

Understanding Gender Differences in Military Populations: A Behavioral Health Perspective



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GOALS FOR THIS SESSION:



Examine the effects of military service on women's lives and discuss the scope of behavioral health needs and services delivery issues affecting women, focusing on these major areas:

- Realities of military service
- Gender disparity and discrimination and their impact on women veterans
- Racial and ethnic disparities and their impact on women veterans of color
- Selected behavioral health issues of women, including depression and PTSD and trauma, eating disorders, chemical dependence, and military sexual trauma.
- Women's health services needs and delivery

Why are we having this conversation?

Female service members are helping to change the face of the military as they join the service at higher rates than at any other time in our nation's history. Approximately 850,730 or 16.533 percent are women. About 11.5 percent of those who serving in the Middle East are women.

Of the 23 million veterans in this country, over 1.8 million are women and almost a half million are enrolled in VA care. This number is expected to grow by 30 percent in the next five years.



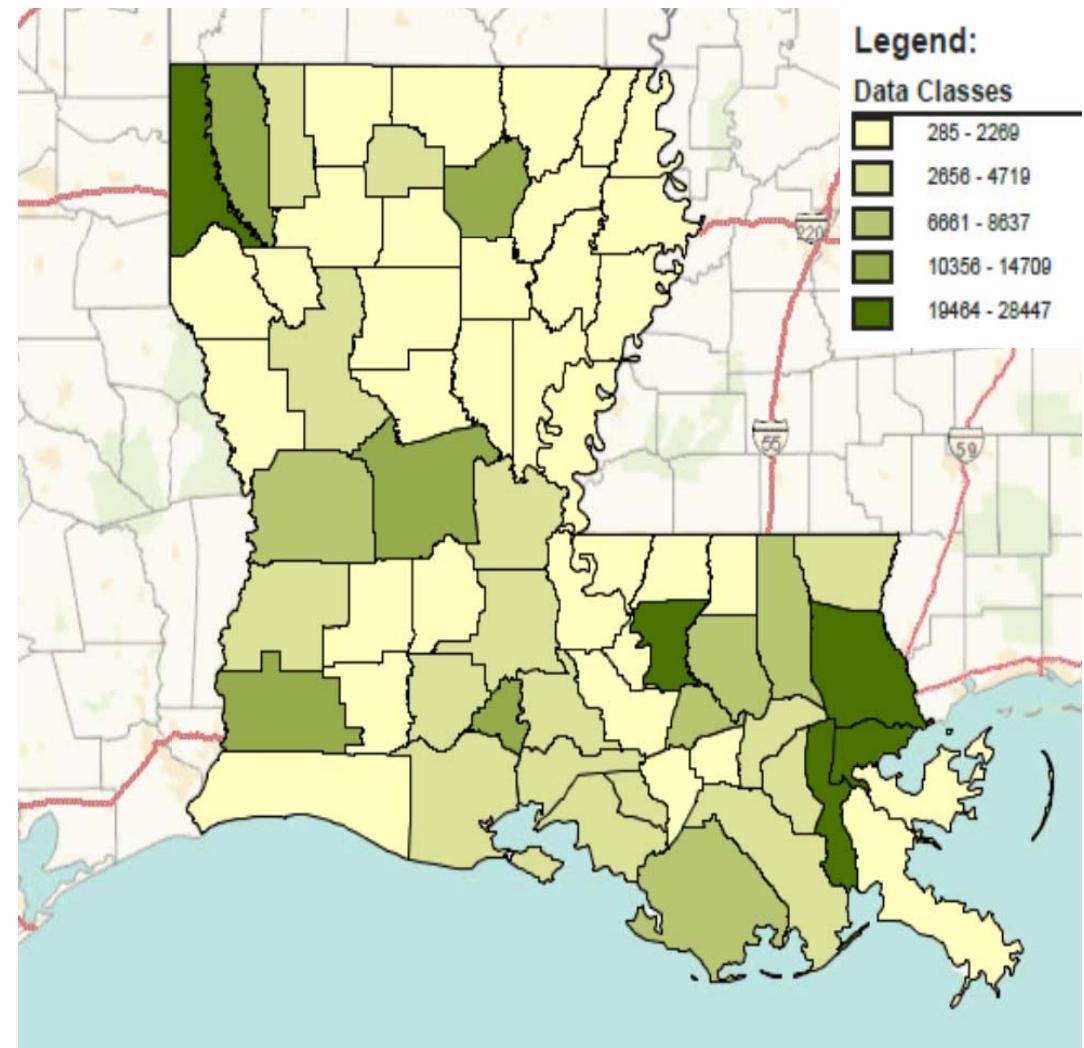
Louisiana Veteran Population by Persons, by Parish

