

Delaware's Veterans

prepared for

**Secretary of State
State of Delaware**

by

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INTRODUCTION

The nation's commitment to care for the elderly and the veterans is outlined in the recently passed Millennium Bill that provides for extended nursing home care for the most disabled veterans and coverage of emergency treatments at non-veteran facilities. This bill and also an initiative in the State of Delaware to better care for its veterans by building a veteran's home will have a significant impact on the quality of life of Delaware's veterans.

The purpose of this report is to investigate and illustrate the condition of and changes in Delaware's veteran population over the last decade. In addition, the state's veterans will be compared with the larger national veteran population. With this information, the reader will be better able to understand the challenges facing today's and tomorrow's veterans and to make informed decisions about the type of support that might prove most valuable.

The report is divided into four sections. Following this brief introduction, an overview of the number of veterans in the United States and the State of Delaware is provided. For Delaware, this will include the distribution of veterans by county and type of service. The next section contains a discussion of the demographic characteristics of veterans such as age structure, gender and race. The third section looks at risk factors that best describe the condition of today's veterans. The emphasis is placed on measuring the number of those with a significant number of risk factors. The final section addresses the likely number of veterans that will reside in the State of Delaware through the year 2020. These projections should better help to understand the longer term need for investments in support of this population.

THE VETERANS

Methodology

The primary source of information on the social and economic characteristics and the number of veterans is the Current Population Survey (CPS), conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Census. (While decennial census last conducted in 1990 addresses this group, the information is somewhat dated.)

The CPS is conducted monthly throughout the nation and its design allows for analysis of the demographic characteristics of the population. An extended version of the CPS survey, which contains even more detailed data is conducted in March. More than 64,000 households are included in the sample and data is collected on approximately 131,800 persons in those households. Each month, basic demographic and employment data is gathered along with optional information that changes from month to month. The March CPS is usually referred to as the annual demographic file, since it captures a broad array of demographic information. Part of the demographic information concerns veterans.

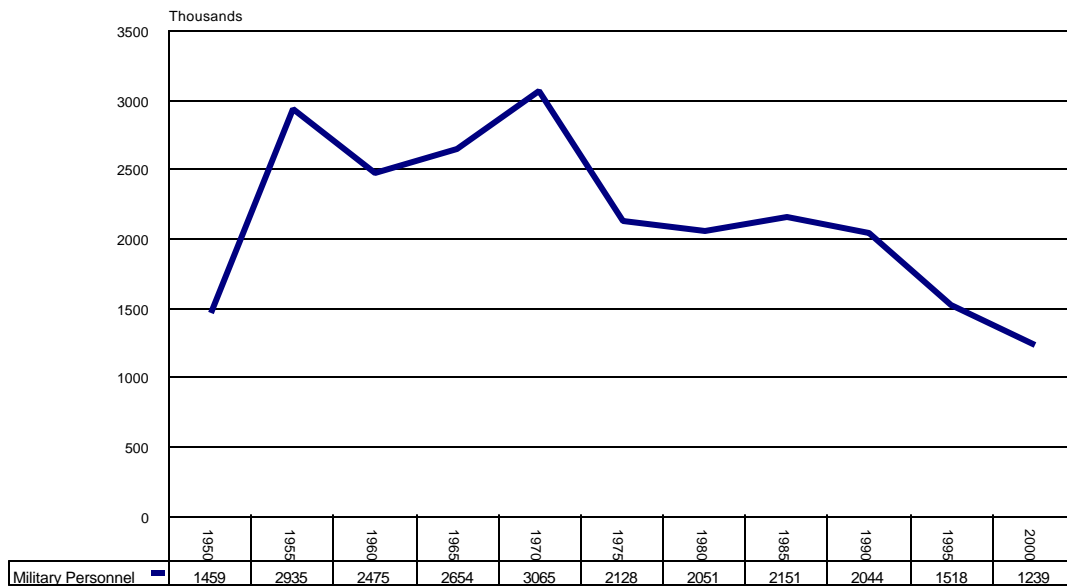
This data is made available to the research community for further analysis on magnetic media and over the Internet. Releases of this data set going back into the 1970's are maintained at the University of Delaware.

In Delaware, the CPS surveys about 700 households monthly, which usually accounts for more than 1,400 people. At this level the sample size is sufficient to produce statewide estimates on a variety of demographic indicators and with a little more risk even some county level estimates. Three year moving averages of various CPS demographic variables are reported here. This tends to remove some of the year-to-year fluctuations that are due to random variation associated with sample surveys. Overall, more than ten years of the CPS data were used in this analysis.

Military Personnel

Eligibility for most veteran benefits is based upon discharge from active military service under other than dishonorable conditions. Active service means full time service as a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, or as a commissioned officer of the Public Health Service, the Environmental Services Administration or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Also, service in 28 organizations during special periods has been certified as active military service. The trend in the Department of Defense manpower shown in Figure 1.1, is a good measure of the overall trend.

**Figure 1.1
Department of Defense Military Personnel
1950 – 2000**



**Source: Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services
Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research**

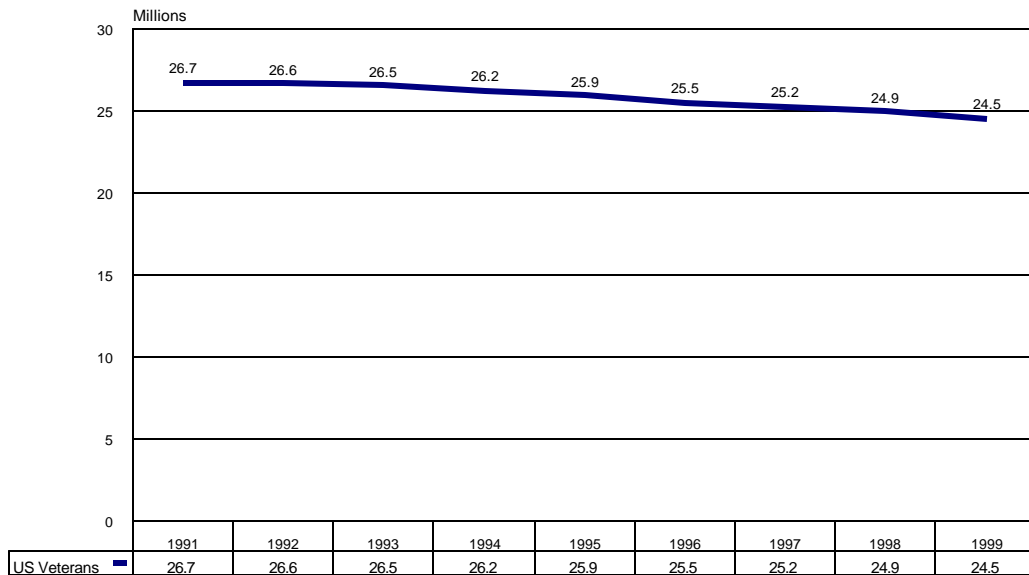
During the period from 1950 through 2000, the number of Department of Defense military personnel (including National Guard, Reserve, and retired regular personnel on extended or continuous active duty) has gone through dramatic changes. This can be seen in Figure 1.1, above. First the US involvement in the Korean conflict caused a significant increase. Similarly in the late sixties, during the Vietnam conflict, the number of active duty military personnel peaked. Since the end of the cold war at the end of the 1980s, an overall reduction in the number of Army

active duty personnel has occurred. In the year 2000, it is expected that a historic minimum in Department of Defense manpower will be reached.

US Veterans

Having less active duty military personnel has an impact on the number of discharges and therefore the number of new veterans. Also, the number of veterans is going to slowly decrease due to the aging of the veteran population. The estimates show that over the last decade the number of US veterans has decreased by 8%. Figure 1.2 below, shows the estimated number of US veterans in this decade.

**Figure 1.2
Number of US Veterans
1991 – 1999**

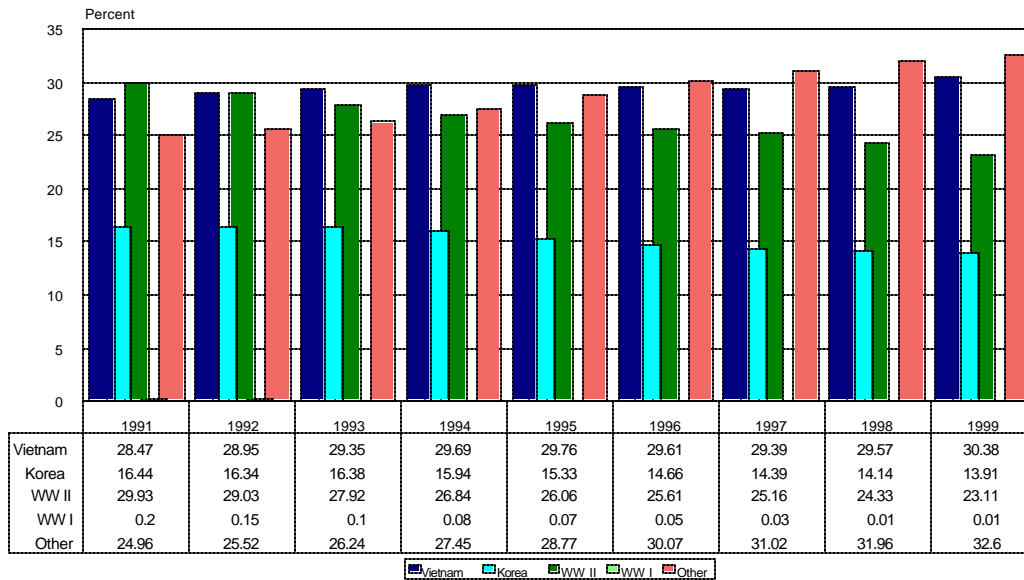


**Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999**

The downward sloping trend of the US veteran population will continue in the future. Looking at the US veterans by period of duty in Figure 1.3, the reasons are evident. The proportion of veterans who served in WWI, WWII and Korea is on a steady decline. Their total has decreased by 27% since 1991. The number of veterans who served during other conflicts (including new veterans) is increasing. Since 1991 their number has increased by 20%. As one

would expect, the population of US veterans who served during the Vietnam conflict is holding steady. The average age for this group is about 55, so that attrition from aging is as yet not significant. Those that have served since Vietnam reflect the smaller military but will continue to grow since their attrition is even slower.

