

Patricia Normoyle

Tape 2 of 2

Answer: I'm going to start writing that book because I have many stories of what it was like living in a town that small, and my Daddy down in the coal mines, and -- but that's another story

Question: (laughs)

Answer: It really is. Kids just don't -- they don't realize --

Question: I know.

Answer: We didn't even have an icebox. And the people -- the few people that did, we thought oh, that was, gee, that was so wonderful. But anyway, we just -- just had to get by, what we had.

Question: So let me -- I'm going to back up just a little bit and I'll set it up. Okay, so you're living in Olympia now and you're living at the McCleary Mansion, which is on Capitol Way.

Answer: Yes, hm-hmm.

Question: And I take it you had taken a room there -- rented a room or something.

Answer: Oh, no, we had our own -- a lovely apartment.

Question: Oh.

Answer: See, they were all made into apartments. They were beautiful. And every once in a while I would go down and -- where the kitchen was. I was the cook and I did all the washing and everything. Took care of -- my friend had a little girl -- they just a year apart. And, but every once in awhile I'd go down and look at that -- where my kitchen was, where I cooked and everything. You know how you do. But we were living there and we were living there, I guess about -- wasn't too long, maybe around three months or four months. Anyway, Corey was two. And the little girl, my friend's little girl I took care of was three. And so we wrote back and forth and he -- he wrote -- I still have his letters. And some of 'em are -- they're kind of torn and there -- there's some blood stain on them, things like that. But anyway, why I said that I -- I was waiting on the steps waiting. What they did then -- they would call you and tell you that they had a telegram. That your husband -- they didn't tell you that he was killed. They said it's word about your husband. And we will bring the telegram to you. So I sat on the steps. And I just kept praying that -- that he'd just be injured. But wasn't so. And you know, you think after many years, and like I'm married to one of the best guys in the world now. I'm a very lucky person to have two guys like them. And -- but, and it was so -- it was so close to the time that the war was over with, and I just -- I just, you know, I was devastated. Absolutely devastated. And of course Corey was too small. He didn't understand. But -- so then I stayed on with them for awhile and finally -- well, my mother and I took the bus and went to -- to Port Orchards -- but it wasn't Port Orchards -- was just Orchards. That's where the town was outside of Vancouver. And my mother rode down in the bus with me. I'll never forget that. The longest bus ride. But Howard, or Bake's parents were wonderful. And they just -- well I wanted to be with them. You know, it was very, very tough on their family. Cause he was the kind of guy that -- it's hard to explain. He was funny all the time; he was laughing all the time, and -- and he would give you anything. His last -- his last penny. And I got letters and letters from his friends at high school. And so we stayed and visited them for awhile. And I don't know -- it - it almost seemed like his father took it

Patricia Normoyle

Tape 2 of 2

the hardest. It was -- it was really hard. Like it was for any of the men that were killed and women and there certainly were both men and women that were killed.

But I happened to think about when I lived in the apartment at the mansion -- the McCleary place. And I have told Ryan and some of my children some of this stuff. Where they rationed -- everything was rationed. You couldn't get anything. They just -- and there was no such thing as butter, and maybe fruit. If they had bricks -- well, as white as this paper. This was called "nuco" and they had a little packet that had yellow -- this yellow gunk in it, and you had to squeeze it to put that in -- and it was really - it's as bad as it really sounds. And then you mixed and mixed and mixed and that was your butter. They just didn't have things because they, you know, there was war on. And that's when my sister -- I was telling you, became a riveter. She lived in Portland so I got to see her quite a bit. Stayed with her some of the time. In fact, she -- when we had our four houses together, those houses are still there. And she took care of Corey -- became very fond of him. And then she only had one child and she died when she was about 45, and that was her only child. But anyway.

Question: How did they -- you talked about rationing.

Answer: Yes. You got coupons.

Question: So how did you -- where did you get -- how did you get your coupons? Or what did -- how did they divide things up?

Answer: Well, they, you know, you have to remember this was 52 -- almost 52 years ago. But it was just like any other coupons or things that you'd have to get. Each family would get so many coupons, and you just were glad to take what they had. And I'd say, oh, I hope we'll never have this again because I don't want to be squishing this stuff. But actually I wasn't much of a butter eater but my -- I was cooking for them and I had to do all this squishing and everything.

Question: So would you -- the coupons then, did they say a specific food on them when you took them to the store or --

Answer: Well, everything that you'd get from the store. They only had so much of. So you -- so you had to have vouchers to get certain things. They just didn't have them. And -- and it -- the kids nowadays have no idea

Answer: That's why I think something like this is so good. And also I regret that I didn't see the movie that was out, you know, the one that was with --

Question: Oh, Tom Hanks, Saving Private Ryan.

