

IN UNIFORM AND IN-COUNTRY

- Vietnam vets: 9.7 percent of males of their generation.
- 9,087,000 military personnel served on active duty during the Vietnam era (Aug. 5, 1964 — May 7, 1975).
- 8,744,000 personnel were on active duty during the U.S. war years (Aug. 5, 1964 — March 28, 1973).
- 3,403,100 (including 514,300 offshore) personnel served in the Southeast Asia Theater (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and sailors in adjacent South China Sea waters).
- 2,594,000 personnel served within the borders of South Vietnam (Jan. 1, 1965 — March 28, 1973).
- 50,000 U.S. troops served in Vietnam between 1960-64.
- 7,484 women (83.5 percent were nurses) served in-country.
- Peak troop strength in Vietnam: 543,482 (April 30, 1969).

CASUALTIES

- Total deaths: 58,275*.
- Hostile: 47,528. Non-hostile: 10,747 (18 percent).
- 8 nurses died — 1 was KIA.
- Married men killed: 17,215.
- 61 percent of the men killed were 21 years old or younger.
- Highest state death rate: West Virginia — 84.1 per 100,000 males (national average in 1970: 58.9).
- Army Combat Arms Hostile Deaths: Infantry, 70 percent; Aviation/Helicopter, 6 percent; Field Artillery, 4 percent; Medical Service, 3 percent; Armor, 2 percent; and Combat Engineers, 2 percent. These branches account for 87 percent of Army hostile deaths.
- Wounded: 303,704 — 153,329 hospitalized + 150,375 wounded who required no hospital care.
- Severely disabled: 75,000 — 23,214 100 percent disabled; 5,283 lost limbs; 1,081 sustained multiple amputations.
- Amputation or crippling wounds to the lower extremities were 300 percent higher than in WWII and 70% higher than in Korea. Multiple amputations occurred at a rate of 18.4% compared to 5.7 percent in WWII.
- Prisoners of War: Captured: 778. Died in captivity: 117.

DRAFTEES VS. VOLUNTEERS

- 25 percent (648,500) of total forces in-country were draftees. (66 percent of U.S. armed forces in WWII were drafted.)
- Draftee deaths: 17,692. Hostile: 15,485 (32.5 percent of all hostile deaths); Non-hostile: 2,207. (Included are a total of 683 Marine deaths.)
- Reservist deaths: 5,771. Hostile: 4,350; Non-hostile: 1,421.
- National Guard deaths: 97. Hostile: 80; Non-hostile: 17.

RACE AND ETHNIC BACKGROUND

- 88.4 percent of the men who actually served in Vietnam were Caucasian (includes Hispanics); 10.6 percent (275,000) were black; 1 percent belonged to other races.
- 86.1 percent of the men who died in Vietnam were Caucasian; 12.4 percent (7,265) were black; 1.5 percent other races/not reported.
- 170,000 Hispanics served in Vietnam; 3,070 (5.2 percent of total) died there.
- 86.8 percent of the men who were killed as a result of hostile action were Caucasian; 12.1 percent (5,741) were black; 1.1 percent belonged to other races or not reported.
- 14.1 percent (1,524) of non-combat deaths were among blacks.
- 34 percent of blacks who enlisted volunteered for combat arms.
- Overall, blacks suffered 12.4% of the deaths in Vietnam at a time when the percentage of black males of military age was 13.5% of the total population.
- Religion of dead: Protestant — 64.4 percent; Catholic — 28.9 percent; other/none — 6.7 percent.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

- 76 percent of the men sent to Vietnam were from lower middle/working class backgrounds.
- Three-fourths had family incomes above the poverty level; 50 percent were from middle-income backgrounds.
- Some 23 percent of Vietnam vets had fathers with professional, managerial or technical occupations.
- 79 percent of the men who served in Vietnam had a high school education or better when they entered the military service. (63 percent of Korean War vets and only 45 percent of WWII vets had completed high school upon separation.)

AGE & HONORABLE SERVICE

- Average age of the Vietnam War GI: 22.
- 97 percent of Vietnam-era veterans were honorably discharged.

PRIDE IN SERVICE

- 91 percent of Vietnam War veterans and 90 percent of those who saw heavy combat are proud to have served.
- 66 percent of Vietnam vets said they would serve again if called. ✪

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*As of August 2022, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation reported 58,281 names on The Wall.