Louisiana is home to 312,087 veterans

(9.2% +/-0.1 of the population)

7.7-11 % of these veterans are female

Additionally there are at least 5900 service women are living within the state of Louisiana.



Brief History of Women in the US Armed Forces

- Women have answered the call to duty in every conflict in U.S. history, beginning with the American Revolution and the Civil War.
- 1901- the military realized the need for nurses and the (ANC) Army Nurse Corps was established followed by the (NNC) Navy Nurse Corps in 1908. Prior to the ANC and NNC women served as contract and volunteer nurses.
- NAVY – 1st to involve women in jobs other than medical due to clerical shortages. By the beginning of WWII, women were filling the roles of stenographers, typists, clerks, draftsmen, postal clerks, intelligence analysts, stock record clerks, cryptographers, translators, telephone and teletype operators, photographers, mail censors ,interpreters, supply officers, personnel officers.
- Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 gave women permanent status in the military but imposed a 2% ceiling on the number of women in the military, restricted promotions, limited the number of women who could serve in command positions to 10%. Women could not attain any rank above lieutenant colonel in the WAC or above commander in the Navy. Women could be discharged without cause and could not fly aircraft or be assigned to ships engaged in combat.
- In 1967 President Lyndon B. Johnson removed legal ceilings on women's promotions.
- 1976 –President Ford signed Law establishing the admission of women into the academies
- In 1988, the Department of Defense adopted a “risk rule” that excluded women from noncombat units or missions if the risks of exposure to direct combat, hostile fire, or capture were equal to or greater than the risks in the combat units they supported.
- In 2013, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta lifted the ban on women in combat, allowing them to officially serve on the front lines for the first time in the history of the U.S. Armed Forces.

The Combat Masculine Warrior Complex

As an institution comprised primarily of men, military culture is shaped by men. Soldiering is historically viewed as a masculine role—the profession of war, defense, and combat is defined by society as men's work. Thus, a deeply entrenched "cult of masculinity" (with accompanying masculine norms, values, and lifestyles) permeates military culture.

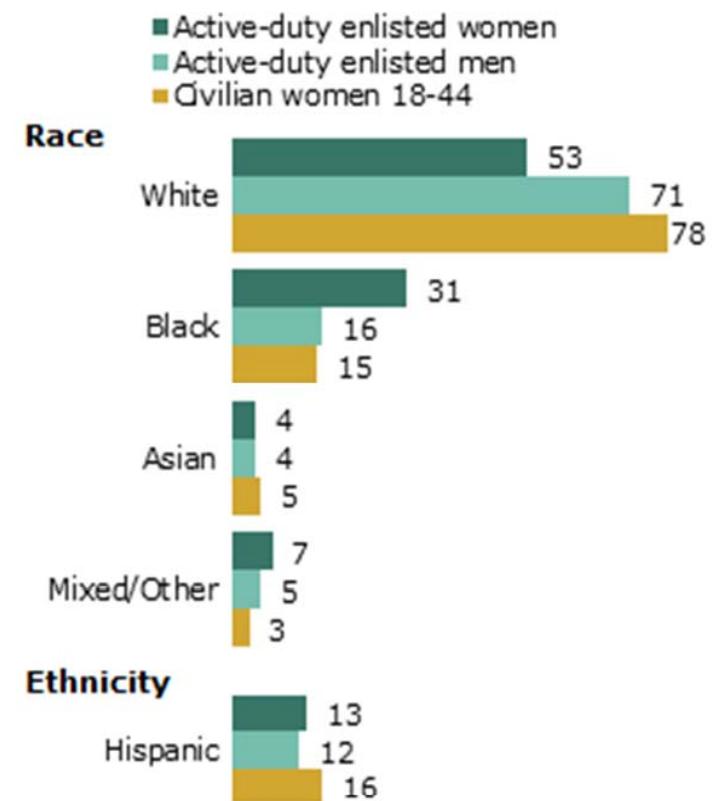


There are a few key demographic differences between women and men in the military.

