



California's Women Veterans at a Glance

SHORT SUBJECTS

WOMEN VETERANS SERIES

October 2012

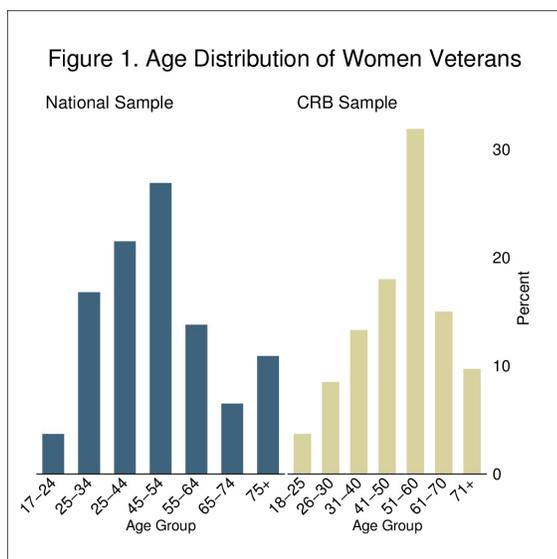
S-12-009

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates that there are 166,110 women veterans living in California.² However, we do not know who these women are exactly, as the VA does not provide detailed information about women veterans in California and does not provide the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) a comprehensive list of veterans residing in the state.

This fact sheet provides estimates of the characteristics of women veterans living in California. The data includes information from the VA and the CRB 2011 Survey of Women Veterans. Estimates from the VA are based on estimates from a national sample of veterans. Statistics from the CRB survey are based on 843 responses to our survey.¹ While CRB does not claim to have a fully-representative sample of women veterans in California, our sample closely resembles a national sample on some key characteristics.

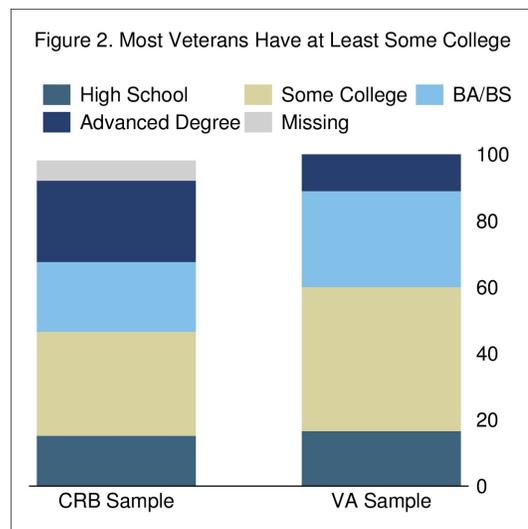
Number of Women Veterans in CA: 166,110

Age: Both nationally and in California, most women veterans are between the ages for 41 and 65. See Figure 1.



Rank at Discharge: Respondents to the CRB survey were split evenly between lower enlisted (39.3 percent) and noncommissioned officers (NCOs, 41.8 percent). The balance discharged at a rank of officer (18.9 percent). The VA does not provide statistics on the rank at which women discharged from the service.

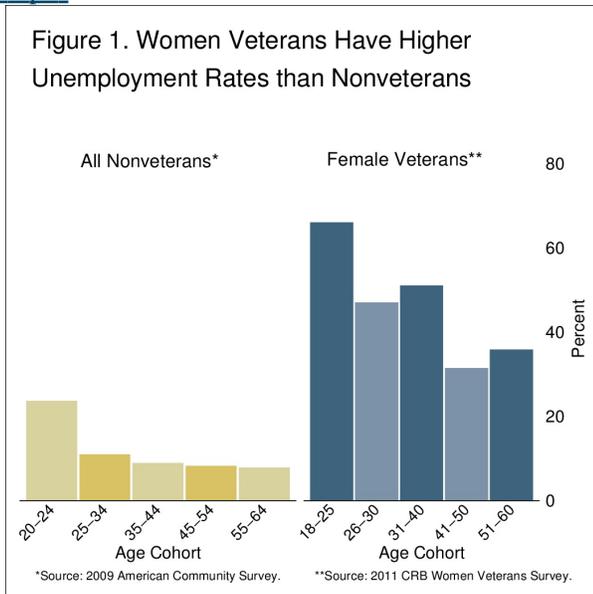
Education Level: Women veterans, like their male counterparts, tend to be more educated than the general public. Nationally, 75.4 percent of women veterans have completed at least some college and 11.0 percent hold an advanced degree. In comparison, 56.2 percent of all nonveteran women have at least some college and only 8.8 percent have an advanced degree. The CRB sample was highly educated, with 53.5 percent holding at least a four year degree and 24.5 percent of those additionally holding a Master’s degree or higher. See Figure 2.



Employment Status: Women veterans face greater amount of unemployment than either civilian women or male veterans. Male veterans currently have a lower unemployment rate than the general population (9.8 percent versus 12.2 percent). In the CRB survey, we found that roughly half of all women veterans in each age group were unemployed. See Figure 3. The Department of Labor (DOL) and the Employment

Development Department (EDD) do not provide a breakout of employment statistics for women veterans. It is important to note that the CRB survey simply asked women if they were currently employed (including self-employed) while EDD and DOL only count people as unemployed if they are actively looking for work.

For more information see: "California's Women Veterans and Employment: A 2012 Overview." CRB#S-12-007. www.library.ca.gov/crb/12/S-12-007.pdf.



Report a Current Mental Health Condition:

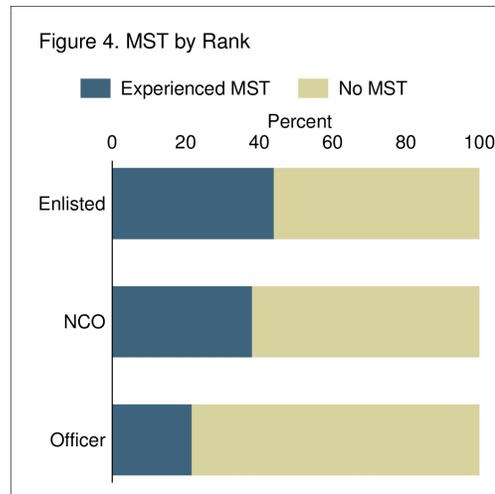
Veterans in general are more likely to suffer from a current mental health condition than members of the general population.⁴ Thirty-seven percent of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan are diagnosed with a mental health problem by the VA.⁶ About half of the respondents in the CRB survey reported a current mental health problem. Anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and sleep disorders were the most common problems reported in the CRB survey.

For more information see: "California's Women Veterans and Mental Health." CRB#S-12-005. www.library.ca.gov/crb/12/S-12-005.pdf.

Report Experiencing Military Sexual Trauma (MST):

The VA reports that 1 in 5 women and 1 in 100 men experience MST. In the CRB survey of women veterans, we found that women report much higher levels of MST than the VA reports. Overall, 37.0 percent of women reported experiencing MST. Women in lower enlisted and NCO ranks experienced higher levels of MST than did officers. See Figure 4.

For more information see: CRB#S-12-004. www.library.ca.gov/crb/S-12-004.pdf.



CITATIONS:

- Blanton, Rebecca E. and Lisa K. Foster. (2012). California's Women Veterans: Responses to the 2011 Survey. CRB#12-004. www.library.ca.gov/crb/12/12-004.pdf.
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- VA Office of Research and Development, health Services Research and Development Service. (2012). "QUERI Fact Sheet: Mental Health." http://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/QuickFacts/2010NSV_QuickFact_Final.pdf.

This brief was requested by the [California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls](http://www.library.ca.gov/crb).

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