

A somewhat different presentation of well-known facts and figures:

VIETNAM VETERAN STATISTICS

In case Vietnam veterans haven't been paying attention these past few decades after they returned from Vietnam, the clock has been ticking.

The following are some statistics that are at once depressing yet, in a larger sense, should give Vietnam veterans a HUGE SENSE OF PRIDE.

Of the 2,709,918 Americans who served in Vietnam, less than 850,000 are estimated to be alive today, with the youngest American Vietnam veteran's age approximated to be 54 years old.

So, if you are a Vietnam veteran reading this, how does it feel to be among the last 1/3rd of all the U.S. vets who served in Vietnam?

These statistics were taken from a variety of sources to include: The VFW Magazine, the Public Information Office, and the HQ CP Forward Observer - 1st Recon April 12, 1997.

STATISTICS FOR INDIVIDUALS IN UNIFORM AND IN COUNTRY VIETNAM VETERANS

9,087,000 military personnel served on active duty during the Vietnam Era (August 5, 1964 - May 7, 1975).

8,744,000 GIs were on active duty during the war (Aug 5, 1964 - March 28, 1973).

2,709,918 Americans served in Vietnam, this number represents 9.7% of their generation.

3,403,100 (including 514,300 offshore) personnel served in the broader Southeast Asia Theater (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, flight crews based in 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). Another 50,000 men served in Vietnam between 1960 and 1964.

Of the 2.6 million, between 1-1.6 million (40-60%) either fought in combat, provided close support or were at least fairly regularly exposed to enemy attack.

7,484 women (6,250 or 83.5% were nurses) served in Vietnam.

Peak troop strength in Vietnam: 543,482 (April 30, 1968).

CASUALTIES

The first man to die in Vietnam was James Davis, in 1958. He was with the 509th Radio Research Station. Davis Station in Saigon was named for him.

Hostile deaths: 47,378

Non-hostile deaths: 10,800

Total: 58,202 (Includes men formerly classified as MIA and Mayaguez casualties).

Men who have subsequently died of wounds account for the changing total.

8 nurses died -- 1 was KIA.

61% of the men killed were 21 or younger.

11,465 of those killed were younger than 20 years old.

Of those killed, 17,539 were married.

Average age of men killed:

Total Deaths: 23.11 years

Enlisted: 50,274 - 22.37 years

Officers: 6,598 - 28.43 years

Warrants: 1,276 - 24.73 years

E1: 525 - 20.34 years

1B MOS: 18,465 - 22.55 years

Five men killed in Vietnam were only 16 years old.

The oldest man killed was 62 years old.

Highest state death rate: West Virginia - 84.1% (national average 58.9% for every 100,000 males in 1970).

Wounded: 303,704 -- 153,329 hospitalized + 150,375 injured requiring no hospital care.

Severely disabled: 75,000, -- 23,214: 100% disabled; 5,283 lost limbs; 1,081 sustained multiple amputations.

Amputation or crippling wounds to the lower extremities were 300% higher than in WWII and 70% higher than Korea.

Multiple amputations occurred at the rate of 18.4% compared to 5.7% in WWII.

Missing in Action: 2,338

POWs: 766 (114 died in captivity)

As of January 15, 2004, there are 1,875 Americans still unaccounted for from the Vietnam War.

DRAFTEES VS. VOLUNTEERS

25% (648,500) of total forces in country were draftees. (66% of U.S. armed forces members were drafted during WWII).

Draftees accounted for 30.4% (17,725) of combat deaths in Vietnam.

Reservists killed: 5,977

National Guard: 6,140 served: 101 died.

Total draftees (1965 - 73): 1,728,344.

Actually served in Vietnam: 38% Marine Corps Draft: 42,633.

Last man drafted: June 30, 1973.

RACE AND ETHNIC BACKGROUND

88.4% of the men who actually served in Vietnam were Caucasian; 10.6% (275,000) were black; 1% belonged to other races.

86.3% of the men who died in Vietnam were Caucasian (includes Hispanics).

