

Special Surveillance Report Veterans Health Survey

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Office of Analytics

Department of Health and Human Services

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Accessibility Disclosure

We want to make our reports accessible to everyone. If you have any problems related to the accessibility or need any enhanced accessibility, please email data@dhhs.nv.gov.

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Introduction

Nevada Revised Statute 417.126 states that the Director of Veterans Services “prescribe a questionnaire for veterans concerning their experience in the military and any service-connected disabilities and diseases.” Nevada Revised Statute 439.249 states that the Director “annually submits the information obtained through the questionnaire to the Division of Public and Behavioral Health of the Department of Health and Human Services on or before January 31 of each year.”¹

Section 5(1) states that the questionnaire must include questions to obtain the following data:

- a. The veteran’s experience in the military, including, without limitation, the branch of the military in which the veteran served, the veteran’s job while in the military, any battle, conflict, or war in which the veteran served and the locations where the veteran was stationed.
- b. Any service-connected disabilities and diseases, including, without limitation, diseases presumed to be service-connected, from which the veteran may suffer.
- c. Whether the veteran is enrolled with and receiving benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

The questionnaire was available on the Nevada Department of Veterans Services website, <https://veterans.nv.gov/>.

The Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Analytics annually publishes a special surveillance report on veteran health and suicide, which goes in-depth into veteran deaths. Please visit the [Office of Analytics – Data & Reports](#) web page for more information.

Methods

The questionnaire was designed and administered using the Qualtrics online survey platform. The raw data was outputted from Qualtrics into an Excel file on February 1, 2022. The Excel file was then uploaded into SAS (Statistical Analysis System) for data analysis.

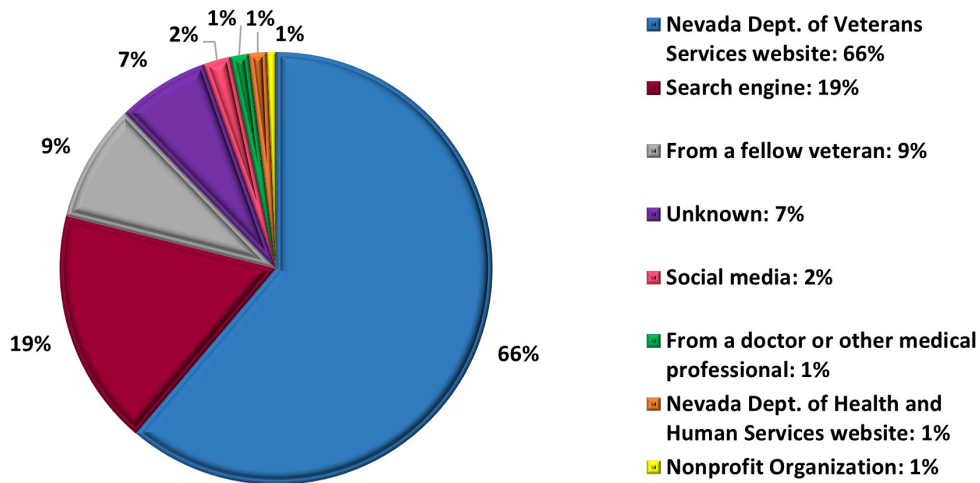
There were 147 responses to the questionnaire between January 31, 2021, and January 31, 2022. An individual may have started the survey, stopped, and re-started later. Qualtrics logged all responses, regardless of whether an individual completed the survey or not and regardless of how many times an individual took the survey before completing it. There is no way to eliminate an individual’s partial surveys and only keep their completed surveys, so all analyses included all responses. Therefore, the 147 responses may consist of multiple responses from the same individual.

Findings

Of the 147 responses to the Nevada veterans' health survey, 74 were complete (50%), and 73 were incomplete (50%). The first year this survey was available was 2020. The 2020 survey yielded 200 responses; of those responses, 119 were complete (60%), and 81 were incomplete (40%). This year, fewer surveys were completed.

