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Corey Joseph Tinay

University of San Francisco, cjtinay@dons.usfca.edu

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by Corey Tinay

University of San Francisco

May 2021

Master of Arts

in

International Studies

The Colonial Marginalization of Filipino and Filipino American Soldiers in the US Army during World War II

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree MASTER OF ARTS in
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

by *Corey Tinay*

May 1, 2021

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this thesis project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

APPROVED:

Capstone Adviser

Date

ABSTRACT:

This thesis analyzes the structural paradigms in place within American society as multifaceted tools of colonialism and how they impacted the experiences of minority and colonized soldiers in the United States Army during the Second World War. The history is analyzed through the postcolonial lens, observing factors in place such as; denial of place in history, identity, and recognition of service. The research questions that this thesis addresses are as follows: What are the colonial implications in the experience of Filipino and Filipino American soldiers experience during the Second World War? Are colonial soldiers treated as more expendable than white soldiers? How does the colonial relationship between the United States and the Philippines affect how we understand the colonial soldiers' experience? By analyzing the histories of the segregated Filipino and Filipino American units of the Second World War and supporting literature that addresses the impacts of colonialism on the colonized, I will analyze aspects of the role of the minority and colonized soldier as a tool of the colonial empire. I argue that the colonial soldier is a paradigm of the United States military and colonial footprint of the country during the Second World War, prior, and up until the present. The perspectives of Orientalism towards minorities, colonialism and how it subjects the oppressed population, and subaltern realities for the oppressed minorities are the factors that make up the experience for the minority and colonized soldier.

This thesis analyzes the colonial relations between the United States and the Philippines and the recruitment of colonized soldiers in the Second World War through the recruitment of

Filipino American and Filipino soldiers for the war efforts in the global conflict through the historical documents and official United States government stances on the occupation of the Philippines and the Filipino people. Colonial constructions of the Filipino Other are also observed with many ideals and lenses from the work of Edward Said and Orientalism; specifically the relationship between policy/discourse and societal paradigms in which the Filipino culture and existence was otherized and targeted. The concept of the otherization of the Filipino American and Filipino is seen through the interviews conducted with family members detailing the hardship of their experience, the grassroots movements of the Filipino and Filipino American veterans in the plight for acquiring equal veteran status and medical benefits after having them revoked following the Rescission Act of 1946, and the removal of their contributions from the mainstream historical record of the conflict.

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I. Introduction

Background

Throughout the history of the United States of America, the nation's battles have been fought by large numbers of minority and colonial soldiers. These groups of soldiers throughout the nation's history range from the African American soldiers fighting in the Revolutionary War fighting for the nation's independence to the Civil War fighting for their emancipation from slavery to the Filipino and Filipino American soldiers fighting for their country during the Second World War, the minority and colonial soldiers' contributions have been ignored and/or looked over in favor of histories of service members belonging to the white majority oppressing group as the minority/colonial soldiers have been subjected to a white supremacist driven societal structure of second classism and a colonial domination driven method of the recording of history. The narrative of the contributions of these minority and colonial soldiers being less than or not as noble in comparison to white soldiers is not only blasphemous, but also false in many instances. The systemic doctored silencing and denying of claim to place in history seen in the experiences and histories of all colonized and subaltern groups is amplified during times of conflict as the soldiers are then used as tools of colonial interest in a manner that dehumanizes the minority and colonial soldiers through application of tactics such as otherization, racial prejudices, misrepresentation, and stereotyping.

Colonial domination of the Filipino American and Filipino soldiers within the US Army during the Second World War is an extension of the otherization of the people of the Philippines through established systems of oppression in the colonization process; these prejudices and stereotypes operated and were employed in a fashion to control the narrative of the minority and colonized soldier. Through the Filipino veterans of the US Army during the Second World War

grassroots movement is an extension of this otherization as it extended past the war and their time in service as the US government did not recognize their service during the conflict as equal; this grassroots movement aimed to fight back against the otherization and actions they faced as a result of their ethnic background.¹ This research thesis examines the histories of two segregated United States Army units containing minority and colonial soldiers (Filipino American and Filipino), their experiences, and the experiences of minority and colonized soldiers in other United States Army units through the lens of the theoretical frameworks developed by Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Tarak Barkawi, and Gayatri Spivak; the impacts of colonization and imperialism such as, prejudice ingrained in societal structures, will be the main focus of applying the mentioned frameworks with the intent of focusing on the following themes in application of understanding the minority and colonized soldiers' experience: Postcolonialism, Representation of the Other (Orientalism), Imperialism, and Subaltern Studies in the effort of creating a more thorough understanding of the history of the time period and in a push to correct the white washed narrative that is told in the decolonization efforts of restoring identity and culture.

As a member of the US Army and being of minority status, I feel especially motivated and passionate in this research as I heard stories of the Filipino and Filipino American soldiers in the US Army (Alongside the Japanese American and African American histories) while growing up from my Grandfather. My Grandfather passed this knowledge down after seeing many of these veterans in his community growing up on a plantation in Hawaii as a son to Filipino immigrants. He grew up with these histories in his upbringing and acquired more in his travels and service in the Army, which brought him to many of the same locations as the Filipino soldiers he had heard of from his childhood. As it turned out, I also ended up in the US Army. It

¹ Raimundo, Antonio. "The Filipino Veterans Equity Movement: A Case Study in Reparations Theory." *California Law Review* 98, no. 2 (2010): 575-623.

just so happened I attended the university which was built upon the former Ft. Ord where the segregated Filipino units of the Second World War had a large footprint both before and following the war. After my time in undergrad had finished, I joined the US Army. Again the history of the Filipino Infantry Regiments were on my mind as my unit I trained with during my graduate studies here at USF conducts all of its training on the former training sites of the units. This huge historical footprint is largely unseen in the telling of the area. The history and experience of the soldiers is overshadowed by the majority narratives that came out of the area during its long history as a major US Army base. I feel my personal motivations in aiding in the discussion and contribution to the recognition of these soldiers is deeply tied to who I am and where I come from, even where I am currently. My visions for the future, in regards to the experiences of all minority and colonial soldiers, is the further analysis into the plight for the right to their respectful places in history and the acknowledgment of the structural disadvantages that affect both minority and colonial soldiers past, present, and future.

Research Project: Methods and Theoretical Frameworks

This research project will examine the histories of segregated United States Army units, specifically the Filipino Infantry Regiment and the other units of US Army Philippines, to analyze the experiences of minority and colonized soldiers, how colonization and otherization has affected said experiences through discrimination through related academic articles, books, and related works, observe any personal accounts, photographs, family accounts, newspapers, film, and other related primary sources.

During my research of the segregated Filipino and Filipino American units of the United States Army during the Second World War, one thing that I came across time and time again was the oral history being maintained by the family members of the soldiers that often did not live to

see proper representation from their government; this practice of oral history was a strong factor in maintaining identity throughout conflict, displacement, and lack of governmental support.² Oral history allowed for the identity and culture of the minority and colonized soldiers to be preserved for future generations that don't get to read about their backgrounds' involvement in the history they are forced to learn. The use and practice of oral history has also allowed for the perspective and opinion of the colonized to be addressed and processed on their own terms which is important in recognizing the impacts of dehumanizing practices and experiences of colonial domination.

