

THE BATTLE OF
LONG TAN

South Vietnam: 18 August 1966

Facts Sheet

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Battle of Long Tan Documentary

- Feature Film Project conceived by Martin Walsh in 2004
- Documentary project conceived by Martin Walsh and Graham Cassidy in March 2005
- Martin Walsh (Red Dune Films) and Animax Films began working on the documentary in February 2006.
- Pre-production began in April 2006.
- Production began in May 2006 and wrapped in July 2006.
- Post production began on 4th July 2006.
- The documentary was filmed on location in NSW, ACT, QLD, New Zealand & Vietnam
- First broadcast at 8.30pm on Wednesday, 16th Aug 2006 on **The History Channel, FOXTEL and AUSTAR.**
- Cast and Crew:
 - Narrated by Sam Worthington
 - Executive Producers Martin Walsh & Damien Lay
 - Director Damien Lay
 - Director of Photography Steve Williams
 - Producers Martin Walsh & Damien Lay
 - Writers Keith Thompson, Damien Lay & Martin Walsh
 - Music Mark Gluhak
 - Editor Joseph Morris
 - Research Martin Walsh
 - Production Manager Sam Bateman
- Technical details:
 - Gauge shot on Super 16
 - Length 104 minutes

Battle of Long Tan Events

- **Total Australian and enemy casualties as a result of the Battle of Long Tan**
 - Australian
 - 18 killed (17 from D Coy, 6RAR and 1 from 3Trp, 1APC Squadron)
 - 21 wounded
 - NVA and VC¹
 - Approximately 500+ killed (officially 245 bodies counted on the battlefield + bodies found over two weeks after the battle + identification from the VC Commanders diary which was captured by US Army)
 - More than 1,000 wounded (Again identified from captured documents)
 - 2 wounded NVA 45 Regiment soldiers were captured on the battlefield
 - 1 wounded VC D445 soldier was captured on the battlefield
- **Total number of forces opposing each other on the battlefield at Long Tan**
 - Australia & New Zealand
 - 105 soldiers from D Coy, 6RAR, Australian Army
 - 3 man New Zealand Forward Artillery Observation party, 161 Bty RNZA
 - Total 108 men
 - NVA and VC²
 - 1,600 soldiers from VC, 275 Main Force Regiment
 - 500 soldiers from North Vietnamese Army, 45 Regiment
 - 550 soldiers from VC, D445 Battalion
 - Total 2,650+ men

¹ To Long Tan, Ian McNeill: Enemy body count on battle field and information gathered from captured documents including the diary of the VC commander at Long Tan.

² AWM Records: Australian Army Intelligence Report – information from enemy prisoners and captured documents. Intel Summary No.79, 24 August 1966, 1 ATF Commanders Diary.

Detailed facts:

- **The patrol was in response to a mortaring of the 1ATF (Australian Task Force) base at 2.43am on the morning of 17th August**
 - 82 enemy mortar rounds impacted the base
 - 24 Australians were wounded, two seriously
 - Seven vehicles were lightly damaged and 21 tents damaged
- **The patrol given to D Coy on 18th August 1966 was codenamed Operation Vendetta**
- **The Australians were outnumbered 26 to 1 at the battle of Long Tan**
- **The majority of the battle was fought in a blinding monsoon, thunder storm**
- **The entire battle took place over an area no bigger than two football fields**
- **The rubber plantation at Long Tan was approximately 5km's from the artillery at Nui Dat**
- **The battle lasted 3.5 hours with the last contacts occurring around 7.10pm, 18 August 1966**
- **Artillery at Nui Dat fired almost non-stop for 5 hours in support of the battle**
 - Regimental Fire Missions (involving all 18 Australian & NZ artillery guns firing at once and at some stages all six of the US guns as well) had not been fired since the Korean war and will probably never be fired again
 - Lightning twice hit the artillery positions
 - Two artillery gunners passed out from cordite fumes from the guns as the fumes could not disperse due to the weather
 - Artillery fire was eventually being brought in "Danger Close" to within 50 metres of the Australian positions
- **Weapons and ammunition**
 - Approximately 400,000 rounds of ammunition were fired by both sides
 - The artillery at Nui Dat fired in excess of 3,500 rounds
 - More than 20 rounds of enemy mortar rounds were dropped on or near D Coy units during the battle
 - The Australians captured more than –
 - 60+ enemy weapons
 - 10,500+ rounds of ammunition
 - 300+ hand grenades
 - 100+ rounds of rockets and mortars
 - These figures are highly unusual as the enemy always took their weapons and dead from battlefields and this is further evidence of the destruction inflicted on the enemy
- **D Company 6RAR at Long Tan comprised:**
 - 105 Australian regular and national service soldiers
 - 3 person New Zealand forward artillery observer party
 - Each rifleman carried 3 x 20 round magazines and another 60 rounds in boxes in their packs
 - Each M60 machine gun team (3 men) carried 5 x 100 round belts and another 5 x 100 round belts in their packs
 - D Coy departed Nui Dat base at 11am, 18 August 1966
 - D Coy met up with B Coy at 1pm

