture as something to enjoy. Other instructors told me that focusing on fun was meant to communicate the low stakes of the class. One instructor told me that troops have a hard job that requires their attention, and that rigorous culture and language study would only distract from that, so retention and assessment of the material or language were not important. Instead, instructors focused on fostering a positive overall emotional impression of Japan and/or Okinawa, often explicitly telling personnel undergoing the course that remembering language and history were not important. Instructors on multiple bases told students that any mainland Japanese or Okinawan person will be able to understand their English and offer them help if the American can just push through that person's initial shyness.

Shorter orientations that I joined were PowerPoint presentations that made up just one part of a longer comprehensive base orientation that took from one to two days. These comprehensive orientations typically began with the base commander telling the newcomers that they should see themselves as ambassadors for the United States, imploring the troops to be "good neighbors," (always with little to no definition of what being an "ambassador" or a "good neighbor" entails), and stressing the importance of leaving the base and experiencing the country. Once the Japanese culture section began, there would usually be some discussion of interesting places to visit in Japan, some Japanese foods, a quick list of Japanese manners (e.g. do not wear your shoes indoors), and a few phrases of Japanese that the speaker would call out and have the audience repeat, such as "thank you," "excuse me," "beer please," and the name of the train station closest to the base. These points were shared among all of the shorter orientations, but they did have their differences. The shortest cultural orientation I attended also included a brief history of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, coupled with the instructor's numerous expressions of gratitude to America for ending the war and to President Truman for using the atomic bombs to stop the U.K. and the U.S.S.R. from claiming Japanese territory for themselves, a historically dubious assertion. Another brief in mainland Japan turned to the experiences of the base's most senior noncommissioned officer, who described his love of Japanese baseball, his favorite food to order at Japanese McDonalds, and his own overview of the history of the base and the area in which it is located. He also particularly stressed how different Okinawa was, repeating that it was more Americanized and had a different culture.

In Okinawa, I was able to experience the updated briefing that had been created in response to the outcry about negative portrayals of Okinawans following the Mitchell exposé. It, too, went through the list of tourist attractions, foods, manners, and useful phrases, all introduced by an Okinawan woman in kimono, before pivoting to the new Okinawa Orientation Overview, led by a white male American civilian and a different Okinawan woman, both employees of the base's morale organization, Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS). The American man began with a brief overview of the strategic and geopolitical justifications for American permanent deployment in Okinawa, focusing mainly on using American power projection to limit Chinese access to the Pacific. He then moved into the history of Okinawa, describing the Ryukyu Kingdom and Japan's colonization of the islands before jumping ahead to World War II and the American bombardment and invasion of Okinawa. According to the speaker, "Memories of that victimization—if you will—serve as the basis for anti-base rhetoric," the inclusion of the phrase "if you will" suggesting that he questioned the status of Okinawans as victims. He then went over the period of American occupation of the islands, prefacing each of the historical hardships incurred by Okinawans under American rule with "locals describe," as though to portray the information as hearsay or a one-sided view of history. He went over key political aspects of the history as bullet points, with no discussion of backgrounds or consequences: Okinawa under American occupation was subject to neither the U.S constitution nor the Japanese constitution; Okinawans supported reversion to Japanese rule under the assumption that it would include the removal or reduction of the bases. He mentioned that the bases once comprised the

bulk of the Okinawan economy and are still considered by many Okinawans to limit the prefecture's potential for economic growth. He then said that the bases having an environmental impact is an inevitability, listing jet engine noise as his sole example.[11] He stated that residents of the towns around the bases had been awarded millions of yen in reparation for the noise, though he did not mention that the money was awarded to them by the Japanese government and not the U.S. military, or that the military was not required to make any changes in response to the problems for which such reparations had been issued. He told the audience that some Okinawans believe that military Americans are "not living up to standards" without identifying what standards he referred to. He then described the gang rape of an Okinawan child by American servicemembers in 1995, stating that it resulted in the decision to move the marines' airfield from Futenma to Henoko but not explaining how these two events are related. This led into speaking about the legal status of Americans, which he emphasized as very different from the Okinawan woman who was also introduced as leading this session, though he did indicate that "if we break the law, we can be arrested by Japanese police," speaking in a tone that suggested he expected the audience to be surprised by this news. He then explained the concept of Okinawans as having a "cumulative" view of history (i.e. viewing U.S. military crimes and incidents as a long pattern or chain of events), as opposed to the American "annual" view of crime (i.e. "crime is up/down X% this year"), which he described as a major cultural difference between Americans and

[11]Noise is, indeed, an issue. Instruments in the Ue-Ojana area of Ginowan City, for example, recorded aircraft noise over 11,000 times in 2018, with noise levels reaching as high as 123 decibels and exceeding 100 decibels at night (Ginowan City Military Base Affairs and Policy Department, 2019). (For context, 95 decibels is the level of a passing subway train, and 130 decibels is the threshold for noise to cause physical pain.)

Okinawans (NOWA 2019). As I have previously noted, “in this line of thinking, putting negative incidents such as crimes or crashes in historical context constitutes an unfair, anti-US Marine political act,” an “erasure of history, memory, and the need for redress…” (Gabrielson 2019, 411). The speaker concluded his discussion of Americans’ legal status in Japan by briefly flashing a slide containing an extensive list of American military crimes in Okinawa on the screen, which he described as “case studies,” before passing the baton to his Okinawan counterpart (NOWA 2019). While this new version of the orientation no longer included accusations of Okinawans as manipulative liars or simple-minded pawns, it nevertheless attached an air of questionable credibility to Okinawans’ positions and in doing so established the superiority of U.S. military understandings of Okinawa.

The Okinawan woman then spoke, though only very briefly, in contrast to the American man. She told the story of her childhood best friend who was an American that lived on a base, and told the audience that “for Okinawans, you represent America.” She then moved on to asking the newcomers to “be an ambassador,” “be a responsible neighbor,” “proactively interact with local communities,” and “make a true friend.” The American man then cut in with offices and resources that could help newcomers find opportunities to go off base, then passed it back to the Okinawan woman, who described all of Okinawa’s major festivals and some traditional arts. Finally, the man concluded the presentation with “Explore this beautiful island. To many of the local people, bases are a contradiction to their peaceful way of life. You are guests” (NOWA 2019). He offered no further explanation of how military personnel should acknowledge

or approach this sense of contradiction, nor did he or his counterpart explain what would be expected of them as ambassadors, neighbors, proactive interactors, or guests.

The orientations that spanned several days came with a xeroxed packet including train maps, language lessons and glossaries of helpful Japanese words, lists of local holidays and festivals, and sometimes brief introductions to cultural or historical aspects of Japan such as sumo wrestling or the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate. Two of the long orientations I attended followed closely to the agendas printed in these packets, with the majority of the course being run as lectures with PowerPoints. In one case, this was likely due to having particularly large groups of newcomers: enough to fill a small auditorium, rather than the classroom's-worth found at other facilities. These two orientations had both planned out each day's list of topics and prepared slides, questions for the audience, and other materials accordingly. They began with brief discussions of the stages of culture shock and ways to prepare for and cope with it before then moving into more Japan-specific topics. Coverage included useful Japanese phrases, Japanese sports and holidays, food and manners, exciting tourist destinations in Japan, things that Americans purportedly find funny in Japan, Japanese history, and how to ride the train.

The overall tone of the courses alternated between two poles: information on holidays and traditional places such as the temples of Kyoto was given with an air of veneration and exoticism, suggesting both that these things are important and that they are mysterious. At times, this veered into very nationalistic directions, such as introducing a cultural emphasis on interpersonal harmony as both universal to all Japanese people

and diametrically opposed to American individualism, or referring to the emperors (both past and present) as benevolent gods and direct descendants of the sun goddess—a position stated or implied at both bases. This attitude of mystery and reverence was also understandably present in the sections on Japanese history, but the history lessons in mainland Japan always ended with the Meiji Restoration of 1868, with no mention of the conflict between the United States and Japan that led to the bases' presence, the enduring animosity over war-related historical issues with their East Asian neighbors that Japanese leaders use to justify that presence, the postwar Occupation and introduction of American-led social and political reforms including a new Constitution, the historical episodes of American crime and racism during the Occupation and after that helped give rise to the anti-base movement, or any of the other events or topics of potential relevance to the alliance and the servicemembers' current situation that had occurred in the intervening 150 years.

The other tone most commonly observable in these two courses was one of making Japan an object of laughter. This extended beyond the courses' sections on "funny Japan," even appearing in the discussion of culture shock: in one orientation, the phrase "it's not disgusting, it's different" was accompanied by a massive image of the view from behind as a sumo wrestler was bending over, to which the American newcomers responded loudly with mixed laughter and disgust. Teachers often made remarks or facial expressions suggesting that Japanese people are strange or crazy while distancing

themselves from those characteristics by referring to Japanese people as "they" or "them," a common practice among Japanese employees on U.S. bases.[12]

Participants in longer courses—myself included—were issued certificates of completion signed by base commanders on the final day of orientation.[13] These certificates were granted to everyone on the course roster, regardless of whether an individual even attended the entire course. At no point were participants expected to demonstrate their learning: there were no tests, projects, assignments, or other activities that would allow instructors or commanding officers to evaluate participants' comprehension or retention. Given that they are usually newly arrived, several participants complained to me that factors such as moving to a new country, jetlag, culture shock, or just the sheer volume of orientations (one organizer referred to their base's two-day comprehensive orientation as "death by PowerPoint") had left them feeling overwhelmed. In response to such circumstances, one instructor viewed the lack of assessment as a kindness to their students. Most personnel that I spoke with were aware of the course's lack of stakes or consequences, and so very few took notes, and some even spent long periods of class time playing games on their phones.

[12]The perspectives and motivations of Japanese base employees who choose to differentiate themselves from other Japanese people will be discussed below.

[13]A retired U.S. naval officer once told me, early on in my fieldwork, that the military has an "evaluation culture," and that officers and installations were confident and thorough in their own evaluations of personnel and programs, meaning my outsider perspective would be seen as unnecessary and unwelcome. In my experience of "soft sessions," such as cultural education programs, base-coordinated volunteer activities in local communities, on-base English classes for Japanese civilians, and other events meant to improve relations between bases and local communities, there was very little evaluation or reflection. Instead, I found a "pat on the back culture," in which participation in any such event, no matter how minimal or haphazard, was always awarded with a certificate of recognition. I will discuss this more thoroughly in a following chapter.

In mainland Japan, courses were led by Japanese people (often in pairs), or former Japanese who had naturalized to the U.S. In Okinawa, the orientations that I joined were hosted either by a lone Okinawan or an Okinawan accompanied by an American civilian. I was able to interview eight of the ten instructors whose courses I had taken, of which one had a background in education (a former public-school teacher in Japan) and two had extensive experience as interpreters, guides, or instructors in Japanese traditions[14]. The rest had all transferred to their positions from other on-base jobs, such as forklift driver, personal trainer, or accountant. Several suggested that the only requirements when applying for the job of cultural orientation instructor were that they be Japanese (preferably Okinawan, at Okinawan bases) and speak English. The instructors I met with reported to American civilians working for the base or one of the on-base community and morale support organizations, such as MCCS, FSS, or Navy MWR.

The list of orientation topics at a given base generally includes a presentation on sexual assault, though for the most part these discussed it exclusively as a crime committed by Americans against other Americans on the base. One presentation by a base legal office contained a passing remark that the age of consent in Japan is sixteen,[15] but "only problems and incidents come from [having sex with people from] the high school," (base legal officer, 2017) and another, Naval Air Station Atsugi, had a special extra orientation for unaccompanied troops living in the barracks that said Japanese women

[14]While Japanese base employees and local government staff tasked to work with the bases are not given any formal training in understanding American culture or communicating across cultural differences, rhetoric reminiscent of ambassadorship is used in recruitment materials.

[15]This is one of numerous factual errors I found throughout the orientations. Per article 177 of Japan's penal code, though no official age is given, consent is deemed impossible prior to the age of thirteen.

are less likely to be direct about not being interested in sex, and it is the troops' responsibility to watch for signs that the women are not interested even if those women are not explicitly saying 'no.' A representative of the legal office at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka's orientation showed a short video of an interview with an American servicemember currently incarcerated in a Japanese prison for a drunk driving incident outside of the base, focusing especially on the hardships of being there without Japanese language ability and the foreignness of the food. Interestingly, the video seemed to be geared toward evoking sympathy for the American convict. At the end of the video, the representative of the legal office said, "Do you want to eat fermented fish heads three times a day?" intimating that such would be their fate if they ended up in prison in Japan. Discussions of crime at all orientations led to mentions of the Japanese media paying special attention to U.S. troops and amplifying the problems they cause, which would both spark a reiteration of the line that they are ambassadors and some commentary that Okinawans in particular are overly sensitive to such news. While the consequences of crimes and accidents for international relations and the inconveniences that would be imposed on military personnel in response to them always warranted inclusion in the presentations, at no point in any discussion of crime or sexual assault at any presentation on any base was there mention of the effects of crimes and accidents on the victims, their families, or their communities. Such was the focus on Americans in these more general orientations, in fact, that almost no base orientation included discussion of the Japan Self-Defense Forces, even on bases shared jointly with those forces.

Because military leadership offers so little guidance or supervision of the bases' cultural education programs beyond the goals that the participants learn to be ambassadors and feel comfortable leaving the base, the form and content of the courses are much more directly influenced by individual instructors' political beliefs, teaching styles, and relationships with the U.S. military. With that in mind, let us take a closer look at the instructors themselves. The following are profiles of two cultural orientation instructors from bases in the Greater Tokyo area, based on interviews that I conducted with them and their colleagues and my own participation in the orientations that they taught.

Yasuko Birkhead

Yasuko Birkhead, who at time of interview had been the cultural orientation instructor for Yokota Air Force Base for ten years, was the wife of a retired Air Force officer. Born and raised in Japan, she had naturalized as an American citizen many years ago, during one of several extended periods in which her husband was stationed in America in between tours in Japan. She began her orientation by individually shaking hands with each participant and thanking us for coming, which she later told me was her attempt to keep the Japanese custom of *aisatsu*, or formal greetings, alive through Americans, because "Japanese men no longer do it properly." Birkhead emphasized both throughout her short lecture and in a later interview that she feels great gratitude to America, not only for defending Japan, but also for preventing the Soviet Union and China from carving off pieces of the country for themselves during the postwar occupation. She also said—again, in both her presentation and

interview—that the United States was blameless for the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as President Truman's grandson had once told her that his grandfather and General MacArthur had stopped China from claiming Kyushu and Russia from claiming Hokkaido. "[Japanese living outside the bases] don't understand," she told me, "America gave us back Japan. That's why we have happy life (*sic*)." Birkhead taught this orientation once a week at the newcomer briefing and told me that she had never once had the contents or teaching style evaluated, though she understands how feedback could be helpful (Yasuko Birkhead, interviewed by the author, June 2017).

Ms. Birkhead had been teaching traditional Japanese arts such as tea ceremony, Japanese cooking, and ikebana for over twenty years, most often to the wives of American officers in both the U.S. and Japan. She was often asked to hold special events for the wives of VIPs visiting the bases, such as holding a tea ceremony or helping them to try on kimono. She told me that many Japanese women who marry U.S. troops become Americanized, but that she believes it is important to maintain your own cultural identity. She said that her greatest concern was for young American men because they are often afraid to leave the American environment of the base and step into another culture. She wanted to do her best to make them feel comfortable stepping off the base. She also emphasized the importance of teaching them to respect Japanese people and culture but lamented the lack of time for covering manners and language in her course. She felt that if she had taught the newcomers to say "excuse me" in Japanese, that

> was enough; those who were interested could learn more Japanese on their own (Yasuko Birkhead, interviewed by the author, 2017).

Birkhead's style of prioritizing troops' comfort, praising America, teaching historical inaccuracies, lamenting a lost Japanese culture that can be resuscitated by Americans, and expecting very little of participants, is indicative of what I experienced at most other bases, as was the fact that she had never had her orientation evaluated. Though Birkhead was clearly kind, well-intentioned, and experienced with many aspects of Japanese culture, her approach encouraged unearned feelings of American superiority and either misinformed her audience about Japanese feelings on the atomic bombings or showed them that she, presented to them as a representative of Japanese people and culture, was herself misinformed.

Onozaki Mitsuo

> Onozaki Mitsuo was the cultural orientation instructor on Camp Zama (a U.S. Army base just over an hour from central Tokyo) when I attended the base's mandatory forty-hour course in 2017. He is often called a samurai by other Japanese employees of the U.S. Army—even ones working in Okinawa. A lifelong swordsman and martial artist, he showed me many base newsletters documenting his demonstrations of cutting through rolled *tatami* mats with *katana* performed at base ceremonies or to welcome special guests. An older man nearing retirement age, Onozaki told us several times in class that he was experiencing back pain so severe it was causing him to sweat, but that his

samurai honor drove him to complete the task of teaching. He first worked on a U.S. base at age 16, acting as a caddy for the base's golf course in order to pick up some English. He put himself through college by working construction to install modern sewage systems in Tokyo and majored in English literature. His first job out of university was as a high school English teacher in what he described as a "rough" area—students brought weapons to school, teachers slept with students, and much of the faculty had been indoctrinated into Communism by the leftist teachers' union, he told me. Four years into the job, he found that a student whom he had helped to gain acceptance to a respectable university was being expelled after a cigarette butt was found on his person. When the principal would not renege on this decision, Onozaki physically attacked him and thereby lost his position, and he believes that his firm anti-Communist stance left him blacklisted by the teachers' union and therefore unable to return to teaching. After ten years doing odd jobs and teaching martial arts, he got a job as a Japanese language instructor on Camp Zama.

As Onozaki tells it, the cultural orientation instructor when he arrived was the Japanese wife of an American officer and she spoke no English, so her course was "forty hours of origami" (Onozaki Mitsuo, interview with the author, July 2017). He told me that a four-star general of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force visited the base, and when not a single American officer was able to greet him in Japanese, the original instructor was fired, and he was begged to take her place. He told me with great bluster that, in order to give up his prior job as a

language teacher, he insisted on following several samurai customs, culminating in an oath to dedicate his life to U.S.-Japan friendship that was accompanied by himself and two American base officials ceremonially drinking each other's blood (Ibid.).

Onozaki was often comparative in his teaching style, setting up the United States and Japan as a cultural dichotomy: America is "me first" and Japan is "you first." This extended to physical descriptions, as he labeled Americans "active" and capable of undergoing harsh physical tasks for hours, which he called "a dream within a dream for Japanese."

Onozaki relied very little on the photocopied packet of course materials prepared by his assistant, which consisted of Tokyo train maps, Japanese grammatical exercises, and an assortment of paragraph-length descriptions of topics such as the cheapest brand of *sake* available in convenience stores and the cult that released sarin gas in the Tokyo subway in 1995. His style was off-the-cuff and involved many lengthy digressions on his favorite aspect of American life, guns, of which he had a near-encyclopedic knowledge. When teaching Japanese language, he led the students in exercises combining English subjects and objects with Japanese verbs, telling us that most Japanese can understand English if spoken that way. He claimed that Japan was in a state of constant conflict until 1868 (despite the roughly 300 years of the *Pax Tokugawa* preceding that period), and that the 2003 film *The Last Samurai* (dir. Edward Zwick), which Tierney (2006) accuses of having a "significant filmic form of

> cultural colonialism and appropriation that reinforce[s] hegemonic ideas of racial and cultural superiority and inferiority," was a true depiction of U.S.-Japan relations prior to that year.

Onozaki was Camp Zama's chief representative of Japanese culture and history for over a decade, during which he trained nearly every soldier, civilian employee, and adult family member to be stationed there, amounting to thousands of people. Several of my co-students recognized his talk of blood rituals, his fiery antipathy for Communism, and his insistence upon teaching intentionally-broken Japanese as eccentricities they were unlikely to encounter among other Japanese people, leading them to question why he had been chosen to be their teacher. Like Birkhead, he had never been evaluated but, if his assessment of his predecessor is to be believed, was still a vast improvement over what came before. He was affable and energetic and proud of what he taught, but he was also a living illustration of the randomness of instructor selection and the lack of consideration that bases put into what their programs are teaching about Japanese culture.

Outside of base orientations and publications, my interlocutors stationed in Okinawa had two main sources of information that they turned to for information on Japanese culture: American Forces Network (AFN) radio and social media. AFN is the only radio station that reaches all corners of Okinawa's main island and, though also attracting tens of thousands of Okinawan listeners, is targeted exclusively at American military personnel (Troy Ruby, interview with the author, February 2019). From 2018-2019, AFN Okinawa ran a monthly talk radio show called Japanese Cultural Awareness and Tips,

and also featured one-minute culture lessons produced by the creators of that show several times every day. The show was the brainchild of cohosts Sgt. Major Mario Marquez, the island's top-ranking enlisted marine, who had been stationed in Okinawa numerous times and was married to an Okinawan woman; and Mari Gregory, a biracial white-Japanese woman who was born and raised in mainland Japan and came to Okinawa accompanying her marine husband two years prior to starting the radio show. Marquez and Gregory's hour-long show featured explanations of Japanese manners and customs and local and national holidays and festivals in addition to answering questions submitted by listeners. Gregory also managed the show's Facebook page. During her time in Okinawa, she told me, in several Facebook groups for Americans in Okinawa, it became common practice that members would advise each other to direct questions about culture and etiquette to her, and so she sometimes found herself answering Facebook messages during dinner or staying up late at night researching proper manners for different situations.

Gregory got her degree in psychology and had no formal training in cultural education, though she used some of her knowledge of psychology to try to make her messages more appealing and convincing. When preparing for a radio show or answering a question from Facebook, she would consult encyclopedias and books on Japanese customs and etiquette, as she often felt her personal experience was not adequate to explain the reasoning or background behind the cultural practices that she introduced. She felt a strong sense of responsibility and pressure to be correct, as she had become the de facto authority on Japanese culture for the bases. When I met with her, there

were only a few months left in her husband's three-year assignment to Okinawa, and she was struggling with how to continue offering cultural education and advice after she left (Mari Gregory, interviewed by the author, February 2019).

In many ways, Gregory demonstrated more dedication to providing cultural knowledge than the instructors that the bases paid to do so. She had a firmer understanding of where the Americans were coming from and a focus on providing practical information without feeling the need to entertain. Though she was not a professional educator and viewed herself as learning alongside the people who sent her questions, she expressed a strong commitment to fact-checking herself and basing her content on questions and needs expressed by her audience, two qualities that were absent in most of the mandatory orientations (which, as we have seen, were often formulaic and whimsical, with little emphasis on the relevance or utility of the information provided). However, Gregory's presence in Okinawa, though tied to her husband, was purely coincidental from the military's perspective. If she had not come, or had not felt driven to promote cultural exchange, or had not had the competence and charisma to host a radio show, then none of what she created would have materialized. This is one of several incidences I encountered of cultural knowledge and cross-cultural communication being facilitated by a happy accident rather than any intentional planning on the part of U.S. military leadership.[16] Cases like Gregory's were often lauded by base public affairs offices and publications as examples of American volunteerism stepping up to overcome

[16]A marine once showed me a news story in *Stars and Stripes* celebrating how his Japanese language skills had led to a successful joint-training exercise between his unit and members of the JSDF (Bolinger 2019), but he had not been assigned to the exercise as an interpreter and no other interpreter had been provided.

problems, when in fact they could just as easily be described as ill-preparedness being offset by dumb luck.

As we have seen, behind the tremendous investment and emphasis placed on base cultural orientations, there is no oversight, no assessment, no uniformity of goals or content, and often no background or training in cultural education for the instructors. Questionable information is presented as facts, irrelevant topics are allowed to occupy significant amounts of time, student attendance and participation are not actually required, and coincidental occurrences of cultural learning are claimed as military achievements. Base leadership are usually aware of these problems, but do nothing to address them, as they believe the central goal of getting troops off base is still being achieved. Jeff Rogers,[17] commander at one of the bases where I participated in an orientation, was very candid with me about the state of his base's cultural programming. Rogers told me that he was a firm believer in the importance of cultural education for American troops. He described cultural orientations as being aimed at encouraging and equipping military members to venture outside of the bases and enjoy their time in Japan, which he believes is key to maintaining good morale and thus essential to the overall functioning of the military. He had not attended his own base's cultural orientation; he told me that his work, which involved communicating directly with high-ranking officials in the Japanese government and Self-Defense Forces, was too important for him to take the time to join the course. However, his wife had taken it, and his understanding from her was that it had been quirky, erratic, and not particularly

[17]This is a pseudonym.

helpful. He laughingly described the orientation as an "institution" on the base, a kind of shared experience or even initiation that everyone except for the highest-ranking officers was expected to go through, but that nobody liked it and that it did not offer much in the way of practical information.

Given Rogers' position working directly with Japanese military leaders, I was surprised to learn that he had not undergone any formal training or orientation regarding Japanese culture or communication styles himself. When asked about how he prepared for his position, he indicated that there had been a handful of briefings on geopolitics and strategy, but the thing that had best prepared him for Japan was a book recommended by another officer: *Dave Barry Does Japan* (Barry 1993), an American humorist's lampooning of Japanese culture that features some racist undertones. Though he acknowledged that he understood the book was meant to be a parody, Rogers described it as a near-perfect representation that greatly informed his interactions with Japanese people. Rogers and his wife also researched Japanese dining etiquette via Google searches before coming, but he found that none of the high-ranking Japanese that he met ever followed any of the rules he had learned.

Rogers was not the only base commander to tell me he had foregone cultural orientation, illustrating that those orientations and their purported promotion of ambassadorship have little relation to actual international and intercultural relations, since those whose duties actually encompass such tasks view them as unnecessary. On the other hand, Rogers' enthusiastic endorsement of *Dave Barry Does Japan* is perhaps not surprising, as it shows that, even without the orientation, he was still subject to the

overall tendencies of military cultural education about Japan to rely on orientalist tropes and encourage a sense of American superiority, the focus of the following section.

Vertical Orientations: Learning Cultural Superiority

The online resources produced by bases that are accessible to or geared toward servicemembers and dependents preparing to be stationed in Japan follow a pattern of erasing, coopting, or scapegoating Japanese bodies to portray American military life in Japan as comfortable and Americans as superior (Gabrielson 2019). Similar problems can be found in cultural education courses. Lutz (2002) has shown that American military ideology has been both reinforced by and a reinforcer of cultural undercurrents of white supremacy. Thus, cultural knowledge can also serve as a force multiplier when that knowledge is used to foster a sense of superiority and entitlement in personnel that can itself contribute to comfort and morale. Elsewhere, Lutz, citing Silliman (2008), describes a "hidden curriculum" teaching incoming American troops stationed at foreign bases that "the people surrounding them are their inferiors." (Lutz 2015, 6). In Japan, this curriculum is not always hidden: we have already seen that past iterations of cultural orientations denigrated local people, as in the slides published by Mitchell discussed above. We have also seen that orientations sometimes encourage Americans to expect special treatment, as in the case of instructors suggesting that Japanese will speak English if you force them to.[18]

[18]The relationship between this sense of entitlement and issues of military masculinity will be further explored in a later chapter.

Base cultural education programs also foster hierarchies through their tendency to emphasize Japan as exotic and ridiculous, thus marking America as "normal" or "respectable" by implicit comparison. I do not mean here to accuse the instructors of harboring a Japan-bashing agenda, as every one of them that I spoke with was happy to be in Japan and proud and excited to share their native or adopted culture with others. Rather, the focus on fun and easy orientations, the lack of oversight over course content, and the common practice of not requiring experience or expertise from the instructors, together form a learning environment in which preexisting notions of American superiority can unconsciously be encouraged and reinforced. Most prominent among these is Orientalism (Said 1979), the carryover mindset from the colonial era that constructs and depicts an imagined Orient[19] through westerners' fantasies and expectations rather than the lived experiences of Asian people. Orientalism positions an imagined, monolithic Orient as the foil to an imagined, monolithic West, with the former being irrational, mystical, emotional, and ancient. Though these qualities are potentially attractive in their exoticism, they are nevertheless still implied to be categorically inferior to the rational, scientific, logical, modern West, and so Orientalism establishes a civilizational hierarchy of Euro-America and white people over Asia and Asians.

Orientations that I attended repeatedly described Japan as strange, ridiculous, surprising, and indecipherable, and these characteristics were presented as intrinsically Japanese, without any acknowledgment that the same could be said about America or any other country or culture, given the right examples. Wester Wagenaar (2017) argues

[19]Said was referring specifically to the Near East, but later scholars have applied his ideas to all of Asia (e.g., Minear 1980, Morley and Robins 1995, Rosen 2000).

that Japan is subject to a particular brand of Orientalism, what they dub "Wacky Orientalism." In Wagenaar's model, "[b]y imagining Japan as weird, the West creates and strengthens the norm of what is "normal," an effect fed by a confirmation bias in which westerners look for and expect "weird" aspects of Japan as a source of humor and entertainment (Ibid. 51-2). Though Japanese instructors have their own reasons for presenting their culture this way, which will be discussed below, orientations' depictions of Japan clearly reflect the Orientalist sentiment that Eastern peoples and cultures are irrational and therefore inferior, and by striving to present materials that Americans will see as entertaining, instructors reinforce the Wacky Orientalist image of Japan as abnormal in a funny way.

As we saw with Onozaki, some instructors also present a more conventional Orientalist image of Japan, describing present-day Japanese culture and values in terms of rigid tradition and samurai honor. Rather than providing realistic expectations about Japanese people, such characterizations paint Japan as an Orientalist fantasyland, echoing popular Hollywood movies about Japan in which modern-day white protagonists are confronted by sword-wielding ninjas.[20] One instructor told me that they adopted this projection of Japan to pander to their American audience, as they felt such talk would "make the students more excited to be in Japan."

The exoticization and ridicule contained in base orientations paint Japan as a cultural other in relation to the United States, often engaging in the Orientalist tendency to cast the two as polar opposites. The fact that this process is carried out primarily by

[20]See, for example, *The Wolverine* (dir. James Mangold 2013) or *Bullet Train* (dir. David Leitch 2022).

Japanese nationals employed to represent their own culture highlights the influence of *nihonjinron* (lit., "theories on the Japanese"), the heart of Japanese cultural nationalism (Yoshino 1992). *Nihonjinron* is a way of thinking represented by a genre of texts produced by both Japanese and foreign pundits and academics that suggests that Japanese culture is monolithic and hyper-unique (see, for example: Dale 1986, Mouer and Sugimoto 1986). In the *nihonjinron* model, Japanese culture is shared and understood only by the Japanese, and outsiders are incapable of truly comprehending or appreciating anything Japanese, from the food, to the traditions, to even Japan's four seasons. Furthermore, implicit in *nihonjinron* is the idea that Japan is the only truly unique nation, as all others fall under shared cultural umbrellas such as "Western," "Chinese," or "Middle Eastern." The Orientalist polarization of Japanese and American (often implied to be shorthand for "Western" more generally) culture is central to much of *nihonjinron*,[21] often taking the form of comparison through false or reductive binaries such as horizontally- vs. vertically-organized culture (Nakane 1972), guilt-based vs. shame-based morality (Benedict 1945), or prioritizing individual rights vs. prioritizing collective harmony (Vogel 1979).

