

Employment characteristics of Gulf War-era II veterans in 2006: a visual essay

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Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the U.S. Armed Forces entered into a new period: Gulf War era II.¹ This era follows Gulf War era I, which extends from August 1990 to August 2001. During Gulf War era II, troops deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, and other locations. A sizable number of troops were called up from the Reserve and the National Guard. This visual essay examines the characteristics of the 1.2 million veterans 18 to 54 years old who served in this new era and shows how they have been faring in the labor market after returning to civilian life.

The information to be presented was obtained from Gulf War-era II veterans or members of their households in 2006. Military personnel on active duty at the time of the survey are excluded. Data are 2006 annual averages and were collected as part of the Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly survey of about 60,000 households that provides national data on civilian employment and unemployment.²

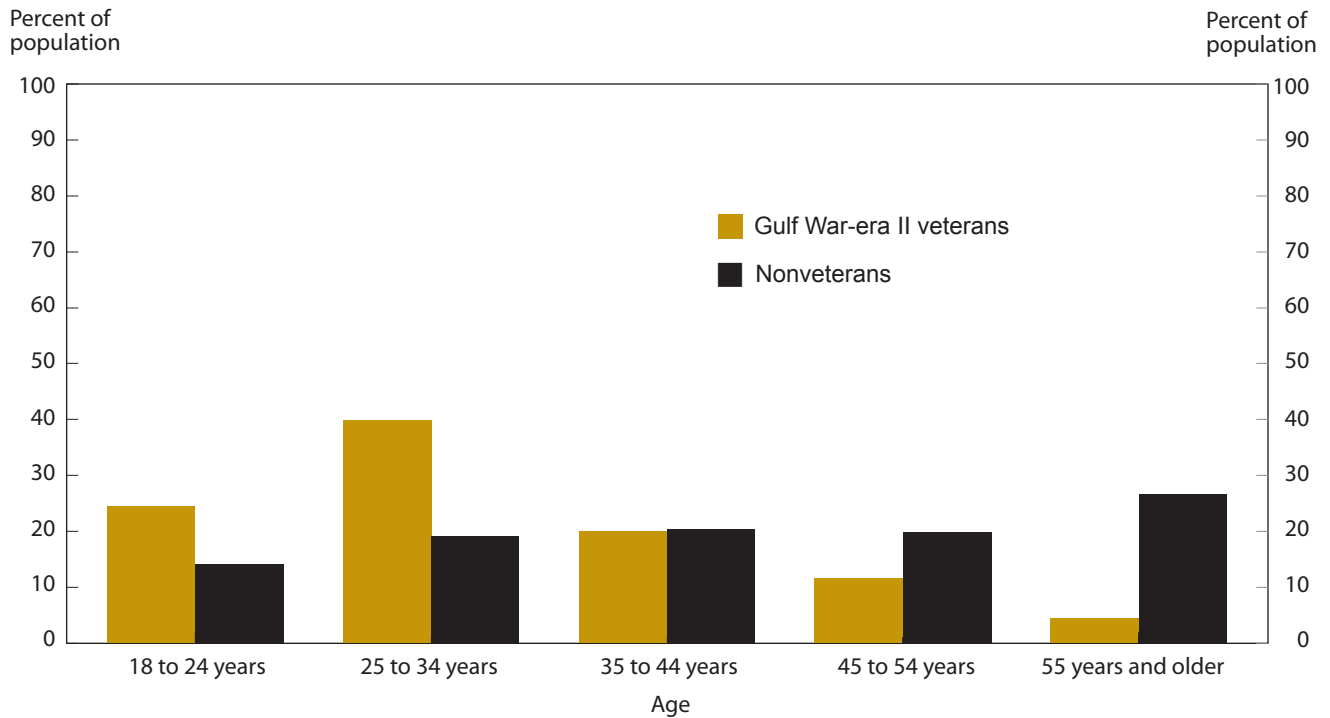
Gulf War-era II veterans are men and women who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces anywhere in the world sometime between September

2001 and the time they were surveyed in 2006. Members of the Reserve and National Guard are counted as veterans if they have ever been called to active duty. Nonveterans have never served on active duty in the U.S. military. Data about veterans who served in other periods are not included in this essay, but are available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The 2006 data are the first annual average statistics available that separately identify Gulf War-era II veterans. Previously, all Gulf War-era veterans (who served since August 1990) were grouped together into one category. Veterans who served in both Gulf War era I and Gulf War era II are classified into the latter category.

CPS data on veterans are of keen interest to a range of users, including the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the U. S. Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service, as well as congressional committees, veterans' service organizations, the news media, and academic researchers. This essay was prepared by James A. Walker, an economist in the Division of Labor Force Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Phone: (202) 691-6378. E-mail: walker.james@bls.gov.

