

# ONE IN 10 IS A VETERAN

A look at military veterans in the state with the highest percentage

By **EDDIE HUNSINGER**

At 10 percent, Alaska has a higher share of veterans than any other state. Four other states come close at 9 percent and nationwide it's 7 percent.

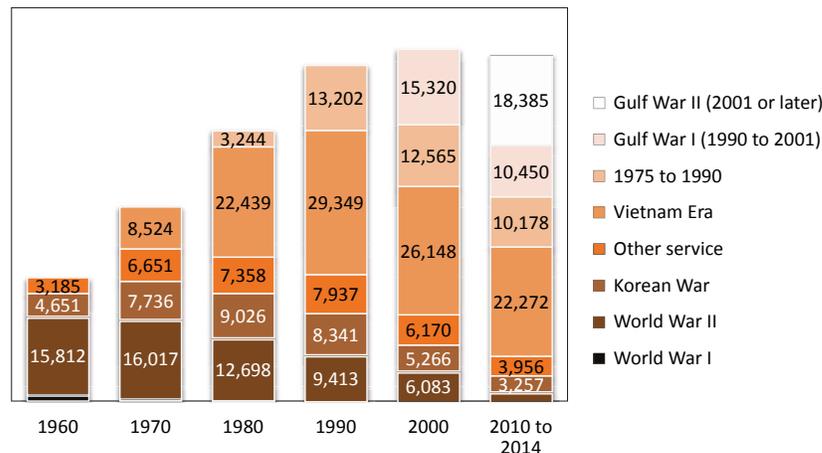
Alaska's high percentage of veterans, defined here as civilians who were previously active duty in any branch of the military including the Coast Guard, is tied to our military history. During World War II, the U.S. established major military bases near Anchorage and Fairbanks and built a number of other facilities, such as a Naval Air Station on Kodiak Island. Military

presence peaked in 1943, when more than 150,000 personnel represented over 60 percent of the state's population.

Just 25,000 remained by 1950, but the military stayed influential with the start of the decades-long Cold War. During the Korean War of the 1950s, the military population jumped to 50,000.

Just after statehood, the 1960 Census counted 32,692 military personnel in Alaska, representing 14 percent of the state. There were also 25,054 veterans, who were 11 percent of the population that year. Most had served during World War II or the Korean War, and 1,406 were World War I veterans. (See Exhibit 1.)

## 1 Veterans By Era Served ALASKA, 1960 TO 2014



Notes: This exhibit does not include people who are currently serving. "Other service" includes veterans who served only between World Wars I and II, or only between the Korean War and Vietnam era. Data are adjusted for multi-era veterans.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 to 2014 American Community Survey

In the decades since statehood, the number of World War II and Korean War veterans has steadily declined, with less than 6,000 here today. The last of the World War I veterans passed away sometime after 1990, when just 10 were counted in the census in Alaska.

## Many Vietnam veterans

By the 1970 Census, Alaska had a growing number of Vietnam War veterans. Vietnam vets made up 22 percent of Alaska's veteran population that year, and many more completed their service and settled in Alaska during the high-growth 1970s and '80s. By 1990, nearly 30,000 Vietnam vets made up 43 percent of all Alaska veterans.

The Cold War continued in the 15 years between the Vietnam era and the 1990 Gulf War, and Alaska and the nation maintained large military populations. Alaska's current veteran population includes more than 10,000 who served at some time during the 1975 to 1990 period.

## Numbers of Iraq, Afghanistan vets still growing

Those who served in the 1990 Gulf War, up to 2001, accounted for 21 percent of Alaska's veterans in 2000. Many of these went on to serve again in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in the 2000s and 2010s.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's latest American Community Survey, Alaska is home to more than 18,000 veterans who served after 2001 alone, a number that is certain to climb as many of today's 20,000-plus active-duty personnel complete their service.

## Veterans older on average

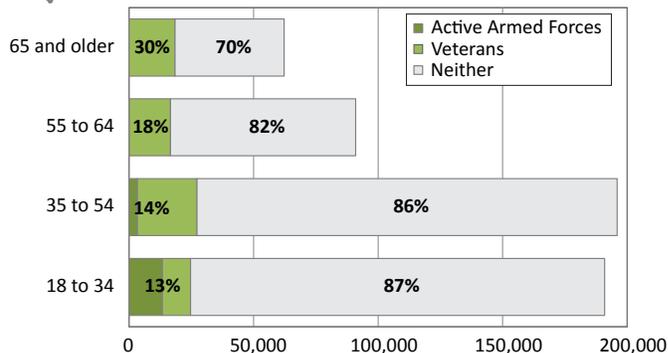
Veterans and those currently serving made up 13 percent of Alaska's 18-to-34-year-old population over the 2010 to 2014 period. (See Exhibit 2.)

Thirty percent of Alaska's seniors have served in the military — the highest of any age group — and while people 65 or older were 9 percent of Alaska's total population, veterans in that age group represented 21 percent of the veteran and active-duty population.

