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ARTICLES

Rape Regiment: Sexual Violence against Women during War

BY ANDREA ROSKAM

Abstract: Despite the extensive research on World War II, little is known about a system created by the Japanese government in which women were forced into sexual slavery. This system, known as the Comfort Woman System, enabled soldiers to systematically and heinously rape young women for the sole purpose of self-satisfaction and as a reward for their military efforts as a man in combat. This study uncovers some of the brutality for a mature audience through an analysis of credible data, photographic evidence and an extensive look into the oral histories of former Comfort Women. These firsthand accounts give the women's own personal reflections on their past and provide a horrific truth to the objection, that this system never existed. This objection is a view that the Japanese government is ardent to stand behind. The stories and pictures add awareness to our understanding of who these women were and what their role was during World War II. This study is part of a growing body of research on violence against women during times of war. In using oral histories with former sexual slaves; this project will add to future research on similar topics.

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Rape is not just a by-product of war. Rape is a sickening occurrence that spreads almost naturally through the tides of conflict. Rape is used as rewards for victors. It is rampant due to a lack of military discipline. Systematic rape has even been used as a tactic of war. This paper examines the forced sexual abuse of women in wartime, particularly the sex slaves of the Japanese military during World War II (WWII) known as comfort women. The focus of this paper is to unlock the horrific past of the “comfort women” and educate the reader on the deceptive practices used on women for the sole purpose of military gain.

This essay will use several aspects of research. First, it will examine the personal testimonies of several former Comfort Women. These vivid interviews will give credibility to the brutal existence that was forced upon them. The evidence will also help analyze the idea of sexual violence during wartime by giving personal experience to the malice imposed by the Japanese government. Second, this essay will delve into documentary materials written by experts in Japanese history, society and culture and include reference materials. Secondary sources will provide an expansive historical background and overview of comfort women during WWII as well as help analyze the assertion of sexual violence against women during wartime.

The sexual violence against women is a silent issue during wartime. During World War II the media focused on combat warfare while the predation of young Asian women was rampant at the hands of the Japanese government. The purpose of this study is to analyze the sexual aggression towards women during times of Japanese occupation in Asian countries, especially forced rape by military servicemen. It is important that societies have a no tolerance policy for rape during wartime. The main issues to be addressed by this research will be to explain the intent of the Japanese military in the creation of the comfort station system, to tell how young women were forced into sexual slavery, to describe the horrendous life a comfort woman was forced to lead, and to compare the violations of women in other military conflicts.

The practice of soldiers raping the enemy’s women during war is seen throughout history. The *Encyclopedia of*

Rape states that “In fifteenth-century England, soldiers often gained control of a woman’s property through sexual seizure. During the American Revolution, British soldiers abducted women and carried out rapes in war encampments.”¹ What has changed is the role of media and how historians have documented the impact of this subject. Claims about soldiers raping during war is not the same as officially documenting the extent to which these heinous crimes have occurred. Knowledge about the number of wartime rapes depends largely on the willingness of the victims to speak out against their assailants and the availability of agencies willing to record and investigate these crimes. For different reasons, whether they are personal or organizational, most victims and military forces decide that remaining silent is the best course of action. Only in recent years, for instance, has the world learned that between 1930 and 1945 the Japanese government forced many women by manipulation and coercion to become involuntary prostitutes for their soldiers.

The idea of using women for pleasure and as a military necessity was nothing new. Before World War II, in Japan for example, prostitution was a state organized program.² Women were licensed and subjected to medical examinations. Prostitutes could be found in many parts of Asia, including areas that became Japanese-occupied territories.³ Given the open nature and well organized system of prostitution in Japan, it was the logical next step for Japanese Armed Forces to implement the same types of institutions through- out the zones conquered and controlled during WWII.

The term ‘comfort woman’ is a euphemism that was derived from the Korean word *wianbu* and the Japanese word *ianfu*, both translating into comfort woman. These were women from different parts of Asia, particularly Korea, China, and Japan, who were forced into sexual slavery. A small minority of women already prostitutes, or “camp followers” as they were

¹ Merrill D. Smith, ed., *Encyclopedia of Rape* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), 1.

