

FUNERAL SERVICE

Sub-Branch President or delegate:

"We, the members of the *** Sub-Branch of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia and friends, have assembled to honour (Veteran's name), who was a Vietnam Veteran.

Those who served in Vietnam share with all other war veterans an awful knowledge and understanding of the true cost of war, for we are all individuals who survived an experience of fright and terror which has no equal; an experience which forever changed and shaped each veteran's life. Veterans of Vietnam have borne an additional burden, for that conflict was not neatly resolved, and many questions remain unanswered.

On this day however, we know one thing (Veteran's name) has left us. In years gone by, many men and women, responding to the call of our nation, answered the summons given and left family and familiar surroundings, people and places loved, to serve in a far-off land, and return home to an uncertain reception. Now (Veteran's name) has left us once more, answering a roll call we all must face, and we gather to remember him/her, trusting she/he has found a reception, a homecoming of gentleness, health, peace, and love".

(If cleric is at service) "The (cleric) will seek Gods presence and blessing on this occasion".

CLERIC:

O loving God, be with us as we honour the life of one who served our nation, for (Veteran's name), who died on (date), and is now in your care. Accept our prayers on behalf of (Veteran's name). May he/she have a place in your house, may he/she rest in peace, and may light perpetually shine upon him/her. Look with mercy upon those among us, family and friends, who are bereaved by his/her passing. Comfort and console them with your presence and tenderness. We ask these things in your name.

All: Amen.

Sub-Branch President or delegate:

One by one, as years roll by, our numbers decrease, and we who survive gather to mark the end of the earthly tour of duty of those who have departed. I present this poppy, a most delicate and beautiful flower, which lives but a brief time, a reminder of the transitory and fragile nature of the life we have been given.

CLERIC:

Each year, Australia's Vietnam veterans gather on August 18th, Vietnam Veterans Day, to remember with solemn ceremony friends and companions made while serving in our nation's armed forces. We gather to renew ties and friendship, to tell stories, to laugh and cry, and ask ourselves, "Did this really happen?"

Many of those gatherings are similar to those held at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in our nation's capital. Vietnam Veterans walk side-by-side perhaps pausing to look or to touch a name or memory. Groups and individuals come, placing mementos, wreaths and flowers, often poppies. Perhaps

(Veteran's name) attended those gatherings, if not in body, certainly in spirit. He/she will be there no more, to laugh or to cry or to place a flower, to share a story or a memory, to ask the haunting questions of war. He/she will be missing, but will our friend be forgotten?

Each year the people of our nation gather on ANZAC DAY to pay solemn tribute to those who have served their nation in their time, helping to secure our nations hopes of truth and freedom. Children come as well and walk and run among the stones and flags, wondering what is going on asking "What happened?" And on these days, we will be there to answer this question. We will tell the children the truth, spurred on by the task entrusted to us by those whose names are written in stone and in our hearts, a duty arising out of our common bond and our knowledge of the fragile nature of life. As we speak, we will remember (Veteran's name), for God has given the gift of memory that we might keep alive those we love.

Sub-Branch President or delegate: We will now recite the Ode.

They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old,
Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn,
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,
We will remember them.
Lest we forget

And when we answer the final roll, we know (Veteran's name) will fulfill his/her duty and greet us with the words of compassion and friendship, peace and love, "Welcome home".
This concludes our service.