

4. MILITARY SERVICE EXPERIENCE

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed results showing that socio-demographic characteristics of the veteran population have changed over time. For example, women, minorities and better-educated individuals make up a larger proportion of the veteran population compared to years past. Differences in veterans' military experiences, like differences in socio-demographic characteristics, may have a differential impact on health status, health needs, insurance needs, and current benefits. Thus, understanding the military service characteristics of the ever-changing veteran population is essential to developing policies and programs that meet those veterans' needs.

In this chapter, we examine four key aspects of veterans' military service experience:

- Branch of service;
- Period of service;
- Combat exposure; and
- Service-connected disability.

We describe service experiences for all veterans, and compare these experiences by gender, age, race, and Hispanic¹ ethnicity.

4.2 Branch of Service

Respondents were asked whether they had ever served on active duty in each branch of the military, as well as the Public Health Service, Environmental Services Administration, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the U.S. Merchant Marines during World War II (WWII). Women respondents were also asked whether they had ever served in any of the women's corps and auxiliary corps.

¹ This includes veterans who identified themselves as having Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino ethnicity.

As Table 4-1 illustrates, about 50 percent of all veterans served in the Army, almost 25 percent in the Navy, 20 percent in the Air Force, 10 percent in the Marine Corps, and slightly more than 1 percent in the Coast Guard. One out of four veterans reported serving in one of the special branches (e.g., Merchant Marines during WWII; Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps [WAAC]; Women’s Army Corps [WAC]).

Gender and Branch of Service. Table 4-1 also illustrates several gender differences in branch of service evident among these veterans. Women were less likely than men to have served in the Army (41.0 percent vs. 50.8 percent, respectively) and the Marine Corps (7.7 percent vs. 10.0 percent, respectively). Women were more likely than men to have served in the Air Force (27.5 percent vs. 19.1 percent, respectively). About the same proportion of women as men served in the Navy (23.7 percent and 24.5 percent, respectively). Very few male veterans (2.0 percent) served in the Merchant Marines during WWII. About 25 percent of women veterans served in one of the women’s special branches, with the largest proportion (10.8 percent) having served in the WAC.

Table 4-1. Percent distribution of veterans by branch of service and gender

	Total	Males	Females
Army	50.2	50.8	41.0
Navy	24.4	24.5	23.7
Air Force	19.6	19.1	27.5
Marine Corps	9.9	10.0	7.7
Coast Guard	1.4	1.4	0.9*
Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC)	1.8	NR	1.8
Women’s Army Corps (WACs)	10.8	NR	10.8
Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service (WAVES)	6.7	NR	6.7
Navy Nursing Corps (NNC)	1.5	NR	1.5
Air Force Nursing Corps (AFNC)	2.8	NR	2.8
Women’s Air Force Service Pilots (WASPS)	0.2*	NR	0.2*
Coast Guard Women’s Reserve (SPARS)	0.3*	NR	0.3*
The Public Health Service, the Environmental Services Administration or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	0.2	0.2	0.4*
U. S. Merchant Marine	2.0	2.0	NR
Number of veterans†	25,095,000	23,629,800	1,465,200

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59; NR: Sample size for the denominator less than 30.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; percent estimates will not sum to 100 because veterans could indicate more than one branch of service.

NOTE: This table excludes veterans who received a medical discharge from the National Guard or Reserves but never served on active duty.

Age and Branch of Service. Age differences in branch of service also were found among these veterans, as shown in Table 4.2. The proportion of veterans who served in the Army increases across age cohorts from 43 percent of those veterans less than 35 years of age to 60 percent of those veterans age 75 years or older. Conversely, the proportion with Marine Corps service decreases from 18 percent of those veterans in the youngest age cohort to 6 percent of veterans in the oldest age cohort. Proportion of veterans with Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard service varied little across age cohorts.

Veterans with service in the women's corps tend to be in the older age cohorts. This is not surprising, given that many of the separate women's corps (e.g., Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service [WAVES], Women's Airforce Service Pilots [WASP]) were disbanded after WWII.

