



A Primer on Military Life and Culture

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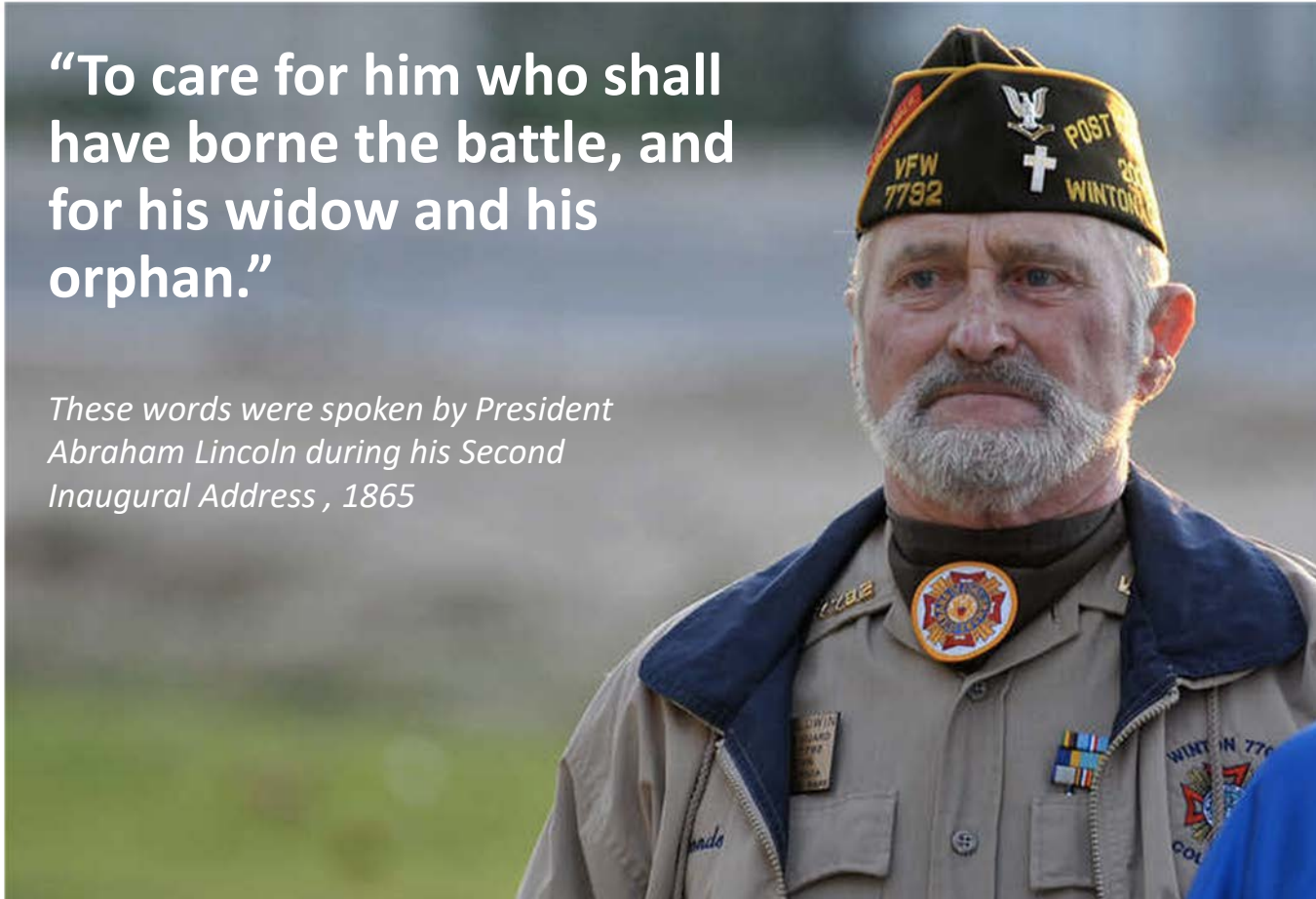
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
New Jersey Health Care System

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The VA Mission Statement

**“To care for him who shall
have borne the battle, and
for his widow and his
orphan.”**

*These words were spoken by President
Abraham Lincoln during his Second
Inaugural Address , 1865*