Nihonjinron thinking can be found throughout popular media in Japan, from bestselling books to television programs (e.g., Gabrielson 2014), and also makes perennial appearances in English-language books that purport to offer unique Japanese methods of business or self-help (e.g. Harvey 2020). Typically, *nihonjinron* identify aspects of

[21]*Nihonjinron* is by no means a unique phenomenon, as all nations have myths about what makes them better than others, and Japan certainly holds no monopoly on imagining Eastern and Western cultures as forming a dichotomy.

Japan to be celebrated and then use cherry-picked examples of Euro-American people and customs to prove the uniqueness of those aspects by way of comparison (Mouer and Sugimoto 1986), inevitably leading to the implied conclusion that Japan is superior for having said aspects while also suggesting that no one else in the world (again, in actual practice most often being represented by white Americans and Europeans) could ever hope to fully appreciate them. In many orientations that I attended, instructors drew explicitly upon *nihonjinron*-style theories in their presentation of Japanese people and culture, highlighting Japanese traditions and customs (such as *karate*, *ikebana*, or wearing kimono) as fundamental markers differentiating them from their American students. This allowed instructors to position themselves as authorities through their ethnic connection to those traditions and customs as Japanese even if they personally had never studied or experienced them. *Nihonjinron*-based education and cultural understanding can also generate a self-perpetuating cycle, as Americans that underwent orientations infused with *nihonjinron* have implemented hiring practices on several bases in which they offer the position of cultural educator—and Japanese personnel accept it—based solely on the qualification that the recipient of the offer is Japanese, as they have accepted that Japanese ethnicity is all that is required to understand Japanese culture.

Course content was also clearly affected by instructors' stereotypes of soldiers, Americans, and foreigners more generally. For example, the flipside of *nihonjinron*, that foreigners are incapable of truly understanding Japan, helps to account for the instructors' lack of concern regarding evaluation of participants' comprehension of

orientation materials and even some instructors' lackadaisical approaches to introducing Japanese culture, as the ideology dictates that linguistic and cultural competence are not goals that Americans could realistically achieve. Various instructors also assumed that Americans would be excited about ninjas and Hello Kitty, would find sumo wrestling humorous, or would want to learn about yakuza in great detail. During his course, Onozaki went on several tangents regarding military gun technology, gun collecting, and his experiences at firing ranges in the United States, always under the assumption that the participants were as enthusiastic about firearms as he was. If anyone was, they did not show it, though perhaps this was due to many participants suffering from jetlag or feeling frustrated with Onozaki's scattered teaching style. While Onozaki's case is the most extreme, none of these attempts to pander to audience expectations could be mistaken for training in cultural understanding and ambassadorship.

Cultural orientations also offered an opportunity for instructors to elevate their own status vis-à-vis other Japanese. Nearly all of the Japanese base employees (known on base as LN, or "local nationals") that I interacted with in English adopted the words "us" and "them" when differentiating themselves from Japanese without base access. This tendency was particularly prevalent among orientation instructors, whose use of these pronouns when speaking to a class strongly implied that the "us" they were referring to grouped them together with the military personnel in their classes. Miyamoto, a community relations specialist at Camp Sanders in Okinawa,[22] told me that in their

[22]Miyamoto will be introduced in detail in a later chapter. Both the name "Miyamoto" and the base "Camp Sanders" are pseudonyms.

community, base work carried at least as much prestige as being a full-time company employee or civil servant, but did not require a college education, making it an alternate pathway to gaining social status. An LN community relations specialist on another base told me that they loved to bring their children on the base because they believed it would make them more worldly and cosmopolitan than children who did not have base access. One LN who had gone to college in America told me that they worked in an office on base where Japanese was spoken exclusively and interaction with Americans was almost nonexistent, but that their coworkers saw themselves as superior to Japanese without base access and often discussed how their base connection differentiated them from their friends and neighbors. In fact, recruitment posters for Japanese base laborers often proclaim "*Nihon no Amerika de hatarakō"* (Let's work in Japan's America), portraying the bases as prestigious international workplaces (while simultaneously avoiding any reference to the inherent violence of the military's purpose).

Nowhere was this self-identifying with the base for social capital more obvious than in cultural instructors' descriptions of anti-base protestors. Though all but one of the cultural orientations I attended left any mention of the anti-base movement out of their prepared materials, there were several cases in which they were brought up by the personnel in attendance, who asked questions along the lines of "Do Japanese hate us?" or "Are we safe outside the bases if we go to Okinawa [where the anti-base movement is most visible]?" LN instructors universally answered these and similar questions by explaining that Japanese had been numbed to the need for militarism through *heiwa*

kyoiku (“peace education:” the Japanese right wing’s term for their assertion that left-wing antimilitarism has greatly influenced all aspects of public education) and *heiwa boke* (“peace dementia:” the supposed consequence of *heiwa kyoiku*, suggesting that Japan’s decades-long refusal to participate in external military actions has caused Japanese people to forget about war or view it as the stuff of fantasy and fiction). As a result, they explained, Japanese people (themselves excluded) had no concept of the dangers posed by Communism and Communist countries, the importance of deterrence in maintaining regional stability, and the necessity of war as a form of modern statecraft. The protestors, one said, “mean well and deserve respect [for their convictions],” but are operating under a fundamental misunderstanding of international security. Another told the class that protestors are “naïve and too optimistic.” The implication to the class, which one instructor later stated to me plainly in an interview, was that American military personnel are more sophisticated in their engagement with war and security than the average Japanese, and that the instructors had overcome this inferiority through close association with military members and thus saw themselves as holding a more realistic worldview that other Japanese were unable or unwilling to comprehend.

Japan as Mental Health Care: the Intentions and Consequences of Making an Allied Culture into a Force Multiplier

As we have seen, if one assumes that the goal of American military ambassadorship is to build relationships and foster cross-cultural understanding, then the current array of base guidebooks, cultural orientations, guided excursions, language and culture courses, radio programs, and other media aimed at introducing Japanese culture seems largely ineffective, if not detrimental. This is why I assert that understanding is not the goal of these programs. Cultural orientation materials offered at and published by individual bases invariably suggest that the goals are "intercultural relations," "cultural appreciation," "understanding of the host nation and its people," (Onozaki and Takahashi 2017) and the like. However, as we have seen, when asked to explain exactly what this means, or to otherwise define the goals of cultural orientations on U.S. bases, everyone from course instructors to base commanders offered the same response: the courses are meant to make the American personnel feel comfortable leaving the base, as they consider staying only within the confines of the base, in what is essentially designed to be a hyper-securitized, colorless approximation of an American suburb (Gillem 2007), to be detrimental to morale. Leaders at bases across Japan told me that they wanted their troops to feel comfortable going to restaurants, traveling, and (according to one American officer) meeting Japanese women because they view leaving the base not as a fun diversion for servicemembers, but as an urgent matter affecting both the morale of troops as they go about their work and the likelihood that they will reenlist at the end of their tour. As Major General James Pasquarette, Commanding General of the United States Army, Japan, told me, a key goal of army cultural education programs is "making sure our soldiers enjoy the place that [sic]

they're gonna serve," because "we think a happy soldier or a content soldier is a more effective soldier" (James Pasquarette, interviewed by the author, August 2017). My interviews indicate that it is an accepted truth among U.S. military officers in Japan that those troops who rely solely on the internal facilities of the bases for their food and leisure will end up bored, bitter, and disappointed. Military cultural awareness training in Japan is therefore not about learning the culture so much as it is about being prepared to spend time in it in order to escape the monotony and artificiality of the bases themselves.

Most bases I visited had invested a great deal in providing creature comforts for troops. Depending on the size of the facility, there were amenities ranging from game rooms with video game consoles and pool tables to bowling alleys and movie theaters showing current American theatrical releases. Representatives of morale-centered organizations such as MCCS or the Air Force's Force Support Squadron (FSS) often appeared at base orientations to highlight these amenities as means for relaxing and assuaging homesickness, but even they explained that staying only on base was not a fun way to live. Most of these morale organizations offered trips, tours, and guided experiences all over Japan as more attractive options to on-base amusements. One organization, Navy Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (Navy MWR) Atsugi, even has a point system that rewards personnel who regularly take advantage of these off-base excursions with points that can be used to earn discounts on future tours (navymwratsugi.com). While many of these organizations did offer what they billed as "Japanese experiences" on base, such as language classes, crafting workshops, tea ceremonies, and photoshoots in

kimono, these were often explicitly described as being aimed at the wives of base personnel (marking them as feminine activities within the hypermasculine, heteronormative environments typical of American bases) and also took place on weekdays during times when most personnel would be at work. While the consequences of linking cultural activities specifically to women will be explored at length in a later chapter, suffice it to say here that most cultural activities hosted by and on bases are designed to be both unappealing and inaccessible to the overwhelmingly male population of active duty troops, making their cultural experience opportunities dependent on leaving the base.

This concerted effort from leadership and morale organizations to promote and incentivize leaving the bases illustrates the importance that the U.S. military places on getting personnel to pursue Japanese cultural experiences. If the reason is that staying on base is bad for job performance and overall morale (by exacerbating depression, homesickness, boredom, etc.), then the implication is that the work of boosting morale and improving troops' mental health happens outside the base fences, and therefore outside the purview of the military. Thus, the (expected) force multiplication effect extends beyond simply keeping military members' spirits up to include a full shifting of responsibility for addressing the mental health issues of those members onto local communities and Japan at large, freeing up military resources for other uses and providing scapegoats when troops experience mental health issues[23]—i.e., if the military did everything it could to prepare them to go off base and still failed to improve their

[23]Belkin (2012) identifies scapegoating of outsiders and minorities as a common mechanism for social control within the U.S. military, an idea that will be discussed in detail in a later chapter.

morale, then it was either because they chose not to take advantage of the world outside the base, because they could not enjoy Japan, or because Japan failed to make them happy. To put this another way, by equating mental health care and maintaining morale with leaving the base, the military can claim that problems arise because the individual chose not to accept help from the host nation, the individual was beyond helping by the host nation (making them one of the so-called "bad apples" addressed in the next chapter), or the pleasure and/or care to which the individual was entitled was not delivered by the host nation.

Military members are at high risk for having mental health problems and have significantly higher suicide rates than civilians according to Suitt (2021), who found that the number of current or former U.S. servicemembers who died by suicide between the 9/11 attacks in 2001 and 2021 was more than four times the total number of American troops who died in combat in all of the conflicts that occurred during that period. While military installations offer a variety of virtual and in-person tools and services to address personnel's mental health problems (Military OneSource, "Mental Health"), deeply-rooted structural and cultural factors within the military prevent personnel from making use of them. Tanielian, et. al., (2016) found three key interconnected obstacles that impeded their interlocutors' decisions to make use of military mental health care: first, many questioned the capacity of the mental health care facilities, with both practitioners and potential patients stating that there were not enough caregivers (723). Consequently, care was not available outside of working hours, meaning those who wished to seek it required permission from their commanding officers to miss work and

thus exposing themselves to potential career repercussions depending on their leaders' attitudes toward mental health (Ibid. 723-5). Given that "the military ethos values "toughing it out" and espouses that persons with problems are weak" (Ibid., 725), it is perhaps unsurprising that as many as sixty percent of troops experiencing mental health problems do not seek help (Sharp et. al., 2015). Treating going off-base as a panacea for psychological and emotional problems is a far simpler and more convenient alternative to the drastic institutional change that would be required to address these problems.

So what are all of these Americans meant to be doing off base? The suggestions I heard from base commanders, base orientation leaders, and public relations officers were always very general, such as "see Japan," "experience Japan," "enjoy the culture," and sometimes "make friends," but always while remembering to be ambassadors. In practice, personnel that I spoke with most commonly went off base for drinking or joining base-organized volunteering activities (discussed in the next chapter). Slightly less common were people who regularly went off base to eat or buy groceries, and among my interlocutors, tourism and domestic travel were only common for troops whose families had accompanied them to Japan. When asked if going off base had been good for them, a small number consisting mainly of young enlisted servicemembers recounted negative experiences such as being cheated out of money by taxi drivers or treated rudely by old men on the street, and many people who identified themselves as enlisted personnel or spouses posted to Facebook groups dedicated to complaining about military life in Japan. Most did tell me that leaving base had improved their quality of life, and though this was clearly the answer expected of them and the answer

that conveyed the most sophistication and respect for Japan, it was backed up at least partially by the litany of comments by self-identifying base personnel coming to the defense of Japan in response to nearly every Facebook post in the complaint groups.

The life improvements experienced by my interlocutors most often came in terms of providing an alternative to base food and shopping options, which many found disappointing, living in the more comfortable housing they had found outside of their base, or enjoying tourism. Very few of them had made friends with Japanese people, though some officers and spouses who lived off base mentioned friendly relationships with Japanese neighbors. Most cited the short length of their deployment, the language barrier, and—despite their varying degrees of mandatory training in cross-cultural communication and relations—cultural differences as the chief obstacles to forming relationships with local people. Those who had made friends typically did so by volunteering for base-sponsored English language classes and getting to know the regular students.

In the orientations that I attended, drinking and sex were only ever discussed in terms of their limitations, such as base curfews, tongue-in-cheek warnings not to underestimate the strength of alcoholic drinks found in Japanese convenience stores, comparisons of American and Japanese legal blood alcohol levels for driving, and advisories regarding bars and clubs that had been blacklisted due to drug dealing or prostitution—this being the only mention that engaging prostitutes was not permitted. Aside from these references to prostitution and the single, inaccurate reference to Japan's age of consent mentioned above, sex was never explicitly brought up as a possible off-base activity.

Moon (1997, 36-37) found that prostitution and sexually-transmitted diseases were discussed in detail, sometimes including encouragement for pursuing the former and guidance for avoiding the latter, regularly at U.S. military posts in Asia, so perhaps I did not encounter such talk because newcomer orientations and cultural education classes were not considered the appropriate venue for it. For my part, I did encounter materials like a welcome video to Camp Fuji and digital welcome guides to Iwakuni[24] that imply the availability of sex with Japanese women and evoke Orientalist fantasies of Asian feminine subservience to white men (Gabrielson 2019). Though this implicit benefit (for cisgender heterosexual males) of sexual access to exotic women is no secret (e.g., Roberts 2014), only one of my interlocutors, a formerly-enlisted Black man in his thirties, brought it up. He described his experience of sex off base as an informally institutionalized activity, wherein newly arriving Black troops would "inherit" local sexual partners from departing Black troops.[25] For those troops who participated, he told me, it seemed to function as a morale boost at the time, though it had the opposite effect on him as an observer, as he found it exploitive and off-putting.

While the Japanese owners of bars and businesses catering to U.S. troops that I interviewed did not generally think of themselves as picking up the bases' slack in terms of mental health and morale, nearly all saw their business as providing some form of care in addition to their primary services. They often had stories to tell about marines binge drinking to overcome the fear of their impending deployment, soldiers looking to

[24]Both of these facilities belong to the USMC, the service with the lowest mean age, highest ratio of male to female members, and least married members (Department of Defense 2020).
[25]I will discuss the racial implications of this practice and the agency of the women involved in a later chapter.

talk to bartenders or local women about their traumatic experiences while stationed in the Persian Gulf, sailors taking on significant loans from local car dealerships and buying a new sportscar in order to feel like they had higher status in Japan than they did back at home, or airmen who came to the same restaurant every night to have a cheeseburger because they were homesick and afraid to try Japanese food, to give just a few examples. As these stories illustrate, by shifting responsibility for mental health and morale outside of base fences, the military has also moved the burden of paying the costs for mental health care to the troops themselves.

It is beyond the scope of this project to link the military's shifting of morale maintenance and everyday mental health support to the informal forms of care available off-base with issues such as crime committed by servicemembers in local communities or servicemembers' high incidence of suicide. However, even if it is not a contributing factor to these problems, encouraging servicemembers to leave the base—and doing so as a substitute for investing in professional mental health care—nevertheless places Japanese communities in direct contact with them.

Once, at a protest, an older male Japanese peace activist who has organized monthly demonstrations outside one of the bases in mainland Japan for many years explained to me why he was so adamant about getting the bases to close. He told me that the base in his town was designed for American troops to bring their families, meaning not only more people but also longer stays. He took that to imply that he and the other people of his town were expected to welcome them, to support them, to entertain them, to feed them and rent apartments to them and sell them souvenirs and maybe even date them.

And, he said, that is what people did; their manners, economic needs, and general friendliness led them to contribute to these Americans' pleasant experiences in Japan. Thus, he felt, he and his fellow townsfolk had been incorporated into the systems for maintaining American military morale and therefore were playing a part in force multiplication. In other words, he felt that he and his neighbors were complicit in acts of American state violence simply by living in their community, even if their personal political stances are opposed to that violence. Institutionalizing "get the troops off base" as the first step in maintaining morale therefore does not just turn cultural education into a force multiplier; in taking advantage of Japanese hospitality and manners, it makes a force multiplier of Japanese culture itself.

Conclusion: Ambassadorship as a Force Multiplier

Petraeus's notion that learning the "cultural terrain" of a site of deployment could be more significant than understanding the physical terrain of the place holds particular merit when applied to the culture of an allied nation such as Japan, where there is no risk of enemies of the United States using the local geography to their advantage. However, this is not to say that deeply or even correctly understanding cultural terrain is necessary for force multiplication to take place. Military-mediated cultural learning about Japan forgoes accuracy for entertainment, choosing to focus on improving troops' morale by depicting Japan as a fun, easy place to live, where Americans can expect hyper-accommodating locals and an exotic, oriental atmosphere to act as a balm for

their mental and emotional struggles. Responsibility for personnel's mental and emotional struggles is thus shifted onto the country and culture outside the base, together with blame for problems that arise when those struggles go untreated.

This emphasis on bolstering morale as the true purpose of cultural education means that American base personnel are not expected to learn the local language or customs and face no consequences if they fail to do so; instead, they are told that their lack of understanding is forgivable and will be compensated for by the efforts of the Japanese people whom they encounter, suggesting that they are entitled to special accommodation. This approach also fosters nationalistic feelings that help Japanese base employees avoid feeling inferior to Americans, both by telling them that their military affiliation makes them more globally-minded and aware of political realities than other Japanese, and by bolstering their nationalistic sense of cultural uniqueness by reaffirming that understanding Japan is not possible for outsiders.

Though the meaning behind the sentiment that military-affiliated Americans "are all ambassadors" was never concretely explained in any of the countless instances in which I encountered it, base leadership and public relations specialists linked it explicitly to cultural knowledge programs, especially mandatory orientations. A more cynical interpretation of this would suggest that, for the U.S. military, ambassadorship simply means feeling entitled to let Japanese people and culture solve your problems with mental health, homesickness, and workplace motivation. The willingness of leaders like Rogers to leave ineffectual programs unchanged and the overall lack of accountability for both instructors and participants would support this conclusion. However, I believe

that most of my military interlocutors—notably including the cultural orientations' instructors and participants—were genuine in their stated desires to contribute positively to U.S.-Japan relations. This suggests two key implications.

First, thanks to the positive attitudes that many base personnel hold towards intercultural relations, the very existence of cultural education programs becomes a force multiplier: similarly to how military public relations offices pointed to Mari Gregory as an example of base community members' commitment to bettering ties with the Japanese that surround them, they hold up cultural orientation programs and military members' earnest participation in those programs as evidence of American respect for Japanese culture and desire to be "good neighbors," even though the content of the programs often works against these goals. Additionally, anti-base activist groups regularly accuse the Americans of being imperialistic, calling into question the legitimacy of their right to occupy Japanese territory with their bases (Inoue 2017). Having cultural orientations means that PR offices can respond to such claims with evidence that the bases are ostensibly promoting mutual respect and cross-cultural understanding, and then the military's Japanese-language websites and Facebook pages can show military members enthusiastically participating in cultural events. According to the Japanese-language Community Relations page for the USMC, for example, marines stationed in Japan "are making efforts to understand Japanese culture more deeply through exchange with local communities, and making efforts as residents of Japan to become good neighbors and good friends." (Marines.mil, "Chiiki to no kankei").

Second, the desire held by many base personnel to learn Japanese customs and manners, coupled with the impressive resources that bases dedicate to cultural education programs, suggest that orientations that support the goals of mutual respect and cross-cultural understanding should be possible. Many bases have already created positions for full-time cultural educators, made undergoing cultural training a paid and mandatory work duty for nearly all personnel, dedicated timeslots and locations to carrying it out, and produced guidebooks and course materials about local culture. The form is not lacking, only the content. A pivot towards more accurate, meaningful cultural education is therefore possible, and such education could itself be a force multiplier if it were geared toward respecting Japanese people and culture and actively discouraging feelings of entitlement and superiority in order to improve person-to-person relations[26] and perhaps even reduce military-related crimes,[27] for example.

However, as the findings of anthropologists such as González (2010) and Stone (2017) have indicated, other U.S. military attempts to operationalize cultural knowledge also routinely forego accuracy and sensitivity in favor of ease, expediency, and/or the desire for military personnel involved to have a positive experience. By misrepresenting foreign cultures in this way, the U.S. military's cultural knowledge programs are not only coopting those cultures in order to enable violence (via force multiplication), but are also committing violence against those cultures by reinforcing stereotypes and

[26]Christopher Nelson (2008, 117) links historical acts of Okinawan resistance against the U.S. military to "American insensitivity."

[27]While U.S. military sources accurately site low (and often declining) rates of crimes committed by American base personnel (e.g. Robinson 2015), it is nevertheless true that "rapes conducted by American soldiers of local women would not have occurred if the Japanese government had not hosted US military bases…" (Mikanagi 2004, 98), and thus any rate above zero remains an unwanted consequence of U.S. military deployment in Japan. Military crime will be discussed more in the following chapter.

engendering attitudes of American cultural superiority. In the case of Japan, tens of thousands of Americans undergo military cultural education every year and then return to the U.S. with the added authority of someone who has experienced the country firsthand. It is imperative, then, that future research uncover how these supposed ambassadors are representing Japan to other Americans, and what effects their military-influenced perspectives have on the treatment and experiences of Asians and Asian-Americans.

Rogers, one of the top-ranked USFJ officers in Japan, told me that he worked closely with the military and civilian leaders responsible for shaping and carrying out the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance. When asked about the JSDF, he was extremely critical, saying that their leadership falls apart whenever things do not proceed according to plan, a weakness that would make them a liability on the battlefield. He referred to the Japanese as "neutered by their constitution," referencing Article 9, which prohibits the country from making war. Echoing the standard answer that I had been given elsewhere, though with a slight tone of ridicule, he described the protestors that demonstrate weekly outside his base as "polite." He told me that the older generation are the only ones who are against the bases, and that the Chinese government is involved in supporting anti-base protests (a questionable assessment that I will address more directly in a later chapter). The ease with which he could speak dismissively of not only protestors but even allied forces, his reliance on stereotypes of inflexibility and politeness, the gendered language he used to speak negatively of the Japanese

populace,[28] and his readiness to ascribe a valid Japanese political position to the machinations of what he considered an enemy state all clearly show that the kind of problematic attitudes that I found underlying base cultural education programs are present in the upper echelons of military leadership and are therefore likely to exert influence over not just personal interactions, but policy decisions that affect the security of the entire Asia-Pacific region. Of course, Rogers himself did not go through his base's cultural education program, but that in itself is a policy decision regarding the importance of that education, as it means he felt his predetermined ideas and biases regarding Japanese culture had no more need of modification than what could be gained from the twenty-five-year-old observations of a comedian on vacation.

[28]The role of gender in American military relations with Japan is the focus of a later chapter.

Chapter III: Good Neighbors and Bad Apples

Figure 6: Trick-or-treaters from a local preschool receive candy from a remotely piloted Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) robot during a Halloween event on Camp Hansen. Photo by the author.

One would be hard-pressed to determine whether U.S. base personnel in Japan are told more often that they need to be ambassadors or good neighbors. In fact, one of these directives is often followed immediately by the other. The ideal of being a "good

neighbor" was brought up by over half of my American interlocutors during formal interviews, referring both to a behavioral standard for individual Americans living in predominantly Japanese communities off base and to a desire to minimize the impacts of the bases and the military as an organization upon the daily lives of the local communities within which they are embedded. The rhetorical opposite to this ideal, as used by both my interlocutors and by officers addressing groups of base personnel, is the "bad apple," though this is never applied to the bases generally, but instead signifies specific Americans who commit crimes, make trouble, or otherwise fail to be "good neighbors." The focus of this chapter is on interrogating these two labels. I argue that the proximity of American base personnel and Japanese locals, as well as the interpermeability of the bases and their surrounding communities (Lutz 2002), result in an unplanned intimacy between the two groups, and that both the good neighbor trope and the bad apple trope represent ways of understanding and shaping that intimacy through a militarized lens. Specifically, I have found that nearly every effort made by individuals or bases toward being a "good neighbor" is praised and rewarded, even when it is poorly planned, poorly executed, or poorly received, thus disincentivizing effort and consideration and absolving said neighbors of any responsibility for the outcomes. At the same time, perpetuating the "bad apple" metaphor unmoors all crimes and incidents from any sort of historical context and thus dismisses the position —prevalent among both mainland Japanese and Okinawans—that problems from the bases form a larger pattern stretching all the way back to the postwar Occupation. Thus military frames of self-reference attempt to mitigate the potential negative effects of

everyday intimacy with Japanese people and communities by delineating two correct modes for the local people to understand them—that every positive intention is representative of the organization and its culture and values, but that no bad act be—and thus denying all other modes of understanding as incorrect.

I define intimacy here as conditions of material, financial, spatial, and/or affective entanglements that directly influence our bodies, identities, and/or ways of life. Feminist political geographers Pain and Staeheli (2014, 344) offer the important reminder that intimacy is not limited to close proximity or personal relationships, further arguing that though intimacy is often treated as merely a site in which geopolitics is inflicted on and experienced by bodies, geopolitics has been "exposed as already created by and consisting of practices of intimacy" (Ibid., 345). Thus, "[i]f intimacy has already encompassed and formed that which is wider and distant from it, any clear distinction between intimacy and geopolitics no longer makes sense" (Pain 2015, 66). Adey et al. (2016) build on this point, describing intimacy as both constitutive of and threatening to militaries through its ability to positively or negatively impact elements—such as morale and unit cohesion—that are seen as crucial to mission success. By highlighting the intimate relationships that result from inserting American bases into Japanese communities, this chapter exposes the ambiguities of intimacy, illustrating that intimacy can be both constitutive of and threatening to the continued presence of U.S. bases in Japan. The lens of intimacy highlights the persistence, mutuality, and deep engagement of the U.S.-Japan alliance without erasing its exploitive, hierarchical, racialized, and gendered aspects, and suggests fraught layers of

desire, ambivalence, and presumption about the other that affect the stability of that alliance.

Important work has already been done on intimacies between the U.S. military and local civilian populations in East Asia. Kovner (2013) has shown that American troops' demand for sex in postwar Japan (framed at the time as a biological "need") resulted in draconian and dehumanizing policies toward sex work and public hygiene from both Occupation authorities and the Japanese government, meaning that official military interventions in cross-cultural intimate relations like those I describe are not new. As I demonstrate, the entitlement implicit in military narratives of how locals should relate to troops has shifted from overtly sexual to focused more on recognition of good deeds and moral character. Forgash (2020) brings these intimate interventions into the contemporary era in her research on marriage between Okinawan women and American servicemembers. She describes the military's construction of both real and metaphorical fencelines that marginalize and disempower Okinawan women and reenforce Orientalist expectations of gender performance. These fencelines highlight the inherent problems of viewing the bases as "neighbors:" as physical representations of an asymmetrical sense of difference, they deny Japanese both access to their American "neighbors" and the ability to shut those neighbors out, while granting both of these abilities to the Americans on the base. Ames (2010) explores the social benefits and consequences for Okinawan women who form relationships with military men, once again discussing the racialized expectations of both sides but also highlighting the agency and cosmopolitanism that such women gain from their choices of partner,

illustrating the interpermeability that I point out by showing that the fenceline is a porous border and that the power and hierarchy that it generates can be appropriated (to some extent, at least) by those whom it is meant to keep on the outside. Miyanishi's (2012) ethnography of Okinawan wives of American troops in Okinawa further exposes the limits of military intervention in troops' intimate relations with locals through her discussion of the military's lack of adequate support or concern for domestic violence in these relationships, demonstrating the practice that I identify of base personnel's bad behaviors being ascribed to "bad apples" in order to avoid any institutional responsibility by denying that such behaviors are part of historical or cultural patterns within the military.

Though the insights provided by these works cannot be understated, they all limit their analysis of intimacy to its most narrow definition as an element or byproduct of sex and romance. This chapter expands the scope of intimacy studies between American base personnel and Japanese civilians by looking at other forms of intimacy and how the bases generate, frame, and respond to them. Thus, rather than romance and sex, I focus on the intimacy that results from everyday contact, from teacher-student relationships, from playing and celebrating together, from learning about each other, from one side giving up its time to help the other, from simply living in the same neighborhood, and from crime and victimization. Including these points of contact reveals that intimacy across the U.S.-Japan Alliance is not limited to romantic or sexual relationships, but in fact is experienced by countless others inside and outside of the bases, and that the influence of American militarization responds to and attempts to influence all of these

entanglements. Military-affiliated Americans' uses of the "good neighbor" and "bad apple" narratives frame all forms of intimacy in terms that improve morale through increased self-regard, naturalize the continued presence of the U.S. military in Japan, and undermine local resistance by discrediting any critique that paints the problems of the bases as interconnected or systemic.

Though some American military personnel referred to themselves as "guests," most—often including the self-proclaimed "guests"—described themselves as members of Japanese communities. Major General James Pasquarette, then commanding general of the United States Army, Japan, for instance, told me that American troops "are a member of the local community; we just happen to have fences for security reasons" (interviewed by the author, August 2017), while Sgt. Major Mario Marquez, then Okinawa's top-ranking enlisted marine, said that "We are part of [Okinawans'] community" (interviewed by the author, May 2019). However, definitions of what specific values being a good neighbor entailed varied widely from person to person. In general, Americans described it as following social norms and not being a nuisance, citing examples such as not littering and cleaning up garbage left by other Americans (base public relations officer, interviewed by the author, 2019), picking up after their dogs and not playing music too loudly (Troy Ruby, station manager, American Forces Network Okinawa,[29] interviewed by the author, February 2019), or supporting local businesses and not disrespecting Japanese law (Mario Marquez, Sgt. Major of the 3rd Marines Expeditionary Force, interviewed by the author, May 2019). Marquez also

[29]Amongst his other duties, Ruby is responsible for producing public service announcements for AFN radio designed to improve servicemembers' behavior.

highlighted learning the Japanese language and making Japanese friends as part of being a good neighbor.