Figure 1.3
Percentage of US Veterans
by Period of Duty 1991 – 1999



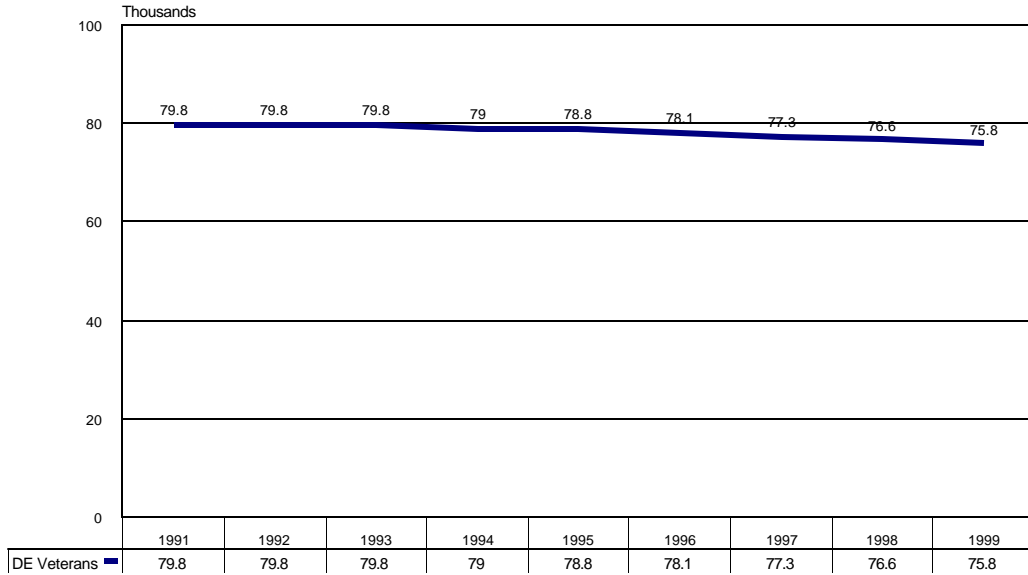
**Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
 US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999**

Delaware Veterans

As shown in Figure 1.4 below, the pattern in Delaware's veteran population is similar to the one presented for the United States. The number of Delawareans who are veterans is decreasing slowly but steadily. In 1999 the number of veterans in Delaware is estimated to be 75,771. This represents approximately 10.1% of the 1999 Delaware population. At the beginning of the decade, 11.8% of Delaware's residents were veterans totaling some 79,827.

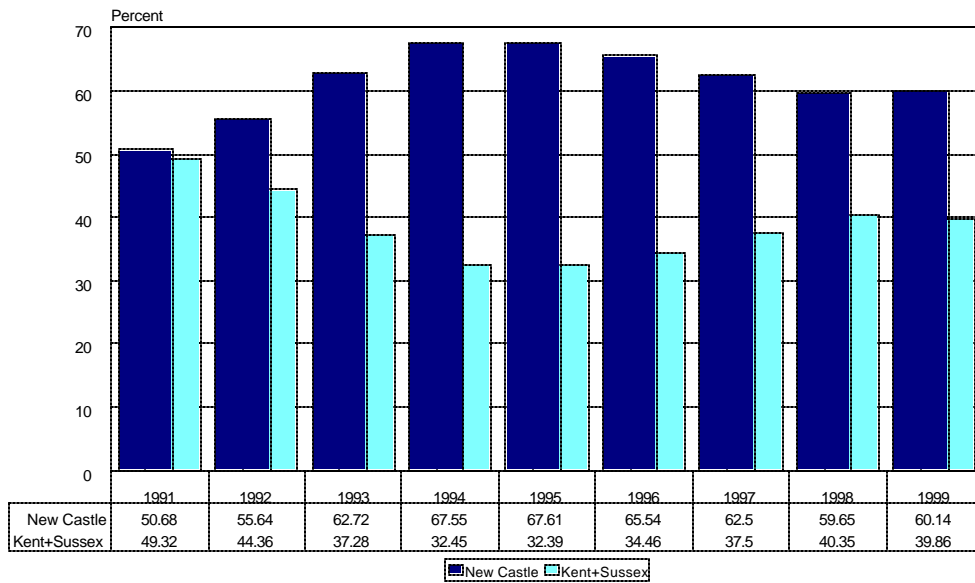
Since 1996 the CPS has provided data on the county as well as the state of residence on the survey database. Prior to 1996, the CPS did provide for a means to estimate the population of veterans in New Castle County, but only a combined estimate for Kent and Sussex counties was available. These estimates are found in Figure 1.5, below.

Figure 1.4
Number of Delaware Veterans
1991 – 1999



Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
 US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999

Figure 1.5
Percentage of Delaware Veterans
by County of Residence 1991 – 1999



Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
 US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999

From Figure 1.5 it is evident that 60% of the Delaware veteran population or about 45,000 now reside in New Castle County with 30,000 veterans in Kent and Sussex counties combined. This was not the case at the beginning of the decade when almost 50 % of all Delaware veterans lived in either Kent or Sussex counties. The reasons for the changes since 1990 are not at all apparent¹. Sussex County's population has been growing fastest, but those in-migrants tend to be either somewhat older or migrants from foreign countries and would not have served in the US military.

In the next section, the demographic characteristics of the 75,711 veterans now living in Delaware will be explored.

¹ The changes in the population of veterans in New Castle County might be affected by the positive migration patterns with other states.

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Introduction

The demography of the population is always changing. Not only does the size change, but also the internal structure of the population is changing. The population is aging, its racial and ethnic makeup is becoming more diverse, and gender must be considered as the composition of the armed forces has changed.

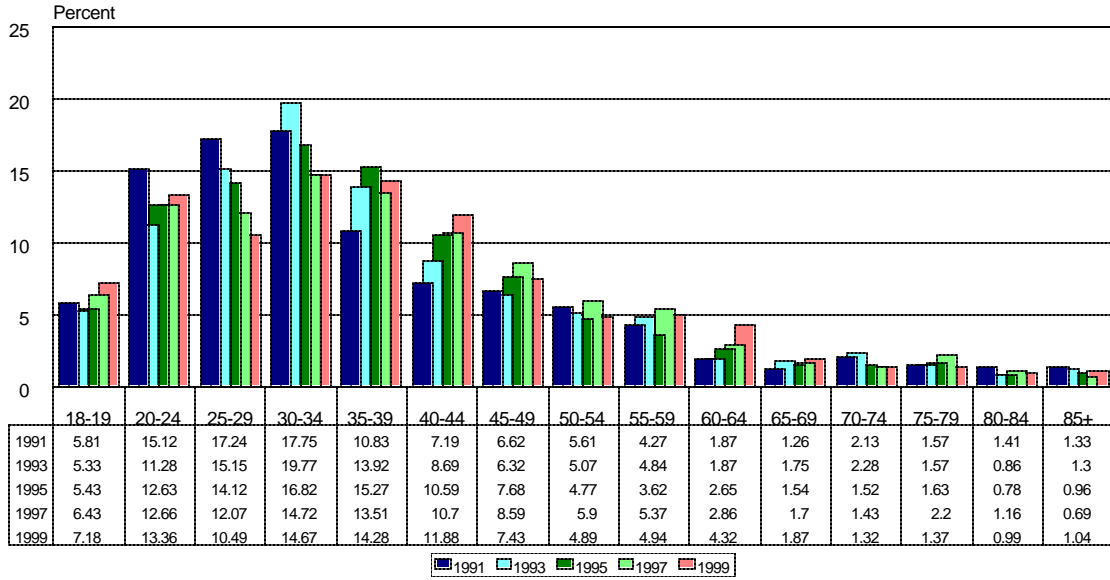
All of these factors and many others have an impact on the veteran population in the United States, and on those in the State of Delaware as well. This section will present estimates on the main demographic factors that impact the veteran population. The factors will be examined and significant differences between different populations will be highlighted.

Age Structure

Proportions of the population by age structure for males 18 and above in Delaware who are *non-veterans* are found in Figure 2.1, below. This is presented to provide a significant contrast for veterans in Delaware.

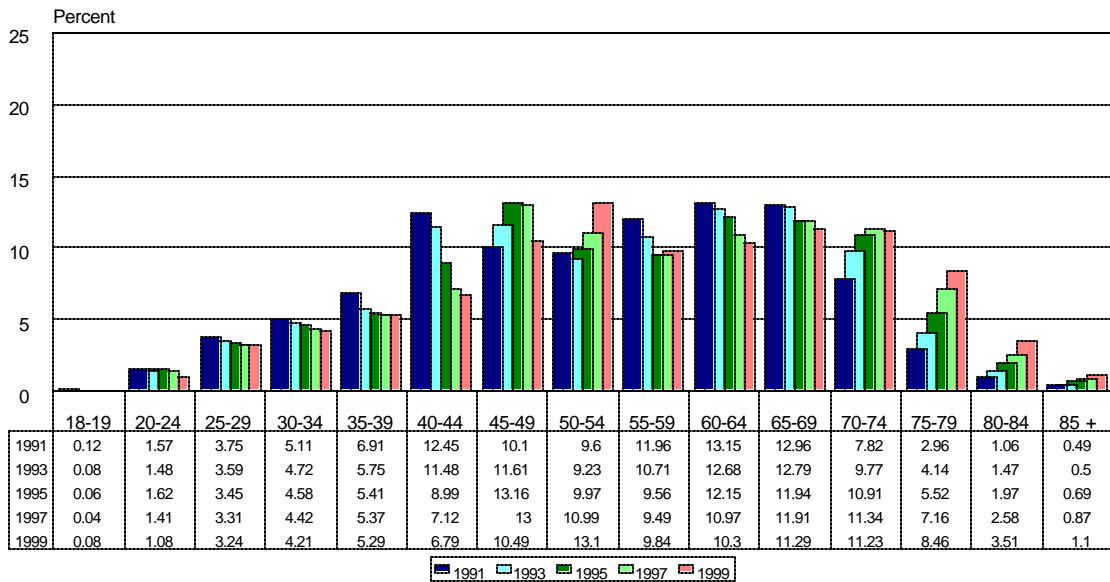
There are several notable trends in the data. First, the group with the highest proportion in 1999 is age group 30-34 with 14.67% in Figure 2.1, below. Ten years ago it was also the highest proportion but the age distribution is flattening out over time. Second, the proportions of all age groups 40 and above, with the exception of a few at the end of the distribution, have experienced a significant growth over the last 10 years. On the other side the population, in the age groups 20-34 and below, there has been a significant decrease in their proportions. As the life expectancy of the population increases, as the baby-boomers age and as the birth rate continues to fall, the US male population is going to age rapidly. All of these trends are present in the total population of Delaware and the US.

