



Research Brief

The Commonwealth's Official Source for Population and Economic Statistics

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Veterans Day: A Profile of Pennsylvania Veterans

PENN STATE HARRISBURG – Veterans Day originated as Armistice Day on November 11, 1919, the first anniversary of the end of World War I. Seven years later, Congress passed a resolution calling for an annual observance, and ultimately Nov. 11 became a national holiday beginning in 1938. President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed legislation in 1954 to change the name to Veterans Day as a way to thank and honor all those who served in the United States Armed Forces. This national day of respect and remembrance is marked by parades and commemorations across the country, including the notable Veterans Day National Ceremony held at Arlington National Cemetery.

Military Service and the Commonwealth

From America's earliest days to current conflicts across the globe, millions of Pennsylvanians have served our country in defense of the nation. Today, veterans make up 10.1 percent of Pennsylvania's adult population, according to 2009 American Community Survey. The commonwealth is home to 988,006 former service men and women, ranking it 5th among states in terms of total veterans. California (1,963,556) lead all states and the District of Columbia, followed by Florida (1,591,864), Texas (1,581,873), and New York (994,358). An additional 14,012 Pennsylvanians served on active duty in 2009.

County Data from the 2006-2008 American Community Survey

According to the 2006-2008 American Community Survey, of the Pennsylvania counties with a population of 20,000 residents or more, Allegheny had the largest veteran population (104,694), followed by Philadelphia (81,333), Montgomery County (55,984), Bucks County (44,763), and Delaware County (39,413). Juniata County had the smallest veteran population (1,694).

Warren County had the largest percentage of veterans in the adult population (14.1 percent), according to the 2006-2008 American Community Survey. Tioga and Susquehanna Counties both ranked second (13.4 percent), followed by Franklin County (13.3 percent), and Cambria County (13.2 percent). Philadelphia County had the smallest percentage of veterans (7.5 percent).

Pennsylvania Veterans by Age, Sex, Race, and Ethnicity

More than 70 percent (704,421) of all Pennsylvania veterans were 55 years or over in 2009. Veterans age 18-54 account for the remaining 28.7 percent (283,585). The veteran population was overwhelmingly male (934,377, or 94.6 percent) and White (890,928, 90.2 percent). African-Americans (78,839) accounted for 8.0 percent of the veteran population, and Hispanics (16,403) accounted for 1.7 percent of the total veteran population.

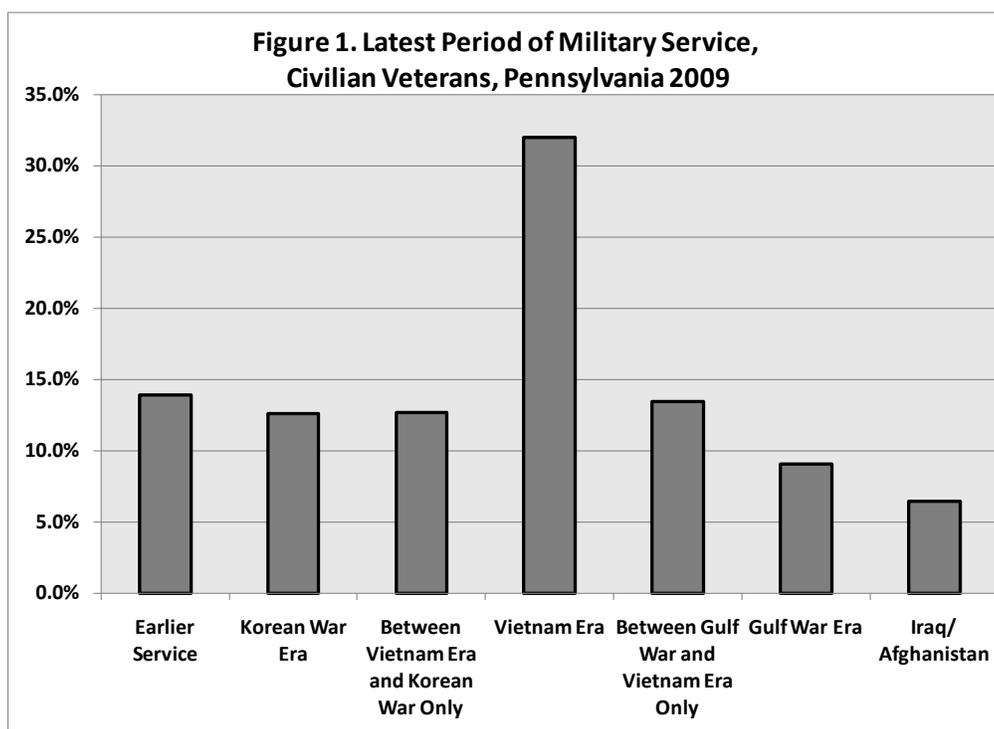
Other Veteran Characteristics

A larger proportion of veterans earned a high school diploma than non-veterans (89.0 percent compared to 87.8 percent for non-veterans). Fewer veterans went on to obtain a bachelor's or advance degree than non-veterans (20.2 percent versus 27.2 percent). However, former service men and women had higher median incomes (\$31,923 versus \$24,547), and lower rates of poverty (6.4 percent compared to 11.7 percent) in 2009. In Pennsylvania, 10.6 percent of veterans (104,314) have a service-connected disability rating: 19.1 of veterans who

incurred a disability in the line of duty had a service-connected rating of 70 percent or higher. The Census Bureau defines a service-connected disability as a disability that was the result of disease or injury incurred or aggravated during active military service. The ratings determine the amount of compensation payments made to the veterans. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 3 million veterans nationwide received compensation for service-connected disabilities in 2009.

Era of Service

Pennsylvania soldiers have served in various theaters all over the world. The Vietnam Era was the latest period of service for 32.0 percent of veterans (see Figure 1.). Veterans who served prior to the Korea conflict (including World War II) accounted for 13.9 percent of the veteran population, followed by the more than 132,000 (13.4 percent) who served between the Gulf War and Vietnam Era. Veterans who served between the Vietnam Era and Korea War Era made up 12.7 percent of veterans, while those who participated in the armed forces during Korean War Era accounted for 12.6 percent. The Gulf War Era included 89,325 Pennsylvania service members (9.0 percent), while the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have included 63,651 veterans (6.4 percent).



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Defining “Veteran Status”

The Census Bureau defines a “civilian veteran” as a person 18 years old and over who, at the time of the enumeration, had served on active duty in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard in the past (even for a short time), but was not then on active duty, or who had served in the Merchant Marine during World War II. People who served in the National Guard or Military Reserves were classified as veterans only if they had been called up or ordered to active duty, not counting the 4 to 6 months for initial training or yearly summer camps. All other civilians 18 years old and over were classified as nonveterans.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the commonwealth’s official source for population and economic statistics. It is based at Penn State Harrisburg’s Institute of State and Regional Affairs. The Pennsylvania State Data Center is part of the U.S. Census Bureau’s National State Data Center Program. Editors: For additional data, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center’s State Capital Office at 717.772.2710 or for faculty comment on this topic, contact Penn State Harrisburg’s Public Information Office at 717.948.6029.

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