

# TUNNEL RATS authors tour

## Six days in the footsteps of the Aussies who found the Vietcong's secret weapon

Presenting a once-in-a-lifetime chance to walk in the footsteps of bona fide heroes and larrikin legends.

In February 2012 the authors of the best-selling military adventure *Tunnel Rats* take a select group of travellers to where Aussie troops were first based in Vietnam, working hard, playing harder, and creating the legend of the Tunnel Rats.

Based in Saigon, the Tunnel Rats Authors Tour will be as informative and entertaining as the book itself.

This is not a tour for former Tunnel Rats (although any would be welcome) but for those who've read the book and heard some of the stories and want to see for themselves.

Led by authors Sandy MacGregor and Jimmy Thomson, the group will go by river to both sets of tunnels near Cu Chi, returning by land.

They will go to Long Tan and Nui Dat, where the Australian forces were based, and where ex-servicemen have built a school for local kids.

They will visit Vung Tau, an arrival point for so many Australian troops but now a fabulous beach resort reminiscent of the South of France.

And they will explore a third set of nearby tunnels

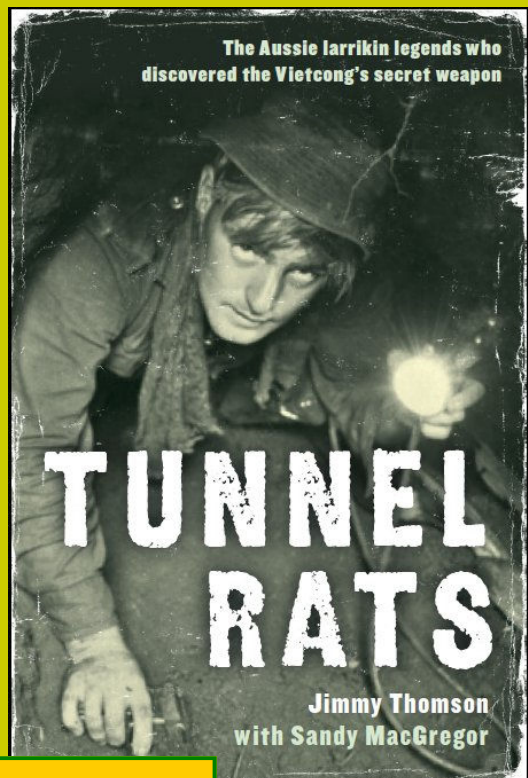
### Your hosts: two great storytellers

**Sandy MacGregor** and **Jimmy Thomson** are both experienced and entertaining public speakers on a variety of topics.

As a young Army Engineer, **Sandy** commanded 3 Field Troop, the first to investigate the Vietcong's massive tunnel system North-West of Saigon and was awarded the Military Cross for his achievements. Sandy is now patron of the MiVAC landmine clearance charity and the founder of CALM (Creative Accelerated Learning Methods).

**Jimmy** is a journalist, author and script-writer who, with Sandy, wrote *Tunnel Rats*, published this year. Last year his book *Snitch*, the reminiscences of a Kings Cross gangster was nominated for the *Ned Kelly* crime writing award and his new book, *Watto* the biography of Australian cricket star Shane Watson, has just been released.

Throughout the tour, Sandy will talk about his first fateful year with 3 Field Troop (and beyond) while Jimmy will talk about writing the book as well as showing how the skills, ingenuity and determination that were evident during the war make Vietnam one of the rising stars of South-East Asian commerce.



that were also a focus of Australian 'sappers' actions.

In Saigon there will be opportunities to visit the War Remnants Museum, Presidential Palace and the Ben Thanh Markets, a Mecca for bargain-hunter tourists.

And for those interested in the full Tunnel Rats experience there will be a "naughty but nice" visit to the "Western Area" which is Saigon's version of Sydney's Kings Cross in so many ways.

There will also be an optional extra tour to the Mekong Delta for those who wish to see more of the Vietnam countryside.

