

# WHO WE SERVE

## Our Continuous Focus on the Veteran

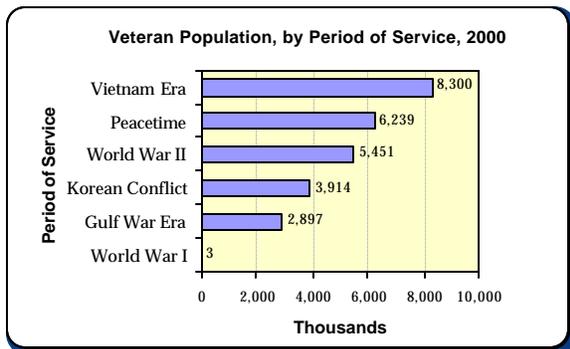
This section of the Performance Report presents social and demographic data on the veteran population. The data comparing veterans and non-veterans were obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS) through a contract with the Bureau of the Census, and with the approval of the Department of Labor, sponsor of the survey. Data on the number of veterans by age, sex, period of service, and state of residence are from VA official estimates and projections.

### Summary

Beginning with our Nation's struggle for freedom more than 2 centuries ago, approximately 42 million men and women have served their country during wartime. Most (85 percent) served in one or more of the four major conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today, an estimated 25.5 million veterans are living in the United States, Puerto Rico, and overseas. Of these, 19 million veterans served during wartime.

### Number of Veterans and Periods of Service

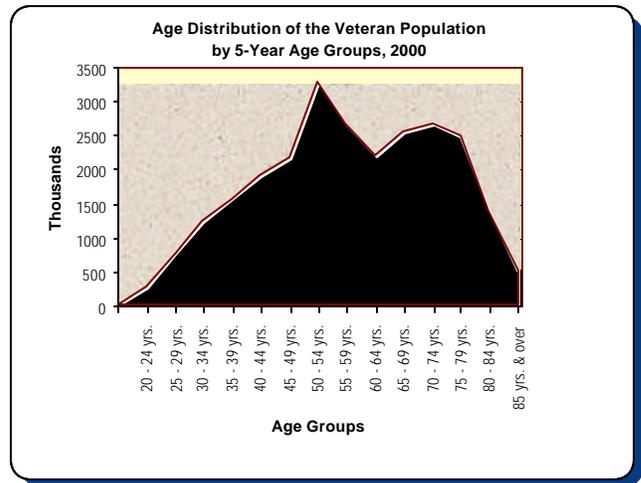
The veteran population continued to decrease in FY 2000 because of the large number of veteran deaths (657,000 between October 1, 1999, and September 30, 2000). Vietnam-era veterans account for the largest segment of the present veteran population.



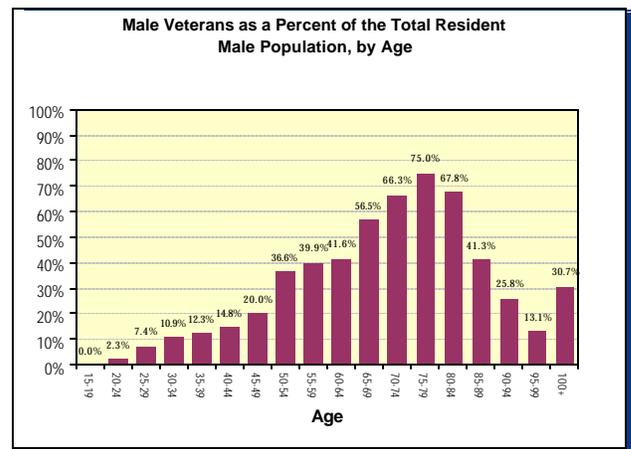
Data by period of service will add to more than total due to veterans who served in more than one period.

### Age of Veterans

At the end of FY 2000, the median age of all living veterans was 57.4 years. Veterans under 45 years of age constituted 22 percent of the total veteran population; veterans aged 45 to 64 years old, 40 percent; and veterans 65 or more years old, 38 percent.



The number of veterans 85 years of age and older totals over 510,000. Ten years ago, there were as few as 155,000 veterans in this age range. This large increase in the oldest segment of the veteran population has had significant ramifications on the demand for health care services, particularly in the area of long-term care.



## Female Veterans

In FY 2000, the female veteran population of 1.4 million constituted 5.5 percent of all veterans living in the United States, Puerto Rico, and overseas. The female veteran population as a percentage of all veterans is expected to increase, because the number of former military service women continues to grow. Generally, the demographic profile of the female veteran population stands in contrast to that of the male veteran population (e.g., differences in age and period of service).

The median age of female veterans is 13.8 years younger than that of male veterans, 44.2 versus 58.0. The growing involvement of women in the military in recent years is reflected in period-of-service differences between male and female veterans. About 58 percent of all female veterans served during the post-Vietnam era.

## State of Residence

Veterans in just three states—California, Florida, and Texas—comprised nearly 23 percent of the veterans living in the United States and Puerto

Rico at the end of FY 2000. The three next largest states in terms of veteran population are New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. These 6 states account for more than 37 percent of the total veteran population.

At the other end of the scale, the two least populous states in terms of veteran population—Wyoming and North Dakota—and the District of Columbia collectively accounted for less than 1 percent of the total.

## Education

Education plays a critical role in the social and economic achievement of America’s veterans. In FY 2000, the educational attainment of male veterans was slightly above that of male non-veterans.

Female veterans fared much better than either male veterans or their female non-veteran counterparts in terms of educational attainment. Among female veterans, 71.4 percent had at least some college education; among male veterans, the figure is 53.3 percent; among female non-veterans, the figure is 50.1 percent.