² George Hicks, *The Comfort Women* (New York: Norton, 1994), 27.

³ *Ibid.*, 28.

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called, volunteered to be comfort women for the Japanese government. The majority, however, were pushed into such a wretched life.

How did these women become sexual slaves for military personnel? There were two common methods of gathering, or “rounding up”, comfort women.⁴ The first entailed the expeditionary forces gathering women in occupied territories. The other method entailed rounding up women in Korea, Japan, and Taiwan. The accosted women were raped and taken prisoner from their villages by invading military soldiers. Women were purchased through armies who had taken them as prisoners of war and the majority of women were deceived into forced sexual service. Yoshimi Yoshiaki, author of *Comfort Women*, describes an instance where a husband and wife team of comfort station operators, named Mr. and Mrs. Kitamuras, “bought twenty-two unmarried Korean women in 1942. They paid the girls’ parents between 300-1,000 yen (the equivalent of \$3 to \$12 U.S Dollars), depending on the girl’s character, appearance, and age.”⁵

Deception became a common practice, especially among those rounded up in Korea. Young females were coerced into thinking that they were being a patriot to their country and that they would be working in factories making goods and supplies for the troops. Because the Japanese government frequently used procurers, people who sought out and provided prostitutes, women faced betrayal by their own communities.

Based on my research, throughout military history, fighting men and sexual need has gone hand in hand. Although it seems to be debatable, the rise for comfort systems stem from different areas within war. In Roman society, which was founded on a system of slavery, life was made comfortable and pleasurable for the elite. These leaders of society were traditionally men in Roman armies. Slavery provided a regular supply of captive females whose primary task was to provide

⁴ Yoshimi Yoshiaki, *Comfort Women* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 64.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 105.

sexual services at all hours of the day and night. Other chores may have included cooking, cleaning, and nursing the wounded.

In George Hick's book *The Comfort Women* he writes that "during the sixteenth century, the Spanish Duke of Alba's army, when invading the Netherlands with the Armada," had over 1200 women who were systematically raped and used for sex.⁶ The main objective in having these women available at all times was to keep the troops in order and to establish peace within the ranks.

With the change to armies of mass enlistment, the nineteenth century gave way to greater problems in maintaining order, controlling venereal disease, and preventing desertion. It is my opinion that the level of military prostitution was beginning to transform. Military authorities began to recognize that women being used for sexual service was relevant and a necessity. It kept troops content and obedient, reducing the danger of rape among civilians and disease could be controlled.

War began to provide various arrangements for prostitution. Military brothels were established in key zones of occupied areas as auxiliary installations. These were under the control of central command. Local commanding officers, however, were made responsible for equipment, supply, and supervision. In light of the German experience in World War I, when there had been two million cases of venereal disease in the German Army alone, the main focus was on hygiene control.⁷

With these systems being developed and put into practice all through history, the organization found in the Japanese Armed Forces was anticipated. The deterioration of entire battalions by venereal disease was a threat the Japanese took seriously. They used this danger as justification for establishing military-controlled comfort stations. The Japanese also had several superstitions that were linked to sex. It was believed by officers and soldiers alike, that sex before a battle could prevent injury. Sexual deprivation was thought to make one accident-prone, so visiting comfort women was a source of

⁶ Hicks, 30.

⁷ Hicks, 32.

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good luck and was necessary in effective decision making during battle. Sex also acted as a way for the Japanese soldiers to combat stress and alleviate the savage discipline they endured.

The health of the soldiers was a matter of special concern, but another aspect in the Japanese rationale for creating comfort stations was to decrease the random cases of rape that were occurring among civilian populations at the hands of the Japanese military. Like all war crimes, rape is a hideous act. But these acts were a particular problem for the leaders of the Japanese army. Not only did Japanese military leaders know that reports of mass rape leaked out to the international community, thus bringing unwanted attention and outrage, they realized this would especially not sit well with the Chinese.⁸ Because of this, the mass rapes being committed by Japanese troops were considered a definite problem in maintaining order in occupied China. It was agreed that the establishment of comfort stations was an essential part of wartime tactics. Comfort women were a necessity for the major purpose of preventing uncontrolled rape in occupied territories and minimizing the risk of soldiers contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

The next portion of this study is mainly comprised of oral histories of former comfort women. These statements are products of interviews conducted in order to gain knowledge about these victims and their experiences as sex slaves to the Japanese government. The analysis of these oral histories, compared with secondary resources, provides reliable insight into the validity of the war crime allegations against the Japanese military.