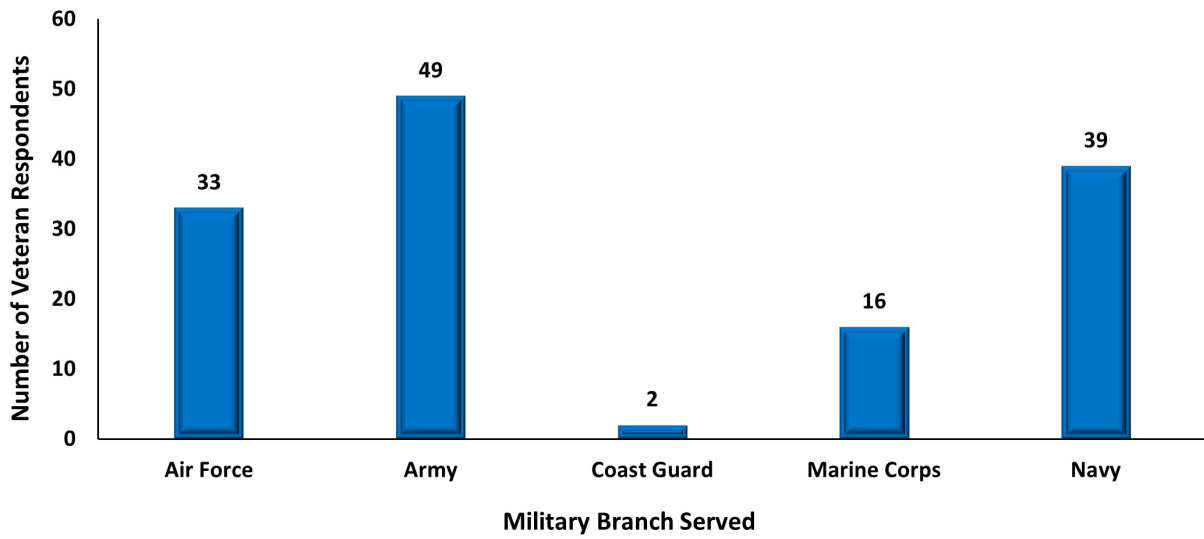
Most respondents heard about the survey directly from the Nevada Department of Veteran Services website (66%), followed by those who found the survey on a search engine (19%) [Figure 1].

Figure 1. How Did You Hear About This Survey?



An individual may have served in more than one branch of the military; therefore, the counts represented in Figure 2 below are not mutually exclusive. About 91% of respondents served in one branch of the military, three percent served in two branches, and one percent served in more than two branches [Figure 2].

Figure 2. In Which Branch of the Military Did You Serve?



Most respondents had served during a wartime era (58%) [Figure 3]. The respondents were asked to list the wartime eras they served, and most had either served during zero or one wartime. Two respondents listed six wartime eras they served [Figure 4].

Figure 3. Did You Serve During a Wartime Era?