Although veterans tend to be older on average than Alaskans overall, veterans are younger here than nationwide. In the U.S. as a whole, senior citizens were 43 percent of the national veteran

# 2 Higher Shares at Older Ages

## ALASKA VETERANS, 2010 TO 2014



Note: This is a combination of American Community Survey data on veterans and active-duty Armed Forces.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 to 2014 American Community Survey

# 3 Veterans by Alaska Area

## 2010 to 2014

	Veterans		Percent Veterans	
	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error
<b>Alaska</b>	<b>70,370</b>	<b>+/-1,609</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>+/-0.2%</b>
Aleutians East Borough	99	+/-33	3%	+/-1.0%
Aleutians West Census Area	340	+/-95	6%	+/-1.7%
Anchorage, Municipality	30,203	+/-1,185	10%	+/-0.4%
Bethel Census Area	843	+/-127	5%	+/-0.7%
Bristol Bay Borough	83	+/-19	8%	+/-1.9%
Denali Borough	217	+/-77	11%	+/-3.8%
Dillingham Census Area	184	+/-32	4%	+/-0.6%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	10,979	+/-732	11%	+/-0.7%
Haines Borough	230	+/-80	9%	+/-3.1%
Hoonah-Angoon CA	194	+/-43	9%	+/-2.0%
Juneau, City and Borough	2,548	+/-266	8%	+/-0.8%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	5,949	+/-423	10%	+/-0.7%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	1,329	+/-150	10%	+/-1.1%
Kodiak Island Borough	1,024	+/-234	7%	+/-1.7%
Kusilvak Census Area	281	+/-35	4%	+/-0.4%
Lake and Peninsula Borough	64	+/-20	4%	+/-1.3%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	9,775	+/-400	10%	+/-0.4%
Nome Census Area	573	+/-59	6%	+/-0.6%
North Slope Borough	721	+/-137	7%	+/-1.4%
Northwest Arctic Borough	328	+/-63	4%	+/-0.8%
Petersburg Borough	268	+/-58	8%	+/-1.8%
Prince of Wales-Hyder CA	592	+/-71	9%	+/-1.1%
Sitka, City and Borough	764	+/-122	9%	+/-1.4%
Skagway, Municipality	68	+/-36	7%	+/-3.6%
Southeast Fairbanks CA	951	+/-144	14%	+/-2.0%
Valdez-Cordova CA	868	+/-141	9%	+/-1.5%
Wrangell, City and Borough	388	+/-80	16%	+/-3.4%
Yakutat, City and Borough	46	+/-15	7%	+/-2.4%
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	461	+/-39	8%	+/-0.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 to 2014 American Community Survey

and active-duty population between 2010 and 2014.

The percentage of women in the veteran and active-duty population has grown, from 7 percent in 1980 to 11 percent in 2000 to 13 percent over the 2010 to 2014 period. The nationwide percentage for 2010 to 2014 was 8 percent, up from 6 percent in 2000 and 4 percent in 1980.

## Most live near the bases

Alaska's population centers of Anchorage and the Matanuska-Susitna and Fairbanks North Star boroughs (see exhibits 3 and 6), which are home to or near the state's major military bases, have over 70 percent of Alaska's veterans. Approximately 40,000 veterans (57 percent) live in the Anchorage/Mat-Su region and another 11,000 (16 percent) live in the Fairbanks area.

Areas with the most veterans per capita are the City and Borough of Wrangell (16 percent), Southeast Fairbanks Census Area (home to Fort Greely; 14 percent), and the Fairbanks North Star and Denali boroughs (11 percent each; Denali is home to Clear Air Force Station).

## Similar education, employment

Alaska veterans 25 and older are more likely to have attended college than nonveterans — 71 percent versus 63 percent — but about as likely to have a bachelor's degree, at 27 and 28 percent respectively. (See Exhibit 4.)

# 5 Veteran Employment and Income

ALASKA, 2010 TO 2014

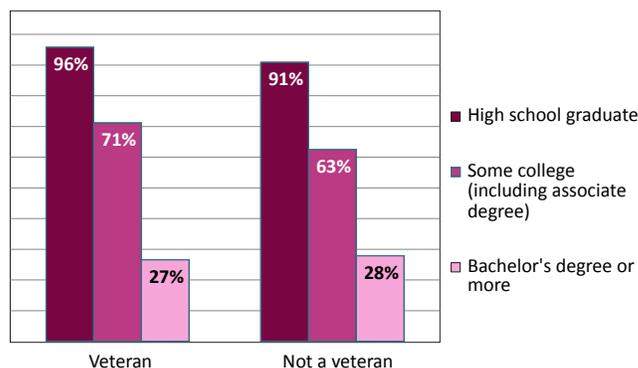
	Veterans		Nonveterans	
	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error
<b>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</b>				
Civilian population 18 to 64 years	51,868	+/-1,496	409,325	+/-1,641
Labor force participation rate	81%	+/-1.1%	78%	+/-0.5%
Civilian labor force 18 to 64 years	42,230	+/-1,401	317,383	+/-2,335
Unemployment rate	7%	+/-1.0%	9%	+/-0.3%
<b>MEDIAN INCOME IN THE PAST YEAR (IN 2014 DOLLARS)</b>				
Civilian population 18 years and over with income	\$50,674	+/- \$1,207	\$30,858	+/- \$418
<b>POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS</b>				
Civilian population 18 years and over for whom poverty status is determined	69,529	+/-1,594	445,417	+/-1,758
Below poverty in the past 12 months	5%	+/-0.5%	10%	+/-0.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 to 2014 American Community Survey

# 4

## Similar Education for Vets

ALASKA, 2010 TO 2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 to 2014 American Community Survey

The nationwide pattern is similar. Sixty-three percent of U.S. veterans attended college and 27 percent have at least a bachelor's degree.