Conversely, "bad apple" as a label was not so much defined by my military sources as attached after the fact whenever a base-affiliated American was caught breaking laws or misbehaving. Base officials repeatedly told me that there had been "a few bad apples" (public relations officer, interviewed by the author, December 2018) or that "there's always one or two bad apples" ("Jeff Rogers," interviewed by the author, 2017), suggesting that crimes and faux pas were only committed by a small minority of individuals who were inherently "bad" and should not be taken to represent the whole (despite the rhetoric that all base personnel are "ambassadors," as discussed in the previous chapter). It is noteworthy that the metaphor of the "bad apple" comes from the centuries-old English adage "one bad apple spoils the whole barrel" (Merriam Webster.com, One 'Bad Apple' Can Spoil a Metaphor), meaning that, if we follow the metaphor, the mere existence of even one such "bad" individual leads to the corruption or ruination of the entire organization or community. The military usage, lacking the consequentiality of the original adage, is intended to dismiss criminals and troublemakers as outsiders. This stands in stark contrast to the perspectives of critics of American military deployment in Japan, who view each crime committed by a SOFA-status[30] American as a crime that would not have occurred if the bases were not there (e.g. Mikanagi 2004, 98).

[30]Americans affiliated with the U.S. military in Japan are generally covered by the U.S.-Japan Status of Forces Agreement, or SOFA, which grants them different rights from other foreign residents. SOFA-status Americans are not only military members, but can also be family members living with a member or civilian contractors and employees working on the bases.

This chapter will proceed in five parts. First, I will look at the most visible and oft-pointed-out representation of the bases' efforts toward being good neighbors: base-initiated programs that send military volunteers to help local communities. Analysis will focus on the shapes and consequences of the intimate contact that results from these encounters. Next, I will discuss the ways in which the military tries to establish bases as natural and permanent neighborhood institutions through the use of events that bring members of the local community onto the bases, creating opportunities for intimacy on the military's own terms. Following that, I will look at base activities that present American troops as good with or good for children and the related mindset among some Japanese that the troops are children themselves, arguing that juxtaposing American troops and Japanese children can serve several military public relations goals, but at the risk of exposing the children to the trappings of military violence. Fourth, I will look at "bad apples," analyzing bases' narratives of crime, punishment, crime prevention, and rehabilitation, and grounding those narratives in both Japanese and American interlocutors' experiences and attitudes regarding military members' crimes and misdeeds. Finally, I will conclude by exploring how narratives of good neighbors and bad apples structure the ways that servicemembers build intimacy with locals, and the roles that intimacy can play in shaping alliance politics and regional security.

This chapter is not meant to answer or even address the question of whether American bases are capable of being "good neighbors." To attempt making a case in either direction would involve looking at factors such as Japanese people's approval ratings regarding the U.S. military, economic impacts of the military presence, jobs created by

bases, community development projects and shared facilities benefitting base towns, the environmental and noise pollution generated by the military, the consequences of on-base and off-base accidents and aircraft crashes, land ownership disputes, Okinawa's history of underdevelopment under U.S. rule, and how community concerns are addressed (if they are addressed) by bases, among others. While I will briefly discuss base-related crime and sexual violence, this is also not in the interest of proving that bases are "bad neighbors." Instead, this chapter examines how my interlocutors experienced and deployed the ideas of "good neighbor" and "bad apple" when making sense of the intimate, everyday encounters and entanglements that occur between the two groups when Americans are deployed to bases in Japan[31].

Being Neighborly: Volunteerism and the Celebration of Good Intentions

A common theme among both American and Japanese interlocutors that identified as "pro-base" (i.e., they were against decreasing U.S. military deployment to Japan and supported U.S. military projects such as the construction of the new USMC facility at Henoko) was that Americans—and particularly servicemembers—have a strong drive for volunteerism, which many felt was an example that Japanese people could benefit from emulating. To evince this, base public affairs officers routinely pointed to the thousands of hours that American troops and other base personnel spend volunteering to help

[31]As I will discuss at length in a later chapter, U.S. personnel (particularly those at mainland Japanese bases) tend to view Okinawans as distinctly more combative and resistant to U.S. military goals than mainland Japanese. For this reason, I use "Okinawa/Okinawans" and "mainland Japan/mainland Japanese" when referring to these groups separately or highlighting an important difference between them, and simply "Japan/Japanese" when speaking generally about both groups.

communities around their bases every year. As with most things, each base's capacity for volunteering was different, with some having fewer volunteer opportunities than others as well as different foci to their volunteer activities. During my fieldwork, I joined sailors from Naval Base White Beach on visits to local daycare centers; watched soldiers from Torii Station act as crossing guards for children on their way to school; picked up trash on the streets of Kin Town and at Igei Beach with marines from Camp Hansen; participated in English-education events from board game nights to formal English classes alongside personnel from several bases; did yardwork and trail maintenance with troops; planted mangrove trees on Earth Day with a group of marines, town officials, and local preschoolers; and once even helped out at an event where marines modeled their new haircuts to help a small-town chamber of commerce promote a new barber shop to other marines at the neighboring base. In cases where Japanese people were involved, such as English classes, street cleanups, or anything involving children, I was often called upon to act as interpreter, including times when servicemember volunteers did not know why a child was upset or when Japanese officials wished to give a speech in praise of Japan-U.S. cooperation.

Participants that I spoke with often told me that they had joined several such volunteering activities and generally felt a strong desire to contribute to the communities outside the bases, with "I want to be a good neighbor" being a common refrain. Beyond that, they offered several reasons for volunteering. The most common reason among troops who regularly joined repeating activities, such as weekly English classes or monthly board game events, was that they were looking for opportunities to

interact with and get to know local people. However, due to the wide range of English levels among Japanese participants, many volunteers found interaction and communication frustrating and ended up spending most of their time with other Americans. Aside from interaction, most participants also told me that they joined volunteer activities to advance their careers. Troops (and ethnographers) who participated in volunteer activities both on- and off-base were issued letters of recognition from their base commanders for their efforts, and servicemembers could then include those letters in the portfolios that they used to apply for a promotion in rank. Another common reason I encountered was that a particular servicemember or even their entire unit had been, as they put it, "voluntold" to join, meaning their participation as a volunteer had been ordered by someone higher up the chain of command and they had little choice in the matter. When servicemembers volunteered during business hours on a weekday, it often meant that they were still technically at work and were being paid for their time, so some people joined the events as a welcome reprieve from their usual job tasks. Finally, several people told me they joined out of boredom; they were stuck in a small base town and did not know what to do with their time, so they signed up for volunteer events to have a reason and a means to get off the base.

An overarching characteristic of all the volunteer events that I observed was the lack of organization, leadership, and preparation. English lessons had been printed off of websites minutes before class began, musical performances for holiday events had never actually been rehearsed, face painters at face-painting booths only painted each

other, food was prepared in inadequate amounts, and both volunteers and locals rarely seemed to know where they were supposed to be or what they were supposed to be doing at any given moment. This is not to say that their efforts did not amount to anything, but it does indicate that, just as base personnel equate being a good neighbor with volunteering, they often understand volunteering to mean just showing up.

The following vignettes describe actual volunteering activities in which I participated in order to better illustrate how military personnel's attempts at neighborliness play out on the ground. In this section, I focus on events that were meant to contribute to local communities without opening the bases to them or focusing specifically on children, as examples of both will be included in the following sections.

Jungle Attack

White Beach is a joint U.S. Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force base in central Okinawa. Because it occupies land seized from Okinawans, there are over 200 Okinawan family graves located inside the base fences (public affairs officer, interviewed by the author, 2019), most of which are located on unused and overgrown pathways and hillsides. According to an officer from the JMSDF portion of the base, sometime in 2016, the local governments around White Beach contacted the base, saying that many residents had complained that they were experiencing hauntings and other paranormal problems because they were unable to tend to their family graves according to Okinawan custom. The JMSDF officer, who (like most SDF personnel stationed in Okinawa) was from mainland

Japan, laughed when he told me this story, commenting on the peculiar beliefs of Okinawans, and his counterpart, a Community Relations official for the Navy (a civilian who had also come from mainland Japan) indicated that the American Naval commanders had never been informed about the supposed supernatural nature of the complaints, instead only being told that locals wanted to visit the graves. The Navy and JMSDF formulated a joint response to the issue by agreeing not only to allow families access to visit their graves, but also to clear paths through the dense Okinawan vegetation to make those graves accessible. This program was dubbed "Jungle Attack," and, at the time of my fieldwork, was carried out on a monthly basis. The majority of the graves are located along five main trails, but the plants grow back very quickly, so when I participated in 2019, Jungle Attack cycled through the trails, clearing one a month. Navy public relations lauded the program to me as a prime example of the U.S. military both contributing to local communities and coming together with the JSDF to interact on a person-to-person level.

I arrived to participate in Jungle Attack early on a Thursday morning, wearing jeans and long sleeves despite the heat and the heavy boots that White Beach Public Affairs had repeatedly emphasized I should wear. I was loaded into one of a small group of vans with other volunteers and various manual and gas-powered gardening tools. When we pulled up to the site for the day's work, a group of ten JMSDF members in coveralls with gloves, goggles, and other safety equipment had already begun cutting into the vegetation under the direction of

their unit leader. The dozen or so American volunteers—all servicemembers from the Navy or Army except for one spouse, who was also one of only two women present—were dressed in civilian clothes (one man in shorts complained that he would end up covered in rashes) without any safety gear, lacking direction, milled around more a couple of minutes before choosing tools and beginning to haphazardly hack into the trees around the path. Occasionally, a JMSDF member would direct an American (through gestures) to point their machete or chainsaw in a specific direction. A photographer from Navy public affairs was also present. When the first section of a trail was cleared, a break was declared and the Americans and Japanese stood about ten yards apart. A JMSDF member went around offering cups of cold barley tea to the American volunteers, some of whom accepted, and then returned to his group. Two of the volunteers who did not accept the tea eyed it with visible suspicion and one of people who accepted it took one sip and then poured it out. The female sailor asked if the others had been "voluntold" to join by their unit commanders, as she had, and a representative of Navy public affairs stepped in to reassure her that everyone present would receive an official letter of appreciation for their time.

Soon after the work resumed, the American commander of the base and the senior noncommissioned officer arrived and joined in. Just as the work was winding down, the commander took a chainsaw from one of the volunteers and had everyone stand back while he cut down a tree in front of the photographer.

> One American sailor wondered aloud if this was a staged photograph, then looked sheepish when the noncommissioned officer gave him a disapproving look. The noncommissioned officer then gave a short speech about the significance of the event, saying that the trail they were clearing also led to a lookout post that the Japanese Imperial Navy had used to watch for Americans, and that it was a sign of the strength of the alliance that the two countries could now clear the path together.

On the surface, Jungle Attack delivers what it promises: paths are cleared, allowing many local families to tend their family graves, albeit on specified days, with special permits for limited access to that section of the base. It also creates opportunities to take photos of the base commander wading into the task and wielding a chainsaw for base social media posts, and for American participants to enhance their promotion portfolios with letters of recognition. This would seem to be a mutually beneficial situation were it not for the fact that the lion's share of the work was in fact done by the better prepared and better organized JMSDF contingent. The symbolism of the event for the Navy, that Jungle Attack represents the strength of the U.S.-Japan Alliance, is thus tainted both by the fact that the Americans invested very little effort or preparation in that symbol and the lack of any engagement between the Americans and Japanese volunteers beyond one kind but silent offer of tea that had been partially rebuffed. The symbolism of the event for the surrounding communities, that the base was respecting their customs, was likewise tainted by the ridicule it received from the Japanese

participants and the fact that the Americans were not even informed of the circumstances behind it.

Cleaning up the streets and beaches

Many of the U.S. bases in Okinawa recruit volunteers to clean up garbage from the beaches or pick up litter in the towns around the bases. In fact, a common refrain I heard from several base Public Affairs officials and Japanese base employees was "The media only ever covers the crimes and accidents! No one ever sees all the work the troops do cleaning up the beaches!" On several occasions, I was able to join marines from Camp Sanders[32] for various cleanup projects. Typically, about a dozen military volunteers in civilian clothes would join, with no more than one female marine present, reflecting the gender imbalance of the marines, which is highest among the services. After each cleanup, the amount of garbage and detritus collected was impressive, and the volunteers posed with all of their full garbage bags for photos for base social media pages at the end. On one street cleanup outside of Camp Sanders, the first object I found was unfamiliar to me until a marine volunteer explained that it was a disposable tool used for cleaning rifle barrels and had clearly been left by a marine. In fact, the organizer of that event, an Okinawan base employee, later suggested to me that most of the cleanups happen on beaches, but they wanted to do a street cleanup because most of the garbage on the streets had been left by marines. At the end of the cleanup, local business owners and local

[32]Camp Sanders is a pseudonym for an amalgamation of all USMC bases in Okinawa that I use in order to protect the anonymity of my interlocutors.

government representatives gathered to celebrate the marines' efforts (I was asked to translate their words of gratitude) and award them with coupons for free drinks at a local café. On a later beach cleanup, Miyamoto (the base's Community Relations Officer, introduced below) told me that marines used to camp on the beaches overnight and light huge bonfires, then bury their garbage in the sand the next day, so now both camping and bonfires were prohibited for Americans and Japanese alike.

I joined one beach cleanup where a unit's chaplain was overseeing the work. Like the rest of his unit, he was only in Okinawa for six months, which was nearing its end. He told me that Okinawa, as a permanent site of deployment, was entitled to what he called "sweat equity," meaning marine manual labor, whereas temporary sites such as Hong Kong instead received "cultural exchange" in the form of activities such as hospital visits. He described volunteering explicitly as a war tactic, meant to exert control over the military's image and create a positive narrative for the media, and he repeatedly described those who protest the bases as "adversaries."[33] What adversaries do not understand, he told me, is that military crimes and accidents are inevitable, as there are always "bad apples," and that volunteering is a good way to show that most American troops are "good guests," and their presence is not a threat to the local culture.

Okinawa-based journalist Jon Mitchell, whose award-winning reporting focuses heavily on the environmental impacts of the bases, spoke at a symposium I attended in October

[33]This incident and the chaplain's choice of words will be analyzed at length in a later chapter.

2018, where he suggested that the constant beach cleanups are camouflage, creating an image of environmental stewardship that the bases can point to with one hand while denying Japanese inspections of base chemical spills and pollutants with the other. As these examples illustrate, the cleanups also serve to camouflage the troops' littering, and creates opportunities for marines to be celebrated for what is essentially cleaning up their own messes. The chaplain concurred with this assessment by labeling the cleanups as tactical moves in a war for public opinion, and his notion of sweat equity also made the volunteering transactional, suggesting it was either accruing or paying off a debt rather than contributing to the local environment out of a sense of neighborliness.

Collaborating with the U.S. consulate

The U.S. Consulate in Okinawa regularly organizes, funds, or otherwise supports events aimed at teaching English and American culture to Okinawans, and relies mainly on military volunteers to make these programs work. At the time of my fieldwork, these included monthly board game nights, where locals (mainly children) would go to a shopping center food court and play board games (supplied by the consulate) with marines in English. Several times a month, the consulate also held early-morning English conversation groups at various Starbucks around the island for local professionals to come in and practice speaking English with military volunteers (often in uniform) before going to work. At both types of events, organizers (typically Japanese employees of the consulate) would actively direct military volunteers to disperse and distribute themselves among the Japanese participants to prevent them from interacting only with

each other. Volunteers at consulate-sponsored events often received two letters of recognition: one from the base and one from the consulate. Japanese participants, many of whom were repeat attendees, told me that they greatly enjoyed and looked forward to these events.

Ooshiro Hiroshi's American Christmas Party

Ooshiro Hiroshi is head of several educational organizations in Okinawa, particularly groups dedicated to promoting English education. He is also an adjunct professor at several universities both in Okinawa (where he teaches English) and in mainland Japan (where he teaches Okinawan history and culture). He is also the founder and president of Koju University, an unaccredited organization that offers a variety of classes for elderly Okinawans, including English courses, which he teaches himself. Every year, he organizes a Christmas party for the English students as a way to let them experience American culture. In 2018, he decided that he wanted that party to include actual Americans as well, and so he contacted the U.S. Consulate in Okinawa about the possibility of a Christmas celebration for his students on a military base. The consulate was happy to help and even offered to sponsor the event, so long as English education could somehow be incorporated. The consulate then put Ooshiro in touch with Camp Hansen, a marine base in the northern part of Okinawa.

The base agreed to host a Christmas lunch with marine volunteers and incorporate some kind of English activity. According to an officer at Camp

Hansen, Ooshiro then sent the base a full itinerary for the event: there would be welcome speeches, an English game during lunch, Christmas carols performed by marines, and then traditional Okinawan music and dance performed by the elderly Okinawans. Then everyone would join hands and sing "We are the World" to close out the event. Not wanting to disappoint a guest, base personnel began organizing the party according to Ooshiro's plan. As they gathered volunteers for the event, my source told me, they found that many of the marines who wanted to join did not celebrate Christmas and did not know any Christmas songs. Following the USMC directive of "adapt and overcome," they moved forward with the event anyway, gathering smaller groups of the volunteers to represent the rest at Christmas carol time. At the event, one of the base officials expressed frustration to me that they felt they had been pushed into performing Ooshiro's vision of Christmas rather than organizing a more honest and representative event that could showcase the variety of beliefs and traditions held by the marines of Camp Hansen. For all intents and purposes, Ooshiro had organized the same Christmas party he did every year, only this year it was inside a base with young marines present and free food provided by the consulate. When I asked Ooshiro if he would do anything differently the next time, he said that he felt he had not had enough of a hand in organizing the event and would like to make some adjustments, such as ensuring that all of the marines in attendance sang Christmas carols together.

During the meal, I was seated at the V.I.P. table with, among others, Ooshiro and the representative of the U.S. consulate. Inspired by the idea of creating opportunities for military volunteers to teach English to elderly Okinawans, the consular officer began listing off numerous other ways that he could support Ooshiro's school. His offers included sending military teaching assistants for the classes, arranging weekly conversation practice with military volunteers, organizing field trips or outings where marines would accompany the elderly students for sightseeing or picnics, and several others. Ooshiro abruptly dismissed all of the suggestions, saying only that his English courses were already planned.

Moments before the event began, the consular officer noticed and pointed out to me that the hall in which the event was taking place was decorated with poster-size black-and-white photos of marines in action during the Battle of Okinawa on every wall. They looked around for a minute, evaluating whether there would be enough time to have them removed before the party began, but then the guests started streaming in and they gave up. The concern, they told me, was that many of these seniors would have been alive during the battle, and there was no knowing how traumatic the images might be for them.

After the twenty uniformed marines, fifty elderly Okinawans, V.I.P.s, and myself all joined hands to sing "We are the World," the event concluded with a ceremony in which each marine volunteer present was called up by name and awarded a letter of appreciation from the base, a certificate of participation

from the consulate, and a t-shirt from Ooshiro's school. The ceremony lasted longer than any other single part of the event, save for the musical performances, which went long due to technical difficulties with the sound system.

The volunteers who joined Ooshiro's party did not know there would be an award ceremony; in fact, those I spoke with had known very little beyond that lunch would be served, that some of them would be expected to sing Christmas songs to elderly Okinawans, and that their commanding officer wanted them to attend. My conversations with over a hundred volunteers at this and similar events have shown me that, regardless of other motivations, most military members who volunteer sincerely want to be good neighbors. However, without adequate language and cultural training, they are dependent on military organizers to create the opportunities for them to do so, and military organizers equate participation with success. To that end, logistics begin and end with the allocation of bodies to a given project or event, and that allocation is celebrated as a positive contribution to local communities even if Japanese do all the heavy lifting (as in Jungle Attack), they are merely undoing what other military members have done (as in many beach and street cleanups), or the America they represent is a Japanese fantasy not of their choosing (as in Ooshiro's party). The message here, reinforced every time a servicemember receives a letter of appreciation for volunteering (as every volunteer above did), is that context and consequences have no bearing on being a good neighbor; if you showed up, and you feel good about what you did, then you have done your part.

The above examples illustrate the tools that military neighborliness practices equip troops with in order to limit and frame the ways that intimate contact with Japanese people can affect them. Jungle Attack suggests that all gestures can be taken at face value; working side by side means being strong allies even if one side does most of the work, and understanding and preparation are not important when offering help. Cleanups illustrate that any effort—even cleaning up after themselves—entitles them to praise and earns them transactional sweat equity. In guaranteeing the success of its volunteer efforts by making participation and intent the only criteria for evaluation—even to the degree of consciously misrepresenting American culture—events like Ooshiro's party discourage servicemembers from reflecting critically on the meanings or consequences of their actions. Taken together, they suggest the message that intimacy with Japanese should be approached with little regard for cultural and political context, a sense of entitlement, and no consideration for potential consequences.

Opening up to the Neighbors: Base Access as Gift and Privilege

With the U.S.-Japan alliance approaching its eightieth year, the U.S. bases already existed before most Japanese alive today were born. Kakazu Yoshinari, an Okinawan entrepreneur in his late thirties, told me that he had never questioned their presence as a child, but rather had seen them as the venue for several annual community events. As a child, Kakazu had looked forward to base festivals and other opportunities to get inside the fence, and he has many fond memories of childhood visits to the bases near

his home. In fact, many of my Japanese interlocutors, including some anti-base protestors, told me that they grew up attending base festivals, and some Japanese people who live near the bases consider experiences such as attending base festivals or even performing on the festival's main stage as part of a community dance or musical group to be a normal—even banal—activity for people in their area.

While individual military personnel may pursue neighborliness through volunteering, the bases do so by occasionally opening their gates to locals, unironically granting them limited access to Japanese sovereign land that, in some cases, was taken from the surrounding communities by force. Typically, bases will host at least one major "open base day" or "base festival" per year. These involve booths selling food—either more typical Japanese festival fare at Japanese-run booths or American foods like smores or barbecue offered at booths run as fundraisers by military units—a bar featuring American beer, Japanese carnival games, inflatable structures for children to play on, carnival rides, booths selling memorabilia related to the base or some of its more prominent units, and a static display of military vehicles and hardware that visitors can explore and take pictures with. Festivals also have a large stage featuring performances by local Japanese acts such as clowns or hula dancers, cover bands (often from the Philippines) specializing in American rock and pop, and a band or artist that is relatively well known in America as the headliner. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic,[34] festivals usually ran for two days and concluded with fireworks displays. Variations on this

[34]At time of writing, bases have only recently started reopening for festivals, and of the few examples available, most have been shortened to a single day.

standard pattern exist, such as Atsugi's *Bon* Odori[35], Camp Foster's Okinawa Comic Con, and Futenma's classic car show. Some bases also allow visitors limited access to the American goods for sale in the base's postal exchange (PX), such as beer, cigarettes, snack foods, and sports drinks. Bases may also allow visitors to buy food from the on-base American fast-food restaurants and food courts. Several of the events I attended also had roped-off VIP seating for high-ranking officers, visitors from the U.S. embassy, and prominent Japanese politicians and business owners from the surrounding communities (such as the Ginozas, described in a later chapter). Finally, some open base events on joint bases shared with the JSDF also included vehicles and troops from the Japan Self-Defense Forces in their static displays, though this was not always the case.

These large annual open-base events typically attract thousands of visitors from the surrounding region and for that reason military public affairs officials and community relations specialists sometimes point to them as an indicator of the popularity of the bases and the strength of their relationships with local communities. Members of a now-defunct Facebook group of military personnel dedicated to complaining about life in Okinawa would often share memes suggesting that the locals protesting outside the gates were the same people who come to buy beer and cigarettes at the PX on open base days, implying that the local appreciation for base festivals can also be used to question the legitimacy of anti-base protests.

[35] *Bon Odori* is a dance event for welcoming ancestral spirits that is practiced in neighborhoods across Japan, most often in summer.

Representatives of the USFJ described the festivals to me as opportunities for troops to connect with people from the local community through fun and leisure, but these events are also a means of normalizing both the presence of the military and its mission of American state violence. For one thing, the static display gives Japanese people the opportunity to touch and marvel at American military power. Tanks, helicopters, fighter jets, and even the contentious Osprey aircraft are regularly featured, and visitors are encouraged to take pictures with them or even board them and explore the inside. Base festivals also normalize American securitization, as visiting a base exposes Japanese people to sights and experiences that would be nearly impossible to find outside of the base fences, such as the presence of uniformed security details armed with automatic weapons patrolling the festivals and searching their bags as they enter. I witnessed Japanese visitors taking selfies with the fully uniformed and armed troops responsible for security at several of the base festivals. Additionally, t-shirt logos and visible tattoos prevalent among Americans on the bases include a lot of violent motifs, such as skulls, knives, guns, bombs, and similar imagery.[36] A neighborly base therefore aims for intimacy—here in the form of bringing locals inside the base—to set the groundwork for policy by influencing locals' opinions in ways favorable to the U.S. military: bases are for fun and signs of violence are just exotic decorations.

Before moving to the next section, one final aspect of the festivals and their impact on base-"host" relations is worth noting. At most major events, the base commander will

[36]One notable example is a marine I spotted at a festival in Okinawa wearing a t-shirt from Grunt Style, a brand officially licensed to produce U.S. military-themed apparel, featuring a picture of the Enola Gay (the plane that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima) over the words "Fly Atomic Airlines."

address the crowd either at the beginning or before a major event such as the headliner or a fireworks display. These speeches—simultaneously delivered in Japanese by a base community relations specialist—focus on ideas of Americans and Japanese learning about one another, strengthening interpersonal ties, and coming together as one community. Of course, after the festival is over, Japanese visitors are required to leave, and the base fences once again serve to physically divide that community and apportion access to both the base and "host" sides of it only to those who are allowed to live and work inside the fence.

Small-Scale Base Events

Most on-base events are much smaller in scale. Like the Christmas party described above, they are typically aimed at specific populations or for the benefit of specific community groups. At bases that I visited, the responsibility for organizing these activities fell to Japanese employees in the bases' community relations offices, so before looking at these smaller events, let us first meet one such community relations officer.

"Miyamoto"

Miyamoto, a native of Okinawa, has worked on American bases for over a decade. Camp Sanders is not his first base, but it is the first one where he has served as Community Relations Officer. He was initially attracted to base employment by the stability of the work and the opportunity to use the English he had picked up while studying abroad. His job broadly consists of serving as the main point of communication between the people on the base and the

government and businesses of the neighboring towns. He works all the time, often giving up his evenings and weekends to oversee on-base events for local community groups or volunteer opportunities for marines outside of the base. His job also includes duties as diverse as serving as interpreter when the base commander meets with prominent local businesspeople and politicians, receiving military-related complaints that local residents have sent to the town hall, and apologizing to local bar owners on behalf of ill-behaved marines. Miyamoto is well known both on the base and in the surrounding towns as he serves as a kind of unofficial gatekeeper for Japanese people (and American researchers) who wish to access the people and facilities on base. In fact, while I met with Japanese employees in similar positions at U.S. bases throughout Japan, no other had the near-instant access to both high-ranking military officials and prominent local community figures that he enjoyed. Local bureaucrats and business leaders bragged about their connections to Miyamoto, as that meant they could partake of the cheap pizza, movie theaters, slot machines[37], and bowling lanes of the base.

I first met Miyamoto when I joined a group of marines from Camp Sanders on their visit to a local care home for the elderly. He was acting as their interpreter, and I was immediately struck by how effortlessly he was able, through creative interpretation, to recast the marines' slapdash attempts to engage with the residents and callous remarks about the facility as the earnest efforts of plucky

[37]At time of writing, gambling is illegal in Japan, but slot machines are available at many U.S. military facilities.

youngsters doing their best in a foreign culture. (To be fair, some of the marines were earnest, but most told me they joined the event because it meant escaping their regular duties and volunteering looked good in their promotion portfolios).

Miyamoto was always very frank with me about his political beliefs. He thinks that Article 9 of the Japanese constitution, which prevents Japan from having a military, should be removed, and the JSDF should be recognized as the military that (he says) they actually are. He thinks that Japanese should adopt the American custom of thanking troops for their service and treating them with extra respect. He referred to three recent Okinawan elections—anti-base governor Tamaki Denny, the passing of a prefectural referendum against the construction of new U.S. military facilities in Henoko, and anti-base Diet member Yara Tomohiro—as *sanrenpai*, three consecutive losses. He blamed these losses on what he sees as a biased local media that uses base-related crimes and mishaps to sell papers, which cause the older generations of Okinawans to vote against the bases, while the young people, whose ambivalence he sees as more pro-base, hardly vote at all.

Miyamoto takes great pride in his work, not only because of the importance of his position, but also because he sees himself as contributing to the overall peace and stability of the region by supporting the morale and reputation of the base. He is very fond of the phrase “the sound of freedom,” which base officials employ to put a positive spin on the intense noise of American military aircraft flying over Japanese residential areas. While such noise is a constant source of

complaints and even lawsuits in the communities surrounding bases, Miyamoto describes it as a price he is willing to pay to know that his freedoms are being protected. In fact, one American officer on Camp Sanders had told me that he found the phrase insulting, as he had never had to put up with such noise on any of the several domestic American bases on which he had been stationed. However, Miyamoto embraced the phrase and often shared it with his contacts in the Japanese community.

Both in Japanese and English, Miyamoto tended to divide Japan into "us" and "them," with "us" (including himself) being the U.S. military and "them" being the Japanese populace. Like many base workers I have spoken with, he used this distinction to highlight the sophistication of his own understanding of geopolitics and American culture compared to those of the average Japanese citizen. He took a patronizing view of anti-base protestors as being taught to fear war by the local education system but not understanding that war is best avoided through deterrence. Also, like every Japanese base employee and active-duty U.S. military member I have ever interviewed, he believed that the protestors are mainly foreigners, people from outside of Okinawa, and paid college students, and that their movement is being funded by the Chinese government in an effort to destabilize the U.S.-Japan alliance.

Miyamoto has established himself as an essential link—perhaps *the* essential link—in communications between the base on which he works and the surrounding communities, which has granted him high social status as a

> gatekeeper to both Americans and Japanese as they cross the base fence into each other's territories. He was clearly proud of his position and the myriad opportunities he has created for military Americans and local Okinawans to interact. His use of military terminology and adoption of military ways of thinking seemed to give him a feeling of sophistication, an attitude that came out particularly strongly when he spoke about how he sees the anti-base Okinawans as misguided, miseducated, and manipulated, or when he divided Japanese into "us" and "them" based on base access, as described above. At the same time, he elevated himself above the troops by referring to them as children, which seemed to me to serve the additional purpose of distancing them from the violence inherent to their position and, by extension, his complicity in that violence. He is therefore a prime example of those base workers who can leverage their relationships with the base to position themselves in a much higher social standing than would have been available to them had they not affiliated themselves with the military.

