

These are results of a new survey from THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND, Washington DC. This may conflict with many preconceptions that we may have heard about who the typical Vietnam Veterans really are.

THE VIETNAM WARRIORS

"A STATISTICAL PROFILE"

Confusion reigns when it comes to the real numbers and the Vietnam War. Listed below are some figures that may help sort fact from fiction in many media reports.

In Uniform and In-Country

Vietnam Vets: 9.7% of their generation. 9,087,000 military personnel served on active duty during the Vietnam era (Aug 5, 1964 thru May 7, 1975). 8,744,000 GIs were on active duty during the war (Aug 5, 1964 to 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 thru March 28, 1973)

Another 50,000 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 formerly classified as MIA and Mayaquez Ship casualties), subsequently died of wounds account for the hanging 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 with 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. (66% of US 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 thru 1973) 1,728,344 actually served in Vietnam 38%.

Marine Corps draft: 42,633

Last draftee: June 30, 1973

Race and Ethnic Background

88.4% of those who actually served in Vietnam were Caucasian. 10.6% 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.

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 that 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.

Religions of the 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 and working class backgrounds.

3/4ths 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% who served had a high school education or better. (63% of Korean War and only 45% of WWII vets had completed high school upon separation).

Deaths by National Region (per 100,000 of population)

South-31 West-29 Midwest-28.4 Northeast-23.5.

Winning and Losing

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

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

Age and 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.

Pride in their Service

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Suicide Rate

More than three (3) times the amount of men that were actually killed during the Vietnam War have committed suicide since the war's end. And the rate continues to climb each day.

The following statistics are from the book, Nam Vet, by Chuck Dean, which was first published in 1988. The list was compiled from information provided by the Veterans Administration, the Disabled American Veterans, and Trauma Recovery, Inc.

Of those veterans who were married before going to Vietnam, 38% were divorced within six months after returning from Southeast Asia.

The divorce rate for all Vietnam Veterans is 19%

Between 30% and 60% of all Vietnam Veterans have persistent problems with emotional adjustment.

The suicide rate among Veterans who have completed a local VA program is estimated at 2.5 per 100. The National accidental death and suicide rate is 14,000 men per year – 33% above the national average.

58,000+ died in the Vietnam War. Over 150,000 have committed suicide since the War ended.

500,000 Vietnam Veterans have been arrested or incarcerated by the law. It is estimated that there are 100,000 Vietnam Veterans in prison today and 200,000 on parole.

Drug and Alcohol abuse problems range between 50% and 75% of Vietnam Veterans.

40% are unemployed and 25% earn less than \$7,000 per year.