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Interview
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Interview conducted by Lenore Fenn
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SH: I grew up in Watertown Mass, went to public school. My father grew up in Waltham and my mother was from Waltham. I still have family there. I met John at U. Mass. Boston during my first semester there when we first went together. That summer he enlisted because we wanted to get married and the Vietnam War was raging, and he wanted to get it behind him before we married.

INT: What was your family's politics?

SH: My father was a veteran. He was in the Navy in World War II. He went so his kids wouldn't have to. They were anti-war and didn't want John or my brother to go. My mother tried to talk John into hiding in the basement when it was time for him to go, but no, he wanted to get that commitment behind him.

INT: Did your brother serve?

SH: My brother was in Vietnam about the same time John was.

INT: Did you have any group affiliations that influenced your attitudes?

SH: No. My father said we should never fight again in a war unless the tanks were coming up our street. That was a powerful statement; as a little girl I imagined tanks on the street and it scared me.

INT: Did he talk about his experiences?

SH: No, he wanted to put the war in his past. He has a lot of records still and he's on the verge of writing a book. Just retired. We encourage him to do it. He has records and pictures—memoirs.

INT: As a student, when John left, you continued in school?

SH: No, because we were going to get married I started working that summer; my job turned out to be good so I ended up staying working, saving money. John sent money home so we would have something to start with.

INT: What did you hear from him?

SH: Before he left we were young and in love. It was desperate. When he left it was terrible. We said we'd write each other every day. Frustrating. Sometimes I had a week with no letter from him, then I'd get seven. They also read and cut out some. Once he sent a tape. He taped it in a little trailer with a generator [but] I couldn't hear it; that was the end of taping.

INT: How did he become engaged in antiwar activity, or did you encounter VVAW first?

SH: I was working in Copley Square at New England Life. John didn't know. The demonstrations were held right in Copley Square. I would go during lunch hour or after work or on weekends. I didn't tell him until after he came back. It was very confusing, conflicting, because I was anti-war and wanted the war to end. The question would be, "Where's your support, because your brother and your boyfriend are over there?" So I felt like I was doing what I had to do, but I didn't want to confuse either my brother or John about my politics because ultimately they were more important. I was nineteen. It was confusing times. I felt more comfortable in the anti-war movement than supporting Vietnam, so that's where I drew my lines for myself.

INT: Could you describe more about the feeling of the time? What the country was like at the time and maybe some of the demonstrations you attended?

SH: I don't remember too much about the demonstrations except that there seemed to be members of the Communist movement at the demonstrations. There were a lot of leaflets and newspapers being given

out, and I didn't want any part of that. That was too far for me to go. I was just interested in supporting the soldiers in Vietnam in an effort to bring them home. So that's what I remember about the demonstrations, except that I did bring friends from home to demos on weekends and they were really amazed by the crowds and that this was really happening. But my politics about the war was blaring at me because my brother and John were in Vietnam and I had other friends there, too.

I couldn't not watch the news every night—I was glued to the TV to see where was bombed and see where there were plane crashes. I was neurotic about it. I couldn't stop thinking about it. It never left my mind. It was something that was very uncomfortable. So when those days went by, those three or four or five days without a letter I thought, oh my god, I hope...so I needed that. I needed those daily letters to let me know that six days ago—that's about how long it took to get a letter to me—that six days ago he was still alive. And I couldn't get my brother to write to me every day so that I could keep that lifeline. But John did it; he liked getting my letters and I liked getting his letters, and we were very committed about it.

Another thing, when I graduated from high school—this is a little bit of an aside—I was really overwhelmed when I graduated from high school. The draft was on; there was a lot of pressure on the young boys to go in the service. A lot of them went to college to avoid the draft. The rest of them went in the service; they all went in. When my brother enlisted he went with five other friends; they all went in together. They went through boot camp together. So the first few years after I graduated from high school there were no guys around. The men were gone. And I came from a very working class neighborhood. Watertown at that time was a very working class town. I would say within six months of my graduating a third to half of the boys who graduated with me were in the service. It was Basic

Training, maybe some specialty training, and then Vietnam. They all went—unless you had a brother in Vietnam already—they all went. So those kind of were funny years for eighteen, nineteen-year-olds and me because there weren't many men my age around, so your life just was writing to people in Vietnam and trying to keep in touch and sending things—little care packages and things, that's basically what I did. I worked and I supported people that I knew that were over there.

INT: What was the tenor of the demonstrations like? Were they mostly peaceful, were they violent, were they all kinds?

