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War Travels: Militarized (De)Tourism and the Vietnam War

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On November 23, 1969, Benedicto Kayampat Villaverde, a Filipino American medic who was on the verge of completing his tour of duty in Vietnam with the 29th Brigade of Hawai'i's National Guard, took a striking photograph of commuters jostling for position in Saigon's Ben Thanh roundabout (Villaverde 1969). Two days later, Villaverde flew out of Saigon on military flight XB24, which carried him back to his civilian life in Hawai'i (Personal Records Branch 1969). This probably explains why Villaverde's collection at the *Vietnam Center & Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive* only contains three other shots of his travels as a "GI tourist." While two of the other photographs were also taken at the roundabout, the final one features Villaverde and his "pay-as-you-went tourist" friend from "Kanaka-land," posing in front of the Tokyo Hotel as a "Saigon cookie" bursts into the frame (Villaverde 1969a).

While these four photographs seem unremarkable, they nonetheless emphasize the central role that tourism played in helping Villaverde ease back into the rhythms of civilian life. Their significance is complicated by the only other photograph in Villaverde's collection that captures a slice of his wartime travel experiences. On April 5, 1969, Villaverde returned home and spent Easter with family and friends in Kailua (Villaverde 1969b). When read together, these photographs speak to the variegated ways in which tourism sustained war-making in Vietnam and vice versa. In Saigon, Villaverde was seeing the sights. But in Kailua, he was reconnecting with family and celebrating an important holiday with his community.

Villaverde could be back in Hawai'i in the middle of his tour of duty because of the transnational infrastructures of militarized tourism that the US military built to accommodate the leisure needs of soldiers waging war in Vietnam. These transpacific infrastructures formed the backbone of the US military's rest and recuperation (R&R) program, which was established to provide soldiers and support workers with five to seven days of vacation leave during each tour of duty. The resulting infrastructures of militarized tourism encompassed numerous sites within Vietnam, such as Da Nang, as well as ten destinations scattered across the Asia-Pacific region. These included Tokyo, Sydney, Hong Kong, Singapore, Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Manila, Taipei, and Honolulu (Gozur 1969).

My argument here is twofold. First, I show how R&R was just as essential to the logistics of US war-making in Vietnam as the transpacific supply chains of military materiel that have thus far captured the attention of scholars. I begin by placing the pathbreaking work in Asian American and Pacific Islander studies on *militourism* in conversation with the emerging literature on logistics to emphasize how US war managers relied on R&R to assist in the intimate management of soldiering life. My aim is to underscore the need for a more complex understanding of militourism that moves beyond eroticism and exoticism as the only drivers of wartime travel. A closer consideration of how Vietnam War militourism unfolded at the scale of the everyday reveals the importance of reckoning with its investments in the project of racial inclusion that came to define the everyday work of US empire-building in the post-1945 moment (Fujitani 2011; Man 2018). As *the* imperial power in the Pacific during the Cold War, the US empire-state confronted a region that was being reshaped by the transnational forces of decolonization. US imperialists wasted no time in trying to steer these forces towards anti-communist ends. R&R had an important role to play in this project. On a practical level, R&R was meant to boost the morale of soldiers, connecting them to the leisure services and consumer commodities they required to reproduce their labour power for empire. But the US military also

valued R&R for its potential to instill within soldiers a “better appreciation of greater Asia whose people we are defending now in Vietnam and have defended or aided in the past” (Overton 1968). The imperial conceit here was that such a militarized ethos of racial liberalism, idealized as a blueprint for productively bringing American miltourists into everyday encounters with their local hosts, might be upscaled to further the anti-communist project of “securing Asia for Asians.”

Much has already been written about the violence of Vietnam War R&R, and its pernicious effects on the precarious workforces who produced militarized geographies of leisure. Asian and Pacific Islander women staffed the night clubs, bars, and bistros that catered to vacationing US soldiers who roamed cities like Manila, Bangkok, Taipei, and Hong Kong, searching for a moment of respite from the horrors of war (Dixon and Piccini 2022; Mark 2016; Phillips 2020; Sunkul 2013). R&R brought these two groups of imperial subjects into embodied encounter, the nature of which ranged the gamut from the purely casual to the explicitly predatory and everything else in between. Over the course of the war, Manila’s cabarets and Hong Kong’s “smooch joints” became spaces where Asian women carried out the intimate work that goes into maintaining empire on a day-to-day basis (Cross 1970; Gonzalez 2015, 2021).

What the archival record also reveals, however, is that the R&R experience was never reducible to this one specific mode of miltourism. As I show through a close reading of documents on the Hong Kong and Manila R&R programs that I sourced from the *Vietnam Centre* and the *National Archives and Records Administration* (NARA), host communities built relationships with US miltourists outside of established night-life districts. Sex workers in both cities daylighted as guides who accompanied US soldiers as they toured the urban landscape. Racialized soldiers like Villaverde and his Asian, Black, and *kanaka maoli* – or indigenous Hawaiian – squadmates, moreover, had a complex relationship with transpacific R&R infrastructures. Whereas R&R promised white soldiers unfettered access to the “masculinized mobilities of American-style modernity” and all the gendered pleasures associated with miltourism, their racialized comrades instead found themselves navigating a frictional terrain of racial management (Gonzalez 2013, 1). What emerged was a hierarchical geography of R&R mobility that either facilitated or constrained soldier travel on the basis of race.

This becomes especially obvious when some racialized soldiers tried to use R&R as a mechanism of family reunification. War managers opened the only US R&R center in Honolulu so that mainlanders could vacation with their families. To make this work, military logisticians chartered an infrastructure of subsidized flights that circulated soldier families from the mainland to Hawai‘i. In so doing, they exacerbated ongoing forms of settler colonial violence in Hawai‘i and throughout the Pacific Islands, conferring family reunification privileges on certain groups of soldiers, while simultaneously denying them to others. While Asian “locals” and *kanaka maoli* soldiers were able to take advantage of Honolulu’s R&R program to travel home, their Guamanian comrades were not as lucky. For Guamanian soldiers and their families, R&R served as another reminder of their highly uneven integration into the US military-industrial complex and, for this reason, a terrain of political activism and struggle.

