



SDIT FACT SHEET

What is SDIT? *Sons and Daughters In Touch* is an all-volunteer organization that has touched nearly 5,000 children of American servicemen who were killed – or who remain missing – as a result of 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. They come from a diversity of social, ethnic and economic backgrounds. In their careers, they are 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, or have yet to be accounted-for as a result of service in Southeast Asia. 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 advocates for federal legislation that benefits its members and the community of Gold Star Families. In 2021, SDIT was proud to see the US Senate designate August 1 '**National Gold Star Children's Day**' and the last week in September '**Gold Star Families Remembrance Week.**'

Our Vision: While it would be ideal that no child ever lose his or her father or mother in military service, such an aspiration is not realistic. SDIT sees a future where lessons of previous wars guide the care of America's Gold Star families, at the time of their tragic losses and throughout their lives.

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, no organization existed to support and mobilize America's Gold Star children. National exposure from *NBC Sunday Today*, *Parade Magazine* and *CBS Sunday Morning* told the story of this unprecedented effort. In 1993, SDIT was formally recognized as a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization.

Who were our fathers? Our fathers are among the 58,281 American service members lost or still Missing in Action as a result of the Vietnam War. During their service, our dads represented every ethnic and social class in America. They were Privates, Corporals, Lt. Commanders, Petty Officers, Captains and Generals. Some enlisted, some were drafted and others attended the Service Academies. They served in the early days 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. Some received the Distinguished Flying Cross or the Legion of Merit and some were awarded the Medal of Honor. They are remembered on every panel of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

2021 Congressional Gold Star Family Fellowship: This year, SDIT is proud to have four members hired into the initial cohort of Congressional Gold Star Family Fellows working on staff for members of the US House of Representatives.





History of Father's Day: On Father's Day 1992, SDIT held its first national celebration at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. That weekend's events provided hundreds of Gold Star sons and daughters with their first-ever opportunity to meet others who endured a similar loss, and to trace their father's name on The Wall. SDIT has hosted eight national Father's Day celebrations helping make Father's Day one of the most colorful and popular days to visit The Wall. On Father's Day 2005, a group of Vietnam veterans presented hundreds of SDIT members with their Gold Star lapel pins, that were long overdue. In June 2020, SDIT commemorated its 30th anniversary with a virtual Father's Day ceremony.



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: To fulfill its mission and vision, SDIT often partners with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, the National League of POW/MIA Families, Vietnam Veterans of America, the Vietnam War Commemoration, Gold Star Mothers, Gold Star Wives, 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 the surviving families of those who died in military service.

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

Support: Via online and mailed donations, SDIT accepts contributions from its members, supportive veterans and the public to fund operations. As an all-volunteer non-profit organization, SDIT receives no government funding. The SDIT Federal Tax ID number is: 54-1655310.

Other relevant facts about America's Gold Star Families (as of Summer 2021):

- There are 58,281 individuals remembered on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial; 8 of those names represent women killed during the war.
- More than 20,000 children lost their fathers in the Vietnam War.
- 1584 servicemen have yet to be accounted-for from the Vietnam War in SE Asia; More than 80,000 remain missing since WWII.
- In the 20th Century – more than 440,000 American service members were lost on the battlefields and in theaters of WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf Wars. (source: VA American War Facts 2020)
- 90% of Gold Star Families are from wars and conflicts prior to 9/11.
- A few hundred surviving Gold Star "Children" from World War I are now well over 100 years of age.
- Since 9/11, 7057 service members were lost in theatre during the Global War on Terror forging a new generation of Gold Star Families.

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



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