

# *Special Surveillance Report*

## *Veteran Health Survey*

---

*March 2021*

*Office of Analytics on behalf of*



## **Nevada Department of Health and Human Services**

### **DIVISION OF PUBLIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**



Steve Sisolak  
Governor  
State of Nevada

Richard Whitley, MS  
Director  
Department of Health and Human Services

Lisa Sherych  
Administrator  
Division of Public and Behavioral Health

Ihsan Azzam Ph.D., M.D.  
Chief Medical Officer  
Division of Public and Behavioral Health

## Accessibility Disclosure

We understand the importance of making reports accessible to everyone. If you have any problems related to the accessibility or need any enhanced accessibility, please email [data@dhhs.nv.gov](mailto:data@dhhs.nv.gov).

## Table of Contents

<b>Accessibility Disclosure</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Methods</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Findings</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Figure 1. How Did You Hear About This Survey? .....	6
Figure 2. In Which Branch of the Military Did You Serve? .....	6
Figure 3. Did You Serve During a Wartime Era? .....	7
Figure 4. Number of Wartime Eras Served. ....	7
Figure 5. Wartime Era Served. ....	8
Figure 6. Have You Been Diagnosed with a Service-Connected Disability or Disease, Including Presumptive Condition(s)?.....	8
Table 1. List of Service-Connected Disabilities or Diseases. ....	9
Figure 7. Have You Been Rated by the VA for A Service-Connected Disability or Disease, Including Any Presumptive Condition(s)?.....	10
Figure 8 What is the Rating of the Service-Connected Disability or Disease, Including Any Presumptive Condition(s)?.....	10
Table 2. VA Benefits Received.....	11
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Data Sources</b> .....	<b>11</b>

## Acknowledgements

### Prepared by and Additional Information:

Amy Lucas, MS  
Health Resource Analyst II  
Office of Analytics  
Department of Health of Human Services  
State of Nevada  
4126 Technology Way, Suite 200  
Carson City, Nevada 89706  
(775) 684.5895  
[alucas@health.nv.gov](mailto:alucas@health.nv.gov)

### Thank you to following for providing leadership, data, and technical support for this report:

Sandra Atkinson  
Health Resource Analyst II  
Office of Analytics  
Department of Health and Human Services  
State of Nevada

Rachel Jelenic  
Healthcare Initiative Program Manager  
Nevada Department of Veteran Services

Kyra Morgan, MS  
Chief Biostatistician  
Department of Health and Human Services  
State of Nevada

Nathan Orme  
Public Information Officer  
Department of Health and Human Services  
State of Nevada

Jen Thompson  
Health Program Manager II  
Office of Analytics  
Department of Health and Human Services  
State of Nevada

## Introduction

Nevada Assembly Bill 300 (AB300) Section 5(1) states that the Director of Veteran Services “prescribe a questionnaire for veterans concerning their experience in the military and any service-connected disabilities and diseases” and Section 5(2) states the Director “annually submit 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<sup>st</sup> of each year”.<sup>1</sup>

Section 5(1) states that the questionnaire must include questions in order 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 made available on the Nevada Department of Veteran 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. For more information, please visit: [Office of Analytics](#)