⁸ Yoshiaki, 49.



Figure 1: 1938 view of the first Army-run comfort station in Shanghai. (Dong-A Daily). George Hicks, *The Comfort Women* (New York: Norton, 1994), 98.

In an interview done in Seoul on November 2, 1994, Hwang Keom-Ju said “What I want to say is that it would not be enough, even if they gave me half of Japan, to make up for what they did to me.”⁹ She could not describe the pain and hardship that she has faced. When she was 18 years old, she was drafted by the Japanese. She was under the impression that she was going to work in a factory, making military goods. After traveling for several days, Hwang was taken to a regimented Comfort Station and forced to become a sex slave for the Japanese Army. Hwang, along with the thousands of fellow Comfort Women, were tormented with venereal disease and consistent forced abortions. She mentions that the Japanese often refused to use condoms, therefore illness and pregnancy was inevitable. The women were then injected with drugs, for example an arsenic compound called “#606”, that would make their bodies swell and induce miscarriages.¹⁰ Finally, Hwang exhibits the irreversible damage that was done to her mental and physical state. She explains that the Japanese gave her diseases,

⁹ Hwang Keum-ju, *Comfort Women Speak: Testimony by Sex Slaves of the Japanese Military*, ed. Sangmie Choi Schellstede (New York: Holmes & Meier, 2000), 3-9.

¹⁰ Ibid.

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destroyed her ability to have children, and left her needing penicillin to stay alive. Clearly this woman was describing her life in terms that are absolutely associated with enduring trauma.



Figure 2: Soldiers lining up for service at a comfort station in Hankow, China. (Joong Ang Daily). George Hicks, *The Comfort Women* (New York: Norton, 1994), 99.

Jin Kyung-Paeng was interviewed in November 2, 1994 in Seoul. She was 14 years old when she was abducted by the Japanese military police, known as the Kempei. Jin was picking cotton with her mother when the Kempei came over, kicked her mother several times and then forced Jin into a cramped truck filled with other women. The Kempei took the women to a formed comfort station where they forced the young women to have sexual relations with military officers. During the day Jin served as a nurse's aide in the camps medical facility but at night she was a sex slave to about 20 men each night. She states that "some girls serviced up to 50 men a day" many of who refused to use any sort of sexual protection.¹¹ Jin contracted a venereal disease and was treated with many injections,

¹¹ Jin Kyung-Paeng, *Comfort Women Speak: Testimony by Sex Slaves of the Japanese Military*, ed. Sangmie Choi Schellstede (New York: Holmes & Meier, 2000), 11-13.

including the popular “#606”, an arsenic mixture which was used for syphilis. Jin was sent to Pusan, when the area was liberated. The girls were sprayed with disinfectant and given 1,000 won each. Confused and frightened, she made her way back home to Hapchon. Jin remembers seeing her mother and said “when my mother first saw me, she thought she was dreaming.” Jin lived in Hapchon for 22 years. Within that time she had married a man who had children, and when he died she raised and arranged marriages for all of the children. After so many years, Jin explains she has constant pain all over her body and frequent dizziness, but she cannot afford over-the-counter drugs. She continues by saying “I have no possessions, relatives, or offspring. I am alone.”¹²

The testimony of Kim Yoon-Shin was given at the International Symposium held at Georgetown University in Washington D.C. on September 30, 1996. Kim explains that when she was 13 years old, a car arrived in her village. Considering that not even trains came through her community, an automobile was an exciting sight for the neighborhood children. As the car came to a stop, many children tried to climb in, however, the driver only let Kim and another girl get in. There were two other men inside. Kim thought it would be a short ride, but as the truck rolled on and on she knew something was amiss. With tears in her eyes, Kim begged to be taken back to her mother, to no avail. Several days passed as Kim traveled by truck, train and finally a cargo ship. Kim, along with several other young girls, were confined into cubicles known as comfort stations, when they reached the intended destination.

