



Six Degrees of the Bracelet: Vietnam's Continuing Grip

John A Siegfried

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Six degrees of separation refers to the idea that everyone is at most six steps away from, or connected to, any other person on Earth.

While the Vietnam War was raging, silver bracelets were created to raise awareness of, and show support for, American servicemen who were prisoners of war (POW) or missing in action (MIA). After the war, black bracelets were produced to pay homage to any of our armed forces killed in action (KIA). The orange bracelet is more recent and symbolizes all those, living and deceased, who have suffered from diseases, combat wounds, and post traumatic stress resulting from their Vietnam service. These bracelets honor the memory and sacrifice of our troops--one of the central goals of this book.

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You will be riveted by the indescribable stories told by veterans, about veterans, and for veterans, and by the families of the lost or still missing MIAs. More than 3,400,000 men and women served in Southeast Asia. Although close to 60 percent of all Vietnam veterans who served in-country are no longer alive, the families of all these veterans will continue to be affected by the Vietnam War for generations. This book illustrates the misery and despair experienced by both soldiers and victims of this visceral war, but also the exhilaration of combat, and the camaraderie felt, during their respective tours, to present day.

The understanding of warfare, combined with the appreciation of all the elements derived from combat, is necessary to better comprehend the effects of battle on those who have sworn to protect our country. Even if our soldiers did not incur flesh wounds, they may have suffered irreparable damage to their emotions, their psyche, and their soul. We civilians may never know or be able to comprehend the degradation caused to their human spirit and the violence and brutality they encountered. We need also to continue to support these men and women in the aftermath of their courageous service.



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