

... has a personal interest "Good Morning, Vietnam"

BY MIKE HUGHLETT
Staff writer

No doubt Robin Williams fans are eagerly awaiting the local premiere of "Good Morning, Vietnam," in which the manic comic stars as a military disc jockey.

Jean LeRoy of Duluth is anxious to see the film, too — for personal reasons.

He'll be watching to see how well the movie depicts an important chapter of his life.

"Good Morning, Vietnam" is based on the experiences of Adrian Cronauer, a morning DJ in Vietnam during 1965 and 1966. LeRoy — a 20-year-veteran of the Marines and the Air Force — relieved Cronauer in 1966 and spent two years doing the same job.

The movie is scheduled to open in Duluth Feb. 5. But LeRoy hopes to be in the audience for a sneak preview Saturday at The Movies at Miller Hill Mall.

Williams portrays Cronauer as a madcap rebel, clashing with military censors and spinning as many rock 'n' roll records as possible. Between flipping discs, he reels off a string of cracks like: "President Johnson today signed a highway beautification bill. Basically, the bill said his daughters could not drive in a convertible on public highways."

That remark wasn't too typical of the real Cronauer, or any DJ in 1966, when the American cause in Vietnam had yet to come under fire, LeRoy said.

"Cronauer was not nearly the character that Robin Williams is," LeRoy said, basing his comments on magazine and newspaper stories he has read about the film. "He was not nearly as outgoing and vociferous as they make him out to be. If you did what they didn't want, you would never broadcast again. You were done. You'd be sweeping the floors."

Cronauer "was probably the most far out of the people on the air," LeRoy said. "He did his thing and got away with it." Cronauer was the one who dubbed the dawn-hour show "Good Morning, Vietnam," a phrase he, LeRoy and other DJs bawled across the airwaves each sunrise, as in "Good moorrning, Vietnam."

LeRoy began his broadcasting career after he joined the Air Force in 1958. He now is establishing his own public relations and advertising business, and was last in the public eye as the host of the Duluth TV program "Mining Matters," which was can-



The show's logo from a 1966 edition of "Stars and Stripes," an Armed Forces newspaper.

celed last year.

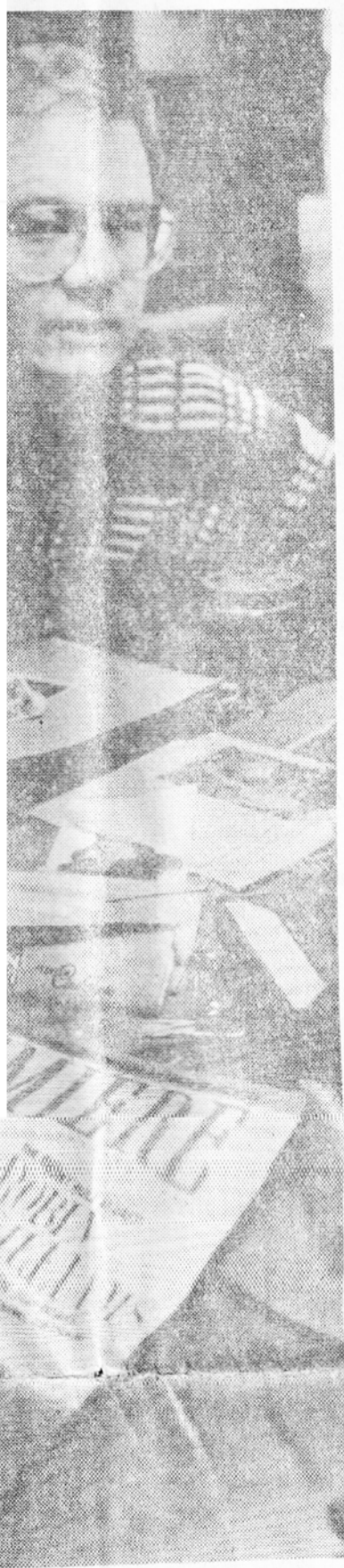
LeRoy, 52, first went to Vietnam in 1964. He stayed for two months to help set up a radio network for servicemen. He returned in '66 to establish a television network and also work in radio. It was then he met and befriended Cronauer, who is now a law student in Philadelphia. A year later LeRoy was sent to West Germany, where he worked in Armed Forces television for 5 years. In 1971 he went back to Vietnam.