Every evening several soldiers lined up outside her cubicle and one by one raped her all night long. Kim describes how her body was so young and the repeated assault on her uterus caused it to invert.¹³ Nevertheless, her possessors injected Penicillin shots mixed with “#606” to temporarily heal her sores and get her back to work. Kim recalls that many girls

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Kim Yoon-Shim, *Comfort Women Speak: Testimony by Sex Slaves of the Japanese Military*, ed. Sangmie Choi Schellstede (New York: Holmes & Meier, 2000), 43-47.

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got pregnant, but were still forced to have sex up until childbirth. After birth, one of the many blue-uniformed women welcomed the newborn into the world by placing it in a sack, leaving the umbilical cord fully intact or cutting the cord improperly. As a consequence, many comfort women got terribly sick. When disease could no longer be treated, they went through an all too familiar occurrence: wrapped in a blanket and ordered to move to another location. This time, though, they would never be seen again. Kim explains how the soldiers would wash and re-use a *saku* (condom). Girls often got infected from the used condoms and Kim lived in fear of getting so sick that she would be taken away forever.

Verbal abuse was a daily occurrence and the girls were identified by numbers. Kim was known as “number 27.” After one sexual encounter, Kim recalls an officer giving her 500 yen, which she used to try to escape, but ended up caught in a home full of soldiers. After being interrogated, she was accused of being a spy, beaten severely, and tortured by weaving a stiff pen between her fingers. Her fingers were left crippled. In 1945, liberation came and Kim made an escape by hiding in a fishing boat. Kim worked on the ship for a month cooking, cleaning, washing and servicing sex. The captain dropped her off on an island, which she was told was Korea. She soon found out it was a leper colony. The lepers welcomed her, fed her, and even helped her write a letter to her parents. Her family came for her but she could not return to her parents’ home, as was Korean custom, so she had to stay with relatives. Once a young woman left home, it would have been disgraceful to move back in with her mother and father. Her parents married her off as a safeguard, but she could not be happy. Kim sadly states “all these years I have lived in secret, in shame, and in pain.”¹⁴ She resents the Japanese and to this day does not trust them at all, claiming they have dual personalities. Kim worries that if there was another war what would stop the Japanese government from repeating the same atrocities?

¹⁴ Ibid.

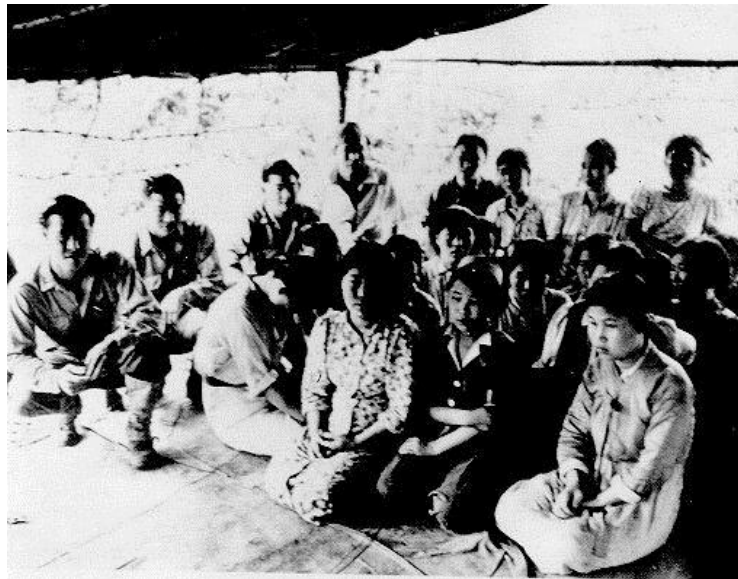


Figure 3: Korean comfort women being interrogated by Allied Intelligence at Myitkyina, North Burma, 14 August 1944. (Dong-A Daily).
George Hicks, *The Comfort Women* (New York: Norton, 1994), 102.

