

A Trip To Georgia
To Close
The
School of the
Americas
(SOA)

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Roger and Marilyn Yockey, OFS



When you feel that your country is doing something that it shouldn't be doing, we who are lucky enough to live in the United States should stand up and be heard. It would be a sad and dangerous country if nothing was said, no demonstrations made, to let the government know we are watching what they are doing. So.....we (Roger and Marilyn Yockey) took the time to go down to Fort Benning in Georgia: to demonstrate, to march, to tell the US government that they should get out of the business of military training for Latin American soldiers.



During our trips to the various countries in Latin America it is hard not to see the military presence there. The latest and most disturbing was the trip to Honduras. The military and police were everywhere! There were many roadblocks with armed soldiers and police at these checkpoints.



The death of Archbishop Oscar Romero, a hero of the people in El Salvador; the deaths of Jean Donovan, Dorothy Kazell, Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, in El Salvador; the killing of the six Jesuits, their housekeeper and her daughter, also in El Salvador, plus the thousands of other men, women and children killed in Latin America have been traced to soldiers trained at the School of the Americas. The human rights abuses by SOA trained graduates continues today!



That is the reason for the "funeral procession" you can see at the beginning of the demonstration. All of us who are marching are holding a white cross with the name and age of someone who has been killed by troops trained at the school. As we are marching around names are read aloud of the victims, we raise our crosses and cry out "PRESENTE".

There were many university students that were part of this demonstration.

I tried to get pictures of groups that were carrying a banner. The number of people participating were thousands. It was peaceful. One person, Nashua Chantal, went over the fence where he was arrested and will probably spend at least 6 months in a federal prison.



When we reached the fence by the gate that enters into Fort Benning, we all put our crosses on the fence. Many people also placed roses. Children have been killed in their countries by the graduates of the School of The Americas, so some people brought stuffed animals, too.



This is a very solemn procession as you can see by the pictures. I have pictured the beginning of the procession on the top left side going down.



On the right I show pictures taken before the procession of the youths that were there.



A Franciscan Friar from El Salvador with his interpreter, a Veteran for Peace with one of the death marchers, and the presence of a union, UAW members, coming to the vigil.



The next couple of pages show the different groups as they processed to the gate, the crosses placed on the fence at the gate, and Nashua climbing up and going over the fence knowing that he will have 6 months in prison and some fines. He is 60 years old and this will not be easy for him.



We do hope that all our children, our grandchildren will find causes they believe in, not be afraid what the world thinks and will act on their convictions.

In our lifetime we have never seen anything “given” in the areas of justice and equality—it must be fought for over and over again.