Alaska's veterans were also a bit more likely to be working and less likely to be unemployed. Just over 80 percent ages 18 to 64 were participating in the labor force — meaning working or actively seeking work — which is a bit higher than nonveterans at 78 percent. Seven percent were unemployed versus 9 percent of nonveterans. (See Exhibit 5.)

## Higher income related to age

Veterans had significantly higher incomes than nonveterans — about \$20,000 more per year — but this is partly due to age. Vets tend to be further into their careers, and more are in age groups that have higher incomes overall.

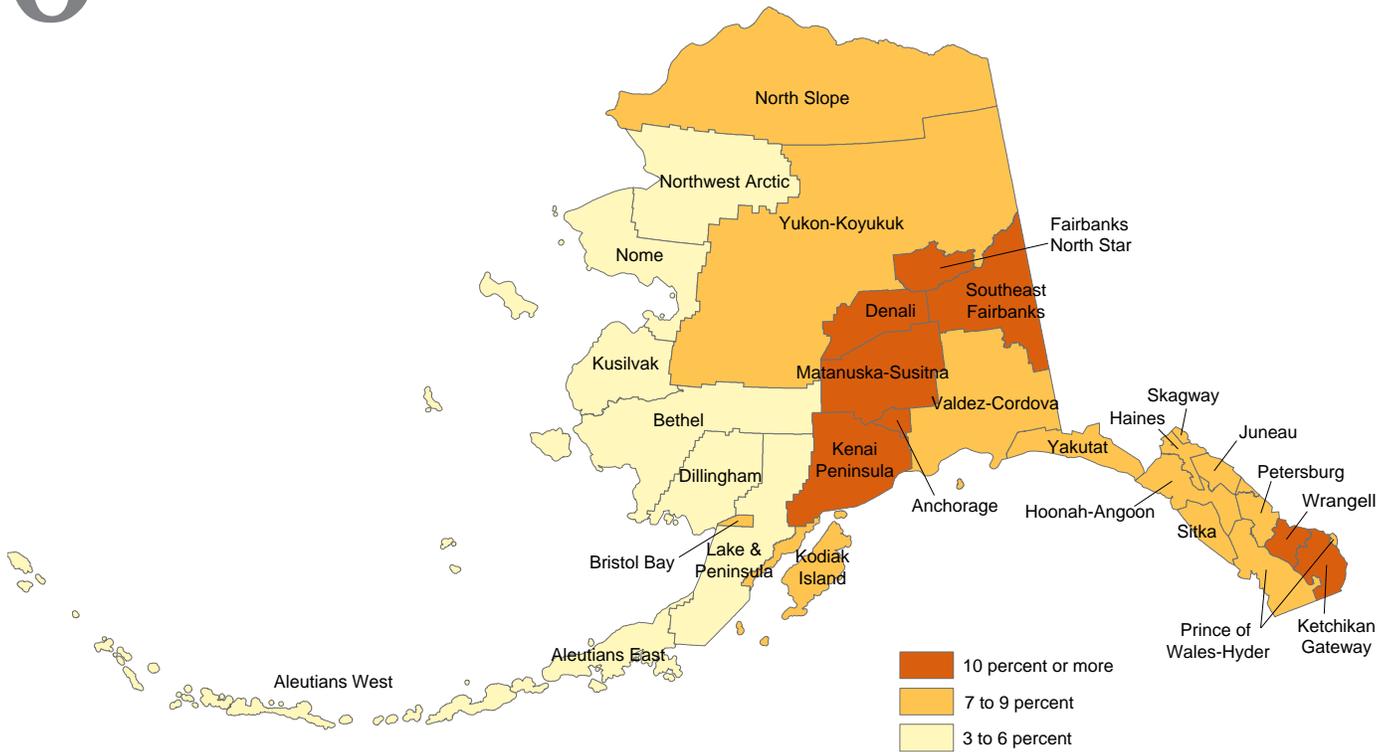
Poverty data also reflect this age structure. While about 10 percent of nonveteran adults were in poverty from 2010 to 2014, just 5 percent of veterans were. Statewide, adults in the younger age groups have the highest rates of poverty, and those 50 or older have lower rates.

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# 6

## More Veterans per capita in Southcentral

ALASKA, 2010 TO 2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 to 2014 American Community Survey

### For more on veterans

U.S. Census Bureau, Data on Veterans: <http://www.census.gov/hhes/veterans/data/>

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics: <http://www.va.gov/vetdata/>