R&R AS MILITOURISM

Geographers have long emphasized the spatial nature of tourism and travel. Derek Gregory's (1998, 2008) work on travel writing, for example, mobilizes a postcolonial framework to show how colonial cultures of tourism to exotic places like Egypt were structured by geographical distinctions that helped European visitors apprehend unfamiliar urban landscapes. These "imaginative geographies" distanced Cairo's modern European quarters from its older Arab neighbourhoods, which were described by popular travel writers in revealingly Orientalist terms. This had the effect of fixing "old Cairo" in a space located beyond the pale of the modern.

As Gregory reminds us, such imaginative geographies were undergirded by the concrete violence of colonial conquest, first by the French, and later by the British. More recently, these ideas have been taken up by other geographers, who underscore the geopolitical dimensions of international tourism. Connie Yang (2020, 1076) draws from her own experiences of pre-packaged tours in Israeli and Palestinian cities to reiterate how everyday geographies of travel create an "imaginative geography that sustains distance and difference between self and Others." Mindful of Yang's insistence on positioning this work as a corrective to how tourism in geography is "commonly understood as unrelated to forms of political violence," this essay extends her claims by considering how soldiering more generally has always been dependent on imperial and colonial cultures of travel. From this perspective, militourism functions both as a scopic regime of knowledge production, as well as a "flexible, seductive, and rebranded form of the colonial contact zone" through which colonizers have historically forged intimate relations with the colonized (Gonzalez 2021a, 384). What a contact zone framework draws our attention to are the everyday "stories-so-far" – which Doreen Massey (2005, 12) defines as "simply the history, change, movement of things themselves" – that militourist programs set in motion and bring together, "[setting] off social processes that further make and change [R&R cities] and the people inside them" (Friedman 2013, 124). Militourism, then, is not just about producing distance between the self and the other. Rather, it is also animated by an asymmetrical politics of intimate encounter that enrolls both soldiers and their hosts in the work of re/producing the everyday lifeworlds of US empire. Conceptualized as a vehicle for bringing American GIs into *positive* relations with the "free" Asians they were tasked with defending, Vietnam War R&R unfolded through various forms of embodied relation work (Attewell and Attewell 2021). The purpose of R&R was therefore to *collapse* the distance between our space and their space, and to foster a kind of intimacy that might be *productive*, in Jan Padios' (2018) terms, of capital and empire.

Mimi Sheller (2021) gets at some of these multi-scalar geographies in her exploration of how US colonial territories like Puerto Rico and the Marianas have repurposed decommissioned military bases, weapons testing ranges, and migrant detention facilities into resort complexes, privatized beaches, and environmental conservation zones. While Sheller (2021) invites us to consider how tourism infrastructures in the Caribbean and the Pacific are often built on military foundations, she has less to say about the intimate forms of violence that are always endured by the local "hosts" who perform the role of happy native for vacationing "guests": violence that is amplified when the "guests" are soldiers, figures who personify the necropolitical violence of imperialism (Gonzalez 2021a). Here, the concept of *militourism* becomes useful. It was first coined by the I-Kiribati scholar Teresia Teaiwa (1999, 251), who used it to describe a "phenomenon by which military or paramilitary force ensures the smooth running of a tourist industry, and that same tourist industry masks the military force behind it." Teaiwa argues that Pacific Islanders have historically experienced militourism as highly gendered forms of settler colonial violence. These

range from the toxic afterlives of US nuclear testing in Bikini Atoll, to the tourist economies that have thoroughly transformed the everyday ecologies of Pacific life, recoding islander bodies as “exotic, malleable, and most of all, dispensable” (Teaiwa 1994, 93).

In the intervening years, scholars have extended Teaiwa’s concept to other sites across the Pacific. In *Securing Paradise*, Vernadette Gonzalez (2013, 3-4) critically juxtaposes the US imperial occupations of Hawai‘i and the Philippines to show how “the roots and routes of the US military in these sites are foundational to tourist itineraries and imaginations, as well as how the desires and economies of modern tourism are central to American military dominance in Asia and the Pacific.” Through a detailed engagement with various examples of miltourism, Gonzalez tracks the transpacific itineraries of the American soldier-tourist: a liminal figure that emerged at the intersection of the US imperial projects to wage race war in Asia while simultaneously securing the region for capitalist exploitation (Man 2018). As a “Martial Law [baby]” growing up in the Philippines, Gonzalez knew this figure by the name of “Joe.” But Joe was also a common fixture on the military bases and camptowns that dotted the Pacific. In Okinawa, Joe stalked R&R zones such as Koza Music Town (Ginoza 2016). In South Korea, his “violent embrace” shaped the everyday contours of civilian life in camptown spaces, such as Itaewon, and later, Pyeongtaek (Kim 2019; Kindig 2016).

These multiple stories of Joe’s “doubled subjectivity as tourist and soldier” still hold power because they are, to paraphrase Monica Kim (2019, 3), “stories about intimate encounter.” Everywhere Joe went, he was “welcomed for the income that base economies bring,” yet also “resented for the sexual trade and erosion of local sovereignties fostered by his presence” (Gonzalez 2013, 1). Indeed, Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander critiques of miltourism have exposed how bases and camptowns were fraught spaces where idealized notions of imperial masculinity were made concrete by the many GIs who sought out various forms of heterosexual intimacy with Asian and Pacific Islander women. As we shall see, the US empire-state’s tacit tolerance of such toxic practices reached new heights during the Vietnam War, when longer-standing R&R zones became linked in new transpacific infrastructures of miltourism.

But the everyday geographies of Vietnam War miltourism cannot be satisfactorily mapped by only following the twin lodestars of eroticism and exoticism, as individual R&R encounters were also framed by other genealogies of power and violence. On a very basic level, Joe’s arrival in Asian and Pacific Rim cities during the Vietnam War was enabled by prior rounds of colonial and imperial R&R. Gonzalez and Lipman (2016, 515) argue that the building blocks of modern miltourism – which included the spread of the US military’s basing network and the development of mass jet travel – emerged during the Second World War. But World War II also showed that the work of supporting wartime travel was an *inter*-imperial project. Santasil Malik’s (2023) recent essay on the US soldiers who camped in British Calcutta in the dying days of the Second World War emphasizes how R&R infrastructures have historically stretched across imperial borders, producing complex geographies of provision and procurement that tie miltourism to the transnational supply chains that sustain imperial war machines.

