

SYDNEY TECHNICAL
HIGH SCHOOL
ANZAC ASSEMBLY
AND
UNVEILING OF
VIETNAM WAR
HONOUR BOARD
6 APRIL 2023



A Joint Project between Sydney Technical High School
and the Teachers' RSL Sub Branch

Introduction



Australia's political focus after WWII was heavily influenced by the fear of nationalistic uprisings in former Southeast Asian colonies. Many of these movements were influenced by Communism. To keep the threat away from Australian shores, the Australian government adopted a policy of Forward Defence, aligning with America's strategy of containing communism. In 1954, the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) was created as an anti-communist defence alliance, with members including the United States, Australia, South Vietnam, and five other nations.

Within eight years of the signing of SEATO, Australia had sent 30 military instructors to Vietnam (AATTV – Australian Army Training Team Vietnam), and on 29 April 1965, Prime Minister Menzies announced the deployment of an Australian battalion to the war.

Between 1962 and the end of the conflict, more than 60,000 Australians, including ground troops, air force, and navy personnel, served in Vietnam. The war claimed the lives of 523 Australians and left nearly 2,400 wounded. This conflict led to the greatest social and political unrest in Australia since the conscription debates of WW1.

Vietnam War Roll of Honour



1962



1973



ALLAN GJ
ANDERSON TR
BARRETT JF
BELL RL
BOWES RT
BROWN KD
BROWN LG
BROWN KH
BRUCE RD
BRYANT IM
BYRNE DK
CASEY DJ
COLLITS HA
COOK GA
COOPER BL
CREBER JR
CUTHEL JW
DARLINGTON IG
DONNELLY PJ
EDWARDS RCL
FERGUSON JT
FLEMING KJ

FONGKEE J
FOX RJ
FREEMAN RR
FRENCH CS
GAUNT JH
GOUGH NJ
GOULDER KE
HAIR SJ
HAMES WJ
HATCH AR
HAYES TJM
HOLLAND JF
HOWARD RA
JONES WD
KICHENSIDE JC
KOSTIUK M
LEATE JF
LEE G
LEONARD GP
LESLIE PG
LOFTUS RD
MANNING PR

MARCHANT JS
McKEAND RT
McKENZIE RG
McLEOD CD
MONK C
MOORE JA
MURDOCH WR
NELSON BM
NEWTON WJ
OSBORN RG
PETERSON RJ
PICKERING IG
POWELL LE
POWER LA
ROBERTSON TJ
ROBINSON FC
ROBISON JE
ROGERS DJ
ROGERS R
ROGERS RA
SANKEY R
SCHAFER JT

SKELTON RG
SMITH DR
SMITH RJ
SMITH IWB
SMITH RD
SOUTH RH
STEVENSON KJ
STEWART JD
STEWART JW
STEWART KJ
STEWART IA
THOMAS RC
THOMSON RW
TURNER DR
WEST BD
WHITE RG
WHITEHEAD JA
WILLIAMS DH
WILLIAMSON DJ
WILSON DA
WILSON RJ
WILSON CA

WILSON DR
WRIGHT WJ
YEE RN



Many draft resisters, conscientious objectors, and protesters were fined or jailed, and some returning soldiers faced hostility at home. For many Australians, the Vietnam War became a chapter they wanted to forget. This may have also been the case for Sydney Tech as we did not honour our veterans from this war.

The Vietnam War Honour Board aims to offer what the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial describes as “a step in a long personal journey from their war service to recognition as veterans” within their local communities, particularly at the place where many of these soldiers began their journey. Completing this Honour Board was crucial to recognise the Vietnam War service of Old Boys and to fill the historical gap that has existed for 50 years. The World War I Honour Board was created in 1917, and the World War II Honour Board followed in 1946. Together with the new Vietnam War Honour Board, they highlight the school’s long-standing commitment to recognising the service of its students since its founding in 1909.



Robert Devlin - Head Teacher History welcomes Alasdair Steel - Alumnus, to the school



The new UH-1H model Iroquois helicopter of No 9 Squadron, RAAF, was quickly put into the forward area supporting units of the Australian Army in Operation Coburg. Photographer: Barrie Thomas Burrill Ward, 1968

This project began in 2019 with the question, "What about our old boys who are Vietnam veterans?" This marked the start of an extensive research journey for Ken Stevenson - Alumnus of the school and Vietnam Veteran, who dedicated over 2,000 hours to uncovering the names of 92 former students from Sydney Technical High School who served in the Vietnam War. Ken, alongside Cheryle Steel, and Robert Devlin, successfully secured an \$8,300 ‘Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grant’ from the Department of Veterans’ Affairs to construct, install, and dedicate a Vietnam War Honour Board at the school.

The school received strong support for this project from the Hon Linda Burney, Federal Minister for Indigenous Australians and Member for Barton, as well as the Hon Chris Minns MP, Premier of NSW and Member for Kogarah. Additional endorsements came from Bayside Council, Georges River Council, South Hurstville RSL Sub-Branch, Ramsgate Rockdale RSL Sub-Branch, and Teachers RSL Sub-Branch. The school's senior executive team - Steven So, Alison Peachey, and Kirk Grinham - generously contributed their time and guidance throughout the project. The Old Boys Union of Sydney Technical High School generously donated \$1,500 to the project, enabling the addition of three Bronze Service Badges to the Vietnam War Honour Board. The badges of the Australian Army, the Royal Australian Air Force, and the Royal Australian Navy enhance the significance of this board, honouring the contributions of those who served.

Cheryle Steel, Elle Proops, and Lisa Rebeiro helped their Year 9 and Year 10 Elective History classes, research, write, and edit biographies of these veterans, ensuring their service would be recognised by the broader school community. Shann Preece and her Media Team created a compelling video that captured the essence of the project. The dedication ceremony itself was beautifully enhanced by Julie Ryan, Murray James, the School Concert Band, the Choir, drummers Armando Dias and Nathan Tao, and Antonio Dias, who performed ‘The Last Post’ and ‘The Reveille’. Their contributions added to the solemnity of the occasion. Cadets from nine different units formed a Catafalque Party and Flag Party for the school’s Anzac Day Assembly, offering senior cadets a valuable opportunity to lead and practice their leadership skills. This aspect of the event was coordinated by Georgia Brook, who provided essential instruction and supervision.

Ian Coulston and the Sound and Lighting Team ensured all technical aspects were flawless, while Cheryl Feigen, Susan Cohen, Jacqui Thompson, Di Hills and John Howard managed the logistics of the event, including the program design, guest list updates, printing, ordering of flowers and wreaths, and decorating the gym for morning tea.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank everyone who contributed to and supported this project, ensuring its successful completion. We now have a legacy to preserve and pass on to future generations.

Robert Devlin - Head Teacher History

Principal's Welcome

Distinguished guests, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales, Dennis Wilson, The Honourable Chris Minns MP - Premier of NSW, Major General Paul Irving AM PSM RFD (Retired) - Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, Ray James OAM JP GAICD - President, RSL NSW, Joanna French - Director, Educational Leadership, Georges River Principals Network, Angelo Gavrielatos - President Teachers Federation, David Knox, Old Boy 1965 - President Old Boys Union, Ken Stevenson, Old Boy 1962 - President, Teachers' RSL Sub-Branch, and members of the school community past and present, welcome to our Annual Anzac Assembly this morning.

The purpose of our assembly today is to unveil Sydney Technical High School's Vietnam War Honour Board. This Board commemorates the names of those students from our school who served in what was, at the time, Australia's longest war. The construction of this Board fills the gap in the social and military history of our school and community. Already, our WWI and WWII Boards demonstrate the vast commitment of this school, since commencement in 1911, to the service of Australia. Since WWII there have been many wars, emergencies, and peacekeeping deployments where Australians have committed to seeking world peace.