- More than three-in-ten (31%) military women are black (including black Hispanics). This is almost twice the share of active-duty men who are black (16%), as well as more than twice the proportion of civilian women ages 18-44 who are black (15%). In addition, more women in the active-duty force than men in the active-duty force and civilian women ages 18-44 are of mixed racial background or some other race.
- The share of Hispanics among women and men in the armed forces is similar (13% vs. 12%, respectively), and the share of military women who are Hispanic is smaller than that of Hispanic women ages 18-44 in the U.S. civilian population (16%). But the number of Hispanics enlisting in the active-duty force each year has risen significantly over the last decade. In 2003, Hispanic women and men made up 11.5% of the new enlistees to the military; just seven years later, in 2010, they made up 16.9% of non-prior service enlisted accessions.

Minority Women in the Military

% who are ...



Notes: All racial groups represent their Hispanic and non-Hispanic components combined. Hispanics are any race. "Unknown" race not shown.

Source: Department of Defense Population Representation in the Military Forces, FY2010.

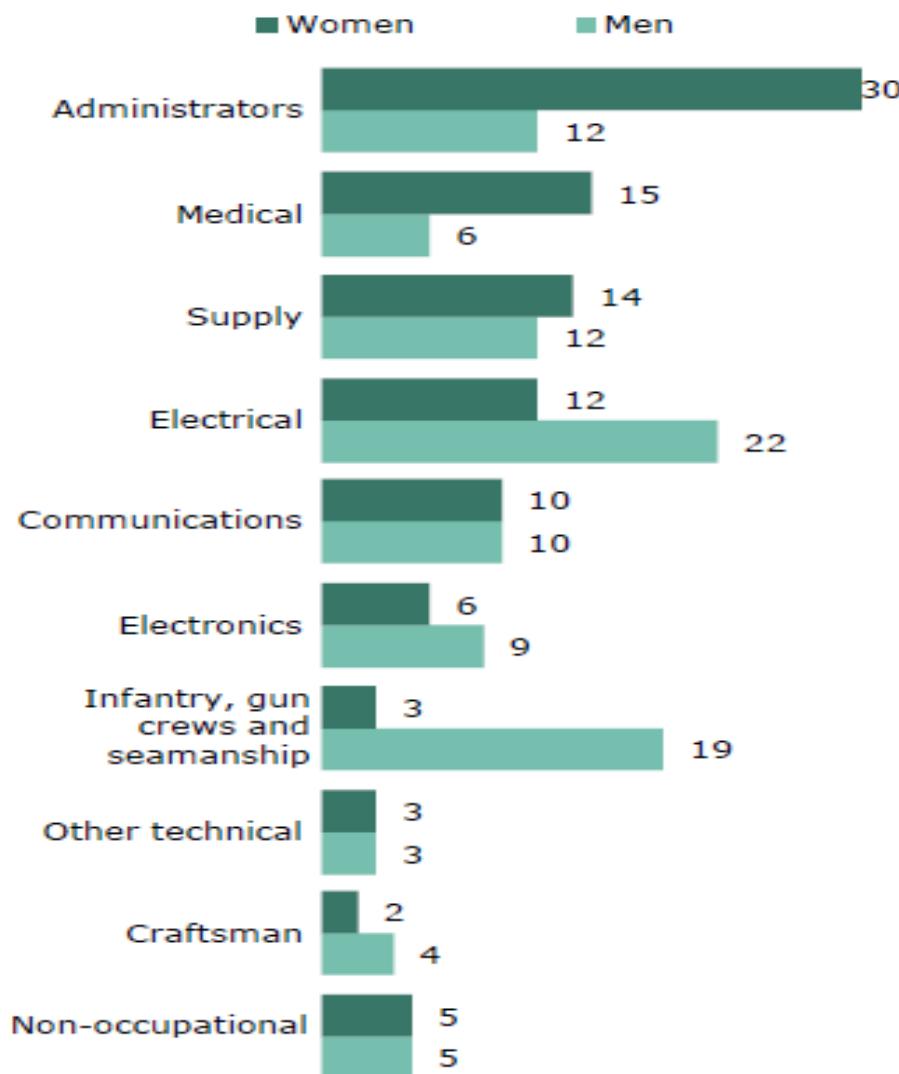
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The largest survey of racial attitudes ever conducted within the armed forces reported that 75 percent of all people of color in the military “report that they have experienced racially offensive behavior, and less than half expressed confidence that complaints of discrimination are thoroughly investigated.” Almost 20 percent of African Americans report being given “inferior assignments or evaluations because of racial bias.”