SH: The ones I went to before VVAW? They were very peaceful. Never an incident. And I was always amazed at the crowd. They were big demonstrations. They always had platforms and speakers. I don't even remember who any of the speakers were—people that were part of groups. Very peaceful. Boston police on horses on the outskirts. Don't remember ever seeing any confrontations, people having to run, or tear gas or anything like that.

INT: What year?

SH: I would say that was 1967-1968.

INT: So then what happened?

SH: John came back in May of 1969. He left on my birthday and came home on my birthday. It was hard when he left on my birthday, but it was nice when he came home. We were married about two weeks later. He still had a year to do in the service, and he was stationed at Sierra Vista and so we spent our first year of marriage living in the desert of Arizona and it was great. Wonderful. The biggest thing that I remember about the Vietnam War and John is his reaction to it that year was mostly that he just wanted to avoid all the bad things ,and every time he talked about Vietnam it was a funny story. It was like, "Oh remember that night that we..." You know we

would have veterans over. He was one of the few people that was married that could live off base. You had to be married to live off base, so we had a lot of people come to visit us because it was a place to go. Lots of times we had dinner parties. Mostly it was all guys so they would sit around and talk about Vietnam, but when they talked about Vietnam, they never talked about the bad stuff. They talked about the parties, and when they broke into the PX or whatever they called it in Vietnam and they stole steaks and had big barbecues, is all they talked about that first year—really our whole life that first year living in a little town just outside an Army base and everybody was in the service. Vietnam was a big topic, but I can't remember hearing anything bad. I can't remember hearing anybody, any friend, dying—anything. That's why, when he got out of the service and when he joined VVAW, it was such an important thing for him because it gave him the opportunity to deal with some of those feelings that he had not faced that first year. I think he needed a break from what was happening in the war. He needed time to give himself some space from all the horror. To have just that one year where the things that he remembered was the fun things and not all the bad stuff. Because it took years, and I think he's still dealing with the bad stuff. But VVAW was his outlet to deal with it.

A lot of people said to me, "John is out of the service now, he needs to put the war behind him. Why do you let him go to VVAW, and why do you let him continue with all these meetings all the time and hang around with all these guys?" I felt like it was the best thing in the world for him. I couldn't imagine any better therapy than to be with all the same people that had all the same feelings and all the same guilt and didn't know how to put the guilt in the right place but were really carrying the burden themselves. When they were all together they were with people that understood them. I couldn't understand the war, but these other vets could, and it was really

important therapy for him. They even had special groups that were just men's groups and nobody that wasn't a veteran from Vietnam could be there. I could go to VVAW meetings and I could go to demonstrations and I could be involved with VVAW, but there were times when they would have meetings that were just vets, and it was to talk about all the things that they really needed to emotionally put in their right place. It was just a really good outlet for John, and I know [it was] for all the guys. And these guys will meet someday again if there's a reunion and it will be just like those twenty-five years never happened, because the camaraderie that they have because of what they shared is really very special. That was a really important thing. I always resented when people said to me, "The war is over for John. He's outta there." Like I could control him anyway, because I really can't, but if I could, there was no way that I would want to stop him from doing that, because it was his way of dealing with that, and it was really a good outlet and it helped him a lot. He needed that. I mean, the veterans that you hear about that do horrible things, like shoot people in banks, or all the horrible crimes like, "A Vietnam veteran did this," or "a Vietnam veteran did that." Those are all the people that never had the opportunity to deal with what they did in Vietnam and who are living with so much guilt and so much horror and so much tragedy. It was too much for one person to handle by themselves. That was a hard concept to get people like my family, my parents and John's parents, and other family members to understand. They thought the same way the World War II veterans felt, that when the war was over to put it behind them and forget about it because "It's a bad thing and you don't want to carry that."

INT: Tell us more about how you dealt with the criticism of John's involvement in VVAW.

SH: Basically it was hard, and I think that it put a wedge between us and our families. John is the only one in his family who went into the service and went to Vietnam, and my brother was the only one in my family that went in the service and went to Vietnam. It really wasn't until after my brother died that my parents really realized how much destruction [the war in] Vietnam had done to my brother. He didn't die in Vietnam, he died in a car accident two weeks after he was home. John and I both feel—and now we basically convinced my parents—that Tommy probably died because he had been [in Vietnam]. It's really very hard to imagine being in Vietnam and twenty-four hours later being in the United States—having everything just be normal after you've lived in a war zone for a year.

