



The National Commemoration for Vietnam Veterans' Day

**HALL OF MEMORIES
PUKEAHU NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL PARK
18 AUGUST 2023**



New Zealand Civilian Surgical Team, Qui Nhon: (from left) Trevor Jacquiere, Mary Mackay, Ruth York, Michael Shackleton, Ron Mackenzie, 1963. Image courtesy of Shackleton family

Cover image: Helicopters coming in for pick up for Operation Coburg, Luscombe Field, Nui Dat, 1968. Photograph by Tony Pringle

Aotearoa me te pakanga o Vietnam

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 (or Việt Nam). 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 sixty years ago, 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.

Ngā Whakaritenga Order of Ceremony

KARANGA

Pekaira Rei
Taranaki Whānui

response by

Hollie Pohatu
Ngāti Porou

NATIONAL ANTHEM OF NEW ZEALAND

Anon Vocal Ensemble

KARAKIA TĪMATANGA

Peter Jackson
Taranaki Whānui

WELCOME

Major Fiona Cassidy (Rtd)
Chair of the National War Memorial
Advisory Council

COMMEMORATIVE ADDRESS

The Honourable Jo Luxton
Minister of Customs

MUSICAL ITEM

A Prayer of King Henry VI
composed by Henry G. Ley
sung by **Anon Vocal Ensemble**

HISTORICAL READING

Extract *Letters from a Viet Nam Hospital*
by Dr Peter Eccles-Smith
read by **Major Peter Stitt RNZALR (Rtd)**
Vietnam War veteran

PRAYER OF REMEMBRANCE

Chaplain James Molony
New Zealand Defence Force

LAYING OF WREATHS

The Honourable Jo Luxton
Minister of Customs
on behalf of the Government and
people of New Zealand

**Medical Chief Petty Officer
Lindsay Grenfell RNZN (Rtd)**
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 Ahmad Salem Alwehaib
Dean of the Diplomatic Corps
on behalf of the Diplomatic Corps

and

Chris Penk MP
on behalf of the Opposition

Dr Ron Mackenzie

New Zealand Civilian Surgical Team

together with

Anna Hunt (nee Shackleton)

on behalf of the New Zealand Civilian Surgical Team

Sean Stewart

General Manager

New Zealand Red Cross

on behalf of the New Zealand Red Cross

Rear Admiral Jack Steer (Rtd)

National Vice President

Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association

together with

Bob Davies

Vietnam War veteran

on behalf of the Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association

ROLL OF HONOUR

Warrant Officer Class One

Ray Marshall RNZIR (Rtd)

Vietnam War veteran

THE COMMEMORATION

THE ODE IN TE REO MĀORI

Warrant Officer Class One

Mario Ropitini

New Zealand Defence Force

THE ODE IN ENGLISH

Rear Admiral Jack Steer (Rtd)

National Vice President

Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association

LAST POST

Uniformed personnel salute

The New Zealand flag is lowered to half-mast head

ONE MINUTE SILENCE

ROUSE

The New Zealand flag is raised to full-mast head

CLOSING

Chaplain James Molony

New Zealand Defence Force

KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA

Peter Jackson

Taranaki Whānui



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

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 and
Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa the New Zealand Defence Force.



Lance Bombardier Kevin Burnell at Nui Dat, base of 161 Field Battery of the Royal New Zealand Artillery, circa 1966-67. Image courtesy of Kevin Burnell

