



# The National Commemoration for Vietnam Veterans' Day

---

**PUKEAHU NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL PARK**  
**18 AUGUST 2022**

## New Zealand and the Vietnam War

**The Vietnam War was the last, longest and most controversial of the five major wars in which New Zealand was involved in the 20th century.**

Between June 1964 and December 1972, more than 3000 New Zealand military personnel served in South Vietnam. Thirty-seven died while on active service and 187 were wounded. About 300 New Zealand civilians also went to help the people of South Vietnam; two lost their lives.

The Vietnam War lasted from about 1960 until 1975. Fought between the communist Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) and the US-backed Republic of Vietnam in the south, it ended with the defeat of South Vietnam in April 1975 and the establishment of a unified state, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The human cost was horrendous: more than 1.4 million military personnel and perhaps 2.6 million civilians died.

New Zealand initially limited its assistance to a civilian surgical team which arrived in April 1963. This was followed by a small non-combatant military force in June 1964; combat involvement began a year later. At its peak in 1968, New Zealand's military force totalled 548 men.

Most of New Zealand's forces were involved in artillery offensives, cordon and search patrols, intelligence gathering and reconnaissance missions.

The Kiwi gunners were renowned for their involvement in several intense fire fights, including the Battle of Long Tan on 18 August 1966 when the gunners played a key role in assisting Australian infantry.

As the fighting dragged on, Vietnam became highly controversial at home with thousands of New Zealanders marching against the war. Many returning veterans felt a deep sense of frustration that their service – undertaken with characteristic skill and dedication – was regarded with ambivalence or, in some cases, hostility.

From late 1970 New Zealand gradually began withdrawing its forces from Vietnam. Combat involvement ended in December 1971, and the army training teams followed 12 months later. The civilian surgical team was the last to leave in March 1975.

Vietnam stands apart from New Zealand's other 20th century military experiences. The conflict had a political and cultural impact that surpassed the numbers involved. For a growing number of young New Zealanders, this country's participation triggered a re-examination of our foreign policy and identity.



*The Second New Zealand Army Training Team Vietnam (2NZATTV), who helped train Cambodian infantry at Dong Ba Thin with the United States Army Republic of Vietnam Individual Training Group/Forces Armees Nationales Khmeres (UITG/FANK) Training Battalion, prior to its withdrawal from South Vietnam, 19 December 1972. Image courtesy of Mike Wicksteed collection*

# Order of Ceremony

---

## KARANGA

**Pekaira Rei**, Taranaki Whānui

*response by*

**Nina Parker**, Ngāti Tūwharetoa

## NATIONAL ANTHEM OF NEW ZEALAND

**Anon Vocal Ensemble**

## OPENING KARAKIA

**Peter Jackson**, Taranaki Whānui

## COMMEMORATIVE ADDRESS

**The Honourable Meka Whaitiri**,  
Minister for Veterans

## PRAYER FOR PEACE

**Chaplain Class Four Tony Brooking**,  
New Zealand Defence Force

## LAYING OF WREATHS

**The Honourable Meka Whaitiri**,  
Minister for Veterans  
on behalf of the Government and  
People of New Zealand

**Vince Kerr**,  
on behalf of the Vietnam War veterans

*and*

**Major General John Boswell DSD**,  
Chief of Army  
on behalf of the New Zealand Defence Force

**His Excellency Mr Leasi Papali'i Tommy  
Scanlan**,  
Dean of the Diplomatic Corps  
on behalf of the Diplomatic Corps

*and*

**Tim van de Molen MP**,  
on behalf of the Opposition

**Dennis Montgomery**,  
on behalf of the New Zealand Surgical Team

*and*

**Sarah Stuart-Black QSO**,  
Secretary General of the New Zealand  
Red Cross on behalf of the New Zealand  
Red Cross

**BJ Clark QSM JP**,  
National President, Royal New Zealand  
Returned and Services' Association

*together with*

**Bob Davies MBE**,  
on behalf of the Royal New Zealand  
Returned and Services' Association

## ROLL OF HONOUR

**Ray Marshall**,  
Vietnam War veteran

## THE COMMEMORATION

### THE ODE IN TE REO MĀORI

**BJ Clark QSM JP**,  
National President, Royal New Zealand  
Returned and Services' Association

### THE ODE IN ENGLISH

**Bob Davies MBE**

### LAST POST

Uniformed personnel salute

The New Zealand flag is lowered to  
half-mast head

### ONE MINUTE OF SILENCE

## ROUSE

The New Zealand flag is raised to  
full-mast head

## CLOSING KARAKIA

**Peter Jackson**, Taranaki Whānui



*Free World Military Forces in Vietnam comprised of troops from various nations, including New Zealand.*



*Army engineers Lance Corporal Richard Mita (left) and Lance Corporal William Williams, members of the New Zealand Army Detachment Vietnam (NEWZAD), work on a bridge in South Vietnam, circa 1964. Image courtesy of National Army Museum Te Mata Toa, Ref: 1992.2160-6701*

This National Commemorative Service was arranged by the Visits and Ceremonial Office, Te Tari Taiwhenua Department of Internal Affairs, in partnership with Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Manatū Aorere Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa the New Zealand Defence Force and the Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association.

*Cover image: Gunners from 161 Battery RNZA move a L5 Howitzer gun into the back of a M113 armoured personnel carrier at Nui Dat, circa 1966. Photograph by Sergeant David Roberts. Image courtesy of Marie Roberts*

