

CWA 4.11- Who Fought in Vietnam? (Page 1 of 2)



Congressman Alexander Pirnie reaching into a container of draft numbers (center) as others look on, including retiring Selective Service Director Lt. General Lewis Blaine Hershey (left) and Deputy Director Col. Daniel O. Omer (right) at the Selective Service Headquarters during the nationwide draft lottery / MST. December 1, 1969, Marion S. Triskoso, Photographer. Source: Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/201166122>.

Background: From 1948 to 1973, young men were drafted into the military services to fill vacancies that could not be filled by volunteers. From 1948 to 1969, American males were selected for the draft based upon their age, with the oldest man in the age category drafted first. Starting on December 1, 1969, the Selective Service System launched the first lottery draft.

The 1969 lottery drawing determined the order in which men, born from 1944 through 1950, were called to report for induction into the military. 366 capsules, each containing a birthday (including the leap year) were put into a canister. On national television, officials assigned each birth date to a lottery number. The first capsule Congressman Alexander Pirnie drew had the date September 14, so every man born between the years 1944 and 1950 with that birth date had a lottery number of 1. Pirnie drew 366 capsules

until each birth date was assigned a number. For the year 1970, numbers 1-195 were drafted. The highest lottery number called for this group was 195; all men assigned that lottery number or any lower number, and who were classified 1-A or 1-A-O (available for military service), were called to report for possible induction. Draftees could be exempt from or defer their military service for medical reasons, if they were religious ministers, if they were students, or if they could prove they were conscientious objectors (opposed to all forms of violence). Thousands of draft-age young men also fled the country to avoid the draft.

In 1973, the draft ended and the U.S. converted to an all-volunteer military. Registering for the draft was suspended between 1975 and 1980, when President Carter resumed the requirement in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Even today, young American males are required to register, although there has not been a draft since 1973.

Group Discussion Questions:

1. Pretend it is 1969 and you were born between 1944 and 1950. Find your birthday on the chart. Would you have been drafted? (Not sure? If your birthday is March 7, in 1969 your draft lottery number would have been 122 and since numbers 1-195 were called up for the draft, you would have been selected). (Source: Selective Service System, U.S. Department of Defense, <http://www.sss.gov/lotter1.htm>)
2. If you had been selected for the draft in 1969, what would you have done? Would you have willingly served? Would you have pursued deferment? If so, what would you claim as the reason for your deferment?
3. If you did not get drafted, because your number wasn't selected, you were a woman, or you were granted deferment, would you have volunteered to serve in a non-combat role? Would you have participated in the anti-war movement? Why or why not?

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	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	305	086	108	032	330	249	093	111	225	359	019	129
2	159	144	029	271	298	228	350	045	161	125	034	328
3	251	297	267	083	040	301	115	261	049	244	348	157
4	215	210	275	081	276	020	279	145	232	202	266	165
5	101	214	293	269	364	028	188	054	082	024	310	056
6	224	347	139	253	155	110	327	114	006	087	076	010
7	306	091	122	147	035	085	050	168	008	234	051	012
8	199	181	213	312	321	366	013	048	184	283	097	105
9	194	338	317	219	197	335	277	106	263	342	080	043
10	325	216	323	218	065	206	284	021	071	220	282	041
11	329	150	136	014	037	134	248	324	158	237	046	039
12	221	068	300	346	133	272	015	142	242	072	066	314
13	318	152	259	124	295	069	042	307	175	138	126	163
14	238	004	354	231	178	356	331	198	001	294	127	026
15	017	089	169	273	130	180	322	102	113	171	131	320
16	121	212	166	148	055	274	120	044	207	254	107	096
17	235	189	033	260	112	073	098	154	255	288	143	304
18	140	292	332	090	278	341	190	141	246	005	146	128
19	058	025	200	336	075	104	227	311	177	241	203	240
20	280	302	239	345	183	360	187	344	063	192	185	135
21	186	363	334	062	250	060	027	291	204	243	156	070
22	337	290	265	316	326	247	153	339	160	117	009	053
23	118	057	256	252	319	109	172	116	119	201	182	162
24	059	236	258	002	031	358	023	036	195	196	230	095
25	052	179	343	351	361	137	067	286	149	176	132	084
26	092	365	170	340	357	022	303	245	018	007	309	173
27	355	205	268	074	296	064	289	352	233	264	047	078
28	077	299	223	262	308	222	088	167	257	094	281	123
29	349	285	362	191	226	353	270	061	151	229	099	016
30	164	----	217	208	103	209	287	333	315	038	174	003
31	211	----	030	----	313	----	193	011	----	079	----	100