Thursday, 18 August 2022

COMMEMORATING THE VIETNAM WAR

Veterans of the Vietnam War were honored today at the Cenotaph in Martin Place and around NSW on Vietnam Veterans Day.

Minister for Transport, Veterans and Western Sydney David Elliott attended the commemoration with RSL NSW President Ray James to pay tribute to the service and sacrifice of our veterans of one of Australia's longest military engagements of the 20th Century.

"Today we come together on Vietnam Veterans Day to remember the service and sacrifice of our veterans in Vietnam over a decade of service from 1962 to 1972," Mr Elliott said.

"We honour the almost 60,000 Australians who served and the 521 veterans who paid the ultimate sacrifice."

In July 1962, Australia's war in Vietnam began with the deployment of three dozen Australian Army advisers to be incorporated into the US Military Assistance Command. Over the next 10 years Australia's involvement increased to include an Army component and task force group over 8,000 strong as well as Royal Australian Navy and Royal Australian Air Force commitments in the skies and off the coast.

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

"RSL NSW takes this responsibility incredibly seriously as the custodians of the ANZAC spirit," Mr James said.

"Today we will honour those veterans who lost their lives during 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 over 50 years later."

Vietnam Veterans Day takes place on 18 August, originally to acknowledge the Battle of Long Tan which took place in 1966 and resulted in 18 Australian deaths and 24 wounded after three hours of fierce fighting before the withdrawal of the Viet Cong.

Mr Elliott and Mr James were then joined by Veterans Representative Trustee and President of the NSW Branch of the 6RAR Association Brigadier Paul O'Sullivan AM MBE (Retd), and Senior Historian and Curator Brad Manera at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park Sydney for a soil ceremony to accept soil from Long Tan, donated by Army veteran Mr Steve Danaher.

Corporal Steve Danaher, a member of United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia travelled to the site of the Battle of Long Tan in 1993 and collected soil from the sacred ground of this famous battle which took place over 50 years ago.

Mr Elliott accepted the soil as Chair on behalf of the Trustees of the Anzac Memorial Building.

MEDIA: Vanessa Till | 0419 603 586