



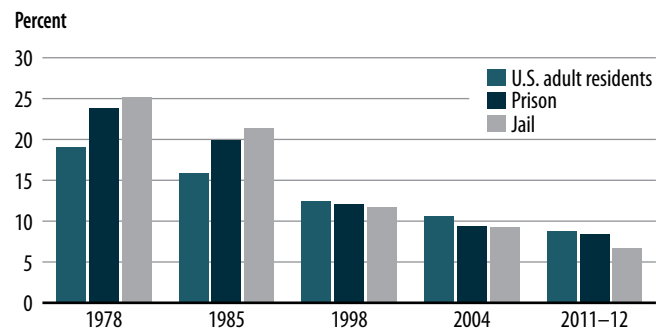
# Veterans in Prison and Jail, 2011–12

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In 2011–12, an estimated 181,500 veterans (8% of all inmates in state and federal prison and local jail excluding military-operated facilities) were serving time in correctional facilities. This represented a decrease from the estimated 206,500 incarcerated veterans (9% of the total incarcerated population) in 2004, and was consistent with the decline in the number of veterans in the U.S. general population (figure 1). While the number of veterans in prison and jail increased along with growth in the overall number of persons incarcerated between 1980 and 2008, the proportion of incarcerated veterans has declined, down from an estimated 24% of all persons incarcerated in state prison and jail in 1978 (federal inmates were not surveyed in 1978).

In 1978, 19% of U.S. adult residents, 24% of prisoners, and 25% of jail inmates were military veterans. By 2011–12, veterans accounted for 9% of the general population, 8% of state and federal prisoners, and 7% of jail inmates.

**FIGURE 1**  
Estimated percent of veterans in the U.S. resident population in prison and jail, 1978, 1985, 1998, 2004, and 2011–12



Note: For years in which prison or jail inmates were not surveyed, the total prison or jail population was multiplied by the veteran distribution from the most recent survey. See *Methodology*.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics data collections on prison and jail inmates and U.S. Census Bureau population data collections. See table 1 for complete list.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- The number of veterans incarcerated in state and federal prison and local jail decreased from 203,000 in 2004 to 181,500 in 2011–12.
- The total incarceration rate in 2011–12 for veterans (855 per 100,000 veterans in the United States) was lower than the rate for nonveterans (968 per 100,000 U.S. residents).
- Non-Hispanic black and Hispanic inmates made up a significantly smaller proportion of incarcerated veterans (38% in prison and 44% in jail), compared to incarcerated non-Hispanic black and Hispanic nonveterans (63% in prison and 59% in jail).
- A greater percentage of veterans (64%) than nonveterans (48%) were sentenced for violent offenses.
- An estimated 43% of veterans and 55% of nonveterans in prison had four or more prior arrests.
- More than three-quarters (77%) of incarcerated veterans received military discharges that were honorable or under honorable conditions.
- An estimated two-thirds of veterans in prison (67%) and jail (66%) were discharged from military service between 1974 and 2000.
- From 2001 to 2012, veterans discharged during Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn accounted for 13% of veterans in prison and 25% of veterans in jail.
- Nearly half of veterans in prison (48%) and jail (44%) served less than 3 years in the military.
- A quarter of veterans in prison (25%) and less than a third of veterans in jail (31%) reported that they had been in combat while in the military.
- About half of all veterans in prison (48%) and jail (55%) had been told by a mental health professional they had a mental disorder.
- Incarcerated veterans who saw combat (60% in prison and 67% in jail) were more likely than noncombat veterans (44% in prison and 49% in jail) to have been told they had a mental disorder.

This report uses data from the 2011–12 National Inmate Survey (NIS-3) to describe the demographic characteristics, military service, and disability and mental health status of incarcerated veterans in jails and state and federal prisons. Data from previous BJS surveys of inmates in prison and jail were used to establish historical trends regarding incarcerated veterans. To facilitate comparisons, estimates of nonveteran inmates were standardized to the veteran inmate population’s distribution by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin. See *Methodology* for further information on computational procedures and data limitations.

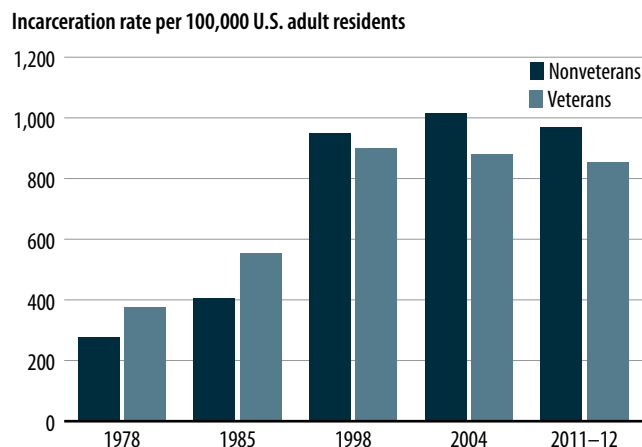
### Veterans in prison and jail have decreased since 1998

In 2011–12, about 131,500 veterans were incarcerated in prison (8% of the total prison population) and 50,000 were in jail (7% of the total jail population) (table 1). This represents a 6% decrease from the number of veterans incarcerated in prison in 2004 (8,500 fewer inmates) and a 25% decrease from the number of veterans in jail in 2004 (16,500 fewer inmates).

While veterans made up a larger proportion of the incarcerated population than the general population in 1978 and 1985, the proportion of veterans in both the general and incarcerated populations was equal in 1998. Veterans were incarcerated at significantly higher rates than nonveterans in 1978 and 1985 and lower rates in 2004 and 2011–12. By 1998, a total of 948 nonveterans per 100,000 adult U.S.

nonveteran residents were incarcerated in prison or jail, compared to 882 veterans per 100,000 adult U.S. veteran residents (figure 2).

**FIGURE 2**  
Incarceration rate of veterans in prison and jail, 1978, 1985, 1998, 2004, and 2011–12



Note: Incarceration rates are based on the U.S. resident population of persons age 18 or older. Rates for nonveterans are based on the number of nonveterans in the U.S. adult resident population. Rates for veterans are based on the number of veterans in the U.S. adult resident population.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics data collections on prison and jail inmates and U.S. Census Bureau population data collections. See table 1 for complete list.

**TABLE 1**  
Veterans in the U.S. adult resident, prison, and jail populations, 1978, 1985, 1998, 2004, and 2011–12

Year	U.S. adult residents			Prison			Jail		
	Total	Veterans	Percent	Total	Veterans	Percent	Total	Veterans	Percent
1978	157,810,300	29,984,000	19.0%	307,300	73,100	23.8%**	158,400	39,900	25.2%**
1985	176,370,700	27,857,000	15.8	502,500	100,200	19.9%**	254,100	54,400	21.4
1998	201,576,800	25,062,000	12.4	1,307,200	156,400	12.0**	592,500	69,300	11.7
2004	220,832,100	23,427,600	10.6	1,497,100	140,000	9.4**	714,000	66,500	9.3
2011–12*	241,419,000	21,230,900	8.8	1,570,400	131,500	8.4	744,500	50,000	6.7

Note: For years in which either prison or jail inmates were not surveyed, the total prison or jail population was multiplied by the veteran distribution from the most recent survey. See *Methodology*. See appendix table 3 for standard errors.

\*Comparison group.

\*\*Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

Sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Survey of Inmates in Local Jails, 1996 and 2002; Annual Survey of Jails, 1986, 1997, and 2004; Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities, 1979, 1986, 1997, and 2004; National Jail Census, 1978; *Correctional Populations in the United States, 1985, 1998, 2004, and 2012*; National Inmate Survey, 2011–12; *Profile of Jail Inmates, 1978*; *Veterans in Prison or Jail*; and U.S. Census Bureau, National Estimates by Age, Sex, Race: 1900–1979; Quarterly Intercensal Resident Population, 1980–1989; National Intercensal Estimates, 2000–2010; National Monthly Postcensal Estimates, 1990–2000; Census Estimates for National Prisoner Statistics, 2012; Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1987 and 1999; Census Factfinder Tables, 2004 and 2012; and American Community Survey, 2005. U.S. Veterans Administration, *Annual Report 1978*.

In 2011–12, there were 619 veterans per 100,000 adult residents incarcerated in prison and 236 veterans per 100,000 adult residents in jail (table 2). The incarceration rate for veterans in prison increased 4% from 2004 to 2011–12 (from 598 to 619 per 100,000), while the rate for nonveterans decreased 5% (from 687 to 653). During the same period, the incarceration rate for veterans in jail decreased 17% (from 284 to 236 per 100,000 in 2004), compared to a 4% decrease for nonveterans (from 328 to 315).