With my selected sources, the application of Postcolonial Theory and the concepts of looking at social structures, academic matters, and experiences through the lens of postcolonialism. Throughout the colonized world, the recruitment of colonial armies consisting of local soldiers were seen as a tool for colonial powers to exert domination and secure their interests in the areas they occupied and were actively colonizing. These practices were employed heavily in many regions that were colonized by colonial powers such as in Africa; this same practice and strategy was used in the recruitment of Filipino and Filipino American soldiers both before the Second World War and during the Second World War, this practice and strategy of recruitment of colonial soldiers was used on the population of Filipino and Filipino American people to create a fighting force within the US Army that was more integrated with and knew the languages and culture of the land the United States had colonized while also allowing for colonial enforcement in a distant land.³ This application of theory can be used to properly understand the history and experience of the minority and colonized soldiers in the U.S Army

² Tamura, Linda. "ORAL HISTORY METHODOLOGY." In *Nisei Soldiers Break Their Silence: Coming Home to Hood River*, Xiii-Xv. Seattle; London: University of Washington Press, 2012.

³ Koller, Christian. "The Recruitment of Colonial Troops in Africa and Asia and their Deployment in Europe during the First World War." *Immigrants & Minorities* 26, no. 1-2 (2008): 111-133.

during World War Two. The trend that is most notable with the application of Critical Race Theory in the sources is the focus on the oppression and suppression of the minority perspective and showing how it affects current experiences in different examples. Through the work of the sources I have gathered, the idea of the experience of the minority and colonized soldier can be examined through the concepts of race being the reason they were being oppressed with systematic disadvantages and prejudice.⁴ Collectively the research I have accumulated looks to bring light to the minority and colonized soldier perspective and has a common theme of proper representation of perspective, truth, experience, and history by deconstructing the colonial rooted white washing of how history is recorded and told both in media narratives and government supported narratives.

By observing the experiences of minority and colonized soldiers of the US Army during the second world war, I use the two mentioned theories to examine the effects of race and colonialism had on these soldiers' experiences. The effects of race and colonialism on the Filipino and Filipino American soldiers were a result of hundreds of years of colonization and otherization by both Spain and the United States. The Filipino and Filipino American experience in the United States is one filled with legal targeting and violent targeting as a result of this applied otherization from the colonizing group. This targeting resulted in the Filipino and Filipino American soldier experience being one of second class nature simply due to ethnic background. Fighting for the country did not erase the damage caused and in some cases only brought it further into the limelight, as with the abandonment of the thousands of Filipino soldiers in the Philippines following the Second World War.

⁴ Briones, Matthew M. "'It Could Just as Well Be Me': Japanese American and African American GIs in the Army Diary." In *Jim and Jap Crow: A Cultural History of 1940s Interracial America*, 192-217. Princeton University Press, 2012.

With Critical Race and Postcolonial Theory, the view of the subaltern, the analysis of the oppressed narrative and history in the established societal structures that uphold white supremacy with its tools and systems of oppression and the dehumanization of minority and colonized groups are observed. I will be taking into account the need for the light to be brought to examine histories and create space for where they rightfully belong in the historical narrative and telling of the time period; colonization is the main focus as minority and colonized groups look to reclaim both history and humanity through efforts of preserving and bringing light to their histories and experiences in the ongoing decolonization process that still has plenty of work to be done. This is very important as groups of people look to reclaim their rightful voices, histories, and experiences within the historical timeline and in the lasting fight to push back against the effects of colonization. In the case of the United States and its relations to the Philippines in the conversation of colonialism, the dynamic has always been one of extortion in the classic relationship dynamic of colonizer and the colonized from the use of the colonized lands and peoples' resources, in industry, geography such as strategic locations, and most importantly manpower as the colonizer looks to employ these resources at the expense of the colonized to sustain and expand the operations and interests of the colonizing empire.⁵

Historical research and practice has an obligation to context and research based on data or evidence. Historians employ the use of a variety of research methods that intersect with the historical method to make up a complete understanding and analysis of the past.⁶ Historical research and the historical method follow established guidelines that create a process of information retrieval and ensure the ability to analyze through context and theory.⁷ Historical

⁵ Singh, Amritjit, and Peter Schmidt. *Postcolonial Theory and the United States : Race, Ethnicity, and Literature*. University Press of Mississippi, 2000.

⁶ Kamp, Jeannette, Susan Legêne, Matthias Van Rossum, and Sebas Rümke. "Applying the Historical Method." In *Writing History!: A Companion for Historians*, 61-82. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018.

⁷ Kamp, Jeannette, Susan Legêne, Matthias Van Rossum, and Sebas Rümke. 61-82.

research methods are usually qualitative approaches. Qualitative methods include interviews, observations, and text analysis such as archival database research.⁸

With the method of a historical case study, I employ similar applications as other historians in various topics. The historical case study that will be a part of my capstone will be able to use the prior knowledge that I present and use it towards the understanding of the case study subject. Another source is able to show how a historical case study allows for the use of location and family records to be applied and used in research.⁹ The application of the case study method as a subcategory of the larger historical method is useful in analyzing both the chronological and context within histories alongside the application of theory.¹⁰

I have conducted interviews to collect oral histories to supplement my use of theory in application towards the experience of the minority and colonial soldiers. This is using the application of a historical case study and qualitative approach through the interviews and content analysis of the collected primary documents and oral history of the minority and colonized soldiers.¹¹ I also used archival research (The Salinas Library, the Fort Ord Archives at CSUMB, and the Filipino American Historical Society) to build more context for my application of methodology and theory in my case study. This allowed me to gather other sources as well through the citations of what I found. I also employed the use of online databases such as JSTOR and the California History Archive, to aid in my research, to find other related academic sources to better deepen my understanding and better my application of theory towards historical research.

⁸ Kelly, Hilton. "The Politics and Poetics of Oral History in Qualitative Research: This One's for Nikki Giovanni." *Counterpoints* 449 (2014): 171-188.

⁹ Wong, John Chi-Kit. "Professional Hockey and Urban Development: A Historical Case Study of the Vancouver Arena, 1911-1914." *Urban History Review / Revue D'histoire Urbaine* 38, no. 1 (2009): 3-14.

¹⁰ Effah-Attoe, Stella. "The Dicey Issue of Chronology in African Historical Reconstruction: A Case Study of the Bias of the Cross River Basin of Nigeria." *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 16 (2005): 8-18.

¹¹ Kelly, Hilton. 171-88.

After I collected my data, I used it to create a critical analysis and evaluation through the use of social theories examining the historical data to observe its present implication and impacts while exploring the oppressed narratives. I also used official videos that the US Army recorded during the Second World War, later declassifying, family photos from the relatives of the Filipino Infantry Regiment veterans in my correspondence and conversations with them, and other primary sources such as letters collected from family members of veterans and veterans themselves, in my research to aid and support my use of social theory in my critical analysis. The oral histories through interviews I conducted come from speaking with family members of the soldiers and collecting how they told their story was also a major component I was able to utilize during my research and write up. The interviews I conducted consisted of a few in person when it was permitted prior to COVID-19 restrictions and a large chunk through digital correspondence. The conversations were informal in nature and often drifted from the experience of the relatives I was researching to their experience as being a Filipino American or how their relatives' service impacted their experience and what they wanted to see the movement and history of the relatives service to look like going forward. The interviews took place over the course of the last three years (2018-2021). This was done through a qualitative approach and part of my case study in the fashion of recording historical context and perspective through the personal experience of the individuals of the case study.¹² They were useful to my research due to its deeper insight and sometimes overlooked perspective.