## Methods

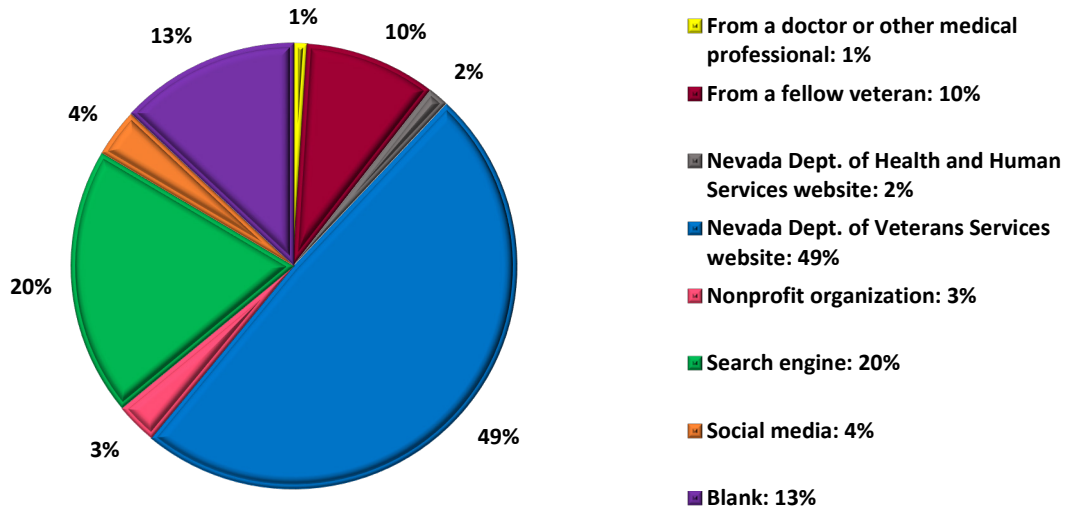
The questionnaire was available using Qualtrics online survey platform. The raw data was outputted from Qualtrics into an excel file on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. The excel file was then uploaded into SAS (Statistical Analysis System) for data analysis.

There were 200 responses to the questionnaire between January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. 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, or how many times an individual took the survey before completing it. There is not a way to eliminate an individual’s partial surveys and only keep their completed survey, so all responses were included in the analyses. Therefore, the 200 responses may include multiple responses from the same individual.

## Findings

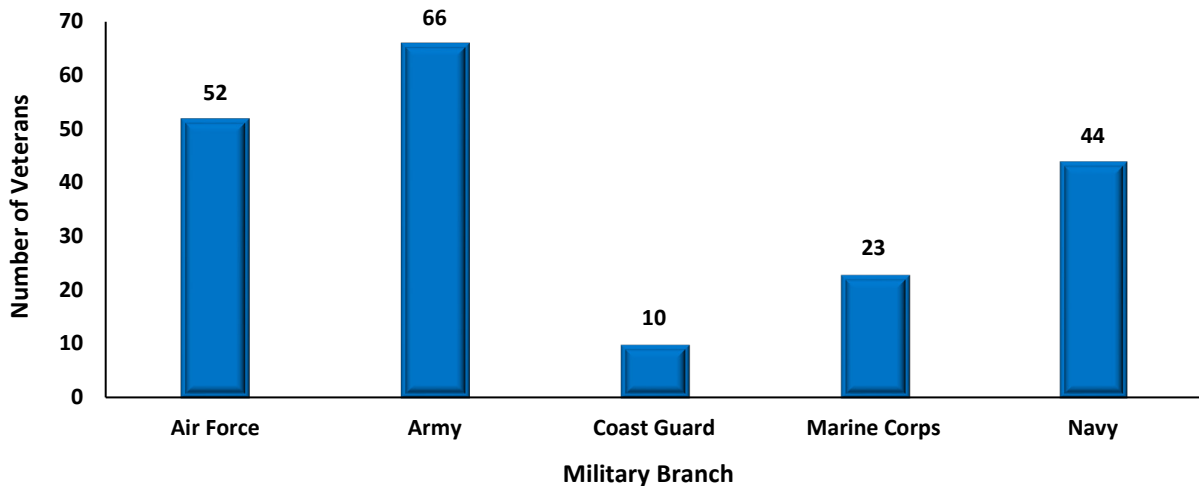
Of the 200 responses to the Nevada veterans' health survey, 119 were complete (60%) and 81 were incomplete (40%).

**Figure 1. How Did You Hear About This Survey?**



Nearly half of respondents heard about the survey directly from the Nevada Department of Veterans Services website (49%), followed by found on a search engine (20%).

