

Vietnam War Statistics

Personnel

9,087,000 military personnel served on active duty during the Vietnam Era (5 August 1965-7 May 1975)

8,744,000 personnel were on active duty during the war (5 August 1964-28 March 1973)

3,403,100 (including 514,300 offshore) personnel served in the SE 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 (1 January 1965 - 28 March 1973)

Another 50,000 men served in Vietnam between 1960 and 1964

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

7,484 women served in Vietnam, of whom 6,250 or 83.5% were nurses.

Peak troop strength in Vietnam was 543,482, on 30 April 1969.

Casualties:

Hostile deaths: 47,359

Non-hostile deaths: 10,797

Total: 58,156 (including men formerly classified as MIA and Mayaguez casualties).

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

WIA: 303,704 - 153,329 required hospitalization, 50,375 who did not.

Severely disabled: 75,000, 23,214 were classified 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.

MIA: 2,338

POW: 766, of whom 114 died in captivity.

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 KIA: 5,977

National Guard: 6,140 served; 101 died.

Ethnic background:

88.4% of the men who actually served in Vietnam were Caucasian, 10.6% (275,000) were black, 1.0% belonged to other races

86.3% of the men who died in Vietnam were Caucasian (including Hispanics)
12.5% (7,241) were black.
1.2% belonged to other races

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

86.8% of the men who were KIA were Caucasian
12.1% (5,711) were black; 1.1% belonged to other races.
14.6% (1,530) of non-combat deaths were black
34% of blacks who enlisted volunteered for the combat arms.

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

Socioeconomic status:

76% of the men sent to Vietnam were from lower middle/working class backgrounds
75% had family incomes above the poverty level
23% had fathers with professional, managerial, or technical occupations.
79% of the men who served in 'Nam had a high school education or better.
63% of Korean vets had completed high school upon separation from the service)

Winning & Losing:

82% of veterans who saw heavy combat strongly believe the war was lost because of a lack of political will.
Nearly 75% of the general public (in 1993) agrees with that.

Age & Honorable Service:

The average age of the G.I. in 'Nam was 19 (26 for WWII)
97% of Vietnam era vets were honorably discharged.

Pride in Service:

91% of veterans of actual combat and 90% of those who saw heavy combat are proud to have served their country.
66% of Viet vets say they would serve again, if called upon.
87% of the public now holds Viet vets in high esteem.

Helicopter crew deaths accounted for 10% of ALL Vietnam deaths. Helicopter losses during Lam Son 719 (a mere two months) accounted for 10% of all helicopter losses from 1961-1975.

OPERATION BABYLIFT - THE FLIGHT..

The plane, a C-5A 'Galaxy', was carrying 243 children, 44 escorts, 16 crewmen and 2 flight nurses. These numbers vary according to which news articles you read as totals vary between 305 to 319 on-board. Eight members of the Air Force crew perished in the crash. The plane was enroute to Travis AFB in California.

Most of those who perished were in the lowest of three levels in what was then the largest aircraft in the world. A survivor of the crash stated:

"Some of us got out through a chute from the top of the plane, but the children (and escorts) at the bottom of the plane didn't have a chance."

Air Force Sgt. Jim Hadley, a medical technician from Sacramento, Calif recalled later that oxygen masks dropped down automatically, but the children were sitting two to a seat and there weren't enough masks to go around. "We had to keep moving them from kid to kid."

In an early report the U.S. embassy indicated possibly 100 of the children and 10 to 15 adults survived, including the pilot. At least 50 of the children were in the lower cargo level of the plane.

The Galaxy had taken-off from Tan Son Nhut airbase and had reached an altitude of approximately 23,000 feet and was approximately 40 miles from Saigon when its rear clamshell cargo doors blew off crippling its flight controls.

In what was described as a "massive explosive decompression" near Vung Tau, the pilot lost control of his flaps, elevators & rudder. The pilot, with only the use of his throttles and ailerons, was able to turn the giant plane back towards Tan Son Nhut.

At 5,000 feet Capt. Dennis Traynor, determined that he was unable to reach the runway safely with the crippled plane and set it down approximately 2 miles north of the airport to avoid crashing in a heavily-populated area where it broke into three pieces and exploded. The fact that many did survive such a crash was indeed a result of his flying ability. A Pentagon spokesman at the time commented on Capt. Traynor's efforts to bring the aircraft in safely as "a remarkable demonstration of flying skill." Victor Ubach, a Pan American World Airways pilot who was flying behind and above the crippled Air Force plane said the C-5A pilots "had done one heck of a job" to avoid a worse disaster.

South Vietnamese sources said three militiamen on the ground were killed when the airplane fell.

At first it was thought the crash may have been attributed to sabotage but later ruled-out by the USAF. The crash investigation was headed by Maj. Gen. Warner E. Newby. The flight-recorder was recovered by a Navy diver on 7 Apr 1975 from the bottom of the South China Sea. A Pentagon spokesman said the plane had undergone minor repairs to its radio and windshield in the Philippines before flying to Saigon but added that had nothing to do with the crash.

At the time the USAF had taken delivery of 81 Galaxy's. Wing problems had plagued this immense cargo plane but were not considered a factor in this incident. In spite of its wing problems this was only the second crash of a C-5A after over 190,000 combined flying hours by the USAF but the first crash resulting in loss-of-life. Two other C-5A's were previously destroyed in a fire while on the ground. Representative Les Aspin and Senator William Proxmire immediately urged the Air Force to ground the remaining 77 C-5A's, pointing to the continuing problem of weak wings.

