

History 225

Re: Handout: A Destructive War

The combined death of the Union and CSA in four years of war was about 620,000. The military deaths of the Civil War exceeded the American deaths of WW II in all theatres by more than 50%.

Excluding the Vietnam War, more Americans died in the Civil War than all of the American wars combined.

Northern dead is figured at 360,000. The South lost 258,000. Of the Union dead about 36,000 were black soldiers.

About one out of every ten Unionists who served in the Civil War died . For the South it was about one in every four.

Given the magnitude of this war, most Americans who were adults at the time of the war either participated in the fighting or had close friends or relatives who fought.

In the North about 35% of all white males of military age (15 to 40) served in the Union army. In the South the figure was about 61%.

Disease caused more than 50% of the Union deaths. More Americans died in POW camps on both sides than died in the Vietnam War. (The round figure for VN deaths was about 58,000).

It is estimated that about 200,000 Union men deserted during the war. The CSA lost at least 104,000 to desertion.

*This handout will be useful when reading Reid Mitchell's essay on "The Perseverance of the Soldiers."