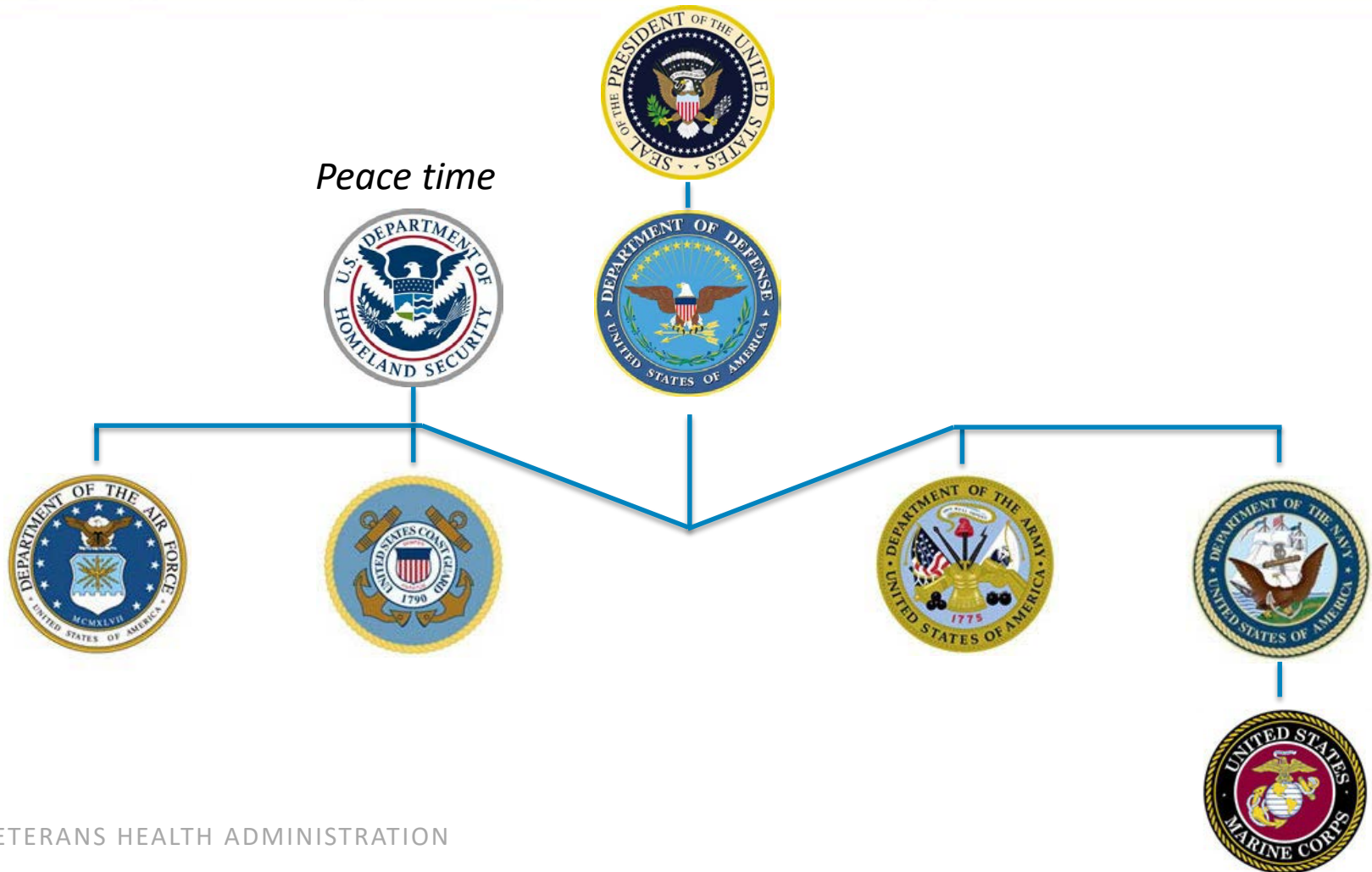


Presentation Overview

- Military Structure
- Life in the Military

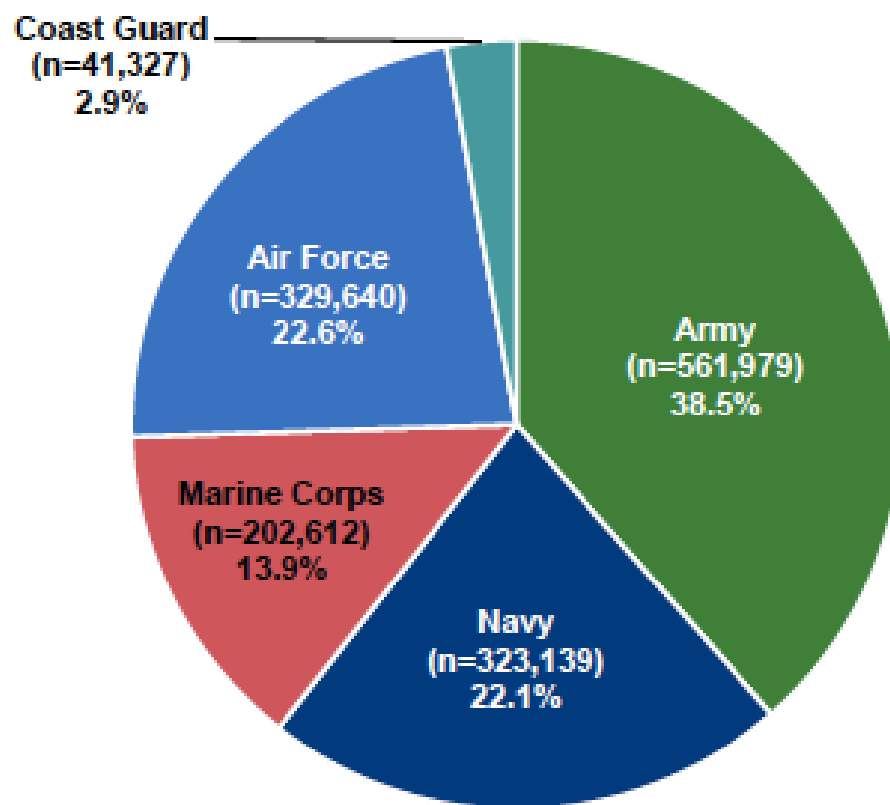


America's Military



America's Military

*Approximately 1.5 million
service members*



Department of the Army

- About 550,000 active duty members
- Largest component of the military
- The oldest service branch, founded in 1775
- Historically, the Army was the service responsible for land-based operations, though soldiers now serve on ground, air and sea.

Members of the Army are known as *soldiers*. While the popularly held image of a soldier is that of an infantryman, Army personnel serve in a wide range of jobs. Elite groups within the Army, such as the Army Rangers and Special Forces, receive advanced training to carry out specialized missions.



Department of the Air Force

- Initially started as part of the Army
- Gained official recognition as own branch in 1947
- Air Force mission: “To fly, fight and win...in air, space, and cyberspace.”

Members of the Air Force are referred to as *airmen*. Only a very small percentage of the Air Force’s 325,000 members pilot aircraft, with the majority of the force working in support of these fliers and the mission.



Department of the Navy

- Consists of the Navy and the Marine Corps
- Founded in 1775, suspended and then reestablished in 1797
- Historically been the branch of service responsible for sea-based operations.

The branch's 330,000 active duty members-- known as *sailors*-- may serve on or under the sea, on land or in the air.

As with other branches, the scope of the Navy is broad and includes not only submarines and aircraft carriers but also elite units such as the Navy SEALs (acronym for Sea, Air and Land).