- Black enlisted women are more likely than other racial groups to be in functional support and administrative specialties, especially compared with whites. Black personnel are also more likely than whites to be in service or supply specialties and less likely than whites to be in electronic, electrical, or mechanical equipment repair, or combat specialties.
- Black women and men are underrepresented in the officer ranks compared with their share of enlisted personnel or the civilian labor force. They are less likely than white officers to have been commissioned through the military academies, and the average age of black officers is significantly lower than white officers.
- Black women officers are less likely than any other group to be promoted, and they are also more likely to leave the service earlier in the “up-or-out system”.

Occupational Roles in the Military

% of ... in each role



Note: Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Source: Department of Defense Population Representation in the Military Forces, FY2010.

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Combat Exclusive Billeting

Bureaucratic maneuvering allowed the military to access servicewomen's labor in combat situations without actually having to recognize them as combatants

Bans have not protected women in combat zones from enemy fire but denied them recognition of their service in combat.

Harassment and Sexism

More than one-third of all female military personnel reported high levels of stress as a woman in the military; women reported more stress than men due to problems with co-workers and supervisors; and 12 percent of all women in the military reported unwanted sexual contact since entering the military (17 percent in the Marine Corps).



- [REDACTED] Dam I miss the Navy
Like · Reply · 5 1 · 2 hrs
- [REDACTED] Damn girl she's hot
Like · Reply · 5 1 · 2 hrs
- [REDACTED] Women don't belong in the military.
Like · Reply · 5 1 · 2 hrs
- [REDACTED] Not sure what's heavier ...
Like · Reply · 5 1 · 2 hrs
- [REDACTED] Back in My days on board USS America ,CVA -66 , 1974 With VA-82 , we had no female sailors on Board , Period. How things have Changed.
Like · Reply · 5 1 · 2 hrs
- [REDACTED] S... Sorry Sir David B. Porter, I also was in VA-82 aboard America, 67/68. And no we had nothing like that on board.
Like · 1 hr
- Write a reply...
- [REDACTED] ohh GOD help me join
Like · Reply · 5 1 · 3 hrs
- [REDACTED] Funny how its a girl on the hose.
Like · Reply · 5 1 · 3 hrs
- [REDACTED] Grape I the background: Hey! Little help here!
PC: She asked me first.
Grape in the foreground:
It's my eyes that get them all the time.
Like · Reply · 5 1 · 3 hrs
- [REDACTED] they didnt look this good when i was there
Like · Reply · 5 1 · 3 hrs
- [REDACTED] shake it but dont brake it.....sizzling hot
Like · Reply · 5 1 · 3 hrs
- Write a comment...



American



Silhouette



Salute



TF2



ClipArt





News Media's Gender Narratives about female soldiers facilitate the social perceptions that women automatically fail as soldiers: either they are considered too weak to serve or are thought of as too disruptive to military discipline and morale.



