

## **Post-9/11 Women Veterans**

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### *Introduction*

The role of women in the U.S. military has expanded greatly since the inception of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) in 1973. Significant changes in legislation and policy in the early 1990s opened up occupational opportunities for active-duty women. According to Department of Defense data, over 80 percent of the services' career positions are now open to women (WREI.org). These changes allowed them to fly combat aircraft, serve on combat ships, and serve in combat-related occupations.

In addition to these policy changes, the nature of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has redefined the experience of women serving in the Armed Forces. The Persian Gulf War of 1991 saw what was then the largest deployment of women in U.S. military history, with approximately 41,000 women deployed to the region (GAO 1999). Since 2002, an unprecedented 155,000 women have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan (PBS.org). As these conflicts have grown longer and the need for soldiers has increased, the rules governing which jobs can be performed by women in the military has changed to meet these needs.

Today's military women represent a generational shift. They no longer face the same gender battles of their predecessors. Not only is the representation of women in the AVF increasing, but the demographics of these women are also changing. Military women are more likely to be members of a racial minority than military men (DoD 2005). They are less likely to be married than their male counterparts. Servicewomen are increasingly being assigned to more "non-traditional" jobs.

### *Objective*

The purpose of this analysis is to investigate how this new generation of women veterans who only served in the Armed Forces after the events of September 11, 2001 is different from their AVF-predecessors who served between the end of the Vietnam Era and 1990, in terms of their post-military social and economic outcomes. This analysis will also compare Post-9/11 women veterans to their similarly-aged nonveteran counterparts.

### *Data*

This analysis uses data from the 2008 American Community Survey (ACS) and the 1990 decennial census. The ACS is a continuous survey that collects detailed person-level data from a national sample of 3 million household addresses a year and offers a unique opportunity to study female veterans in fine detail.

The 1990 decennial census data were used to facilitate the analysis of the two cohorts of veterans. The 1990 data provide information on women veterans from the early part of the AVF-period who are close in age and in the amount of time since their separation from the military to the most recent cohort of women veterans from the Post-9/11 era.

The universe for this analysis is women between the ages of 18 to 50 years from each data source. This age range allows for the inclusion of all women in the 2008 ACS who could have served in the military since September 11, 2001, based on the minimum and maximum age restrictions for enlistment in the Armed Forces.

### *Methods*

This analysis will primarily use descriptive statistics to compare Post- 9/11 women veterans to women veterans who served in the early part of the AVF-period as well as to

nonveteran women of the same ages. Comparisons will be made for a variety of demographic, social, and economic characteristics at the nation level. Multivariate analysis will be used to examine the earnings of Post-9/11 women veterans and their nonveteran counterparts 18 to 50 years old.

Statistical testing will be used to determine significance at the 90-percent confidence level for all comparisons.

### *References*

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