



## Reg Hillier

This tribute was delivered in Parliament by then chief minister Shane Stone in 1998.

REG Hillier was born at Coonabarabran in New South Wales on October 4, 1939.

He moved to the Northern Territory with his family in 1949 and settled at the 11 Mile on the Stuart Highway.

His father was a mechanic with the Civil Aviation Department.

Reg, his brother Jim and sisters Barbara and Margaret used to catch the semi-trailer bus to school in Cavenagh Street.

Mr Hillier left school as soon as he could and went to work as a jackaroo on Vestey cattle properties, including Nicholson, Limbunya and Waterloo stations.

This outback experience was to hold him in good stead in 'Nam.

He enlisted in the Australian Army in 1961 but promised his family that he would return to the Territory after his six-year service.

It was never to be.

In June 1965, Corporal Hillier accompanied 1st Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment, to Vietnam as a section commander in B Company.

His comrades said that his "outstanding leadership and courage" made him an inspiration.

Reinforcements were deployed in his platoon to gain skills and confidence.

Corp Hillier entered Viet Cong tunnels suspected of

containing enemy seven times and captured many important documents and material.

During the Ben Cat operation in 1965, his tracking ability and determination were illustrated when he followed the tracks of two Viet Cong through thick jungle and bamboo, despite many ploys to disguise their tracks and to mislead him.

This tracking led to the capture of many important documents and the discovery of a large Viet Cong base and a herd of 50 Viet Cong-owned water buffalo.

In one of his last letters to Australia, dated October 1, 1965, Corp Hillier described the horror of his combat experience in the Iron Triangle.

He said it was frightening to be under fire.

"I reckon my stomach muscles were digging holes in the ground, I was hugging it that tightly."

Reg Hillier was killed in action at Vo Dat, Binh Tuy Province, on November 29, 1965.

The South Vietnamese government awarded him a Military Merit Medal and the Gallantry Cross with Palm, describing him as a courageous combatant.

Against his family's wishes, Corp Hillier was buried with other Australian servicemen in the military cemetery at Terendak in Malaysia.

The federal Defence Minister has been asked several times to allow the remains to



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be brought home to Darwin. But the reply is always that there are 74,929 Australians buried in war graves overseas and to bring home one would lead to demands to bring them all back.

The NT Government has dedicated Reg Hillier Park in Palmerston to this fine young Northern Territorian.

This ensures that his proud and determined contribution to his country may be remembered for all time.

It is important that we never forget those who gave their lives and, in particular, that we acknowledge those who did fight in the Vietnam War.

It was a real conflict in every sense of the word, and one that Australians gave themselves freely in defence of democracy.

REG Hillier was the only Territorian killed in Vietnam. He was a man of extraordinary courage and, Territorians will be pleased to know, had fine bush skills. The headquarters of the NT Vietnam Veterans Association in Bees Creek is named in his honour. Front cover, this page: Reg Hillier in Vietnam.



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## ANZAC DAY - MONDAY 25 April Free Public Bus Transport

The Northern Territory Government is providing FREE transport for all scheduled bus services on ANZAC Day (normal Sunday timetable applies).

Join RSL members at the ANZAC Day Dawn Service, breakfast and march. Scheduled Sunday bus services will operate along with the following additional services:

### BUSES TO THE DAWN SERVICE

Casuarina Interchange to Darwin City

- Route 4 - bus departs at 5.15 am
- Route 10 - bus departs at 5.30 am

Darwin North RSL to Darwin City - bus departs at 5.20 am

### BUSES TO THE BREAKFAST AND MARCH

Darwin City to Darwin North RSL - departing after the dawn service

Darwin North RSL to Darwin City - bus departs at 8.15 am

### DEPARTING DARWIN CITY

Darwin City (Darwin Interchange) and Darwin RSL Cavenagh St to Darwin North RSL - bus departs at 11 am.

For further information please visit [www.nt.gov.au/freebuses](http://www.nt.gov.au/freebuses) or phone 8924 7666 between 6.45 am - 4.30 pm Monday to Friday and 9 am - 1 pm on Saturday.

[www.lifestylent.nt.gov.au](http://www.lifestylent.nt.gov.au)