



VICTORIA REMEMBERS VIETNAM

A JOURNEY OF REMEMBRANCE, COMMEMORATION AND CELEBRATION





Front Cover: 7 RAR march through Sydney on RTA, and, Vietnam veterans still marching 50 years on.

VICTORIA REMEMBERS VIETNAM

2016: A JOURNEY OF REMEMBRANCE, COMMEMORATION AND CELEBRATION TO MARK THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF LONG TAN, AND THE RESILIENCE OF THE VICTORIAN VIETNAM VETERAN FAMILY



FOREWORD

The Vietnam War was a defining moment in the history of our nation. When Victoria's sons and daughters were called to serve, they did so courageously. They trained and travelled abroad, into the unknown, for the greater good. They selflessly placed their lives in danger and did what their country asked of them. For this, our Vietnam veterans are owed a debt of gratitude. They are owed our respect and our thanks.

Reflected in this book are some of the special moments from Victoria's 2016 commemorative program, acknowledging the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan. It captures the occasions when our community stood side by side in thanks for the service and sacrifice of our Vietnam veterans. This year, we have shown that we will never forget.

I am extremely proud of the role that our Government has played in supporting the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, Victoria Branch, to bring these commemorations to life. I am proud that I could stand with Vietnam veterans and show my support. I am proud that so many Victorians also took the opportunity to pay their respects. I would like to commend the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, Victoria Branch for their vision and determination. This has allowed all Victorians to learn more about our history and has let heartfelt thanks be heard.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan Andrews'.

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier of Victoria

FROM THE MINISTER

When we look back on 2016, the year of the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, we will do so with pride. The commemorative activities that have spanned the year have been a tremendous achievement and have provided the opportunity for all Victorians to show their respect for our Vietnam veterans.

Our community is now wiser with knowledge about those who served and the war they fought. It is incredibly important to keep this history alive and the commemorative activities of 2016 have been instrumental in doing so. I am proud of the role our Government has played in bringing these activities to life.

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, Victoria Branch have worked tirelessly to bring together this fitting tribute for their fellow Vietnam veterans.

I congratulate the entire team for their long hours, dedication and unwavering determination to ensure that the thanks our Vietnam veterans so richly deserve was realised.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Eren'.

The Hon John Eren MP
Minister for Veterans

REFLECTIONS

From the VVAA Victorian State President

The 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan was such an important anniversary for Vietnam veterans and a significant milestone in Australia's military history.

Against the backdrop of the national Centenary of ANZAC commemorations, it seemed even more important to us that the Long Tan anniversary should not be allowed to pass without being commemorated in such a way that the events of 2016 would remain long in the memory. We drew inspiration from the quote by Dr Michael McKernan below.

In partnership with the Victorian Government, we set out to ensure that the 50th anniversary year was marked with significant activities which would honour and commemorate Vietnam veteran service and sacrifice, raise public awareness of the anniversary and the Vietnam war, involve the community and in particular young Victorians, and celebrate the resilience of the Vietnam veteran community.

The well-being of history lies in its telling,
for unless the story is transmitted across
the generations, it is lost.

Dr Michael McKernan

The year provided cathartic moments and times for deep reflection, opportunities to re-kindle old friendships and right old wrongs, times when tears flowed and chests almost burst with pride and times to celebrate what it means to be a part of the Vietnam veteran community.

The images in this book require little commentary, may they remind you of a very special time for Victoria and for Victorian Vietnam veterans.

R W (Bob) Elworthy AM
Victorian State President
Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia





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GRAVESITE VIGIL

STATEWIDE COMMEMORATIONS
21 FEBRUARY 2016

“ . . . at the going down of the sun
and in the morning
We will remember them.”



At 35 cemeteries across the state, Vietnam veterans, next of kin, families and friends gathered to honour the 98 Vietnam veterans who died during the Vietnam War and are buried or commemorated in Victorian cemeteries.

