

McClatchy

# InnerView

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## On the cover

The Viet Nam Memorial in Sacramento, dedicated last year. See story, page 8.

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## FEATURES

### Viet Nam: Twenty years after

McClatchy employees who served in Viet Nam look back on their tours of duty. Read their first-hand impressions and memories starting on page 4.

### McClatchy's newest purchase is a gold mine

The Amador Ledger-Dispatch, the newest member of the McClatchy family, will go for the gold in a fast-growing county in the Gold Country. Story begins on page 10.

### It's not a man's world

Read about McClatchy women who have quietly and not so quietly stepped into men's shoes, beginning on page 13.

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# VIET NAM

## Looking back after 20 years

*After years of silence, we are finally starting to pay our Viet Nam veterans the respect they earned two decades ago. We have a national monument to the men who fought this war that wasn't a war, and Sacramento recently dedicated its own Viet Nam memorial. Movies, television and books are looking honestly at the war, the times, and the people who served. On these pages, a few veterans who work at McClatchy Newspapers talk candidly about their own memories.*

*Paul Vieira, job printing supervisor at The Sacramento Bee, was a Marine in Viet Nam from December 1967 to January 1969. He celebrated his 19th birthday there.*

**T**he Marines was something I always wanted to do. I felt there was a reason for the whole Viet Nam thing. I wanted to contribute the best possible way. That was the Marines.

The hard part to deal with for all of us was coming home. We weren't welcome home. Many of us weren't even welcomed by loved ones. You came home so changed, so different, the people you left no longer knew you.

I was nuts for five years after I got home. It takes you that long to get a grip on what's going on, especially in the turmoil of what was going on in the country at the time.

When I got home, the war was very unpopular. Vets were even more unpopular. Every time planes would come in there would be protesters. When I stepped off the airplane at Travis Air Force Base, I was faced with people in my own peer group, protesters, calling me baby killer. You immediately run into some kind of mental hiding.

After I'd been home for a couple of years, people would ask me if I was a

Viet Nam vet. It was the topic of everybody's conversation. I didn't want to hear about it. It was easier to say no.

How do you describe it unless you were actually there? There's no movies, no stories, no anything that is going to give you a true concept of what it was like. In the movie *Platoon*, there was nothing on the screen as bad as the real thing. I went to see *Platoon*. My reaction was, this is just Hollywood.

A lot of people don't realize this: I

don't care how big or small or old or young an enemy is, if they're coming at you with a weapon and if they're trying to kill you, you're going to kill them. A lot of people who were antagonistic about the war didn't think about that. All they thought about was the politics.

I feel fairly adjusted, but you go through periods when you see something, hear a song, the next thing you know, boom, you're right in the middle of a memory. You might hear a song that would remind



*Paul Vieira*

you of Viet Nam and for the next three or four days you're kind of in a time lapse, remembering things.

I don't know anybody who's been there that didn't lose somebody they cared about. After you lose the first close friend, you don't let yourself get too attached to anybody. One second, you have a living, breathing friend next to you. The next minute he's just simply gone.

I was a squad leader. Like most squad leaders, if you're worth anything, the squads really trusted you. There was a particular person, Bobby. We'd become really close, and I was starting to train him to take over the squad because he was the one I felt could do it. Bobby was from Louisiana, Shreveport. It was odd, because prior to that time I had never had a close black friend. But over there, you realize everyone bleeds the same. You have a tendency to forget all the superficial stuff when it gets real.

We were operating out of Da Nang. There was one little village we had to go through where we had always suspected Viet Cong movement but we never really saw anything.

I'm quite cautious. I kind of had a sixth sense in the bush. People always wanted to be in my squad because I just always knew — don't step there, don't look there, don't go there. I was always right. It kind of gives me chills.

One time we were getting ready to go through the village, and I remember stopping the squad and telling Bobby, you gotta feel what's going on, you gotta feel that air, you gotta look around. If you feel the least suspicious don't take any chances. If you feel something, call in for support.

