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Those Who Served: America's Veterans From World War II to the War on Terror

American Community Survey Report

By Jonathan E. Vespa
Issued June 2020
ACS-43

INTRODUCTION

The first veterans of the United States served during the American Revolution in the Continental Army, created in 1775 when colonial militias formed a common army under command of George Washington. Since then, the United States has declared war 11 times and fought in conflicts around the world. More than 41 million Americans have served over the course of the nation's history. More than 16 million did so in World War II alone.

Who are America's veterans? Throughout history, they have included the Green Mountain Boys, Buffalo Soldiers, Tuskegee Airmen, Women Airforce Service Pilots, Screaming Eagles, and Green Berets. They are the men and women who served their country at home and abroad, on land, sea, and air—and since 1973, have served as an all-volunteer force.

This report looks at the roughly 18 million Americans, or about 7 percent of the adult population, who were veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces in 2018.¹ Ranging from 18 to over 100 years old, they served in conflicts as diverse as the Korean War and the Global War on Terrorism. This report provides an overview of these men and women, such as how many veterans alive today served in World War II, the characteristics of Vietnam veterans, and how many Gulf War veterans are disabled. The report primarily uses data from

¹ The U.S. Census Bureau reviewed this data product for unauthorized disclosure of confidential information and has approved the disclosure avoidance practices applied to this release. CBDRB-FY20-POP001-0048.

the 2018 American Community Survey to describe the demographic, socioeconomic, and health characteristics of veterans by their period of service in the armed forces. Importantly, the report focuses on veterans who were alive in 2018. It does not describe all veterans who served during a specific period in the military or the characteristics of veterans at the time that they left service.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The number of veterans in the United States declined by a third, from 26.4 million to 18.0 million between 2000 and 2018.
- There are fewer than 500,000 World War II veterans alive today, down from 5.7 million in 2000.
- Women make up a growing share of veterans. Today, about 9 percent of veterans—or 1.7 million—are women. By 2040, that number is projected to rise to 17 percent.
- The largest cohort of veterans alive today served during the Vietnam Era (6.4 million), which lasted from 1964 to 1975. The second largest cohort of veterans served during peacetime only (4.0 million).
- The median age of veterans today is 65 years. By service period, Post-9/11 veterans are the youngest with a median age of about 37, Vietnam Era veterans have a median age of about 71, and World War II veterans are the oldest with a median age of about 93.

- Veterans from more recent service periods have the highest levels of education. More than three-quarters of Post-9/11 and Gulf War veterans have at least some college experience, and more than one-third of Gulf War veterans have a college degree.
- Post-9/11 veterans had a 43 percent chance of having a service-connected disability, after accounting for differences in demographic and social characteristics among veterans—significantly higher than veterans from other periods.²
- Among veterans who had a service-connected disability, Post-9/11 veterans had a 39 percent chance of having a disability rating of 70 percent

² A service-connected disability is an injury, disease, or disability that was the result of service in the armed forces.

or more—significantly higher than veterans from other any other periods.

THE DECLINING SIZE OF THE VETERAN POPULATION

Roughly 18.0 million veterans are living in the United States today (Table 1).³ They served during times of war (such as during the Gulf War and Vietnam Era) and times of peace (from 1955 to 1964 and 1975 to 1990). The largest single group of veterans (6.4 million) is from the Vietnam Era. The fastest declining group of veterans is from World War II. Between 2000 and 2018, the number of living World War II veterans in the United States declined from 5.7 million to fewer

³ Estimates in this report come from the American Community Survey and may differ from other data sources. For example, the Department of Veterans Affairs estimated that there were 19.6 million veterans living in the United States in 2018.

than 500,000 (Figure 1). By 2030, it is projected there will be fewer than 8,000 World War II veterans.⁴

Indeed, the veteran population has been declining for decades. Between 2000 and 2018 alone, the veteran population declined by one-third, from 26.4 million to 18.0 million (Figure 1).⁵ The population of veterans is projected to continue declining by 2.5 million over the next decade. By 2040, it is projected there will be about 12.9 million veterans living in the United States, down from a high of 28.6 million in 1980.⁶

⁴ For projections of the veteran population, see Veteran Population Model (VetPop 2016), calculated by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs <www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran_Population.asp>.

⁵ This estimate does not include people who became veterans after 2000 but died before 2018.

⁶ See the reference in footnote 4.

Table 1.

Veterans by Period of Service: 2018

(Numbers in thousands)

| Periods of service | Number of veterans | | |
|---|--------------------|--------|-------|
| | Total | Men | Women |
| All service periods | 17,960 | 16,310 | 1,653 |
| Post-9/11 (September 2001 or later) | 3,764 | 3,132 | 632 |
| Gulf War (August 1990 to August 2001) | 3,804 | 3,247 | 557 |
| Vietnam Era (August 1964 to April 1975) | 6,384 | 6,146 | 238 |
| Korean War (July 1950 to January 1955) | 1,306 | 1,268 | 38 |
| World War II (December 1941 to December 1946) | 485 | 463 | 22 |
| Pre-World War II (November 1941 or earlier) | 12 | 11 | 1 |
| Peacetime only (All other periods not listed above) | 4,034 | 3,653 | 382 |

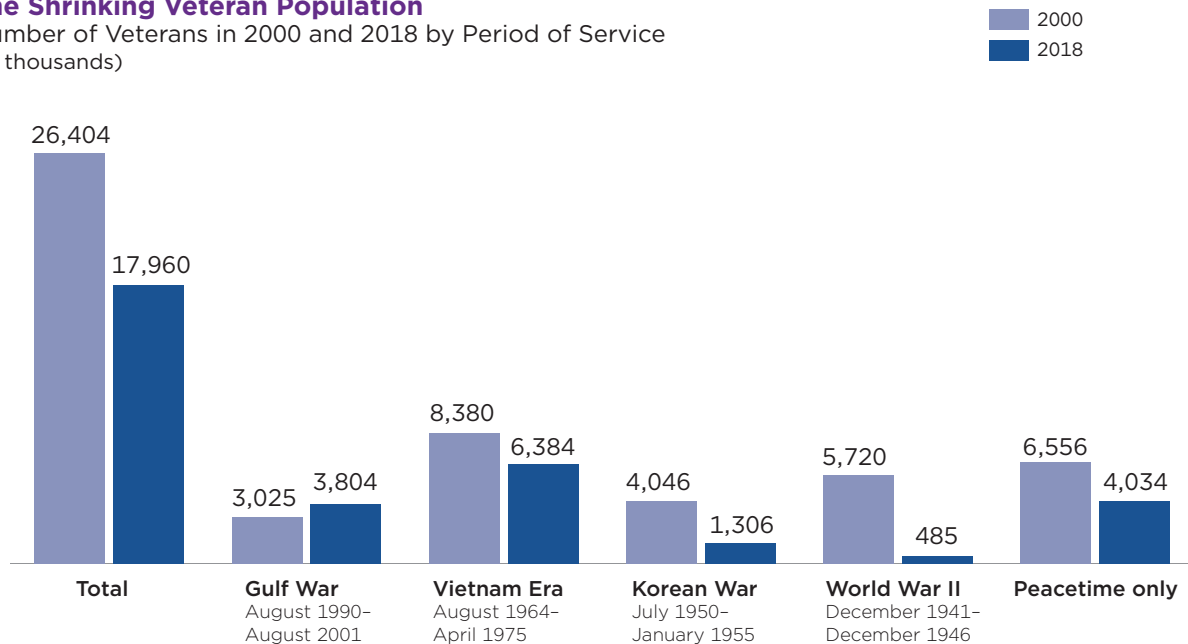
Note: Except for peacetime only, the periods of service are not mutually exclusive. Veterans may have served at any point during the time listed for the service periods; they may not have necessarily served in the war for which the period is named. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <www.census.gov/acs>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 1-Year American Community Survey.

Figure 1.

The Shrinking Veteran Population

Number of Veterans in 2000 and 2018 by Period of Service
(In thousands)



Note: The numbers by period of service will not add to the total because veterans may serve during multiple periods. Post-9/11 veterans who have only served since September 2001, are included in the total only. Peacetime only includes service from January 1947 to June 1950, February 1955 to July 1964, and May 1975 to July 1990. In the 2000 Census, World War II was defined using a wider period of service, from September 1940 to July 1947, than it was in 2018.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census and 2018 1-Year American Community Survey.