In 2011–12, males accounted for 93% of nonveterans and 99% of veterans in prison (table 3). Similarly, males accounted for 87% of nonveterans and 97% of veterans in jail. Unless stated otherwise, analyses in the remainder of this report are limited to data on male inmates.

### On average, veterans in prison and jail were older than nonveterans

Veterans incarcerated in jail were an average of 43 years of age, 11 years older than nonveterans (age 32) (table 3). More than a quarter (27%) of veterans and nearly two-thirds (64%) of nonveterans in jail were ages 18 to 34. Almost 19% of veterans in jail were age 55 or older, compared to 3% of nonveterans. Veterans in prison averaged 49 years of age, 12 years older than nonveteran prison inmates. Thirteen percent of veterans and 47% of nonveterans were ages 18 to 34, and 33% of veterans and 6% of nonveterans were age 55 or older.

The race or Hispanic origin of veterans in prison and jail differed significantly from nonveterans. In prison, 50% of veterans and 27% of nonveterans were white, 27% of veterans and 38% of nonveterans were black, and 11% of veterans and 26% of nonveterans were Hispanic. A

**TABLE 2**  
Incarceration rate per 100,000 U.S. adult residents age 18 or older, by veteran status, 1978, 1985, 1998, 2004, and 2011–12

Year	Prison		Jail	
	Nonveterans	Veterans	Nonveterans	Veterans
1978	183	244	93	133
1985	271	360	134	195
1998	652	624	296	277
2004	687	598	328	284
2011–12	653	619	315	236

Note: Incarceration rates are based on the U.S. resident population of persons age 18 or older. Rates for nonveterans are based on the number of nonveterans in the U.S. adult resident population. Rates for veterans are based on the number of veterans in the U.S. adult resident population.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics data collections on prison and jail inmates and U.S. Census Bureau population data collections. See table 1 for complete list.

higher proportion of non-Hispanic white veterans (44%) than nonveterans (31%) were in jail, while non-Hispanic blacks were equally represented among veterans (32%) and nonveterans (35%). Twenty-four percent of nonveterans and 11% of veterans in jail were Hispanic.

In both prison and jail, more veterans had been married at some point in their lives than nonveterans. Significantly more nonveterans (57% in prison and 61% in jail) than veterans (24% in prison and 32% in jail) had never been married. Forty-five percent of veterans in prison and 31% of veterans in jail were divorced, compared to 17% of divorced nonveterans in prison and 12% in jail.

Incarcerated veterans had more years of formal education than nonveterans. A higher percentage of veterans in prison (20%) and jail (18%) than nonveterans (5% each in prison and jail) obtained at least a college degree.

**TABLE 3****Demographic characteristics of inmates in prison and jail, by veteran status, 2011–12**

Characteristic	Prison				Jail			
	Veterans		Nonveterans*		Veterans		Nonveterans*	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Sex</b>	131,500	100%	1,308,200	100%	50,000	100%	668,800	100%
Male	130,100	98.9**	1,213,100	92.7	48,400	96.8**	578,900	86.6
Female	1,400	1.1**	95,100	7.3	1,600	3.2**	89,900	13.4
<b>Age<sup>a</sup></b>	130,100	100%	1,213,100	100%	48,400	100%	578,900	100%
18–24	3,300	2.5**	165,300	13.6	4,100	8.5**	161,200	27.8
25–34	13,700	10.5**	410,000	33.8	9,000	18.6**	208,000	35.9
35–44	27,900	21.4**	342,000	28.2	10,100	20.9	118,300	20.4
45–54	42,500	32.7**	220,100	18.1	15,800	32.6**	73,700	12.7
55–64	30,900	23.8**	62,900	5.2	7,900	16.4**	15,500	2.7
65 or older	11,800	9.1**	12,600	1.0	1,400	3.0**	2,200	0.4
<b>Mean age<sup>a</sup></b>	49.0 years**		37.0 years		43.5 years**		32.4 years	
<b>Race/Hispanic origin<sup>a</sup></b>	128,700	100%	1,199,100	100%	47,600	100%	572,500	100%
White <sup>b</sup>	64,800	50.3**	323,300	27.0	20,900	43.9**	176,600	30.8
Black/African American <sup>b</sup>	34,300	26.7**	449,200	37.5	15,300	32.1**	201,700	35.2
Hispanic/Latino	14,100	11.0**	308,000	25.7	5,500	11.5**	137,600	24.0
Other <sup>b,c</sup>	3,000	2.3	29,700	2.5	1,300	2.8	14,000	2.4
Two or more races <sup>b</sup>	12,500	9.7**	89,000	7.4	4,600	9.8**	42,600	7.4
<b>Marital status<sup>a</sup></b>	129,100	100%	1,205,700	100%	48,200	100%	574,900	100%
Never married	31,500	24.2**	685,700	56.5	15,400	31.8**	350,000	60.5
Married	28,000	21.6**	224,000	18.5	10,900	22.5**	107,800	18.6
Widowed	5,600	4.3**	16,400	1.4	1,700	3.4**	7,100	1.2
Divorced	58,000	44.6**	206,800	17.0	15,200	31.4**	71,900	12.4
Separated	6,000	4.6**	72,800	6.0	5,000	10.4**	38,100	6.6
<b>Highest level of education<sup>a,*</sup></b>	130,000	100%	1,210,600	99.9%	48,300	100%	575,900	99.7%
Less than high school diploma/GED	36,900	28.3**	737,900	60.8	10,400	21.6**	326,100	56.3
High school diploma/GED	26,100	20.1	241,400	19.9	13,000	26.8**	135,900	23.6
Some college	41,500	31.9**	166,900	13.8	16,300	33.7**	84,500	14.7
College degree or higher	25,500	19.6**	64,300	5.3	8,600	17.8**	29,500	5.1

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding and missing data. Nonveterans were standardized to age, race, and Hispanic origin for male prison and jail inmates. See appendix table 4 for standard errors.

\*Comparison group.

\*\*Difference with the comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

<sup>a</sup>Includes male inmates only unless stated otherwise.

<sup>b</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic or Latino origin.

<sup>c</sup>Includes American Indian and Alaska Natives and Asian, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islanders.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Inmate Survey, 2011–12.

## Incarcerated veterans were more likely to be convicted on a violent sexual offense and have fewer priors than nonveterans

Veterans in prison reported fewer prior arrests and incarcerations than nonveterans (table 4). An estimated 43% of veterans and 55% of nonveterans in prison had four or more prior arrests, while 22% of veterans and 16% of nonveterans had one prior arrest. When standardized to the veteran population, 64% of veterans and 52% of nonveterans in prison were sentenced for violent offenses. An estimated 29% of both veterans and nonveterans in prison reported their most serious offense was a nonsexual violent crime, but a greater percentage of veterans (35%)

than nonveterans (23%) was in prison for a violent sexual offense. When standardized to the veteran population, a larger proportion of nonveterans than veterans were in prison for property (17% for nonveterans compared to 12% for veterans), drug (19% compared to 14%), and DUI/DWI (4% compared to 3%) offenses.

An estimated 81% of veterans and 77% of nonveterans received sentences of 5 or more years, including sentences of life or death. More veterans (16%) than nonveterans (14%) in prison were serving life sentences, while fewer veterans (17%) than nonveterans (21%) were serving sentences of 1 to 4 years.

**TABLE 4**  
Current offense, sentencing, and criminal history characteristics of male inmates in prison, by veteran status, 2011–12

	Estimated number of male prisoners		Percent of male prisoners		
	Veterans	Nonveterans	Veterans*	Nonveterans	
				Standardized	Unstandardized
<b>Most serious current offense</b>	123,600	1,153,900	100%	100%	100%
Violent sexual	43,700	168,000	35.4	23.3**	14.6**
Other violent	35,700	382,500	28.9	28.9	33.1**
Property	14,500	199,500	11.7	17.2**	17.3**
Drug	17,500	268,100	14.2	19.3**	23.2**
DUI/DWI	3,500	31,800	2.8	4.1**	2.8
Other	8,700	104,100	7.0	7.1	9.0**
<b>Sentence length</b>	128,800	1,201,700	100%	100%	100%
Less than 1 year	2,500	41,200	1.9	2.5	3.4**
1–4 years	22,200	297,300	17.2	20.6**	24.7**
5–19 years	54,200	535,300	42.1	40.0	44.5
20 years or more	28,700	211,400	22.3	22.8	17.6**
Life sentence	21,100	114,600	16.4	13.9**	9.5**
Death sentence	200	1,900	0.1	0.2	0.2
<b>Number of prior arrests</b>	128,900	1,201,800	100%	100%	100%
1	28,100	173,400	21.8	15.7**	14.4**
2–3	45,000	365,000	34.9	29.2**	30.4**
4–10	36,900	437,700	28.6	34.8**	36.4**
11 or more	18,900	225,700	14.6	20.3**	18.8**
<b>Prior incarceration<sup>a</sup></b>	130,100	1,213,100	100%	100%	100%
Yes	95,400	972,600	73.3	77.5**	80.2**
No	34,700	240,500	26.7	22.5**	19.8**

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding and missing data. Nonveterans were standardized to veterans for age, race, and Hispanic origin for male prison inmates. See appendix table 5 for standard errors.

