

## What Would They Have Thought?

The Court of Contemplation, Kings Park. It was opened in 1954, dedicated to all who offered their services to their country by Queen Elizabeth II. I trace the letters engraved on the walls- all the wars that tragically claimed so many lives written in a neatly, engraved in cold, hard stone.

As I sit down, I look at the words. I think about why the words are there. A small tribute to the terror of war, the way these men lay down their lives so we can live as we do today.

I keep walking around, reading the names of the wars. I stop at one war - The Vietnam War. This war has a personal meaning for me- my Grandfather fought in this one. He made his own sacrifice, and decided to go. Fortunately for all of us, he was one of the lucky ones that returned.

The Vietnam War- 508 people killed, many more injured. Just over ten years of misery. Over 50,000 Australian soldiers were sent to Vietnam during this time. All came back scarred for life. Over 9 million military personnel from around the world served during the war. Most of them didn't even know why they were fighting, or who they were fighting against. In fact, some didn't even know who they were fighting with.

Upon reflection, the war didn't define enemies. It defined friends. The ground troops quickly learned that the man across the line was just as friendly as the man on their side of the line. The soldiers weren't there because they cared what happened politically, they were there to protect their allies and the people back home.

From my Grandfather's point of view, the war wasn't about even fighting. His job was to rescue the wounded soldiers. He was on one of the first flights over, dropping off the Australian Army Training Team, and one of the last back, picking up the dead.

Yet the words carved in stone pay tribute to what these men did. War cannot be documented in words, pictures, movies, or figures, but by experiences. But as I sit here and look at these words, I think, what would those men have thought of our humble offering?

