

photographic australians in phuoc tuy province evidence:

THE CONFLICT IN VIETNAM was Australia's longest war. From 1962 to 1973 approximately 59,000 Australians served in Vietnam in the Army, Navy, Air Force or civilian tasks.

The war experiences of these Australians could differ widely. A logistics officer at Headquarters, Australian Forces, Vietnam in Saigon fought a very different war from that experienced by a RAAF armourer at Phan Rang, or a radar plot naval rating on HMAS *Perth* in the South China Sea, or an army nurse at the field hospital in Vung Tau, or an adviser with the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV) in the central highlands.

Most of the images in this exhibition relate to Australians who served with the 1st Australian Task Force (1ATF) in Phuoc Tuy and the surrounding provinces of Bien Hoa, Long Khanh and Binh Tuy. 1ATF's area of operations was in the provinces in the south of South Vietnam to the east of Saigon. This area had some mountains and some dense jungles; around the villages and towns the countryside was usually planted with rice paddies or rubber plantations.

Use the questions on the reverse of this page to study the photographs in this exhibition and explore what was it like for the Australian infantrymen, field engineers, medics, signallers, artillery forward observers, armoured vehicle crewmen, Special Air Service troopers and others who fought the North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong in Phuoc Tuy and surrounding provinces.



Carol Eacott, Australian Red Cross Nurse,
holding a Vietnamese orphan, January 1970
[Carmel O'Shea]
AWM (Po2120.002)

photographic evidence:

suggested questions

australians in phuoc tuy province

FROM THE PHOTOGRAPHS what can you tell about the conditions experienced by Australian servicemen and women in Phuoc Tuy province during the war?

PRIMARY LEVEL

How much detail can you pick?

- What was the climate like in the area where the Australians served? Was it hot or cold, wet or dry?
- What was the terrain like? Can you find scenes of jungles, mountains, open countryside and cultivated areas? If so, what kind of crops are growing?
- List some of the equipment you can see the Australians using. Look for helicopters, aeroplanes, field guns, ships, tanks and personal weapons.

SECONDARY LEVEL

Using examples from the photographs answer the following

- Look closely at the captured or killed soldiers of the North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong. How does their dress differ from the clothing worn by the Vietnamese civilians in some of the photographs? What does the clothing tell us about the nature of the war?
- Can you imagine how the living conditions might have affected the comfort and health of Australians serving in Vietnam?
- What are some of the difficulties or advantages of fighting a war in the type of terrain found in Phuoc Tuy? Look for examples of camouflage. What advantages did the terrain give to the Viet Cong guerrilla forces?
- List some of the equipment you can see the Australians using. What is the difference between a Chinook and a Caribou or a Centurion and an armoured personnel carrier?

EXTENSION QUESTIONS

- Study a specialist unit of the Australian Army like the Special Air Service Regiment (SAS). What was their task and how did they perform it? Compare the dress and weapons of the SAS to the infantrymen of the RAR in the photographs.

Reference:

Horner, David, *SAS: Phantoms of the jungle: A history of the Australian Special Air Service*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1989