Why has the veteran population been declining so rapidly? For one, the armed forces are substantially smaller today than in the past. In 1973, the United States eliminated the draft and created an all-volunteer military force. The move to voluntary enlistment changed the composition of the armed forces, while making military service a less widespread, more selective experience for

Americans.⁷ Today, about 1.4 million men and women are on active duty across all branches of the military, a number that has changed little over the last two decades (Figure 2). The size of the military directly feeds into the potential number of veterans, so that as the number of service members declines, the number of future veterans does, too.

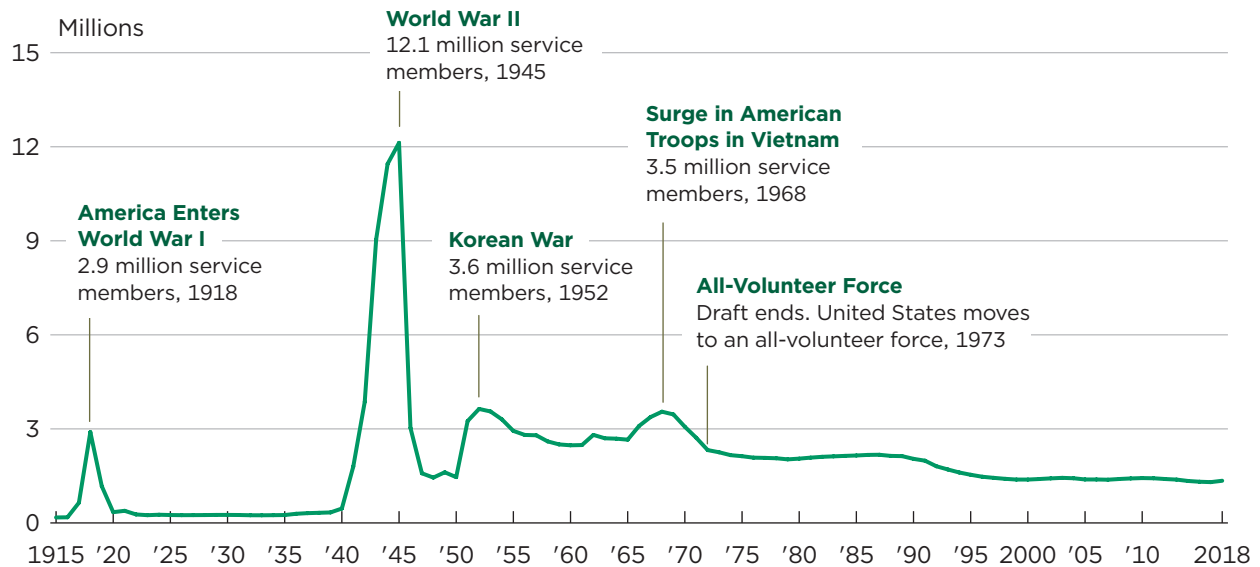
⁷ Rostker, B.D. 2006, "The Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force," *RAND Corporation Research Brief*, RB-9195-RC, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, <www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9195.html>.

At the same time as fewer men and women have been serving, the veterans of past wars—particularly World War II, Korea, and Vietnam—are aging and dying. This is another reason that the veteran population has been declining so rapidly. Earlier wars swelled the size of the armed forces to unprecedented levels in America. In 1940, just before the United States entered World War II, the U.S. Armed Forces numbered fewer than 500,000. By 1945, that number surged to

Figure 2.

A Century of Serving

Size of the U.S. Armed Forces Since 1915



Source: U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center; U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstracts of the United States.

more than 12 million (Figure 2). Over the course of the war, more than 16.1 million Americans would serve worldwide.⁸ Though the size of the military grew again during the wars in Korea and Vietnam, it never reached its height during World War II.

Drafts and voluntary enlistments from World War II and the

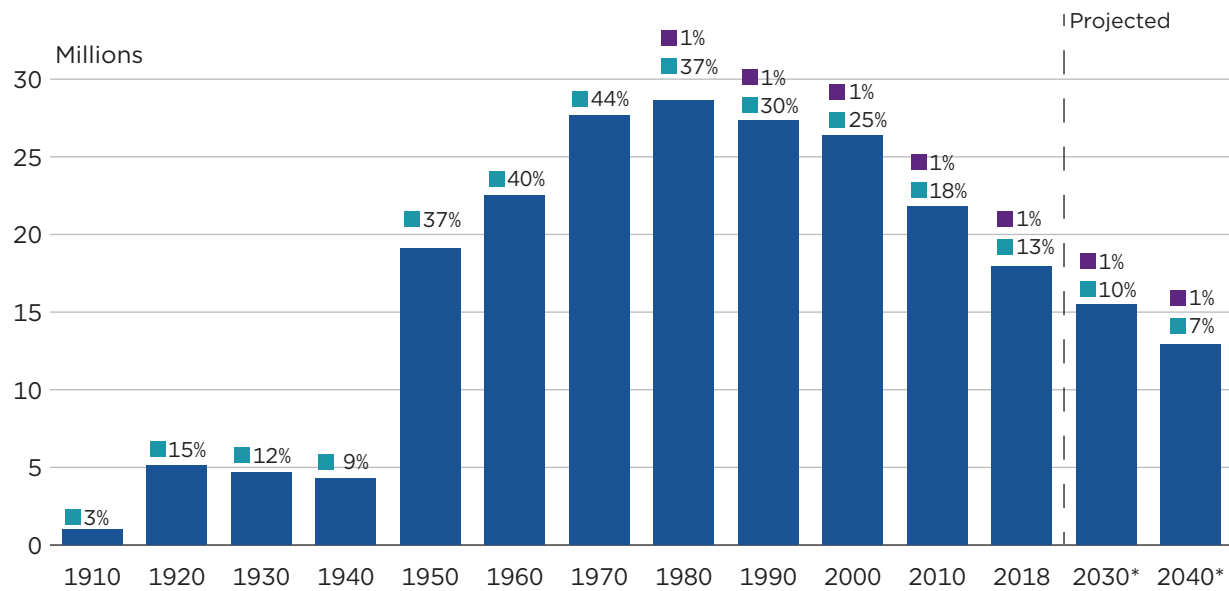
⁸ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2017, "America's Wars Fact Sheet," U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington, DC, <www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs_americas_wars.pdf>.

Korean and Vietnam wars left a substantial imprint on the veteran population, one that has lasted decades. In 1950, following World War II, more than 1 in 3 men in the United States were veterans (37 percent of the male population aged 18 and over at that time). This imprint could still be seen in 2000, when 1 in 4 men were veterans (Figure 3). In coming decades, the number of veterans is projected to continue declining. Today, about 1 in 8 men in the United States are veterans; by

2040, that number is projected to fall to about 1 in 14. Roughly 1 in 100 women are veterans today, a number that is projected to remain relatively unchanged over the next two decades.⁹

⁹ For projections of the veteran population, see the reference in footnote 4. For projections of the U.S. population, see the U.S. Census Bureau's 2017 National Population Projections at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/popproj/2017-summary-tables.html>.

Figure 3.
Those Who Served
 Number of U.S. Veterans Since 1910



Note: The 1980 Census was the first to ask veteran status of both men and women. Prior to 1980, the decennial census asked it only of men.
 Source: U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center; U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstracts of the United States and American Community Survey; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veteran Population Projection Model 2016 (VetPop 2016), projected values for 2030 and 2040.

THE GROWING NUMBER OF FEMALE VETERANS

Beginning in 1901, women formally became part of the nation’s military with the creation of the Army Nurse Corps, although women have served informally throughout the nation’s history as nurses, cooks, spies, and soldiers

(often disguised as young men).¹⁰ The end of the draft in 1973 created more opportunities for women to enlist and since the

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2017, “Women Veterans Report: The Past, Present, and Future of Women Veterans,” National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics. See also Iskra, D.M., 2010, “Women in the United States Armed Forces: A Guide to the Issues,” Praeger, Santa Barbara, CA.