Upon returning he found a great change in radio, which he feels was set in motion by Cronauer. In 1966 Sinatra-ish croons and country western tunes topped the playlist. DJs played only rock 'n' roll's Top 20 if they played rock at all, LeRoy said. But as sentiments toward the war changed the music changed too. Tapes of LeRoy's morning show in 1971 are filled with pop tunes, from The Byrds' "Turn, Turn Turn" to Scott McKenzie's "San Francisco (Be Sure to Where Some Flowers in Your Hair)."

During LeRoy's "early morning attitude check" groggy servicemen were serenaded with the Animals' anthem, "We Gotta Get Out of this Place."

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... the movie "Good Morning, Viet-



Photo by Chuck Curtis

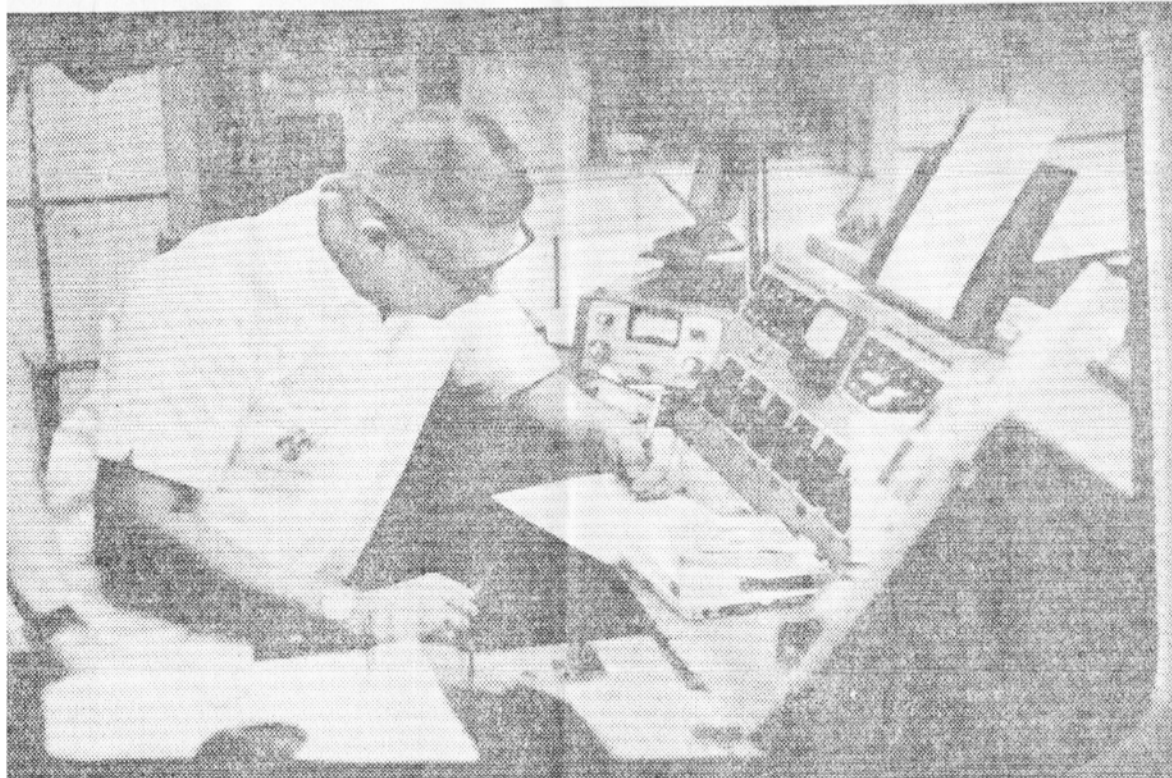
LeRoy will be interested to see the movie "Good Morning, Vietnam" because he lived it.

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LeRoy in Saigon in 1966, when he was a military disc jockey.



Armed Forces Radio-TV insignia