With the research I conducted in person, I was able to interview the families of veterans of the Regiments. I would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions to my research on the Filipino Infantry Regiments and creating a deeper understanding of the Filipino

¹² Robbins, Louise S. "Responses to the Resurrection of Miss Ruth Brown: An Essay on the Reception of a Historical Case Study." *Libraries & the Cultural Record* 42, no. 4 (2007): 422-37.

and Filipino American experience through the use of postcolonial theory: Prof. Mark P. Cazem, Sergeant Pelagio Valdez, Ted Visaya, and President of the Monterey County Chapter of the Filipino American Historical Society, Richard Villegas.¹³ They were very helpful in contributing personal accounts, experience as family members of veterans of the regiments, and advocating for the story of the Filipino Infantry Regiments to be used to reclaim, rebuild, and retain the Filipino and Filipino American identity through history and something the community can continue to rally around. Being able to see the work that they have put into preserving their communities' history was the most real world application of Critical Race Theory and Postcolonial Theory I could imagine. It made for a very deep and enriching learning experience.

The other thing that was impactful in my field research was being able to visit the historical marker honoring the regiments at the Salinas Rodeo Grounds. This marker indicates the regiments' ties to the local area and the rodeo itself, and was lobbied for by veterans of the regiment that returned to the area. While it is the only regimental monument in the area, it acts as a beacon of the Filipino American experience and a step towards the reclamation of identity and experience. Growing up in such a diverse community from a diverse background and having this history all around me was eye-opening and a major reason I was able to come across the mere existence of many of these minority and colonized experiences.

¹³ Interviews held with family members

II. Filipino and Filipino American Soldiers as Colonial Subjects

Dehumanization and Structural Discrimination

Throughout the period of active colonial occupation and postcolonial periods, the groups that were subject to colonization from oppressing groups were subjected to continuous dehumanization and seen as expendable “assets” in regards to furthering colonial/imperial interests and motives. Throughout history, colonial and imperial empires have sacrificed colonized populations at a whim to aid in the supplying and maintaining of their empires and expanding their riches and access to resources at the expense of the colonized subject groups. With this constant period of takeover and extortion of lands not belonging to them, colonial and imperial empires brought additional conflict to the lands they extorted, whether in warring other empires or internally. Empires would force the now colonized groups to fight their wars for them, often without consent. As the modern world approached and the world began fighting larger scale global wars they needed a massive amount of manpower from their colonized regions. During both world wars, every European and western nation fielded units of colonial roots or of minority status.¹⁴ The British colonial armies were one of the largest of the Second World War as the source of colonial troops spanned multiple continents and numbered over the million mark.¹⁵ These units were segregated a majority of the time and often treated as less than the white units of the militaries. This segregation and second class treatment extended to life after the military as well. The United States Army fielded these units filled with minority and colonized soldiers whose lives were dictated by the structures in place during the colonial period.

¹⁴ ROY, KAUSHIK. "Discipline and Morale of the African, British and Indian Army Units in Burma and India during World War II: July 1943 to August 1945." *Modern Asian Studies* 44, no. 6 (2010): 1255-1282.

¹⁵ Grundlingh, Louis. "ASPECTS OF THE IMPACT OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR ON THE LIVES OF BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN AND BRITISH COLONIAL SOLDIERS." *Transafrican Journal of History* 21 (1992): 19-35.

The US Army's history of using colonial soldiers ranged from the Puerto Rican segregated Army units to the units of Guam, Panama, Hawaii, and the Philippines with the US Army Philippine component being the most large of the colonial troop sources.¹⁶ The fielding of colonial units and armies was a strategy that allowed colonial powers to wage war far away from their home nation in larger allocation.

The minority and colonial soldier as a subject of colonial empire and as a tool in these empires' endeavors is one that is often overlooked by the oppressors telling of history and how the minority and colonized group is treated. Without the minority and colonial soldiers the outcomes of many of these conflicts would have played out differently. Statistically, the impact of the minority and colonized soldier in World War Two is immense yet estimated to be even greater in number due to lack of accuracy in the censuses of the time period with many minority individuals being labeled as white which was very common for individuals of descents such as Middle Eastern, Asian, and Hispanic backgrounds.¹⁷ This miscounting of the actual numbers of minority and colonial soldiers makes the topic a bit easier to be lost into the confines of history and aids in the whitewashing of the telling and recording of the events that took place. The numbers of miscounted minority and colonial soldiers has yet to be officially recounted but the practice of mislabeling soldiers in the military has continued well into the modern era, with Filipino American soldiers not having a category in the Vietnam War. During conversations with my Grandfather, who served for 20 years in the US Army as a Filipino American man born in the territory of the occupied Kingdom of Hawaii, beginning his service during the Vietnam War, he would mention this omission of his background by the US Army even though there were a large number of soldiers of Filipino American background during the Vietnam War who were simply

¹⁶ "65th Infantry Regiment." *On Point* 6, no. 3 (2000): 6.

¹⁷ Levitt, Justin. "Citizenship and the Census." *Columbia Law Review* 119, no. 5 (2019): 1355-1398.

filed under different backgrounds in a lack of acknowledgement of a very large minority and former colonized population during the conflict. During the Vietnam War, soldiers in the US Army who did not fall into a racial or ethnic category listed by the military would be white-washed and listed as white soldiers. The practice of white-washing minority soldiers in the data collection process makes the white-washing of history much easier for the dominating group to erase the oppressed from history; this is also seen throughout government records and data collection efforts as many ethnic backgrounds were forced classified as white instead of being recognized. This practice was in use throughout every conflict up to that point as well. The military since the war in Vietnam has expanded its acknowledgment of different ethnicities in its data collection efforts.

Throughout the sources I accessed and applied to my research, a theme of constant pressure stemming from colonization appears as an underlying message in the Filipino and Filipino American soldiers' experience. With the Filipino and Filipino American community many were streamlined into work in agriculture and taught to serve. This ties in later with the Filipino Infantry Regiments serving a country that ruled over their homeland and had extreme prejudice towards them.¹⁸ Institutionalized discrimination of the Filipino culture within the United States was rampant and rooted in colonial prejudice, such as the law of outlawing the intermarrying of white women and Filipinos as they were placed into a sub human category by the US government.¹⁹ This legally mandated targeting in the Filipino experience points to the discriminatory prejudices of an individual or group by the ruling group within American society

¹⁸ Okamura, Jonathan Y. "Filipino American History in Hawai'i: A Young Visayan Woman's Perspective." In *Tomorrow's Memories: A Diary, 1924-1928*, edited by Raymundo Rizaline R., by Monrayo Angeles, 227-246. University of Hawai'i Press, 2003.

