

Who is a Veteran? Evaluating DoD Data for Use in the Census Business Demographics Program

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U.S. Census Bureau

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Annual Total Business Demographics Program

Synchronization of employers & nonemployers

Annual Business Survey
(ABS)
(Employers)
Survey-based

Nonemployer Statistics by
Demographics (NES-D)
Administrative Records (AR) -
based

Statistics

Sex, ethnicity, race, and veteran status

Misalignment in Veteran Status

- Conceptual misalignment between the Annual Business Survey veteran or military personnel concept and VA's veteran concept/data used in NES-D
- The ABS questionnaire
 - “Has the business owner ever served in any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, including the Coast Guard, the National Guard, or Reserve component of any service branch?”
- The VA USVETS data
 - Cover military personnel who have served in the active military, naval air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable
 - Excludes: actively serving, National Guard, and Reserve individuals not previously active
 - VA's veteran concept is narrower than ABS'

This Project

- Evaluate administrative data from the Department of Defense for potential use in the NES-D program
 - Goal: figure out if these data can bring us closer to capturing the survey based “veteran” concept
- DEERS data used to answer several questions related to the usefulness of the data in identifying military personnel
 - Can the DEERS data be used as a complement or substitute to the USVETS data?
 - What does coverage look like for the DEERS data?
 - What can we say about agreement between DEERS and ABS respondent data?

Data: Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS)

- Database contains information for each Uniformed Service member (Active Duty, retired, or a member of a Reserve Component), US-sponsored foreign military, DoD and Uniformed Services civilians, other personnel as directed by the DoD (including the patient population serviced through the Military Health Services System), and their eligible family members
- Registration is required for TRICARE eligibility and enrollment
- Data is not cumulative
- Includes birth and death info
- Can identify personnel given a reference year

Data: Summary of characteristics

DEERS

- *Coverage*
 - Individuals affiliated with DoD as of the cut-off date of file, including the Army, Coast Guard, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Navy
 - Active Duty
 - National Guard
 - Reserve
 - Retired (20+Years and eligible for retired pay)
 - Reserve Retired (20+ Years) but not yet eligible for retired pay
- *Delivery*
 - Two deliveries per year (Fall and Spring, except 2018)
 - Lag from reference year is less than 1 year
- *Excludes*
 - Individuals who were active duty in the past and are not currently employed by DoD, not in receipt of a current Common Access ID card from DoD, or not in current receipt of pay or benefits from the DoD

USVETS

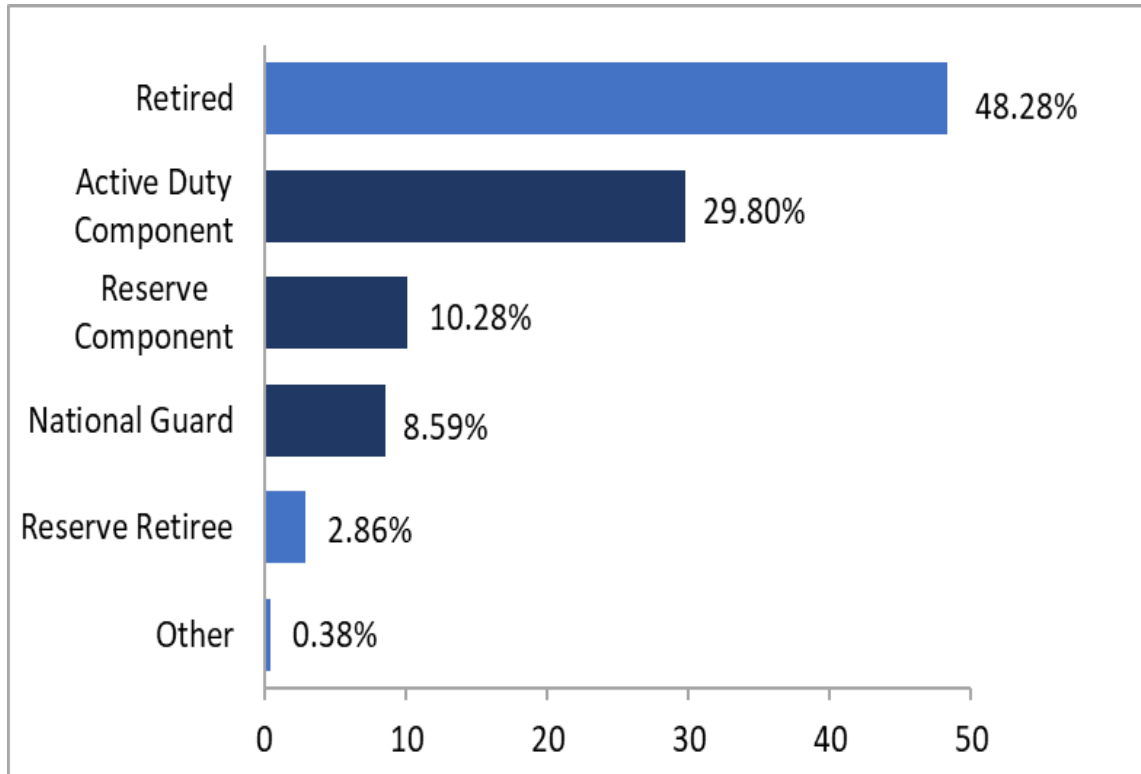
- *Coverage*
 - Individuals who have served in the active military, naval air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable
- *Delivery*
 - Data based on fiscal year of the reference year
 - Lag from reference year is 1.5 year
- *Excludes*
 - National Guard unless they served on active duty under Title 10 USC
 - (First-time) Active Duty
 - Reserve unless they served on active duty under Title 10 USC
- *Additional Gaps*
 - Data as good as original data sources
 - Service members not enrolled/use benefits/healthier/younger
 - Reserve and National Guard members that are activated under Title 10 but are not recorded/updated in DEERS as active duty
 - The very old (fire that caused damage to files)