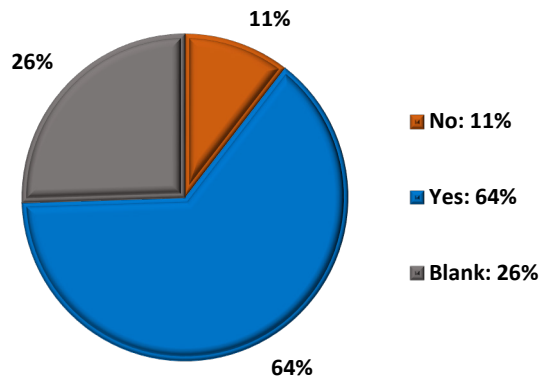
**Figure 2. In Which Branch of the Military Did You Serve?**



An individual may have served in more than one branch of the military, therefore the counts represented in Figure 2 above are not mutually exclusive. Nearly 95% of respondents served in one

branch of the military, five percent served in two branches, and two percent served in more than two branches.

**Figure 3. Did You Serve During a Wartime Era?**



Most respondents had served during a wartime era (64%). The respondents were asked to list the wartime eras served, and a majority had either served during zero or one wartime. One respondent listed seven wartime eras served.

**Figure 4. Number of Wartime Eras Served.**

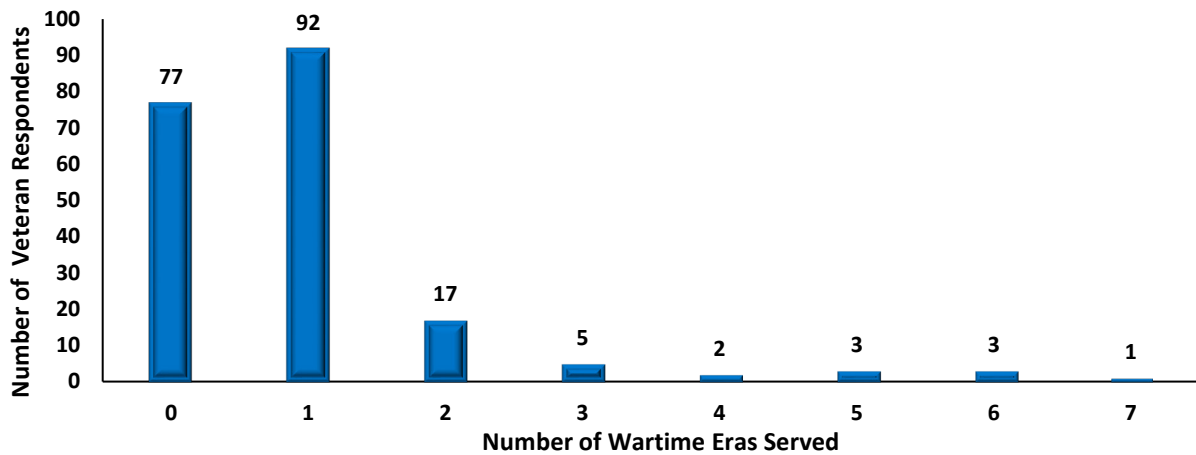
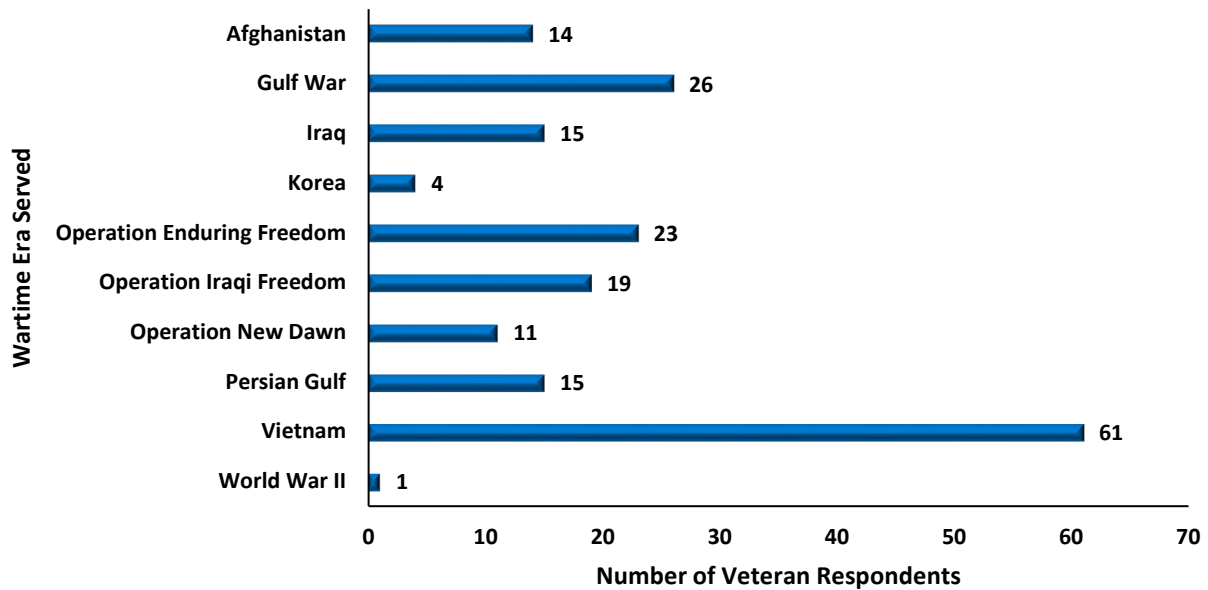
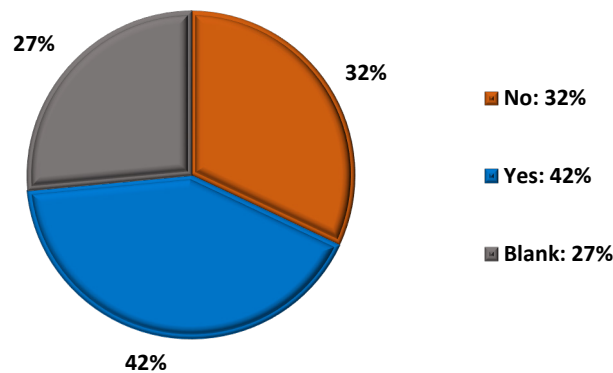