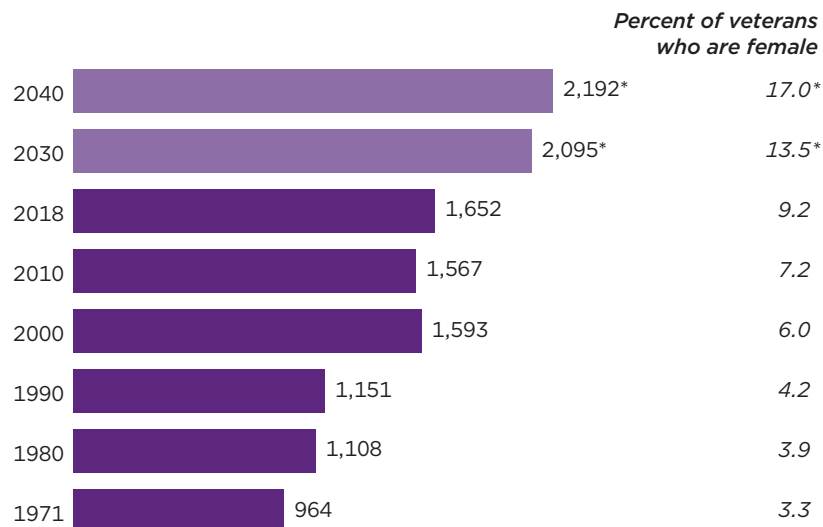
1990s women have been serving in combat roles.¹¹ As a result, a growing share of veterans are women. Between 1980 and 2018, the proportion of female veterans

¹¹ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2017, “Women Veterans Report: The Past, Present and Future of Women Veterans,” National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, <www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/Women_Veterans_2015_Final.pdf>.

Figure 4.

Rise of Female Veterans

Historical and Projected Trends of Female Veterans
(In thousands)



* Projected numbers.

Note: Data from 1971 and projected values for 2030–2040 are from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veteran Population Projection Model 2016 (VetPop 2016).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census 1980–2000 and 2010 and 2018 1-Year American Community Survey.

more than doubled, from about 4 percent to 9 percent (Figure 4). In coming decades, the proportion of female veterans is projected to grow further—to 17 percent of all veterans by 2040. This shift in the composition of veterans comes from a growing number of women who serve in the military. The change, however, is largely driven by cohort change. Veterans of older wars, who are predominantly men, are aging and dying, leaving a relatively larger share of women veterans today.

Because women had more opportunities to serve beginning in the 1990s, they make up a higher share of recent service cohorts. For example, women make up about 17 percent of all Post-9/11 veterans and 15 percent of Gulf War veterans, compared with just 4 percent of Vietnam Era veterans (Figure 5). The female veterans who have served since September 2001, tend to be young, diverse, and highly educated. More than three-quarters are under the age of 45; almost one-quarter are Black and 12 percent are Hispanic; and more than 40 percent have a

college degree.¹² Compared with the broader population of women who have never served, female veterans are more likely to have a college degree, to work full-time, year-round, and to have higher earnings when working full-time.¹³

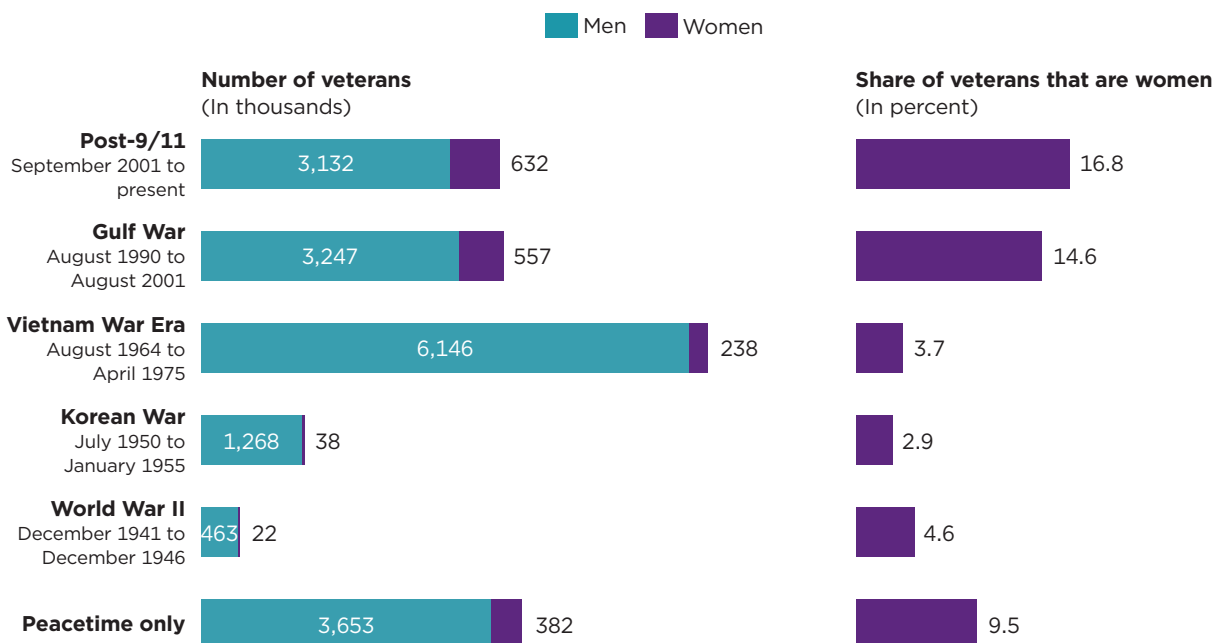
VETERANS OF THE ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE AND DRAFT ERA

In 1973, the United States eliminated the draft and created an all-volunteer military force. Using 1973 as a benchmark, veterans of older periods largely come from the draft era (e.g., Vietnam Era, Korean War, and World War II), while veterans of recent periods (e.g., Post-9/11, Gulf War, and Peacetime service since 1975) represent those who served in an all-volunteer force. Nevertheless, many veterans of older periods enlisted voluntarily. During World War II, about

¹² Federal surveys give respondents the option of reporting more than one race. Therefore, two basic ways of defining a race group are possible. A group such as Asian may be defined as those who reported Asian and no other race (the race-alone or single-race concept) or as those who reported Asian regardless of whether they also reported another race (the race alone-or-in-combination concept). This report shows data using the first approach (race alone). Use of the single-race population does not imply that it is the preferred method of presenting or analyzing data. For further information, see the 2010 Census Brief, *Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin: 2010* (C2010BR-02) at <<http://census.gov/library/publications/2011/dec/c2010br-02.html>>.

¹³ Lofquist, D., 2018, “Younger Veterans Are More Educated, More Diverse,” U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC. See <www.census.gov/library/stories/2018/03/female-veterans.html>. See also, Lofquist, D., 2017, “Characteristics of Female Veterans—An Analytic View Across Age-Cohorts: 2015,” *American Community Survey Briefs* 15-03, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC.

Figure 5.
Those Who Served
 Percentage of Female Veterans in 2018 by Period of Service



Note: The numbers by period of service will not add to the total because veterans may have served during multiple periods. Peacetime only includes service from January 1947 to June 1950, February 1955 to July 1964, and May 1975 to July 1990.
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 1-Year American Community Survey.

6.1 million of the 16.1 million service members were volunteers.¹⁴ Likewise, not every veteran since 1975 is necessarily a volunteer (some may have been drafted during the Vietnam Era and went on to serve after the draft ended). As a result, Tables 2 and 3 generally, but not exclusively, represent veterans of the draft and the all-volunteer force eras.

Of the 18.0 million veterans in the United States, about half (8.8 million) served in an all-volunteer military force. More than 1 in 3 (35.5 percent) served during the

Vietnam Era, making them the largest group of veterans in the United States today. Among all veterans who were alive in 2018, more than three-quarters were non-Hispanic White, more than half were no longer in the labor force, and two-thirds had at least some college education (Table 2). The median age among all veterans was 65 years, reflecting the influence of veterans from older service periods on the age structure of the veteran population.

The demographic and economic characteristics of veterans varied substantially across service periods. In 2018, Post-9/11 veterans were the youngest, with

a median age of about 37 years. They were also the most racially and ethnically diverse group. More than one-third (34.9 percent) of Post-9/11 veterans were some other race and ethnicity than non-Hispanic White, which is significantly more than veterans from the Gulf War or Peacetime period since 1975 (Table 2). Post-9/11 and Gulf War veterans also had more education than older veterans. For example, more than three-quarters of Post-9/11 and Gulf War veterans had at least some college education in 2018, compared with about half of living World War II veterans (Tables 2 and 3).

¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States, Table 523, p. 348, 2003.

Table 2.