Call 02 8229 4764 and ask for the Tunnel Rats Tour

# Tunnel Rats authors tour

In conjunction with Travelindochina

## Day 1 : SAIGON

On arrival in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) you will be met by a Travel Indochina representative and transferred to your hotel. Meet and greet cocktails at the hotel with Sandy and Jimmy, followed by a welcome dinner at a local restaurant.

## Day 2: SAIGON – VUNG TAU

Breakfast at our hotel before beginning our journey to Nui Dat and Vung Tau. Along the way Sandy will explain the significance of Nui Dat in the 3 Field Troop story, as well as its importance to the Australian Army as a whole.

Nui Dat is our first stop where the former runway is now a wide street and the old heli-pad a soccer field. There's a pre-school established by Australians nearby and Jimmy will tell how it came to be there



En route (it's a three-hour drive) Sandy will deliver an illustrated talk on the battle of Long Tan and later we visit the Long Tan Memorial, before continuing to the Long Phuoc Tunnels and visit Ming Dam and Long Hai.

We keep going to the now stylish seaside resort of Vung Tau via the massive War Memorial at Back Beach.

Then we visit Front Beach, Bao Dai Summer House, the airport area, the town centre and market area. We continue to make our way to Vung Tau on the way we stop to visit Ba Ria Markets on the way.

Overnight in Vung Tau where you are welcome to join Jimmy and/or Sandy for dinner and drinks (at your own expense).

## Day 3: VUNG TAU - SAIGON

Spend this morning touring the city including a visit to the White Villa, the impressive Statue of Jesus, the harbour and famous back beach. Return to Saigon after lunch. and en route Jimmy will explain Vung Tau's significance to modern Vietnam's economy and social life.

Rest of afternoon at leisure but in the evening Sandy will deliver an illustrated talk on the Cu Chi Tunnels, which we will be visiting the next day. Join Sandy and/or Jimmy for dinner (own expense).

## Six days in Vietnam with two great storytellers ...

Sandy, Jimmy and Travelindochina plan their first Tunnel Rats Authors Tour for Feb. 24, 2012.

The cost depends on whether or not your accommodation is twin-share and other variables (see Page 4). However, we want to make it as affordable as possible while providing a quality experience in Vietnam.

On the ground, Jimmy and Sandy will be available as much as possible to provide information and just chat generally about their experiences.

So contact us to find out more or make a booking. Be quick—places are limited.

T: 02-8229-4764 (ask for the Tunnel Rats Tour)

e: [Sililak.sourignavong@travelindochina.com.au](mailto:Sililak.sourignavong@travelindochina.com.au)

Web: [www.travelindochina.com.au](http://www.travelindochina.com.au).

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# Tunnel Rats authors tour

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## Day 4: SAIGON – CU CHI TUNNELS

A cruise on the Saigon River through beautiful scenery brings visitors to Cu Chi via the “Hai Thanh” Koi Fish Farm, and the “Glimpse of Vietnam” Tourist Village.

The Cu Chi tunnels network stretches over 250km and extends to three levels underground proving the ingenuity and determination of Communist forces during the Vietnam War.

Although Vietcong tunnels had been found before, Sandy’s men of 3 Field Troop were the first to go down, investigate them and reveal their secrets .

Lunch (own expense) will be taken at a riverside restaurant before carrying on to the second set of tunnels (with a rifle range where you can try out various weaponry).

On return to Saigon by road, there will be an informal briefing by Jimmy on how to behave and what to expect (as well as what to avoid) in Saigon with information about attractions near the hotel. Rest of day at leisure.

Night: Optional (and free) “naughty but nice” tour of the Western Area with Jimmy. Overnight in Saigon.

## Day 5: SAIGON – CITY TOUR

Today after breakfast meet our war historian and a local guide for a short orienta-

tion walk of the area around our mid-city hotel. We then visit the former Presidential Palace where we will receive a briefing on the Australian headquarters system and liaison with Vietnamese and American headquarters during the war, then off to the Post Office and Notre Dame Cathedral.

There’s an opportunity to visit to the War Remnants Museum, which contains may exhibits relating to the Vietnam War. An exhibition of war photographs, by Western photo-journalists, is particularly moving.

