Rise Dead

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WASHINGTON (LNS/CPS) — There may be almost twice as many American deaths in Vietnam as the Defense Department claims.

Former Senator Wayne Morse has charged the Defense Department has two sets of death statistics: the real ones and those released to the public in its weekly "statistical summary." Morse first made the charge last August, claiming 70,000 rather than 30,000 Americans had been killed in Vietnam combat at that time.

An ex-Marine, who was stationed at Marine Headquarters here, told an October Vietnam Moratorium audience, "I realized that the Corps was, as a matter of policy, announcing a death toll that was just about half of the number of deaths reported to our office.. I talked to guys who said the same thing was going on in their office…The fact is, twice as many Americans have died in Vietnam as the military admits."

Slightly more than 40,000 American men have now been killed in Vietnam action, according to the Defense Department. If Morse and the Marine are right, the figure is actually closer to 80,000.

Even the back side of the weekly Defense Department report shows another 7,250 Americans have been killed in Vietnam from aircraft "accidents and incidents" and "other causes" or they are "missing." The causes including the "aircraft incidents," are listed as "U.S. casualties not the result of action by hostile forces."

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