WOMEN IN THE MILITARY
From Service to Civilian Life

This infographic provides key highlights on women in the military. The information and statistics in this document is from our various data collection efforts centered on military life, transition, employment, entrepreneurship, and higher education.

**Women Service Member Population**

**Active Duty, Guard, and Reserve**

- **361,000+** Active Duty and Selected Reserve members to date (which represents around 17% of the total military force)

**TOTAL MILITARY FORCE**

- **Active Duty 204,628** (16% of DoD Active Duty force)
- **Selected Reserves 158,173** (19% of the Selected Reserve force)

**Veterans**

- **2 MILLION+ FEMALE VETERANS** to date (which represents around 10% of the veteran population)

**Female Post-9/11 Veterans**

- **FASTEST GROWING POPULATION** (which represents 17% of the Post-9/11 veterans population)

**Military Service for Women**

**TOP MOTIVATIONS FOR MILITARY SERVICE**

- **EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS** 62%
- **OPPORTUNITY TO PURSUE NEW EXPERIENCES, ADVENTURES, OR TRAVEL** 58%
- **DESIRE TO SERVE MY COUNTRY** 52%
- **SENSE OF PURPOSE** 39%
- **CAREER OPPORTUNITIES** 33%

**TOP SKILLS & ATTRIBUTES STRENGTHENED BY MILITARY SERVICE**

- Work ethic and discipline (85%)
- Teamwork (84%)
- Adaptation to different challenges (81%)
- Mental toughness (79%)
- Leadership and management skills (77%)
- Professionalism (74%)
- Ability to get things done (74%)
- Perseverance (74%)
- Training & teaching others (72%)*
- Self-Discipline (72%)
- Coping with adversity (72%)*

**WAS MILITARY SERVICE WORTH IT?**

- **88%** of female service members reported that JOINING THE MILITARY WAS A GOOD DECISION

- **73%** SERVED OUTSIDE OF THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES operating across different cultures, nations, and regions

- **STEM**

- **40%** reported that their military specialization is STEM RELATED

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* indicates significantly higher for female service members compared to male service members
Transition for Women Veterans

**TOP REASONS FOR LEAVING ARMED SERVICES**

- **41%** Family Reasons
- **36%** Lost faith or trust in military or political leadership
- **29%** Pursue education and training opportunities
- **26%** Concerns and grievances about service experiences
- **26%** Completion of military service obligation (less than 20 years)

**TOP TRANSITIONAL CHALLENGES**

- **59%** Navigating VA programs, benefits, and services
- **55%** Finding a job
- **47%** Financial struggles*
- **41%** Depression*
- **38%** Getting socialized to civilian culture
- **37%** Skills translation
- **33%** Contradictory information from different sources*
- **32%** Disability
- **31%** Understanding GI Bill benefits
- **30%** Employment preparation

**MILITARY INFLUENCE ON POST-SERVICE ASPIRATIONS**

Post Military Career

- **INDICATED THE DESIRE TO PURSUE A CAREER DIFFERENT FROM THEIR MILITARY SPECIALTY (MOS, AFSC, ETC.) 66%**
- **REPORTED THAT MILITARY SERVICE PREPARED THEM FOR THEIR CIVILIAN CAREER 52%**
- **INDICATED THE DESIRE TO PURSUE A CAREER SIMILAR TO THEIR MILITARY SPECIALTY 33%**
- **INDICATE THEY ARE UNSURE IF THEY WILL PURSUE A CAREER SIMILAR TO THEIR MILITARY SPECIALTY 15%**

**EXPERIENCES OF SERVICE AND POST-SERVICE LIFE DIFFER GREATLY BY SERVICE MEMBER GENDER**

Female veterans are similar to male veterans in their responses regarding the positive impacts of service

- **93% Females** Service had a positive impact on their life
- **96% Females** Felt pride from their accomplishments during service
- **97% Females** Matured as a result of their service

Results indicate that transition & post-service life are more challenging for female veteran respondents (particularly in regards to finances)

- **67% Female Veterans** characterized their financial transition as difficult or very difficult, compared with 47% of male veterans
- **37% Female Veterans** selected “loss of income” as a key transition challenge, compared with 23% of male veterans