By 8 Apr, Operation Baby Lift had resumed with the arrival of 56 orphans to the U.S. At the time of the crash over 18,000 orphans were being processed for evacuation from South Vietnam for adoption in the U.S. and other countries. Over 25,000 orphans were in South Vietnam in April of 1975.

We compiled these facts from AP & UPI articles that appeared in the Seattle Times, Seattle P-I and New York Times from 4 April to 8 April of 1975.

Roger Young - Vietnam Veteran

Pam Young - Vietnam-Era Veteran

The Consultant's (Vietnam) Corner

Jun 00

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Random Comments:

Once again, the Media descended on Vietnam, in mass. Led mainly, by those prominent media types who made their "bones" (and in the process garnering fame and fortune to boot) back in the "Good old days" by reporting bad things about Vietnam.

This time (pretty much the same fashion as before) they could often be seen grouped around their old wateringholes, atop the Rex or in the Caravel, reliving those "Thrilling days" of yesteryear, swapping stories and reminiscing about youthful adventures, both real and imagined. One of their own made a rather astute observation to the effect that they all were smitten (to one degree or another) by a sort of hazy "Namstalgia" and as a result, had no intention of straying far from those comfortable notions that had been the very foundation of their collective writing and reporting successes (interestingly enough the original meaning of the word nostalgia was to express sadness and *guilt!*).

While the more ancient of those media icons were drinking and carrying on with one another, their organization's younger blooded staffers were out trying to gather more bad news. Several of those I spoke with were from media outlets that had names containing words such as *Times, Time, USA, Globe, Tribune, etc.* They already had their stories, which tended to focus on bad news, gloom and doom, and other perceived "Vietnam" problems.

On six separate occasions, I explained to individual reporters, that Vietnam was making constant economic progress and their overall economy was healthy. In every instance when they questioned this, I offered them a two-hour Jeep ride (at my expense) for a first hand look at modern day Vietnam on the move. All six declined. I should also mention that all these interviews took place in air-conditioned comfort, in places with names like Caravelle, Equatorial, Omni, Saigon Prince, etc.

President Lincoln once made a remark to the effect that "If we do not study and learn from our history, then what we do in the future won't be worth remembering." The previous American involvement in Vietnam is important. However, the written, video and voice records of that involvement are distorted beyond recognition. Those reporters wrapped up in that hazy Namstalgia are largely responsible those distortions (and in many cases outright falsehoods) that are out there in America's "Vietnam" memory banks. And, until the records containing those distortions and falsehoods are closely examined and corrected, America's perception of Vietnam will continue to linger and fester in the nation's conscience.

The Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)

Once again there are signs of movement on the BTA front. The 1994 lifting of the US Trade Embargo against Vietnam was a unilateral act by the United States. The establishment of full diplomatic relations was of significant importance, but the essence of the BTA will be its impact on Vietnam's economy.

The BTA is about commerce, contracts and money. If a BTA comes into being, trade between the two countries will soar. Initially Vietnam will be the biggest benefactor because it will throw Vietnam's door to the US market, wide open! Also, of significant importance will be the creation of millions of jobs in Vietnam's manufacturing, service and export sectors. Along with this will come a stirring rise in the standard of living among the Vietnamese people. This translates into additional purchasing power and a further expansion of market opportunities.

Manufacturing and Energy

The wealth of every prosperous nation in Asia is directly linked to its trade with the United States. Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore are prime examples. The driving force behind their exports is Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Why? SMEs represent the best that market economies have to offer. They are largely owner managed, lean and fiercely competitive.

Even large American companies such as Boeing depend on SMEs. For example; over 70% of the parts components and materials that go into a Boeing aircraft are supplied by subcontractors, many, if not most of whom are SMEs.

Average per capita consumption of electricity in the United States is 80 times that of Vietnam. Other comparisons are; Malaysia's per capita consumption is nearly 13 times that of Vietnam and even China's consumption is about 5 times that of Vietnam.

But, Vietnam is catching up. Recently members of AmCham's EE&C (Energy, Engineering and Construction) Energy Subcommittee traveled to Hanoi and presented a briefing on Gas Chain Development to senior officials from the Prime Minister's Office, MPI, PVN (Petro Vietnam) and EVN (Electricity Vietnam). During the course of these briefings, we learned that demand for electricity in Vietnam increased by a whopping 14% in the first three months of 2000. It is also obvious that this increase is being driven by consumer demand. It certainly is not being fueled by economic activity generated by new, large foreign invested projects coming on line.

Vietnam: Looking Back - At The Facts

By: K. G. Sears, Ph.D.

One reason America's agonizing perception of "Vietnam" will not go away, is because that perception is wrong. It's out of place in the American psyche, and it continues to fester in much the same way battle wounds fester when shrapnel or other foreign matter is left in the body. It is not normal behavior for Americans to idolize mass murdering despots, to champion the cause of slavery, to abandon friends and allies, or to cut and run in the face of adversity. Why then did so many Americans engage in these types of activities during its "Vietnam" experience?

That the American experience in Vietnam was painful and ended in long lasting (albeit self-inflicted) grief and misery cannot be disputed. However, either the American people or their government does not even remotely understand the reasons behind that grief and misery - . Contradictory to popular belief, and a whole lot of wishful thinking by a solid corps of some 16,000,000+ American draft dodgers and their families / supporters, it was not a military defeat that brought misfortune to the American effort in Vietnam.

The United States military in Vietnam was the best-educated, best-trained, best disciplined and most successful force ever fielded in the history of American arms. Why then, did it get such bad press, and, why is the public's opinion of them so twisted? The answer is simple. But first, a few relevant comparisons.

