



SONS AND DAUGHTERS IN TOUCH

America's Gold Star Children from the Vietnam War

IMPACT REPORT



ABOUT SDIT



OUR MISSION

The Mission of Sons and Daughters In Touch (SDIT) is to locate, unite and support the Gold Star 'sons and daughters' of American servicemen Killed or Missing in the Vietnam War.

OUR HISTORY

SDIT was formed in 1989 to fill a void and help answer life-long questions held by the children of American servicemen who were lost in the Vietnam War.

Since inception, SDIT has been instrumental in providing outreach, education and support to our members through opportunities including national Father's Day gatherings at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, bereavement workshops, leading the largest-ever Gold Star Family pilgrimage to Vietnam and forging partnerships with Gold Star Families from before and after the Vietnam War.

OUR FATHERS

Our fathers hailed from all 50 states and US territories. They served at every rank in each branch of the US military, fought in every battle and received every possible commendation during the war. They are now remembered on every panel of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.



Washing of the Wall, Fathers Day 2015

(Photo credit: Gary Lee)

A NOTE FROM LEADERSHIP



For nearly 35 years, SDIT has blazed an unprecedented trail as it unites the now-grown children of American servicemen who didn't return home from the Vietnam War. It's fascinating to reminisce about how a few simple questions led to the formal establishment of SDIT, what we've accomplished since 1989, and what the future holds!

Across the nation, SDIT members are active in their communities serving thousands of military, veteran and survivor families through engagement with veteran, civic and business organizations. In addition, they form local networks, advance research, foster peer-to-peer mental health support, share personal histories and construct memorial monuments that deepen the public's understanding about the legacy and impact of our unique life experiences.

To all who have benefitted from the work of SDIT, we thank you for joining us! To all who have supported SDIT, we thank you for sustaining us! To all who see a future for SDIT, we invite you to join us as we collaborate with other non-profits, the United States military, and elected officials to ensure that all Gold Star Families, POW/MIA Families and Military Survivor Families are supported in their need and recognized for their family's place in history.



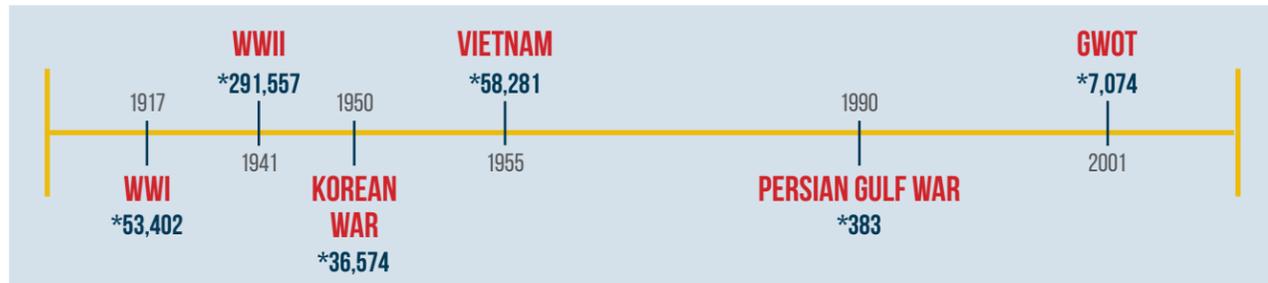
Tony Cordero
Board Chairman and Co-Founder

THE SDIT IMPACT



THE LONG GOLD LINE

90% of America's Gold Star Families lost loved ones in wars and conflicts occurring before 2001. Today, 'The Long Gold Line' includes a few surviving Gold Star Children from WWI and Gold Star Families of those lost in WWII, the Korean War, Vietnam War, Persian Gulf War and the Global War on Terror. SDIT recently supported the development of a Census Survey for WWII and Korean War Gold Star Families.



*'Battle Deaths' and 'Other Deaths (In Theatre)'; America's War Fact Sheet, Department of Veterans Affairs, 7/21



SDIT continues an historic 30-year partnership with Vietnam Veterans of America to promote mutual exchange and healing between the warrior and the children of his fallen comrade.

The 11th Annual Hometown Heroes celebration at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library in California saluted 65 Gold Star Families whose loved ones were lost from WWII to the final days in Afghanistan.



National Memorial Day Concert at the Capitol



WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER



SDIT ADVOCACY

All SDIT Members benefit from our public awareness and advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill and with the Executive Branch of Government. In 2021, SDIT supported several legislative efforts providing benefits and job opportunities for its members. **We were proud to be among the leading voices to establish Gold Star Children's Day on August 1, 2021.** We also advocated for bills that would provide Gold Star Family members a hiring preference in federal job applications; enable Gold Star Family members to utilize space-available seating on military flights, and to have the US Postal Service re-issue the Gold Star Families postage stamp.

SDIT promoted the new Congressional Gold Star Families Fellowship Program by sharing application information and insights to more than 100 members. Four SDIT members are actively serving as Fellows in California, Pennsylvania and Washington.



Major General Pete Aylward, USA (Ret.) with Vietnam Veteran

As an Honorary Commemorative Partner, SDIT is helping the Vietnam War Commemoration mark the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War by coordinating the presentation of honors to Vietnam veterans and Gold Star Families from the Vietnam War.



SDIT supported the National League of POW/MIA Families' efforts to return the POW/MIA Flag atop the White House and to share personal stories promoting the fullest possible accounting for our nation's 1,584 unreturned Vietnam Veterans.