Tommy was wounded three times in Vietnam and was hospitalized three times in Vietnam and put back out. He was a grunt. He was a foot soldier and he was put back out in the field after every hospitalization. When he came home, he was home for just the two weeks. It was like we could breathe again. My parents just felt wonderful! That he was home; that he was safe, and that he was okay. Tommy didn't like the attention that he was getting, and when my mother would make him his favorite meals and bring him orange juice with ice to wake him up in the morning and things like that he would say to her, "Mom, how can you do this for me? You don't know how many kids I've killed. How can you treat me like this? I'm a murderer. I've killed people and turned the body over and found it to be a little boy. Don't treat me like this." He was obviously in a big struggle and not able to deal with all the tragedy that was involved with war. My parents just wanted to celebrate him being home and being safe. So when he died in a car going ninety miles an hour that hit a tree less than two weeks from coming home it was pretty obvious to most of us that it wasn't necessarily an accident. My parents really blamed Vietnam for my brother's death. Even though he

didn't die in Vietnam he died because of Vietnam. That helped my parents come around a little bit with dealing with the fact that John was trying to solve all these confusing issues, and where the blame should lie, through VVAW. Eventually it was pretty much accepted. They know now that when there's a war they're going to hear from us, or they're going to see us on the news, or they're going to know that we're going to Washington. They know that we're not just going to sit back and let things that we don't agree with happen. I think that they basically understand it, even though they won't be out there with us. But at that time when the war was still going on and this anti-war group was growing rapidly it was very hard for my parents to really understand what we were doing.

INT: What kind of stories were you hearing in those letters?

SH: Most of the things that John wrote about I felt were really personal between him and I. He knew that some of his letters were going to be censored. And there were times when things were cut out of his letters. But for the most part he wasn't telling me about the war. He might have been telling me about his buddies or telling me different things that were going on that might have bothered him like, a friend, one of the men that was even in the same hooch as him, ejected from a plane and committed suicide. He purposely ejected from a plane, committed suicide, so here he was dead on the field with everybody right there.

He talked about personal things and comfortable things, like his hooch maid and how she used to bring him bananas every day. She was really good to him. He always had more socks and underwear than anyone else in the hooch because he was nice to her and she liked him. And he would defend her if people were giving her a hard time or were treating her like a maid. Just different things like that. Most of the letters had basically pleasant topics and [he] was asking a lot of personal stuff about myself and

my family and his family because I spent the year that he was in Vietnam going out to visit his mother in Worcester maybe one weekend a month, and then his brother was in the hospital. He had cancer and he was at Children's Hospital and I was working in Boston, so I spend many evenings going in and spending the night with his brother, bringing him food and visiting. He was thirteen at the time. Just doing the family visit with Tommy, because his mother was living in Worcester and she was working everyday and she couldn't visit him. So I spend a lot of time that year doing that. Those were the kinds of things I was writing to him about and those were the kinds of things he was writing back to me about, trying to get a sense of what kinds of things were going on at home and how Tommy's health condition was, because at the time we though he might die. We didn't think he was going to beat cancer. He had several operations that year, maybe four or five. So it was really a hard time for John to be away, because his mother was divorced, and she was alone with the other kids, and she was working full time, and she had a child in a hospital that was fort-five miles away. A lot of the things that we talked about were more keeping the family connections and keeping each other informed, and that kind of thing. Most of his letters were fairly short. Maybe two or three pages, and a lot of it was planning what was going to happen when he got home from Vietnam, and us getting married, and those kinds of things. He really wanted to get engaged while he was in Vietnam. He wanted send me a diamond for Christmas. I didn't want him to and I didn't let him because I felt like that would be a bad omen and that if I had a diamond he'd [be] sure to be killed. I just really had this awful feeling that was hanging over my head that I didn't want anything that would be a pressure, that would make me worry more or—I don't know. So we wrote a lot about that, because he was really trying to convince me that we should be engaged and that was one of the topics. But most of the stuff

was very personal, very much our lives and his personal life, not necessarily what the Army was doing in Vietnam. Sometimes he would write about flying, or criticize a commanding officer. But most of the time I really didn't know what was going on over there. I had a hard time sometimes even knowing where he was.