\*Comparison group.

\*\*Difference with the comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

<sup>a</sup>Includes prison, jail, or any other correctional facility.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Inmate Survey, 2011–12.

About a third of veterans (32%) and a quarter of nonveterans (25%) in jail had not been previously incarcerated (table 5). Compared to nonveterans in jail, a larger proportion of veterans had one prior arrest and a smaller proportion had 11 or more prior arrests. Similar proportions of veterans (53%) and nonveterans (52%) in jail were unsentenced. Among jail inmates who were serving sentences, sentence length did not significantly differ based on veteran status. About 22% of both groups were sentenced to less than 1 year, 14% were sentenced to 1 to 4 years, and 10% were sentenced to 5 years or more.

In 2011–12, a larger percentage of veterans than nonveterans was incarcerated in jail for a violent sexual offense. Nonveterans were more likely to be held for property offenses (25% for nonveterans compared to 21% for veterans) and drug offenses (23% of nonveterans compared to 18% of veterans).

**TABLE 5**  
**Current offense, sentencing, and criminal history characteristics of male inmates in jail, by veteran status, 2011–12**

	Estimated number of male jail inmates		Percent of male jail inmates		
	Veterans	Nonveterans	Veterans*	Nonveterans	
				Standardized	Unstandardized
<b>Most serious current offense</b>	44,300	528,300	100%	100%	100%
Violent sexual	5,200	27,900	11.8	6.5**	5.3**
Other violent	6,900	94,900	15.5	14.1	18.0**
Property	9,200	130,200	20.8	25.2**	24.6**
Drug	7,800	124,600	17.7	23.0**	23.6**
DUI/DWI	3,600	27,500	8.1	7.7	5.2
Other	11,600	123,100	26.1	23.5**	23.3**
<b>Criminal justice status</b>	48,000	569,500	100%	100%	100%
Sentenced	22,500	271,500	47.0	48.3	47.7
Unsentenced	25,500	298,000	53.0	51.7	52.3
<b>Sentence length</b>	47,000	555,500	100%	100%	100%
Unsentenced	25,500	298,000	54.3	52.9	53.7
Less than 1 year	10,500	121,700	22.3	22.0	21.9**
1–4 years	6,300	81,200	13.5	14.5	14.6**
5 years or more	4,100	52,100	8.7	10.2**	9.4
<b>Number of prior arrests</b>	48,000	571,400	100%	100%	100%
1	6,000	60,100	12.5	8.1**	10.5**
2–3	12,100	156,700	25.2	23.6	27.4**
4–10	18,500	215,400	38.6	37.9	37.7**
11 or more	11,400	139,300	23.7	30.3**	24.4**
<b>Prior incarceration<sup>a</sup></b>	48,000	578,900	100%	100%	100%
Yes	32,900	421,100	68.5	75.1**	72.7**
No	15,100	157,800	31.5	24.9**	27.3**

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding and missing data. Nonveterans were standardized to veterans for age, race, and Hispanic origin for male jail inmates. See appendix table 6 for standard errors.

\*Comparison group.

\*\*Difference with the comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

<sup>a</sup>Includes prison, jail, or any other correctional facility.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Inmate Survey, 2011–12.

## The majority of incarcerated veterans did not experience combat during their military service

The majority of veterans in prison (75%) and jail (69%) reported that they did not experience combat while serving in the U.S. military (table 6).<sup>1</sup> Of those who saw combat in at least one conflict zone, 42% of veterans in prison and 24% in jail served in Vietnam. Among combat veterans serving prison terms in 2011–12, 27% (8,500 inmates) fought in the Persian Gulf. Thirty-nine percent (12,000 inmates)

<sup>1</sup> Inmates may have served in more than one combat zone and/or more than one branch of the military.

saw combat in some other action. A higher percentage of veterans in jail saw combat in Afghanistan (23%) or Iraq (42%) than veterans in prison (16% in Afghanistan and 26% in Iraq). Fifty-one percent of veterans in jail reported serving in other conflict zones while in the military.

The service branch profile of incarcerated veterans was similar for both jail and prison inmates. The majority (55%) of incarcerated veterans served in the U.S. Army, followed by the Navy (20%), Marine Corps (18%), Air Force (9%), and Coast Guard (2%).

**TABLE 6**  
Military characteristics of male veterans in prison and jail, 2011–12

Characteristic	Veterans in prison*		Veterans in jail	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Branch of service<sup>a,b</sup></b>	126,000	100%	50,200	100%
Air Force	12,100	9.3	4,500	9.4
Army	70,700	54.5	26,400	54.7
Marine Corps	21,600	16.7	8,500	17.7
Navy	25,700	19.8	9,800	20.3
Coast Guard	1,900	1.5	1,000	2.1
<b>Combat experience<sup>a,b,c</sup></b>	127,900	100%	47,400	100%
None	96,100	75.1	32,800	69.0
Combat veteran	31,800	24.9	14,700	31.0
<b>Combat by conflict<sup>a,b</sup></b>	49,300	100%	24,700	100%
World War II	1,100	3.6	300	2.4
Korea	1,400	4.6	400	2.6
Vietnam	13,200	41.8	3,500	24.3**
Persian Gulf	8,500	26.9	3,800	25.8
Afghanistan	5,000	15.9	3,400	23.3**
Iraq	8,100	25.5	6,000	41.5**
Other <sup>d</sup>	12,000	38.6	7,300	50.9**
<b>Type of discharge<sup>b</sup></b>	123,300	100%	44,300	100%
Honorable	65,100	52.8	23,300	52.7
General under honorable conditions	29,500	23.9	10,600	24.0
Other than honorable	16,000	12.9	5,400	12.2
Dishonorable/bad conduct	6,700	5.4	2,500	5.6
Other	6,100	4.9	2,400	5.4
<b>Era of discharge<sup>b,e</sup></b>	121,400	100%	43,600	100%
Pre-Vietnam era (1940–1963)	4,300	3.5	400	0.9
Vietnam era (1964–1973)	19,600	16.1	3,700	8.5
Post-Vietnam era (1974–2000)	81,700	67.3	28,700	65.8
OEF/OIF/OND era (2001–2012) <sup>f</sup>	15,900	13.1	10,800	24.8
<b>Length of military service<sup>b</sup></b>	126,000	100%	46,700	100%
Less than 3 years	59,800	47.5	20,500	43.9
3 years to less than 5 years	35,900	28.5	13,700	29.4
5 years or more	30,300	24.0	12,500	26.8**

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding and missing data. See appendix table 7 for standard errors.

\*Comparison group.

\*\*Difference with the comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

<sup>a</sup>Detail exceeds total because inmates were allowed to select more than one response.

<sup>b</sup>Total number of inmates may vary between characteristics due to missing data.

<sup>c</sup>Based on inmate self-report of having experienced combat in a line or combat unit during their military service.

<sup>d</sup>Examples of other conflicts include the Balkans, Nicaragua, Somalia, Kosovo, etc.

<sup>e</sup>Date of last discharge was used to categorize veteran inmates.

<sup>f</sup>OEF/OIF/OND = Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Inmate Survey, 2011–12.

Almost half of veterans in prison (48%) and jail (44%) served in the U.S. military for less than 3 years, while about a quarter of prisoners (24%) and jail inmates (27%) had 5 years or more of military service. More than three-quarters (77% each) of veterans in prison and jail received discharges from the military that were honorable or general under honorable conditions. Less than 10% of prisoners (5%) and jail inmates (6%) received dishonorable or bad conduct discharges.

Two-thirds of veterans incarcerated in prison (67%) and jail (66%) separated from the military between 1974 and 2000. A quarter of veterans (25% or 10,800) in jail left the military between 2001 and 2012, the Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND) era. A higher percentage of veterans in prison served in Vietnam (16%) than OEF/OIF/OND (13%).