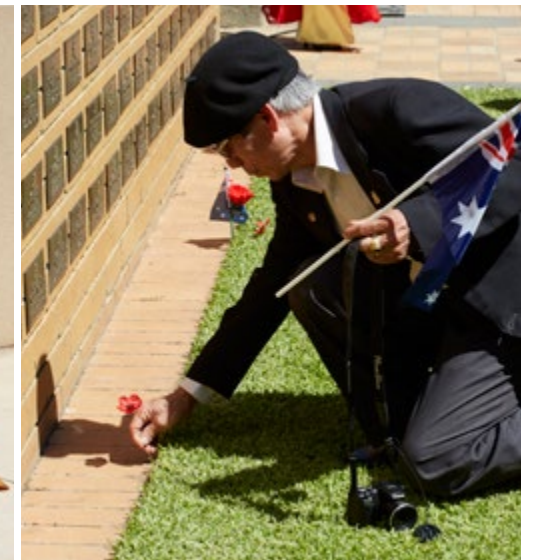
At 12 noon, simultaneous commemorative services, identical in every respect, were conducted by Victorian Vietnam veterans, bugle calls resounded and national flags and hand-made poppies were placed in remembrance.

It is the first time that commemorations on such a scale have ever been conducted in Victoria.



“I finally know exactly how my son died. I never knew until I spoke to some of his mates today . . . thank you.”







“This has given our entire family closure.”

“This is the biggest attendance at our cemetery since the day Norman was buried in 1967.”

Local newspaper reporter at the Kaniva cemetery for the commemoration service for Norman Hawker.

Below: The Hon. John Eren MP, Minister for Veterans Affairs and volunteer buglers at Springvale Botanical Cemetery.





“It is wonderful that my son is remembered so many years after he died.”

SERVICE AND SACRIFICE TOUR

VETRIDE
14-20 MARCH 2016



From Seymour to Canberra, Victorian Vietnam veterans, descendants, wives and friends joined a group of Queenslanders – who rode from Toowoomba – in the national capital. The “Service and Sacrifice” tour paid tribute to the 521 Australians who gave their lives during the Vietnam War while the riding tops, adorned with stylized medal ribbons from the Boer War to the present, acknowledged Australia’s wartime history.

The tour visited significant memorials, cemeteries and military establishments along the way. On the final day, the tour was joined by young ADF and ADFA riders for a ceremonial ride through Canberra. Stopping at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial for a commemorative service, the riders then continued up ANZAC Avenue to Old Parliament House where a lunch in the Members Dining Room brought the tour to an end.





Part of the 6 RAR connection:
 Dave Sabben MG. 12 Pl. Comd.
 Long Tan 1966 and Paul Beraldo,
 second tour. Con Sprogis, second
 tour, also rode on the tour.





ANZAC DAY

25 APRIL 2016

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY VIETNAM

- HMAS ANZAC
 - HMAS BOGNARDO
 - HMAS DEWENT
 - HMAS DUCHESS
 - HMAS JEPART
 - HMAS MELBOURNE
 - HMAS PARRAMATTA
 - HMAS QUEENBOROUGH
 - HMAS QUEBECON
 - HMAS QUICKMATCH
 - HMAS STUART
 - HMAS SWAN
 - DETACHED
RAN MEDICAL PERSONNEL
 - RAN CHAPLAINS
- 
- HMAS SYDNEY
 - HMAS TORRENS
 - HMAS VAMPIRE
 - HMAS VENDETTA
 - HMAS YARRA
 - HMAS HOBART
 - HMAS BRISBANE
 - HMAS PERTH
 - CDT3
 - RAN HELICOPTER
FLT VIETNAM
 - RAN DETACHMENT
9 SQN RAAF
 - NAVAL STAFF OFFICE H
 - RAN MISCELLANEOUS
PERSONNEL

VIETNAM



Vietnam Veterans were granted the privilege of leading the 2016 Melbourne ANZAC Day parade in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan.



WIVES, PARTNERS AND CARERS LUNCHEON

LANGHAM HOTEL MELBOURNE

15 JUNE 2016



Hosted by Mrs Catherine Andrews



“Yours are stories of survival and defiance, love and respect.

What singles you out is your resilience, courage, love and loyalty over such a long period.

You are the glue that holds it all together.”

Catherine Andrews



A toast to our ladies who in many ways are veterans in their own right. We salute your support and love for your Vietnam veterans.

“Very nice to be recognised as integral to our Vietnam vets well being.”

“Very grateful for today. It has made us feel very special. Much appreciated. Thankyou.”

Top left: Mrs Catherine Andrews, Host and Keynote Speaker



CIVIC RECEPTION

GREAT HALL, NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA
6 JULY 2016





The Premier of Victoria, the Hon. Daniel Andrews MP joined 500 guests for the civic reception. The Premier welcomed guests, spoke on the significance of the Vietnam War and presented certificates to Victorian student winners of the Vietnam War history competition. The first public performance of "Echoes of Conflict" composed by Vietnam veteran Lachlan Wilson, and a performance by the cast of stage production "Rolling Thunder" provided the musical highlights of the evening.