¹⁹ *Roldan v. Los Angeles County*, 129 Cal. App. 267, 18 P.2d 706, ; 1930s court case in California saying laws did not bar the marriage of a Filipino and a white person. Was quickly overturned to include the outlawing of mixed Filipino marriages.

and the institutions and laws it embodies as a whole. Systemic stereotypical beliefs are enforced and seen in the policies, laws, and social dynamics of the nation. The extreme and long-lasting negative effects of institutionalized discrimination on the Filipino population in the United States are increased rates of poverty, decreased access to services such as education and healthcare, and overall safety within the nation.

The majority of segregated US Army units fielded by the US military throughout its history, the use of minority and colonial soldiers has more often than not been accompanied with white officers; this has been an intentional move as the minority and colonized soldiers were seen as less capable, less smart, and less loyal. In the example of the Filipino colonial soldiers fighting in the US Army, the Philippine Scouts operated in the fashion of having white soldiers placed in positions of authority over the Filipino and Filipino American soldiers to function as their superiors and make sure the unit maintained the highest priority of American military interests within the Philippines.²⁰ The installment of white officers was to maintain the hierarchy that was present throughout society and the prejudices and stereotypes given to Filipino and Filipino Americans were enforced through this practice as they were deemed as less than from the onset.²¹ During the Second World War, the army began to allow more soldiers of color to take positions in the officer corps but it was generally viewed as bad practice dating back to the times of the revolution in America. Statistically, both during the time period and now in the present era, support that all of these prejudices and stereotypes of minority soldiers were and are simply not true and rooted in racism and systems of oppression that attribute dehumanization of those in the minority. The actions of the segregated units during this conflict were a major reasoning for

²⁰ LAURIE, CLAYTON D. "The Philippine Scouts: America's Colonial Army, 1899-1913." *Philippine Studies* 37, no. 2 (1989): 174-191.

²¹ Ginio, Ruth. "French Officers, African Officers, and the Violent Image of African Colonial Soldiers." *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 36, no. 2 (2010): 59-75.

the push to desegregate the military in America which was put into law in 1948 following the conclusion of the war, but segregated units in the United States military operated well into the Korean War with all black units still fighting in the conflict. Vietnam was the first conflict in which there was a truly integrated force.

American or not? For American citizens this should never be a doubt. However, that's exactly what the government of the United States of America used as justification for their targeting Filipinos with discriminatory laws before opening up enlistment for Filipinos during the conflict as the manpower was needed for the war effort. This systemic oppression of Filipinos and the easing of the said oppression due to the manpower demands of the war. Filipinos faced an incredible amount of prejudice and oppression both by American society and the government. As they were deemed as less than whites and were villainized for attracting white women due to the large influx of Filipino and Filipino American men in the hard labor industries making their way to the States and territories, laws were then put in place in regards to Anti Miscegenation laws that prohibited the marriage of Filipinos with white women.²² During my interview with Mark Cazem, former US Marine and son of a soldier of the Filipino Infantry Regiment, he went into great detail about his dad's life prior to his service in the Second World War and described his working for rich white people and partaking in many of the fashion trends of the day. He then explained how his father was threatened with jail for impregnating a rich white woman he worked for. Mark Cazem stated it is unknown if the powerful white family allowed the pregnancy to be carried out and if he had a sibling hidden and lost through the Anti Miscegenation laws of the era and the general Anti Filipino stance of the country at the time as he detailed how his father's personal relationship resulting in legal trouble was happening during

²² Deenesh Sohoni. "Unsuitable Suitors: Anti-Miscegenation Laws, Naturalization Laws, and the Construction of Asian Identities." *Law & Society Review* 41, no. 3 (2007): 587-618.

a time period in which Filipinos and Filipino Americans were subject to race riots and attacks from white people during this time. It creates a talking point of what is American? The ideal of being a nation proud of its diversity and being built by immigrants is a liberty and quality that has historically and presently only been afforded to those of white background. For people born and raised in America, were American citizens, and much a part of the makeup of society in the country, this lack of acceptance and application of the American ideal/dream to specific groups of people boiled down purely to the ideals of discrimination and prejudice from the dominating force within society.

A lot of the prejudice was already embedded in the nation as the propaganda of the Filipino people appeared in caricatures of the recent past often stereotyped people of minority ethnic background seen in both news and media. Filipinos were often placed into political cartoons as caricatures displayed with derogatory features often making the Filipino individual to appear less human, not intelligent, and in need of “civilizing” which are all ways to dehumanize and dominate a colonized group; Filipinos, much like all other nonwhite races in media were only shown to display these stereotypes whether through only giving Filipinos roles of supporting this oppression or simply having a white actor mock the race by portraying themselves as the race, this in addition to the propaganda to further the support of retaining the colonial interests overseas for the United States all attributed to the treatment of Filipinos both by government and society.²³ Much of the United States of America’s history rooted in empire and extortion used these stereotypes and prejudice targeting to justify their extortion of the affected groups; this is seen in all forms of colonialism/imperialism as the oppressor convinces themselves and tries to convince others of their actions not being oppression but salvation and

²³ Okamura, Jonathan Y. "Filipino Americans: Model Minority or Dog Eaters?" In *Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawai'i*, 155-86. Temple University Press, 2008.

saving of the groups from their own backwards ways. This false justification of oppression rooted in discrimination is far from the reality of the situation. The war simply emboldened the prejudices that were in the country prior, the United States used the war to act on the prejudice they had towards American citizens. In all of the instances, minority and colonized soldiers performed well and served their country well during the conflict. The question of American enough should not ever be rooted in how the group fights for the nation however; what makes those of the majority able to deem groups worth other than blatant racism and prejudice structural beliefs.



US Colonial propaganda comics in which the Philippines and other colonized regions are displayed as below the Americans colonizing them.²⁴

Filipino Americans serving in the U.S Army during World War Two were often denied equal veterans status following the end of the war, during their service they endured segregation and racial prejudice and discrimination.²⁵ During my conversations with Mark Cazem and Pelagio Valdez, they mentioned the training of the Filipino and Filipino American soldiers in the central coast of California for the Filipino Infantry Regiments as a time where even though their fathers were serving the country they weren't seen as equal and were often targeted during their free time while conducting their training when the soldiers would go into town. The soldiers would try to eat at establishments or buy from certain places and be met with resistance even while in uniform due to segregation that was largely enforced in nearly every corner of the country from white establishments.²⁶ Even with the forced assimilation into the society of the United States they were not granted full membership and acceptance into the society and social framework.

US Empire In The Philippines and Employment of Colonial Soldiers

With the history and experience of the soldiers of the Filipino Infantry Regiments and their attached segregated units, it is also important to acknowledge the colonial presence in the non-continental United States portion of the US Army with the US Army Philippines being a major part of the part of the war effort in the war in the pacific theater of the Second World War.

²⁴ "The Racist Portrayal of the Philippines in Historical Cartoons as US Troops Invaded." Global Voices, February 20, 2016.
<https://globalvoices.org/2016/02/18/the-racist-portrayal-of-the-philippines-in-historical-cartoons-supporting-us-invasion/>.

²⁵ Nakano, Satoshi. "Nation, Nationalism and Citizenship in the Filipino World War II Veterans Equity Movement, 1945-1999." *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies* 32, no. 2 (2000): 33-53.