Tasks

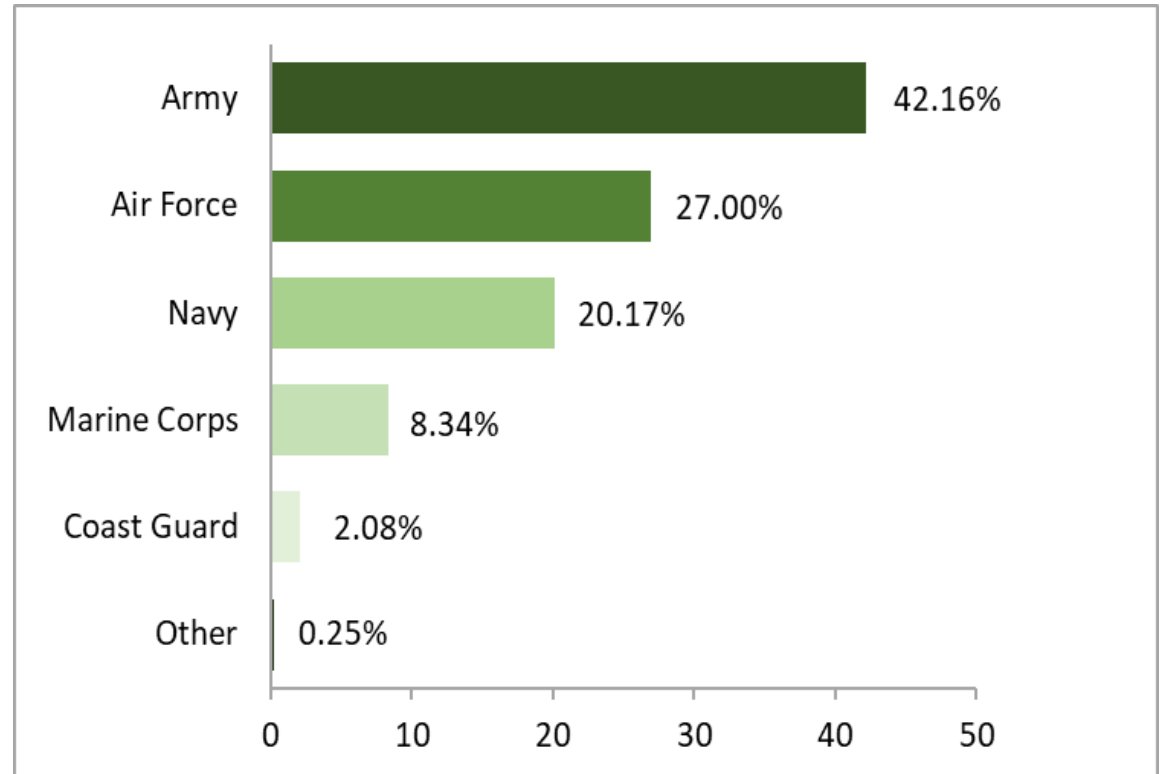
- 1) Outline the DEERS data to understand its universe and coverage
- 2) Merge to USVETS to answer questions including:
 - Who's in DEERS only? Why?
 - Do the results align with our expectations?
 - Is DEERS a complement or substitute to USVETS?
- 3) Assess agreement between ABS respondent data and Admin Records (DEERS & USVETS)
- 4) Examine additional coverage using 2018 DEERS and NES-D estimates