Race and Branch of Service. Table 4.3 displays race comparisons of branch of service. A larger proportion of Blacks veterans (60.3 percent) served in the Army compared to any other racial group. A larger proportion of White and biracial American Indian-White veterans served in the Air Force (19.9 percent and 20.1 percent vs. 15.4 percent to 17.5 percent for other races). Among Black veterans, proportionately fewer (14.3 percent) served in the Navy, compared to veterans of other races (21.9 to 25.7 percent). Aside from the main service branches, the number of veterans of racial groups other than White reporting service in the special branches (e.g., WAAC; WAVES) is too small to make comparisons.

Ethnicity and Branch of Service. Table 4.4 illustrates comparisons of branch of service by Hispanic ethnicity. Proportionately more Hispanic veterans served in the Army and the Marine Corps, compared to non-Hispanic veterans (54.3 percent vs. 50.0 percent respectively in the Army, 15.2 percent vs. 9.6 percent respectively in the Marine Corps). Proportionately fewer Hispanic veterans served in the Navy, compared to non-Hispanic veterans (17.9 percent vs. 24.7 percent, respectively). Aside from the main branches, the number of Hispanic veterans reporting service in the special branches (e.g., WAC; WAVES) is too small to make comparisons.

Table 4-2. Percent distribution of veterans by branch of service and age

	Total	Less than 35 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65-74 years	75 years or older
Army	50.2	43.1	42.4	48.6	48.4	53.8	59.7
Navy	24.4	24.7	24.0	23.0	24.5	23.9	26.8
Air Force	19.6	15.0	23.2	18.0	20.6	19.5	20.3
Marine Corps	9.9	17.5	11.5	12.0	9.0	7.3	6.1
Coast Guard	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.3	1.0	1.2	2.1
Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC)	1.8	0.1*	0.9*	1.6*	4.5*	1.0*	6.9*
Women's Army Corps (WACs)	10.8	0.1*	3.4*	23.2	27.3	20.7*	17.4
Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service (WAVES)	6.7	0.0	0.8*	5.2*	16.2*	14.6*	29.1
Navy Nursing Corps (NNC)	1.5	0.3*	1.1*	0.2*	3.0*	3.5*	5.8*
Air Force Nursing Corps (AFNC)	2.8	0.1*	1.5*	5.5*	6.9*	1.2*	5.6*
Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASPS)	0.2*	0.0	0.0	0.2*	0.5*	0.2*	1.1*
Coast Guard Women's Reserve (SPARS)	0.3*	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6*
The Public Health Service, the Environmental Services Administration or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	0.2	0.1*	0.2*	0.2*	0.4	0.2*	0.2*
U. S. Merchant Marine	2.0	NR	NR	NR	NR	1.2	3.1
Number of veterans†	25,095,000	2,264,300	3,003,700	5,393,700	4,935,700	5,243,100	4,114,700

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59; NR: Sample size for the denominator less than 30.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; the total estimate is larger than the sum of the groups because some veterans did not provide their age; percent estimates will not sum to 100 because veterans could indicate more than one branch of service.

NOTE: This table excludes veterans who received a medical discharge from the National Guard or Reserves but never served on active duty.

Table 4-3. Percent distribution of veterans by branch of service and race

	Total	One race						Two or more races		Race unknown
		Total one race	White	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Total two or more races	American Indian or Alaska Native/White	
Army	50.2	50.3	49.2	60.3	52.2	53.3	42.0*	50.9	53.0	47.7
Navy	24.4	24.6	25.7	14.3	24.3	23.9	9.9*	22.0	21.9	21.2
Air Force	19.6	19.6	19.9	17.5	15.4	17.7*	28.6*	21.3	20.1	16.7
Marine Corps	9.9	9.6	9.5	10.9	12.0	6.4*	19.5*	12.0	11.6	17.1
Coast Guard	1.4	1.4	1.5	0.6*	0.8*	1.9*	0.0*	1.4*	1.9*	1.3*
Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC)	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.3*	NR	NR	NR	5.8*	6.4*	0.0*
Women's Army Corps (WACs)	10.8	11.2	12.1	4.5*	NR	NR	NR	13.0*	16.5*	0.4*
Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service (WAVES)	6.7	7.1	8.4	1.2*	NR	NR	NR	0.0	0.0*	2.4*
Navy Nursing Corps (NNC)	1.5	1.5	1.9	0.0	NR	NR	NR	1.1*	0.0*	1.7*
Air Force Nursing Corps (AFNC)	2.8	3.0	3.4*	0.9*	NR	NR	NR	0.6*	0.0*	0.0*
Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASPS)	0.2*	0.2*	0.3*	0.0	NR	NR	NR	0.0	0.0*	0.0*
Coast Guard Women's Reserve (SPARS)	0.3*	0.3*	0.4*	0.0	NR	NR	NR	0.0	0.0*	0.0*
The Public Health Service, the Environmental Services Administration or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1*	0.7*	0.0	0.7*	0.1*	0.2*	0.3*
U. S. Merchant Marine	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.6*	2.8*	0.0*	NR	3.2*	1.1*	1.0*
Number of veterans†	25,095,000	23,763,200	21,289,000	2,206,000	158,500	73,200	36,500	552,900	360,600	778,800

