

Labor force status of Vietnam-era veterans

*Special survey confirms labor market
difficulties of men who served
in Southeast Asia, especially those
with service-connected disabilities*

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A decade after the war's end, the labor force status of Vietnam-era veterans is generally quite similar to that of nonveterans. There are exceptions, however. Those who served in the Vietnam theater (Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia and the surrounding airspace and waters), and most particularly those who received disabling injuries from combat and other causes, have higher unemployment rates and lower labor force participation rates than their peers.

In 1985, data were collected for the first time on the labor force status of men who actually served in Southeast Asia, distinguishing between those with and without service-connected disabilities. The data confirm the precarious circumstances of disabled veterans, who are especially vulnerable to unemployment.

The information is from the Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly survey of about 59,500 households conducted and tabulated by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In a supplement to the April 1985 survey, men 18 years and older were asked about their service in the Armed Forces and whether they had a service-connected disability.¹ (See appendix for information on the types of questions asked.) The supplement was cosponsored

by the Veterans Administration (VA) and two Department of Labor agencies—the Veterans Employment and Training Service and the BLS.²

Overall picture

Our Nation's 26.2 million male veterans account for nearly one-third of all men 18 years and older. The 7.9 million Vietnam-era veterans are the youngest wartime participants and the second largest veterans' group, exceeded only by the 9.7 million veterans of World War II.³ About 2.4 million veterans, or 9 percent, have a service-connected disability. Most served during wartime, with nearly 800,000 having served during the Vietnam era.

In this study, the Vietnam-era veterans are those men who served in the Armed Forces anywhere during the Nation's longest war, from August 1964 to April 1975, and who are currently in the civilian noninstitutional population. Only 46 percent of these veterans actually served in the Vietnam theater of operations. The age distribution of veterans of the Vietnam era is relatively concentrated, with two-thirds between ages 35 and 44 in April 1985. Indeed, one-half were between ages 35 and 39. (Because of the aging of the population, there were no longer any Vietnam-era veterans under age 25.) The following tabulation shows the age distribution of Vietnam-theater and other Vietnam-era veterans and nonveterans in the civilian noninstitutional population in April 1985.

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	Veterans		Nonveterans
	Vietnam theater	Other Vietnam era	
Number (thousands)	3,672	4,260	54,435
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0
18 to 24 years	0.0	0.0	23.9
25 to 34 years	15.3	27.9	31.0
35 to 44 years	68.9	59.8	16.8
35 to 39 years	49.6	36.6	8.9
40 to 44 years	19.3	23.2	7.9
45 years and over	15.8	12.2	28.3

Many misperceptions surround the men who served during the Vietnam era.⁴ For example, contrary to popular belief, most were not drafted, but volunteered for military service. In 1968, the year with the largest number on active duty, just 40 percent of all enlisted new entrants were draftees.⁵ Another myth is that minorities constituted a disproportionate share of our military forces. In fact, blacks make up 9 percent of Vietnam-era veterans (11 percent of Vietnam-theater veterans), and Hispanics account for 4 percent of these veterans. The black share of the adult male population is about 10 percent, and the Hispanic share is 6 percent.

Table 1. Employment status of men 18 years and over, by veteran status and age, April 1985, not seasonally adjusted

(Numbers in thousands)