These entanglements between R&R and logistics deepened in the post-1945 moment, when miltourism, extrapolating from Malik (2023), “unfolded in tandem with a liberal market agenda.” Prized as a business opportunity for individuals and governments alike, military R&R programs

left their imprint on the urban landscapes of host cities, reorganizing established leisure districts like Wan Chai, Tsim Sha Tsui, or Manila's "salty, shadowy waterfront" into spaces of consumption that were increasingly tailored to the sensibilities of visiting Joes. By participating in these space-making practices, locals gained access to what Jim Glassman and Young-Jin Choi (2014) have described as the transnational "geopolitical economies" of the Cold War military industrial complex. While Glassman and Choi focus on industrial actors such as *chaebols*, a close reading of the Vietnam War R&R program shows how individuals and households also leveraged war tourism as a strategy for "making do" (Tu 2021)

These actors, in turn, played an essential role in shoring up the logistics of the war effort. It is by now widely known that the US military arrived in insurgent South Vietnam lacking the logistical capacity necessary to support an extended occupation. In 1967, one war manager summarized the problem as akin to "mov[ing] a major American city some 10,000 miles, plac[ing] it in a radically new environment, and expect[ing] that every aspect of its existence – public and private – would be provided for without delay or confusion" (Hobson 1967, 3-4). As I show elsewhere, the US responded to these challenges by developing supposedly revolutionary hybridizations of military and corporate logistics that combined cutting-edge technologies and techniques – specifically, containers and computers – with flexible labor management strategies to keep "inventory in motion" along transpacific supply chains. US war managers, however, were also acutely aware of how soldiers had "private" needs, such as food, shelter, and intimacy that also needed to be fulfilled on a timely basis (Hobson 1967, 3-4). To this end, war managers outsourced the gendered work of cooking, cleaning, and caregiving to Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Montagnard women who furnished the intimate forms of social reproductive labour required to sustain imperial ways of life in a "hot" war zone (Attewell and Attewell 2021).

The US empire-state's commitment to providing soldiers with overseas R&R meant that these infrastructures of militarized domesticity did not stop at the borders of occupied Vietnam, but also extended transnationally, enrolling Asian and Indigenous women living in the program's host cities in the essential work of rest, recuperation, and hospitality. These transimperial "highways" of care and relation work often ran alongside – and sometimes piggy-backed on – pre-existing supply chains, fulfilling the social reproduction needs of soldiers waging war in Vietnam while simultaneously securing the US empire-state's ability to advance its geopolitical economic interests across the region (Friedman 2017). Along these intertwined "highways," US Joes forged relationships that were generally grounded in "transnational service work:" a term coined by Jan Padios (2018, 30) to better understand the "form that close relationships ... take when they are made productive for capital," and that I am extending to encompass the broader bundle of sexual, cultural, and commercial exchanges that are the focus of this essay. Retheorizing the Vietnam War R&R experience as the product of transnational service work can help us better capture the wider range of vernacular place-making practices that gradually remade the landscapes of host cities like Hong Kong, Manila, and Honolulu in ways that were "productive of [empire]."

What all of this suggests is the importance of moving away from sensationalist accounts of Vietnam War R&R towards a more "vernacular" approach that attends to the "multiplicity" and the "contingency" of miltourist encounters (Lisle 2016, 6). Malik (2023) theorizes "the vernacular" as an "epistemological framework" that can "[pry] open the generic framework for

representing war.” Malik puts this claim to work by analyzing a collection of snaps taken by the military photographer Clyde Waddell, who set out to capture the “vernacular” recreational activities of US soldiers vacationing in colonial Calcutta. Building on, yet also departing from Malik, I rely on amateur soldier photographs to get at some of the everyday cultures of Vietnam War R&R. Bringing Malik into conversation with Thy Phu, I find this genre of war photography useful as a way of unsettling the stories that we tell about miltourism. Troubled by Vietnam War photography’s “trademark idiom of destroyed bodies and pockmarked landscapes,” Phu (2021, 3, 11) makes a case for expanding its scope to encompass “seemingly domestic images, depicting weddings, reunions, and quotidian, apparently frivolous rituals denoting pleasure, survival, and resilience.” From this perspective, we might consider R&R photographs as “domestic images” that capture soldiers engaging in everyday travel practices that would not seem out of place in a family album. Following Phu, it is the “domestic” quality of R&R photographs that allow them to unsettle the reduction of miltourism to sex tourism.

The war managers who assembled the transnational infrastructures of Vietnam War R&R were less interested in curating the itineraries of individual miltourists, as they were with ensuring their smooth circulation to and from the war zone. While the logistical aspects of this work seemingly dominate the paper documents that can be found in state archives like NARA, filtering them through Malik’s “vernacular” framework necessarily exposes how broader structures of power and violence complicated the everyday work of managing R&R flows, producing uneven geographies of miltourism. This is especially the case when we consider the miltourist experiences of the racialized and/or indigenous soldiers waging war in Vietnam, whose presence on the battlefield is explained as a function of the post-1945 shift in the racial politics of empire from “vulgar” exclusion towards “polite” inclusion (Fujitani 2011). US imperialists championed this strategy of “rework[ing] race and colonial relations” through soldiering as evidence of how their wars in Vietnam and elsewhere were antiracist and anticolonial (Man 2018, 12). Simeon Man (2018, 8) invokes this contradiction to explain why the Vietnam War must be understood from the perspective of what he calls the “decolonizing Pacific,” which is not a “fixed temporal or geographical construct,” but rather, a “methodology for explaining the convergent forces that animated the US empire after 1945”: a moment when “decolonization was not antithetical to the spread of US global power, but intrinsic to it.” Given how Vietnam War R&R infrastructures eventually stretched across territories that had either been formerly colonized by the US, the site of an anti-Communist intervention, or under ongoing forms of settler colonial subjugation, everyday miltourist encounters unfolded through landscapes that had been thoroughly shaped by various attempts – successful or otherwise – at liberation. For many of the supposedly post-colonial regimes that benefited from the geopolitical economies of the Vietnam War, an active R&R program was often the most public face of their increasingly close security relationships with the US empire-state: one that most directly touched the lives of ordinary citizens for whom the questions of decolonization and demilitarization might have remained thorny and unresolved issues.

