

MEDIA RELEASE

VIETNAM VETERANS DAY 2010

This year Vietnam Veterans Day is Wednesday 18th August. On this date some 44 years ago, D Coy 6 RAR engaged a far superior force of North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong guerillas in a rubber plantation at Long Tan, South Vietnam, with the loss of 17 young Infantry and one Armed Corp soldiers. It is believed that enemy losses were in the vicinity of 2500 mark. This action definitely reinforced the ANZAC Tradition set some 95 years ago at Gallipoli.

After the Welcome Home March in Sydney in October 1987 the Federal Government, under PM Bob Hawke, decreed that this day would be set aside and be known as Vietnam Veterans Day, a day that everyone, regardless of whether they were service persons or not, could pause and remember not only those very gallant men of D Coy 6 RAR but also the 521 young people who paid the supreme price, and lost their lives in the search for freedom. We will also remember the some 2500 members of all branches of the Service who were wounded.

We also remember the Veterans and families who have suffered since and are still suffering today. We will pause to remember the tragic losses of our Allies, especially the 51 New Zealanders, 58 000 American, and also the Vietnamese. The Vietnamese losses were in the vicinity of 1 000 000 combat killed and 4 000 000 civilians with approx. 1 000 000 suffering from exposure to Agent Orange today.

This Memorial Service and March is being organised and controlled by the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia Qld Branch (VVAA Qld) in partnership with the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia Qld (VVFA Qld). The organisers have arranged with the Treasury Casino management for the use of their Premiers Bar from 09.30AM to 12 Noon for all veterans and families to gather prior to the March. Marchers will form up in Queens Park, ready to step off at 12 Noon, for the march to ANZAC Square. The parade will be led by the Australian Army Band, Brisbane.

The guest speaker this year is a very well - known Vietnam Veteran, Mr Francis (Frank) Harding Benfield, who served with 161 Recce Flight during the Vietnam War from Nov 1970 to Nov 1971. Frank is currently a member of the Prime Minister's Advisory Council (PMAC) and a Services Member of the Veterans Review Board (VRB). The Catafalque Party, Padre and Flag Orderlies are to be provided by current serving members of 8/9 RAR at this time.

All families and friends of Vietnam Veterans are cordially invited to attend along with their Sons, Daughters and Grandchildren. For those attending and not marching could you please (endeavor to) be in ANZAC Square no later than 12 Noon (if possible). We would like to see as many as possible attending and marching.