A Snapshot Of The New Veteran

May 10, 2010

There are more than 23 million veterans in the U.S., many of whom survived wars from World War II to Vietnam. But those coming home from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are different from decades ago — they are younger, and more of them are women. Here, a brief look at the demographics of our overall veteran population.
Veteran Population By State
Nearly 10 percent of the U.S. adult civilian population are veterans -- ranging from 7 percent in New York to 14 percent in Alaska.

This is a map of the United States, with each state shaded according to the size of its veteran population.

Source: 2008 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau
Credit: Robert Benincasa and Alyson Hurt / NPR
Female Veterans By State

More and more women make up the U.S. veteran population. Women constitute 8 percent of all veterans in the U.S. But of the 425,000 who have tapped into Department of Veterans Affairs benefits since 2002, 12 percent are women. Here, a state-by-state look at how many female veterans make up each state’s adult female population.

This graphic requires version 9 or higher of the Adobe Flash Player. Get the latest Flash Player.

This interactive map shows the number of female veterans per state, as well as the share they represent of the overall adult female population of their respective states.

Source: NPR analysis of data from U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Census Bureau

Credit: Robert Benincasa and Alyson Hurt / NPR
Age Groups

Although this chart shows ages of the 23 million overall veterans, there is evidence that veterans coming back from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars are younger. Of the 425,000 who have claimed VA benefits since 2002, nearly 60 percent are younger than 30.

Veteran population

- **7.6%** 18 to 34 years
- **26.5%** 35 to 54 years
- **25.5%** 55 to 64 years
- **18.5%** 65 to 74 years
- **21.9%** 75 years and over

Race

Total U.S. civilian population 18 years and older

- **76.9%** White
- **11.7%** Black or African-American
- **0.8%** American Indian and Alaska Native
- **4.6%** Asian
- **0.1%** Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander
- **4.4%** Other
- **1.6%** Two or more races
- **13.4%** Hispanic or Latino
  - (can be of any race)

Veteran population

- **85.0%** White
- **10.3%** Black or African-American
- **0.7%** American Indian and Alaska Native
- **1.2%** Asian
- **0.1%** Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander
- **1.2%** Other
- **1.4%** Two or more races
- **5.1%** Hispanic or Latino
  - (can be of any race)

Source: 2008 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau
Educational Attainment
Total U.S. civilian population 18 years and older

15.1%
Less than high school graduate

28.6%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)

28.7%
Some college or associate’s degree

27.6%
Bachelor’s degree or higher

Source: 2008 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Veteran population

9.1%
Less than high school graduate

29.7%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)

35.6%
Some college or associate’s degree

25.6%
Bachelor’s degree or higher

Source: 2008 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

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