



SDIT FACT SHEET

What is SDIT?: *Sons and Daughters In Touch* is an all-volunteer organization that has touched nearly 5000 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 late 40s to 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. Over the years, they have been attorneys, doctors, military leaders, politicians, members of the clergy, and a few were even professional athletes.

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. SDIT regularly partners with America's Veterans Service Organizations to build connections with those who fought alongside our fathers. SDIT members share their life experiences with America's latest generation of Gold Star families to help them understanding what lays ahead. There are many 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.

The Beginning: *Sons and Daughters In Touch* (SDIT) was formed in 1989, seven 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 *Sunday Today with Maria Shriver*, *Parade Magazine* 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 58,279 American service members lost in the Vietnam War. They represented every ethnic and social class in America. They were Privates, Corporals, Airmen, Petty Officers and Generals. Some enlisted in the military and others were drafted. They served in the early years and at the 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 of their tours and just days before coming home. Some have yet to be accounted for in SE Asia. Many of our dads received the Purple Heart along with the Vietnam Service Medal, the Silver and Bronze Stars, the Legion of Merit and Distinguished Flying Cross, and some received the Medal of Honor. Today, our fathers are remembered on every panel of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

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, 2010, 2015 and 2020 helping make Father's Day one of the most popular and photographed days at 'The Wall.' On Father's Day 2005, a group of Vietnam veterans presented several hundred SDIT members with their long-overdue Gold Star pins. On its 30th anniversary, SDIT adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic by hosting a virtual Father's Day ceremony in 2020.





SONS AND DAUGHTERS IN TOUCH

American's Gold Star Children from the Vietnam War
sdit.org

SDIT FACT SHEET (CONT.)

Vietnam 2003: In March 2003, SDIT made an historic pilgrimage to Vietnam to see and experience the country where their fathers made the supreme sacrifice. For 2½ weeks, 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 – nor since – has such a large delegation of Gold Star families visited Vietnam.

Partners: SDIT partners with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, the National League of POW/MIA Families, Vietnam Veterans of America and other leading Veterans Service Organizations; the Vietnam War Commemoration, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), American WWII Orphans Network (AWON), the Hershel 'Woody' Williams MOH Foundation, the Gary Sinise Foundation and other organizations committed to serving Gold Star Families and families of those who have survived the loss of a loved one in military service.

Join: Believing those who lost their fathers in the Vietnam War have already paid a steep price, SDIT does not charge for membership. To join, Gold Star 'Sons and Daughters' can use the 'membership' link at SDIT.org or answer a series of questions on the closed-group Facebook page: "@SDIT: Sons and Daughters In Touch'

Funding: SDIT relies on contributions from its members, Gold Star families, supportive veterans and the public to fund its operations. SDIT is an all-volunteer organization and it receives no government funding. The Tax ID number for SDIT is: 54-1655310.

Other relevant facts about America's Gold Star Families:

- There are 58,279 individuals remembered on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial; 8 are women;
- It is estimated well over 20,000 American children lost their fathers in the Vietnam War;
- 1586 servicemen have yet to be accounted-for from the Vietnam War in SE Asia;
- In the 20th Century, 440,136 American service members were lost on the battlefields and in the theaters of WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf Wars (source: VA American War Facts 2017);
- Since 9/11, more than 7000 service members have been lost on the battlefields and in theatres of the Global War on Terror creating a new generation of Gold Star Families;
- More than 80,000 Americans remain missing since WWII, half of those losses occurred at sea;
- About 300 Gold Star "Children" from World War I are now alive in America – each over the age of 100;

SDIT uses the following social media platforms to inform its stakeholders about related news and events:

Website: sdit.org

Twitter: @GoldStarSDIT

Facebook: @SonsAndDaughtersInTouch

Instagram: @SonsAndDaughtersInTouch

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