SDIT helped establish and dedicate Gold Star Family Memorial Monuments now in every state - with several SDIT members serving as the Gold Star Family representative on the local advisory boards developing the Memorials.



SDIT commemorated National Vietnam War Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Father's Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day and Veterans Day with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, contributed stories for 'What the Wall Means to Me' campaign and supported the Reading of the Names to launch the 40th Anniversary of the Memorial on Veterans Day 2022.

PARTNERSHIPS

Over a decade ago, SDIT initiated the coalition of America's leading Gold Star and Survivor organizations to collaborate on programs and share best practices. We salute our partners!

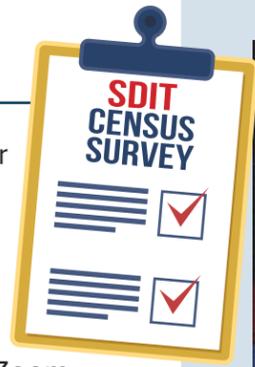
- 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration
- American WWII Orphans Network
- Gary Sinise Foundation
- American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.
- Gold Star Wives of America
- Jan & Becky Scruggs
- Library of Congress - Veterans History Project
- National League of POW/MIA Families

- Society of the Honor Guard – Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
- Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)
- Travis Manion Foundation
- Vietnam Veterans of America
- Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund
- Wear Blue to Remember
- Woody Williams Foundation

HIGHLIGHTS



- **Nearly 275 SDIT members** participated in our Groundbreaking 60-Question Census Survey revealing unprecedented details about the lives of these Gold Star Family members, and the loss of their fathers in the Vietnam War.



- **5,000 connections made** through Quarterly Zoom Meetings, eUpdates and a new YouTube Channel.

- **Over 1,000 Gold Star and POW/MIA Families** receive ongoing support through a Private Facebook community.

- Connected **more than 500 Gold Star Children** to benefits and honors including their Gold Star Lapel Buttons and Certificate from the Vietnam War 50th Commemoration Commission.

- Over the 2021 Holidays, **25 SDIT families** were proud to have their loved one honored on the White House Gold Star Tree.



The loss of a parent to war can have lasting effects and the bereavement process can be lifelong. SDIT set the standard for peer based support and community building as key contributors to resilience in Gold Star Children.

(Photo credit: Gary Lee)

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



In 2021, President Biden and First Lady Dr. Jill Biden traced a name rubbing of Army CPL Dennis F. Shine, Jr's name on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, honoring his service and the family he left behind. Remembered as meticulous and an outstanding baseball and basketball player who excelled in accounting, CPL Shine is still dearly missed by his wife, children and siblings. At an SDIT Father's Day Ceremony at the Wall, his son Dennis reflected on his parents' sacrifices.



“Through my parents letters, I learned about the great love affair they had. I have tremendous admiration for him, and for my mother who worked so hard and dedicated her life to my sister and me.”



CPL Dennis F. Shine Jr.



Dennis Shine and his mom Gerry Shine

SUPPORT OUR MISSION



Approximately 20,000 American Children lost fathers who were actively defending our nation in the US military during the Vietnam War. SDIT has reached nearly 5,000 and positively impacts the lives of thousands more Gold Star Families, POW/MIA Families and Veterans annually, with a tremendous ripple effect.

While our nation commemorates the 50th Anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War, **we ask for your support to help locate more 'Sons and Daughters' and provide the long over-due care and support to those whose fathers answered our nation's call during the Vietnam War.** Help us help those whose families sacrificed for freedom.

For more information or to donate please visit www.sdit.org/support-sdit/ or scan the QR code on the right



SDIT led 50 'sons and daughters' and 20 combat veterans and nurses on the largest-ever Gold Star pilgrimage to Vietnam in 2003.

(Photo credit: Gary Lee)



90% of America's Gold Star Families are from wars and conflicts prior to 9/11.

7 NATIONAL FATHER'S DAY CELEBRATIONS



were held at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial - 1992, 1993, 1997, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015 and a virtual ceremony in 2020.

1,584 SERVICEMEN



have yet to be accounted for from the Vietnam War.

More than

20,000

American children lost their fathers during the Vietnam War.

Since 9/11, **7,074** SERVICEMEMBERS

have been lost on the battlefields and in theaters of the Global War on Terror, creating a new generation of Gold Star Families.

LEADERSHIP



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lauren Berkson | Florida
daughter of **Joseph M. Berkson**, US Army
Killed in Action - May 2, 1972

Mike Burkett | Texas
son of **Curtis E. Burkett**, US Army
Killed in Action - February 19, 1971

Tony Cordero | California
son of **William E. Cordero**, US Air Force
Killed in Action - June 22, 1965

Dan Jordan | Arizona
son of **Daniel W. Jordan**, US Army
Killed in Action - July 10, 1967

Elaine Roach | California
daughter of **Harold Roach**, US Navy
Killed in Action - Body Not Recovered - October 2, 1964

Jim Sampers | Alberta
son of **James W. Sampers**, US Navy
Killed in Action - September 7, 1969

Dennis Shine | Washington, D.C.
son of **Dennis F. Shine**, US Army
Killed in Action - August 19, 1969

Stacy Swenck | California
daughter of **Robert B. Swenck**, US Air Force
Killed in Action - November 25, 1971

ADVISORS

Denise Reed | Washington, DC
daughter of **Harold B. Reed**, US Army
Killed in Action - July 3, 1966

Colleen Shine | Virginia
daughter of **Anthony C. Shine**, US Air Force
Killed in Action - December 2, 1972
Missing in Action 1972-1996



CONNECT WITH US



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