During the Civil War, at the Battle of Bull Run, the entire Union Army panicked and fled the battlefield. Nothing even remotely resembling that debacle ever occurred in Vietnam.

In WWII at the Kasserine Pass in Tunisia, the Germans overran elements of the US Army. In the course of that battle, Hitler's General Rommel (The Desert Fox) inflicted 3,100 US casualties, took 3,700 US prisoners and captured or destroyed 198 American tanks. In Vietnam no US Military units were overrun and no US Military infantry units or tank outfits were captured.

WW II again. In the Philippines, Army Generals Jonathan Wainwright and Edward King surrendered themselves and their troops to the Japanese. In Vietnam no US generals, or US military units ever surrendered.

Before the Normandy invasion ("D" Day, 1944) the US Army (In WW II the US Army included the Army Air Corps which today has become the US Airforce) in England filled its own jails with

American soldiers who refused to fight and then had to rent jail space from the British to handle the overflow. The US Army in Vietnam never had to rent jail space from the Vietnamese to incarcerate American soldiers who refused to fight.

Dissertation. Only about 5,000 men assigned to Vietnam deserted and just 249 of those deserted while in Vietnam. During WW II, in the European Theater alone, over 20,000 US Military men were convicted of desertion and, on a comparable percentage basis, the overall WW II desertion rate was 55 percent higher than in Vietnam.

During the WW II Battle of the Bulge in Europe two regiments of the US Army's 106th Division surrendered to the Germans. Again: In Vietnam no US Army unit ever surrendered.

As for brutality: During WW II the US Army executed nearly 300 of its own men. In the European Theater alone, the US Army sentenced 443 American soldiers to death. Most of these sentences were for the rape and or murder of civilians.

In the Korean War, Major General F. Dean, commander of the 24th Infantry Division in Korea was taken prisoner of war (POW). In Vietnam no US generals, much less division commanders, were ever taken prisoner.

During the Korean War the US Army was forced into the longest retreat in its history. a catastrophic 275 mile withdrawal from the Yalu River all the way to Pyontaek, 45 miles south of Seoul. In the process they lost the capital of Seoul. The US Military in Vietnam was never compelled into a major retreat nor did it ever abandon Saigon to the enemy.

The 1st US Marine Division was driven from the Chosin Reservoir and forced into an emergency evacuation from the Korean port of Hungnam. There other US Army joined them and South Korean soldiers and the US Navy eventually evacuated 105,000 Allied troops from that port. In Vietnam there was never any mass evacuation of US Marine, South Vietnamese or Allied troops.

Other items: Only 25 percent of the US Military who served in Vietnam were draftees. During WW II, 66 percent of the troops were draftees. The Vietnam force contained three time as many college graduates as did the WW II force. The average education level of the enlisted man in Vietnam was 13 years, equivalent to one year of college. Of those who enlisted, 79 percent had high school diplomas. This at a time when only 65% of the military age males in the general American population were high school graduates.

The average age of the military men who died in Vietnam was 22.8 years old. Of the one hundred and one (101) 18 year old draftees who died in Vietnam; seven of them were black. Blacks accounted for 10.5 percent the combat deaths in Vietnam. At that time black males of military age constituted 13.5 percent of the American population.

The charge that the "poor" died in disproportionate numbers is also a myth. An MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) study of Vietnam death rates, conducted by Professor Arnold Barnett, revealed that servicemen from the richest 10 percent of the nations communities had the same distribution of deaths as the rest of the nation. In fact his study showed that the death rate in the upper income communities of Beverly Hills, Belmont, Chevy Chase, and Great Neck exceeded the national average in three of the four, and, when the four were added together and averaged, that number also exceeded the national average.

On the issue of psychological health: Mental problems attributed to service in Vietnam are referred to as PTSD. Civil War veterans suffered "Soldiers heart" in WW I the term was "Shell shock" during WW II and in Korea it was "Battle fatigue." Military records indicate that Civil War psychological casualties averaged twenty six per thousand men. In WW II some units experienced over 100 psychiatric casualties per 1,000 troops; in Korea nearly one quarter of all battlefield medical evacuations were due to mental stress. That works out to about 50 per 1,000 troops. In Vietnam the comparable average was 5 per 1,000 troops.

To put Vietnam in its proper perspective it is necessary to understand that the US Military was not defeated in Vietnam and that the South Vietnamese government did not collapse due to mismanagement or corruption, nor was it overthrown by revolutionary guerrillas running around in rubber tire sandals, wearing black pajamas and carrying home made weapons. There was no

“general uprising” or “revolt” by the southern population. A conventional army made up of seventeen conventional divisions, organized into four army corps, overran Saigon. This totally conventional force (armed, equipped, trained and supplied by the Soviet Union) launched a cross border, frontal attack on South Vietnam and conquered it, in the same manner as Hitler conquered most of Europe in WW II. A quick synopsis of America's “Vietnam experience” will help summarize and clarify the Vietnam scenario:

Prior to 1965; US Advisors and AID only

1965 - 1967; Buildup of US Forces and logistical supply bases, plus heavy fighting to counter Communist North Vietnamese invasion.

1968 - 1970; Communist “insurgency” destroyed to the point where over 90% of the towns and villages in South Vietnam were free from Communist domination. As an example: By 1971 throughout the entire populous Mekong Delta, the monthly rate of Communist insurgency action dropped to an average of 3 incidents per 100,000 population (Many a US city would envy a crime rate that low). In 1969 Nixon started troop withdrawals that were essentially complete by late 1971.

Dec 1972; Paris Peace Agreements negotiated and agreed by North Vietnam, South Vietnam, the Southern Vietnamese Communists (VC, NLF / PRG) and the United States.

