

# Vietnam Commemoration Tour

**15 Nights 8-23 April 2012**

Walk in the footsteps of more than 50,000 Australians who served during the Vietnam War on this emotional journey to the former battlefields. Our 15-night tour takes in all the key Australian sites from the war, plus also many of Vietnam's cultural treasures, allowing you to experience all aspects of this vibrant country. Your guide on this compelling journey is Gary McKay, who served as a platoon leader in Vietnam and was wounded and awarded the Military Cross during Australia's last battle of the war. This tour will appeal to both veterans and ordinary Australians who wish to explore this significant chapter in our history.



**\$250 discount for Vietnam Veterans\***

## **DAY 1** 8 April – Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon)

### **STAR INCLUSIONS**

- ★ **Airport transfer in Saigon**
- ★ **Central hotel** ★ **Dinner**

Welcome to this moving tour to the Australian battlefields of Vietnam. On arrival in Ho Chi Minh City we will be met at the airport and transferred to our hotel. After checking in we will enjoy a group welcome dinner in a local restaurant, an opportunity to get to know our fellow travellers and Historian better. (D)

## **DAY 2** 9 April – Saigon city tour

### **STAR INCLUSIONS**

- ★ **Orientation walk of Saigon**
- ★ **Sightseeing tour**

Today after breakfast we will meet our Historian and a local guide for a short orientation walk of the area around our mid-city hotel. We then visit the former Presidential Palace where we will receive a briefing on the Australian headquarters system and liaison with Vietnamese and American headquarters during the war, and then visit the War Remnants Museum, the Post Office, Notre Dame Cathedral and the Binh Tay market precinct of Cho Lon. We will also visit Father Tam's Catholic Church where

President Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother hid themselves in 1963 before being taken away and executed. We will finish our day at the renowned Ben Thanh Markets, one of Saigon's most famous landmarks. (B)

## **DAY 3** 10 April – Cu Chi Tunnels

### **STAR INCLUSIONS**

- ★ **Visit to the Cu Chi Tunnels**
- ★ **Lunch at floating restaurant** ★ **Dinner**
- ★ **Boat transfer to Saigon**

Today we will travel to Cu Chi to visit the famous Cu Chi tunnels, where Australians first operated in the Iron Triangle in 1965. A battlefield brief will be given on the bus enroute to Cu Chi and cover 1965's Operation Crimp that Australians were involved in. After visiting the Den Ben Duoc Temple at Cu Chi we will enjoy lunch at a nearby floating restaurant (if you wish to enter the temple, please wear long shirts and long trousers.) The return trip from Cu Chi will be by boat down the Saigon River to the city and to our hotel for dinner. (B, L, D)

## **DAY 4** 11 April – Saigon to Vung Tau

### **STAR INCLUSIONS**

- ★ **Hydrofoil journey to Vung Tau**
- ★ **Orientation tour** ★ **Lunch** ★ **Dinner**

Today after checking out of our hotel we will

travel down the Saigon River by hydrofoil to the seaside resort town of Vung Tau and the former site of the 1st Australian Logistic Support Group (1 ALSG). After checking in to our hotel and freshening up we will enjoy an orientation tour of the town including the former 1 ALSG base area, and former Peter Badcoe Club site and the 'Flags' area. We will also visit the Front and Back beach areas and take a dip in the South China Sea (weather permitting). During this orientation tour a brief will be delivered on the area and its relevance to Australian operations and the role of 9 and 35 Squadron RAAF and the RAN clearance diver teams. (B, L, D)

## **DAY 5** 12 April – Long Tan

### **STAR INCLUSIONS**

- ★ **Touring the Phuoc Tuy battlefields**
- ★ **Long Tan memorial service** ★ **Lunch**

A very special day! Today we will travel to the former Phuoc Tuy Province and area of operations for the 1st Australian Task Force (1 ATF) via Baria and visit the former task force base area. The area is still a military reserve in parts and some areas may be restricted to visitors. We will be given a brief on 1 ATF operations that were conducted from the base and how it was developed and protected. A picnic lunch will be enjoyed in Nui Dat. After lunch, we will drive to



the battlefield at Long Tan and conduct a Remembrance Service at the Long Tan Cross Memorial site. After the service we will return to Vung Tau via the Horseshoe fire support base site, which unfortunately is off-limits owing to commercial quarrying. Our afternoon is free after returning to Vung Tau. (B, L)