Though every community relations specialist I met brought their own character to the job, their political leanings and social position often mirrored Miyamoto's, and some even referenced him explicitly as someone they aspired to emulate. Thus the kind of power dynamics that he (seemingly subconsciously) encouraged—with servicemembers as childish purveyors of cosmopolitanism, off-base Japanese as naïve and envious, and himself as guiding (and therefore superior to) both groups—could be found at small on-base community events across Japan. Let us now look at base-sponsored English

education programs, the most common form of such events, before turning to children's events in the following section.

Teaching English

Some bases extend their efforts at neighborliness to creating opportunities for a limited group of locals to come inside and interact with troops, with perhaps the most common example being English classes offered for local adults. While English classes are significantly smaller in scale than open-base days, they are nevertheless offered in a spirit of goodwill toward their surrounding communities. I volunteered at English classes on three bases. None of the military volunteers that I met had a background in teaching, and so their methods were not necessarily effective, usually lacking clear instructions, well-defined goals, and continuity from lesson to lesson. However, volunteers were generally highly motivated, friendly, and energetic individuals who were excited to teach and interested in interacting with the students, and so the students generally had a very good time, and the classes that I attended had all developed groups of regular attendees. At the end of one class, a first-time attendee asked a student who had been coming weekly for two years if she felt her English had improved, and the senior student responded (in Japanese), "I can't really speak, but I feel like by coming, my listening has gotten a little better." Another student told me that the main benefit of attending the classes for her was that she no longer felt threatened when bumping into troops in town because now she could recognize several of them.

Classes were generally held weekly and took place over an hour or two in the evenings, as the majority of attendees were working adults, though retirees and sometimes children also attended. If a class had enough regular attendees and extra space available, then it would offer students the choice of joining a "lower" or "higher[38]" level group, though sometimes both groups would be brought together for special holiday lessons, goodbye parties for military volunteers being transferred away, or social events that took place outside of the classes, such as drinking parties or, in one case, a sushi-making party. American volunteers—typically servicemembers or their spouses, but I also taught a handful of lessons—planned and led the classes, and several other American volunteers would attend to facilitate group work and act as conversation partners. There was typically one volunteer for every three to five students and it was not strange for as many as half of the volunteers to arrive in uniform. Classes were held in classrooms on the bases or in rented spaces at local community centers near the bases. English-speaking Japanese community relations officers took responsibility for reserving the space, advertising the course to the local community, finding volunteer instructors to lead, issuing letters of recognition to volunteers who joined regularly, and even teaching the course themselves when no one else was prepared to do so. Instructors could teach whatever they wanted, and so I observed lessons on everything from verb conjugation, to American geography, to once just breaking into groups and playing with toys. At Camp Schwab, a USMC facility in Okinawa, the course organizer had the instructors begin class with a review of the previous week's lesson, but beyond

[38]The difference between the two was never clearly defined, and so generally only students with significant experience abroad would join the upper-level group, as most others were highly self-conscious of their English ability.

that there was no sense of continuity or connection from week to week outside of the familiar faces of regular volunteers and attendees.

Teaching "Dialect"

Of all of the English classes I joined, one in particular stands out. The instructor, a middle-aged white officer and regular attendee, stood before the class and announced that the theme of that night's lesson would be "hogun." A moment of confusion ensued as neither the Japanese students nor the American volunteers were sure they had heard him correctly. Finally, the Japanese base worker responsible for organizing the course and tracking volunteers' participation (for purposes of issuing letters of recognition, of which I personally earned three) stepped in and announced that the instructor was trying to say *hōgen*, meaning Japanese regional dialects. In fact, the topic he had chosen was *Uchināguchi*, the Okinawan language. The instructor distributed a printout of Okinawan words to the students and volunteers and told us that our task for the evening would be to work together to translate them into English and Japanese.

There are two points in this class that demand particular analysis. The first is the instructor's (attempted) use of the word *hōgen* to describe the Okinawan language. In the case of Okinawa, this is not a politically neutral choice. There is a movement in Okinawa for the Okinawan people to achieve recognition as an indigenous group, and in fact the United Nations has recognized them as such since 2008 (Dietz 2010). Indigenous activists balk at having the Okinawan language described as a dialect of Japanese, as they see it as one of the

characteristics that sets them apart from ethnic Japanese and establishes the distinctness of their own culture (Ibid.). As one of the goals of the indigenous movement is to leverage indigenous land rights as a means of ousting the U.S. bases (Ibid.), an American servicemember labeling *Uchināguchi* as a dialect is not only interfering in how Okinawans identify themselves but is also undermining one aspect of the anti-base movement. While the instructor that night was likely unaware of the difference between a language and a dialect and almost certainly not conscious of the political implications of that difference for Okinawa, he stood in a position of some authority as the teacher of the class and an officer of the U.S. military when he implied to a room full of Japanese people (most of whom were Okinawan) and American military personnel (most of whom were of significantly lower rank than him) that "dialect" is the correct term to describe *Uchināguchi*.

Second, at the end of the class, the instructor attempted to instill in the American military volunteers the value of learning *Uchināguchi* with some advice. He did so first by teaching them the Okinawan word for "cheers," *karī*. Then he explained that, if servicemembers use that word at any bar or pub in Okinawa, the locals will be so pleased that they will pay for the Americans' drinks.

This class illustrates how military attempts at neighborliness can use the intimate connections they generate (in this case, the friendships and camaraderie built through a weekly language class) to serve a disciplinary function. Though the instructor indicated

to me that he had no conscious intention of doing so, he inadvertently asserted a position of privilege—i.e., expertise enough to teach Okinawans their own language, marking him as superior to the students even in arenas seemingly native to them—and reinforced the social expectations and expressions of that privilege by teaching servicemembers and Okinawans that troops who speak *Uchināguchi* should drink for free.

U.S. military and consular officials often described on-base events like festivals and English classes to me as opportunities to teach Japanese people about American culture. Certainly, festivals featured American pop music, holiday traditions, and carnival rides, and English classes that I joined often included discussion of differences between American and Japanese people and culture. However, in allowing their neighbors to step inside their fences, military bases also work to normalize the presence of weapons and other signs of violence, and to impose upon intimate contact between different groups a social hierarchy reminiscent of that which exists between military and civilians in the U.S. As I argued in the previous chapter, whereas American troops' higher status is constructed through narratives of service and indebtedness (MacLeish 2014, 188-9) and instructions to the public to value and idolize troops (Lutz 2001, 228-37), bases in Japan must settle for the smaller-scale processes of casting troops and bases as cosmopolitan and elite[39] in order to place Americans over Japanese and Japanese with base access over those without.

[39]Another notable strategy used to foster feelings of military superiority is to emphasize the troops' masculinity. This will be discussed in detail in a later chapter.

Playing with Children: Troops and/as Local Kids

Many U.S. military volunteer activities in Japan center on interacting with local children, including on-base Easter egg hunts, Christmas events for disadvantaged local children, English storybook-reading events at public libraries, and visits to afterschool daycare centers and facilities for children with special needs, to name a few. From the perspective of base leadership, there are several benefits that come with having American servicemembers play with Japanese children. First, as discussed in the previous chapter, U.S. bases rely heavily on Japanese communities and amenities for the maintenance of troops' morale, and for many of the volunteers I spoke with, activities related to children did just that: several volunteers described playing with children as more fun than other types of volunteering, and some got a sense from it that they were helping the children and bettering their lives. Second, base PR officers hope that friendly interaction with American troops will encourage Japanese children to build positive associations with the military that they will carry with them into adulthood.

Third, the spectacle of servicemembers playing with children—and the social media posts that PR offices generate from that spectacle—serves the purpose of making the servicemembers look childlike themselves. As Frühstück (2017, 167-8) has shown, a need for distance from the disastrous militarization of Japan's past has led the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) to embrace self-infantilization in their recruitment materials, eschewing any signs of violence or weaponry and instead focusing on images that frame themselves as either harmless children or friends and protectors of children. Though contradictory to their domestic advertising strategies, the U.S. military in Japan has

engaged actively with this approach to winning over Japanese hearts and minds (Ibid., 189-210), infantilizing itself in promotional materials "to persuade the Japanese public of the necessity and utility of [its] alliance with Japan" (Ibid., 169). In volunteering to work (or play) with children, servicemembers not only take on the role of "good neighbor," but also link themselves to both Japanese and American PR narratives of harmlessness, innocence, and youth.

I joined several base events that were explicitly geared towards local children, sometimes as a volunteer facilitating communications between servicemembers and caregivers, and other times simply as an observer. At every such event, it was apparent that they were a fun break from routine for the troops and an exciting visit for the children. However, one thing that often stood out to me was that American troops were not professionals in the field of childcare; they were professionals in the field of sovereign violence. I found that the inherent violence of their positions could sometimes be seen even when camouflaged by the presence of children. For example, when I joined a group of base personnel visiting an afterschool daycare center, the volunteers got so competitive in their game of dodgeball that some ignored the children altogether. At the peak of the troops' competitiveness, a group of children fled the room crying and told their caregivers they were too scared to go back in because the Americans were throwing the ball too hard and it looked like it would hurt. As the vignettes below will illustrate, though servicemembers dedicate their attention and efforts to giving the children a good time, their lack of expertise and the normalization of violence in their environment and behavior lead to such events having mixed results.

Halloween on Camp Hansen

For over a decade—though with a few interruptions—Camp Hansen has hosted a Halloween event for local children. When I joined, it was held in a parking lot inside the base, and several different local preschools and daycare centers visited, along with some SOFA children. Marine volunteers—some in costume, others in uniform—gave out candy and ran Halloween-themed games for the children. Activities included climbing inside base firetrucks and military vehicles, being wheeled around the parking lot in an inflatable reconnaissance raft by a group of marines, receiving candy from an explosive ordnance disposal robot (see fig. 2), and more traditional games like tic-tac-toe, guessing the weight of a pumpkin, and a bean-bag toss. Some of the marines' choices were questionable or even dangerous, such as dressing as a murderous clown with a bloody axe, allowing children to borrow and play with the real metal baseball bat that one marine brought to accessorize her Harley Quinn[40] costume, providing balloon animals only for a small number of the children and then leaving their Japanese guardians to attempt to recreate dozens more for the children who felt left out, or giving hard candies and caramels to children under two years old. However, it was clearly a hit with the kids. The local children (ranging in age from one to five years old) all came in costume, which surprised me considering that Halloween is a very new holiday in Japan and still not widely celebrated outside of major urban areas. The organizers told me that the children have been coming in

[40]Harley Quinn is a highly-sexualized psychopathic anti-hero originally associated with Batman.

costume since the event's inception, and the caretakers who accompanied the children (also in costume) confirmed this, adding that the preschools have started having their own Halloween costume parties in recent years, but prior to that, preschools had asked parents to provide Halloween costumes for their children specifically for this annual on-base event.

Two aspects of military projects aimed at local children can be seen in this case: first, just as with many other volunteering projects carried out by base personnel, the Halloween event evinced an abundance of enthusiasm hampered by very little prior consideration or relevant training—in this case, regarding how to work with small children. Second, the creative repurposing of military equipment such as the bomb disposal robot and the raft as amusements for children serves to camouflage the anticipated violence predicating the base's very existence, i.e., that terrorists will plant bombs for the military to dispose of and that threats to American security will arise that justify stealthy infiltration of enemy territory by sea. In particular, the fact that Camp Hansen has a bomb disposal robot can suggest that the U.S. military is preparing for explosive devices to be discovered in Okinawa[41], which in turn serves as a reminder that the factors most likely to attract terrorist attacks to Okinawa are its strategic value to the U.S. military and high concentration of military facilities and troops. At Halloween, however, the robot was presented to attendees and their caretakers only as a high-tech candy distributor, rather than a symbol of the risks posed by the base to its neighbors.

[41]Actually, unexploded American ordnance, usually leftover from the bombardment of the island prior to the Battle of Okinawa in 1945 and occasionally discovered in a forgotten or abandoned weapons cache associated with a current or former base, is periodically discovered in Okinawa, though it is not of the type that requires a robot for disposal and is most often disposed of by the JSDF (Takeuchi 2021).

Bowling with(out) Santa

In December one year, Miyamoto invited me to join a Christmas party held for disadvantaged local children at Camp Sanders' internal bowling alley. Troops on the base had donated enough new toys that each child in attendance could get a present, and the volunteers (who all came from the same unit) had also sprung for donuts and a light lunch for the children. I arrived at the event about half an hour after the party began and was told that Santa (a servicemember in costume) had made an appearance but had already left. The remaining volunteers were bowling in groups with small children. By this point, some of the excitement of volunteering had worn off, and most volunteers were looking at their phones between frames, but perhaps a third of them were still actively trying to engage with the children. Japanese caregivers accompanying the children rushed busily around the bowling alley, attempting to facilitate communication between the children and the servicemembers while also distributing food, tying shoes, ushering children to the restroom, etc. To one side of the alley, a group of drunk male servicemembers unaffiliated with the event were bowling on two of the lanes, and when children wandered over to them, the caregivers would rush over and direct them back to the main group. Throughout the event, the TV screen suspended over one of the bowling lanes where children were playing was showing a rather gruesome Christmas-themed American horror movie.

> Once lunch had been eaten, volunteers began to leave, and so the Japanese base community relations officer overseeing the event hurriedly asked those who remained to distribute presents to the children. The caregivers then explained that the children had each crafted a small ornament to be gifted to a volunteer, but as very few volunteers now remained, the children instead gave them to everyone present, including the beer-drinking bowlers, the bowling alley staff, and myself. Two of the remaining volunteers, a married couple, asked leading questions to one of the caregivers about the squalor that they assumed the children lived in and whether or not the gifts the children had received from the marines would be the nicest toys they had ever owned. Preoccupied with the children and not a strong English speaker, the caregiver gave a quick yes to their questions, prompting the couple to make several comments to the Americans around them about the sorry state of the children's lives, the importance of their own contributions to them, and the state of social welfare programs in Japan.

In this particular case, the marines' unpreparedness for dealing with children is clearly not so much disorganization as a lack of consideration for the event's central guests. Most volunteers stayed only long enough to finish their own game of bowling, never asking if the event was over, or if children and their caretakers had additional plans. Environmental details with potentially detrimental effects on the children, such as the horror movie or the presence of drunk marines unrelated to the event, went unchanged or even unnoticed. The aforementioned married couple pushed a caretaker to validate their self-image of generosity and implicit superiority. Like the other events described

above, this party allowed volunteers to take on the role of the "good neighbor" according to their own definitions and evaluate themselves based on their own criteria, regardless of what the intended beneficiaries experienced.

From one point of view, the local children attending the Halloween or Christmas events were not the only kids present: many of the Japanese people I met that worked on bases or lived in base towns, including Miyamoto, regularly referred to American troops as "young people" (wakamono) or "the kids from the base" (*kichi no wakai ko-tachi*). Given that Americans sometimes join the armed forces as early as age seventeen and that, at the time of my fieldwork, legal adulthood in Japan was set at age twenty, this response was not wholly inaccurate. While my interlocutors who used such phrasing did associate the troops with some of the positive aspects of youth, such as having a lot of energy and enthusiasm, they also characterized the "kids from the base" as naïve and unsophisticated (for their presumed inability to follow Japanese manners and social cues) or even helpless (for their lack of Japanese language ability and their dependence on Japanese staff to read their mail, organize their vacations, teach them what to buy in the supermarket, etc.).

Interestingly, I found this conceptualizing of American troops as children to be true even with some anti-military activists. For example, in the documentary *ANPO: Art X War* (Hoaglund 2010), Ishikawa Mao, an Okinawan photographer focusing on depicting the impacts of military bases on civilians, cries for American soldiers, as she sees them as youths suffering from forced separation from their mothers. Activists that I spoke with reiterated this idea, and sometimes incorporated phrases like "go home to your

mothers" into signs and slogans at protests. For these activists, the image of the troops as childlike was not so much charming as it was tragic, representing war and militarization as forces that break up families.

American military bases in Japan actively create opportunities for direct interaction between their troops and local children, a pairing that would be unlikely to occur on its own, and thus introduce a new form of intimate cross-cultural interaction. For American servicemembers, being a good neighbor by interacting with local children thus comes with a lot of different possible meanings. Troops' interactions with children and creative applications of military equipment can serve to disguise the inherent violence of the bases' purpose, mimicking the infantilizing PR strategy of the JSDF. Commanders can use playtime with children to boost their units' morale, while individual servicemembers can use it to reinforce their senses of self-worth as volunteers and superiority as generous, privileged Americans. Associating with children can also feed into perceptions of the troops as children themselves, making them appear at once charming and helpless to some, while tragic and lonely to others. Finally, for the children involved in the events, the troops can be both a source of excitement and fun and a vector for exposure to confusion, fear, and violence. Though such negative experiences are far from the intentions of those planning and participating in the events, they nevertheless represent one consequence of the bases' attempts to embed themselves in the communities and lives that surround them.

Let us now turn to more explicitly negative consequences of intimacy between American troops and Japanese civilians.

Bad Apples: When are Good Neighbors Not Good?

Many Japanese people associate American bases with higher crime rates, but U.S. military sources are quick to argue that such is not the case. Between 1972-2016, *Stars and Stripes* reports, the rate of crimes committed per 10,000 people among Americans with SOFA status in Okinawa was 27.4, or less than half that of Okinawans' rate of 69.7 (Sumida and Burke 2016). These figures have been contested on the grounds that Japan is known for its low rate of reporting of sexual assault and similar crimes ("Sex Crimes Remain Significantly Underreported in Japan: Gov't Survey") and that many Okinawans feel that military crimes go unpunished because Okinawan police are powerless to investigate military-related crimes and the military's internal justice system is overly lenient (Mitchell 2018). However, nearly every base-affiliated interlocutor in my study told me that they felt servicemembers' crimes were disproportionately covered by Japanese media, unfairly encouraging resentment of the bases and making improving Japanese attitudes toward the U.S. military a "no-win situation" (Sumida and Burke 2016). Military representatives regularly employed the bad apple metaphor when speaking with me, displaying some resentment on their own part for having their entire organization judged based on the actions of what they viewed to be a few fringe individuals.

The issues herein are threefold: first, even if one accepts the statistical argument that crime rates are low and decreasing, it does not justify isolating those crimes that do

occur from the larger institutional and historical context, as the "bad apple" label intends to do. Second, maintaining that all bad acts come from "bad apples" not only erases the culpability of the larger organization for those acts, but also casts anyone who indicates that they are part of a pattern as biased and—perhaps intentionally—unfairly twisting information against the military. Third, several of the very individuals who told me that American servicemembers were good neighbors—including military interlocutors and even Japanese locals unaffiliated with the bases—expressed a sense of fear or risk around proximity to off-duty troops, suggesting that those "good neighbors" could become "bad apples" at any time.

So what separates the "good neighbors" from the "bad apples"? During my fieldwork in Okinawa in April 2019, Gabriel Olivero, a sailor in the U.S. Navy stationed at Camp Schwab, stabbed Tamae Hindman, his Okinawan ex-girlfriend, to death before killing himself in her apartment. Though Olivero was under a restraining order to stay away from Hindman after allegedly sexually assaulting her (the incident was still under investigation at the time of the murder) and he had begun seeing a therapist to deal with the stress of Hindman's accusations, the Naval Times describes the incident as the "murder no one predicted," citing that prior to the murder, Olivero "had started teaching both yoga and meditation…started volunteering most weekends at the USO and became a Single Marine Program representative. He helped organize a company barbecue that turned out to be a lot of fun." (Simkins 2019) Does Olivera's volunteerism not make him a good neighbor? Was he an apple that spoiled? Could he have spoiled others? In this final section, I will interrogate the "bad apple" metaphor, arguing both

that military conceptualizations of crime as committed by servicemembers encourage a false sense of containment by depicting it all as internal to the bases, and that, as with Olivera above, good neighbor-bad apple is a false binary as it is entirely possible to be (or be seen) as both.

Base as barrel and the containment of "bad apples"

The mandatory base newcomer orientations that I attended (described in detail in the previous chapter) always included a representative from the base's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) office. SAPR is a Department of Defense program covering all branches of the military that "promotes military readiness by eliminating sexual assault and ensuring excellence in victim advocacy…" (United States Department of Defense Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: "Mission & History"). The centrality of a military goal ("mission readiness") to SAPR's mission echoes the tone of the cultural-knowledge-as-force-multiplier doctrine discussed in the previous chapter, in that both recognize affective goals such as comfort or the avoidance of trauma primarily for their contributions to defense objectives, meaning that trauma that does not affect American military morale (e.g., the trauma of Japanese victims of military sexual assault) is of lesser concern.

Other formal discussions of real and potential military crimes at which I was present, like the SAPR briefs, allowed for the existence of "bad apples," but rarely focused on the consequences of their crimes for the victims (aside from their effect on unit cohesion and morale), and *never* mentioned that those victims could be their Japanese

"neighbors." Given that the military aims for the bases to be seen as embedded in their communities, that bases routinely offer opportunities for their personnel to come into close contact with locals, and that the USFJ relies on Japanese communities to aid in the maintenance of servicemembers' morale (see Chapter II), any undiscovered "bad apples" will have direct and easy access to the people outside of the base fences.

SAPR presentations that I attended included definitions and examples of sexual harassment and sexual assault, cartoon videos about consent, discussion of the military laws and policies concerning sexual assault, and introductions to the services available from SAPR offices. What they did not contain, on any of five bases on which I observed them, was any mention or even implication of non-American, non-base-affiliated people being the victims of sexual assault by base personnel.[42] This struck me as odd, considering that arguably the greatest disruption in US-Japan relations since the end of the Allied Occupation (1945-1952) was the gang-rape of an Okinawan schoolgirl by three American servicemembers in 1995 (see Angst 2001), in response to which the Henoko project, which is highly contested even now, was first proposed. However, the notable absence of Japanese as potential victims was not surprising, as it reflects an overall trend of erasure of Japanese people in military education about and in Japan (Gabrielson 2019). Aside from a quick slide in Camp Foster's general orientation for all incoming USMC personnel in Okinawa listing military-related crimes and incidents that occurred specifically in Okinawa, orientations' discussion of crimes committed outside

[42]In one non-SAPR presentation, a special brief only for single troops staying in the barracks at Naval Air Facility Atsugi, the speaker told the attendees that Japanese women may be less direct in indicating their consent or lack thereof, but no additional advice was given on how to recognize the signs that a Japanese woman was not interested, and Japanese men were not discussed at all.

the base fences was entirely absent, with one exception: drunk driving. Orientations, as well as a variety of public service announcements on American Forces Network (AFN) Radio, regularly discussed drunk driving, but mainly did so by emphasizing that there is no legal level of blood alcohol in Japan (unlike the U.S., where it is still legal to drive so long as your blood alcohol concentration is under 0.08%) and thus it is easier to be charged with drunk driving. Yokosuka's orientation even included a memorable video about the hardships faced by an American drunk driver serving his sentence in a Japanese prison. However, the overall focus on Japanese law's relative strictness regarding blood alcohol level suggests that this one off-base crime is not always a real crime—since it would not necessarily be illegal back in the States—and therefore does not contradict the overall image of military crimes as internal to the bases. In other words, base materials and briefings suggest that the existence of bad apples and their potential to cause spoilage are both firmly contained within the "barrel" of the base fences.

Unfortunately, the violent influence of "bad apples" can and does reach beyond the bounds of the bases, intimately affecting the lives of those who live outside the fence. Regarding Japanese assumptions of who will be a "bad apple," Johnson (2019, 121) has found that they most strongly associate military crime with Black personnel. She links this to segregation and racial scapegoating practices in the U.S. military during the mainland Occupation and the U.S. administration of Okinawa and preexisting colorism in Japan (Ibid., 119-21). The preponderance of male servicemembers and particular attention that the Japanese media and public pay to cases of sexual assault by military

personnel mean that Japanese also typically expect “bad apples” to be men. Similarly, the SAPR briefs all exclusively used hypothetical examples with military male perpetrators and military female victims when defining or discussing sexual assault, harassment, or other inappropriate sexual behaviors, suggesting that they, too, have a tendency to limit “bad apples” to men. For this reason, married men are seen as less likely to be “bad apples,” as the presence of their spouse (presumed to be a wife) is meant to manage and temper their sexual aggression and other undesirable tendencies (Enloe 2014, 142).

This form of containment, too, comes with problems. Intimate partner violence (IPV) is comparatively prevalent among military members (Kwan et al. 2020), and servicemembers are allowed—or even tacitly encouraged (Gabrielson 2019)—to enter into romantic relationships with locals. In fact, Miyanishi (2012, 252) found that bases in Okinawa offered counseling from chaplains and family advocacy offices to victims of domestic abuse, but these services were only available to a Japanese person if they were currently married to a servicemember, not to mention that for many victims, the prospect of having to discuss their traumatic home life in English was prohibitive. Of further concern is that there is a high rate of correlation between post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and perpetration of intimate partner violence, as well as a higher level of severity to the IPV that PTSD sufferers perpetrate (Gray 2017). Given that Gates et al. (2012) estimate that between 14-16 percent of active-duty military personnel suffer from PTSD, compared to 8 percent among civilians, the risk of a military partner becoming abusive or dangerous is not insignificant.

In 2019, AFN radio in Okinawa repeatedly played a longform public service announcement focusing on military members with PTSD. It described them as suffering individuals who could pose a danger to themselves or others without the support and vigilance of spouses, friends, neighbors, and coworkers, insinuating that their safety and wellbeing should be the responsibility of their community. Like other materials and services offered by the military regarding support for PTSD sufferers, the program was presented only in English, leaving the support and risk taken on by Japanese partners unnoticed, or at least unacknowledged. Like sexual assault, intimate partner violence and PTSD are treated as contained within the bases, but the realities of intimacy and proximity mean that base fences offer Japanese people no real protection.

Living next to the barrel

Several times during my fieldwork, I stayed for short stretches (one to two weeks) in off-base neighborhoods in close proximity to one or more bases and with high concentrations of American military personnel[43]. Though I saw incidences of Americans being drunk, rowdy, and rude, I never personally witnessed any crimes or any behaviors that were not comparable to what I had seen drunk Japanese people on a train platform or outside a bar in Tokyo. My understanding from the majority of my interlocutors was that they did not see themselves as living in fear of military crime, but many still

[43]Systems and reasons for living off-base varied heavily between bases. Many bases did not offer family housing, so servicemembers accompanied by family were required to live off-base, while others required families to live on-base in order to make use of their family housing. Off-base housing privileges for individuals were often determined by rank, position, length of stay, or personal preference. In Okinawa, many of my interlocutors complained that base housing was old, poorly maintained, smelly, or moldy, while others felt that staying off-base gave them a better sense of privacy and independence. Those who preferred base housing referenced the bureaucratic hassles they associated with finding off-campus housing, as it often involved scheduling safety and security inspections, negotiating with realtors, and setting up and paying for utilities via local companies that often did not communicate in English.

recommended avoiding the areas where troops tend to go drinking if one were out alone at night. As with most issues surrounding the military bases, what I mainly encountered was my interlocutors' ambiguity; they accepted that military crime was a reality while simultaneously believing that individual American troops were good neighbors, helpful volunteers, and/or friendly youngsters.

The following two vignettes illustrate this ambiguity, showing that both Americans and Japanese can be afraid of military "bad apples" without feeling that their proverbial barrel has been spoiled.

Karen and Garret

One evening during my fieldwork, I went for an after-dinner stroll with a base public affairs officer, "Karen," and a civilian U.S. government official who worked with the bases, "Garret." We were walking along the seawall in Sunabe, a residential area in central Okinawa known for having a very high concentration of off-base housing for American military personnel. The two of them were emphasizing to me how the Americans in the area really strive to be good neighbors, and they pointed to the seawall itself, showing places where concrete tiles that had been loosened or blown away in a recent typhoon had been gathered and replaced by American volunteers. The conversation turned to Karen's experiences while deployed in Iraq, and Garret asked her if she felt safe camping with other troops, as he had read about female soldiers who had died of dehydration because they were worried that if they had to step away to pee

in the middle of the night, they would be raped by other soldiers. Karen responded that she had always brought a sidearm with her to the toilet or shower. Karen then said that this was why she off-base housing far from Sunabe: she felt far more threatened by other Americans than she did by Okinawans. Garret, who lived in Sunabe, sympathized, as he had recently found evidence that someone from his neighborhood had attempted to break into his home. Karen said that Sunabe is "where all the crime happens," and Garret added that one of his neighbors had recently poisoned another neighbor's dog.

Some Japanese and Americans that I spoke with said that they preferred to live in areas generally identified as "American neighborhoods" because they found them livelier than predominantly Japanese neighborhoods. However, as Karen and Garret's conversation illustrates, even military members themselves will acknowledge that living in these neighborhoods involves being subject to fears and risks not likely encountered in other communities in Japan. It was an accepted fact among many of my military interlocutors, for example, that Camp Hansen was where all of the "problem" marines were sent, to isolate them from all other communities save the neighboring town of Kin, and that therefore people from other bases dare not go drinking in Kin. These rumors about Hansen suggest that "bad apples," rather than isolated cases, can occur in or be concentrated in larger numbers, while Karen and Garret's assessment of Sunabe introduces the idea that they are more likely to occur when Americans are concentrated in one place.

Shimabukuro

“Shimabukuro,” a retired Okinawan woman in her sixties, grew up in a small town abutting a marine base. As a child, she would cross to the other side of the street to avoid passing too close to marines and would not go out after dark if she thought they would be nearby. When she was a teenager, she got a job in a shop, and though she could speak some English, she would always pretend that she could not when a marine came in because she was worried that if they knew she could understand, they would tell their friends and more marines would come. When I asked if they had ever given her reason to be scared, she told me the following story, though her tone indicated amusement more than fear or indignation:

Shimabukuro’s husband used to work late, and one night, maybe fifteen to twenty years ago, she was waiting for him to come home when a drunken marine barged into her home. She had been watching television in the living room with her children asleep in an adjoining room when a large marine in full uniform walked through her front door and stumbled into the room with his boots still on. In a panic, Shimabukuro stood up to place herself between the marine and the door to her children’s room and began demanding in Japanese that he leave. He was having trouble standing and his words slurred so much that she could not make out what he was saying, although she thinks he said something about a convenience store, which stuck with her because there was a very bright, obvious one visible from her apartment building and it would have been much easier for this man to go there than to walk up several flights of stairs

> to her apartment. The marine stood in her living room for over five minutes, speaking incomprehensibly, and Shimabukuro began to worry that he was on drugs. Unsure of what else to do, she kept gesturing frantically at the door, and eventually he left. The next day, she told the story to her neighbors and was surprised to find that several of them, including a rather frail elderly woman who lived alone, had had similar experiences of marines entering their homes in the middle of the night. Shimabukuro ended the story by telling me that she does not hate the marines, and in fact things that many of the Americans from the base can be quite nice, but now she knows to keep her front door locked at night.

Shimabukuro's treatment of what at the time had clearly been a terrifying experience as an amusing anecdote illustrates the ambiguity of living close to a base. Was the marine a "bad apple" if he had not been a danger to her? Did the friendliness of some military acquaintances make up for the risk that comes with living near others? Questions like these struck her as moot. Either way, it was the town where she was born, where her parents lived, where her children had grown up, and where she owned a home, and maintaining these roots meant living with the base, risky or not.