[More images](#)

Lynndie England

Soldier

Lynndie Rana England is a former United States Army Reserve soldier who served in the 372nd Military Police Company. [Wikipedia](#)

Born: November 8, 1982 (age 31), [Ashland, KY](#)

Spouse: [James Fike](#) (m. 2002–2003)

Education: [Frankfort High School](#)

Children: [Carter Allan England](#)

Parents: [Kenneth R. England Jr.](#), [Terrie Bowling England](#)

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Jessica Lynch

Jessica Dawn Lynch is a former United States Army soldier who served in the 2003 invasion of Iraq by U.S. and allied forces. [Wikipedia](#)

Born: April 26, 1983 (age 31), [Palestine, WV](#)

Nationality: American

Awards: The US Glamour Award for Woman of the Year

Siblings: [Greg](#)

Children: [Dakota Ann](#)

Parents: [Gregory Lynch](#), [Deidre Lynch](#)

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“Men are soldiers, but women are female soldiers”



While the military may be legally inclusive of women,
women have yet to reach social and cultural integration

NON-GENDER SPECIFIC FACTORS



- a. Physical Performance
- b. Alcohol Availability
- c. Living Arrangements
- d. Types of Service and Deployments
- e. Prescription practices
- f. Post deployment assessments
- g. Policies regarding drug testing
- h. Military to Civilian Transition

system

WAR IS TRAUMA.



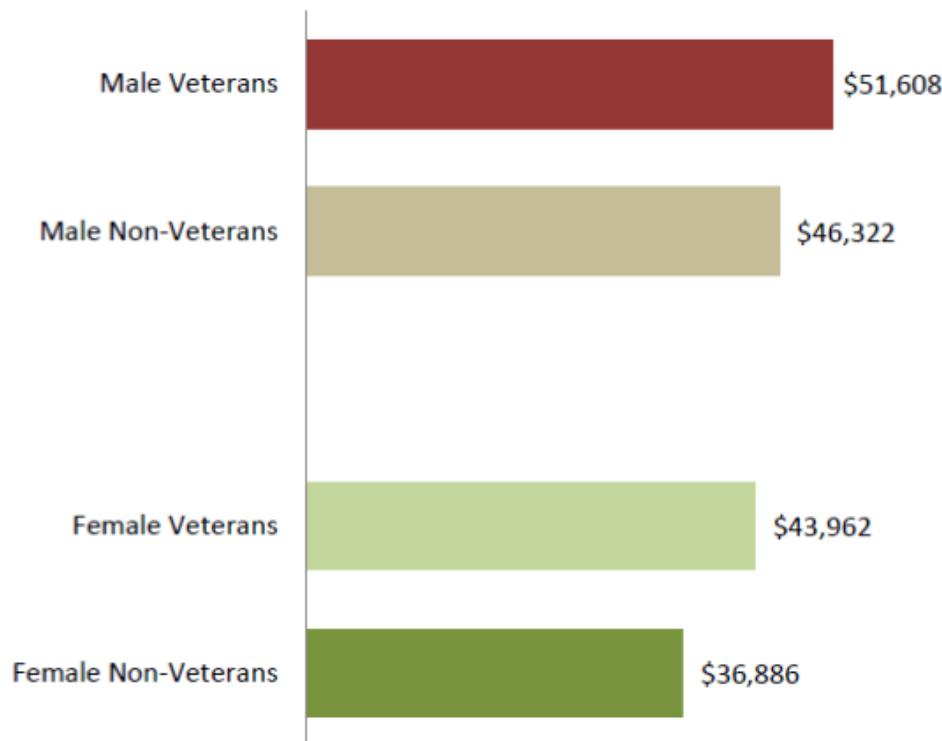
Military members are at high risk for exposure to traumatic events, especially during times of war.

Future studies are needed to better understand the effects of women's exposure to combat.