He did have a period where I didn't get letters. He went AWOL for, I don't know, maybe ten days or something. He was having a really hard time with one of his officers and he just walked off the base. At that time he went to where my brother was and visited him, and he went to where some of our other friends were and he visited them, and he just kind of went on a trip in Vietnam. That time I was really concerned about him because it was the longest period I didn't hear from him. He did write to me and tell me all about it when the letters resumed, because he was afraid he was going to be court-martialed. He thought that if they put him in jail that I wouldn't hear from him, so he wanted to make sure I knew what was going on. But it was the most interesting and had the most to do with the service of any of the letters that he wrote to me while he was there. It was quite a collection.

INT: I'm eager to know how you perceived the organization and structure and tenor of VVAW.

SH: I spent a lot of time actually—not a whole lot of time, but when John was there and I was with him—we were in the office in Cambridge, the VVAW office, and they really looked like a motley crew. They didn't look like they were very organized or very democratic and they almost didn't look like they were peaceful. They always were in fatigues and always in camouflage and wore all their buttons and all their anti-war stuff, and it didn't seem like—you kind of wondered all the time. Every time there was an issue or every time they were planning a demonstration or every time they were deciding what to do, if there was one person who was just going

to sway things one way or another way… And a little tiny bit of that happened. But for the most part they voted about everything. You had to be a veteran to vote, and they did! They discussed everything. They had meetings, and if they couldn't solve things they'd have another meeting. Everybody in VVAW and the structure of VVAW was very involved and very committed to making these meetings and being there and being part of the planning, so that everybody understood what was going on. Even though from a woman's perspective I would say first-hand it didn't look very organized and it didn't look like they were being very democratic, they really were, and there were a lot of really smart guys in this group, and they really wanted to do things right. I think that's an important thing to remember when you look at them, because when you look at them they look like hoodlums and they look a bit like, "This guy's a troublemaker," but they were really good people and they had really big hearts and they spent a lot of time doing things like fundraiser dinners for underprivileged people from other countries and things like that. They did a lot of good things; they didn't just demonstrate against the war. They did a lot of supportive things for each other. It was very impressive.

INT: I gather that you attended some protests organized and sponsored by the VVAW once you and John got involved, perhaps in Washington.

SH: I went to Washington. We camped on the Green right across from the White House. That was a very interesting demonstration because a lot of politicians came out to talk to us. Ted Kennedy was there and of course John Kerry was there and other senators came out, too, to first hand find out what was really going on with this group. It was kind of special because when somebody came onto the Green that wasn't part of our group, everybody knew almost instantly—it was just a buzz. It was, "Oh, Senator Kennedy is walking around," or whatever. So people that had something to

say to these politicians actually got a chance to say it, which was good because I think that the government really didn't know where the people from VVAW were coming from and I think they were a big threat. The one-to-one speaking with each other was helpful for them to get some kind of perspective that these people are anti-war but also that they are a peaceful group.

INT: Did the tenor of the demonstrations change over time? The demonstration that you're talking about in Washington was in 1970-71?

SH: 1971. I actually had to fly home from that demonstration and that's kind of when things really started to get going. I wasn't arrested in Washington and [was] not involved in taking any of the monuments or any of that stuff, but John was. So as soon as I got home I had to start worrying about what was going on with him, because he ended up spending a couple of nights in jail in Washington D.C., and I guess their jails are pretty much of a dungeon type. That was a very active time and it was very exciting for him because he felt like all of America was watching. And they were. I mean, we watched this on TV. It was kind of scary for me, because even though I knew that what they were doing was important, I still felt a personal threat because I felt that he could end up being sentenced and end up in jail because of this. And I didn't want to see anything like that happen, but the way things worked out I don't think anybody was jailed for any of those things—the taking of the monument or the Empire State Building or any of those things. I remember following the court cases, but I think most of the charges were either dropped or they were given probation or some kind of thing like that. But I don't think anyone was every locked up for any of that.

The demonstration in Lexington had a completely different tone because that was kind of going out into yuppie land where everybody was kind of prim and proper, and we were treated very nicely. We were greeted very