Figure 2.1
Percentage of the Delaware Male Non-veteran Population
by Age Group 1991-1999



Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
 US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999

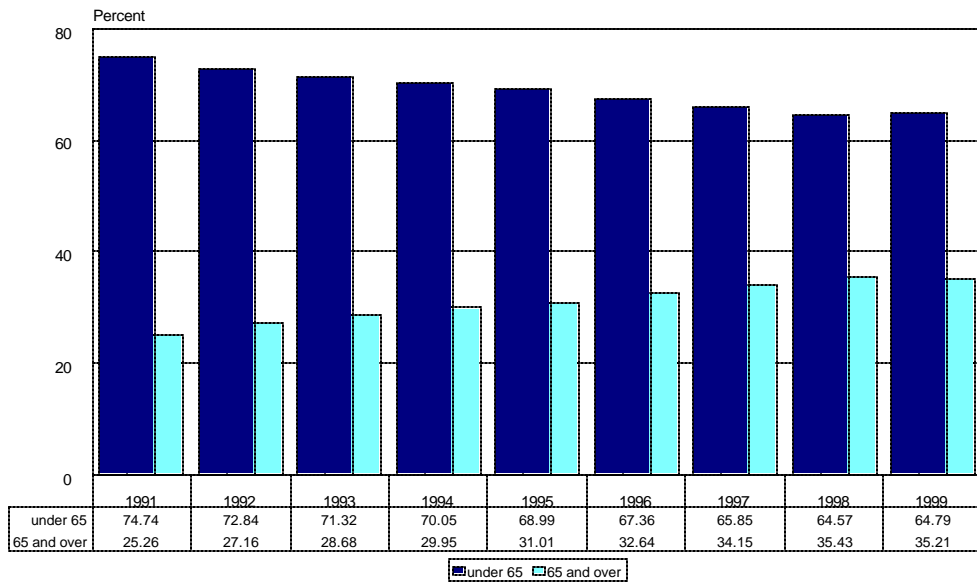
Figure 2.2
Percentage of the Delaware Male Veteran Population
by Age Group 1991-1999



Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
 US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999

The shape of the age distribution found in Figure 2.2, above is very different. These are the male veterans. Comparing the two distributions, it is clearly evident that the veteran population of males in the State of Delaware is much older than that for non-veteran males age 18 and above found in Figure 2.1,above. In 1991 the median age of Delaware veterans was approximately 50 years. In 1999 the median age of Delaware veterans has shifted to 54 years. If there is no change in the number of new veterans, which is unlikely given the general reduction in the military, the dramatic aging of the veteran population will continue in the future. This of course has implications for the needs of the changing veteran population in terms of long-term and short-term health care as it does for the entire aging population in Delaware.

Figure 2.3
Delaware Veterans
By Selected Age Groups 1991 – 1999



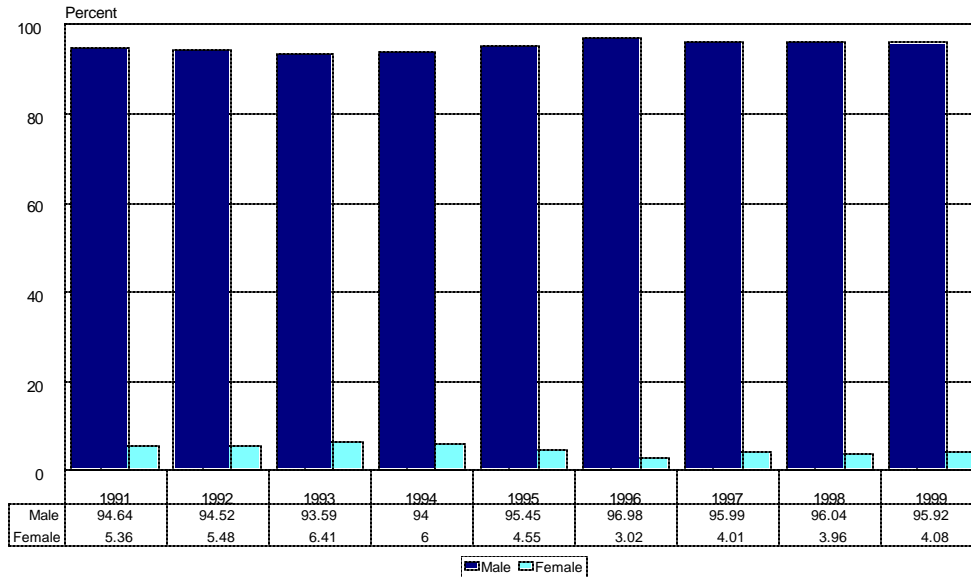
**Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
 US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999**

Another way to look at Delaware's veterans in terms of age structure is to look at the proportion of veterans below age 65 and 65 and above. Figure 2.3 above, depicts the trend. It is evident that the proportion of veterans below age 65 is steadily decreasing. Within 15 years over half of veterans will be over the age of 65. This also means a larger proportion will be eligible for both Social Security and Medicare.

Gender and Race

In Delaware, 96% of all veterans are male (see Figure 2.4, below). This number has not changed significantly over the last decade. As the number of active duty female military personnel increases in the future, it is expected that the proportion of females in the veteran population in Delaware and also in the United States is going to increase.

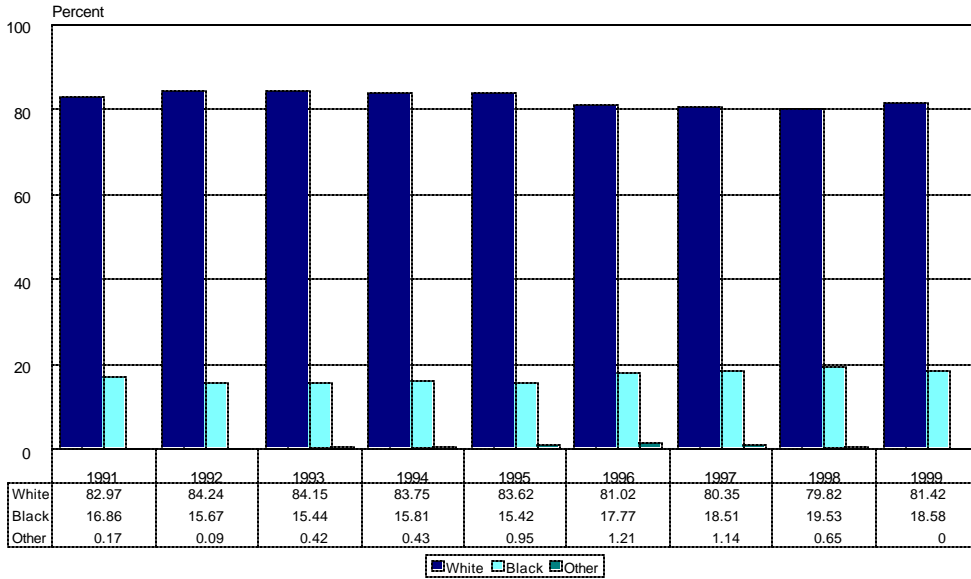
**Figure 2.4
Delaware Veteran Population
by Gender 1991 – 1999**



**Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999**

Even though the proportion of Delaware veterans by gender is not reflective of Delaware's general population, the distribution of veterans by race follows very closely the general male population 18 and above. There are some inconsistencies though, but they are largely due to the sample size and year-to-year variation. An example is the low proportion of other races in the Delaware veteran population. The proportion of African American veterans is increasing even over this short time frame. This reflects largely the integration in the military that took place after the end of World War II.

**Figure 2.5
Delaware Veteran Population
by Race 1991 – 1999**



**Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999**

In the next section, the focus will shift to the social and economic factors that determine the well-being of Delaware's veterans. These factors coupled with the trends in the demographic attributes discussed here will allow one to draw some conclusions about the veteran population that may be at risk.

ECONOMIC FACTORS

Introduction

As the veteran population ages, many factors influence its ability to cope with the difficulties of everyday life. Educational attainment, labor force status, home ownership, sources of income, poverty status and the availability of health insurance are among the factors that will determine how well veterans are going to cope. Staying out of poverty and being able to take care of one's needs are goals that might be simple for some, but are very difficult for others to achieve. This section addresses each of these variables for the veteran population and at the end combines them to create a risk factor measure. This index will be used to provide an estimate of the number of Delaware veterans at great risk of becoming dependent on others' support.

WARNING: Throughout this section comparisons are made with the Delaware and US non-veteran populations using the symbols of *DE NON VET* and *US NON VET*, respectively. These comparisons are meant to show the condition of veterans compared with non-veterans. For those comparisons to be meaningful, only males have been included in the non-veteran categories.

