* Channel 8 news anchor Allison Ross introduces a series called, “Return to Vietnam” which covers fifteen stories reported by Greg Hurst and other reporters portraying the legacy of the Vietnam War and the after effects of it within the country.
* Introduction to the series begins with different images of Vietnamese people in their everyday life while the audio plays sounds of wartime during the Vietnam War
* More images of Vietnamese people in their everyday life during the late 1980’s presented to give a basis for how the effects of the war are present still
* Vietnam in 1989 still looked the same as it did during the 1960’s (many rice paddy fields and rivers throughout the country)
* Tan Son Nhat airport used to be one of the busiest airports, but at the time of the series became almost desolated
* Many military complexes are gone when they were ever present during wartime
* When visitors go to Vietnam they see many bureaucratic officers; reporters for the series were only able to see what the government allowed them to see
* When speaking to locals, the reporters were given candid perspectives of modern day life in Vietnam
* Population of Ho Chi Minh City at the time was 6 million people
* Reporter Greg Hurst describes his first hand account of arriving in Ho Chi Minh City from the weather, traffic and crowds in the streets
* U.S. Embassy building in Saigon was prominent during the war, but now there isn’t an U.S. Embassy building and Saigon is now called Ho Chi Minh City
* April 30, 1975: U.S. Embassy rooftop used as a helipad for a million refugees
* Life in Vietnam gradually changing even though repression and secret police still exist; free enterprise and an increase flow of food is present
* Central government admits nearly destroyed country’s economy; to break free from the Communist shackles and continue the rapid progression in Vietnam the country opened up to the West for business people, former refugees and tourists.
* Many of those coming back to visit were American-Vietnam veterans (i.e. Vung Tau) who come back to help the Vietnamese people
* Fredy Champagne from the Garberville Vets Restoration Project speaks about how American soldiers were sent to “win the minds and hearts of the Vietnamese people,” but were given weapons of war; in turn they help with the restoration of the country for people along with bringing medical supplies
* The Garberville Vets Restoration Project built a health clinic, the first US building project since the 1970s - Hurst further discusses how they cover why the veterans came back and how it is working with the Vietnamese people side by side, seeing the battlefields and so forth.

**[This section of the newspiece gave me the impression of an Americanized perspective of Vietnam told in an almost lighthearted way at first. I was surprised to see many Vietnam veterans wanting to return to Vietnam, especially because from what I’ve read on my own and learned in school, the PTSD and after war trauma were persistent amongst veterans. I could see why some would want to return to help Vietnamese people along with coming to terms with their own self healing by visiting where they fought during the war].**

* News report then shifts to how Vietnam War soldiers felt like returning home to the US such as prisoners of war; story was reported by news anchor Jody Hammond
* Hammond reports on how many of the veterans are glad to see many return to Vietnam and wish to return themselves as well; visits the Landing Zone in Downtown San Diego to take a poll among the Vietnam vets to ask how they feel about Americans going back to Vietnam (not a betrayal to their fallen friends and see how country has adapted after the war)
* Dave Carey (Vietnam vet) from Poway who was a prisoner of war for five years, but now works his own consulting business and has managed to work through his trauma; he has no interest in going back to Vietnam
* Estimated 100,000 Vietnam veterans in San Diego county
* Estimated 1 million refugees who left Vietnam since the 1960’s; many made the transition to American life via Camp Pendleton where there was once a relocation camp
* Reporter Carol Hasson reports from Linda Vista the Vietnamese-Americans reaction to people returning to Vietnam; has a negative presence and community leaders fear citizen diplomacy issues could be overlooked
* Nguyen Anh Giao (Vietnamese Federation member): feels like people could fall into Communist trap; fear American citizens attempt to help Vietnamese people can cause hindrance
* Thousands continue to flee Vietnam each month - evidence that life in country has gotten worse
* Dr. Thuy Phuc Le (Boat People Committee): talks about how Vietnamese-American visiting Vietnam can be used for political agenda and emphasize “normalization”
* Fear of official normalization that Communists will benefit it from it and important issues of basic human rights will be ignored and lead to suffering of the Vietnamese people
* Main concern is reunification of families who haven’t seen each other in years

**[This part of the series for me gave a more candid, realistic perspective, especially since it takes into account what Vietnamese-Americans think about this “normalization” of Vietnam when there are still issues of basic human rights and Communist control in the country to consider].**

* Contrast between modern and rural life within Vietnam; chaos of traffic and gridlock in the city; poverty coinciding with the Westernization in city life

**[The contrast between rural and city life shown in the footage is so prominent; it reminded me of Mexico City when I used to visit relatives since some lived in the dense city population with and when one goes outside the city it's nothing but fields and mountains where there’s small towns in which people live there as well].**

* Secret police and communism ever present and Hurst discussed with Vietnamese people about it off camera; afraid to say anything negative afraid of repercussions

**[I commend Hurst mentioning that people were candid with them off camera to express how they actually felt living in Vietnam; it shows a realistic perspective of what people have to deal with and experience].**

