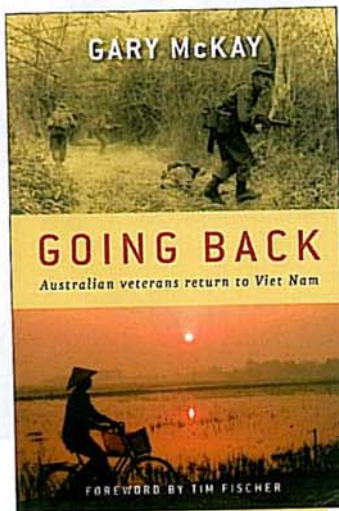


# Returning to the battlefields – a soldier's experience



**Title:** Going Back  
**Author:** Gary McKay  
**Publisher:** Allen & Unwin  
**RRP:** \$24.95

The Vietnam War has gone down in history as one of the most unpopular wars of all times. The psychological scars, as well as the guilt and shame associated with the political battle, will never be forgotten by its soldiers. **Lauren King** takes a look at their experiences as a group of veterans travel back to enemy territory in Gary McKay's *Going Back*

As a **platoon commander** in the Vietnam War, Gary McKay has seen firsthand what war can do to a man. And he has also witnessed what little recognition there has been for the Vietnam veterans.

As McKay puts it, the Vietnam War left no "overall victory" or "important military success" to celebrate. Instead, Australian soldiers returned to face outright hostility for their part in such a despised war. As a result, many soldiers chose to keep their experiences silent, burying the memories and scars deep down. However, for most veterans there comes a time when they can no longer push back the memories and remain silent. And, as they search for answers and closure, the question arises: should they go back?

In this powerful collection of personal experiences, McKay records the reactions of Vietnam War veterans as they confront their former enemy – Vietnam.

Recording each individual's firsthand experience and thoughts, the book manages to open up a whole generation of lost stories and memories, producing a candid and emotional look at the experiences of

veterans who were once so eagerly forgotten. However, more importantly, it also provides a practical guide for all those considering going back.

McKay endeavours to present the situation in an unbiased and informative manner, promising not to "gloss over" any difficulties which veterans may encounter.

He covers everything the veterans should expect to encounter, from the mental and physical preparation needed for the journey, locating their former military bases, the country itself, to the reaction of the Vietnamese people to their return.

And while McKay is able to successfully produce the practical guide he set out to do, it is his personal experiences that are present throughout the entire book that make it a raw yet outstanding read.

The result is a one-of-a-kind collection of emotional real-life experiences and practical advice, which will no doubt help many veterans, and their families, to make the decision whether or not to journey back to Vietnam. ■

## Keep your cool

### Gadget: COOLdock laptop stand

#### What it is

A stand for your laptop which not only works to improve your posture and spare your back, neck and wrists from those late hours working on spreadsheets or e-mailing, but also cools your laptop to extend the life of the battery.

#### Why you need it

Most brokers are probably all too familiar with the 'laptop hunch' – the C-shaped curve that comes hand in hand with using the all-too-convenient laptop in a highly inconvenient spot (and pose). Unfortunately, that hunch can have debilitating effects if it becomes a regular occurrence. The COOLdock laptop stand compactly combines the convenience of a laptop with the comfort of a desktop as it allows users to adjust the screen to a comfortable height, while also providing a comfortable slant for the keyboard – and as a bonus it also cools the laptop and helps to preserve it.

#### Key features

- Offers eight levels of adjustable screen height for optimal viewing and ergonomic comfort
- Is space saving, light and convenient
- Has built-in four-port USB 2.0 hub which provides one-time connection for computer accessories

#### What happened when we tested it

As a prime culprit of the laptop hunch, *AB's* Agnes Gajewska tested the COOLdock laptop stand for a night to see if it actually did anything more than make her own laptop look technically savvy.

The answer is a resounding 'yes'.

Although the idea behind the COOLdock laptop stand is fairly simple, it works incredibly well. The stand itself is light, easy to adjust and use, and being able to change the angle of the keyboard gives overworked journalist wrists (and back) a break from the battering they usually receive when embarking on a writing project.

Furthermore, the four-port USB 2.0 hub also means that one can attach a camera and various other accessories to the stand, which makes the mini workstation quite neat and efficient.



- Has two built-in cooling fans that dissipate heat from the laptop to extend battery and processor life

#### What's particularly cool about it

Not only does the stand instantly make your laptop a lot more pleasant to work with, the inbuilt cooling fan system dissipates heat from your computer. This not only works to make typing more comfortable, but actually also has technical benefits for the laptop itself, as it extends battery life and processor speed.

#### What it will cost you

The COOLdock laptop stand retails at \$59.95.

#### Where you can get it

The COOLdock laptop stand can be purchased online from [www.badbacks.com.au](http://www.badbacks.com.au). ■