Jan 1973; All four parties formally sign Paris Peace Agreements.

Mar 1973; Last US POW released from Hanoi Hilton, and in accordance with Paris Agreements, last American GI leaves Vietnam.

Aug 1973; US Congress passes the *Case - Church* law which forbids, US naval forces from sailing on the seas surrounding, US ground forces from operating on the land of, and US air forces from flying in the air over South Vietnam, North Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. This at a time when America had drawn its Cold War battle lines and as a result had the US Navy protecting Taiwan, 50,000 troops in South Korea and over 300,000 troops in Western Europe (Which has a land area, economy and population comparable to that of the United States), along with ironclad guarantees that if Communist forces should cross any of those Cold War lines or Soviet Armor should roll across either the DMZ in Korea or the Iron Curtain in Europe, then there would be an unlimited response by the armed forces of the United States, to include if necessary, the use of nuclear weapons. In addition, these defense commitments required the annual expenditure of hundreds of billions of US dollars. Conversely, in 1975 when Soviet armor rolled across the international borders of South Vietnam, the US military response was nothing. In addition, Congress cut off all AID to the South Vietnamese and would not provide them with as much as a single bullet.

In spite of the *Case - Church* Congressional guarantee, the North Vietnamese were very leery of US President Nixon. They viewed him as one unpredictable, incredibly tough nut. He had, in 1972, for the first time in the War, mined Hai Phong Harbor and sent the B-52 bombers against the North to force them into signing the Paris Peace Agreements. Previously the B-52s had been used only against Communist troop concentrations in remote regions of South Vietnam and occasionally against carefully selected sanctuaries in Cambodia, plus against both sanctuaries and supply lines in Laos.

Aug 1974; Nixon resigns.

Sept 1974: North Vietnamese hold special meeting to evaluate Nixon's resignation and decide to test implications.

Dec 1974: North Vietnamese invade South Vietnamese Province of Phuoc Long located north of Saigon on Cambodian border.

Jan 1975: North Vietnamese capture Phuoc Long provincial capitol of Phuoc Binh. Sit and wait for US reaction. No reaction.

Mar 1975; North Vietnam mounts full-scale invasion. Seventeen North Vietnamese conventional divisions (more divisions than the US Army has had on duty at any time since WW II) were formed into four conventional army corps (This was the entire North Vietnamese army. Because the US Congress had unconditionally guaranteed no military action against North Vietnam, there was no need for them to keep forces in reserve to protect their home bases, flanks or supply lines), and launched a wholly conventional cross-border, frontal-attack. Then, using the age-old tactics of mass and maneuver, they defeated the South Vietnamese Army in detail.

The complete description of this North Vietnamese Army (NVA) classical military victory is best expressed in the words of the NVA general who commanded it. Recommended reading: *Great Spring Victory* by General Tien Van Dung, NVA Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Volume I, 7 Jun 76 and Volume II, 7 Jul 76. General Dung's account of the final battle for South Vietnam reads like it was taken right out of a US Army manual on offensive military operations. His description of the mass and maneuver were exquisite. His selection of South Vietnam's army as the "Center of gravity" could have been written by General Carl von Clausewitz himself. General Dung's account goes into graphic detail on his battle moves aimed at destroying South Vietnam's armed forces and their war materials. He never once, *not even once*, ever mentions a *single word about revolutionary warfare or guerilla tactics* contributing in any way to his *Great Spring Victory*.

Another Aspect - US Military battle deaths by year:

Prior to 1966 - 3,078 (Total up through 31 Dec 65)
1966 - 5,008
1967 - 9,378
1968 - 14, 589 (Total while JFK & LBJ were on watch - 32,053)
1969 - 9,414
1970 - 4,221
1971 - 1,381
1972 - 300 (Total while Nixon was on watch - 15,316)

Source of these numbers is the Southeast Asia Statistical Summary, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense and were provided to the author by the US Army War College Library, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17023. Numbers are battle deaths only and do not include ordinary accidents, heart attacks, murder victims, suicides, etc. Those who think these numbers represent "heavy fighting" and some of the "bloodiest battles" in US history should consider the fact that the Allied Forces lost 9,758 men killed just storming the Normandy Beaches; 6,603 were Americans. The US Marines, in the 25 days between 19 Feb 45 and 16 Mar 45, lost nearly 7,000 men killed in their battle for the tiny island of Iwo Jima.

By comparison the single bloodiest day in the Vietnam War for the Americans was on 17 Nov 65 when elements of the 7th Cav (Custer's old outfit) lost 155 men killed in a battle with elements of two North Vietnamese Regular Army regiments (33rd & 66th) near the Cambodian border southwest of Pleiku.

Parallel Point

During its Normandy battles in 1944 the US 90th Infantry Division, (roughly 15,000+ men) over a six week period, had to replace 150% of its officers and more than 100% of its men. The 173rd Airborne Brigade (normally there are 3 brigades to a division) served in Vietnam for a total of 2,301 days, and holds the record for the longest continuous service under fire of any American unit, ever. During that (6 year, 3+ month) period the 173rd lost 1,601 (roughly 31%) of its men killed in action.

Further Food For thought

Casualties tell the tale. Again, the US Army War College Library provides numbers. The former South Vietnam was made up of 44 provinces. The province that claimed the most Americans killed was Quang Tri, which bordered on both North Vietnam and Laos. Fifty four percent of the Americans killed in Vietnam were killed in the four northernmost provinces, which in addition to Quang Tri were Thua Thien, Quang Nam and Quan Tin. All of them shared borders with Laos. An additional six provinces accounted for another 25 % of the Americans killed in action (KIA). Those six all shared borders with either Laos or Cambodia or had contiguous borders with provinces that did. The remaining 34 provinces accounted for just 21% of US KIA. These numbers should dispel the notion that Vietnam was some kind of flaming inferno or a huge cauldron of burning dissent. The overwhelming majority of Americans killed, died in border battles against regular NVA units.