## Veterans in prison and jail were likely to report having been told they had post-traumatic stress disorder

Past 30-day serious psychological distress (SPD) is measured by the K6 scale of nonspecific psychological distress.<sup>2</sup> When standardized to the veteran population, no significant difference was observed in the percentage of veterans (14%) and nonveterans (15%) in prison who had scores consistent with SPD (table 7). An estimated 48% of veterans and 36% of nonveterans in prison were ever told they had a mental disorder. Veterans in prison (23%) were twice as likely as nonveterans (11%) to report that a mental health professional ever told them they had post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

<sup>2</sup>The K6 scale is a six-question, self-reported mental health screener widely used in national surveys. It is not the same as a clinical diagnosis of a mental disorder(s) and is used here as an indicator that an inmate might have a current mental health problem. See *Methodology*.

**TABLE 7**  
**Mental health characteristics reported by male inmates, by veteran status, 2011–12**

	Prison			Jail		
	Veterans*	Nonveterans		Veterans*	Nonveterans	
		Standardized <sup>a</sup>	Unstandardized		Standardized <sup>a</sup>	Unstandardized
<b>Indicators of a current mental health problem</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Past 30-day serious psychological distress <sup>b</sup>	14.0	14.7	14.1	28.5	26.4	25.3
Currently treated for a mental health problem <sup>c</sup>	18.1	15.5**	12.9**	25.6	19.4**	14.9**
Taking prescription medication	14.4	12.5**	9.8**	22.1	17.0**	12.8**
Receiving counseling/therapy from a trained professional <sup>d</sup>	12.7	10.9**	9.3**	11.3	8.5**	6.5**
<b>History of a mental health problem</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Told by a mental health professional they had a mental disorder <sup>e</sup>	47.6%	36.3%**	33.4%**	54.7%	43.4%**	39.6%**
Major depressive disorder	27.3	24.1	21.9**	34.4	30.3**	26.9**
Bipolar disorder	17.5	16.2	15.9	26.6	23.5**	22.0
Schizophrenia or another psychotic disorder	10.0	9.2	8.3**	13.4	13.6	11.2**
Post-traumatic stress disorder	22.9	11.1**	9.7**	31.0	15.1**	12.4**
Anxiety disorder <sup>f</sup>	12.1	11.3	10.2**	19.4	17.1**	15.2**
Personality disorder <sup>g</sup>	16.5	13.5**	12.2**	16.8	14.8**	12.6**
Ever had an overnight hospital stay for a mental health problem <sup>h</sup>	25.8%	22.3%**	20.4%**	35.1%	28.5%**	25.5%**
<b>Estimated number of inmates</b>	130,100	1,213,100	1,213,100	48,400	578,900	578,900

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding and missing data. Nonveterans were standardized to veterans for age, race, and Hispanic origin for male prison and jail inmates. See appendix table 8 for standard errors.

\*Comparison group.

\*\*Difference with the comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

<sup>a</sup>Incarcerated veterans were standardized to the prison and jail veteran populations based on the distribution by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin.

<sup>b</sup>Based on K6 score of nonspecific serious psychological distress and meeting the criterion of a score of 13 or higher. See *Methodology*.

<sup>c</sup>Currently is defined as the time of the interview.

<sup>d</sup>Trained professional includes psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or nurse.

<sup>e</sup>Based on inmates who reported that at some point in their lives, a mental health professional, including a psychiatrist or psychologist, told them they had a mental disorder.

<sup>f</sup>Includes panic disorder and obsessive compulsive disorder.

<sup>g</sup>Includes antisocial and borderline personality disorder.

<sup>h</sup>Includes inmates who stayed overnight or longer in a hospital or other facility to receive treatment or counseling for a problem with their emotions, nerves, or mental health. Does not include hospital stays for drugs or alcohol problems.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Inmate Survey, 2011–12.



## Incarcerated veterans with combat experience remained in the military longer than those without combat experience

About 31,800 veterans in state and federal prisons and 14,700 veterans in local jails reported that they experienced combat in a line or combat unit during their military service (table 8).

Veterans with combat experience who were serving time in prison or jail were significantly more likely than those who did not see combat to have remained in the military longer and to have received an honorable discharge. Thirty-five percent of

veterans in jail who left the military between 2001 and 2012 saw combat, compared to 21% of veterans in prison.

Significantly more incarcerated veterans who had seen combat reported they were told that they had a mental disorder at some point in their lives. This could be influenced by increased access to mental health services provided by the military. Sixty percent of veterans in prison who experienced combat and 44% of those who were not in combat were

**TABLE 8**  
Characteristics of male veterans in prison and jail, by combat status, 2011–12

Characteristic	Prison		Jail	
	Combat experience <sup>a</sup>	No combat experience*	Combat experience <sup>a</sup>	No combat experience*
<b>Type of military discharge</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%
Honorable	68.3**	47.8	65.8**	47.3
General under honorable conditions	16.1**	26.4	17.0**	27.0
Other than honorable	9.5**	14.1	8.6**	13.6
Dishonorable/bad conduct	3.2**	6.1	4.7	6.0
Other	2.9**	5.6	3.8**	6.1
<b>Length of military service</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%
Less than 3 years	23.9%**	55.4	21.8**	53.8
3 years to less than 5 years	36.2**	25.9	32.3**	28.0
5 years or more	39.9**	18.7	45.8**	18.2
<b>Era of discharge<sup>e</sup></b>	100%	100%	100%	100%
Pre-Vietnam era (1940–1963)	1.9**	4.1	0.5**	1.2
Vietnam (1964–1973)	23.0**	13.9	10.8**	7.4
Post-Vietnam era (1974–2000)	53.8**	71.7	53.7**	70.7
OEF/OIF/OND era (2001–2012) <sup>e</sup>	21.3**	10.3	35.0**	20.6
<b>Mental health status</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%
No indicator of mental health problem	36.0**	51.2	27.1**	40.9
Past 30-day serious psychological distress <sup>b</sup>	16.4	13.2	31.1**	27.2
Told by a mental health professional they had a mental disorder <sup>c</sup>	59.5**	44.1	67.2**	49.3
<b>Most serious current offense</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%
Violent sexual	36.8	35.0	12.9	11.5
Other violent	28.9	28.8	16.4	15.1
Property	12.6	11.5	20.5	20.6
Drug	11.3	15.0	14.4**	19.3
Other	10.5	9.6	35.9	33.6
<b>Estimated number of inmates<sup>d</sup></b>	31,800	96,100	14,700	32,800

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding and missing data. See appendix table 9 for standard errors.

\*Comparison group.

\*\*Difference with the comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

<sup>a</sup>Based on inmate having experienced combat in a line or combat unit during their military service.

<sup>b</sup>Based on K6 scale of nonspecific serious psychological distress and meeting the criterion of a score of 13 or higher. See *Methodology*.

<sup>c</sup>Based on inmates who reported that at some point in their lives, a mental health professional, including a psychiatrist or psychologist, told them that they had a mental disorder.

<sup>d</sup>Date of last discharge was used to categorize era of discharge.

<sup>e</sup>OEF/OIF/OND = Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Inmate Survey, 2011–12.

## Incarcerated veterans with combat experience remained in the military longer than those without combat experience (continued)

told they had a mental disorder at some point in their lives. Sixty-seven percent of veterans in jail who experienced combat reported they were told that they had a mental disorder, compared to 49% of veterans who were not in combat. The differences were smaller for current serious psychological distress (SPD), although more veterans in jail

who had combat experience reported SPD. Thirty-one percent of veterans in jail who had combat experience and 27% who were not in combat reported current SPD, compared to 16% of veterans in prison with combat experience and 13% who were not in combat.

An estimated 29% of jail inmates had K6 scores consistent with SPD, and there was no significant difference between veterans and nonveterans. A higher percentage of veterans (26%) than nonveterans (19%) in jail reported they were currently being treated for a mental health problem.

A higher percentage of veterans (55%) than nonveterans (43%) in jail reported that, at some point in their lives, a mental health professional told them they had a mental disorder. The most common disorder for veterans (34%) and nonveterans (30%) was major depressive disorder. The proportion of veterans in jail who were ever told that they had PTSD (31%) was twice as high as nonveterans (15%).

### Veterans in prison and jail were more likely than nonveterans to report a hearing or vision disability

Inmates were asked if they had one or more of six disability types: hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, or independent living (see *Methodology*). An ambulatory

disability was the most common disability among veterans and nonveterans in prison (30% each of veterans and nonveterans) and jail (18% of veterans and 20% of nonveterans) (table 9). There were few significant differences between prisoners according to veteran status and disability. About 18% of veterans in prison reported a cognitive disability, 14% reported an independent living disability, and 11% reported a hearing disability.

After adjusting for age and race, nonveterans in jail (8%) were less likely than veterans (14%) to report having a hearing disability. Rates for vision, cognitive, self care, and independent living were comparable between nonveterans and veterans.