A decolonizing Pacific perspective, furthermore, reminds us that the racialized and Indigenous subjects who soldiered through US empire in Vietnam could also use their R&R leave to visit any one of the 10 host cities encompassed by the program. As they traveled, they, too, experienced the overlapping legacies of (anti)imperialism that were mobilized by the war. And yet, as Malik (2023) notes, it is the “quintessential image of the white American male GI” that

became an “enforced principle of representation in an army” that, at the height of the Second World War, “consisted of nearly a million African American troops.” Narratives of racialized and indigenous travel, in other words, are almost always occluded in the “vernacular photographic archives of American GIs,” which “betrays the wider structural nets that filtered the meaning of US war efforts and GI identity around the world.” While racialized and indigenous soldiers visited cities like Hong Kong, Manila, and Honolulu, their presence is poorly documented. It is precisely this occlusion that makes it easy for scholars to play up the violent aspects of Vietnam War R&R.

How, then, did these non-white Joes participate in and grapple against the gendered violence of military R&R? And what might such vernacular practices of wartime travel tell us about how racialized and indigenous subjects used militourism as a way of “mak[ing] do” in a world torn asunder by the global forces of transpacific imperialism? By paying better attention to how R&R during the Vietnam War “[became] operational” through complex and contradictory frameworks of race and indigeneity, my aim is to open up spaces for rethinking militourism as not only a conduit of gendered violence, but also as a logistical terrain of racial management and a fraught strategy of everyday survival (Gonzalez and Lipman 2016, 519).

R&R AS RACIAL MANAGEMENT

In the January 1971 issue of *Gidra*, a newspaper-magazine written by a collective of “Third World, Asian sisters unit[ed] in the struggle for liberation,” Evelyn Yoshimura penned an article entitled “G.I.s and Asian Women.” Drawing on the experiences endured by many of her drafted “Asian American brothers,” Yoshimura details how US war-making in Vietnam was dependent upon the dehumanization of Asian women. Yoshimura (1971, 4) reports that drill instructors would make “dirty joke[s] usually having to do with the prostitutes they had seen in Japan or in other parts of Asia while they were stationed overseas.” By reducing Asian women to “symbolic sexual object[s]” in this manner, drill instructors tapped into and perpetrated longer-standing forms of anti-Asian violence. “The image of a people with slanted eyes and slanted vaginas,” Yoshimura writes, “enhances the feeling that Asians are other than human, and therefore much easier to kill.” Other than a brief mention of incidents where GIs on in-country R&R leave killed Vietnamese civilians “out of a paranoid concept of gooks [sic.],” however, Yoshimura’s (1971, 4) report does not explicitly engage with the gendered violences of transpacific militourism. And yet, it seems significant that the only image Yoshimura reproduces for her article is the frontispiece of AOA Hong Kong’s “Servicemen’s Guidebook.” Distributed “FREE” to soldiers on R&R leave in Hong Kong, the guidebook featured a pin-up photograph of a local woman lounging invitingly on a beach. The implication seems clear: Hong Kong appears to prospective militourists as an R&R site where their sexual fantasies could be fulfilled on demand.

Indeed, as Peter Hamilton (2015) notes, visiting US servicemen who had just arrived in Hong Kong often wasted no time making their way to Wan Chai, a district that remains infamous for its “smooch joints” and other, tamer forms of nightlife (Cross 1970). While in Wan Chai and other entertainment districts such as Tsim Sha Tsui, many Joes overindulged in alcohol, narcotics, and commercial sex. On occasion, they carried out violent acts that caused major headaches for locals and colonial officials alike. But as Hamilton emphasizes, US R&R experiences were never contained to these spaces. Hong Kongers across the city interacted with

visiting servicemen, profiting from the US presence while simultaneously “negotiat[ing] the asymmetrical race, class, and gender dynamics” that haunted everyday R&R encounters (Hamilton 2015, 567).

Hong Kong was not the only R&R destination that was popular for its nightlife. Military Assistance Command Vietnam’s (MACV) Office of Information (1968, 2) opened its pamphlet on the Manila R&R program by describing the “most attractive” city as a “Malaysian cake with Spanish filling and American topping.” As the pamphlet enthuses:

“Manila by night swings! It swings in tempo with the tantalizing sway of a lovely Filipina’s hips. Vivacious Filipinas glide across the dance floor to the soothing sound of a love ballad, each lovely lass typifying the unspoiled beauty of the archipelago-republic.”

Like the frontispiece to the Hong Kong guidebook, the pamphlet reproduces the tropical “Far East” as a “tantalizing” space of “unspoiled” beauty, ripe for US consumption. By trafficking in such well-worn militourist tropes, it re-established a martial, heterosexual masculinity as the “bedrock” – to paraphrase Munira, Yasmine, and Rola Khayyat (2018, 269) – upon which “[US transpacific] empire rests, and through which it expresses and reproduces itself.”

But as the pamphlet also recognizes, some vacationing servicemen preferred to spend their wages on drinks and food, rather than entertainment. Manila was also well equipped to cater to these soldiers:

“A galaxy of neon signs flashes across the night sky, luring the fun-seekers to a world of bistros and bars that vary from high class establishments to the murky beer and B-girl haunts – from the bright core of the city to the salty, shadowy waterfront” (MACV Office of Information 1968, 3)

The net effect here is to map Manila through a racialized geography of *leisure*, fixing different forms of entertainment in different parts of the city. The pamphlet underscores how musical acts from America, Europe, and the “top spots of Asia” perform for the “better night clubs” in the “bright core of the city,” implying that most local acts were likely relegated to the “murky” haunts located in the twilight zones of the broader metropolitan region. What links these seemingly distinct geographies of militourism and R&R is how they were sustained by the *labor of intimacy* – a concept that Vernadette Gonzalez (2015, 91) uses to understand how “intimate relationships were pivotal to the work of maintaining empire” – extracted from an overwhelmingly Filipina workforce. While working in Manila’s night clubs, cabarets, bars, and bistros, Filipinas – and perhaps also some Filipinos – brokered relationships both for and with their American occupiers, contributing to the everyday functioning of the broader imperial regime.