The examples of Garret, who holds both praise and suspicion for his American neighbors, and Shimabukuro, who has a positive image of American troops but learned to keep her doors locked because of them, highlights two aspects of life near bases: First, the everyday intimacies resulting from proximity reveal that the distinction between "on base" and "off base" and the image of containment of "bad apples" are

illusory. Second, even the distinction between “good neighbor” and “bad apple” does not stand up to examination, as it is clearly possible for one person to be both.

Conclusion: “Intimate Remoteness” and Alliance Policy

The good neighbor and bad apple metaphors represent how the U.S. military wants to be seen and understood by the Japanese people. By calling themselves good neighbors, bases and individual servicemembers not only depict friendliness and the ability to contribute to local communities, but also insinuate a sense of belonging, reinforcing their position that they are a welcome and permanent addition to their neighborhood. By singling out bad apples, they attempt to isolate and distance themselves from individuals and events that could negatively impact their reputation. However, though it is the Japanese public that they wish to convince of the veracity of these metaphors, they follow only internal standards: they measure their success by how well they can convince themselves.

A retired naval officer once described the U.S. armed forces to me as having an “evaluation culture.” By this, he meant that people and practices were regularly and strictly evaluated to ensure peak performance, and that while servicemembers were accustomed to evaluation, they did not trust external evaluators because the military’s own internal systems of evaluation were well-established and grounded in insider knowledge and experience. He had meant this as a warning to me, that I might find bases unwelcoming and troops unwilling to talk if I presented myself as critical to their

institution or its objectives. Instead, I took his idea as instructive, and I began to examine how the process of evaluation worked in the arena of community relations. While I cannot speak to the efficacy of "evaluation culture" in more technological or combat-oriented contexts, what I observed regarding volunteering would more accurately be described as a "pat-yourself-on-the-back culture." By this I mean that any servicemember's effort at being a good neighbor, from merely showing up at a volunteer event to merely learning the Okinawan word for "cheers," was always met with strong positive reinforcement from military authorities—often in the form of an official letter of appreciation that participants could submit with their next application for promotion. While I believe it is fundamentally a good thing for the military to reward troops for offering positive contributions to the communities outside the base fences, the lack of evaluation of the methods or results of those contributions means that efforts with mixed or negative results get the same rewards as those that actually do some good, and in fact there is no concern for whether the results were mixed or negative in the first place.

This lack of accountability to their Japanese neighbors can be found in many aspects of U.S. military activity in Japan. As we have seen, discussions of servicemembers' sexual assaults and other crimes generally ignore the possibility of those crimes occurring outside of the base, and both crimes and criminals are discussed in isolation, denying anti-base activists' assertions that those incidents are part of a cultural and historical pattern. Cultural and language education programs, as discussed in the previous chapter, award participants with certificates of completion regardless of whether they

gained any ability to understand or communicate with Japanese people at all. The result of this "pat-yourself-on-the-back culture" is that problematic practices and patterns are allowed to calcify, since every effort is always already a success.

In his ethnography of Air Force pilots piloting attack drones in Afghanistan and the Middle East remotely from bases in the United States, Gusterson (2016) employs the concept of "remote intimacy" to describe the relationships that the drone pilots experience through surveillance of military targets: coming to know their daily habits, documenting their personal relationships and business connections, and witnessing their explosive deaths in an immersive, visceral way. I propose that U.S. bases in Japan present a flipped version of this, a kind of "intimate remoteness." By moving 100,000 Americans into Japan, the U.S. Department of Defense generates a situation of close physical proximity between American and Japanese people, laying the groundwork for countless instances of intercultural intimacy, from professional relationships, to business partnerships, romantic and familial connections, one-sided or mutual antagonisms, exploitation, misunderstandings and faux pas, friendships, labor and land disputes, collaborative learning, physical and emotional violence, cultural exchange, intergovernmental projects, joint military exercises, and more. However, undergirding all of this are the institutionalized metaphors of the "good neighbor" and the "bad apple," which encourage cognitive remoteness—a closed loop of self-evaluation and pats on the back that makes no space for external feedback. This denial of accountability to people outside of the organization means that every instance of intimate contact between the military and outsiders can potentially be lauded as a sign

of neighborliness, while the consequences of that contact can be ignored or dismissed as the work of individuals who have been characterized as intrinsically bad and therefore beyond the military's ability (and responsibility) to control or fix.

Gusterson links remote intimacy to "remote narrativization" (Gusterson 2016, 64-6), explaining that the pilots' ability to access intimate, personal information through visual surveillance without understanding its cultural context, without being able to hear or understand what they are saying, and without being able to see what goes on when the targets are in private spaces, leads to the creation of

> …mental stories that help make sense of the people they watch. In the process, they can make interpretive leaps, fill in informational gaps, and provide framing moral judgments as they integrate shards of visual information and turn pixilated figures into personalities. (Ibid., 65-6)

Gusterson illustrates this concept through cases where drone pilots killed civilian noncombatants because of 'interpretive leaps" through which they convinced themselves that the noncombatants were indeed insurgents. This happens because "after a frame has been put into place, ambiguous information is interpreted within the frame, informational gaps are ignored, and moral judgments are rendered." (Ibid., 69) Though the relationship between remoteness and intimacy at American bases in Japan may be turned on its head, the resulting narrativization is similar. The volunteer couple at the Christmas bowling event, for example, constructed a narrative of destitution around the children present and used that narrative to make a moral judgment, all

without cultural context, the ability to communicate with the children, or any encounters with the children in their homes, at their daycare center, or anywhere outside of that bowling alley. Similarly, the English class volunteer who sought to teach Okinawans about their own language built a narrative in which they did not know their own language but they should, and therefore he had a right (perhaps even a responsibility) to teach it, even though he did not even speak Japanese himself and knew nothing of the politics surrounding Okinawan language and its treatment as a dialect.

To return to a point made in the introduction, intimacy is constitutive of geopolitics. For instance, the size of American bases in Japan and the facilities they require are heavily affected by whether or not servicemembers are married, as the land acquisition and construction necessary to allow bases to accommodate families is approved through negotiations between the American and Japanese governments. Furthermore, the U.S. government has relied on the support of military spouses for morale and informal diplomacy (e.g., Alvah 2007), treated servicemembers' sex lives as a matter of strategic concern (e.g., Roberts 2014), and set encouraging a positive view of homosexuality as a goal at its diplomatic missions in Japan and elsewhere in order to boost its image as a global leader in liberal democracy (U.S. Department of State official, interviewed by the author, November 2018).

As we have seen, the intimacy between American base personnel and Japanese people (or between the bases themselves and their surrounding communities), is shaped by layers of cognitive remoteness, as servicemembers and military leadership

conceptualize it via the metaphors of “good neighbor” and “bad apple.” Not only does that intimacy affect Japanese people and communities in ways that are often ignored, but it also affects U.S.-Japan relations and American security policy.

Take, for example, the construction of the new USMC airfield at Henoko in northern Okinawa. The U.S. government has framed this construction as a response to Japanese public outcry over the 1995 gang rape of a Japanese schoolgirl by three servicemembers (Inoue 2017, 127). The new facility is meant to move troops away from the densely populated area of Ginowan to an artificial island far from urban centers, also sparing Ginowan residents from aircraft noise and the risk of crashes or falling debris (Ibid.). In this case, the sexual violence of three servicemembers—labeled “bad apples” by then-USFJ commander Lieutenant General Richard Myers (Paget-Clarke 2004)—triggered U.S.-Japan negotiations on land use and cost, pushed the U.S. military to reorganize its deployments in the Asia Pacific, and linked Okinawa to transnational antimilitary, feminist, and environmentalist movements. However, this response has been extremely unpopular with Okinawans, whose main demand in the wake of the rape incident was for the U.S. military footprint in Okinawa to be reduced or removed entirely (Inoue 2017, 127). In fact, the construction has been so highly contested that, though the agreement to build it was made in 1996, construction did not begin until 2018, and is still protested at time of writing. Furthermore, to Japanese activists such as Akibayahsi Kozue and Takazato Suzuyō (2009), the rape was one among hundreds of cases of sexual violence by SOFA-status Americans against Okinawan women, and the characterization of the perpetrators as “bad apples” fails to acknowledge their place in a larger pattern

stretching back to 1945. The U.S. military, in its response to this incident, can thus pat itself on the back for addressing what Americans think that Okinawans should want, all without displaying any accountability to the Okinawans themselves.

The use of “good neighbor” and “bad apple” as ways for the USFJ to label itself and its members attach a remoteness to the intimacy between base personnel and Japanese locals—or between the bases themselves and their surrounding activities—by attempting to negate the need to learn from or be accountable to that intimacy, instead relying purely on internal evaluations and interpretations to discern their effects on the world outside the base fence. When intimacy constitutes policy, remoteness results in evaluations and interpretations not grounded in the realities of the people those policies affect. To put it simply, the current approach to being a good neighbor has the potential to make America a bad ally.

Chapter IV: Samurai

Figure 7: A helicopter fuselage emblazoned with samurai philosopher Miyamoto Musashi, the unit logo of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron Five One, based out of Naval Air Facility Atsugi. Photo by the author.

Introduction: Samurai Warriors, Samurai Squadrons, Samurai Gates

Early in my fieldwork for this project, I attended a newcomer orientation at Yokota Air Base, a facility shared by the U.S. Air Force (USAF) and Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) in western Tokyo and the headquarters of the United States Forces, Japan (USFJ). As with nearly all base newcomer orientations I attended throughout Japan, one of the first speakers was the base commander, who came out to welcome the incoming

airmen[44] and their families and impress upon them the importance of the USAF's role in Japan and the Indo-Pacific. At the climax of his speech, he led us all in repeating the base's motto through call and response: "Samurai Warriors! Swift to Fight!" This was my first introduction to the USFJ's love affair with the figure of the samurai. In Okinawa, Kadena Air Base's community newsletter is called *Samurai Gate*, suggesting that all who reside within the gates of the massive USAF base are samurai. Combined Arms Training Center Camp Fuji, a U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) facility near Mount Fuji, boasts of its historical connection to samurai on its home page: "As far back as 1198 AD, the Kamakura Feudal Government trained more than 30,000 Samurai warriors on the same ground where Marines and other U.S. forces train today" (Marines.mil, "Camp Fuji History"). Marine Corps Air Station Futenma's Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron unit insignia features a samurai helmet (Marines.mil, "Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron"), and naval Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 51 (see fig. 3), based at Naval Air Facility Atsugi south of Tokyo, tells us on the history page for their unit that they

> …embody the fighting spirit of the Samurai proudly depicted on their unit insignia, Miyamoto Musashi. A famed 16th century [*sic*] warrior, Musashi developed and created a two sword [*sic*] technique known as Ni Ten Ichi Ryu, "two heavens as one". In addition to his renowned skill as a swordsman, Musashi was also an accomplished calligrapher, artist, and known for his straightforward

[44]All members of the U.S. Air Force, regardless of gender, are referred to as "airmen," just as the U.S. Army has "soldiers," the U.S. Navy "sailors," the U.S. Marine Corps "marines," and the U.S. Space Force "guardians."

> approach to combat, with no additional frills or aesthetic considerations. (America's Navy, "History")

These are just some examples of the ubiquity of samurai imagery and the tendency to identify American servicemembers with samurai at U.S. military facilities throughout Japan. In this chapter, I interrogate the USFJ's appropriation of the image of the samurai. What does the samurai mean to U.S. troops? What kind of ideological work does the image do for them? What does it say about their attitudes towards the (seemingly) more obvious contemporary heirs to the title of samurai, the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF)? And how does taking the mantle of samurai away from Japanese troops affect American servicemembers' perceptions of American (military) masculinity and Japanese masculinity in general? Through my answers to these questions, I argue that American military adoptions and adaptations of the samurai aim to approximate the "super-citizen" image that reinforces troops' sense of superiority over civilians at home (Lutz 2001, 236) in a country where they are not citizens. Unable to be super-citizens, they appropriate the samurai mantle, allowing themselves to become "super-men." What is more, in order to cast themselves as the peak of local masculinity, they symbolically displace and thus emasculate local men. They accomplish this not just by claiming the label of samurai for themselves, but also by redefining the term to create greater similarities with contemporary American troops, taking it for granted that the samurai is the ultimate symbol of Japanese masculinity, and foreclosing the possibility that contemporary Japanese men could be samurai. While all of this is ideological work ostensibly internal to the U.S. military, the intimate proximity of American

servicemembers and Japanese troops and civilians created by the deployment of roughly 100,000 Americans to Japan under the two countries' Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) has led some Japanese to reevaluate Japanese masculinity in response to this American samurai image.

The importance of masculinity to militarism must not be underestimated. Enloe (2000) links military masculinities to major policy and strategic decisions between militaries and between countries, illustrating that gendered ideologies and ways of thinking inform leaders' perceptions of themselves and their forces, expectations of their allies and enemies, and values that they wish to demonstrate to their constituents, in turn influencing national policies and international relations. The U.S. military's adoption and adaptation of the samurai, I as I will show, is a prime example of how masculine ideology impacts politics when the combination of military masculinity with cultural appropriation interferes with alliance politics. The samurai also serves intra-military functions: Belkin (2012) has shown the U.S. m ilitary has used masculinities as mechanisms of discipline and control, imposing impossible and contradictory ideals that both glorify soldiers as better than other men and degrade them for being unworthy of that glory in order to foster confusion and compliance based on a fear of being found insufficiently masculine. He adds that those masculinities have historically been imposed on the subjects of American imperialism, pointing to Filipino men who were both expected to live up to standards of American military masculinity and preemptively prevented from doing so through Orientalist infantilizing and feminizing discourse and tasks (157-8). I argue here that American samurai masculinity similarly serves a

disciplinary function for U.S. personnel and that, through proximity and daily contact, this function affects Japanese as well. Lutz (2002) provides the specific backdrop for the samurai by zeroing in on one of the more potent masculine ideals used by the U.S. military: the soldier as "super-citizen," with rights and honors beyond those of ordinary civilians. The current global reach of the U.S. military exposes the limits of the "super-citizen," but does not ameliorate the need for militarized masculinity as a source of control and morale or its effects on international relations, so this chapter extends this idea to encompass the U.S. military abroad, arguing that, though unable to be citizens and lacking the power to directly impose other forms of masculinity on the local populace, the military is nevertheless capable of appropriating and displacing local masculinities in order to establish the superiority of American troops, and that these appropriations come with their own strategic and policy implications.

This chapter will proceed in five parts. First, I will compare the historical samurai to their portrayal in the American popular imaginary generally and the meanings that U.S. military sources ascribe to the samurai as they apply that label to themselves. Second, I will connect what I refer to as the USFJ's "samurai masculinity" to theories on the domestic construction of American military masculinity and explore how the processes of that construction adapt to the foreign context of military bases abroad. Turning to the specific case of Japan, I will then shed light on how the appropriation of the label of 'samurai' is one such adaptation deployed to construct military masculinity in lieu of American models unrecognized in Japan by imagining themselves as the peak of Japanese masculinity in ways that ultimately feminize and belittle Japanese men.

Fourth, I will examine Japanese responses to American military masculinity on both individual and institutional levels. Finally, I will conclude with a discussion of how the intersection of Orientalist fantasy and military masculinity contributes to the shape and direction of the U.S.-Japan Alliance and its goals of mutual friendship and regional security.

Samurai as History, Fantasy, and American Military Identity

Samurai were the ruling class of feudal Japan's caste system and existed from the 12th to 19th centuries. Though most often remembered as warriors, their martial status became largely symbolic under the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603-1867), when their duties shifted to those of government functionaries and the *Pax Tokugawa* left little need for them to actually wage war. (Lagasse and Columbia University, "samurai," 2018). By the end of this period, the power and wealth of the samurai had been eclipsed by the success of the merchant class, and many samurai fell into poverty (Seigle 1993, 92). When Japan began its rapid modernization in 1868, the caste system was eliminated, and universal male conscription meant that being a warrior was no longer a privilege that distinguished an elite few (Haywood, "samurai," 2001).

Akira Kurosawa's *The Seven Samurai* (1954), "widely recognized as the greatest foreign film ever made" (Sato 2021), introduced many outside of Japan to the image of the samurai. As evinced by the success of James Clavell's 1975 novel *Shōgun* and its 1980 television adaptation, the various card- and role-playing games of *Legend of the Five*

Rings—popular since their creation in 1995—2003's Academy Award-nominated *The Last Samurai* (dir. Edward Zwick), and, in the 2020s, the *Ghosts of Tsushima* franchise of best-selling video games made by American developer Sucker Punch Productions, the fascination with fantastical images of samurai among international audiences has remained strong in the intervening years. This fantasy has even extended into the business world. Since Japan's unprecedented economic growth in the 1980s, various western authors have attempted to attribute Japan's business success to the cultural and spiritual legacies of the samurai (e.g., Diffenderffer 2005, Dorbayani 2017, Krause 1999, Lareau 1992, Lukassen 2019, Merks 2012, PTU Edutainment 2021). However, this use of samurai to portray everything from action heroes to corporate warriors also demonstrates the lack of historical grounding in these pop culture versions of the samurai, making the word an all-but-empty signifier, signifying little more than a vague sense of something masculine and Japanese.

At the heart of the samurai's romantic hold on popular imagination is another exotic-sounding but ultimately empty word: *bushidō*, most often translated as "the way of the samurai" or "the way of the warrior." Often described both within and outside of Japan as a Japanese equivalent to European knights' codes of chivalry, *bushidō* carries little meaning of its own, save what is ascribed to it in modern-day uses that typically amount to a post-facto projection of contemporary values onto samurai times. As Mason states:

> Notions of *bushidō* have necessarily always been complex, changing, and contradictory idealizations of an ostensibly fixed and universally practiced ethical code of the samurai. Writers commonly point to an exemplary model of a

> remote historical moment while lamenting the failings of morals, society, and governance in their own age. Yet none of the samurai "house codes" (*kaken*), philosophical treatises, and moral guidebooks produced during the centuries of samurai rule, taken together or separately, can be said to illustrate a comprehensive and consistent articulation of *bushidō*. Most do not even use the term. (2011, 69)

For all that it evokes images of honorable warriors and ritual suicides today, *bushidō* as a system of values never really existed in samurai times, and thus represents a blank slate. Just as Japanese writers have used it to lend credence to their moralistic opinions (Mason 2011), American military personnel have also employed it to glorify their own values and claim a kind of Japanese cultural ancestry. For instance, in March 2019, several noncommissioned officers and chaplains from bases around Okinawa appeared on an American Forces Network (AFN) radio show for a discussion on the topic of increasing troops' "spiritual resilience." Midway into the broadcast, Sergeant Major Mario Marquez, Sergeant Major of III Marine Expeditionary Force (which makes up the majority of servicemembers in[45] Okinawa), began to speak about *bushidō* as an example that American troops could learn from about how to be more resilient. He did not define the term, but another guest on the show chimed in to answer that *bushidō* represents what keeps soldiers going "down in the trenches." Though the other panelists all agreed that *bushidō* provided valuable lessons for the USFJ, no further

[45]I opt for the preposition 'in' rather than the 'on' used by US military personnel and materials when referring to Okinawa because I believe it evokes a sense of Okinawa as a bounded space with interiority, whereas 'on' can suggest more of a geographical object than a lived-in place and can minimize the distinction between Okinawa and other places.

attempt was made to define or clarify it. Marquez himself was known at the time not only as one of the highest-ranking non-commissioned officers in the USFJ, but also as the co-host of Japanese Cultural Awareness and Tips, a monthly radio show on AFN meant to introduce aspects of Japanese culture and answer servicemembers' questions about life in Japan, granting him some authority among Americans in Okinawa on matters of Japanese culture. When I interviewed Marquez, I asked him to define *bushidō* to clarify what he had meant on the radio, and to explain for me its relevance to U.S. marines. He told me that *bushidō* is about respect, mental toughness, maturity, and professionalism. Samurai, he asserted, were "held to a higher standard than ordinary citizens." (Mario Marquez, Sgt. Major of the 3rd Marines Expeditionary Force, interviewed by the author, May 2018) These are all traits that I had heard Marquez and other U.S. military leaders use to describe or praise American troops and had only the most tenuous connections to *bushidō* as described by Japanese authors and historians of Japan. Invoked without prior research and assigned to whatever values seem cogent at the time, the *bushidō* described by Marquez and other Americans is an American invention that reflects how servicemembers, as self-styled samurai, wish to be recognized. In other words, the samurai adorning newsletters and unit insignia, animating base mottos, and standing as ancestral occupants to U.S. facilities, are an American military fantasy.

If Not Super-Citizens, Then Super-Men

In order to unpack the military's attachment to the samurai label, we must first look at the mechanisms and purposes of military masculinity generally, and then probe the choice to invest in a foreign, fantastical model for military masculinity rather than relying on the images and tropes that work back home in the United States. Enloe (2014, 149-50) suggests that engendering specific forms of militarized masculinity is meant to better prepare soldiers to kill, defining militarized masculinity as

> a mode of acting out one's manhood that makes soldiering, especially combat soldiering, real or fantasized, a principal criterion against which to judge one's behaviors and attitudes. This particular mode [of masculinity] often accords primacy to toughness, skilled use of violence, presumption of an enemy, male camaraderie, submerging one's emotions, and discipline (being disciplined and demanding it of others).

Enloe's observation that militaries foster masculinity as a means of increasing their troops' willingness and ability to kill is further complicated by Belkin (2012). Belkin contends that American military masculinity is inherently contradictory, simultaneously celebrating certain values and standards that have been coded as masculine and forcing troops to violate those values and standards. These contradictions foster conditions of vulnerability and confusion that make troops easier to control. The military then shifts blame to women, LGBTQ+-identifying people, foreigners, and People of Color for creating or exposing the contradictions, making those groups easier to scapegoat and

dehumanize while safeguarding loyalty to itself (Ibid.).[46] Masculinity thus becomes a key tool not just for making effective soldiers, but also for controlling them.

So how can militaries foster this kind of masculinity? In many countries, soldiering has been branded as a form of "masculinized citizenship dependent on the superior control of violence" (Enloe 2000, 4), establishing that, through its elite and heroic masculinity, serving in the military grants a status higher than civilian men, what Lutz (2001, 236) describes as becoming a "super-citizen." Because servicemembers supposedly earn their citizenship by committing to kill and die for the nation, they can look down on the inferior masculinity and incomplete citizenship of civilians, and can expect civilians to treat them with respect, gratitude, and even hero-worship. The superiority of soldier over civilian is further reinforced through American media and public discourse, which regularly suggest that:

> No matter his or her gender, a civilian is feminized, a soldier masculinized…the soldier is emotionally disciplined, self-sacrificing, vigorous, and hardworking. By definition, then, the civilian is weak, cowardly, materialistic and wealthy, and self-centered. The civilian is soft, lacking experience with both the physical discipline that hardens muscles and with the hard facts of death and evil that the soldier faces down. (Ibid., 229)

[46]The use of sexual assault as hazing in some military units serves as an illustrative example of how Belkin describes this process: a new male soldier may be forced to engage in sexual contact with another male soldier in order to prove that he is brave, dedicated, and able to withstand pain and discomfort (i.e. "take it like a man"), but the fact that he is performing a homosexual act in a homophobic environment can simultaneously throw his manhood into question, resulting in the shame and confusion that makes him a more pliable recruit. The soldier's emasculation via homosexual behavior also serves to demonize gays and thus helps not only to dehumanize them as a group, but to direct the soldier to blame that group (and not the military) for causing his sense of shame and confusion.

Building on this idea, MacLeish (2013, 185-91) explains that American civilians are taught that they owe an abstract, unpayable debt to servicemembers for the "sacrifice" constituted by their service and its implied risk of trauma and death. For this reason, he explains, "[t]he relationship between soldiers and civilians is not just simple opposition or categorical difference but an *exception*," (Ibid., 188, emphasis in original) an institution that exists apart from and above the civilian world.

The U.S. military is a diverse organization, adding differences of branch and rank to the preexisting complexities of race, gender, sexuality[47], religion, socioeconomic status, and so on. As such, military masculinity is not monolithic; what I have identified as samurai masculinity is not the only masculinity in play. However, I did find it utilized in similar ways across otherwise very different groups, such as a male Japanese-American Air Force officer bragging about getting his tattoo of a koi fish in the traditional Japanese style (*wabori*) despite it being a more painful method, or a Black male enlisted marine showing off his recently purchased *katana* (Japanese sword) to his English students as evidence that he had embraced *bushidō*. In other words, I did not find significant differences in the extent to which men of different races, ranks, or services engaged with samurai masculinity.

Women that I interacted with were less likely to personally invest in the samurai image, but were otherwise enthusiastic about applying it to their unit or base, such as the women who cheered enthusiastically in response to the Yokota commander's calls of

[47]Only one of my servicemember interlocutors ever disclosed to me that they did not identify as heterosexual—likely because sex and sexuality were not central to my research questions—and so I do not have sufficient data to discuss the relationship between samurai masculinity and other sexual identities at this time.

“Samurai warriors! Swift to fight!” Feminist scholars of militarization have repeatedly demonstrated that acceptance of women in the U.S. military has always been tied to their ability to measure up to heterosexual men (ex. Ali 2014, 73; Gusterson 1999; Keohane and Jakes 2021). Belkin (2012, 6) adds that this means not only that women’s success is therefore tied to their participation in performing military masculinities, but also that their presence can be used to camouflage that masculinity behind a façade of gender equality. Thus, women’s engagement in the appropriation of the samurai should not be taken to mean that it is a gender-inclusive or genderless title, but rather another example of a patriarchal paradigm to which they are expected to conform.

Thus far, I have argued that the American military has made morale and control dependent on cultivating a particular form of masculinity, and that this military masculinity is propped up by societal values that establish soldiers as super-citizens to whom the civilian population is always in debt. But Japanese people are not taught to feel indebted to soldiers. They have not been trained to recognize troops as masculine exemplars of discipline and bravery that make themselves look effeminate and naïve by comparison. And American troops can make no claim to being the greatest of citizens in a country where they hold no citizenship at all. In other words, without the American conditions that establish their state of exception, they risk becoming *unexceptional*.

In order to establish their superiority outside of the United States, the USFJ has chosen to turn to Japanese culture, adopting a label for themselves that they believe the civilian population will both understand and recognize as a superior, exceptional form of masculinity: the samurai. Divorced from its historical realities and associated in

American popular consciousness with battle prowess, honor, masculinity, and success, the samurai serves three purposes as a symbol of the masculinity of the USFJ. First, it turns being stationed in Japan into a fun, exotic fantasy. This fantasy, though motivating in its own right, serves the dual purpose of constructing another contradiction á la Belkin: it is a glorious masculine fantasy, but to believe in fantasies is childish, and thus it caries with it the possibility of infantilization. Second, while the convention of naming several Okinawan bases after troops who fought heroically during the battle of Okinawa could conceivably offer images of American heroism, those figures are not as instantly recognizable as the samurai, and their individual histories make them questionable candidates. Smedley D. Butler, after whom the main collective of marine bases in Okinawa is named, spent his later years speaking out against American imperialism; others, such as Camp Hansen, Camp Kinser, Camp Courtney, and Camp Schwab[48], are named after American Medal of Honor recipients who were killed by Japanese forces during the Battle of Okinawa, making them reminders of U.S.-Japan animosity.

Third, as a form of warrior masculinity (and thus superior masculinity) believed to be legible to locals, the samurai fantasy also appeals to the military's drive to project neighborliness (described in the previous chapter). By linking themselves to a local historical and cultural figure, they portray the bases as likewise occupying a permanent, intrinsic space in Japanese culture and thus reinforcing perceptions of American deployments to Japan as permanent and even natural.

[48]Camp Schwab's namesake, Albert E. Schwab, used a flamethrower on Japanese troops, connecting him to a trend I witnessed of Okinawan artists and exhibitions using photographs of American troops with flamethrowers to represent the U.S.'s role in the death and destruction of the Battle of Okinawa.

We have seen what the samurai means to American troops and what function it serves for the U.S. military. Let us now turn to how USFJ claims to the mantle of samurai affect their perceptions of and relationships with Japanese people.

Samurai Gate-Keeping: Occupying Peak Masculinity

As we have seen, the USFJ interpretation of the samurai is constructed so as to cast American troops as the samurai of today, both to justify the presence of those troops in Japan and to recreate the sense of masculine superiority that they are meant to experience at home. In imagining the samurai as the peak of Japanese masculinity and then claiming that title for themselves, servicemembers construct a narrative in which Japanese masculinity is inaccessible to Japanese men. From this perspective, just as base gate guards deny Japanese people access to Japanese land, American military masculinity denies Japanese people access to Japanese masculinity. In practice, this plays out in both how SOFA-status Americans treat the JSDF and how they perceive Japanese men more generally.

Though most of my U.S. military interlocutors were unaware of the historical factors preventing the JSDF from projecting a warrior image (discussed below), they had nevertheless bought into the image of the JSDF as nonviolent, and this became the basis for many implicit and explicit critiques that made American troops look strong, rugged, and capable—all traits coded masculine in military discourse (see Belkin 2012)—by comparison. Perhaps foremost among the Americans' implicit critiques was a lack of

awareness of the JSDF altogether: many American servicemembers that I interviewed were either unaware of the existence of the JSDF or simply never paid them any mind. Of the seven newcomer orientations that I attended on U.S. bases in Japan, four were at joint USFJ-JSDF facilities, and yet the JSDF were only ever mentioned at two of the bases, only one of which was shared. Instead, base commanders would tell troops that they (alone) are responsible for the protection of Japan and the maintenance of security in the Indo-Pacific.

Those American interlocutors who had something to say about the JSDF often delivered their opinions in the form of back-handed compliments. When I asked "Jeff Rogers," a high-ranking officer responsible for top-level coordination between the JSDF and the USFJ, he at first described the Japan Self-Defense Forces as top-notch and incredibly well-organized, but was otherwise very critical, saying that their leadership falls apart whenever things do not proceed according to plan, a weakness that would make them a liability on the battlefield. He also referred to the Japanese as "neutered by their constitution" (referring to Article 9, which prohibits the country from making war), simultaneously linking masculinity (as a biological determination) to warfare and marking Japanese masculinity as damaged or even absent. He also told me that he felt the JSDF is too politicized and too tied to public opinion, suggesting that a sensitivity to the feelings of others—a characteristic typically coded feminine—was detrimental to its ability to defend Japan. He spoke of the involvement of the JSDF in UN Peacekeeping Operations and the second Iraq war as "baby steps" toward integration with the rest of the world's militaries, again referring to contemporary Japanese military actions with

emasculating language (Jeff Rogers, base commander, interviewed by the author, 2017). As one of the highest-ranking officers in the USFJ, it is safe to assume that his opinions not only held authority among other Americans, but also affected his strategic decisions as an architect of regional security policy.