United States Marine Corps

- Highly deployable and combat-oriented force Specialized in amphibious assaults and expeditionary warfare
- Every *Marine* is trained as a rifleman
- Semper Fidelis (“Always Faithful”)

While the Marine Corps is a separate with its own military hierarchy, the Navy provides many of support services (logistics, transportation, medical care) to all 220,000 Marines.



United States Coast Guard

Combination of several formerly distinct services: the Lighthouse Service, the Revenue Cutter Service, the Steamboat Inspection Service, and U.S. Lifesaving Service.

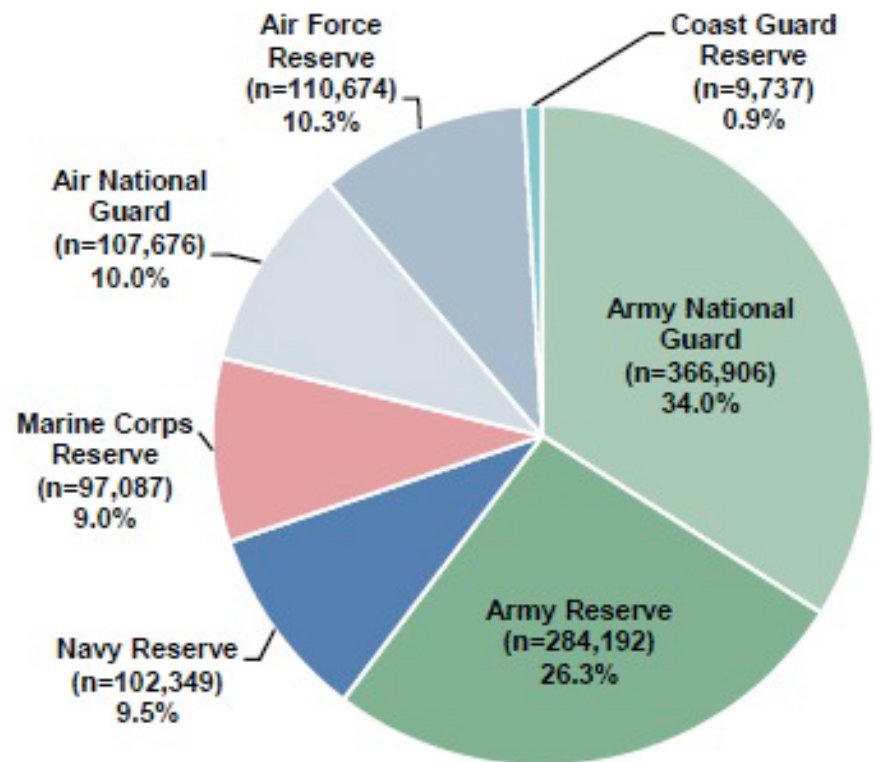
The relatively small service of just over 42,000 *Coast Guardsmen* or “*Coasties*” engages in a wide range of domestic maritime responsibilities including search and rescue operations, law enforcement, and environmental cleanup activities.

When required, the Coast Guard can be utilized for military operations.

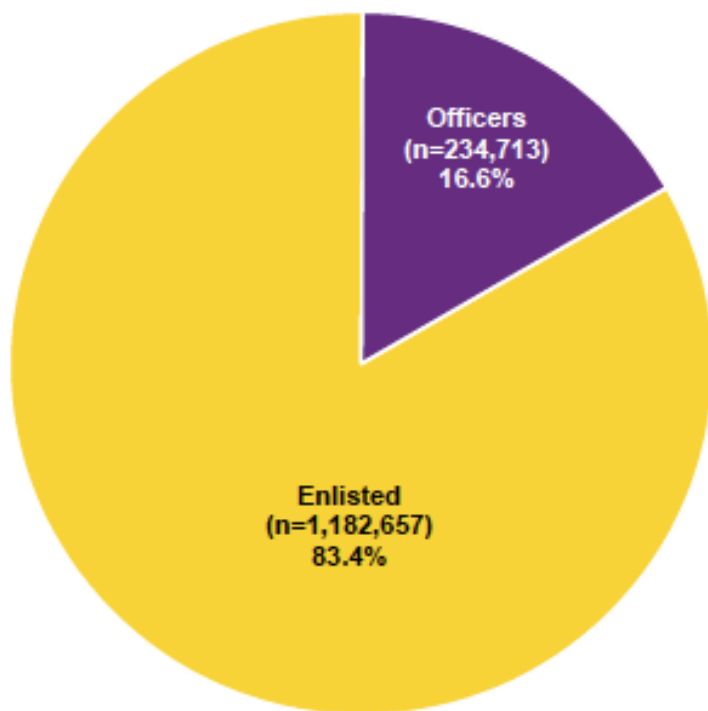


National Guard and Reserve Components

| ACTIVE | GUARD/RESERVE |
|---|---|
| Full-time military work | Part-time military work; often civilian job |
| Live near/on installation | May live substantial distance from unit |
| Usually seek health care in military treatment facility (MTF) | Often seek health care in community/civilian facility |
| Subject to mobilization/deployment | Can be activated to mobilize/deploy |



Military Rank Structure



- In general, a service members rank and grade depend on length of time in service and achievement.
- Two distinct populations in the military—officers (O) and enlisted (E) personnel—each with its own rank structure.
- All officers, by definition, outrank all enlisted service members.

Rank vs. Grade

Rank

- A form of address (such as "Private," "Airman," "Sergeant", "Captain", "General")
- Basis for the insignia worn on the uniform.
- Enlisted personnel are usually addressed by their rank, such as "Private" or "Sergeant."
- All officers are addressed by their rank and/or "Sir" or "Ma'am" by subordinates.

Grade (or pay grade)

- A designation made for pay purposes and is standard across services
- Enlisted personnel are E1 (the lowest grade) through E9 (the highest grade of non-commissioned officer)
- Commissioned officers are O1 (second lieutenant in the Army, Air Force and Marines; ensign in the Coast Guard and Navy) through O10 (general in the Army, Air Force and Marines; admiral in the Coast Guard and Navy).