Mun Okchu came from an educated family in Taegu, South Korea. When Mun turned 13, her mother fell ill and was unable to work. Mun's father struggled to provide for the family, so Mun left home to work as a housemaid. She attended the Ladies Institute at night to further her education, while she worked. One evening she heard that there was factory work in Japan and the potential to earn a lot of money sounded exciting. So, at 19, Mun was drafted to work for the Japanese government, along with several other young Korean women. As she sat on the covered train taking her to the factory, she recalls feeling uneasy and trapped.

After several days of travel, the train finally arrived in China and the girls were put in trucks. The trucks pulled up to a large encampment where rows of makeshift tin huts could be seen. Mun was given a thin blanket and sent to a hut. The next day she was ordered to see one of the officers in charge, who promptly raped her until she fell unconscious. Mun woke up in a pool of blood and had no recollection of what happened. From then on, forced sexual encounters were a daily occurrence. Officers refused to wear condoms, the girls often got pregnant.

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They were injected with “# 606” when pregnancy occurred. After receiving the injection, Mun remembers her body feeling chilly and swelling like a pumpkin. A few days later she had a massive discharge of blood, aborting the baby. Mun suffered this atrocious process 4 times, which caused her to be barren. About a month into her new life, Mun was transferred to a comfort station. This was a makeshift building with a main room that was divided into 5 or 6 cubicles by wooden planks. A small blanket was used as a door for each cubicle. She would sexually serve 30-40 men a day, more on the weekends. Mun states that “the comfort women in the military unit were not treated like human beings.”¹⁵ She lived her life after liberation with a resentful heart, especially since she could not have children. She always wanted to tell her government what she has suffered, but she hasn’t been given the proper opportunity.

In 1992, Oh Omok was among 40 women who had agreed to be contacted and interviewed in regards to their life as comfort women for the Japanese Government. She began her story by explaining that she had been tricked into submission by the military and was forcibly taken from her family. In 1937, when Oh Omok was 16 years old, the Japanese military had come to her village and was promised work in a textile factory in Japan. She was told that she would be making goods for the war effort. Oh was sent to a village made up of tents on the outskirts of the Japanese military units’ base. Upon arrival the women were sheared of their hair, given Japanese names, and a blanket. After this, they were sent to one of the many tents that were already filled with up to 30 women.

At first, Oh Omok delivered food to the soldiers and washed their clothes. After a few months, however, she was forced to have sex with up to 10 men a day.¹⁶ She serviced soldiers in very small rooms with floors covered in mats. If she did not understand what was expected of her, she was beaten.

¹⁵ Mun Okchu, “Back to my Wretched Life” in *True Stories of the Korean Comfort Women*, ed. Keith Howard (New York: Cassell, 1995), 104-114.

¹⁶ Oh Omok, “I Thought I Was Going to a Textile Factory” in *True Stories of the Korean Comfort Women*, ed. Keith Howard (New York: Cassell, 1995), 65-69.

Oh learned quickly to do whatever they asked of her, in order to stay alive. In rare occasions, she recalls, the soldiers wore condoms and even paid them with red or blue bills, for their sexual service as if they were common prostitutes. The women were not paid for anything else they did. As the army moved, so did the comfort women. Oh remembers arriving in Nanjing, China, where the women participated in (forced) military training, and wore a sash with “Women’s National Defense Society” written on it. After the training session they went back to designated stations to continue their main contribution to the Japanese government: sexual service for its soldiers. While still in Nanjing, WWII ended, and the comfort women were liberated. Oh Omok carefully made her way back home to Chŏngŭp, where she would live for many years with her family. When she was 33, she married a farmer whose wife had died and he had five children. Oh found it hard to raise someone else’s kids, and she had discovered that she could not have any of her own. At 48, she left her husband and took the housemaids baby. She adopted the baby girl and raised her alone. She still feels resentful that she was not able to have children because of what happened almost 50 years ago.



Figure 4: Korean comfort women. (The US National Archives)

This photograph was taken in a comfort station near Shanghai, China. The image seems to convey every horrendous aspect of life that young women were forced to endure as sexual servants during wartime. At the far right of the photo, a woman is shown to be in the second or third trimester of pregnancy.