Characteristics of Veterans by Service Period: 2018

Veterans of the All-Volunteer Force Era

(Numbers in thousands)

| Characteristic | All veterans | | Post-9/11 | | Gulf War | | Peacetime only (post-Vietnam Era) | |
|---|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Total | 17,960 | 100.0 | 3,764 | 100.0 | 3,804 | 100.0 | 2,529 | 100.0 |
| Demographics | | | | | | | | |
| Median age (years) | 65.0 | X | 36.6 | X | 49.6 | X | 58.0 | X |
| Race and Hispanic origin: | | | | | | | | |
| White alone, non-Hispanic | 13,780 | 76.7 | 2,449 | 65.1 | 2,626 | 69.0 | 1,818 | 71.9 |
| Black alone, non-Hispanic | 2,107 | 11.7 | 551 | 14.6 | 609 | 16.0 | 433 | 17.1 |
| Other, non-Hispanic | 789 | 4.4 | 274 | 7.3 | 215 | 5.7 | 110 | 4.3 |
| Hispanic | 1,285 | 7.2 | 490 | 13.0 | 354 | 9.3 | 169 | 6.7 |
| Employment and Education | | | | | | | | |
| Employment status: | | | | | | | | |
| Employed | 8,049 | 44.8 | 2,948 | 78.3 | 2,850 | 74.9 | 1,664 | 65.8 |
| Unemployed | 324 | 1.8 | 133 | 3.5 | 95 | 2.5 | 69 | 2.7 |
| Not in labor force | 9,591 | 53.4 | 683 | 18.1 | 859 | 22.6 | 797 | 31.5 |
| Education: | | | | | | | | |
| High school graduate or less | 5,984 | 33.3 | 819 | 21.8 | 816 | 21.5 | 950 | 37.5 |
| Some college, no degree | 6,764 | 37.7 | 1,671 | 44.4 | 1,566 | 41.2 | 1,028 | 40.6 |
| Bachelor's degree or more | 5,216 | 29.0 | 1,274 | 33.8 | 1,421 | 37.4 | 552 | 21.8 |
| Economic Characteristics | | | | | | | | |
| Personal income (dollars, median) | 41,560 | X | 50,110 | X | 61,350 | X | 45,530 | X |
| Income to poverty ratio: ¹ | | | | | | | | |
| Less than 150 percent of poverty | 2,275 | 12.9 | 433 | 11.7 | 325 | 8.6 | 407 | 16.4 |
| 150 to 399 percent of poverty | 6,911 | 39.1 | 1,468 | 39.5 | 1,174 | 31.2 | 833 | 33.5 |
| 400 percent or more of poverty | 8,470 | 48.0 | 1,812 | 48.8 | 2,268 | 60.2 | 1,249 | 50.2 |
| Receives public assistance ² | 1,647 | 9.2 | 343 | 9.1 | 311 | 8.2 | 354 | 14.0 |
| Housing: | | | | | | | | |
| In group quarters | 379 | 2.1 | 63 | 1.7 | 50 | 1.3 | 59 | 2.3 |
| In households | 17,580 | 97.9 | 3,701 | 98.3 | 3,754 | 98.7 | 2,470 | 97.7 |
| Homeowner | 13,660 | 77.7 | 2,372 | 64.1 | 2,882 | 76.8 | 1,859 | 75.2 |
| Renter ³ | 3,922 | 22.3 | 1,329 | 35.9 | 872 | 23.2 | 612 | 24.8 |

X Not applicable.

¹ Not calculated for people living in most types of group quarters.² Includes Supplemental Security Income, cash public assistance income, and food stamps or SNAP.³ Includes veterans who live rent free.

Note: Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <www.census.gov/acs>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 1-Year American Community Survey.

Gulf War veterans had the highest median income in 2018, at \$61,400, while the majority had an income-to-poverty ratio that was at least 400 percent (Table 2). Gulf War veterans were more likely to have a bachelor's degree and were older than Post-9/11 veterans, which has provided them more time for work experience outside of the military and to earn higher incomes. At the other end of the spectrum, veterans of World War II and

Peacetime service since 1975 had the highest percentage with income-to-poverty ratios below 150 percent. In other words, these two groups had a greater share of veterans who were living in or near poverty in 2018.

THE HEALTH OF TODAY'S VETERANS

Veterans have distinctive health issues related to their military service and are more likely to

suffer from trauma-related injuries, substance abuse, and mental health disorders than people who have never served in the armed forces.¹⁵ About one-quarter of all veterans had a service-connected disability in 2018, which is an injury, disease, or disability that active duty either

¹⁵ Olenick, M., M. Flowers, and V. J. Diaz, 2015, "U.S. Veterans and Their Unique Issues: Enhancing Health Care Professional Awareness," *Advances in Medical Education and Practice* 6: 635-639.

Table 3.

Characteristics of Veterans by Service Period: 2018

Veterans of the Draft Era
(Numbers in thousands)

| Characteristic | Vietnam Era | | Korean War | | World War II | | Peacetime only (pre-Vietnam Era) | |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Total | 6,384 | 100.0 | 1,306 | 100.0 | 485 | 100.0 | 1,505 | 100.0 |
| Demographics | | | | | | | | |
| Median age (years) | 70.8 | X | 86.1 | X | 92.6 | X | 80.0 | X |
| Race and Hispanic origin: | | | | | | | | |
| White alone, non-Hispanic | 5,272 | 82.6 | 1,157 | 88.6 | 441 | 90.9 | 1,333 | 88.6 |
| Black alone, non-Hispanic | 588 | 9.2 | 67 | 5.1 | 19 | 3.8 | 83 | 5.5 |
| Other, non-Hispanic | 210 | 3.3 | 32 | 2.5 | 11 | 2.2 | 36 | 2.4 |
| Hispanic | 314 | 4.9 | 50 | 3.8 | 15 | 3.0 | 53 | 3.5 |
| Employment and Education | | | | | | | | |
| Employment status: | | | | | | | | |
| In labor force | 1,515 | 23.7 | 59 | 4.5 | 12 | 2.4 | 155 | 10.3 |
| Not in labor force | 4,869 | 76.3 | 1,248 | 95.5 | 474 | 97.6 | 1,350 | 89.7 |
| Education: | | | | | | | | |
| High school graduate or less | 2,170 | 34.0 | 610 | 46.7 | 237 | 48.8 | 702 | 46.6 |
| Some college, no degree | 2,332 | 36.5 | 332 | 25.4 | 97 | 20.0 | 415 | 27.6 |
| Bachelor's degree or more | 1,883 | 29.5 | 365 | 28.0 | 151 | 31.2 | 388 | 25.8 |
| Economic Characteristics | | | | | | | | |
| Personal income (dollars, median) | 38,770 | X | 30,960 | X | 29,070 | X | 30,780 | X |
| Income to poverty ratio: ¹ | | | | | | | | |
| Less than 150 percent of poverty | 780 | 12.4 | 183 | 14.5 | 74 | 16.4 | 201 | 13.6 |
| 150 to 399 percent of poverty | 2,450 | 38.9 | 599 | 47.5 | 204 | 45.5 | 708 | 48.0 |
| 400 percent or more of poverty | 3,075 | 48.8 | 478 | 38.0 | 171 | 38.0 | 568 | 38.5 |
| Receives public assistance ² | 525 | 8.2 | 88 | 6.7 | 31 | 6.4 | 104 | 6.9 |
| Housing: | | | | | | | | |
| In group quarters | 101 | 1.6 | 50 | 3.8 | 40 | 8.2 | 32 | 2.1 |
| In households | 6,284 | 98.4 | 1,256 | 96.2 | 445 | 91.8 | 1,473 | 97.9 |
| Homeowner | 5,356 | 85.2 | 1,046 | 83.3 | 333 | 74.7 | 1,271 | 86.3 |
| Renter ³ | 927 | 14.8 | 210 | 16.7 | 113 | 25.3 | 202 | 13.7 |

X Not applicable.

¹ Not calculated for people living in most types of group quarters.

² Includes Supplemental Security Income, cash public assistance income, and food stamps or SNAP.

³ Includes veterans who live rent free.

Note: Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <www.census.gov/acs>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 1-Year American Community Survey.

caused or aggravated (Tables 4a and 4b). The prevalence of service-connected disability varied markedly across periods of service. Veterans who served during peacetime before 1975 had the lowest percentage with a service-connected disability. Among those with the highest percentage were Post-9/11 and Gulf War veterans, more than one-third of whom had a

service-connected disability.¹⁶ Not only did Post-9/11 veterans have the highest proportion disabled, they also had the highest share—16 percent of all Post-9/11 veterans—with a disability rating

¹⁶ Although this report compares health and disability across service periods, the prevalence of disability has changed over time as well. Coinciding with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the number of veterans with service-connected disabilities has increased since 2001, after decades of remaining relatively stable. See Duggan, M., 2014, "The Labor Market Effects of the VA's Disability Compensation Program," Stanford University Economic Policy Research, CA.

of 70 percent or greater (Tables 4a and 4b).

