

Appendix A: Demographics

Demographics of Sample

Of the 2,117 responses to the BPW Foundation survey, 1,629 are considered valid based on their military status as discharged, separated or retired. Almost half of the respondents served in the Army (46 percent), along with respondents from the Navy (24 percent), Air Force (22 percent) and Marine Corps (10 percent). The remaining respondents came from the Coast Guard, Public Health Services and other branches of service.

A large percentage of respondents (86 percent) report that they live within 100 miles of a military base at time of answer, but only 35 percent of respondents consider themselves involved in an organization or association associated with the military.

A quarter of survey respondents are under the age of 30, almost half of the respondents are under the age of 40, and over four-fifths of respondents are under the age of 50. Comparable population parameters list almost 70 percent of women veterans over the age of 40 as of 2006.¹⁵

The average time spent in the service for respondents was approximately 12 years. The average age of women veterans upon leaving service was 32.7 years. A quarter of veterans surveyed were 25 or younger when they left service. The average number of years respondents had been out of the service is approximately seven years as of the time of survey. Most of the respondents had been out of the service for 10 years or less (77 percent). Twenty-five percent had been out less than one year at the time of the survey.

Over 50 percent of respondents reported themselves as being White, non-Hispanic, almost 30 percent reported themselves as being Black, non-Hispanic, and 10 percent reported themselves as being Hispanic. Comparable population parameters report a higher percentage of women veterans in the general U.S. population as White, and a smaller percentage as either Black or Hispanic.¹⁶

Respondents had their first post-military job in every U.S. state, and 3 percent of respondents took their first post-military job outside of the U.S. Almost half reported themselves as having some kind of disability, and approximately 95 percent of the disabilities were related to their military service. More than half responded that they did not serve in a combat/war zone.

Over 80 percent of respondents had some college education or more at time of separation, and this number increases to over 90 percent of respondents with some college or more at time of survey response.¹⁷ Approximately 60 percent used military benefits to attain their level of education.

Almost 50 percent of respondents reported that their first post-military job was in the for-profit sector, but less than 30 percent are still employed in the for-profit sector. Approximately the same percentage worked in the government, non-military sector for their first post-military job as did at the time of survey (20 percent). Over half of respondents reported themselves as the primary income earner in their household.

Demographics of General Population

As readers view the demographic information of the survey sample, the following information is offered as a comparison. It reflects current government data on the demographic characteristics of women veterans. Women veterans are a vital and growing part of the American labor force. Women make up over 15 percent of the military and a growing percentage of veterans. In 1980, women veterans were 4 percent of veterans (1.1 million women veterans); in 2007, they make up 7 percent of the veteran population (1.74 million women veterans). While the proportion of women veterans in the population is expected to increase over the coming decades, the percentage of male veterans is expected to decline.

According to a 2005 report on the history of women veterans published by the Department of Veterans Affairs:

“In contrast to the population of male veterans in the United States, the population of female veterans has actually increased over the last decade or so because (a) of the increasing number and proportion of women entering (and leaving) the military, (b) a more favorable survival rate of women

¹⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics (2006). Current Population Survey data. Unpublished table

¹⁶ Bureau of Labor Statistics (2006). Current Population Survey data. Unpublished table.

¹⁷ Not including vocational or technical school.

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compared to men at any given age, and (c) the younger age distribution of women veterans compared to male veterans, which means relatively more women at younger ages, with lower mortality rates.”¹⁸

The population of women veterans in the United States is projected to continue to rise reaching 1.9 million in 2020 when they will make up 10 percent of the veteran population. In contrast, the projected population of male veterans is projected to decline from 24.8 million in 2000 to 16.2 million by 2020.¹⁹

Women veterans tend to be younger than their male counterparts. In 2007, the estimated median age of male veterans was 60 years but the median age of women veterans was 47.²⁰ The proportion of older women veterans to younger women veterans is also smaller than the proportion of older male veterans to younger male veterans. In 2007, 18 percent of women veterans were 65 and older while an estimated 40 percent of male veterans were in that age bracket. By 2010, the proportion of women veterans over 65 is estimated to shrink to 17 percent of the total women veteran population while the proportion of that age bracket among male veterans will increase to 42 percent.²¹

Nearly 30 percent of women veterans identified themselves as a member of a racial minority, reports the Department of Veterans Affairs. As of 2007, most (19 percent) identified themselves as Black or African-American/Non-Hispanic; seven percent as Hispanic, one percent American Indian/Non-Hispanic, two percent Asian/Non-Hispanic; less than one percent Pacific Islander/Non-Hispanic, two percent some other racer or multiple race/Non-Hispanic. Seventy-percent of women veterans identified their race as White/Non-Hispanic.²²

In August 2005, the unemployment rate for all veterans was 3.9 percent. Female veterans had a labor force participation rate of 60 percent about the same as the non-veteran population. Women veterans had a 5.9 percent unemployment rate which was similar to that of non-veterans at 5 percent. Among women veterans about 40 percent worked in management and professional occupations while about one-third were employed in sales and office occupations. This contrasts with male veterans where about 30 percent were employed in management and professional occupations with 20 percent employed in each of natural resources, construction and maintenance; sales and office, and production, transportation and materials moving.²³

In 2001, the median family income for women veterans was \$43,000 compared to \$44,000 for non-veteran women. Data from a 2007 Current Population Survey indicates that women veterans are less likely to be at the low end of the family income distribution range when compared to non-veteran women but they are also less likely to be at the high end of the range. While 10 percent of women veterans had a family income less than \$15,000, 14 percent of non-veteran women were at that income level. In contrast, 28 percent of women veterans earned \$75,000 or more while 29 percent of non-veteran women did. Other income levels for women veterans in 2007 were: 29 percent earned \$15,000 to 29,999 and 33 percent earned \$40,000 to 75,000.²⁴

High levels of education are attained by women veterans. Approximately, 72 percent have had at least some college experience with nearly 40 percent of those possessing at least a bachelor's degree. High school was the highest level education for 24 percent of women veterans.²⁵

The Bureau of Labor Statistics also reported that in 2005, 11 percent of veterans reported having a service-connected disability. Of the 800,000 Gulf War Veterans who were discharged between January 2002 and August 2005, about 20 percent reported a service-connected disability.

Interestingly, results from a March 2002 Current Population Survey, indicates women veterans, aged 30 and older, were less likely to be married than non-veterans.

Women veterans live throughout the United States and Puerto Rico, but as of 2007 nearly 50 percent of them were clustered in nine states: California, Texas, Florida, Virginia, Georgia, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and North Carolina.²⁶

¹⁸ Klein, Robert (2005) *Women Veterans: Past, Present, Future*. Department of Veteran Affairs Office of Planning.

¹⁹ (September 2007) *Women Veterans: Past, Present, Future*. Department of Veteran Affairs Office of Planning.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ “Employment Situation of Veterans” (May 2006). Bureau of Labor Statistics.

²⁴ (September 2007) *Women Veterans: Past, Present, Future*. Department of Veteran Affairs Office of Planning

²⁵ American Community Survey (2006) (as cited in *Women Veterans: Past, Present, and Future*. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Planning, 2007).

²⁶ Ibid.