

## YOUR VIRTUAL VISIT - 50 TO THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY MUSEUM OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



*It has now been a year since the Virtual Visit series began presenting interesting features from the collection and their background stories. Who remembers the April 2020 lockdowns in WA?*

*The Australian Army Museum of Western Australia is now open four days per week, Wednesday through Friday plus Sunday. Current COVID19 protocols including contact tracing apply.*

### AUSTRALIAN VIETNAM FORCES WELCOME HOME PARADE



On 3 October 1987, after a Dawn Service at the Cenotaph in Martin Place, 22,000 Vietnam veterans marched through the streets of Sydney in the Australian Vietnam Forces Welcome Home Parade. Veterans assembled in the Domain before marching through the city, passing enthusiastic crowds lining the streets along the route, in some places ten deep.

More than 500 Australian flags, each representing an Australian soldier killed in the Vietnam War, were carried by relatives and friends at the head of the parade. The staff of each flag bore a plaque engraved with a serviceman's name and unit. Large groups of American, South Korean, Vietnamese and New Zealand veterans participated, along with members of Australian civilian medical and surgical teams, entertainers, and war correspondents. The march concluded with participants applauded from the steps of Town Hall by Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke, armed forces chiefs, and other dignitaries.

Organised by the Australian Vietnam Veterans Association, the parade was among the events held for Vietnam veterans that weekend. While many units had marched through the streets on their return to Australia, many in the Vietnam veteran community felt Australian society did not respect or recognise their service. Addressing the RSL Conference in August 1987, Prime Minister Hawke noted: *“I firmly believe that the October parade will be the culmination of a long process of reconciliation and community acceptance of its obligations to the veterans of Vietnam. I believe we must honestly acknowledge that our involvement in Vietnam did cause deep divisions in the Australian community. But whatever our individual views on the merits of Australian involvement, we must equally acknowledge the commitment, courage and integrity of our armed forces who served in Vietnam.”*



The Army Museum has four flags carried during the **Vietnam Welcome Home March** in Sydney on 3 October 1987. These Australian flags were carried in memory of 521 Australians who died during Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War from 1962 to 1972 and each bore a plaque with the soldier’s rank, name, and unit. The four Australian flags at the Museum honour the service of:

**Pte R Buchanan 6 RAR**  
**Pte A Van Valen 1 RAR**  
**L/Cpl RE Coxon 1 RAR**  
**T/WO2 JM Stone AATV**

## **LINKS FOR FURTHER ENJOYMENT**

Visit the Australian Army Museum of Western Australia web site

<https://armymuseumwa.com.au/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5CgTVItOWY>

<https://placesofpride.awm.gov.au/memorials/187961>

<https://www.perthnow.com.au/community-news/western-suburbs-weekly/aussie-and-kiwis-dig-in-to-renovate-bus-stops-in-mt-hawthorn-c-862827>



Vietnam Memorial Pavilion, Kings Park



The Governor, the Hon Kim Beazley AC speaking with Clive Robartson AM about the Bell UH-1H Iroquois (Huey) at the Aviation Heritage Museum, Bull Creek