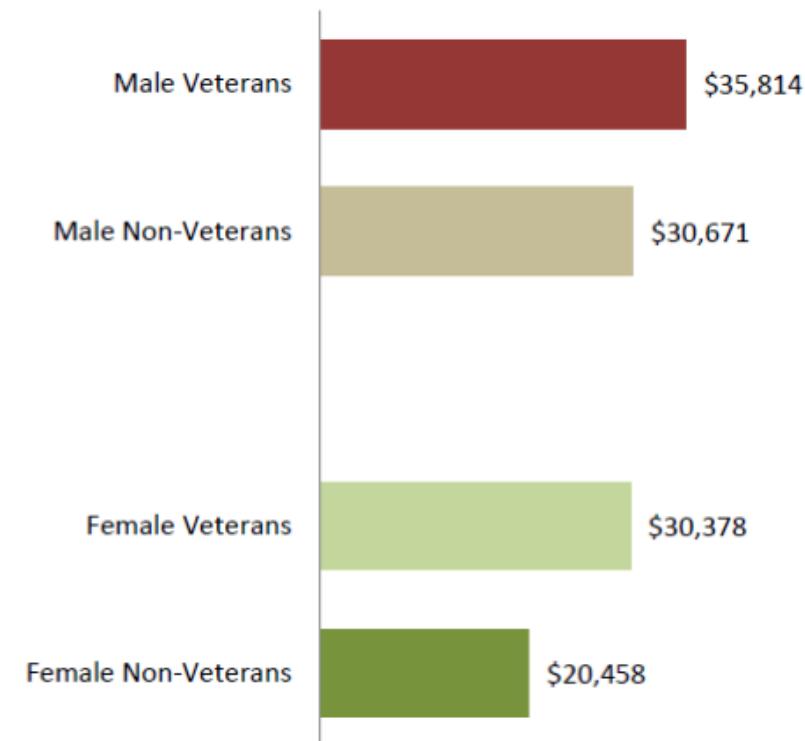
Overall women veterans are less likely than non veteran women to live in poverty. (10% vs 16%) However, women veterans are more likely than their male counterparts to be unemployed and live in poverty

36% of women veterans age 18-24 nation-wide are unemployed; significantly more likely to be unemployed than male veterans and non-veteran women within the same age range

Median Earnings of Year-Round Full-Time Workers by Sex and Veteran Status



Median Personal Income by Sex and Veteran Status



"Earnings" refer to salary, wages, and self employment income.

"Year-round full-time(YRFT) refers to employment of 50 or more weeks per year and 35 or more hours per week. Median earnings are calculated for the YRFT employed population with earnings greater than zero.

"Income" refers to the total of earnings and other sources of income such as pension, Supplement Security Income, public assistance, etc. Median Income is calculated for the total population with personal income greater than zero.

Both male and female Veterans who work year-round and full time have higher median earnings than non-Veterans. Veterans of both sexes also had higher personal incomes than non-Veterans.

A photograph of a woman, likely a veteran, sleeping on a wooden bench outdoors. She is wrapped in a large American flag patterned blanket. To her left is a red shopping cart filled with various items, including bags and containers. The background shows a dark, possibly wooded area.

Women veterans are two to four times more likely to become homeless, compared to non-veteran women

33% of homeless women veterans have a minor child living with them, compared to 8% of homeless male veterans

DRUG USE

- The percentage of both men and women reporting prescription drug misuse in all military services combined (11.5 percent) was more than twice that of the civilian population in the age group 18-64 (4.4 percent).
- Prescription drug abuse among women on active duty (13.1 percent) was more than four times the rate for civilian women (3.2 percent)
- Women in the military were shown to have a higher rate of past-month use compared to males.