Views that cast the masculinity of the JSDF as inferior are not limited to leadership. After attending a JSDF festival at their base next to Naha International Airport in Okinawa, at which U.S. marines displayed and demonstrated American military hardware, I was able to interview two male enlisted marines about the impressions of the JSDF that they had gotten from the event. When I asked them if they felt there were any major differences between the Japanese and American equipment, one was quick to tell me that his unit had not been able to bring their biggest tanks for fear of destroying the JSDF base's lawns, showing a clear eagerness to assert the superiority of American equipment and warfighting capabilities and suggesting the JSDF's own capabilities were hampered by another feminine-coded characteristic: concern over appearance. The other man said that what struck him was that the JSDF vehicles were much cleaner and better smelling than the American ones. While this was likely at least partly meant to be a compliment, it simultaneously served to draw attention to the fact that the JSDF have never fought in any wars and thus the equipment on display was largely unused and free from the smells of dirt and sweat that these marines associated with their own hardware. As the rugged, blood-and-mud-crusted soldier is one of the idealized masculine images to which American troops are meant to aspire (Belkin 2012, 143-8), referencing the cleanliness of JSDF equipment asserts the superiority of Americans as warriors who

actually practice war and likewise implies a denial of Japanese masculinity on the grounds of cleanliness. The two marines were stationed at Camp Schwab, the base at the center of the Oura Bay construction controversy, and perhaps because of the political sensitivity of that issue, they had been briefed by a base Public Affairs specialist (an American officer) prior to meeting with, during which time they were presumably instructed on what questions to answer and how to answer them, indicating that what they shared with me can be viewed as more or less in line with the overall perspectives of the base and the Corps. Perspectives such as these indicate that SOFA personnel can dismiss the possibility of JSDF members as contemporary samurai not only through passive omission, but also through acts of active comparison that serve to assert the superiority of American military masculinity.

For their part, the JSDF do not claim the samurai mantle for two reasons, both of which create conditions that Americans can use to support their claim to the title. First, JSDF public relations efforts are focused on projecting an image of nonviolent protectors as a means to distance themselves from the catastrophic militarism of the war-era Imperial Japanese Army and Navy, whose jingoism and lack of civilian control (among other aspects) are often blamed both for the Japanese populace's suffering during the Asia-Pacific War and Japan's defeat (Satō 2004). In sharp contrast to the rough, aggressive imagery used in military recruiting materials in most countries (Frühstück 2017, 191), the JSDF actively utilizes women and feminizing imagery in order not only to avoid the historical comparison, but also

> … to find ways to assure that men undertake “manly” jobs; to cement relations between the U.S. and Japan; to make up for the lack of male recruits by recruiting growing numbers of women; to inspire in women national security consciousness; to mitigate antipathy towards the SDF; to attract heterosexual male recruits; to appear “modern” and “democratic” to international allies; to improve the public image of the SDF; to claim societal advancement following the expansion of workplace access for women in civil society; to create the image of the SDF as a safe and benevolent peacekeeper; and to camouflage the position of men and women SDF forces in a combat area in Iraq. (Satō 2012)

Thus, as Frühstück (2007, 50) has shown, the masculinity of JSDF members and the JSDF as an institution are already being questioned domestically. Interestingly, however, I found no evidence of direct engagement with or even awareness of these domestic critiques among my USFJ sources. I attribute this to two factors: first, this is likely another symptom of U.S. servicemembers’ general lack of knowledge or interest regarding their Japanese counterparts. Second, American emasculations of the JSDF are part of a much wider pattern of emasculating Japanese men generally, and the domestic forces that pit JSDF masculinity against other forms of Japanese masculinity (Ibid., 57) are therefore rendered moot.

This wider attack on Japanese masculinities is necessitated in part because the JSDF is not the sole claimant to the mantle of samurai. The second reason why JSDF members

do not refer to themselves as samurai is that, in the decades following the Allied Occupation of Japan, it was the businessmen who took over the title: “The present-day samurai fights his battles at work, not in the field” (Frühstück 2007, 56). However, American perceptions of Japanese businessmen as “corporate samurai”—whether as idealized warrior or threat to American companies—declined starting in the 1990s due to Japan’s increasing precarity and its drop in global economic rankings (Heale 2009, 46). By this time, Americans had already found ways to actively discredit this expression of masculinity as well. First, as mentioned previously, American military masculinity rests on the premise that soldiers are inherently better than civilians, and thus a “corporate” man can have no legitimate claim to being a samurai. Second, at the height of Japan’s economic strength, though much scholarship and punditry was dedicated to unlocking the role of an imagined samurai spirit in the country’s success (as described above), many American political and business elites employed yellow peril narratives to discredit Japan’s economic growth, claiming unfair government intervention and warning of an “economic Pearl Harbor,” the latter evoking associations of a dishonorable sneak attack (Ibid., 30). As Said (1979) famously pointed out almost half a century ago, the colonial “habit” of dichotomizing East and West in ways favorable to the West allowed Europeans (and Americans) to imagine the Orient as intrinsically feminine and inscrutable in order to establish themselves as masculine and forthright, and thus this racially-charged depiction of Japanese people as underhanded is inherently an emasculating move.

Obviously, the yellow peril narratives of late-twentieth-century America were not by any means the first instance of Orientalist feminization of Japan—one need only look at John Luther Long's 1898 short story "Madame Butterfly" and the opera it inspired to see that this process was in action long before Japan emerged as a global economic superpower. In fact, during the Allied Occupation of Japan, General Douglas MacArthur famously compared Japan to a twelve-year-old boy eager to learn democracy at America's knee (Shibusawa 2010, p. 55). Shibusawa (Ibid.) argues that this statement was indicative of a larger trend to rewrite the American public image of Japan in the immediate postwar from one of a country of robotic enemy soldiers to one of a cherry blossom-dappled land of beautiful geisha and smiling children, so as to convince the American public to invest in rebuilding and democratizing their former enemy. Furthermore, since the Vietnam War era, scholars of Asian-American Studies have been calling attention to the clear link between the durability of Orientalism and Asian stereotypes in the United States and the gendered images of Asian women[49] and men perpetuated by the U.S. military's sexual practices in Asia (e.g., Ralston 1998; Uchida 1998; Yoshimura 1974).

This longstanding Western cultural current of viewing Japan as female, compounded by the dismissal of all potential native candidates to occupy the position of "warrior" that

[49]As in other cases of Asian women being exoticized through Orientalist motifs, there was also a complementary discourse among my servicemember interlocutors (both male and female) depicting American women: the "dependapotamus" ("dependa" for short), a portmanteau of dependent (i.e., spouse) and hippopotamus. In contrast to Asian female partners who were meant to be demure and subservient, American wives of servicemembers were depicted as selfish, domineering, obese women with inflated an inflated sense of entitlement and no respect for military masculinity. During my fieldwork, I followed three now-defunct Facebook groups dedicated to military life in Japan that regularly complained about encounters with "dependas" or posted mems deriding them.

American military personnel locate at the pinnacle of masculinity, allows the Americas ton occupation of that pinnacle (at least in their own perception), consequently placing all Japanese men beneath them. As a result, I was able to observe many instances of SOFA personnel calling into question or even openly criticizing the masculinity of Japanese men. Consider the following excerpt from a welcome guide to Japan produced by the U.S. military's internal newspaper, *Stars and Stripes*, and distributed to newcomers at bases throughout Japan in 2013:

> "Yeah, I come to the beach to meet women," said David Williams, a sailor onboard the destroyer John. S. McCain, in a way that sounded a lot like, "Duh."
>
> Williams and his buddies were engaging in nampa, a Japanese word meaning looking to hook up.
>
> Williams and a group of his tattooed buddies from the McCain seemed to consistently have a gaggle of bikini-clad girls in tow who seemed just as interested in this practice. He said his full-sleeve Japanese arm tattoos are often what breaks the ice.
>
> "Girls here love tattoos; they think it's cool," said Williams. His friends, who are also adorned with all types of ink, agreed. (Flack, et. al. 2011)

Aside from the article's overt encouragement for feelings of sexual entitlement towards Japanese women, the perspective it offers on tattoos also sends a clear message about Japanese masculinity. While getting tattoos is very common among U.S. military personnel and identified by some as proof of their masculinity (field notes, April 2019),

it is generally not a socially acceptable practice for Japanese in Japan due to associations between tattoos and organized crime. This negative attitude toward tattoos was mentioned in several of the cultural orientations I attended, it came up with some frequency in online discussions between SOFA Americans about which public pools and waterparks in Japan allow tattoos, and three Japanese tattoo artists who cater to U.S. troops verified to me in interviews that this particular aspect of Japanese culture is indeed very widely known among military Americans. The statement "Girls here love tattoos; they think it's cool," tells American servicemembers that Japanese women will be more interested in male American troops than in Japanese men, since the vast majority of Japanese men do not have and will not get tattoos. This sentiment was echoed in a popular meme posted to a now-defunct Facebook group for U.S. servicemembers in Okinawa in March 2019. It featured an image of a white man and woman lying in bed in matching women's lingerie and was captioned with the phrase, "How men without tattoos sleep at night." While the post was not explicitly directed at Japanese men, it was shared among servicemembers in Japan who were likely aware that most Japanese men would fall into the category that the image is figuratively emasculating. This same Facebook group regularly featured posts and comments from male servicemembers alluding to a belief that female servicemembers are not sexually attracted to—or cannot be sexually satisfied by—Japanese men and therefore prefer Americans. None of the female servicemembers that I interacted with ever corroborated this sentiment, but there were a small number of supportive comments

online from people who identified as female servicemembers in response to such statements.

This emasculating tendency is also employed strategically by the U.S. military. Servicemembers of all ranks—from base commanders, to public affairs officers, to newcomers fresh out of boot camp—were quick to tell me that Japanese protestors are predisposed to ignore logic in favor of their emotions, and that they do not truly grasp the intricacies of international relations and military policy—often implying this is because Japan is not an important actor on the world stage and therefore such understanding is unnecessary. The qualities of emotional sensitivity, irrationality, and lack of knowledge or concern regarding politics implied in such descriptions render the Japanese as immature and naïve and heighten the contrast with the supposed manliness and worldliness of American military masculinity (Belkin 2012, 35-6). On top of that, suggesting that the protestors are incapable of rational conversation and/or do not know what they are talking about provides excuses for the bases not to engage with protestors and to dismiss their concerns.

I encountered similar sentiments in the aforementioned Facebook group, which was specifically made for U.S. military personnel to complain about life in Japan. Commenters there regularly described Japanese people as needlessly afraid of them and overly sensitive to their presence, creating a consistent narrative that the extra rules for U.S. bases in Japan existed because Japanese people had grown up in a culture that had made them deeply fragile and overly emotional. Contributors to these posts made it

clear that they resented the Japanese for the limitations and inconveniences that the military imposed on its members seemingly to appease this widespread irrationality.

As imagined by USFJ personnel, the samurai exists at the peak of Japanese masculinity, and thus is the ultimate position for American troops to occupy in order to maintain a sense of superiority over the civilian population. Building on the existing Orientalist framework of Asian emasculation, my SOFA sources fortify this samurai fantasy by incorporating commonly-held Japanese values such as an aversion to the militarized past and an association of tattoos with criminality, ensuring that Japanese men—military or otherwise—pose no challenge to their superiority. Though the samurai was likely adopted as a symbol by the U.S. military with little consideration beyond its attractiveness as a cool fantasy warrior, this nevertheless is an act of cultural appropriation that promotes a racist view of masculinity by declaring Japanese/Asians inferior. Let us now turn to how Japanese people have experienced and reacted to American assertions of masculine superiority vis-à-vis the samurai.

Rapists, Gentlemen, Big-Bodied Babies, and Destroyers of the National Penis: Japanese Responses to American Samurai Masculinity

American expressions of military masculinity have provoked a variety of responses in Japan. Most common among those responses is Japanese people's widespread image of American military masculinity as a threat—a source of sexual aggression that leads to rape and violence, particularly against Japanese women. Warnings of rape by American soldiers featured heavily in Japanese propaganda during the Asia-Pacific War,

particularly in Okinawa (Kitazawa and Allen 2007), and in the early days of the Occupation, the Japanese government went so far as to recruit lower-class Japanese women for state-organized brothels to serve the occupiers in order to create a buffer between rapacious troops and middle- and upper-class Japanese women (Kovner 2013, 105). This fear continues today, bolstered by the extensive local media coverage dedicated to instances of SOFA personnel sexually assaulting Japanese women (Robinson 2015).

In fact, it is difficult to gage how common sexual assault is between U.S. servicemembers and Japanese and Okinawan women. Base public affairs offices in Okinawa regularly point to both an overall decline in military crimes and a lower ratio of crimes per capita than that of Okinawan men to argue that there is no statistical basis to stereotypes of military men as dangerous to local women. However, as Johnson (2019, 136) reports, sexual assault in particular is grossly underreported in Japan, as Japanese police "are notorious for discourag-ing victims from legal action, interrogating them at length, and making them reenact their abuse, risking secondary trauma." Johnson also found that, despite the military keeping no records of complaints of sexual assault under the postwar U.S. administration of the Ryukyus, informal records such as "personal stories, passed-down stories, and U.S. military policies" (Ibid., 118) point to a widespread problem, suggesting a solid historical basis behind contemporary fears of rape from American servicemembers.

Running parallel to the image of American troops as sexually aggressive and dangerous, if smaller in scale, is some Japanese (typically women's) exotification and idealization of

male American troops as potential sexual partners and husbands. Kelsky (2001) has offered an extensive analysis of the "Yellow Cab" phenomenon, in which a small number of well-to-do Japanese women sought out foreign lovers at, amongst other places, U.S. military bases. While she did find that this involved eroticization of Black and white male bodies, it also leaned heavily on Japanese women idealizing Western men more generally "for their exemplification of the modern, romanticized for their alleged sensitivity (*yasashisa*), and fetishized as signifiers of success and gatekeepers of social upward mobility" (Ibid., p. 8). One of my informants, a Black former servicemember, told me that he had been shocked on arrival to meet what his friends referred to as "Blapans," Japanese women that were purportedly so eager to sleep with Black men that departing troops could "pass them on" to incoming Black troops like a kind of inheritance (Michael Koonce, former U.S. airman, interviewed by the author, February 2017). Ames (2010) reveals the complexity behind Japanese women's choices to pursue Black military men in Okinawa, showing that women with SOFA boyfriends or partners face discrimination, and none more so than the women with Black men. While Kelsky's findings may at first suggest that the American assertion that they, as samurai, are more desirable than Japanese men (perhaps exemplified most strongly in the cases of tattoos discussed above), both she and Ames highlight that military partners, as foreign men, primarily serve not as sex objects, but as status symbols, pathways to living abroad, objects of a 'Western chivalry fantasy" (Ma 1996, 92, quoted in Kelsky 2001, 138), and critiques of sexist and misogynistic aspects of Japanese masculinity (Ames 2010, 193-5; Kelsky 2001, 138). In other words, SOFA men are less attractive for their military

masculinity than for their value as a signifier to which Japanese women can attach meaning.

My Japanese male interlocutors did at times compare themselves unfavorably to American military men, particularly in terms of body and physicality. Many Japanese men described being an American servicemember as though it were coeval with being a (male) bodybuilder. When I was invited to join the members of the Kin Town Chamber of Commerce—a group of Japanese male entrepreneurs mostly in their forties and fifties—celebrate the Japanese government-funded renovations of a barber shop aiming to cater to American personnel from nearby Camp Hansen, the businessmen from the chamber all pressured each other to get "high-and-tight" haircuts, the most extreme version of the military "buzz cut." After the first man got his cut, he complained that Japanese men are too skinny to look good with that style, to which the others responded by ribbing him about the need to begin weightlifting to get his body to match his hair (Fieldwork, January 2019). Two male servicemembers were also present at the event in order to act as models for the salon's website, and while they were both taller than the Japanese men present, they were also quite skinny themselves. Despite the Japanese men's concerns about Japanese bodies failing to measure up, though military bases have gyms and troops have physical training requirements, military members nevertheless display a wide range of body types, including substantial variations in height, weight, muscularity, gender presentation, and so on. Though Japanese mass media features many examples of American troops as large, muscular white men (such as Lt. Surge in the *Pokémon* animated series or Guile in the *Street Fighter* series of

games), these particular men owned businesses that catered to American troops and lived in close proximity to bases, suggesting that they regularly encountered servicemembers of all shapes, sizes, and colors, and yet they defaulted to an image of the American soldier that cast themselves as smaller and weaker by comparison.

Interestingly, it was largely the same men who lauded the superiority of servicemembers' bodies that also referred to American troops as "youths" or "kids." This contrast between physical maturity and mental/emotional childishness can also be seen in how some JSDF personnel see their American counterparts. For members of the JSDF, who are likely to come into contact with American troops via joint exercises between the two militaries and may even share a base with them, American claims of being modern-day samurai stand in stark contrast to their "carefully nurtured notions of the military hero as a helper and a savior rather than a warrior" (Frühstück 2007, 76). This results in a relationship with American military masculinity that is fraught with contradictions. As Frühstück (Ibid.) describes it,

> Identification with the American soldier is far from being automatic , ranging instead from desirable to impossible, to, most often, highly problematic… Typically imagined as a Caucasian male, the American soldier personifies what some servicemembers perceive as a more desirable military and what others view as a permanent emasculating threat.

Frühstück later recounts a JSDF interlocutor suggesting that American troops' lack of effort to clean up bullet casings and other detritus after training exercises signified a

lack of concern for the safety of civilians, a reversal of the Americans' backhanded compliments about the JSDF's cleanliness. This move masculinizes the JSDF as heroes and protectors, casting American samurai masculinity as irresponsible, inconsiderate, and possibly dangerous by comparison.

When I asked a male JSDF officer on Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, a joint JSDF-USFJ base, for his thoughts on the differences between the American and Japanese servicemembers, he told me that, if a fire broke out on the base, the JSDF members would gather around their leader and consult a guidebook to determine the proper procedure for the specific type and location of the fire, then follow that procedure to the letter. Americans, he told me, would just run over and start helping—maybe they would be in shorts playing basketball or in uniform and in the middle of their own task, but would drop everything, run to the fire, and attempt to rescue anyone inside. He longed for the freedom to carry out this kind of unfettered action, but did not identify it with waging war (JSDF public affairs officer, interviewed by the author, August 2017). In other words, he paid little heed to Americans' samurai masculinity, but instead was bothered by the Americans' ability to outperform his group on his own scale of "rescuer" masculinity, clearly valuing their initiative and autonomy over his own organization's emphasis on planning and professionalism.

This is not to say that Japanese men do not feel that their masculinity is threatened by the U.S. troops' identity as warriors. Interestingly, however, this particular fear of emasculation is often linked more to one's political stance than to any background of military service. A key cause among Japan's conservative political elites, championed

heavily by former prime minister Abe Shinzō, is the revision of Japan's postwar constitution. In particular, Abe and other conservatives have stressed their determination to remove the constitution's anti-war section, Article 9, in order to make Japan a "normal" country in terms of having a more standard military with stronger offensive capabilities (e.g., Muto 2016). Building on Frühstück's (2003) observation that human bodies and an imagined national body were ideologically conflated in the creation of modern Japan, Yoneyama contends that pro-rearmament conservatives suffer from "racialized castration anxiety" (2017, 121), as they view the imposition of Article 9 on Japan as a national emasculation at the hands of white Americans. To these right-wingers, a normalized military is the ultimate expression of a nation's masculinity, and thus Japan's inability to maintain one puts it in a state of permanent inferiority by way of pacifist emasculation. This position not only reifies the U.S. military's notion of militarized masculinity as the most essentially masculine masculinity (since the military is equated with the national phallus), but also suggests that American military masculinity is replacing Japan's and occupying that peak position, which Japan has left vacant. In other words, Japan's conservative constitutional revision movement accepts the premises behind American appropriations of the samurai: i.e., the preeminence of warrior masculinity over other forms, the inability of Japanese men to achieve warrior masculinity, and therefore the inherent superiority of American men (and, by association, America itself) over Japan.

While conservatives who feel emasculated by the U.S.-Japan security alliance seemingly accept American servicemembers' samurai mentality, they nevertheless offer a way for

Japanese men to reclaim their peak position via rearmament. This is perhaps why the Americans' samurai positioning needs to invalidate all Japanese masculinity and not simply the masculinity of the JSDF: the U.S. government has long been in support of Japan rearming (Harries and Harries 1987, 307), and so the existence of actual Japanese warriors as a challenge to American samurai status has always been a possibility. In such a case, for the U.S. military's samurai masculinity to continue operating as a substitute morale booster in the absence of super-citizen status, it will have to depend on assertions of the inferiority of the clean, tattoo-less, emotional men (and women) that make up the Japanese military in lieu of simply dismissing all Japanese for being non-warriors.

Conclusion: Fantasy and Forward Deployment

Let me close with two stories about US marines—often masculinized beyond other servicemembers as America's "tip of the spear"—that illustrate the functions and results of the USFJ's samurai masculinity. First, the city of Masuda in Shimane Prefecture, not far from Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni in neighboring Yamaguchi Prefecture, has at times invited marines from the base to participate in the annual Nanaō Festival. In the festival, participants dress up as pre-modern warriors (notably not samurai) and parade through the town. An article originally published on Iwakuni's official website details the experience of a group of participating marines. The article describes how they dressed up as samurai (it later clarifies that they were not actually samurai but heavily implies

that the marines were told they were samurai) and then proceeded to do a full military march down the parade route across the center of Masuda. The article quotes base Community Relations Specialist Takayuki Takeda as saying "Of course Marines and Sailors are professional marchers, so even though local people get tired the marines and sailors never do…I heard a lot of people saying 'wow that's great, impressive' and stuff like that" (Jones 2018). Setting aside the possibility that Takeda—whose job in part entails making American troops feel welcome and comfortable outside of the base—exaggerated the locals' appraisal of the participants, singling out the servicemembers' ability to march in formation as the main object of praise is perhaps a strange choice, as such marching is a modern military practice that was not performed by samurai or any other premodern Japanese warriors. In other words, this group of marines was told (likely by Takeda or someone in a similar position) that they were so good at being samurai that they impressed Japanese observers, when in fact they had neither looked nor behaved like samurai.

What I take from this story is that the USFJ's samurai masculinity is a closed circuit, a fantasy that the bases generate and perpetuate internally, without regard for cultural sensitivity, historical accuracy, or the effects that their appropriation of the title has on the people around them. It fabricates its own exceptionalism and ignores any voices or evidence that may contradict it. This practice of dismissing local knowledge and barring input from local sources sets a worrying precedent for U.S.-Japan communication and collaboration.

The foundation of the U.S.-Japan Alliance, the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation between Japan and the United States of America (1960), states in the first line of its preamble—before even mentioning championing democracy, cooperating economically, or maintaining regional security—that it stems from the two nations' desire "to strengthen the bonds of peace and friendship traditionally existing between them." This may read like an empty platitude, but the rhetoric of U.S.-Japan friendship can be seen in such prominent cases as the establishment of a U.S. federal agency, the Japan-U.S. Friendship Committee, or the USFJ titling its extensive relief efforts following Japan's triple disaster in March 2011 "Operation Tomodachi" (Japanese for "friend"). However, given the U.S. military's appropriation and reinterpretation of the samurai, the use of "traditional" to describe the U.S.-Japan friendship raises some interesting questions. If "tradition" is meant to evoke the continuation of a historically established friendship, then is it harkening back to the period before the Asia-Pacific War, in which America approached Japan with colonialist intentions, understood Japan through Orientalist, feminizing frameworks, and treated with Japan from a position of racial superiority? Or is it meant to suggest that the strength and friendship are based on the countries' traditions, even though Japanese tradition is a subject that the USFJ is intent on willfully misunderstanding? One can assume that neither position is what the Japanese signees of the treaty would have wanted.

Second, while conducting fieldwork in Okinawa, I made a habit of visiting all of the American bases' open days and friendship festivals (events that open up sections of the bases to the Japanese public) in order to see what kind of face the USFJ put on and how

Japanese people interacted with base facilities and personnel. My first such visit was to Camp Kinser, a USMC base, on a particularly humid afternoon. Friendship festivals typically feature amusement park-style rides, games, entertainers, food stalls and, invariably, a static display of military vehicles for children to climb on and people to take pictures with. While this particular friendship festival was not at a shared facility, the local Japan Ground Self-Defense Force garrison had supplied some of its tanks and missile launchers for the static display, while the marines had only put out trucks and forklifts. Nearly all of the visitors—both Japanese and American—stayed on the Japanese side of the display, and the American troops manning their vehicles were visibly bored. I approached a younger male enlisted marine who seemed relieved to have a fellow American to speak with. After we introduced ourselves and I told him I was there to learn about military relations with the Japanese populace, I asked, "Don't get me wrong, but it looks like all of the cool stuff here is Japanese. Why don't you guys have any tanks out?" The heretofore friendly marine became defensive and, assuring me that the U.S. military does indeed have cooler stuff than the JSDF, expressed his surprise and disappointment that none of it was on display. He then started to talk about where all the tanks were actually located, but quickly thought better of it and cut himself off before revealing any sensitive information (Field Notes, 2018). Military equipment is often associated with masculinity, whether that be the masculinity of the equipment's designer, its operator, or even the nation itself (Cohn 1987), and so this marine's comments can be read as an attempt to defend his (or his organization's, or even his country's) masculine superiority, while his visible discomfort at having his

simple truck compared to Japanese missile launchers brought to mind Belkin's (2012) aforementioned contention that military masculinity generates confusion and frustration by establishing ideals and then subjecting troops to conditions that contradict them.

Basing military masculinity on a half-baked understanding of another country's history and culture creates an unstable and ultimately untenable position. For American servicemembers, samurai status is meant to place them above the people they are ostensibly meant to protect, but only does so in (the Americans') theory, and not in (Japanese people's) practice, making it destined to disappoint. At the same time, for all that samurai iconography and other expressions of military masculinity are justified in terms of unit cohesion, they predispose USFJ personnel to look down on JSDF members, undermining the cohesion of the alliance itself and creating a hindrance to any joint operations between the two forces.

So long as American security strategy focuses on forward deployment to foreign bases, military encounters and interactions with foreign cultures are inevitable. However, the agreements that allow the U.S. military to station personnel in the territory of an allied country are predicated on the expectation that they will come to the defense of that country and region. If the common practice is to replace super-citizen ideology at these bases with American fantasies carved from the local culture, then they are misunderstanding and misrepresenting that which they have agreed to protect. In this sense, the Americans are enacting a violent invasion, not with tanks and drones, but with privilege and dismissal. When American entitlement leads to abuse and assault on

civilians; when local politicians' feelings of emasculation push them to advocate for violent and patriarchal reforms; when feminizing local troops hampers joint defense operations; when the host country's inability to live up to the fantasy affects troops' mental health; and when the fantasy supersedes local knowledge and opinions, then even this symbolic invasion is bound to leave casualties in its wake.

Chapter V: Adversaries

Figure 8: Pro- and anti-military t-shirts on sale a Michi no Eki Kadena, which also houses a decidedly anti-military museum and a viewing deck where military enthusiasts can photograph aircraft taking off and landing inside the base. Photo by the author.

One Saturday afternoon in Okinawa, I joined a group of U.S. marines working to level out the sand of a small beach in a town not far from Camp Sanders[50] in time for a local festival that would take place there. I had joined several cleanups before as they usually

[50]In order to protect the identities of my interlocutors, I have amalgamated Okinawan marine bases under the pseudonym "Camp Sanders" and have likewise amalgamated personnel of similar rank and position under pseudonyms.

involved a mix of American troops and Japanese volunteers who wanted to practice English, and a contact in the local government had emailed me to say that this beach event would also include local children and would be a good chance to see the marines interacting with them. Arriving at the beach, I found not a child in sight, though this was probably for the best as it appeared to be brutally hard labor shoveling sand under the unforgiving Okinawan sun. Unsurprisingly, Miyamoto from the base Community Relations office was there (he told me he gave up a lot of weekends to help with such volunteering events), and he quickly introduced me to the group. They were all enlisted marines sent to Okinawa as part of the Unit Deployment Program (UDP), a marine corps initiative meant to offer extensive training and foster unit cohesion among new marines by sending them to one of the various bases in the Pacific for six months. Okinawa hosts thousands of UDP marines every year, and the U.S. military has facilities across the main island for tank and artillery training, urban anti-insurgency training, and pilot touch-and-go (landing and then immediately taking off again) training, among others. This particular unit had come to the end of its tenure in[51] Okinawa and was performing one last good deed before leaving.

Seemingly feeling guilty for my having driven a considerable distance just to watch a bunch of guys shoveling sand, Miyamoto introduced me to the unit's chaplain and suggested I ask him about the unit's impressions of Okinawa. The chaplain instead began unprompted to describe the purpose behind his unit's volunteerism. Locations with a permanent military presence, he told me, get "sweat equity," meaning manual

[51]As discussed in the introduction, I choose to use "in Okinawa" rather than the U.S. military's preferred language of "on Okinawa" because it suggests I believe the former suggests more of a politically-bounded space, while the latter evokes a geographical feature.

labor. Places where marines only stop over briefly—he gave the example of Hong Kong—get "cultural exchange" instead, which he said amounted to visits to hospitals and orphanages. All of this, he said, was tactical. He referred to Okinawans as "adversaries" and said that they point to crimes as signs that the U.S. military is destroying the local culture, so it is imperative that the marines "strategically control images and flows of information as a war tactic," which included promoting a good image of the military through visible volunteer efforts. "Adversaries," he explained, do not understand that the presence of 25,000 marines in Okinawa makes crimes and accidents a regrettable inevitability that must be accepted. There are always a few bad apples, he told me—ignoring the damning back half of that axiom[52] just like so many other military-affiliated Americans I had spoken with had done—and so it is important to steer the image toward marines who were being good guests of their host nation.

Up until this point, I had never heard anyone describe Okinawans so explicitly as enemies of the U.S. military. Most of the base-affiliated Americans I had spoken with in official interviews in Okinawa had taken great pains to avoid painting Okinawans in any kind of negative light, which is not surprising given that base public relations offices often acted as gatekeepers between me and my military interviewees and made no secret of coaching my interviewees before they met me and debriefing them after (not to mention my own record as having published an article criticizing the anti-Okinawan tone of the orientation briefing slides released by Mitchell in 2016, discussed below). However, this chaplain, relatively new to Okinawa and not groomed in how to talk

[52]As discussed in Chapter III, the full saying goes "One bad apple spoils the barrel."

about Okinawa to outsiders to the military, spoke frankly to me of his opinion that the Okinawan people were adversaries in the battle over military public image. Six months spent living in Okinawa, working with Okinawans such as Miyamoto on base, and training under American personnel on longer-term assignments to the island had either reinforced this point of view or had otherwise failed to relieve him of it, and in fact had left him feeling it was natural to discuss Okinawans in this way with a perfect stranger. Clearly more than an outlying opinion, his casting of Okinawans as "adversaries," while more explicit and militaristic than other expressions I had or have since encountered, mirrored comments and attitudes I had met from American military personnel across Japan.