Answer: Yes. And I am going to see it now. And some of the kids in our family say, Mom, I think it's going to be awfully hard for you. And I said, well, you think after this, so many years, that it would be easier, but when you come across something, like the letters that -- and he talked about Corey and he was just so young. And he -- and I knew him and he volunteered, and so he was killed. He volunteered to -- he was protecting his men. He -- and he did -- he got the Silver Star and the Purple Heart and I, you know, when you said there isn't any honor big enough or medals big enough for him -- he was that kind of a person. And it's -- even at my age, and we were married a long, long time, but it's something you never get over.

Question: Is it hurt you feel or anger you feel?

Patricia Normoyle

Tape 2 of 2

Answer: It's a mixture of things. It's a mixture of, you know, why did this have to happen and why did he have to go? And then there was the confusion about where he was buried, because of the fact in Luzon there is a Santa Barbara, and of course in California there's a Santa Barbara, and so there was a mix-up, and so, his father -- they gave that information to his parents. We didn't know why but it didn't make any difference. But he understood that, and this is really bizarre. That they send him over and buried him in Santa Barbara, California

Answer: Well, it wasn't that way. They first -- and there is the bit graveyard in Santa Barbara, Luzon. Well, it's Luzon-something else, Leyte or something like that -- George calls it. And so then we find out, and this is really -- this is really strange. That they did send him to Santa Barbara, California

Answer: And we got the letter from, you know it's an official letter and everything, and then about six months ago. Well, Corey has a very close friend he goes back and forth to visit in San Francisco, and his friend was wandering around a cemetery and there, low and behold, they had moved him to San Francisco, and that's where he is. Now we're going down there.

Question: Oh, really?

Answer: Yeah, George will go with me.

And it's -- it's just like -- and it's hard for some people to understand that when we go up to the Capital on Memorial Day, and when I first saw his name (crying) up there -- and we had quite a few bricks from our children. And then we had -- we have the bricks for George. And because our children -- they didn't want, for one reason, for their Dad to not have the same -- the same, you know, honor that Corey's Dad -- but they never had any problem with it and George has never had any problem with it. He, well, he raised Corey, and Corey's crazy about him. Very close to him. So, I don't know -- things the world is -- has -- works in strange ways. And we -- we -- this, this time when, on Memorial Day, we're -- you know how large a family we have. You remember at our anniversary, I said 11 of them aren't here, and they weren't. So anyway, we're trying to get as many to be up here. And -- and the last few times they -- they go to the cemetery and -- and they see the bricks. And my daughters are -- and the boys don't -- they walk away -- don't want anybody to see. But the girls are very emotional because they -- because their Dad's there, and also of course their brother, you know. But we really - we're trying to get more of the younger ones like Ryan, that's -- stop and think, 19. And all of our children, of course. That would be quite an undertaking, but anyway.

And for them to really, really understand what it's all about. And the suffering and what everyone had to go through. And you'd think, and I've talked to people about this, that you'd think with a lot of years going by, that you wouldn't have the same ache inside your gut, but believe me, it never goes away. And -- and it's just something that I -- I really am glad you're doing this because I think that the children -- like there were -- the men -- so many of the men had to go to war, there weren't many men left in -- in the cities. And it was really tough, when they didn't have their fathers, and they need to know, just really, what happened. And because I've talked to so many of them, my children and my friends' children, and yeah, they know when you're supposed to salute the flag, and -- but they -- they -- not too many of them go up to the -- the services -- Veteran's services, because -- well, I have a friend that says "It's just too much for me. I can't do it." And I say, "That's really too bad, because it is too much, but -- but if you walk away from everything like that, it's going to be -- it's -- you're going to miss a lot of feelings that you really need to have."

Question: Do you -- because your - your husband was killed by the enemy, do you hold an animosity to the enemy? I mean, are you -- or do you make that association at all to the loss

Patricia Normoyle

Tape 2 of 2

of your husband? I mean, is it more loss of my husband and that's a personal thing, or I'm angry because of this enemy that you were fighting a war with?