The very next day I was called to go home. Right on the spot I turned the squad over to Bobby. He took the squad to the same village and was ambushed. Out of seven people, two were left, Bobby and his radio man. You're talking about guys that had been with me for at least eight months. In a matter of about 20 minutes, I'm happy I'm going home and then, boom. For many, many years, I had the feeling that if I had been there, would I have sensed it?

I saw Bobby after the battle. He was just devastated. The only thing he said to me, he said, I'm sorry. He felt like he'd killed my squad. I've never heard from him since. I have no idea how he's coped with it.

For me personally, one of the things I can never get rid of is the sound of artillery coming in, that shrieking sound. It would come in and then would just explode. There's an old saying, you never hear the round that hits you. That's true, because when you hear it, it's already gone past you.

The good times that you had over there were great. I wouldn't trade them for anything. The whole time I was over there, the laughs I had over there were probably the best laughs I ever had in my entire life.

I remember one guy — we got there the same time — all he could say was, I'm going to make it, I know I'm going to make it. He was starting to get on people's nerves. This guy was going to the same base I was. I thought, oh, great, I gotta listen to this guy.

It was the end of the rainy season, and when we got to where we were going, I remember jumping off the truck and landing up to my waist in mud. It looked like red clay, but I was standing in deep mud.

We were fresh from the states, didn't know anything about anything. During our training no one ever said anything to us about the enemy having rockets. All of a sudden there was rocket fire and guys started scrambling. I figured I better get out of there. This guy just stood there, he just froze standing by the truck. The truck took a direct hit, and there was nothing of him left. He was just gone. I think that guy knew at the beginning what was going to happen to him.

*Joe Stratton, printer for The Sacramento Bee, was an aerial intelligence specialist in Saigon in 1972. He was 23 at the time, and out of college. He was in Viet Nam when the peace accord was reached.*

**W**hen I used to go to work, the peace envoys would go by every day and go to their meetings. It was like a big joke for us. We would think every week it was going to end, but it kept going on and on. Every day we would say, maybe it's today. It was like a big joke for us for several weeks.

My tour was timed perfectly. I had been there six and a half months when we pulled out. I had missed R&R because I hadn't been there long enough, and they wouldn't send me home because I hadn't been there long enough for that either. So I finished out my tour in Thailand. If I had been six months later, I wouldn't have had to go at all.

By the time I got there, the country was ugly. There was barbed wire everywhere. The war had pretty much wound down. The Vietnamese knew we were leaving, so they weren't the friendliest in the world. They weren't as happy or as friendly with us as they were in '68 and '69.

I worked in aerial intelligence. We'd look at aerial photographs and find things to bomb — troop movements, trucks, oil depots, aircraft on the ground, boats in the rivers, whatever we could find. We'd also compare photos before and after bombing raids. When we bombed Hanoi, that was our busiest time. We were working 16 to 18 hours a day during that time.

Everything was so secret it was strange. The building I worked in had a combination to get in. When I first got to Viet Nam, I couldn't find my office, and nobody could tell me where it was. I finally found it during a bombing raid. I was lying in a ditch while the bombs were going off, and the guy next to me knew I was assigned to the same unit he was and he said he'd take me there.

The fun thing about intelligence was that every time you'd see the government say, Well, we didn't do this, we're doing that, we were seeing what really happened. There was so much misinformation it was ridiculous. Sometimes you'd read the newspaper and just laugh.



*Al Truax, advertising manager for The Modesto Bee, was a radio operator in Viet Nam in 1968 and '69. He celebrated his 21st birthday there.*

I actually had a good time over there. Well, I never had hand-to-hand combat with anybody. We would get bombed a lot — rocketed a lot — but I never had to point a gun at anybody. It's something I don't know if I could have done, anyway.