While R&R scholars have tended to center the spaces of imperial nightlife as the primary terrain of militourist encounter, local women also performed the labor of intimacy during the daytime. This is exemplified by the figure of the tour guide, who escorted US servicemen around R&R

cities as they saw the sights. According to one pamphlet distributed to vacationing soldiers in Hong Kong, tours around the Island, Kowloon, and the New Territories could be arranged at the Servicemen's Guide booth at Fenwick Pier in Wan Chai (Servicemen's Guides, no date). But many servicemen procured guides through more informal channels. Ronald Lauer's (1968) photographs of his leave in Hong Kong includes one portrait of his "escort," Annie Chan, posing next to some shopping bags at a viewpoint near Pok Fu Lam in western Hong Kong Island. Similar photographs, dated December 1969, appear in Jerry Harlowe's (1969) collection. Harlowe identifies one of his companions as Jenny, a "prostitute who worked out of the 'California Bar' [in] Kowloon." Wearing an orange vest, black trousers, and sandals, Jenny and an unnamed friend accompanied Harlowe's group to Tiger Balm Gardens and Victoria Peak. Along the way, Harlowe took candid photographs of both women, lending an aura of menace to what might have otherwise seemed like a pleasant afternoon scene. Reading Harlowe's photographs alongside Lauer's is suggestive of how Hong Kong women during the Vietnam War engaged in tourism and sex work to make ends meet. Nor were these entanglements limited to the Hong Kong context, for Don Kilgore's (1970) photographs of his two "Manila tour guides" emphasizes the need to understand these gendered survival strategies within a transnational context.

The ease with which Harlowe, Lauer, and Kilgore navigated Hong Kong and Manila was undoubtedly a privilege that stemmed from their whiteness. For non-white soldiers, race became a potential source of miltourist friction that could potentially impede wartime travel. In 1967, for instance, the South Korean and Filipino governments formally requested that their soldiers – who, as contributors to the war effort, were entitled R&R privileges – be allowed to take their leave in Hong Kong. Hong Kong's security representatives, however, voiced their opposition to the idea, flagging an undercurrent of "local antipathy to Phils [sic.]," which was "allegedly based on prejudicial handling of Hong Kong Chinese in Philippines" (Rice 1967). But it was also the Asian-ness of Filipino and South Korean soldiers that threatened the colonial order of things. Unsurprisingly, there was little consensus over the precise nature of this threat. Some colonial officials thought that Filipinos and South Koreans were "potential police problems *given easy merger with local populace and consequent difficulty in establishing controls and handling investigation incidents arising from R&R*" (Rice 1967, emphasis mine). Others made the opposite claim. One telegram paraphrasing First Secretary Rainsford explained that: "[Chinese Communists] and [Hong Kong] residents are *used to the presence of US soldiers*, but [the Hong Kong Government] feels ROKs or Filipinos, who *readily distinguishable* from Americans, *would immediately attract and adverse reaction*" (American Embassy Seoul 1967, emphasis mine). What links these two contradictory Orientalisms is how colonial officials racialized Filipino and South Korean soldiers as *Asian*, and hence, *different* from their white colleagues. Their Asian-ness became the grounds for constraining their mobility as miltourists: constraints that were not imposed on white Australian soldiers, who reportedly visited Hong Kong on R&R leave in droves (Tinkham 1967).

If war managers saw Hong Kong as a potential site of racial tension, they nonetheless celebrated Manila for exemplifying a "feeling of friendliness toward RR participants . . . that is more genuine than in most other countries," where "financial" considerations supposedly played a more important role (Anonymous 1970, 2). War managers knew that the friendliness of

Manilenos was “genuine” because it reportedly extended across racial lines. As one telegram enthused:

“There is a firm rapport between the Negro [sic.] servicemen and Filipinos that leaves Manila free of racial problems experienced elsewhere. In fact, believe Manila has *highest percentage of Negro [sic.] servicemen and is very popular with them.*” (Anonymous 1970, 2, emphasis mine)

This passage reveals that US war managers were acutely aware of how thorny questions of race relations were central to the everyday management of the R&R program. Racialized soldiers had their own R&R preferences that did not always match those of their white squadmates. R&R leave in a city like Manila might have appealed to Black or Asian soldiers who were looking for a way to escape the everyday forms of white supremacist violence that the US military’s broader commitment to a liberal politics of racial inclusion could never quite smooth over.

This is not to suggest that Black GIs *only* visited Manila on R&R. On the day that Harlowe toured Tiger Balm Gardens and Victoria Peak, he was also accompanied by a Black companion, who was also presumably a Joe on R&R leave. Unlike Jenny, this Black companion is never named in Harlowe’s captions. Given that Harlowe’s other photographs of base life suggest that he did not fraternize with many Black GIs, it is also difficult to confirm whether the two Joes knew each other before travelling to Hong Kong. That Harlowe did not feel compelled to acknowledge his Black companion is perhaps an indication that the two men were not very close. Or maybe Harlowe’s photographic gaze was simply fixated on Jenny whom he often kept at the center of his frame. When considered in relation to Harlowe’s (1969a, 1970) other portraits of women war workers – such as “Kim” of the Oh Hanh Long Hotel in Saigon or Maria from the Newton Towers Hotel in Singapore – his candid shots of Jenny exemplify his inability to see them as anything other than the objects of his imperial, desiring gaze. But an alternative reading of Harlowe’s photographs might linger on how they show Jenny, her friend, and the Black Joe doing things *together*. They chat at a Pok Fu Lam reservoir lookout (Harlowe 1969b). They wait for a taxi together (Harlowe 1969c). They rest on a patio, comfortable in each other’s company (Harlowe 1969d).

It is impossible to know what they talked about, what experiences they shared. Reading Harlowe’s photographs against the grain, however, draws our attention to the potential proximities between the Black Joe and the Asian women who were carrying out the transnational service work of empire. These inadvertent depictions of “productive intimacy” acquire further significance when we consider other soldier photographs that also capture everyday moments of Afro-Asian relation-making under conditions of race war. James Elliott’s (1970) strikingly intimate portrait of Samuel Fletcher, a Black special forces soldier who steps out of a hooch in Buôn Ma Thuôt alongside a smiling Vietnamese maid, invites similarly speculative questions about the potential nature of their relationship and its potential *political* implications. Following Katherine McKittrick’s (2011, 959) reflections on the “relational and connective life-force[s]” that have always been conditional to Black place-making practices, it is surely not a reach to suggest that Black soldiers might have come to value – in ways that mirror and yet also depart from white Joes like Harlowe – the fugitive forms of care and comfort offered by precarious

Asian war workers who, as Evelyn Yoshimura decries, were *also* surviving a war machine that was still structured by the lethal logics of white supremacy.