nicely by the locals, and I don't remember any tension at all, even though they were saying that if you stay on the Green after nine thirty or ten o'clock you're going to be arrested. They were saying, "If you stay on the Green, you're going to be arrested, and there are the buses. They're going to walk you onto the bus." I don't even remember people being dragged, although that could have happened; but I don't remember that happening. I know that when it was time for us to be arrested we lined up like we were going to school, and we got on the buses and they took us off to the DPW [Department of Public Works] and they gave us doughnuts and coffee and made us comfortable with blankets and pillows and things, and we got to sleep on the floor that night. They weren't out to teach us a lesson. I don't know why they took that stand. I don't know why they didn't just let us stay on the Green that night, but for some reason they felt they had to enforce that law, and we weren't going to leave and that's just the way that went. But it was never a threatening situation. I never felt like anybody was going to be hurt or that any police officers were going to have to use their guns or anything like that. It was a very safe... if you had to be arrested it was probably the best place you could do it. Because they treated us wonderful and they knew—they basically seemed to have an understanding about being anti-war and about the politics of demonstrating against a war and they didn't "freak" like maybe like the police in downtown Boston might or something like that. We were handled with kid gloves and then entertained. Even when we went to court I felt that we were treated that way, and even the lawyers—people just went out and collected money in the community to pay for...nobody paid for their lawyer. The money was all donated by people that supported the efforts of VVAW and what they were doing. That was really nice, that was support from maybe people that wouldn't go out and demonstrate, but did understand what you were doing, why you were

there. So the tone of that one was much different than a lot of the other demonstrations. Most of the time if there was going to be problems, I backed off from it because at that time I was pregnant, and then after that at demonstrations I had a baby with me, so I really wasn't going to let anything happen.

INT: What kind of people joined you on the Green, what was the mood like?

SH: You mean besides veterans? You know, I don't remember. I know there were people that just came out to watch and to see what was going on, but I don't remember them really joining us. I was thinking along the [Concord] river, when we were camping the two days before… Actually that night on the Green I think there were people from the community that said, "If they're going to arrest all these people, they're going to arrest me, too," But I didn't know anybody from Lexington at the time, so that's something that I really haven't thought about.

Were there a lot of people from Lexington? That got arrested that night? Yes? I know that the church was really good to us, too, and anyone who didn't want to be arrested could just go stay overnight at the church. And that was nice, that was an option for me too. If I didn't want to be arrested, I could go stay at the church and a lot of the women did stay at the church. People that had kids at home or whatever, that were worried about other personal aspects about being arrested, did stay at the church, but John convinced me that I should stay with him, so I ended up being arrested.

INT: Are there any vivid images or memories? Describe the school buses and lining up and…

SH: Yes, I was a little bit apprehensive. I didn't know where they were taking us and I didn't know what it was going to be like, but once we got there, I mean, it wasn't even like you were locked up. Even though we were

in the DPW building and there were police guarding us—supposedly—it was never a threatening situation. I just felt like they just wanted to get us through the night and without any incidents, and that's basically what happened. That's why they brought in food and blankets and tried to make sure people were comfortable and they played music and that's really nothing like being arrested. When people say, "You got arrested!" it's not like you spent a night in jail. There was so much camaraderie within the whole group that it didn't feel like a bad thing. It felt like, okay, it was making a stand and it accomplished what we wanted it to accomplish. And it certainly wasn't difficult—I mean if it was like that every time, people would be getting arrested all the time.

INT: What are your memories of going to court? What was the judge like? What was the procedure?

SH: It was real court and the judge was up there on a throne. And the lawyers did most of the talking. I don't remember a whole lot about it. I think that I was apprehensive at the beginning because it was the first time I'd ever been in a courtroom. It was a big old building and they are very impressive with all the mahogany woodwork and the guy with [the gavel], and it seemed very controlled. It seemed that before we went into court we knew what was going to happen. The lawyer that was representing us—I don't think he had talked to the judge, but I think there had been some kind of an agreement that was basically made and we had to go through the formality of the whole thing—but we were assured before actually going before the judge that things were going to be okay and what probably was going to happen. We weren't told exactly what would happen, but we were told what probably was going to happen. So it wasn't as frightening as it could have been, and I don't remember anything about the judge beyond

that. He was, I think, just going through the motions. I don't remember him giving a speech to us or anything.

INT: And then what happened?

SH: And then we went home. It was very nice to go home after camping for a couple of days and spending a night at the DPW; we were glad to go home and kind of settle down.

INT: You said, "We accomplished what we set out to accomplish." Describe what that was.

SH: I don't know the numbers of how many people demonstrated through that whole weekend. But it was impressive. The press was very involved and the television news people were involved and basically what we were trying to accomplish is to say, "We're here"—not me, but the veterans were trying to say, "We're here"—"and we've been to Vietnam and we know what it was like, and we think it was wrong and we want it to stop." At least they got that message and I think that was really important. To me, basically—I was nineteen years old so I don't know how much thinking I did about it then—but the basic message was, "We have the experience of what it is like over there and we want you to listen to us." Because of all the press and because of the television stations and the newspapers covering this, the message was out and that's what they were trying to do. And it was out in big numbers. There were a lot of people there and it was very impressive. Because it was so peaceful too, I think that was really important. Because everything went so easy without any problems or anybody being hurt. That just magnified the feeling of "We want the war to end. We're a peaceful group." That message was very well covered.