I was stationed in Nah Trang, south of Camrahn Bay, on the beach. We lived in downtown Nah Trang. It was like living right downtown in America. We ate very well, had great food. It was a small unit, and we were always barbecuing steaks, going to the beach. For fun, I'd get in the jeep, even though I had access to flying, and I would drive to Camrahn Bay, 80 or 90 or 100 miles away, just because it was fun going through the jungle. I thought it was a beautiful country. In fact, I have a desire to go back.

I really ran into a lot of nice people there, both Americans and Vietnamese. You meet people from all over the country that you know for such a short time, yet you develop such strong friendships because you're over there sharing this thing together. Some guys you'll know for

*Dave Dunlap*



*Alan Truax*

six months, some guys you'll only know for maybe a month, and yet you'll still get close to them.

It was kind of a growing time for me, realizing that everything is not the same as the suburbs USA. As it turned out, it was a positive experience in my life — certainly not what was happening over there, but how it impacted me.



*Dave Dunlap, camera operator for The Sacramento Bee, was stationed in the Central Highlands of Viet Nam during 1967 and 1968. He was 19 when he went off to war.*

I left for Viet Nam on Mother's Day. I had heard a little bit about Viet Nam, but I didn't know that much about it. Then I get in the service, they're teaching you how to kill, how to survive, telling you what's going to happen if you don't listen. They said, 90 percent of you are going to Viet Nam. We just said, what's Viet Nam? All of a sudden we're coming from the civilian world into the jungle and the first vehicle we're getting into is a bus with bars on the windows.

Camrahn Bay was amazing. Here you are in this country torn by war and it was just like being stationed someplace in the U.S. They had big elaborate bases for the military, a big huge airport, everything was spit and polished most of the time. They had beautiful beaches, some gorgeous beaches over there. Camrahn Bay was all secured. When you were in Camrahn Bay, it was like you were stateside. It was like everything else was shut out.

I never experienced rain like I experienced there. It was unbelievable. I can remember standing underneath a building letting the rain run off the roof into a



50-gallon drum and getting into the drum to take a bath.

Our water was either flown in or trucked in. We had no fresh water. During the rainy season, when you couldn't get the trucks up the mountain and you couldn't get the helicopter in, we would have enough for cooking and drinking, but as far as showers, we just stood out underneath the rain and took a bar of soap. Or we would catch water in the drum and all take turns taking baths.

We built a shower from a pontoon off an airplane. We filled it with water, then put a heater up underneath it and heated it up.

I still get teary-eyed when I think about Viet Nam. Like when they put up the wall in Washington or the memorial in Sacramento. That first article in *The Bee* about the memorial in Sacramento, it had a picture of a lady with a picture of her son on the mantel. I knew her son. We were in elementary school together, Boy Scouts together. He lived right around the corner from me.

I feel very fortunate. I was in communications in a little outpost near Dalat. We were stationed on a mountain. We were pretty secure up there. I never saw the jungle and I was never in combat. In a lot of ways I can't even fathom the things that some of those guys have gone through. We could hear stuff going on all around us. In my particular situation, if you didn't hear, then you didn't think about it much. You'd try to carry on from day to day and put it out of your mind.

We had these short-timer calendars. As you colored off each day, a picture would form. You know, typical GI stuff. Toward the end, when you've got a calendar and you're counting the days, the closer you got to finishing it, you started thinking more about the fact that you're going home.

The night before I was leaving, I was lying in my bunk thinking, I've been here 12 months and I'm going home tomorrow. I can hear grenades. I can hear machine gun fire just outside the compound. I don't really know what's going to happen. After all this time, you had to get back to someplace to get out. The helicopter could have been shot down, too.

*Terry Breiting, a technician with the Tacoma News Tribune, was in Viet Nam from September 1968 to September 1969. He was stationed in Vinh Long in the Mekong Delta. He turned 19 while he was there.*

I got to do a lot of flying in Viet Nam. I did test pilot work. Whenever we made repairs on helicopters, we'd have to go out and do a test flight to make sure everything worked. I flew all over the delta and to Saigon.