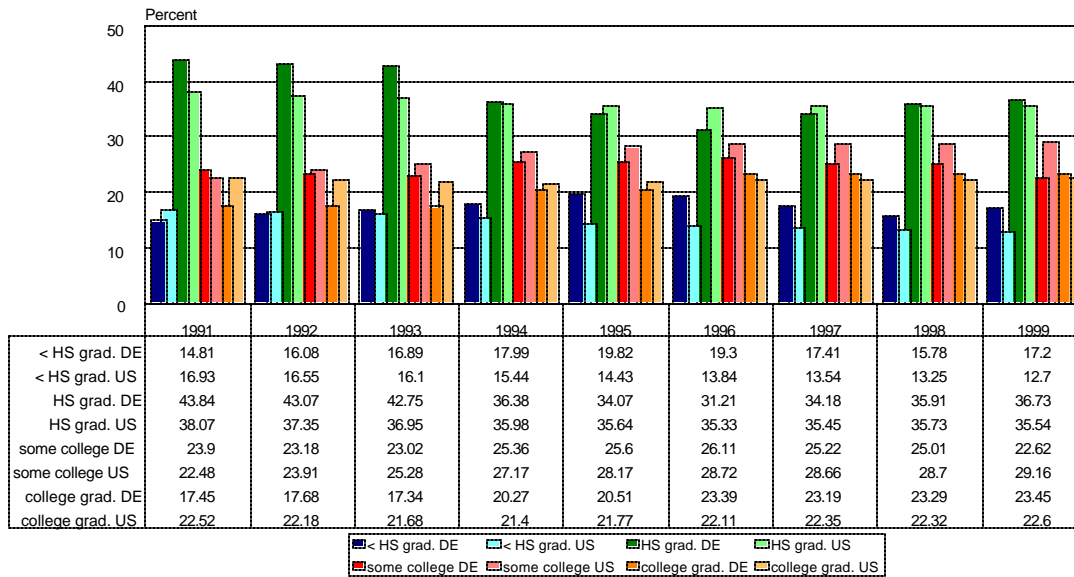
Educational Attainment

Educational attainment is one of the factors of determining both future and current earnings. For the US, the proportion of veterans with a college education was stable over the decade (see Figure 3.1, below). In contrast, the proportion of college graduates among veterans has increased significantly to the point that their proportion is now higher than in the US. Since a college education is closely related to higher earning potential, this trend bodes well for Delaware veterans.

The proportion of veterans with a high school education has been higher in Delaware than the US although the difference has been declining as the college graduate category increased.

In terms of the proportion of those who have less than a high school education, the proportion is higher among Delaware veterans than for veterans in the US overall. The proportion of US veterans with this lower level of education has been declining while the proportion for Delaware veterans has increased somewhat over the last decade, although the difference is probably not statistically significant. Having less than a high school education automatically excludes some of the veterans from getting higher paying jobs and therefore puts them at risk.

Figure 3.1
Educational Attainment of Delaware and US Veterans 1991-1999



Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999

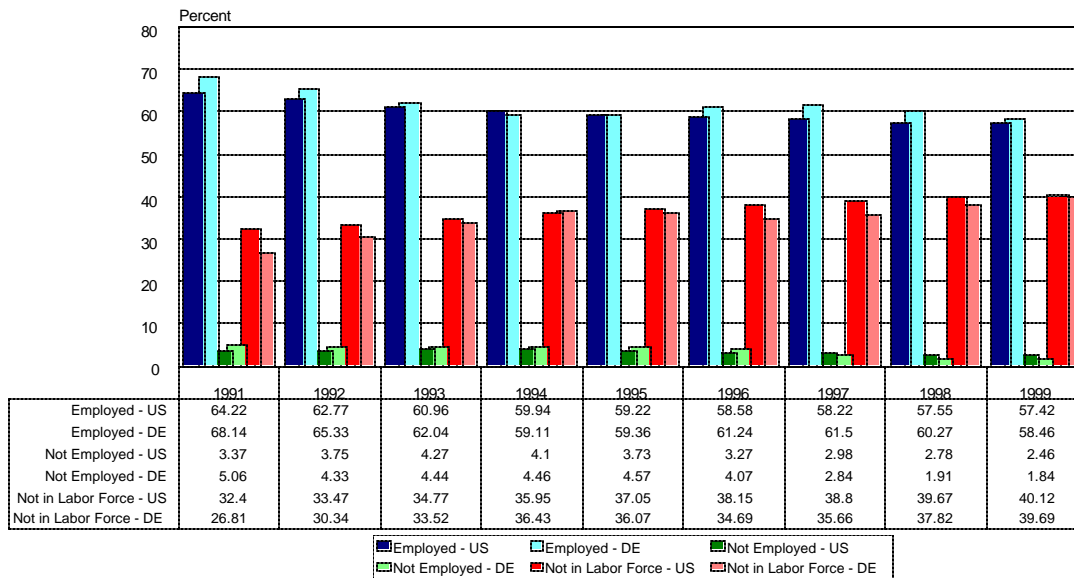
Labor Force Status

An important factor that largely determines the income of an individual is participation in the labor force. Figure 3.2 below, presents the distribution of both Delaware and US veterans by labor force status. It is important to note that the group *not employed* includes both people on layoff and looking for job.

Both in the US and Delaware, the proportion of veterans not in the labor force is increasing. The group, *not in the labor force*, includes people with long term physical or mental illness as well as retired persons. Since the proportion not in the labor force has been rapidly growing in the veteran population over the observed period, the trend is expected to continue into the future especially as the boomers reach retirement age.

Interestingly, the proportion of veterans employed and not employed is decreasing. The decrease in the proportion of employed veterans can be explained by the aging of their population and more of them shifting to the retired group from either the unemployed or the employed group. Conversely, the decrease in the not employed group can be assigned to the extremely well performing labor market of the last few years. In short, if a veteran wants to work in Delaware there is a job available. The unemployment rates for veterans are well below those for the population of Delaware as a whole. However, this also reflects the maturity of this group as well.

Figure 3.2
Labor Force Status of Delaware and US Veterans 1991-1999



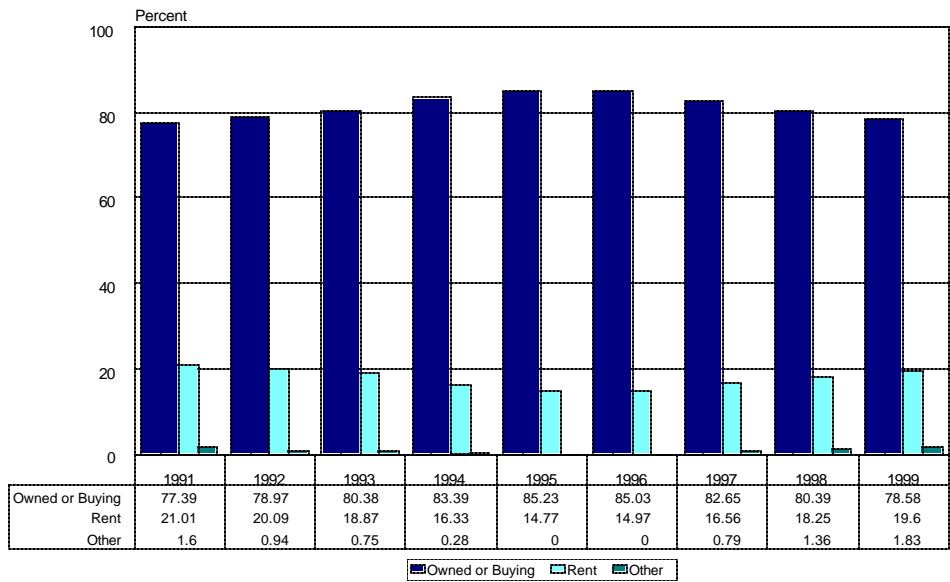
Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999

Household Tenure

Household tenure is an important determinant of self-sufficiency, and is presented in Figure 3.3, below.

The proportion of homeowner veterans in Delaware has shown a slight change since the beginning of the decade. It peaked in 1995 (85.23%). The significance of this number is determined by the continuation of the trend in the following years. The trend hasn't continued during the following period, on the contrary, home ownership rates for Delaware veterans has been on a steady decline ever since. This decline may have been caused by a random variation that often occurs in sample surveys.

Figure 3.3
Delaware Veteran Population
by Housing Tenure 1991 – 1999



**Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
 US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999**

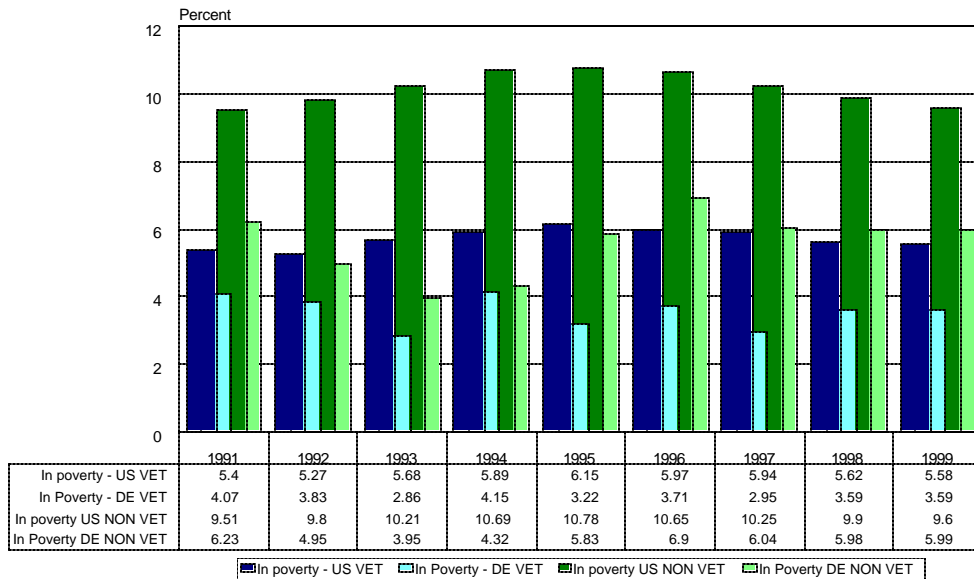
An interesting comparison not presented graphically here, is the comparison of home ownership rates for Delaware veterans and non-veteran Delaware males age 18 and above. As one would expect, the ownership rates for Delaware veterans is higher than the home ownership rates of the general non-veteran male population. The ability to afford a home usually increases with age and also the older you are the more time you have had to become a homeowner. Therefore, the higher homeownership rates for Delaware veterans have to be interpreted very carefully.

