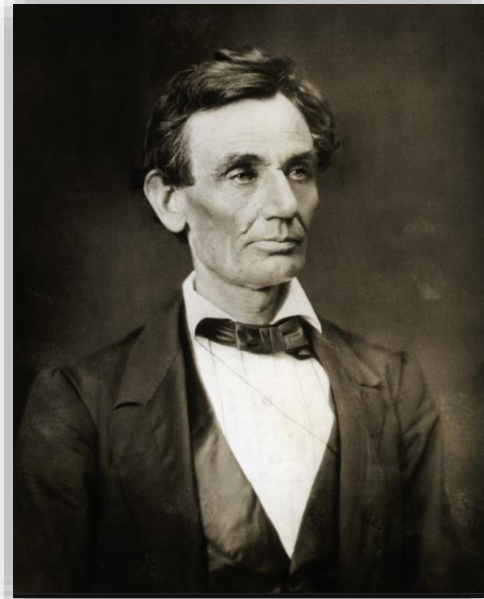


Three days later, Abraham Lincoln attended *Our American Cousin*, a play being shown at Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC. Visibly ravaged and exhausted by the burdens of the war, and with his mind turning towards reconstruction, he was given a standing ovation upon his arrival as he settled into his box. During a raucous scene, John Wilkes Booth, a prominent actor and Southern sympathizer, quietly stepped into the box, raised his gun, and fired at Lincoln with a single shot in the back of the head. Booth jumped down from the box onto the stage, shouted the Virginia state motto, *sic semper tyrannis* ("Thus always to tyrants"), and rushed out of the theatre.

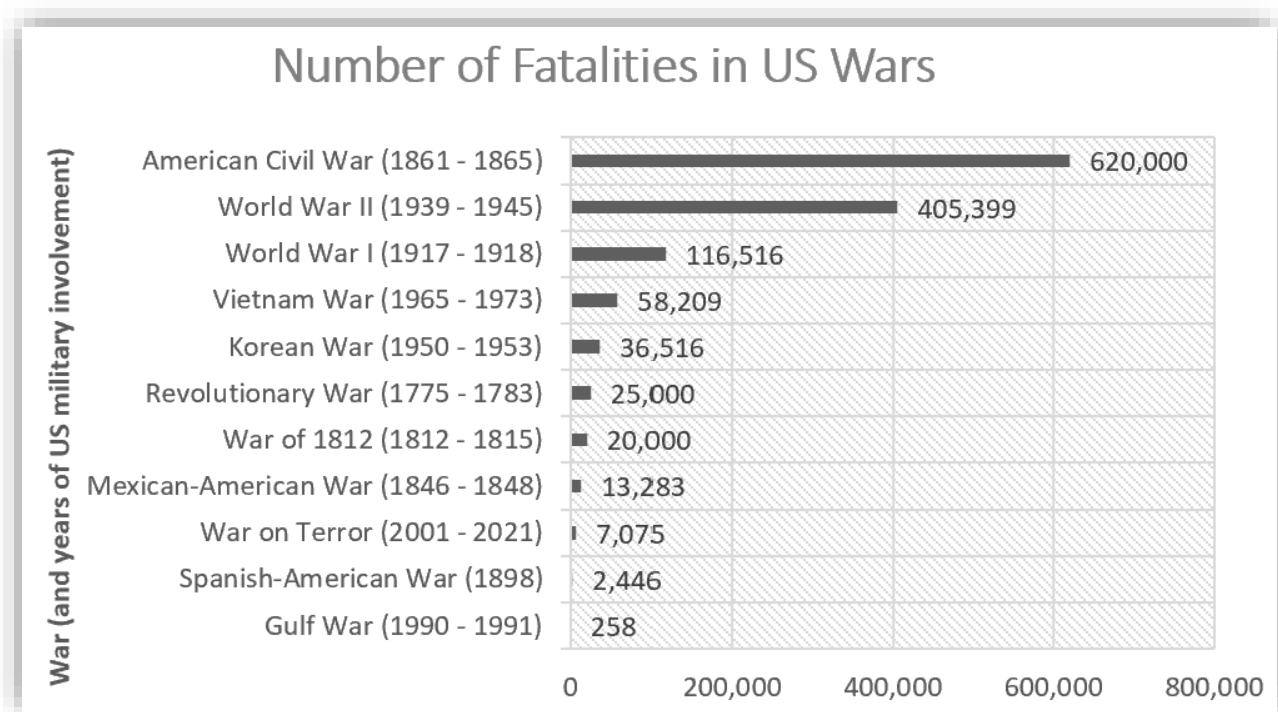


Lincoln in 1860 (top) and in 1865 (bottom)

Lincoln was carried across the street to the house of a tailor, William Petersen, where he died at 7:22 a.m. on April 15, leaving the North, the South, and the entire international community in shock and mourning. After 12 days on the run, Booth was tracked down, shot, and killed as he fled from a burning barn, and his co-conspirators were arrested and either imprisoned or sentenced to death by hanging. Booth had organized the conspiracy independently of the Confederacy, and as Lincoln's vice president, Andrew Johnson

(who was also on the conspirators' list for assassination that day), became president, and any joyous end-of-war celebrations were immediately snuffed out.

Lincoln's death may have been the most high-profile of all those killed during the Civil War, but he was just one of 1.1 million total casualties, with 620,000 (roughly 2 percent of the population) killed<sup>1</sup> — more than every other war the US fought combined, until one adds in the fatalities of Vietnam. Government debt before the war stood at \$64.8 million; now it stood at \$5.2 billion, and the destruction to the South would be comparable to that of Europe's in the World Wars.



Cities and infrastructure still smoldered from the catastrophe, and an estimated two thirds of the wealth was destroyed.

<sup>1</sup> "United States: War Fatalities 1775-2022," Statista, accessed November 3, 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1009819/total-us-military-fatalities-in-american-wars-1775-present/>.

The Union, however, was guaranteed. Slavery was dead, and the superiority of federal power over local and state had been established. But big questions remained as to how heal the scars, how to treat the Confederate states, and how to integrate African Americans into society.