- D Coy left B Coy at 3pm approximately 2km's from the Long Tan rubber plantation
- D Coy first engaged the enemy at 3.40pm
- Ammunition resupply by chopper received by D Coy around 6pm
- Reinforcements from B Coy on foot reached the D Coy position at 7pm
- Reinforcements from A Coy riding in 10 x 3 Trp APC's reached the D Coy position at 7.10pm
- 17 members of D Coy were killed (see Appendix for names, ages and locations)
 - 11 National Servicemen, Australian Army
 - 6 Regular, Australian Army
 - 21 members of D Coy were wounded

- **3 Troop, 1APC Squadron at Long Tan comprised:**
 - 10 x M113 Armoured Personnel Carriers (APC's)
 - 22 troopers from 3 Troop
 - 1 member of 3 Troop died of wounds received in the battle

- **B Coy, 6RAR comprised:**
 - 32 soldiers

- **A Coy, 6RAR comprised:**
 - 100+ soldiers

- **Four artillery batteries from 1 Field Regiment at Nui Dat were used in the battle**
 - 6 x M101A1 105mm L1A1 guns of 161 Field Battery, Royal New Zealand Army
 - 6 x M101A1 105mm guns of 103 Field Battery, Royal Australian Army
 - 6 x M101A1 105mm guns of 105 Field Battery, Royal Australian Army
 - 6 x M109 Self Propelled 155mm guns of A Battery, 2/35th Howitzer Battalion, US Army

- **The main enemy force facing D Coy at Long Tan comprised:**
 - Elements of VC 5th Division totalling 2,650+ soldiers
 - VC, 275 Main Force Regiment
 - 1,600 soldiers
 - North Vietnamese Army, 45 Regiment
 - 500 soldiers
 - VC, D445 Provincial Battalion
 - 550 soldiers
 - VC, 274 Regiment of the VC 5th Division comprising around 2,000 soldiers was in a position North West of the 1ATF base at Nui Dat on 18th August 1966 to the ambush any US reinforcements from Saigon

- **The stated aim of the enemy at the Battle of Long Tan (from interrogation of captured enemy on battlefield and captured documents) was:**
 - The VC 275 and NVA 45 Regiments along with D445 would lure an enemy Australian Battalion out of the task force base to destroy them and then attack the Australian base. 274 Regiment would then ambush any reinforcements from Saigon. Wiping out the Australians at Nui Dat would force them to leave Vietnam.

- **The battle of Long Tan severely weakened the enemy in Phuoc Tuy province and they never again posed a direct serious threat to the Nui Dat base.**

- **Australia went on to completely secure Phuoc Tuy province and improve the lives of the South Vietnamese people living there contrary to the rest of Vietnam. This was not achieved anywhere else in South Vietnam.**
- **The Australian memorial cross in the rubber plantation at Long Tan is one of only two foreign war memorials allowed in Vietnam.**
- **The following awards and decorations were given:**
 - The Presidential Unit Citation
 - This is the highest award that can be awarded to a unit for gallantry against the enemy. D Coy wear it proudly as the award has been given to Australian Units on only three occasions, Long Tan, Vietnam, to a Rifle Company, another a Battalion, 3RAR for Kapyong, Korea and the third to 13 Squadron, RAAF in 1942.
 - Distinguished Service Order (DSO)
 - Brigadier O.D. Jackson
 - Lieutenant-Colonel C. Townsend
 - Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE)
 - Captain M. Stanley (NZ)
 - Military Cross (MC)
 - Major H. A. Smith
 - Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM),
 - Warrant Officer 2 J. W. Kirby
 - Corporal J. Carter
 - Military Medal (MM)
 - Sergeant R. S. Buick
 - Private R. M. Eglinton
 - Mentioned in Dispatches (MID)
 - Lieutenant F. A. Roberts
 - Second Lieutenant G. M. Kendall
 - Second Lieutenant D. R. Sabben
 - Corporal P. N. Dobson
 - Corporal W. R. Moore
 - Lance Bombadier W. Walker (NZ)
 - Private W. A. Akell
- **The following Australians were Killed in Action (KIA):**

Pte Aldersea, Richard A.