Looking back it is now clear that the American military role in "Vietnam" was, in essence, one of defending international borders. Contrary to popular belief, they turned in an outstanding performance and accomplished their mission. The US Military was not "Driven" from Vietnam. The US Congress voted them out. This same Congress then turned around and abandoned America's former ally, South Vietnam. Should America feel shame? Yes! Why? For kowtowing to the wishes of those craven hoards of dodgers and for bugging out and abandoning their former ally.

The idea that "There were no front lines." and "The enemy was everywhere." makes good press and feeds the craven needs of those 16,000,000+ American draft dodgers. Add either a mommy or a poppa, and throw in another sympathizer in the form of a girl (or boy?) friend and your looking at well in excess of 50,000,000 Americans with a need to rationalize away their draft-dodging cowardice and to, in some way, vilify "Vietnam" the very source of their shame and guilt. During the entire period of the American involvement in "Vietnam" only 2,594,000 US Military actual served inside the country. Contrast that number with the 50-million plus draft dodging anti-war crowd and you have the answer to why the American view of its Vietnam experience is so skewed.

Once the draft dodging gang's numbers reached critical mass, the media and politicians started playing to the numbers. Multi-million dollar salaries are not paid to people for reporting the news, in any form, be it written, audio or video. Multi-million dollar salaries (e.g., Cronkite) are paid to entertainers, stars and superstars. One does not get to be, much less continue to be, a superstar unless one gives one's audience what it wants. Once the dodging anti-war numbers started climbing through the stratosphere it was not in the media's interest to say something good about Vietnam to an audience that was guilt ridden with shame and a deep psychological need to rationalize away the true source of their guilt.

A good example of this number pandering can be found in a 1969 *Life* magazine feature article in which *Life's* editors published the portraits of 250 men that were killed in Vietnam in one routine week. This was supposedly done to illustrate *Life's* concern for the sanctity of human life; American human life. In 1969 the weekly average death toll from highway accidents in the United States was 1,082. If indeed *Life's* concern was for the sanctity of American lives why not publish the 1,082 portraits of the folks who were killed in one routine week on the nation's highways?

The most glaring example of the existence of the dodging guilt syndrome can be found in a statement made by the ranking head dodger himself. When asked for his reaction to McNamara's book *In Retrospect*, Clinton's response was "I feel vindicated." (of his cowardly act of dodging the draft). Clinton is a lawyer and understands the use of English words very well. For one to "feel" vindicated, as opposed to *being* vindicated, one must have first been *feeling* guilty.

The Battle of Xuan Loc; Mar 17 - Apr 17, 1975 & The End

Xuan Loc was the last major battle for South Vietnam. It sits astride Q. L. (National Road) #1, some 40 odd miles to the northeast of Saigon (on the road to Phan Thiet), and was the capitol of South Vietnam's Long Khanh province. The NVA (North Vietnamese Army) attack fell on the ARVN (Army Republic of Vietnam) 18th Division.

On 17 Mar 75 the NVA Sixth and Seventh Divisions attacked Xuan Loc but were repulsed by the ARVN 18th. On 9 Apr 75 the NVA 341st Division joined the attack. After a four thousand round artillery bombardment, these three divisions massed, and, spearheaded by Soviet tanks, assaulted Xuan Loc; but again the ARVN 18th held its ground. The NVA reinforced with their 325th Division and began moving their 10th and 304th Divisions into position. Eventually, in a classic example of the military art of "Mass and Maneuver" the NVA massed 40,000 men and overran Xuan Loc.

During this fight, the ARVN 18th had 5,000 soldiers at Xuan Loc. These men managed to virtually destroy 3 NVA Divisions, but on 17 Apr 75 sheer numbers and the weight of the "Mass" overwhelmed them. Before overrunning Xuan Loc the NVA had committed six full divisions, plus a host various support troops.

In the *Sorrow of War*, author and NVA veteran Bao Ninh writes of this battle: "Remember when we chased Division 18 southern soldiers all over Xuan Loc? My tank tracks were choked up with skin and hair and blood. And the bloody maggots. And the fucking flies. Had to drive through a river to get the stuff out of my tracks." He also writes "After a while I could tell the difference between mud and bodies, logs and bodies. They were like sacks of water. They'd pop open when I ran over them. Pop! Pop!"

The Irony

It's ironic that in spite of all the hype and hullabaloo about the "Viet Cong" and the "American Soldiers" both were absent from the final battles for South Vietnam. The Viet Cong had been bludgeoned to death (During Tet 1968) on the streets of the cities, towns, and hamlets of South Vietnam. The Americans had left under the terms of the Paris Peace Agreements, and then were barred by the US Congress, from ever returning. The end came in the form of a cross border invasion. Two conventional armies fought it out using strategies and tactics as old as warfare itself.

A quick word about the South Vietnamese government lacking support from the people, and of the so called "Popular support" for the Communists. During the 1968 Tet Offensive the Communists attacked 155 cities, towns and hamlets in South Vietnam. In not one instance did the people rise up to support the Communists. The general uprising was a complete illusion. The people did rise, but in revulsion and resistance to the invaders. At the end of thirty days, not one single communist flag was flying over any of those 155 cities, towns or hamlets. The citizens of South Vietnam, no matter how apathetic they may have appeared toward their own government, turned out to be overwhelmingly anti-Communist. In the end they had to be conquered by conventional divisions, supported by conventional tanks and artillery that was being maneuvered in accordance with the ancient principles of warfare. But then, as with mathematics, certain rules apply in war, and, military victories are not won by violating military principles.