**TABLE 9**  
Estimated number of male veterans in prison and jail reporting a disability, by veteran status, 2011–12

Disability type	Prison			Jail		
	Veterans*	Nonveterans		Veterans*	Nonveterans	
		Standardized	Unstandardized		Standardized	Unstandardized
Hearing	10.7%	11.5%	6.2%**	13.9%	8.3%**	5.4%**
Vision	10.3	11.2	7.3%**	13.2	10.1	6.5%**
Cognitive	18.0	15.1	8.2%**	17.4	18.9	9.1%**
Ambulatory	30.0	30.3	29.3	17.6	20.1	18.9
Self-care	7.7	4.4	2.2	3.6	3.0	1.9
Independent living	13.7	9.4	8.1	9.4	11.9	7.0
Estimated number of inmates	128,700	1,212,300	1,212,300	43,800	582,900	582,900

Note: Estimates based on alternative survey respondents only. See *Methodology*. Nonveterans were standardized to veterans for age, race, and Hispanic origin for male prison and jail inmates.

See appendix table 10 for standard errors.

\*Comparison group.

\*\*Difference with the comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Inmate Survey, 2011–12.

## Methodology

### The National Inmate Survey

The findings in this report come from the 2011–12 fielding of the National Inmate Survey (NIS-3). The NIS-3 was conducted in 233 state and federal prisons, 358 local jails, and 15 special facilities (military, Indian country, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)) between February 2011 and May 2012. RTI International collected the data under a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).

The surveys were administered to 41,822 adult inmates in state and federal prison and 58,745 inmates in jail, for a total of 100,567 adult inmates who participated.

Additional information on the methodology for sample selection of facilities and inmates can be found in *Sexual Victimization in Prisons and Jails Reported by Inmates, 2011–12* (NCJ 241399, BJS web, May 2013).

### Measurement of veteran status

In this report, the analysis of veteran status was restricted to adult inmates in prison or jail excluding military prisons. This report contains measures of veterans incarcerated in state and federal prison and local jail. It does not include estimates of all incarcerated service members because it excludes inmates age 17 or younger or in military, Indian country, or ICE facilities.

The veteran status module was administered to all inmates participating in the NIS-3. Survey respondents received the module before they were randomized to either the sexual victimization survey (90% of inmates) or the alternative survey (10% of inmates), and all inmates responded to the veteran module. The module on veteran status relied on inmates reporting their direct experience. It asked those who indicated they were a veteran about the branch of the military in which they served, whether they saw combat, the campaign(s) they fought in, their discharge type, and how long they served in the military.

Due to the small number of female respondents, it is not possible to make significant inferences about female veterans in prisons or jails. Therefore, except for the sex variable in table 3, this report excludes females from all analyses.

The audio computer-assisted self-interview questionnaire (listed as National Inmate Survey) is available on the BJS website.

### Nonresponse bias analysis

Bias occurs when the estimated prevalence of an outcome is different from the actual prevalence of the outcome for a given inmate. One potential source of bias is nonresponse. For each survey in the NIS-3, a nonresponse bias analysis

was conducted to determine whether inmates who did not receive modules (due to the time constraints built into the survey) that may be associated with veteran status were different from inmates who did receive those modules. For both the sexual victimization survey respondents and the alternative survey respondents, the analysis consisted of assessing the level of missing data for key items.

Key findings from the nonresponse bias analysis for respondents to the sexual victimization survey include the following for both prisons and jails:

- All inmates completed the demographic and criminal history modules.
- All inmates received the facility climate module, which includes items on contact with family and friends.
- All inmates received the disciplinary experiences module.
- More than 99% of inmates received the mental health screener module. When “don’t know” and “refuse” responses were taken into account, more than 95% of inmates provided useable responses to the mental health screener items.
- Of the inmates who reported a mental health condition, more than 15% did not receive the full mental health module due to survey time constraints.
- More than 15% of inmates did not receive the disability module.

Key findings from the nonresponse bias analysis for respondents to the alternative survey include the following for both prisons and jails:

- All inmates received the demographic and criminal history modules.
- More than 99% of inmates received the mental health screener items and full mental health module. When “don’t know” and “refuse” responses were taken into account, more than 95% of inmates provided useable responses.
- More than 99% of inmates received the disability module.

Based on this analysis, the following was determined:

- A combined file consisting of respondents from the sexual victimization survey and alternative survey can be used to analyze veteran status and demographics, criminal history, contact with family and friends, and mental health screener items.

### Weighting and nonresponse adjustments

Responses from interviewed inmates were weighted to produce national-level estimates. Each interviewed inmate was assigned an initial weight corresponding to the inverse of the probability of selection within each sampled facility. A series of adjustment factors was applied to the initial

weight to minimize potential bias due to nonresponse and to provide national estimates.

Methods to adjust for survey nonresponse are described in *Sexual Victimization in Prisons and Jails Reported by Inmates, 2011–12* (NCJ 241399, BJS web, May 2013). Once adjusted, weights were developed to account for survey nonresponse. An additional weighting adjustment was conducted to account for the potential bias introduced by nonresponse due to time constraints. Bias could result if the module nonrespondents were different from the module respondents. The adjustment for module nonresponse included a calibration of the weights so that the weight from a nonresponding inmate was assigned to a responding inmate with similar characteristics.

Weight adjustments were conducted separately for the sexual victimization survey and the alternative survey so that each had weight totals representing the prison and jail populations by sex. For analyses that consisted of a combination of respondents to the sexual victimization and alternative surveys, an additional weight adjustment was made to ensure that weight totals were correct. In this adjustment, an inmate's survey weight was adjusted by the probability of receiving the survey to which they were randomly assigned. As all inmates in the survey received the veteran module, this report includes additional responses that were properly weighted for inference to either the prison or jail population. The nonresponse bias analysis found that all inmates completed the demographic, criminal history, and veteran modules, so no response was necessary.

### Standard errors and tests of significance

As with any sample survey, the NIS-3 estimates are subject to error arising from their basis on a sample rather than a complete enumeration of the population of adult inmates in prison and jail. Differences in the estimates for subgroups in the tables have been tested and noted for significance at the 95% level of confidence.

### Standardization of nonveteran estimates

When comparing two populations, differences found for some characteristics or conditions may be statistically different as a result of a true difference in the populations or due to differences in basic demographics that are associated with the outcome of interest. Standardizing the estimates is one method that can be used to determine if these demographic differences are the only reason for differences found in other characteristics or conditions.

Standardizing survey estimates consists of calibrating the survey weights for one population so that the distributions are identical for key demographic characteristics known for

each population. This process was done using SUDAAN's PROC DESCRIPT procedure. The resulting estimates are not a representation of the standardized population by themselves (i.e., generalizations about the population cannot be made from standardized estimates), but are appropriate estimates for comparison with other populations of interest.

In this report, the nonveteran prison and jail populations were standardized to the distributions of race or Hispanic origin and age for veterans in jail and prison. The analyses in this report were limited to the male inmate population, so standardization by sex was not necessary.

### Measuring serious psychological distress

To determine whether inmates had an indicator of a current mental health problem, the NIS-3 included the K6 screening scale. The K6 scale is a measure of past 30-day, nonspecific serious psychological distress (SPD) and is not a diagnostic tool. It was developed by Kessler and colleagues to estimate the prevalence of serious mental illness in noninstitutional settings and as a tool to identify possible cases of psychiatric disorder.<sup>3</sup> It has been used widely in epidemiological surveys in the United States and other countries including with prison populations.

The K6 scale consists of six questions that ask inmates to report how often during the past 30 days they had felt—

- nervous
- hopeless
- restless or fidgety
- so depressed that nothing could cheer them up
- everything was an effort
- worthless.

The response options were (1) all of the time, (2) most of the time, (3) some of the time, (4) a little of the time, and (5) none of the time. Following Kessler, the responses were recoded from 4 to 0, with 4 assigned to “all of the time” and 0 assigned to “none of the time.” A summary scale combining the responses from all six items, with a range of 0 to 24, was then produced. The summary score was then reduced to three categories: 0 to 7 indicated no mental illness, 8 to 12 indicated an anxiety-mood disorder, and 13 or higher indicated SPD.

<sup>3</sup> Kessler, R. C., Barker, P. R., Colpe, L. J., Epstein, J. F., Gfroerer, J. C., Hiripi, E., . . . Zaslavsky, A. M. (2003). Screening for serious mental illness in the general population. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 60, 184-189.  
Kessler, R. C., Green, J. G., Gruber, M. J., Sampson, N. A., Bromet, E., Cuitan, M., . . . Zaslavsky, A. M. (2010). Screening for serious mental illness in the general population with the K6 screening scale: results from the WHO World Mental Health (WMH) survey initiative. *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research*, 19(Suppl. 1), 4-22.