This project has cultivated many important community relationships and conversations between Sydney Technical High School and the Teachers' RSL Sub Branch, about a collective Australian past. Also, it has triangulated the goals of the NSW Department of Education to create active informed and connected citizens. In addition, it has developed the understandings concerning our veterans championed by the Department of Veterans' Affairs to create more inclusive discussions about history. All of this is central and essential to you - our students of today. To know your place here at Sydney Tech, and our school's place in the wider community.



You, our gifted and talented students drawn from all over Sydney, proudly represent over 73 different cultural groups. It is you, our excellent ambassadors who have worked on this project. It is you, in this hall today, who are called to remember and to promote remembrance of these past students and veterans now and into the future.

Thanks must be given to the dedicated students of the Year 11 World History Classes of 2022, who spent a significant amount of time researching the Vietnam conflict and the biographies and experiences of the Old Boys of Sydney Tech who served in this war. I look forward to hearing from them shortly about their research. These young historians were assisted by Head Teacher History, Robert Devlin, their World History teachers, Elle Proops and Cheryle Steel, and Ken Stevenson - alumnus of 1962, and Vietnam Veteran, who researched over 2000 hours to create the list of names we will remember today. The dedication and diligent effort of this inspiring group of historians ensures Sydney Technical High School knows the stories and names of the people who have shaped our school values, served our nation, and contributed to our local, national, and global history.



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC - Governor of NSW, and Steven So - Principal

This Vietnam Honour Board is a crucial complement to our WWI and WWII Honour Boards that recognise the service of our Old Boys in those conflicts. But the Australian story at large has often forgotten to remember Vietnam Veterans. That is why today is significant as we remedy this too often forgotten part of our history. Today we correct this historical oversight and ensure our Tech veterans of Vietnam know we, as a school, will never forget them. It is not only fitting, after 50 years since the last Australian troops left Vietnam, that we honour these men. The dignitaries gathered here today in this auditorium speak through their presence how truly and strongly we all hold this belief.

As we assemble to commemorate our veterans of the Vietnam War, it is important to remember that it was a complex and controversial conflict that challenged our nation's values and tested the courage and dedication of all those who served. As documentary filmmaker Ken Burns reminds us, the Vietnam War must be remembered and honoured, and we owe a debt of gratitude to the veterans who served with great courage and to their families who endured so much. We must never forget their sacrifices and we must ensure they are never forgotten. As historian and author Jon Meacham notes, it is our duty to learn from the lessons of this conflict and strive to prevent future wars. So let us remember and honour the sacrifices made by our veterans of the Vietnam War, and pledge to work towards a future of peace and prosperity for all.

Steven So - Principal



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC - Governor of NSW, and Steven So - Principal



Nui Dat, South Vietnam, November 1971. Lowered for the last time. A simple ceremony by a small element of 4RAR/NZ (Anzac)

The Anzac Battalion comprising 4th Battalion.

The flag lowering ceremony was carried out by New Zealand Regimental Policeman Private Tai Whatu and Australian Regimental Policeman Private John Skennar of Grafton, NSW, William James Cunneen.

Photographer: William James Cunneen, 1971



The Honourable Chris Minns MP - Premier of NSW, being welcomed by Student Representative Council Members



Cadet Aariz Anwar

Introduction to Ken Stevenson



Your Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC - Governor of NSW and Dennis Wilson, distinguished guests, Old Boys, RSL members, staff, and students - thank you for the opportunity to introduce Ken Stevenson to this assembly on this prestigious occasion.

Ken, an Old Boy attended STHS between 1958 and 1962 and was awarded a Teachers' College scholarship to become a Science and Mathematics teacher. He was conscripted and served in Vietnam with the Royal Australian Army Service Corps between 1968 and 1969. He later became Head Teacher of Mathematics at TAFE Ultimo.

Since 2011, Ken has been Secretary/Treasurer and is now President of the NSW Teachers RSL Sub-Branch.

The purpose of the Sub Branch is two-fold: to educate school children about the service and sacrifice made by teachers for one's country and to be guardians of the history of the teachers' service to education and Australia.

Ken's work has shown NSW how to transform the dusty and neglected Honour Boards and other War Memorials languishing in the corners of schools and TAFE colleges into a vital and engaging curriculum resource of proven contemporary interest to the students of today.

In doing so, he has paved the way for a potential resurgence of interest in Australian history across schools in NSW and nationally, not from an uncritical or jingoistic point of view of military history but from a balanced and contemplative evaluation of Australia's journey to our current place in the world.

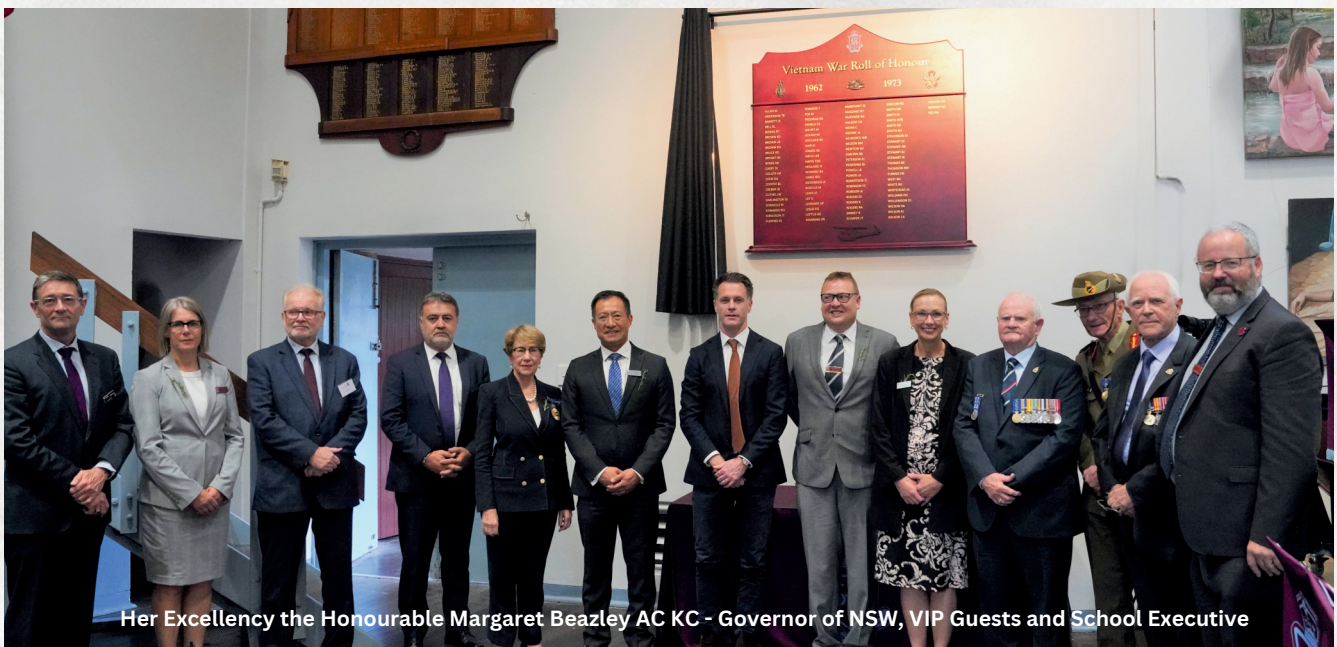
His work on the Sydney Technical High School WWI Honour Board over three years and countless hours of research is a testament to his service to public education.

It's a great honour to have Ken address this assembly and to thank him for his service to this school and public education.

**Joanna French - Director, Educational Leadership
Georges River Principals Network**



Ken Stevenson 1969 VN Medical Aid Project



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC - Governor of NSW, VIP Guests and School Executive

Occasional Address to the 2023 Anzac Assembly



Sixty-two years ago I and other Old Boys in the audience were seated where you boys are today, listening to the Governor of NSW, His Excellency LTGEN Sir Eric Woodward, with his wife (Lady Woodward) open the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the school. Today I would refer to her as his partner. We never knew her name.