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Young females were obligated to abort any pregnancies that had occurred due to the forced, unprotected sexual practices of military soldiers. Often, these women did not survive the abortion and their bodies were simply thrown into a local river or stream. Should the pregnancy be allowed to continue, either for genocidal purposes or a mere display of male virility, the women would be continuously raped up until the birth of their child. Once born, the baby was usually killed immediately and the young mother was made to begin servicing soldiers the next day.¹⁷

The three women in the middle of the photo show the abuse that was a normal occurrence in the comfort stations throughout Asia. Women were brutally beaten if they refused sexual advances, got sick while working, or did not complete their assigned daily chores. The females ranged in ages from 12 to 25. The women were given dirty clothes to wear, no shoes, and meals consisting of bread or soup twice a day. As the war progressed, clothing was no longer provided and the women had to scrounge around for clothes that had been left by dead soldiers. Food also decreased and meals were usually given every other day or two. No sanitary napkins were given to women who were still menstruating. They were forced to use and re-use shreds of cloth ripped from old blankets or shirts that had been left behind.

The very presence of the man on the far left of the photograph suggests that soldiers did not see any harm in participating in the mass rape of more than 100,000 women.¹⁸ The comfort stations were used as a way to keep soldiers content and loyal to their regime. Military personnel would line up at the stations, thousands at a time, in order to force women into sexual service. Most of them refused to use condoms, even though they were provided, and they looked upon these women as puppets just waiting to be played with.

The horrendous secrets of comfort women were hidden at the discretion of Japanese officials. It was not until late 1991

¹⁷ Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 81-104.

¹⁸ Hicks, 19.

that documents were uncovered, revealing that the Japanese military had not only secretly operated the comfort women system, but also instructed military personnel to destroy all evidence of the system at the end of the war. As more information was unearthed, research about the comfort women's nightmarish roles rapidly increased. Along with this newfound information, the victims and their assailants began to give testimonies.

The personal stories of several former comfort women also emerged to make their extraordinary experiences as sexual slaves known. The facts about comfort women, although somewhat vague at times, started to take shape. Women from Korea, China, Japan, and Indonesia were speaking out against the Japanese government. These women wanted to hold their assailants accountable for their mistreatment during the war.

During the early 1990's, historians began to research and investigate different aspects of the issues surrounding the wartime rape, particularly the comfort women system. Most researchers focused on the story that needed to be told from the perspective of the comfort women. Historians began to interview, catalog, and document the oral histories of survivors. In 1995, Keith Howard began to compile a collection of life stories (originally published in 1993 in Korean) entitled, *The Korean Comfort Women Who Were Coercively Dragged Away for the Military*. These stories chronicled the wretched lives of Korean women who were forced into the service of the Japanese government as comfort women. Being that many of the surviving women were quite old when interviewed, many were reluctant to talk about their lives, and so their stories contained inconsistencies and some even contradicted themselves. Howard states "to help them remember their experiences more clearly, researchers compared details of their accounts with what we know about the military history of Japan through documents."¹⁹ In an attempt to obtain accurate testimony, researchers had to interview each survivor more than ten times. The interviewers were forced to restrain their emotion

¹⁹ Keith Howard, ed., *True Stories of the Korean Comfort Women*, (New York: Cassell, 1995), 12.

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and maintain an objective attitude while talking about heart-breaking experiences.”²⁰ After recording the testimonies of about 40 former comfort women, Howard included 19 of them into a book called *True Stories of the Korean Comfort Women*.

As the decade progressed, historians began to take a more activist role on the issue of wartime rape. Toward the end of the 1990’s, researchers wrote books that called for a more proactive look at what had happened, and they discussed ways in which the organizations responsible should be held accountable. Yoshimi Yoshiaki, a professor of modern Japanese history at Chuo University in Tokyo and a founding member of the Center for Research and Documentation on Japan’s War Responsibility, wrote a book entitled, *Comfort Women*, which “provides a wealth of documentation and testimony to prove the existence of over 2,000 centers where as many as 200,000 young women were held for months and forced to engage in sexual activity with Japanese military personnel.”²¹ The use of documentary materials makes Yoshiaki’s writings an exceptional resource for historians and represents Yoshiaki’s efforts to respond to comfort station survivors’ demands and help realize their vision for justice.

