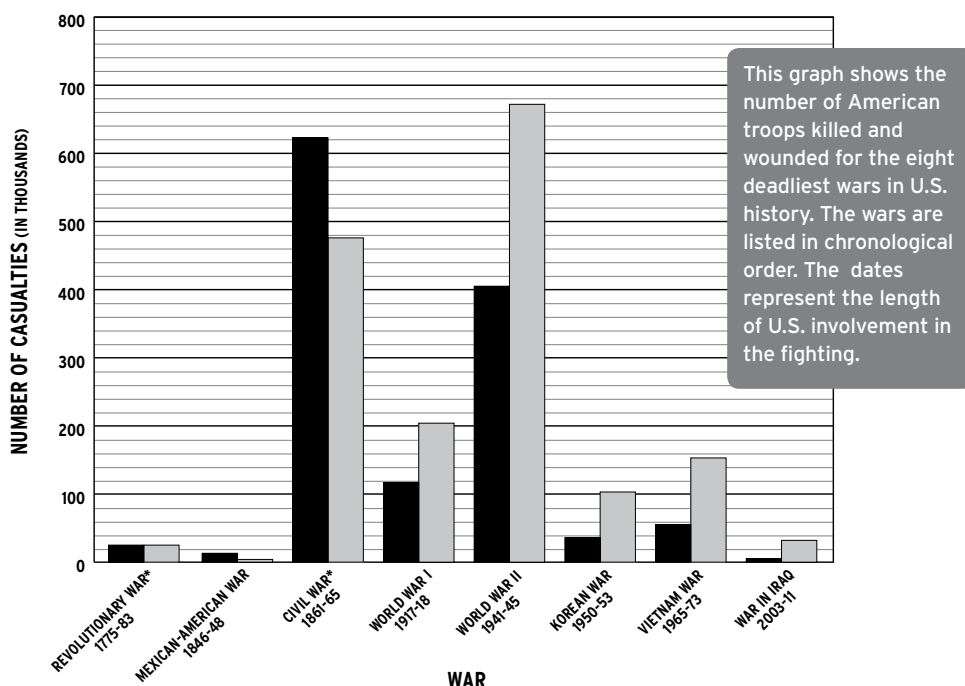


The Vietnam War was one of the longest, costliest, and most controversial wars in U.S. history. And with 58,000 American deaths, it was deadlier than the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan combined. This graph shows how the number of American casualties in Vietnam compares with the casualty totals of some other U.S. wars. The tally of the dead includes not only those killed by the enemy in battle but also victims of accidents and disease.

Casualties of War p. 18



KEY
DEAD
WOUNDED

*Because of incomplete records, Revolutionary War and Civil War figures are estimates.

ANALYZE THE GRAPH

- In which wars has the number of American dead equaled or exceeded the number of wounded?
 - in all 20th century wars
 - in most wars on foreign soil
 - in America's earliest wars
 - in the majority of wars listed on the graph
- For how many wars did the total number of American dead and wounded exceed 1 million?
 - one
 - two
 - four
 - five
- About how many more U.S. troops were wounded in Vietnam than in the war in Iraq?
 - 170,000
 - 120,000
 - 80,000
 - 40,000
- In Vietnam, about 30 percent of the U.S. troops who died were draftees. The number of draftees who died in that war is about equal to the total number of troops who died in _____.
 - the Mexican-American War
 - the Korean War
 - the War in Iraq
 - World War I
- The graph lists the eight deadliest U.S. wars. You can infer from it that _____.
 - more Americans served in Korea than in Vietnam
 - no troops died in the War of 1812
 - more Americans died in the war in Iraq than have died in the war in Afghanistan
 - none of the above

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The U.S. fought in Vietnam for about eight years and in World War II for only four. Why do you think casualties in World War II were significantly higher than those in Vietnam? How did these two wars differ?
- How might you explain the shift in the ratio of dead to wounded in America's wars as the nation entered the 20th century?
- The totals given for some of the earliest wars on the graph are historians' best estimates. Why might records of the dead and wounded in the Revolutionary War and Civil War be incomplete? What were conditions like during these conflicts?
- Limb amputations and crippling leg wounds were three times as common among American soldiers in Vietnam compared with those fighting in Afghanistan today. Why do you think this is the case? What challenges do you think these vets have faced upon returning home?