

The Recent Unveiling Of A War Memorial In Coventry Is Only Part

State's Involvement In Vietnam

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With the recent unveiling of Connecticut's Vietnam memorial in Coventry, the state now has its own black granite wall of honor.

The memorial on the town green lists the names of 612 men. As the nation focuses on the sacrifice of veterans everywhere, here are some additional numbers profiling the state men who never made it home from Southeast Asia.

■ Connecticut lost more men in Vietnam than any other New Eng-

land state except Massachusetts (1,329); more than 17 other states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the American territories; and nearly as many as Colorado (622); Kansas (626); and Mississippi (637).

■ Many of the dead were from the state's larger cities (39 from Hartford), but some smaller communities also suffered, including Ansonia, which lost eight men. Numbers from other towns and cities include: Bristol, 15; New Britain, 24; West Hartford, 6; Manchester, 10; Middletown, 2; Plymouth, 5.

■ 406 of the total were killed

during hostile action, while 51 later died of wounds suffered in combat and 50 were declared dead from hostile action after being reported missing. Causes of death included small arms fire (199); artillery, rockets and mortars (46); multiple fragmentation wounds (73); "other explosive device" (93); aircraft crash on land (90); aircraft crash on the sea (11); burns (5); illness and disease (6).

■ Approximately 500 of the men were enlisted, and 80 percent of those were from the lower rungs — E-1 (or private in the Army and Marines), to E-4 (specialist or corporal in the

Army and Marines). Among the Connecticut officers, a total of 47 were grades O1 and O2, (2nd and 1st lieutenant in the Army and Marines); 22 were O3 (Army or Marine captain); 15 were O4 (Army and Marine major); eight were evenly split among O5s (Army and Marine lieutenant colonel) and O6s (Army and Marine colonel); and one was an O7 — Army Brig. Gen. Alfred Judson Force Moody — the highest ranked Connecticut casualty.

Moody, a Hamden native and fa-

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ther of four daughters, died of a heart attack in 1967 while serving as assistant commander of the 1st Cavalry Division. He was 49. Moody had graduated first in the West Point Class of 1941 and was a decorated veteran of World War II and Korea. Before going to Vietnam, he had been a military assistant to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

■ The Connecticut service members' religious identification included 346 Roman Catholic; 6 Jewish; and 150 Protestant, with no denominational preference listed. Protestants who listed a denomination

included 10 Congregationalists; 20 Baptists; 11 Lutherans; 15 Methodists; 20 Episcopalians; and 4 Presbyterians.

■ Divided by military branch, 348 of the men were in the Army; 200 Marines; 38 from the Air Force; and 26 from the Navy.

■ Approximately two-thirds of the combined Army and Marine members were killed in 1967-69 (239 Army and 157 Marines).

■ Of the 612 dead, 565 were identified as Caucasian, 42 as Negro and 1 as American Indian. No race was reported for four service members.

■ At least four Connecticut men earned the Medal of Honor in Vietnam (others who were born and raised in the state entered service in other states). Among the state men who won the nation's highest military honor was PFC Daniel John Shea, who was born in Norwalk in

1947 and entered service in New Haven. Serving as a medic in the Army's Americal Division, Shea made four trips under intense enemy fire to patch wounded soldiers and carry them to safety after an enemy ambush in May 1969, according to the official citation. Rushing to the aid of a fifth wounded man, Shea was "grievously wounded," but continued tending to his fellow soldiers until suffering mortal wounds in another burst of enemy fire.

Sources: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund website — www.vvmf.org; the website of No Quarter, a private organization that provides a searchable database of government military records — www.no-quarter.org; a compilation of biographies titled "612," by students at Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School in Coventry; and U.S. government records at www.archives.gov.