



SDIT FACT SHEET

What is SDIT? : *Sons and Daughters In Touch* consists of nearly 3,000 children of American servicemen lost in the Vietnam War. Today, these Gold Star sons and daughters reside in every US state and overseas. They now range in age from their mid-40s to their mid-60s. Some are college educated and some did not graduate from high school. They are married and unmarried, parents and grandparents. Some have successful careers and some are struggling to get by. Today, they are politicians, members of the religious clergy, and were pro athletes.

The Beginning: *Sons and Daughters In Touch* (SDIT) was established in 1990, eight years after the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. At the time, prior to the Persian Gulf War and 9/11, no organizations existed to support and mobilize the Gold Star children whose fathers are listed on The Wall. Media exposure from *Parade Magazine*, *Sunday Today with Maria Shriver*, and *CBS Sunday Morning* helped promote the identity and formation of this group of young adults. In 1993, SDIT was formally recognized as a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization.

Who were our fathers? : Our fathers are among the 58,292 American servicemen lost in the Vietnam War. They represented every ethnic and social class in America. They were Privates, Airmen, Seamen and Generals. They were drafted by and enlisted into every branch of the US military. They served from the beginning to end of the Vietnam War, fighting in every battle along the way. On land, in the air and at sea, our dads were lost at the very beginning and end of their combat tours...and some are still missing in SE Asia. Our dads received the Purple Heart, Vietnam Service Medal, the Silver Star and Bronze Star, the Navy Cross and Distinguished Flying Cross, and some received the Medal of Honor. Today, our fathers are remembered on every panel of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Our Mission: SDIT exists to locate, unite and support Gold Star sons and daughters whose fathers were lost during the Vietnam War. This mission is being accomplished by utilizing social media and other communications channels to identify additional members, provide information about benefits, scholarships and relevant legislation, and maintain a one-of-a-kind database about our new and existing members. SDIT regularly partners with America's Veterans Service Organizations to build connections with those who fought alongside our fathers, and promotes healing by working with America's latest generation of Gold Star families to share understandings of what lays ahead in this unique life experience. It is estimated that there are several thousand more SDIT members to be located.

Our Vision: While it would be ideal that no child ever lose his or her father or mother in military combat, such a dream is not likely. SDIT sees a future where the lessons of previous wars are used to provide better care for America's Gold Star families, not only at the time of their tragic loss – but throughout their lifetimes.

Funding: SDIT relies on contributions from supporters to fund its operations as it receives no financial support from the US government. The tax ID number for SDIT is: 54-1655310.



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History of Father's Day: In 1992, SDIT held its first national Father's Day reunion at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. That weekend of events provided hundreds of Gold Star sons and daughters with a first-ever opportunity to meet other sons and daughters and to trace their fathers' names on The Wall. SDIT also hosted national Father's Day celebrations in 1993, 1997, 2000, 2005 and 2010, helping make Father's Day one of the most popular and photographed days at the The Wall. The 2015 Father's Day celebration marks the 25th Anniversary of SDIT.

Vietnam 2003: In March 2003, SDIT made an historic trip to Vietnam to see, touch, and experience the country where their fathers made the supreme sacrifice. For 2½ weeks, more than 50 Gold Star sons and daughters - led by 20 Vietnam combat veterans and nurses - traveled from the Mekong Delta to Hanoi, pausing to visit the actual locations where their fathers were lost. Never before – or since – has such a large delegation of Gold Star family members visited Vietnam.



The following links provide additional information about SDIT, its members and the history of the organization.

On the web: sdit.org

YouTube videos:

- **From Father's Day 2010, *Stars & Stripes* news spoke to SDIT members about their experiences during that Father's Day weekend:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfv8jYv7FQU>
- **Underscoring the unique link between America's latest generation of Gold Star children and those from the Vietnam War, *Gold Star Children* is a documentary created by a member of SDIT:**
<https://vimeo.com/73941340>
- **On Memorial Day 2010, *Fox News* reported on the Father's Day celebration that SDIT would hold in June of that year:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fx0jm8iSVGc>