Poverty Rates

One of the most crucial indicators of a person at risk is that person's poverty status. In the CPS, individuals are classified as being in poverty or above poverty by an index adopted by a Federal Interagency Committee in 1969 and is modified annually by the US government. The index provides a cutoff threshold of income for families of different sizes. If the family's income for the observed year is under the poverty threshold for that year and family structure, each family member is considered to be in poverty.

Figure 3.4 presents the proportion of US and Delaware veterans and non-veterans² in poverty. A striking outlier in the table is the proportion of the US non-veteran that is in poverty. This population's poverty rate is significantly different from the poverty rates of all other groups presented.

**Figure 3.4
Percentage of Population in Poverty
by Veteran Status DE and US 1991-1999**



**Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999**

Both Delaware's non-veteran and veteran poverty rates are consistently lower poverty rates in Delaware compared to the US.

² Non-veterans are males age 18 and older.

Delaware veterans outperform all other groups: the US veterans, the US non-veteran male population 18 and above, and also the Delaware non-veteran male population age 18 and above. In this comparison the proportion of veterans in poverty in the State of Delaware is the lowest of all groups. Nevertheless, there is still a population of around 2,700 veterans in the State of Delaware who are in poverty.

Sources of Income

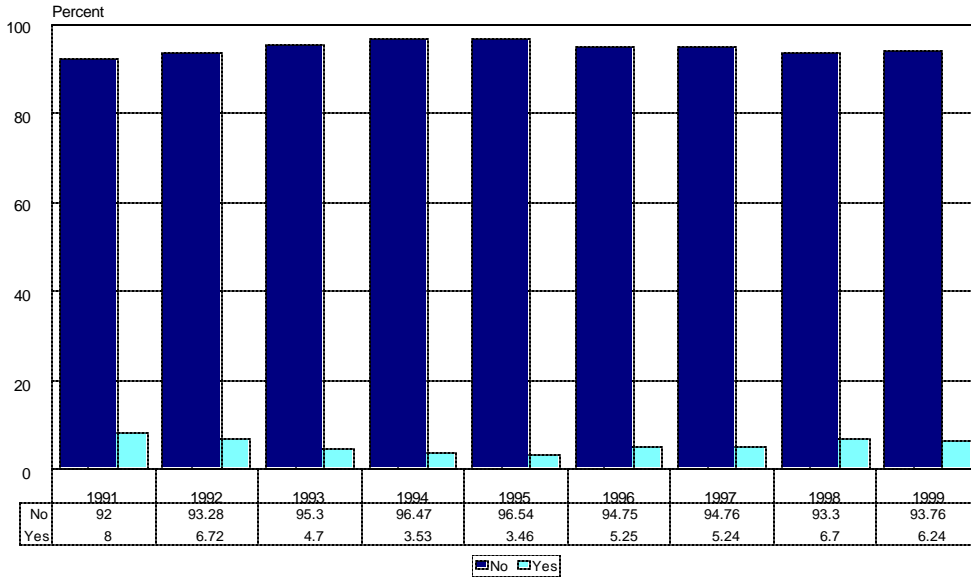
In the current population survey, information on income for each person age 15 and above is collected. The questions asked about income refer to the amount of income received in the preceding year, while the characteristics of the person such as age, labor force status, household tenure, household composition and other refer to the time of the survey.

Taking into account the population in question (veteran population with a median age of 54 in 1999) the following sources of income are of particular interest: veteran payments, Social Security payments, and retirement income other than Social Security payments or veterans' payments.

Veterans' payments include money paid periodically by the Veterans Administration to disabled members of the armed forces as well as to survivors of deceased veterans, subsistence allowances paid to veterans for education and on-the-job training, and as so-called "refunds" paid to ex-servicemen as GI insurance premiums.

Figure 3.5 below, presents the proportion of Delaware veterans receiving veterans' payments. Veterans' payments are income transfers designed to benefit veterans or their survivors. Around 6% of all veterans are receiving some form of these payments. Not much difference is observed while comparing Delaware veterans and US veterans (not presented here). There is no significant difference in these proportions for Delaware and the US.

Figure 3.5
Delaware Veteran Population Receiving Veterans' Payments
1991 – 1999



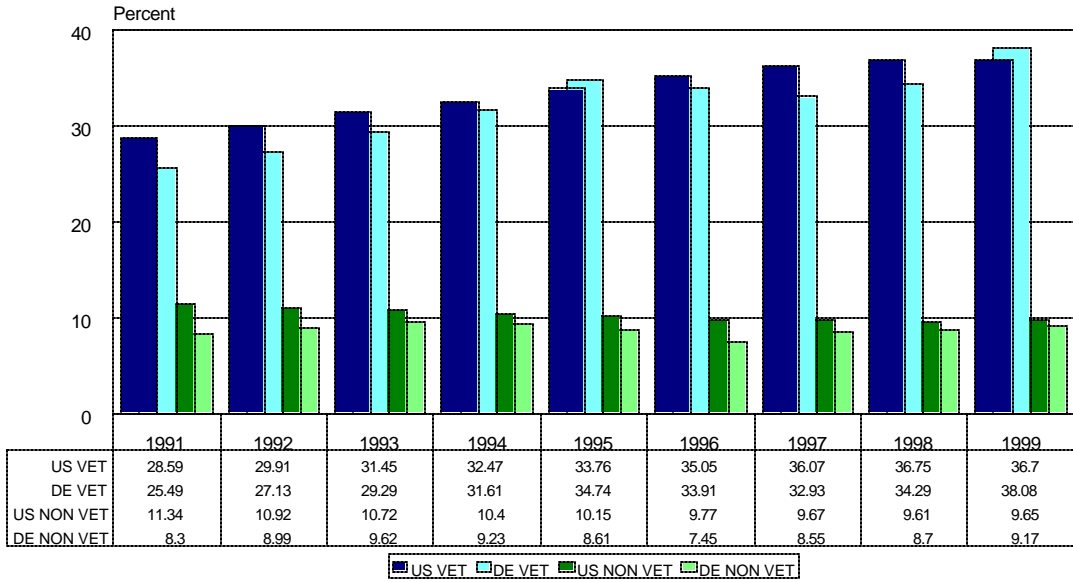
**Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
 US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999**

Social Security payments include Social Security pensions, survivor's benefits and permanent disability insurance payments made by the Social Security Administration.

Overall, the percentage of both US and Delaware veterans receiving Social Security pensions (see Figure 3.6, below) has been increasing steadily over the observed period. This is due to the aging of the veteran population. Extrapolating from the data presented above, if the trend continues, and there is strong evidence to assume this, by the end of the first decade of the 21st century the proportion of veterans receiving Social Security will increase to almost 45%.

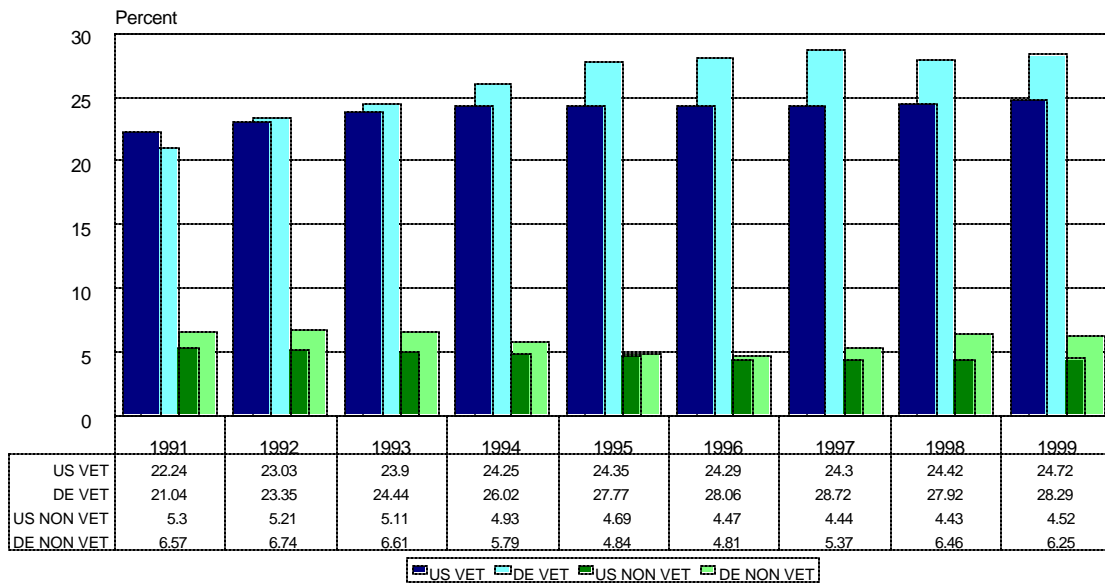
Also noteworthy is the slight decrease in the percentage of non-veteran US population receiving Social Security. For Delaware, the percentage has changed somewhat over the observed period, but this might be due to random variation.

