

## 30 Apr 1975 – 50 years ago

The Vietnam War ended with the fall of Saigon.

South Vietnam surrendered to the North. North Vietnam established the Republic of South Vietnam. Vietnam was reunified as a communist state on 2nd July 1976

The **50th anniversary commemorations of the Vietnam War** are ongoing and will continue through **Veterans Day, November 11, 2025**. This initiative was authorized by Congress to honor Vietnam veterans and their families, with various ceremonies and events taking place across the nation to express gratitude for their service and sacrifice. In 2025, a yearlong program series titled "**Conflict and Healing: Exploring the Legacy of the Vietnam War**" will also be held to further commemorate this significant milestone.

More than 50 years ago, the Vietnam War was surrounded by controversy.

The war broke out in 1955 between communist-backed North Vietnam and U.S.-backed South Vietnam.

"We still had this idea that we wanted to stop the spread of communism in Southeast Asia so we took over the mission," said United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration Branch Chief Mark Franklin.

The U.S. sent hundreds of thousands of troops, but after mounting casualties and widespread protests back home, the U.S. withdrew from the war and Saigon fell to North Vietnam in 1975.

"We just felt kind of like the black sheep of the family when we got out of the Vietnam War," said Tines. "It wasn't popular by no means."

Now, the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration — enacted by Congress in 2012— seeks to make things right.

"They answered their nation's call," said United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration Director Major General Ed Chrystal Jr. "They returned. They expected to be — if not a parade, at least welcomed back, and that didn't happen. The community back then — the state — the country was in turmoil. Could not separate the war from the warrior. Now, what we try to do is right that wrong."

Today, the Commemoration is honoring 7 million Vietnam veterans and 10 million families of all who served with a Vietnam veteran lapel pin.

[Vietnam War veterans honored with 50th anniversary pin](#)



U.S. involvement in the Vietnam war spanned a 25-year period from 1950 – 1975. Combat units arrived in Spring 1965 and on March 29, 1973 the last U.S. combat troops left Vietnam. The United States, Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, Republic of Korea, and Thailand sent troops to support South Vietnam. The South Vietnamese capital, Saigon, was overrun by North Vietnamese forces on April 30, 1975, marking the end of the war. The final U.S. military involvement is known as the Mayaguez Incident with the deaths of 38 Americans on May 15, 1975.





One of the most famous photos captured during the Vietnam war was taken by Michael Coleridge, on the 26th of august 1967. It displays members of 5 platoon, B company, 7RAR waiting to be airlifted by US army helicopters following a Cordon and Search operation near Phước Hải [2953 x 2446]



This image has since been etched on the rear wall of the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial on ANZAC Parade in Canberra. When I say 7RAR that means 7th Royal Australian Regiment.

## BURST OF JOY



The photograph came to symbolize the end of United States involvement in the Vietnam War, and the prevailing sentiment that military personnel and their families could begin a process of healing after enduring

After spending more than five years in a North Vietnamese camp, Lt. Col. Robert L. Stirm is reunited with his family at Travis AFB, on March 13, 1973.

**Burst of Joy** is a Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph by Associated Press photographer Slava "Sal" Veder.

The photograph came to symbolize the end of United States involvement in the Vietnam War and the prevailing sentiment that military personnel and their families could begin a process of healing after enduring the horrors of war.

Prisoners of war freed from the prison camps in North Vietnam landed at Travis Air Force Base in California. Even though there were only 20 POWs aboard the plane almost 400 family members turned up for the homecoming.

For the complete story go to: [Burst of Joy: The sad story behind the iconic picture, 1973 - Rare Historical Photos](#)

GOING HOME?, REPORT HERE, USA BOUND.

## The "Going Home" Sign



[Snapshots from the Vietnam War: The "Going Home" Sign](#)



[Photos from 1975 document the fall of Saigon | AP News](#)

[50 years later: The Vietnam War in powerful pictures](#)