Today the roles are reversed. The Governor today is Her Excellency, the Honourable Margaret Beazley, accompanied by partner Dennis Wilson. (We even know his name!). Thank you, Excellency, for being here and honouring the school on this significant occasion. Thank you for honouring the youth of our State, the Public Education system and Vietnam veterans. And of course I thank all of the other distinguished guests for your presence here, representing various groupings in our State of NSW which intersect with what we are doing today. Especially (in advance) our new Premier, Chris Minns.

Going back to 1961 (did you do the Maths?) I have to say I cannot remember a single thing Sir Eric said on the day. But I am confident it will be different today.

The written reports of 1961 however, do say: His Excellency, in the course of the Jubilee Address, not only congratulated the School on its great achievements during the 50 years of its existence, but also was loud in his praise of the definite contribution the School had made to the nation. In honour of the occasion. His Excellency unveiled a special plaque.

That could be an Easter treasure hunt for History classes – to find the plaque? Just a random thought, Mr Devlin?

Having mentioned Robert Devlin, I want to briefly refer to the WWI Board to my right. The Old Board was in very poor physical condition as can still be seen – it is still here in the school. My repeated nagging of your former Principal about this issue became an annoyance and I was referred to the Head Teacher of History (Robert Devlin).

That is how I met Robert, your passionate Head Teacher of History. From our collaboration and shared pain on that reconstruction and research Robert and I have been privileged to form a bond of friendship. His passion for “doing” History is amazing.

I don’t know who is responsible but, upon dedication of that WWI Board, one of us must have said, after a beer or two, “now we really should do something about the Vietnam War”. Even last Monday afternoon over a drink, he blamed me yet again. I feel obliged to deny that statement - refusing to believe I would cause myself so much pain. But it has been good pain and a great privilege to do this task.

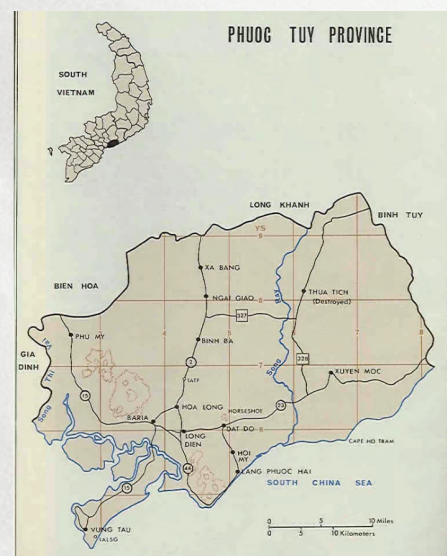
I understand that what I have just said is somewhat self-indulgent.



Aerial view of the 1st Australian Task Force (1ATF) base among the Rubber Trees, Nui Dat, Vietnam

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

EKT/71/0648/VN



Australia and New Zealand Forces were responsible for Phuoc Tuy Province

So what am I going to say to you today? Shall I talk to you about the 1000 year war where the original Vietnamese (now called Montagnards or moi (savages) were driven from their coastal lands into the mountainous spine by downward pressure of migrating Chinese? And how the French became the cruellest of colonial oppressors?

And how Ho Chi Minh was promised at the end of WWI in 1919 at the Treaty of Versailles that the great powers would support his ideal of nationalism? And how he helped them defeat the Japanese in their occupation in WWII? And how we ignored Ho's claim on the promise and restored the French? And how the French Foreign Legion was defeated in 1954 at the Battle of Dien Ben Phu and Vietnam was divided with the promise of free elections - which promise we broke? And how we set up puppet governments which became so egregious that the CIA was encouraged to assassinate President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963?

No, that's all in the books and on the websites. So I will continue to be self indulgent and speak to you of some of my experiences. After all, they are lived experiences. The context for my comments will be the Law of Unintended Consequences. This Law is based on assumptions we make. And it relates to the disasters which can follow.

Mistake: My call up medical. In 1967 I was completing the Diploma of Education at Armidale Teachers' College and University of New England to become a Maths and Science teacher. My eyesight had always been poor - extreme myopia. There was no way I would be medically fit? All of my College mates were drinking soap solution and doing other strategies to be medically unfit. Wrong call. A local country doctor had been appointed by the Government for this very task. He was a WWII veteran and wore a Harris tweed jacket with leather patches on the elbows. "Well done son you're really healthy" and I got a friendly slap on the shoulder. "But, but my eyesight" "Don't worry son, you'll be OK"

Mistake: Since my medical records said "nil vision without spectacles", all of this administrative error would be sorted out in recruit training. Wrong. Our task one day in Recruit Training at Kapooka target practice was at the firing range - our first experience of rifles with live ammunition. I could actually kill someone at last.

The ground was rocky and as we were marching at double time (running) I fell, stumbled, smashed my spectacles. "Sergeant", said I, "I can't see the target". "Don't worry son", said he, "it's over that way - do your best". If I had been street smart I would have swung the loaded SLR towards him saying "where?" and that would have ended my brilliant Army career.

Mistake: The Army will replace my specs and give me a spare pair. Wrong again. No spare pair.

Mistake: It doesn't matter. Wrong - it did matter - my transport unit at Ingleburn was posted to Vietnam. Camped out at night around a village preparing for a search and destroy sweep the next morning I put my spectacles down and could not find them in the dark. As driver of the unit this posed quite a problem. Fortunately our Vietnamese interpreter (ironically a conscripted school teacher working with the American Army), found them.

Mistake: Having accepted without question that Australia was to be attacked by communism, that the yellow peril would keep knocking over the countries in Asia like falling dominoes; I went to Vietnam assuming that all other Australian soldiers shared the same belief, and that we were all there to support the great cause of protecting Vietnamese people. Wrong. Early in my service there I was driving my Land Rover from Vung Tau on the coast to Task Force HQ at Nui Dat, with soldiers on board returning from leave. As we approached a Vietnamese peasant riding his bicycle one of the passengers leaned out and with a mighty kick sent the farmer careering off into a rice field. That did make me start to think.

And then there were the military blunders on a grand scale with their unintended consequences.



Ken Stevenson in Uniform 1968

Defoliation and Agent Orange: Since the Viet Cong were adept at using jungle cover we would send Hercules aircraft full of defoliants to spray the jungle. There were massive swathes of bare earth. So Charlie (the VC) used this bare earth as a highway. At the sound of helicopters he dived into the foliage, waited, and continued when the coast became clear. We made their task easier, not harder. Tens of thousands of babies have been deformed because of a contaminant in the Agent Orange defoliant.

Dat Do Minefield: Dat Do was a village in the area of responsibility of our Task Force. A well known supply route for the enemy passing through the area. What to do? Stop movement along this route of course. One of the Task Force commanders constructed a minefield of 23,000 M16 anti-personnel mines stretching for 11 kilometres to provide a physical barrier. This was against the advice of the 5RAR Battalion commander and many other senior officers. But then the Viet Cong (with their own casualties) gradually dug up the mines and used them to kill Australian troops. In total 95 Australians were killed and 600 wounded by these mines. I confess that these major miscalculations make me angry and often depressed. But where to with all this? I am one of the fortunate ones - I have returned to Australia with all my limbs, and according to the psychiatrists I am classed as 70% sane. I often think of our school motto - Manners Makyth Man. And also how we made fun of it as schoolboys.

It was written in about 1370 by the Bishop of Winchester. The motto is not really concerned with your table manners or giving up a seat in the train. But in its earliest use, it likely had a broader meaning, that manners make us human - they are what prevent us from falling into savagery. I found an article in the British Medical Journal by two doctors and the title is: Manners Makyth Man. A plea for the importance of character in medicine.

We can extend this to any profession/job/ situation beyond medicine. Boys of the school - you are going to have your battles in life. Hopefully they will not be in the context of armed conflict. But they will be very real. How are you going to handle them? I know that I came through Vietnam in large part because of the integrity and character my parents and church imbued in me. Will you have character and integrity - will you be a real man - or will you be weak and tossed about by every force that faces you? Will you be able to resist tribal behaviour - being tough in a crowd and doing things of which you are ashamed? Will you reject bullying and call it out when you see it? I remember being bullied here at Tech High as a weedy little First Year - but I also remember a fellow student standing up for me. Thank you, Bruce Way.

