



MEDIA RELEASE – July 15, 2016

Australian Amputee on 10,000km Charity Ride to Support Injured Veterans

A former Australian soldier riding from Hanoi to Sydney to support veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and other injuries pedalled into Bangkok today.

Laurie 'Truck' Sams, 67, who served with the Special Air Service Regiment in Vietnam in 1970 before losing a leg in a parachute accident in 1995, left Hanoi on May 12 aiming to reach the steps of Sydney Opera House six months and 10,000km later on November 20.

So far he's ridden his trusty Trek 3950km through the steamy jungles and paddy fields of Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand and will leave on Saturday for Singapore via Surat Thani, Butterworth, Kuala Lumpur and Malacca.

Riding alongside him on the legs from Ho Chi Minh City to Surat Thani are two younger ex-SAS troopers, Troy Lockyer, 43, and Giles Beresford-Peirce, 47, who will pass the escort baton to Matt Brown, 50, also ex-SAS, for the 1220km leg to Singapore.

"These guys are younger than me and they're super competitive, so I've had to pick up the pace a bit from Ho Chi Minh City," Truck lamented. "We fly from Singapore to Perth but then there's the Nullarbor and beyond, probably with another bunch of young whipper-snappers."

A world champion parachutist, Truck was awarded Australia's Star of Courage in 2001 for saving his tandem parachute student in the 1995 accident. After learning to walk with a prosthetic leg he led trekking expeditions along the Thai section of the notorious Thai Burma Railway in 2002 and 2005 and has completed charity bike rides right around Asia, especially in Thailand.

Included were a 2400km Tour De Thailand ride in 2008 and a 800km Tour De Esahn ride in 2010 to raise funds for the blind and children with cleft palates.

Truck said he set his sights on "the long ride home" to Australia as a friendship initiative between Australia and Asia and to support injured veterans, adding:

"I'm blown away at the number of vets suffering from PTSD and other injuries, not just from Vietnam but all the conflicts we have been involved in before and since. I lost mates in Vietnam and many others are still suffering terribly, so I'm using the ride to raise money for their treatment and really shine a spotlight on their problems."

Truck said sponsors were still being sought for the ride and anyone interested in contributing could do so by going to the donations page on the ride website at www.thelongridehome.com.au.

"We're passing through some amazing countryside and I'm working with the support team to provide regular video updates available on our blog page at www.thelongridehome.com.au/blog or Facebook at www.facebook.com/thelongridehomeaustralia."