Women Veterans: Who are they and how are they doing?

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Setting the stage

• Who are they?
  – Basic demographics by cohort

• How and why does military service affects civilian work life?
  – Employment, earnings, also educational attainment
  – **Mechanisms** generating outcomes
    • Employer attitudes, decisions & behaviors
    • Public meanings of military service
    • Veterans’ attitudes, decisions & behaviors
Today’s Focus

*Differences between women veterans*
And non-serving women peers, across cohorts

*Are women veterans unique?*
Labor force participation, Unemployment, Earnings, & College enrollment

*Are employers discriminating against women veterans in hiring?*
Resume audit study
Demographic Data

• Current Population Survey
  – Charts: March data, 1988-2012 pooled
  – Regression: MORG, 2005-2012 pooled
  – National data source for labor force statistics, includes veteran status, wages (not just HH income), college enrollment (at older ages)
    • Lots it doesn’t capture!!!
  – Pooling years allows for subgroup analyses
    • Gender, race/ethnicity, education
Highest rates of military service are found among the WWII cohort, followed by the AVF cohort who saw the sharpest rise in % female in the armed forces.
Highest proportion veteran among women from WWII, AVF and Vietnam cohorts.
Among women veterans, most are from the AVF, OEF/OIF cohort
Today, most women veterans are from AVF, OEF/OIF, and Vietnam cohorts.
Veterans educational advantage varies by cohort: After Vietnam, veterans less likely to have BA+ than civilian peers.

How will the post 9/11 GI Bill alter this emerging pattern?
Women veterans have become racially and ethnically diverse, with Hispanics the predominant minority group among OEF/OIF veterans.
OEF/OIF veteran more likely to be married and divorced than civilian peers. 50% of them are married to another veteran.
OEF/OIF women have greater childrearing responsibilities than their peers.
OEF/OIF women veterans experience higher unemployment than their civilian peers.
Women veterans have higher personal income than their civilian peers

WHY?

Is there something unique about women veterans’ unemployment compared with male counterparts?
## Methods

- **No-frills multiple regression**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unemployment</th>
<th>Earnings</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Logistic regression</td>
<td>GLM: log link, gamma family</td>
<td>Logistic regression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Controls

- **Group A:**
  - Veteran post 9/11, Age, Age², sex, race, education, marital status, urban/rural, child <5 at home
  - Industry, occupation, sector

### Interactions

- Sex, race, education

- Sex, race, education

- Sex, race, education
Controlling for demographics, all veterans experience ~50-65% higher odds of unemployment than non-veterans.

### Odds of Unemployment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Additive</th>
<th>Interaction Veteran*Sex</th>
<th>Interaction Veteran*Race</th>
<th>Interaction Veteran*Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veteran: Served since 9/11</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.50***</td>
<td>1.65***</td>
<td>1.53***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran 9/11×Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.38*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Veteran 9/11×Black</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.62*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veteran 9/11×Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veteran 9/11×Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veteran 9/11×LHS</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran 9/11×Some College</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran 9/11×BA+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>296,513</td>
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</tr>
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Legend: * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Reference is: Non-veteran, never married, HS/GED, white, rural, no children <5
The veteran unemployment “penalty” is ~38% higher among female veterans (compared to male veterans)

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Conclusion and Challenges

• Veteran unemployment “penalty” is worse among women veterans compared with male veterans.
• Not fully explained by different compositional characteristics (age, education, family, rural/urban)

• Nationally representative data have little information on mechanisms
  – Without a WHY, policy may be inefficient/ineffective
  – Difficult for researchers to get at these mechanisms, especially among subgroups
    • Qualitative approaches, but difficulty identifying sampling frame without DoD/VA cooperation
What to do?

• **Mechanisms** generating veteran labor forces outcomes
  – Employer attitudes, decisions & behaviors
  – Public meanings of military service
  – Veterans’ attitudes, decisions & behaviors
ARE EMPLOYERS DISCRIMINATING AGAINST WOMEN VETERANS IN HIRING?
Theoretical explanations

Selection

“Capital" perspectives
– Human
– Social
– Cultural
– Bridging environment: these changes most beneficial for disadvantaged groups

Signalling/screening hypothesis:
• Signal as information shortcut
  – Signal that screening criteria met or exceeded, selectivity
  – Signal meaning may vary across employers, industries, markets
Basic Correspondence Audit Design

• Send matched sets of resumes in response to advertised positions (each matched unit is called a `team').
• Convey characteristics of interest “on paper” (e.g. military experience, race, gender)
• Measure employer response as callback/e-mail for interview
• Run over several month period (depends on power calculations ex-ante)
Kansas City: A large-scale study of hiring

Sample: all entry level jobs accepting faxed resumes advertised in the KC Star online and in print.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Military Treatment</th>
<th>Civilian Control 1</th>
<th>Civilian Control 2</th>
<th># tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Clerk HS</td>
<td>Clerk HS</td>
<td>Clerk BA</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Clerk HS</td>
<td>Clerk HS</td>
<td>Clerk BA</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Clerk HS</td>
<td>Clerk HS</td>
<td>Clerk BA</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Clerk HS</td>
<td>Clerk HS</td>
<td>Clerk BA</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Callbacks: Female Veteran Advantage

- White and black FEMALE veterans preferred by employers
- Military-BA contrast significant, $p < 0.05$
- Military-HS contrast marginal sig., $p < 0.10$ for white women
Callbacks: Male Veterans Treated Equally

- White and black MALE veterans may be preferred by employers
- But not statistically significant
- Lower callback rates for men than women, but men tested during worse job market

![Graph showing callback rates for Black and White male veterans with different education levels.](image)
Summary of findings

• Female veterans clearly preferred over civilian equals
• Male veterans face no clear hiring disadvantage or advantage
• No race differentials in treatment of veterans (no “bridging”)

Experiment suggests discrimination is NOT a primary reason for high veteran unemployment, conditional on having transferrable skills.

Job search is a process of matching:
• Job seekers play an important role in their own search.
• Are women doing something differently here?
• Ensure women veterans have good job search skills!
Thank you!

Questions?

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