Veteran status and age	Civilian noninstitutional population	Civilian labor force					Not in labor force
		Total	Percent of population	Employed	Unemployed		
					Number	Percent of labor force	
Veterans							
Total, 18 years and over	26,153	19,524	74.7	18,449	1,075	5.5	6,629
18 to 24	378	340	89.9	280	60	17.7	38
25 to 34	2,933	2,770	94.4	2,515	255	9.2	163
35 to 44	5,977	5,761	96.4	5,443	318	5.5	216
45 and over	16,865	10,653	63.2	10,212	440	4.1	6,212
Vietnam era:							
Total, 18 years and over	7,932	7,449	93.9	7,003	445	6.0	483
18 to 24	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
25 to 34	1,753	1,677	95.7	1,522	155	9.3	76
35 to 44	5,078	4,895	96.4	4,630	265	5.4	183
45 and over	1,101	877	79.7	852	25	2.8	224
Vietnam theater:							
Total, 18 years and over	3,672	3,383	92.1	3,158	225	6.7	288
18 to 24	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
25 to 34	563	533	94.7	472	61	11.4	30
35 to 44	2,529	2,402	95.0	2,251	151	6.3	128
45 and over	580	449	77.4	435	14	3.1	130
Other Vietnam era:							
Total, 18 years and over	4,260	4,065	95.4	3,845	220	5.4	195
18 to 24	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
25 to 34	1,190	1,144	96.1	1,050	95	8.3	46
35 to 44	2,549	2,494	97.8	2,379	115	4.6	55
45 and over	521	427	82.0	417	11	2.5	94
Other war periods:							
Total, 18 years and over	13,666	7,784	57.0	7,436	348	4.5	5,882
18 to 24	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
25 to 34	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
35 to 44	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
45 and over	13,666	7,784	57.0	7,436	348	4.5	5,882
45 to 54	2,673	2,398	89.7	2,274	124	5.2	275
55 to 64	6,778	4,595	67.8	4,400	194	4.2	2,183
65 and over	4,215	791	18.8	762	29	3.7	3,424
Other service periods:							
Total, 18 years and over	4,555	4,291	94.2	4,010	282	6.6	264
18 to 24	378	340	89.9	280	60	17.7	38
25 to 34	1,180	1,093	92.6	993	100	9.2	87
35 to 44	899	866	96.3	813	53	6.1	33
45 and over	2,098	1,992	94.9	1,923	69	3.5	106
Nonveterans							
Total, 18 years and over	54,435	42,724	78.5	39,538	3,185	7.5	11,712
18 to 24	13,034	10,097	77.5	8,893	1,204	11.9	2,937
25 to 34	16,852	15,932	94.5	14,861	1,071	6.7	920
35 to 44	9,165	8,639	94.3	8,175	465	5.4	526
45 and over	15,384	8,054	52.4	7,609	446	5.5	7,330

¹ Because of the aging of the population, there were no longer any Vietnam-era veterans under age 25 or any other war veterans under age 45.

Table 2. Employment status of male Vietnam-era veterans, by race and Hispanic origin, April 1985, not seasonally adjusted

(Numbers in thousands)

Veteran status, race, and Hispanic origin	Civilian noninstitutional population	Civilian labor force					Not in labor force
		Total	Percent of population	Employed	Unemployed		
					Number	Percent of labor force	
Total							
Vietnam-era veterans	7,932	7,449	93.9	7,003	445	6.0	483
Vietnam theater	3,672	3,383	92.1	3,158	225	6.7	288
Other Vietnam era	4,260	4,065	95.4	3,845	220	5.4	195
Nonveterans	54,435	42,724	78.5	39,538	3,185	7.5	11,712
White							
Vietnam-era veterans	7,084	6,660	94.0	6,326	335	5.0	424
Vietnam theater	3,193	2,947	92.3	2,786	161	5.4	246
Other Vietnam era	3,892	3,714	95.4	3,539	174	4.7	178
Nonveterans	46,468	36,849	79.3	34,504	2,345	6.4	9,619
Black							
Vietnam-era veterans	724	678	93.6	588	90	13.2	46
Vietnam theater	411	379	92.2	325	54	14.1	32
Other Vietnam era	312	299	95.8	263	36	12.1	13
Nonveterans	6,100	4,444	72.9	3,725	719	16.2	1,656
Hispanic origin							
Vietnam-era veterans	356	341	95.8	312	29	8.6	15
Vietnam theater	161	150	93.2	140	9	6.3	11
Other Vietnam era	195	192	98.5	172	20	10.4	4
Nonveterans	4,575	3,759	82.2	3,388	371	9.9	816

NOTE: Detail for the race and Hispanic-origin groups will not sum to totals because data for the "other races" group are not presented and Hispanics are included in both the white and black population groups.

Men who served in Southeast Asia accounted for two-thirds of the nearly 800,000 Vietnam-era veterans who reported a service-connected disability. Their disability is rated from 0 to 100 percent, representing the "average impairment in earning capacity" in civilian occupations resulting from diseases and injuries caused or aggravated by military service.⁶ About half had disability ratings of less than 30 percent.

Labor force

Veterans of the Vietnam era are now in their prime working ages, and 7.5 million of a total of 7.9 million were in the labor force in April 1985. Being a large segment of their generation, they account for more than 1 of 4 men in the labor force between the ages of 30 and 44. With a 94-percent participation rate, Vietnam-era veterans were as likely as their nonveteran peers to be in the labor force. (See table 1.) Those who served in the Vietnam theater were somewhat less likely to be labor force participants than other veterans of that period (92 versus 95 percent), in part because a larger proportion had service-connected disabilities. Black and Hispanic veterans were as likely to be in the labor force as whites, in contrast to the situation for nonveterans, among whom blacks have lower participation rates than whites and Hispanics. (See table 2.)

