Confusion reigns when it comes to numbers and the Vietnam War. Listed below are some figures that may help sort out 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 – May 7, 1975).
- 8,744,000 personnel were on active duty during the war (Aug. 5, 1964 – March 28, 1973).
- 3,403,100 (including 514,300 off-shore) personnel served in the Southeast Asia Theater (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, flight crews based in Thailand, and sailors in adjacent South China Sea waters).
- 2,584,000 personnel served within the borders of South Vietnam (Jan. 1, 1965 – March 28, 1973).
- 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 (6,250 or 83.5% were nurses) served in Vietnam.

**Casualties**
- Hostile deaths: 47,359
- Non-hostile deaths: 10,797
- Total: 58,156 (included men formerly classified as MIA and Mayaguez casualties). 27 other men have died of wounds, bringing the total to 58,183.
- 8 nurses died — 1 was KIA.
- Married men killed: 17,539
- 61% of the men killed were 21 years old or younger.
- Highest state death rate: West Virginia — 84.1 (national average 58.9 for every 100,000 males in 1970).
- Severely disabled: 75,000
- Vietnam Vets: 9.7% of their generation. 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
- Prisoners of War: 766 (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 killed: 5,977
- National Guard: 6,140 served; 101 died.

**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.
- 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.

**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.)

**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 general public agrees that it was a failure of political will, not of arms.

**Age & Honorable Service**
- Average age of the Vietnam War GI: 19 (26 for WWII).
- 97% of Vietnam-era veterans were honorably discharged.

**Pride in Service**
- 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.
THE VIETNAM WAR
1954-1973

- U.S. Base Area
- Area of Confrontation
- Major Engagement
- U.S. Bombing Target Area
- U.S. Air Strikes
- Corps Tactical Zone Boundary
- North Vietnamese Base
- Viet Cong Base Area
- Enemy Supply Route
- Enemy External Supply Route
- Route of Infiltration

Map courtesy of the West Point Museum Collections, United States Military Academy