²⁶ Interviews with Mark Cazem and Pelagio Valdez

Even with the second world war being in rather recent relative memory, the impacts and realities of colonialism/imperialism is an undertone in rather blatant fashion throughout many of the campaigns of the global conflict as colonial lands were fought on and over for resources and geographic advantages such as shipping lanes, port access, and increasing range of airfields both on colonized lands and domestically.²⁷ Many of the battles of the war raged outside of Europe, such as in Africa as former colonial powers fought through the regions they had colonized in years past. In the pacific campaigns, many of the islands were controlled by European powers for a good change of the last couple hundred years and now the war of distant lands had brought violence and destruction to their remote formerly isolated islands. Another major colonial factor in the war in relation to the history of the Filipino American soldiers experienced during the conflict is the promise of sovereignty return to the Philippines for their aid in the war effort after hundreds of years of colonization first by the Spanish then by the Americans. This involvement overseas has been a colonial endeavor the United States is very familiar with, as during this time period it worked to obtain and conquer many groups of people and regions around the globe to further its interest alongside the Philippines.²⁸ As the nation moves forward, more and more veterans are dying from the conflict and their efforts are being left to their families and communities to preserve and continue for the social change.

The colonial and imperial history of the Philippines is a long and complex one that transcends one sole occupying force as the people of the Philippines were colonized by the Spanish for a couple hundred years before the transition to being ruled by the empire of the United States following the Spanish American War then the Philippine American war that

²⁷ BARKAWI, TARAK, and SHANE BRIGHTON. "Brown Britain: Post-colonial Politics and Grand Strategy." *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-) 89, no. 5 (2013): 1109-1123.

²⁸ Barkawi, Tarak. "Globalization, Culture, and War: On the Popular Mediation of "Small Wars"." *Cultural Critique*, no. 58 (2004): 115-147.

followed immediately after as the people of the Philippines continued to fight and attempt to regain their sovereignty.²⁹ After the war with America, the Philippines were used as a puppet state as part of the American empire and the people of the Philippines were used to supplement the US military with the US Army having a whole department focused on the islands. These soldiers served in segregated units led by white officers and operated in the same fashion of the European colonial armies.³⁰ The Philippine Scouts were recruited and used as a colonial enforcement force when they were not being used as a war fighting force against Japanese invasion force. This form of control and creating class racial and ethnic class structure within the ranks of the military further the second class citizen ideal that was common for the country and the military during the conflict. Alongside the Scouts, the US Army conscripted many Filipinos into the US Army after the Japanese invasion and takeover of the Philippines, these veterans did not get the equal treatment of veteran status following the war after the Rescission Act of 1946 which led to many decades of protesting and lobby for the awarding of health benefits and compensation. During my interviews and conversations with Pelagio Valdez, he stated the push for the Congressional gold Medal and the awarding of some financial compensation for the Filipino Veterans of the Second World War was a minor victory but also very late, with the large majority having passed by the time the US government stepped back and reevaluate their actions and treatment of the US Army soldiers of Filipino background that were promised citizenship and medical benefits following their service to the United States. Pelagio conveyed that it was great to finally see recognition but noted that it coming so late was very painful as a lot of the

²⁹ Hong, Jane H. *Opening the Gates to Asia: A Transpacific History of How America Repealed Asian Exclusion*. CHAPEL HILL: University of North Carolina Press, 2019.

³⁰ Shaffer, Robert. "'Partly Disguised Imperialism': American Critical Internationalists and Philippine Independence." *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 19, no. 3/4 (2012): 235-262.

veterans never came close to living long enough to get recognition or health care that they were owed.³¹

American empire in the Philippines stemmed from the Spanish American War and the control of the lands were shifted from one colonial power to another with the Filipinos fighting both powers to regain their sovereignty. The Americans fought a short but bloody war in the Philippines that lead to many changes in military tactics that would be used in both of the upcoming world wars; the creation of the .45 caliber pistol was accredited to how fierce the Filipinos fought as the Americans deemed the calibers in use were not enough to kill a Filipino in battle, and then employed larger rounds to kill the people of the Philippines more efficiently in true imperial fashion.³² Filipino sovereignty was hundreds of years in the making and the second world war forced the United States government to promise the nation's sovereignty in return for their aid in helping the war effort in the pacific. This was enforced through the Presidential Military Order of July 26, 1941 which forced the Philippines to recruit its people for service under the US Army and in return would be awarded American veteran status and benefits and path to citizenship before the passing of the Recession following the war.

A large population of the Filipino Infantry Regiment soldiers were agricultural workers that lived along the west coast. The Filipino American agricultural community has deep roots on the west coast and the pacific (Hawaii) as they were hand in hand with many of the agricultural movements with the Mexican American populations during the time. The Filipino American experience prior to the Second World War was filled with ethnic and racial based prejudice and legislation targeting the people. From riots in the 1930s in response to mistreatment of

³¹ Phone interviews with Pelagio Valdez, located in Fresno , CA

³² Paterson, Thomas G. "United States Intervention in Cuba, 1898: Interpretations of the Spanish-American-Cuban-Filipino War." *The History Teacher* 29, no. 3 (1996): 341-361.

agricultural workers to anti interracial marriage laws for Filipinos in the United States, discrimination towards the ethnic group was something not new. Mark Cazem stated during our conversations how his father came to become a driver in Hollywood and began mingling with the elite of the Hollywood scene during his work. Cazem told the story of how his father was jailed for being with a white woman named, Gloria Dehaven, impregnating her, he stated: “The family filed a criminal complaint and my father was jailed for the first time in his life. It was rough being placed with violent criminals for him. Thankfully his employer from the driving company he worked for was able to get him out. We don’t know if there’s a half Filipino Cazem sibling out there but it’s very interesting to think about.”³³

The Philippine Scouts were a set of US Army colonial/imperial units based in the Philippines, these units were segregated but Filipinos were not allowed to be officers in the units as the Army decided that white soldiers were the only capable option of leading and making decisions within the units. The Philippine Scouts operated during the entire duration of the American occupation of the Philippines and throughout the Second World War. It was a colonial Army asset that was separate from the main force and operated purely in the empirical interests of the United States, not the Philippines. Many of the veterans of these units within the US Army’s Philippine colonial command were not citizens of the United States. While some soldiers were able to become citizens, a large number were not allowed citizenship even though it was promised by the US Government. Following the war, the promises made were vetoed and the majority of the veterans of the US Filipino overseas units were left abandoned by the nation they had fought for. The plight for equal recognition of service and veterans status following the war was a long battle. Many of the veterans did not live to see this wrong addressed by the US

³³ Interviews with Mark Cazem, son of a soldier within Filipino Infantry Regiment, Salinas, CA Little Manilla 2019.

government. Famous grassroots movements of the Filipino veterans of the Second World War involved veterans chaining themselves to the White House fence in demonstration to bring attention to their situation and treatment from the United States government.



Photo Above: Filipino Infantry Regiment Soldiers training with their Bolo Knives (US Army Video)³⁴

The US Army made official training videos detailing the otherization of the Filipino and Filipino American soldiers where the Filipino and Filipino American soldiers are given bolo knives as a representation of their colonial origin. The soldiers were given these knives as representation of the colonization of the Philippines, it is rooted in the sugar plantation culture of the region and is seen everywhere Filipino plantation workers have been sent.