1. Gulf War-era II veterans are younger than nonveterans

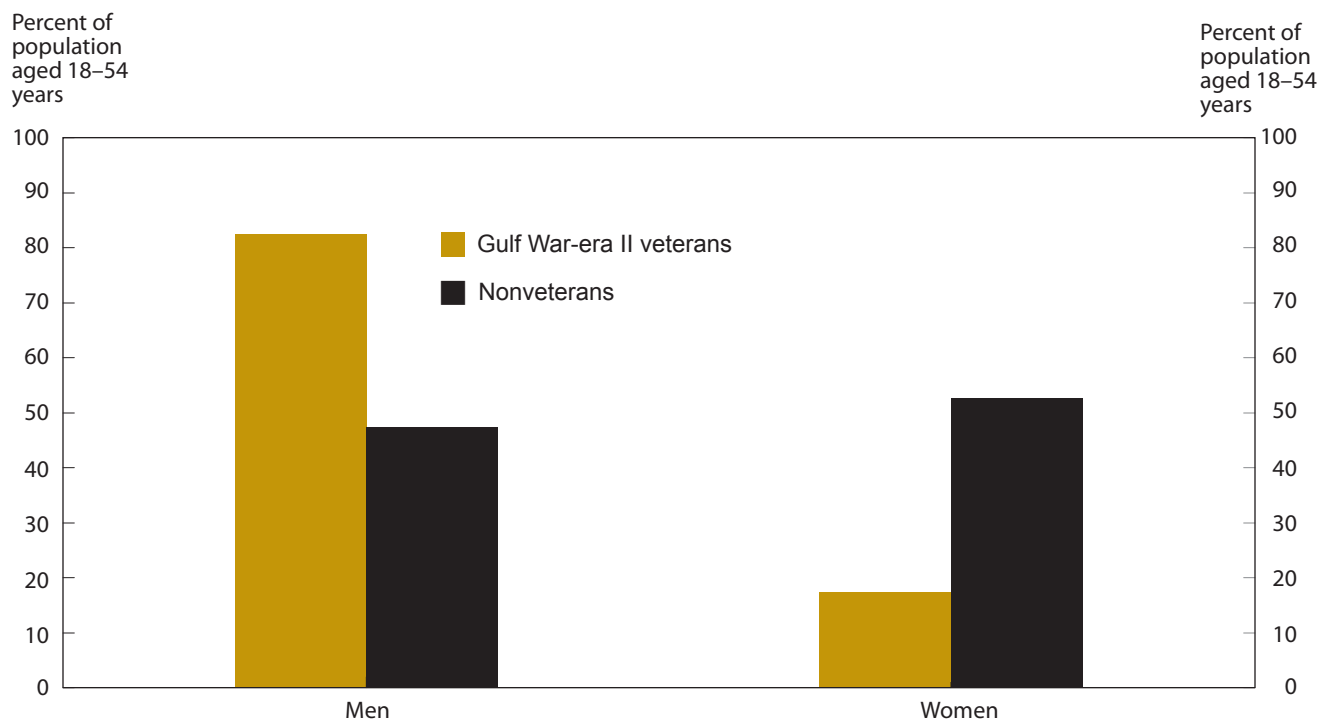


NOTE: Gulf War-era II veterans had served anywhere on active duty since September 2001.

SOURCE: Current Population Survey (CPS), 2006 annual averages.

- The Gulf War-era II veteran population is younger than the nonveteran population. In 2006, Gulf War-era II veterans under 35 years of age—those 18 to 24 years old (24.4 percent) and 25 to 34 years old (39.8 percent)—made up 64.2 percent of the Gulf War-era II veteran population. By contrast, the under-35-year-old nonveteran population in 2006 was 33.2 percent of the nonveteran population.
- Few Gulf War-era II veterans were 55 years or older (4.4 percent) in 2006. However, this age group accounted for 26.6 percent of the total nonveteran population. As a result, the large nonveteran population aged 55 years and older significantly influences any comparison made between Gulf War-era II veterans and nonveterans. Therefore, the charts that follow compare Gulf War-era II veterans aged 18 to 54 years with nonveterans in the same age group.
- The population referenced in this essay is the civilian noninstitutional population, which includes all persons residing in any of the 50 States or the District of Columbia. The definition excludes people who live in institutions (such as nursing homes, correctional facilities, juvenile detention facilities, and long-term mental health care facilities) and those who are currently on active duty in the Armed Forces.

