

REMEMBERING THE COMFORT WOMEN

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“Because we survived, now the whole world will know.” — Kim Hak-sun.

INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH QUESTION

How does Japan’s contested memory of the “comfort women” present the ways in which states use forgetting as a political tool, and how can public history reassert survivor memory?

BACKGROUND

During the spring semester, I conducted a research project under the supervision of Dr. Mullins through HIST 4955: The project culminated in a twenty-page research paper titled “*The Politics of Forgetting: Comfort Women, Memory, and Denial.*”

The paper examined Japan’s postwar historical narrative and its ongoing denial of the comfort women system. Over the semester, I analyzed scholarly debates, primary testimonies, and government statements.

OBJECTIVES

- Translating the written paper into an accessible digital exhibit mock-up designed for a general audience.
- Move the discussion of comfort women beyond academic spaces.

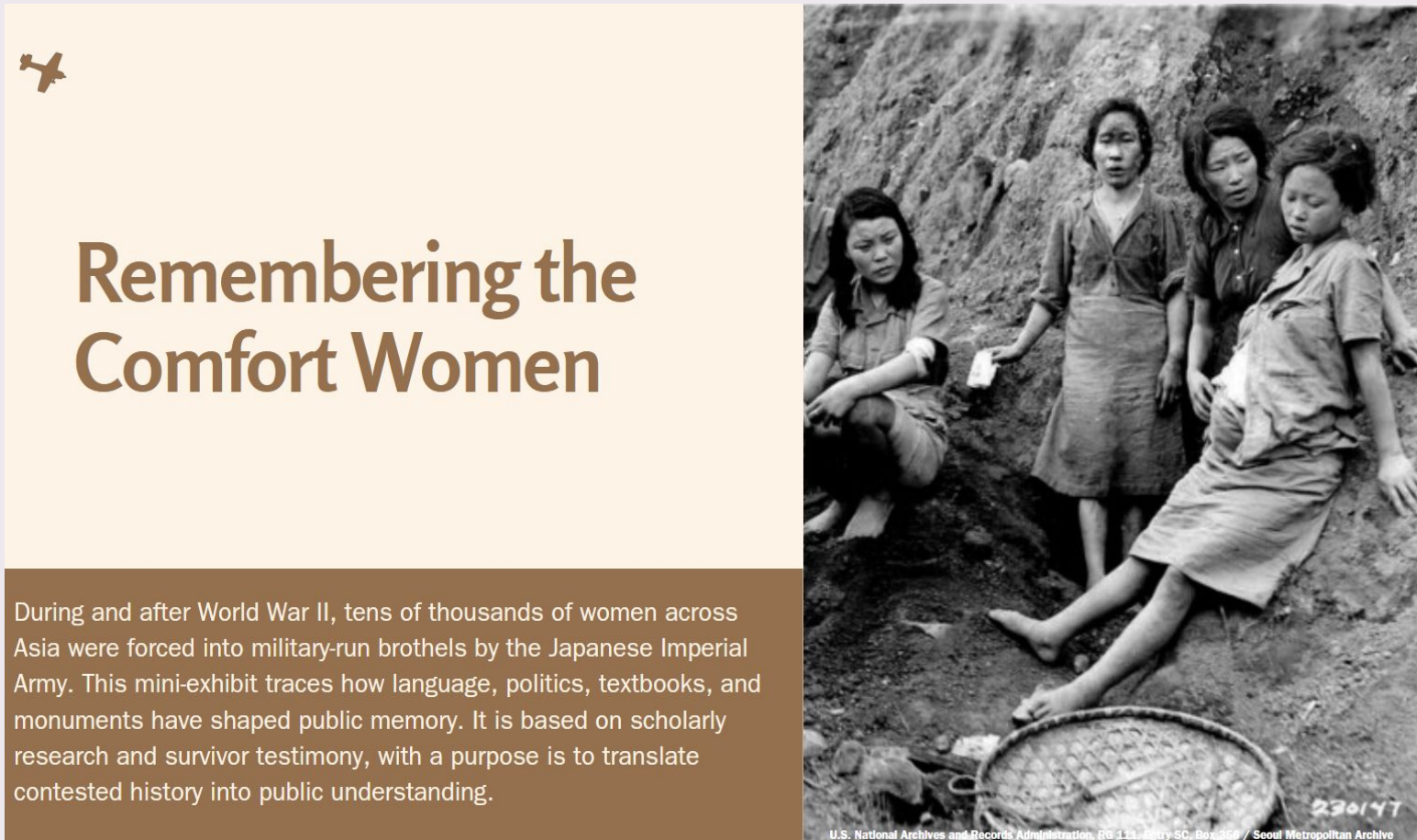
RESEARCH

ABSTRACT

Wartime atrocities are negotiated before they’re remembered. This project examines how the memory of Japan’s “comfort women” (women forced into military sexual slavery during World War II) has been silenced and reframed. Memory itself becomes a site of political struggle, where nations decide whose pain is acknowledged and whose is erased.

WEBSITE

The faux website was the result of my summer research. It is meant to be an example of an accessible digital exhibit that bridges academic research with collective remembrance. With the support of my mentor Dr. Wert, I created this mock-up.



CONTEXT

The term “comfort women” refers to the tens of thousands of girls and women forced into state-sanctioned sexual slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army during the Second World War.

Abducted from occupied territories across East and Southeast Asia, many were teenagers, some as young as thirteen. These women were confined in military-run “comfort stations,” euphemistically described as places of rest for soldiers but, in reality, organized sites of systematic sexual violence.

Website: <https://comfortwomenexhibit.my.canva.site/>

CONCLUSION

Forgetting is never neutral. Japan’s erasure of its comfort women is not only about the past, it is about the present struggle over accountability. When officials choose silence, survivors and educators bear the burdens of truth. The persistence of their memory resists any attempt to bury it. When I discuss this topic with others, many have never heard of it. And so, this project concludes that remembrance itself is a moral act. By making this history visible through a public digital format, I hope to demonstrate how storytelling and history can coexist as forms of justice.

SELECTED SOURCES

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