Will you support people who are weak and different or make fun of them? An article in SMH within the last two days by a woman, with 20 years' experience in High School teaching in NSW, sent shivers up my spine. She talked about toxic masculinity in the boys in her school. She felt personally threatened by their attitudes. What a tragic situation. She and the school resolved this by implementing programs for respectful relationships.

Unfortunately, my generation and the one following have not set you a good example - in politics (rorting and bullying), in business (fraud and shady deals), in churches (paedophilia and cover ups), in sport (any football code), in relationships with women. Lack of restraint in using social media and the gutless cowardly trolling that occurs.

I am not primarily concerned with the school's reputation - I have not been told by anyone to say these things. I am concerned for you as individuals and the battles you face in not falling into savagery and taking our society into savagery. I am not playing the generational game of an old fellow who knows best.

From the heart I wish you well in your battles. And I believe every name on this new Board today would wish likewise for you.

Ken Stevenson - Alumnus 1962
Sydney Technical High School



Ken Stevenson - 3 February 1968
Recruit Training 50km March Singleton



Ken Stevenson - 4 February 1968

Introduction to Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC - Governor of NSW

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my great honour to introduce to you Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW.

Her Excellency is the 39th Governor of NSW, commencing her five year tenure on 2 May 2019.

Prior to her appointment as Governor, Her Excellency enjoyed a long and distinguished law career spanning 43 years, during which time she served as a role model for women in law at both the State and National level.

Appointed Queen's Counsel in 1989, in 1993 she was made a judge of the Federal Court of Australia, the first woman to sit exclusively in that Court. In 1996, she achieved the distinction of being the first woman

appointed to the New South Wales Court of Appeal and, subsequently, as the first woman to be appointed as its President. She served, on a number of occasions, as Administrator of the Government of the State of NSW.

She was made a Companion of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day Honours List on 26 January 2020 for "eminent service to the people of NSW, particularly through leadership roles in the judiciary, and as a mentor of young women lawyers".

Her Excellency brings her deep commitment to education, youth leadership, human rights and social justice to the role in service of the people of NSW.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my privilege to present to you Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW.

Steven So - Principal

Governor's Address to the Assembly

Bujari gamarruwa

Diyn Babana Gamarada Gadigal Ngura

I greet you in the language of the Gadigal, as I pay my respects to Elders, past, present and emerging of the Kameygal and the Bediagal, traditional owners of this land.

- The Honourable Chris Minns MP - Premier of NSW
- Mr Ray James OAM - President, RSL NSW
- Major General Paul Irving (Retired) - Anzac Memorial
- Mr Steven So - Principal, Sydney Technical High School
- Mr Ken Stevenson - Old Boy 1962, Vietnam War Veteran
- Students and Special Guests

Thank you for this invitation to deliver the 2023 Anzac address. Growing up in Hurstville, your school is part of my home turf, so I am particularly pleased to be here. There is nothing like that feeling of being on familiar territory.

Nothing could have been less familiar than the cities, villages and jungles of Vietnam for the 60,000 Australians who served there between 1962 and the final withdrawal in January 1973. Throughout that decade, nothing could have been more harrowing than the sounds of gunfire and helicopters sweeping overhead and nothing more fearful than the prospect of stepping on a booby trap planted by friend or foe - who knows who.

Sixty thousand Australians served in the war. Conscription, which was introduced in 1965, was for young Australian men who turned 20 in the year of the ballot. 15,000 young Australians were conscripted, purely based on their birthday. I was part of the generation that lived during that war, but not part of the generation that was required to go to war. My parents were part of the generation that had already gone to war, lost loved ones and suffered the deprivations and other miseries that war brings.



I remember the times well. I remember my mother's tears and fears the night before the ballot, not knowing whether my 20-year-old brother's birthday would be drawn in the ballot. I remember her tears the following morning when the date 6 May appeared in the ballot. My brother's birthday is 7 May.

Those who did serve in Vietnam were there because, either as full-time members of the armed forces or as conscripts, they had been required by their country to be there to fight the threat of a perceived growing 'Red Peril.'

I can still remember the front page of many newspapers of the day which carried a map with big red arrows starting in China, sweeping down through North Vietnam, through South-East Asia, landing in Australia – it was the great ‘domino theory’ of the advance of communism. Initially, the fear of the ‘Red Peril’ was palpable in the community. But as the war went on the criticism grew. There were conscientious objectors. There were student protests and arrests. I knew both conscripts and conscientious objectors.

In the United States, yellow ribbons appeared on gates and trees and lampposts. The song ‘Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Old Oak Tree’ became the lullaby of a war that was seen as the ‘Unnecessary War’ – I say lullaby because it was a song of protest, wanting the soldiers to come home to a dreamlike peace With the final messy withdrawal from Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City, in terminology that fails to grasp the reality, the humanity and the sacrifice of those who served, it was the War that was lost, not won.

The impact on those who fought in a war their government asked them to fight, was significant. Some managed it better than others but as a country we did not manage it well.

In 1969, still at the height of the war, members of Australian D Company returned to the site of the Battle of Long Tan and created a memorial there. The battle of Long Tan on 18 August 1966 saw the largest loss of life on a single day with 18 young Australians killed. It is the date on which we now commemorate Vietnam Veteran’s Day.

The creation of the Long Tan Memorial during the height of the war was the act of comrades who understood the importance of commemoration - of remembering their lost colleagues. It is the only foreign war memorial permitted on Vietnamese soil, except for the French military memorial at Dien Bien Phu.

It was another 18 years after that memorial was built, and 14 years after the withdrawal of Australian troops before any form of recognition was given when a welcome home parade was held. On 3 October 1987, after a dawn service at the Cenotaph, 22,000 Vietnam Veterans marched in Sydney in the Australian Vietnam Forces Welcome Home Parade before a crowd of 100,000 well-wishers.



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC - Governor of NSW



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley
AC KC - Governor of NSW

It was another five years before a national memorial was built. On 3 October 1992, some 25,000 Vietnam veterans marched as part of the dedication of the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial on Anzac Parade.

That failure of commemoration over two decades was deeply hurtful to the 60,000 personnel who served. It was a failure, in the words of Oxford University philosopher Cecile Fabre, to give testimony to the ‘moral significance of all human beings.’ Prime Minister Paul Keating spoke of this at the Dedication Ceremony when he said: “We cannot make good this hurt any more than we can undo the war itself. But, by this memorial, we can make good the memory.”



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC -
Governor of NSW, and Steven So - Principal

Wars have a tendency to turn the national focus inwards. In this school's very first Journal, published in May 1916, when Australian soldiers were also at war on foreign soil and those at home were fearful and worried, there is a very prescient quote which speaks of the vision of the school then, and which remains. The quote reads:

"Australia is not the only environment that young Australia(ns) must take into account. A people cannot live its complete life apart from other peoples, any more than a man can fully function apart from society ... we are the 'heirs of all the ages', although ... we may find it in unexpected places."

In many ways, this reflects the war that we are here to commemorate. Because the Vietnam War created such division, from support to condemnation, we do not often speak of the positive contribution that the war - and, therefore, those Australians who fought in it - had on us as Australians, on our defence policies and in the region. The contribution and the impact of that contribution has been significant.

In the region, Lee Kuan Yew, first Prime Minister of Singapore, was strongly of the view that, by delaying the fall of Saigon from 1965 to 1975, Singapore and other nation states, had 10 years to strengthen their political and economic resilience.

Australia was the place to which Vietnamese refugees fled, embracing Australia as home, adding to the vibrancy of our multicultural community. They fled here because of the goodwill created there by our veterans. In doing so, they left their homes and homeland, many never wishing to return because of the trauma of the war.

