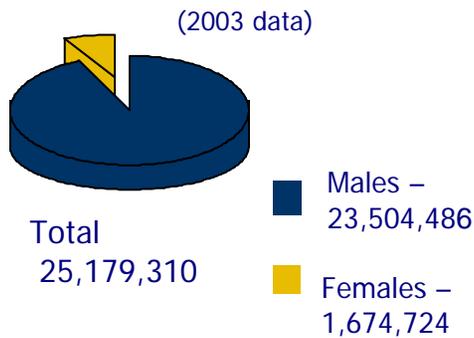


The 2004 World Almanac and Book of Facts stated that in 1973, 2.5% of individuals in the U.S. armed forces were women. By mid-2000, women made up 14% and this figure had grown to 15.1% by January 2003. In Vietnam, 90% of women served in traditional female occupations as nurses, doctors, clerks, and administrative personnel. However, in the first Gulf War, fewer than half of female personnel held traditional roles.

Veteran population in the U.S. and Puerto Rico by Gender



Number of Women Who Served in US Military Conflict:

- Gulf I - 41,000
- Panama – 770
- Grenada – 170
- Vietnam - 7,500
- Korea - 48,000
- World War II - 350,000
- World War I - 35,000

VA has responded to the growing number of women veterans by establishing the Center for Women Veterans and the Veterans Health Administration Women Veterans Health Program. Each VA medical center and Veterans Benefits Administration Regional Office has a Women Veterans Program Manager or Women Veterans Coordinator designated to serve as an advocate for women veterans.

For additional information:
<http://www1.va.gov/wvhp/>

Women Veterans Health Program
 Washington, DC
 (202) 273-8577

**Department of Veterans Affairs
 Veterans Health Administration
 Office of Public Health and
 Environmental Hazards (13)**



Through the years, women who have served their country in the military have been essential to maintaining our free way of life.

Patriotism Knows No Gender

June 2004

IB 10-183
 P96057

ORIENTATION BROCHURE



THROUGH THE YEARS

*We are mothers; daughters;
 sisters; aunts; or nieces.
 We have served in defense of
 America with dedication,
 courage and
 patriotism in times of conflict
 and in times of peace.*

**We Are Women
 Veterans**



From the birth of this Nation, women have played key roles serving our country, whether it was tending to manpower shortages on the home front or dressing wounds on the battleground. Womens' service to our country in an enhanced capacity is directly related to societal changes that opened doors to roles of women across a wide range of professions.

The history of women in the military began more than 220 years ago with those who served in the Revolution. It continues today with those serving in Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom in our fight against terrorism.

During the American Revolution, women disguised themselves as men to join the Continental Army. During the Civil War, they provided medical care, foraged for supplies, cooked, sewed, and were scouts and couriers. Over 1,500 nurses served with the Army in the Spanish-American War.



Women were there during the two World Wars. During World War II, members of the Women's Army Corps (WAC) were the first women other than nurses to serve within the ranks

of the United States Army. Initially, both the military and the American public initially had difficulty accepting the concept of women in uniform.

However, political and military leaders, faced with fighting a two-front war and supplying men and materiel for that war while continuing to send lend-lease material to the Allies, realized that women could supply the additional resources so desperately needed in the military and industrial sectors. From the beaches of Normandy to the Pacific Islands, women served and were wounded, imprisoned, and gave their lives.

In June of 1950, as the overall numbers for women in the military dropped to a post war low, the North Korean Communists crossed the 38th parallel, known as "The Forgotten War." President Truman ordered troops into South Korea and within a few days the Army Nurse Corps was also there. During the Korean War, over 48,000 women were on active duty.

Women served in Vietnam in all branches of service. These women served as professional nurses, physical therapists, occupational



therapists, air traffic controllers, aerial reconnaissance photographers, support staff, intelligence and language specialists and many other positions. They served as officers, as well as enlisted women; there were young women in their early twenties with barely two years in service and career women over forty. Women suffered the same hardships as the men in many cases and were often in the line of fire from rockets and mortars.



Desert Storm marked the largest deployment of women to a combat theater in U.S. history. More than 41,000 women served in the Gulf, flying helicopters on reconnaissance and search and rescue missions, driving convoys, staffing Patriot missile placements, piloting planes and guarding POWs, among other duties.



(USAF photo by SSgt. William Greer)

The United States remains the world's most capable and powerful military, with service personnel who now are the best person in each job, regardless of gender.