Apart from service-connected disabilities, the American Community Survey (ACS) asks whether individuals have difficulty with any of the following: hearing, vision, cognitive functioning, independent living, mobility, and/or self-care. These ACS-defined disabilities are asked independently of being a veteran and may not be related to active-duty service at all. For example, an

older veteran may have difficulty hearing because of his age, and not because he was injured while serving. Indeed, ACS-defined disabilities are far more prevalent among older service cohorts, just as they are among older adults

in general. In 2018, roughly 77 percent of World War II veterans had an ACS-defined disability, compared with 35 percent of Vietnam Era veterans and 15 percent of Post-9/11 veterans (Tables 4a and 4b).

As discussed earlier, veterans of different service periods vary in their demographic and social characteristics, whether age, race, or education. These characteristics may be associated with a veteran's likelihood of

Table 4a.

Health and Disability of Veterans by Service Period: 2018

Veterans of the All-Volunteer Force Era
(Numbers in thousands)

| Characteristic | All veterans | | Post-9/11 | | Gulf War | | Peacetime only (post-Vietnam Era) | |
|---|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Total | 17,960 | 100.0 | 3,764 | 100.0 | 3,804 | 100.0 | 2,529 | 100.0 |
| Health Characteristics | | | | | | | | |
| Disability: ¹ | | | | | | | | |
| Has ACS-defined disability | 5,382 | 30.0 | 569 | 15.1 | 670 | 17.6 | 570 | 22.5 |
| Has service-connected disability ² | 4,349 | 24.2 | 1,460 | 38.8 | 1,387 | 36.5 | 363 | 14.4 |
| 0 to 20 percent rating | 1,360 | 7.6 | 314 | 8.3 | 403 | 10.6 | 151 | 6.0 |
| 30 to 60 percent rating | 1,253 | 7.0 | 487 | 12.9 | 434 | 11.4 | 95 | 3.8 |
| 70 percent or higher rating | 1,527 | 8.5 | 595 | 15.8 | 497 | 13.1 | 94 | 3.7 |
| Insurance and VA health care: | | | | | | | | |
| Uninsured | 525 | 2.9 | 202 | 5.4 | 144 | 3.8 | 154 | 6.1 |
| Ever received care through VA | 6,614 | 36.8 | 1,464 | 38.9 | 1,376 | 36.2 | 655 | 25.9 |

¹ ACS-defined disabilities are different from a service-connected disability. The former include difficulty with vision, hearing, mobility, cognitive functioning, independent living, and self-care. A service-connected disability is an injury, disease, or disability that was the result of service in the armed forces. Importantly, a veteran with a service-connected disability may not report having a limitation or functional difficulty for ACS-defined disabilities.

² A service-connected disability rating is shown only for veterans who reported a rating.

Note: Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <www.census.gov/acs>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 1-Year American Community Survey.

Table 4b.

Health and Disability of Veterans by Service Period: 2018

Veterans of the Draft Era
(Numbers in thousands)

| Characteristic | Vietnam Era | | Korean War | | World War II | | Peacetime only (pre-Vietnam Era) | |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Total | 6,384 | 100.0 | 1,306 | 100.0 | 485 | 100.0 | 1,505 | 100.0 |
| Health Characteristics | | | | | | | | |
| Disability: ¹ | | | | | | | | |
| Has ACS-defined disability | 2,201 | 34.5 | 792 | 60.6 | 374 | 77.2 | 667 | 44.3 |
| Has service-connected disability ² | 1,677 | 26.3 | 183 | 14.0 | 68 | 14.0 | 122 | 8.1 |
| 0 to 20 percent rating | 547 | 8.6 | 75 | 5.7 | 25 | 5.1 | 61 | 4.1 |
| 30 to 60 percent rating | 433 | 6.8 | 50 | 3.8 | 19 | 3.9 | 30 | 2.0 |
| 70 percent or higher rating | 627 | 9.8 | 44 | 3.4 | 18 | 3.7 | 21 | 1.4 |
| Insurance and VA health care: | | | | | | | | |
| Uninsured | 48 | 0.7 | 1 | 0.1 | <1 | 0.1 | 2 | 0.1 |
| Ever received care through VA | 2,774 | 43.4 | 510 | 39.1 | 186 | 38.3 | 493 | 32.8 |

¹ ACS-defined disabilities are different from a service-connected disability. The former include difficulty with vision, hearing, mobility, cognitive functioning, independent living, and self-care. A service-connected disability is an injury, disease, or disability that was the result of service in the armed forces. Importantly, a veteran with a service-connected disability may not report having a limitation or functional difficulty for ACS-defined disabilities.

² A service-connected disability rating is shown only for veterans who reported a rating.

Note: Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <www.census.gov/acs>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 1-Year American Community Survey.

having a service-connected disability without directly causing the disability. The most common causes of disability are injuries suffered during combat, although injuries can occur throughout a soldier's training and service. Other factors may also be associated with disability. For example, what if female veterans were more likely to be diagnosed with a certain kind of injury or disability than male veterans? If this were true, and a particular service period had more female veterans, such as Post-9/11, then it would appear as though veterans from that group were more likely to be disabled.

To better understand whether Post-9/11 veterans are more likely to have a disability than other veterans, we have to separate service period from other demographic and social characteristics. Logistic regression, a type of statistical analysis, accounts for the variation in service-connected disability that is associated with demographic and social characteristics, helping to separate the effect of service period. Using regression analysis, this report shows the predicted probability of a veteran having an ACS-defined disability or a service-connected disability in 2018, while accounting for the influence of other characteristics.¹⁷

Looking across service periods, Post-9/11 veterans had a significantly higher chance of

¹⁷ The predicted probabilities are calculated from regression models that control for demographic and socioeconomic differences between veterans, and are calculated holding these characteristics at their mean level; that is, the predicted probabilities represent the chance that an average veteran of that service period will report a service-connected disability.

having a service-connected disability than any other group of veterans: Post-9/11 veterans on average had a 43 percent chance (Figure 6). In comparison, Gulf War veterans had a 27 percent chance, while Vietnam veterans had a 16 percent chance. In other words, Post-9/11 veterans were the most likely to have a disability from their time serving, even after accounting for the different demographic and social characteristics of veterans that could influence the diagnosis or reporting of disabilities. Importantly, this finding only applies to veterans who were alive in 2018 and does not apply to all veterans who ever served since September 2001, a distinction that the report discusses in more detail below.

If veterans have a service-connected disability, they receive a graduated rating based on the nature and severity of their injuries, according to a schedule set by the Veterans Benefits Administration, which is part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The ratings range from 0 to 100 percent, and higher ratings may reflect a single serious disability or a combination of several smaller disabilities. Importantly, estimates from the ACS rely on self-reporting of service-connected disabilities and ratings, which may differ from estimates from the VA, which rely on administrative records.¹⁸

Not only were Post-9/11 veterans the most likely to have a service-connected disability, they were also the most likely to have a

¹⁸ The VA estimated about 4.7 million veterans in 2018 had a service-connected disability, which is higher than the 4.4 million estimated using the 2018 American Community Survey.

high disability rating. Among the disabled, Post-9/11 veterans had the highest predicted probability of any service period—39 percent chance—of having a service-connected disability rating of 70 percent or higher, after accounting for different demographic and social characteristics of veterans. In comparison, disabled Gulf War veterans had a 21 percent chance of having a rating of 70 percent or higher. Disabled Vietnam Era veterans had a 24 percent chance, significantly higher than Gulf War veterans and significantly lower than Post-9/11 veterans (Figure 6).