Thanks to the dedicated and diligent archival work of Vietnam veteran Ken Stevenson, your school now has its own memorial to those who served and made their contribution to Australia and to the wider region. It is an honour to be here to share this significant moment with the school.

Lest we Forget.

Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley, AC KC - Governor of NSW



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC - Governor of NSW, with her husband - Dennis Wilson, Steven So - Principal, and guests to the school



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC - Governor of NSW with her husband - Dennis Wilson, and Steven So - Principal



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC - Governor of NSW, addressing the assembled guests and students



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC - Governor of NSW, with Sydney Technical High School Alumnus/Veterans

Lesley Stevenson graciously agreed for the school to reprint this letter she sent to 'Australia All Over' with Ian McNamara on ABC Radio National - Sunday 9 April 2023

Ken and I started going out together at Sydney University. We knew that his birth date had come up on the ballot, but he was allowed to defer until his course was finished. We didn't know whether he would pass the medical or even if he would have to go to Vietnam. (Some conscripts served their two years in Australia in various roles.) In 1967 he went to the Armidale Teachers College and University of New England to do his teacher training (Diploma of Education) and it was there he had his medical examination for conscription into the National Service. Despite having nil vision without spectacles, the country doctor said, "Congratulations, son, you're really fit! Don't worry about the glasses, they will take care of that."

We became engaged that year and went ahead with planning to marry in August 1968. Basic training started for him in February at Kapooka and it was several months before we knew that his transport platoon (he was targeted to train as a truck driver) was to be sent to replace other transport units already in Vietnam. We did have our wedding, right after jungle training at Canungra. There were many jokes about that in the speeches! We had three precious months together while he continued serving in a transport platoon at Ingleburn, before I went with his parents to Richmond air base to farewell him as he took off on a Hercules for a three day trip. First stop Darwin, then Butterworth, then Vung Tau and then on to the big adventure!

I have never forgotten being dropped home at our apartment in Penshurst. The first thing my eyes lighted on as I walked in the door was a wedding photo. I just dropped to the floor, overcome with the thought that we might never see each other again... just like every other partner of a service person who has ever farewelled their loved one off to war.

We wrote to each other every day - the letters would arrive in clumps of random order every few days. At first, Ken became a driver for the Psychological Operations unit (PsyOps), working with a similar American unit. For interest, this was probably the high point for Ken. He got to experience going in a helicopter that flew over the countryside, dropping leaflets and calling on villagers to surrender and/or change sides. At night with no lights the chopper would fly a few hundred metres above the jungle canopy while a loudspeaker gave out the same message, both from helicopters and from his Landrover. One helicopter would fly at night with the voice from the loudspeaker warning that if anyone supported the enemy Vietcong, their spirit after death would find no rest.



These and other experiences Ken shared in his letters. His final deployment was driving the garbage truck - not much to write home about there!

When Ken was due for R&R, I sought permission from my teaching job to take time off and meet him in Malaysia. Before our plan came to fruition, he learned that his tour of duty was being shortened from the expected 12 months, so he came home to Australia for the break instead, with only two months to serve in Vietnam after that. On the American plane back from Australia, the troops were relayed news of the moon landing and the hostesses served champagne! Meanwhile, I watched it on TV in the Cronulla High School assembly hall with all the students and staff. Ken served out the remainder of his two years at Victoria Barracks, Sydney doing menial tasks for the Barracks Adjutant, before beginning his teaching career.



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC - Governor of NSW, with Ken Stevenson

As a postscript, about 15 months after Ken's return, our first child was born. Our little son only lived two days, succumbing to the most serious of his conditions - the "plumbing" of his heart being around the wrong way, so we were told. He also had a cleft nose and facial paralysis. Just one of those random things, the doctor said. It wasn't until years later that we began to hear about the effects of Agent Orange on the Vietnamese and their offspring and possibly on the genetics of our veterans. Ken heard a talk from a toxicologist who mentioned that some veterans had suffered facial paralysis themselves. Our next child, a daughter, was dysmature at birth (had all the signs of prematurity, though she was full term) and has suffered various autoimmune conditions, as well as adrenal insufficiency all through her life. We have never been aware of any channels through which we could prove a connection to Agent Orange exposure but continue to wonder. The only help that can be claimed for veterans' children and grandchildren is psychological counselling.

In the early years, Ken would joke on Anzac Day about wearing his medals on his pyjamas. That was the period when the day was not as wholeheartedly observed as it is now, with something of a revival of interest and patriotism. It was also before Vietnam veterans were welcomed home. As the years went by, Ken became more and more aware of the need to remember and learn from the past. Each year at Ultimo TAFE, a WWII veteran would give a eulogy and Ken, by now a TAFE teacher, observed how difficult it was becoming for him. Ken took over that role, being both a teacher and a veteran, and from then on, became increasingly aware of the dilapidated state of many honour boards and the stories hidden within those lists of names, as well as names not shown which should have been. His other career as an amateur researcher took off and continues!

Although I was well aware of all the anti-war protests (remember the Moratoriums?) and Ken's letters increasingly questioned the rightness of our involvement as he read books about the history of Vietnam, we were not personally aware of anti-war sentiment. Until one early morning, travelling by train to an Anzac service, we passed an older veteran wearing his medals. Ken was wearing his and reached out to shake the man's hand. He turned away, not reciprocating. Ken had to explain to me that many World War II vets, including RSL members, had trouble recognising the service of Vietnam vets. "Vietnam was not a real war!"

These are just a few recollections of the effects on one family of a government's decision to engage in a war, and in this particular war to pluck young men from everyday non-military life by a conscription lottery. I am very aware that more than 500 Australians didn't return from that war and 3000 were wounded, not to mention the physical and psychological suffering of the people of Vietnam. Ken and I were living in Port Moresby doing church work in 1975 when we read of the downfall of Saigon. We have since seen footage of desperate people trying to board the last helicopters. At that time in PNG we felt very low, trying to make sense of all the sacrifice and loss.

One highlight for me of the morning at Tech High was a young man seeking me out and saying he remembered talking to me about the WWI veteran he had researched when that restored board was unveiled at Tech High. He's now studying Law at ANU. Apart from the excellent primary research done by the school History students, it has been heart-warming to see the mutual respect and interest displayed by alumni, veterans and current students.

Lesley Stevenson



Unidentified Australian gunners fire their M2A2, 105mm howitzer towards enemy positions at Fire Support Base Debbie. Photographer: Brian Wood 1971



Students awaiting Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC - Governor of NSW

Students Anzac Assembly Presentation - Introduction

‘Distinguished guests, Your Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW, Mr Dennis Wilson, Hon Chris Minns MP, Premier of NSW, and special guests, RSL Members, teachers and students and members of the school community past and present, we are honoured to welcome you here today. We represent the 2022 Year 10 World History classes who last year had the privilege to research the names of the Old Boys who served in Vietnam as part of our historical investigation work. We were led by the History Faculty, Mr Devlin, Head Teacher History, and Tech Old Boy and Vietnam Veteran Ken Stevenson who has conducted over 2000 hours of research to find the names of the Sydney Tech Boys who fought in WWI, WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. Making and telling the history of this school and of these men is important. To quote social historian Charlotte Riley, we must be conscious of “... how histories are being told, about who is being represented and celebrated, but also which people or groups are absent”. Vietnam is often a forgotten war due to the numerous complexities surrounding it. This is why, 50 years and three months after its end, Sydney Tech is finally and insistently recognising its Vietnam Veteran Old Boys.

The Vietnam War began for Australia in 1962 when the first regular soldiers arrived in Vietnam with what became the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam. According to the official figures approximately 60,000 Australians served in Vietnam. Tech students could be found in all parts of the armed forces, amongst the 13,000 naval personnel, and amongst the 41,957 army personnel. Of the army contingent, 15,381 were national servicemen, or Nashos. These men were selected to participate in the war by a birthdate-based conscription drawn by lottery. Some of our Techies here today were Nashos and experienced the moment of being selected for war. It was a controversial system, particularly among young people and was abolished in 1972, the same year Australian combat troupes began the withdrawal from Vietnam. Finally, Techies were also represented amongst the 5,925 Air Force personnel.