Figure 3.6
Receiving Social Security by Veteran Status 1991 – 1999



Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999

Figure 3.7
Receiving Other Retirement Income by Veteran Status 1991-1999



Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999

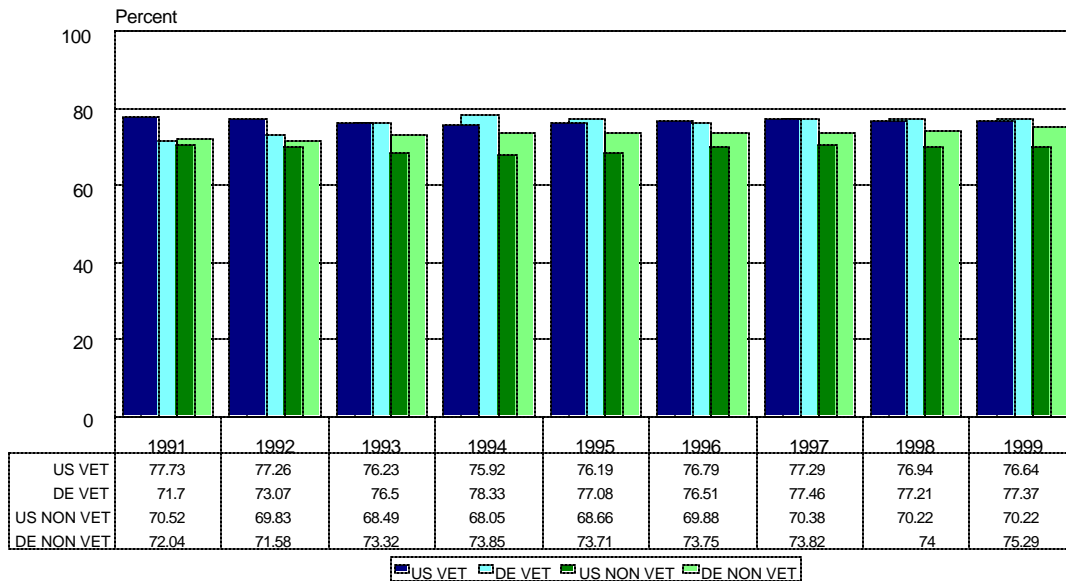
Sources of income other than Social Security or veteran payments are presented in Figure 3.7, above. Due to the higher median age of the veteran population, the percentage of veterans receiving retirement income other than Social Security is much higher than for the general male population age 18 and above. The rates differ somewhat over the decade for both Delaware and the US.

Comparing the general population alone, the proportion of Delaware residents receiving this kind of retirement income has been higher in all years than in the US.

Health Insurance Coverage

It is generally accepted that those with health insurance have typically greater access to health care. Persons who do not have health insurance are still likely to need health care and medical attention at some point in their lives.

Figure 3.8
Percentage Covered by Private Health Insurance
by Veteran Status 1991-1999



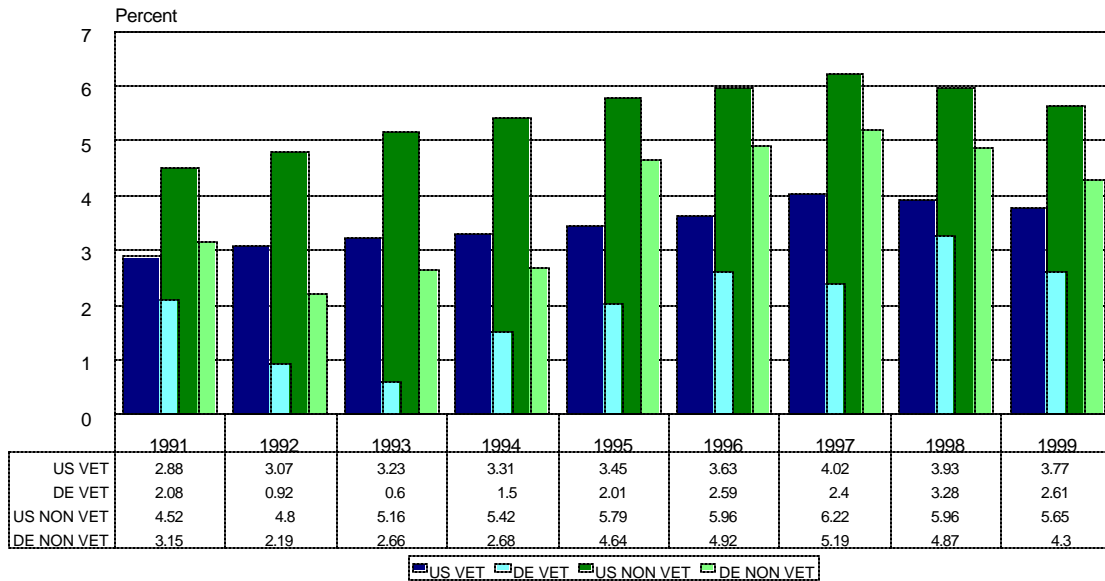
**Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
 US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999**

One source of health care coverage is private health insurance. Before concentrating on the veterans, the main target group of this study, it is important to point out that Delaware residents are more likely to be covered by private health insurance than the average for the US.

Figure 3.8, above supports this finding. During the observed period the proportion of Delaware non-veteran male residents age 18 and above covered by private health insurance has been higher than in the case of the same demographic group for the entire US. Thus, Delaware residents rely on private health coverage more than other US residents. They are also more likely to be insured overall than elsewhere in the US.

As far as the private health coverage of veterans is concerned, they rely on private health insurance even more than other non-veterans.

Figure 3.9
Percentage Covered by Medicaid
by Veteran Status 1991-1999



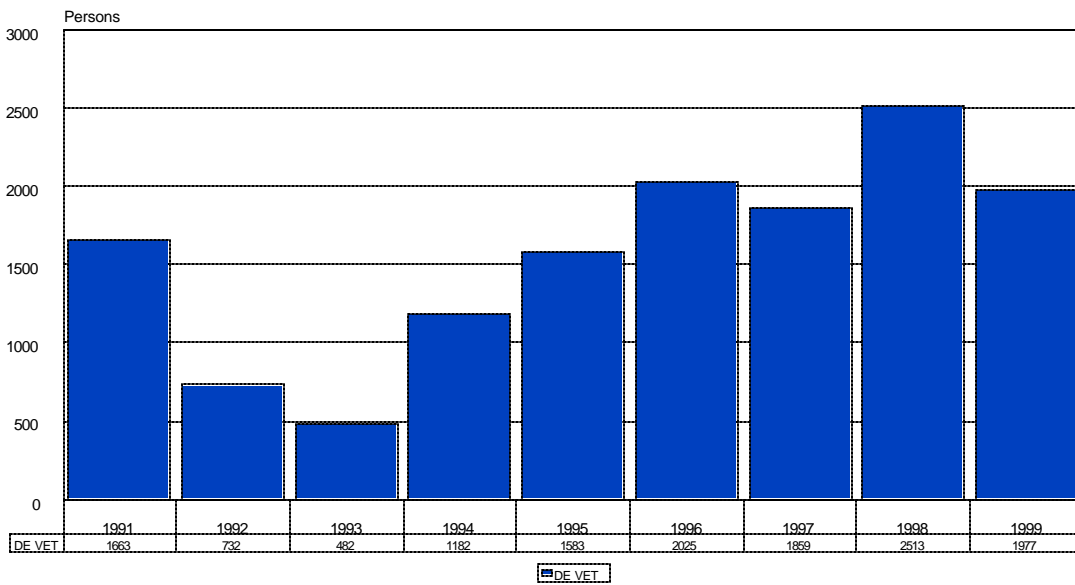
**Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
 US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999**

Medicaid is designed to provide medical assistance to needy families with dependent children, and to aged, blind, or permanently and totally disabled individuals, whose resources and incomes are insufficient to meet the cost of needed medical treatment. Medicaid is a program with complex eligibility rules that vary from state to state.

The number of persons receiving Medicaid is closely related to the number of persons in poverty – reflecting the design and the purpose of the program – to help the needy.

The changes in the percentage of veterans covered by Medicaid do vary over the decade, but not significantly. Interestingly, the percentage of US non-veteran males age 18 and above covered by Medicaid is higher than for any other group presented.

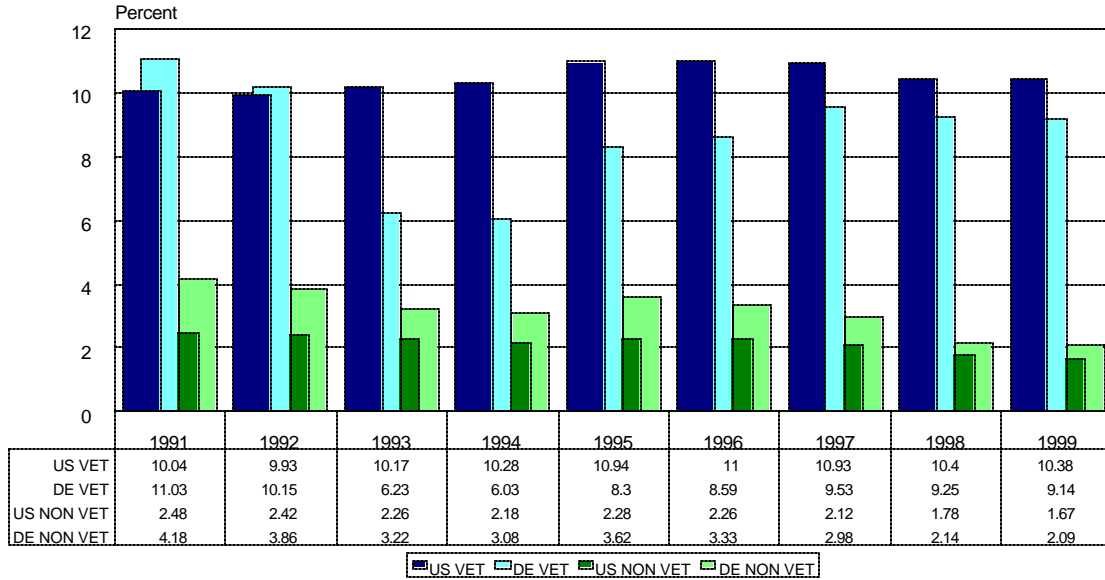
**Figure 3.10
Delaware Veterans Covered by Medicaid
1991-1999**



**Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999**

The number of needy veterans in the State of Delaware – covered by Medicare - has varied somewhat over the observed time period as seen in Figure 3.10, above. In 1999, the number of Delaware veterans covered by Medicaid was 1,977.