**DAY 6** 13 April – Long Hai

**STAR INCLUSIONS**

- ★ **Touring the Long Hai battlefields**
- ★ **Lunch** ★ **Dinner**

This morning we will travel along the South China Sea coast to visit the former Minh Dam Secret Zone and meet a former Viet Cong officer. We will then climb to the apex of the Long Hai Hills and take in spectacular views of the area and visit the local museum in the former Viet Cong Sanctuary. Returning to Vung Tau we travel through the former area of operations and visit the site of the Battle of Ap My An near Lang Phuoc Hai that occurred during Operation Bribie in February 1967. Later in the day we arrive back at our hotel in time for dinner. (B, L, D)

**DAY 7** 14 April – Vung Tau to Saigon

**STAR INCLUSIONS**

- ★ **Touring the Nui Le battlefield** ★ **Lunch**

After checking out of our hotel, we will visit the scene of the Battle of Binh Ba. After a picnic lunch we will travel north to the area of the Courtenay Rubber Plantation and the scene of the Battle of Nui Le, Australia's last major action of the war. Gary McKay will give a battle site briefing at Nui Le, the action

where he was wounded and was awarded the Military Cross. We will then return to Saigon where our evening is at leisure. (B, L)

**DAY 8** 15 April – Saigon to Hoi An

**STAR INCLUSIONS**

- ★ **Flight to Da Nang** ★ **Orientation tour of Hoi An**

This morning we will check out of our hotel and fly to Da Nang in central Vietnam. We then drive to the town of Hoi An where we will check into our hotel and then take a quick orientation tour of this beautiful provincial and historic town. We will enjoy a local restaurant lunch and dinner at the hotel. (B, L, D)

**DAY 9** 16 April – Hoi An to Da Nang

**STAR INCLUSIONS**

- ★ **Touring the Da Nang area** ★ **Lunch**

After breakfast we travel north to Da Nang, which was the headquarters of the Australian Army Training Team. We will also visit Marble Mountain, famous for its marble factories. Next we will visit Red Beach where the US Marines first landed in 1965, and China Beach, the Rest and Convalescence Centre for US troops. Lunch will be in a local restaurant by the beach. (B, L)

**DAY 10** 17 April – Hoi An to Hue

**STAR INCLUSIONS**

- ★ **Lunch** ★ **Dinner**

After checking out of our hotel we will drive north via the famous Hai Van Pass to the former Imperial Capital of Hue. We will enjoy

lunch and dinner at local restaurants. (B, L, D)

**DAY 11** 18 April – Hue city tour

**STAR INCLUSIONS**

- ★ **Boat trip to Thien Mu Pagoda**
- ★ **Lunch** ★ **Dinner**

Today we will take a boat trip on the Perfume River on our way to visit the famous Thien Mu Pagoda. We will then travel by bus to the nearby Citadel and undertake a battlefield tour of this historic and ancient city. We will enjoy lunch and dinner at local restaurants. (B, L, D)

**DAY 12** 19 April – Hue to Hanoi

**STAR INCLUSIONS**

- ★ **Flight to Hanoi** ★ **Cyclo tour of Hanoi's Old Quarter** ★ **Water Puppet Show**
- ★ **Lunch** ★ **Dinner**

After checking out of our hotel we will travel to nearby Phu Bai Airport to fly to the Vietnamese capital Hanoi. After checking in to our hotel we will take an afternoon cyclo ride around the Old Quarter of Hanoi. This evening we will attend the world famous Water Puppet Show. We will enjoy lunch and dinner at local restaurants. (B, L, D)

**DAY 13** 20 April – Hanoi city tour

**STAR INCLUSIONS**

- ★ **Hanoi highlights tour** ★ **Visit to Hanoi Hilton** ★ **Lunch**

After breakfast we will enjoy a highlights tour of Hanoi, which includes the One Pillar Pagoda, Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum, Ho Chi Minh's home and the Temple of Literature.