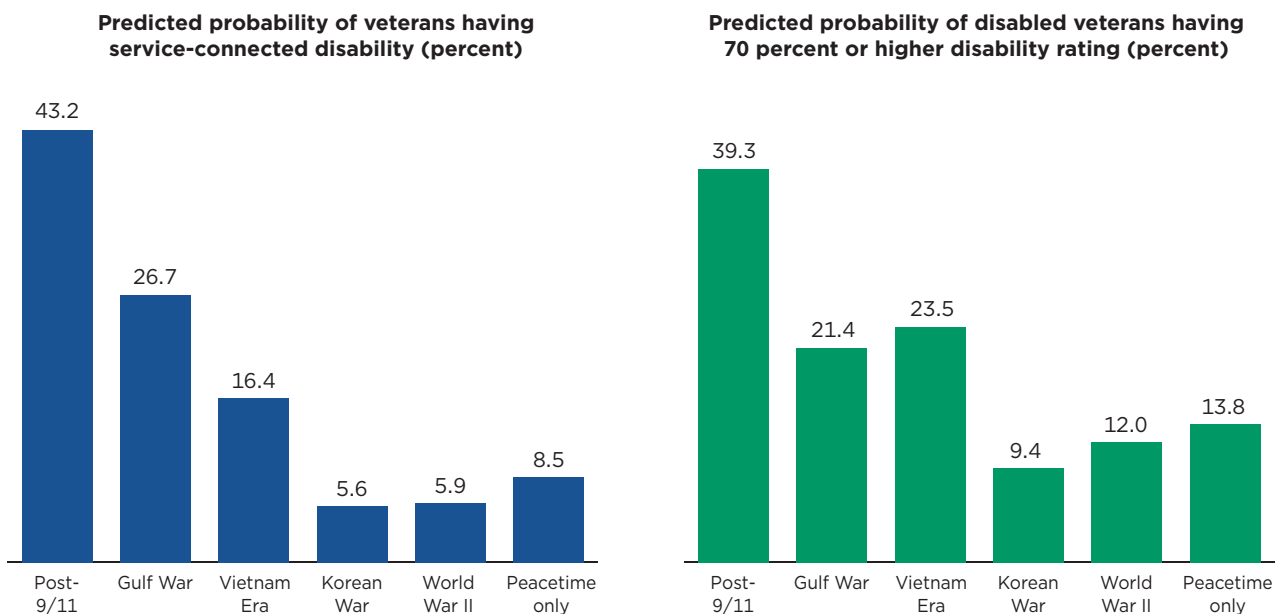
Post-9/11 veterans may be more likely to have a service-connected disability because of distinctive tours of duty or service conditions that other cohorts did not experience. For example, thanks to medical advances, veterans today are more likely to survive injuries that would have been fatal in past decades.¹⁹ The analysis in this report supports that explanation, while not ruling out other plausible explanations for the findings. The analysis is limited in that it looks at the population of veterans in 2018, not veterans at the time of their separation from service. For older groups of veterans, only the healthiest are still alive. Today's veterans from the Vietnam Era, Korean War, and World War II may look healthier in comparison to Post-9/11 veterans because the most severely disabled from those

¹⁹ Goldberg, M.S., 2010, "Death and Injury Rates of U.S. Military Personnel in Iraq," *Military Medicine* 175(4), pp. 220-226. See also, Glasser, R. J., 2011, "Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds: A Medical Odyssey from Vietnam to Afghanistan," History Publishing Company, Palisades, NY; and Harvard University, 2005, "Ninety Percent of U.S. Wounded Survive: In Iraq, Firepower Increases, Deaths Decrease," *ScienceDaily* 28, <www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2005/01/050127234012.htm>.

Figure 6.

Post-9/11 Veterans Are More Likely to Have a Disability Than Other Veterans

Predicted Probability of Having a Service-Connected Disability or Disability Rating of 70 Percent or Greater



Note: Predicted probabilities were calculated from the logistic regressions shown in Appendix Table 5 and show the percent chance that an average veteran in a given service period has a service-connected disability on the left; and, on the right, among veterans with a disability, the chance that they have a disability rating of 70 percent or greater. The predicted probabilities were calculated holding all other veterans' characteristics in the model at their mean levels.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 1-Year American Community Survey.

older service periods have already died. In contrast, the healthiest Post-9/11 service members may still be serving and are not yet veterans, leaving the current group of Post-9/11 veterans with disproportionately higher rates of disability.

In addition, comparing service-connected disabilities across service periods assumes that the type, severity, and diagnosis of injuries—not to mention the reporting of injuries—have remained relatively constant across time. But that is not the case. Diagnosing and treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), for example, has changed

significantly over time.²⁰ For these reasons, the regression analysis should be interpreted cautiously. It does not show the likelihood of active-duty service members becoming disabled, or having a disability at the time they separate from service. The analysis does show the likelihood that veterans alive today have a service-connected disability, after statistically accounting for differences in the demographic and social characteristics of these veterans.

²⁰ Nidiffer, F.D., and S. Leach, 2010, "To Hell and Back: Evolution of Combat-Related Post Traumatic Stress Disorder," *Developments in Mental Health Law* 29:1–22.

Apart from period of service, several other characteristics were associated with service-connected disabilities. Black, Hispanic, and other race veterans were more likely than White veterans to have a service-connected disability. Similarly, veterans who ever received health care through the Veterans Health Administration and those who had a functional disability or limitation were more likely to have a service-connected disability (Appendix Table 5, Model 4). This is not to say that these characteristics *caused* a veteran to become disabled. In the case of the VA, for example, disabled veterans have a greater need for health care and may be more likely to seek out that

care from the VA. As a result, receiving health care from the VA has a strong statistical correlation with having a service-connected disability. Among all veterans, men were no more likely to have a service-connected disability than women. However, among disabled veterans, female veterans were significantly more likely to report a rating of 70 percent or greater, after accounting for period of service and other demographic and social characteristics (Appendix Table 5, Model 6).

SUMMARY

The number of veterans in the United States has been declining for decades, as military experience becomes less common and veterans of older wars age and die. The massive numbers of men who volunteered or were drafted into service during World War II, as well as the Korean and Vietnam wars, swelled the size of the veteran population after these men left the armed forces. Following World War II, more than 1 in 3 adult men had ever served in the military. Their numbers have been steadily declining. Over the last two decades alone, the veteran population declined from over 26 million to 18 million. The creation of an all-volunteer force in 1973 further transformed the armed forces by making military service a less widespread, more selective experience for Americans. Today, about 1 in 8 adult men and 1 in 100 adult women have ever served.

Coupled with broader changes in the U.S. population, service members from more recent periods (Gulf War and Post-9/11)

have different demographic and social characteristics than older veterans. Today's veterans are less likely to be non-Hispanic White and more likely to have attended college compared with veterans from older service periods. A greater proportion of today's veterans are women, a figure that is projected to rise in coming decades as older male veterans die and as more women join the ranks of the armed forces. The characteristics of veterans are changing in other ways too. Post-9/11 and Gulf War veterans have more education than veterans from older periods. The higher levels of education reflect the computer, mathematical, engineering, and mechanical training that are integral to a modern military as it adopts new technologies. Even as the number of veterans continues to decline, the makeup of the armed forces and veteran population will continue to change as younger generations of Americans enlist to serve their country.

DATA, SOURCE, AND ACCURACY

This report uses data from the American Community Survey, which is a nationwide survey designed to provide timely and reliable data every year on the demographic, social, economic, and housing characteristics of the nation, states, counties, and other localities. The survey has an annual sample size of about 3.5 million addresses across the United States and Puerto Rico, and includes both housing units and group quarters. The ACS is conducted in every county throughout the nation. The ACS

1-year data are released for geographic areas with populations of 65,000 or greater. The ACS 5-year data are released for all geographic areas. For information on the ACS sample design and other topics, visit www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/.

Data in this report come from the 2018 American Community Survey and are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. Comparisons of estimates in the report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level or higher, unless otherwise noted. Because of rounding, some details may not sum to totals. For information on sampling and estimation methods, confidentiality protection, and sampling and nonsampling errors, see the "Accuracy of the Data" documents for 2018 located at www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html.

SUGGESTED CITATION

Vespa, Jonathan E., "Those Who Served: America's Veterans From World War II to the War on Terror," ACS-43, *American Community Survey Reports*, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2020.

Appendix Table 1.

Margins of Error for Veterans by Period of Service in the Armed Forces: 2018

(Numbers in thousands. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <www.census.gov/acs>)

| Periods of service | Number of veterans | | |
|---|--------------------|------|-------|
| | Total | Men | Women |
| All service periods | 66.9 | 63.1 | 20.4 |
| Post-9/11 (September 2001 or later) | 34.3 | 30.0 | 14.8 |
| Gulf War (August 1990 to August 2001) | 34.2 | 29.7 | 14.0 |
| Vietnam Era (August 1964 to April 1975) | 37.6 | 35.4 | 9.3 |
| Korean War (July 1950 to January 1955) | 11.8 | 11.8 | 2.6 |
| World War II (December 1941 to December 1946) | 9.4 | 9.5 | 2.0 |
| Pre-World War II (November 1941 or earlier) | 1.8 | 1.8 | 0.4 |
| Peacetime only (All other periods not listed above) | 30.5 | 29.2 | 9.1 |

Note: Except for peacetime only, the periods of service are not mutually exclusive. Veterans may have served at any point during the time listed for the service periods; they may not have necessarily served in the war for which the period is named. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. This number when added to or subtracted from the estimate forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 1-Year American Community Survey.

Appendix Table 2.