Recommended Reading

Works by Bao Ninh, the author of *The Sorrow of War*. He tells of being drafted into the North Vietnamese Army in 1968 and fighting for nearly seven years. His unit lost over 80% of its men to battle deaths, desertion and sickness. In all those years, he never once fought against the Americans. His war was strictly a Vietnamese affair.

Closing Comments

For those who think that Vietnam was strictly a civil war, the following should be of interest. With the collapse of Communism and the Soviet Union along with the opening up of China, records are

now becoming available on the type and amount of support North Vietnam received from China and the Soviet Block. For example:

China has opened its records on the number of uniformed Chinese troops sent to aid their Communist friends in Hanoi. In all, China sent 327,000 troops to North Vietnam. Historian Chen Jian wrote "Although Beijing's support may have fallen short of Hanoi's expectations, without the support, the history, even the outcome, of the Vietnam War might have been different."

In addition, at the height of the War, the Soviet Union had some 55,000 "Advisors" in North Vietnam. They were installing air defense systems, building, operating and maintaining SAM (Surface to Air Missiles) sites, plus they provided training and logistical support for the North Vietnamese military.

When I asked a well known American reporter why they never reported on this outside Communist support, his answer was essentially that the North Vietnamese would not let the reporters up there and that because "We had no access to the North during the war...meant there were huge gaps in accurately conveying what was happening North of the DMZ."

By comparison, at the peak of the War there were 545,000 US Military personnel in Vietnam. However, most of them were logistical / support types. On the best day ever, there were 43,500 ground troops actually engaged in offensive combat operations, i.e., out in the boondocks, "Tiptoeing through the tulips" looking for, or actually in contact with, the enemy. This ratio of support to line troops is also comparable with other wars, and helps dispel the notion that every troop in Vietnam was engaged in mortal combat on a daily basis.

Final Entry

General Dung's Great Spring Victory was supported by a total of 700 (maneuverable) Soviet tanks, i.e. Soviet armor, burning Soviet gas and firing Soviet ammunition. By comparison, the South Vietnamese had only 352 US supplied tanks and they were committed to guarding the entire country, and because of US Congressional action, were critically short of fuel, ammo and spare parts with which to support those tanks.

Casualties - US vs NVA/VC

Note: NVA casualty data was provided by North Vietnam in a press release to Agence France Presse (AFP) on April 3, 1995, on the 20th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. The entire press release is reproduced [below](#).

US casualty information was derived from the Combat Area Casualty File of 11/93, and The Adjutant General's Center (TAGCEN) file of 1981, available from the National Archives. Additional information was derived from the [sources](#) listed at the end of this document.

Entire War

Force	KIA	WIA	MIA	CIA
US Forces	47,378 ¹	304,704 ²	2,338 ³	766 ⁴
ARVN	223,748	1,169,763	NA	NA
South Korea	4,407	17,060	NA	NA
Australia	469	2,940	NA	NA
Thailand	351	1,358	NA	NA
New Zealand	55	212	NA	NA
NVA/VC	1,100,000	600,000	NA	26,000 ⁵

Note 1: there were an additional 10,824 non-hostile deaths for a total of 58,202

Note 2: of the 304,704 WIA, 153,329 required hospitalization

Note 3: this number decreases as remains are recovered and identified

Note 4: 114 died in captivity

Note 5: Does not include 101,511 *Hoi Chanh*

Legend: KIA = Killed In Action WIA = Wounded In Action MIA = Missing In Action CIA = Captured In Action

1968 Tet Offensive

Force	KIA	WIA	MIA	CIA
US Forces	1,536	7,764	11	unknown
ARVN	2,788	8,299	587	unknown
NVA/VC	45,000	unknown	unknown	6,991

Casualties By Year

1961-1965

Force	KIA	WIA	MIA	CIA
US Forces	1,864	7,337	18	unknown
ARVN	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown
NVA/VC	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown

1966

Force	KIA	WIA	MIA	CIA
US Forces	5,008 1	29,992	61	unknown
ARVN	11,953	71,584	unknown	unknown
NVA/VC	71,473	unknown	unknown	3,247

Note 1: there were an additional 1,045 non-hostile deaths for a total of 6,053

1967

Force	KIA	WIA	MIA	CIA
US Forces	9,378 1	56,013	113	unknown
ARVN	12,716	76,299	529	unknown
NVA/VC	133,484	unknown	unknown	6,065

Note 1: there were an additional 1,680 non-hostile deaths for a total of 11,058

1968

Force	KIA	WIA	MIA	CIA
US Forces	14,594 1	87,388	176	unknown
ARVN	28,800	172,512	587	unknown
NVA/VC	208,254	unknown	unknown	9,462

Note 1: there were an additional 1,919 non-hostile deaths for a total of 16,511

1969

Force	KIA	WIA	MIA	CIA
US Forces	9,414 1	55,390	112	unknown
ARVN	22,000	131,780	683	unknown
NVA/VC	132,051	unknown	unknown	5,905

Note 1: there were an additional 2,113 non-hostile deaths for a total of 11,527

1970

Force	KIA	WIA	MIA	CIA
US Forces	4,221	24,835	101	unknown
ARVN	23,000	137,770	727	unknown
NVA/VC	86,591	unknown	unknown	3,934