Military Officers

- Leaders of the military organization
- Responsibility for units rests with them
- Officers almost always have a 4-year college degree, and many have one or more advanced degrees.

Officers can receive commissions through a number of routes:

- Graduating from one of the service academies
- Completing a the college-based Reserve Officer Training Program (ROTC)
- Attending post-college Officer Candidate School (OCS)
- Via battlefield commissions and direct commissions for special skills such as medical, chaplaincy, and others










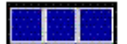





Officers issue orders, enforce policies and supervise the executions of orders that are handed to them from their superiors. The officers are ultimately responsible for all aspects of the military unit. This responsibility not only relates to work, but also to service members' personal lives (e.g., financial issues, marital problems, legal troubles).

Military Enlisted Members










































- Often join the armed forces out of high school or in the few years thereafter
- Trained in an area of specialty and, under the direction of officers, they help execute all of the vital functions of the military including combat, administration, engineering, healthcare and many other fields.
- Promotion from E1 to E4 is based on a combination of job performance, demonstrated leadership promise and standardized testing.
- At the grade of E4 or E5, the service member becomes a **Non-Commissioned Officer**
- NCOs are responsible for the supervision, mentoring, and training of junior enlisted members
- All NCOs are expected to provide updates on their troops and other advice to their commanding officer.
- NCOs usually have more experience in the military than the officer under whose leadership they serve

Military Warrant Officers









































- The Army, Navy, Coast Guard and Marines also designate a separate category known as Warrant Officers.
- Warrant officers normally fulfill a highly specialized duty such as aviation or criminal investigation. They make up a small percentage of the military and rank in the Army, Navy and Marines and rank above all enlisted personnel but below officers.
- Warrant officers are addressed as "Chief Warrant Officer" or by "Mr." or "Ms.".

| WARRANT | | |
|---|--|--|
| NAVY | MARINES | ARMY |
| W-1  CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER |  WARRANT OFFICER |  WARRANT OFFICER |
| W-2  CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER |  CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER |  CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER |
| W-3  CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER |  CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER |  CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER |
| W-4  CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER |  CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER |  CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER |
| W-5  CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER |  CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER |  CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER |

Enlisted Rank Insignia

| Grade | Air Force | Army | Marines | Navy/Coast Guard |
|-------|---|---|---|--|
| E-1 | Airman Basic | Private | Private | Seaman Recruit |
| E-2 |  Airman |  Private E2 |  Private First Class |  Seaman Apprentice |
| E-3 |  Airman First Class |  Private First Class |  Lance Corporal |  Seaman |
| E-4 |  Senior Airman |   Specialist Corporal |  Corporal |  Petty Officer Third Class |
| E-5 |  Staff Sergeant |  Sergeant |  Sergeant |  Petty Officer Second Class |
| E-6 |  Technical Sergeant |  Staff Sergeant |  Staff Sergeant |  Petty Officer First Class |
| E-7 |   Master Sergeant First Sergeant |  Sergeant First Class |  Gunnery Sergeant |  Chief Petty Officer |
| E-8 |   Senior Master Sergeant First Sergeant |  Master Sergeant |   Master Sergeant First Sergeant |  Senior Chief Petty Officer |
| E-9 |    Chief Master Sergeant First Sergeant Command Chief Master Sergeant |   Sergeant Major Command Sergeant Major |   Sergeant Major Master Gunnery Sergeant |   Master Chief Petty Officer Fleet/Command Master Chief Petty Officer |

Officer Rank Insignia

| Grade | Air Force | Army | Marines | Navy/Coast Guard |
|-------|---|---|---|--|
| O-1 |  Second Lieutenant |  Second Lieutenant |  Second Lieutenant |  Ensign |
| O-2 |  First Lieutenant |  First Lieutenant |  First Lieutenant |  Lieutenant Junior Grade |
| O-3 |  Captain |  Captain |  Captain |  Lieutenant |
| O-4 |  Major |  Major |  Major |  Lieutenant Commander |
| O-5 |  Lieutenant Colonel |  Lieutenant Colonel |  Lieutenant Colonel |  Commander |
| O-6 |  Colonel |  Colonel |  Colonel |  Captain |
| O-7 |  Brigadier General |  Brigadier General |  Brigadier General |  Rear Admiral Lower Half |
| O-8 |  Major General |  Major General |  Major General |  Rear Admiral Upper Half |
| O-9 |  Lieutenant General |  Lieutenant General |  Lieutenant General |  Vice Admiral |
| O-10 |  General |  General |  General |  Admiral |

