

Vietnam Warriors

A STATISTICAL PROFILE IN UNIFORM AND IN COUNTRY

GENERAL STATISTICS

- Vietnam Vets: 9.7% 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 GIs were on active duty during the war (Aug. 5, 1964-March 28, 1973).
- 3,403,100 (including 514,300 offshore) personnel served in the 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, 1969).

CASUALTIES

- 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.
- Married men killed: 17,539
- 61% of the men killed were 21 or younger.
- 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 in 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).

DRAFTEES VS. VOLUNTEERS

- 25% (648,500) of total forces in country were draftees.
- 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 North-west 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

- 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.

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.
- 66% of Vietnam vets say they would serve again if called upon.
- 87% of the public now holds Vietnam veterans in high esteem.