

## David Harris

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing,  
Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, Minister for the Central Coast



## Media Release

# Vietnam veterans remembered, 50 years on from Australian troop withdrawal

Friday, 18 August 2023

Vietnam Veterans Day commemorations being held today around the state and Australia will hold special significance, marking fifty years since Australia's withdrawal from Vietnam.

Vietnam Veterans Day takes place on 18 August, originally to acknowledge the Battle of Long Tan which occurred in 1966, and resulted in 18 Australian deaths and 24 wounded after three hours of fierce fighting before the withdrawal of the Viet Cong. But the day is used to broadly remember the service and sacrifice of all who fought in Vietnam.

Minister for Veterans David Harris was at the Cenotaph alongside RSL NSW President, and Vietnam veteran, Ray James OAM to pay tribute to the service and sacrifice of our veterans of one of Australia's longest military engagements of the 20th Century.

"This year, 50 years on from the withdrawal of Australian troops, we pay special tribute to all who served in Vietnam to keep us safe," Mr Harris said.

"Sadly, 523 lost their lives and almost 2,400 were wounded, with all involved carrying the scars and memories that only armed combat can bring. We will never forget your service and sacrifice."

RSL NSW President Ray James OAM said commemorating significant moments in our military history is vital to Australia, as people, a community, and a nation.

"Today we will honour those veterans who lost their lives during a battle; returned home wounded, ill, or injured, lost their lives in the years since they returned, and still carry the physical and emotional scars of their service since Australia withdrew from the Vietnam War 50 years ago," Mr James said.

"For those of us who are still here today, I say we must continue to honour the dead but fight like hell for the living as we support our fellow veterans of all conflicts, and connect them with the mateship, camaraderie, and services they need."

Vietnam veterans and nurses are also being honoured in a new exhibition at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park. The *Stories of the Dat Do Dogs* is a photographic exhibition with digital stories from over 50 veterans sharing their experiences from Vietnam.

Minister Harris who opened the exhibition said the memories shared by these veterans will enable their legacy to continue.

"The photographs and digital stories produced are essential to ensuring the sacrifices of these veterans are not forgotten, and their legacy is passed down to future generations."

The exhibition will feature in the Auditorium at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park Sydney through to March 2024. For more information visit the [Anzac Memorial event page](#).

**MEDIA: Alison Ayres | Minister Harris | 0488 463 648**