

4d- That's me in the picture: Jan Rose Kasmir at an anti-Vietnam war rally at the Pentagon, in 1967

I was 17 when this picture was taken, and by that point I was already dedicated to the anti-war movement. I felt that the war in Vietnam was a horrible expression of American imperialism and we had no business being there.

I went by myself to the march on the Pentagon, and when I arrived, everyone gathered around the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool. As we walked to the Pentagon I fell in with a crowd who were chanting "Viva Che, Viva Che" – I didn't even know what a Che was! I had never heard of Che Guevara.

As we approached the Pentagon, the National Guard lined up to form a barrier to keep us from encroaching. Somebody was handing out flowers, which is how I came to have a chrysanthemum in my hand. I was going back and forth, beckoning the soldiers to join us. It never dawned on me that I was in any danger. This was before Kent State, so who would ever think that they would kill me?

None of them made eye contact. They stonewalled me. But the photographer later told me he noticed them shaking. I think they were afraid they were going to be told to fire at us.

If you look at my face, I am extremely sad: at that moment I realised how young these boys were. They were just as much a victim of the war machine as anyone else. When I saw the picture exhibited for the first time, many years later, I teared up; it took me back to that overwhelming sadness.

Looking back, it was a mind-blowing time – I was just 17.

Interview: Abigail Radnor