³⁴ US Army video; 1943; Filipino soldiers receive their Bolo Knives. (Video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9R_dvKINyWw&ab_channel=JosephHewes)

The bolo knife was given to the Filipino and Filipino American soldiers in an effort to raise unit morale and cohesion. The colonial implications were not advertised to the troops but the knife is tied to being a symbol of strength and dedication in the face of forced labor conditions from the colonization process.³⁵ Actions such as these from the US Army reaffirmed the otherization of the Filipino and Filipino American soldiers as colonial subjects; Filipino veterans and people began to see the bolo knife in combat as a reclaimed symbol of Filipino pride.

³⁵ US Army video; 1943; Filipino soldiers receive their Bolo Knives. (Video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9R_dvKINyWw&ab_channel=JosephHewes)

III. Erasure From the Recording of History

The research I have conducted in the field with individuals related to the soldiers mentioned in this thesis, the locations I was able to visit, along with the archival sources I have gathered have a shared quality in how oppression, segregation, prejudice, and racism affected the treatment and experience of minority and colonized soldiers before, during, and after the Second World War. The experience of these minority and colonial soldiers were greatly affected by the structures in place from colonialism/imperialism and not only dictated their experience but also dictated how history would go on to leave them out of its telling of the events. Common themes I come across while researching the history and experiences of minority and colonized soldiers as tools of empire during conflict through the theoretical frameworks mentioned are the minority and colonized soldiers being forced into service due to the country needing bodies to do task and protect empirical interest regardless if the country held or holds prejudice to their racial/ethnic groups or cultures and/or oppressing them from legal standpoints without holding power or a true voice in their existence/identity within the system and nation. The lives of the minority and colonial soldiers in the Second World War following the conflict were also dictated by their service and amount of support they received from the government of the United States and their general integration into the society in the face of ethnic and racial prejudice that prevailed. The application of the mentioned theoretical frameworks that will be mentioned shortly in creating further understanding towards the plight of the Filipino people as colonial tools in the war efforts of the United States and will directly observe and explain the inner workings of the paradigms that dominate the lives of the colonized.

Another thing that is widespread throughout the research I conducted is the disregard of minority and colonial soldiers' military service in the whitewashed mainstream historical narrative and the experience of minority and colonial soldiers in the process of fighting in a white man's army facing segregation.³⁶ This is done through the suppression of experiences and histories, sometimes the denial of equal rights of veterans' rights, etc. as seen in the case of the Filipino veterans that began their grassroots movement for their service recognition and proper full veteran status.³⁷

While minority and colonial soldiers were facing tremendous amounts of prejudice both within and outside of the US Army, the military was seen by the government as a way to condition and program minority and colonial soldiers and turn them into assimilated beings within what the oppressors deemed as acceptable. This did not translate into respect and equal treatment. Military service is seen as a way for a minority and colonized group to prove their loyalty to the nation that is oppressing them in the context of these segregated units during the Second World War the soldiers were expected to assimilate to the US military and would be given proper respect in the grand scheme of American society but as we know this was not the case even with the soldiers performing well overseas in the conflict and battle zones their families were still subjected to targeting from both the people of the nation and the government.³⁸ Military service has always been seen in a similar light to how religion has been seen in regards to the act of colonizing and dominating a group of people and getting them to accept the society in control of them. This "Americanization" of the colonized group or the **forced assimilation** is

³⁶ McGuire, Phillip. "Desegregation of the Armed Forces: Black Leadership, Protest and World War II." *The Journal of Negro History* 68, no. 2 (1983): 147-158.

³⁷ Sammons, Jeffrey T., and John H. Morrow. *Harlem's Rattlers and the Great War: The Undaunted 369th Regiment and the African American Quest for Equality*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2014. 1-528.

³⁸ Knauer, Christine. "Fighting for Respect." In *Let Us Fight as Free Men: Black Soldiers and Civil Rights*, 13-32. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

a common practice to remove a minority/colonized group from their identity and culture. It is a tactic of domination that pushes for the agenda of removing a culture and identity from the mainstream identity of society as a whole, effectively othering and targeting them. In the article, "The Formation of Filipino Nationality Under U.S Colonial Rule," written by Resil Mojares goes into the constant colonial pressure that was set during the colonial period in the Philippines during Spanish rule and transferred to the United States after the Spanish American war and the Philippine American war while observing how identity and culture developed with this constant weight upon its shoulders with "chip on shoulder" edge. This would later translate to the Filipino contributions to the U.S war effort in World War Two.³⁹

The subaltern position of the colonial soldier and their surrounding lives is one of unequal distributions of power and extortion through the colonial process, both ongoing and previously that has silenced the group and made their experience one of domination from the oppressing group and without equal claim to historical place, significance, and identity in the larger retelling of the events. This subalternity of the colonial soldier then moved into the direct actions of the United States government as they removed the order for equal status to the Filipino soldiers without any input or concern of their experience and the gravity of the consequences of doing so. The colonial soldier is a concept and reality that not only persisted through the years of active colonialism but throughout modern times continuing in modern forms in the "postcolonial" era. In nearly all accounts, the colonial soldier is seen as less than by the country they fight for and within the military they fight alongside; this view of the soldiers as disposable tools of the colonial/imperial empire dehumanizes the soldiers in a sense that is rooted in their background.

³⁹ Mojares, Resil B. "The Formation of Filipino Nationality Under U.S. Colonial Rule." *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 34, no. 1 (2006): 11-32.

From the lens of subaltern studies, I can connect this to the experience of the minority and colonized soldier during the Second World War in the US Army as it allows for insight into the life of a colonial soldier and their family. For the Filipino soldiers who were removed from equal veterans status to save money, many of their wives and families lost their family members in the conflict or following the conflict due to injuries sustained from the war without access to the healthcare normally provided to veterans of the American armed forces.

With a major component of colonization being the erasing of identity and forcing the oppressed group to assimilate into the dominant culture, the denial to history comes up as an important discussion piece in the conversation for deconstruction of colonial prejudices. In the experience of minority and colonized soldiers denial to history is seen through media and in particular for the histories of these two units, Hollywood's role in the whitewashing of history reinforces the structural prejudices against people of color as the images for the masses of the soldiers fighting for their country were always white, the idea of the American War Hero is a concept that white America has monopolized through movies and television shows. It is common to even have the background characters in many war movies covering the Second World War to not have any minority and colonized soldiers; this wasn't close to the reality as many minority and colonized soldiers played huge roles in many of these major battles covered in the news and later in movies and other entertainment. A major battle during the war that is seen as the largest argument for the desegregation of the armed forces which was made law in 1947, but segregated units operated well into the Korean War, was the battle of the bulge where African American soldiers were integrated into units holding the front line with white soldiers and performed with high efficiency in the harsh combat environment. This major battle during the war was one of the

largest integrations of white soldiers and soldiers of color operating in somewhat equal job descriptions recorded to date.⁴⁰

Said's work is important in the conversation of minority and colonized soldiers with colonial/imperial tied backgrounds mainly because of his constant criticism of this stance of helpfulness and innocence the western powers took in the times of colonization, but also in the ongoing ever continuous processes of decolonization. This weaponization of culture is something that Said observes as a main component of the tie of culture in colonized groups and the process and impacts of imperialism. In the text, "Orientalism," written by Edward Said, addresses the self-serving justifications to colonialism from the West and what they deemed the "Orient" this otherization and fetishization of what people of others perspectives and experiences were are seen in the description of the times of the US Army and how the army described their segregated units, often playing up the stereotypes of the ethnic and racial groups of the minority and colonized soldiers. This white savior recording and telling of history is then seen in all of the other facets of the recording of the Second World War, from the Hollywood telling of the conflict to what was taught in the history books to the masses. Said brings up many important conversations in "Orientalism" and they are all very applicable to the concept of minority and colonized soldiers and their experience within the segregated US Army units due to the fact that the soldiers were of a double minority being casted as the other both in society and in the military from the white dominating groups.⁴¹ The otherization of Filipino people created complex layers of prejudice and racial discrimination based on colonial rooted stereotypes that were constructed to benefit the oppressor and that is sense in every representation of the minority

⁴⁰ Hughey, Matthew W. "Cinethetic Racism: White Redemption and Black Stereotypes in "Magical Negro" Films." *Social Problems* 56, no. 3 (2009): 543-577.

