

**VA**

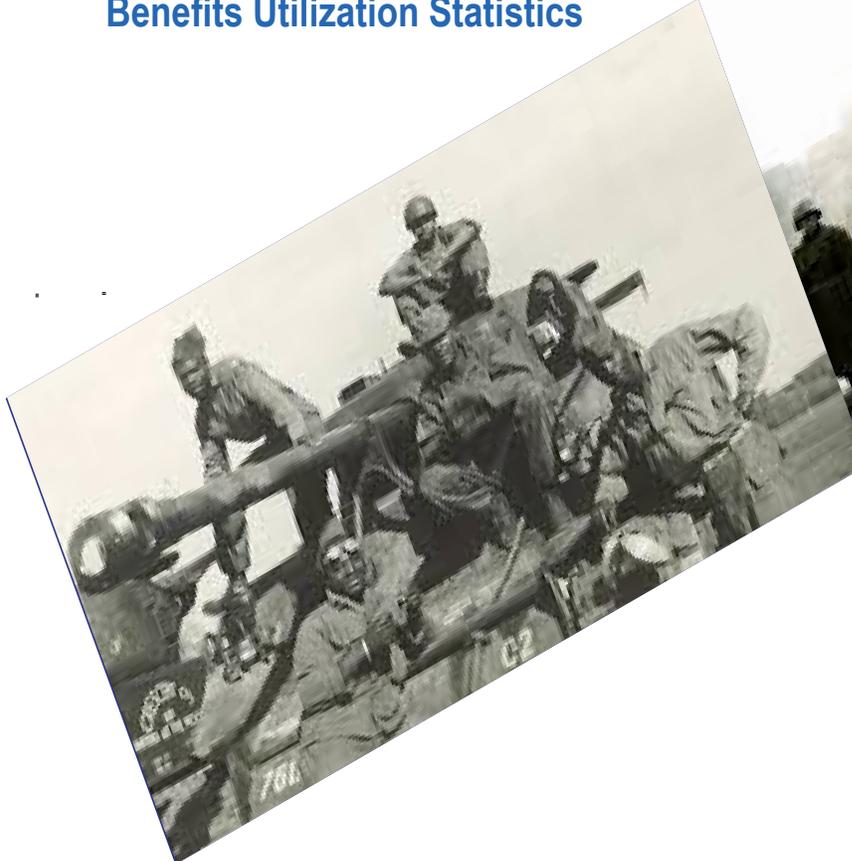


U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

2017

# Minority Veterans Report

Military Service History and VA  
Benefits Utilization Statistics



Department of Veterans Affairs

National Center for Veterans Analysis  
and Statistics

November 2020

# Minority Veteran Report Military Service History and VA Benefit Utilization Statistics

Prepared by:

Office of Data Governance and Analytics

The Office of Data Governance and Analytics serve as the authoritative clearinghouse for VA to collect, validate, analyze, and disseminate key statistics on Veteran population and VA programs to support planning, analysis, and decision-making activities. For more information on reports, surveys, or statistics regarding the Veteran population, check our website at <http://www.va.gov/vetdata/>. For general inquiries, please e-mail us at [VANCVAS@va.gov](mailto:VANCVAS@va.gov).

Contributors:

Tamara Lee  
Maribel Aponte  
Andrew Bickel  
Stephen Dillard  
Tom Garin  
Dorothy Glasgow  
Mark Guagliardo  
Eddie Thomas

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## Executive Summary

Over the past 30 years, racial and ethnic minorities have entered the military in ever-increasing numbers. Ultimately, they will make the transition from Service Member to Veteran. In 2017, minorities comprised 23.7% of the total Veteran population in the United States. By 2045, they are projected to make up 36.2% of all living Veterans. This comprehensive report profiles the characteristics of minority Veterans in 2017, illustrates how minority Veterans used some of the major benefits and services offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and discusses challenges of minority Veterans in relation to VA. The goal of this report is to provide an understanding of who our minority Veterans are, how they compare to those without military service, and how they can be better served based on these insights.

### Demographic Characteristics

- According to data from the 2016 Veterans Population Projection Model, over 5.0 million Veterans in the United States and Puerto Rico were minorities. Minorities represented about 23.7% of the total Veteran population in 2017.
- Nearly forty-eight percent of all minority Veterans have served during the Gulf War Era (August 1990 to the present).
- Black non-Hispanics had a disproportionately high representation in the minority Veteran population compared to the minority non-Veteran population (49.9% and 31.1%, respectively). In contrast Hispanics had a disproportionately low representation (31.7% and 46.1%, respectively). The median age of minority Veterans was 56, compared with 39 for minority non-Veterans.

### Socioeconomic Characteristics

- Minority Veterans had higher educational attainment than minority non-Veterans. Minority Veterans were more likely to have completed a bachelor's or advanced degree (24.4% versus 21.9%), more likely to have had some college as their highest level of education (42.1% versus 28.3%), and less likely to have had a high school diploma or less as their highest level of education (33.5% versus 49.8%).
- Four percent of minority Veterans aged 17 to 64 were unemployed compared with 2.6% of non-minority Veterans.
- A higher percentage of employed minority Veterans 17 to 64 years old worked in the government sector (32.7%) than minority non-Veterans (12.2%).
- Overall, a lower percentage of minority Veterans were living in poverty than minority non-Veterans. About 9.9% of all minority Veterans and 17.3% of all minority non-Veterans had incomes below poverty.
- The median household income for all minority Veterans was \$59,966 in 2017, compared with \$46,991 for minority non-Veterans.
- Four percent of minority Veterans lacked healthcare coverage compared with 16.7% of minority non-Veterans.

## Executive Summary Cont.

### Use of VA Benefits and Services

- The percentage of minority Veterans who used at least one VA benefit or service annually has steadily grown from 38.0% in 2005 to 52.3% in 2017.

#### *Use of VA Health Care Services*

- In 2017, 59.0% of minority Veterans were enrolled in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) health care system. Of the 2.5 million enrolled minority Veterans, 1.7 million (68.0%) used VA health care in 2017.
- From 2005 to 2017, the number of minority Veterans using VA health care increased from 1.0 million (21.5%) to 1.7 million (34.6%).
- Fifty-nine percent of minority Veterans who used VHA health care had a service-connected disability rating.

#### *Use of Compensation and Pension Benefits*

- In 2017, 1.3 million minority Veterans (27.5%) received compensation from VA for a service-connected disability. Sixty-one percent of these had a combined disability rating of 50% or higher.
- The top five service-connected conditions for minority Veterans (tinnitus, limited flexion of the leg, lumbosacral or cervical strain, post-traumatic stress disorder, and scars) accounted for nearly 22.6% of all service-connected disabilities for minority Veterans.
- About 8.4% of minority Veterans who received compensation for a service-connected disability were receiving Individual Unemployability (IU) compensation.
- IU is a component of VA's disability compensation benefit program which allows Veterans to receive financial compensation at the 100% level even though their total service-connected disability rating is below 100%.
- Over 86,000 minority Veterans were receiving a VA disability pension.

#### *Use of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program*

- Fifty percent of Veterans participating in the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program in 2017 were minorities (66,075 out of 132,050). Participants are in any of the following stages of the vocational rehabilitation process: extended evaluation, independent living, job-ready status, and rehabilitation-to-employment.

#### *Use of Education Benefits*

- In 2017, 260,035 minority Veterans used education benefits. This represents 5.4% of the total population of minority Veterans and is twice that of non-minority Veterans (2.5%).

#### *Use of Burial Benefits*

- Over 30,000 minority Veterans used memorial benefits in 2017.



# Minority Veterans - Past, Present and Future

Over the past 30 years, racial and ethnic minorities have entered the military in ever-increasing numbers.<sup>(1)</sup> Ultimately, they will make the transition from Service Member to Veteran. In 2017, minorities comprised 23.7% of the total Veteran population in the United States. By 2045, they are projected to make up 36.2% of all living Veterans. This comprehensive report profiles the characteristics of minority Veterans in 2017, illustrates how minority Veterans used some of the major benefits and services offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and discusses challenges of minority Veterans in relation to VA. The goal of this report is to provide an understanding of who our minority Veterans are, how they compare to those without military service, and how they can be better served based on these insights.

In 2017, 31.3% of active duty military were racial minorities and 15.5% reported as being of Hispanic or Latino origin. Approximately one-quarter (26.1%) of National Guard and Reserve<sup>(2)</sup> forces identified themselves as being a racial minority and 11.5 as Hispanic in 2017.<sup>(1)</sup> Active duty and reserve forces decreased by 8.4 and 12.4% respectively from 1995 to 2017, while minority personnel increased by 26.6% and 4.2% respectively over the same time period.<sup>(1)</sup> This same trend is seen in the Veteran population and is projected to continue in the future. Using the Decennial Census,<sup>(3)(2)</sup> minority Veterans increased from 13.6% of the total Veteran population in 1990 to 17.1% in 2000.<sup>(2)</sup>

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1 In this report racial and ethnic minorities are individuals who are reported as one race alone: Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, or Some other race, or as Two or more races, or as Hispanic or Latino of any race. Race is reported as excluding Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. Hispanic or Latino ethnicity of any race is reported separately. For more information see definitions and concepts section of this report.

2 The data depicted here describes Reserve and Guard members in the Selected Reserve only. All Reserve and Guard manpower are assigned to one of three Reserve component categories: The Ready Reserve, the Standby Reserve, and the Retired Reserve. The report from which these numbers were pulled focused on Selected Reserve members because they train throughout the year and participate annually in Active Duty training exercises.

3 The 2010 Census was not included because the Veteran status question was no longer included.

ent Appointment, and Veterans Preference. See <https://www.fedshirevets.gov/job-seekers/>



The total Veteran population in 2017 was nearly 20.0 million, of which 4.7 million were minority Veterans (*see Figure 1*). Minorities comprised about 1 in 5 (23.7%) living Veterans in the United States. That proportion is projected to increase to about 1 in 3 (36.2%) by 2045. During this same time period, the total Veteran population is projected to decrease from 22.0 million in 2017 to 12.0 million in 2045. This drop is about 8 million Veterans or 40% decline in the total Veteran Population in almost 30 years.

**Figure 1.**  
**Veteran Population Projections by Minority Status, 2017-2045**  
*(in percent)*

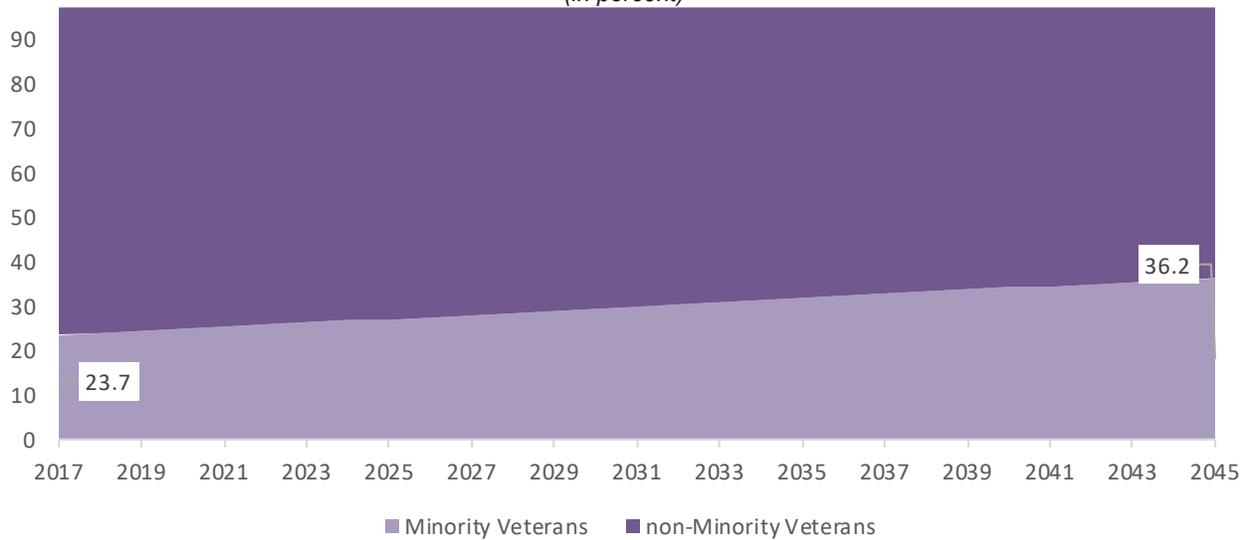
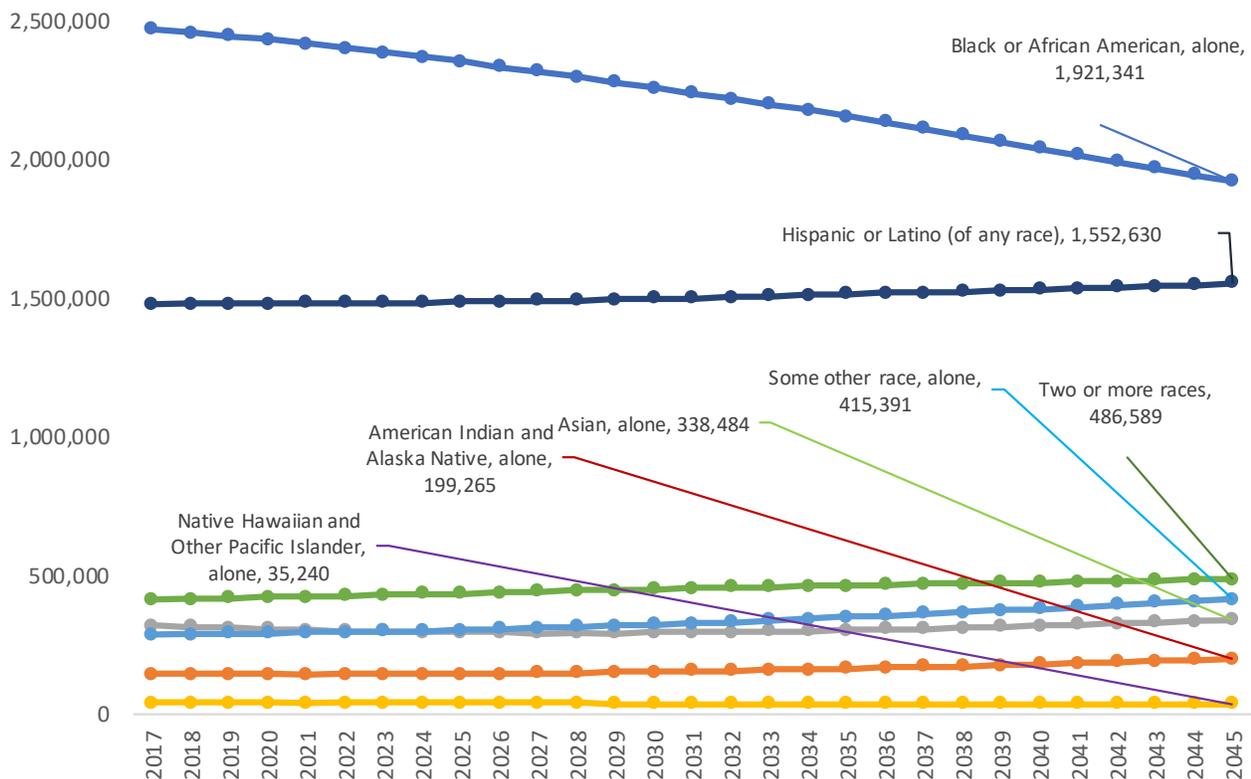


Figure 2 shows the projected changes in the Veteran population by race/ethnicity from 2017 to 2045. The number of Black Veterans, the largest minority cohort, shows a steady decline (547,000) but the proportion of the total Veteran population is expected to increase from 12.3% to 16.0%. Hispanic Veterans are projected to increase in number (75,000) and proportion (7.4% to 12.9%). Asian, American Indian and Alaskan Natives (AIAN), Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (NHOPI) Veterans are projected to have modest increases in number and proportion. The proportions of Some Other Race (1.4% to 3.5%) and Two or more races (2.1% to 4.1%) doubles. This could be due to changes in the racial make-up of the general population and changes in reporting more than one race.

**Figure 2.**  
**Projected Population of Minority Veterans by Race/Ethnicity, 2017-2045**



Source: Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Enterprise Integration, Veteran Population Projection Model (VetPop), 2016.



## About the Data

Data are from the Veteran Population Projection Model 2016 (VetPop). The Model provides official Veteran population projections from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Using the best available Veteran data, VetPop provides living and deceased Veteran counts by key demographic characteristics such as age, gender, period of service, and race/ethnicity for the next 30 years. VetPop data include Veterans residing in states, U.S. territories and foreign countries. For more information about VetPop, see [https://www.va.gov/vetdata/veteran\\_population.asp](https://www.va.gov/vetdata/veteran_population.asp)

## Who are Today's Minority Veterans?

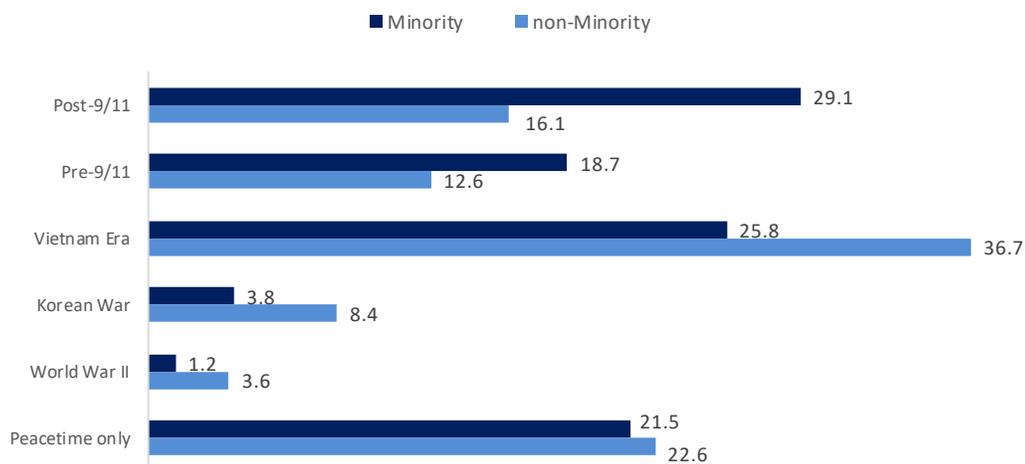
Minority Veterans are a diverse group who differ in many ways from their counterparts who never served in the military. Data from the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) provide an in-depth profile of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of minority Veterans living in the U.S. and Puerto Rico today. A complete table of detailed characteristics from the ACS can be found in Appendix A. Unless otherwise noted, all comparative statements using ACS data are statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.

## Demographic Characteristics

### Period of Service

As of 2017, almost forty-eight percent of all minority Veterans have served during the Gulf War Era (Pre-9/11 and Post-9/11, August 1990 to the present) versus 28.7% of non-minority Veterans. The largest cohort of minority Veterans served during Post-9/11 (29.1%). In contrast, the largest cohort of non-minority Veterans served during the Vietnam Era (36.7%). Nearly 22% of all living minority Veterans served only during times of peacetime periods.

**Figure 3.**  
**Period of Military Service of Veterans by Minority Status: 2017**



**Period of Service Dates:**

Post-9/11: September 2001 to present

Pre-9/11: August 1990 to August 2001

Vietnam Era: August 1964 to April 1975

Korean War: July 1950 to January 1955

World War II: December 1941 to December 1946

Note: Veterans who served in multiple periods of service are shown here in the most recent period of service.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2017

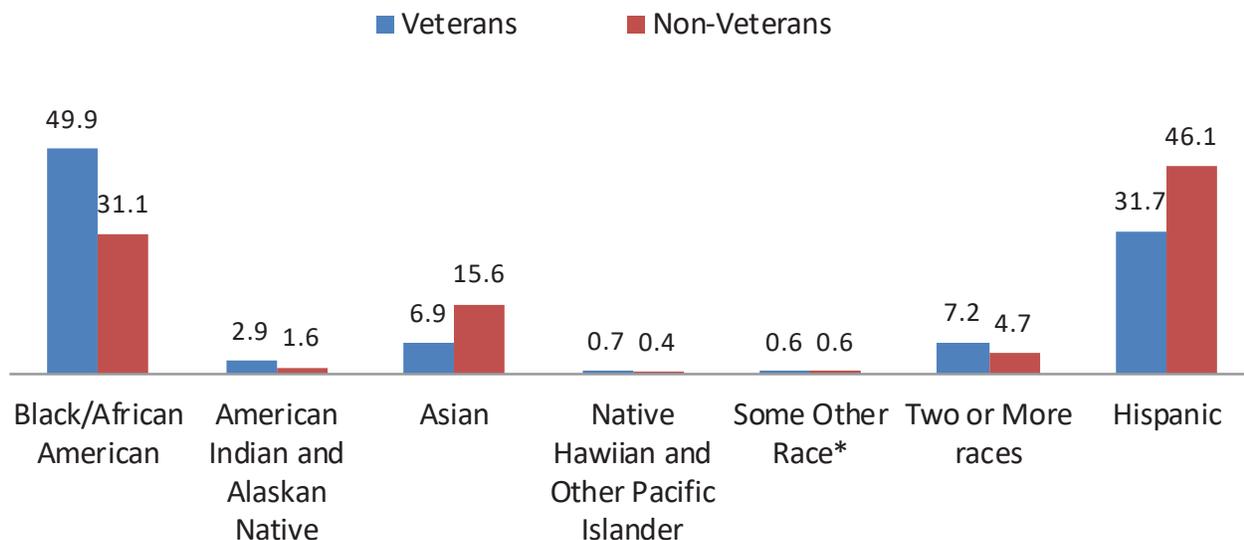
## About the Data

Data for this section of the report come from the 2017 American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, an ongoing annual survey conducted in every county across the nation, including every municipio in Puerto Rico. ACS does not include Veterans and non-Veterans residing in other US territories and foreign countries. The ACS is the largest survey in the United States with a sample of about 3 million household addresses each year. The ACS collects essentially the same detailed demographic, social, economic, and housing information previously collected every ten years on the decennial census long-form questionnaire. For this report, Veteran status is determined by respondents answering that they were active duty in the past, but not now. Members who are currently in active duty status are not included in this report. All others who are not Veterans or current active duty service members are considered non-Veterans. For more information about the ACS, see: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>

## Race and Hispanic Origin

Figure 4 shows that in 2017, a higher percentage of minority Veterans were Black<sup>(4)</sup> compared to non-Veterans (49.9% compared with 31.1%). The percentage of minority Veterans who were American Indian and Alaskan Natives (AIAN) was almost twice that of non-Veterans (2.9% compared with 1.6%). There was no difference in the rates of those who self-identify as Some Other Race between Veterans and non-Veterans. In contrast, the percentage of minority Veterans who are Hispanic was significantly lower than those of non-Veterans (31.7% compared to 46.1%). This may be because many Hispanics in the U.S. do not qualify for military service due to immigration status, education attainment, or English proficiency.<sup>(3)</sup> As the percentage of Hispanics in the general population rises, their representation in the military will rise as well, therefore the percentage of Hispanic Veterans is expected to increase in the future. The percentage of minority Veterans who were Asian was approximately one third that of non-Veterans (6.9% compared to 15.6%).

**Figure 4.**  
**Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Minorities, by Veteran Status: 2017**  
*(in percent)*

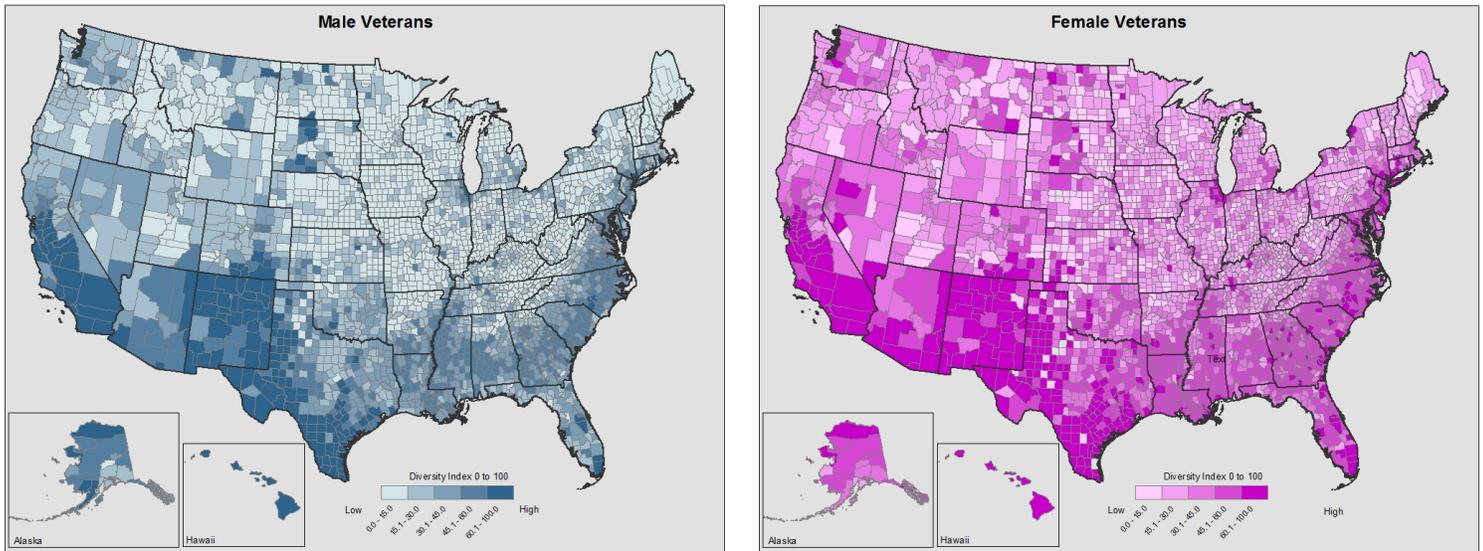


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2017

4. The race African American or Black will be referenced to as Black for the remainder of this report.

Figure 5 display diversity index maps which display how racially and ethnically diverse a population is. They measure the probability that two people chosen randomly in a geographical area is of different races or ethnicities.<sup>(4)</sup> Eight mutually exclusive racial and ethnic categories were used to calculate the diversity index for each county within the U.S. The index ranges from 0 (low diversity) to 100 (high diversity). The maps display male and female Veterans indices by county. Female Veterans are more diverse than male Veterans. The national diversity index for female Veterans is 61 versus 45 for male Veterans. Larger versions of the maps are in Appendix B.

**Figure 5.**  
**County Diversity Index Maps by Sex: 2017**

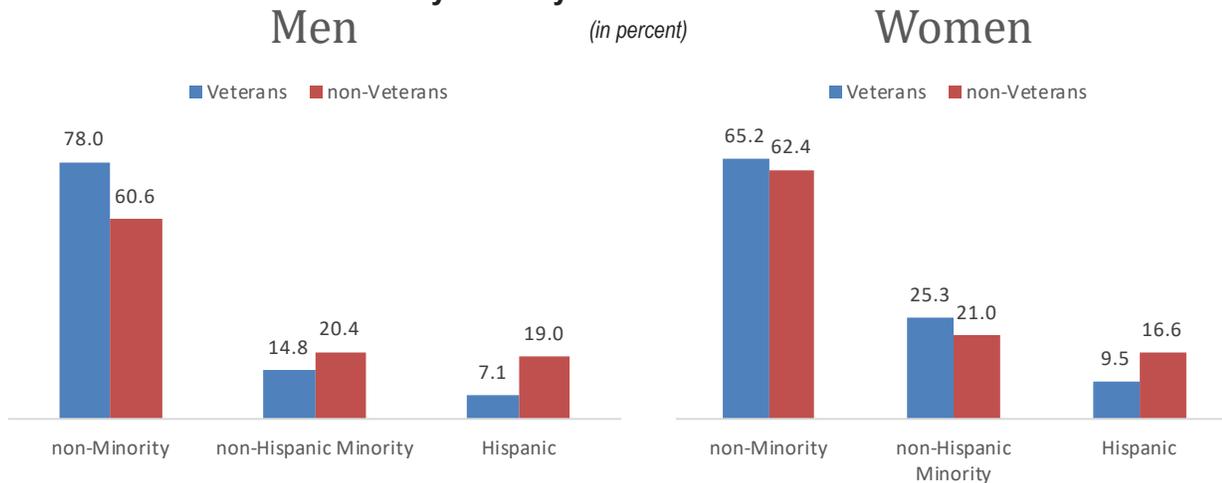


Source: Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Enterprise Integration, U.S. Veterans Eligibility Trends Statistics, 2017

### Sex and Age

The Veteran population is majority male (86.5%). Figure 6 shows that male Veterans are have a higher percentage of non-minorities (78.0%) than male non-Veterans (60.6%). A higher percentage of female Veterans are minorities than male Veterans (25.3% and 21.0%, respectively). Veterans are less likely to be Hispanic than non-Veterans regardless of sex.