Joining the Military

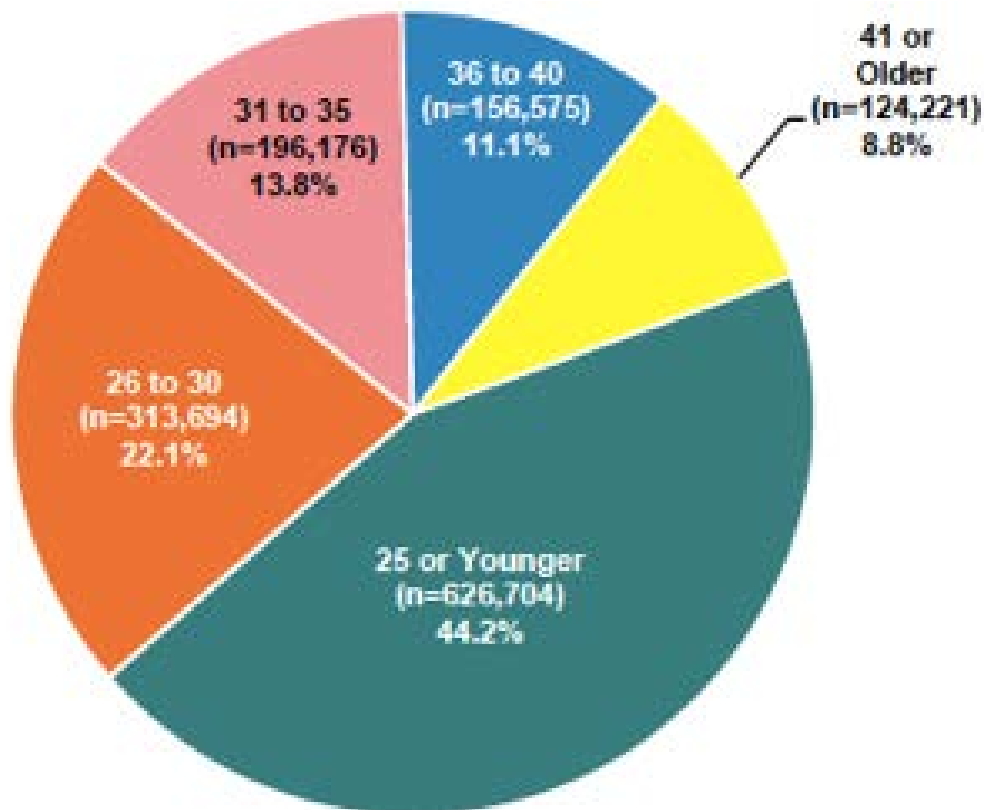
- Patriotism
- Adventure/travel
- Do something to be proud of
- Learn to work as a part of a team
- Develop self-discipline
- Learn a skill/trade
- Earn a steady income
- Obtain medical benefits for themselves and their family members
- Obtain educational benefits
- Earn retirement benefits
- Family tradition of military service
- Escape from difficult family or personal circumstances
- Avoid legal troubles

Joining the Military

- Must either be **citizens of the United States or legal, permanent residents** who are physically living in the country.
- Must meet certain **height and weight standards**
- Must undergo **medical screening** including a physical examination
- Must also meet certain **academic requirements**. A high school diploma or its equivalent is generally required for enlistment.
- Prospective military enlistees take the Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test.