Margins of Error for Characteristics of Veterans by Service Period: 2018

Veterans of the All-Volunteer Force Era

(Numbers in thousands, except median age. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <www.census.gov/acs>)

| Characteristic | All veterans | | Post-9/11 | | Gulf War | | Peacetime only (post-Vietnam Era) | |
|---|--------------|---------|-----------|---------|----------|---------|--------------------------------------|---------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Total | 66.9 | X | 34.3 | X | 34.2 | X | 24.7 | X |
| Demographics | | | | | | | | |
| Median age (years) | 0.1 | X | 0.1 | X | 0.1 | X | 0.1 | X |
| Race and Hispanic origin: | | | | | | | | |
| White alone, non-Hispanic | 52.8 | 0.2 | 24.3 | 0.5 | 27.9 | 0.4 | 21.3 | 0.5 |
| Black alone, non-Hispanic | 26.8 | 0.1 | 13.5 | 0.3 | 14.6 | 0.3 | 10.1 | 0.4 |
| Other, non-Hispanic | 15.8 | 0.1 | 10.1 | 0.3 | 8.6 | 0.2 | 5.3 | 0.2 |
| Hispanic | 19.9 | 0.1 | 14.6 | 0.3 | 10.7 | 0.3 | 6.6 | 0.2 |
| Employment and Education | | | | | | | | |
| Employment status: | | | | | | | | |
| Employed | 55.6 | 0.2 | 32.4 | 0.4 | 31.8 | 0.4 | 20.8 | 0.5 |
| Unemployed | 9.7 | 0.1 | 7.0 | 0.2 | 4.9 | 0.1 | 4.4 | 0.2 |
| Not in labor force | 45.0 | 0.2 | 15.3 | 0.4 | 16.8 | 0.4 | 15.5 | 0.5 |
| Education: | | | | | | | | |
| High school graduate or less | 40.0 | 0.2 | 16.1 | 0.4 | 15.2 | 0.4 | 14.9 | 0.4 |
| Some college, no degree | 36.8 | 0.2 | 21.0 | 0.4 | 19.5 | 0.4 | 14.3 | 0.5 |
| Bachelor's degree or more | 34.5 | 0.1 | 18.8 | 0.4 | 22.0 | 0.4 | 11.6 | 0.4 |
| Economic Characteristics | | | | | | | | |
| Personal income (dollars, median) | 129 | X | 306 | X | 368 | X | 469 | X |
| Income to poverty ratio: ¹ | | | | | | | | |
| Less than 150 percent of poverty | 25.8 | 0.1 | 11.2 | 0.3 | 9.9 | 0.3 | 9.7 | 0.4 |
| 150 to 399 percent of poverty | 42.2 | 0.2 | 22.2 | 0.4 | 20.1 | 0.4 | 13.0 | 0.4 |
| 400 percent or more of poverty | 49.3 | 0.2 | 21.9 | 0.4 | 29.4 | 0.5 | 18.2 | 0.5 |
| Receives public assistance ² | 21.6 | 0.1 | 11.1 | 0.3 | 8.8 | 0.2 | 10.3 | 0.4 |
| Housing: | | | | | | | | |
| In group quarters | 8.1 | <0.1 | 4.7 | 0.1 | 2.7 | 0.1 | 3.6 | 0.1 |
| In households | 64.7 | <0.1 | 32.5 | 0.1 | 34.6 | 0.1 | 24.4 | 0.1 |
| Homeowner | 65.3 | 0.2 | 25.4 | 0.5 | 30.0 | 0.4 | 23.0 | 0.5 |
| Renter ³ | 36.0 | 0.2 | 23.2 | 0.5 | 17.4 | 0.4 | 12.2 | 0.5 |

X Not applicable.

¹ Not calculated for people living in most types of group quarters.² Includes Supplemental Security Income, cash public assistance income, and food stamps or SNAP.³ Includes veterans who live rent free.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 1-Year American Community Survey.

Appendix Table 3.

Margins of Error for Characteristics of Veterans by Service Period: 2018

Veterans of the Draft Era

(Numbers in thousands, except median age. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <www.census.gov/acs>)

| Characteristic | Vietnam Era | | Korean War | | World War II | | Peacetime only (pre-Vietnam Era) | |
|---|-------------|---------|------------|---------|--------------|---------|-------------------------------------|---------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Total | 37.6 | X | 11.8 | X | 9.4 | X | 15.8 | X |
| Demographics | | | | | | | | |
| Median age (years) | <0.1 | X | <0.1 | X | 0.1 | X | 0.1 | X |
| Race and Hispanic origin: | | | | | | | | |
| White alone, non-Hispanic | 31.3 | 0.2 | 10.3 | 0.4 | 7.8 | 0.6 | 15.1 | 0.4 |
| Black alone, non-Hispanic | 11.8 | 0.2 | 3.7 | 0.3 | 2.0 | 0.4 | 4.3 | 0.3 |
| Other, non-Hispanic | 6.1 | 0.1 | 2.5 | 0.2 | 1.6 | 0.3 | 3.3 | 0.2 |
| Hispanic | 10.1 | 0.1 | 3.6 | 0.3 | 2.0 | 0.4 | 3.6 | 0.2 |
| Employment and Education | | | | | | | | |
| Employment status: | | | | | | | | |
| In labor force | 14.9 | 0.2 | 3.4 | 0.3 | 1.6 | 0.3 | 5.1 | 0.3 |
| Not in labor force | 34.5 | 0.2 | 12.1 | 0.3 | 9.7 | 0.3 | 14.9 | 0.3 |
| Education: | | | | | | | | |
| High school graduate or less | 22.5 | 0.3 | 10.0 | 0.7 | 6.9 | 1.2 | 9.9 | 0.5 |
| Some college, no degree | 21.8 | 0.3 | 7.6 | 0.5 | 4.6 | 0.8 | 10.1 | 0.6 |
| Bachelor's degree or more | 19.7 | 0.2 | 9.0 | 0.6 | 5.8 | 1.0 | 9.2 | 0.5 |
| Economic Characteristics | | | | | | | | |
| Personal income (dollars, median) | 230 | X | 405 | X | 600 | X | 364 | X |
| Income to poverty ratio: ¹ | | | | | | | | |
| Less than 150 percent of poverty | 13.5 | 0.2 | 5.4 | 0.4 | 3.8 | 0.8 | 7.0 | 0.4 |
| 150 to 399 percent of poverty | 25.1 | 0.3 | 9.8 | 0.6 | 6.6 | 1.1 | 10.5 | 0.5 |
| 400 percent or more of poverty | 24.3 | 0.3 | 8.8 | 0.6 | 5.7 | 1.0 | 10.5 | 0.6 |
| Receives public assistance ² | 13.0 | 0.2 | 3.9 | 0.3 | 2.7 | 0.5 | 4.4 | 0.3 |
| Housing: | | | | | | | | |
| In group quarters | 4.0 | 0.1 | 2.6 | 0.2 | 2.8 | 0.6 | 2.2 | 0.1 |
| In households | 36.6 | 0.1 | 11.7 | 0.2 | 9.4 | 0.6 | 15.6 | 0.1 |
| Homeowner | 35.8 | 0.3 | 10.0 | 0.5 | 7.9 | 1.0 | 14.8 | 0.5 |
| Renter ³ | 17.6 | 0.3 | 7.1 | 0.5 | 5.4 | 1.0 | 7.9 | 0.5 |

X Not applicable.

¹ Not calculated for people living in most types of group quarters.² Includes Supplemental Security Income, cash public assistance income, and food stamps or SNAP.³ Includes veterans who live rent free.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 1-Year American Community Survey.

Appendix Table 4a.

Margins of Error for Health and Disability of Veterans by Service Period: 2018

Veterans of the All-Volunteer Force Era

(Numbers in thousands. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <www.census.gov/acs>)

| Characteristic | All veterans | | Post-9/11 | | Gulf War | | Peacetime only (post-Vietnam Era) | |
|---|--------------|---------|-----------|---------|----------|---------|-----------------------------------|---------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Total | 66.9 | X | 34.3 | X | 34.2 | X | 24.7 | X |
| Health Characteristics | | | | | | | | |
| Disability: ¹ | | | | | | | | |
| Has ACS-defined disability | 31.8 | 0.2 | 12.5 | 0.3 | 12.5 | 0.3 | 13.1 | 0.4 |
| Has service-connected disability ² | 33.2 | 0.1 | 19.3 | 0.4 | 23.5 | 0.5 | 9.8 | 0.4 |
| 0 to 20 percent rating | 17.2 | 0.1 | 9.9 | 0.2 | 11.7 | 0.3 | 5.7 | 0.2 |
| 30 to 60 percent rating | 18.7 | 0.1 | 10.2 | 0.3 | 9.8 | 0.2 | 5.4 | 0.2 |
| 70 percent or higher rating | 21.3 | 0.1 | 13.8 | 0.3 | 12.3 | 0.3 | 5.1 | 0.2 |
| Insurance and VA health care: | | | | | | | | |
| Uninsured | 14.1 | 0.1 | 9.6 | 0.2 | 7.3 | 0.2 | 6.4 | 0.2 |
| Ever received care through VA | 42.4 | 0.2 | 19.6 | 0.4 | 19.0 | 0.4 | 11.3 | 0.4 |

X Not applicable.