Our research showed that for most Australians who participated in the Vietnam conflict their war took place in the jungles, rice paddies, villages and hills of the coastal Phuoc Tuy province and the Australian Army Task Force was based at Nui Dat and Vung Tau. Air Force members mainly served at Vung Tau, Phan Rang, or Ubon Air Base in Thailand. Most navy veterans served on HMAS Sydney, its escorts, or the destroyers on the gun line off the coast of Vietnam. The Australian soldiers who served largely maintained high morale - remarkable given the contentious nature of the war, the problematic support for the war at home, the conviction of the enemies, the difficult climate, and the constant danger they faced. Australian participants on average received one year of training with the men with whom they would be posted in Vietnam.



Therefore, they were buoyed by a sense of professional pride and loyalty to their mates. Tech Old Boys fought in a range of diverse roles such as: sapper, radio operator, cinema operator, pilot, field engineer, engineer mechanic (to name a few).

To uncover the stories of these Techies, we visited the Anzac War Memorial in Hyde Park and were guided in our research by Senior Historian and curator Dr Brad Manera, and Major General Paul Irving, who is with us here today, who showed us how to use the substantial archival holdings of the War Memorial. We also took a trip down the road to the State Library of NSW to further delve into local newspapers. These stories we have constructed are done so from fragments: a service number, a rank, and a line between two dates. Precious little of a life. At the end of the research process, we each had a partial, subjective history: a single version of the countless stories that could have been told - these were stories we created with care. As historians we were forced to make choices: what to write about, or what not to; and how to present our findings. In the end we will never be able to tell our Old Boys' complete stories, but we can present the stories we meticulously crafted and we are honoured to be sharing them with you today.

School, please know that today we are honoured to have present with us several of our Old Boy Veterans. We thank them for their service and thank them for sharing their stories with us. We will now hear the first of those from Russell who will speak to us about the naval experience.

Lest We Forget.

Marcus Young - Year 11

Students Anzac Assembly Presentation - Navy, HMAS Sydney



Our stories today begin with three Old Boys who served in the Royal Australian Navy during the Vietnam War and in particular, on the aircraft carrier HMAS Sydney. These Old Boys are Peter Graham Leslie, Phillip Richard Manning, and Russell Anthony Rogers. These Techies, like us in this hall today, came to our school from all over Sydney's suburbs, and like us, their families came from all over the world. Between 1965 and 1972, these three Techies from different graduating years, found themselves serving together on The Sydney, which was informally referred to by service personnel as the Vung Tau Ferry as it made 25 journeys between South Vietnam and Sydney in the years our Techies served. It was also the largest troop and stores transport of the war for Australia.

Leslie, Manning, and Rogers, like many of us here at Tech, had a strong interest in engineering. This interest led all three to the HMAS Sydney with Peter Leslie an Engineering Mechanic, Phillip Manning, an Electrical Mechanic, and Russell Rogers, the Leading Engineering Mechanic on board ship. They were tasked with maintaining weapons, communications, and combat systems; work that required rigorous attention to detail, something they would have learnt, in part at Tech, as Engineering students. Details were important because the cost of error was human life. When entering the war zone all crew members were given tasks either protecting the ship or unloading and loading the troops and equipment. Men stood prepared to react to chemical attacks, and endured heavy depth charges to ensure no enemy combatants made it close to the ship.

Even in quiet conditions, life on the ship was difficult. It was an old vessel, commissioned into the navy in 1947, built in 1944, and truly a relic of the Second World War. It was not built for tropical conditions; having no air conditioning making it blistering hot both day and night, described by veterans as "hot as hell, full of asbestos, as well as cockroaches that no amount of fumigation could eradicate". However, like Techies everywhere these men were flexible, and strong. Even though conditions were harsh, their resilience allowed them in quieter moments to reflect, to enjoy soccer on deck, and jokes with friends.

It is important to note that the largest group of Australian Vietnam veterans whose war service has been marginalised are navy veterans. Those who served on the HMAS Sydney and other logistical support vessels were not recognised as Vietnam Veterans until 1993. Today we recognise the service of these three engineers - Old Boys of Tech and comrades in war service. Their experiences add a sense of veracity to our frequently uttered call of "Tech Pride Worldwide".

Lest We Forget.

Russell Liauw - Year 11



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC - Governor of NSW, and the Honourable Chris Minns MP - Premier of NSW, unveiling the new Vietnam War Honour Board



Vietnam, Troops of 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR) board a Vietnamese landing barge before crossing the Dong Nai River into War Zone D. Photographer: Bryan Rupert Dunne, 1965

Students Anzac Assembly Presentation - Army - 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment



Today, I will focus on Army service, particularly on the Fifth Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment (5RAR), where three Tech Old Boys had the privilege to serve. To set the stage, I'd like to begin with a quote from Australian Military Historian Robert J O'Neill, who served as Infantry Captain with this Battalion. He once said, "Every man sees the war in which he fights from two points of view. The one is his personal life in relation to the harsh environment of battle, the other is the outlook of his unit, which makes him share closely a corporate experience and gives that unit an individual entity and character with its peculiar difficulties and joys, its own failures, and successes". This quote sheds light on the story of the three Old Boys who served in this Battalion: Private Robert James Smith, Private William Robert Murdoch, and Lance Corporal Ian William Balen Smith.

The 5RAR Battalion was established during a time of Australian military expansion, with barracks located at Holsworthy. It was the first Battalion to be composed of both regular soldiers and 'Nashos', or National Servicemen, as Marcus mentioned earlier. This diverse unit was deployed to Vietnam and

established its base at Nui Dat. The Battalion's composition highlights Robert O'Neill's quote about the individual and collective identities that we all come to wear, as it brought together soldiers with different experiences and perspectives in relation to war, including regular soldiers and conscripts, who may not have anticipated or planned a life that included war time service.

The 5th's service spanned two tours: 1966-1967 and 1969-1970. Like most Australian army units, they trained together for approximately a year growing to know each other, trust each other, and work together - all of which helped to forge this collective group identity that was such a successful part of Australian Army organisation. The 5th became the first Australian Task Force assigned to the role of keeping the Viet Cong, or the Communists who fought against the Australian forces and South Vietnamese Government, out of the Phuoc Tuy province, an area which the communists had exploited since 1945. During such a challenging period, the collective identity and spirit of the unit was fostered as they adopted a tiger as their mascot. This engendered the idea of becoming the 'Tiger Battalion', which once introduced, spread rapidly and spontaneously amongst these very different individuals creating a bond for life. It was hereon in that the 5th Battalion were the Tiger Battalion, from the gold of their lanyards to the tiger tails tied onto their kit bags, when they left Vietnam.

The Tiger Battalion's first tour was highly successful in dispersing the power base of the communists and increasing the number of villagers under South Vietnamese Government protection. By April 1967, 98,408 villagers were under Government protection in 105 hamlets, up from only 24,775 before the arrival of the Tiger Battalion. Our three Techies were part of this collective group and participated in Operation Quintus Thrust I and II, a reconnaissance mission that aimed to prevent the movement of communist forces towards Baria (the capital city of the province) from the west and denied penetration into the major population centres of Phuoc Tuy Province.



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW, meeting Sydney Technical High School Students

These three Tech Old Boys' activities and operations on a day to day basis can be pieced together from the Australian Army Commanders' Diaries which provide insights into the day-to-day activities of the Tiger Battalion, which included securing helicopter landing zones under heavy enemy fire, conducting search operations and sweeps, and repositioning troops. According to the diaries, the constant threat of booby traps, mines, and snipers made their operations exhausting and dangerous. However, their trust in each other and the collective identity of the Battalion kept them safe and alive. Their experiences fostered belonging, support systems, and they accepted each other's differences - their experience is a lesson to us here today.