For disabled Vietnam-era veterans, labor force participation varied widely, depending on the degree of disability. Those with disability ratings of less than 30 percent were nearly as likely to be in the labor force as those with no

disability. However, the participation rate was only 35 percent for those reporting disability ratings of 60 percent or higher. (See table 3.) Disabled veterans of the Vietnam theater were about as likely to be labor force participants as disabled veterans who had served elsewhere.

Of course, the existence of other sources of income can influence the veteran's decision to seek employment. Most disabled veterans as defined in this report received regular monthly compensation through the VA or Department of Defense. Based on the extent of the reduced capacity to work, VA payments range from under \$100 to around \$4,000 per month.⁷ For instance, a veteran whose only service-connected injury was the loss of the use of part of a finger or toe may be eligible to receive \$70 per month. At the other extreme, a veteran whose military service resulted in quadriplegia may be entitled to around \$4,000 (including the maximum allowance for dependents).

Unemployment

The unemployment rate for Vietnam-era veterans was 6.0 percent in April 1985. Altogether, almost 450,000 of the men were looking for work. Those who actually served in Southeast Asia were more likely to be unemployed than other Vietnam-era veterans, 6.7 percent compared with 5.4 percent. This was partly the result of their higher incidence of disability and also of factors which predated their military service. For instance, men in the Vietnam theater had, on average, less education and were from poorer families than other veterans of the same era.⁸ Hence, they were already at

a greater risk in terms of joblessness. A 1980 survey of veterans identified "finding a job" as their biggest problem, but less than one-half attributed their difficulties to military service.⁹

The jobless rate for disabled Vietnam-era veterans, at 8.1 percent, was much higher than that for those without disability (5.6 percent). Disabled veterans who served in Southeast Asia were more likely to be unemployed than other disabled Vietnam-era veterans (9.2 versus 5.6 percent). Of the former, those with disability ratings of 30 to 50 percent had a particularly high jobless rate—16.0 percent.

The jobless rate for black Vietnam-era veterans was substantially higher than that for their white and Hispanic counterparts, regardless of the theater of service. The rate for black veterans averaged 2½ to 3 times that for the whites, about the same relationship as in the general population. However, black and Hispanic veterans, like other veterans, had a lower jobless rate than their nonveteran counterparts. Two-thirds of the jobless Vietnam-era veterans were reentrants, a very high proportion, indicating more frequent breaks from the labor force for veterans than for men who never served in the Armed Forces. Almost none of the veterans were new entrants to the civilian labor force.

The median length of joblessness for Vietnam-era veter-

ans was 9.3 weeks, about 3 weeks less than the duration for all men 25 years and over. Those who served in Southeast Asia were unemployed for a shorter time than were those who served outside the war zone. The men who served in the Vietnam theater were also less likely to be among the long-term unemployed (15 weeks and longer).

Employment

Both public and private sector employers have had various incentives to hire the Vietnam-era veteran. Many large employers, most notably the Federal, State, and local governments, give veterans preference in hiring, usually by adding points to their score on a competitive civil service exam. Public job service agencies in each State provide veterans with special assistance and counseling and have given them priority in referrals to job openings with Federal contractors. The Department of Labor sponsors training programs, as does the Department of Defense. The Labor Department also has responsibility for enforcing veterans' re-employment rights. Many of these services were firmly in place well before the war's end.¹⁰

More than 18 million veterans were employed at the time the survey was taken, including 7 million from the Vietnam period. While the most recent wartime veterans were about

Table 3. Employment status of male Vietnam-era veterans, by presence of service-connected disability and reported disability rating, April 1985, not seasonally adjusted

(Numbers in thousands)