2. Men make up most of the Gulf War-era II veteran population

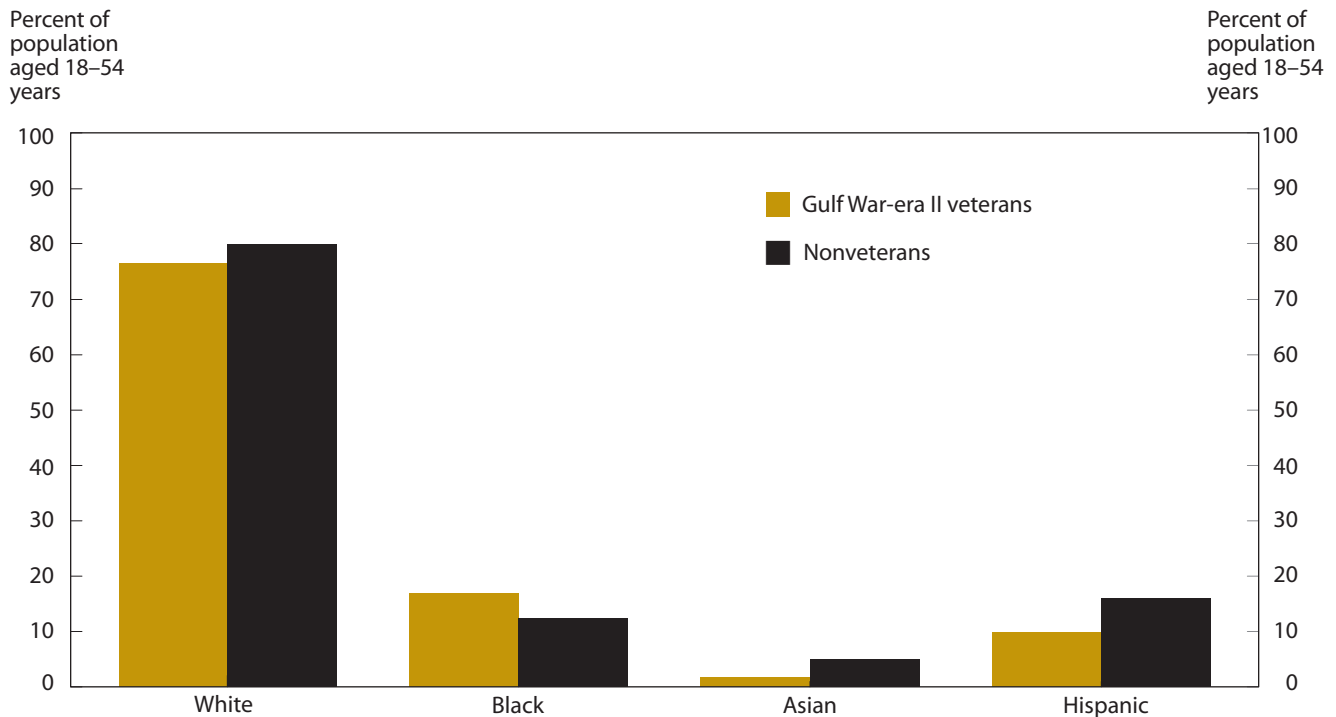


NOTE: Gulf War-era II veterans had served anywhere on active duty since September 2001.

SOURCE: Current Population Survey (CPS), 2006 annual averages.

- In 2006, 82.4 percent of Gulf War-era II veterans aged 18 to 54 years were men, compared with 47.4 percent of nonveterans of the same age. Since September 2001, nearly 1 million men in the 18-to-54-years age group had served in the Armed Forces and returned to civilian life.
- Women were a fairly small part of the Gulf War-era II veteran population, compared with the percentage of women in the nonveteran population, in 2006. Specifically, almost 18 percent of Gulf War-era II veterans aged 18 to 54 years were women, compared with 52.6 percent of nonveterans. As of 2006, about 211,000 women aged 18 to 54 years had served during Gulf War era II.
- The higher proportion of men making up Gulf War-era II veterans relative to nonveterans contributes to some of the differences in the labor market characteristics of the two groups.

3. Blacks are overrepresented in the Gulf War-era II veteran population

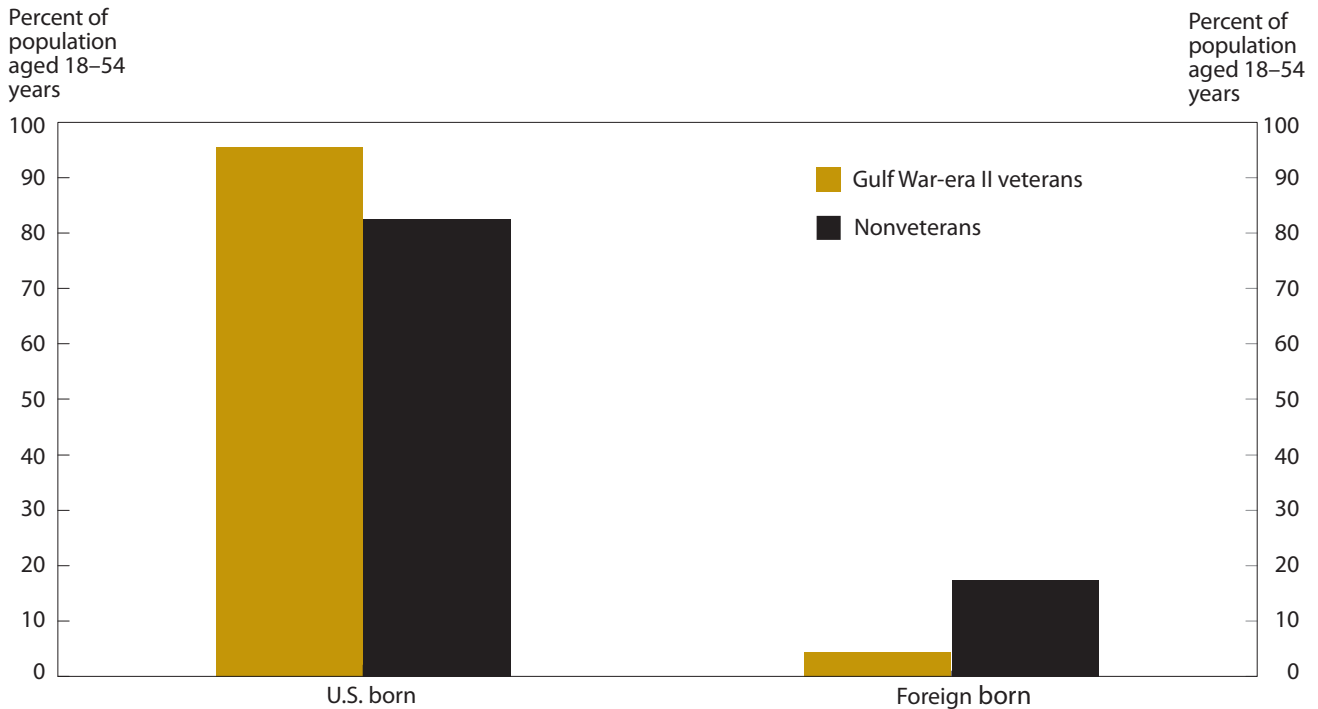


NOTE: Estimates for the race groups shown (White, Black, and Asian) do not sum to 100 because data are not presented for all races. Hispanics may be of any race. Gulf War-era II veterans had served anywhere on active duty since September 2001.