Figure 5. Wartime Era Served.



As illustrated in Figure 4, an individual may have served in more than one wartime era, therefore the numbers reflected in Figure 5 above are not mutually exclusive. Of the wartime eras listed, most had served during the Vietnam era, followed by the Gulf War, and Operation Enduring Freedom. When asked if they had served in direct combat operations, about one-third responded “no” (37%) and one-third responded “yes” (34%).

Figure 6. Have You Been Diagnosed with a Service-Connected Disability or Disease, Including Presumptive Condition(s)?



Approximately 42% 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”.<sup>2</sup>



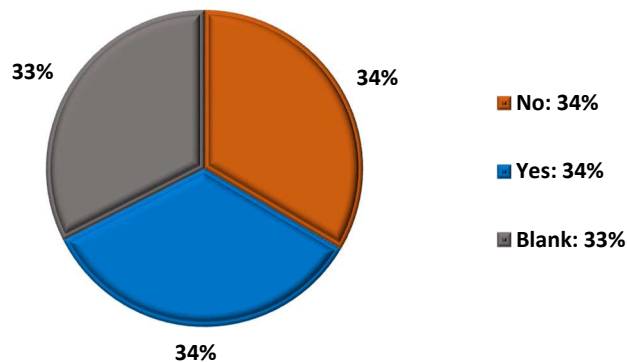
Nevada Veteran Health Report

**Table 1. List of Service-Connected Disabilities or Diseases.**

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
Cancer of the bone	1
Cancer of the brain	1
Cancer of the ovaries	1
Cardiovascular signs or symptoms	3
Chronic B-cell leukemias including but not limited to hairy cell leukemia and chronic lymphocytic leukemia	1
Diabetes mellitus Type 2	4
Esophageal cancer	1
Female infertility	1
Fibromyalgia	1
Functional gastrointestinal disorders	3
Gastrointestinal signs or symptoms	2
Gulf War syndrome	4
Headache	2
Irritable bowel syndrome	1
Joint pain	4
Lung cancer	1
Miscarriage	1
Muscle pain	2
Neurobehavioral effects	2
Neurological signs or respiratory system (upper or lower)	2
Peripheral neuropathy, early-onset	1
Peripheral neuropathy except where related to infectious causes	2
Post-traumatic osteoarthritis	2
Prostate cancer	1
Signs or symptoms involving the skin	2
Sleep disturbances	1
West Nile virus	1