Female veterans took about **3 MONTHS LONGER** than males to find employment after transition*

* indicates significantly higher for female service members compared to male service members
Employment for Women Veterans

UNEMPLOYMENT

IN 2017 FEMALE VETERAN UNEMPLOYMENT IN 2017 WAS AT 4.1%

THIS IS HIGHER THAN MALE VETERAN UNEMPLOYMENT WHICH WAS AT 3.6%

IN 2017 FEMALE POST-9/11 VETERAN UNEMPLOYMENT WAS AT 5.5%

THIS IS HIGHER THAN POST-9/11 MALE VETERAN UNEMPLOYMENT WHICH WAS AT 4.3%

EARNINGS

$52,111 AVERAGE EARNINGS FEMALE VETERANS

HIGHER compared to nonveteran female counterparts who earn about $40,861

LOWER compared to male veteran counterparts who earn about $71,289

WOMEN VETERANS IN STEM WORKFORCE

FEMALE VETERANS ARE NEARLY 2X MORE LIKELY TO BE IN A STEM OCCUPATION THAN FEMALE NONVETERANS

$77,924 AVERAGE EARNINGS FOR FEMALE VETERANS IN STEM

TOP 3 OCCUPATIONS

1. Computer & Mathematical
2. Computer Science & Information Technology
3. Engineering

TOP 3 INDUSTRIES

1. Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services
2. Public Administration
3. Manufacturing

TOP FIVE OCCUPATIONS FOR WOMEN VETERANS

1. Office and Administrative Support Occupations
2. Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations
3. Management Occupations
4. Sales and Related Occupations
5. Education, Training, and Library Occupations

TOP FIVE INDUSTRIES FOR WOMEN VETERANS

1. Health Care and Social Assistance
2. Public Administration
3. Educational Services
4. Retail Trade
5. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

Entrepreneurship for Women Veterans

ABOUT 15% of veteran owned businesses are owned by women

REASONS FOR PURSUING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

DISSATISFACTION WITH THE CIVILIAN WORKFORCE

CREATIVITY & FLEXIBILITY

FINANCIAL & INDEPENDENCE

RECOGNIZE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

FAMILY & WORK LIFE BALANCE

OBSTACLES 83% FEMALE VETERANS EXPERIENCE AT LEAST ONE OBSTACLE/BARRIER TO STARTING AND OWNING THEIR BUSINESS

"If I was a white male, it would be easier."

“ It's hard starting a not-for-profit, especially without assistance or support."

RESOURCES WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS FIND MOST HELPFUL:

- Information on/from Conferences and Workshops
- Education
- Peer Mentorship
- Networking/Peer Network
- Work/Life Balance
Higher Education for Women Veterans

**EDUCATION ATTAINMENT**

Women service members as a group achieved:

- **Bachelor’s Degree or Higher**: 41%
- **Some College or Associate Degree**: 40%
- **High School Degree**: 18%
- **Less than High School**: 2%

**BARRIERS THAT HINDERED PURSUIT OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

- Lack of financial resources/ Financial burden (57%)
- Health/disability issues (28%)
- Personal/family obligations (28%)
- GI Bill benefits expire before I complete my degree (26%)
- Conflict between job and school (20%)
- Inflexibility in class schedules (16%)
- Bureaucracy associated with VA paperwork & processing (15%)
- Lack of confidence (15%)

**CHALLENGES WHILE PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION**

- Age differences (39%)
- Lack of financial resources (33%)
- Working full time job (31%)
- Few veterans resources on campus (28%)
- Family responsibilities (27%)
- Transferring academic credits (24%)

**HELPFUL RESOURCES AND ASSETS FOR VETERAN SUCCESS**

- Military/veteran friendly campus (64%)
- Flexible class schedules (61%)
- Academic advising/counseling (60%)
- Preferred classroom settings & instruction (55%)
- Dedicated veterans office & administrators on campus (55%)
- Veterans supportive faculty (53%)

**REFERENCES**

- Women Service Member Population


- Military Service for Women

- Transition for Women Veterans


**SUGGESTED CITATION**