SOURCE: Current Population Survey (CPS), 2006 annual averages.

- The percentage of Blacks in the Gulf War-era II veteran population (17.0 percent) was larger than the percentage of Blacks in the nonveteran population (12.5 percent) in 2006. In contrast, Whites, Asians, and Hispanics accounted for a lower percentage of the Gulf War-era II veteran population than their respective share of the nonveteran population.
- Whites aged 18 to 54 years made up 76.4 percent of the Gulf War-era II veteran population, compared with 79.9 percent of the nonveteran population in 2006. About 2 percent of Gulf War-era II veterans aged 18 to 54 years were Asian, while 5.1 percent of nonveterans in the same age group were Asian.
- In 2006, 9.9 percent of Gulf War-era II veterans aged 18 to 54 years were of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, while Hispanics accounted for 16.0 percent of nonveterans. (Hispanics can be of any race.)

4. Almost 5 percent of Gulf War-era II veterans are foreign born

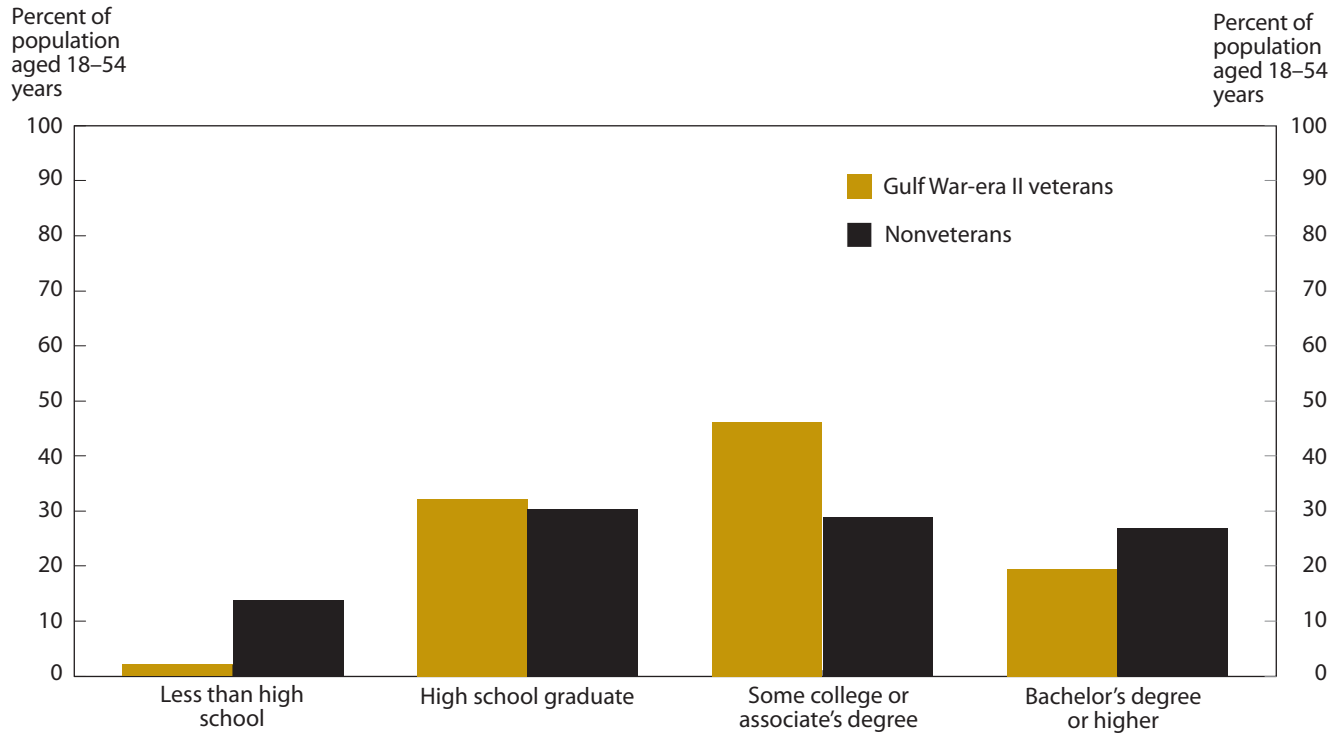


NOTE: Gulf War-era II veterans had served anywhere on active duty since September 2001.

SOURCE: Current Population Survey (CPS), 2006 annual averages.

- In 2006, 4.5 percent of Gulf War-era II veterans aged 18 to 54 years were born outside the United States or one of its outlying areas (such as Puerto Rico or Guam) to parents, neither of whom was a U.S. citizen.
- U.S. citizens, or resident aliens with valid immigration documents, may be members of the military. Foreign-born persons with other immigration statuses usually may not join the U.S. Armed Forces. This requirement may in part explain why few foreign-born veterans served during the Gulf War-era II period.

