

Student Handout
Oakland Museum of California
What's Going On? California and the Vietnam Era
Lesson Plan #2

1968: Year of Social Change and Turning Point in Vietnam and the U.S.

Oral History

Doug Ryan

Doug Ryan was a First Lieutenant in the Marine Corps. He served in Vietnam from 1965 to the spring of 1966. When he got out of the service, he became a film studies student at UCLA. Later he would serve as a consultant and cinematographer on *Apocalypse Now*.

Um, one of the teaching assistants ... we were going across campus and there was a ... there was a demonstration going on in front of one of the buildings and it was ... I asked him, I said "Bob, what's that?" And he said "Dow Chemical demon— ... demonstration. They're demonstrating against Dow Chemical." I said "Well, why are they demonstrating against Dow Chemical?" He says "Why? They make napalm." I said to him "Really?" with all sincerity. "What's wrong with napalm?" And he said "What's wrong with napalm? It burns people. It kills people. It kills babies." So I ... I said "Bob, let me tell you, when you're in a hot landing zone and you're taking incoming and all of a sudden this phantom jet comes in, lays napalm across a ridge line and it suddenly gets quiet, believe me, you'll love napalm." And what's that situation? Ethics? I don't know. But that's the way it was.