We’ll take time to visit the Bitexco Financial Observation Deck, the tallest building in Vietnam with panoramic 360 degree views of this booming city.

And we finish the tour at renowned Ben Thanh Markets (near the hotel), one of old Saigon’s landmarks now very popular with bargain-hunters.

Rest of the day free at leisure. A variety of restaurants will be recommended for dinner and you will be welcome to accompany Jimmy and/or Sandy for your evening meal (own expense).

## Day 6: SAIGON (free time)

A day off from touring, this is your chance to explore Saigon on your own. Alternatively you can take the optional tour of the Mekong Delta (see next page) or other side trips. In the evening you are welcome to join Jimmy and Sandy for an informal farewell dinner and drink.

## Day 7: SAIGON - HOME

The whole day to explore Saigon until late check-out (at 6pm) and transfer to the airport for your flight home.



## OPTIONAL MEKONG DELTA DAY TOUR



On day six you can take the Mekong Delta and Cao Dai Temple tour. See next page for more details

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## OPTIONAL MEKONG

### DELTA TOUR



In the morning you travel south from

Saigon to the gateway to the Mekong Delta. Known as the 'rice bowl' of Vietnam, the Delta is the most fertile region in the country and the main producer of rice and tropical fruits.

Stop en route at an unusual Cao Dai pagoda, a bizarre sect combining a mix of all the world's great religions, including Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam.

Board your boat to begin your exploration of the mighty Mekong River as well as its narrow canals, gaining a real insight into the lives of the local people.

Visit a brick factory where old-fashioned kiln techniques are used, stop at a riverside coconut



processing factory and visit a local family home to experience their hospitality.

After a deli-

cious lunch featuring some local specialties, including Elephant Ear Fish, return to Saigon by late afternoon.

**Cost: AUD \$ 115.00 per person (based on minimum of 2 paying passengers)**

## Getting there ...

You can get direct flights on Vietnam Airlines from **\$760 return** (plus taxes, ex Sydney and Melb). Or call 02 8229 4764 and ask about other options through Travelindochina.

## What it costs ...

\$1750 pp twin share (single occupancy supp. \$380). This does not include flights but we can offer low fares (see below, left).

## What you get ...

- ◆ Five nights plus one full day in Saigon hotel (Liberty Central, Deluxe Rooms)
- ◆ One night in Vung Tau (Palace Hotel, Deluxe Plus room).
- ◆ Daily breakfast at hotels.
- ◆ Lots of quality time with Sandy and Jimmy.
- ◆ Local English-speaking guide
- ◆ Transportation, touring and entrance fees, as per the itinerary.
- ◆ Speed boat to Cu Chi tunnels
- ◆ Welcome dinner at local restaurant
- ◆ Lunch in Vung Tau
- ◆ Observation deck, Bitexco tower, Saigon
- ◆ Late check out on the last day (until 18.00)

**NB: Possession of adequate travel insurance is a compulsory condition of travelling with Travel Indochina.**

## Not included in price ...

- ◆ International air tickets and airport taxes to and from Vietnam. ◆ Visa fees for Vietnam.
- ◆ Meals not mentioned ◆ Drinks with meal(s)
- ◆ Personal expenses (laundry, telephone, drinks, tips...) ◆ Optional Mekong Delta tour
- ◆ Additional services not listed in itinerary.

## How to find out more:

Email, with 'Tunnel Rats' in the subject line:  
[Sililak.sourignavong@travelindochina.com.au](mailto:Sililak.sourignavong@travelindochina.com.au)

Or call 02 8229 4764 and ask  
for the Tunnel Rats tour.

**SANDY:** [www.calm.com.au/about\\_calm.php](http://www.calm.com.au/about_calm.php)

**JIMMY:** [www.jimmythomson.com](http://www.jimmythomson.com)

**Travelindochina:** [www.travelindochina.com.au](http://www.travelindochina.com.au)

**TUNNEL RATS (book):** [www.allenandunwin.com](http://www.allenandunwin.com)

**MiVAC:** [www.mivactrust.org](http://www.mivactrust.org)