

Prairie Public Vietnam oral history project

I recently met Barb Gravel from Prairie Public TV about their Vietnam oral history project. At last month's Vietnam Veterans of America chapter 941 meeting, she described the project and encouraged chapter members to participate. I've worked on a WWII oral history project for the past 15 years and learned a great deal about our WWII Veterans. This is a wonderful opportunity for a similar experience. Prairie Public will be asking "How has the Vietnam War made an impact on your life and the lives of those you know?" of the men and women who served in Southeast Asia, the families who were left behind, caught in social conflict, the people who protested and, in some cases, resisted the war and the refugees who fled their war torn country to make a new home on the prairie.

To document how this turbulent time shaped life in the prairie region, Prairie Public and the State Historical Society of North Dakota have begun "Prairie Memories The Vietnam War Years", a region wide initiative aimed at inspiring Minnesotans and North Dakotans to remember and share stories, recognize bravery, honor those lost, express reasons for dissent, and foster understanding of the lasting impact of war.

Prairie Public is seeking people would be willing to be interviewed so their story could be included in the project: and have scheduled appointment times on these dates:

August 1 & 2 at the Heritage Center, Bismarck, ND

August 10 & 11 at the Hjemkomst Center, Moorhead, MN

August 16 at the North Dakota Veterans Home, Lisbon, ND

August 21 at the History Museum, Perham, ND

Prairie Public is finalizing plans to be at the Three Affiliated Tribes Museum, New Town, ND

Those interested in participating can call for an appointment at 1-800-359-6900 or make arrangements by email at memories@prairiepublic.org. More information about the project can be found at www.prairiepublic.org/memories

Once completed, the documentary will air on Prairie Public's television and radio in November. Videos will also be posted on YouTube channel and on Facebook. The oral histories will be permanently hosted on the Digital Horizons regional history archive with selected stories posted on the Story Wall as part of the Minnesota Remembers Initiative.

Speaking of oral history projects, the Heritage Education Commission recently received transcripts on 70 oral histories conducted during the 1980s and early 1990s. HEC is a regional organization developed for the purpose of creating, initiating, and conducting programs and projects which aid in the preservation or restoration of the cultural heritage in the service of the Upper Midwest region. The Commission recorded nearly 300 oral histories of local individuals, primarily from Moorhead. The areas covered were Agriculture, Arts, Business, Communication, Education, Government and Politics, Homemaking, Law and Law Enforcement, Medicine, Religion and Service Organizations. The new transcripts will be added to the HEC website over the next couple weeks and can be found at www.heriateed.com and clicking on the Oral History Projects tab.