In more recent years, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, rape was used as an instrument for ethnic cleansing.²² The purpose of the Serbian forces was to drive Muslims and Croats away from the conquered territories using rape as venue for humiliation, demoralization, and ultimately destruction of the victim and her family. “Cleaning squads”, special units of the Serbian army and Serbian units, broke into Muslim homes. The objective was to terrify everyone- women, men, children, and the elderly- so brutally, that they would never get the idea to return back to their homeland. These people were taken to internment camps. Once there, murder, torture, and rape were instilled to break down any hope for the prisoners.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹ Yoshiaki, 11.

²² Alexandra Stiglmeier, ed. *Mass Rape: The War against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 85.

Young women were forced to go to what was known as rape/death camps. Here the genocidal plan of ethnic cleansing was rampant. Women were raped for extended periods of time. These rapes were forms of torture preceding death or torture leading to a forced pregnancy. Victims who became pregnant were raped consistently and subjected to psychological abuse. This went on until they had progressed beyond the point when a safe abortion would be possible, and then they were released.²³ The psychological result of this practice was the surviving victims were convinced that the pregnancy they carried would result in the birth of a Serb, a baby who would have none of its mother's characteristics.

Today, wartime rape is recognized by the United Nations as a war crime. The United Nations is an international organization whose main focus is facilitating the cooperation of international agencies in law, security, social progress, and human rights. Rape can also be prosecuted as a crime against humanity, if evidence confirms that wartime rapes resulted from systematic government planning. These crimes are often difficult to establish. Throughout history, wartime rape has been evaluated and recorded as having certain rules and objectives, including the extent to which the military has supported these crimes. According to the *Encyclopedia of Rape*, these classifications include, but are not limited to mass rape as a genocidal weapon, rape to "wound the honor" of the enemy, rape as part of military culture, and rape as random behavior. Some critics argue that by classifying rape of women a crime against humanity, the international community identifies women as the weaker gender in need of protection. Others disagree, and claim it formally brought women into the frontline of humanity for the purpose of prosecuting crimes against humanity.²⁴

In conclusion, this research provides only a glimpse into the malicious acts of violence towards women during wartime. It has represented specific areas of systematic rape, including

²³ Beverly Allen, *Rape Warfare* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 63.

²⁴ Smith, 269.

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the development of the comfort women system by the Japanese government in World War II. The greatest objective for this work is that it will inspire other researchers and historians to investigate the stories of sexual slave survivors before the last of these stories are gone forever. Most importantly, it is with great hope, that it will awaken the conscience of governments, especially the Japanese leaders, to accept responsibility for these incidents and be proactive in developing preventative measures in order to ensure that these atrocities do not continue.

This research is intended as an interpretation of the acts of violence that have been, and continue to be, systematically used against women during times of war. As researchers, we must be able to dissect and analyze history as thoroughly as we can. As historians, we must take the information that is presented and decide what can be done to either change or enhance our own work, and, if possible, to affect our world. It is the task of this paper to inspire readers to do everything possible to guard against the perpetuation of such acts of violence. The information provided is to be used as a resource for holding those responsible accountable for their actions.

The movement to force agencies, such as the Japanese government, to face the full truth of its legacy is on the rise. This work is a step toward public awareness and activism. It is a call for a proactive role in demanding that international political communities make perpetrators accountable and execute a plan of action that will ensure the safety and humane treatment of women. Historians, educators, and students alike are encouraged to contribute to the groups involved in achieving justice and to give aid to the countless victims. Within these pages numerous issues are described that need desperate representation at every level. By taking this research and expanding the knowledge into activism, government sanctioned wartime rape can be eliminated. We must be convinced that governments involved must acknowledge their past if they expect to command trust from their neighbors and their citizens. This paper was written with George Santayana's undying warning in mind: *Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.*

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and not letting her quit the dozens of times she really wanted to. The most important reason for her success is her spunky toddler, Emily Isabella, and when she is not reading yet another textbook, Andrea can be found chasing after Bella, cooking, or watching CSI.