Answer: It's really all of what you said. I mean, it -- it was just -- it was just more than we could understand. And of course we were younger. I don't know if that makes any difference or not, but -- and there were so many, many things that went on when they put the Japanese people into the barracks. And you see -- it just -- you wonder why something like that would have to happen. What those children thought when they herded them off and put them in those barracks and everyone's lives were just so changed. They'd never be the same. And -- but still, you know, we had a lot of grandchildren and friends, and our children are really coming around and wanting to -- to realize what everything was really about, you know. And I know because when we went last year and let's see -- the girls went and Grant and -- Dana went later. But Steve -- Steve, our son that lives in -- in Portland, I don't know if I could get him to go. He's -- he's like my friend. He avoids things. If you can, well, you know -- "well it's just too hard for me, I'm not going to do it." But I think he will come around one of these times. Because he loves his Dad and -- and he -- but he just -- you know, you -- I tell him, you can be an ostrich and bury your head so long but then the reality has to set in someplace along the line.

Question: Do you think -- is there a message from World War II for future generations that you would want to leave with your great grandchildren? That you may never meet -- may never fully know?

Answer: Yeah. Well, I think first of all they really need to know the full scale of it. I mean, we were just kind of talking a little bit about the Diary of Anne Frank. They need to know that story. They need to know all the stories and they need to know all the atrocities -- whether they want to or not. Because when you -- when you finally know everything that's gone on, and what the Japanese did, you know, and of course ... loading down with the first bomb and from the very first. And I just absolutely feel that they -- they're still -- there's been too much avoidance of well, they're too young, and I don't think they should know all this stuff. And I also strongly believe that when you do know things, I know because of the changes in me through all these years and not knowing -- wanting to know a lot of things earlier on and now I don't run away from anything because, like I've tried to tell my friend and Steve a lot, too, that you don't understand this. You think that if you can't hear anymore. If you hear all of these gruesome terrible things that went on, that you're just going to want to crawl in a hole and you'd be weaker. I said no, no. It makes you stronger. It makes you so much stronger, because when I think of my years, younger years growing up and then having my family and things happening and the wars and -- and if you turn your face away from it, and that's what I used to do. And I wasn't as strong as I am now. And the more that I really face the reality of what really happened in the war, all of the families and the tragedies and the horrible things, and it breaks your heart, but it makes you stronger. And I know, you know, like some of our friends and even, actually not the girls. The girls are willing to go up to the -- up to the Capital and go to the ceremonies. But actually it's more the boys. But I'm sure they'll come around. Because we've talked about, you know, if you run away from all of it, you're just -- you're not going to get stronger. You're going to get weaker.

Question: You talked about getting the telegram.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: How did they break that to you? I mean, is it just straight forward or what's --

Patricia Normoyle

Tape 2 of 2

Answer: Well, I was sitting on the steps at the McCleary House and he just rode up on his bicycle, said "I'm sorry Ma'am", gave me the telegram. And I -- I just kept praying, please just let him be wounded. I really thought that. But it wasn't. But then he just got on -- on his bike. But then, you know, he -- poor guy, what could he say. He probably thought all the way going up there with the telegram, boy I sure hate to -- to take this to this young woman, she's not very old, you know. And -- but then my friends were all right there. My mother came up and I think if I'd been in some big city like New York where I didn't have anyone -- oh, I -- I just hope there was someone that they could have would have the guts enough to do it because that's -- that's hard to go -- do it alone.

Question: Had you seen this before, I mean had you seen the telegram person come to neighbors?

Answer: Very, very little.

Question: So you were the real first person --

Answer: Oh, yeah, I was the only one that came to the, you know, the mansion, McCleary place where I was living. And I, no, I never had seen anyone. I just had known of some that got -- got word of it, but I think one of the -- and you know, you -- you -- these things you never, never forget. They'll be out of your mind for awhile and then something you'll see or something you'll hear -- it just brings it right back like that. And I had heard of, you know, knowing other people, not personally, I didn't really know. I did a little bit later. One of my good friends, but that was a little bit later. But there weren't too many people that I knew that had lost -- had lost anyone. But of course they told about it on the movies, but it was just something. I don't know, I just had the idea, you know, being so young and everything that he was going to be back -- that wasn't going to happen. We had this beautiful child and I really had that -- that confidence that nothing was going to happen to him. But -- and it wasn't just him. There were so many -- so many. Like George, he -- I couldn't understand it, but his parents signed the papers and let him go. And we've talked about that and I said I would never, ever want my sons to go before they're 18 -- he was about 17-1/2. And he was in Lee -- Lee -- what's that other name -- well, he knows. I'll think about it, see, in a minute. But he was in Australi

Answer: He was in the worst, well I told you part of the story, but the worst swamp there ever was, the fighting.