I was in eight crashes — four were mechanical failures, four were being shot down. When you make test flights, you stay real close to the base. We'd yell, May Day, May Day, all the way down and usually somebody would be there to rescue us by the time you got down. It was scary but you didn't have time to think about it. I never got hurt. I had a few bruises but never broke anything.

It was terrible living over there. It's the only place in the world that you can stand waist-deep in mud and have sand blown in your face. It was sand and mud everywhere. The whole delta is like a swamp and the high spots are sandy. They have torrential rains. That's when the mud gets really deep, four or five feet deep.

Our barracks were all tents until a few months before I left. The water tasted bad, the food was terrible. It wasn't very often that we got fresh meat or fresh milk. The enlisted people weren't fed very well, I don't think. All the officers got fed a lot better. On Christmas and Thanksgiving, by the time we got to eat, there'd be no meat left.

It was really bad coming back. People just have a different attitude about you. I was a different person when I came home. I had matured, I know that. The friends that I went to school with were still kids. I was a different person, I suppose.

I had delayed post-Vietnam stress syndrome. I kind of had fits of anger, became violent. Not physically violent, just violent. And nightmares. I was not getting it out of my system or talking about it. It was really hard on my wife.

About seven years ago, I went into a vets counseling program. My wife went with me. That really helped. It helped calm me down and make me more rational. It helped my wife understand how I felt and acted sometimes.

# NOT IT'S A MAN'S WORLD



Lois Germond

She had to lie about her age and persuade her mother to agree, but in 1942, when the Navy formed the WAVES, Lois Germond, now retired from McClatchy Personnel, knew she wanted to join.

"At that time you wanted to do something for the war," Germond says. "Anybody who lived at that time knows how patriotic everybody was. You'd just do anything to help."

At 17, Germond was adventurous and caught up in the excitement of World War II. But she was too young to enlist. Born when birth certificates were rare, she decided to get around the age barrier by fudging her birth date. All she needed was a note from her mother.

"At first she objected," Germond says. "Then all of a sudden one day she gave in. I come from a family of girls and she didn't have a boy to send."

Germond, with a note that added two years to her age, was the first woman from San Diego to be accepted into the U.S. Navy and one of only 20 recruited nationwide. Her mother put a star in the window,

signifying she had a child in the service.

The women of the Navy filled the desk jobs at home so the men could go off to battle, Germond says. Her base pay, she remembers, was \$21 a month. "But we had no place to spend it." Her clothes — a navy blue suit and "ugly shoes" — were free. The women were required to remain in uniform even during their off hours. But they sometimes broke that rule and hoped no one would figure out they weren't civilians.

"One day," Germond says, "I had pants on and I saw an officer. When you saw an officer you saluted, and I automatically saluted." She didn't get caught. "He might have thought I was just a smart ass," she says.

The women — all enlisted ranks — did everything the sailors did, Germond says. "We were up at five in the morning right along with the men. We did the same exercises they did. We marched against them in competition. In the first competition we beat them. We didn't make any points with them."

The sailors, she says, weren't too fond of the new women on their turf. "You could feel, not hate, but total dislike," she says. "They wouldn't hold the doors or carry our bags. In those days you expected that. It was almost like we were not there."

Germond served two-and-one-half years of her four-year enlistment, leaving in 1945 because the Navy thought she had rheumatic fever. She didn't, but she says, "When it was time to get out, I think I was ready."

Darla Judson, at 25, is a lead computer operator at The Modesto Bee. When she became the first woman at her paper to hold her job, she replaced two men.

Filling traditional men's shoes is nothing new to Judson. She has been doing it since childhood. Judson admits frankly that she's ambitious and competitive. What she most likes is to race — whether it's in her career, in a car or on a jet ski.