But the above passage about the Manila R&R program is also striking for acknowledging how R&R sites might be engulfed by local geographies of resistance and struggle. It was lifted from a telegram dated March 10, 1970, a time when Manila was being rocked by student demonstrations against the recently elected Marcos government. As an eager participant in the US' "burgeoning transnational security state in Asia," the Marcos regime sent troops to Vietnam in exchange for opportunities to "set the nation on a path to greater economic prosperity and influence in the region" (Man 2018, 104). Earlier rounds of student activism in the Philippines had explicitly renounced "war as an instrument of national policy." These concerns with Marcos' increasingly close "security relationship" with the US were carried forward by the "First Quarter Storm" movement that surged across the streets of Manila in the early months of 1970 (Lindio-McGovern 2020; Sales 2019). It is therefore hardly surprising that some war managers worried that this "First Quarter Storm" might take an explicitly anti-American turn, thereby requiring the closure of Manila as an R&R site. But the author of the telegram downplayed those fears, noting that while "there is always the possibility of an American serviceman becoming involved in an incident, anti-American or otherwise, in Manila, I do not believe such possibility is as high as anywhere else in Pacific, even including Hawaii" (Anonymous 1970, 1). Closing the R&R site was also ill-advised for diplomatic reasons, as the US empire-state was in the middle of renegotiating the crucial military bases agreement with the Marcos regime. Given the centrality of US miltourism to the continued economic health of the Philippines, the author argued that closing the Manila R&R program would "appear to be a reprisal on part of US and an unnecessary one," further stressing "Phil/Am" geopolitical economic relations (Anonymous 1970, 3). But even if the Manila R&R program proved to be a boon to some enterprising Manilenos, individual encounters between US miltourists and locals also potentially doubled – especially to First Quarter Stormers – as a reminder of how Marcos' nationalist ambitions had repositioned a supposedly postcolonial Philippines under the geopolitical economic control of its former colonizers.

This was not the first time that US war managers were confronted with the challenge of operating an R&R program under conditions of urban unrest. Only three years earlier, the Hong Kong site had become similarly mired in local political struggles. In the summer of 1967, leftist organizations carried out a succession of demonstrations and blockades – what one telegram labeled "terrorist activities" – across Hong Kong Island and Kowloon, which "succeeded in calling attention to the social inequalities and deep-seated class contradictions in the erstwhile colony" (Orlando 1968; Luo Shi 2020). This "tense situation," according to war managers, was "marring" the appeal of the Hong Kong R&R program, resulting in "decreased utilization." By creating an environment that was potentially unsafe for vacationing GIs, the riots forced war managers to consider the possibility that the R&R site might have to be discontinued. While Hong Kong's R&R program survived the riots, the May Day moment nonetheless reveals how GIs like Harlowe were touring – and transforming – a city caught between longer histories of colonial control and emerging geographies of inter-imperial investment. By 1967, Hong Kong had already become a key site of US imperial intervention. In the early 1960s, US finance capital began pouring into Hong Kong's booming plastics manufacturing industry, which had the effect of redirecting its output towards the US. As Christopher Chien (2021, 194) points out, it was this

industry's "exploitative labor practices" that "provided the economic foundation for the watershed 1967 Hong Kong riots." What the 1967 rioters were protesting, then, was not merely Hong Kong's ongoing colonial subordination by a "depleted" British empire, but also its gradual economic integration into transnational regimes of just-in-time imperialism in the Pacific. The implication here is that the logistical infrastructures that were shuttling miltourists to Hong Kong during the Vietnam War were part of the same transnational system of imperial "highways" that was circulating finance capital and plastic commodities between the colony and US consumer markets.

Following Andrew Friedman (2013), R&R cities like Hong Kong or Manila were therefore never merely flat surfaces or empty containers, but rather, militarized "meeting-up places" where US soldiers forged embodied relationships with locals, setting off social processes that further transformed the urban landscapes that the hosts called home. Paying closer attention to the everyday geographies of Vietnam War R&R emphasizes how such a vernacular politics of imperial relation-making took on a variety of forms and jumped across multiple scales. The intimate encounters between US Joes and transnational service workers that came to define Vietnam War R&R were not only productive of empire, but also a globalizing racial capitalism that eventually transformed Asia into a key center of offshored industrial production. While Evelyn Yoshimura, the First Quarter Stormers, and the May Day rioters never explicitly targeted R&R with their radical activism, Vietnam War miltourism nonetheless served as a scalar hinge linking the most intimate forms of racialized and gendered violence to the broader geographies of geopolitical and geoeconomic transformation that were sparking mass movements for decolonization and demilitarization in the Philippines, Hong Kong, and elsewhere.

R&R AS FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Thus far, this essay has reproduced common-sense understandings of miltourism as being driven by leisure. But not all soldiers took R&R leave to consume alcohol or drugs, see the sights, or pursue intimate relations with locals. Instead, some were traveling home on the military's dime. Hawaiians like Villaverde were quick to take advantage of R&R leave in this way. Not only did Villaverde return to Kailua in April 1969, his diary shows that his *kanaka maoli*, Asian, and white squadmates all took advantage of the R&R site in Honolulu to visit family and friends back home (Villaverde 1969c). While mainland soldiers like Harlowe could secure 30 days of home leave by extending their tour of duty, those who had no interest in waging *more* war could not meet up with their families while on the job. War managers saw this as an urgent problem that needed to be solved, and over time, assembled a transpacific infrastructure of family reunification, anchored by the R&R center at Honolulu's Fort De Russy, that subsidized the social reproduction of white, middle-class, and heteronormative households while simultaneously letting others fall by the wayside. Guamanian soldiers, in particular, quickly learned how R&R infrastructures could, in Deborah Cowen's (2017) words, "inhibit as well as enable connection." Unsatisfied by their second-class status as the logistical afterthoughts of the R&R program, these soldiers, their families, and their representatives transformed military R&R into a terrain of political struggle.

On January 19, 1968, Guahan's governor, Manuel Guerrero (qtd in Westmoreland 1968) wrote a letter to the commander of MACV, General Westmoreland, asking for clarification on "whether

the R&R program for Guam is operated on a different basis from that for other sites, and if so, whether the policy might be changed.” Westmoreland responded 9 days later, confirming that:

“Guam is *not an integral part of the R&R program, but operates as an exception to policy*. There is no R&R Center at Guam, nor is Guam a destination for R&R contract aircraft. However, since Guam is a refueling point for Hawai‘i R&R flights, we do permit servicemen whose families are residents of Guam to take leave there with authorization to travel on contract Hawai‘i aircraft on a space available basis” (Westmoreland 1968).