Another thing that happened, due to the war, because -- because of the war, how it happened. Was some of the boys and the men that came home. It affected them so much they never changed. I mean, they -- it -- it literally destroyed them. They -- they a lot of them were just -- weren't -- they were living on the street. They couldn't face it. I mean, you've read so many things about that. And not just the Korean War but in the United States war, they -- it -- it was something that was so -- so traumatic and so -- so fiercely unbearable to even think about that. I didn't know a lot of people like that but my children have. Like Leah and some of the older kids knew guys that just never came out of it.

Question: Well, now it affected George pretty heavily, didn't it?

Answer: Oh, yes.

Question: And he still, to the day, 50 some years --

Answer: Oh, yes, yes. And George is not like me. I'm glad he isn't. Where I'm -- I'm quite verbal and I talk and I express my opinions and things. But he keeps so much to

Patricia Normoyle

Tape 2 of 2

himself. And -- but there's something that happened to George. George was a twin. They were the most beautiful children you ever saw. And their grandparents dressed them identical in their pictures. And his twin died of rheumatic fever. And George was never, never the same. And they were the most adorable children you ever saw. And he's -- he's been very quiet, more like a quiet person ever since then. And -- and then he, for some reason, he wanted to go into the war. And he and his buddy, like I told you, they -- they didn't expect to come back on that ship. And then, it was the weirdest thing, and it was way later. He gets this package in the mail and it's got medals, high medals in it. He did have some medals. But -- and they don't know why they overlooked it. But this has just been in the last year. And I says, my gosh -- those - you got those medals -- I mean -- but he just put them away, you know, and he didn't say much about it. But I told our kids that 'cause I knew they wanted to know. And they think their Dad is just, you know, there's just no one like him, and they're very, very proud of him. But he's -- he's the person that really keeps too much -- I mean too much to himself. And his accomplishments and everything, what he did down there, was truly --

Question: Tricia talks about -- says like the 4th of July is tough for George because of the fireworks and -- Tricia's talked about the 4th of July and said that George has a 4th of July and fireworks -- he's bothered as a result of this.

Answer: There's been a lot of times, because -- well, it's just the difference in people. I mean, if I were bothered by things, people would know it. But he walks, he walks by himself. He walks away. And he, when we went up last year and saw the bricks and the girls gave their Dad some bricks and then -- and then the one for Corey's Dad was right there and then we had another brick to George from the children. And, but -- there will probably be more. But he -- he so seldom, he just is this stiff upper lip, you know. And for some reason it hasn't -- it doesn't do a person or a body good to really keep things in like he does but he does. But this last year it really hit him and he just walked away. He had to be by himself. And our -- our girls, they -- said Mom, "Dad's never going to get over this". It's something that (crying) stays with you. You put it away, you know, in your pocket for awhile but it always comes back. But I'm just hoping so much that the children -- the children of Ryan's age and all the other children know what sacrifices and just what really happened. And instead of -- I don't know whether so many of the schools or the teachers have just avoided -- that they might think they're getting too, too emotional or too deep and it's too much for the kids, let their parents do it, you know. So they think, oh, well, we salute the flag, and we know -- we know about the war, they they really don't, but they'll say we know about the war, and they don't really watch a lot of war pictures. They're not all -- you know, for real anyway.

Question: What's -- what's the -- you talked about a good thing, saluting the flag -- what's the feeling you get when you hear the Star Spangled Banner, the national anthem? When you see the flag raised --

Answer: When I hear it any time?

Question: Yeah, I mean whether it be Veteran's Day or any time --

Answer: Oh, it -- well, there's a mixture of feelings. I mean, there's a mixture of -- yeah, our country's the greatest. This is our country, and those kids really need to know that. And -- and it also brings a lot of overwhelming sadness and -- and all the memories you have, the things you think about and the sacrifices and everything. And that -- what the children are enjoying now, you know, they have everything, you know, the cell phones and everything else that they're enjoying -- they wouldn't have any of them because when the men came back from the war, so many of them were gone, they built this country. They really did. This

Patricia Normoyle

Tape 2 of 2

country is built on the World War II vets. And that's what I really want the children to know. So they just don't -- you know, well, you could go on and on about what happens nowadays with children into the -- with the drugs and, you know, fast automobiles, and you hope and pray it's not your child that's going to get killed in an automobile or drug overdose. And that's what their world is. I mean, even if they don't do those things, they don't have -- they don't know enough about the sacrifices and why they do have what they have. But they can really have enough of that and know enough to in turn give that back to their children, because if we -- if we ever forget what happened and what everyone went through, then heaven help us.

Question: Well, great. Thank you very much.