



Military History & Heritage Victoria



VIETNAM 30/50

THIRTY YEARS OF WAR/FIFTY YEARS OF REFLECTION
1945 - 2025
16 - 17 MAY 2026
TOBRUK HOUSE



The 6th Biennial Two-Day Conference of Military History and Heritage Victoria Inc. at the Tobruk House, Albert Park, 16-17 May 2026.

This conference examines the conflict in Vietnam from the end of WWII to 1975 and its impact until 2026. It will examine historical and strategic factors leading to the war and Australian involvement. New research and new interpretations of the war itself and Australian operations on land and air, including stories by those who were there, will take centre piece. Finally the conference will consider the impact of the war on veterans and families alike, along with reflections on the aftermath of the war and its impact 50 years after its end.

SATURDAY 16 MAY 2026

8:30 – 9:00 am | Conference Registration

9:00 – 9:10 | Opening Remarks and Introductions

Major-General Jim Barry AM MBE RFD ED (Rtd)

Conference Chair and MHHV Patron

Session Chair: Lieutenant Colonel (Rtd) Mike Buckridge RFD, President MHHV

Keynote Address

International Speaker

9:10 – 09:50 | War's end and normalisation of relations

Dr Stephen F. Maxner

Director, Vietnam Center & Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive, Texas Tech University, USA

10:30 – 11:00 | Morning Tea

11:00 – 1:00 | Session 1 – Highways to a War (Koch)

Session Chair: Lieutenant-Colonel Murray Duckworth CSM, Vice-President MHHV

11:00 – 11:40 | Hell in a very small place (Fall): Dien Bien Phu

Dr Andrew Kilsby

MHHV, professional historian and published author

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11:40 – 12:20 | An Army Transformed? The Australian Army's Road to Vietnam, 1953-1965

Dr Thomas Richardson

Lecturer, Australian Defence Force Academy at UNSW Canberra; author *Destroy and Build Pacification in Phuoc Tuy, 1966–1972*

12:20 – 1:00 | Through the Air Power Lens - The Failure of Western Military Power in the Vietnam War

Martin James, MDefStud

Historian, former Head of the Office of Air Force History and author *The Origins of the RAAF Commitment to the Vietnam War*

1:00 – 1:45 | Lunch

1:45 – 2:45 | Session 2 – The Road Not Taken (*Boot*)

Session Chair and Moderator: *Major-General (Rtd) Mike O'Brien CSC*

1:45 – 2:25 | Round Table:

Was this a winnable war? And if not, what were the alternatives?

Panel : Steve Maxner, Tom Richardson, Martin James, Nathalie Nguyen

2:25 – 3:00 | The Literature of the Vietnam War Redux

Major-General (Rtd) Mike O'Brien CSC

President, Royal United Services Institute; author *Conscripts and Regulars: with the Seventh Battalion in Vietnam* and Vietnam veteran

3:00 – 3:30 | Afternoon Tea

3:30 – 5:00 | Session 3 – New Perspectives: ARVN

Session Chair: *Dr Daryl Moran, MHHV*

3:30 – 4:10 | Pioneers: Female Soldiers in South Vietnam

Professor Nathalie Huynh Chau Nguyen

Professor of History, Monash University and author *South Vietnamese Soldiers: Memories of the Vietnam War and After*

4:10 – 4:45 | Reflections: The Impact of the War on Veterans and Communities

Dinh Nguyen

Past President Vietnamese Veterans Association and ARVN veteran

4:45 | Convenor – end of day, dinner and next day



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SUNDAY 17 MAY 2024

9:00 - 10:15 | Session 4 – One Crowded Hour (*Bowden*)

Session Chair: *Lieutenant Colonel Michael Buckridge RFD (Rtd), President MHHV*

9:00 – 9:40 | An Analysis of Australian Operations

Dr Bob Hall

Adjunct Lecturer, ADFA at University of NSW Canberra; author of *Combat Battalion: The Eighth Battalion in Vietnam*; co-author (with Andrew Ross and Amy Griffin) of *The Search for Tactical Success in Vietnam*, and Vietnam veteran

9:40 – 10:15 | Cadres, Sappers and Spies - Viet Cong infrastructure in Phuoc Tuy province

WO1 Blair Tidey

ADF Warrant Officer and PhD candidate ANU; author of *Forewarned, Forearmed*

10:15 – 10:45 | Morning Tea

10:45 – 11:55 | Session 5 – One Crowded Hour II

Session Chair: *Lieutenant-Colonel (Rtd) Murray Duckworth CSM, Vice-President MHHV*

10:45 – 11:20 | Just Another Day in the Delta: EMUs in Vietnam

Commander Max Speedy DSC RAN (Rtd)

Editor with Bob Ray of *A Bloody Job Well Done*, and Vietnam veteran

11:20 – 11:55 | Long Tan: Memories, Myths and Reality

Brigadier Kevin O'Brien CSC (Rtd)

Historian, published author, Vietnam veteran.

12:00 – 1:00 | Lunch

1:00 – 2:20 PM | Session 6 – One Crowded Hour III

Session Chair: *David Phillipson, MHHV*

1:00 – 1:40 | Forged in Adversity: The Ivor Hodgkinson Story

Brigadier David Webster AM CSC (Rtd)

Author 7 RAR: *The two Tours of Vietnam – through a Soldier's Lens*, and Vietnam veteran.

1:40 – 2:20 | Round Table:

Was the Australian air, sea and land contribution to the war effective, measurable and recognised? Could more have been done?

Moderator: Dr Stephen F. Maxner, TTU

Panel : Bob Hall, Blair Tidey, Max Speedy, Kevin O'Brien, David Webster, Martin James.

2:20 – 3:00 Session 7 – Vietnam Fragments I (*McKay*)

Session Chair: *Dr Daryl Moran, MHHV*

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2:20 – 3:00 | Return to Vietnam: American and Australian Veterans' Journeys

Dr Mia Martin Hobbs

Post-doctoral research fellow, Deakin University

3:00 - 3:30 | Afternoon Tea

3:30 – 5:00 PM | Session 8 – Vietnam Fragments II

Session Chair: *Dr Daryl Moran, MHHV*

3:30 – 4:10 | Coming Home: Australia's Vietnam Veterans and the Legacies of their War

Craig Tibbitts, MPhil

Senior Historian, Military History Section, Australian War Memorial

Published author and Research assistant to Peter Yule's *The Long Shadow*.

4:10 – 4:50 | Old Enemies Unite: Recovering the Dead of Coral-Balmoral

Luke Johnston

Son of 3 RAR veteran, researcher, historian, battlefield tour leader and director-at-large of US-based charity, *Healing Through History*

4:50 – 5:00 | Closing Remarks

Major-General Jim Barry AM MBE RFD ED (Rtd)

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Conference Sponsors:



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