2018 DEERS Universe

Personnel Category



Service Branch

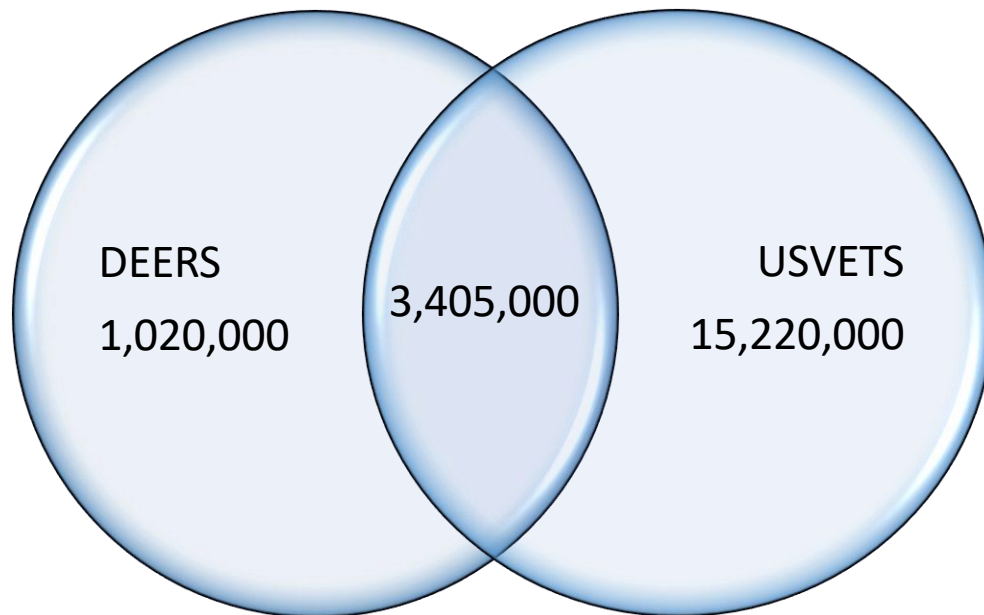


Notes: Sponsors, calendar year 2018. N = 4,507,250.

Retired: served 20+ years and eligible for retired pay

Source: Department of Defense's Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS), 2018

Military personnel in DEERS/USVETS



Putting these numbers into perspective

- According to the ACS, there were about 18.0 million living veterans in 2018
- In fiscal year 2018, DoD reported 1.3 million Active Duty personnel

Notes: Data linked with Protected Identification Key (PIK)

Calendar year 2018 DEERS and VA data used for merge data contain living military personnel and vets only

Sources: Department of Defense's Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) and Department of Veteran Affairs' United States Veterans Eligibility Trends and Statistics (USVETS), 2018



2018 DEMOGRAPHICS PROFILE

ACTIVE DUTY MEMBERS

More than 1.3 million active duty members serve in the four military Service branches: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force. These members are an important part of the military community.

1.3 Million Active Duty Members

17.7% Officers

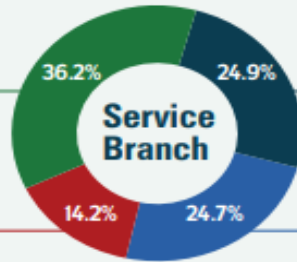
82.3% Enlisted

Army:
471,990 members

Navy:
325,395 members

Marine Corps:
185,415 members

Air Force:
321,618 members



Geographic Location

United States or U.S. Territories: **87.3%**

Europe: **5.0%**

East Asia: **6.4%**

North Africa: **0.7%**

Western Hemisphere outside U.S.: **0.2%**

Other/Unknown/ Ships Afloat: **0.4%**



Source: 2018 Demographics Profile of the Military Community (Department of Defense)
<https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2018-demographics-report.pdf>

Gender

83.5% MEN **16.5%** WOMEN

Race/Ethnicity

31.0% of AD force Racial Minority*

16.1% of AD force Hispanic or Latino

*Racial minority includes Black or African American, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Multi-racial, and Other/Unknown