INT: Looking back on it, how did participating in these anti-war activities change you? What did you learn from doing what you did?

SH: I think the biggest part of being involved in the anti-war movement was knowing that when you thought something was wrong it was okay to stand up and say that. Also, being part of a group is very important because when you're part of a group where everybody feels the same way you're not alone anymore and it's not just your problem, and you can be together and you can understand each other and you can stand up together. That's something that I really became aware of during the Persian Gulf War because we're no longer in the area where all our anti-war friends live in the Boston/Cambridge area and I really felt alone, and we almost felt like we needed to move back to Boston because we needed that support of that group, of those people that feel the way that we feel. Something wonderful happened here in Truro. A group of anti-war people formed a group called Cape Codders for Peaceful Solutions and we joined, and they did everything that anti-war groups do for each other. It was just really wonderful to find that you don't have to be in this really politically aware environment to find people that are anti-war and to find people that will support you and understand you and that was really important, that you could be off in Truro in some little tiny town where there's only fourteen hundred people and you could still get that support. So we joined this group and they still meet every Saturday morning. We don't go regularly because that's usually a time when we're working, but we do go when we can and we always go when there's events and they always march in the 4th of July parade in Wellfleet together.

INT: What did take place at the time of the Gulf War with this group?

SH: We started just with meetings and we were really trying to figure it out: where did we want it to go; how visible do we want to be; what do we want to do? So we started lining up at the post office on Saturday mornings with our anti-war posters. Maybe sometimes it would be five people,

sometimes ten people; sometimes it would be twenty people and sometimes it would be more and sometimes there would be children. Then people from Wellfleet started to join us, then people from Eastham that started to join us, and there were some people from Provincetown that came, too. Then we started going sometimes to different post offices and just saying, "We're against this war and we want it to stop." A lot of people didn't understand what was going on and a lot of people thought, "What are these people doing—and demonstrating at a post office?" But it seemed like this isn't the normal place that this would happen. They happen in the big city and Boston Common but they don't happen in Truro, and it really opened a lot of eyes, and we leafleted a lot and tried to put our message out and we were pretty much accepted by the community.

We've been asked to and have talked in the local schools. That was really important, to be able to go into the schools and talk. Now they actually have this Cape Codders for Peaceful Solutions group [that] has involved the schools in a mediation group for school kids who are having problems getting along. They go in and help children with constant really serious problems in school, getting along, help them solve those problems. It's really nice that the school can call this peace group and say, "Will you come and mediate? We have problems with the fifth graders and the sixth graders getting along out in the school yard." It actually works, and they're really nice people and it's a good group and it's been accepted by the community even though there is no war going on now. They use those resources. They also get involved in a lot of other local issues like recycling and just different things like that they can involve themselves with the local community and the school children so that everybody is still aware, so that they're not going to disappear into the cracks until the next war comes up and we all have to band together again.

That was basically what our group was like, but we also joined with other people in Hyannis to close a recruiting station one day. That was the biggest demonstration on the Cape. That was a really interesting demonstration because I don't think the Hyannis police had a clue it was going to happen and the recruiting people didn't have a clue it was going to happen. Everybody seemed really shocked and surprised. And we did close the recruiting station that day.

INT: How?

SH: By blocking the doors. Police climbed right over the people, just stepped right on them to try to get in. But eventually they just gave it up and the recruiting station was just closed for the day. There was a lot of press about that, too. That was really interesting, because there were a lot of people on the Cape, people my age, who had sons in the service that were being sent to the Persian Gulf or that were in the Persian Gulf, and it became a very real issue. When we had that demonstration to close the recruiting station, that was the recruiting station where most of these kids went into the service. So it was very symbolic of these people that enlisted and went into the service when there was no war, then in no time at all, it was almost like overnight we were bombing. It was a shock. I mean, people thought it was a safe time for their kids to go through the service and get the educational benefits they could get from it, and for all of a sudden a war to just happen. For so many of the young people from this area to be sent over there and be threatened and be in a war zone, it really opened a lot of eyes. I really think that a lot people who wouldn't have demonstrated were there demonstrating because of that. We also had demonstrations in churches. The churches were very supportive. I was really surprised about that, but they were very, very supportive. We also have a stepson, a foster son that went to the Persian Gulf, so it was a very emotional issue for us and we really felt like