"Echoes of Conflict"
Composer Lachlan Wilson
is welcomed on stage





Student winners of the Vietnam War history competition with the Premier



Student Alexander Ivanov responds on behalf of the students



VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

18 AUGUST 2016

521
REASONS
TO NEVER
FORGET



In the presence of Her Excellency Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria and Mr Anthony Howard QC, the Hon, Daniel Andrews MP, Premier of Victoria and Mrs. Catherine Andrews, the Hon John Eren MP, Victorian Minister for Veterans and distinguished guests, the largest contingent of Vietnam veterans seen for many years commemorated Vietnam Veterans Day 2016 at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance. In excess of 2200 Victorian schoolchildren and a huge spectator group watched the march to the Shrine and a re-enactment of the placing of the Long Tan Cross in Vietnam in 1969. White crosses, each bearing the name of an Australian service member who died during the Vietnam War, and each with a hand-made poppy and flag affixed, took pride of place on the Shrine forecourt lawn.





Thousands of school children participated







The Long Tan Cross re-enactment







The Governor of Victoria receives Vice Regal Salute on her departure

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING

5 OCTOBER 2016





A non-denominational service of thanksgiving for service and sacrifice.



Chaplain, Group Captain Andrew Knight delivers the message



VICTORIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS VIETNAM WAR HISTORY COMPETITION

SEPTEMBER 2016



Ten students were rewarded for their entries in the competition with a tour of Vietnam, taking in battle sites and visiting major tourist areas in the south and north of the country. Vietnam veteran Gary McKay MC, led the tour, which included a service at Long Tan, visits to Binh Ba, Nui Le, Courteney rubber plantation, Ho Chi Minh City, Vung Tau, Hoi An and Hanoi



“These nine days have been so enriching, full of learning, sightseeing, experiencing culture, tasting it and living it.”



“I stood at the battle of Long Tan site in shivers”



“This impacted me on a level that is simply not possible in the confines of a classroom. A truly humbling experience.”

“This trip of a lifetime to Vietnam has been truly life changing and has changed my perspective on many things that I take for granted in Australia”

“A special thankyou to VVAA for allowing ten eager students to go on the trip of a lifetime. It has truly been life changing.”



NATIONAL VIETNAM VETERANS MUSEUM OPEN DAY

5 NOVEMBER 2016



Built by veterans for veterans, the National Vietnam Veterans Museum threw open its doors for a special Open Day to mark the 50th anniversary commemorations. Speeches, presentations and acknowledgements made way for tours, food and then some good old rock n, roll. Highlights of the day were a highly charged address by special guest and Vietnam veteran Graeme Edwards AM and a great line up of entertainers including Wendy Stapleton and Russell Morris.

“It is a museum which evokes a lingering and powerful memory which clings close to the heart of each and every one of us.

Let this museum stand as evidence and a constant reminder that those who served in Vietnam fought with honour.”

Graeme Edwards AM



Come and See the Real Thing, Come and See the Real Thing, Come and See . . . Russell Morris





VIETNAM VETERANS FAMILY RACE DAY

SEYMOUR
19 NOVEMBER 2016





Left: Proud connections with the winner of the Long Tan Handicap.









EDUCATION TEAM ACTIVITIES

IN SUPPORT OF THE COMMEMORATIONS





The VVAA Victorian Branch Education Team mounted displays and delivered presentations across Victoria in support of and at some of the 2016 commemorative events, including travelling ahead of the cycle ride to Canberra and providing static displays. The Team vehicle attracted attention wherever it was displayed.





COMMEMORATIVE QUILT

An historical record of the Branch in 2016, the quilt is on permanent display at the National Vietnam Veterans Museum.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With thanks to photographers, Susan Gordon-Brown, Kym Wallis, Noel Butcher and contributions from VVAA Victorian Members.

VICTORIAN BRANCH COMMEMORATIONS COMMITTEE



Left to right: Allan Rantall, Ken Baker (Chair), Nigel Wilson, Gary Elliott, Bob Farquhar, Brendan Kincade, Alma Elliott, Maurie Benson, Bob Elworthy AM, Ross Gregson, Peter Blackman, Aff Binnoore BEM, Bob Glaubitz, Brian Tateson

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*The wellbeing of history lies
in its telling for unless the
story is transmitted across
the generations it is lost.*

Dr Michael McKernan

Honour the dead, but fight like hell for the living.