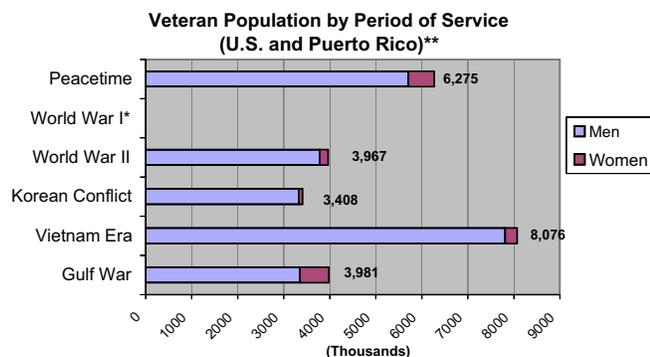


Who We Serve

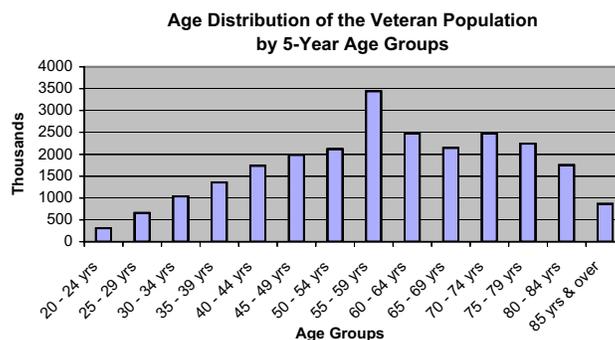
Our Continuous Focus on the Veteran

This section of the report presents social and demographic data on the veteran population. Data on the number of veterans by age, sex, period of service, and state of residence are from official VA estimates and projections based upon VetPop2001Adj data with initial adjustments to reflect the Census 2000 data.

Beginning with our Nation's struggle for freedom more than 2 centuries ago, approximately 42 million men and women have served this country during wartime periods. Today, there are approximately 24.6 million veterans living in the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico; over 18 million (74 percent) of these veterans served during at least one wartime period. The veteran population decreased by an estimated 1.9 million between April 2000 and September 2004. There are also approximately 38 million family members of living veterans and survivors of deceased veterans. The accompanying table depicts the veteran population by period of service.



Data as of 09/30/04 Source: VetPop 2001 Adjusted, Office of the Actuary
 *There are too few living WW I veterans to estimate their number with an acceptable level of reliability.
 **Sum by period of service will exceed number of all veterans due to veterans who served in multiple periods.



Data as of 9/30/04

Source: VetPop 2001 Adjusted, Office of the Actuary

As of September 2004, the median age of all living veterans was 59 years. The number of veterans 85 years of age and older totaled nearly 864,000. In April 1990, there were only 164,000 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.

As of September 2004, the 1.69 million women veterans constituted 6.9 percent of all veterans. The population of women veterans as a percentage of all veterans is expected to increase as the number of military servicewomen continues to grow. The demographic profile of the female veteran population is generally younger than that of male veterans with the median age of female veterans being 15 years younger than that of male veterans—45 versus 60. The growing number of

women in the military in recent years is reflected in period-of-service differences between male and female veterans. The number of women veterans enrolled in VA's health care system grew from 226,000 in FY 2000 to 378,000 in FY 2004, an increase of 67 percent.

Veterans in just three states – California, Florida, and Texas – comprised over 23 percent of the total number of veterans living in the United States and Puerto Rico

as of September 2004. The three next largest states in terms of veteran population are New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. These six states account for more than 37 percent of the total veteran population. At the other end of the scale, the three least populous states in terms of veteran population—Wyoming, North Dakota, and Vermont—plus the District of Columbia, collectively accounted for less than 1 percent of the total.