In this chapter, I will focus specifically on Okinawa, exploring the images and realities of Okinawans' relationships to the bases. Because military-affiliated Americans, mainland Japanese, and Okinawans employed on the bases almost universally framed Okinawans as defined by a pro-base/anti-base dichotomy, I will look at how, when, and why Okinawans are described as being affiliated with one position versus the other, and how these perceived affiliations are used to justify American and mainland Japanese security agendas. To do so, I employ Weber's (2016) queer model of international relations. Weber, following Ashley's (1989, quoted in Weber 2016) notion of "statecraft as mancraft," argues that questions of sovereignty in democratic systems seek to identify an idealized "sovereign subject" through logics of either/or, but that supplanting these with a queer logic of and/or makes it possible to understand more complex and contradictory models for the sovereign subject. I argue that Okinawans, through their

relationships with the U.S. military, are overwhelmingly described in terms of a supporter/adversary binary, but that both the relationships as Okinawans experience them "on the ground" and the relationships as described and instrumentalized by the U.S. military have always been queer and/or relationships. Furthermore, reducing these complex queer structures to simple dichotomies has occluded our understandings of these relationships, camouflaged processes of American militarization in Okinawa, and unfairly centered the military in discussions of Okinawan identity. This queer logic is thus essential for understanding what is undeniably a queer, nonbinary relationship: the Okinawa-Japan-U.S. triangle.

I begin with U.S. military narratives of Okinawa, looking at how and when Okinawans are depicted as adversaries or supporters and what agendas are served by alternating between these positions. I next apply this queer logic to previous scholarship on the base issue in Okinawa, which has also tended to frame Okinawans as universally anti-base (though in this case casting resistance as heroic self-determination), reifying and centering the overly simple pro- anti- binary. As my ethnographic data shows, even Okinawans who identify strongly as pro- or anti-base acknowledge ambiguities and exceptions to their chosen positions. For these Okinawans, their personal experience is a mix of pro- *and* anti-base feelings, while their political stance, public persona, or job, demands that they identify as pro- *or* anti-base, placing them in the queer position of being pro- *and/or* anti-base.

I locate the process of reducing Okinawan identity to a pro-/anti- dichotomy within a larger historical pattern of dichotomizing Okinawa's relationship as part of and/or apart

from mainland Japan according to the militarized agendas of the United States and Japanese governments, highlighting that Okinawans' queer positions vis-à-vis base politics are an extension of the larger political space that they occupy in their triangular relationship with mainland Japan and the United States.

Finally, I continue the project of decentering the false dichotomy of pro- versus anti-base stances from conceptions and perceptions of Okinawan identity. My interlocutors unseat these polarizing assumptions of Okinawan identity by making the material, political, and social conditions of the bases peripheral to their own individual goals. These individuals leverage the U.S. military presence for personal gain and prestige, adapting to the existence of the bases and then coopting it without fully investing in supporting American military goals. In this way, being pro- and/or anti-base becomes secondary to the fact that the bases are in fact helpful and/or harmful to them.

In sum, it is the goal of this chapter to show that the queer complexities of Okinawan sovereignty and sovereign identity refute the assumptions that have heretofore been foundational to scholarship, policymaking, and military training about Okinawa: the narrative common on mainland Japanese bases that Okinawans are all "adversaries," the rhetoric of commanders and public affairs offices in Okinawan that claim the "adversaries" are not true Okinawans, and the positions of the many Okinawa scholars who categorize the prefecture as "Resistant Islands" (McCormack and Norimatsu, 2012), united in a campaign of anticolonialism against the U.S. and Japan.

Adversarial Narratives: Framing Anti-Base Protestors

In general, I found two dominant narratives regarding anti-base protestors among U.S. base personnel, including Japanese and Okinawan workers. At mainland bases, it was most often said or implied that all Okinawans are adversarial towards the U.S. military. Two mainland base commanders, for example, spoke in interviews and orientation briefings about the good relationship their base has with the residents of the surrounding communities, but then qualified this with comments to the effect of "in Okinawa, it's different." Several enlisted troops who had never been to Okinawa told me that Okinawans hate the bases, and five Japanese base employees described their affiliations with the bases as more socially acceptable on the mainland than they would be in Okinawa. The explanation I heard most often from my interlocutors for why Okinawans were so adversarial was that brainwashing by Okinawa's overly-leftist media and complacency engendered by three generations of "peace education" (*heiwa kyoiku*, a right-wing critique of Japanese public education as being excessively anti-war) had left Okinawans without the sophistication to understand geopolitical realities, while a steady stream of government handouts offered in response to noise and other problems caused by the bases had fostered opportunistic habits of exploiting even minor inconveniences to get more payments and investment from the central government. One particularly vitriolic officer on Iwakuni (a Marine Corps installation in mainland Japan) who had never been stationed in Okinawa told me that "Okinawans are only Japanese when the government is giving out money," implying not only that Okinawans are greedy, but that they are different from mainland Japanese. This echoed a comment

made by former American Consul General of Okinawa Kevin Maher to a group of American students on a study tour in 2011, calling Okinawans "'lazy' and 'masters of manipulation and extortion of Tokyo'" ("U.S. Diplomat Accused of Disparaging Okinawans.").

These kinds of images—of Okinawans as greedy, lazy, unsophisticated, brainwashed by media, and so on—were also hardwired into marine base orientations in Okinawa until Mitchell exposed them in 2016. Using materials gathered by Freedom of Information Act request, Mitchell revealed that these disparaging portrayals of Okinawans had been included in official orientations scripts and slides, prompting a reevaluation of orientation materials across all Okinawan bases under the partial supervision of the Okinawan prefectural government.

Perhaps due in part to this very public backlash, on bases in Okinawa, the description from both Okinawan staff and longer-term American personnel went in the opposite direction: Okinawans love the bases. Most supported this position by citing the number of jobs provided by the bases, the economic impact of relying on local contractors for base construction and maintenance projects, and the tens of thousands of Okinawans who annually attend base festivals and other open-base events. When I asked them about the protests, the story I always got was that the protestors outside of the bases are not Okinawans, or at the very least that they are Okinawans who are not actually dedicated to pacifism or demilitarization. Informant after informant, from enlisted troops to high-ranking public affairs officers, told me that protestors came from other parts of Japan to impose their opinions without understanding the realities of the

situation for Okinawans. Several told me they had heard about South Korean groups joining the protests and that the presence of such foreigners artificially inflated the protestors' numbers. Additionally, I was told many times, usually by the same informants who described the protestors as outsiders, that university students are sent to protest sites by bus and paid to stay all day. Whenever I asked who was paying the students, renting their busses, or providing airfare for hundreds or even thousands of outsiders to regularly come to Okinawa for protests, the answer was always the same: China, they told me, is funding the anti-base movement in order to destabilize the U.S.-Japan Alliance. For my base-affiliated interlocutors, both American and Japanese, this information was considered common knowledge, though when pressed, several admitted that they could not trace this information back to a reliable source. However, one civilian contractor working in military intelligence told me that this had all been verified by sources that he could not share with me, which he implied to be the CIA. I do not find his account credible, though, as I feel it is unlikely that a professional in military intelligence would share actual CIA secrets with a graduate student who had his essays and talks criticizing US bases posted on his public website.

Military sources thus depict their own and/or structure for understanding Okinawan sentiments toward bases: placing a mainland source and an Okinawan source side-by-side will show that Okinawans are anti-base *and* pro-base, but both sources will emphasize that only one position is possible – anti-base *or* pro-base. At the same time, we begin to see another, older false binary: mainland sources categorize Japanese as pro- and Okinawans as anti-, while Okinawan sources identify Okinawans as pro- and

suggest that the anti-base activists are outsiders from mainland Japan, with both sides clearly delineating Okinawans from mainland Japanese. Complicating things further, my military sources in Okinawa say that protestors are not Okinawan, but also that they are Okinawan students being paid to protest, or they are Okinawans who have been duped by the media and peace education. In my experience, these seeming contradictions were left unaddressed—perhaps even unnoticed—as the various images of friendly Okinawans, foreign and mainland agitators, students employed by the Chinese government, and ignorant and unsophisticated Okinawans could be selectively deployed to explain a variety of situations, support multiple positions, and justify all manner of approaches to addressing or disregarding local concerns. When protestors numbered in the thousands, they were (or were funded by) outsiders; when anti-base referenda passed, Okinawans were naïve; and in incoming troops' cultural orientations, Okinawans were supportive and helpful to military members. Belkin (2012) has argued that U.S. military training has fostered compliance through forcing members to accept contradictions, suggesting that this ability to pivot between conflicting descriptions of Okinawans is not surprising or new, but just a reflection of a fundamental mode of military thinking.

The pro- /anti-base binary can also be found in social science research that focuses on Okinawans' relationships with the bases, particularly those works that seek to represent Okinawan people or identities.[53] Typically, these works depict Okinawans as universally against the U.S. military, or similarly lionize anti-base Okinawans as representing the

[53]As opposed to works that abstract Okinawans in order to focus more on policy than on ethnography, such as Calder (2008) and Kawato (2015).

authentic Okinawan conviction. In either case, the implication is that the dichotomy is a moral one, as resistance to bases is cast as morally correct. In the most important of these works to date, Inoue's (2007, 2017) ethnography of Okinawan identity vis-à-vis the U.S. bases, the author speaks of Okinawans as having a "united front" (2017: 9) against the bases that the Japanese government is trying to subvert by preying upon class differences between middle-class (whom he categorizes as anti-base) and working-class (whom he categorizes as pro-base) Okinawans (Ibid., 154-5). describes the middle-class anti-base position as valuing democracy, environmentalism, and gender equality, as opposed to the patriarchal and capitalist values of "working-class Okinawans who *reluctantly* support the U.S. military" (Ibid. 211, my emphasis).[54] Contrary to this position, I found ambivalence toward the bases among middle-class informants, and some working-class Okinawans that I met (such as Miyamoto) were anything but reluctant in expressing their support of the U.S.-Japan alliance and its footprint on Okinawa.

A survey of other scholars who have focused on the contemporary protest movement reveals that most have followed Inoue's example, generalizing Okinawans as unwilling victims or staunch opponents of the U.S. military. Dower (2017) describes Okinawa as a bastion of peace challenging twenty-first-century American imperialism. McCormack depicts Okinawans as sharing a dislike for the government of then-prime minister Shinzo Abe, who represented an affront to their pacifist values, as they are "citizens intent on

[54]In the preface to the 2017 edition of his book, Inoue proposes that Okinawan identity has shifted to a "multitude" defined by its use of social media to combat the biopower regime of American militarism (2017: xxviii).

demilitarization" (2018) and acknowledges the existence of Okinawans who support the bases only long enough to explain that they do so "under relentless state pressure" (2019), ironically calling to mind the lack of agency that U.S. military narratives of media brainwashing ascribe to anti-base Okinawans. Lummis prolifically depicts anti-base protestors at Henoko as representing the prefecture as a whole (2019, 2019b) and expressing "Okinawa's adamant opposition" (2020).

However agreeable it may be to side with anti-base activists against the U.S. military, this construction of a true, just, or heroic Okinawan position against the bases nevertheless casts a shadow: the implied false, immoral, or villainous characteristics it attaches to the possibility of any Okinawan standing willingly in support of the bases. The scholars above have largely avoided attaching these labels to Okinawan individuals by either portraying all Okinawans as firmly entrenched within the side of good or suggesting that all others are "reluctant" or have been coerced by the Japanese government, foreclosing the ability of Okinawans who see themselves as pro-base to be represented in their studies and leaving unexamined the points where their subjects' actions and opinions fail to conform to the binary they have constructed. While these scholars are not alone in examining relations between Okinawans and the U.S. military —Ames (2010, 2016) and Forgash (2020), for example, offer more nuanced depictions via their focus on romantic and material exchanges—they nevertheless stand out as the most prominent authors focusing on the anti-base movement in Okinawa. Even in resisting the bases, these authors reify the same pro- /anti- base dichotomy that base personnel rely on to justify their presence and actions.

Beyond Binaries: Okinawan Relationships with U.S. Bases

Until now, I have discussed how others have depicted Okinawan subjectivities vis-à-vis the U.S. military bases, whether by layering and then switching between multiple, conflicting dichotomies (as my military sources have done) or glorifying Okinawans as occupying the moral high ground in a right/wrong dichotomy. Now I will move on to a discussion of how my Okinawan interlocutors saw themselves and understood their own individual relationships with the U.S. military, beginning with my interactions with those individuals who would seem to be most likely to support a dichotomized view of Okinawans: those who self-identified as anti-military or anti-base. Over the course of my research, I attended everything from weekly protests made up of only a handful of activists, to monthly mass protests numbering in the thousands, to a weeklong peace march that spanned the length of Okinawa's main island, and a symposium commemorating decades of anti-base environmental activism. According to American personnel from the mainland, they should have been adversaries; according to the works of Okinawa scholars, they should have been heroic representations of the pacifist will of the Okinawan people; and according to Okinawan base personnel, they should not have been Okinawans at all. Let me start with this last assumption first, as it is true that some of the people I met at protests were not themselves Okinawans, and identifying and separating them will allow me to then focus on the place of the pro-/anti- dichotomy in the identities of the Okinawans I met.

While the overwhelming majority of protestors I met identified themselves as Okinawan, I did meet several non-Okinawans. The Japanese from outside the prefecture who were present were nearly all connected to anti-militarist activism on a larger scale than just Okinawa, demonstrating that they were present due to personal conviction, a conclusion later confirmed by the fieldwork of Sakuma Sayaka (2021). For example, I met an elderly Japanese woman from Kanagawa who participates in weekly and monthly protests at bases near Tokyo, including Japan Self-Defense Force Bases. A sophisticated observer of regional politics, she criticized American pressure on Japanese industries to produce more military technology and worried about the Japan Self-Defense Forces' increasing presence on the most remote islands of Okinawa. When her husband died, she sold his farmland and now—with her children's blessing, she assured me—uses the money left over from the sale to fund her occasional trips to join protests in Okinawa as a representative of her mainland group. She was far from the exception in terms of offering plausible explanations for travel funding. In fact, as Lummis (2019) points out, "[the protestors'] main economic base is Japan's reasonably generous retirement system," meaning that the majority of protestors are elderly Japanese and Okinawans, and many of them fund their political activities with their pensions.

I also joined a group of Japanese Buddhist monks and activists from inside and outside of Okinawa on a peace march across the island. The participants all slept on the floors of community centers and ate donated bentos for the duration of the march. What little travel expenses they had were covered by donations that followers from both Okinawa

and the mainland had made to their sect. They also hold peace marches from Hiroshima to Nagasaki as well as around other military bases and sites of wartime tragedy.

The foreign protestors I met were not affiliated with the Chinese government, and all of them had plausible explanations for the funding they used to join the protests. Accompanying the aforementioned peace march, for example, was a Taiwanese journalist writing an article about the impacts that allowing U.S. bases could have on Taiwan. He was paying his own way but living according to the very modest standards of the monks. I also met a group of six South Korean protestant ministers from different denominations joining a protest of over 1,000 Okinawans against the new base construction at Henoko. They had come to express their solidarity with Okinawa as part of a global resistance movement against U.S. military expansion and imperialism, as many of them belonged to groups resisting the American military bases in their own country and they generally felt militarism to be anathema to their Christian values. Their short trip was funded by donations from members of their various congregations.

Regarding the Okinawans that I met at protests, aside from the large-scale protests of the base construction project at Henoko, most were from or had settled in the communities immediately bordering the bases they were protesting. Protestors who were not retirees were usually employed full-time, explaining why regular protests are scheduled either on weekends or very early in the morning, so that the protestors can go directly from the demonstration to work. At a protest in front of Kadena Air Base, I met mayors and council members from the surrounding municipalities. Tanaka Kōei of the Japanese Communist Party, then member of the Kadena Town Council, told me that

he joined the protests regularly to show his constituents that he was committed to addressing their towns' issues with the base. At an international symposium of feminist anti-military organizations in Okinawa, I met Itokazu Keiko, at the time a representative of Okinawa to the National Diet. She was there to speak about building a transnational network of women to resist military violence.

I did not meet any university students, paid or otherwise, at any of the protests that I attended. Most university-age Okinawans that I spoke with outside of protests viewed the bases as a permanent fixture of their surroundings and otherwise did not hold a particularly strong opinion about them. This echoes the trend published in a 2019 report by the East-West Center that surveyed Okinawans ages twenty to forty-five and found that half of their respondents would not identify as either pro- or anti- U.S. bases, while only a third of respondents identified as firmly anti-base (Morrison and Chinen 2019, p. 4).

As with protestors on the mainland, I found the Okinawan protestors to be extremely sophisticated in their knowledge of Japanese and American defense policy, military technology, base-related environmental issues, alliance politics, American and Japanese law, recent political developments in China, Taiwan, and the Koreas, and other germane topics. Most of them had loftier goals than simply the reduction or removal of U.S. bases, such as global nuclear disarmament, decolonization, environmental and cultural preservation, or the abolishment of all forms of martial capability in Japan (including the Japan Self-Defense Forces). Once again, I found no ties to the Chinese government, and no sign that any of the protestors were somehow profiting from their participation.

Over the course of my fieldwork, only one anti-base organization asked me for a donation, and it did so indirectly, by way of including instructions for donations by bank transfer on its flier (Heri kichi hantai kyōgikai, 2018). Admittedly, with such information, agents of the Chinese government could conceivably donate to the cause without being identified as such, but it occurred to me as I marched with the handful of elderly Japanese who made up the group that, one, a sudden influx of Chinese money might help to sustain their efforts, but that their convictions would be the same with or without it; and two, that, given they are up against the combined financial and political might of the Government of Japan and the United States Military, China could never make a donation large enough to put this or any other group on a level playing field with their opponents. For these reasons, I argue that it does not matter if foreign sources are funding this movement or not, because such funding could do very little to alter the protestors' position or change the balance of power.

Even among individuals who were actively working against the bases, I found that most of my informants had much more complex feelings. For example, an Okinawan activist and academic who had been actively working against the bases for decades told me stories about their grandchildren attending a homeschool run by the wife of a U.S. marine, and another lifelong activist was thankful for the Air Force family next door who took care of their pets when they traveled. In fact, this same complexity was equally true of the most vocal pro-base Okinawans that I met, such as an employee on Camp Sanders who staunchly supported the alliance but still resented the fact that a decision by a base commander to punish poor behavior among their troops by restricting time

off base could devastate local businesses dependent on those troops to stay afloat. In other words, far from falling into a a clear-cut binary, my interlocutors evinced instead a common experience of ambiguity toward the bases.

This ambiguity can also be seen in Okinawan politics. During my year of fieldwork in Okinawa, there were three major elections focused on base issues. First, the very day that I arrived, new prefectural governor Tamaki Denny was elected on a platform of resisting the construction of new U.S. marine facilities in Oura Bay outside Henoko.[55] When the construction of the new base continued unabated, a prefecture-wide referendum was passed against the construction, and in the following election for a representative to the National Diet, Yara Tomohiro was chosen for his own platform against the new construction. A group of staunch supporters of the U.S. military among my Okinawan informants referred to these elections as "*san renpai,"* three consecutive defeats, but even they admitted that none of these elections was about shuttering the bases and kicking the Americans out of Okinawa; rather, they were all focused specifically on the issue of the new base in Oura Bay. Even though the majority of Okinawan voters came out against the Henoko construction, fully demilitarizing the prefecture is still seen as a radical position, especially by younger Okinawans (Morris and Chinen 2019, 4).

Perhaps the best physical illustration of Okinawa's queerness is *Michi no Eki Kadena* (Kadena roadside station), a rest stop and tourist site in Kadena Town just outside of

[55]While Tamaki is often described as an anti-base politician, he has not moved to oppose the U.S. military on any issue outside of the Henoko facility construction, which is also true of most of his predecessors (McCormack 2020, 156-7).

Kadena Air Base. Outside of the station, a giant anthropomorphic sweet potato, the town's official mascot, measures and displays the levels of aircraft noise, entwining the town's identity with military noise pollution. Inside, the second floor houses a historical museum of Kadena Town that not only focuses on the land seizures and other problems brought by the base, but also places all of the exhibits behind barbed wire to symbolize the way that base fences limit access to the town's history and identity. The third floor, far more popular than the second when I visited, houses an open observation deck where *miriota* ("military otaku," Japanese obsessive fans of the military) and tourists gathered to photograph military aircraft taking off and landing on the airstrip just across the base fence. All of this came together in the first-floor gift shop (see fig. 4), where items celebrating and condemning the U.S. military in Okinawa were sold side-by-side. Michi no Eki Kadena, a site built by the town both to condemn and capitalize on its proximity to the U.S. Air Force, highlights the way that resistance to the military can overlap with acceptance and even celebration of it in Okinawa, exposing the falsehood of the pro-base/anti-base binary.

Japan or Not? Okinawan Dichotomy and Militarist Agendas

This dichotomous and contradictory treatment of Okinawans as loving and hating the bases has not emerged from a historical vacuum. As we shall see, the U.S. military, Japanese government, and even many Okinawan political and business leaders can never seem to decide whether the prefecture is *of* Japan, or just *in* Japan. In other

words, all three of these groups have constructed and/or relationships between Okinawa and Japan—whether in terms of culture, ethnicity, or even nationality—and where Okinawa is positioned within a particular discourse dictates the extent to which the Okinawan people can be treated as allies or adversaries.

On February 24th, 2019, over seventy percent of Okinawan voters supported a referendum opposing the construction of new base facilities at Henoko/Oura Bay. The construction had been pushed forward despite the best efforts of two consecutive prefectural governors to stop it, and so the referendum was meant to explicitly express the will of the Okinawan people with regard to the project. In response, on February 26th, Iwaya Takeshi, Japan's Minister of Defense at the time, rejected the referendum, stating that "Okinawa has Okinawan democracy, and the nation has national democracy" ("'Okinawa niwa Okinawa no, kuni niwa kuni no minshushugi ga aru' Iwaya boeisho ga jiron ('Okinawa has Okinawa's, and the nation has the nation's democracy' - Defense Minister Iwaya's personal theory)."). The idea that Okinawan bases are for Japanese defense, but that Okinawan democracy is not Japanese democracy, is the latest in a long line of simultaneous contradictory claims on Okinawa's relationship to Japan. A summary of the history of such claims will serve to illustrate both the longevity and the futility of the question: is Okinawa Japan?

In 1609, the Shimazu clan annexed the Ryūkyū Kingdom into its domain of Satsuma in southern Kyushu. The kingdom, a state centered on the island of Okinawa that had incorporated many surrounding islands, had counted China, the Philippines, and others as regular trading partners in addition to Japan, and continued to do so even after the

Shimazu laid claim to it, most notably as a sometime vassal of China. When the Shimazu made their regular processions to Edo, they had Ryūkyūans wear foreign costumes and perform foreign dances, as this "served to bolster notions of Shimazu power and prestige as the only *daimyō* house to claim foreign kings among its vassals, and of the power and prestige of the Tokugawa regime, to whom even foreign kingdoms dispatched envoys in supposed recognition of Tokugawa strength and virtue." (Seifman 2019: 53)

The United States enters this story early on, with Commodore Matthew Perry's famous 1854 expedition having landed in the Ryūkyūs (called Lew Chew in the expedition's documents) well before they employed so-called gunboat diplomacy to treat with the leaders of Japan. Perry's journal indicates that, in response to his demand that the Ryūkyūs be opened to America as a (trading and refueling?) port, the Shogun told him that the Ryūkyū Kingdom "is a very distant country, and the opening of its harbor cannot be discussed by us" (Perry and Lilly 1856, 425), once again affirming its foreignness. However, soon after this meeting, the Tokugawa government issued guidelines for discussing its sovereignty over the Ryūkyūs as a territory subordinate to both Japan and China (Tinello 2018).

Soon after came the Meiji Restoration of 1868, and with it, the claiming of both the Ryūkyūs (now called Okinawa) and Hokkaido as integral parts of the new Japanese nation. Okinawa was made a full prefecture in 1872, but with this came a process of "cleaning up" (*shobun*) Okinawa, in which the Meiji government engaged in what they described as "civilizing" activities that purported to raise up Okinawans to the level of

other Japanese while in effect highlighting the difference between the two by suggesting Okinawans' inferiority. The treatment of Okinawans at the time is perhaps best illustrated by the 5th Annual Industrial Exhibition, held in Osaka in 1903. The exhibition featured an exhibit called the Human Pavilion that was akin to a zoo featuring a variety of indigenous peoples, including Koreans, Taiwanese, Ainu, China, India, and even an African, as well as Okinawans. The people of Okinawa took this as an affront, believing it suggested they were primitive by lumping them in with colonized peoples and races considered inferior by the European social Darwinism sweeping Japan at the time. Okinawans protested inclusion in the pavilion by asserting that they were Japanese and therefore no different from the onlookers coming to view the pavilion, and in response the Okinawans were removed from the exhibit.

However, prejudice against Okinawans by mainland Japanese persisted, leading to the decision by Japanese military leaders to sacrifice Okinawa to American assault in 1945 in order to buy time to formulate a defense for Japan proper. This led to the bloodiest battle of any theater in World War II, in which over a quarter of the population of Okinawa was killed. During the battle, which lasted eighty-two days, Japanese imperial troops pushed, goaded, or sometimes forced Okinawan locals to kill themselves and each other in order to protect sensitive information, such as troop positions, from reaching the Americans. Stories from this time talk about schoolchildren forced to hide in caves and starve, fathers being given a grenade and told to gather their family around it, crying babies being silenced with sickles, and behind all of it, two ideas: one, Japanese soldiers told Okinawans that no fate was worse than falling into the hands of the

Americans and that surrender meant subjecting yourself and your family to anything from rape to cannibalism; and two, that this was an opportunity for Okinawans to prove their commitment to the Japanese nation and show that they were, in fact, Japanese. Of course, the demand for proof is itself a marker of difference, though this almost frivolous expenditure of Okinawan lives speaks volumes more to the gulf between Japanese and Okinawans.

As the American-led allies closed in on their victory over Japan, they issued the Potsdam Declaration, detailing how the postwar occupation would be carried out and what kind of reforms Japan would be forced to undergo. In the section on stripping Japan of its colonies, the declaration stipulated that Japanese territory would "be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku, and such minor islands as we determine" (Potsdam Declaration, article 8), leaving the fate of Okinawa ambiguous. By then, American military intelligence officers had already begun formulating plans to play on Okinawan tensions with Japan and foster ideas of Okinawan cultural distinctness and American intervention as liberation from colonization in order to gain local support for an American occupation (Saeki 2012, 14). The official American position at the time was thus one of Okinawan difference, and this position carried over into the Occupation period.

Almost as soon as the U.S. military landed in Okinawa, it began appropriating land for barracks, airfields, and all manner of other military facilities. A military administrative office was set up to govern the islands, which were renamed the Ryukyus in order to highlight the break with Japan. Eventually, the military administration was replaced by a

civilian one, but at no point was the Ryukyus considered to be American territory, and with its separation from Japan, this left Okinawans as stateless persons not subject to the rights of Americans or Japanese. Massive wage differentials, limitations on freedom of speech, and more severe punishments for crimes against Americans than against Okinawans were just some of the ways that the U.S. made it clear that Okinawans were different from them, while at the same time unprecedented economic growth and the development of extremely advanced infrastructure and social security mechanisms in now-unoccupied Japan highlighted just how different it was to life in Okinawa.

In 1965, Japanese prime minister Eisaku Sato declared that "the postwar era will not end so long as Okinawa is not returned" (Okinawa Prefectural Board of Education), marking the former prefecture as the ultimate symbol of Japan's economic, political, and psychological recovery from the Asia-Pacific War and the Allied Occupation. Many Okinawans, seeing in Japan's postwar constitution's anti-war article a potential means to evict the U.S. military, began supporting a movement to return Okinawa to Japanese control. One of the initial American responses was to pour resources into promoting the distinctness of Ryukyuan culture, funding language classes, traditional dance events, and venues for practicing Ryukyuan arts and crafts in hopes of encouraging Okinawans to see themselves as other than Japanese. When reversion did finally happen in 1972 (twenty years after Japan's occupation had ended), the American and Japanese governments agreed to it on the condition that the U.S. military be allowed to stay in Okinawa and keep all of the facilities it had built and all of the land it had appropriated from the Okinawan people.

While the demilitarization that many had hoped for never materialized, there was much fanfare and ceremony about Okinawans once again becoming Japanese, including making a big production—complete with pop anthem—about changing over from driving on the right side to the left side of the road. For the Americans, this new arrangement was ideal: as Japanese citizens, Okinawans would have to take all of their complaints about the bases to the Japanese government and send them through diplomatic channels rather than expressing them directly to the base commanders themselves, not just creating opportunities to delay action in response to Okinawans' dissatisfaction, but also setting up the Japanese government as a scape goat for when those responses failed to materialize, and even shifting the cost of rent payments for appropriated land and reparations for military issues and accidents to Japanese taxpayers as well. In other words, the Americans were more than happy to accede that Okinawans were completely Japanese.

Once they were reunited with Japan, many Okinawans began to renew their own sense of difference. Most obviously, this stemmed from the massive gap in standards of living between rapid-growth Japan and camptown Okinawa, prompting calls for government aid and investment in infrastructure and social services. One of the key areas to develop out of this time was tourism, which was itself built on promoting a sense of Okinawan difference. While early tourism focused on Okinawa's unique and tragic history as Japan's only battleground, it later developed into rebranding Okinawa as a tropical paradise meant to be a domestic rival to Hawaii (Figal 2012). This meant both building on the revival of Okinawan traditions that had been spurred on by American

propagandists and embracing an exotification that included elements of the colonial undertones and reputation for being primeval or even primitive that had so troubled Okinawa in the prewar era.

As the emphasis in Okinawan tourism has shifted away from commemorating the tragedies of the Battle of Okinawa, the national government has taken steps to fold Okinawan history into a national narrative. Christopher Neslon notes that, in the 1990s, Japanese politicians and government-approved textbooks began describing the war era as a time when all Japanese suffered, diluting the real historical differences of the Okinawan experience and essentially sweeping colonization and cultural erasure, decades of prejudicial treatment, the sacrifice of the islands to buy time for the rest of the country, the forced suicides of civilian families, the twenty-seven years of American military domination, and the continued disproportionate burdening of Okinawa with the U.S.-Japan alliance all neatly under a rug of commonality and shared trauma (2008, 6-15).