Guerrero (1968) was unsatisfied, for he continued to advocate on behalf of Guamanian soldiers who were finding it difficult to travel home on R&R. Guerrero confirmed that he was fielding a “large number of complaints from Guamanian servicemen, many of whom feel they are being discriminated against.” Guerrero expressed his support for these servicemen, reminding Westmoreland of their “fine record” in Vietnam, and calling on the general to make “every effort ... to afford them full and equal flight privileges, rather than accommodating them on a space available basis.” Guerrero, in other words, was asking Westmoreland to reorganize the logistics of R&R so that Guamanian soldiers might escape what Sheller (2021, 286) identifies as the “ambiguous” grey zone of “uncertain mobilities,” defined by a colonial interplay of belonging and exclusion.

Given Guahan’s colonial history, it should come as no surprise that these soldiers were largely Asian and/or indigenous. As Michael Lujan Bacqueva (2011, 35) notes, CHamoru men held the dubious “distinction of possibly having the highest killed-in-action rate per capita.” Out of Guahan’s total civilian population of just under 40,000, approximately 6000 CHamoru men and women served in Vietnam, 78 of whom lost their lives in battle (Le Espiritu Gandhi 2022). Given these brutal wartime experiences, CHamoru soldiers, as Keith Camacho and Laurel Monnig (2011, 167) note, “began to question why they sacrifice their lives for a U.S. government that continue[d] to impose its colonial policies and practices” on their communities back home. Under such increasingly tense conditions, the unevenly distributed geographies of R&R infrastructures became, for many Guamanian soldiers, a *political* problem to be addressed through transnational organizing and struggle. The experience of Sergeant Henry Sablan – who was potentially of Filipino and CHamoru descent – exemplifies some of the logistical challenges described by Guerrero. In a memorandum dated July 1968, Lieutenant Colonel Perselay (1968) details how Sgt. Sablan’s mother in Guahan had successfully pled with military authorities to grant him a thirty-day home leave on compassionate grounds. Perselay’s memorandum notes that Sgt. Sablan had never applied for R&R nor was he “aware of his mother’s actions ... in his own behalf.” Both Sablan and his mother were therefore counseled concerning the recent policy changes described by Westmoreland above, which permitted him to “apply for R&R to Honolulu and debark at Guam by competing with other Honolulu applicants on a space required basis.”

All of this is in stark contrast to the lengths that the US military underwent to ensure that mainland servicemen could use R&R leave to reunite with their families in Honolulu. Given that, as Adria Imada (2013, 213) emphasizes, the US military had long used Hawai‘i as a “staging ground” for the “leisure of millions of soldiers,” Honolulu’s Fort De Russy was well prepared to

host the uniquely demanding R&R program. Reporting for the *New York Times* in 1970, Wallace Turner (1970) notes that approximately 10,000 soldiers were arriving from the warzone each month to take their R&R leave in Honolulu. The majority of these soldiers were scheduled to rendezvous with one or more of the 12,000 people who were travelling to Honolulu from the mainland, hoping to “meet their men from Vietnam and try to catch up on a little of the living they have been missing since the war intervened.” To facilitate these reunifications, the US military negotiated with US airlines to subsidize the travel costs incurred by the wives and parents of soldiers on leave. By mid-1967, United, Pan American, and Northwest Airlines had all agreed to reduce economy class fares for military wives traveling to Honolulu by 25%: a subsidy which was extended to the parents of unmarried children in February 1968 (Anonymous 1967).

Over time, the R&R program was a massive boon to Honolulu’s economy, contributing approximately \$60 million a year. As Turner (1970) learned from Colonel Shikata, the commander of the R&R Center at Fort De Russy: “on any given day, these men and the people who have come to see them will be occupying 1,600 hotel rooms around [Waikiki Beach],” or “15 per cent of all the hotel rooms in Hawai‘i.” Such a massive influx of R&R dollars, Imada (2008, 352) argues, went on to accelerate the development of Waikiki into an international tourist hub. But from the perspective of certain military officers, the benefits of the Honolulu family reunification scheme were unclear. According to one lieutenant colonel, Honolulu’s popularity amongst married soldiers meant that it had “limited appeal” compared to other R&R sites, and therefore, could not justify its “considerable expense” (Nesler 1967, 2). But others recognized that the value of the Honolulu site was tied to its less tangible capacity to facilitate the social reproduction of mainland soldiers. It is therefore unsurprising that the Honolulu site eventually anchored the US military’s “7+7” R&R program, which was unveiled to much fanfare in 1971. In the months leading up to the launch of this revamped R&R program, MACV had begun experimenting with a directive that permitted soldiers to take 14 days of leave in the continental US. This option proved popular, inspiring MACV to develop a brand-new program that combined 7 days of R&R in Honolulu with 7 days of leave to either the mainland or any US Trust Territory (Anonymous, no date).

MACV’s adoption of the 7+7 model marked the formal incorporation of Guamanian servicemen into the R&R program. In so doing, MACV seemingly addressed the grievances that Guerrero raised in his 1968 letter to Westmoreland. But MACV’s about-face only emphasizes the racialized geography of uneven mobility that has historically haunted Vietnam War R&R. Up until the 7+7 experiment, war managers like Westmoreland continued to represent the formal incorporation of Guamanian soldiers into the R&R program as a logistical impossibility. As Westmoreland (1968a, emphasis mine) wrote to Guerrero in April 1968:

“Regarding your suggestion to divert or otherwise reschedule military aircraft to favor Guamanian leave traffic, there is nothing that can be appropriately done. Military aircraft, along with military contract aircraft, are committed to the maximum in *carrying out essential missions*; therefore, *any diversion for less than essential matters would affect adversely our efforts in Southeast Asia.*”

By framing R&R eligibility as a technical problem of logistics, Westmoreland (1968a, emphasis mine) hoped to convince Guerrero that “individuals whose homes or families are in Guam *suffer no discrimination* but, rather, appear to be favored among personnel serving in Vietnam.” In Westmoreland’s eyes, *only* soldiers from Guahan and Hawai‘i could reasonably expect home leave, at least before 1970. But what Westmoreland obscures is that the Honolulu family reunification program was *never designed* with *kanaka maoli*, CHamoru, or “local” Hawaiians and Guamanians in mind. Rather, their return journeys were the logistical *by-product* of a longer-standing imperial and settler colonial drive to guarantee the social reproduction of settler households. Despite the US empire-state’s investment in ideologies of racial liberalism, Pacific Islander modes of life-making could only be accommodated by transpacific R&R infrastructures on a “space available” basis.

