

PIONEERS

FEMALE SOLDIERS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

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VIETNAM 30/50
THIRTY YEARS OF WAR/FIFTY YEARS OF REFLECTION 1945-2025
TOBRUK HOUSE, ALBERT PARK, VICTORIA 3206
16 MAY 2026



Left: Bùi Ngọc Thúy after a parachute jump at Cu Chi, a jumping training site, in 1957.

Right: With her parachute pack over her shoulder before returning to the gathering point.

Bùi Ngọc Thúy

- Born in Kien An, northern Vietnam in 1936
- Father arrested by the French in 1947
- In 1949, the mother and six children walked from Cai Nang to Haiphong
- Formed part of the 1 million refugees who moved from the communist north to the republican south after partition in 1954-1955
- Joined the military in 1955
- Seven years in the Airborne Division
- Gave birth to four children between 1960 and 1965
- Received a medal for bravery while she was working for the Presidential Protective Service in Saigon in 1968
- Served in the RVNAF until 1971
- Sponsored to Australia by her son in 1989
- Died in Brisbane, Queensland, in 2014



Bui Ngoc Thuy in 1957



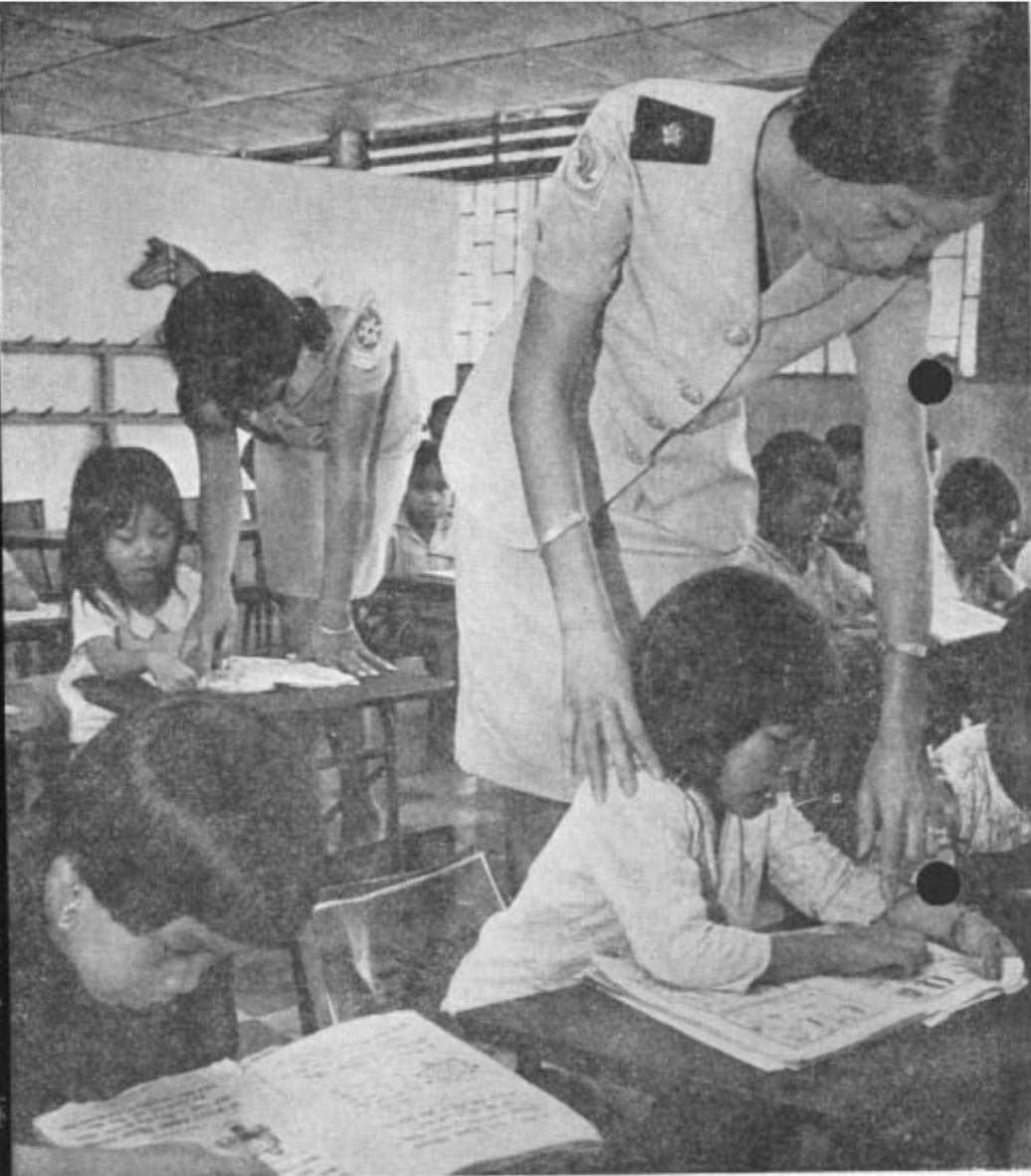
As a military social assistant giving presents to a soldier in the Department of Army Security in 1969