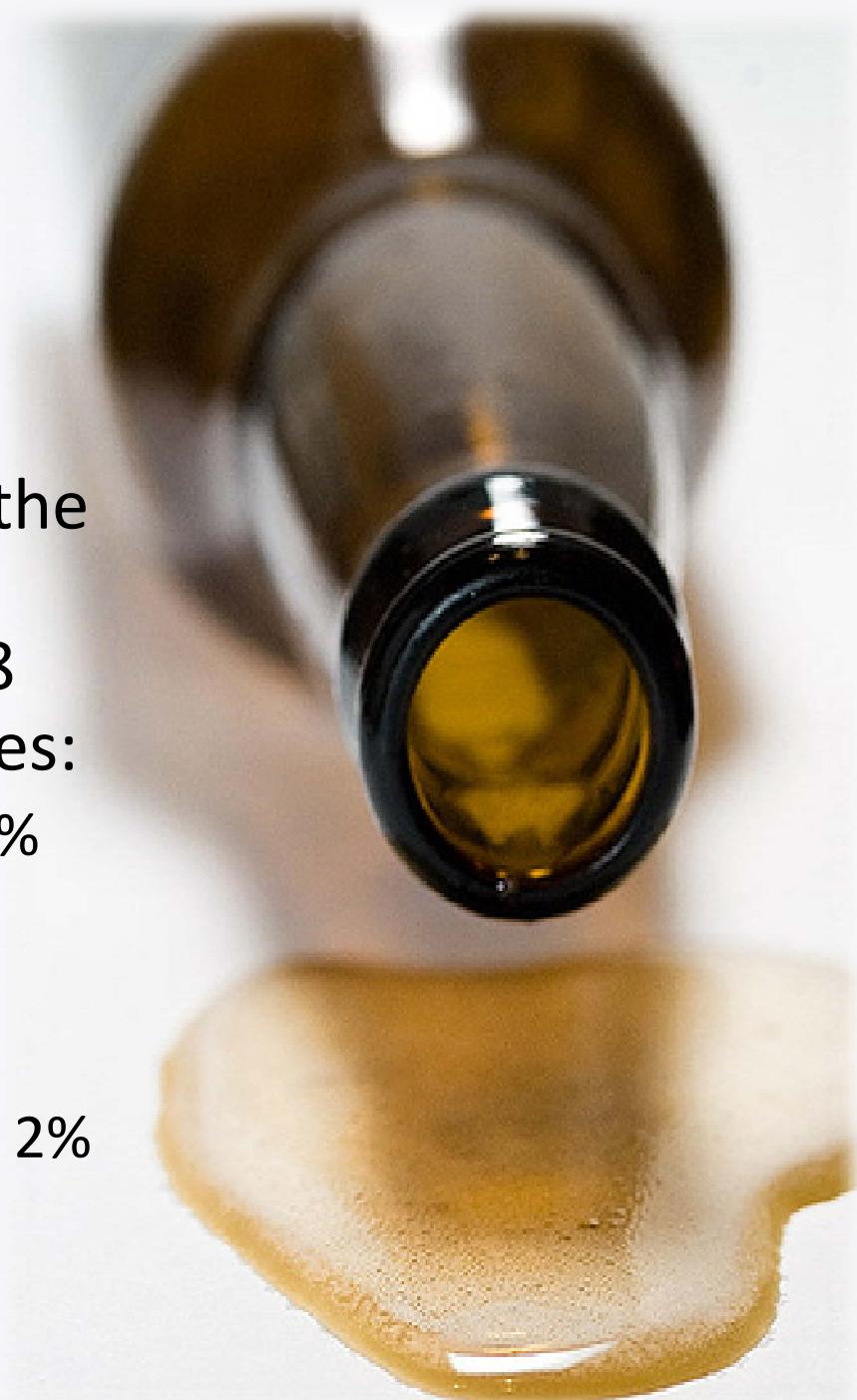
Some major gender differences regarding drug use within the services:

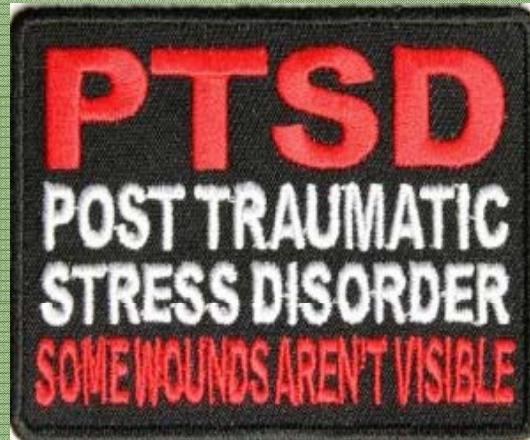
Except in the Marine Corps, women in the military tend to be more likely than their male counterparts to use illicit drugs.

Army women are more than twice as likely as men in the Air Force, Coast Guard, and Navy to have used any illicit drug, including prescription drugs used non-medically, in the past month.

Alcohol Use

- The NHSDA (National Household Survey on Drug Abuse), reported the following alcohol use among the nearly 30 million veterans aged 18 and older living in the United States:
 - ALCOHOL USE: Female Veterans 41% vs. Males Veterans 56%
 - BINGE DRINKING: Female Veterans 14% vs. Male Veterans 23%
 - HEAVY DRINKING: Female Veterans 2% vs. Male Veterans 7%





- Women in military populations are more than twice as likely to develop PTSD than male counterparts (10% for women and 4% for men).
- Among women veterans of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, almost 20% have been diagnosed with PTSD. We also know that 27% of women Vietnam Veterans suffered from PTSD sometime during their postwar lives. Of men who served in Vietnam, the lifetime rate of PTSD was 31%.