As these men returned to civilian life, they found things to be much quieter. However, their war experiences remained with them. Their families were also impacted by war - their wives who had to say goodbye to them, sometimes after only a few months of marriage, and their children were also touched by war. The ongoing impact of this war cannot fully be known to us here today, and sometimes those moments are too personal to talk about in an assembly such as this but, please, let us take a moment to acknowledge the long-term effects of war, which continue to affect veterans today.

Our research sadly uncovered that Lance Corporal Ian William Smith, a member of the 2nd Platoon A Company, passed away in June 2002 after battling cancer. After his military service, "Smithy often thought of the Tiger Battalion and Sydney Tech, two corporate identities that gave him strength and courage."

We honour these men for their service and sacrifice, and we recognise the lasting impact of war on veterans' and their loved ones' lives. Let us be grateful for the freedoms and opportunities we enjoy today, here at this school and in this peaceful nation we call home. Let us never forget the names and legacies of Private Robert James Smith, Private William Robert Murdoch, and Lance Corporal Ian William Balen Smith.

Lest We Forget.

Taha Chalak- Year 11



Ray James - President of the NSW RSL, and Ian Hui lay a wreath on behalf of the Returned Soldiers' League



Ken Stevenson, December 1968, being decorated with flowers at Phuoc Hoa School



Major General Paul Irving AM PSM RFD, and Gene Truong lay a wreath on behalf of the ADF



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC - Governor of NSW, with school cadets

Students Anzac Assembly Presentation - Royal Australian Air Force



As well as ground and sea operations, our Tech alumni also contributed to the Vietnam War effort from the sky. The airmen provided crucial support, gathering intelligence, flying in supplies, and assisting with assault and defence operations. Today, I will share the story of one such Old Boy, Terrence John Michael Hayes, who was a helicopter pilot in Vietnam and also share the stories of the skippy squadron pilots who were tasked with flying Australian servicemen to and from the war.

Firstly Terrence John Hayes attended Tech from 1957 to 1961 and excelled academically. In his final year at Tech he received multiple awards including first place in English and second place in Modern History and gained a Commonwealth scholarship for university studies. After graduating from the Officer Training Unit on 22 December 1967, Hayes qualified as an Army helicopter pilot at the 1st Aviation Regiment. His unit was deployed in Vietnam with four aircraft

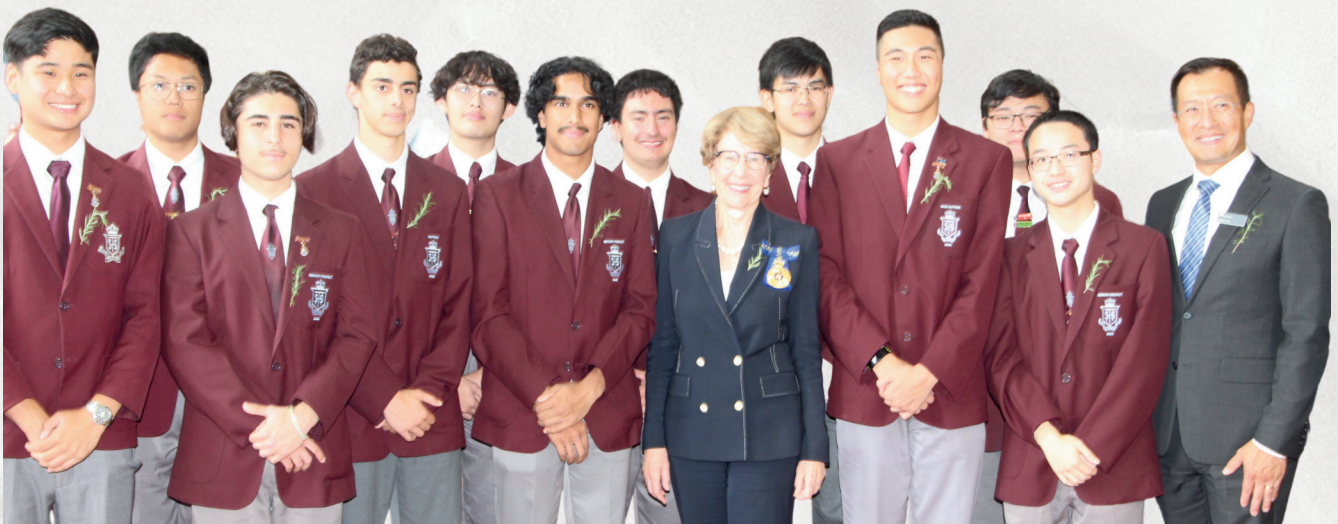
in 1965 and later became the 161 (Independent) Reconnaissance Flight, which Hayes joined as a pilot on 10 September 1970. As the unit grew larger and its responsibilities expanded, Hayes and the rest of his crew would operate missions out of Vung Tau and Nui Dat until the unit's withdrawal at the end of 1971.

Throughout his year of service, Hayes was an outstanding pilot who consistently obtained valuable information on enemy movement and installations, often putting himself in harm's way. He also flew Australian troops out of Vietnam at the end of the war. One of his close calls with death occurred during a visual reconnaissance mission when his helicopter was engaged by at least three automatic weapons, causing the engine to stop. Hayes managed to crash land the aircraft without further injuries to his passengers, demonstrating his exceptional airmanship

For his service, Hayes was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the highest award for extraordinary aerial achievement. He and the 161 reconnaissance flights made significant contributions to assisting ground forces during the Vietnam War. We also recognise the work of James William Cuthel and Anthony Ronald Hatch who were part of the pilots who ferried Australian troops between Sydney and Saigon during the Vietnam War. Between 1965 and 1972, Qantas flew more than 600 military flights with its Boeing 707s. Each flight carried approximately 130 soldiers. Qantas flew them into service and was there in a year's time to pick them up and bring them home. Old Boy Ken Stevenson reported that seeing the faces of these fellow Old Boys would bring feelings of jubilation to servicemen who realised it was now time to return home. Thank you for your service.

Lest We Forget

Marcus Lara-Camara - Year 11



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC - Governor of NSW, with Steven So - Principal, and Year 12 Prefects

Students Anzac Assembly Presentation - Conclusion

Today we have presented vignettes, small histories, created from our research into the Sydney Tech Alumni who served in the Navy, Army and Airforce as a part of the Australian Vietnam War effort. These stories are so layered, remember also, hidden amongst them are the service of many other service men and women. We have shared some experiences from the names featured on our Vietnam War Honour Board but there are many more. To our fellow Techies in the auditorium today - we pass the baton on to you and task you with the responsibility

of researching the names you see today in your future studies. This research has allowed us to grow, change, and encounter other places and worlds. We wish the same for you.

We thank you all for listening to our research. Thank you, our Vietnam War Alumni, for both your service and the glimpse into your lived experience.

Lest We Forget.

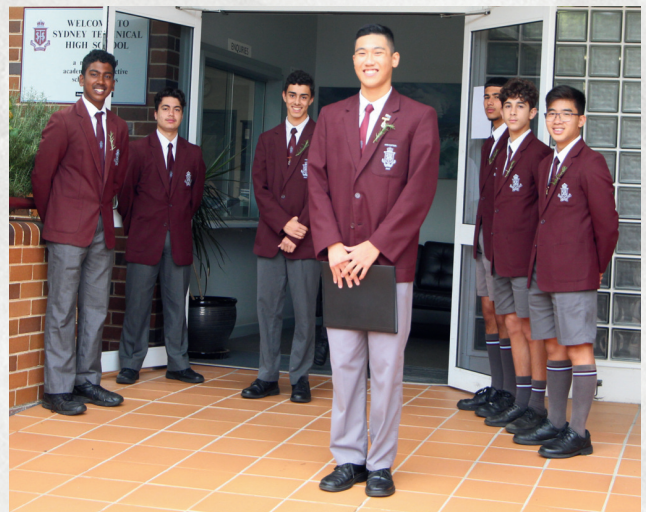
Marcus Young

Aidan Miu reports on the Anzac Day Commemoration of the Vietnam War Honour Board

On Thursday 6 April 2023 – 50 years since the last Australian troops of the Saigon Embassy Guard Platoon left Vietnam – staff, students and special guests gathered at Sydney Technical High School for our annual Anzac Assembly and the unveiling of the Vietnam War Honour Board. Sydney Technical High School was fortunate to have Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC – Governor of NSW, Mr Dennis Wilson, the Honourable Chris Minns MP – Premier of NSW, Mr Ray James OAM – President of NSW RSL, Major General Paul Irving AM PSM RFD (Retired), Mr Ken Stevenson – Old Boy 1965 and Vietnam War Veteran, as well as other many notable guests in attendance.

