



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS
MINISTER ASSISTING THE PRIME MINISTER FOR THE
CENTENARY OF ANZAC
SPECIAL MINISTER OF STATE**

OFFER TO BRING OUR VIETNAM FALLEN HOME

The Commonwealth Government will offer the families of Australian servicemen killed during the Vietnam War and buried overseas the opportunity to repatriate their remains.

The offer follows extensive consultation with the RSL, the Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia, the Vietnam Veterans' Federation of Australia, as well as veterans' families.

Australia deployed more than 60,000 servicemen and women to the conflict in Vietnam between 1962 and 1973, with 521 Australians names listed on the Australian War Memorial's Roll of Honour.

Australia's policy on repatriating the remains of fallen soldiers changed in January 1966.

Since that time, the remains of our fallen have been repatriated.

Some of our Vietnam veterans were buried overseas while their fallen mates were brought home.

Twenty five of Australia's war dead from Vietnam were not brought home.

One lies in the Kranji War Cemetery in Singapore and 24 in the Terendak Military Cemetery in Malaysia.

With the agreement of their families, the Commonwealth Government will bring them home.

It is time that all our Vietnam fallen had the same treatment, which is why the Government will offer to repatriate the remains of those buried overseas, with the agreement of their families.

A number of other servicemen and dependants of Defence personnel are also buried at Terendak Military Cemetery, which is located within a Malaysian Armed Forces Base.

The Government will also offer the families of these Australians the opportunity to bring their remains home where they can have unrestricted access to their graves.

The decision to take up this offer of repatriation rests, as it should, with the families. Some will choose to bring loved ones home, and others will let them rest where they now lie.

We are grateful to the Government of Malaysia for taking good care of the graves of our soldiers and

civilians and for facilitating visits for their loved ones.

The Government will meet the costs associated with repatriation and reburial.

As 2015 marks fifty years since the arrival of combat troops and the escalation of Australian involvement in Vietnam, it is right and proper that we honour their service with this gesture.

Over the coming years, we will further honour those who served through commemorations marking the 50th anniversary of battles such as Long Tan, Coral-Balmoral and Binh Ba.

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*Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) and Veterans Line
can be reached 24 hours a day across Australia for crisis support and free and confidential counselling.
Phone 1800 011 046 (international: +61 8 8241 4546).*