Military Sexual Trauma

The Department of Defense defines Military Sexual Trauma (MST) as rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment. Even by conservative standards, MST can be considered an epidemic.

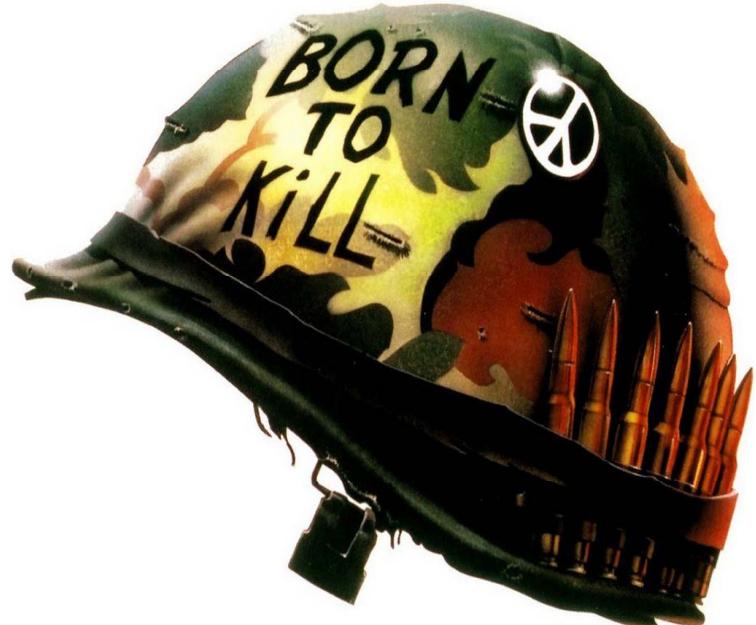
DoD FY 2013 Total number of sexual assault reports: **5,061** reports, an increase of nearly 50% over FY 2012 numbers (3,374 total reports).

However, the Pentagon estimates that 85 percent of sexual assault crimes go unreported. In 2012, surveyed Active Duty Members of the military anonymously revealed 26,000 instances of unwanted sexual contact. This included coerced and abusive sexual contact, aggravated sexual assault and rape -- all prohibited by military law.

Women make up 16.5 percent of active-duty forces, but 47 percent of sexual assault victims.

17.9 % of all DOD enlistments between 2003-2006 were “ Morality Waivers” :

“All commanders are charged with the responsibility of recommending or approving waivers for applicants who, to the satisfaction of the commander concerned, have been rehabilitated; are good risks from a moral standpoint; and possess a documented, meritorious waiver request... commander or acting commander(on orders) will personally interview all applicants requiring a serious criminal misconduct waiver either in person or by telephone.”



- Out of 125,524 moral waivers, a total of 4,230 convicted felons were enlisted, including individuals found guilty of vehicular homicide, rape, statutory rape, unlawful sexual contact, aggravated assault, assault with dangerous weapon, assault, intentionally inflicting great bodily harm, assault with intent to commit felony. On top of this, 43,977 of these recruits had been found guilty of a serious misdemeanor, which included robbery, burglary, negligent homicide, assault/assault and battery.
- The DOD has **no** systematic tracking or monitoring of recruits with waivers once it signs them up.

Other Health Concerns...

- Women Veterans also had higher risks for depression than men, though lower substance use disorders.
- Suicide risk was reported as being lower among women Veterans, but the standardized mortality ratio among female Veterans is reportedly higher than that of male Veterans. Most studies focus on the differences among Veterans vs. non-Veterans more than women vs. men. For example, the suicide rate among all Veterans (male and female) is estimated to be 66 percent higher than that of the general population. Also, among suicide decedents, women Veterans were 1.6 times more likely to use firearms (compared to non-Veterans).
- women deployed with combat exposures were 1.78 times more likely to develop disordered eating and 2.35 times more likely to lose an extreme amount of weight when compared with women who deployed but did not report combat exposures.

*Any
Questions?
Comments?*



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