



Speech by

## Mr JIM PEARCE

MEMBER FOR FITZROY

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Hansard 18 August 1999

### LONG TAN DAY

**Mr PEARCE** (Fitzroy—ALP) (10.30 a.m.): Today is Long Tan Day, the day when Vietnam veterans, their families and the families of those who died in South Vietnam remember Australia's involvement in a conflict that split the nation. On this day, 18 August, in 1966 at approximately 1540 hours, 108 men of D Company, 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, found themselves in the single most dramatic and bloody battle of Australia's decade-long involvement in the Vietnam War. The Battle of Long Tan resulted in the deaths of 18 Australians and the wounding of another 24.

In a battle that caught the attention of the Australian, New Zealand and American people, 245 enemy soldiers were killed. In the midst of a monsoonal downpour, D Company survived continual frontal assaults of some 2,500 NVA and VC troops, who were highly motivated and committed to their cause. The battle was won through a well-trained and disciplined Australian force and a grim determination to fight it out when cornered. Supported by the accuracy of Australian, New Zealand and US army artillery, the courage of RAAF helicopter ammunition resupply and the eventual arrival of the armoured personnel carriers that advanced head on into the enemy forces.

Fifteen Commonwealth decorations were awarded to individual soldiers for their actions during the battle. D Company, 6th RAR, was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation by American President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Long Tan was significant in asserting the dominance of Australian forces in Phuoc Tuy Province. Today we remember the commitment and dedication of the Australian forces in South Vietnam. We remember those who did not come home, their loved ones, those who were wounded and those who suffer in silence because of their experiences. Lest we forget.

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