We will enjoy lunch at Brothers Café before continuing our tour visiting the Lake of the Restored Sword. We will also visit the notorious 'Hanoi Hilton' prison, Hoa Lo, and the Dong Xuan Market. We will later return to our hotel, where our evening is free. (B, L)

#### DAY 14 21 April – Ha Long Bay

##### STAR INCLUSIONS

- ★ **Luxury overnight cruise on Ha Long Bay**
- ★ **Lunch** ★ **Dinner**

Today we will drive east to tour the magnificent Ha Long Bay. We will depart Hanoi for a three-hour journey through the scenic landscape of the rural northeast, stopping at a crafts cooperative en-route to Ha Long Bay and the Gulf of Tonkin, which was once the haunt of Vietnamese and Chinese Pirates. At Ha Long Bay the romance of old Vietnam still lingers, with bizarre karst islets randomly scattered and the odd red-sailed junk clipping across the waters. With 1969 limestone and dolomite islets sprinkled over an area of 1500 square kilometres, Ha Long Bay offers a wonderland of karst topography. After arriving at the Ha Long Port we will board our traditional wooden luxury cruiser for a majestic cruise of Ha Long Bay. We will enjoy a delicious seafood lunch on board as we take in the magnificent scenery. In the evening we will enjoy dinner, before retiring for the night to our well-equipped cabins. (B, L, D)

#### DAY 15 22 April – Ha Long Bay to Hanoi

##### STAR INCLUSIONS

- ★ **Visit to Dong Trieu ceramic village**
- ★ **Lunch** ★ **Farewell dinner**

This morning we will enjoy breakfast on board while watching the magnificent sunrise on Ha Long Bay. We will then continue exploring the islands, beach coves, caves and floating villages before returning to the port. On our way back to Hanoi we will visit Dong Trieu ceramic village. We will arrive in Hanoi in time to check in to our hotel before enjoying a farewell dinner. (B, L, D)

#### DAY 16 23 April – Hanoi

##### STAR INCLUSIONS

- ★ **Transfer to Hanoi airport**

This morning we will transfer to the airport to connect with our international flight back to Australia, arriving early the following morning after a wonderful couple of weeks exploring Vietnam. The journey may be over but the memories will last a lifetime. (B)

#### YOUR HISTORIAN

(see page 41 for more information about our leading War Historians)



#### Gary McKay

Gary McKay spent 30 years as an army officer after being conscripted for national service in 1968. He served in South Vietnam in 1971 as an infantry rifle platoon commander where he was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry and severely wounded in the last major Australian battle of the Vietnam War. He is now a full-time historian and is Australia's most prolific author on the subject of the Vietnam War.



## Your tour includes

- ★ The best guide in the business – Gary McKay is a Vietnam veteran and Australia's leading expert on the Vietnam War. There is no better historian to travel with on this special journey
- ★ All excursions, scenic drives and sightseeing as described in the itinerary
- ★ Commemorative service at Long Tan
- ★ 15 nights' 4-star accommodation
- ★ Hotel portering
- ★ Breakfast daily, 13 lunches and 10 dinners
- ★ Dragon boat on Perfume River in Hue
- ★ Speed boat transfer from Cu Chi to Saigon
- ★ Hydrofoil from Saigon to Vung Tau
- ★ Luxury overnight cruise on Ha Long Bay
- ★ Services of a Tour Manager, Driver, War Historian and experienced local guides
- ★ Extensive touring of the Vietnam battlefields
- ★ All entrance fees as per the itinerary
- ★ Travel by First Class air-conditioned coach
- ★ All tips to your Tour Manager, Historian and Driver
- ★ Autographed copy of Gary McKay's definitive guidebook, *Australia's Battlefields in Viet Nam*
- ★ Quality travel bag and luggage tags
- ★ Souvenir cap

**\$3297** per person, twin share (land only)

Single supplement: \$1097. Ask about our airfare deals, which offer great discounts when booked in conjunction with our tours.

**Vietnam veterans receive a \$250 discount. Ask us for details.**

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