

## **Homefront SD**

**Ralph Ripple**

(Interviewed by Hannah of Agar-Blunt-Onida School District)

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### **What were times like back then?**

Back then during the war we saw things that nobody had dreamed of before we had rationing. Rationed gas and rationed sugar and of course then we had the draft. Everyone between the ages of 18 & 45 had to sign up for the draft. Then as your number was drawn out of the hat you were inducted into the military. Other than that things went on pretty much same as normal except there were a lot of things we did not have. You couldn't buy a new car, couldn't buy a new tractor a lot of things that just weren't available because everything was manufacturing tanks, trucks, guns, for the military.

### **What was school like back then?**

During the war I was in high school and of course I helped my dad with farming. I was way too young to be in the military at that time.

### **How did you get around?**

Well, we got around in a car but we had to make sure we had several things handled on the trip because we didn't get much gas so you had to make every trip count. You couldn't make an extra trip. If you forgot something in town, you lived without it until you could afford to burn that much gas to go back to town.

### **Did people change during the war?**

Well yes there were a lot of people that changed during the war. Those that had worked here suddenly went someplace where they were manufacturing military arms and equipment. Other than that the people that stayed here, no, they didn't change much. Yeh they were more anxious but no big change.

### **Where were you and what were you doing when the war started?**

I can't remember what day it was but I think I was probably, no I wasn't either, because it was on a Sunday. I was at home and the radio that's all we had in those days was the radio. The radio came on and said that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor, and then we didn't know a whole lot about what was going on, then the next day Germany declared war on the United States and of course when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor we declared war on the Japanese.

### **How did you keep track of the war?**

Well the only thing we had was either the news paper or the radio, and that was limited to what they wanted us to hear or read.

### **What benefits did you get from the war?**

In fact the only ones who got any benefits from the war were the actual veterans and a few people that got better paying jobs for a while because they were building military equipment. The veterans got paid schooling and benefits like loans, they started getting health care and a few things like that at government expense.

### **How did the war change your life?**

Actually it didn't because when the war ended I just got young to worry. I went to school everyday. It didn't change the school program any. We had plenty of fuel for the school hours to keep warm. Basically, the civilians here, other than concerned for their relatives who were in the service didn't change their life to much.

### **Were there any drills you had to do in school?**

No, we didn't have anything but the normal fire drill once a year. We weren't too concerned about anybody bombing us and of course they didn't know about any nuclear missiles and that kind of stuff so no we didn't have any special drills.

### **How were clothes different from today?**

Clothes, well not a lot but the girls skirts were considerably longer than they are now and as far as dress in school is concerned a lot of the outfits I see kids wear in school today, they would have been sent home and told to get on something decent. As far as the boys, they wore blue jeans and a few with a little more money they wore a dress trouser but most of the kids wore blue jeans and the girls pretty much all wore dresses.

### **What was something important that you lost?**

That I lost, I don't know as I lost anything really. Like I say, I was too young to go any place, I didn't lose anything. Now the veterans they lost their freedoms. I can remember the platoon sergeant lining us up the first morning and he said "I am your mother, you will do as I say I can't make you do anything. But I can damn well make you wish you would have." I guess you could say they lost their happy go lucky freedom. Right quick, than they had 4-6 weeks basic training before they were sent overseas.

### **What were you feeling when the war was starting?**

What was I feeling? I guess shock would be the main thing. Nobody suspected a thing, yes the Germans were romping around Europe. They had submarines out in the ocean. But they hadn't blown up any American ships and we kinda thought, let the Europeans kinda take care of themselves until that Sunday morning Dec. 7 1941 than everything changed right quick.

### **What do you think was important about the war?**

Well as far as the war was concerned I can't see as they actually solved anything I don't know if they proved anything yes they proved that the United States and England and a few other countries were a lot stronger than Germany and Japan. During the war they figured out how to make a nuclear bomb which they dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and that brought the war with Japan to an end in a hurry because they didn't want to see any more towns disappear off the face of the map. But as far as solving any problems, they didn't because as soon as it was over had the cold war with Russia and other little skirmishes around the world and we had 1-2-3-4-5 skirmishes since WWII if you divide Iraqis fiasco into 2 skirmishes desert storm and desert freedom and now Iraqi freedom.

### **When the war was starting to end what were you feeling?**

When it ended I have to say I was pretty happy because I was rapidly approaching 18 which meant I was going to have to sign up for the draft. And I still hadn't signed up when I was 18 but there wasn't that much danger of being drafted because although kids 2 years behind were drafted but I felt good about it. Everybody thought it was that, that ended all wars which history has proved us wrong.

### **Did you know anybody that went to war?**

I had an uncle who was in the United States air force, He was a tail gunner on a B17 and he was shot down over Germany and spent 2 years in a German prison camp before he was freed in 1945. One thing about it, those guys never liked to talk about their experiences. They had very little to say. My uncle did say that while they were in prison over there if a rat or a mouse ever ran across the floor he was in big trouble because somebody wanted him for lunch. So it was not a picnic in the prison camps. I know quite a lot of the fellas over there. One other thing I remember is one gentleman told me that they always and this was before D-day, lined em up & made sure that they all had a new, clean mattress cover. He couldn't figure out why they wanted them to have a clean mattress cover, but after he got on the beach, he found out, that's what they used for a body bag.

### **What were the battles like in the war?**

I don't know much about what they were like but I know the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor than they invaded the Philipene islands and they came down the Potong peninsula which was where they pushed the Americans. They finally captured that, the Americas all left to a small island fortress called Cougadore. They finally took Cougadore because everybody ran out of ammunition and there was nothing you could do but surrender. General McArthur was on Cougadore and before at fell a submarine came and picked him up. Then after that the war pretty much went Japans way. They started down a string of islands from Japan to almost New Zealand and they took over all those islands down there. After I don't remember when, about 43 we started down near New Zealand, coming up through those strings of islands and in 1953 I got in, on a mock invasion of the island of Okinawa supposedly it was the same place and the same way that the troops invaded Okinawa 1944-45, the European was started out in North Africa, General Patton with his army of tanks chased General Ronol across Africa and finally chased him out. Then we invaded Sicily and from Sicily we went to Italy. Before they got done with Italy, there was D-day they invaded France on the Normandy beach from there on it was squeeze the Germans in closer to home. Of course our air force was bombing everything in Germany that they could find. After we got the Germans under control we put all of our effort into the Pacific theatre. They went up through all of the islands. There were several sea battles. We were fortunate and won because we sank the Japanese Navy. Zeros weren't quite the match for the Americans P51 mustangs and P47 Thunderbolts. The Navy fought Secorski they could out fly em about anytime they wanted too. 1945 we draped the atomic bomb and that brought everything to a halt. I the meantime the Germans had already surrendered because we had lost to Germany over to Berlin and the Russian army came in from the other side and met us in Berlin and that took care of the Germans. Than after Hiroshima, couple 3 weeks to a month and the Japanese surrendered.