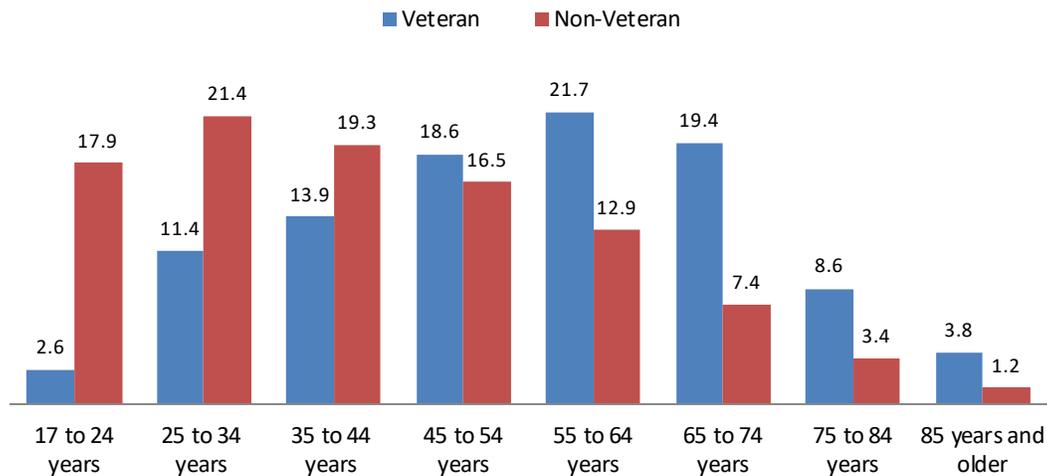
**Figure 6.**  
**Sex by Minority and Veteran Status: 2017**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2017

Figure 7 shows that in general, minority Veterans were older than minority non-Veterans in 2017. The median age of minority Veterans was 56 compared with 39 for their non-Veteran counterparts. One reason for the significant difference in Veteran status among the youngest minorities (17 to 24 years old) is that service members in that age group had not finished service and are thus not counted in this report. Minority Veterans are younger than White Veterans. The median age for minority Veteran race and ethnic cohorts ranged between 53 and 60 years old, which is younger than White Veterans (67).<sup>(5)</sup> For the median ages of each race and ethnicity see Appendix A.

**Figure 7.**  
**Age Distribution of Minorities, by Veteran Status: 2017**  
*(in percent)*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2017

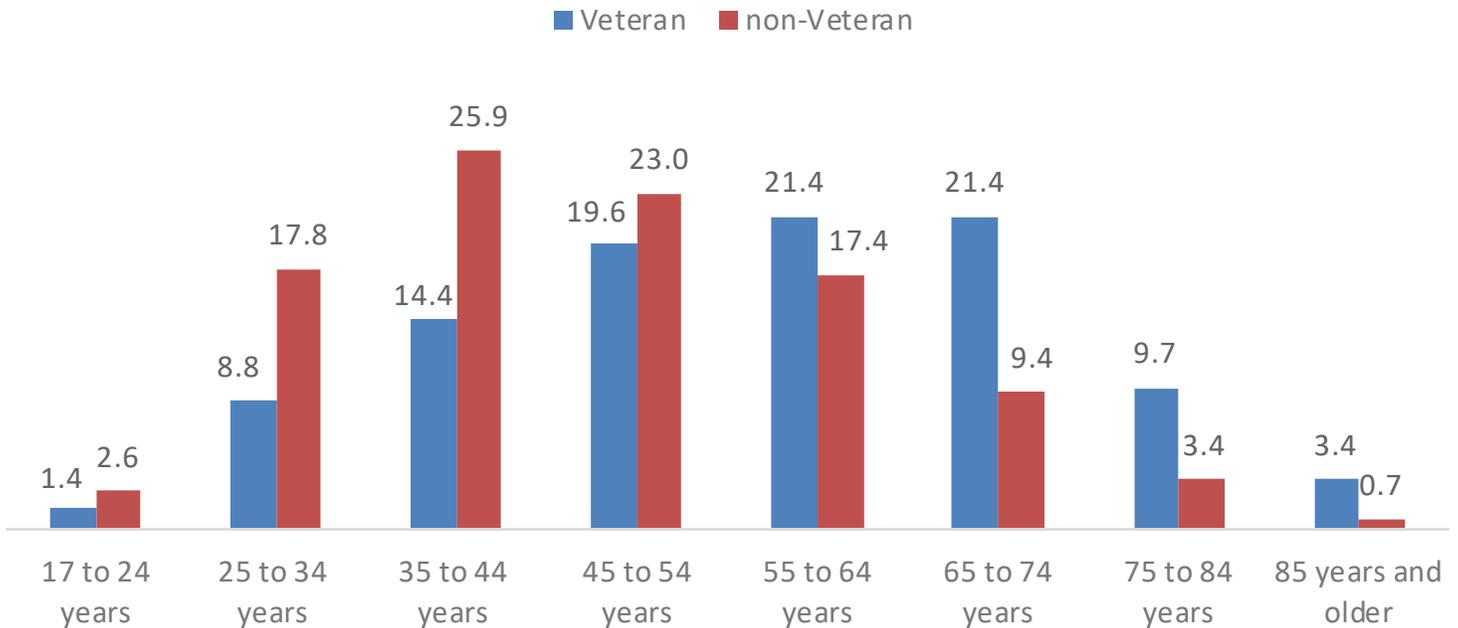
## Marriage

A higher percentage of minority Veterans have been married than minority non-Veterans. In 2017, 82.3% of minority Veterans were currently married, divorced, widowed or separated compared with 58.0% of minority non-Veterans. However, the rates are not consistent over age groups, with higher marriage rates among non-Veterans in the 54 and younger groups, and higher rates among Veterans in the 55 and older groups (Figure 8). The percentage of married minority Veterans was almost twice that of minority non-Veterans age 55 and older (55.9% compared with 30.9%, respectively). Minority Veterans (35.2%) were twice as likely to have had multiple marriages than minority non-Veterans (17.5%).

The percentage of minority Veterans who had never married was consistent with the norm in delaying marriage to later ages among the non-Veteran minority population (Figure 9). Thirty percent of minority Veterans had never married in 2017 compared to 7.3% of non-Veteran minorities (Figure 9). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2017, the median age at first marriage was around 28 for women and 30 for men.<sup>(6)</sup> This represents a continuation of a long-term trend that has been noted since the mid-1950s. Black or African Americans were the oldest race cohort at first marriage, 31 for women and 32 for men.<sup>(6)</sup> According to research done at Pew Research, Americans are staying single longer and the number of people living with an unmarried partner increased by 29% between 2007 and 2016.<sup>(7)</sup>

In 2017, among those who have ever been married, 18.6% of minority Veterans were currently divorced compared with 9.4% of minority non-Veterans. There was no difference in the percentage currently divorced for minorities aged 17 to 34 years regardless of Veteran status (Figure 10). A lower percentage of minority Veterans than minority non-Veterans aged 25 to 54 were currently divorced. The trend changed beginning at age 55, when the percentage of minority Veterans that were divorced was larger than that of non-Veteran minorities.

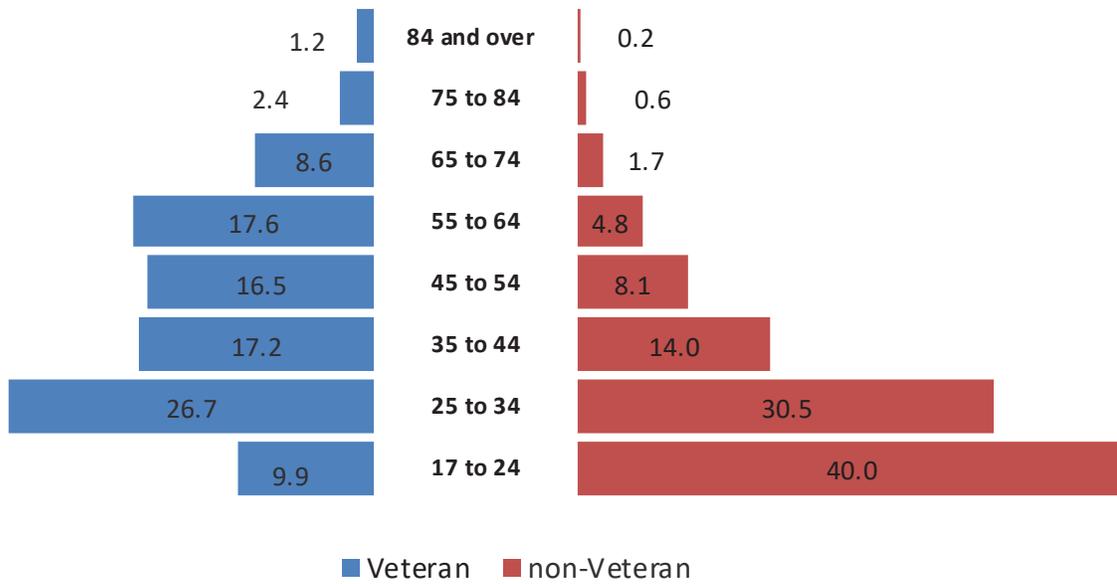
**Figure 8.**  
**Age Distribution of Percentage of Minorities Who Were Currently Married, by Veteran Status: 2017**  
*(in percent)*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2017

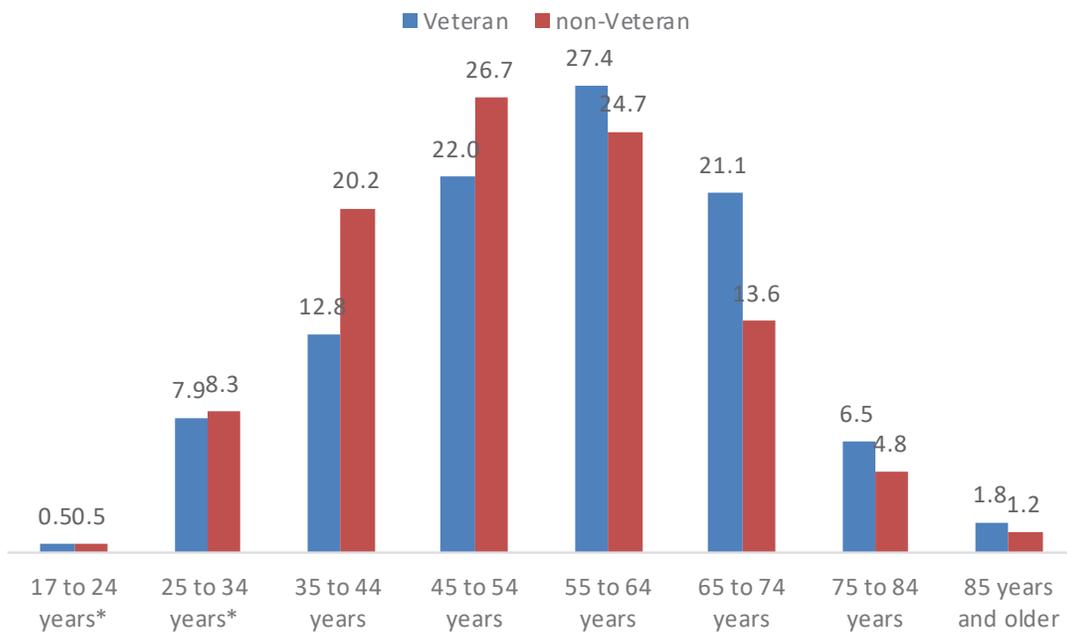


**Figure 9.**  
**Age Distribution of Percentage of Minorities Who Were Never Married, by Veteran Status: 2017**  
*(in percent)*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2017

**Figure 10.**  
**Age Distribution of Percentage of Minorities Who Were Currently Divorced, by Veteran Status: 2017**  
*(in percent)*



Note: An \* indicates that there is no statically significant difference between

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2017

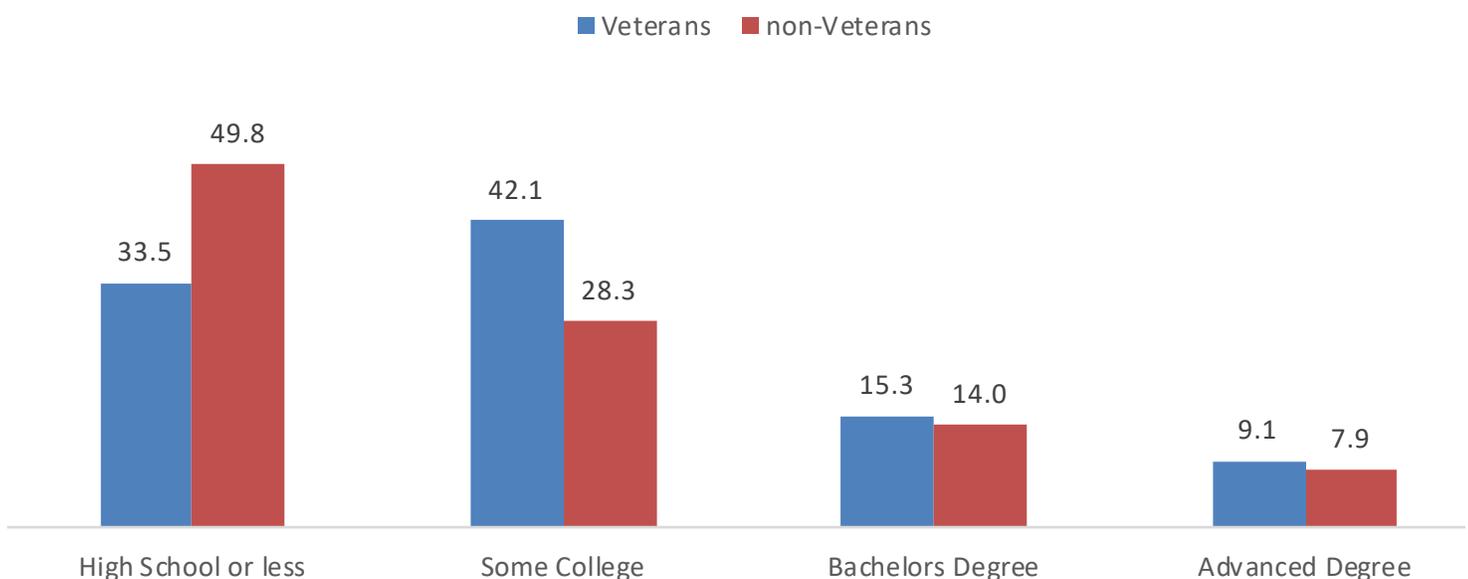
## Socioeconomic Characteristics

### Educational Attainment

Data on socioeconomic characteristics of Veterans and non-Veterans come from the 2017 American Community Survey. Current military enlistment requirements stipulate that recruits must have a high school diploma or equivalent. This requirement has changed over time; thus, some older Veterans were able to enlist without a high school diploma or equivalent. As an artifact of the enlistment requirements, Veterans will have higher base educational attainment level than non-Veterans. In 2017, about 6.3% of the general U.S. population aged 18 and older had not received a high school diploma and 14.1% had a high school diploma as their highest level of attainment.<sup>{8}</sup> In 2017, 33.5% of all minority Veterans had a high school diploma or less as their highest level of educational attainment, compared with 49.8% of minority non-Veterans (Figure 11). Another striking difference in the educational attainment of minorities by Veteran status is the percentage that had completed “some college” but not a four-year degree. About a third more minority Veterans had completed some college compared with minority non-Veterans (42.1% compared to 28.3%, respectively).

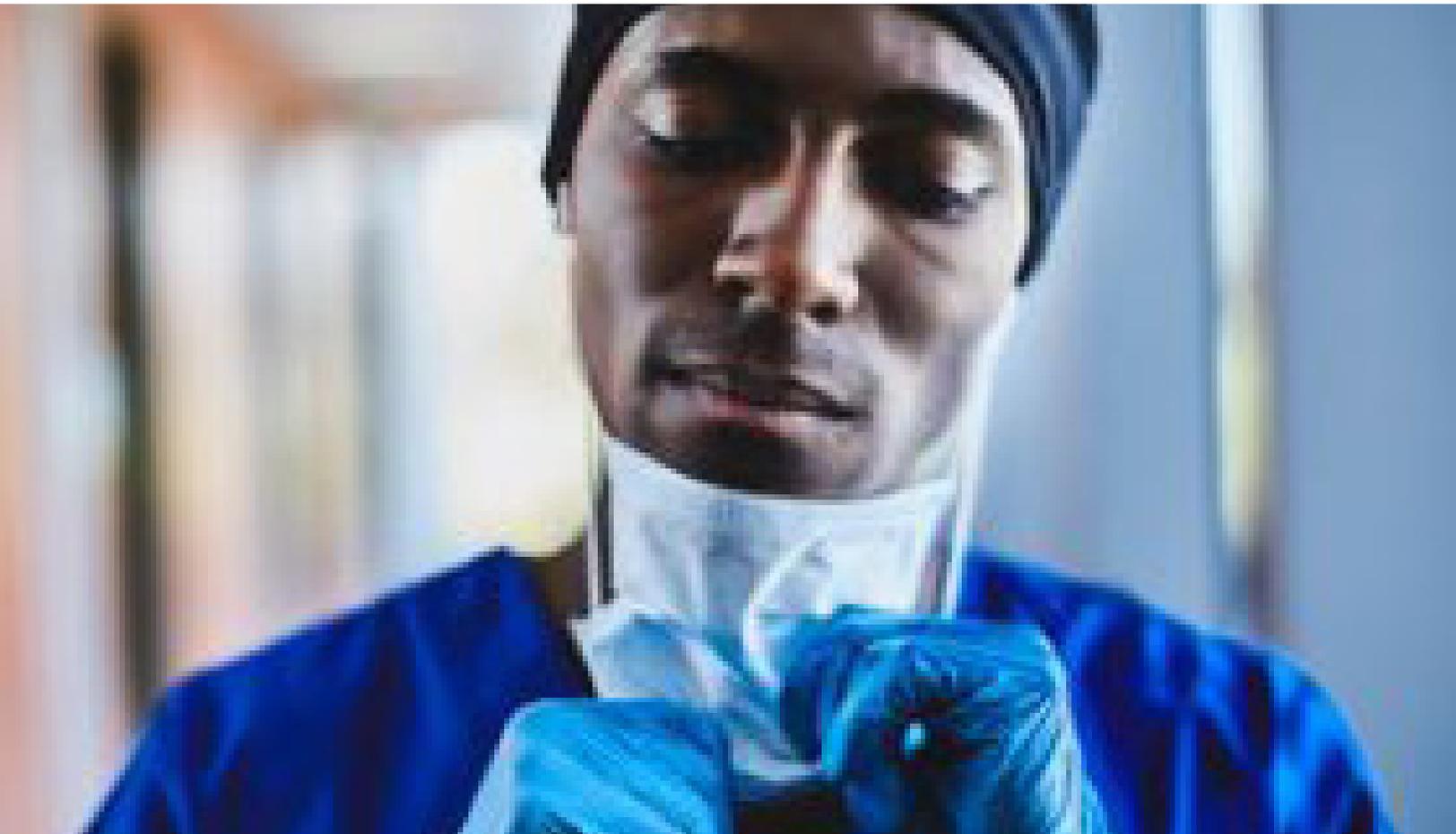
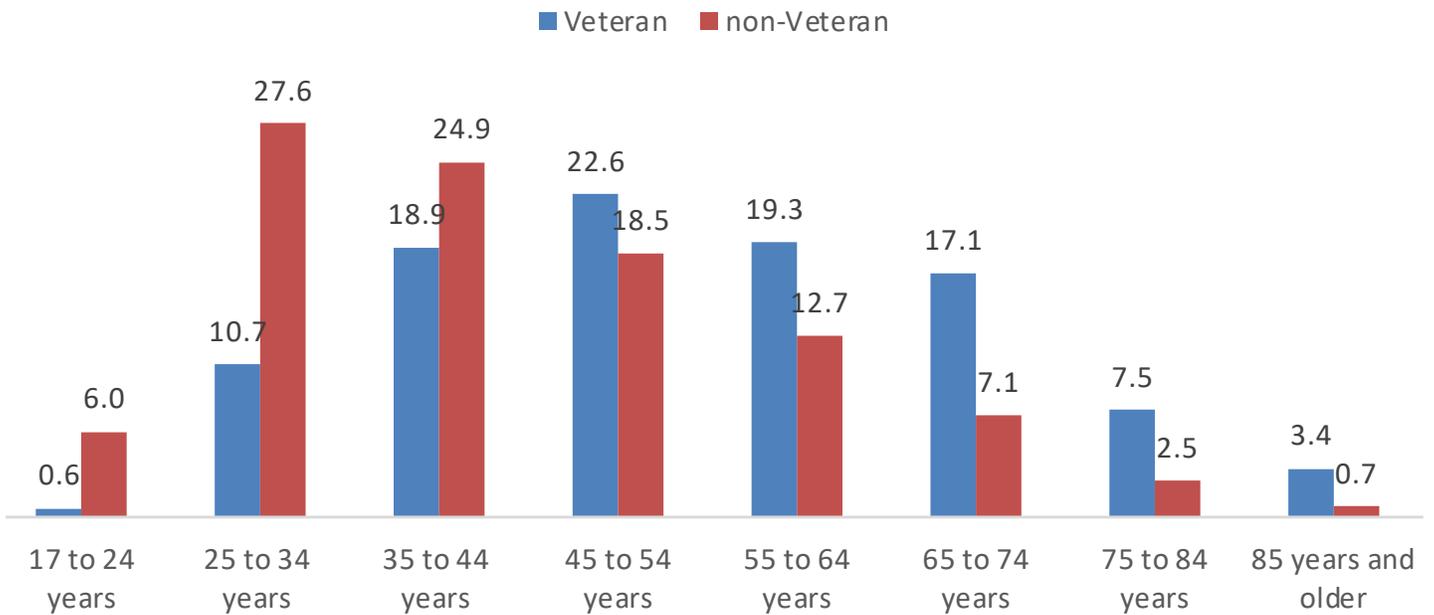
Minority non-Veterans obtained bachelor’s degrees or advanced degrees at higher rates than minority Veterans between the ages of 17 to 44 years old (Figure 12). This trend changed at age 45. The American Council on Education found that student Veterans are non-traditional students (are older, attend part-time, married, have children, and/or work). While traditional student matriculated at college or university upon graduating from high school, undergraduate Veteran students delay college by five years on average.<sup>{9}</sup> The ages of Veterans range from 24 to 40 years old and the average was 25 years old when they started to pursue an undergraduate degree.<sup>{9}{10}</sup> In 2014, Forty-three percent of Veteran undergraduates were racial/ethnic minorities.<sup>{10}</sup>

**Figure 11.**  
**Educational Attainment of Minorities, by Veteran Status: 2017**  
(in percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2017

**Figure 12.**  
**Age Distribution of Percentage of Minorities with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, by Veteran Status: 2017**  
*(in percent)*



## Employment

In 2017, working age minority Veterans (i.e., those 17 to 64 years old) had a higher labor force participation rate (74.1 %) than minority non-Veterans (72.6%). The labor force participation rate represents the proportion of the total population in the civilian labor force.<sup>(5)</sup> Individuals may not participate in the labor force for a variety of reasons, including disability and pursuit of higher education. A higher percentage of minority Veterans than non-Veterans who were not in the labor force had some type of disability (43.9% compared with 22.3%, respectively). Twelve percent of minority Veterans who were not in the labor force were enrolled in school in 2017, compared with 15.9% of non-Veteran minorities.

In 2017, minority Veterans were at 19.2% lower risk of unemployment than minority non-Veterans yet had a 40.0% higher risk of unemployment than non-minority Veterans. A small but growing body of literature has suggested that recent Veterans of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq face greater risk of unemployment than previous generations of Veterans, which is consistent with our data.<sup>(11)(12)(13)(14)</sup> Post-9/11 minority Veterans in 2017 had a 26.3% higher risk of unemployment than minorities that served in Pre-9/11, 77.8% more than minorities that served in the Vietnam Era and 14.3% higher than those that served during Peacetime only periods. The relative risk of unemployment for Post-9/11 minority Veterans was calculated as the ratio of the percentage of unemployed Post-9/11 minority Veterans (4.8%) to the percentage of unemployed minority Veterans in other periods of service (3.8%, 2.7% and 4.2% for Pre-9/11, Vietnam Era and Peacetime only, respectively). Ratios higher than 1.0 indicate that Post-9/11 Veterans were at a higher risk compared to minority Veterans who served in other periods.

Employed minority Veterans were more likely to work year-round (50 to 52 weeks) and full-time (35 hours or more per week) than minority non-Veterans (81.7% and 70.2%, respectively). The median earnings of minorities in 2017 who worked year-round and full-time were \$49,976 for Veterans and \$36,968 for non-Veterans. The percentage of non-minority Veterans who worked year-round and full-time was 83.6% and their median earnings were \$59,724 in 2017. See Appendix A for additional details about Veteran employment by race/ethnicity.

## Occupation and Employment Sector

A higher percentage of employed minority Veterans aged 17 to 64 worked in the government sector (32.7%) than minority non-Veterans (12.2%). This includes local, state and Federal government workers. There are several initiatives<sup>(6)</sup> in place to actively recruit Veterans for jobs in the Federal government, which may explain some of the difference. Also, Veterans may find the transition from military to government easier or more compatible with their skills and experiences than to private sector.

Minority Veterans and non-Veterans differ in the specific kinds of work they do. In 2017, a little over one-third of all minority Veterans (35.1%) worked in management, professional, or other related occupations, compared with 30.1% of minority non-Veterans. Of the top ten occupations of minority Veterans, three were in the services category, two of which were in protective service occupations (police officers, security guards and correctional officers) and one in janitorial and building cleaning. Three were in sales and office occupations (customer service representative, supervisors of retail workers and first line supervisor of office administrative staff), two were in transportation (driver/sales workers and truck drivers and laborers and freight, stock, and material movers) and two in management. For employed minority non-Veterans, three of the top ten occupations were in service occupations (home health aides, food service, maids and janitorial services). Three were in sales and office occupations (cashiers, retail sales, and customer service representatives), one in transportation (driver/sales workers and truck drivers) and three in management, professional and other related occupations (teachers, registered nurses, and managers).

5 Active duty military personnel are not included. Unemployed individuals are those who are not currently working but are actively seeking work and they are different from those who are not participating in the labor force at all.

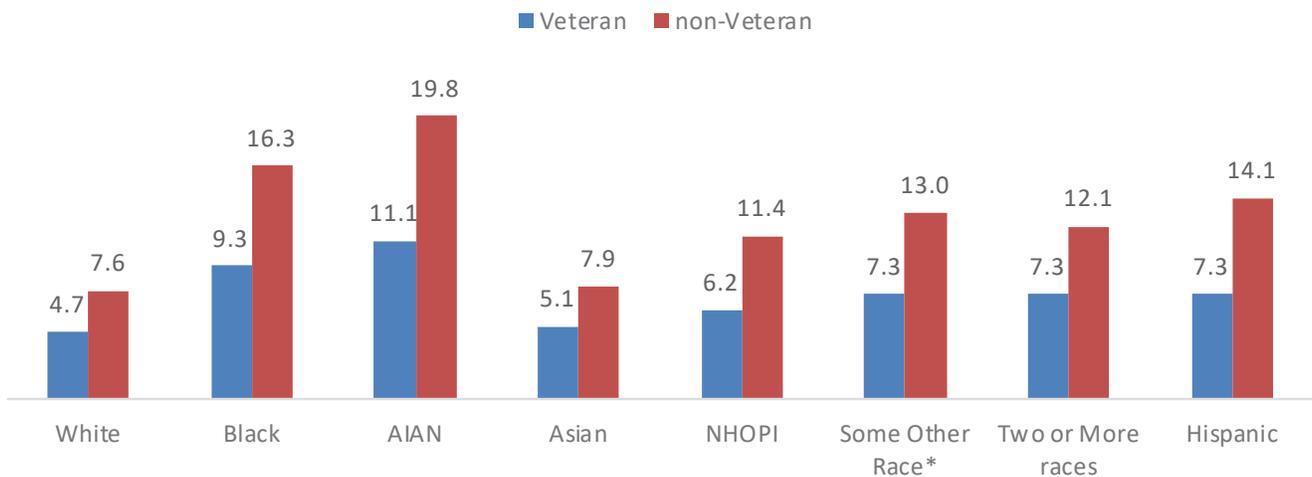
6 A few federal initiatives include Veterans employment Opportunities Act, The Veteran Recruitment Appointment, and Veterans Preference. See <https://www.fedshirevets.gov/job-seekers/>.

