

## Helicopter Losses During the Vietnam War

There were about 12,000 helicopters that served in the Vietnam War (we have specific tail numbers for 11,827 from all services). See below for losses.

Bell Helicopter built 10,005 Hueys from 1957 to 1975. Prior to 1957, there were three XH-40 prototypes and six YH-40 test helicopters manufactured. Of the 10,005 production Hueys, the first 732 were designated HU-1A and HU-1B. 9,216 of these went to the U.S. Army, 79 to the U.S. Air Force, 42 to the U.S. Navy, and 127 to the U.S. Marine Corps. The rest went to other countries.

Our records show that 7,013 Hueys served in the Vietnam War. Almost all were Army.

		KIA	KIA
	served	destroy	pilots crew
UH-1	80	80	36 17
UH-1A	8	1	
UH-1B	729	376	139 144
UH-1C	696	415	167 158
UH-1D	1,926	1,028	224 247
UH-1E	156	100	39 41
UH-1F	31	18	4 5
UH-1H	3,375	1,285	457 487
UH-1L	2		
UH-1M	5		5 3
UH-1N	2	2	
UH-1P	3		3 1
	-----	-----	-----
	7,013	3,305	1,074 1,103

Total helicopter pilots killed in the Vietnam War was 2,202. Total non-pilot crew members was 2704. Based on a database I got recently from the Pentagon, we estimate that over 40,000 helicopter pilots served in the Vietnam War.

To help in understanding the above numbers, the first 80 Hueys are missing a letter for some unknown reason. UH-1Ds were upgraded to UH-1Hs. That is why you see a higher percent of losses for UH-1Ds. They were destroyed before they were upgraded to Hs. They were both used as slicks so they should be counted together when making any conclusions. UH-1Bs were upgraded to UH-1Cs then to UH-1Ms. Most of the UH-1Bs and nearly all of the UH-1Cs were used as gunships. The UH-1E, F, L, N and P were typically non-Army.

2,709 people were killed while in Hueys.

1,074 pilots

1,103 crew members

532 American passengers (we do not have a good count on Vietnamese, their numbers probably exceed the number of American passengers)

-----

2,709

Army UH-1's totaled 7,531,955 flight hours in the Vietnam War between October 1966 and the end of 1975. It is my opinion that the Huey including the Huey Cobra (AH-1G) which had 1,038,969 flight hours in Vietnam, have more combat flight time than any other aircraft in the history of warfare.

Here is a web site of mine with more information <http://www.vhfcn.org/stat.htm>

All of the Army's Vietnam era helicopters had Indian names except for the Cobra. The UH-1 was officially

designated the Iroquois. It was the first turbine power aircraft purchased by the Army and had the largest numbers produced of any helicopter for that era (this may still be true). It started out as the civilian model 204 and was designated XH-40 when the first three prototypes were ordered. The first of these was flown by Floyd Carlson at Fort Worth on 22 October 1956. Before this first flight, a service test batch of six YH-40s had been ordered and these were delivered by August 1958. When the H-40 was ordered into production, it was redesignated HU-1A in the Army category for utility helicopters and officially named the Iroquois. The HU designation gave rise to the "Huey" nickname for the type. The first of nine pre-production HU-1As were made on June 30, 1959. In 1962, the Iroquois became the H-1 in the new tri-service designation system which changed the HU-1A and HU-1B to UH-1A and UH-1B.

The following was done recently for a museum.

1	205	was destroyed (Air America)
270	AH-1G	were destroyed
1	AH-1J	was destroyed
1	BELL	was destroyed
14	CH-21C	were destroyed
2	CH-34	were destroyed
1	CH-37B	was destroyed
1	CH-37C	was destroyed
7	CH-3C	were destroyed
7	CH-3E	were destroyed
94	CH-46A	were destroyed
58	CH-46D	were destroyed
83	CH-47A	were destroyed
20	CH-47B	were destroyed
29	CH-47C	were destroyed
12	CH-53A	were destroyed
2	CH-53C	were destroyed
9	CH-53D	were destroyed
9	CH-54A	were destroyed
2	H-37A	were destroyed
21	HH-3E	were destroyed
7	HH-43B	were destroyed
6	HH-43F	were destroyed
2	HH-53B	were destroyed
7	HH-53C	were destroyed
147	OH-13S	were destroyed
93	OH-23G	were destroyed
45	OH-58A	were destroyed
842	OH-6A	were destroyed
3	SH-34G	were destroyed
8	SH-3A	were destroyed
3	SIOUX	were destroyed
60	UH-1	were destroyed
1	UH-1A	was destroyed
357	UH-1B	were destroyed
365	UH-1C	were destroyed
886	UH-1D	were destroyed
90	UH-1E	were destroyed
18	UH-1F	were destroyed
1313	UH-1H	were destroyed
1	UH-1N	was destroyed
6	UH-2A	were destroyed
6	UH-2B	were destroyed
176	UH-34D	were destroyed

Total helicopters destroyed in the Vietnam War was 5,086 out of 11,827

Please note: These numbers were compiled at different times with different conditions; therefore, there are some discrepancies between the two sets. I will not be able to resolve the differences within your time frame, but the above should give you plenty of information to make some fairly accurate general statements.

Information compiled by [Gary Roush](#)

Return to [VHPA Home Page](#)