Ultimately, then, R&R infrastructures were a conduit of racial and gendered violence, as well as a terrain of struggle and survival. This is not to elevate the politicking of Governor Guerrero into the realm of decolonial resistance. As numerous CHamoru scholars have pointed out, the US empire-state created the Government of Guam in 1950 as a way of maintaining territorial and administrative control over the island through various forms of proxy rule. Given that Guam’s “gendered history ... has created a complex brand of Chamorro loyalty and patriotism to the United States,” one might read Guerrero’s advocacy on behalf of Guamanian soldiers as an attempt to make claims on transpacific empire by strategically mobilizing a reformist politics of multicultural inclusion (DeLisle 2016, 567). But it is also difficult to ignore the sense of urgency that seems to animate Sgt. Sablan’s mother as she struggles to bring her son home from the warzone. Her testimony is not reproduced in the brief memorandum that I found in NARA. And yet, even when filtered through Perselay’s choppy prose, her ordeal still powerfully speaks to the sheer amount of logistical labor that has always gone into making diasporic and indigenous life bearable under conditions of transpacific empire. Christine DeLisle (2016, 569) argues that CHamoru women activists have long been at the forefront of local movements for decolonization and demilitarization. Moving forward, then, what alternative conceptions of tourism might we glean from the mothers of racialized and marginalized soldiers like Sgt. Sablan as they struggled to reunite their families?

CONCLUSION

In this essay, I traced the evolution of the US military’s R&R program over the course of the Vietnam War. Through a close reading of archival sources, I showed how these transpacific R&R infrastructures set in motion an overlapping multitude of militourist circulations across the decolonizing Pacific, bringing rank-and-file Joes into embodied relations with everyday configurations of Asian and Indigenous life. “Tourism’s imaginaries,” Vernadette Gonzalez (2021a, 387) argues, transform archipelagoes like the Philippines, Hong Kong, Hawai‘i, and Guahan “into destinations, removing long-standing oceanic networks of exchange and reciprocal relations with living beings, both human and nonhuman.” The Joes that I write about in this essay both confirm and complicate Gonzalez’s theorization of tourism as an imperial technology of antirelationality (see Melamed 2015). In their pursuit of both leisure and family reunification through R&R, they brushed up against, reproduced, and undermined longer-standing histories and geographies of transpacific imperialism, settler militarism, and racial capitalism, thereby opening intellectual and political spaces for thinking militourism differently.

Moving forward, it is important to acknowledge that this essay has reproduced the methodological problem of making US Joes – racialized or otherwise – the protagonists of the stories that we tell about R&R. This is not a problem that is easily solved. As both Phu and Gonzalez remind us, there are no official state archives that might help geographers recover the perspective of the bar girl, the prostitute, or the tour guide. Gonzalez (2021, 9) emphasizes how the gendered work of everyday survival is often “barely registered” in the imperial archive. Phu (2021, 15) confirms that these “violent occlusions” have ensured that “with few exceptions, visual histories of the war in Vietnam have nearly erased Vietnamese perspectives, relegating them to the backdrop of an American obsession with national humiliation and, in the post-1975 period, with moral redemption through militarized humanitarianism.” This isn’t to say that Asian or indigenous women war workers *never* appear in the boxes of documents that make up NARA’s Record Group 472. The correspondences of base managers reveal how they understood domestic workers as a potential strikers or insurgents and managed them as a risky source of disruption to the functioning of the war machine. But it is rare for state documents to engage with the everyday experiences of these women war workers in all their richness and complexity.

But even if the archival and secondary sources analyzed in this essay still gender miltourism as an activity undertaken by men, they nonetheless hint at the ways in which women war workers *also* relied on travel as a strategy for surviving and making do. In Vietnam, many of the women working on and around military bases were migrants who had been uprooted by the world-shattering violence of counterinsurgency, chemical warfare, and cluster bombing. Furthermore, historians like Angelina Chin (2012) might point out that in post-1945 Hong Kong, the supposedly “local” women who worked the streets and bars of Wan Chai or Tsim Sha Tsui were likely to be migrants themselves, hailing primarily from borderland provinces in South China. As day-time tour guides for Joes on R&R leave, they, too, consumed the sights. Through their labour, they reproduced landmarks like the Peak and Tiger Balm Gardens as miltourist destinations.

The implication here is that any radical geographical theory of miltourism must reckon with the vernacular cultures of travel that have always been produced by women war workers. As domestics, bar girls, tour guides, and entertainers carried out the transnational service work of empire in cities and on bases far from home, they also came to rely on each other for mutual aid and other communal forms of care and support. Over the course of the war, domestic workers not only sought safety in each other’s company, but also collectively struggled for better wages, working conditions, and other benefits (Attewell and Attewell 2021). Mai Lan Gustaffson’s (2011) interviews with Vietnamese entertainment workers, furthermore, emphasize how they “relied on each other for the familial assistance they had lost in the move away from their villages,” resulting in “tight-knit network[s] of babysitters and companions.” It is not a stretch to imagine how Jenny and her friend from the California Bar might have supported each other in similar ways: practices that have been carried forward into the contemporary moment by migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong, who continue to rely on similar infrastructures of solidarity and mutual aid as a means of survival (The Migrants Solidarity Committee 2020). Like the racialized and indigenous soldiers who strategically used R&R as a way of visiting friends and family back home, women war workers travelled not for the purpose of leisure, but rather, to engage in what Tuy Linh Tu (2021) might call an everyday politics of making do.

While scholars like David Chang (2016), Tracey Banivanua Mar (2016), Vernadette Gonzalez (and Mei-Singh 2017; and Aikau 2019), Hokulani Aikau, and Laurel Mei-Singh have asserted the centrality of travel to Pacific Islander practices of decolonization and resurgence, the everyday cultures of miltourism that I track in this essay are, by comparison, more modest and less radical. The racialized Joes who used R&R to make their service for empire bearable were not building “counter-networks of the end of empire” – to borrow from Banivanua-Mar (2016, 21) – as they travelled to and from the battlefield. And yet, I have tried to highlight the importance of lingering on the everyday experiences of figures such as Villaverde, Sgt. Sablan and his mother, the unnamed Black soldier, Annie Chan, and Jenny, who all turned to miltourism as a way of living under transpacific regimes of empire and racial capitalism. What we can glean from their stories are alternative geographies of miltourism that might allow us to think relationally across the multiple times, spaces, and scales of the decolonizing Pacific.

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