

Some Statistics from the Vietnam War

Roughly 27 million young men came of draft age between 1964 and 1973, the peak years of American military engagement in Southeast Asia. Of that total, 2.5 million men served in the Vietnam War. Roughly 25 percent of all enlisted men who served in Vietnam were from poor families, 55 percent from working-class families, and 20 percent from the ranks of the middle class. In an era when half of all Americans claimed at least some post-secondary education, only 20 percent of Vietnam War servicemen had been to college, while a staggering 19 percent had not completed 12th grade.

1965 was the year when most Americans began hearing about the Vietnam war. There was a country hit by Johnny Wright I remembered hearing a lot that year.

NUMBER OF U.S. TROOPS IN COUNTRY:

1965- 184,000

1966 384,000

1967 486,000

1968 537,000.

1969 543,000 (Note: I saw a conflicting report that puts that peak number in April 1968).

I've always tried to use as few numbers as possible in stories but this isn't really a story----it's just a collection of numbers that tell the story of the war taken from a variety of sources including: The VFW Magazine, the Public Information Office, and the HQ CP Forward Observer.

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

* 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.

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.

CASUALTIES:

Hostile deaths: 47,378

Non-hostile deaths: 10,800

61% of the men killed were 21 or younger.

11,465 of those killed were younger than 20 years old, five of them only 16.

Of those killed, 17,539 were married.

Average age of men killed: 23.1 years

Highest state death rate: West Virginia

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%

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%

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.

Between 1995 and 2000 (according to the 2000 Census), an average of 390 Vietnam Veterans a day died .