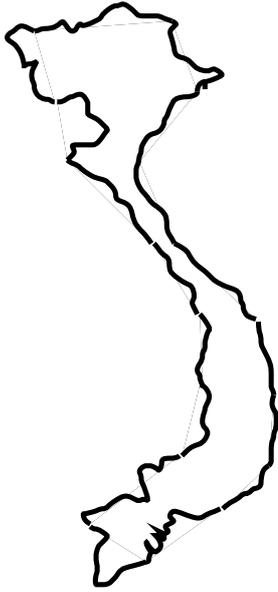


Viet Nam



The American War

By the end of the [First Indochinese, 1946-54] war seventy-eight per cent of the French effort was being funded by the United States.

The Maddox was scarcely a pleasure-cruiser that had drifted into the Gulf of Tonkin by some accident of misnavigation; rather it was actively engaged in seaborne espionage, even though at this time this could be hardly admitted. (...)

Shortly before midnight, Johnson appeared on television to tell the American people about an "unprovoked attack" on his warships, and to inform them that bombers had already been ordered to retaliate.

From 1965 to 1973, over 3 million military personnel passed through South Viet Nam. The vast majority returned home alive. However, 57690, according to official statistics, did not.

153'329 soldiers received wounds that required hospitalization, while over half a

The American soldier was never more than a visitor, fighting somebody else's war.

million are estimated to have suffered from "post-traumatic stress syndrome".

By 1988 suicides among "Vietnam veterans" had actually exceeded war fatalities.

Between two and three million Vietnamese lost their lives as a direct result of hostilities between 1960 and 1975.

The average age of the US infantryman was just nineteen.

By 1971 up to a third of American troops were using drugs, including heroin. Meanwhile a new word had been introduced into the military lexicon: "fragging", the deliberate elimination of unpopular officers, usually by means of a fragmentation grenade. Between 1969 and 1973 there were 730 reported incidents, with eighty-three officers actually murdered by men under their command.

Because of the sheer, sodden might of their air-power, the Americans in Viet Nam never lost a major battle.

General Curtis Le May, commander of the United States Air Force, (...) recommending that North Vietnam be "bombed back into the Stone Age". (...)

Operation Rolling Thunder [bombing of North Viet Nam 1964 to 1968] (...) Some 350'000 sorties were flown, disgorging 655'000 tons of bombs, for the loss of 918 aircraft. Civilian casualties averaged a thousand per week.

At the end of 1965 the first draft card had been burnt in protest. By the end of 1967 half a million servicemen found themselves in South Viet Nam.

In the financial year 1967-8 the war cost the American treasury \$21 billion, or three per cent of the gross national product.

Everything is quoted from Justin Wintle, *The Viet Nam Wars*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson (Academic), London, 1991.