Note 1: there were an additional 1,844 non-hostile deaths for a total of 6,065

1971

Force	KIA	WIA	MIA	CIA
US Forces	1,380	18,109	16	unknown
ARVN	19,901	123,545	727	unknown
NVA/VC	19,320	unknown	unknown	2,304

Note 1: there were an additional 968 non-hostile deaths for a total of 2,348

1972

Force	KIA	WIA	MIA	CIA
US Forces	300	3,936	11	unknown
ARVN	25,787	139,731	727	unknown
NVA/VC	4,261	unknown	unknown	1,349

Legend: KIA = Killed In Action WIA = Wounded In Action MIA = Missing In Action CIA = Captured In Action

Note 1: there were an additional 261 non-hostile deaths for a total of 561

Troop Levels

As of 1 January 1968

Force	Total Strength	Support	Combat Arms
US Forces	409,111	346,260	62,850
ARVN	Not Avail	Not Avail	Not Avail
NVA/VC	420,000	unknown	unknown

As of 1 January 1969

Force	Total Strength	Support	Combat Arms
US Forces	440,029	372,429	67,600
ARVN	Not Avail	Not Avail	Not Avail
NVA/VC	332,000	unknown	unknown

The figures for relative strengths assume the following: On January 1, 1969 there were 110 battalions in Vietnam (98 Infantry, 3 tank, and 9 artillery). An Infantry battalion had 656 infantrymen (4 companies per battalion with 164 men per company). An armor battalion had 204 tankers (3 companies per battalion with 68 tankers per company). An artillery battalion had approximately 300 men. Therefore, the number of actual "trigger pullers" added up to 67,600. Note that this was "authorized strength". Most battalions were not even close to their TO&E strength during the war, with many infantry companies operating with 80 men. This was true despite the fact that the parent divisions reported being at, or slightly over, authorized strength. There were a large number of REMFs in Vietnam.

U.S. Army KIA by Unit

Source: National Archives and Records Administration

Unit	Nickname	KIA	Comment
1st Cavalry Division	First Team	5,464	-
25th Infantry Division	Tropic Lighting	4,561	-
101st Airborne Division	Screaming Eagles	4,022	-
1st Infantry Division	Big Red One	3,151	-
Various Individual Units	-	2,872	See Note 1 below
9th Infantry Division	Old Reliables	2,629	-
4th Infantry Division	Ivy Division	2,541	-
173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate)	Sky Soldier	1,758	-
1st Aviation Brigade	-	1,706	-
196th Light Infantry Brigade	-	1,188	-
11th Light Infantry Brigade	-	1,109	-
Military Assistance Command Vietnam	MACV	1,017	Advisors to ARVN
198th Light Infantry Brigade	-	987	-
United States Army Vietnam	USARV	847	Headquarters - includes advisors
5th Special Forces Group (Airborne)	Green Berets	834	-
23rd Infantry Division	Americal	809	non-brigade units
199th Light Infantry Brigade	Redcatchers	757	-
11th Armored Cavalry Regiment	Blackhorse	729	-
1st Logistical Command	-	598	-
5th Infantry Division (Mechanized)	Red Diamond	530	1st Brigade only
I Field Force Vietnam	IFFV	353	-
82d Airborne Division	All American	228	3rd Brigade only
1st Signal Brigade	-	193	-
II Field Force Vietnam	IIFV	80	-
Engineer Command	-	64	-
Unit unknown	-	6	-

Note 1: This group is comprised of the following individual units with no further breakdown

17th Field Hospital (An Khe)
 22nd Surgical Hospital (Phu Bai)
 71st Evacuation Hospital (Pleiku)
 91st Evacuation Hospital (Tuy Hoa)
 95th Field Hospital (Qui Nhon)
 3rd Field Hospital (III Corps)
 7th Surgical Hospital (III Corps)

**45th Surgical Hospital (III Corps)
93rd Evacuation Hospital (III Corps)
80th Engineer Group
121st Assault Helicopter Company
18th Military Police Brigade
89th Military Police Brigade
8th Transportation Group
48th Transportation Group
11th Aviation Group
12th Aviation Group
23rd Artillery Group
108th Artillery Group
35th Engineer Group
45th Engineer Group
34th General Support Group
506th Field Depot**

Additional Casualty Statistics

Source: Combat Area Casualty File of 11/93, National Archives

All US Forces KIA in Vietnam = 58,169

US Army Soldiers KIA in Vietnam = 38,190

US Army Infantrymen (MOS 11B, 11C, etc.) KIA in Vietnam = 20,460

US Army Helicopter Crewmen KIA in Vietnam = 3,007

US Army Scouts KIA in Vietnam = 1,127

US Army Tankers KIA in Vietnam = 725 (equals 27% of all tankers *ever assigned* to Vietnam)