## Measuring disability

The disability module was administered to participating inmates in the NIS-3 for one of two reasons:

1. to ensure the sexual victimization survey length was similar for all participating inmates
2. as part of the alternative survey on mental and physical health, past drug and alcohol use, and treatment for substance abuse.

Inmates were randomly assigned to a core survey—90% received the sexual victimization survey and 10% received the alternative survey. Respondents in the 90% sample who completed the core sexual victimization survey in 45 minutes or less received the quasi-core 2, which contained the mental health and disability modules. Based on the time criteria, 31,048 prisoners and 47,427 jail inmates randomly assigned to the sexual victimization survey completed the disability module. Of the inmates who received the alternative survey on mental and physical health, past drug and alcohol use, and treatment for substance abuse (10% of inmates surveyed), 4,237 prisoners and 5,958 jail inmates completed the disability module. Together, 35,285 prisoners, 88% of whom were in the sexual victimization survey sample (90% of inmates surveyed), answered the disability questions. Approximately 53,385 jail inmates, 89% of whom were in the sexual victimization sample, answered the disability questions.

Disability data come from the 10% alternative sample only. This sample was a randomized set from the original sample of inmates in each facility, which allows all inmates in the United States to be independently represented. Nonresponse and poststratification adjustments were conducted on the 10% sample only using the frame information (sex, age, race or Hispanic origin, time since admission, and sentence length). National weights were benchmarked to the adult inmate population (age 18 or older) by facility jurisdiction (prison or jail) and sex.

The disability data from the 90% sample were not used due to bias. Respondents in the 90% sample who completed the disability module were less likely to report sexual victimization while incarcerated, less likely to report mental health problems, and less likely to speak English than inmates who did not receive or complete the disability module. These factors, particularly victimization and mental health status, are likely highly correlated with an inmate's disability status and would introduce bias into the results.

This report uses six questions to measure disability. The questions were modeled after the 2012 American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. Inmates could report more than one disability.

1. Hearing disability—Are you deaf or do you have serious difficulty hearing?
2. Vision disability—Are you blind or do you have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses?
3. Cognitive disability—Because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem, do you have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?
4. Ambulatory disability—Do you have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs?
5. Self-care disability—Do you have difficulty dressing or bathing?
6. Independent living disability—Because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem, do you have difficulty doing activities on your own such as going to meal time, going outside, working in or outside of this facility, going to classes, or attending programs?

Limitations of these data and assumptions that cannot be made about incarcerated adults who self-report a disability include the following:

- The etiology of an inmate's disability is unknown. It might be congenital, genetic or biological, related to an illness or disease, or caused by something in the environment (i.e., a gunshot wound). The temporal relationship between the onset of the disability and the offense is also unknown. Therefore, it is inappropriate to make assumptions about whether or not a disability "caused" an inmate to commit an offense.
- The way in which the disability limits or impairs an inmate's ability to function is unknown (e.g., daily struggles with many activities or occasional flare-ups only).
- Disability data were not verified against medical records or diagnostic information.
- Prevalence rates may be underestimated because some inmates with serious functional disabilities may have been unable to participate in the NIS-3 due to cognitive limitations that prevented them from fully understanding the informed consent procedures or the survey questions. In addition, some inmates with a particular disability (e.g., a hearing disability) may have had a harder time completing the survey than inmates who did not have a disability.

**APPENDIX TABLE 1**

**Demographic and offense characteristics of male veterans in prison and jail, by discharge era, 2011–12**

	Prison				Jail			
	Pre-Vietnam era (1940–1963)	Vietnam era (1964–1973)*	Post-Vietnam era (1974–2000)	OEF/OIF/OND era (2001–2012) <sup>a</sup>	Pre-Vietnam era (1940–1963)	Vietnam era (1964–1973)*	Post-Vietnam era (1974–2000)	OEF/OIF/OND era (2001–2012) <sup>a</sup>
<b>Median age</b>	74 years	62 years	49 years	30 years	73 years	62 years	48 years	28 years
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
White <sup>b</sup>	78.9**	60.1	48.7**	50.4**	63.4	48.1	43.3	52.2
Black/African American <sup>b</sup>	6.7**	22.0	30.1**	18.3**	13.4**	32.6	35.9	23.2**
Hispanic/Latino	7.9	7.9	9.5	15.2	8.1	8.5	8.7	12.9
Other <sup>b,c</sup>	0.6	1.9	1.8	3.5	0.0**	3.3	3.2	1.3
Two or more races <sup>b</sup>	5.9	8.1	9.8	12.6	15.2	7.5	8.9	10.4
<b>Marital status</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Never married	3.8**	10.1	22.7**	46.3**	13.1	14.9	26.0**	48.5**
Married	24.4	25.8	21.3	16.7**	21.8	23.7	22.7	21.9
Widowed	12.8	6.1	3.7	1.6**	37.9**	10.5	3.1**	0.9**
Divorced	58.2	53.4	46.9	28.8**	25.2	40.0	36.9	19.6**
Separated	0.8**	4.0	4.9	5.2	2.0**	10.9	10.9	8.8
<b>Highest education level</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Less than high school diploma/GED	41.4	34.2	25.1	23.0**	35.0	26.3	21.0	15.6**
High school diploma/GED	13.3	20.6	20.7	18.1	19.5	21.5	26.5	29.3
Some college	17.0	25.8	34.1**	39.5**	29.5	28.4	35.4**	37.2**
College degree or higher	28.2	19.3	20.2	19.3	16.0	23.9	17.1**	17.9
<b>Branch of service<sup>d</sup></b>	103.3%	100.3%	103.3%	103.9%	90.1%	101.3%	103.8%	101.7%
Air Force	17.7	7.7	8.6	10.5	20.0	11.9	8.3	7.9
Army	46.5	53.8	56.8	55.0	33.6**	58.5	55.8	54.9
Marine Corps	14.8	19.2	16.3	17.3	25.0	18.2	16.5	18.9
Navy	24.0	18.9	20.5	19.6	11.5	12.3	22.0**	19.0
Coast Guard	0.3	0.7	1.0	1.5	0.0	0.3	1.2	1.0
<b>Most serious current offense</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Violent sexual	53.4	39.3	33.7	38.7	43.3**	15.6	10.6	11.5
Other violent	27.7	29.4	28.1	32.2	21.2	10.4	12.6	22.7**
Property	4.4	8.9	13.2**	11.2	3.4**	20.7	21.2	19.9
Drug	11.1	15.0	15.4	7.8**	8.6	22.5	18.5	16.3
DUI/DWI	0.8**	3.3	2.6	2.4	2.9**	12.3	9.2	6.2
Other	2.7	4.0	7.0**	7.8	20.5	18.5	27.8**	23.3
<b>Length of sentence</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Unsentenced	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	52.4	53.9	53.6	57.5
Less than 1 year	0.0**	0.7	1.9**	2.9	19.8	17.7	23.6	20.6
1–4 years	11.1	14.0	16.0	27.2**	15.4	13.6	13.6	14.8
5–19 years	28.2**	42.1	42.9	47.5	12.4	14.1	8.6	6.0
20 years or more	30.6	23.9	22.3	17.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Life sentence	30.1	19.3	16.9	4.8**	0.0	0.7	0.5	0.7
Death sentence	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
<b>Estimated number of inmates</b>	4,200	19,300	81,200	15,800	400	3,500	27,900	10,500

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. For discharge era, date of last discharge was used to categorize veteran inmates. See appendix table 2 for standard errors.

\*Comparison group.

\*\*Difference with the comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

<sup>a</sup>OEF/OIF/OND = Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn.

<sup>b</sup>Excludes persons who are Hispanic or Latino.

<sup>c</sup>Includes American Indian and Alaska Natives and Asian, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islanders.

<sup>d</sup>Detail exceeds total because inmates were allowed to select more than one response.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Inmate Survey, 2011–12.