Marital Status

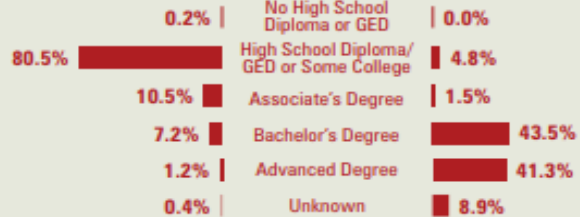


51.5% Married active duty members

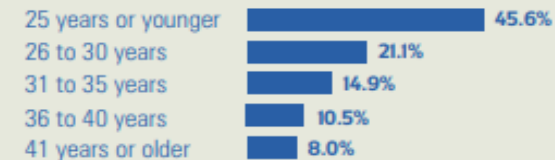
Education

1,073,394 Enlisted

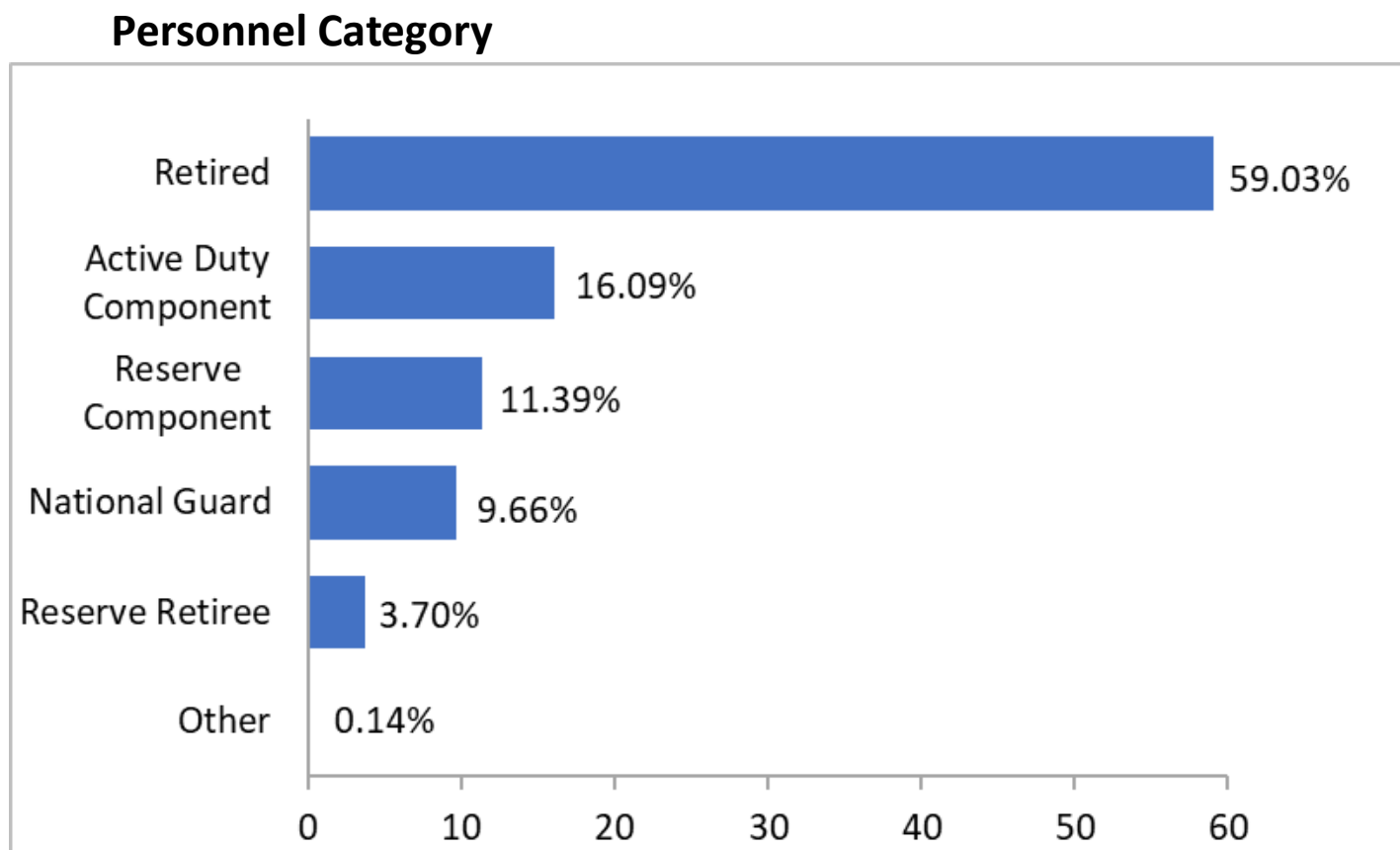
231,024 Officers