that he got sucked into the whole thing. He was out of high school and he just felt like it was an exciting thing to do and we couldn't talk him out of enlisting. Then when he did enlist he went through that recruiting station and he was promised all kinds of things that he never got. Very quickly he was sent to the Persian Gulf. So it was a very emotional issue for us because I think that John basically felt the same way as the World War II veterans felt when Vietnam cropped up, that they fought that war so that their children wouldn't have to, and we felt that we didn't want our children to have to be at war and to have to go through that. And it wasn't just going through the war. It wasn't just the time in the war. But to have the scars—to carry the scars and have the emotional damage that war does to people that you never really forget and to have to live those nightmares. We didn't want that for our kids.

So it was really easy for us to get excited and get involved and really stand up for our anti-war feelings and encourage other people to do it too. At least when that did happen we did find support here. We didn't have to go to Boston. We didn't have to be in the big city to find people that felt the same way that we do and that was really comforting for us.

INT: What were the consequences for your kids of the visible stand that you took?

SH: My kids were in different schools. My daughter was at Nauset High School and my son was at school in Provincetown High School. At Nauset High School the demonstration that was up at the recruiting station—most the kids were demonstrating against the war that day at the school, too, and then a lot of those kids came to the recruiting station and demonstrated up there also. So that school basically supported their students having a day off of school to demonstrate against the war. My daughter was in a group where she felt comfortable and she also ended up in Hyannis with

us and she, being brought up by John and I in an anti-war family, that was the right place for her to be. But my son was in high school in Provincetown, and it wasn't the same for him. It's a very small town and they knew every soldier from Provincetown that was in the Persian Gulf by name, and there were lists of these men and I don't think there were any women from Provincetown. Everybody knew them and everybody in the school knew them, so for Mark to be demonstrating against this war and Provincetown taking this patriotic stand to support [its] sons—it was very confusing issue. The schools didn't know how to deal with it. They didn't really deal with it well at first, and Mark was chastised a bit in school. I felt like the teachers didn't really have control over conversations that were happening in their classrooms and also didn't support Mark's right to demonstrate and to stand up for his feelings. He just had a different view than almost everybody else in that school. And that was very, very difficult for him because it's such a small school and everyone knows everyone. We did have to go into the school and speak to his teachers and his guidance counselor and his principal about our principles and where we stood and where Mark was getting his values, and after that the school dealt with him differently and things were better.

But I would say that they would never have had a peace demonstration at Provincetown High School or anti-war demonstration because of the patriotic feeling that they have in this town about the children they had in the Persian Gulf at the time. There was a big conflict for them with that, and there was no real understanding as far as being able to see the anti-war point of view.

INT: What kinds of harassment did Mark endure?

SH: I think you need to ask him that. I think it was conversational things. People did not understand, and he ended up with his picture in the

newspaper. Of course John was very vocal through the whole time and people knew what was going on with our family during this time. Basically it was considered a negative thing, what we were doing, so there were negative views toward Mark. But you really need to ask him.

INT: How did the principal, teachers, guidance counselor that you spoke with, what did they do differently that made a difference afterwards?

SH: Basically it was agreed in that meeting that Mark's rights to demonstrate and to feel the way he felt and to express those feelings were to be respected and were to be respected in the classroom just as much as somebody else's right to patriotism was to be respected, and it was really a good meeting. John and I both came out of it feeling really…well, I was nervous about going in there with my politics and saying, "What's up? How can this be going on in your school?" When I came out of there I felt like, well it's not going to go on anymore. And that was important. I really felt like they gave us the option to meet with them and to talk to them and to listen to us and they did. That was good.

INT: I have come to the end of the formal questions and I wanted to ask if there's anything you wanted to tell us that you haven't told us about, now would be a good time.

SH: I think I've told about things I haven't remembered in so many years, I can't believe it.

INT2: You said that when you were describing the arrest on Lexington Green that the church had been friendly, and that some of the women with children could stay there. Were you referring to women involved with VVAW?

SH: I was referring to anybody that was on the Green that night, not necessarily just women, but anybody that didn't want to be arrested that needed to get off the Green. Because we had marched there, nobody had

their car, so nobody could leave. So the church opened up their basement and provided an area for people to be if they didn't want to be arrested, so that was an option. And you could be off the Green.