US Marines Killed In Action in Vietnam = 14,836

More US Army Infantrymen died than Marines of all MOSes

The highest loss-rate for any MOS was 11E (Armor Crewman) 27% KIA

U.S. Army KIA by Province

Source: Combat Area Casualty File of 11/93, National Archives

Code	Province	KIA	Comment
99	Province unknown	6,276	Military Region unknown
02	Thua Thien	2,893	I Corps - Hue, etc.
23	Binh Duong	2,742	III Corps
22	Tay Ninh	2,648	III Corps
05	Quang Ngai	2,342	I Corps - Border w/II Corps
07	Binh Dinh	2,211	II Corps - Bong Son, An Loa Valley, etc.
04	Quang Tin	2,068	I Corps - Tam Ky, etc.
01	Quang Tri	1,683	I Corps - south of DMZ
06	Kontum	1,641	II Corps - Dak To, Ben Het, etc.
42	Hua Nghia	1,424	III Corps - Khiem Cuong, etc.
25	Bien Hoa	1,147	III Corps
24	Gia Dinh	1,064	Capital Special Zone - Saigon
08	Pleiku	1,015	II Corps - Hwy 14, Ia Drang, etc.
27	Long An	1,002	III Corps
03	Quang Nam	971	I Corps - Da Nang, etc.
21	Binh Long	909	III Corps
30	Dinh Tuong	794	IV Corps - My Tho, etc.
14	Phuoc Long	679	III Corps - Phuoc Binh, etc.
19	Long Khanh	558	III Corps - Xuan Loc, etc.
**	Unknown Code	467	NARA error
33	Kien Hoa	416	IV Corps - Truc Giang, etc.
17	Binh Thuan	300	II Corps - Phan Thiet, etc.
09	Phu Yen	282	II Corps - Tuy Hoa, etc.
11	Khanh Hoa	275	II Corps - Nha Trang, etc.
26	Phuoc Tuy	204	III Corps - Vung Tau, Phuoc Le, etc.
18	Binh Thuy	176	III Corps - Ham Tan, etc.
13	Quang Duc	171	II Corps - Gia Nghia, etc.
10	Darlac	163	II Corps - Ban Me Thout, etc.
35	Phong Dinh	146	IV Corps - Can Tho, etc.
15	Lam Dong	143	II Corps - Bao Loc, etc.
32	Vinh Long	142	IV Corps
28	Kien Tuong	140	IV Corps - Moc Hoa, etc.
16	Ninh Thuan	97	II Corps - Phan Rang, etc.
36	Kien Giang	77	IV Corps - Rach Gia, etc.
12	Tuyen Duc	76	II Corps - Da Lat, etc.

29	Kien Phong	65	IV Corps - Cao Lanh, etc.
47	Unknown code	60	Possibly Saigon Area
38	Ba Xuyen	56	IV Corps - Khanh Hung, etc.
34	Vinh Binh	49	IV Corps - Phu Vinh, etc.
43	Go Cong	40	IV Corps - Go Cong, etc.
93	Province unknown	34	Military region 3 - III Corps
39	An Xuyen	33	IV Corps - Quon Long, etc.
37	Chuong Thien	30	IV Corps - Vi Thanh, etc.
92	Province unknown	25	Military region 2 - II Corps
46	Sa Dec	25	IV Corps - Sa Dec, etc.
41	Phu Bon	24	II Corps - Hau Bon, Song Ba River, etc.
99	Province unknown	22	Military region 1 - I Corps
31	An Giang	17	IV Corps - Long Xuyen, etc.
81	Offshore	19	Military Region 1 - I Corps
89	Offshore unknown	19	Province & Military Region unknown
44	Bac Lieu	14	IV Corps - Bac Lieu, etc.
82	Offshore	11	Military Region 2 - II Corps
NZ	Unknown Code	10	NARA error
94	Province unknown	9	Military region 4 - IV Corps
83	Offshore	2	Military Region 3 -III Corps
84	Offshore	2	Military Region 4 - IV Corps
20	No code provided	1	NARA error, possibly Cam Ranh Bay
40	Con Son Island	1	IV Corps
45	Chua Doc	1	IV Corps - Chau Phu, etc.
48	Unknown code	1	NARA error
49	Phu Quoc Island	1	IV Corps
50	DMZ	0	Demilitarized Zone

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The Agence France Presse (French Press Agency) news release of 4 April 1995 concerning the Vietnamese Government's release of official figures of dead and wounded during the Vietnam War.

HANOI (AP) - April 4. Cinq millions de morts: 20 ans apres la fin de la guerre du Vietnam, le gouvernement de Hanoi a revele le bilan d'un conflit dont le nombre de victimes avait ete minore a l'epoque pour ne pas affecter le moral de la population.

Selon Hanoi, il y a eu pres de deux millions de morts dans la population civile du Nord et deux autres millions dans celle du Sud. Quant aux combats proprement dits, les chiffres sent d'un million cent mille militaires tuees et de 600.000 blessees en 21 ans de guerre.

Ce dernier bilan comprend a la fois les victimes de la guerilla vietcong et les soldats nord-vietamiens qui les tuaient. Les estimations de source occidentale faisaient tat d'un bilan de 666.000 morts parmi les combattants Vietnamiens.

Loose Translation

The Hanoi government revealed on April 3 that the true civilian casualties of the Vietnam War were 2,000,000 in the north, and 2,000,000 in the south. Military casualties were 1.1 million killed and 600,000 wounded in 21 years of war. These figures were deliberately falsified during the war by the North Vietnamese Communists to avoid demoralizing the population.

Given a Vietnamese population of approximately 38 million during the period 1954-1975, Vietnamese casualties represent a good 12-13% of the entire population. To put this in perspective, consider that the population of the US was 220 million during the Vietnam War. Had The US sustained casualties of 13% of its population, there would have been 28 million US dead.

Anyone who thinks the US lost the Vietnam war should reconsider their definition of "lost". The North Vietnamese Communists were willing to pay any price in terms of the blood of their people to dominate the Republic of Vietnam. General Giap was not a genius: he sent his own men out to be slaughtered. The Hanoi government hid this information from their people not to avoid demoralizing them, but to avoid a rebellion among their own population. The North Vietnamese Army went to extraordinary lengths to remove their dead from the field of battle because they did not want the US to discover their true battlefield losses. Contrast this with the fact that the US government published weekly lists of killed and wounded and disseminated this accurate data to the news media.