* Stan Miller introduces part of the Return to Vietnam series that focuses on the local support network developed for Vietnam veterans; shows an outreach counselor try to assist homeless veterans assimilate back into American life
* Vietnam War was the longest, less successful and most unpopular
* Two and half million Vietnam veterans returned to America and made attempt to return to normal life
* Bob Kiddie (Veterans Outreach Program): Trying to help vets and their families with issues revolving the after effects of the war; Vet Center established so that any vet regardless of economic status can have access to counseling and services; counselors trying to reach out to silent majority

**[I always hear about these types of programs for veterans, but I am aware it can be hard for people to access, especially since there’s the stigma for asking for help as well as limited resources].**

* Veterans from the Garberville Vets Restoration Project return to Vietnam to help locals, but also cope and heal from their war experience in the country; they build a clinic in Vung Tau (fishing town of 100.000 population)
* Feel like they helped themselves as well as the Vietnamese people; a lot of positive feedback from the veterans participating in the project and feel a good energy of being in Vietnam and receive good reception from the locals
* Hurst notes thousands of Vietnamese people leaving the country and the struggle to assimilate into a new country
* Various refugee groups in San Diego to assist with assimilation; about 40,000 Vietnamese people living in San Diego County
* Since 1965 many programs developed to help develop job skills as well as learn English as a second language
* Various groups joined together to form Vietnamese Federation in San Diego
* Example: Boat People Committee assists with helping refugees who arrive by boat and to save them as many of the as possible (estimated about 100,000 have died)
* Issue of reluctance of many nations to issue visas to refugees

**[This section of the footage provided new information I wasn’t aware about with refugees and the local programs that were in San Diego at the time. I wonder if any of these programs are still in effect today].**

* ‘Dust of Life’: name referred to the children of American G.I’s and Vietnamese (a product of war); left behind by their fathers (i.e. Nguyen Thi Kim Thuy whose father lives in Washington and she has never met him)
* Not acknowledged by others for being “half and half” and referred to as Ameriasian; they hope to leave the country in hopes of going to school
* 9,000 documented according to studies; they receive no education, jobless, homeless
* An agreement made between the US and Vietnam which states that these children are allowed to come to the US

**[I was surprised to hear about the ‘Dust of Life’ children since I didn’t learn about them in school and also that the term ‘Ameriasian’ was used to describe them because it’s not a term that is used anymore].**

* The aftermath of the war and transition of civilian life for veterans is a different experience for each of them - for some it’s an easeful transfer while others struggle
* Julius Allen of Landing Zone: non-profit organizations to assist veterans; Allen, a Vietnam vet who was helped through the Dust Off program (for veterans dealing with alcohol and drug issues); he became an outreach counselor for Landing Zone
* Lorraine Kimel reports on a veteran who successfully transitioned back into civilian life; Jim D’Artenay, who did two tours of duty and then became a psychiatrist that runs a program at UCSD
* There was skepticism with the Garberville Vets project of building the clinic due to resources according to Do Hang of the Bureau of Foreign Affairs and former Viet Kong doctor
* The Garberville Vets group make it clear they are there to help the people in need of medical assistance and there is not association officially with the Vietnamese government; want to see a restoration for the better in the country and a small step to assist

**[The emphasis on making a small step to have peace was consistent throughout this story and it shows among the veterans who participated in the program and they feel grateful to have been able to do so].**

* ODP (Orderly Departure Program): A former program to permit immigration of Vietnamese to the United States and other countries

**[A program I wasn’t aware of and could see how many of the children now adults struggle to live in Vietnam due to being half American, which I still think is a persistent issue with biracial children to this day].**

* Nguyen Phi Tuyen (ODP): States that the American government should have claimed the Ameriasians a long time ago; many of the children are now adults waiting for approval
* Commercialization of the Vietnam War: Many movies and books during the 1980’s were Vietnam War based action movies and books; reporter Gina Lew presents the success these movies have in the box office (i.e. China Beach, Good Morning, Vietnam, Platoon)
* Media responding to how war was perceived by the people and questioning what the generation after the war feels
* There is a glamourization of the war also with scenes of war being showy and gory at times
* Vietnam was a subject that no one discussed due to the negative connotations, but is now being presented through film and TV shows
* John Wells (Producer): Points out that this media based on Vietnam is a catharsis in order to cope and understand what happened during the time and reevaluating beliefs and point of views.
* Tom Straw (Producer): Sees this stream of Vietnam media as a natural progression
* The education of the Vietnam War being taught in school made a progression to be taught more (i.e. Madison High school textbooks have twenty pages on the Vietnam War)

**[I didn’t realize how popular Vietnam War movies were during the 1980’s until they were pointed out in this news coverage. There is so much glamourization to the war through these fields that overlook the life and death situations that both the American soldiers and Vietnamese people faced].**

* MIA’s of the Vietnam War: Reported sightings, but never confirmed; 2,500 considered MIA and many believe they are still in Vietnam
* Believed to be lost in jungle or in hiding
* Some con men kept remains of American soldiers in order to trade for a visa through a black market trade
* Legacy of Vietnam War: many young women have ovarian and cervix cancer due to Agent Orange that was spread throughout the country; chemicals absorbed by bodies; fields filled with various live land mines; separated families due to the war
* East Meets West Foundation: To help the sick and those need with clothes, food and medicine, especially children; lack of medical supplies and care due to limited resources