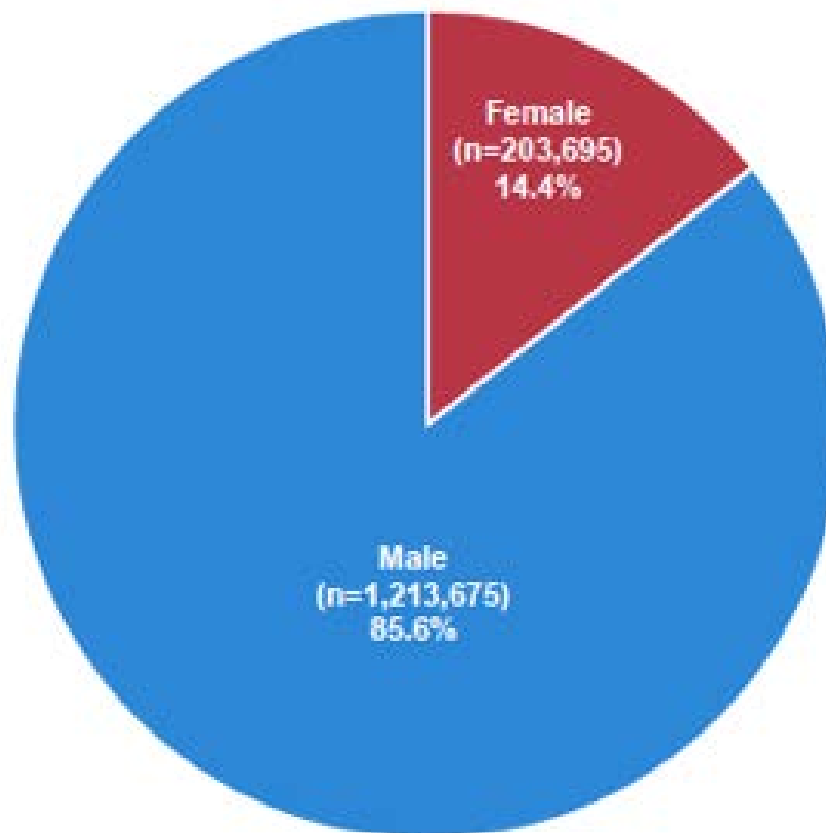
Demographics

Age of Active Duty Force



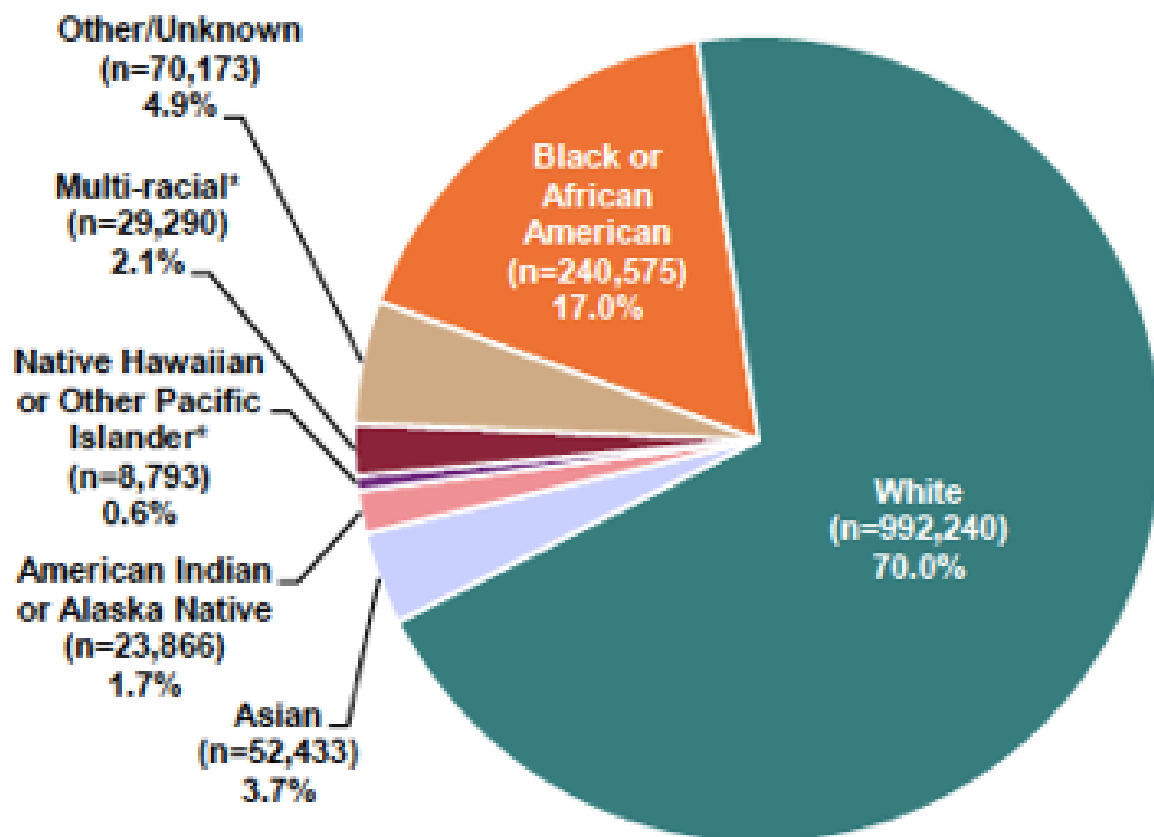
Demographics

Gender of Active Duty Force



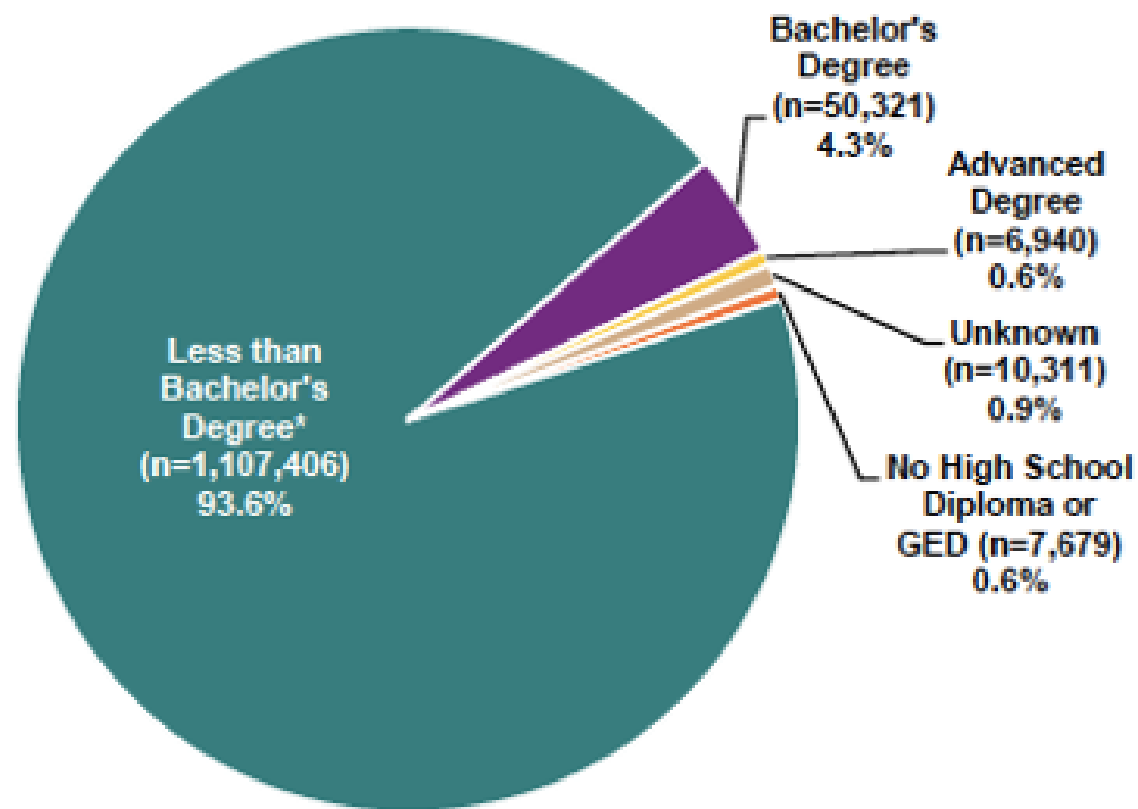
Demographics

Race of Active Duty Force



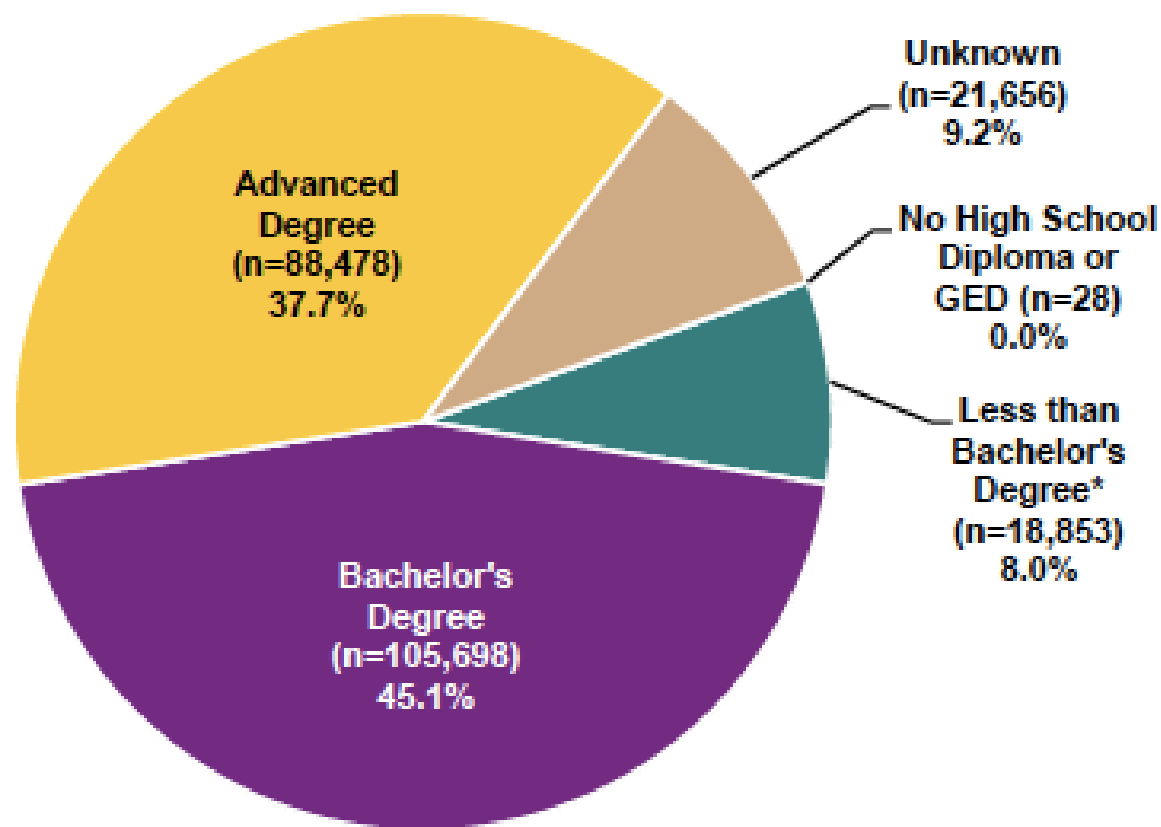
Demographics

Education Level of Enlisted Active Duty Force



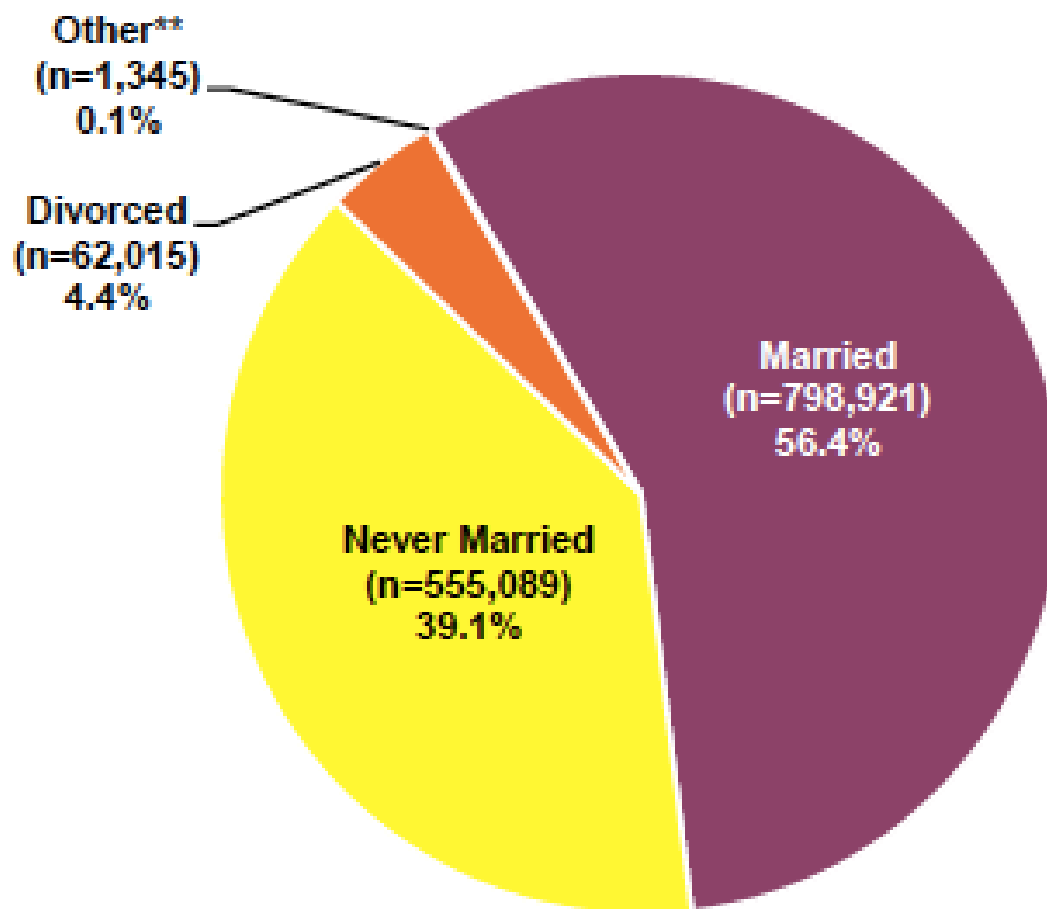
Demographics

Education Level of Officer Active Duty Force



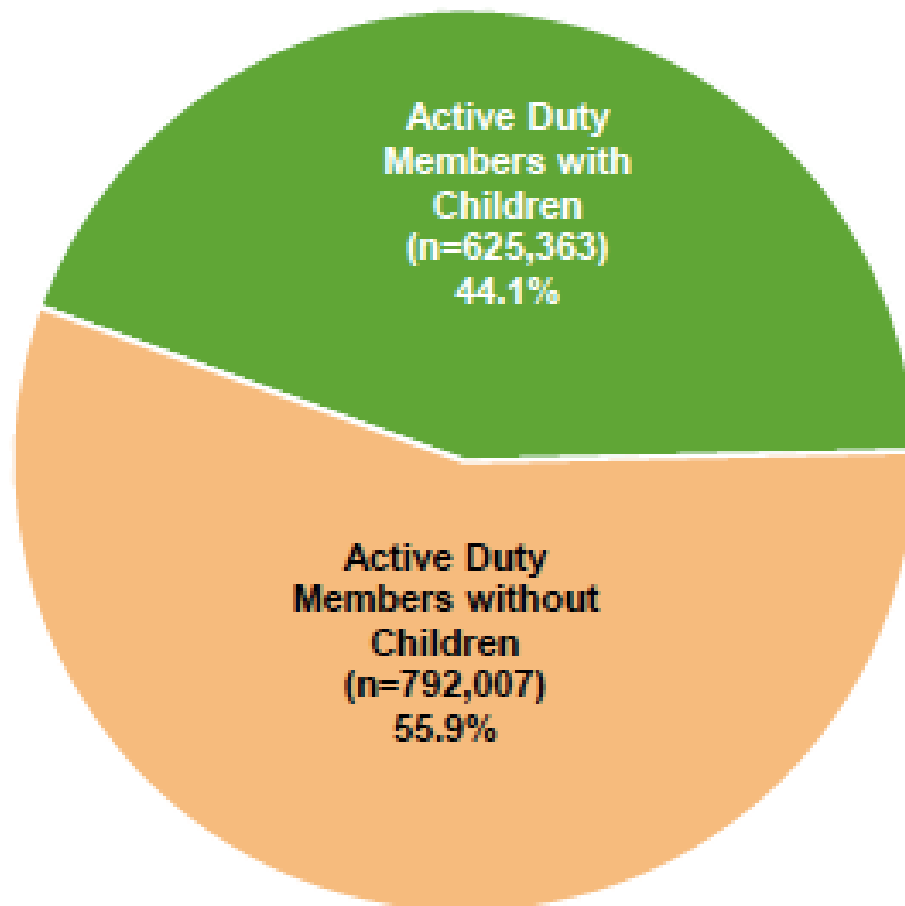
Demographics

Marital Status of Active Duty Force



Demographics

Parental Status of Active Duty Force



Military Work

Duty Station

With basic and specialty training complete, service members are assigned to and must move to their first duty stations (usually military installations) where they will begin work in their specialty.

- This move is referred to as a permanent change of station (PCS). A **PCS** refers to any permanent change of duty location and is distinguished from **deployments** and temporary duty (**TDY**) assignments.
- Depending on the length of the enlistment and the needs of the service, this may be the first of many moves, as typical stays at permanent duty stations can range from one to three years, though some tours may be longer.

Military Work

Categorization

- In the Army enlisted ranks and in the Marines, one's job is referred to as a **military occupational specialty (MOS)**. Related MOSs are grouped together in a **career management field (CMF)**.
- In the Navy, an enlisted sailor's job is defined by his/her **rate** and **Navy Enlistment Code (NEC)**.
- In the Coast Guard a Coast Guardsmen's job is defined by his/her **rate**.
- The Air Force designates an airman's job as his/her **Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC)**.

Military Jobs

- Infantry (Example of **combat arms**)
- Field Artillery
- Aviation
- Special Forces
- Engineering/Construction
- Communications/Signaling
- Chemical Operations
- Legal
- Law Enforcement