Judson started working at The Bee when she was 20 and fresh from a secretarial job and a business college course in computers. She had planned to be a secretary, but took a computer class and "found that I couldn't do anything wrong."

Computers came easy, but the real challenge of her job is that she's young, blonde and pretty. "People don't take me seriously," she says. "When people come to the office, they think I'm the secretary."

People have been underestimating her most of her life.

The youngest of six children, she always hung around with her brothers. "They were into hot rods," she says, "so I worked on cars. I had go-carts and drove tractors."

When her brothers' friends challenged them to a road race, they'd accept — with one condition: Their sister would drive. She usually won. Before she was legally old enough, she raced cars on a track. She rarely lost there, either.

Judson no longer races cars, but she does work with the pit crew at a Stockton race track for stock cars. "That's something I do to be in contact with racing," she says. "When you feel the motors roaring, and stand on the track and see cars going 90 miles an hour on the straightaways and 50 miles an hour in the corners, there's no way you cannot be excited."



But the excitement of driving had its limits. "I don't have a fear of driving, so it's not so exciting," Judson says. She does have a fear of water, though, and she has found a racing sport that challenges that fear. A couple of years ago, Judson discovered the jet ski.

"I can't get enough of it," she says now. "I could ride every day of the week. There's a feeling you can't get any other way."

Once she fell in love with the sport, Judson went out and bought the biggest, fastest jet ski she could find. She rides it every chance she can. "I don't like people to know that I race," she says, "but just let some guy come up and rev up his motor and challenge me. I've lost in the car, but I always win on the jet ski."



*Darla Judson*

**L**orraine Kopan is by now used to breaking barriers. She was the first woman to work in The Sacramento Bee's pressroom, the first woman outside advertising aide at The Bee, and the first woman in the pressroom of a printing company in her home state of Ohio.

She didn't set out to be a trailblazer. "I was just looking for jobs that paid well," she says. "That's the main thing, right? That's what we all work for."

She started out with the Ohio printer working in the bindery. Work was slow, she says, and she frequently got laid off. She noticed that pressroom work was more steady and paid better, and she applied.

"The foreman tried to dissuade me from taking the job because it was very hard work," she says. "He tried to tell me rolls of paper weighed 500 pounds."

She got the job but had to prove in 30 days that she could do it. "They put me on one of the heaviest jobs there," she says, "stacking papers strapped together. They weighed 100 pounds each. I had to stack one every few minutes."



*Lorraine Kopan*

She had known some of the pressmen when she worked in the bindery, and, she says, "I didn't know it at the time, but the guys had actually slowed down the press so I could keep up. It was really nice."

She left Ohio to come to Sacramento in 1981, worked first at The Sacramento Bee's Neighbors office as a courier and eventually landed a job at The Bee as a temporary advertising aide. In that job, she was the first woman driver to take out the ads. When she saw a position in 1984 for a flyperson — a pre-apprentice press person — she applied.

"I didn't know they'd never had a woman down here before till I was hired," Kopan says.

There were a few problems at first, she says. "I think a lot of guys were upset, thinking they had to watch their language and had to watch this and that. But I just came down here to work. I wasn't trying to improve anybody's etiquette."

She did her job and didn't let anybody give her a bad time. "If they dish it out," she says, "I dish it back to them. We get along that way."

Now, she says, she's just one of the guys. "I use my own share of foul language. I just work here, like everybody else."

**T**erri Tannahill wasn't looking for a career when she applied to work as an inserter at the Tri-City Herald. She was just looking for "something part time," and inserting was what she knew how to do.

"I didn't want to get a job during the daytime," she says. "I want to raise my children. But when the newspaper switched to morning, and I could work nights, I thought, why not? I never thought of it becoming anything more."

But it has become a lot more. Tannahill now is supervisor of the Distribution Center's night shift — the first woman to hold that position.