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59; NR: Sample size for the denominator less than 30.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; only one sub-category of "Total Two or More Races" is shown because all other categories were too small to report; percent estimates will not sum to 100 because veterans could indicate more than one branch of service.

NOTE: This table excludes veterans who received a medical discharge from the National Guard or Reserves but never served on active duty.

Table 4-4. Percent distribution of veterans by branch of service and ethnicity

	Total	Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino	Not Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino
Army	50.2	54.3	50.0
Navy	24.4	17.9	24.7
Air Force	19.6	16.2	19.7
Marine Corps	9.9	15.2	9.6
Coast Guard	1.4	0.6*	1.5
Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC)	1.8	0.0*	1.9
Women's Army Corps (WACs)	10.8	2.3*	11.2
Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service (WAVES)	6.7	0.0*	7.0
Navy Nursing Corps (NNC)	1.5	0.0*	1.6
Air Force Nursing Corps (AFNC)	2.8	3.5*	2.8*
Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASPS)	0.2*	0.0*	0.2*
Coast Guard Women's Reserve (SPARS)	0.3*	0.0*	0.3*
The Public Health Service, the Environmental Services Administration or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	0.2	0.0	0.2
U. S. Merchant Marine	2.0	2.3*	2.0
Number of veterans†	25,095,000	1,111,800	23,899,600

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; ; the total estimate is larger than the sum of the groups because some veterans did not provide a category of Ethnicity; percent estimates will not sum to 100 because veterans could indicate more than one branch of service.

NOTE: This table excludes veterans who received a medical discharge from the National Guard or Reserves but never served on active duty.

4.3 Period of Service

Respondents were asked the dates when they entered and left military service. Based on these dates, period of service was determined. The periods into which veterans were classified included: WWII; between WWII and the Korean Conflict; the Korean Conflict; between the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam Era; the Vietnam Era; post-Vietnam Era; and the Gulf War. Respondents could be classified into more than one period of service, so percentages displayed in related tables do not sum to 100.

Table 4-5 shows that the largest percentage of veterans report that they served during the Vietnam Era (36.1 percent), followed by the Post-Vietnam Era (27.9 percent) and the era between the Korean and Vietnam eras (25.6 percent). This pattern has changed slightly since the 1992 NSV, when the majority of veterans reported that they served during the Vietnam Era (33.5 percent) or WWII (30.0 percent).

Table 4-5. Percent distribution of veterans by period of service and gender

	Total	Males	Females
World War II	20.5	21.0	12.0
Between World War II and the Korean Conflict	6.7	7.0	2.4
Korean Conflict	16.9	17.7	5.0
Between the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam Era	25.6	26.7	8.0
Vietnam Era	36.1	37.3	16.2
Post-Vietnam Era	27.9	26.3	53.8
Gulf War	13.9	12.4	37.0
Number of veterans†	25,095,000	23,629,800	1,465,200

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; percent estimates will not sum to 100 because veterans could indicate more than one period of service.

NOTE: This table excludes veterans who received a medical discharge from the National Guard or Reserves but never served on active duty.

Gender and Period of Service. Proportionately more women veterans served during the two most recent periods, compared to men veterans. Almost 54 percent of female veterans served during the Post-Vietnam Era compared to 26 percent of male veterans. In addition, proportionately three times as many female veterans served during the Gulf War compared to men (37.0 percent vs. 12.4 percent, respectively). These findings reflect increasing participation of women in military service in the past few decades.