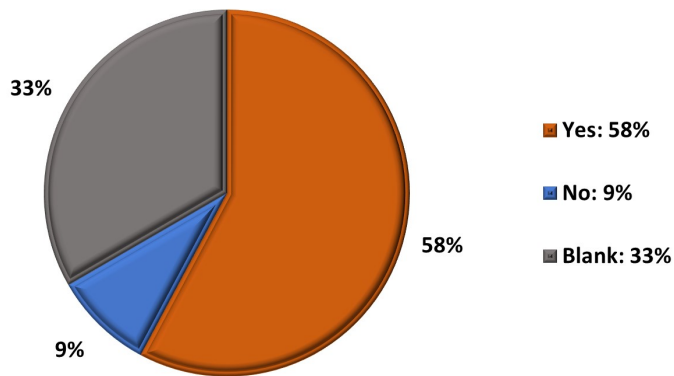
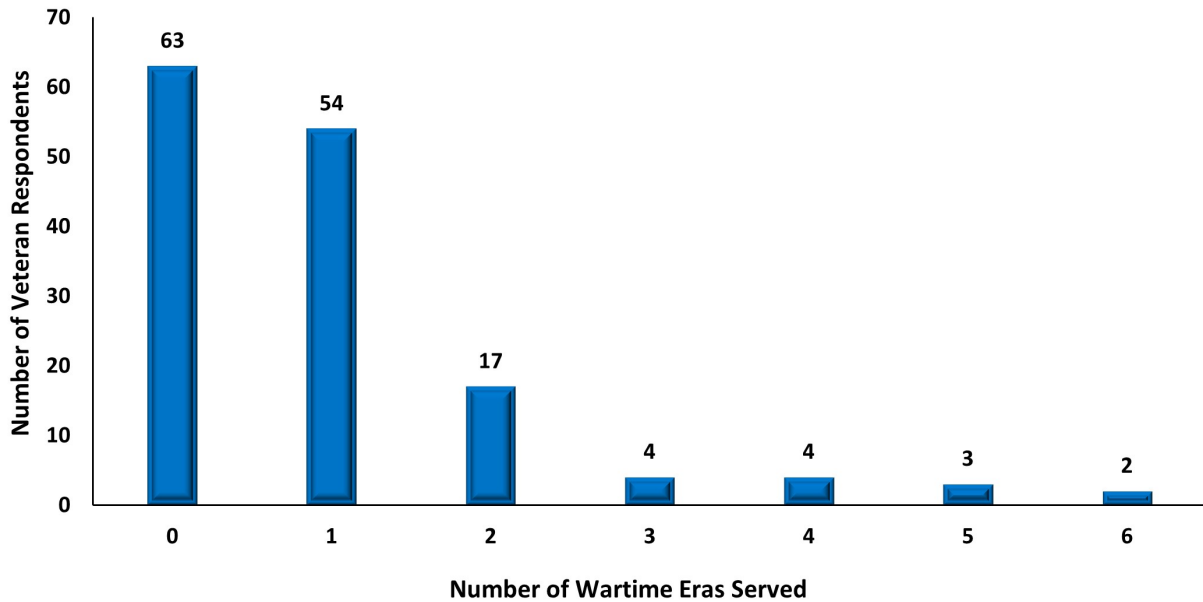
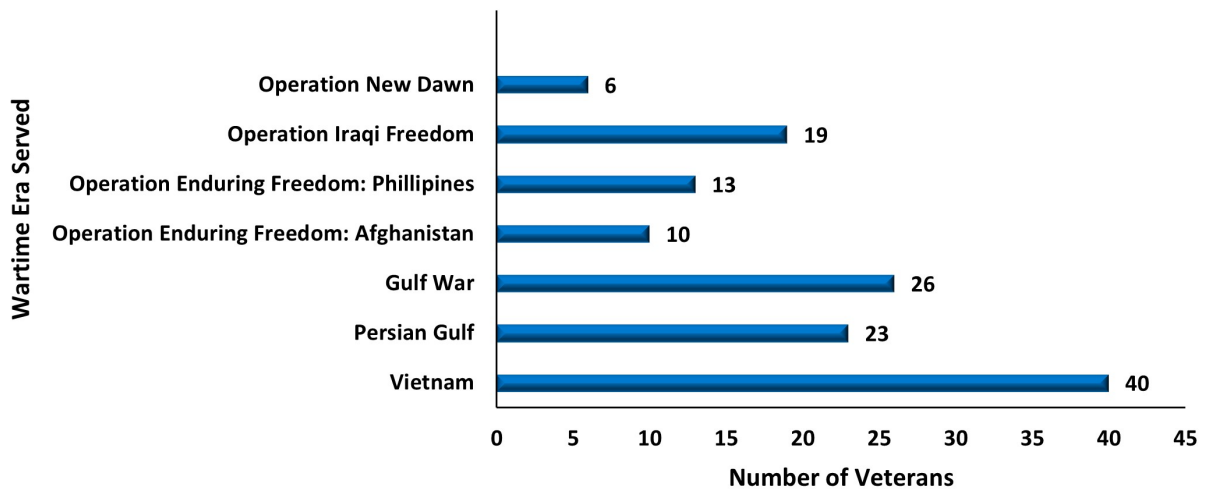


Figure 4. Number of Wartime Eras Served.