Presence and rating of disability	Civilian noninstitutional population	Civilian labor force					Not in labor force
		Total	Percent of population	Employed	Unemployed		
					Number	Percent of labor force	
Vietnam-era veterans							
Total, 18 years and over	7,932	7,449	93.9	7,003	445	6.0	483
With service-connected disability	771	616	79.9	566	50	8.1	156
Less than 30-percent disability rating	398	367	92.2	337	29	8.0	31
30- to 50-percent disability rating	190	151	79.5	133	18	11.9	40
60-percent or higher disability rating	119	41	34.5	41	—	(1)	78
Disability rating not reported	63	58	(1)	56	3	(1)	7
Without service-connected disability	6,858	6,570	95.8	6,201	368	5.6	289
Presence of disability not reported	302	264	87.4	236	27	10.3	39
Vietnam theater							
Total, 18 years and over	3,672	3,383	92.1	3,158	225	6.7	288
With service-connected disability	515	416	80.8	378	38	9.2	99
Less than 30-percent disability rating	260	244	93.8	225	19	7.8	16
30- to 50-percent disability rating	137	106	77.4	89	17	16.0	30
60-percent or higher disability rating	78	30	38.5	30	—	(1)	48
Disability rating not reported	39	36	(1)	34	2	(1)	4
Without service-connected disability	3,004	2,842	94.6	2,666	176	6.2	162
Presence of disability not reported	153	125	81.7	114	11	8.7	28
Other Vietnam era							
Total, 18 years and over	4,260	4,065	95.4	3,845	220	5.4	195
With service-connected disability	256	199	77.7	188	11	5.6	57
Less than 30-percent disability rating	138	123	89.1	112	10	8.5	15
30- to 50-percent disability rating	54	44	(1)	44	—	(1)	9
60-percent or higher disability rating	41	11	(1)	11	—	(1)	30
Disability rating not reported	24	21	(1)	21	—	(1)	3
Without service-connected disability	3,854	3,727	96.7	3,535	192	5.2	127
Presence of disability not reported	150	139	92.7	122	16	11.8	11

¹ Data not shown where base is less than 75,000.

NOTE: Dash indicates fewer than 500 persons.

as likely to be working as their nonveteran peers, there were differences in the types and settings of employment. Perhaps the most striking of these is the large proportion, particularly among the disabled, who were working in the public sector and in the Federal Government in particular. About 20 percent of the Vietnam-era veterans held public sector jobs, compared with 11 percent of nonveterans. Those men who actually served in the Vietnam theater were somewhat more likely to be public employees than other veterans of the same period. Black and Hispanic veterans were even more apt to be public sector employees than were whites. The following tabulation shows the percent of employed veterans who were wage and salary workers in private industry (excluding the self-employed and unpaid family workers) and in government in April 1985:

	Private industry	Government	
		Total	Federal
Vietnam era	70.2	20.3	8.6
Disabled	58.1	33.0	19.8
Not disabled	71.1	19.4	7.7
Vietnam theater	69.3	21.7	9.5
Disabled	58.5	33.3	18.8
Not disabled	70.6	20.4	8.4
Other Vietnam era	71.0	19.2	7.9
Disabled	57.4	31.9	21.8
Not disabled	71.5	18.6	7.2

Among disabled Vietnam-era veterans with jobs, one-third were in the public sector, with about 1 of 5 employed by the Federal Government. This reflects several factors, including special hiring preferences given to the disabled veteran (in addition to preferences given to all who served when the Nation was at war), special retention rights during reductions in force, and perhaps an unusually strong commitment on the part of Federal agencies to hire handicapped workers in general.¹¹

Veterans of the Vietnam period were about as likely to be self-employed as other men their age. Disabled Vietnam-era veterans were somewhat less likely to be self-employed than other veterans.

The average length of the workweek for Vietnam-era veterans, at 45 hours, was about the same as that for adult men in general, and varied little on the basis of theater of service or disability. However, disabled veterans were more likely to work part time (less than 35 hours per week) than nondisabled veterans. Not surprisingly, disabled veterans reported more absenteeism than other veterans.

Occupations. The Armed Forces provide certain training which is generally transferable to civilian jobs. While there are some military specialties, such as infantry and gun crews, which have no civilian counterpart, jobs in management, repair, clerical, and craft specialties are similar to those of civilians.¹²

The role of education in occupational selection has been critical for veterans. An estimated 70 percent of Vietnam-era veterans returned to school after their military discharge,¹³ the great majority taking advantage of veterans' educational benefits.¹⁴ Despite this, veterans are less likely to hold college and postgraduate degrees than their nonveteran peers, and this lower educational attainment is reflected in the types of jobs they hold, on average.¹⁵ In addition, the employment situation of veterans cannot be viewed apart from the performance of the economy as a whole. Economic dislocations in recent years have limited the growth of blue-collar jobs in favor of managerial, professional, and technical positions, to the detriment of some veterans who left the service with training and experience in craft, repair, and related fields.

