



MEDIA RELEASE – August 16, 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 diverted to the Kranji War Memorial today to pay homage to interred Allied soldiers after pedalling into Singapore from Malaysia.

Laurie ‘Truck’ Sams, 67, who served with Australia’s 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.

Mr Sams late father William was an Australian Army POW on the Thai Burma death railway. In 2002 he led a group of ex-Malaysian commandos into Thailand to locate the bodies of more than 40,000 Malaysian forced labourers who died along the notorious railway’s 415km route.

So far the epic charity ride has taken Mrs Sams more than 5800km over 73 riding days through the steamy jungles and paddy fields of Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and down the Malay Peninsula. He leaves Singapore for Perth on August 19 to begin the Australian leg of the journey to Sydney.

Accompanying him from Surat Thani to Singapore was Matt Brown, 50, one of several ex-SAS veterans providing support and motivation on sections of the journey.

“These guys are younger than me and they’re super competitive, so I’m not being given the chance to slacken off,” he lamented. “We fly from Singapore to Perth but then there’s the whole of Australia from west to east and we’re only a little over the halfway point of the ride about now.”

A world champion parachutist, Mr Sams 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 began a series of trekking and cycling expeditions around South-East Asia to raise awareness and money for charitable causes.

He 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 very concerned 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 to really shine a spotlight on their problems.”

Mr Sams said sponsors were still being sought for the ride and anyone interested in finding out more and contributing could go to the ride website at [www.thelongridehome.com.au](http://www.thelongridehome.com.au).

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