RVNAF doctors and nurses operating in Combat Field Hospital 1 in Quang Ngai in 1968. Photograph courtesy of Tran Xuan Dung and Nguyen Hoang Hai.



Lieutenant Ha Thi Lai, 27, of the Women's Armed Forces Corps (WAFC) provides reading matter for a wounded ARVN Airborne trooper at a Tan Son Nhut hospital.



Two WAFCs conduct a kindergarten class for dependents of ARVN Airborne troopers at Tan Son Nhut in the suburbs of Saigon. In front is Lieutenant Ha Thi Tuoi, behind is Technical Sergeant Kim Quynh.



Master-Sergeant Do Thi Trinh, a WAFC Pharmacist, dispenses tablets to ARVN Airborne trooper's dependents.

1950-1952

Army of the Centre

Integrated into the National Army of Vietnam in 1952

1952-1965

Women's Auxiliary Corps (WAC)

5 branches: 1) Staff; 2) Medical Corps; 3) Communications;
4) Military Supplies; 5) Social Work

Reduced to 2 branches in 1959:

1) Medical Corps; 2) Military Social Work

1965-1975

Women's Armed Forces Corps (WAFC)

Chief of the WAFC

WAFC Training Centre became the WAFC School in 1967

Servicewomen dispatched to different branches according
to the needs of the Ministry of Defense

April 1975

6,000 in the WAFC including 600 officers



Members of the Women's Armed Forces Corps in 1972. Hồ Thị Vẻ is seated the middle of the front row.



ĐẶC SAN
CỰU NỮ QUÂN NHÂN
QLVNCH



KỶ NIỆM NGÀY HỘI NGỘ NQNV
12 THÁNG 8 NĂM 2001



*Nữ Quân Nhân QLVNCH tham dự lễ Kỷ Niệm Hai Bà Trưng
tại sân vận động Cộng Hòa năm 1974*