Table 4. Employed male Vietnam-era veterans and non-veterans by occupation and class of worker, April 1985, not seasonally adjusted

(Percent distribution)

Occupation and class of worker	Vietnam-era veterans			Nonveterans
	Total	Vietnam theater	Other Vietnam era	
Total, 18 years and over (in thousands)	7,003	3,158	3,845	39,538
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Occupation				
Managerial and professional specialty	27.5	25.5	29.3	23.7
Executive, administrative, and managerial	15.6	14.3	16.7	12.0
Professional specialty	11.9	11.1	12.6	11.7
Technical, sales, and administrative support	20.3	20.0	20.6	19.0
Technicians and related support	4.1	4.2	4.0	2.7
Sales occupations	9.5	9.2	9.7	11.0
Administrative support, including clerical	6.8	6.6	6.9	5.3
Service occupations	7.9	9.2	7.0	9.5
Protective service	3.9	5.0	3.1	2.1
Other service occupations	4.0	4.1	3.9	7.4
Precision production, craft, and repair	23.5	24.5	22.7	20.2
Mechanics and repairers	9.4	9.3	9.5	6.9
Construction trades	7.5	8.5	6.6	7.8
Other precision production, craft, and repair	6.7	6.8	6.6	5.5
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	18.4	18.7	18.2	22.1
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	7.2	7.2	7.3	8.5
Transportation and material moving occupations	7.4	7.7	7.2	7.2
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	3.8	3.8	3.7	6.4
Farming, forestry, and fishing	2.2	2.1	2.4	5.5
Class of worker				
Wage and salary workers	90.5	91.0	90.2	89.4
Private	70.2	69.3	71.0	78.3
Government	20.3	21.7	19.2	11.1
Federal	8.6	9.5	7.9	(1)
State and local	11.7	12.3	11.3	(1)
Self-employed and unpaid family workers	9.5	9.0	9.8	10.6

¹ Data not available.

Veterans who served in the Vietnam theater were less likely to hold managerial and professional positions than others of the same era, and more likely to hold skilled craft and protective service jobs. (See table 4.) Disabled Vietnam-era veterans were more likely than their nondisabled counterparts to be professionals, clericals, and unskilled laborers, and less likely to be skilled craftworkers and machine operators. This followed the pattern of veterans of earlier wars, except that the older disabled veterans were also more likely to be in sales.

The occupational distribution of black veterans varied from that of whites, paralleling the general situation. Black Vietnam-era veterans were less likely to be in managerial and professional positions and more likely to hold service jobs than were whites. But they were also less likely to occupy unskilled and low paying laborer jobs and more

likely to hold lower level white-collar positions than nonveteran blacks, indicating, perhaps, that military service confers a greater relative benefit to blacks than to whites.

Out of the labor force

A small number of Vietnam-era veterans were not working or looking for work in April 1985. The majority of the 480,000 veterans in this category reported that they were retired, but ill health stemming from service injuries and illnesses also played a significant role in their labor force status.

Black veterans were about as likely to be outside the labor force as whites, a picture quite different from the population as a whole, where blacks have a greater incidence of nonparticipation than whites. □

FOOTNOTES

¹ Respondents to the April 1985 CPS supplement were men only; however, 1 million women were also veterans, including about 250,000 from the Vietnam era. For more information, see *Female Veteran Population* (Veterans Administration, 1984); and Maria L. Roca, "Women veterans total 1 million in first half of 1986," *Monthly Labor Review*, December 1986, pp. 30-31.

² Information from the April 1985 CPS supplement was issued initially as news release USDL 86-125, "BLS Issues First Time Study on Disabled Veterans," Mar. 31, 1986. Historical data on Vietnam-era veterans are found in *Employment and Earnings*, a monthly BLS publication, and *The Employment Situation*, a monthly BLS news release. For the latest article on the subject, see John F. Stinson, Jr., "Vietnam veterans in the labor market of the 1970's," *Monthly Labor Review*, November 1979, pp. 3-11.

³ *Statistical Abstract 1986* (Washington, U.S. Department of Commerce), p. 346.

⁴ For a comparison of the attitudes of veterans, employers, and the public toward the veterans, see *Myth and Realities: A Study of Attitudes Toward Vietnam Era Veterans*, submitted by the Veterans Administration to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, July 1980.

⁵ *Statistical Abstract 1975* (Washington, U.S. Department of Commerce), p. 327.

⁶ *Code of Federal Regulations*, title 38.

⁷ *Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents* (Veterans Administration, 1986), pp. 3-4.