**APPENDIX TABLE 2**

**Standard errors for appendix table 1: Demographic and offense characteristics of male veterans in prison and jail, by discharge era, 2011–12**

	Prison				Jail			
	Pre-Vietnam era (1940–1963)	Vietnam era (1964–1973)	Post-Vietnam era (1974–2000)	OEF/OIF/OND era (2001–2012)	Pre-Vietnam era (1940–1963)	Vietnam era (1964–1973)	Post-Vietnam era (1974–2000)	OEF/OIF/OND era (2001–2012)
<b>Median age</b>	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>								
White	5.4%	3.9%	1.6%	3.3%	12.7%	4.1%	2.1%	2.9%
Black/African American	2.7	2.6	1.6	2.4	6.4	4.2	1.7	2.3
Hispanic/Latino	3.6	2.8	1.0	2.3	5.9	2.4	1.0	2.0
Other	0.6	0.6	0.4	1.2	~	1.4	0.7	0.4
Two or more races	2.6	1.7	0.9	2.2	13.2	2.1	0.8	1.3
<b>Marital status</b>								
Never married	1.5%	1.5%	1.6%	2.9%	8.0%	2.7%	1.2%	2.6%
Married	4.3	2.7	1.3	2.3	9.0	3.7	1.4	1.9
Widowed	3.8	1.3	0.5	0.7	12.8	2.9	0.4	0.3
Divorced	4.7	3.3	1.8	2.6	8.9	4.3	1.5	1.9
Separated	0.8	1.0	0.6	1.4	2.0	3.0	1.1	1.4
<b>Highest education level</b>								
Less than high school diploma/GED	4.6%	2.6%	1.1%	3.7%	11.4%	4.0%	1.1%	1.8%
High school diploma/GED	3.6	3.1	1.3	2.1	7.4	3.1	1.4	2.7
Some college	4.3	3.0	1.4	3.5	12.8	3.2	1.7	2.2
College degree or higher	6.4	1.9	1.2	2.5	7.5	3.5	1.7	1.5
<b>Branch of service</b>								
Air Force	5.0%	1.3%	0.8%	1.9%	9.5%	3.0%	0.8%	1.1%
Army	5.0	2.7	1.8	3.8	10.1	3.8	1.6	2.4
Marine Corps	4.2	2.4	1.0	2.4	13.1	3.0	1.0	1.9
Navy	6.6	2.0	1.4	2.8	5.7	2.7	1.2	2.2
Coast Guard	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.8	~	0.3	0.3	0.3
<b>Most serious current offense</b>								
Violent sexual	9.0%	3.8%	2.3%	4.2%	11.9%	3.4%	0.9%	1.3%
Other violent	6.6	3.2	1.6	3.8	13.5	2.5	1.1	2.2
Property	2.7	2.0	1.1	2.0	2.1	4.8	1.4	1.8
Drug	5.0	3.8	1.5	1.7	7.0	3.6	1.2	2.0
DUI/DWI	0.6	0.9	0.5	0.8	2.8	3.1	1.0	1.3
Other	1.6	1.3	0.9	1.7	8.9	2.8	1.5	2.0
<b>Length of sentence</b>								
Unsentenced	~	~	~	~	12.1%	4.4%	2.1%	2.5%
Less than 1 year	~	0.3%	0.5%	1.2%	9.4	3.2	1.6	1.8
1–4 years	3.0%	2.0	1.5	3.3	8.5	2.7	1.2	1.9
5–19 years	4.3	3.8	2.2	3.9	7.7	4.4	0.9	0.9
20 years or more	6.6	3.0	2.3	3.2	~	~	~	~
Life sentence	6.8	3.1	1.7	1.4	~	0.4	0.2	0.4
Death sentence	~	~	0.0	~	~	~	~	0.3
<b>Estimated number of inmates</b>	600	1,700	4,200	1,200	100	300	1,400	600

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Inmate Survey, 2011–12.

### APPENDIX TABLE 3

#### Standard errors for table 1: Veterans in prison and jail populations, 1978, 1985, 1998, 2004, and 2011–12

Year	Prison		Jail	
	Veterans	Percent	Veterans	Percent
1978	2,100	1.2%	1,400	1.5%
1985	3,200	1.3	1,400	0.9
1998	3,800	1.3	2,600	1.2
2004	5,500	1.8	2,700	1.2
2011–12	8,200	1.8	2,700	1.4

Sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Survey of Inmates in Local Jails, 1996 and 2002; Annual Survey of Jails, 1986, 1997, and 2004; Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities, 1979, 1986, 1997, and 2004; National Jail Census, 1978; *Correctional Populations in the United States, 1985, 1998, 2004, and 2012*; National Inmate Survey, 2011–12; Profile of Jail Inmates, 1978; and Veterans in Prison or Jail.

### APPENDIX TABLE 4

#### Standard errors for table 3: Demographic characteristics of inmates in prison and jail, by veteran status, 2011–12

Characteristic	Prison				Jail			
	Veterans		Nonveterans		Veterans		Nonveterans	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Sex</b>	8,200	~	73,700	~	2,700	~	27,800	~
Male	8,200	0.2%	73,200	0.7%	2,700	0.4%	27,100	0.8%
Female	200	0.2	8,500	0.7	200	0.4	6,400	0.8
<b>Age</b>	5,000	~	40,400	~	1,700	~	14,400	~
18–24	600	0.5%	13,100	0.8%	400	0.4%	7,400	0.4%
25–34	1,100	0.7	24,500	0.6	500	0.5	9,800	0.5
35–44	2,100	0.9	24,200	0.5	800	0.3	5,800	0.3
45–54	2,800	1.1	15,700	0.6	1,100	0.4	4,600	0.4
55–64	3,100	1.5	4,800	0.3	700	0.1	1,000	0.1
65 or older	1,200	0.7	1,400	0.1	200	0.1	300	0.1
<b>Mean age</b>	0.4 years		0.3 years		0.3 years		0.1 years	
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>	6,300	~	52,300	~	1,900	~	19,700	~
White	5,500	1.8%	22,100	1.1%	1,100	1.8%	8,400	1.2%
Black/African American	2,500	1.3	36,900	1.6	1,300	1.5	13,100	1.4
Hispanic/Latino	1,500	1.1	28,300	2.1	600	1.0	11,800	1.5
Other	400	0.3	3,000	0.2	300	0.5	1,300	0.2
Two or more races	1,000	0.7	8,500	0.4	400	0.7	2,200	0.2
<b>Marital status</b>	5,800	~	51,400	~	1,700	~	17,900	~
Never married	1,800	1.3%	46,700	1.1%	1,100	1.0%	16,200	0.7%
Married	2,200	1.1	14,700	0.9	700	1.0	6,500	0.5
Widowed	700	0.5	1,300	0.1	200	0.4	500	0.1
Divorced	4,900	1.5	14,700	0.6	900	1.0	3,600	0.4
Separated	800	0.5	4,700	0.3	500	0.8	2,100	0.2
<b>Highest level of education</b>	4,100	~	21,200	~	1,600	~	8,900	~
Less than high school diploma/GED	2,900	1.0%	45,100	0.9%	700	0.9%	14,500	0.7%
High school diploma/GED	2,000	1.0	16,200	0.6	900	1.2	6,900	0.4
Some college	2,900	1.3	13,000	0.5	1,000	1.1	5,200	0.4
College degree or higher	2,100	0.9	4,500	0.2	800	1.2	2,100	0.2

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Inmate Survey, 2011–12.



**APPENDIX TABLE 5**

**Standard errors for table 4: Current offense, sentencing, and criminal history characteristics of male inmates in prison, by veteran status, 2011–12**

	Estimated number of male prisoners		Percent of male prisoners		
	Veterans	Nonveterans	Veterans	Nonveterans	
				Standardized	Unstandardized
<b>Most serious current offense</b>	6,200	45,500	~	~	~
Violent sexual	5,000	20,000	2.4%	1.7%	1.2%
Other violent	2,600	30,500	1.6	1.5	1.4
Property	1,300	14,500	1.0	0.7	0.8
Drug	1,900	21,100	1.5	1.7	1.6
DUI/DWI	600	3,800	0.5	0.5	0.3
Other	1,100	8,300	0.8	0.4	0.5
<b>Length of sentence</b>	6,400	50,200	~	~	~
Less than 1 year	500	6,100	0.4%	0.3%	0.5%
1–4 years	1,800	22,400	1.4	1.3	1.4
5–19 years	4,500	32,900	2.0	1.6	1.2
20 years or more	3,600	27,400	1.9	1.8	1.6
Life sentence	2,400	12,300	1.6	1.3	1.0
Death sentence	100	500	0.1	0.1	0.0
<b>Number of prior arrests</b>	5,200	45,000	~	~	~
1	2,400	12,400	1.1%	0.8%	0.8%
2–3	3,600	25,900	1.2	1.0	0.7
4–10	2,500	32,300	1.0	0.9	0.8
11 or more	1,500	12,400	1.0	1.1	0.8
<b>Prior incarceration</b>	6,700	62,600	~	~	~
Yes	6,100	60,800	1.2%	0.8%	0.7%
No	2,800	15,200	1.2	0.8	0.7

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Inmate Survey, 2011–12.