Seventeen percent of minority Veterans work in production and transportation occupations, compared with 14.5% of minority non-Veterans. This category includes jobs such as drivers, mechanics and freight handlers. Nineteen percent of minority Veterans work in service occupations, compared with 23.2% of minority non-Veterans. Service occupations include healthcare support, firefighters and law enforcement and food service workers. Eighteen percent of minority Veterans worked in sales and office occupations, compared with 22.5% of non-Veteran minorities. The sales and office category include jobs such as cashiers, salespeople, receptionists, office clerks, and mail carriers.

## Poverty

Poverty rate is defined as the proportion of people with incomes below a specified poverty threshold during a given year. Poverty thresholds vary by family size and composition.<sup>(7)</sup> The poverty universe is a subset of the total population and excludes those living in institutional group quarters (e.g., nursing homes, prisons) and those living in college dormitories and military barracks. Overall, minority Veterans have a lower percentage than minority non-Veterans living in poverty (Figure 13). In 2017, 9.9% of all minority Veterans and 17.3% of all minority non-Veterans had household incomes below poverty. Figure 14 shows that 60.4% of minority Veterans living in poverty were 55 years and older. In contrast 75.1% of minority non-Veterans in poverty were 54 years and younger. Poverty rates were highest for minority Veterans in the 55 to 64 age group (30.8%). The highest rates of poverty in non-Veteran minorities were aged 17 to 24 years (22.7%).

**Figure 13.**  
**Poverty Rates of by Race/Ethnicity and Veteran Status: 2017**  
*(in percent)*



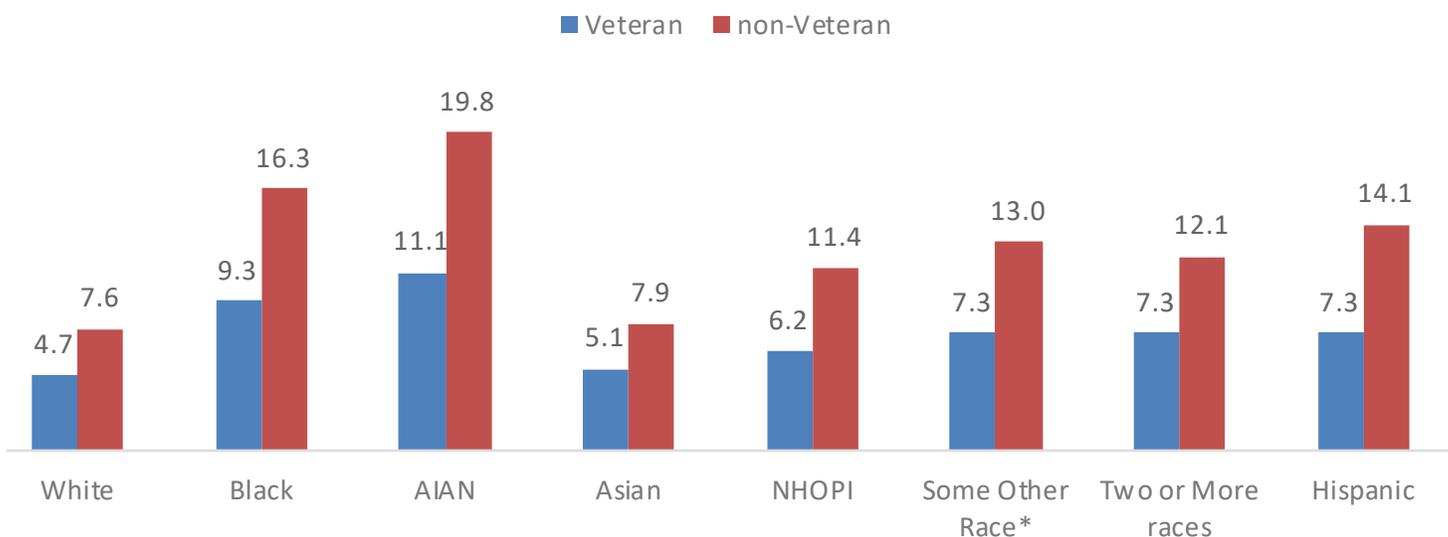
**Note:** An \* indicates that there is no statistical significant difference between values.

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2017

Minority Veterans are almost twice as likely to live in poverty as non-minority Veterans, 9.9% and 5.7% respectively. Poverty rates by race were highest among AIAN (11.1%) and Black Veterans (9.3%). White, NHOPi and Asian Veterans had the lowest poverty rates at 4.7%, 7.2% and 7.1% respectively.

<sup>7</sup> For additional information about poverty see <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/about/glossary.html>

**Figure 14.**  
**Poverty Rates of Minorities, by Age and Veteran Status: 2017**  
*(in percent)*



Note: An \* indicates that there is no statistical significant difference between values.

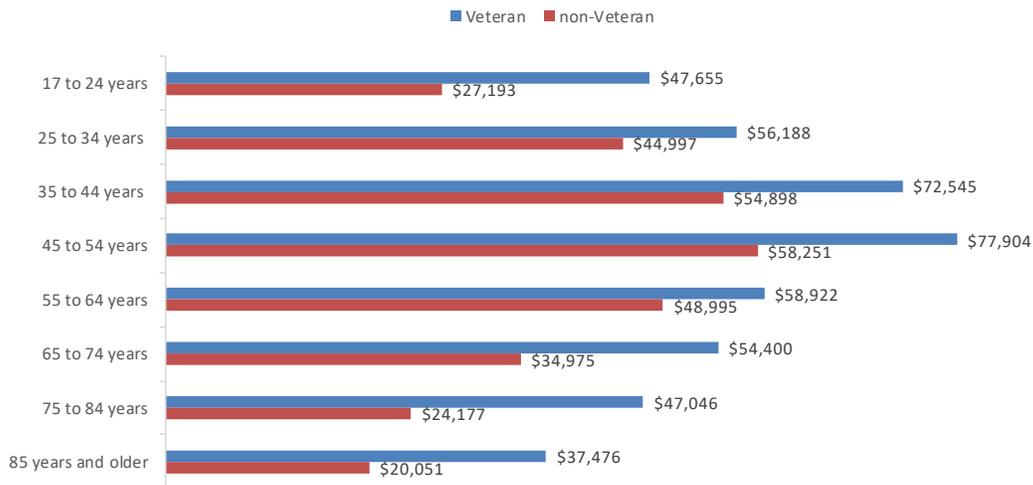
	Poverty Rate
Minority Veterans	9.9
non-minority Veterans	5.7
Minority non-Veterans	17.3



## Household Income

Household income includes the incomes of the householder and all other related and unrelated individuals 15 years and older living in the household. The median household income for all minority Veterans was \$59,966 in 2017, compared with \$46,991 for minority non-Veterans. Median household incomes were higher for minority Veterans than minority non-Veterans in all age categories (Figure 15). Median household incomes were highest for Asian Veterans (\$83,570) and Asian non-Veterans (\$82,974). Median household incomes were lowest for Blacks (Veterans \$54,878 and non-Veterans \$37,999).

**Figure 15.**  
**Median Household Income of Minorities, by Age and Veteran Status: 2017**  
*(in 2017 inflation-adjusted dollars)*



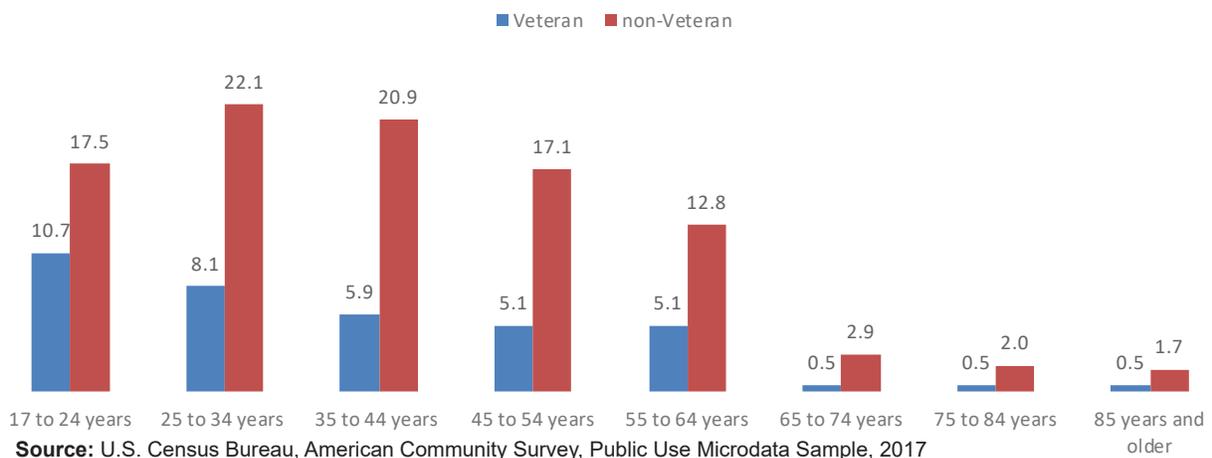
**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2017



## Health Insurance Coverage

Overall, 4.3% of all minority Veterans were uninsured, compared with 16.7% of non-Veteran minorities. In 2017, the uninsured rates for minorities varied by age. Minority Veterans under the age of 25 had the highest uninsured rate, at 10.7% (Figure 16). Minority non-Veterans between the ages of 25 and 34 had the highest uninsured rate, 22.1. The uninsured rates for all minorities decreased after age 34. The rates for minority Veterans over the age of 25, however, were significantly lower than those for non-Veterans. Once minorities reached age 65, the age of eligibility for Medicare, almost all were covered by some type of health insurance. Less than one percent of minority Veterans over the age of 65 were uninsured and less than two percent of non-Veteran minorities were uninsured.

**Figure 16.**  
**Uninsured Rates of Minorities, by Age and Veteran Status: 2017**  
*(in percent)*



In 2017, AIAN Veterans (8.1%) and NHOPI (6.2%) had the highest uninsured rates. The high uninsured rate for AIAN Veterans could be attributed to the use of Indian Health Service (IHS). If an individual only report having IHS coverage and no other type of insurance, they are considered uninsured.<sup>(8)</sup> IHS is a health care program through which the Department of Health and Human Services provides medical assistance to eligible American Indians at IHS facilities. In addition, IHS helps pay the cost of selected health care services provided at non-IHS facilities. In 2017, 61.5% of uninsured AIAN Veterans used IHS services. Asians had the lowest rates of uninsured, 2.8%.

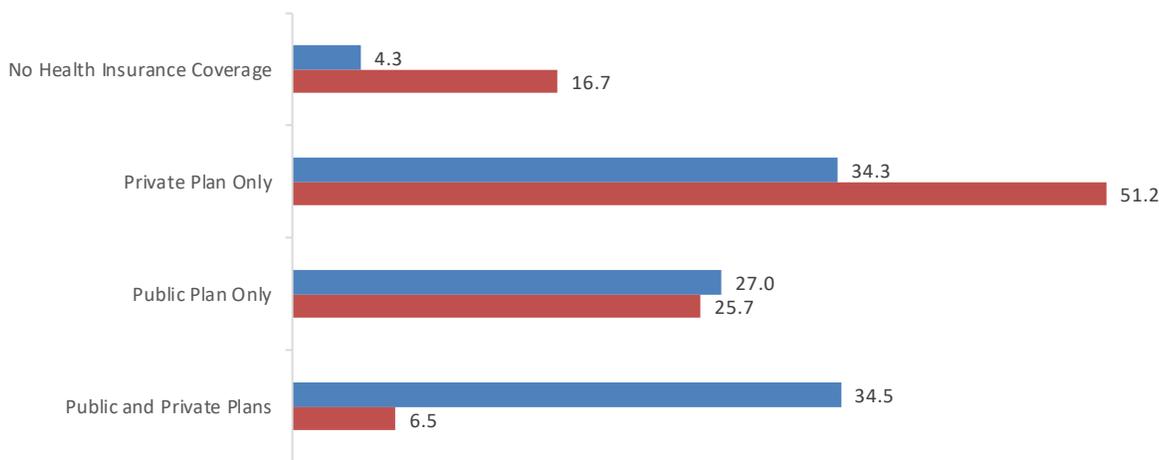
About a third of insured minority Veterans had more than one type of health insurance coverage in 2017 (34.5%), compared with 6.5% of minority non-Veterans (Figure 17). Fifteen percent of insured minority Veterans with multiple coverage were using employer-based health care plans in conjunction with VA health care while 7.2% were using employer-based health insurance with Tricare. Tricare is a health care plan provided by the Department of Defense for military personnel, military retirees, and their dependents. Eleven percent of minority Veterans used VA health care and Tricare.

Twenty-seven percent of insured minority Veterans had some type of public health insurance as their only source of health care coverage, compared with 25.7% of minority non-Veterans. Public plans included Medicaid, Medicare, VA and other state specific plans. While 38.6% of all minority Veterans reported using VA health care services alone or in combination with other plans, 8.6% reported using VA health services as their only source of health care coverage.<sup>(9)</sup>

**Figure 17.**  
**Health Insurance Coverage of Minorities, by Age and Veteran Status:**  
**2017**

in (paercent)

■ Veteran ■ non-Veteran



**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2017

8 For definition of health insurance coverage in the American Community Survey (ACS) see [https://www.census.gov/topics/health-insurance/about/glossary.html#par\\_textimage\\_18](https://www.census.gov/topics/health-insurance/about/glossary.html#par_textimage_18).

9 The question on the ACS asks respondents to choose their health care coverage from a list of categories with the option of writing in a type of coverage that was not listed. The category for VA coverage reads “VA (including those who have ever used or enrolled for VA health care.” The ACS estimates should therefore be expected to be somewhat higher than VA Utilization estimates since some veterans may mark the option if they are enrolled but not using services during the survey year.

# Use of the Department of Veterans Affairs Benefits and Services

VA administers and delivers a wide array of federally authorized benefits and services to eligible Veterans and their dependents and survivors. These benefit programs are overseen by three administrations within the VA – Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), and the National Cemetery Administration (NCA). This section of the report describes the utilization characteristics and trends of the Veterans for whom race/ethnicity could be determined. Data about the utilization of VA benefits and services come from the U.S. Veterans Eligibility Trends and Statistics (USVETS).

Figures 18 and 19 present information about unique Veteran users. A unique Veteran user is defined as any Veteran who received at least one VA benefit or service during fiscal year 2017. A Veteran may have received multiple benefits or services from VA but was only counted once in the total number of unique Veterans. In 2017, 2.5 million minority Veterans used at least one VA benefit or service. The proportion of minority Veterans who use at least one VA benefit or service steadily grew from 38.0% in 2005 to 52.3% in 2017.

## About the Data

Data for this section of the report come from the U.S. Veterans Eligibility Trends and Statistics (USVETS). USVETS is the single integrated dataset of Veteran demographic and socioeconomic data. It provides the most comprehensive picture of the Veteran population possible to support statistical, trend and longitudinal analysis. USVETS consists mainly of data sources from the Veterans Benefit Administration, the Veterans Health Administration, the Department of Defense’s Defense Manpower Data Center, and other data sources including commercial data sources. This dataset contains information about individual Veterans including demographics, details of military service, VA benefit usage, and more. USVETS data includes Veterans residing in states, US territories and foreign countries

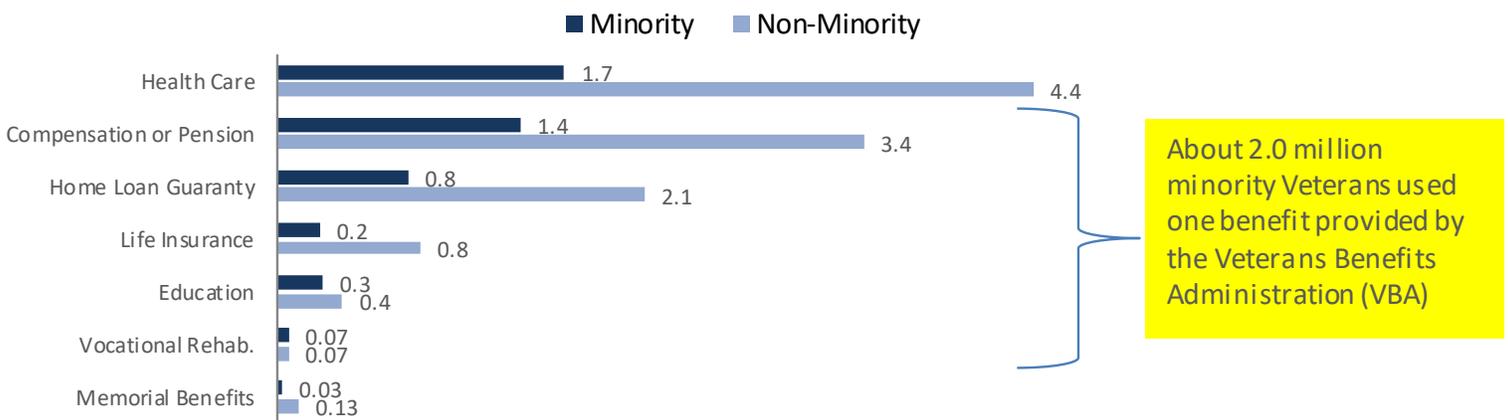
**Figure 18.**  
**Benefits of Minority Veterans: 2005-2017**  
*(in million)*



Source: U.S. Veterans Eligibility Trends and Statistics, 2017

Figure 19 shows the types of benefits and services VA provides and the number of Veterans who used each benefit during 2017. Of the total minority Veteran population in 2017, approximately 34.6% (1.7 million) used VA health care and less than one percent (30,744) were interred in a VA state or national cemetery or received a grave marker from VA. Of the 2.0 million minority Veterans (41.2% of total minority Veteran population) who used programs administered by VBA, 71.3% received disability payments, 38.2% had a VA home loan guaranty, 12.4% had a life insurance policy administered or supervised by VA, 13.2% used education benefits, and 3.4% participated in or completed a vocational rehabilitation training program during 2017.

**Figure 19.**  
**Benefits Use by Program and Minority Status: 2017**  
*(in million)*



*\*Note: The numbers from the chart do not sum to the total number of VA users. Veterans who used multiple programs are counted in each individual program, but only once in the overall total.*

**Source:** Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Enterprise Integration U.S. Veterans Eligibility Trends and Statistics, 2017

## Health Care Services

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) meets the health care needs of minority Veterans by providing a broad range of primary care, specialized care, and related medical and rehabilitative services. VA's health care delivery is one of the largest systems of integrated health care in the United States, with 143 medical centers and 1241 community-based clinics, comprising 1,384 sites of care for ease of access and convenience.<sup>(15)</sup>

Health care services are provided to minority Veterans at both VA and non-VA facilities in order to meet demand and ensure high quality service. When care at VA is not feasibly available, VA may furnish care through community providers. While there are some exceptions, Veterans generally must first enroll in the system in order to use VA health care (see the text box "Understanding VA Health Care" for more information). The number of minority Veterans enrolled in VA health care has been increasing over time. This is likely due to several factors, such as the increasing number of minorities serving in the military and VA outreach and initiatives targeted to minority Veterans. From 2005 to 2017, the number of minority Veterans enrolled in VA health care increased by 51.8%, from 1.64 million to 2.49 million (Figure 20). To put this in perspective, about 34.2% of all minority Veterans in 2005 were enrolled in VA health care compared with 52.0% of all minority Veterans in 2017. During this same time period, the number of non-minority Veterans enrolled in VA health care increased only 19.8%.

In 2017, 52.0% of minority Veterans were enrolled in the VA health care system compared with 47.7% of non-minority Veterans. Of the 2.5 million enrolled minority Veterans, 1.7 million used VA health care. Not all minorities who enroll in the health care system ultimately become health care users (Figure 20). This could be due to Veterans having other health care coverage such as Medicare, or they did not use VHA in a given year for any number of reasons (see the text box “Understanding VA Health Care” for additional information). From 2005 to 2017, the number of minority Veterans using VA health care increased 61.6%, from 1,026,190 to 1,658,458. To put this in perspective, about 21.5% of all enrolled minority Veterans in 2005 used VA health care compared with 34.6% of all enrolled minority Veterans in 2017.

**Figure 20.**  
**Number of Minority Veterans Enrolled in VA Health Care, by VA Health Care Usage: 2005-2017**

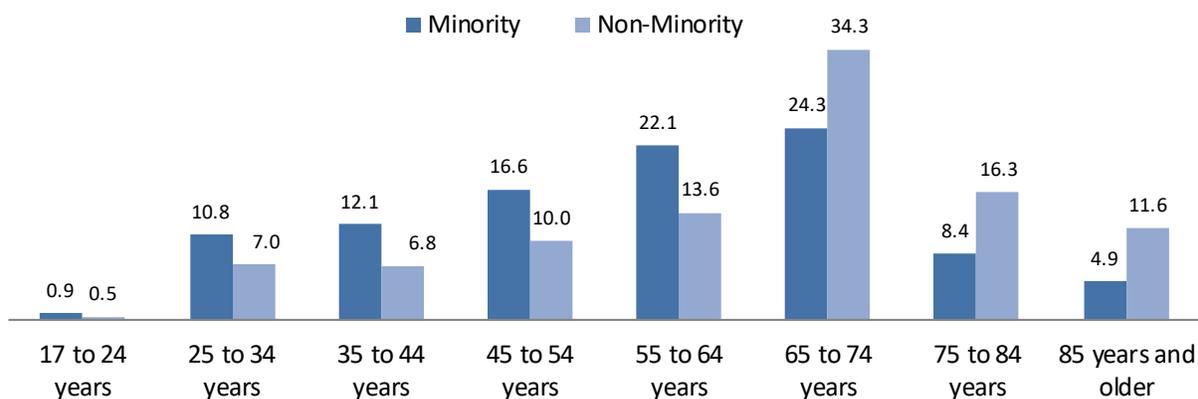
	Enrolled		Not Enrolled
	Used VAHC	Did not use VAHC	
2005	1,026,190	610,275	3,145,359
2006	1,054,891	649,308	3,065,970
2007	1,089,682	678,312	2,974,930
2008	1,133,275	697,733	2,939,487
2009	1,197,193	724,675	2,859,068
2010	1,273,077	749,531	2,815,156
2011	1,333,166	779,276	2,746,920
2012	1,386,669	809,737	2,675,835
2013	1,449,966	827,950	2,586,829
2014	1,519,940	843,074	2,490,774
2015	1,581,350	800,109	2,439,998
2016	1,625,571	817,374	2,365,556
2017	1,658,468	836,228	2,298,407

**Source:** Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Enterprise Integration U.S. Veterans Eligibility Trends and Statistics, 2017



The age distribution of minority Veterans using VA health care (Figure 21) generally resembles that of the total minority Veteran population in the ACS presented in Figure 7. Minorities who used VA health care were generally older than minority Veterans who did not use VA health care. The median age of minority Veterans who used VHA services was 59 years while the median age for minority Veterans who did not use VHA was 50 in 2017. Sixty-two percent of minority Veterans who used VA health care were under the age of 65 years compared with 37.9% of non-minority Veterans.

**Figure 21.**  
**Age Distribution of Minority Veterans who Used VHA: 2017**  
*(in percent)*



**Source:** Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Enterprise Integration U.S. Veterans Eligibility Trends and Statistics, 2017



## Understand VA Health Care

An overview of the concepts of enrollment, eligibility, and means testing helps with understanding how VA health care benefits work.

### Enrollment

Veterans who want to use VA health care services must apply for enrollment first. This is done by completing VA form 10-10EZ online, calling 1-877-222-VETS, or by visiting any VA health care of Veterans' benefits facility. Enrollment can be done future needs if services are not currently required. In some cases, enrollment is not necessary. Veterans do not have to enroll for health care if they have a 50% or higher VA service-connected disability rating, if they are seeking care for a VA-related disability only, or if they were discharged within the last year for a disability that was caused or worsened in military service but has not yet been rated by VA.

### Eligibility

Eligibility is determined as part of the enrollment process. Basic eligibility is determined based on type of service and discharge status. Many Veterans must also satisfy a minimum duty requirement. Veterans are then generally assigned to one of eight priority groups based on different factors such as length of service, level of disability, and level on income. These priority groups are intended to help VA allocate its available health care resources among Veterans should Congress reduce healthcare funding below what is necessary to care for all eligible Veterans. VA priority groups range from 1 to 8 with priority group 1 as the highest priority for access to VA health care priority group 8 as the lowest priority. Assignment to certain priority groups is based in part on income. Increases or decreases in income may affect future priority group determination and copayment obligations for services. VA uses a process of means testing to determine eligibility.

Priority group 3 is typically assigned to Veterans who are former Prisoner of War (POW), in receipt of the Purple Heart Medal, in receipt of the Medal of Honor, etc. The complete list can be found on [https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/publications/IB\\_10-441\\_enrollment\\_priority\\_groups.pdf](https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/publications/IB_10-441_enrollment_priority_groups.pdf).

### Means Testing

VA's means testing applies both national and geographic income limits in determining priority groups. For low income Veterans, Congress added geographic income limits to the existing national income limit to expand services for those who live in high-cost areas. For higher income Veterans, VA assigns Priority Group 8 for those who were enrolled prior to 2003, or who have income that exceeds current income limits by more than 10% and who agree to pay the applicable copayment. Below are some examples to illustrate how means testing works.

In FY 2018, a Veteran with no dependents living in DePage County, Illinois would qualify for placement in Priority Group 7 with copay for health care services on an income basis if the gross household income is below the 2018 VA National Income Threshold of \$33,632, or below the 2018 VA National Geographic Income Threshold of \$44,250 for Dupage County.

Changes in the number of dependents can influence priority groups status. For example, if this same Veteran's income was \$50,600 and he or she had a child in 2018, the priority group would change due to higher income limit extensions for dependents. Separate income limit extensions are available for up to 7 children.

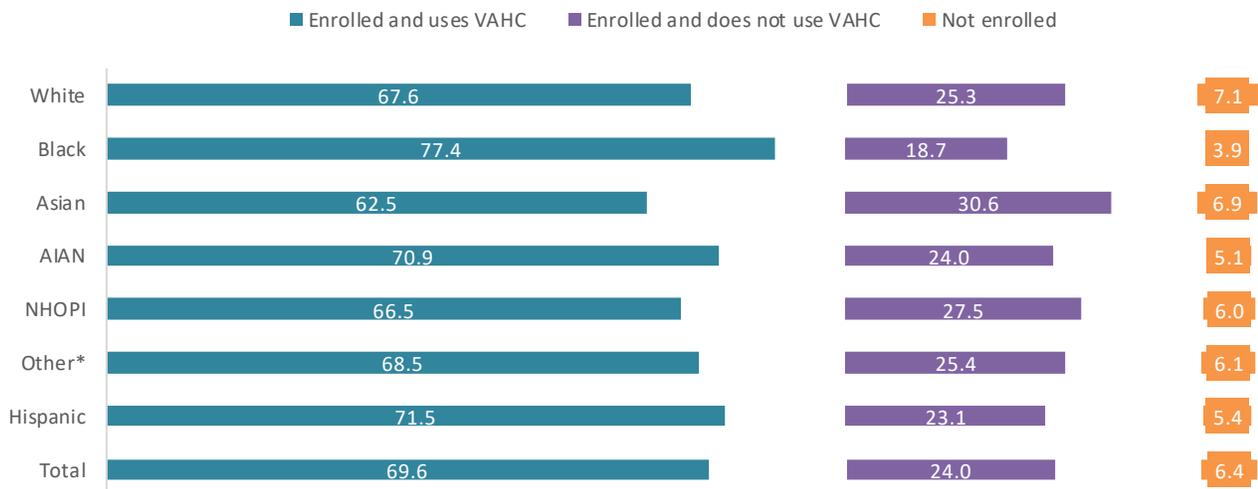
Unemployment or other common losses to income may increase available benefits. For example, if income drops below \$11,830 there may be eligibility for free medications and travel benefits to VA facilities.

## Service-Connected Disability and Health Care Utilization

In 2017, 20.4% of minority Veterans who used VHA health care had a service-connected disability rating. Service-connected disabilities are injuries or illnesses that are incurred or aggravated during military service. VBA reviews disability compensation claims, determines if the disability is service-connected, and then rates the severity of the disability from 0 to 100. In the context of this analysis, “service-connected” refers only to Veterans who have been granted VA benefits for a service-connected disability. Minority Veteran patients with a service-connected disability who either have not yet applied for or have not been granted benefits would not be included here. Service-connected disability status can be granted for many conditions and diagnoses.