INT2: The reference to other women is of interest to me because I'd like to know if in the organization of VVAW you encountered other women who were also involved either with their male counterparts or just because they were interested.

SH: Over the years in VVAW I was involved with other women who were involved with VVAW through a relationship with a veteran. But I don't think I knew them then. I think this was kind of the beginning of a lot of that, because they weren't there and I can't imagine that they wouldn't be there. I think time-wise, I just hadn't met them yet. And there weren't a lot of women involved, as you can tell from the pictures.

INT2: How did pregnancy figure into your actions that weekend, and when you went to court, were you with John?

SH: Yes, I was, when we were arrested, we were arrested together and I I expected to be separated. I expected to have one place for men and one place for women. But that didn't happen. We were together the whole time, which was really good. Part of the reason why I really was anticipating not to be arrested, even though I was being reassured by John that everything would be okay and I wasn't going to get hurt, I just had a vision of maybe what I saw on television of other people at demonstrations being arrested, that I might be thrown or I might be pushed or I might be shoved in some way that I could endanger my unborn child, and I didn't want that to happen. But it was just so obvious at the time, I mean right up until it was time to line up and get in the bus, I was saying, "I'm not going to go, I'm not going to go," and John was saying, "Just hold my hand. We'll be okay." I watched people line up like school children and get on the bus and nobody

was being pushed and nobody was being shoved and nobody was having a problem. It was just going to be okay. That's why I allowed myself to stay and be arrested. If I thought that I was going to be in danger physically in any way I wouldn't have. I would have gone against his wishes, and I don't know how I would have gotten back to our car or how I would have gotten home or if I would have gone over to the church. I think probably I would have gone over to the church and stayed there. But as it was, everything was fine.

But that was a decision I had to make. It was a hard one, and it was really right down to the line before I was sure that I was going to be okay. I didn't make the decision until I knew—I watched probably half of the crowd be arrested before. And everything was going so peacefully I just knew that everything was going to be okay.

INT2: You had talked about how important, in a couple of situations that you described, the group support feeling is...here on Cape Cod and for the veterans in VVAW; in your description of your year with John in Vietnam, and the letter writing, and the connection and you had a lot of family involvement, but did you ever have other women that had some similar…did you have a support group, other than your family? Other women having a similar experience as you, as a woman waiting at home?

SH: I did at work. I worked in an office building and I had a lot of girlfriends whose boyfriends were in Vietnam at the same time and who were going through exactly the same thing that I was going through. The men were away. There weren't a lot of guys around. They were either away at college; they were either avoiding the draft or they were gone, and that's basically what it was. So, yes, there were a lot of women in the same situation as me.

INT2: Not a formal group, but how did you support each other?

SH: I would say the most support I got was from the women that I worked with, because we ate lunch together and we got to talk and we did social things together. We had a dinner club and we used to go out like once every ten weeks or something to a fancy restaurant in Boston. A lot of the issues that we needed to talk about or needed to deal with or even talking about like, "My boyfriend got wounded," or—there were some real tragic things that were happening that people did need to talk about. I would say that the group of women that I worked with at New England Life was my support group at that time. They were the only thing that I had besides my family and they were very important.

INT: You said that the men in the VVAW office were very bright, they didn't look, they didn't dress in a way that would have persuaded me, but can you generalize at all about the kind of people who joined VVAW?

SH: There was no one kind. It was a very diverse group. I would say probably the people either with the most education or maybe the smartest, basically, got involved with the leadership, because they knew how to organize people and demonstrations and how to get things done, but it was a very diverse group and anybody that was a Vietnam veteran that was against the war that wanted to be in that group was in that group. They did not discriminate and say, "You can't be in our group." This was for veterans on every level that came back from Vietnam that were against the war and really needed to be a part of that group.

INT: Most of the veterans that we have interviewed became anti-war while they were in Vietnam. There were plenty of veterans who never joined VVAW. What's the divide there, do you think?

SH: I think the divide is their different perspective about patriotism. I think that they, even though they were against the war and even though they have all the same scars, suffered all the same horrors as the guys that ended

up in VVAW. I think that it's a patriotic issue and they haven't spent the time getting it in its place. I'm not saying there is anything wrong with them, because they're going with their own feelings. But I think that, somebody that was in Vietnam that came back and was against the war but still didn't join VVAW felt that VVAW wasn't the patriotic way to deal with your anti-war feelings, and the people that were in VVAW felt like it was exactly the way that they needed to deal with their feelings.

END OF INTERVIEW