¹ ACS-defined disabilities are different from a service-connected disability. The former include difficulty with vision, hearing, mobility, cognitive functioning, independent living, and self-care. A service-connected disability is an injury, disease, or disability that was the result of service in the armed forces. Importantly, a veteran with a service-connected disability may not report having a limitation or functional difficulty for ACS-defined disabilities.

² A service-connected disability rating is shown only for veterans who reported a rating.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 1-Year American Community Survey.

Appendix Table 4b.

Margins of Error for Health and Disability of Veterans by Service Period: 2018

Veterans of the Draft Era

(Numbers in thousands. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <www.census.gov/acs>)

| Characteristic | Vietnam Era | | Korean War | | World War II | | Peacetime only (pre-Vietnam Era) | |
|---|-------------|---------|------------|---------|--------------|---------|----------------------------------|---------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Total | 37.6 | X | 11.8 | X | 9.4 | X | 15.8 | X |
| Health Characteristics | | | | | | | | |
| Disability: ¹ | | | | | | | | |
| Has ACS-defined disability | 21.6 | 0.3 | 12.4 | 0.7 | 8.9 | 0.9 | 10.6 | 0.5 |
| Has service-connected disability ² | 18.5 | 0.2 | 6.4 | 0.5 | 4.2 | 0.8 | 5.0 | 0.3 |
| 0 to 20 percent rating | 9.9 | 0.1 | 3.9 | 0.3 | 2.2 | 0.4 | 3.3 | 0.2 |
| 30 to 60 percent rating | 9.4 | 0.1 | 2.8 | 0.2 | 1.9 | 0.4 | 2.8 | 0.2 |
| 70 percent or higher rating | 12.3 | 0.2 | 3.3 | 0.2 | 1.9 | 0.4 | 2.2 | 0.1 |
| Insurance and VA health care: | | | | | | | | |
| Uninsured | 3.3 | 0.1 | 0.5 | <0.1 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0.7 | <0.1 |
| Ever received care through VA | 25.0 | 0.3 | 9.7 | 0.7 | 6.4 | 1.0 | 9.9 | 0.6 |

X Not applicable.

¹ ACS-defined disabilities are different from a service-connected disability. The former include difficulty with vision, hearing, mobility, cognitive functioning, independent living, and self-care. A service-connected disability is an injury, disease, or disability that was the result of service in the armed forces. Importantly, a veteran with a service-connected disability may not report having a limitation or functional difficulty for ACS-defined disabilities.

² A service-connected disability rating is shown only for veterans who reported a rating.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 1-Year American Community Survey.

Appendix Table 5.

Likelihood of Veterans Having a Disability by Type and Rating

(Odds ratios reported from logistic regression)

| Characteristic | ACS-defined disability ¹ | | | | Service-connected disability | | | | Disability rating 70 percent or greater (among veterans with a service-connected disability) | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------------|---------|----------------|------------------------------|----------------|---------|----------------|--|----------------|---------|----------------|
| | Model 1 | Standard error | Model 2 | Standard error | Model 3 | Standard error | Model 4 | Standard error | Model 5 | Standard error | Model 6 | Standard error |
| Service Period | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Post-9/11 (reference) | Ref | X | Ref | X | Ref | X | Ref | X | Ref | X | Ref | X |
| Gulf War | 1.17 | *0.03 | 1.08 | *0.03 | 0.62 | *0.01 | 0.48 | *0.01 | 0.56 | *0.02 | 0.42 | *0.01 |
| Vietnam Era | 2.98 | *0.06 | 1.28 | *0.04 | 0.52 | *0.01 | 0.26 | *0.01 | 0.90 | *0.02 | 0.48 | *0.021 |
| Korean War | 8.51 | *0.19 | 3.59 | *0.13 | 0.20 | *0.01 | 0.08 | *<0.01 | 0.37 | *0.03 | 0.16 | *0.01 |
| World War II | 19.37 | *0.72 | 7.82 | *0.38 | 0.23 | *0.01 | 0.08 | *<0.01 | 0.51 | *0.05 | 0.21 | *0.02 |
| Peacetime only | 2.48 | *0.04 | 1.75 | *0.05 | 0.22 | *<0.01 | 0.12 | *<0.01 | 0.46 | *0.02 | 0.25 | *0.014 |
| Sex | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male (reference) | N | N | Ref | X | N | N | Ref | X | N | N | Ref | X |
| Female | N | N | 0.93 | *0.02 | N | N | 0.97 | 0.02 | N | N | 1.12 | *0.04 |
| Age (years) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 to 44 (reference) | N | N | Ref | X | N | N | Ref | X | N | N | Ref | X |
| 45 to 64 | N | N | 1.37 | *0.04 | N | N | 1.60 | *0.04 | N | N | 1.04 | 0.03 |
| 65 or older | N | N | 1.68 | *0.05 | N | N | 1.05 | 0.04 | N | N | 0.65 | *0.03 |
| Race and Hispanic Origin | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| White alone, non-Hispanic (reference) | N | N | Ref | X | N | N | Ref | X | N | N | Ref | X |
| Black alone, non-Hispanic | N | N | 0.87 | *0.02 | N | N | 1.50 | *0.03 | N | N | 1.79 | *0.06 |
| Other, non-Hispanic | N | N | 1.19 | *0.03 | N | N | 1.14 | *0.03 | N | N | 1.24 | *0.06 |
| Hispanic | N | N | 1.03 | 0.03 | N | N | 1.14 | *0.03 | N | N | 1.48 | *0.07 |
| Employment Status | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| In labor force | N | N | 0.33 | *0.01 | N | N | 0.58 | *0.01 | N | N | 0.27 | *0.01 |
| Not in labor force (reference) | N | N | Ref | X | N | N | Ref | X | N | N | Ref | X |
| Education | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| High school diploma or less | N | N | 1.42 | *0.02 | N | N | 0.71 | *0.01 | N | N | 1.22 | *0.04 |
| Some college, no degree | N | N | 1.27 | *0.02 | N | N | 0.99 | 0.02 | N | N | 1.13 | *0.03 |
| Bachelor's degree or more (reference) | N | N | Ref | X | N | N | Ref | X | N | N | Ref | X |
| Income to Poverty Ratio² | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Less than 150 percent of poverty | N | N | 1.74 | *0.03 | N | N | 0.46 | *0.01 | N | N | 0.51 | *0.02 |
| 150 to 399 percent of poverty | N | N | 1.26 | *0.02 | N | N | 0.67 | *0.01 | N | N | 0.67 | *0.02 |
| 400 percent or more of poverty (reference) | N | N | Ref | X | N | N | Ref | X | N | N | Ref | X |
| Health and Healthcare | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ever received care through VA | N | N | 1.45 | *0.02 | N | N | 7.17 | *0.10 | N | N | 1.96 | *0.06 |
| Has service-connected disability | N | N | 2.77 | *0.04 | N | N | N | N | N | N | N | N |
| Has ACS-defined disability | N | N | N | N | N | N | 2.70 | *0.04 | N | N | 1.94 | *0.04 |

* Denotes that the variable is statistically significant at least $p < .05$ (i.e., we are 95 percent certain that the variables are correlated with one another and the correlation is not by random chance alone).

N Not available. Estimates for this variable are not available because the variable was not included in the analysis.

X Not applicable.

¹ ACS-defined disabilities are different from a service-connected disability. The former include self-reported difficulty with vision, hearing, mobility, cognitive functioning, independent living, and self-care. A service-connected disability is an injury, disease, or disability that was the result of service in the armed forces and are assigned ratings based on a graduated scale defined by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Importantly, a veteran with a service-connected disability may not report having a limitation or functional difficulty for ACS-defined disabilities.

² Not calculated for people living in most types of group quarters.

Note: Models 1-4 include all veterans; models 5 and 6 include only veterans who reported having a service-connected disability. The table shows odds ratios from logistic regression predicting the likelihood of veterans having an ACS-defined disability, a service-connected disability, or a service-connected disability rating of 70 percent or greater. Odds ratios larger than one represent a greater likelihood, while odds ratios less than one represent a lower likelihood. A reference category means that all other categories in that group are compared to the reference.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 1-Year American Community Survey.