5. Two-thirds of Gulf War-era II veterans have attended college

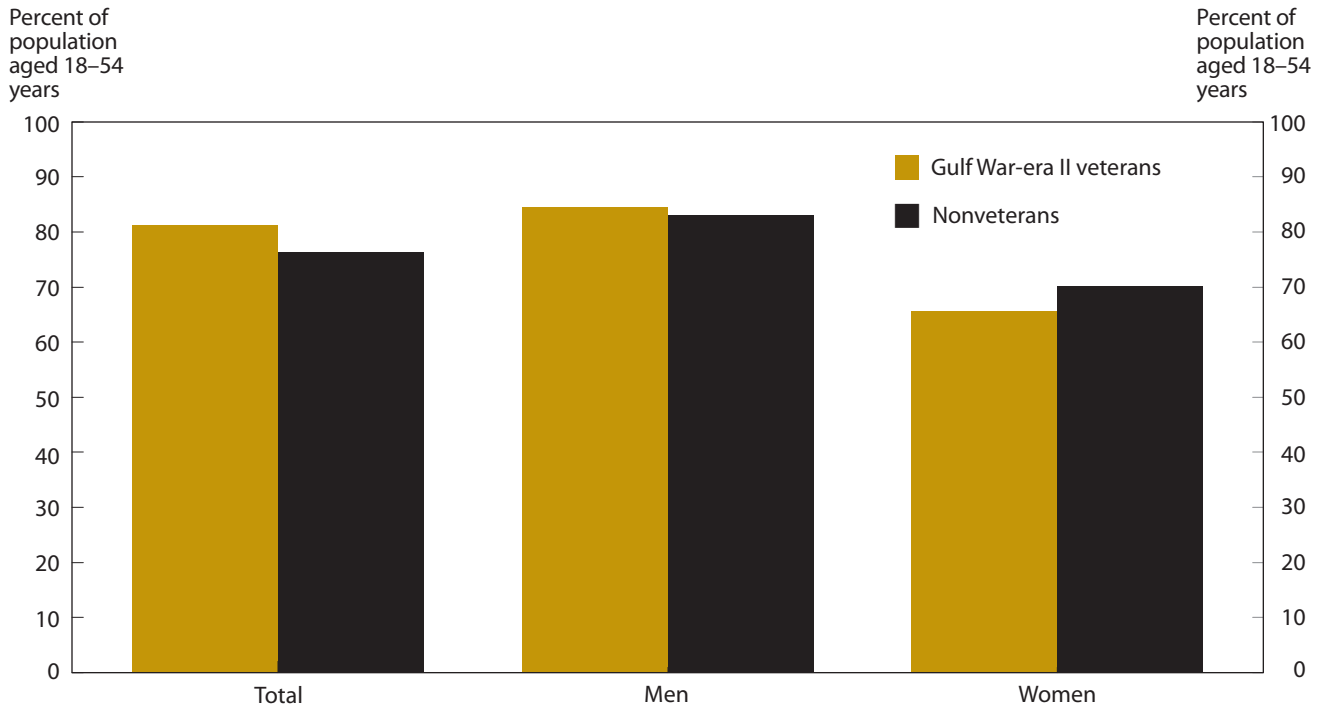


NOTE: Gulf War-era II veterans had served anywhere on active duty since September 2001.

SOURCE: Current Population Survey (CPS), 2006 annual averages.

- About 46 percent of Gulf War-era II veterans aged 18 to 54 years had completed some college or earned an associate's degree by 2006, while another 19.5 percent had completed a bachelor's degree or higher. Together, these groups made up nearly two-thirds of Gulf War-era II veterans aged 18 to 54 years.
- By 2006, more nonveterans (26.9 percent) than Gulf War-era II veterans (19.5 percent) had completed a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Also by 2006, fewer Gulf War-era II veterans aged 18 to 54 years had earned less than a high school diploma (2.1 percent) than did nonveterans (13.8 percent).
- In 2006, male and female Gulf War-era II veterans had similar educational attainment characteristics.