⁸ *Legacies of Vietnam: Comparative Adjustment of Veterans and Their Peers*, a study prepared for the Veterans Administration, submitted to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, Mar. 9, 1981, pp. 104-16.

⁹ *Myths and Realities*, pp. 108-19.

¹⁰ See Elizabeth Waldman and Kathryn R. Gover, "Employment situation of Vietnam-era veterans," *Monthly Labor Review*, September 1971, pp. 3-11, for a discussion of programs and benefits for these veterans, as well as a comparison of the job markets facing Vietnam, Korea, and World War II veterans.

¹¹ See *Veterans' Preference in Federal Employment* (Office of Personnel Management, 1985).

¹² See Carol Boyd Leon, "Working for Uncle Sam—a look at members of the Armed Forces," *Monthly Labor Review*, July 1984, pp. 3-9.

¹³ *Legacies of Vietnam*, pp. 153-72.

¹⁴ The VA estimates that as of September 1985, 6 million Vietnam-era veterans had received training under the GI Bill, nearly two-thirds of them at the college level. For more information, see *Veterans Benefits Under Current Educational Programs, Fiscal Year 1985* (Veterans Administration).

¹⁵ *Annual Report 1985* (Veterans Administration), p. 7.

APPENDIX: Notes on the data

The estimates in this article are obtained from a supplement to the April 1985 Current Population Survey (CPS). Special questions in this survey asked men 18 years and older about their service in the Armed Forces and whether they had a service-connected disability. The CPS, a monthly survey of about 59,500 occupied households, is conducted for the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the Bureau of the Census. It provides information on the employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population; the demographic, occupational, and other characteristics of the employed, the unemployed, and persons not in the labor force; and related data. The April 1985 survey was taken during the week of the 14th through the 20th and refers to the status of individ-

uals during the preceding week (7th through the 13th). The definitions underlying the data in this article are as follows.

Veteran status is provided from responses to the questions:

Did you ever serve on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces?

When did you serve?

- Vietnam Era—Aug. 1964—Apr. 1975* ○
- Korean War—June 1950—Jan. 1955* ○
- World War II—Sept. 1940—July 1947* ○
- World War I—Apr. 1917—Nov. 1918* ○
- Other service—All other periods* ○

If the person served in more than one of the major conflicts, the most recent war period is marked. "Other service" is marked only if no time was served during one of the four major conflicts. Vietnam-era veterans were asked this question to determine if service was actually in the Vietnam theater:

Did you serve in Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia; in the waters in or around these countries; or fly missions over these areas between August 1964 and April 1975?

The presence of a service-connected disability is provided by the question:

Has the Veterans Administration or the Department of Defense determined that you have a service-connected disability, that is, a health condition or impairment caused or made worse by military service?

The disability status must be determined by the Veterans Administration or the Department of Defense. Self-diagnosed or personal-physician-diagnosed disabilities are not applicable. Service-connected disability ratings are determined from the question:

What is your service-connected disability rating?

Answers range from 0 to 100 percent. Disability ratings are determined from a rating schedule published in the *U.S. Code of Federal Regulations* (title 38), "Pensions, Bonuses, and Veterans Relief," Part 4—"Schedule for Rating Disabilities." The rating schedule is "primarily a guide in the evaluation of disability resulting from all types of diseases and injuries encountered as a result of or incident to military service. The percentage ratings represent as far as can practicably be determined the average impairment in earning capacity resulting from such diseases and injuries and their residual conditions in civil occupations." Part 4 lists hundreds of disorders by degree of severity and assigns a rating of 0 through 100 percent in steps of 10 percent for each (as well as instructions for rating multiple disorders).

An example of the rating system is the assignment of a rating of 30 percent where a service-connected injury or disease causes the visual acuity of one eye to be reduced to 10/200 and vision in the other eye is 20/40. A rating of 90 percent disability is assigned where both eyes have only 10/200 acuity. Although the schedule's ratings are based primarily on the average impairment in earning capacity, "full consideration must be given to unusual physical or mental effects in individual cases, to peculiar effects of occupational activities, to defects in physical or mental endowment preventing the usual amount of success in overcoming the handicap or disability, and to the effect of combinations of disability."

ERRATA

The article "New basket of goods and services being priced in revised CPI," which appeared in the January issue, contains two incorrect figures. In the first column of page 4, the second sentence of the last paragraph should read:

The CPI-W population comprises 28 percent of all consumer units and 32 percent of the noninstitutional population.