"When Terry Robinson (her manager) asked me if I would like to be a supervisor," Tannahill says, "you could have knocked me over with a feather."

She was thrilled with the promotion, but had reservations about taking it. She had worked part time as an inserter in high school, becoming a veritable whiz at the job, but had no college and had not worked since.

At first, the going wasn't easy. "Believe me, some of the guys — they're no longer here — really, really tried to give me a run for my money. I was told I'd never last because I'm a woman."

She not only has lasted — with support from her superiors, most of



her crew and her family — she has also reduced turnover, a major problem on night shifts. She hired and trained most of the people now on her crew.

She also has taught some of her workers a new, faster way of hand-inserting. "If everything's going well and I want something to do," she says, "I hand-insert. When my crew sees me hand-insert, it's almost a challenge for them to get up their speed like I have. My way is a little bit harder, but once you get it, it's no problem. Some of my crew do inserts like I do and they are pretty good at it. That makes me pretty proud."

Tannahill has had to tackle a lot of new responsibilities, such as confronting errant workers, fixing inserting machines, educating employees about the company and learning to speak comfortably at supervisors meetings.

With her full-time job, Tannahill says she has the best of both worlds: She has work she enjoys and she still gets to be with her three children during the day. The only thing that's missing, she admits, is sleep.

"I get two to four hours of sleep a day, she says. "It keeps me going. I know a lot of women with children. They're in the same situation, and they do the same thing."

**S**usan Fornoff, 30-year-old sports writer for The Sacramento Bee, is the only woman in America assigned to travel with a baseball team. But she never intended to write about sports.

"I was always a really good student," she says, "and I decided I could pick what I wanted to do." What she wanted to do was write newspaper stories. But she started college soon after Woodward and Bernstein broke Watergate, and everybody else wanted to write newspaper stories, too.

"I thought there was no way I was going to get a job," she says. An avid sports fan, in an era when sports departments were hiring "token women," she decided to look for work as a sports writer first and move

to another part of the paper later.

Years later, she's still in sports.

"What I do is a lot of fun," she says. "Sometimes you feel like it's really not a job. If I wasn't doing this for a living, I'd be spending my own money going to the ballgames."

When she first came to The Bee in 1985, Fornoff traveled with the A's part time. For the past three years, she has traveled with them full time.

She follows the same routine for each game. She gets to the ballpark about 5 p.m. — nearly all games are at night — and goes to the clubhouse "to see what's new." She checks on injuries, gathers tidbits, talks to the manager, reads the team notes, gets her scorecard ready. She files a notebook of short items by 8:30, then watches the game for a couple of hours. At 11:15 she writes. When the game is over, she runs to the locker room for quotes and files her story.

The locker room was one of the last barriers to fall for women sports writers, and many college locker rooms are still off-limits to women. In her early days, she wasn't always welcome in the locker rooms. One A's member, in a well-publicized incident, expressed his dislike of her presence there by sending her a dead rat in a shoe box.

"I always wanted to outlast him," she says. "So I'm still here and he's not."

She's just one of the guys in the locker room now, and she, the players and the manager, she says, have achieved a "mutual respect."

Fornoff doesn't consider herself "one of the guys" in her approach to her stories. Hoping to draw more women to the sports pages, she tries to keep the numbers to a minimum and the human interest high.

"I like to do stories where we can make the players seem human and bring them into people's living rooms," she says. "I feel that gets more people into my stories."

Fornoff, who would like to see more women writing sports, is co-founder of an organization she hopes will help improve the status of women sports writers and give women in sports a network of support and encouragement. The Association for Women in Sports Media now has about 160 members and has held two national conventions.

Someday, Fornoff says, she'd like to have a job with a more normal schedule and more time to craft her stories.

"I hope when I do leave this beat, there are some other women doing this," she says. "It's a great job. And with all the traveling, I know where all the best shopping is in the country."



Terri Tannahill



Susan Fornoff