6. A smaller proportion of female Gulf War-era II veterans are employed compared with female nonveterans

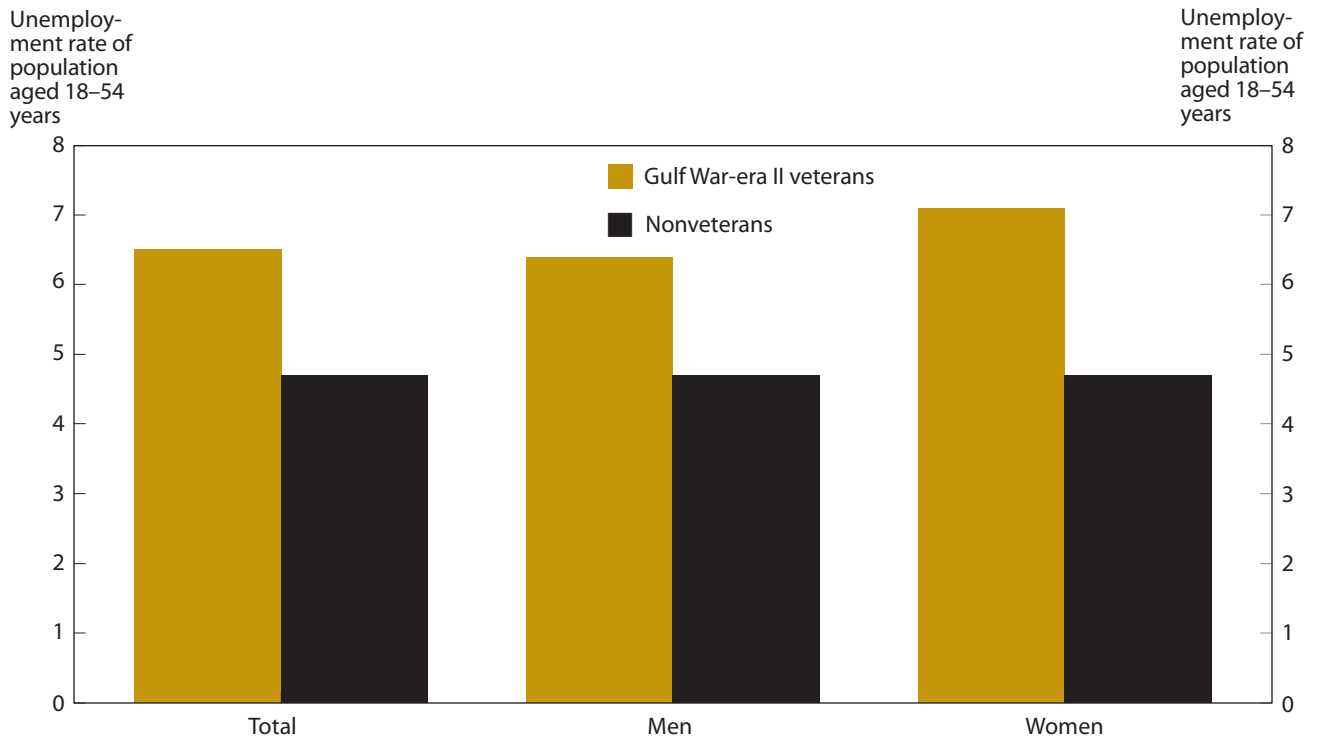


NOTE: Gulf War-era II veterans had served anywhere on active duty since September 2001.

SOURCE: Current Population Survey (CPS), 2006 annual averages.

- In 2006, the proportion of female Gulf War-era II veterans who were employed (65.6 percent) was smaller than the proportion of female nonveterans who were employed (70.2 percent).
- In 2006, there was little difference between the percentage of male Gulf War-era II veterans who were employed (84.6 percent) and the percentage of male nonveterans who were employed (83.2 percent).
- The percentage of all Gulf War-era II veterans who were employed in 2006 (81.2 percent) is influenced by the high proportion of Gulf War-era II veterans who are men. The percentage of nonveterans who are employed in 2006 (76.4 percent) consists of a more even mix of men and women.

7. The unemployment rate of Gulf War-era II veterans is higher than that of nonveterans

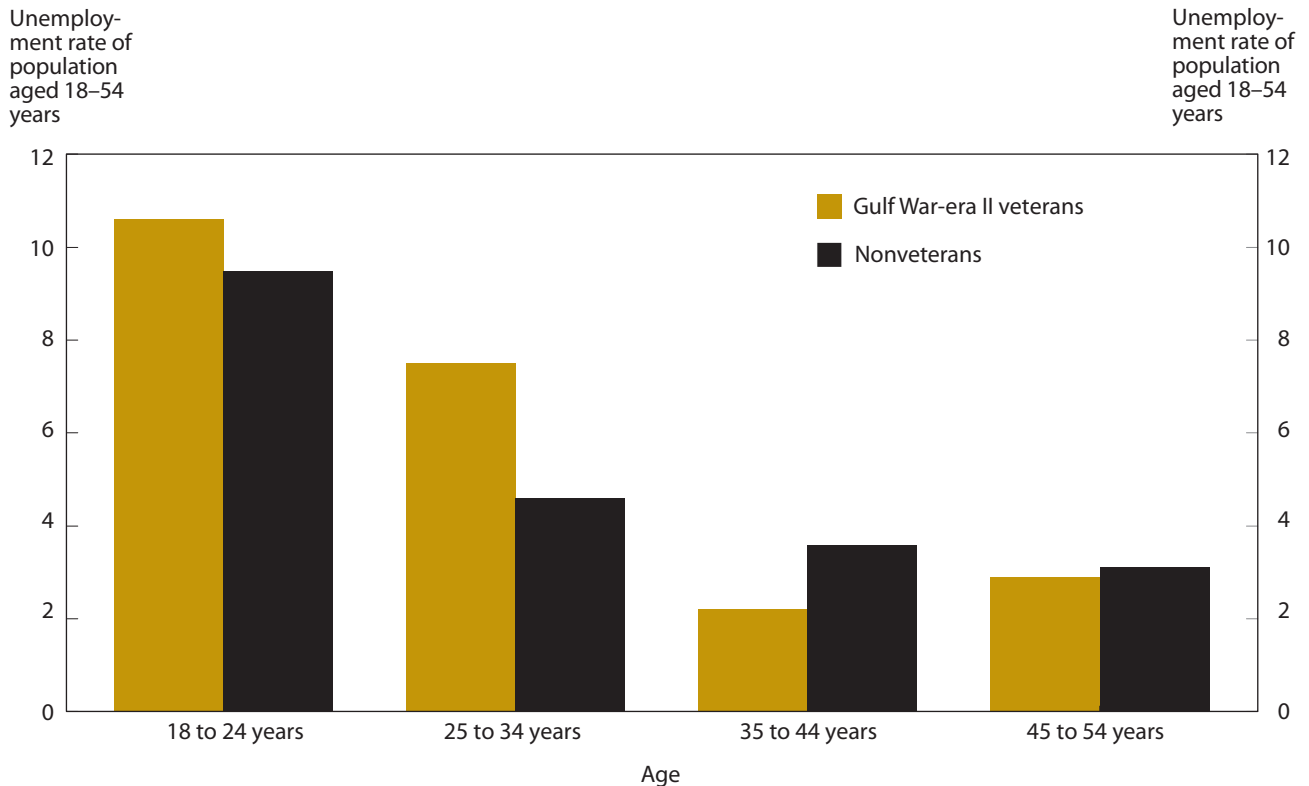


NOTE: Gulf War-era II veterans had served anywhere on active duty since September 2001.