Age



Personnel found in both DEERS & USVETS data

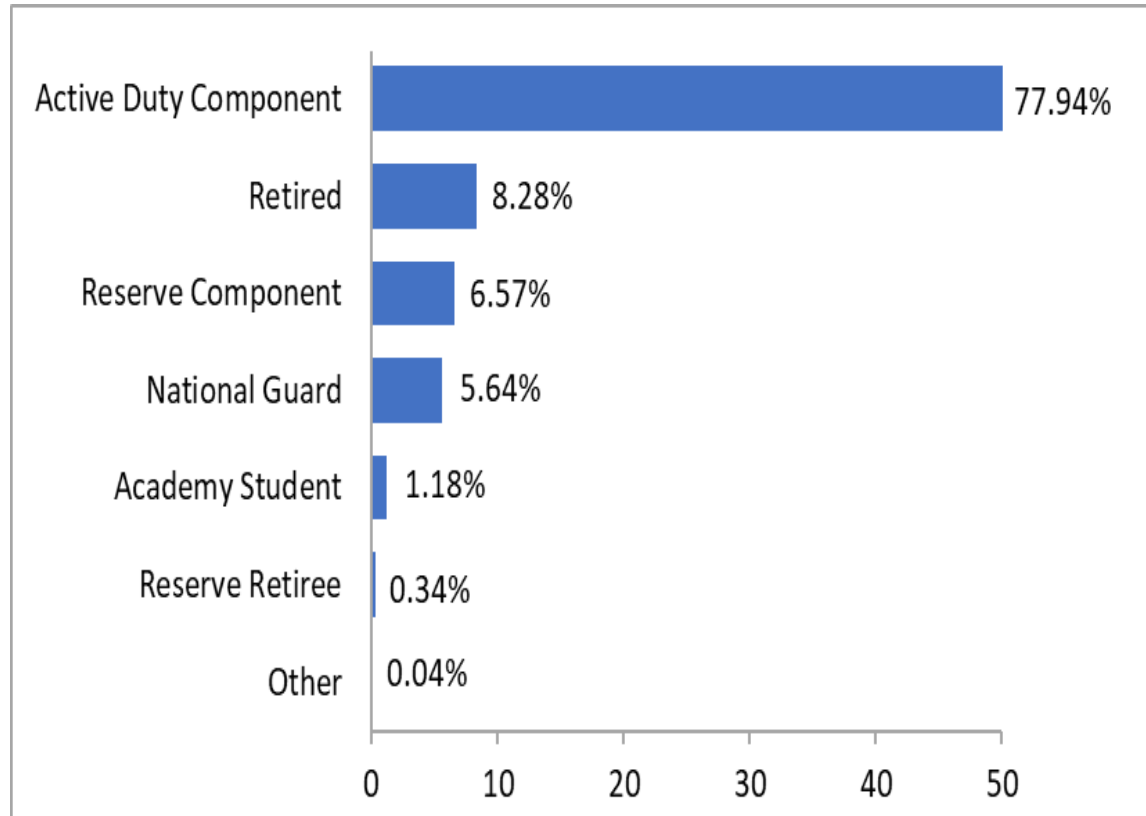


Note: Calendar year 2018 DEERS and VA data used for merge data contain living military personnel and vets only. N = 3,405,000.