It should be noted that not all minority Veterans who have a service-connected disability use VA health care services. These Veterans can receive care from their choice of public or private providers depending on their access to health care insurance. The likelihood of a Veteran with a service-connected disability seeking treatment from VA health care facilities varies by race and ethnicity. Veterans with a service-connected disability are more likely than those without a service-connected disability to use VA health care regardless of race/ethnicity (Figure 22 and 23). Disabled Black Veterans have the highest rate of VA health care use (Figure 22). Among those who do not have a service-connected disability, the rates for NHOPI and Asian Veterans are considerably lower than other races/ethnicities (Figure 23).

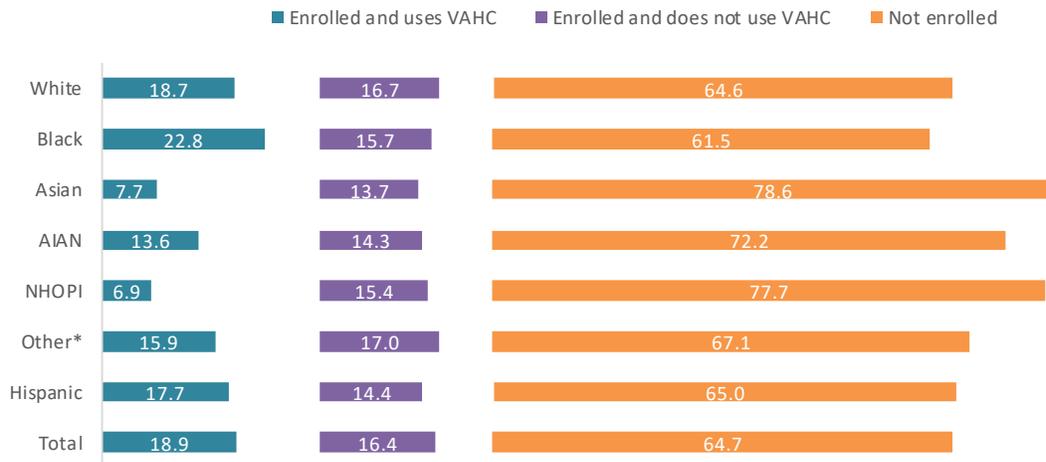
**Figure 22.**  
**Service-Connected Disabled Veterans’ Use of VA Health Care by Race/Ethnicity: 2017**  
*(in percent)*



**Note:** \*Other includes Veterans of two or more races

**Source:** Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Enterprise Integration U.S. Veterans Eligibility Trends and Statistics, 2017

**Figure 23.**  
**Non- Service-Connected Disabled Veterans' Use of VA Health Care by Race/Ethnicity: 2017**  
*(in percent)*



Note: \*Other includes Veterans of two or more races

Source: Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Enterprise Integration U.S. Veterans Eligibility Trends and Statistics, 2017

## Compensation Benefits

Disability Compensation is a monetary benefit paid to Veterans for disability resulting from illness or injury incurred or aggravated during military service. These conditions are referred to as service-connected conditions; also, commonly known as service-connected disabilities. The amount of Disability Compensation payments varies with the degree of disability and the number of the Veteran's dependents. The benefit is paid monthly generally for life. Ratings for service-connected disabilities range from 0% to 100%, in increments of 10. A 0% rating indicates that a disability exists, but is not so disabling that it entitles the Veteran to compensation benefits, whereas a 100% disability rating generally indicates that the disability is severe and that the Veteran cannot gain or hold steady employment.<sup>(16)</sup> In 2017, 1,315,989 minority Veterans were receiving compensation from VA for a service-connected disability, representing about 27.5% of the total population of minority Veterans. Of those minorities receiving compensation, 60.9% had a combined disability rating of 50% or higher.

### Most Prevalent Service-Connected Disability Awards

Of the top ten conditions for minority Veterans in 2017, the top five (tinnitus, limited flexion of the leg, lumbosacral or cervical strain, post-traumatic stress disorder, and scars) accounted for nearly 22.6% of all active service-connected disability awards. The top five are similar for non-Minority Veterans (Figure 24).

#### Tinnitus

Tinnitus is noise or ringing in the ears. A common problem, tinnitus affects about 1 in 5 people.<sup>(17)</sup> Tinnitus isn't a condition itself — it's a symptom of an underlying condition, such as age-related hearing loss, ear injury, or a circulatory system disorder. Almost 5.7% of service-connected disabled minority Veterans received compensation for this condition in 2017.

#### Limited Flexion of Leg

Flexion describes a bending movement that decreases the angle between a segment and its proximal segment. A knee

### Lumbosacral or cervical strain

Lumbosacral strain, commonly referred to as lower back pain, is a common condition in the general population as well as in the population of minority Veterans. Cervical sprain or strain typically refers to acute pain arising from injured soft tissues of the neck, including muscles, tendons, and ligaments. Approximately 42% of service-connected disabled, minority Veterans received compensation for these conditions in 2017.

### Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can occur as a result of experiencing a trauma, and between 7 and 8% of the general population will have PTSD at some point in their lives.<sup>{18}</sup> Approximately 3.7% of service-connected disabled minority Veterans received compensation for this condition in 2017. According to the VA's National Center for PTSD, some groups of people, including Blacks and Hispanics, may be more likely than Whites to develop PTSD. This may be because these groups are more likely to go through a trauma. For example, in Veterans who survived Vietnam, a larger percent of Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans were in combat than Whites.<sup>{19}</sup> Experiencing any trauma can predispose an individual to developing PTSD, but that does not mean that every individual will develop PTSD. There are several factors that influence the development of PTSD, such as length and intensity of the trauma, reaction to the trauma, or how much support and help the individual sought after the trauma.<sup>{19}</sup>

### Scars

In 2017, around 3.7% of service-connected disabled minority Veterans received service-connected compensation for scars.

**Figure 24.**  
**Ten Most Prevalent Service-Connected Disability Awards by Minority Status: 2017**

Minority Veterans		
Condition	Frequency	Percentage
Tinnitus	752,216	5.7
Limitation of flexion of leg	679,826	5.2
Lumbosacral or cervical strain	555,218	4.2
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	488,432	3.7
Scars, other	487,912	3.7
Limited motion of the ankle	410,562	3.1
Migraine	372,490	2.8
Eczema	338,428	2.6
Paralysis of sciatic nerve	333,470	2.6
Defective hearing	315,880	2.4
<b>Total – Most Prevalent Disability Awards</b>	<b>4,734,434</b>	<b>36.1</b>
<b>Total – All Other Disability Awards</b>	<b>8,366,492</b>	<b>63.9</b>
<b>Total – Number of Disability Awards</b>	<b>13,100,926</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total – Unique Beneficiaries</b>	<b>1,315,989</b>	

Non-Minority Veterans		
Condition	Frequency	Percentage
Tinnitus	1,988,362	8.2
Defective hearing	1,157,756	4.8
Limitation of flexion of leg	971,132	4.0
Scars, other	967,544	4.0
Lumbosacral or cervical strain	904,692	3.7
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	861,506	3.6
Limited motion of the ankle	656,986	2.7
Paralysis of sciatic nerve	609,160	2.5
Degenerative arthritis of the spine	563,012	2.3
Migraine	561,156	2.3
<b>Total – Most Prevalent Disability Awards</b>	<b>9,241,306</b>	<b>38.2</b>
<b>Total – All Other Disability Awards</b>	<b>14,967,726</b>	<b>61.8</b>
<b>Total – Number of Disability Awards</b>	<b>24,209,032</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total – Unique Beneficiaries</b>	<b>3,204,733</b>	

Source: U.S. Veterans Eligibility Trends and Statistics, 2017

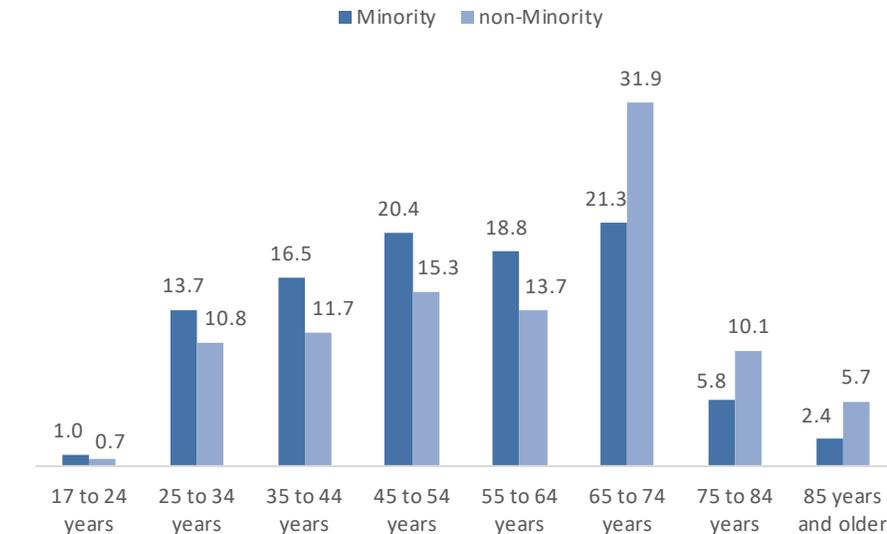
## Age Distribution for Minority Veterans Receiving Compensation

Minority Veterans who received service-connected disability compensation were younger than their non-minority counterparts (median age 54 and 62, respectively). Figure 25 shows that nearly three-quarters (70.5%) of minority Veterans receiving compensation were below the age of 65, while slightly more than half (52.3%) of non-minority Veterans were below the age of 65. Compared with the total population of minority Veterans, both the youngest (17 to 24 years) and the oldest (85 years and older) generations made up smaller proportions of minority Veterans who received service-connected disability compensation in 2017. Conversely, those aged 65 to 74 years of age made up larger proportions of minority Veterans who received service-connected disability compensation when compared to total population.

**Figure 25**

### Age Distribution of Veterans Receiving Disability Compensation by Minority Status: 2017

(in percent)



Source: U.S. Veterans Eligibility Trends and Statistics, 2017

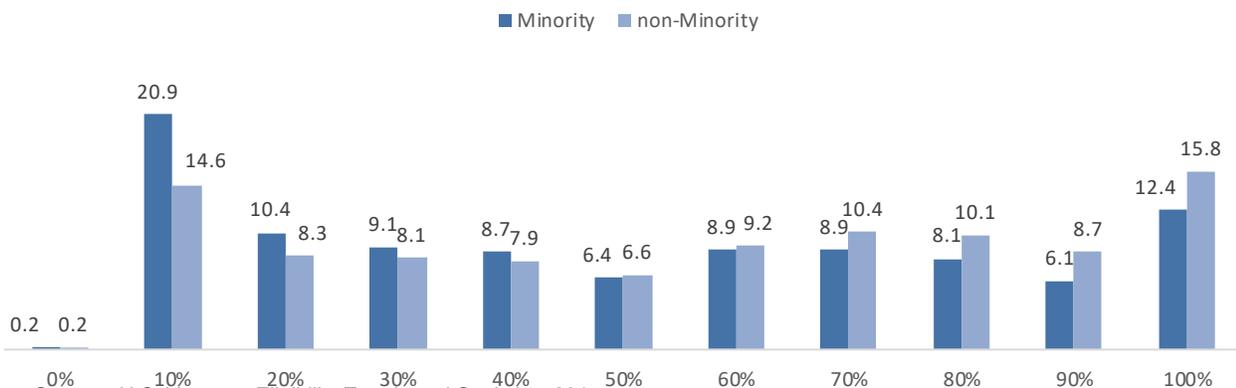
## Degree of Disability

Minority and non-minority Veterans have similar distributions of disability ratings except for 10% and 100% disability ratings. At the 10% rating, minority Veterans is 6.3 percentage points higher than non-minority Veterans. A 10% rating has the lowest severity to receive compensation. Non-minority Veterans is 3.4 percentage points higher than minority Veterans who received a 100%. A 100% rating has the highest severity to receive compensation.

**Figure 26**

### Distribution of Disability Rating by Minority Status: 2017

(in percent)



Source: U.S. Veterans Eligibility Trends and Statistics, 2017

## Individual Unemployment Compensation

Individual Unemployability (IU) is a component of VA's Disability Compensation benefit which allows Veterans to receive financial compensation at the 100% level even though their combined service-connected disability rating is below 100%. In order to qualify, a Veteran must be unable to maintain substantially gainful employment as a result of their service-connected disabilities.<sup>(20)</sup> In 2017, 8.4% of minority Veterans who received compensation for a service-connected disability were receiving IU compensation. Thirty percent of all IU participants were minorities. This represents 2.3% of the total minority population compared to 1.7% of non-minority Veterans.

## Pension

Pension benefits are payable to wartime Veterans who meet certain eligibility requirements. Generally, in order to qualify for a disability pension, Veterans must meet the following criteria: (1) discharged under conditions other than dishonorable, (2) serve at least 90 days of active service, one of which was during a wartime period, (3) have a family income that falls below a set annual limit, and (4) be age 65 or older, or be permanently and totally disabled or be a patient in a nursing home receiving skilled nursing care or the recipient of a supplemental social security income.<sup>(10)(21)</sup> Veterans also cannot receive a VA disability pension and service-connected compensation at the same time. In 2017, 86,416 (1.8%) minority Veterans were receiving a disability pension. One percent (180,230) of non-minority Veterans received pension.

## Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program is authorized by Congress under Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 31.<sup>(22)</sup> The VR&E program assists Veterans who have service-connected disabilities to prepare for, find and keep suitable employment. For Veterans with service-connected disabilities that cannot hold suitable employment VR&E provides services to help maximize their independence in daily life. Services that are provided by the VR&E program include: interest and aptitude testing, occupational exploration, career counseling, on-the-job and post-secondary training, and job placement assistance.<sup>(22)</sup> Fifty percent of Veterans participating in the VR&E program in 2017 were minority Veterans (66,075 out of 131,976). Participants are defined as Veterans in any of the following stages of vocational rehabilitation process: extended evaluation, independent living, job ready status and rehabilitation to employment.

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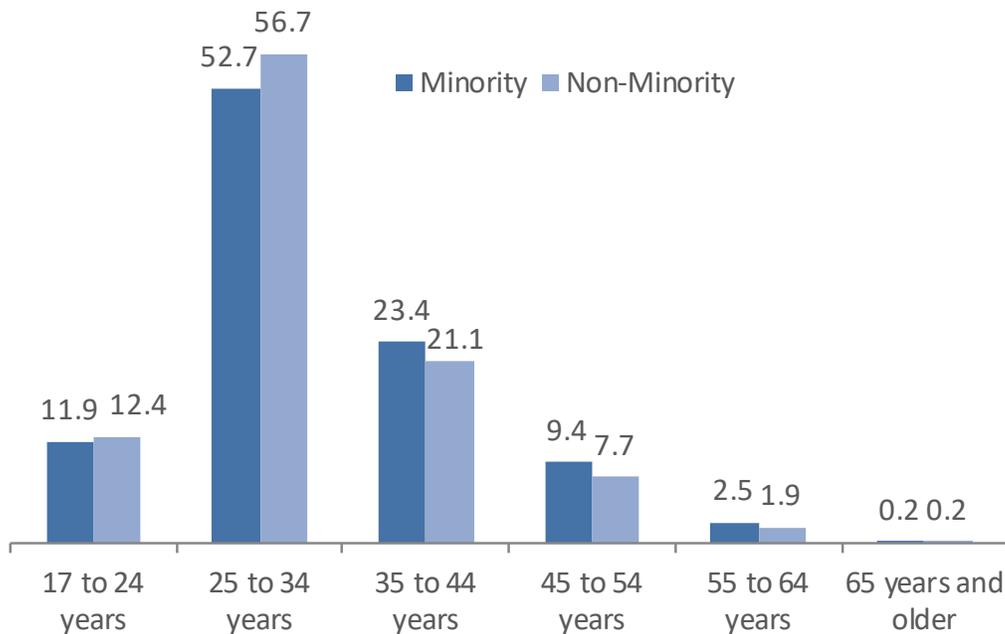
<sup>10</sup> If the Veteran entered active duty after September 7, 1960 generally, he or she must serve at least 24 month or the full period for which they were called or ordered to active duty (with some exceptions), with at least one day during a wartime period.

## Education Benefits

There are many benefits available to advance the education and skills of Veterans and Service Members (see text box “Various Department of Veteran Affairs Education Programs” for more information). The establishment of the G.I. Bill in 1944 was fundamental in creating educational benefits for those who have served this nation, a goal that continues as a high priority today.<sup>(23)</sup> Since 1944, Congress has continued to create education programs in order to reflect the changing social, political and economic environment and to better serve the needs of current Veterans. For more information see Appendix D.

In 2017, 260,035 minority Veterans used education benefits. This represents 5.4% of the total population of minority Veterans and is twice that of non-minority Veterans (2.5%). Regardless of minority status, more than half of Veterans using educational benefits were age 25 to 34 years (minority Veterans 52.7% and non-minority Veterans 56.7%). Less than one percent of all Veterans who used education benefits in 2017 were age 65 or older.

**Figure 27.**  
**Age Distribution of Education Benefits by Minority Status: 2017**  
*(in percent)*



Source: U.S. Veterans Eligibility Trends and Statistics, 2017

## Burial and Memorial Benefits

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) oversees all the VA programs that provide burial benefits to Veterans, their dependents, and survivors. All honorably discharged Veterans became eligible for burial in 1873. In 1973, Public Law 93-43 authorized the transfer of 82 of the existing 84 national cemeteries from the Department of the Army to the VA. The NCA cemetery system does not include Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia or Soldiers' Home National Cemetery in Washington, DC. In September 2016, VA opened its 135th cemetery— Omaha National Cemetery.<sup>(24)</sup> Veterans who served in a branch of the military and were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable may be eligible for burial in a VA National Cemetery. Veterans are entitled to a grave, headstone or marker, burial flag and Presidential Memorial Certificate. In 2017, 30,744 minority Veterans used memorial benefits.



## Future Challenges

The VA has made great strides in the past 30 years to meet the needs of minority Veterans as one of the fastest growing sub-populations within the Veteran community. VA is committed to continue ensuring that minority Veterans receive benefits and services equal to their non-minority counterparts and that they are treated with respect by all VA service providers. The challenge for the VA in serving the increasingly diverse population is to ensure that every Veteran achieves the best outcomes regardless of who they are, where they live or what health problems they have.

The minority Veteran population is growing, and more minorities are looking to use benefits that VA provides, making it even more important for VA to anticipate and address the challenges that minority Veterans are currently facing. During the December 2016 Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans meeting, four challenges were identified by the Center for Minority Veterans (CMV): homelessness, awareness of VA benefits, chronic diseases and unemployment. The first three of these are discussed below. For unemployment see the employment section of this report.

### Homelessness

According to the 2017 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report, Veterans are fifty percent more likely to become homeless compared with all Americans.<sup>(25)</sup> The risk is even greater among Veterans living in poverty and poor minority Veterans. There were 40,056 Veterans who experienced homelessness on a single night in January 2017.<sup>(25)</sup> This represents 7.2% of all homeless people and 9.1% of all homeless adults. Nearly 62% were in shelters or transitional housing programs, and 38.4% were in unsheltered locations. While only 23.7% of the total Veteran population identified themselves as part of a racial minority group, nearly half (43.2%) of Veterans experiencing homelessness in the U.S. were in a minority group. One-third (33.1%) of Veterans experiencing homelessness were Black, and 4.8% were multi-racial. Veterans experiencing homelessness were nearly half as likely to be Hispanic as non-Veteran individuals experiencing homelessness (10.3% compared to 18.7%) and less than half as likely as all people experiencing homelessness (10.3% compared to 21.6%).

VA is committed to ending homelessness among Veterans. Overall, Veteran homelessness dropped 45% between 2009 and 2017.<sup>(26)</sup> VA conducts outreach to proactively seek out Veterans in need of assistance. VA provides health and rehabilitative services, employment assistance, transitional housing, and supportive services. In conjunction with the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Veterans can acquire permanent supportive housing. VA also collaborates with other federal, state and local agencies; employers; housing providers, faith-based and community nonprofits; and others to expand employment and affordable housing options for Veterans exiting homelessness.<sup>(26)</sup>

### Awareness of VA Benefits

VA has long understood the importance of outreach activities to raise awareness of available benefits and services among Veterans. The 2010 National Survey of Veterans found that over half of minority Veterans had little to no awareness of VA benefits and services.<sup>(27)</sup> For minority Veterans, the general understanding of VA benefits available to them had the highest percentage of positive responses among the awareness questions: between 42% and 46% of minority Veterans indicated that they understood their general benefits “a lot” or “some”. Asian and Hispanic Veterans showed the highest percentage of understanding their general benefits with 45.1% and 46.0%, respectively. Awareness was lower for specific programs. For example, about 22% of minority Veterans reported understanding the Veterans life insurance benefits. For American Indian/Alaska Native and multiracial Veterans, this percentage was only 15.1% and 18.8%, respectively.

VA's CMV was created in November 1994 under Public Law 103-446. This law also established the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans. CMV helps to educate Veterans, their families and survivors through targeted outreach and effective advocacy. VA continues to make improvements to outreach programs and work with communities to raise awareness of services and benefits available to Veterans and their families.

## Chronic Diseases

Low income and minority Americans disproportionately experience chronic diseases and greater chronic illness related mortality.<sup>{28}</sup> In 2017, heart disease, cancer, chronic lower respiratory diseases, stroke, diabetes, chronic liver disease, kidney disease, hypertension and Alzheimer's disease were among the top ten leading causes of death for minority Americans. See Appendix C for tables of leading causes of death by race/ethnicity and sex in the United States.

Minority Veterans have greater access to care than their non-Veteran counterparts, with over 90% having health care insurance coverage. Studies of VA health care services have shown that VA is generally good at delivering preventative and primary care services (e.g., screenings for cancer, high blood pressure testing) regardless of demographic group.<sup>{29}{30}{31}</sup> However, VA has not been completely successful at eliminating the racial and ethnic disparity in outcomes (e.g. chronic illness mortality).<sup>{29}</sup> Continued research to identify effective strategies for reducing disparities and putting them into practice is needed.

## About the Data

The 2010 National Survey of Veterans (NSV) was a comprehensive nationwide survey designed to help the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) plan its future programs and services for Veterans. The information gathered through these surveys helps VA to identify the needs of Veterans and then allocate resources in ways that will ensure these needs are met. While the NSVs have been conducted under the general authorization of U.S. Code Title 38, Section 527 which requires the VA Secretary to gather data for the purposes of planning and evaluating VA programs, the 2010 NSV also included the requirement, at the direction of P.L. 108- 454, Section 805, to assess beneficiary awareness of VA benefits and services. The Public Law also expanded the survey populations in the 2010 NSV to include in addition to Veterans, other beneficiary groups: Active Duty Service members; demobilized National Guard and Reserve members; Family members and Surviving spouses. Survey items included measures of demographic and military service characteristics, health status, VA and non-VA health care use, and determinants of and barriers to VA health care use. All data were weighted to represent population estimates for the total Veteran population. For additional information about NSV see: <http://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SurveysAndStudies/NVSSurveyFinalWeightedReport.pdf>



## Definitions and Concepts

This report adhered to the 1997 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standards on race and ethnicity which identify two ethnic categories (Hispanic or Latino, and Not Hispanic or Latino) and five racial categories (American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN), Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (NHOPI) and White). The 1997 OMB standards permit the reporting of more than one race:

**White** – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

**Black or African American** – A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.

**American Indian or Alaska Native** – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.

**Asian** – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.

**Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander** – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

**Two or More Races** – A person having more than one race.

**Some Other Race** – Includes individuals who did not report as belonging to any other race categories.

**Hispanic or Latino** – A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.

**Minorities** - Includes a person who self-reported their race as Black, AIAN, Asian, NHOPI, Two or more races, Some other race or Hispanic or Latino of any race.

**Non-Minorities** – A person who self-reported their race and ethnicity as White alone, non-Hispanic.



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Characteristics of Veterans and Non-Veterans by Race/Ethnicity from the American Community Survey 2017

White Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristics		Veterans		Non_Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		13,657,937	100	134,821,194	100	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	12,670,740	92.8	61,887,637	45.9	*
	Female	987,197	7.2	72,933,557	54.1	*
<b>Living in group quarters</b>		224,645	1.6	3,191,252	2.4	*
<b>Age</b>	17 to 24 years	135,858	1.0	14,755,425	10.9	*
	25 to 34 years	841,639	6.2	21,884,151	16.2	*
	35 to 44 years	1,038,199	7.6	20,089,893	14.9	*
	45 to 54 years	1,772,540	13.0	22,706,238	16.8	*
	55 to 64 years	2,206,985	16.2	25,027,022	18.6	*
	65 to 74 years	3,994,679	29.2	17,918,975	13.3	*
	75 to 84 years	2,372,738	17.4	8,841,240	6.6	*
	85 years and older	1,295,299	9.5	3,598,250	2.7	*
<b>Median Age</b>			67	49		*

White Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristics		Veterans		Non_Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		13,657,937	100	134,821,194	100	
<b>Citizen</b>	Citizen	13,634,346	99.8	132,633,100	98.4	*
	Not a citizen	23,591	0.2	2,188,094	1.6	*
<b>Language</b>	Speaks a language other than English	379,015	2.8	7,258,295	5.4	*
	Speaks English well	13,636,005	99.8	134,057,026	99.4	*
	Speaks English less than well	21,932	0.2	764,168	0.6	*
<b>Period of Military Service</b>	Post-9/11	2,194,680	16.1			
	Pre=9/11	1,722,864	12.6			
	Vietnam Era	5,012,103	36.7			
	Korean War	1,152,640	8.4			
	World War II	489,001	3.6			
	Peacetime only	3,086,649	22.6			

White Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristics		Veterans		Non_Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		13,657,937	100	134,821,194	100	
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	9,110,236	66.7	71,322,732	52.9	*
	Divorced	2,041,877	15.0	16,792,751	12.5	*
	Widowed or Separated	1,378,649	10.1	11,306,440	8.4	*
	Never Married	1,127,175	8.3	35,399,271	26.3	*
Educational Attainment	High school graduate or less	4,614,908	33.8	46,376,876	34.4	*
	Some college	4,934,485	36.1	41,500,423	30.8	*
	Bachelor's degree	2,381,957	17.4	29,365,451	21.8	*
	Advanced degree	1,726,587	12.6	17,578,444	13.0	*
	Percent enroled in school	463,296	3.4	9,838,391	7.3	*

White Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristics		Veterans		Non_Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		13,657,937	100	13,821,194	100	
<b>Poverty Status</b>	0 to 99% of poverty	628,345	4.7	9,981,759	7.6	*
	100 to 149% of poverty	763,427	5.7	8,038,127	6.1	*
	150 to 199% of poverty	981,700	7.3	9,527,023	7.2	
	200 to 299% of poverty	2,171,909	16.2	19,311,694	14.7	*
	300 to 399% of poverty	2,164,768	16.1	18,979,381	14.4	*
	400% of poverty and public coverage	6,723,143	50.0	65,791,958	50.0	
<b>Health Insurance</b>	No health insurance coverage	291,337	2.1	8,146,037	6.0	*
	Has private coverage only	3,628,226	26.6	82,803,652	61.4	*
	Has public coverage only	3,334,672	24.4	22,609,804	16.8	*
	Has private and public coverage	6,403,702	46.9	21,261,702	15.8	*

White Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristics		Veterans		Non_Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		13,657,937	100	134,821,194	100	
<b>Disability Status</b>	Has one or more disability	4,240,900	31.1	20,763,851	15.4	*
	No disability	9,417,037	68.9	114,057,343	84.6	*
<b>Service-connected Disability Status</b>		2,943,119	21.5			
		10,714,818	78.5			
<b>Region</b>	Northwest	2,097,072	15.4	26,117,821	19.4	*
	Midwest	3,235,297	23.7	35,563,744	26.4	*
	South	5,406,473	39.6	46,651,960	34.6	*
	West	2,918,071	21.4	26,475,637	19.6	*
	Puerto Rico	1,024	0.0	12,032	0.0	
<b>Median personal income (in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars)</b>		\$40,281		\$50,484		*
<b>Median household income (in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars)</b>		\$62,997		\$66,792		*

White Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristics		Veterans		Non_Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics						
Total Population, Between 17 and 65 years old		5,476,842	100	103,820,441	100	
<b>Employment Status</b>	Employed	4,668,608	77.9	85,326,506	82.2	*
	Unemployed	154,110	2.6	2,780,708	2.7	
	Not in labor force	1,172,503	19.6	15,713,227	15.1	*
<b>Labor Force Participation Rate</b>		88,107,214	80.4	87,401,017	84.9	*
<b>Work Status of Employed</b>	Worked year-round, full time	3,927,996	65.5	62,564,318	59.9	*
	Worked less than year-round, full time	2,067,225	34.5	41,898,411	40.1	*
<b>Personal Earnings of Employed</b>	Less than \$20,000	523,784	11.2	18,935,845	22.2	*
	\$20,000 to \$39,999	990,654	21.2	21,441,298	25.1	*
	\$40,000 to \$59,999	1,071,947	23.0	17,034,458	20.0	*
	\$60,000 to \$99,999	793,896	17.0	10,702,575	12.5	*

White Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristics		Veterans		Non_Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, Between 17 and 65 years old		5,476,842	100	103,820,441	100	
<b>Personal Earnings of Employed cont.</b>	\$80,000 to \$99,999	455,827	9.8	5,807,715	6.8	*
	\$100,000 or more	832,294	17.8	11,396,403	13.4	*
<b>Class of Worker of Employed</b>	Private	3,657,611	67.7	74,036,214	76.2	*
	Government	1,303,262	24.1	13,655,096	14.0	*
	Self-employed	444,637	8.2	9,515,388	9.8	*
<b>Occupation of Employed</b>	Management, professional, and related	1,800,526	38.6	36,982,506	43.3	*
	Service	618,827	13.3	12,538,283	14.7	*
	Sales and office	727,073	15.6	19,898,907	23.3	*
	Farming, fishing, and forestry	16,869	0.4	393,393	0.5	*
	Construction, extraction, maintenance...	691,363	14.8	6,669,369	7.8	*
	Production, transportation...	813,950	17.4	8,884,048	10.4	*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2017  
Note: \*Indicates that comparative statements are statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.