Race and Period of Service. As described above, the largest proportion of veterans served during the Vietnam Era (36.1 percent), while the second-largest proportion served during the post-Vietnam Era. Table 4-6 illustrates that this pattern is reversed among Black and American Indian veterans. The proportion of minority veterans who served during the post-Vietnam Era and Gulf War is also markedly higher than that of White veterans. This reflects the increasing racial diversity observed among military service members in recent decades.

Table 4-6. Percent distribution of veterans by period of service and race

	Total	One race						Two or more races		Race unknown
		Total one race	White	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Total two or more races	American Indian or Alaska Native/White	
World War II	20.5	21.1	22.4	10.1	8.1	20.4	4.9*	11.1	12.0	9.7
Between World War II and the Korean Conflict	6.7	6.8	7.1	4.6	5.7*	9.8*	4.0*	5.7	7.2	3.5
Korean Conflict	16.9	17.2	17.7	13.3	11.5	13.5*	18.0*	13.6	16.5	9.5
Between the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam Era	25.6	26.0	26.8	18.8	18.9	24.1	27.0*	21.2	25.9	17.9
Vietnam Era	36.1	35.8	35.9	34.8	34.6	36.3	56.1*	44.2	45.0	38.2
Post-Vietnam Era	27.9	27.3	25.2	45.8	50.5	32.5	56.2*	39.1	34.1	37.7
Gulf War	13.9	13.3	11.9	26.4	19.6	32.0	16.6*	19.2	14.9	27.0
Number of veterans†	25,095,000	23,763,200	21,289,000	2,206,000	158,500	73,200	36,500	552,900	360,600	778,800

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; only one sub-category of "Total Two or More Races" is shown because all other categories were too small to report; percent estimates will not sum to 100 because veterans could indicate more than one period of service.

NOTE: This table excludes veterans who received a medical discharge from the National Guard or Reserves but never served on active duty.

Ethnicity and Period of Service. Table 4-7 compares Hispanic and non-Hispanic veterans and the periods during which they served. Proportionately more Hispanic veterans served during the post-Vietnam Era and the Gulf War, compared to non-Hispanic veterans. Fewer Hispanic veterans served between WWII and the Vietnam Era, compared to their non-Hispanic counterparts. These results mirror those seen in comparisons of race and period of service, indicating the increasing diversity of military service members.

Table 4-7. Percent distribution of veterans by period of service and ethnicity

	Total	Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino	Not Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino
World War II	20.5	10.2	21.0
Between World War II and the Korean Conflict	6.7	3.1	6.9
Korean Conflict	16.9	10.6	17.2
Between the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam Era	25.6	17.9	26.0
Vietnam Era	36.1	34.9	36.1
Post-Vietnam Era	27.9	35.9	27.5
Gulf War	13.9	25.9	13.3
Number of veterans [†]	25,095,000	1,111,800	23,899,600

[†] Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; the total estimate is larger than the sum of the groups because some veterans did not provide a category of Ethnicity; percent estimates will not sum to 100 because veterans could indicate more than one period of service.

NOTE: This table excludes veterans who received a medical discharge from the National Guard or Reserves but never served on active duty.

4.4 Combat Exposure

Respondents were asked questions about combat and combat-related military experiences. These questions included whether the veteran had served in a combat or war zone and had been exposed to dead, dying, or wounded people. As Table 48 displays, nearly 39 percent of veterans said they had served in a combat or war zone, while 36 percent said they had been exposed to dead, dying, or wounded people during their military service.

Gender and Combat Exposure. As might be expected, male veterans were much more likely to have served in combat or a war zone than were women veterans (40.6 percent vs. 12.0 percent, respectively). Male veterans were also more likely than their female counterparts to have been exposed to dead, dying or wounded people, although the difference is not as striking.

Table 4-8. Percent distribution of veterans by service in combat or war zone or exposure to dead, dying, or wounded and gender

	Total	Males	Females
Served in Combat or War Zone			
Yes	38.9	40.6	12.0
No	60.1	58.3	87.8
Unknown	1.0	1.1	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Exposed to Dead, Dying, or Wounded People			
Yes	36.4	37.2	24.4
No	62.9	62.1	75.2
Unknown	0.7	0.7	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of veterans†	25,095,000	23,629,800	1,465,200

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred.