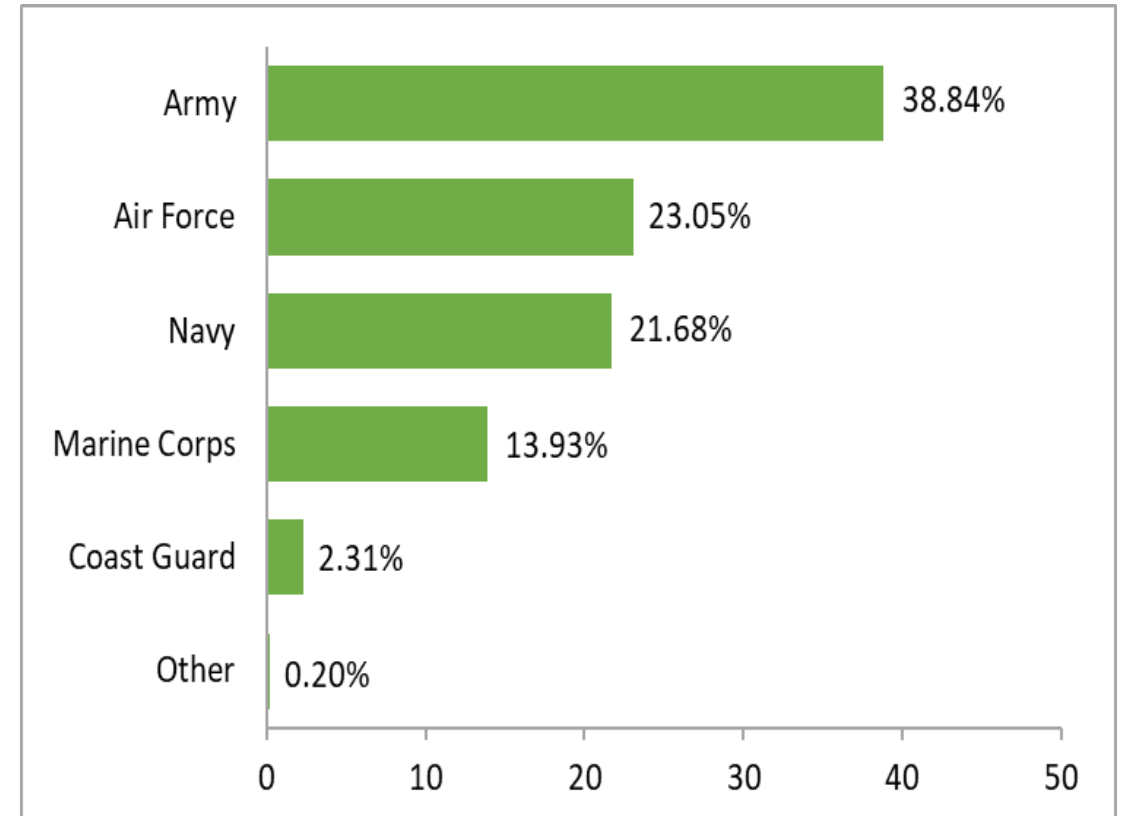
Sources: Department of Defense's Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) and Department of Veteran Affairs' United States Veterans Eligibility Trends and Statistics (USVETS), 2018

Personnel in DEERS not found in USVETS

Personnel Category



Service Branch



Assessing Agreement between Survey Response and Military Administrative Records (DEERS + VA)

B.1.4 Military Service

Has *Owner 1* ever served in any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, including the Coast Guard, the National Guard, or a Reserve component of any service branch?

 Yes

No - Skip to B.1.7 Initial Acquisition Year

in DEERS or VA

ABS Veteran Response

Count Percent	ABS Veteran Response	
	NO	YES
NO	32,500 99.12	900 32.61
YES	300 0.88	1,800 67.39
Total	32,800 100	2,700 100

Note: agreement rates are calculated using 2018 respondent data and calendar year 2018 DEERS and VA data. Owner 1 owns 100% of the firm.

Sources: Respondent data from the Annual Business Survey, Department of Defense DEERS and Department of Veterans Affairs USVETS administrative data, 2018

Additional military coverage of 2018 NES-D from DEERS Records

Personnel Category	Count
Active Duty Component	8,400
National Guard	2,200
Retired	6,400
Reserve Component	4,100
Other	350
Total	21,450

Summary

- VA USVETS data remain the best for identifying business owner veterans
- DoD DEERS data is a good complement to USVETS
 - 1) Allows us to capture military currently serving
 - 2) Provide information on National Guard members, Reservists, Retired, National Guard Reservists
 - 3) Fills in the gap for those older and healthier retirees that do not use VA benefits and thus are not in the USVETS data
- DEERS can serve us well when performing quality assessments of employer-owned military responses
- These data can also be leveraged for frame sampling of veteran business owners and in the imputation process for veterans with missing military responses

Next Steps

- Cases with disagreement results are those in/out of Active Duty
- Aim to increase coverage and agreement rates by creating longitudinal panel of DoD military personnel
 - Capture those who have ever served but are not in VA data or in DoD cross-section
 - Better coverage the longer the panel
- Re-calculate agreement rates using more recent data: PIKs from 2022 ABS and 2018-22 VA-DoD panel
 - Sensitivity analysis with smaller employers w/ fewer owners
- Using ABS info, drill-down on demogs/other characteristics of disagreement cell (e.g., vets in ABS but not in AR (VA or DoD))

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