- Intelligence
- Finance
- Psychological Operations
- Civil Affairs
- Administrative
- Public Affairs
- Religious Services
- Medical
- Recruiting
- Transportation
- Explosives/Ammunition
- Maintenance
- Supply/Logistics
- Band Members (Example of **non-combat arms**)

Benefits and Opportunities

Pay and Bonuses

- Military service members are employees of the federal government
- **Pay is equal** for equivalent ranks across the services.
- Service members with particular skills or duties (e.g. pilots and physicians) or who are serving in certain locations (e.g. those serving in combat theater) are eligible for additional pay.
- Service members also earn **30 days of vacation** (or “military leave”) each year.
- At times, the services offer **bonuses for re-enlisting**.
- Bonuses are often given to personnel in special skill areas in which there is personnel shortage or high demand.

Military Allowances

- Officers and enlisted personnel receive a **basic allowance for housing (BAH)** with the amount dependent on pay grade, location (due to cost-of-living considerations) and whether the service member has dependents.
- Unmarried enlisted service members arriving to their first station are assigned to the **barracks** or dormitories.
- Meals are provided in **military dining facilities**.
- Married service members who are accompanied by family (e.g., spouse, children) can elect to live in **on-base housing**, if available.
- If on-base housing is not available, they are required to find housing in the community with their BAH.
- Enlisted soldiers also receive a **basic allowance for subsistence (BAS)** to offset the cost of meals as well as a clothing allowance to offset the cost of military uniforms.

Other Benefits

- **Service Group Life Insurance (SGLI)**
 - up to \$400,000 of life insurance
- **Thrift Savings Program (or TSP)**
 - similar to a 401(k) that are not taxed until withdrawal
- Service members are eligible for **retirement** benefits after 20 years of service