12.5% (7,241) were black; 1.2% belonged to other races.

170,000 Hispanics served in Vietnam; 3,070 (5.2% of total) died there.

70% of enlisted men killed were of northwest European descent.

86.8% of the men who were killed as a result of hostile action were Caucasian; 12.1% (5,711) were black; 1.1% belonged to other races.

14.6% (1,530) of non-combat deaths were among blacks.

34% of blacks who enlisted volunteered for the combat arms.

Overall, blacks suffered 12.5% of the deaths in Vietnam at a time when the percentage of blacks of military age was 13.5% of the total population.

Religion of Dead: Protestant -- 64.4%; Catholic -- 28.9%; other/none -- 6.7%

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Vietnam veterans have a lower unemployment rate than the same non-vet age groups.

Vietnam veterans' personal income exceeds that of our non-veteran age group by more than 18 percent.

76% of the men sent to Vietnam were from lower middle/working class backgrounds.

Three-fourths had family incomes above the poverty level; 50% were from middle income backgrounds.

Some 23% of Vietnam vets had fathers with professional, managerial or technical occupations.

79% of the men who served in Vietnam had a high school education or better when they entered the military service.

63% of Korean War vets and only 45% of WWII vets had completed high school upon separation.

Deaths by region per 100,000 of population: South -- 31%, West --29.9%; Midwest -- 28.4%; Northeast -- 23.5%.

DRUG USAGE & CRIME

There is no difference in drug usage between Vietnam veterans and non-Vietnam veterans of the same age group. (Source: Veterans Administration Study)

Vietnam veterans are less likely to be in prison - only one-half of one percent of Vietnam veterans have been jailed for crimes.

85% of Vietnam veterans made successful transitions to civilian life.

WINNING & LOSING

82% of veterans who saw heavy combat strongly believe the war was lost because of lack of political will.

Nearly 75% of the public agrees it was a failure of political will, not of arms.

HONORABLE SERVICE

97% of Vietnam-era veterans were honorably discharged.

91% of actual Vietnam War veterans and 90% of those who saw heavy combat are proud to have served their country.

74% say they would serve again, even knowing the outcome.

87% of the public now holds Vietnam veterans in high esteem.

INTERESTING CENSUS STATISTICS RELATIVE TO THOSE WHO CLAIM TO HAVE "Been There"

1,713,823 of those who served in Vietnam were still alive as of August, 1995 (census figures).

During that same Census count, the number of Americans falsely claiming to have served in-country was: 9,492,958.

As of the current Census taken during August, 2000, the surviving U.S. Vietnam veteran population estimate is: 1,002,511. This is hard to believe, losing nearly 711,000 between '95 and '00. That's 390 per day.

During this Census count, the number of Americans falsely claiming to have served in-country is: 13,853,027. By this census, **FOUR OUT OF FIVE WHO CLAIM TO BE** Vietnam vets are not.

OTHER

The Department of Defense Vietnam War Service Index officially provided by The War Library originally reported with errors that 2,709,918 U.S. military personnel as having served in-country. Corrections and confirmations to this erred index

resulted in the addition of 358 U.S. military personnel confirmed to have served in Vietnam but not originally listed by the Department of Defense. (All names are currently on file and accessible 24/7/365).

Isolated atrocities committed by American soldiers produced torrents of outrage from anti-war critics and the news media while communist atrocities were so common that they received hardly any media mention at all. The United States sought to minimize and prevent attacks on civilians while North Vietnam made attacks on civilians a centerpiece of its strategy. Americans who deliberately killed civilians received prison sentences while communists who did so received commendations.

From 1957 to 1973, the National Liberation Front assassinated 36,725 Vietnamese and abducted another 58,499. The death squads focused on leaders at the village level and on anyone who improved the lives of the peasants such as medical personnel, social workers, and school teachers. - Nixon Presidential Papers.

Paul Sutton "Dominus Fortissima Turris"

The pessimist complains about the wind.

The optimist expects it to change.

The realist adjusts the sails.

Land of the Free Because of the Brave