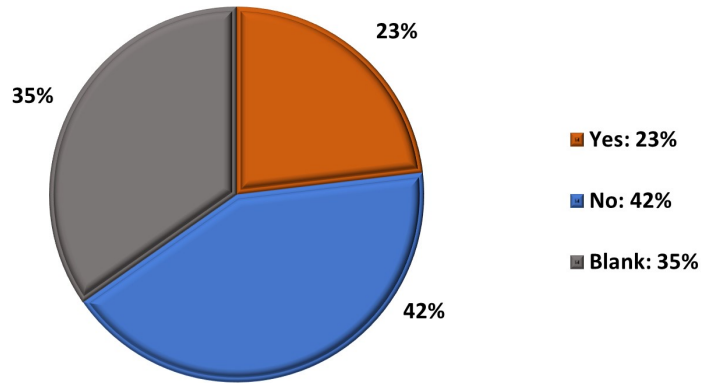
As illustrated in Figure 4 above, an individual may have served in more than one wartime era; therefore, the numbers reflected in Figure 5 below are not mutually exclusive. Of the wartime eras listed, most had served during the Vietnam era, followed by the Gulf War and the Persian Gulf War [Figure 5].

Figure 5. Wartime Era Served.



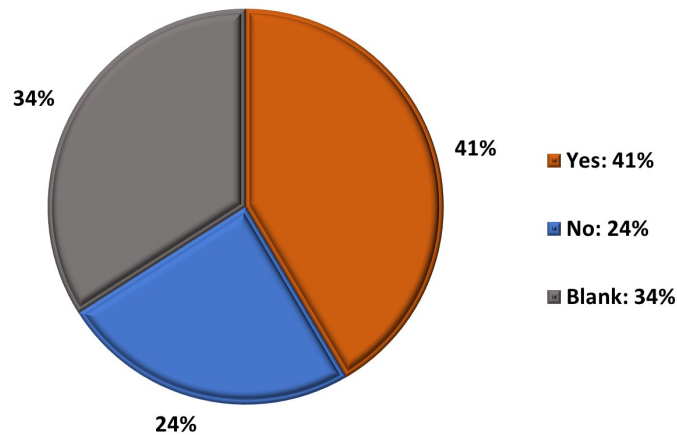
About 23% of the veteran respondents were rewarded a combat badge, ribbon, or medal, depending on the military branch in which they served [Figure 6].

Figure 6. Were You Rewarded a Combat Action Badge/Combat Infantryman Badge (Army), Combat Action Ribbon (Navy, Marines, & Coast Guard), Combat Action Medal (Air Force)?



Approximately 41% of respondents answered that they had been diagnosed with a service-connected disability or disease, including presumptive conditions. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), presumptive service connections are disabilities and conditions that the VA presumes were caused by military service, due to the “unique circumstances of a specific Veteran’s military service”² [Figure 7].

Figure 7. Have You Been Diagnosed with a Service-Connected Disability or Disease, Including Presumptive Condition(s)?

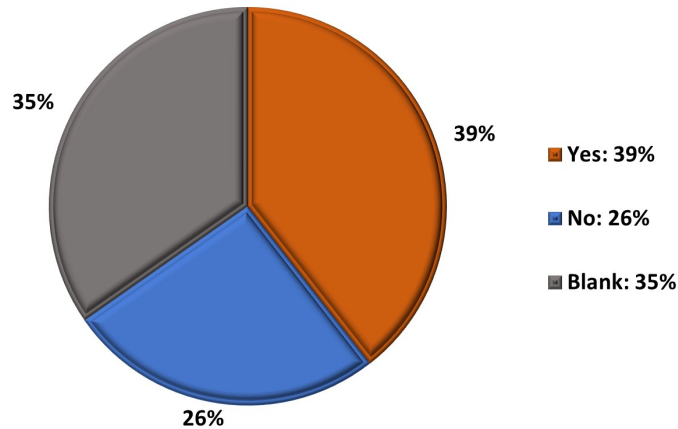


Respondents were asked to list their most recurring service-connected disability or disease from a drop-down list. Although 63% of responses were blank, the reported responses ranged from headaches to different types of cancers [Table 1].

Table 1. What is Your Most Recurring Service-Connected Disability or Disease?