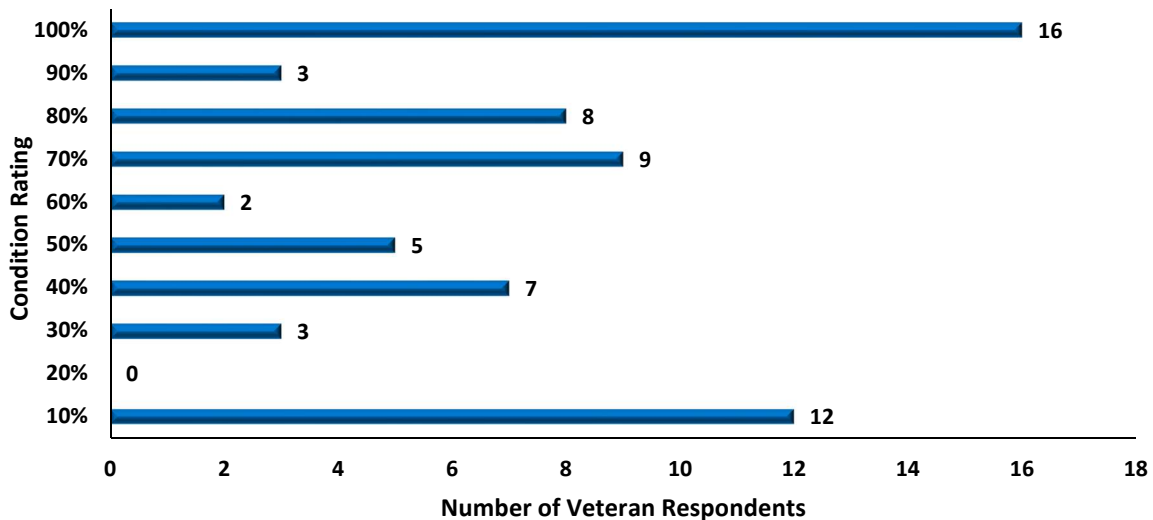
Respondents were asked to list their service-connected disability or disease. The responses were diverse, with an array from headaches to different types of cancers.

**Figure 7. Have You Been Rated by the VA for A Service-Connected Disability or Disease, Including Any Presumptive Condition(s)?**



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). 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”.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 8. What is the Rating of the Service-Connected Disability or Disease, Including Any Presumptive Condition(s)?**



The assigned rating is then used to determine disability compensation and other VA benefit eligibility. The rating is expressed as a percent. Of the 65 responses to the survey question, 25% of respondents (16) were rated at 100%.

**Table 2. VA Benefits Received.**

Survey Question	Yes	No	Blank
Are you receiving any monthly monetary benefits from the VA?	36%	33%	32%
Do you receive health care from the VA?	45%	25%	32%
Do you have a disability claim in process?	18%	48%	34%

About 36% of respondents reported receiving monthly monetary benefits from the VA, 45% receive health care from the VA, and 18% have a disability claim in process.

## Conclusion

This report was based off responses from the first Veteran Health Survey. This survey had a total of 200 respondents, which is about 0.1% of the veteran population. Furthermore, only 119 survey responses (60%) were complete. According to the United States Census Bureau, there were 212,507 veterans living in Nevada in 2019.<sup>3</sup> 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 the first year that the survey was conducted, and the survey will be available annually going forward, future years will conceivably be completed by more veterans and 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 eight forms of cancer, neuropathies, and various musculoskeletal pains. The responses were from veterans who served in 10 different wartime eras, were stationed in 10 different countries, and across five branches of the military.

## Data Sources

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

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

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