

# WHO WE SERVE

## Our Continuous Focus on the Veteran

This section of the Performance Report presents social and demographic data on the veteran population. Data on the number of veterans by age, sex, period of service, and state of residence are from official VA estimates and projections.

### Summary

Beginning with our Nation's struggle for freedom more than two centuries ago, approximately 42 million men and women have served our country during wartime. Most (85 percent) served in one or more of the four major conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today, an estimated 25.3 million veterans are living in the United States, Puerto Rico, and overseas. Of these, 19 million veterans served during wartime.

### Number of Veterans and Periods of Service

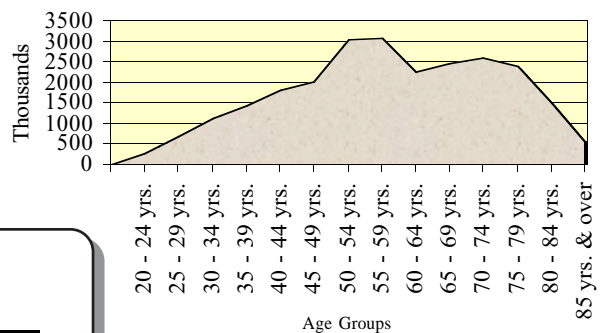
The veteran population decreased by 560,000 in FY 2001. Vietnam-era veterans account for the largest segment of the present veteran population.

### Age of Veterans

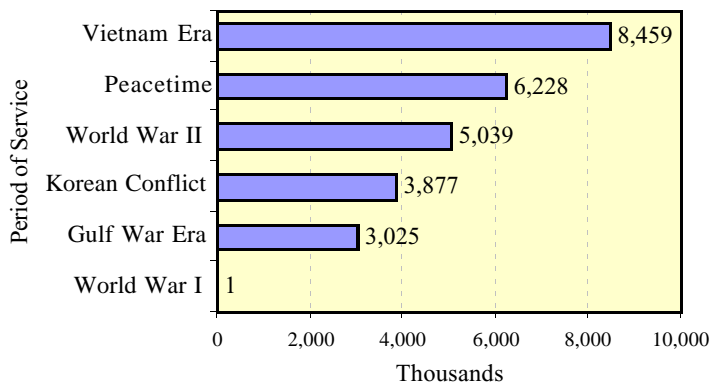
At the end of FY 2001, the median age of all living veterans was 58 years. Veterans under 45 years of age constituted 21 percent of the total veteran population; veterans 45 to 64 years old, 41 percent; and veterans 65 or older, 38 percent.

The number of veterans 85 years of age and older totals over 556,000. Eleven years ago, there were as few as 155,000 veterans in this age range. This large increase in the oldest segment of the veteran population has had significant ramifications on the demand for health care services, particularly in the area of long-term care.

Age Distribution of the Veteran Population by 5-Year Age Groups, 2001



Veteran Population, by Period of Service, 200



Data by period of service will add to more than total due to veterans who served in more than one period.

Age distribution of the Veteran Population by 5 year age groups as of 9/30/01 in 000's

## **Female Veterans**

In FY 2001, the female veteran population of 1.4 million constituted 6 percent of all veterans living in the United States, Puerto Rico, and overseas. The female veteran population as a percentage of all veterans is expected to increase because the number of former military service women continues to grow. Generally, the demographic profile of the female veteran population stands in contrast to that of the male veteran population (e.g., differences in age and period of service).

The median age of female veterans is 13 years younger than that of male veterans, 45 versus 58. The growing involvement of women in the military in recent years is reflected in period-of-service differences between male and female veterans. About 59 percent of all female veterans served during the post-Vietnam era.

## **State of Residence**

Veterans in just three states—California, Florida, and Texas—comprised nearly 23 percent of the veterans living in the United States and Puerto Rico at the end of FY 2001. The three next largest states in terms of veteran population are New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. These 6 states account for more than 37 percent of the total veteran population.

At the other end of the scale, the two least populous states in terms of veteran population—Wyoming and North Dakota—and the District of Columbia collectively accounted for less than one percent of the total.