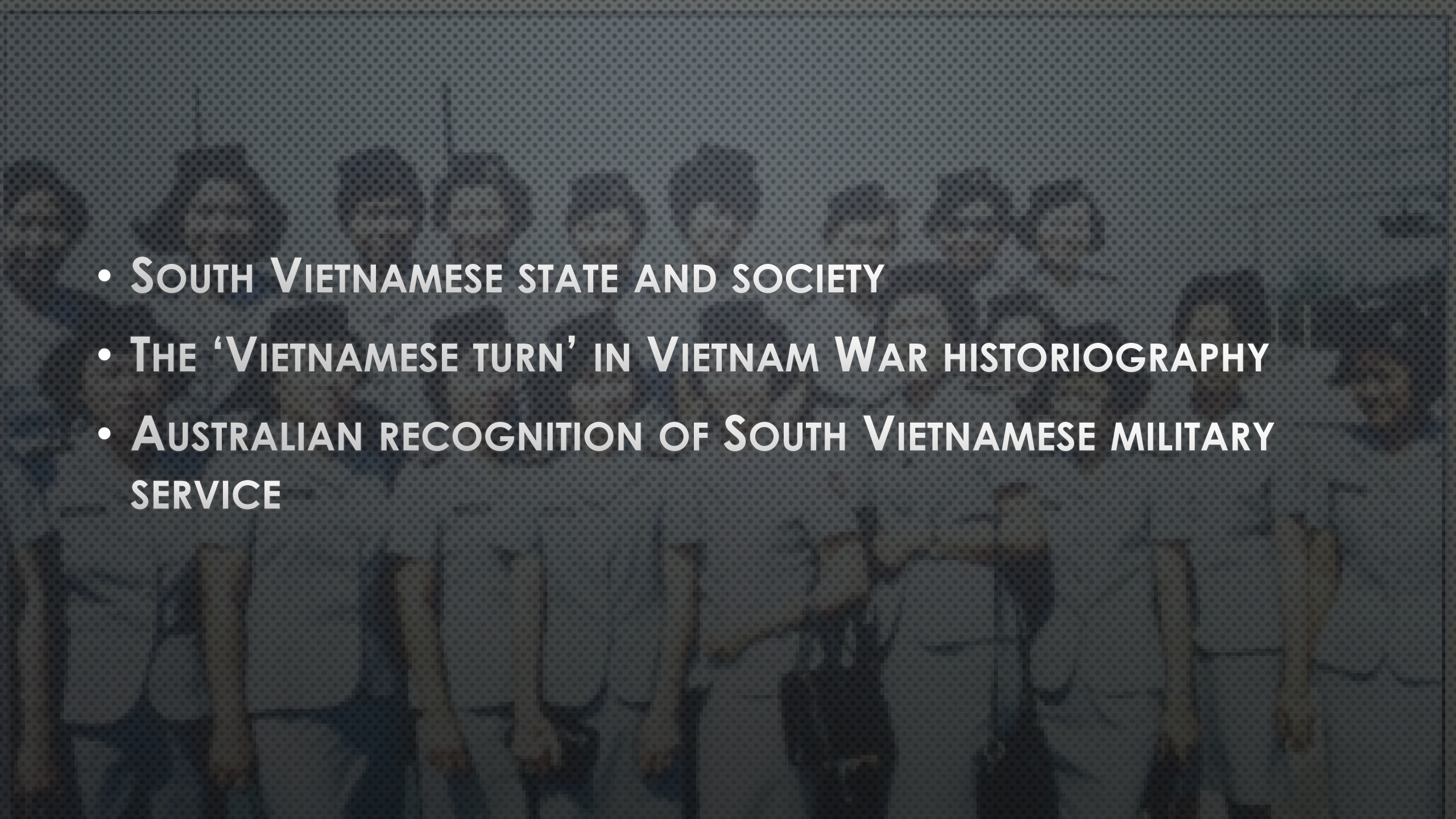




Thuy

- Born in 1951
- Officer course in 1972
- II Corps Headquarters during 1972 Offensive
- III Corps Headquarters
- Married and gave birth to a son in 1974
- Hard labour and harassment after 1975
- Imprisoned with son for nearly two years after failed escape attempts
- Escaped from Vietnam in 1989
- Son died
- Four years in refugee camps
- Arrived in Australia 1993 'alone'
- Trauma narrative
- PTSD
- Service recognized by Australia

- 1. Tradition vs Modernity**
- 2. South Vietnamese state and society**
- 3. Silenced histories and archives**
- 4. The 'Vietnamese turn' in Vietnam War historiography**
- 5. Oral history and testimony**
- 6. Australian acknowledgement of allied service**

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- A group of South Vietnamese military personnel in uniform standing in formation. The image is dark and grainy, with a halftone pattern. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.
- **SOUTH VIETNAMESE STATE AND SOCIETY**
 - **THE 'VIETNAMESE TURN' IN VIETNAM WAR HISTORIOGRAPHY**
 - **AUSTRALIAN RECOGNITION OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY SERVICE**