SOURCE: Current Population Survey (CPS), 2006 annual averages.

- Gulf War-era II veterans aged 18 to 54 years had a higher unemployment rate (6.5 percent) than did nonveterans (4.7 percent) in 2006. The unemployment rate represents the number unemployed as a percentage of the labor force (the sum of the number employed and the number unemployed).
- Male Gulf War-era II veterans aged 18 to 54 years had a higher unemployment rate (6.4 percent) than male nonveterans (4.7 percent) in 2006. Likewise, female Gulf War-era II veterans aged 18 to 54 years had a higher unemployment rate (7.1 percent) than female nonveterans in the same age group (4.7 percent).
- The unemployment rate of 18-to-54-year-old male Gulf War-era II veterans (6.4 percent) is not statistically different from that of female Gulf War-era II veterans in the same age group (7.1 percent).

8. Gulf War-era II veterans aged 25 to 34 years have a higher unemployment rate than nonveterans

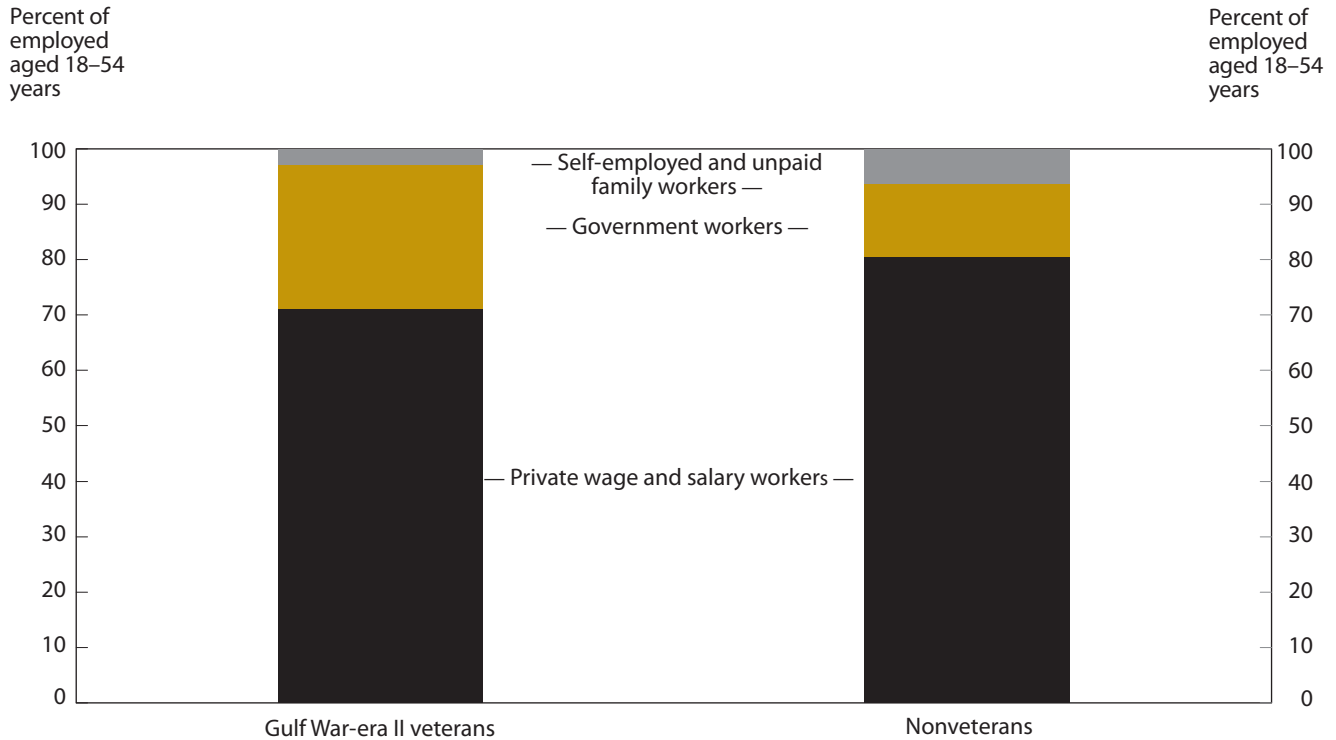


NOTE: Gulf War-era II veterans had served anywhere on active duty since September 2001.

SOURCE: Current Population Survey (CPS), 2006 annual averages.

- At 7.5 percent in 2006, the unemployment rate of Gulf War-era II veterans aged 25 to 34 years was higher than the 2006 unemployment rate of nonveterans in the same age group (4.6 percent).
- The unemployment rate of Gulf War-era II veterans aged 18 to 24 years was about the same (10.6 percent) as that of their nonveteran peers (9.5 percent) in 2006. (The difference was not statistically significant.)
- Gulf War-era II veterans aged 35 to 44 years and 45 to 54 years had unemployment rates that were not significantly different from those of nonveterans in the corresponding age groups (2.2 percent compared with 3.6 percent, and 2.9 percent compared with 3.1 percent, respectively).