Black or African American Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristics		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and other		2,001,760	100	24,652,026	100	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	1,710,569	85.5	10,529,728	42.7	*
	Female	291,191	14.5	14,122,298	57.3	*
<b>Living in group quarters</b>		52,078	2.6	869,154	3.5	*
<b>Age</b>	17 to 27 years	36,231	1.8	3,355,328	13.6	*
	25 to 34 years	161,715	8.1	5,082,567	20.6	*
	35 to 44 years	230,838	11.5	4,444,648	18.0	*
	45 to 54 years	412,376	20.6	4,212,372	17.1	*
	55 to 64 years	519,128	25.9	3,837,204	15.6	*
	65 to 74 years	408,132	20.4	2,336,523	9.5	*
	75 to 84 years	166,088	8.3	1,020,252	4.1	*
	85 years and older	67,252	3.4	363,132	1.5	*
<b>Median Age</b>		57		43		*

Black or African American Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristics		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and other		2,001,760	100	24,652,026	100	
<b>Citizen</b>	Citizen	1,991,126	99.5	23,587,893	95.7	*
	Not a citizen	10,634	0.5	1,064,133	4.3	*
<b>Language</b>	Speaks a language other than English	70,818	3.5	2,158,316	95.7	*
	Speaks English well	1,997,890	99.8	24,409,342	99.0	*
	Speaks English less than well	3,870	0.2	242,684	1.0	*
<b>Period of Military Service</b>	Post-9/11	488,346	24.4			
	Pre-9/11	388,787	19.4			
	Vietnam Era	543,610	27.2			
	Korean War	67,373	3.4			
	World War II	19,358	1.0			
	Preacetime only	494,286	24.7			

Black or African American Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristics		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and other		2,001,760	100	24,652,026	100	
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	1,006,919	50.3	7,524,726	30.5	*
	Divorced	415,401	20.8	3,101,576	12.6	*
	Widowed or Separated	217,236	10.9	2,490,703	10.1	*
	Never married	362,204	18.1	11,535,021	46.8	*
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	High school graduate or less	696,367	34.8	11,101,590	45.0	*
	Some college	835,683	41.7	8,460,572	34.3	*
	Bachelor's degree	282,082	14.1	3,238,088	13.1	*
	Advanced degree	187,628	9.4	3,851,776	7.5	*
	Percent enrolled in school	135,324	6.8	2,369,993	9.6	*

Black or African American Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristics		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and othe		2,001,760	100	24,652,026	100	
<b>Poverty Status</b>	0 to 99% of poverty	180,598	9.3	3,872,584	16.3	*
	100 to 149% of poverty	165,884	8.5	2,652,830	11.2	*
	150 to 199% of poverty	160,059	8.2	2,696,865	11.3	*
	200 to 299% of poverty	319,720	16.4	4,342,324	13.9	*
	300 to 399% of poverty	295,552	15.2	3,311,757	27.4	*
	400% of poverty or higher	731,080	36.5	2,366,665	9.6	*
<b>Health Insurance</b>	No health insurance coverage	63,082	3.2	2,689,372	10.9	*
	Has private coverage only	662,527	33.1	12,845,442	52.1	*
	Has public coverage only	545,071	27.2	6,750,547	27.4	
	Has private and public coverage	731,080	36.5	2,366,665	9.6	*

Black or African American Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristics		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and othe		2,001,760	100	24,652,026	100	
<b>Disability Status</b>	Has one or more disability	536,060	26.8	4,204,118	17.1	*
	No disability	1,465,700	73.2	20,447,908	82.9	*
<b>Service-connected Disability Status</b>	Has service-connected disability	637,838	31.9			
	No service-connected disability	1,363,922	68.1			
<b>Region</b>	Northwest	187,445	9.4	4,031,990	16.4	*
	Midwest	292,401	14.6	4,269,385	17.3	*
	South	1,279,456	63.9	14,227,452	57.7	*
	West	242,458	12.1	2,121,444	8.6	*
	Puerto Rico			1,755	0.0	
<b>Median personal income (in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars)</b>		\$35,373		\$36,991		*
<b>Median household income (in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars)</b>		\$55,906		\$39,981		*

Black or African American Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristics		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, Between 17 and 65 years old		1,360,288	100	20,798,377	100	
<b>Employment Status</b>	Employed	958,034	70.4	15,871,083	76.3	*
	Unemployed	53,341	3.9	1,114,841	5.4	*
	Not in labor force	348,913	25.6	3,812,924	81.7	*
<b>Laor Force Participation Rate</b>		1,011,375	74.4	16,985,924	81.7	*
<b>Work Status of Employed</b>	Work year-round full time	798,558	58.7	11,985,924	54.9	*
	Work less than year-round full time	561,730	41.3	9,441,786	45.1	*
<b>Personal Earnings of Employed</b>	Less than \$20,000	152,482	15.9	4,863,437	30.6	*
	\$20,00 to \$39,000	264,639	27.6	5,377,842	33.9	*
	\$40,000 to \$59,000	232,996	24.3	2,866,983	18.1	*
	\$50,000 to \$79,000	145,732	15.2	1,389,734	8.8	*
	\$80,000 to \$99,000	75,641	7.9	624,541	3.9	*
	\$100,00 or more	86,544	9.0	747,303	4.7	*

Black or African American Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristics		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, Between 17 and 65 years old		1,360,288	100	20,798,377	100	
<b>Class of Worker of Employed</b>	Private	705,079	60.9	14,548,539	78.2	*
	Government	387,945	33.5	3,123,752	16.8	*
	Self-employed	64,307	5.6	933,294	5.0	
<b>Occupation of Employed</b>	Management, professional, and related	320,339	33.4	4,194,135	29.5	*
	Service	182,964	19.1	3,729,887	24.6	*
	Sales and office	177,786	18.6	3,779,657	24.8	*
	Farming, fishing and forestry	2,059	0.2	33,190	0.2	*
	Construction, extraction, maintenance, repair	80,789	8.4	671,127	4.6	*
	Production, transportation, material moving	194,097	20.3	2,231,325	16.4	*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2017

Note: \*Indicates that comparative statements are statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.

American Indian Alaskan Native Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		115,697	100	1,219,065	100	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	103,754	89.7	548,551	45.0	*
	Femal	11,943	10.3	670,514	55.0	*
<b>Live in group quarters</b>		2,005	1.7	41,385	3.4	*
<b>Age</b>	17 to 24 years	1,733	1.5	170,040	13.9	*
	25 to 34 years	9,757	8.4	233,513	19.2	*
	35 to 44 years	13,172	11.4	214,027	17.6	*
	45 to 54 years	19,111	16.5	210,191	17.2	*
	55 to 64 years	25,688	22.2	211,819	17.4	*
	65 to 74 years	30,924	26.7	119,053	9.8	*
	75 to 84 years	12,164	10.5	44,434	3.6	*
	85 years and older	3,148	2.7	15,988	1.3	*
	Median age	60		44		*

American Indian Alaskan Native Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		115,697	100	1,219,065	100	
<b>Citizen</b>	Citizen	115,632	99.9	1,212,483	99.5	*
	Not a citizen	65	0.1	6,582	0.5	*
<b>Language</b>	Speas a lanuage other then English	19,463	16.8	247,574	20.3	*
	Speaks En- glish well	114,962	99.4	1,204,672	98.8	*
	Speaks English less than well	735	0.6	14,393	1.2	*
<b>Period of Military Service</b>	Post-9/11	24,635	21.3			
	Pre-9/11	20,314	17.6			
	Vietnam Era	38,922	33.6			
	Korean War	4,786	4.1			
	World War II	1,294	1.1			
	Peacetime only	25,746	22.3			

American Indian Alaskan Native Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		115,697	100	1,219,065	100	
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	63,183	54.6	439,572	36.1	*
	Divorced	23,079	19.9	186,907	15.3	*
	Widowed or Separated	12,092	10.5	118,337	9.7	
	Never Married	17,343	15.0	474,249	38.9	*
<b>Education- al Attainment</b>	High school graduate or less	41,866	36.2	609,308	50.0	*
	Some college	50,329	43.5	437,429	35.9	*
	Bachelor's degree	16,665	14.4	117,241	9.6	*
	Advanced degree	6,837	5.9	55,087	4.5	
	Percent enrolled in school	5,656	4.9	89,936	7.4	*

American Indian Alaskan Native Alone, Non-Hispanic

Characteristic		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		115,697	100	1,219,065	100	
<b>Poverty Status</b>	0 to 99% of poverty	12,600	11.1	233,517	19.8	*
	100 to 149% of poverty	9,045	8.0	141,864	12.0	*
	150 to 199% of poverty	13,632	12.0	138,188	11.7	
	200 to 299% of poverty	21,033	18.5	206,062	17.5	
	300 to 399% of poverty	15,629	13.7	151,137	12.8	
	400% of poverty or higher	41,753	36.7	306,912	26.1	*
<b>Health Insurance</b>	No health insurance coverage	8,857	7.7	250,954	20.6	*
	Has private coverage only	27,493	23.8	485,542	39.8	*
	Has public coverage only	42,141	36.4	373,422	30.6	*
	Has private and public coverage	37,206	32.2	109,147	9.0	*
<b>Disability Status</b>	Has one or more disability	45,004	38.9	276,268	22.7	*
	No disability	70,693	61.1	942,797	77.3	*

American Indian Alaskan Native Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		115,697	100	1,219,065	100	
<b>Service-Connected Disability</b>	Has service-connected disability	30,031	31.1			
	No service-connected disability	79,666	68.9			
<b>Region</b>	Northwest	6,601	5.7	59,735	4.9	
	Midwest	19,850	17.2	206,647	17.0	
	South	45,325	39.2	390,905	32.1	*
	West	43,921	38.0	561,675	46.1	*
	Puerto Rico			103	0.0	
<b>Median personal income (in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars)</b>		\$32,704		\$35,991		
<b>Median household income (in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars)</b>		\$56,570		\$40,978		*

American Indian Alaskan Native Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, Between 17 and 65 years old		69,461	100	1,033,227	100	
<b>Employment Status</b>	Employed	47,018	67.7	715,758	69.3	
	Unemployed	3,885	5.6	55,408	5.4	
	Not in labor force	18,558	26.7	262,061	25.4	
<b>Labor Force Rate</b>		50,903	73.3	771,166	74.6	
<b>Work Status of Employed</b>	Worked year-round, full time	37,854	54.5	494,134	47.5	*
	Worked less than year-round, full time	31,607	45.5	545,456	52.5	*
<b>Personal Earnings of Employed</b>	Less than \$20,000	8,049	17.1	237,748	33.2	*
	\$20,000 to \$39,999	13,602	28.9	245,058	34.2	
	\$40,000 to \$59,999	10,387	22.1	118,806	16.6	
	\$60,000 to \$79,999	6,664	14.2	54,583	7.6	*
	\$80,000 to \$99,999	3,745	8.0	24,725	3.5	*
	\$100,000 or more	4,571	9.7	34,804	4.9	*

American Indian Alaskan Native Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, Between 17 and 65 years old		69,461	100	1,033,227	100	
<b>Class of Employed</b>	Private	35,072	59.9	597,574	67.3	*
	Government	19,164	32.7	232,531	26.2	*
	Self-employed	4,348	7.4	58,262	6.6	
<b>Occupation of Employed</b>	Management, professional, and related	16,174	34.4	199,019	27.8	*
	Service	8,215	17.5	179,741	25.1	*
	Sales and office	6,385	13.6	162,105	22.6	*
	Farming, fishing, and forestry	364	0.8	7,538	1.1	
	Construction, extraction, maintenance, repair	8,038	17.1	70,649	9.9	*
	Production, transportation, material moving	7,842	16.2	96,706	13.5	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2017  
Note: \*Indicates that comparative statements are statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.

Asian Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		273,961	100	11,774,171	100	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	241,448	88.1	5,764,657	49.0	*
	Female	32,513	11.9	6,009,514	51.0	*
<b>Living in group quarters</b>		1,714	0.6	206,374	1.8	*
<b>Age</b>	17 to 24 years	7,028	2.6	1,147,409	9.7	*
	25 to 34 years	35,639	13.0	2,548,062	21.6	*
	35 to 44 years	40,074	14.6	2,494,555	21.2	*
	45 to 54 years	42,436	15.5	2,139,818	18.2	*
	55 to 64 years	38,203	13.9	1,636,055	9.3	*
	65 to 74 years	57,228	20.9	1,099,216	9.3	*
	75 to 84 years	32,506	11.9	520,882	4.4	*
	85 years and older	20,847	7.6	188,174	1.6	*
	Medial Age	57		43		*

Asian Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		273,961	100	11,774,171	100	
<b>Citizen</b>	Citizen	255,247	93.2	8,481,950	72.0	*
	Not a citizen	18,714	6.8	3,292,221	28.0	*
<b>Languauge</b>	Speaks a language other than English	153,132	55.9	9,116,723	77.4	*
	Speaks English well	255,528	93.3	9,967,860	84.7	*
	Speaks English less than well	18,433	6.7	1,806,311	15.3	*
<b>Period of Military Service</b>	Post-9/11	92,455	33.7			
	Pre-9/11	42,757	15.6			
	Vietnam Era	69,834	25.5			
	Korean War	14,961	5.5			
	World War II	7,131	2.6			
	Peacetime only	46,823	17.1			

Asian Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		273,961	100	11,774,171	100	
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	180,423	65.9	7,202,269	61.2	*
	Divorced	22,822	8.3	680,360	5.8	*
	Widowed or Separated	23,458	8.6	690,888	5.9	*
	Never married	47,258	17.2	3,200,654	27.2	*
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	High school graduate or less	67,250	24.5	3,135,732	26.6	
	Some college	98,241	35.9	2,395,662	20.3	*
	Bachelor's degree	67,796	24.7	3,518,011	29.9	*
	Advanced degree	40,674	14.8	2,724,766	23.1	*
	Percent enrolled in school	23,412	8.5	1,279,328	10.9	*

Asian Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		273,961	100	11,774,171	100	
<b>Poverty Status</b>	0 to 99% of poverty	13,997	5.1	913,069	7.9	*
	100 to 149% of poverty	11,078	4.1	714,932	6.2	*
	150 to 199% of poverty	16,041	5.9	775,213	6.7	
	200 to 299% of poverty	35,244	12.9	1,473,138	12.7	
	300 to 399% of poverty	40,734	15.0	1,396,271	12.1	*
	400% of poverty or higher	155,153	57.0	6,295,174	54.4	
<b>Health Insurance</b>	No health insurance coverage	5,656	2.1	695,899	5.9	*
	Has health insurance coverage	101,304	37.0	8,087,172	68.7	*
	Has private coverage only	54,014	19.7	2,116,274	18.0	
	Has private and public coverage	112,987	41.2	874,826	7.4	*

Asian Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		273,961	100	11,774,171	100	
<b>Disability Status</b>	Has one or more disability	63,672	23.2	939,773	8.0	*
	No disability	210,289	76.8	10,834,398	92.0	*
<b>Service-Connected Disability Status</b>	63,031	23.0				
	210,930	77.0				
<b>Region</b>	Northwest	22,607	8.3	2,417,679	20.5	*
	Midwest	18,312	6.7	1,395,968	11.9	*
	South	66,570	24.3	2,632,897	22.4	
	West	166,472	60.8	5,326,750	45.2	*
	Puerto Rico			877	0.0	
<b>Median personal income (in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars)</b>		\$44,066		\$59,906		*
<b>Median household income (in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars)</b>		\$84,255		\$86,957		

Asian Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veterans		Non-Veterans		
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, Between 17 and 65 years old		163,380	100	9,924,828	100	
<b>Employment Status</b>	Employed	133,235	81.5	8,691,579	87.6	*
	Unemployed	4,180	2.6	218,513	2.2	
	Not in labor force	25,965	15.9	1,014,736	10.2	*
<b>Labor Force Participation Rate</b>		137,415	84.1	8,910,092	89.8	*
<b>Work Status of Employed</b>	Worked year-round, full time	108,493	66.4	6,247,794	62.7	*
	Worked less than year-round, full time	54,887	33.6	3,718,105	37.3	*
<b>Personal Earnings of Employed</b>	Less than \$20,000	14,745	11.1	1,924,706	22.1	*
	\$20,000 to \$39,999	28,066	21.1	1,937,943	22.3	
	\$40,000 to \$59,999	26,585	20.0	1,317,514	15.2	*
	\$60,000 to \$79,999	23,192	17.4	1,011,243	11.6	*
	\$80,000 to \$99,999	15,245	11.4	746,433	8.6	*
	\$100,000 or more	25,402	19.1	1,751,749	20.2	

Asian Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veterans		Non-Veterans		
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, Between 17 and 65 years old		163,380	100	9,924,828	100	
<b>Class of Worker of Employed</b>	Private	90,839	59.3	7,679,303	80.2	*
	Government	51,220	33.4	1,033,886	10.8	*
	Self-employed	11,116	7.3	863,964	9.0	
<b>Occupation of Employed</b>	Management, professional, and related	65,008	48.8	4,610,704	53.0	*
	Service	21,832	16.4	1,436,290	16.5	
	Sales and office	22,344	16.8	1,631,618	18.8	
	Farming, fishing, and forestry	209	0.2	14,069	0.2	
	Construction, extraction, maintenance, repair	12,223	9.2	225,777	2.6	*
	Production, transportation, material moving	11619	8.7	773,121	8.9	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2017  
Note: \*Indicates that comparative statements are statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.

<b>Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander Alone, Non-Hispanic</b>						
Characteristic		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		28,292	100	313,276	100	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	23,408	82.7	154,012	49.2	*
	Female	4,884	17.3	159,264	50.8	*
<b>Living in group quarters</b>		359	1.3	10,222	3.3	*
<b>Age</b>	17 to 24 years	645	2.3	42,969	13.7	*
	25 to 34 years	3,702	13.1	74,932	23.9	*
	35 to 44 years	3,666	13.0	70,206	22.4	*
	45 to 54 years	3,864	13.7	48,549	15.5	
	55 to 64 years	6,153	21.7	43,099	13.8	*
	65 to 75 years	7,498	26.5	23,566	7.5	*
	75 to 84 years	1,861	6.6	7,686	2.5	*
	85 years and older	883	3.1	2,269	0.7	
	Median Age	57		40		*

<b>Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander Alone, Non-Hispanic</b>						
Characteristic		Veterans		Non_Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographiccs		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		28,292	100	313,276	100	
<b>Citizen</b>	Citizen	27,699	97.9	267,393	85.4	*
	Not a citizen	593	2.1	45,883	14.6	*
<b>Language</b>	Speaks a language other than English	10,058	35.6	125,882	40.2	
	Speaks English well	28,096	99.3	301,894	96.4	*
	Speaks English less than well	196	0.7	11,382	3.6	*
<b>Period of Military Service</b>	Post-9/11	7,999	28.3			
	Pre-9/11	5,302	18.7			
	Vietnam Era	8,334	29.5			
	Korean War	1,104	3.9			
	World War II	435	1.5			
	Peacetime only	5,118	18.1			

Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristics		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		28,292	100	313,276	100	
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	19,897	70.3	156,493	50.0	*
	Divorced	2,871	10.1	29,909	9.5	
	Widowed or Separated	3,101	11.0	20,507	6.5	
	Never married	2,423	8.6	106,367	34.0	*
<b>Education- al Attainment</b>	High school graduate or less	8,493	30.0	146,670	46.8	*
	Some college	13,786	48.7	109,033	34.8	*
	Bachelor's degree	4,598	16.3	41,666	13.3	
	Advanced degree	1,415	5.0	15,907	5.1	
	Percent enrolled in school	1,632	5.8	27,638	8.8	

Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristics		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		28,292	100	313,276	100	
<b>Poverty Status</b>	0 to 99% of poverty	1,737	6.2	34,543	11.4	*
	100 to 149% of poverty	955	3.4	26,662	8.8	*
	150 to 199% of poverty	3,535	12.7	29,214	9.6	
	200 to 299% of poverty	5,091	18.2	51,766	17.1	
	300 to 399% of poverty	4,340	15.5	46,346	15.3	
	400% of poverty or higher	12,275	43.9	114,523	37.8	
<b>Health Insurance</b>	No health insurance coverage	1,248	4.4	32,065	10.2	*
	Has private coverage only	9,946	35.2	194,262	62.0	*
	Has public coverage only	5,301	18.7	61,616	19.7	
	Has private and public coverage	11,797	41.7	25,333	8.1	*
<b>Disability Status</b>	Has one or more disability	9,125	32.3	34,032	10.9	*
	No disability	19,167	67.7	279,244	89.1	*

<b>Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander Alone, Non-Hispanic</b>						
Characteristics		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Esitimate	Percent	Esitimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		28,292	100	313,276	100	
<b>Service-Connected Disability Status</b>	Has ser-vice-connect-ed disability	9,345	33.0			
	No ser-vice-connect-ed disability	18,947	67.0			
<b>Region</b>	Northwest	816	2.9	7,759	2.5	
	Midwest	1,717	6.1	22,692	7.2	
	South	5,510	19.5	43,296	13.8	
	West	20,249	71.6	239,529	76.5	
	Puerto Rico					
<b>Median personal income (in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars)</b>		\$35,732		\$39,290		
<b>Median household income (in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars)</b>		\$67,812		\$63,221		

<b>Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander Alone, Non-Hispanic</b>						
Characteristics		Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant
Category of Demographics		Esitimate	Percent	Esitimate	Percent	
Total Population, Between 17 and 65 years old		18,050	100	275,150	100	
<b>Employment Status</b>	Employed	12,925	71.6	228,496	83.0	*
	Unemployed	980	5.4	9,325	3.4	
	Not in labor force	4,145	23.0	37,329	13.6	
<b>Labor Force Paticipation Rate</b>		13,905	77.0	237,821	86.4	
<b>Work Status of Employed</b>	Worked year-round, full time	10,88	59.9	175,681	62.8	
	Worked less than year-round, full time	7,242	40.1	104,074	37.2	
<b>Personal Earnings of Employed</b>	Less than \$20,00	1,638	12.7	60,186	26.3	*
	\$20,000 to \$39,999	3,118	24.1	79,651	34.9	
	\$40,000 to \$59,999	2,884	22.3	43,037	18.8	
	\$60,000 to \$79,999	2,334	18.1	22,700	9.9	
	\$80,000 to \$99,999	1,439	11.1	9,898	4.3	
	\$100,000 or more	1,512	11.7	13,024	5.7	

Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristics	Veterans		Non-Veterans		Significant	
Category of Demographics	Esitimate	Percent	Esitimate	Percent		
Total Population, Between 17 and 65 years old	28,292					
<b>Class of Worker of Employed</b>	Private	10,674	66.0	205,217	78.5	*
	Government	5,284	32.6	42,871	16.4	*
	Self-employed	227	1.4	13,444	5.1	*
<b>Occupation of Employed</b>	Management, professional, and related	4,371	33.8	57,995	25.4	
	Service	2,270	17.6	52,934	23.2	
	Sales and office	2,753	21.3	61,256	26.8	
	Farming, fishing, and forestry	78	0.6	1,926	0.8	
	Construction, extraction, maintenance, repair	1,050	8.1	19,237	8.4	
	Production, transportation, material moving	2,403	19.6	35,148	15.4	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2017

Note: \*Indicates that comparative statements are statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.

<b>Some Other Race Alone, Non-Hispanic</b>						
Characteristics		Veterans		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		24,953	100	446,288	100	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	21,975	88.1	212,914	47.7	*
	Female	2,978	11.9	233,374	52.3	*
<b>Live in group quarters</b>		201	0.8	6,127	1.4	
<b>Age</b>	17 to 24 years	712	2.9	75,758	17.0	
	25 to 34 years	2,935	11.8	110,769	24.8	
	35 to 44 years	3,758	15.1	85,847	19.2	
	45 to 54 years	3,628	14.5	68,989	15.5	
	55 to 64 years	4,112	16.5	59,498	13.3	
	65 to 74 years	6,924	27.7	31,224	7.0	
	75 to 74 years	2,061	8.3	9,899	2.2	
	85 years and older	823	3.3	4,304	1.0	
	Median age	57		38		

Some Other Race Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		24,953	100	446,288	100	
<b>Citizen</b>	Citizen	24,578	98.5	356,541	79.9	*
	Not a citizen	375	1.5	89,747	20.1	*
<b>Language</b>	Speaks a language other than English	4,148	16.6	178,263	39.9	
	Speaks English well	24,325	97.5	417,040	93.4	
	Speaks English less than well	628	2.5	29,248	6.6	
<b>Period of Military Service</b>	Post-9/11	7,305	29.3			
	Pre-9/11	4,724	18.9			
	Vietnam Era	8,016	32.1			
	Korean War	983	3.9			
	World War II	389	1.6			
	Peacetime only	3,536	14.2			

Some Other Race Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Charateristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		24,953	100	446,288	100	
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	11,493	46.1	176,261	39.5	
	Divorced	5,402	21.6	47,039	10.5	*
	Widowed or Separated	3,591	14.4	30,686	6.9	*
	Never Married	4,467	17.9	192,302	43.1	*
Educational Attainment	High school graduate or less	6,168	24.7	164,743	36.9	*
	Some college	11,889	47.6	139,086	31.2	*
	Bachelor's degree	3,658	14.7	88,868	19.9	
	Avanced de- gree	3,238	13.0	53,591	12.0	
	Percent en- rolled in school	2,172	8.7	59,035	13.2	

Some Other Race Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		24,953	100	446,288	100	
<b>Poverty Status</b>	0 to 99% of poverty	1,816	7.3	57,178	13.0	*
	100 to 149% of poverty	1,141	4.6	39,792	9.0	
	150 to 199% of poverty	1,731	7.0	39,520	9.0	
	200 to 299% of poverty	4,606	18.6	77,694	17.7	
	300 to 399% of poverty	3,961	16.0	64,318	14.6	
	400% of poverty or higher	11,497	46.4	161,659	36.7	
<b>Health Insurance</b>	No health insurance coverage	1,054	4.2	63,343	14.2	*
	Has private coverage only	7,817	31.3	265,233	59.4	*
	Has public coverage only	7,381	29.6	87,223	19.5	*
	Has private and public coverage	8,701	34.9	30,489	6.8	*

Some Other Race Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		24,953	100	446,288	100	
<b>Disability Status</b>	Has one or more disability	7,320	29.3	53,811	12.1	*
	No disability	17,633	7.7	392,477	87.9	*
<b>Service-Connected Disability Status</b>	Has service-connected disability	7,709	30.9			
	No service-connected disability	17,244	69.1			
<b>Region</b>	Northwest	2,306	9.2	159,816	35.8	*
	Midwest	3,228	12.9	48,605	10.9	
	South	10,952	43.9	137,779	30.9	*
	West	8,467	33.9	99,043	22.2	*
	Puerto Rico			1,045	0.2	
<b>Median personal income (in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars)</b>		\$40,160		\$39,938		
<b>Median household income (in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars)</b>		\$68,690		\$52,957		*

Some Other Race Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, Between 17 and 65 years old		15,145	100	399,248	100	
<b>Employment Status</b>	Employed	11,182	73.8	332,601	83.3	
	Unemployed	423	2.8	12,853	3.2	
	Not in labor force	3,540	23.4	53,794	13.5	
<b>Labor Force Participation Rate</b>		11,605	76.6	345,454	86.5	
<b>Work Status of Employed</b>	Worked year-round, full time	10,257	67.7	228,845	57.1	
	Worked less than year-round, full time	4,888	32.3	172,016	42.9	
<b>Personal Earnings of Employed</b>	Less than \$20,000	1,185	10.6	106,515	32.0	*
	\$20,000 to \$39,000	2,885	25.8	97,610	29.3	
	\$40,000 to \$59,999	2,696	24.1	54,658	16.4	
	\$60,000 to \$79,999	1,227	11.0	34,224	10.3	
	\$80,000 to \$99,999	1,265	11.3	13,994	4.2	
	\$100,000 or more	1,924	17.2	25,600	7.7	

Some Other Race Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, Between 17 and 65 years old		15,145	100	399,248	100	
<b>Class of Worker of Employed</b>	Private	7,064	52.1	299,804	79.8	*
	Government	4,552	33.6	36,500	9.7	*
	Self-employed	1,935	14.3	39,335	10.5	
<b>Occupation of Employed</b>	Management, professional, and related	5,425	48.5	107,850	33.0	
	Service	1,904	17.0	80,060	24.1	
	Sales and office	1,529	13.7	77,964	23.4	
	Farming, fishing, and forestry			1,400	0.4	
	Construction, extraction, maintenance, repair	932	8.4	29,881	9.0	
	Production, transportation, material moving	1,390	12.4	33,446	10.1	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2017  
Note: \*Indicates that comparative statements are statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.