Delivering the Anzac Address for our ceremony, Her Excellency recalled the challenges and struggle that was being experienced at the time, revealing to us the personal family trauma surrounding her brother and conscription. Remembering the times very distinctly, she told the story of how her brother was almost being sent to fight in what was deemed the 'Unnecessary War'. Not many people can be able to share a story like this. Her Excellency also highlighted on the importance of commemoration of war, which plays a significant part in ensuring that history is never repeated. Her Excellency's address, filled with passion and empathy, powerfully drew the attention on all of us as listeners, reminding us to remain grateful to all our defence personnel, past and present.

We also had the pleasure to hear addresses from Old Boy, Mr Ken Stevenson, a Vietnam Veteran and four Year 11 Modern History Students, who worked side by side to research Techies who served in Vietnam. They all dedicated so much time towards this cause, on top of their schoolwork and outside school commitments to uncover and tell the



Aidan Miu along with Ghassan Adra - Captain, and SRC members welcome special guests to Sydney Technical High School

stories of those who served in the Navy, Army and Air Force. Each of their speeches, delivered with pride, truly moved every single person in attendance and reminded all of us, of the importance of reflecting upon these times that cost the lives of so many. This is a true example of our school beliefs – Respect, Responsibility and Integrity.

The whole day was filled with mixed emotion. Remembering those who served but reminding ourselves to never forget the past. The moment the Vietnam War Honour Board was unveiled, a sense of admiration filled the entire auditorium. Each of those 91 names is a testament to the sacrifice and dedication that everyone should praise and admire. Alongside the WWI Honour Board, they serve as a pivotal reminder of never forgetting history. Now erected in our school auditorium, I urge all to take the time to read the names of those who gave so much for our Country.

Lest we Forget

Aidan Miu - School Vice Captain

History Teachers Association of Australia National Conference 2023

Ken Stevenson - STHS Alumni, Cheryle Steel - History Teacher, and Robert Devlin - Head Teacher History, presented a workshop at the History Teachers Association of Australia National Conference encouraging schools to use their Honour Boards as a gateway to explore local national, and World History.



Winners of the 2023 Ron Rathbone Local History Prize in the High School Category:



Taha Chalakh, Marcus Lara-Camara, Russell Liauw, and Marcus Young, won the award for their joint entry - Bexley Commemorates their Vietnam Veterans.



Antonio Dias plays the Last Post



Sydney Technical High School Choir



Sydney Technical High School Concert Band



Nathan Tao and Armando Dias

Acknowledgements

Steven So – Principal

Ken Stevenson - Researcher, Old Boy 1962, Vietnam Veteran and President, Teachers' RSL Sub-Branch

Robert Devlin - Head Teacher History and the Library

Cheryle Steel – History Teacher

Department of Veteran Affairs - 'Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program 2022-23'

Joanna French, Director, Educational Leadership, Georges River Principals Network

Kirk Grinham and Alison Peachey - Deputy Principals

Elle Proops and Lisa Rebeiro - History Teachers

Julie Ryan – Head Teacher Creative Arts

Georgia Brook - Cadet Coordinator/Science Teacher

Shann Preece – Art Teacher

Cheryl Feigen - School Administration Officer

Jacqui Thompson - Business Manager

Brian Colwell - Sign Writer

Hon Linda Burney, Federal Minister for Indigenous Australians, and Member for Barton

Hon Chris Minns MLA, Premier of NSW, and Member for Kogarah

Bayside Council and Georges River Council

South Hurstville RSL Sub-Branch, Ramsgate Rockdale RSL Sub-Branch

Teachers RSL Sub-Branch

Major General Paul Irving AM PSM RFD (Retired) - Australian Defence Forces

Faith Jones - Virtual RSL War Memorial

Brad Manera - Senior Historian and Curator of the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park Sydney

Parents and Citizens Committee

SRC: Ghassan Adra - Captain, Aidan Miu - Vice Captain, Daniel Ajami, Minol Jayawardana, Nicholas Maratos, Gene Truong - Senior Prefects, and Ian Hui, Tejas Narayanan, Henry Nguyen, Danny Tan, Thomas Tran, Mark Ureta - Prefects

Presenters:

Year 11 Modern History Students: Taha Chalak, Marcus Lara-Camara, Russell Liauw, Marcus Young

Bugelier: Antonio Dias - Year 9

Acknowledgement of Country: Levi Haggett - Year 8

Cadets: Aariz Anowar, Kyle Anthony, Saihil Arandkar, Rocean Chand, Benson Chen, Ilias Ghomri, Rafi Gonano, Sahej Grewal, Sameer Gupta, Matthew Hoang, Anthony Hui, Paarth Mane, Aidan Miu, Daniel Ngo, Phil Nguyen, Daksh Patel, Akshit Premkumar, Kaif pathan Rizu, Oscar Sadrana, Aden Shiroma, Saral Shrestha, Shen Chi Tan, Jadyen Vuong, Thomas Zlatar

Choir: Aariz Anowar, Vaibhav Arora, Brandon Boseski, Rocean Chand, Anay Chundury, Charlie Drew, Lucas Fonseca, Kabir Ghosh, Sashwath Govind, Edward He, Cheston Ho, Daniel Ju, Shaunishh Katta, Frank Ling, Bryan Liu, Tokiya McDermott, Tejas Narayanan, Daksh Patel, Holland Pu, Oliver Richards, Keith Trayhurn, Robert Wang

Concert Band: Aditya Bhatia, Nathan Carvalho, Qianrui Chen, James Dewey, Conrad Fong, Luke Ghazal, Toby Greaves, Alex Guo, Lachlan Ha, Anson Ho, Oscar Hu, Easan Indran, Dinira Jayawardana, Harry Kathestides, Jojo Le, Yuheng Li, Russell Liauw, Vincent Lloyd, Anthony Luo, Paras Nayyar, Joshua Nguyen Neil Reddy, Justin Sangrung, Thomas Tran, Adrian Tu, Srisahishnu Varanasi, Thomas Watts, Chenning Xu, Linton Zeng

Digital Media Team: James Bui, Aidan Chan, Darius Giann, Lachlan Ha

Drummers: Armando Dias Nathan Tao

Sound and Lighting: Harry Jones, Daniel Ju, Min Sok Kwon, Maxwell Lim, Alexander Nguyen, Tafshi Rahman, Dharshan Retnasingham, Kaif pathan Rizu, Justin Zhang

Ushers: Adam Ajami, Ali Hamade, Nitin Karthik, Shadi Sayrafi, Troy Vo

Vietnam

Starved, hungry, helpless and poor,
Children are living in the midst of the war,
Supplies are dropped from planes overhead
Sometimes bombs are dropped instead
People long for release,
And we at home pray for peace,
Made ill by war many people die
The war may stop if enough just try.

Vietnam Poem 1968

Graham Wood, 1C

STHS Student

Ode to the Fallen

They shall grow not old,
As we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them,
Nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun,
and in the morning
We will remember them.
Lest We Forget

The publication of the Vietnam War Honour Board Commemorative Booklet would not have been possible without the generous support of the following organisations:

- NSW Teachers' RSL Sub Branch
- Sydney Technical High School Old Boys Union
- Sydney Technical High School P&C Association