Challenges of Life in the Military

Moves

Although the military attempts to afford some stability and often assigns members to a single location for 2-3 years, such **consistency is not guaranteed**.

- Members may have some say in where they would like to move; however, they will not necessarily receive the assignment they desire.
- Families are removed from established support systems and must secure affordable housing.
- Children must be enrolled in new schools.
- Families need to change health care providers, and spouses often have to find new jobs.
- Some service members and their families relocate to places (e.g., OCONUS- places other than the Continental United States) with significantly different cultures, and acculturation to life in a new land provides both opportunities and challenges.

Challenges of Life in the Military

Deployments

- Extended work assignment to an area away from home base
- May include various responsibilities: routine support to another installation or unit, military training, **humanitarian** crisis/peacekeeping or work in an operational or **combat** area.
- Travel on a time-limited basis (several weeks to over one year) **without their family or many of their belongings.**
- Vary in length, though most recent combat deployments have lasted between **6 and 12 months**

References

- All charts, pay and separation tables, and demographics, unless otherwise noted, are reprinted from Demographics 2010: Profile of The Military Community by Military HOMEFRONT - U.S. Department of Defense, 2010, Washington, DC: Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (MilitaryCommunity and Family Policy).
- Rank charts and DoD charts are created by Derrick Hamaoka
- Respective service emblems are from defense.gov

Text resourced from:

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Thank you

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VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

New Jersey Health Care System