Two or More Races Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		293,864	100	3,716,129	100	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	248,504	84.6	1,751,353	47.1	*
	Female	45,360	15.4	1,964,776	52.9	*
<b>Living in group quarters</b>		66,566	2.2	151,903	4.1	*
<b>Age</b>	17 to 24 years	11,301	3.8	896,182	24.1	*
	25 to 34 years	37,007	12.6	939,575	25.3	*
	35 to 44 years	46,752	15.9	674,136	18.1	
	45 to 54 years	56,264	19.1	505,604	13.6	*
	55 to 64 years	55,572	18.9	377,365	10.2	*
	65 to 74 years	55,119	18.8	211,527	5.7	*
	75 to 84 years	23,827	8.1	87,106	2.3	*
	85 years and older	8,022	2.7	24,634	0.7	*
	Median Age	53		34		*

Two or More Races Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		293,864	100	3,716,129		
<b>Citizen</b>	Citizen	291,444	99.2	3,566,595	96.0	*
	Not a citizen	2,420	0.8	149,534	4.0	*
<b>Language</b>	Speaks a language other than English	25,345	8.6	490,225	13.2	*
	Speaks English well	292,180	99.4	3,669,610	98.7	*
	Speaks English less than well	1,684	0.6	46,519	1.3	*
<b>Period of Military Service</b>	Post-9/11	96,829	33.0			
	Pre-9/11	58,133	19.8			
	Vietnam Era	72,951	24.8			
	Korean War	7,423	2.5			
	World War II	4,109	1.4			
	Peacetime only	54,419	18.5			

Two or More Races Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		293,864	100	3,716,129	100	
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	159,453	54.3	1,315,644	35.4	*
	Divorced	63,915	21.7	402,159	10.8	*
	Widowed or Separated	23,876	8.1	206,761	5.6	*
	Never Married	46,620	15.9	1,791,565	48.2	*
<b>Education- al Attainment</b>	High school graduate or less	73,134	24.9	1,240,725	33.4	*
	Some college	132,047	44.9	1,305,604	36.3	*
	Bachelor's degree	54,828	18.7	726,639	19.6	
	Advanced degree	33,855	11.5	398,161	10.7	
	Percent enrolled in school	24,723	8.4	552,743	14.9	*

Two or More Races Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		293,864	100	3,716,129	100	
<b>Poverty Status</b>	0 to 99% poverty	20,920	7.3	431,547	12.1	*
	100 to 149% poverty	21,268	7.4	291,686	8.2	
	150 to 199% poverty	24,553	8.5	287,437	8.1	
	200 to 299% poverty	44,241	15.4	597,438	16.8	
	300 to 399% poverty	42,062	16.6	492,842	13.8	
	400% of poverty or higher	134,254	46.7	1,463,276	41.1	*
<b>Health Insurance</b>	No health insurance coverage	12,704	4.3	359,138	9.7	*
	Has private coverage only	108,074	39.8	2,332,260	62.8	*
	Has public coverage only	72,079	24.5	738,560	19.9	*
	Has private and public coverage	101,007	34.4	286,171	7.7	*
<b>Disability Status</b>	Has one or more disability	91,476	31.1	566,645	15.2	*
	No disability	202,388	68.9	3,149,484	84.8	*

Two or More Races Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		293,864	100	3,716,129	100	
<b>Service Connected Disability</b>	Has service-connected disability	86,859	29.6			
	No service-connected disability	207,005	70.4			
<b>Region</b>	Northeast	26,775	9.1	519,219	14.0	*
	Midwest	51,729	17.6	687,306	18.5	
	South	113,253	38.5	1,185,459	31.9	
	West	101,773	34.6	1,323,355	35.6	
	Puerto Rico	334	0.1	790	0.0	
<b>Median personal income (in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars)</b>		\$39,970		\$44,949		*
<b>Median household income (in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars)</b>		\$64,139		\$58,517		*

Two or More Races Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, Between 17 and 65 years old		206,896	100	3,354,845	100	
<b>Employment Status</b>	Employed	155,880	75.3	2,644,143	78.8	*
	Unemployed	8,332	4.0	151,907	4.5	
	Not in labor force	42,684	20.6	558,795	16.7	*
<b>Labor Force Participation Rate</b>		164,212	79.4	2,796,050	83.3	*
<b>Work Status of Employed</b>	Worked year-round, full time	126,553	61.2	1,739,498	51.3	*
	Worked less than year-round, full time	80,343	38.8	1,653,364	48.7	*
<b>Personal Earnings of Employed</b>	Less than \$20,000	22,106	14.2	857,271	32.4	*
	\$20,000 to \$39,999	37,853	24.3	705,657	26.7	
	\$40,000 to \$59,999	33,547	21.5	427,582	16.2	*
	\$60,000 to \$79,999	20,641	13.2	265,659	10.0	*
	\$80,000 to \$99,999	14,894	9.6	136,348	5.2	*
	\$100,000 or more	26,839	17.2	251,573	9.5	*

Two or More Races Alone, Non-Hispanic						
Characteristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, Between 17 and 65 years old		206,896	100	3,354,845	100	
<b>Class of Worker of Employed</b>	Private	115,027	61.4	2,468,052	78.4	*
	Government	56,519	30.2	441,283	14.0	*
	Self-employed	15,694	8.4	236,926	7.5	
<b>Occupation of Employed</b>	Management, professional, and related	62,710	40.2	1,005,522	38.0	
	Service	26,491	17.0	553,843	20.9	
	Sales and office	26,208	16.8	655,328	24.8	
	Farming, fishing and forestry	359	0.2	7,663	0.3	
	Construction, extraction, maintenance, repair	19,019	12.2	154,221	5.8	
	Production, transportation, material moving	21,093	13.5	267,566	10.1	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2017

Note: \*Indicates that comparative statements are statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.

Hispanic or Latino						
Characteristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		1,278,005	100	35,107,974	100	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	1,135,028	88.8	18,318,259	52.2	*
	Female	142,977	11.2	16,789,715	47.8	*
<b>Living in group quarters</b>		17,503	1.4	949,183	1.8	*
<b>Age</b>	17 to 24 years	44,791	3.5	5,502,688	15.7	*
	25 to 34 years	203,024	15.9	7,989,637	22.8	*
	35 to 44 years	216,042	16.9	7,420,646	21.1	*
	45 to 54 years	206,781	19.2	6,061,112	17.3	*
	55 to 64 years	213,218	19.7	4,132,817	11.8	*
	65 to 74 years	230,797	18.1	2,424,991	6.9	*
	75 to 84 years	111,202	8.7	1,154,697	3.3	*
	85 years and older	52,150	4.1	421,386	1.2	*
	Median age	53		39		*

Hispanic or Latino						
Characteristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		1,278,005	100	35,107,974	100	
<b>Citizen</b>	Citizen	1,234,109	96.6	26,042,231	74.2	*
	Not a citizen	43,896	3.4	9,065,743	25.8	*
<b>Language</b>	Speaks a language other than English	745,894	58.4	26,819,287	76.4	*
	Speaks English well	1,224,289	95.8	27,103,245	77.2	*
	Speaks English less than well	53,716	4.2	8,004,729	22.8	*
<b>Period of Military Service</b>	Post-9/11	452,114	35.4			
	Pre-9/11	229,193	17.9			
	Vietnam Era	295,443	23.1			
	Korean War	55,342	4.3			
	World War II	14,277	1.1			
	Peactime only	231,636	18.1			

Hispanic or Latino						
Characteristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		1,278,005	100	35,107,974	100	
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	766,898	60.0	15,694,010	44.7	*
	Divorced	211,224	16.5	3,530,561	10.1	*
	Widowed or Separated	98,274	7.7	2,593,897	7.4	*
	Never married	201,609	15.8	13,289,524	37.9	*
<b>Education- al Attainment</b>	High school graduate or less	429,335	33.6	19,915,960	56.7	*
	Some college	555,423	43.5	9,637,632	27.5	*
	Bachelor's degree	195,018	15.3	3,890,799	11.1	*
	Advanced degree	98,229	7.7	1,663,583	4.7	*
	Percent enrolled in school	118,170	9.2	3,080,030	8.8	

Hispanic or Latino						
Characteristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		1,278,005	100	35,107,974	100	
<b>Poverty Status</b>	0 to 99% of poverty	92,339	7.3	4,852,675	14.1	*
	100 to 149% of poverty	97,784	7.8	4,190,623	12.2	*
	150 to 199% of poverty	101,561	8.1	4,405,086	12.8	*
	200 to 299% of poverty	219,701	17.4	7,127,704	20.7	*
	300 to 399% of poverty	213,709	17.0	5,116,040	14.8	*
	400% of poverty or higher	535,408	42.5	8,782,274	25.5	*
<b>Health Insurance</b>	No health insurance coverage	45,655	3.6	7,187,088	20.5	*
	Has private coverage only	482,540	37.8	17,402,034	49.6	*
	Has public coverage only	332,421	26.0	8,623,495	24.6	*
	has private and public coverage	417,389	32.7	1,895,357	5.4	*
<b>Disability Status</b>	Has one or more disability	328,572	25.7	4,155,864	11.8	*
	No disability	949,433	74.3	30,952,110	88.2	*

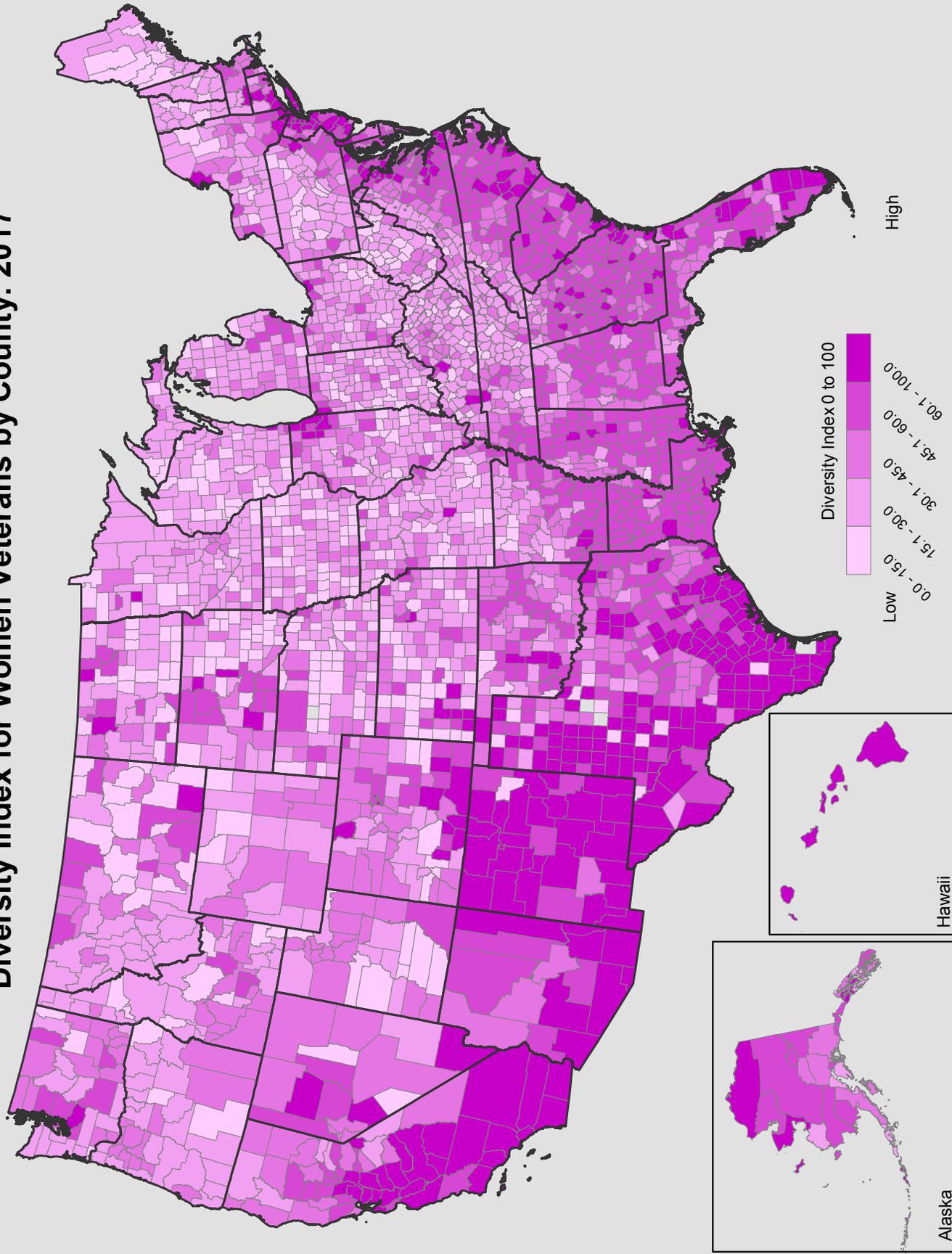
Hispanic or Latino						
Characteristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, 17 years and older		1,278,005	100	35,107,974	100	
<b>Service-connected disability</b>	Has service-connected disability	357,153	27.9			
	No service-connected disability	920,852	72.1			
<b>Region</b>	Northeast	122,660	9.6	4,932,153	14.0	*
	Midwest	98,238	7.7	2,934,768	8.4	
	South	528,519	41.4	12,263,308	34.9	*
	West	463,619	36.3	13,001,969	37.0	
	Puerto Rico	64,969	5.1	1,975,776	5.6	*
<b>Median personal income (in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars)</b>		\$38,137		\$33,593		*
<b>Median household income (in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars)</b>		\$65,102		\$47,985		*

Hispanic or Latino						
Characteristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, Between 17 and 65 years old		883,856	100	30,942,099	100	
<b>Employment Status</b>	Employed	696,542	78.8	26,118,782	84.4	*
	Unemployed	28,524	3.2	1,103,873	3.6	
	Not in labor force	158,790	18.0	3,719,444	12.0	*
<b>Labor Force Participation Rate</b>		725,066	82.0	27,222,655	88.0	*
<b>Work Status of Employed</b>	Worked year-round, full time	571,104	64.6	18,622,052	59.9	*
	Worked less than year-round full time	312,752	35.4	12,484,848	40.1	*
<b>Personal Earnings of Employed</b>	Less than \$20,000	105,726	15.2	8,626,380	33.0	*
	\$20,000 to \$39,999	182,300	26.2	9,494,988	36.4	*
	\$40,000 to \$59,999	160,423	23.0	4,209,088	16.1	*
	\$60,000 to \$79,999	107,000	15.4	1,820,995	7.0	*
	\$80,000 to \$99,999	58,072	8.3	850,562	3.3	*
	\$100,000 or more	83,021	11.9	1,115,867	4.3	*

Hispanic or Latino						
Characteristic		Veteran		Non-Veteran		Significant
Category of Demographics		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Total Population, Between 17 and 65 years old		883,856	100	30,942,099	100	
<b>Class of Worker of Employed</b>	Private	491,255	61.0	23,655,197	81.1	*
	Government	268,355	33.3	3,003,871	10.3	*
	Self-employed	45,699	5.7	2,519,205	8.6	*
<b>Occupation of Employed</b>	Management, professional, and related	232,865	33.4	5,788,380	22.2	*
	Service	131,284	18.8	6,442,743	24.7	*
	Sales and office	128,276	18.4	5,752,390	22.0	*
	Farming, fishing and forestry	2,394	0.3	518,635	2.0	*
	Construction, extraction, maintenance, repair	100,703	14.5	3,498,241	13.4	
	Production, transportation, material moving	101,020	14.5	4,118,393	15.8	*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2017  
Note: \*Indicates that comparative statements are statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.

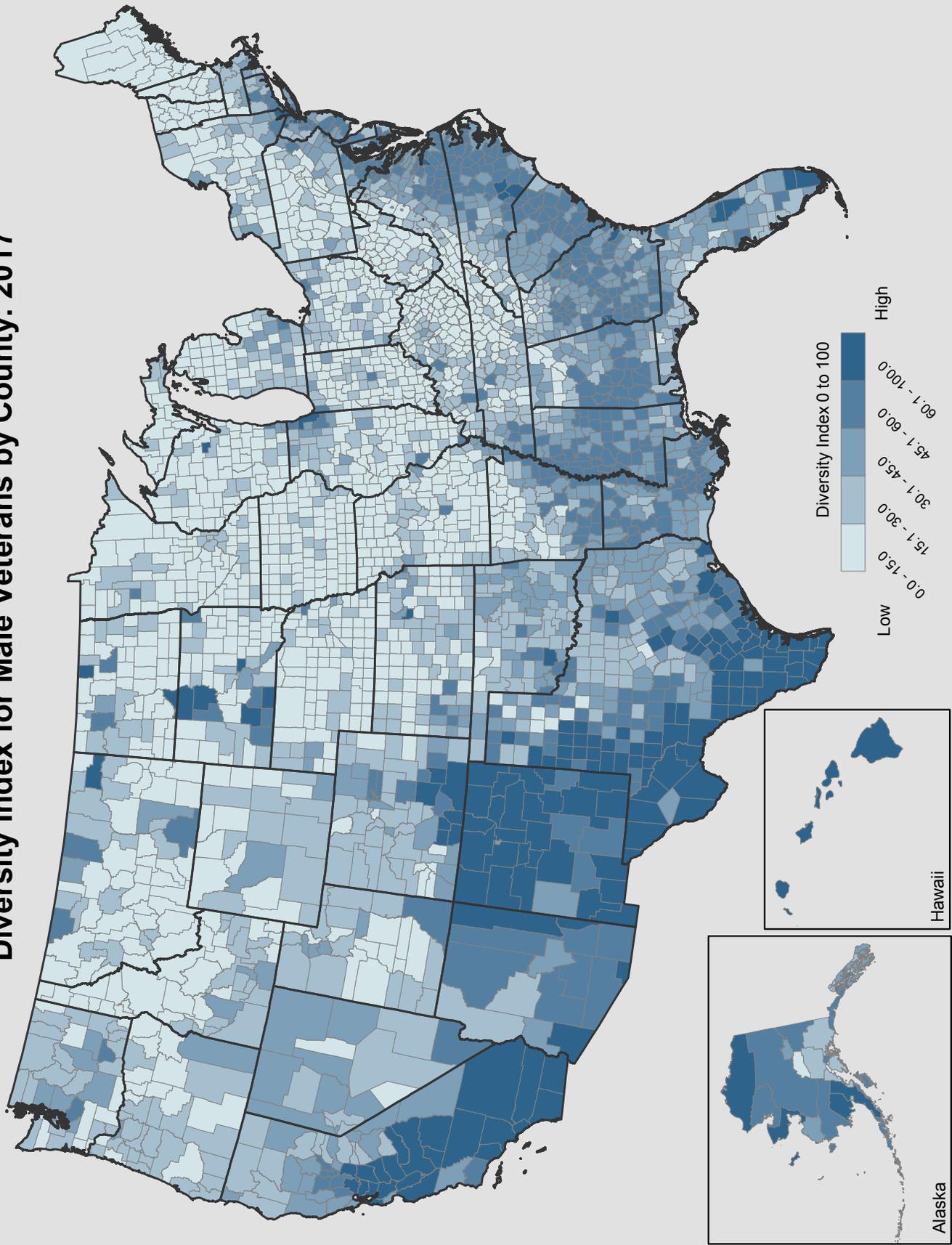
Diversity Index for Women Veterans by County: 2017



Source: Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Enterprise Integration, U.S. Veterans Eligibility Trends and Statistics (USVETS), 2017

Prepared by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics

# Diversity Index for Male Veterans by County: 2017



Source: Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Enterprise Integration, U.S. Veterans Eligibility Trends and Statistics (USVETS), 2017  
Prepared by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics

# Appendix C

Leading Causes of Death by Race/Ethnicity Males, United States, 2017*						
Rank	All Races	White Alone	Black Alone	American Indian Alaska Native Alone	Asian/Pacific Islander Alone	Hispanic
1	Heart disease 24.2%	Heart disease 24.3%	Heart disease 23.7%	Heart disease 19.2%	Cancer 24.7%	Heart disease 20.3%
2	Cancer 21.9%	Cancer 22.1%	Cancer 20.2%	Cancer 16.3%	Heart disease 22.6%	Cancer 19.4%
3	Unintentional injuries 7.6%	Unintentional injuries 7.6%	Unintentional injuries 8.0%	Unintentional injuries 13.8%	Stroke 6.5%	Unintentional injuries 11.5%
4	Chronic lower respiratory diseases 5.2%	Chronic lower respiratory diseases 5.6%	Homicide 4.9%	Diabetes 5.9%	Unintentional injuries 5.7%	Stroke 4.7%
5	Stroke 4.3%	Stroke 4.1%	Stroke 4.9%	Chronic liver disease 5.4%	Diabetes 4.3%	Diabetes 4.7%
6	Diabetes 3.2%	Diabetes 3.0%	Diabetes 4.3%	Suicide 4.3%	Chronic lower respiratory diseases 3.2%	Chronic liver disease 4.0%
7	Alzheimer's disease 2.6%	Alzheimer's disease 2.8%	Chronic lower respiratory diseases 3.2%	Chronic lower respiratory diseases 4.1%	Influenza and pneumonia 3.1%	Suicide 2.9%
8	Suicide 2.6%	Suicide 2.7%	Kidney disease 2.6%	Stroke 3.1%	Suicide 2.7%	Chronic lower respiratory diseases 2.5%
9	Influenza and pneumonia 1.8%	Chronic liver disease 1.9%	Septicemia 1.7%	Homicide 2.1%	Chronic liver disease 2.1%	Homicide 2.4%
10	Chronic liver disease 1.8%	Influenza and pneumonia 1.9%	Hypertension 1.7%	Influenza and pneumonia 1.8%	Alzheimer's disease 2.1%	Alzheimer's disease 2.1%

Leading Causes of Death by Race/Ethnicity Females, United States, 2017*						
Rank	All Races	White Alone	Black Alone	American Indian Alaska Native Alone	Asian/Pacific Islander Alone	Hispanic
1	Heart disease 21.8%	Heart Disease 21.8%	Heart Disease 22.8%	Cancer 17.8%	Cancer 25.4%	Cancer 22.0%
2	Cancer 20.7%	Cancer 20.4%	Cancer 21.4%	Heart Disease 16.6%	Heart Disease 20.0%	Heart Disease 19.6%
3	Chronic lower respiratory diseases 6.2%	Chronic lower respiratory diseases 6.7%	Stroke 6.1%	Unintentional injuries 9.0%	Stroke 8.4%	Stroke 6.4%
4	Stroke 6.2%	Alzheimer's disease 6.5%	Diabetes 4.5%	Diabetes 5.6%	Alzheimer's disease 5.0%	Alzheimer's disease 5.7%
5	Alzheimer's disease 6.1%	Stroke 6.1%	Alzheimer's disease 4.0%	Chronic lower respiratory diseases 5.6%	Diabetes 4.1%	Unintentional injuries 4.9%
6	Unintentional injuries 4.4%	Unintentional injuries 4.5%	Unintentional injuries 3.8%	Chronic liver disease 5.5%	Unintentional injuries 3.4%	Diabetes 4.7%
7	Diabetes 2.7%	Diabetes 2.4%	Chronic lower respiratory diseases 3.5%	Stroke 4.7%	Influenza and pneumonia 3.2%	Chronic lower respiratory diseases 3.2%
8	Influenza and pneumonia 2.1%	Influenza and pneumonia 2.1%	Kidney disease 3.1%	Alzheimer's disease 2.9%	Chronic lower respiratory diseases 2.5%	Influenza and pneumonia 2.2%
9	Kidney disease 1.8%	Kidney disease 1.6%	Septicemia 2.2%	Influenza and pneumonia 2.3%	Hypertension 2.3%	Kidney disease 2.2%
10	Septicemia 1.6%	Septicemia 1.5%	Hypertension 2.1%	Kidney disease 2.1%	Chronic liver disease 2.1%	Chronic liver disease 2.2%

Source: Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Health Statistics, Mortality Tables, 2017  
Prepared by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics

Notes: \*Percentages represent total deaths in the race/ethnicity group due to the cause indicated. The White, Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Asian/Pacific Islander race groups include persons of Hispanic and non-Hispanic origin. Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Some terms have been shortened from those used in the National Vital Statistics Report. See the next page for a listing of the shortened terms in the table and their full unabridged equivalents used in the report. To learn more, visit Mortality Tables at [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/mortality\\_tables.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/mortality_tables.htm) or <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/deaths.htm> (HHS)

## Appendix C Cont.

<b>Short and Full Terms for Leading Causes of Death</b>	
Some terms in the leading causes of death table have been shortened from those used in the National Vital Statistics Report. Below is a listing of the shortened terms used in the table and their full, unabridged equivalents used in the report.	
<b>SHORT TERMS</b>	<b>FULL TERMS</b>
<b>Cancer</b>	Malignant neoplasms
<b>Chronic liver disease</b>	Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
<b>Chronic lower respiratory diseases</b>	Includes bronchitis, emphysema, asthma, bronchiectasis, and other chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
<b>Diabetes</b>	Diabetes mellitus
<b>Heart disease</b>	Diseases of the heart
<b>Homicide</b>	Assault (homicide)
<b>Hypertension</b>	Essential (primary) hypertension and hypertensive renal disease
<b>Kidney disease</b>	Essential (primary) hypertension and hypertensive renal disease
<b>Stroke</b>	Cerebrovascular diseases
<b>Suicide</b>	Intentional self-harm
<b>Unintentional injuries</b>	Accidents (unintentional injuries)
Source: World Health Organization. International statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth Revision (ICD-10). Geneva: World Health Organization, 1992. Available at <a href="http://www.who.int/classifications/icd/en/">http://www.who.int/classifications/icd/en/</a> . Accessed May 21, 2020.	

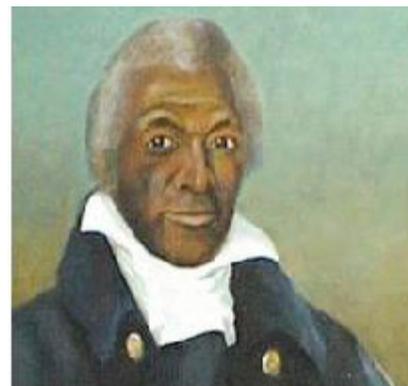
## Appendix D

### Minorities in Military History

This section provides a historical overview of military service among Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino American, Asian American or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (NHOPI), and American Indian or Alaskan Native (AIAN).

