



Speech By  
**Bart Mellish**


**MEMBER FOR ASPLEY**

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## ADJOURNMENT

### Vietnam Veterans' Day

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (6.28 pm): On this day in 1966, on a rubber plantation near the village of Long Tan, Australian soldiers fought one of the fiercest battles of the Vietnam War. The men of Delta Company, 6th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment, faced approximately 2,000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops. By the end of the day, 17 Australians had been killed in action and 25 were wounded. That was the Battle of Long Tan. Today is the 56th anniversary and so every year on 18 August Australia commemorates Vietnam Veterans' Day.

**Ms Bates** interjected.

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Martin): Pause the clock. We will wait for silence.

**Mr MELLISH:** Today we honour approximately 60,000 Australians who served. We remember the sailors of the Royal Australian Navy who supported the extensive land operations carried out by the Australian Army. We also remember the Royal Australian Air Force personnel who served in roles including combat and transport. We pay our respects to the 521 Australians who lost their life as a result of the war and to the 3,000 service personnel who were wounded.

In 2022 we also mark 60 years since Australia's first involvement in the Vietnam War. Last month I was proud to attend a memorial service held by the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam Association, or AATTV. The service commemorated the 60th anniversary of the initial deployment of AATTV personnel to Vietnam in 1962. It was a touching and respectful event, with a very moving address by Major General Stephen Day, the Queensland RSL President, and very well organised by Colonel Kerry Gallagher AM, National President of the AATTV. I am happy to wear their tie today which Kerry was kind enough to gift me.

The AATTV, led by Colonel Ted Serong, was the first Australian Army unit to serve in the Vietnam War. They were involved in training, advising and leading a variety of Vietnam forces. There were approximately 1,000 servicemen in the AATTV. Of those, 33 were killed and 122 were wounded. It became the most highly decorated Australian unit to serve in the war. Four Victoria Crosses were awarded to AATTV personnel, and there were numerous other awards and decorations for the unit.

It was also an honour to attend the unveiling of a sandstone plinth at the Row of Memory, dedicated to the 33 members of the team who were killed in action. Today, on Vietnam Veterans' Day, we remember and honour those men, as well as the 60,000 Australians who served in the Vietnam War more broadly.

The AATTV was the first Australian unit in and the last one out of Vietnam. They never actually served in Australia. They were raised and disbanded overseas. All had to qualify at the Tropical Warfare Advisers Course at Canungra, which is where their grove was located. It was fantastic to attend the service there which was really touching. Lest we forget.