9. Gulf War-era II veterans are twice as likely to be government workers than are nonveterans

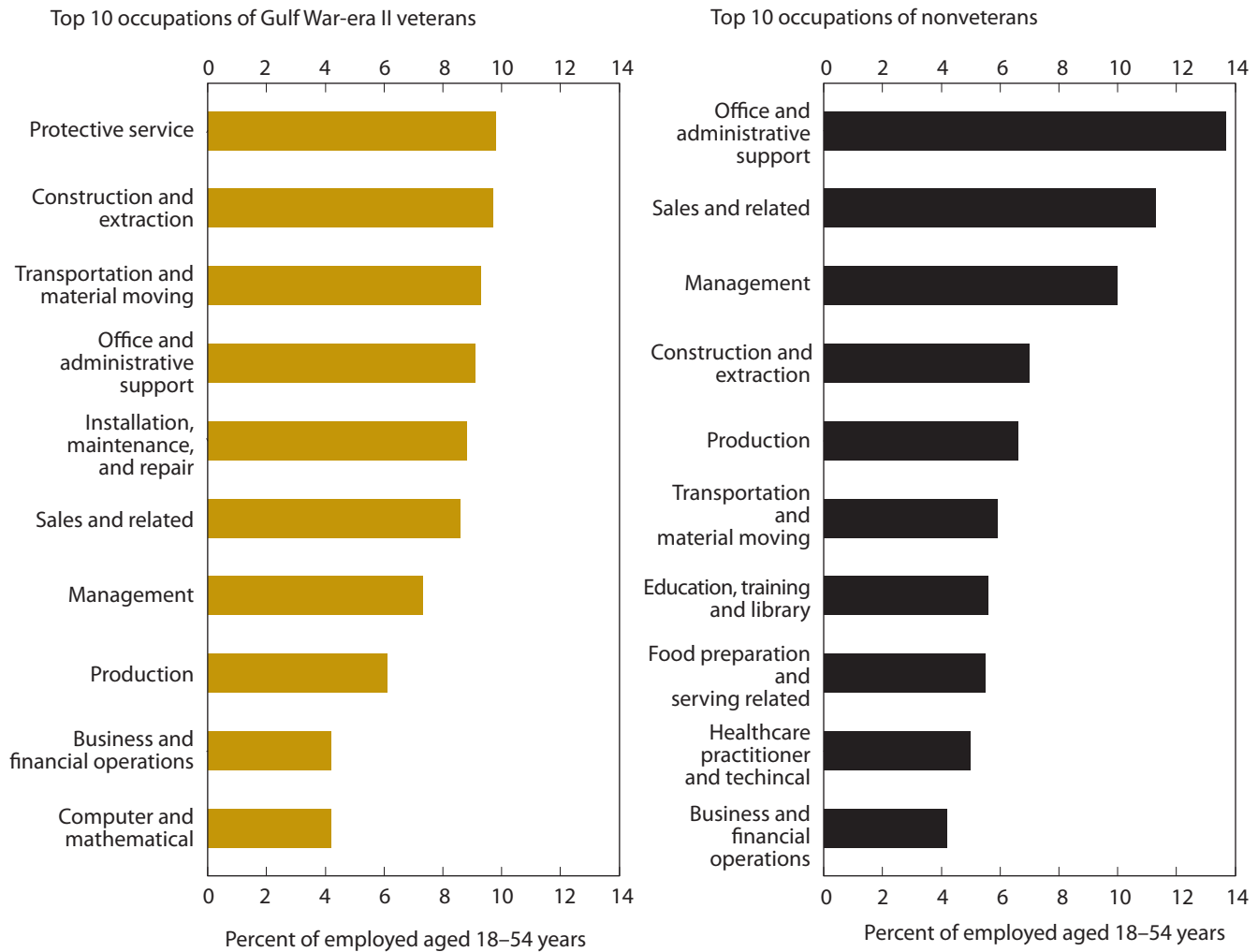


NOTE: Gulf War-era II veterans had served anywhere on active duty since September 2001.

SOURCE: Current Population Survey (CPS), 2006 annual averages.

- Gulf War-era II veterans were twice as likely to be government workers than were nonveterans of comparable ages (18 to 54 years). Among employed veterans, 26 percent worked in the public sector at the Federal, State, or local level in 2006, compared with 13 percent of nonveterans.
- Three percent of Gulf War-era II veterans aged 18 to 54 years were self-employed in 2006, compared with 6 percent of nonveterans in the same age group.
- Both male and female Gulf War-era II veterans had similar distributions by category of worker. However, among nonveterans, employed women were more likely than men to work for the government.

10. Gulf War-era II veterans are more likely to be employed in protective service occupations than are nonveterans



NOTE: Gulf War-era II veterans had served anywhere on active duty since September 2001.

SOURCE: Current Population Survey (CPS), 2006 annual averages.

- Gulf War-era II veterans aged 18 to 54 years were more likely to be employed in protective service occupations (9.8 percent) than were nonveterans (1.8 percent) in 2006. Protective service occupations include police and sheriff’s patrol officers; security guards and gaming surveillance officers; and bailiffs, correctional officers, and jailers. Most Gulf War-era II veterans working in protective service occupations were men.
- In 2006, men made up most of the veterans employed in each of the top 10 occupations of Gulf War-era II veterans. However, women made up about a quarter of the Gulf War-era II veterans working in office and administrative support occupations. In contrast, less than 1 percent of Gulf War-era II veterans employed in construction and extraction occupations in 2006 were women.

Notes

¹The designation “Gulf War era II” was developed in consultation with the Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Department of Labor’s Veterans’ Employment and Training Service.

²CPS data are available on the Internet at www.bls.gov/cps.