⁴¹ Said, Edward Wadie. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage books, 1994.

and colonized soldier in the fashions in which the US Army treated the soldiers even after great performance during battle and soldiers of the segregated units receiving numerous awards and accolades as a unit during the conflict.

IV. Reclaiming Identity and History, and Social Change

Filipino and Filipino American soldiers returned home as heroes following the Second World War, as their stories and service records told of their acts of bravery in both the Pacific and European theaters of the war as they began to rebuild their communities the best that they could following the uprooting that the conflict had caused; this heroic return to the United States however, was not granted to every veteran of the conflict that had fought under the American flag as thousands of US Army Philippines veterans were left in the Philippines after the executive order that promised them the right to immigrate immediately with their earned citizenship for fighting for the country was revoked and they were left by the nation they fought for without citizenship and without the veterans' benefits awarded to those recognized, such as education and medical services.⁴² The minority and colonial soldiers that served in segregated units during the war often stayed in close contact with their fellow soldiers as they shared a lot of culture and geographical proximity and with that created many community organizations to protect and preserve not only the history of their service in the absence of the government and country they fought for failing to doing so . These organizations have been able to promote the preservation of culture and community in the ethnic communities of the segregated units to the point that now in the present day as history is continued to be decolonized the organizations are able to guide the process and in most cases initiate the process for decolonization to take place and identity and place to be restore/granted.⁴³

⁴² Rescission Act of 1946, which removed the order to grant citizenship to Filipino nationals who fought for the US military in its war efforts and also removed recognition of US veteran status from the Filipino soldiers, stripping them of their benefits, such as educational services and medical treatment.

⁴³ Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 2004.

The US Army Philippines soldiers were ordered to fight for the United States during the war against the Japanese in return for equal veteran status and benefits following the war. However, following the conclusion of the Second World War, the Filipino soldiers were not awarded their benefits or equal veteran's status from the government of the United States, as the Rescission Act of 1946 was passed by congress and signed by President Truman to cut costs as the world and the United States of America looked to focus on rebuilding Europe. This act cut the veterans status for the soldiers who fought under the American flag and alongside fellow American troops; the benefits cut ranged from pensions, healthcare, and other resources available to veterans of the US military.⁴⁴ The language of this act removes the United States as the controlling nation state for the Filipino soldiers that fought under the promise of gaining American citizenship and veteran status and benefits as the act transfers everything over to the Philippines in wording that promotes the idea of independence but also through washing the United States government of any accountability of the Filipino soldiers who fought under the American flag without citizen in the role of colonial soldiers.

This disservice for the veterans of the war began to lobby and protest, much of the grassroots movements then moving into the hands of their children and family members as the years went by following the war and more and more of the veterans of the conflict passed away. In 2009, President Obama and congress began with the awarding of the Congressional Gold Medal to veterans of the Second World War that had their service not recognized by the US government; many of the veterans had passed at this point but their surviving family members were able to request the award in their deceased relatives honor. After awarding the Congressional Gold Medal the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 was passed

⁴⁴ Rescission Act 1946, US government.

and began a one time payment of \$15,000 or \$9,000 to surviving Filipino veterans of the conflict dependent on their citizenship status at the time of the act passing, even though citizenship was part of the original agreements for their service in the conflict.⁴⁵ While it was a victory for the veterans and their families, it did not repair decades of damage caused by the cold shoulder the United States government gave its military members. Many of the veterans eligible did not live to see the day their service was recognized or to receive any financial compensation for their service by the US government. The veterans that protested for many years would conduct peaceful protests such as protesting in front of the White House in D.C. before being removed by law enforcement to try to lobby politicians to garner support for their plight in acquiring equal veteran's rights. Now with many of the soldiers dead and gone due to health issues and old age, their family members have moved on from the grassroots movements for medical care and veteran resources to modes of grassroot movements rooted in retaining the history and keeping the identity of the community intact, this can be seen in some of the new art coming out of the Filipino American community from dance and performance to short stories being published in the form of children's books. During the result protest spanning decades resulting in government recognition of service in award form, Filipino veteran of the US military during the Second World War, Celestino Almeda,

Almeda encountered many problems with the U.S. bureaucracy when it came to proving his military service under the U.S. during World War II. In 1990, Almeda applied for U.S. naturalization using his military records as supporting documents. The Immigration Service tried to verify his service through the National Personnel Records Center but could not find his name. This forced Almeda to hire an immigration lawyer and take his case to immigration court. He was finally sworn in as an American in 1996. Almeda's military service was again questioned when he applied for Veterans' benefits. In 2009, the Filipino Veterans

⁴⁵ 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, US government.

Equity Compensation became law, promising a \$15,000 payment to all Filipino Veterans of World War II. Unfortunately, there were no records of his guerilla service. He appealed the decision and soon met with the other Filipino Veterans to organize a national movement to be recognized by the U.S. government for their service. After years of protesting, testifying before Congress and even being arrested in front of the White House, the government finally recognized Almeda's service. On October 25, 2017, at the age of 100, Almeda was awarded a Congressional Gold Medal and VA benefits.⁴⁶

The 1st Filipino Infantry Battalion was staged and raised San Luis Obispo, CA and the main objective was for them to aid in liberating the Philippines, which before falling to the Japanese was used as a strategic military location for its proximity to multiple regions within the pacific theater during the Second World War; there were also thousands of soldiers and other military personnel being held prisoner by the Japanese as they were not able to escape during the invasion. A couple months after being staged and raised as a battalion it was elevated to a regiment level unit at the California Rodeo Grounds in Salinas, California.⁴⁷ A second regiment was formed after a mass number of Filipino Americans and Filipinos joined the Army in Fort Ord, CA.⁴⁸ The Filipino Infantry regiments of the us army are important not only in the context of Filipinos and their experience as a minority and colonized group from the Philippines but also relevant in the history of California as Filipino Americans made up a large amount of the volunteers and draftees for the segregated regiments which were raised and trained in California before shipping off to the pacific. They fought in multiple campaigns in the pacific theater before being involved in the retaking of the Philippines, many of the soldiers had never set foot in the land their families had come from and the invasion was a clashing of the diaspora with the locals. This created a stronger sense of community and identity upon return to the states for the soldiers

⁴⁶ Celestino Almeda , US Department of Veterans Affairs publishing. Dec. 31 2020

⁴⁷ This location is minutes from where I grew up. I was able to see the small sign that honors their history at the location during my field research