Despite this push for unity and shared history, however, Okinawa continues to be treated differently. This is most visible in the continued military burden (today, seventy percent of all land used by the U.S. military in Japan is in Okinawa, a prefecture that makes up 0.1 percent of the country's landmass), but can also be seen in how the Japanese government treats opposition to that burden. The quote by Defense Minister Iwaya above is by no means unique in its maltreatment of Okinawan democracy. The Liberal Democratic Party, ruling party for the vast majority of Japan's postwar history, has been interfering in Okinawan local elections since 1997, doing everything from

assigning top political strategists to campaigns for pro-base candidates in local mayoral elections to dispatching (via the religious ties of its coalition partner, Kōmeitō) a thousand volunteers to canvas a city with a voting population of only 55,0000 (McCormack et. al., 2018). As one Okinawan anti-base activist put it, “Is Japan, which will crush our regional independence and even change our laws to maintain its dominance over Okinawa, truly our country at all?” (Ishihara 2018). This kind of national interference in local politics is unheard of elsewhere in Japan and suggests that the national government views any Okinawan politician deemed to have anti-base sentiments as an adversary.

Since working within the system by exercising their democratic rights as Japanese citizens has repeatedly proven ineffective against militarization, some Okinawans have instead chosen to deploy Okinawan distinctness as a political tool. From 2008-2014, the United Nations has declared on four different occasions that Okinawans are an indigenous people and should thus be afforded certain protections, including land rights that could help in evicting the military bases. Okinawans (and the Okinawan diaspora) have been actively involved in achieving these declarations, in using them to apply pressure to the Japanese government, and in building ties with global indigenous rights movements (Dietz 2010, Ueunten 2015, Yokota 2015). However, feelings about indigeneity in Okinawa are complex, as some still fear its associations with backwardness, a label that Okinawans have historically worked to discard. In 2016, Gibo Yasutaka, a city council member from Tomigusuku in southern Okinawa, went to the United Nations himself to petition that the declarations of Okinawan indigeneity be

rescinded, citing the fact that most Okinawans today do not self-identify as indigenous, instead considering themselves ethnically Japanese.

In sum, there is not one, but three queer and/or relationships between Okinawa and Japan, each one defined by which corner of the Okinawa-Japan-U.S. triangle is constructing it. For Japan, where the Ryukyu Kingdom was a foreign vassal until it could be a bargaining chip with encroaching Americans, and where the prefecture was disposable in war and yet indispensable as a symbol of postwar recovery, Okinawans should shoulder the burdens of defending Okinawa and Japan, but democratic processes distinguish between whether voters are Okinawans or Japanese. For the U.S. military, which promoted Ryūkyūan distinctness when it sought to keep Okinawa as a permanent military position but happily agreed it was part of Japan when that meant that it would no longer be directly accountable to the Okinawan people, Okinawans and Japanese are unified when telling troops stationed in Okinawa that they are welcome and that the protestors represent neither group, but Okinawans are also adversaries whose greed and naivety highlight the friendliness and loyalty of mainland Japanese. These contradictory yet coexisting depictions are not lost on Okinawan politicians, as they have identified with Japanese when demanding equal treatment and petitioning the national government to recognize their rights, but have also differentiated themselves when looking internationally for support. In this sense, Okinawa is a prefecture and/or colony, under the imperial and/or democratic rule of Japan and/or the United States. In both constituting and being constituted by modes of resistance

and/or acquiescence to militarization, these relationships form the foundation for Okinawa's queer status as America's friend and/or adversary.

Putting the Bases to Work: Okinawan Agency in Queer Base Politics

The complexities of Okinawans' and/or relationships with the bases were apparent in the conflicted or ambivalent feelings about the bases that I encountered throughout my interviews and interactions with Okinawan interlocutors, and my initial tendency to categorize the Okinawans I met in terms of resistance and collaboration was challenged as I came to see them as living with and adapting to the bases without necessarily embracing them. Inoue has suggested that the oppressive shadow of the U.S.-Japan alliance can be viewed as productive in Okinawa, but he indicates that this is only in the sense of it generating "critical social consciousness" (Inoue 2017, 30), i.e., anti-base resistance. In contrast, I have found that life around the bases has empowered some Okinawans to repurpose the military in ways that drive their personal success without necessarily benefiting the military in return. Below are three case studies on Okinawans who live with the military in ways beyond simply supporting or opposing American militarism, having managed to leverage the bases in ways advantageous to their own professional lives. While they have varying personal opinions toward the base issue, all three cases demonstrate how the presence of the U.S. military in Okinawa can be repurposed—perhaps even exploited—as a source of social capital and profit. For these individuals, the U.S. bases have provided a source of free labor and a pathway to local

and national renown, granted cultural cache through politicized fashion, and created opportunities for leadership in the business community, respectively.

Doctor Ginoza Tamotsu and Mrs. Ginoza Ayako

In July 2000, then U.S. president Bill Clinton, addressing the U.S. marines of Camp Foster during his visit to Okinawa for the 26th G8 summit, celebrated the efforts of American marines to do gardening, cleanup, and visits at a nursing home in northern Okinawa. Specifically, he used them as examples of what it means for U.S. troops to be what he called "good neighbors" in Okinawa. He was referring to Hikarigaoka Nursing Home, which had been receiving help from marines at Camp Hansen since 1994, making it—then and now—the longest continuous volunteering relationship between the U.S. military and a local community in Okinawa. Once a month in winter and twice a month in summer, a vanload of marines arrives at Hikarigaoka to mow the lawns, trim the trees, and do any other gardening that needs to be done, and at Christmas and sometimes other holidays, marines come to visit with and entertain the residents. All of the lawnmowers and other equipment the marines use were donated by previous marines, so as of 2019, the home had not needed to hire gardeners or even purchase gardening supplies in over two decades.

The care center is owned by Ginoza Tamotsu, a wealthy Okinawan who has, in the twenty-two years since Clinton's mention of his facility, successfully laid claim to some of the "sweat equity" described by the chaplain at the beginning

of this chapter—and the attention paid to that equity by the former president—translating it into both money (saved maintenance costs) and status (access to/affiliation with other elites). He and his wife, Ayako, have achieved this by publicly promoting and celebrating the ways in which the marines have improved the quality of care at his nursing home, which has in turn established their nursing home as the go-to example for American military commanders and local politicians across Okinawa to point to when hoping to highlight that American troops can be good neighbors. Dr. Ginoza has consequently become a prominent figure in the community, resulting in his election to local public office several times and even earning him a meeting with former prime minister Shinzo Abe, among other national elites. He and his wife are now regularly invited to all important ceremonies on Camp Hansen, including when command of the base is transferred from one commander to another. Mrs. Ginoza[56] also told me that she and her husband invite the leaders of Camp Hansen to their year-end parties every year as a means of introducing them to Okinawan culture. She showed me several photos of herself and her husband with different American commanders and their families and spoke proudly of retired U.S. officers who had come to visit them while vacationing in Okinawa.

Mrs. Ginoza, a Catholic who self-identifies as conservative, was very adamant that the anti-war stance of the local media had pushed Okinawans into a biased

[56]Though I requested several times to interview Ginoza Tamotsu, my go-between (who worked on Camp Hansen) insisted that I speak with Mrs. Ginoza, as they felt she would better represent the relationship between the nursing home and the base.

> view against the American bases, that protestors are often paid rabble-rousers from mainland Japan, and that the elderly residents of Hikarigaoka, many of whom had worked on American bases at some point in their life, were filled with gratitude and nostalgia for the American military in Okinawa. She spoke at length in praise of a spirit of volunteerism that she saw as quintessentially American and lacking among Japanese. She also credited the influence of the officers of Camp Hansen and their wives[57] with improving her marriage. She said that Japanese marriages follow an outdated style in which over time the husband becomes something of a tyrant and the wife is expected to obey his every whim, but that the example of American military couples had led her and her husband to modernize their relationship and begin treating each other as equal partners. In this way, she casts herself and her husband as more modern and cosmopolitan than women of her generation without military connections.

The Ginozas' example complicates notions of Okinawans as dependent on the U.S. bases, as though they have come to rely on base labor and supplies to keep their business going, by accepting the labor and supplies, they grant the bases in Okinawa the ability to maintain their strongest symbol of "good neighbor" status. In this way, it is not the Ginozas who are defined by their feelings toward the bases, but the bases who are reliant upon them for their own positive self-definition. As the next example illustrates, it is also possible for Okinawans to extract value from the U.S. military in ways that the bases do not benefit from and may not even be aware of.

[57]As was common among all of my interlocutors, she defaulted to characterizing all military personnel as heterosexual and male.

Kakazu Yoshinari

Kakazu Yoshinari is the creator and lead designer of Lequio, an Okinawa-based high fashion brand inspired by the Ryūkyū kingdom's history of adopting material cultures from the surrounding cultures and, more recently, the U.S. occupation. One of the brand's main fashion lines is "Made in Occupied Japan," clothes and bags made from caches of U.S. military surplus material such as tents and nurse uniforms left over from the Occupation period (1945-1972). While Lequio sells the line at stores throughout Japan, Kakazu told me that it is most popular in foreign countries like the U.K. and Taiwan. Kakazu relies mainly on unused U.S. Army tents made between the 1960s and the 1990s to make the bags that constitute the majority of the line, and naturally this is not only a finite resource but a resource with unpredictable availability, as he is dependent on pallets of old surplus being discovered in the back corners of warehouses or in the inventory of now-defunct stores. Interestingly, enough such places exist to have kept the line going since Lequio's founding in 2009.

Kakazu says that he chose the name "Made in Occupied Japan" largely because he found it amusing, but also because he hopes it will make people think. For him, it does not suggest that America is currently engaged in a neocolonial occupation of Japan, although he recognizes that some people may read it that way. He told me that, as an Okinawan making the line in Okinawa, he sees the name and the use of American military materials as together making an ironic jab at the Japanese national government, viewing them as the present-day

occupiers of Okinawa and comparing them to American military rule. He believes that this inherent political messaging and sense of resistance gives the line more depth or uniqueness. However, he denies having any kind of specific political agenda, and the line's website states that the only intentional message is a generic statement against war:

> If you consider the original intentions and uses for the American military surplus materials that we use, you could call them a negative legacy. However, by intentionally giving these materials designs and functions that fit in our daily lives, then like [the Okinawans of the Occupation era], by making them into items for daily use that differ from their original purposes, we can change the words "Made in Occupied Japan" into a message of peace.

As suggested in the above quote, the brand draws upon the material history of Okinawa under American administrative rule by evoking the image of Okinawans fashioning useful items out of leftovers and refuse from the American troops. Lequio also specializes in items died with Ryukyu indigo produced using traditional means—Kakazu's hands were stained a deep blue when we spoke. The overall mission of the brand is "fabrication passed down from generation to generation" (https://www.lequio-r.com/about/), equating both indigo-making and repurposing military surplus with Okinawan tradition.

Kakazu, a native of Okinawa, grew up viewing American bases as sites of fun festivals and sources of exotic goods. He does not identify as being anti-base, though he respects the position of those who do. He also distances himself from right-wingers and nationalists and situates himself as Okinawan first, Japanese second. Kakazu sees Okinawa as set apart from Japan, first by prejudice from the mainland and now by Okinawans who wish to turn Okinawa into a distinct and exotic brand in order to attract tourists. Of course, in using "Occupied Japan" to sell present-day Okinawa, he is taking part in this process of differentiation-as-branding himself.

Kakazu's example shows that it is not only possible but even profitable for some Okinawans to extract value from the bases without offering them any benefit in return. In fact, Kakazu profits not only from the material presence and longevity of the bases, but also from drawing attention to the controversy surrounding the bases, as his brand gains its unique flavor from the politicizing language it uses to characterize Okinawan-U.S. and Okinawan-Japanese relations. Rather than letting the base debate define his identity, Kakazu seeks to define the debate, making it into a fashion statement. The final example is a businessman who has built his business largely on serving the military, but in doing so has established himself in the top tier of the community of entrepreneurs whose businesses work for the bases.

Tony Sakuda

The American Chamber of Commerce in Okinawa (ACCO) is a professional organization consisting mainly of American-owned businesses and businesses working with Americans that was founded in 1953 as the American Businessmen in Okinawa (ABO). By the time of Okinawa's reversion to Japan in 1972, the organization had evolved independently of its mainland counterpart, the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan, and so the decision was made to keep the ACCO as a separate entity. Over 50% of the membership of the ACCO is Okinawan, though Okinawan business owners do not have voting rights in the organization unless they had joined as members of the ABO. Most businesses in the ACCO deal primarily or exclusively with the U.S. bases and/or American military personnel, with the ACCO offering support services both for Americans wishing to establish new businesses and Okinawans hoping to work with the U.S. bases.

Tony Sakuda has served as president of the ACCO five different times and has been a member of its Board of Governors since 2011. He is to date the only president who was not an American citizen. Sakuda runs a tourism company that was grandfathered into the ACCO with voting rights after having been part of the original ABO. The company leads tours and finds flights for Americans from the bases as well as local Okinawans and visitors from mainland Japan or other parts of Asia. Sakuda's father was a Filipino who moved to Okinawa in the immediate postwar to work for the U.S. occupation, and his mother is an Okinawan local. He grew up in a home just outside of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma and

remembers the windows rattling and the television losing reception constantly as military aircraft flew over the house. His experience as a university student in Hawaii led him to recognize the abnormality of the U.S. military presence in his neighborhood and also inspired him to take pride in his Okinawan heritage and work toward educating others to understand and appreciate it.

Sakuda has a positive image of U.S. military personnel, but he believes they are an untapped resource for improving tourism and the service industry on the island. This is partly because there are so many native English speakers who could help Okinawans to improve their language and communication skills, but also because the constant rotation of thousands of Americans through Okinawa can be seen as a test market for the tourism industry, offering businesses insight into what foreign visitors enjoy and how to attract them. He sees a lot of Americans wanting to settle in Okinawa after they leave the military because he believes they view it as a safe place to raise their children. He is also optimistic about the prospect of U.S. military personnel assimilating into Okinawan society, saying "It's not by blood that you're Okinawan; you can be Okinawan at heart."

Sakuda views travel and tourism as means for promoting peace, and he sees Okinawa as an ideal place to build cultural bridges between the U.S. and Japan. He points to Okinawa's history as a trading port with various surrounding kingdoms and says that Okinawans are used to seeing beyond ethnic and cultural differences, and that they have a natural inclination towards empathy and diplomacy over violence. He respects all of the volunteer work that the U.S.

> military personnel do, but he feels that for them to be true ambassadors, they need to be committed to learning from Okinawan culture . He did not indicate whether that would mean learning empathy and diplomacy, but he did give the overall impression that he is against militarism generally. He also disclosed that he does not support the new U.S. base construction in Henoko, saying "If I don't want it in my yard, then I don't want it in someone else's." He wants the facility to be moved to a place where the locals feel it is as beneficial to them as it is to the U.S. military, and he feels that the Henoko location does not offer enough benefits to Okinawans. However, he acknowledged his need to be sensitive about this issue given the number of ACCO member businesses that work directly with the U.S. bases.

In Sakuda's example, we can see a social structure with economic and political ramifications that has arisen directly from the bases, but that is made up of, by, and for, Okinawans. Thus, the seeming centrality of the U.S. military to Sakuda's business in fact provides only the backdrop to his identity and social status. Furthermore, he maintains his own complex opinion on the bases despite both his business and the ACCO being closely connected to them, showing that one can maintain such connections without them determining one's political position.

The above individuals occupy positions of social status that are dependent on the existence of U.S. bases in Okinawa, and yet none of them are at the mercy of the bases. Their ability to extract social capital from the bases demonstrates ways of existing outside the confines of a pro-base/anti-base dichotomy in which one must either be

working for the Americans or against them. For the Ginozas, the Americans are quite literally working for them, and in continuing to reap those benefits, they gain local status and national acknowledgment. Kakazu uses the bases to shine a light on Okinawan identity, both as a fashionable commodity and as a critique of Japanese national politics. Sakuda works to assist Okinawan companies that build and maintain them not because he supports their mission or finds their presence unproblematic, but because he wants them to be sites of cultural exchange and resources for developing the local tourist industry. These Okinawans are neither interested in acting in the U.S. military's best interests nor committed to opposing those interests—a position shared by most Okinawans with whom I spoke—rather, they have gotten the U.S. military, whether actively or passively, to support their interests instead.

Conclusion: Queering Okinawan Binaries

In Okinawa, a kingdom originally colonized by Japan, administered by the United States military, and then "returned" to Japan without any decrease in U.S. military presence, the complexities and ambiguities of the base problem are hypervisible. Okinawa is Japan's smallest prefecture and has lost 8.2% of its landmass to U.S. military facilities (Okinawa Prefectural Government Washington D.C. Office - Official Site, "Base-related Data"), constituting over 70% of the total Japanese land occupied by the United States Forces Japan. The bases are also heavily linked to the economy, both as employers for thousands of Okinawans, consumers of food, alcohol, cars, and souvenirs, and clients

supplying a constant stream of construction contracts to local firms. On the other hand, that economy also depends on tourists from mainland Japan, and many of the hotels and other tourist facilities there are owned by mainland Japanese companies. The ubiquity of American A&W fast food restaurants, the space given over to American canned meats on Okinawan supermarket shelves, and the fact that the military's American Forces Network is the only radio station in the prefecture with a signal strong enough to reach every corner of the main island (Troy Ruby, station manager at American Forces Network Okinawa, interviewed by the author, 2019) all hint at the cultural impacts of Okinawa's entanglement with the United States, but language education, national holidays, and sakura-themed Starbucks drinks all encourage Okinawans to see themselves as culturally Japanese. Meanwhile, bases and their American personnel are alternately under Japanese or American legal jurisdiction (depending on the severity and visibility of the crime), while Okinawan and mainland Japanese personnel on the bases are subject to Japanese labor laws as carried out by American supervisors. In fact, they can even be subject to U.S. military policies that affect their private lives, such as a 2020 directive from Kadena Air Base in Okinawa that ordered all "Local National" (i.e. Japanese/Okinawan) personnel to follow the same restrictions on movement and activities imposed on troops and their families in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Vowell 2022).

These layers of influence and expectation make Okinawa a very difficult place to categorize. For many anti-base activists and scholars of Okinawan Studies, Okinawa is a "dual colony" (Akibayashi and Takazato 2009), subjected both to second-class status

within Japan and the whims of America's global military empire. For American military leaders and political analysts, it is the "keystone of the Pacific," an integral staging ground for American campaigns to protect democracy and free trade (e.g., Marines.mil, "About Okinawa"). For the majority of the Okinawans with whom I spoke, it was neither a colony nor a carrier, though it still had crucial cultural, historical, and political differences that set it apart from what they saw as Japan. This status of distinctness, though itself emergent from the multivalent realities of Okinawan life, provides the impetus for the U.S. military and the Japanese government to question whether Okinawans are "with" or "against" them—a question that, in its oversimplification, reduces outsider narratives of the prefecture and its people to only those two extremes. Historically, this has allowed the Americans and the Japanese (and, in cases like promoting tourism or claiming indigenous rights, even the Okinawans themselves) to imagine and label a unified Okinawan position as either "with" or "against" the bases depending on which best served any given agenda. Okinawans are adversaries to the U.S. military when protesting, but happy hosts and eager recipients of American culture when troops need to be reassured that they will not be greeted with hatred outside the base gates. Okinawans are citizens of Japan with responsibilities to national defense, but their votes and voices are not allowed to affect national policy. Thus, to the U.S. and Japan, Okinawans can be "with" and "against" the bases at the same time, while for Okinawans like the Ginozas, Kakazu, or Sakuda, the idea that they must be either "with" or against" the bases imposes an irrelevant binary that oversimplifies their actual positions.

In this chapter, I have utilized the queer logic of and/or to reveal the complexities of these relationships. The value of the queer and/or is in its ability to encompass inclusive (the unifying "and") and divisive (the adversarial "or") positions that exist as simultaneous—even entwined—realities. American narratives of Okinawa, for example, can be framed as "Okinawa *and* Japan" when discussing the importance of the new base construction at Henoko to the U.S.-Japan alliance and regional security and still be framed as "Okinawa *or* Japan" when casting the prefecture as a problematic outlier for resisting that same construction. On a larger scale, the overlapping friendship and power differential of the U.S.-Japan relationship illustrate that it is both alliance *and* empire, while the division between the official positions of the two governments and the expressed identities and experiences of most Japanese and Okinawan people on the one hand, and activists and social scientists demanding justice and resisting militarism on the other, shows that those groups define the relationship as either empire *or* alliance.

It is therefore not just the subject, but the sovereignty itself can be and/or, and the position of Okinawa in the U.S.-Japan relationship—and its reflections in how bases and Okinawan communities depict their relationships with each other—exposes that relationship's status as one of alliance and/or imperialism, bound to both the 'or' logic of alliance *or* empire and the 'and' logic of alliance *and* empire. Situating militarization within a context of 'empire,' of 'alliance,' or even of (just) 'empire and alliance,' fails to allow for the complexity and ambiguity of everyday life around the permanent, contested, dangerous, defensive, friendly, armed, (almost) architecturally-American

(Gillem 2007), (technically) territorially-Japanese bases of the USFJ generally, and the more imposing bases in Okinawa in particular.

Just as they can be Okinawan and/or Japanese and citizens and/or colonial subjects of the alliance and/or empire, Okinawans are pro- and/or anti-base. Most have voted no to the construction of a new base, a clear selection of one side over the other that places them in an adversarial position vis-à-vis both the Japanese government and the U.S. military. Most of my informants have indicated that they like having the American troops around—they bring in money, culture, and new ideas—and they hate having the noisy, dangerous American aircraft overhead. Any attempt to lump them all into one category or another—or even to label them as both, constitutes an erasure and often says more about the political agenda of the observer than the actual perspectives of Okinawans themselves.

In destabilizing binary distinctions and shining a light on how they are employed, I have also argued that the pro-base/anti-base hierarchy should not be portrayed as central to Okinawans' identities, as it is very possible for Okinawans to make the bases and the base issue peripheral to themselves, rather than the other way around. There is no doubt that the overall impact of the U.S. bases on everyday life is felt more strongly around the bases in Okinawan than at those in mainland Japan, but this level of impact can be constructive and/or harmful: though there is no denying the nose, crime, pollution, and other potential hazards that come with living near a base, the more pronounced entanglements that proximity fosters between local communities and

people on one hand, and bases and their personnel on the other, can also create opportunities for Okinawans to establish, elevate, and enrich themselves.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

In December 2022, Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumiō announced a plan to double Japan's defense spending by 2027, setting aside the unofficial policy of capping defense spending at 1% of the GDP that Japan has followed since the end of the Occupation. As part of this military expansion, Japan has purchased 400 long-range cruise missiles from the U.S., another break from tradition as long-range weaponry was long considered to violate the "defense only" posture of the JSDF—even in this case, the missiles are meant to provide "counterstrike capability" (Nemoto 2023). These changes come in response to what Japan sees as an escalation of regional threats to their security: Russia's invasion of Ukraine suggests more potential for aggression, North Korea continues to periodically test ballistic missiles by launching them into Japanese airspace, and relations with China are always on the verge of turning hostile due to the lack of resolution of issues stemming from the Asia-Pacific War.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Department of Defense, itself concerned about the unpredictability of Russia and escalating tensions with China, is preparing to move command of the USFJ from Hawaii's Indo-Pacific Command to a location within Japan (Akiyama 2023). This move is meant to improve response time to threats in the Asia-Pacific, but also works toward the current goals of both governments of "bolstering deterrence in an integrated manner" and "enhancing interoperable capabilities," as stated by representatives of the two governments in January 2023 ("Joint Statement of the 2023 U.S.–Japan Security Consultative Committee ('2+2')"). In sum, Japan is planning on greatly expanding its investment in the JSDF, and America is relocating control of the

USFJ in Japan so that the two forces can work together to protect their interests in the region.

Increasing cooperation between the Japanese and American militaries obviously necessitates increased person-to-person contact at levels ranging from strategists and commanders, to logistics specialists, down to combat troops themselves. Undergirding all of this contact will be the stories that the U.S. military has told itself about the Alliance and the USFJ's role in it. American troops and leaders in Japan will have prepared for this increased cooperation through cultural training that has purportedly prepared them to be ambassadors. As it stands today, that training reinforces American stereotypes about Japan, most notably the Orientalist trope of Western entitlement and Eastern submissiveness. Cultural orientations are built on the assumption that Japanese people, businesses, and communities are willing and equipped to handle all of the mental health and morale issues faced by base personnel and that troops venturing off-base can expect local people to go out of their way to help them and make them comfortable, up to and including by readily communicating with them in English. The courses emphasize that, for Americans, it is both unnecessary and exceedingly difficult to do the actual work of understanding Japanese language and culture, not only furthering feelings of entitlement, but also making all things Japanese unimportant beyond their value as objects of comfort and fun. With images such as these serving as the basis for American-Japanese working relationships, it is easy to imagine USFJ personnel expecting—perhaps even subconsciously—that their Japanese counterparts

will conform to their working culture, communicate in their language, and take on the most difficult or uncomfortable aspects of tasks themselves.

At the same time, Americans are steeped in the narrative of the "good neighbor," which tells them that whatever effort they put into supporting or cooperating with Japanese people is always already worthy of praise. Thus, not only are USFJ personnel entitled to comfort in their "enhanced integration" with Japanese forces, but they are also shielded from accountability. As I have shown, under the current model governing servicemembers' contact and entanglements with Japanese people, positive intentions and efforts are applied institutionally and celebrated regardless of outcome, while failings and faux pas are always the fault of a problematic individual and must not be taken to reflect on the wider organization. In an environment of collaborative defense, this suggests that any partner to America is thus at best going to be severely hampered in its ability to critique U.S. military strategies and ideas, and at worst being set up as a potential future scapegoat for American mistakes.

Furthermore, the Orientalist tropes of passivity and submissiveness art part and parcel to the Orientalist gendering of the Orient as feminine (and the Occident, therefore, as masculine). Seeing Japanese collaborators in such a light reinforces American claims to the title of samurai and its accompanying (American) associations with being the supreme expression of Japanese masculinity and the true warriors of Japan, but then what does that say about a military partnership? A fundamental contradiction emerges in the question of how the JSDF can be trusted to carry out any defense-related tasks (let alone the most uncomfortable or difficult ones) when they cannot be considered

true warriors or even true men. “Rogers” (base commander, interviewed by the author, 2017), my top-ranking interlocutor, saw the JSDF as “neutered” and unable to function under adverse conditions. American military narratives of Japan thus suggest that increased interoperability means working with partners who can be expected to adapt to U.S. standards and practices and do all of the hard work, but who at the same time cannot be trusted with that work, as they are categorically incapable of matching those standards and unable to competently execute military tasks. This suggests that U.S. military-produced cultural knowledge about Japan and dismissal of Japanese masculinity have set the stage for Belkin’s (2012) model of contradiction as a method of military control to be applied to inter-military cooperation as well, since it measures the JSDF against an impossible standard in which competence contradicts American masculine superiority and incompetence contradicts American entitlement and comfort.

Nowhere is this application of contradiction more visible than Okinawa, where the locals are treated as supporters and/or adversaries who are Okinawan and/or Japanese, tied to false binaries to more flexibly serve the militarist needs of both Washington and Tokyo. Given the strategic value that the former places on Okinawa and its convenience to the latter as a means of distancing military impacts from mainland Japan, it would be next to impossible for any increase in military cooperation between the two to not involve the communities and bases of Okinawa. This will place even more pressure on the already tenuous situation, as it will strain the believability of the American narratives on Okinawa. After all, no amount of accusing activists of being Chinese-funded agitators and ignorant yokels or celebrating the attendance at base festivals can

hide the fact that the majority of Okinawans continue to vote against base construction and military expansion, as evinced by the September 2022 re-election of governor Denny Tamaki.

Increasing the amount of contact and collaboration between the American and Japanese militaries while the U.S. military continues to operate under the influence of the narratives that I have articulated here means exacerbating the problems that those narratives are already generating. In terms of the personal and political aspects of the U.S.-Japan Alliance, the potential negative outcomes are threefold: first, the Alliance is hamstrung. As I have shown, American attitudes are already fostering contradictory expectations for the JSDF, a lack of trust in their defense capabilities, and the burdening of the Japanese with the full responsibility of bridging the linguistic and cultural gaps between the two sides. Any one of these on its own could be a formidable obstacle to joint operations, and taken together, they suggest that Japanese collaborators could find themselves caught up in a vicious cycle, as failure to live up to impossible expectations feeds the lack of trust, and any attempt at communicating about the impossibility of the expectations requires that the Japanese make themselves understood on American terms to Americans that are likely questioning their ability to communicate based on their failure to meet expectations.

Second, Japanese goodwill for the U.S. declines. A 2022 poll by the Yomiuri Shimbun found that 58% of respondents had a favorable image of U.S.-Japan relations, the highest it had been since before the Trump administration (The Yomiuri Shimbun 2022). However, this does not necessarily indicate that the Alliance is on stable ground, as data

from the Pew Research Center's Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey shows a longstanding trend of Japanese people not trusting the U.S. to consider their interests—aside from a brief moment of approval in the aftermath of the 2011 Fukushima Triple Disaster (Pew Research Center 2018). The USFJ's practice of inadequately training personnel in language and customs before all-but forcing them to seek pleasure and fulfillment from Japanese people and culture, its refusal to acknowledge the systemic issues and historical patterns behind "bad apples," its dismissal of Japanese masculinities, and its contradictory and adversarial treatment of Okinawans are today principally discussed in pacifist and anti-base circles, but as the 1995 case of the troops who sexually assaulted a teenage girl in Okinawa illustrates, the criminal mistreatment of just one Japanese individual by the U.S. military has the potential to galvanize national disproval from a population already suspicious of their motives.

Third, troops bring their problematic views back to the U.S. In fact, feminist scholars have been warning about this since the Vietnam era: Yoshimura (1974) was one of the first to point out that the military's tacit encouragement of the hyper-sexualization (often including sexual assault and exploitation) of women in Asia had come home with the G.I.s in the forms of racialized objectification and mistreatment of Asian-American women. As I have shown, much of the contemporary problems inherent to the military's treatment of its members vis-à-vis the Japanese are rooted directly in Orientalism, from exaggerated senses of American entitlement to Japanese attention and care to the feminization and dismissal of Japanese men. Orientalism is a racial and civilizational way of thinking that does not make exceptions for Asian-Americans in its blanket

assumptions about the inferiority of Asian peoples (Cho 2022). If the U.S. Department of Defense truly wishes to pursue its stated vision of becoming "a model employer and community partner by advancing and embedding diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility principles" (Department of Defense 2022, 5), it will need to address the military's continued role in the promotion and propagation of racist ideologies.

It was fear of the potential repercussions in America of tens of thousands of military personnel undergoing Orientalist training in Japan that first spurred me to begin this project, alongside hope that, in drawing attention to it, I might contribute in some small way to lessening the negative impacts of American militarism on the peoples of both countries. It is my belief that direct, meaningful contact between Americans and Japanese has the potential to humanize both sides to the other, allowing them to demonstrate both their individual complexities and their shared experiences. In this way, cross-cultural communication could become a viable means of combating Orientalist tendencies. However, when the organization responsible for bringing those people together is actively working to impose an Orientalist frame on the encounter, a positive outcome becomes all the more difficult to reach.

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