**APPENDIX TABLE 6**

**Standard errors for table 5: Current offense, sentencing, and criminal history characteristics of male inmates in jail, by veteran status, 2011–12**

	Estimated number of male jail inmates		Percent of male jail inmates		
	Veterans	Nonveterans	Veterans	Nonveterans	
				Standardized	Unstandardized
<b>Most serious current offense</b>	1,500	12,900	~	~	~
Violent sexual	400	1,600	0.8%	0.3%	0.2%
Other violent	700	6,100	1.0	0.6	0.6
Property	700	6,300	0.9	0.6	0.5
Drug	500	6,100	1.0	0.7	0.6
DUI/DWI	400	1,800	0.8	0.4	0.3
Other	800	6,800	1.1	0.6	0.6
<b>Criminal justice status</b>	2,200	20,300	~	~	~
Sentenced	1,300	11,700	1.6%	1.0%	0.9%
Unsentenced	1,800	16,600	1.6	1.0	0.9
<b>Length of sentence</b>	2,100	18,500	~	~	~
Unsentenced	1,800	16,600	1.7%	1.0%	1.0%
Less than 1 year	800	5,900	1.3	0.6	0.7
1–4 years	500	4,300	0.9	0.5	0.5
5 years or more	400	3,400	0.8	0.6	0.5
Life sentence	100	400	0.2	0.0	0.1
Death sentence	100	100	0.1	0.0	0.0
<b>Number of prior arrests</b>	1,800	15,200	~	~	~
1	500	3,700	0.9%	0.3%	0.4%
2–3	800	7,700	1.0	0.5	0.4
4–10	1,300	10,600	1.2	0.6	0.5
11 or more	800	6,800	1.0	0.7	0.5
<b>Prior incarceration</b>	2,200	21,200	~	~	~
Yes	1,900	19,600	1.1%	0.6%	0.4%
No	1,000	8,000	1.1	0.6	0.4

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Inmate Survey, 2011–12.

**APPENDIX TABLE 7**

**Standard errors for table 6: Military characteristics of male veterans in prison and jail, 2011–12**

Characteristic	Veterans in prison		Veterans in jail	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Branch of service</b>	5,700	~	1,900	~
Air Force	1,200	0.6%	400	0.7%
Army	5,000	1.3	1,500	1.4
Marine Corps	1,700	0.9	700	0.9
Navy	1,700	0.9	800	1.0
Coast Guard	400	0.3	200	0.3
<b>Combat experience</b>	7,000	~	2,300	~
None	6,700	1.2%	2,000	1.2%
Combat veteran	2,100	1.2	1,000	1.2
<b>Combat by conflict</b>	7,000	~	2,300	~
World War II	300	0.9%	100	0.5%
Korea	400	1.1	100	0.5
Vietnam	1,300	2.7	400	1.7
Persian Gulf	800	1.9	300	1.8
Afghanistan	700	1.8	400	1.9
Iraq	1,000	2.5	400	2.3
Other	900	2.0	600	1.9
<b>Type of discharge</b>	7,900	~	2,500	~
Honorable	4,000	1.5%	1,400	1.3%
General under honorable conditions	2,400	1.0	700	1.0
Other than honorable	2,000	1.1	500	0.8
Dishonorable/bad conduct	700	0.5	300	0.6
Other	700	0.5	300	0.5
<b>Era of discharge</b>	7,800	~	2,500	~
Pre-Vietnam era (1940–1963)	800	0.5%	100	0.2%
Vietnam era (1964–1973)	2,200	1.3	400	0.7
Post-Vietnam era (1974–2000)	5,300	1.6	1,800	1.1
OEF/OIF/OND era (2001–2012)	1,300	0.9	700	1.2
<b>Length of military service</b>	8,000	~	2,700	~
Less than 3 years	3,900	1.1%	1,300	1.1%
3 years to less than 5 years	2,600	0.9	1,000	1.1
5 years or more	2,300	0.9	800	1.0

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Inmate Survey, 2011–12.

**APPENDIX TABLE 8**

**Standard errors for table 7: Mental health characteristics reported by male inmates, by veteran status, 2011–12**

	Prison			Jail		
	Veterans	Nonveterans		Veterans	Nonveterans	
		Standardized	Unstandardized		Standardized	Unstandardized
<b>Indicator of a current mental health problem</b>						
Past 30-day serious psychological distress	1.0%	0.6%	0.5%	1.3%	0.7%	0.5%
Currently treated for a mental health problem	1.3%	1.2%	1.0%	1.3%	0.8%	0.7%
Taking prescription medication	1.2	1.1	0.9	1.2	0.8	0.7
Receiving counseling/therapy from a trained professional	1.1	0.9	0.7	0.9	0.5	0.3
<b>History of a mental health problem</b>						
Told by a mental health professional they had a mental health disorder	1.6%	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%	0.8%	0.8%
Major depressive disorder	1.5	1.1	1.0	1.1	0.7	0.7
Bipolar disorder	1.1	0.9	0.8	1.1	0.6	0.6
Schizophrenia or another psychotic disorder	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.7	0.5
Post-traumatic stress disorder	1.2	0.6	0.5	1.3	0.6	0.4
Anxiety disorder	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.9	0.5	0.5
Personality disorder	1.1	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.5	0.3
Ever had an overnight hospital stay for a mental health problem	1.2%	1.0%	0.8%	1.1%	0.7%	0.5%
<b>Estimated number of inmates</b>	5,000	40,400	40,400	1,700	14,400	14,400

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Inmate Survey, 2011–12.

**APPENDIX TABLE 9**

**Standard errors for table 8: Characteristics of veterans in prison and jail, by combat status, 2011–12**

Characteristic	Prison		Jail	
	Combat experience	No combat experience	Combat experience	No combat experience
<b>Type of military discharge</b>				
Honorable	2.2%	1.7%	2.3%	1.6%
General under honorable conditions	1.8	1.2	1.4	1.3
Other than honorable	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.1
Dishonorable/bad conduct	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.7
Other	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8
<b>Length of military service</b>				
Less than 3 years	1.8%	1.3%	1.5%	1.4%
3 years to less than 5 years	2.2	1.1	1.9	1.4
5 years or more	2.3	1.0	1.9	1.2
<b>Era of discharge</b>				
Pre-Vietnam era (1940–1963)	0.5%	0.7%	0.2%	0.3%
Vietnam era (1964–1973)	2.1	1.5	1.1	0.8
Post-Vietnam era (1974–2000)	2.4	2.2	2.2	1.2
OEF/OIF/OND era (2001–2012)	3.0	0.8	2.2	1.3
<b>Mental health status</b>				
No indicator of mental health problem	2.5%	1.9%	2.3%	1.4%
Current serious psychological distress	1.9	1.1	2.2	1.4
Post 30-day serious psychological distress	2.4	1.8	2.4	1.5
<b>Most serious current offense</b>				
Violent sexual	2.9%	2.6%	1.3%	1.0%
Other violent	2.5	1.8	1.5	1.2
Property	1.4	1.2	1.6	1.1
Drug	1.9	1.7	1.4	1.2
Other	1.9	1.0	2.0	1.5
<b>Estimated number of inmates</b>	2,100	6,700	1,000	2,000

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Inmate Survey, 2011–12.

**APPENDIX TABLE 10**

**Standard errors for table 9: Estimated number of veterans in prison and jail reporting a disability, by veteran status, 2011–12**

Disability type	Prison			Jail		
	Veterans	Nonveterans		Veterans	Nonveterans	
		Standardized	Unstandardized		Standardized	Unstandardized
Hearing	2.2%	1.0%	0.6%	1.9%	1.3%	0.5%
Vision	3.2	1.4	0.7	2.1	1.1	0.7
Cognitive	2.3	2.0	0.8	2.9	1.4	0.6
Ambulatory	2.6	1.8	1.3	3.5	1.8	1.1
Self-care	1.1	0.6	0.3	1.9	0.8	0.3
Independent living	1.7	1.5	0.7	2.9	0.9	0.7
<b>Estimated number of inmates</b>	128,700	1,212,300	1,212,300	43,800	582,900	582,900

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Inmate Survey, 2011–12.



The Bureau of Justice Statistics of the U.S. Department of Justice is the principal federal agency responsible for measuring crime, criminal victimization, criminal offenders, victims of crime, correlates of crime, and the operation of criminal and civil justice systems at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels. BJS collects, analyzes, and disseminates reliable and valid statistics on crime and justice systems in the United States, supports improvements to state and local criminal justice information systems, and participates with national and international organizations to develop and recommend national standards for justice statistics. William J. Sabol is director.

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