

Chris Lynn  
 Interviewing Donna Lynn  
 5/29/01

School

C: What were teachers teaching about the war while it was going on?

D: Our world history teachers would talk about it. There was an underlying tension about the war. Feelings ran strongly both ways, pro and con, for and against the war. So teachers were very careful, kind of in a third person type of way. 'What do you think? These are the decisions they are making. If you could make decisions what would you-- how would you go about changing the war? There were just very careful as to what they said, or how much they said, because there were a lot of strong feelings both ways. And of course we were in high school. As a female it wasn't as... it affected us, but not as directly as being a male, because they had the draft to look at.

C: What did you feel-- you mentioned the teachers talked in third person-- what was your reaction? How did you feel?

D: I didn't want there to be a war. I don't think... no one wants a war. It was scary. It was at times.. at times I thought what we were doing was right, and I still defend what our government did, but at the time there was all that loss of lives. And that really bothered me.

C: How did you react to that?

D: The loss of lives? I was saddened. I knew friends that were going to go over there. When they graduated, that was it, or had graduated. There were a lot of people that didn't believe in it and protested. I was never involved in that directly. It's always sad when you know there's going to be a loss of lives.

C: What was the attitude and reaction when they changed the dress or the hair style?

D: Well you always have the dissident few that are... we're going to have the ones that are dressing in the khaki clothing and the camouflage clothing and things like that. No we weren't hippies, we were into flower power and short skirts, bandanas on our heads. The one thing that sticks out is the MIA bracelet. It seemed like everybody was wearing the MIA bracelet. Like I said, at any one time I would have at least 5 on, and as we would get confirmation that they had either been found or whatever; an MIA bracelet is Missing in Action. And when they would find that person they whether he be dead, or alive, or in a prison camp. When that person was located, then the bracelet was... they had a central place that you were supposed to take them or send them, and that's what we did. I'm sure I still have one two or three still laying around, though.

C: Do you know some of the people that you wore the bracelets for?

D: I'd have to look. I remember one. His name is Robert G. Donnet (sp) and he was a lieutenant, and they never did find him. In fact I still have his bracelet somewhere, but we never did find him. Another one was Captain Michael Lewis. Or something like that. They did find him. He did die. They did find him. He was missing in action. They later found out that he was killed in a crash.

Homefront activity

C: How did men who were drafted rebel?

D: People who were being drafted, men who didn't want to be. They usually rebelled by going to Canada. Or somewhere where there wasn't extradition. But then they weren't allowed, after the war was over... if you went to Canada, that was it.

C: You weren't allowed to come back.

D: No, once you went to Canada, you were a deserter, and you were court martialed as such, or put in jail. Whatever they at that time decided was your punishment. And it wasn't just leaving the country. Oh boy! ...And coming back when the war was over. That wasn't what it was. You were going to pay for leaving the country, and I'm not sure which president, but I know they weren't allowed back in.

Vets

C: To what extent did men enlist voluntarily or accept the draft?

D: A lot. Nobody wants to go to war willingly. I don't think, anybody just says, 'oh boy, I want to go to war.' There may be a few, but the majority of the people had reservations. They may join that because of patriotic duty or whatever, but the thought of dying was not thrilling to anybody. And once you went over there, I think your term was a year, and you were lucky if you lasted the first week. Yes, there was a lot of apprehension. People signed up, but they weren't accepted. If you went in and enlisted, when you got back, things were not, 'oh wow you fought in the war; we're really proud of you.' You got spit on. You got hit.

C: And this is how they were treated after they returned?

D: Yes, you didn't get the heroes. Not like in WWI or WWII. You didn't get a hero's welcome, and that was wrong. I think that scared a lot of young men.

C: Were there any activities done about that?

D: There were drives, petitions to stop the war, to find our missing men. I honestly tried to stay out of a lot of it. I really did. It's bad to say, but I just... I was very afraid of it.

C: That's understandable.

C: How did life in Hillsboro change from before the war started to during the war?

D: To me, it really didn't, other than the drives, and wearing the bracelets. There really wasn't that much change. I worked in a drug store; what can I say. We weren't in the middle of the war. Different things went on, dances and stuff like that, and the veterans would come back, and you would hear all this stuff but, no, I can't really say.

Opinion

C: The public opinion of the war, did that change over time?

D: There were people that believed in the war and people that didn't believe in the war. There were people that spoke out strongly both ways. I know there were times when we would be in the middle of Hillsboro, and people would be arguing, 'I think this is wrong.' 'They have no right to do that.' 'No, they're right to do that.' 'They should send that many more men.' 'No they shouldn't.' Verbal disagreements. It was a very sensitive subject. It was one that you tried to steer clear of, that was the best thing to do. It was a subject you wanted to stay away from.



C: Did the prices change for example the economy? Did that change over the war? Did the government raise prices?

D: No, let's put it this way: the guy I worked for, he was always raising the prices. Yeah, I would say things did get raised. Prices did go up, at least from my point of view. Different things that you wanted to buy.... Because it was... you're talking about funding a war effort. It boosts the economy, and people hate to say that, but when there's a war, the economy is boosted. Of course things go up, and people start buying more.

C: Was the price increase significant?

D: Any price increase to a person in high school is going to be tough.

C: How did the anti-war demonstrations affect you?

D: I was never personally involved in them. I had seen them. That I know of, they didn't really happen in Hillsboro. I know they did happen in Portland. But as far as Hillsboro, I don't really remember any happening. There were people that would get upset, and you would hear this verbal argument. But as far as demonstrations go, there were more in Portland.

C: The young men that were drafted and knew they were going into the war, how were they treated before they left?

D: There was a lot of pressure to avoid the draft. Going to college. Going to Canada. The ones that wanted to go, the ones that actually wanted to do their duty, they got slack. People were more, 'Why are you doing this?' 'Don't you know it's wrong?' Were they given the hero's send off? No.

C: Were there any programs set up to help them reintegrate?

D: I can't honestly tell you. I know that after, not right after, but probably between two and five years after the war, when they started finding out about post-war syndrome... after the war. When they started finding out that this was a reality, that people were having flashbacks, and they were having problems, then you started hearing about programs popping up.

C: Were there any changes regarding school life that can be attributed to the war?

D: I couldn't tell you.

C: Price increases?

D: The prices increases, rising feminism, I just didn't... I tried to stay out of the war.

C: Is there anything that I have not asked that you would like to relate to me regarding the Vietnam War?

D: It was just a bad time in American history. The young men and women that were in it deserve more than they got. They gave more than they ever got, and if I had known then what I know now, I would have done more, or at least tried, because, there were young men and women that went over there, doing for their country and their country turned their back on them; and that was wrong. You don't ever do that, no matter how much you object to something. If you've got young men and women going out there and doing their

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Vets

patriotic duty, don't turn your backs on them. That's just not right. And you and I may feel that the war was wrong, or the war was right. We had the Korean War, then the Vietnam War, and people say 'they didn't want us there.' They needed help. We were ill prepared. We went over there, and they did things nobody had even thought about. They had complete cities under ground. How were we supposed to deal with that? We had never fought an enemy like that. You can look in hindsight, but... I didn't fight over there, but I think the people that did... I have a lot of admiration for them, because they had the guts to do something I didn't.