Figure 3.11
Percentage Covered by Champus, Veteran or Military Health Care
by Veteran Status 1991-1999



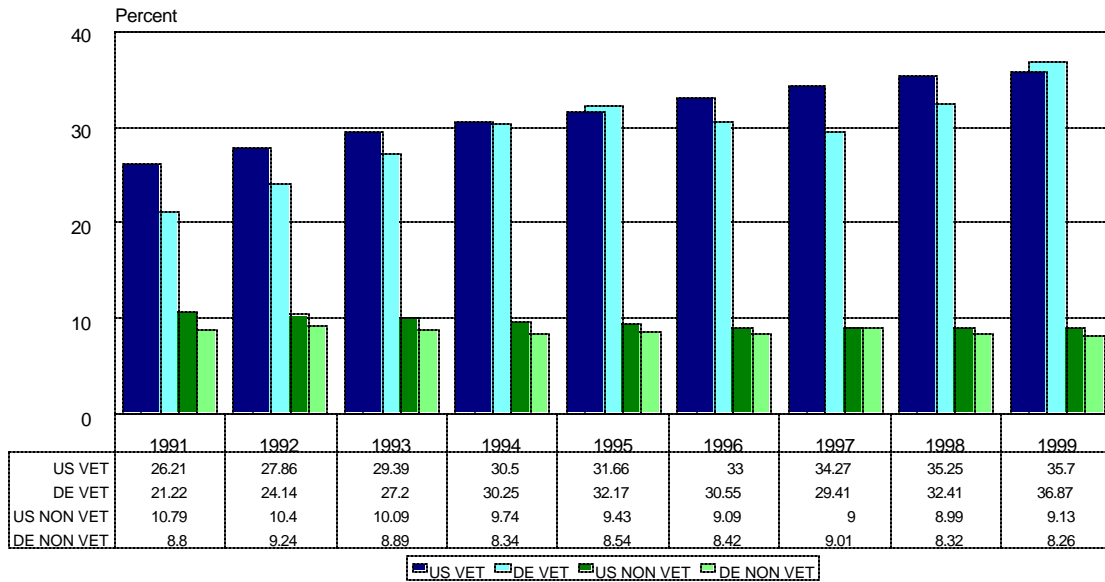
**Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
 US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999**

Other possible sources of health care for veterans are Champus, Veteran or Military Health Care. All of these health care programs are intended to provide health care to either veterans or Department of Defense military personnel.

Figure 3.11 above, depicts the proportion of the population covered by these programs by veteran status and residency. These programs cover approximately 10% of all veterans both in the US and Delaware. In terms of the general male population age 18 and above only around 2 to 3 percent of them are covered by these programs.

In Delaware the ratio varies somewhat, but this variation is statistically insignificant over the observed time period.

**Figure 3.12
Percentage Covered by Medicare
by Veteran Status 1991-1999**



**Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999**

The Medicare program is designed to provide medical care for the aged and disabled. It consists of two parts – one providing basic protection against hospital costs and related post hospital services. The other part is a voluntary plan that builds on the hospital insurance protection provided by the basic plan. It provides protection, covering physicians’ and surgeons’ services, and a number of other health related services received either at a hospital or on an ambulatory basis.

Medicare also covers many people under the age of 65 who receive Social Security and/or railroad retirement benefits based on long-term disability. This is supported by the fact that a correlation has been observed in the relation of Social Security recipients and the number of persons covered by Medicare.

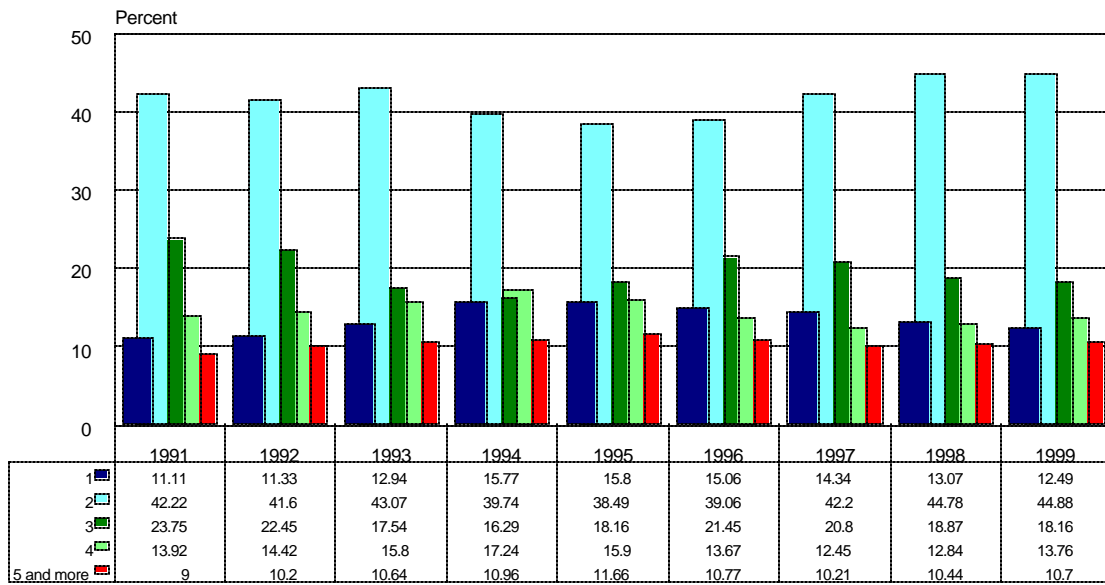
The population of veterans has a higher proportion of persons 65 and above who could be covered by Medicare than the non-veteran population. Figure 3.12 above, depicts this relationship clearly. Again, as in the case of Social Security recipients, the percentage of veterans (both US

and Delaware) has an upward sloping trend that is to continue in the future due to the aging of the veteran population.

Household Size

Families are usually the last line of defense for individuals who may be at risk. One indicator, although not the only one, is the size of household the veteran lives in. The larger that household unit, the more opportunity there is for support. This may mean that another person can share in the costs of the household. It may also mean there is someone available to help with daily living needs. In other words, there is usually more safety in numbers.

**Figure 3.13
Household Size of Veteran Households
1991-1999**



**Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999**

In Figure 3.13, above, the largest numbers of veterans reside in 2-person households. While that percentage has varied over the decade, the changes have not been large. As the population continues to age however, those percentages are likely to decrease as single person households increase. Today, only about 12% of veterans live alone.

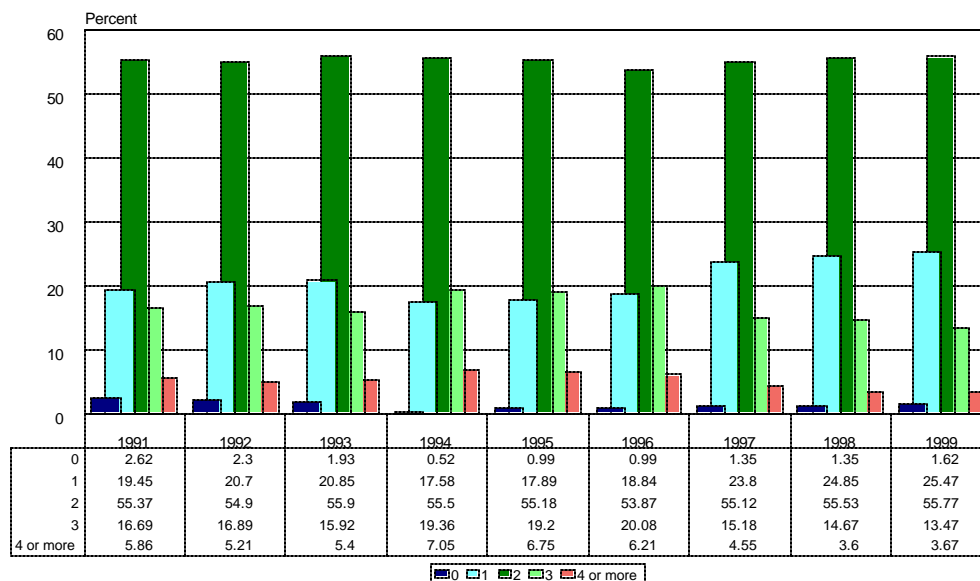
RISK FACTORS and PROJECTIONS

Risk Factors

How many veterans are there with no health insurance, in poverty, living in a single person household or that are unemployed? What percentage of all veterans have to deal with more than one of these disadvantages? How do these risk factors work together? What is the veteran population in the State of Delaware that will need special attention?

In trying to answer these questions, a cumulative variable was constructed (see Figure 4.1, below) that counts the number of risk factors for every single veteran in the State of Delaware over the last decade.