#### Black or African American

**Revolutionary War (1775-1783).** African Americans have fought in every American war. Free African Americans fought with the colonists in the Revolutionary War against the British. On the eve of the revolution, approximately 20 percent of the colonial population of 2.5 million men were African American.<sup>(1)</sup> As early as April, 1775, African American “minutemen” fought at Lexington and Concord.<sup>(1)</sup> James Armistead (1760-1832), for example, was a slave born in Virginia, and he entered the Army as a volunteer at the age of 21. Armistead was assigned to Marquis de Lafayette. His mission was to carry communications between the French units. But it wasn't long before Lafayette realized his greater value as a spy. Armistead fabricated a story about being a runaway slave and joined the British ranks. Due to his knowledge about the area, General Cornwallis called Armistead up amongst the British officers so Armistead could serve as his personal guide when leading his armies. Armistead spied on Arnold and Cornwallis and his intelligence reports to Marquis de Lafayette helped America to win the Battle of Yorktown. Armistead was granted his freedom in 1786 and he was awarded full military honors at his death.<sup>(2)</sup> By war's end, approximately 5,000 African American soldiers had served in the Colonial army of 300,000 soldiers.<sup>(1)</sup>



<http://www.blackpast.org/aah/lafayette-james-armistead-1760-1832>

**Civil War (1861-1865).** Over 200,000 African Americans, many of them former slaves, served in the U.S. military forces during the Civil War. About 180,000 African Americans fought in the Union Army and another 29,000 served in the Union Navy.<sup>(3)</sup> Of the 1,523 Medals of Honor awarded during the Civil War, twenty-three were awarded to African American service members.<sup>(1)</sup>

Shortly after the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect on January 1, 1863, Massachusetts Governor John Andrew obtained authority from the War Department to raise two regiments of African American soldiers to fight for the Union Army. These regiments were later known as the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Colored Infantry Regiments. He chose Robert Gould Shaw as commander of the 54th Massachusetts, the first African American regiment for the state of Massachusetts. During its service in the Civil War, the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment lost 270 men: 5 officers and 104 enlisted men were killed in battle or mortally wounded, including its commander, Robert Gould Shaw; 1 officer and 160 enlisted men died from disease. Highlights of the 54th Massachusetts' war experiences were portrayed in the popular 1989 movie “Glory.”



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Harvey\\_Carney](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Harvey_Carney)

William Carney and Martin Delaney were two members of the 54th Massachusetts. Born a slave, William Carney, (1840-1908), was born in Norfolk, Virginia. His father was William Carney who had doubtlessly adopted the last name of his master, Major Carney, owner of a large plantation. Carney served as a color bearer in the front lines.

Best remembered for his heroic acts during the assault on Ft. Wagner, in Charleston, S.C., Carney prevented the American flag from touching the ground during the American retreat. Carney was wounded twice and went on to become the first African American to receive the Medal of Honor.(4)

Martin Robinson Delany, 1812-1885, became the highest ranking African American officer in the Union Army. Delany was an intellectual abolitionist and an activist for African American empowerment. He started one of the first African American newspapers, "The Mystery." He was admitted to Harvard Medical School in 1850. However, the white students strongly protested his presence and he was dismissed after one semester. Delany thought he had acquired enough knowledge, and started to practice medicine. In the 1850's he traveled to Africa where he planned to set up a African American colony. Once the civil war began, he stopped work on the colony and resumed his abolitionist activities. In 1863, Massachusetts Governor John Andrew was authorized to raise African American regiments. Delany recruited African American citizens from several New England states, including his own son, and they joined into the 54th Massachusetts. Delany served in the 104th US Colored Troops, and was promoted to major in 1865 by President Lincoln. After the war, he worked with the Freedman's Bureau to help former slaves adjust to life as Americans.(5)



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin\\_Delany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Delany)



<http://www.carnegiecenter.org/remembered-life-lucy-higgs-nichols/>

Another notable African American in the Civil War was Lucy Higgs, 1828-1915. She, along with her daughter and husband, traveled at night on foot through fields, briars, and underbrush until they found a Union camp near Bolivar, Tennessee. There Lucy joined the 23rd Indiana Regiment and served as a nurse during the war. She was the only African American and only woman in the regiment. Her travels with the regiment took her to Vicksburg and other battlefields in the South. She came to be known affectionately as "Aunt Lucy" by the men in her regiment.

During the war she lost her first husband and daughter. Lucy later married John Nichols and joined the Grand Army of the Republic as an honorary member. In 1898, after years of applying and being denied, she received a nurse's pension by a Special Act of Congress, with full support from Veterans of the 23rd Indiana Regiment. During the Civil War, Robert Smalls began his life as a slave in Beaufort, South Carolina, and became the Navy's first African American captain. Smalls began his seafaring life in 1851 when he worked as a rigger in Charleston. He sailed the waters between South Carolina and Florida and eventually became



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_Smalls](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Smalls)

a deck hand on the Confederate transport steamer, the Planter, in 1861. The Planter was used by General Ripley for cargo and carried special dispatches. It had a crew of at least eight slaves. Around May 12, 1862, the Planter's Captain and other officers went ashore at Charleston, a major port of the Confederacy, leaving the slaves (along with some of their family members) on board, unintentionally providing a window of opportunity for them to escape. Robert Smalls seized the moment and hijacked the wellstocked boat. He calmly navigated past the Confederate commander's headquarters, past Fort Sumter, onward to the nearest Union blockade, then raised a white flag and surrendered the boat. Smalls' actions created one of the most embarrassing moments of the war for the Confederates. Smalls enlisted in the Union Navy and served as pilot on several ships. Congress authorized Navy to provide him with a small reward for his bravery and daring. In November 1863, Chief Quartermaster J.J. Ewell placed Robert Smalls in charge of the Planter as captain. The Planter was used as a supply boat for the remainder of the war under Robert Smalls. After the war, Robert Smalls was elected to public office in his state and in Congress. He died in Beaufort, S.C., on February 22, 1915.(6)

While African Americans saw limited naval action during World War I, one of them, Edward Donohue Pierson, also earned the French Croix de Guerre for valor when he was wounded aboard the USS Mount Vernon when it was torpedoed off the coast of France.(9) Another one was John Henry (“Dick”) Turpin. In 1917, he became the first African American chief petty officer, the Navy’s highest enlisted rank at the time.(10) Turpin enlisted in 1896 and survived the sinking of the battleship USS Maine in Havana harbor in February 1898. He was one of few African American sailors allowed to serve during World War I. Not until 1932 were African Americans allowed into the Navy again and then only as stewards and mess attendants.(11) President Lincoln had gone to Gettysburg to dedicate a National Cemetery. What the war must achieve he stated clearly, “...that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom – that the government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.” Many of the problems that had plagued the country before the war still remained, but one did not. Slavery was gone and at long last African Americans had begun to be Americans.

**World War I (1914-1918).** Over 400,000 African American soldiers served in uniform during World War I. Of these soldiers approximately 10 percent were assigned to combat units. Over 1,300 African Americans were commissioned as officers. Although this was less than 1 percent of all officers, it was the largest number of African Americans in the commissioned grades since the entry of African American soldiers into the Army.(1) African Americans comprised 13 percent of active duty manpower during World War I with roughly 200,000 being deployed to Europe as part of the American Expeditionary Force and the French Army. When World War I broke out, Eugene Bullard, 1894-1961, joined the French Infantry. After being seriously wounded, Bullard was offered a chance to transfer from the French Army to the French Air Force. Bullard distinguished himself by shooting down enemy aircraft and destroying countless enemy supply points. Bullard was the first African American and United States citizen to be a combat fighter pilot. At a time when African American were not allowed to serve in the US Army Air Service, many believe it was Bullard’s service in the French Air Force that helped pave the way for other African Americans to serve in the U.S. Army Air Service.(7)



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugene\\_Bullard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugene_Bullard)

During World War I, Privates Henry Johnson and Needham Roberts, served with the 369th Regiment known as “the Harlem Hellfighters.” It was one of a few African American units that saw action in Europe and they spent more than six months on the front lines—longer than any other American unit during the war. On the night of May 15, 1918, they were assigned to a listening outpost, to detect enemy movements, when they were attacked by a German raiding party. Roberts was quickly incapacitated, but he continued to hand off grenades to Johnson, who was also wounded. The Germans attempted to drag Roberts back to their trenches, but Johnson pursued them. Private Johnson fired his rifle continuously until it jammed, and then he used it as a club, until it broke. He then drew a bolo knife and continued to fight, killing four Germans. After reinforcements arrived, Private Johnson collapsed from his 21 wounds. Private Henry Johnson became the first American recipient of the Croix de Guerre (Cross of War), France’s highest award for valor. Private Needham Roberts and nearly 500 of their fellow “Hellfighters” also received the award. African American soldiers received much acclaim in the press for their bravery in battle during World War I. Private Johnson died in 1929 and was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart and Distinguished Service Cross. In August 2014, the U.S. Defense Secretary recommended awarding Private Johnson the Medal of Honor. He is buried at Arlington Cemetery.(8)

While African Americans saw limited naval action during World War I, one of them, Edward Donohue Pierson, also earned the French Croix de Guerre for valor when he was wounded-aboard the USS Mount Vernon when it was torpedoed off the coast of France.(9) Another one was John Henry (“Dick”) Turpin. In 1917, he became the first African American chief petty officer, the Navy’s highest enlisted rank at the time.(10) Turpin enlisted in 1896 and survived the sinking of the battleship USS Maine in Havana harbor in February 1898. He was one of few African American sailors allowed to serve during World War I. Not until 1932 were African Americans allowed into the Navy again and then only as stewards and mess attendants.(11)

**World War II (1941-1945).** In October 1940, the War Department announced that the strength of African Americans in the Army would be limited to their proportion of the general population in the United States which was approximately 10 percent. (1) Over 900,000 African American soldiers served and at the height of the African American participation, nearly 9 percent of the Army was African American. (12) Approximately, 167,000 African Americans served in the Navy (or about 4 percent of the Navy) and 17,000 served in the Marine Corps (or about 2 percent of the Marines). In 1940, the War Department opened officer candidate schools in addition to previously opened Reserved Officers Training Corps (ROTC) units to African Americans. By 1945, African American officers constituted roughly 1.9 percent of all officers in the military.(1)

One of the first heroes of Pearl Harbor was Doris Miller, known as Dorie by his shipmates. Miller, a messman assigned to the USS West Virginia, had arisen at 6 a.m., and was collecting laundry when the alarm for general quarters sounded. He headed for his battle station, the anti-aircraft battery magazine amidship, only to discover that torpedo damage had wrecked it, so he went on deck. Because of his physical prowess, he was assigned to carry wounded fellow Sailors to places of greater safety. Then an officer ordered him to the bridge to aid the mortally wounded Captain of the ship. He subsequently manned a 50 caliber Browning anti-aircraft machine gun until he ran out of ammunition and was ordered to abandon ship. Miller described firing the machine gun during the battle, a weapon which he had not been trained to operate: “It wasn’t hard. I just pulled the trigger and she worked fine. I had watched the others with these guns. I guess I fired her for about fifteen minutes. I think I got one of those Jap planes. They were diving pretty close to us.”(13)



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuskegee\\_Airmen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuskegee_Airmen)

In 1947, the group known as Tuskegee Airmen, 1939-1949, was the first African American squadron in the newly created United States Air Force.(14) The Airmen had fought triumphantly in the air over the WWII battlefield and quickly became the premier escort group for Air Force bomber pilots. The Tuskegee Airmen destroyed over 250 German aircraft and destroyed over 950 supply vehicles. Amongst the Tuskegee ranks are 8 Purple Heart recipients, 15 Bronze Star holders, 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses and nearly 750 other Air Medal awardees.(15)

In February 1943, Louis C. Etheridge, Jr. and an all-African American gun crew on board the USCGC Campbell played a key role in sinking the German submarine U-606.(16) Etheridge was later awarded a Bronze Star and a Letter of Commendation from the Commandant for his heroic actions. Oscar Holmes was sworn in on 28 September 1942 as an ensign, making him the first African American Naval Aviator. Holmes entered the Navy as a qualified pilot, and was not required to attend basic pilot training.(17)

**Korean Conflict (1950-1953).** The Korean Conflict was a war fought between North and South



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/24th\\_Infantry\\_Regiment\\_\(United\\_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/24th_Infantry_Regiment_(United_States))

Korea. The United Nations' force, led by the United States, fought for the South, and China fought for the North. The former Soviet Union assisted China. The war arose from the division of Korea at the end of World War II and from the global tension of the Cold War that developed immediately after World War II. For the United States, this was the first war fought under a policy of troop integration. The 24th Infantry Regiment was disbanded early in the Korean Conflict, which completely removed the last evidence of segregation in the Army.

(18)

Private First Class (PFC) William Thompson's platoon was reorganizing when they were ambushed by enemy

forces. PFC Thompson moved his machine gun into the path of the approaching enemy and delivered heavy suppressive fire. Even as he was being hit by grenade fragments and small arms fire, he continued to deliver deadly, accurate fire giving his platoon time to withdraw to a better position. He was mortally wounded by an enemy grenade and was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously. (19) He became the first African American so honored since the Spanish-American War in 1898. Sergeant Cornelius H. Charlton was the other African American who received the Medal of Honor in Korea.



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Thompson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Thompson)

**Vietnam Era (1960-1973).** The Vietnam War was fought between North Vietnam, supported by the Soviet Union, China and other communist countries, and South Vietnam, supported by the United States and other non-communist countries. The North Vietnamese wanted to re-unite the country, the United States feared the influence of the former-USSR would begin to spread across Southeast Asia and the new communist regimes would be friendly to the former-USSR government.

Specialist (SPC) Clarence Eugene Sasser served as a medical aidman in the Vietnam War. As his company was air assaulting they fell under attack. Thirty casualties were sustained within the first few minutes. Without hesitation, SPC Sasser ran across an open rice paddy through a barrage of fire to assist the wounded. He successfully brought one soldier to safety when he was hit in the shoulder by rocket fragments. However, he continued to search for and treat the wounded. He was wounded twice more immobilizing both of his legs. Despite his wounds, he dragged himself 100 meters to a nearby soldier and treated him. Then he encouraged another group of soldiers to crawl to a safe area 200 meters away where he treated their wounds for the following five hours until they were evacuated. SPC Sasser's perseverance and valor in the face of adversity earned him the Medal of Honor. He was one of 20 African Americans to be awarded the Medal of Honor in Vietnam. (20)



[https://www.google.com/search?q=clarence+eugene+sasser&biw=1280&bih=886&source=inmls&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewLsv6UostPAhXGNSYKHSVEDNOQ\\_AUICsgC#imgrc=QKfj4v91PHJLQM%3A](https://www.google.com/search?q=clarence+eugene+sasser&biw=1280&bih=886&source=inmls&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewLsv6UostPAhXGNSYKHSVEDNOQ_AUICsgC#imgrc=QKfj4v91PHJLQM%3A)

In 1979, Vietnam War Veteran Colonel Guy Bluford became the first U.S. astronaut of African American heritage. (21) Guion “Guy” Bluford, served with the Air Force’s 557th Tactical Fighter Squadron during the Vietnam War, where he flew 144 combat missions. After his military discharge, he became a flight instructor at Sheppard Air Force Base in Texas. In 1978 he was selected by NASA as one of 35 astronaut candidates and became an astronaut in August 1979. His first mission was STS-8 aboard the Challenger which launched on August 30, 1983; it was the first night launch and landing for that space shuttle. He flew on three more shuttle missions--STS-61-A Challenger, STS-39 and STS-53 on the Discovery before retiring in 1993.



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guion\\_Bluford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guion_Bluford)

## Hispanic or Latino American

**Revolutionary War (1775-1783).** Hispanic or Latino Americans have a long history of service in the military. For example, as a 5-year old boy, Peter Francisco, 1760-1831, was found on a wharf on the James River in City Point, Virginia. A judge took Francisco in as an indenture servant. By the age of 16, when he enlisted in the army, Francisco was about 6’6” and 260 lbs. Due to his massive size and incredible bravery in battle, Francisco was known as the “Hercules of the Revolution.” Francisco used his size, strength and courage to destroy entire British elements by himself. This Amazing feat became so regular it is told that George Washington himself referred to Peter Francisco as a “one man Army.” Francisco was awarded full military honors at his death.(23)

**Civil War (1861-1865).** The Department of Defense estimates that 9,000 Mexican Americans, serving in both the Union and Confederate armies, fought in the Civil War.(24) The following are three examples of Hispanic or Latino-Americans who served in the Civil War. First, Juan Ortega, 1840-unknown, a Spanish immigrant, served aboard the USS Saratoga in the South Atlantic blockading a squadron under Commander George Musalas Colvocoresses. Ortega was a part of multiple landing party raids that helped cripple the Confederate Army by destroying key munitions facilities, crucial supply routes, and coastal strongholds. Ortega served from 1863-1865 and was awarded the Medal of Honor. He was the first American of Hispanic or Latino decent to do so.(25) Second, Maria Andreu served as the Keeper of the St. Augustine Lighthouse in Florida from 1859 to 1862, becoming the first Hispanic or Latino American woman to serve in the Coast Guard and the first Hispanic or Latino American woman to command a federal shore installation.(26) Third, Admiral David Farragut devoted his life to service in the United States Navy. The son of a Spanish-American immigrant and Revolutionary War Veteran, Farragut himself was a Civil War hero remembered for his bravery at the Battle of Mobile Bay. Farragut was the first person to hold the ranks of Vice Admiral, Rear Admiral, and full Admiral in the United States Navy.(27)



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter\\_Francisco](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Francisco)



[s://www.google.com/search?q=juan+ortega+civil+uss+saratoga+confederate+army&btw=1280&bih=886&source=images&sch&sa=X&ved=1ahUKEWizye3C08TPAhWM45YKHc1ACUjIBigB#imgrc=DpTNOqW0xspqM963A](https://www.google.com/search?q=juan+ortega+civil+uss+saratoga+confederate+army&btw=1280&bih=886&source=images&sch&sa=X&ved=1ahUKEWizye3C08TPAhWM45YKHc1ACUjIBigB#imgrc=DpTNOqW0xspqM963A)

**World War I (1914-1918).** More than 4,000 Hispanic or Latino Americans were trained for military service in World War I.(28) Two notable soldiers were David Barkley, 1899-1918, and Richard Cordova, died 1918. Barkley became the first American of Hispanic or Latino decent to be awarded the Medal of Honor for his services during WWI. When information was needed during the planning phases of an assault on German forces, Barkley volunteered to swim the near-frozen Meuse River in order to get behind enemy lines and conduct reconnaissance on the size and strength of the German force. The icy water caused him to cramp up and drowned on his swim back.(25) In September 26, 1918 Seaman Richard E. Cordova gave his life when his cutter, the CGC Tampa, was torpedoed and sunk with all hands onboard by a German U-Boat during World War I.(16)

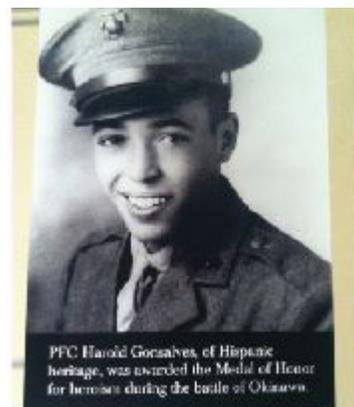
**World War II (1941-1945).** One estimate indicates that approximately half a million Hispanic or Latino Americans fought in World War II.(29) Guy Louis Gabaldon, 1926-2006, was born in Los Angeles, and was soon adopted by a Japanese family at the age of 12. Learning to speak Japanese with the family, Gabaldon enlisted in the Navy at the beginning of WWII. Beginning on his first night in Saipan, Gabaldon began bringing back prisoners using his knowledge of the Japanese language to help coax Japanese soldiers into submission. Before long, Gabaldon had been credited with over 1,500 enemy soldiers captured. Gabaldon was awarded the Navy Cross Medal.(30)

PFC Harold Gonsalves, 1926-1945, was a member of an eight man forward observer team that helped direct artillery fire. It became necessary for the team to advance to the front line.(31) PFC Gonsalves and one other marine accompanied the officer in charge to lay down telephone lines for communications with the artillery battalion. As they approached the front line, they fell under fire. Just as the three soldiers had reached the front line, a Japanese grenade landed amongst the group. Without hesitation PFC Gonsalves threw himself on the grenade, absorbing the explosion and leaving his comrades completely unharmed. He was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously for his sacrifice.



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guy\\_Gabaldon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guy_Gabaldon)

**Korean Conflict (1950-1953).** During the Korean Conflict, most Hispanic or Latino Americans served in integrated units.(24) The 65th Infantry regiment, however, was an all Hispanic or Latino regiment and was nicknamed “The Borinqueneers” after a Puerto Rican Indian tribe who were ancestors of many of the soldiers in the regiment. After a three-day attack, the Borinqueneers helped secure the South Korean capital of Seoul. On the third and final day of the attack, with the two hilltops in reach, the Borinqueneers fixed bayonets and took the two hilltops. The regiment is responsible for capturing 2,086 and killing 5,905 enemies. This regiment’s excellent performance in the Korean Conflict earned the American Presidential and Meritorious Unit Commendations, two Korean Presidential Unit Citations, and the Greek Gold Medal for Bravery.(32)



PFC Harold Gonsalves, of Hispanic heritage, was awarded the Medal of Honor for heroism during the battle of Okinawa.

During the Korean Conflict, Sgt Joseph Rodriguez was taking part in an attack against a well-fortified enemy force when his squad could no longer move forward



<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/brooklyn/u-s-forgot-all-volunteer-puerto-rican-unit-borinqueneers-served-bravely-article-1.140594>

due to heavy fire from five emplacements of automatic weapons and small arms. The enemies were also barraging his squad with grenades. Rodriguez responded by sprinting 60 yards towards the enemy. He threw his first grenade into a foxhole with great accuracy, destroying the foxhole. He then proceeded to silence an automatic weapon with two grenades and destroy two more foxholes. He reached the last foxhole and annihilated the gun and its crew. His act of valor resulted in 15 enemy dead, the enemy’s defense uprooted and the securing of a strategic strongpoint. He was awarded the nation’s highest honor, the Medal of Honor.(32)

**Vietnam Era (1960-1973).** Over 500,000 Hispanic or Latino Americans (including 350,000 Mexican Americans and 53,000 Puerto Ricans) served in World War II.(33) Master Sergeant (then Staff Sergeant) Roy P. Benavidez was a member of the 5th Special Forces Group. On May 2, 1968, the 5th Special Forces group inserted a 12 man team by helicopters into a dense jungle area to conduct reconnaissance on a large enemy force. Shortly after arriving, the team met heavy resistance from Vietnamese forces, and requested emergency evacuation. Three helicopters attempted to extract the team, but were unable to land due to small arms and anti aircraft fire. Benavidez was at the forward operating base monitoring the mission over the radio. Realizing the dire situation that the team was in, he voluntarily boarded a helicopter. He jumped from the hovering helicopter into the

jungle and while running 75 meters to the reconnaissance team was wounded in the leg, face and head. Despite his injuries, he took charge and repositioned the team to facilitate the landing of an extraction helicopter. As he was loading the helicopter with the members of the team, Benavidez was hit by small arms fire and grenade fragments leaving him severely wounded. At almost the same time, the helicopter pilot was mortally wounded and the helicopter crashed. Benavidez made his way back to the wreckage and set up a perimeter of the crash site with the survivors where he continued to supply them with ammunition and water, re-instilling in them the will to live and fight. He was wounded once again when he began to call in airstrikes on the enemy as he was performing first aid on one of his comrades. When an extraction helicopter arrived, he loaded the team onto the helicopter, making several trips. He saved the lives of at least 8 men in the face of overwhelming odds and earned the Medal of Honor for his efforts.(34) (25)



### Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND). Sergeant First Class (SFC ) then Staff Sergeant Leroy Petry was a weapons' squad



leader in the 75th Ranger regiment.(35) Petry and his squad were clearing the courtyard of a house that potentially contained high value combatants. While crossing the courtyard, Petry and another Ranger encountered automatic weapon fire and were wounded. Petry, though wounded and under fire, helped bring the other Ranger to cover. He contacted more Rangers for help and engaged the enemy with a hand grenade as another Ranger moved to his position. The enemy responded quickly, moving closer and throwing more grenades. The first grenade landed nearby and knocked his fellow Rangers to the ground. A second grenade landed only feet away from Petry and his fellow Rangers. Petry then picked up the unexploded grenade and proceeded to throw it away from the Rangers. The grenade exploded as he threw it towards the enemy, amputating his right hand at the wrist and injuring him with shrapnel. Petry then placed a tourniquet on his right wrist and coordinated support for himself and his fellow Rangers over the radio. Petry

undeniably saved his fellow Rangers from being severely wounded or killed. Petry's gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty earned him the Medal of Honor.

### Asian American or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (NHOPI)

**Civil War (1861-1865).** Asian Americans, have fought and served on behalf of the United States since the War of 1812, but their participation in the US military is not well-documented. One documented example is Edward Day-Cohota, 1845-1935. In 1845, a small Chinese child was found aboard a ship, the Cohota, and was adopted by its Captain Day. With no name, Captain Day gave the small Chinese boy the name Edward as well as his last name. Edward Day went on to go by Edward Day-Cohota absorbing the name of the ship he was found

aboard. He fought in the bloody battles of General Grant's Virginia campaign of 1864. At Dreyer's Bluff in Virginia, Cohota survived the battle despite seven bullet holes through his clothing. At the battle of Cold Harbor, he saved the life of a comrade by hiding the wounded soldier behind a rock. After the war, he re-enlisted in the Army, served for 30 years, married and had six children.(29)

**World War II (1941-1945).** Filipino Americans began serving in the Army shortly after the end of the Philippine-American War, 1899-1902, as Philippine Scouts and they began serving in the Navy in 1904.(36) By 1922, the Filipino Americans comprised 5.7 percent of the enlisted personnel in the Navy.(36) Between 200,000 and 300,000 Filipinos fought with U.S. during WW II.(37)



<https://weservedtoo.wordpress.com/2013/05/22/1st-known-civil-war-soldier-of-asian-heritage-in-va-history-edward-day-cohota/>

Over 30,000 Japanese Americans, mostly children of immigrants, served in the U.S. military during World War II.(38) Daniel Inouye, 1924-2012, wanted to join the service after the attacks on Pearl Harbor, but due to his Japanese heritage he was unable to enlist until 1943. He joined the Army and rose to the rank of Captain. In April 1945, while serving in Italy, He was shot and lost his right arm when a German grenade exploded. After he was discharged from the Army he returned to Hawaii, where he not only had to adapt to living without an arm, but he also faced racism due to his heritage. He did not, however, let this affect him. He got married, attended law school, and worked as an attorney. He was elected as Hawaii's first congressman in 1959, and he was the first Japanese-American to ever serve in Congress. He was elected to the Senate in 1962. He served consecutively for 9 terms over 50 years. On June 21, 2000, 21 Asian-American Veterans, including Senator Inouye, who served with the 442nd during WW II received the Medal of Honor from President Bill Clinton.(39)

During World War II, 13,499 Chinese Americans served in the military, which represented about 22 percent of all adult males of Chinese descent in America.(40) Three examples are Wilbur



[http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/us/daniel-inouye-hawaii-quiet-voice-of-conscience-in-senate-dies-at-88.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/us/daniel-inouye-hawaii-quiet-voice-of-conscience-in-senate-dies-at-88.html?_r=0)

Daniel Inouye, in uniform when he was a member of the Army's 442nd Regimental Combat Team Cred 442nd Veterans Club, via

Carl Sze, Hazel Ying Lee, and Edmund Dixon Young. First, Sze was the first Chinese-American Marine Corps officer. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant on January 25, 1943. The 100th Infantry Battalion, a battalion of mainly Asian-Pacific soldiers, fought in the European theater of operation during WWII. The 100th Infantry Battalion was highly touted as the most distinguished element with 1 Medal of Honor Recipient, 52 Distinguished Service Crosses, 560 Silver Stars, 28 Oak Leaf Clusters to the Silver Star, 4,000 Bronze Stars, 1,200 Oak Leaf Clusters to the Bronze Star and, 9,486 Purple Hearts. The 100th was later absorbed into the 442nd Infantry. Second, in 1932, Hazel Ying Lee was one of the first American women of Chinese heritage to obtain a pilot's license in the U.S. She later served as a Women Airforce Service Pilot (WASP) and made the ultimate sacrifice for her country during World War II. Hazel Lee was born in Portland, Oregon on August 24, 1912 to Chinese parents. She took her first plane ride in 1932

at an air show and learned to fly under famed aviator Al Greenwood. In October 1932, she obtained her pilots license, making her one of the first women of Chinese heritage to do so. In 1943 she signed up for the WASPs and received her training at Avenger Field in Sweetwater,

Texas. The WASPs were civilians who aided the U.S. Army from 1942-1944 by ferrying planes between manufacturers and military air bases, testing planes for mechanical problems, and towing practice targets for aerial gunnery students. Roughly 1,000 women served as WASPs and 38 of them, including Hazel Ying Lee, died while in service to their country. Public Law 95-202, signed on November 23, 1977 by President Jimmy Carter, provided WASPs with official military status for their service during World War II, making them eligible for federal Veterans benefits.