⁴⁸ I grew up in Fort Ord, CA the unit had small footprints still in the area although overshadowed by other units.

of the unit, many of them bringing home brides from the Philippines; this process has been attributed to strengthening the ties to culture within the Filipino American community as the brides coming straight from the Philippines reintroduced cultural practices from the homeland that countered the assimilation and westernization of the group after living in the states for a longer time period.⁴⁹ This could be seen in the sense of community near where I grew up throughout the Monterey Bay area. In Salinas, California, a “Little Manilla” portion of town has sprouted from the post war period as the veterans returned to the area and established themselves. The veterans retained close ties to those that they served with many of their children growing up alongside each other; when speaking to the children of the veterans they pointed to their families efforts in maintaining the ties to those they served with and maintaining their community was important in them having a place of belonging when growing up and a pivotal and defining aspect of identity for the Filipino in the community.⁵⁰ This tie to identity rooted in the preservation of culture is one that has stuck with the efforts of the Filipino and Filipino American communities throughout the post war era and has been a large driving factor in the push for equal recognition for veterans status for those colonial soldiers that were left in the Philippines and for recognition in the significance of their contributions in the grand scheme of the Second World War and the scope of general history that is taught to the nation in which they fought and died for.

A large portion of Filipino American soldiers would create nights of cooking traditional foods in an act of countering the assimilation of the US military using the rations to retain identity and pride within the culture. It was allowed to increase morale and promote more unit

⁴⁹ Conversations with Mark Cazem, son of a veteran of the segregated Filipino American unit and a war bride from the Philippines.

⁵⁰ Conversations with children of the veterans; Ted Visaya, Mark Cazem, and Pelagio Valdez

cohesion in the long run within the US Army during the conflict.⁵¹ During my interviews with the family members of the Filipino Infantry Regiments this was a topic that came up fairly often. During my interviews with Mark Cazem, Ted Visaya, and Pelagio Valdez, all sons of veterans of the segregated Filipino Infantry Regiments that went on to also serve in the military, they would describe how their fathers would retain some of the Filipino culture with their fellow soldiers by having certain nights where they would partake in traditional Filipino practices from singing to dancing to cooking traditional Filipino foods. This practice during the service was continued after the war with the veterans and a large basis of these men's upbringing and what they identified with. All three men talked about how they grew up knowing one another because of the continuation of the practice that was used by their fathers during the war as the Filipino and Filipino American community stayed close knit through customs already had and only strengthened by their shared military experience. They were able to maintain their culture and values within the assimilation to the oppressing groups way of life that was enforced in the military and counter the whitewashing of the minority and colonial soldiers. The families of the soldiers were quick to attribute the closeness of their fathers during the war and the bond formed through service as a major factor in what kept the community close in their return home compounded by the already close knitted nature of the Filipino culture and communities. This is seen in the establishment of Filipino community organizations and parts of cities throughout the west coast of the United States, such as the small enclave of "Little Manilla" in Salinas, California where I conducted a decent amount of my research and personal interviews. These enclaves and pockets boosted by the return of Filipino American veterans can be seen all over

⁵¹ Elias, Megan. "The Palate of Power: Americans, Food and the Philippines after the Spanish-American War." *Material Culture* 46, no. 1 (2014): 44-57.

California as well, mainly centered around cities with larger agricultural presences as the Filipino community were majority agricultural workers.

According to Dr. Gerald Shenk, the oppressing group cannot determine how the oppressed group perceives them due to the fact that the oppressed not only knows more about themselves then the oppressors can understand but also more about the group that oppresses them than the oppressing group knows about themselves.⁵² This is important due to the minority/migrant communities fighting to preserve and reclaim history and identity in the face of oppression from the white supremacy and imperialism as the main oppressing systems of domination. With acknowledging these systems in place, it works to better apply theory and create understanding of the narrative and experience of the historical case study. This all knowing aspect of knowing the oppressor better than they know themselves is especially important in observing the experience of Filipino and Filipino American soldiers fighting for the US Army during the Second World War due to the fact they were operating in the toolbox of the oppressors might as an expendable item in the cog of the war efforts of the empire.⁵³

⁵² Shenk, Gerald. "Domination & Resistance: Twentieth Century US Histories A Conceptual Framework." CSU Monterey Bay. 2005.

⁵³ White, Richard J., and Erika Cudworth. "Taking It to the Streets: Challenging Systems of Domination from Below." *Counterpoints* 448 (2014): 202-219.

IV. Conclusion

This paper has examined the histories of both segregated United States Army and non-segregated United States Army units to analyze the experiences of minority and colonized soldiers, how colonization/imperialism has affected said experiences, and how the colonization processes and prejudices have resulted in the otherization of minority and colonized soldiers in the United States Army both inside the Army and after they leave the Army through related academic articles, books, and related works, observe any personal accounts, photographs, family accounts, newspapers, film, photographs, and other related primary sources with the intent of analyzing the minority and colonized soldier's experience in the US Army through the theoretical frameworks of: Postcolonialism, Orientalism, and the otherization of colonized groups, with the intent of furthering the movement for equal veterans rights and benefits while also contributing to the conversation and observation of the treatment of current minority and colonized soldiers within the Army today and how systematic disadvantages can be addressed. Going forward, the histories and experiences of these soldiers need to be further addressed through academic study and field research with the intent of further reconstructing how mainstream history looks at the efforts of soldiers during World War Two. With a conversation as complex as colonization and the deconstruction of colonial and imperial oppressions on the colonized, the right to history is a first step in the process of breaking free of the chains of colonialism. Further research will be needed on more of the segregated units within the US Army and can be then expanded to the global context as every Allied and Axis nation had large colonial/imperial footprints that were used during the war. The aftermath of the war as an impact on the colonial layout of the world will also contribute to any further research as it will be able to observe the impacts of military service for minority and colonized soldiers and how

colonialism/imperialism has impacted the soldiers experience in the years after conflict; the impacts on the communities and cultures can also be further observed through this as well.

Many of these veterans are getting too old to communicate with and many are dying off at a rapid rate as time goes on. With this research into how the minority and colonized soldier faces disadvantages that the white soldier does not, my goal is to use the research and argument to further the movement for equal veterans rights and benefits while also contributing to the conversation and observation of the treatment of current minority and colonized soldiers within the Army today and how systematic disadvantages can be addressed.

The biggest challenge that I faced during this research process during the ongoing global pandemic due to the COVID-19 virus has been the move to remote contact with field research methods such as interviews. Initially, the biggest challenges seemed to be the difficulty of connecting with those of the older generation. After over a year in the world of COVID-19, the remote research process has improved as the world has transitioned to being able to fluidly communicate on digital platforms. I am grateful I was able to conduct a lot of in person research within the Filipino American community prior to the pandemic as I was able to see firsthand how the war affected the community and how the community remembered the experience of their parents and grandparents in the forms of community events with the intent of preserving the efforts during the Second World War and also exposing traditional celebrations to the younger generations. The transition of oral history into more modern mediums such as comics and other various artworks for easier consumption for the youth is something that I believe will aid in the reclaiming to place in history and restoring and maintaining identity within communities that

have dealt with denial to places in history, whitewashing of history, and the loss of culture and identity through the process of colonization.

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