NOTE: This table excludes veterans who received a medical discharge from the National Guard or Reserves but never served on active duty.

Period of Service and Combat Exposure. Table 4-9 shows that, in general, the proportion of veterans who reported serving in a combat or war zone decreases across the periods of service after WWII, then increases during the Vietnam and Gulf War periods. More WWII veterans said they served in a combat or war zone, followed by veterans who served between WWII and Korea and those who served during the Vietnam era, compared to veterans of other periods of service. Although the relatively high proportion with combat exposure among those who served between WWII and Korea seems at odds with peacetime service, this may simply represent veterans who had already served during WWII and experienced combat then.

A similar pattern (i.e., highest during WWII service and immediately thereafter, second-highest during Vietnam era service) is seen in exposure to dead, dying, or wounded people.

Table 4-9. Percent distribution of veterans by service in combat, war zone, or exposure to dead, dying, or wounded and period of service

	Total	World War II	Between World War II and Korea	Korean Conflict	Between Korean Conflict and Vietnam Era	Vietnam Era	Post-Vietnam Era	Gulf War
Served in Combat or War Zone								
Yes	38.9	60.3	52.8	42.4	31.9	48.1	31.5	38.1
No	60.1	38.7	46.5	56.9	67.1	51.1	67.3	60.7
Unknown	1.0	1.0	0.7	0.7	1.0	0.8	1.2	1.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Exposed to Dead, Dying, or Wounded People								
Yes	36.4	49.7	42.9	34.8	30.0	45.9	32.3	31.7
No	62.9	49.2	56.3	64.6	69.4	53.5	67.0	67.6
Unknown	0.7	1.1	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of veterans [†]	25,095,000	5,149,100	1,680,600	4,245,600	6,426,500	9,057,200	7,005,000	3,483,600

[†] Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; the total number of veterans is smaller than the sum of the groups because veterans could indicate more than one period of service.

NOTE: This table excludes veterans who received a medical discharge from the National Guard or Reserves but never served on active duty.

4.5 Service-Related Disability and Service-Connected Disability Rating

All respondents were asked whether they had a disabling condition. Those who answered affirmatively were asked whether their disabling condition was service-related. In addition, everyone was asked whether they had a service-connected disability rating.

A service-connected disability is any disability incurred in or aggravated during a period of active military service where the veteran did not receive a dishonorable discharge or the disability was not due to willful misconduct of the veteran. In general, a service-connected disability evaluated as 10 percent or more disabling by VA entitles a veteran to receive disability compensation.² Service-related disability, on the other hand, is a self-reported disabling condition. Table 4-10 shows that almost 14 percent of veterans said they had a service-related disability. The same proportion said they had a service-connected disability rating, as Table 4-11 displays.

² A small percent of veterans with less than a 10 percent rating receive compensation.

Gender and Service-Related Disability. Gender differences in service-related disability are displayed in Tables 4-10 and 4-11. A slightly higher percentage of male veterans than female veterans report having a service-connected disability (13.9 percent vs. 12.7 percent, respectively). The difference in proportion of male and female veterans reporting a disability rating is even smaller (13.8 percent vs. 13.5 percent, respectively).

Table 4-10. Percent distribution of veterans by service-related disability and gender

	Total	Males	Females
Yes	13.8	13.9	12.7
No	16.6	16.8	12.0
Not Applicable or Unknown	69.6	69.3	75.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of veterans†	25,196,000	23,712,400	1,483,600

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Table 4-11. Percent distribution of veterans by service-connected disability rating and gender

	Total	Males	Females
Yes	13.8	13.8	13.5
No	85.1	85.1	85.6
Unknown	1.1	1.1	0.9*
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of veterans†	25,196,000	23,712,400	1,483,600

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Branch of Service and Service-Related Disability. Table 4-12 compares the proportion of veterans reporting a service-related disability in the different military branches. Comparing only the major services (i.e., Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard), the highest proportion of veterans reporting a service-related disability was among those who had served in the Marine Corps (16.7 percent). The next highest proportion was found among those who had served in the Army (15.0 percent). The lowest proportion reporting a service-related disability was found among Navy veterans (11.4 percent).

