



SHORT SUBJECTS

WOMEN VETERANS SERIES

September 2012

S-12-007

California's Women Veterans and Employment: A 2012 Overview

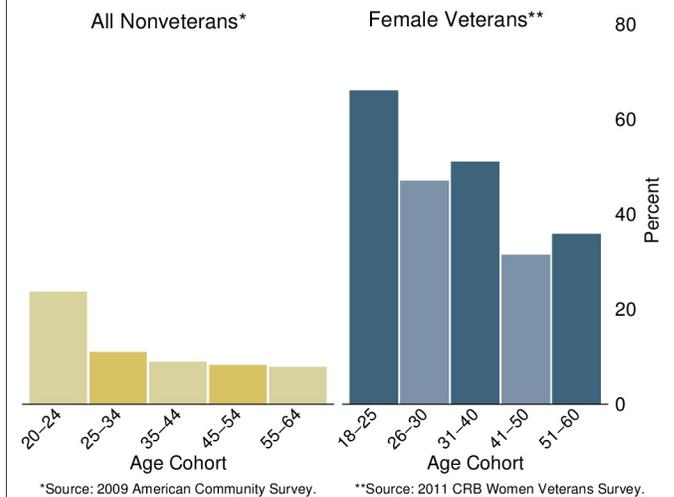
Since 2009, veterans generally have been more likely to hold a job than nonveterans. Because 90 percent of veterans are male, unique patterns for female veteran employment are obscured by this statistic. In the 2011 CRB Women Veterans Survey,* we found that California women veterans were significantly less likely to be employed than either their male counterparts in California or women nationally. As with veterans in general, the older a woman veteran is (until she reaches retirement age), the more likely she is to be employed. In the CRB Survey, 66 percent of women veterans up to age 25 reported being unemployed compared to 31 percent of those 41-50 were unemployed. See Figure 1 for more detail.

Nationally, veterans overall are more likely than nonveterans both to participate in the workforce (i.e., seek a job) and to be employed. In 2010, the unemployment rate in California for veterans was 9.8 percent, compared to 12.2 percent for non-veterans.² However, only 49.0 percent of California veterans participated in the workforce, compared with 66.5 percent of nonveterans.

Neither the Department of Labor (DOL) or California's Employment Development Department (EDD) provide separate breakout information about women veterans and employment in California. The differences in findings between CRB and DOL/EDD may be due to methodological variance. The DOL/EDD statistics are drawn from the American Community Survey, which randomly samples thousands of Americans. CRB used a snowball sample of women veterans in California, so the sample is not completely random. However, the CRB sample is comprised of women veterans slightly more educated and who discharged as officers more frequently than a random sample of veterans would have. We would expect our sample to have a higher

*The survey was requested by the Commission on the Status of Women and CalVet. For full survey results, please see: Blanton, Rebecca E. and Lisa K. Foster. (2012). California's Women Veterans: Responses to the 2011 Survey. www.library.ca.gov/crb/12/12-004.pdf.

Figure 1. Women Veterans Have Higher Unemployment Rates than Nonveterans



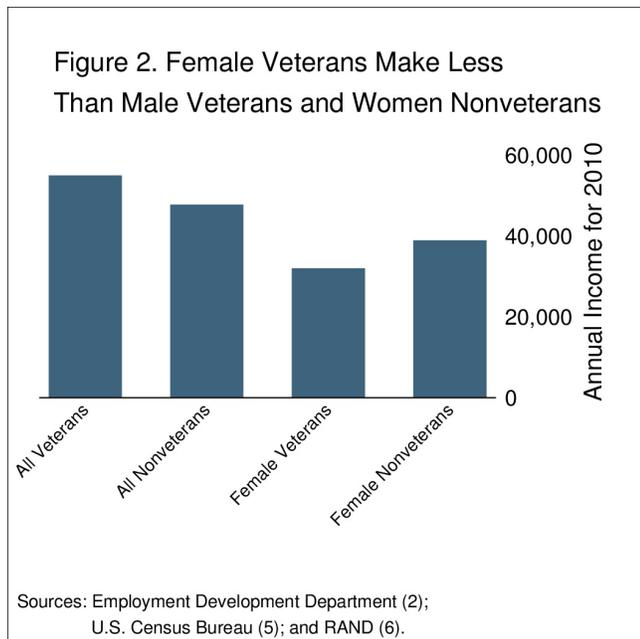
employment rate than a general sample of women veterans.

Additional considerations about the comparison include how the concept of "unemployed" is operationalized. In the CRB survey, we asked women if they were employed full-time, employed part-time, self-employed, or unemployed. All women responding "unemployed" were counted as unemployed. In the DOL/EDD samples, only women currently looking for work while unemployed are considered unemployed. Women who choose to remain unemployed (e.g., full-time homemakers), are not counted in the standard DOL/EDD statistics for unemployment. Regardless of methodology, the large discrepancy between employment rates for women veterans in CA and nonveterans should raise significant questions as to why the discrepancy exists.

EARNINGS

In general, veterans make more than nonveterans (\$54,900 versus \$47,683, respectively in CA in

2010).^{3,8} This difference is driven by the fact that veterans are older and more educated, on average, than people in the general population.^{5,10} However, even though the average woman veteran is older and more educated than her civilian counterparts (46 vs. 35 years old, respectively), women veterans earn substantially less per year (\$31,925) than either other veterans or civilian women.⁷



SPECIAL FINANCIAL BURDENS OF WOMEN VETERANS

While women veterans tend to earn less than their male counterparts, many bear additional financial burdens. Women veterans are nearly three times as likely as their male peers to be single parents (11.0 percent versus 4.0 percent),⁷ although this rate is lower than is true for women and men nationally (23.6 percent and 3.5 percent, respectively).⁹

Women veterans are also more likely than their male peers to have a significant service-related disability. Thirty-five percent of women veterans have a disability rating of at least 50 percent compared with 26 percent of men.⁴ In the CRB survey, 29 percent of women veterans had at least a 70 percent VA disability rating. The jobless rate for veterans with service-related disabilities in August 2011 was not statistically different than the rate of veterans without them (8.7 versus 7.9 percent, respectively).⁴

Most male veterans are currently married (74.9 percent) compared to only 38.9 percent of women veterans.¹⁰ Recent studies indicate that men in the Armed Services are more likely to remain married than

their civilian counterparts while women in the Armed Services divorce more frequently.⁶ The increased divorce rate and number of households headed by a single women veteran increases the financial burden on this population.

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This brief was requested by the [California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls](#).

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