Unit: 6RAR; Age: 20; Regular Army enlistee
 Born: Perth, WA
 Civ: Lube attendant; Married
 KIA - Chest wounds
 Commem: Karrakatta Cemetery, WA

Cpl Clements, Peter E

Unit: 1 APC Sqn; Age: 21; Regular Army enlistee
 Born: Cunderdin, WA
 Single
 WIA - died at hospital
 Commem: Moora Cemetery, WA

Pte Drabble, Glenn A

Unit: 6RAR; Age: 21; National Serviceman
 Born: Brisbane, Q.
 Civ: Blinds installer; Single
 KIA - Gunshot wound to head
 Commem: Garden of Remembrance, Q
 Buried at: Pinnaroo Cemetery, Q

Pte Gant, Kenneth H	Unit: 6RAR; Age: 21; National Serviceman Born: Brisbane, Q Civ: Butcher; Single KIA - Gunshot wounds Commem: Garden of Remembrance, Q Buried at: Mt Gravatt Cemetery, Q
Pte Grant, Ernest F	Unit: 6RAR; Age: 20; Regular Army enlistee Born: Thurgoona, NSW Civ: Farm hand; Single KIA - Gunshot wounds Commem: Albury Cemetery, NSW
Pte Grice, Victor R	Unit: 6RAR; Age: 21; National Serviceman Born: Ballarat V Civ: Storeman; Single KIA Commem: Garden of Remembrance, Q Buried at: Pinnaroo Lawn Cemetery, Q
Pte Houston, James M	Unit: 6RAR; Age: 22; Regular Army enlistee Born: Wallsend, NSW Civ: Station hand; Married KIA - Gunshot wounds Commem: Garden of Remembrance, Q Buried at: Mt Thompson Crematorium, Q
L/Cpl Jewry, Jack	Unit: 6RAR; Age: 21; National Serviceman Born: St Mary's NSW Civ: Apprentice electrician; Married KIA - Gunshot wounds Commem: Garden of Remembrance, NSW Buried at: Pine Grove Memorial Park, NSW
Pte Large, Paul A	Unit: 6RAR; Age: 22; National Serviceman Born: Wellington, NSW Civ: Manager; Single KIA - Gunshot wounds Commem: Garden of Remembrance, NSW Buried at: Coolah Cemetery, NSW
Pte McCormack, A F	Unit: 6RAR; Age: 21; National Serviceman Born: Launceston, Tas Civ: Clerk; Single WIA - Died at hospital
Pte McCormack, Dennis J	Unit: 6RAR; Age: 21; National Serviceman Born: Adelaide, SA Civ: Labourer; Single KIA - Gunshot wounds Commem: Garden of Remembrance, Q Buried at: Pinnaroo Cemetery, Q
Pte Mitchell, Warren D	Unit: 6RAR; Age: 21; National Serviceman Born: Dalby, Q Civ: Clerk; Single KIA - Gunshot wounds Commem: Garden of Remembrance, Q Buried at: Mt Gravatt Cemetery, Q

Pte Salverton, Douglas J	Unit: 6RAR; Age: 20; National Serviceman Born: Brisbane, Q Civ: Student; Single KIA - Gunshot wounds Commem: Garden of Remembrance, Q Buried at: Mt Gravatt Cemetery, Q
2Lt Sharp, Gordon C	Unit: 6RAR; Age: 21; National Serviceman Born: Tamworth, NSW Civ: Television cameraman; Single KIA - Gunshot wounds Commem: Garden of Remembrance, NSW Buried at: Tamworth Memorial Park, NSW
Pte Thomas, David J	Unit: 6RAR; Age: 21; Regular Army enlistee Born: Bendigo, V Civ: Skilled labourer; Single KIA - Chest wounds Commem: Kangaroo Flat Cemetery, V
Pte Topp, Francis B	Unit: 6RAR; Age: 19; Regular Army enlistee Born: Toowoomba, Q Single KIA Commem: Helidon Cemetery, Q
Pte Wales, Maxwell R	Unit: 6RAR; Age: 22; Regular Army enlistee Born: Goondiwindi, Q Single KIA Commem: Moree Cemetery, NSW
Pte Whiston, Colin J	Unit: 6RAR; Age: 21; National Serviceman Born: Sydney, NSW Civ: Postman; Single KIA - Gunshot wounds Commem: Garden of Remembrance, V Buried at: Crib Point Cemetery, V

Vietnam War

- **The 1 Australian Task Force base (1ATF) at Nui Dat was established on 5th June 1966**
- **Australia was one of only a few countries to establish diplomatic relations with Vietnam soon after the Vietnam War. Australia officially established diplomatic relations on 26th February 1973.**
- **Australian Defence Force in Vietnam and Conscription**
 - 59,000 Australians served in Vietnam
 - A total of 508 were killed in Vietnam
 - A total of 3,100 were wounded in Vietnam
 - 804,000 Australian males registered for National Service
 - 63,000 Australians were conscripted into National Service
 - 18,000 National Servicemen served in Vietnam
 - 200 were killed
 - 1,279 were wounded
 - Peak Australian troop deployment in Vietnam was 7,672

- **New Zealand Defence Force in Vietnam**
 - 3,500 served in Vietnam
 - 37 were killed in Vietnam
 - 187 were wounded in Vietnam
 - Peak NZ troop deployment in Vietnam was 552