**Figure 4.1
Delaware Veterans by
Number of Risk Factors 1991 – 1999**



**Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999**

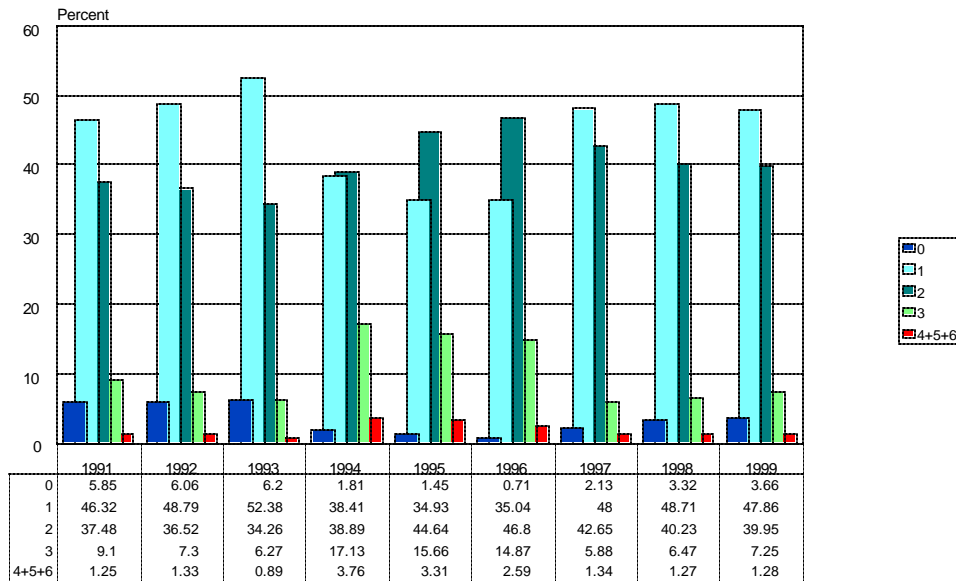
The following six risk factors were taken into account: being in poverty; not having any health insurance; not being employed (either looking for job or on layoff) and not in labor force;

not receiving retirement income other than Social Security and veteran payments; and finally living in a single person household. Some other risk factors (e.g. receiving Social Security and others) were excluded due to the fact that they were closely related to some of the other variables and including them would not provide any significant information.

Most of the veterans in the State of Delaware (55.77% in 1999) have two risk factors. Around 4% of all veterans residing in Delaware are very much at risk, as they exhibit more than four risk factors. Over the last decade the proportion of veterans with different number of risk factors has changed slightly, but not significantly.

The 3.6% of veterans with four to six risk factors in 1999 accounts for approximately 2,784 veterans. These are the veterans most at risk of needing support from outside sources to provide housing, income and also health insurance.

Figure 4.2
Delaware Veterans age 65 and above
by Number of Risk Factors 1991 – 1999



**Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
 US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999**

The aging population of Delaware’s veterans brings up a question of how well do Delaware’s senior veterans age 65 and above cope in terms of the number of risk factors? The

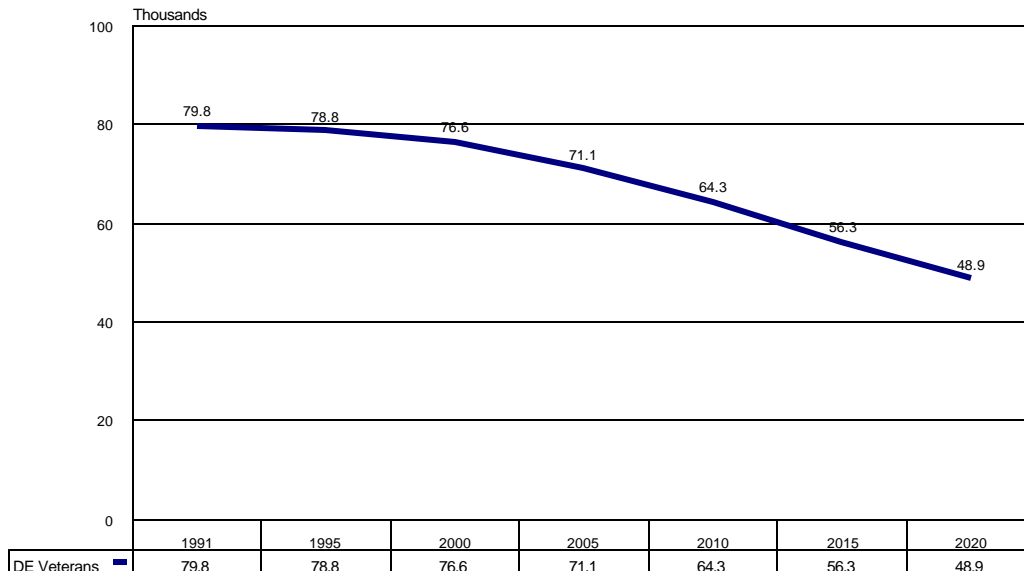
data presented in Table 4.2 is imputed for this age group from data for the US due to the small sample size. It is evident that this group of veterans is doing a bit better than the general veteran population in Delaware. The proportion of veterans with a lower number of risk factors is greater for the age group 65 and above. This is due to the fact that veterans who turn 65 are eligible for programs like Medicare and that immediately eliminates one of the risk factors. Eligibility for Social Security usually guarantees that the veteran will not be in poverty as well.

The estimated number of Delaware veterans age 65 and above who have four and more risk factors is estimated to be 340 in 1999.

Projections

The projections of Delaware veterans are based on the Delaware Population Consortium’s Populations projection. The consortium’s projections already take account for the aging of the population, changes in mortality rates, migration and other adjustments.

**Figure 4.3
Delaware Veterans Population Projection 1991 –2020**



**Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware
US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1989-1999**

The proportion of veterans in all age groups for US was applied to the consortium's population projection. Every five years the proportions from the previous age group were applied to the population projections – thus accounting for the aging of the population. This, of course, assumes that veterans die at the same rate as their non-veteran counterparts of the same age.

Also, adjustments considering changes in the proportion of veterans for different age groups were applied. In addition, based on the declines over the past decade, a modest declining rate of new veterans was assumed for both men and women. If a new policy were introduced that increased the size of the military, these projections would have to be adjusted as well.

Figure 4.3 above, presents the projected veteran population from 1991 through 2020 in five-year intervals. Based on this projection the decline of the veteran population will continue to the future. In 2020, it is projected that, the Delaware veteran population will decrease to 48,972 people from its current level of slightly less than 76,000 or a reduction of about 36% from 1999 levels.

Assuming no change in the risk factors, the number of veterans at risk would decline from about 2,800 to approximately 1,800 over the next 20 years. This is probably an overestimate since the proportion that will be over the age of 65 will also increase from its current level of 35% to 55%. That would result in a smaller number of veterans at risk. However, the potential negative impact of the baby boomers on both Medicare and Social Security coupled with the increased medical costs for those that are living longer could swell the ranks and alter the risk factors.

Finally, the future utilization rate of any new state sponsored program for veterans is unknown. The proportion of those estimated 900 to 1800 veterans who may be at risk may or may not utilize the program.

In order to estimate the utilization rate of a state sponsored veteran's home program by veterans data on existing state veterans homes in the states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland were examined. At the time of the survey, there were five state veteran homes in Pennsylvania, three in New Jersey and one in the state of Maryland. Capacities, current use and the number of veterans in each state are presented in Figure 4.4, below.

Figure 4.4
State Veterans Homes in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland, April 2000

| State | Number of Facilities | Total Capacity | Occupied beds | Number of veterans in 1999 | Percentage of Veterans using the facility (%) |
|--------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------------------|---|
| Pennsylvania | 5 | 1,497 | 1,361 | 1,126,259 | 0.121 |
| New Jersey | 3 | 918 | 836 | 605,482 | 0.138 |
| Maryland | 1 | 350 | 378 | 511,141 | 0.068 |

Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware

The observed data suggests that 0.068% to 0.138% veterans use the state veterans homes in the states of the region. It is logical to assume that the utilization in Delaware rate would be similar. Based on the number of veterans in Delaware in 1999, an estimated 52 to 105 veterans would use such a facility. It is important to use these estimates with caution, especially in terms of making projections for future utilization rates of these facilities³. Before these can be done the aging of the veteran population and other factors having a possible impact on these rates have to be taken into consideration.

³ A possible state residency requirement limiting the participation in the veteran house program has to be taken into account.

SUMMARY

- Both the number of military personnel and number of veterans has decreased significantly during the last decade.
- Most of the veterans living today, who can be identified by a specific theater, served during the Vietnam War.
- Sixty percent of Delaware's 75,800 veterans live in New Castle County.
- Delaware's veteran population is older than the non-veteran male population.
- The proportion of Delaware's older veterans (65 and above) has increased from 25 percent in 1991 to 35 percent in 1999. The aging of the veteran population will continue due to the mortality of older veterans and the decreasing number of new veterans.
- Only 4 percent of veterans in Delaware are female.
- Minorities represent nineteen percent of the total veteran population in Delaware.
- In 1999 there were more veterans with a college education than veterans with less than a high school education. The most numerous group of all are veterans whose highest educational achievement is their high school diploma.
- Less than two percent of Delaware's veterans are not employed (on layoff or looking for work). Almost sixty percent of the veterans have jobs and the rest are not in the labor force.
- An overwhelming majority of veterans own or are buying their home.
- The proportion of veterans in poverty is lower than the proportion of non-veteran males in poverty.
- Veterans in Delaware are more likely to have private health insurance than the non-veteran male population.
- In terms of income, the proportion of veterans receiving Social Security or Other Retirement Income is much higher than the proportion of non-veteran males receiving these payments. This is because they are older.

- Veterans in Delaware are less likely to be covered by Medicaid in 1999 than non-veterans. This is because they are less likely to be in poverty. An estimated 2,500 veterans are currently receiving Medicaid services from the State of Delaware.
- The proportion of Delaware's veterans covered by Medicare is triple the proportion of Medicare covered non-veteran males in the state. This too is a function of age.
- One out of every ten veterans lives alone. Almost half of the veterans live in two person households. Those that live alone are at greater risk.
- More than 2,700 veterans (340 veterans age 65 and above) in Delaware have more than four of seven potential risk factors. These are the ones most likely to need additional services.
- By 2020, the number of veterans will decrease thirty six percent from the 1999 level of 76,000 to 49,000.
- The percentage of veterans using state veteran homes in the states surrounding Delaware ranges from 0.068% to 0.138%. If these rates were applied to the number of veterans in Delaware, it is estimated that between 52 and 105 of Delaware's veterans would use a state veterans home.