**Reflection**

As a military veteran, I admittedly have a degree of bias towards my perception of the military. The military service benefitted my family and I enormously. I fully support the U.S military and look to them as brothers and sisters. However, as a native of the Marianas, I cannot ignore any threat to my islands resources and land. Having these two conflicting ideals, I ventured out to obtain a better understanding. Over the course of conducting research, I have found that my initial understanding of the current issue of military development was inaccurate. My research transformed into an opportunity for a better understanding. It became a chance to better understand the relationship between the military and the island, both of which I take pride in.

Choosing the topic of military build-ups was easy. I was very interested in what I could find and the people I might get a chance to speak to. The military community here on Saipan is a group I am comfortable with. The two guests I had the chance to interview gave me a nostalgic feeling that immediately reminded of my prior service. It was refreshing to sit down and conduct an interview. In the end, I was glad that I could get accurate information on the topic. I would like to continue the research. There are many people that had the same perception of military build-ups that I had. I think it would be important to provide information to the community to avoid any misconceptions.

Conducting the research was also very interesting. Reading over the literature, looking at surveys, and the conversations I had with people around me also added to my fascination. As I went through my methodology, I started to understand the structure of the research paper I was putting together. However, it was the interviews that completely transformed the conclusion I was searching for. After completing all the requirements for the research, I now know that I can perform the same method for any class I take in the future. It’s almost the same process, but certain methods of gathering data would be less or more effective, depending on the topic and intended audience. I believe that this course helped me develop skills such as finding sources, experts on the topic, how to properly conduct an interview, and how to approach a research question.

In the end, I realized that searching for the truth is made even more effective if the researcher keeps an open mind. My prior knowledge on the issue of military build-ups in the Marianas acted almost like a barrier. What I found was the misconceptions on my part. In the beginning I was looking for something, instead I should have just allowed the information to reveal itself. If there is anything I could take away from this experience, is that the knowledge is out there, one just needs to let it in.