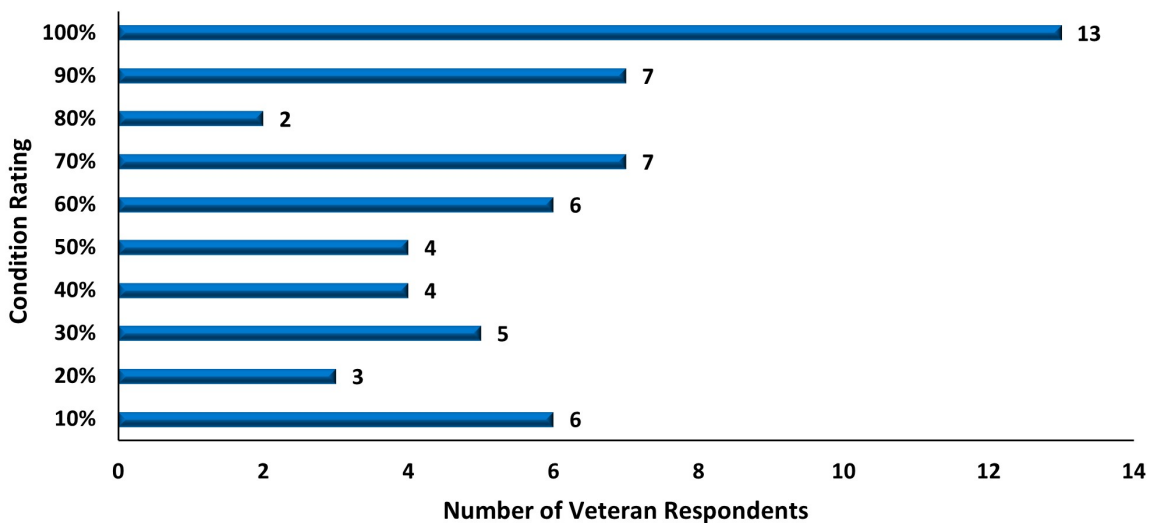
Service-Connected Disability or Disease	Count
Abnormal weight loss and menstrual disorders	2
Anxiety states	4
Atherosclerotic heart disease or hypertensive vascular disease and their complications	3
Breast cancer	1
Chronic fatigue syndrome	1
Diabetes mellitus (type 2)	3
Fibromyalgia	1
Gulf War Syndrome	2
Headache	4
Irritable bowel syndrome	1
Joint pain	5
Multiple myeloma	1
Muscle pain	3
Neurobehavioral effects	2
Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma	1
Osteoporosis	1
Peripheral neuropathy (early-onset)	1
Prostate cancer	3
Signs or symptoms involving the skin	3
Sleep disturbances	9
Stroke and its complications	1

Approximately one-third of respondents responded “yes” to having been rated by the VA for a service-connected disability or disease, including any presumptive condition(s) [Figure 8].



According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the VA assigns a veteran a disability rating “based on the severity of your service-connected condition”.² The assigned rating is then used to determine disability compensation and other VA benefits eligibility. The rating is expressed as a percent. Of the 57 responses to this specific survey question, 23% of respondents (13) were rated at 100% [Figure 9].

Figure 9. What Is the Rating of the Service-Connected Disability or Disease, Including Any Presumptive Condition(s)?



About 39% of respondents reported receiving monthly monetary benefits from the VA, 46% received health care from the VA, and 16% have a disability claim in process [Table 2].

Table 2. VA Benefits Received.

Survey Question	Yes	No	Blank
Are you receiving any monthly monetary benefits from the VA?	39%	26%	35%
Do you receive health care from the VA?	46%	19%	35%
Do you have a disability claim in process?	16%	48%	36%

Conclusion

This report was based on responses from the second annual Veterans Health Survey. As noted, this survey had 147 respondents, which is about 0.1% of the veteran population. Furthermore, only 74 survey responses (50%) were complete. According to the United States Census Bureau, there were 212,507 veterans living in Nevada in 2019.³ With a Nevada veteran population of 212,507, a confidence level of 95%, and a margin of error of 5 (plus or minus accounting for miscalculations, represented as a percent; 5 is standard), the survey sample size should be at least 383 respondents to draw meaningful conclusions.

Because this was only the second year that the survey was conducted, and the survey will be available annually, future years will conceivably be completed by more veterans. Therefore, the results will become more meaningful over time. However, this report does highlight the diverse service-connected diseases and disabilities with which veterans have been diagnosed, including four forms of cancer, sleep disturbances, and various musculoskeletal pains. Responses were from veterans who served in seven different wartime eras, were stationed in 18 other countries, and served across five military branches, which also highlights the range of experience within Nevada's veteran community.

Data Sources

¹Nevada Legislature website <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/>

²U.S Department of Veterans Affairs website <https://www.va.gov/>

³United States Census Bureau website <https://data.census.gov/>