Veterans from the special branches (e.g., women’s corps; WAVES) were more likely to have service-related disabilities, compared to veterans from the major services. About 17 percent of WAC (Women’s Army Corps) veterans and 16 percent of WWII Merchant Marine veterans reported having a service-related disability. The number of veterans in the other special branches that reported a service-related disability (e.g., WAAC; WAVES) is too small to make comparisons.

Table 4-12. Percent distribution of veterans by service-related disability and branch of service

	Total	Army	Navy	Air Force	Marine Corps	Coast Guard
Yes	13.9	15.0	11.4	14.1	16.7	11.8
No	16.5	18.1	16.3	15.9	14.1	18.2
Not Applicable or Unknown	69.6	66.9	72.3	70.0	69.2	70.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of veterans†	25,095,000	12,593,500	6,130,500	4,909,000	2,487,400	356,100

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; the estimate is smaller than the sum of the groups because veterans could indicate more than one branch of service.

NOTE: This table excludes veterans who received a medical discharge from the National Guard or Reserves but never served on active duty.

Table 4-13 displays the proportion of veterans who report having a service-connected disability rating, comparing veterans from different branches. Among the major branches, Marine Corps veterans are most likely to report having a disability rating (16.4 percent), followed by veterans of the Air Force (16.0 percent) and the Army (14.8 percent). Navy veterans (10.7 percent) are the least likely to report having a disability rating. Among the special branches, about 20 percent of WAC veterans and 12 percent of WWII Merchant Marine veterans report having a service-connected disability rating. The number of veterans in the other special branches that reported having a disability rating (e.g., WAAC; WAVES) is too small to make comparisons.

Table 4-13. Percent distribution of veterans by service-connected disability rating and branch of service

	Total	Army	Navy	Air Force	Marine Corps	Coast Guard
Yes	13.8	14.8	10.7	16.0	16.4	12.3
No	85.1	84.0	88.4	83.3	81.9	87.2
Unknown	1.1	1.2	0.9	0.7	1.7	0.5*
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of veterans†	25,095,000	12,593,500	6,130,500	4,909,000	2,487,400	356,100

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; the total number of veterans is smaller than the sum of the groups because veterans could indicate more than one branch of service.

NOTE: This table excludes veterans who received a medical discharge from the National Guard or Reserves but never served on active duty.

Period of Service and Service-Related Disability. The general trend in the proportion of veterans who report a service-related disability is upward across the periods of service after WWII, as Table 4-14 indicates. However, the higher proportions among veterans who served later may be an artifact of the fact that a higher proportion of veterans from earlier periods have already died. A similar trend can be observed in the proportion of veterans who say they have a service-connected disability rating (see Table 4-15).

Table 4-14. Percent distribution of veterans by service-related disability and period of service

	Total	World War II	Between World War II and Korea	Korean Conflict	Between Korean Conflict and Vietnam Era	Vietnam Era	Post-Vietnam Era	Gulf War
Yes	13.9	13.6	14.0	11.7	12.5	18.5	19.6	22.5
No	16.5	28.6	25.1	22.7	18.8	11.6	7.4	3.0
Not applicable or unknown	69.6	57.8	60.9	65.6	68.7	69.9	73.0	74.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of veterans†	25,095,000	5,149,100	1,680,600	4,245,600	6,426,500	9,057,200	7,005,000	3,483,600

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; the total estimate is smaller than the sum of the groups because veterans could indicate more than one period of service.

NOTE: This table excludes veterans who received a medical discharge from the National Guard or Reserves but never served on active duty.

Table 4-15. Percent distribution of veterans by service-connected disability rating and period of service

	Total	World War II	Between World War II and Korea	Korean Conflict	Between Korean Conflict and Vietnam Era	Vietnam Era	Post-Vietnam Era	Gulf War
Yes	13.8	14.2	16.3	13.3	12.8	18.1	20.4	24.2
No	85.1	84.6	82.6	85.9	86.6	80.9	78.6	74.5
Unknown	1.1	1.2	1.1*	0.8	0.6	1.0	1.0	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of veterans†	25,095,000	5,149,100	1,680,600	4,245,600	6,426,500	9,057,200	7,005,000	3,483,600

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; the total estimate is smaller than the sum of the groups because veterans could indicate more than one period of service.

NOTE: This table excludes veterans who received a medical discharge from the National Guard or Reserves but never served on active duty.