Third, one of VA's first medical doctors known to be of Asian American heritage was Dr. Edmund Dixon Jung.(41) He was a third generation American of Chinese heritage, born to Ming and Mabel Jung



<https://weservedtoo.wordpress.com/2014/09/01/dr-edmund-dixon-jung/>

in California on January 29, 1914. He graduated from Stanford University and then pursued a medical degree at the University of California-San Francisco (UCSF) where he graduated in 1944. He met his future wife, Haw Chan, while they were both attending medical school. He enlisted with the U.S. Army medical department on June 24, 1943 and served in the South Pacific as a medical officer during World War II. After his war service, he resumed work on his medical career. He undertook an internship at Kaiser Permanente in Oakland and then completed his 1st year of residency at UCSF hospital before becoming a resident at the San Francisco VA hospital. At the time, he needed a total of 3 years of residency for a specialty in internal medicine, but he stayed an extra year after being appointed Chief Medical Resident. He began his full-time career as a VA physician in 1951 at the Oakland VA hospital where he provided primary care to acutely ill Veterans. He obtained additional training in allergies and was appointed as Chief of the Allergy section in 1959. The original Oakland VA hospital closed in 1963

and many of its staff was transferred to the new VA hospital built in nearby Martinez. For many years, Dr. Jung enjoyed a respectful, professional working relationship with his VA coworkers.(41)

**Korean Conflict (1950-1953).** Many Japanese Americans who had been part of the Military Intelligence Service also served during the Korean War.(42)

**Vietnam Era (1960-1973).** The Department of Defense has estimated that 35,000 Asian Americans or Other Pacific Islanders served honorably during the Vietnam War.(43) For example, SFC Rodney Yano was performing the duties of crew chief on board the troop's command and control helicopter when the helicopter fell under attack of intense small arms and anti aircraft fire. Yano returned suppressive fire on the enemy and marked their positions with smoke and white phosphorous grenades. This allowed for the troop commander to accurately fire artillery rounds at the enemy. One of the phosphorous grenades exploded prematurely, severely injuring Yano. The smoke from the grenade obstructed the pilot's vision and made him lose control. Yano though injured, began to toss blazing ammunition out of the helicopter further injuring himself. He continued to do so until the helicopter was no longer in danger. His selfless sacrifice prevented loss of life and additional injury to the rest of the crew. He was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously.(39)



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rodney\\_J.\\_T.\\_Yano#media/File:Rodney\\_J.\\_T.\\_Yano.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rodney_J._T._Yano#media/File:Rodney_J._T._Yano.jpg)

## Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/ OND).

LTC L. Tammy Duckworth, 1968 – Present, was a Major in the Illinois Army National Guard. She deployed to Iraq with in 2004. Duckworth served as an Assistant Operations Officer as well as a Blackhawk pilot. On a mission north of Baghdad, the Blackhawk Duckworth was copilot-ing was hit by a rocket propelled grenade. She lost both of her legs and partial use of one arm. As a result of her injuries she was awarded the Purple Heart. In 2008 and 2009, she ran in the Chicago Marathon. In 2009 she served as the Department of Veterans Affairs Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. From 2013 to 2016, Duckworth was a member of the House of Representatives for Illinois. She began serving as a junior United States Senator for Illinois in 2017.(44)



<http://www.blogula-rasa.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/90/20120904-142230.jpg>

## American Indian and Alaska Natives (AIAN)

Native Americans (American Indian and Alaska Native) have fought and served on behalf of the United States since the Revolutionary War.

**Revolutionary War (1775-1783).** At the beginning of the Revolutionary War, Native Americans tended to fight on the British side. After three years of fighting, Congress made a treaty with the Delawares, initially bringing about 400 Native Americans to the American side.(45) John Montour, 1744-1788, was a Captain who commanded American troops in the fight against the British. Montour was part Native American, and a respected member of the Delaware Indian tribe. Montour could speak multiple Native American languages as well as both read and write English. This allowed Montour to be useful as an interpreter for American Officers and allowed Montour to make treaties and peace alliances amongst other tribes.(46)



[http://history.org/almanack/people/bios/images/montour1\\_sm.jpg](http://history.org/almanack/people/bios/images/montour1_sm.jpg)

afternoon, 150 years ago, at the McLean House in Appomattox Court House, Virginia, General Lee was greeting Ely S. Parker, a Seneca Indian who was serving as General Ulysses S. Grant's secretary. Parker replied with dignity, "We are all Americans." In the picture above to the right, General Parker is the third person from the right in the back row.

The other general, Stand Watie, 1806-1871, a Cherokee Indian, was promoted through the ranks of the Confederate Army. Known for his determination and bravery, General Watie fought in multiple battles including the Battle of Pea Ridge. His determination was so fierce he ended his career as the last Confederate General to surrender. Surrounded by Union forces, General Watie and his men held out until all resources were depleted.(47)

**Civil War (1861-1865).** About 20,000 Native Americans fought on both sides of the Civil War.(45) There were two Native American Civil War generals. General Ely S. Parker, 1828-1895, was a Seneca attorney, engineer, and tribal diplomat. He rose to the rank of Brevet Brigadier General. General Parker was present when the Confederate general Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox Courthouse in April 1865. Robert E. Lee wore a puzzled look as he examined the officer's dark features, then recovered enough to extend his hand and remark, "I am glad to see one real American here." On that April 9th



<http://www.weaponsmen.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/appomattox-1.jpg>

**World War I (1914-1918).** Prior to World War I, Native American Veterans did not receive Veterans' benefits because they were not considered American citizens. When America engaged in World War I, many Native Americans tried to enlist for the war effort but again they were told they were not citizens of the United States. So they volunteered and served as "code talkers" where they would be attached to different units but communicate amongst each other in their Native American tongue. This was done to secure the information that was being passed over the radio. Their code was unbreakable, and they proved a very valuable asset in both World War I and II. In 1919, Congress passed Public Law 66- 75, signed on November 6, 1919, offering citizenship to all honorably discharged Native American World War I Veterans, which gave them access to full Veterans' benefits. Five years later, Congress extended citizenship to the rest of the Native American population.(48)



[http://www.navajopeople.org/Images/navajo\\_code\\_talkers\\_6.jpg](http://www.navajopeople.org/Images/navajo_code_talkers_6.jpg)

ing citizenship to all honorably discharged Native American World War I Veterans, which gave them access to full Veterans' benefits. Five years later, Congress extended citizenship to the rest of the Native American population.(48)

**World War II (1941-1945).** About 25,000 Native Americans served in the military during WW II and about 50,000 went to work in war-related jobs off of the reservation.(45) As in WW I, sixteen or more tribes furnished code talkers during the war.(49)

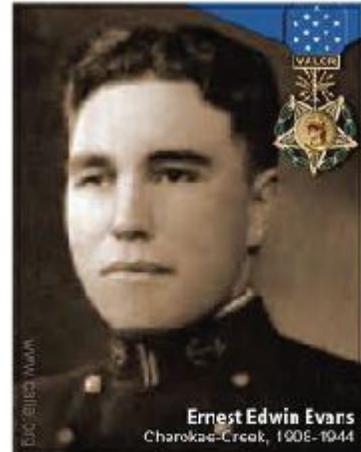
Two Native American Veterans who are also World War II Medal of Honor recipients had VA facilities named in their honor. On June 15, 2006, VA named its first facility in honor of a Native American Veteran, Jack C. Montgomery Veteran's Medical Center (VAMC). Lt. Montgomery fought his way to a battlefield commission and was awarded the Medal of Honor for personally breaking up a German strong position at Padi-gliione, Italy during which he killed eleven German soldiers and took 33 soldiers prisoner. On November 15, 2007, VA named its second facility in honor of a Native American, Ernest Childers Community Based Outpatient Clinic. Lt. Childers led a team of eight enlisted men and went after three enemy machine gun nests on a hill near Oliveto, Italy during which he threw rocks into the German nests. Thinking the rocks were grenades, the German soldiers leaped out of their nests and were shot.(50)

Other noteworthy examples follow. First, Roy Harmon, 1915-1944, was serving at the squad leader level when his platoon was pinned down by three heavily fortified machinegun nests. Harmon risked his cover and single handedly destroyed 2 machine gun nests. When approaching the 3rd nest, Harmon was wounded 3 times and continued forward. After being wounded a fourth time and near death, Harmon- with his last breath, managed to rise to his knees and toss a grenade that destroyed the machine gun nest saving his entire platoon. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions.

Second, Coast Guardsman Joseph R. Toahty, 1919-1997, was "the first Native American to participate in an offensive operation with United States naval forces in World War II." Toahty, a member of the Pawnee Nation, enlisted in the Coast Guard in 1941 and trained to become a landing craft coxswain. He participated in the initial landings at Tulagi and Guadalcanal.(51)

Third, Ernest E. Evans, 1908-1944, was half-Cherokee and one-quarter-Creek, a Naval Academy graduate, and a Lieutenant Commander serving onboard USS Johnston. During the Battle

off Samar on 25 October 1944 the Johnston formed part of Task Unit 77.4.3 (Taffy 3), which came under attack by a vastly superior Japanese force comprising of battleships, heavy and light cruisers and destroyers. In spite of the odds, Evans gave orders to close the range and prepare for a torpedo attack, informing his crew that “survival cannot be expected.” As his ship and the other destroyers of Taffy 3 drove the attack home, Japanese fire took the inevitable toll. After unleashing a spread of torpedoes, the Johnston was so badly damaged that Evans had to give the order to abandon ship. It is uncertain whether Evans died of wounds on board his ship or drowned after jumping into the water, but he was not among the Johnston’s crew who were rescued. For his gallantry and unwavering courage that materially aided in the warding off of the Japanese force, Ernest E. Evans was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.(50)



Ernest Edwin Evans  
Charokaa-Creek, 1908-1944  
[https://www.google.com/search?q=coast+guard+man+joseph+r.+toahly+1919-1997&blw=1280&bih=886&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEWlavK2lqsTPAhXFbIYKHZ\\_uDAEQ\\_AUIBigB#tbm=isch&q=ernest+e+evans+1908-1944+&imgcr=hIMbbKcWHPYgCM963A](https://www.google.com/search?q=coast+guard+man+joseph+r.+toahly+1919-1997&blw=1280&bih=886&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEWlavK2lqsTPAhXFbIYKHZ_uDAEQ_AUIBigB#tbm=isch&q=ernest+e+evans+1908-1944+&imgcr=hIMbbKcWHPYgCM963A)

Fourth, PFC Ira H. Hayes was one of the six marines who raised the flag on Iwo Jima. He was a Pima Native American. The Alaska Territorial Guard (ATG), more commonly called the Eskimo Scouts, was a military reserve force component of the US Army, organized in 1942 in response to attacks on United States soil in Hawaii and occupation of parts of Alaska by Japan during World War II. The ATG operated until 1947. Over 6,000 volunteers joined the ATG and served without pay. The ATG brought together for the first time into a joint effort members of these ethnic groups: Aleut, Athabaskan, White, Inupiaq, Haida, Tlingit, Tsimshian, Yupik, and most likely others.



<https://circletoircle.wordpress.com/tag/iwo-jima/>  
US Marines of the 28th Regiment, 5th Division atop Mt. Suribachi & Photo: Iwo Decentrol

**Korean Conflict (1950-1953).** About 29,700 Native Americans served in the Korean Conflict.(49) PFC Charles George was a member of a raiding party whose mission was to capture a prisoner for interrogation. His group fell under heavy machine gun and mortar fire. He valiantly fought his way up the hill and when he reached the crest of the hill, he jumped into the trenches engaging the enemy in hand to hand combat. Upon completion of the mission, George and two others were covering the withdrawal from the objective when an enemy soldier lobbed a grenade at the three Americans. Seeing what had just happened, George yelled to warn his comrade, pushed the other

soldier out of harm’s way, and then unhesitatingly threw himself on top of the grenade, absorbing the blast without a single outcry. The other two soldiers carried him to the forward aid station where he succumbed to his severe wounds. “Pfc. George’s indomitable courage, consummate devotion to duty, and willing self-sacrifice reflect the highest credit upon himself and uphold the finest traditions of the military service.” In his honor, VA named a third facility after an American Indian, Charles George VAMC on December 26, 2007.(52)

**Vietnam Era (1960-1973).** About 42,000 Native Americans served in Vietnam War.(30) Of those who served, First Sergeant Pascal Poolaw is perhaps the most decorated Native American to serve in the US Armed Forces with 42 total medals and citations. Among his medals are four Silver Stars and five Bronze Stars. He also earned three Purple Hearts, one for each of the wars in which he fought, WW II, Korea, and Vietnam.

**Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND).** Private Lori Piestewa, 1979 – 2003, was the first woman soldier to die in Iraq and the first Native American woman ever to die in combat on foreign soil.(54) She was driving a truck transporting troops when her convoy was ambushed. She was one of nine soldiers killed in that attack. Private Piestewa was raised as a Hopi on the Navajo reservation in Arizona. She was a divorced mother of two when she followed in her family's footsteps and enlisted in the army. She made the ultimate sacrifice for our country, and the renaming of "Squaw's Peak" to "Piestewa Peak" was done in her honor.



<https://www.army.mil/americanindians/piestewa.html>



## Notable Minority Women

Angela Salinas is a retired Major General of the US Marine Corps. She joined the Marines after college and rose to be the first Hispanic woman to become a US Marine Corps general officer and the sixth woman in the Marine Corps to reach the rank of brigadier general. She was also the first woman in the Marine Corps to command a recruiting station and the first woman to serve as a recruiting district commanding officer. During her 39 years of service, Salinas was awarded the Defense Superior Service Medal and was the highest ranking female officer in the Marines when she retired in 2013.



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angela\\_Salinas/media/fileAGSalinas.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angela_Salinas/media/fileAGSalinas.jpg)



<https://armylive.dodolive.mil/index.php/2015/african-american-women-in-the-army/>

Hazel Johnson, 1927-2011 was the first African American woman to become a general in the U.S. Army.(56) Johnson joined the Army Nurse Corps in 1955. Johnson served in Japan at a U.S.

Army Evacuation Hospital. She served at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in 1960 where she was a staff and operating room nurse. Between 1963 and 1967, she was an operating room instructor and supervisor while on a tour of three different hospitals. From 1969 to 1973, she helped develop new sterilizing methods for the Army's Field Hospital Systems as a staff member of the Army Medical Research and Development Command. In 1974, Johnson was promoted to Colonel and appointed the director of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Nursing. In 1978, Johnson was sent to South Korea where she was the chief of the department of nursing at the largest U.S. Army hospital in that country. In May 1979, she returned to Washington D.C. where she was appointed

general. A military ceremony was held in her honor at the Pentagon, where U.S. Army Surgeon General Julius Richmond pinned on her the brigadier general star. Johnson was also sworn in as the sixteenth Chief of the Army Nurse Corps. Hazel Johnson retired from the U.S. Army in 1984.

On March 23, 2003, during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Shoshana Johnson was in a convoy that was ambushed in the city of an-Nasiriyah. Johnson received a bullet wound to both ankles.(57) She and five other members of the 507th Maintenance Company were captured and taken as prisoners of war. The ambush and its aftermath made world news headlines. House raids conducted by US Marines in the city of Samarra, Iraq, resulted in the successful rescue of seven POWs on the morning of April 13. Later, along with six former POWs, Johnson came back to a hero's welcome in the US with a cheering crowd of over 3,000 people. Johnson has penned a memoir about her experience titled *I'm Still Standing: From Captured Soldier to Free Citizen-My Journey Home*. The biography was nominated for a NAACP Image Award and is a national bestseller.



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shoshana\\_Johnson/media/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shoshana_Johnson/media/File-ShoshanaJohnson.jpg)

File-ShoshanaJohnson.jpg

# Department of Veterans Affairs

## The History of Minority Veterans

Our mission, to care for those who “shall have borne the battle,” and their families,[1] guides our action towards the service to others. Throughout history, our leaders recognized that Veterans have represented every aspect of this nation’s great diversity. The following paragraphs attempt to highlight certain aspects of the role VA has played in the care of Veterans with a special emphasis on minority Veterans.

**Early America.** The first law in the colonies on pensions, enacted in 1636 by Plymouth, provided money to those disabled in the colony’s defense against Indians. Other colonies followed Plymouth’s example.(59) In the Revolutionary War, General George Washington initially banned African American participation, but later he changed his mind and allowed free African Americans to fight with the other colonists.(60) (61) In 1776, the Continental Congress granted half pay for life to soldiers in cases of loss of limb or other serious disability. But because the Continental Congress did not have authority or the money to make pension payments, the actual payments were left to the individual states. In 1789, with the ratification of the US Constitution, the first Congress assumed the burden of paying Veterans the benefits they earned.(59) In 1842, pensions were authorized for specific American Indian warriors who aided our nation during the War of 1812.

**Civil War (1861-1865) and its Legacy.** When the Civil War broke out in 1861, the nation had about 80,000 Veterans.(59) The Militia Act of 1862 enabled African Americans to serve in state militias, authorized them to enlist into the federal armed forces for the first time, and later received Federal benefits for their service. The Conscription Act of 1863 initiated the draft and included African Americans to be drafted. African Americans who enlisted in 1862 were not officially authorized to bear arms until shortly after the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect on January 1, 1863. There were 209,145 African American soldiers who fought in the Civil War.(62) African American soldiers who served in the Union forces were eligible for the same Veteran benefits as Caucasian Veterans. By the end of the war in 1865, another 1.9 million Veterans had been added to the rolls. Native Americans who served in the U.S. Regular or volunteer military forces, state regiments, or militia did not receive Veterans’ benefits because they were not considered legal citizens according to American law. They often served as guides or scouts for the Army and during the Civil War there were several Indian regiments on both sides. Some Native Americans successfully petitioned Congress and obtained small pensions or reimbursements for property losses, but they did not have access to the same benefits given to white military Veterans.

Beginning at the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, established in 1865, disabled Veterans were trained in new occupations as their interests and abilities allowed. Veterans were taught trades such as telegraphy, plastering, or gardening as residents at the National Homes. There were no education opportunities or benefits for them outside of the National Home. Congress authorized funds for farming or manufacturing operations at the National Homes as both a means to supply necessary food, supplies, and services to the Homes and as occupational endeavors for its residents. By 1875, Veterans at the National Homes were engaged in cigar-making, knitting socks, printing and book binding, shoemaking, wagon-making, iron work, plumbing, building steam engines, tin-smithing tailoring, bread-baking, breeding and raising livestock, cabinetry, and much more. They often sold items to the public in the Home’s commissary and were paid for their labors.

**World War I (1914-1918).** Some 4-7 million Americans fought in World War I. Of these, 116,000 died in service and 204,000 were wounded.(59) When the U.S. declared war on Germany in April 1917, the “separate but equal” policies had been in place in America for 21 years (1896 Plessy v. Ferguson). De-

spite those segregation policies, thousands of African Americans enlisted for U.S. military service. The Army established four segregated units of African American soldiers during World War I. The Navy's segregation policy, at the time, accepted very few African Americans and the Marines accepted none. Of those who joined the military, most African Americans served in supply or labor battalions, but a few unit went into battle overseas. The U.S. enlisted 367,710 African American men as soldiers, mostly from the south, into the Armed Services. About 200,000 were sent to France and approximately 50,000 of those saw combat.(63) Thousands of Native Americans tried to enlist for the war effort. They were required to register for the military draft of 1917, but they could not be formally drafted into the military, or receive benefits later, because they were not legally citizens, despite having been born in the U.S. Instead, they volunteered and were invaluable assets for the American forces.

**Veterans Administration Created.** In 1921, Congress created the Veterans' Bureau to consolidate Veterans programs managed by the Bureau of War Risk Insurance, the Public Health Service, and the Federal Board of Vocational Education. It is located at 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington DC.(59) In 1929, President Hoover proposed consolidating agencies administering Veteran benefits The Veterans Administration was created under authorization of the act of Congress approved July 3, 1930 (46 Stat. 1016: 38 U.S.C. 11), to consolidate and coordinate under a single control all Federal agencies dealing with Veterans' affairs. President Hoover signed the executive order establishing the VA on July 21, 1930, and retired Brig. Gen. Frank T. Hines was named the first administrator of the agency.(59)

**World War II (1941-1945).** Over 2.5 million African Americans registered for the draft in WWII. Of that number, approximately half served in one of the four major services.(1) Nearly 750,000 served overseas in Europe and the Pacific.(64) In 1941, President Roosevelt brought the Philippine Commonwealth forces under the auspices of the US military. In 1942, Congress allowed for the naturalization of foreigners serving for the U.S. during the war. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 authorized the release of a one-time, lump-sum payment to eligible World War II Philippine Veterans.

**GI Bill.** On June 22, 1944, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed Public Law 78-346, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, to provide sweeping new benefits to World War II Veterans. The law has been commonly referred to as the "G.I. Bill" since then. The G.I. Bill provided honorably discharged Veterans with access to a college education, job training and placement, loans to purchase homes, new home construction, or farms, farming equipment, and more. For the first time in history, it:

- Elevated the VA to a war essential agency, second only to the War and Navy Departments (at the time), giving it elevated priority in funding.
- Provided \$500,000,000 for additional Veterans hospitals
- Authorized interchange of staff and facilities between VA and the military services to facilitate adjudication and dissemination of all Veterans benefits.
- Authorized educational benefits to honorably discharged Veterans (not just the disabled) who served after September 16, 1940 (World War II Veterans); this included attending college, refresher courses, retraining, etc., at approved institutions for up to 4 years.
- Provided loans for Veterans to purchase homes, new construction, farms and farm equipment, and business property.
- Provided job counseling and employment services for World War II Veterans.



President Roosevelt signing G.I. bill courtesy of FDR Library

Effects of the G.I. Bill. As a result of the GI Bill, Veterans became college graduates, bought homes, started businesses and families. Veterans fueled the post-war economy, initiated the consumer culture, and transformed America's middle class. Levittown, NY was the first American planned community built specifically to attract returning World War II Veterans and their families. According to Harry Belafonte, "What the GI Bill did was it gave us the qualifications or the credentials to compete for jobs that would ultimately lead us into the middle class...Once we had access to education, to knowledge, to skill we could upgrade ourselves."(65)

After the war, the African American colleges were inundated by Veteran students. Their enrollment increased by 50 percent and many Veterans were turned away or assisted by states to attend schools elsewhere. One beneficial result was increased federal support for buildings and equipment at the historically African American institutions.

The African American college enrollment increased from a prewar 1.08 percent to 3.6 percent in 1950. The GI Bill played a key role in the integration of institutions of higher education.

The GI Bill opened the door to law school for WAC Captain Dovey Johnson Roundtree. As a Howard University Law student, Ms. Roundtree found herself at the center of the group of African American attorneys leading the charge against segregation. She went on to a distinguished career in civil and criminal law, setting legal precedent with a number of cases and becoming a mentor to dozens of young African American attorneys. She saw her journey from life in the segregationist South to the halls of federal courthouses as a testament to the infinite possibility of a government which, though imperfect, provides its citizens the means for change. In her case, the GI Bill allowed her to take the first giant step forward, providing the means for her to go to law school. "Democracy," Ms. Roundtree said, "Is not a fixed thing. It is always becoming. And it falls to each of us to do for America what the hymn says so beautifully: 'to mend thine every flaw.' In doing that, we help it to become all that it can be." (65)

**Post-World War II.** On July 26, 1948, President Truman signed Executive Order (EO) establishing the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services. The order stated:

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the Armed Forces without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency or morale. (66)

The EO created within the National Military Establishment an advisory committee called the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services. On behalf of the President, the committee is authorized to determine in what respect the rules, procedures and practices may be altered or improved with a view of carrying out the policy of the EO.

Korean Conflict (1950-1953). Among the 1.8 million men and women who fought in the Korean War there were more than 100,000 African Americans. African American personnel made up 13 percent of the total military strength in Korea. But before 1948, they fought when they were allowed to fight, in segregated units – denied the opportunity to show their abilities in an integrated setting. However, President Truman’s 1948 Executive Order 9981 changed all that.(66)

Vietnam Era (1960-1973). Of the 3.14 million men who served in Vietnam, Cambodia, or Laos, during the Vietnam War, nearly 340,000 (10.8 percent) were African American. In the National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study (NVVRS), the first large-scale nationally representative study of post war adjustment among African American men serving in Vietnam reported that 20.6 percent of African American male Vietnam Veterans met diagnostic criteria for PTSD.(67) These findings meant that about one in five African American men (or 70,000 male African American Veterans) who served in Vietnam met the full criteria for current PTSD as described in the third edition of the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM III) of Mental Disorders. Roughly 82 percent had not sought mental health treatment from the VA, with the predominant reason offered “that the Veterans felt that he could handle the problem on his own.”(68) Furthermore, a significant body of unanalyzed data from the 1988 Congressionally mandated NVVRS still exists. There remains a need for more knowledge about PTSD’s effects on African American Veterans.

All-Volunteer Force (AVF). On March 27, 1969, President Nixon announced the appointment of the President’s Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force.(69) The Commission studied a broad range of possibilities for increasing the supply of volunteers for service, including increased pay, benefits, recruitment incentives, and other practicable measures to make military careers more attractive to young men. In 1973, as the Vietnam War ended, the military began the era of the All-Volunteer Force. Historically, from 1940 to 1973, African Americans were less likely to join the military than Whites.(70) In 1970, African Americans were slightly underrepresented in the military (9.8 percent in the military and 11 percent in the military-age general population). Later research, however, has concluded that during the AVF era, African Americans have been overrepresented in the military.(71)

Desert Storm (Jan 16, 1991 – Feb 28, 1991). Of the 35,000 women who went to Desert Storm, an estimated 40 percent were African American. Today, over 30 percent of military women are African American, approximately 33.6 percent enlisted and 13.1 percent commissioned and warrant officers.

(72) In 2002, African American women were over-represented in the Armed Services as compared with their population in the civilian population. This is simply to say that African American women made up only 12 percent of all civilian women.

Center for Minority Veterans (CMV) Established. On November 2, 1994, Public Law 103-446, Section 509, established the Center for Minority Veterans. The Director was given certain functions with respect to Veterans who are minorities which include the following: serve as advisor to the Secretary, make recommendations to establish or improve programs, promote the use of benefits, disseminate information, conduct and sponsor appropriate social and demographic research, and analyze and evaluate complaints.

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## Understanding VA Health Care

An overview of the concepts of enrollment, eligibility, and means testing helps with understanding how VA health care benefits work.

### Enrollment

Veterans who want to use VA health care services must apply for enrollment first. This is done by completing VA form 10-10EZ online, calling 1-877-222-VETS, or by visiting any VA health care or Veterans' benefits facility. Enrollment can be done for future needs if services are not currently required. In some cases, enrollment is not necessary. Veterans do not have to enroll for health care if they have a 50 % or higher VA service-connected disability rating, if they are seeking care for a VA-rated disability only, or if they were discharged within the last year for a disability that was caused or worsened in military service but has not yet been rated by VA.

### Eligibility

Eligibility is determined as part of the enrollment process. Basic eligibility is determined based on type of service and discharge status. Many Veterans must also satisfy a minimum duty requirement. Veterans are then generally assigned to one of eight priority groups based on different factors such as length of service, level of disability, and level of income. These priority groups are intended to help VA allocate its available health care resources among Veterans should Congress reduce healthcare funding below what is necessary to care for all eligible Veterans. VA priority groups range from 1 to 8 with priority group 1 as the highest priority for access to VA health care and priority group 8 as the lowest priority. Assignment to certain priority groups is based in part on income. Increases or decreases in income may affect future priority group determination and copayment obligations for services. VA uses a process of means testing to determine eligibility.

Priority group 3 is typically assigned to Veterans who are former Prisoner of War (POW), In receipt of the Purple Heart Medal, In receipt of the Medal of Honor, etc. The complete list can be found on [https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/publications/IB10-441\\_enrollment\\_priority\\_groups.pdf](https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/publications/IB10-441_enrollment_priority_groups.pdf)

### Means Testing

VA's means testing applies both national and geographic income limits in determining priority groups. For low income Veterans, Congress added geographic income limits to the existing national income limit to expand services for those who live in high-cost areas. For higher income Veterans, VA assigns Priority Group 8 for those who were enrolled prior to 2003, or who have income that exceeds current income limits by more than 10% and who agree to pay the applicable copayment. Below are some examples to illustrate

*In FY 2018, a Veteran with no dependents living in DuPage County, Illinois would qualify for placement in Priority Group 7 with copay for health care services on an income basis if the gross household income is below the 2018 VA National Income Threshold of \$33,632, or below the 2018 VA National Geographic Income Threshold of \$44,250 for DuPage County.*

*Changes in the number of dependents can influence priority group status. For example, if this same Veteran's income was \$50,600 and he or she had a child in 2018, the priority group would change due to higher income limit extensions for dependents. Separate income limit extensions are available for up to 7 children.*

*Unemployment or other common losses to income may increase available benefits. For example, if income drops below \$11,830 there may be eligibility for free medications and travel benefits to VA facilities.*