

GAY MEN AND LESBIANS IN THE U.S. MILITARY: Estimates from Census 2000

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28 September 2004

The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, the Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and the Military Community Services Network supported this research.

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Executive Summary

Intense policy debates about the compatibility between homosexuality and service in the United States armed forces contrast with limited information about the characteristics of the gay men and lesbians who choose to serve their country through military service. Using data from Census 2000, this research brief begins to remedy this information gap and estimates the size of the gay and lesbian population serving in the military and offers a demographic portrait of this often invisible minority.

Despite a variety of rules designed to keep gay men and lesbians out of military service, census data make clear that they are actively serving in the armed forces, in guard and reserve units, and have served in the military throughout the later part of the 20th century. However, their patterns of service are not precisely the same as those of other men and women. In general, coupled gay men are less likely to report military service than other men, while coupled lesbians are more likely than other women to serve. These patterns hold true for service in the active military, the national guard and reserve, and among veterans.

Estimates suggest that more than **36,000 gay men and lesbians are serving in active duty, representing 2.5 percent of active duty personnel**. When the guard and reserve are included, **nearly 65,000 men and women in uniform are likely gay or lesbian, accounting for 2.8 percent of military personnel**. Other key findings from this research brief:

- Gay men and lesbians have served in all military eras in the later part of the 20th century. In particular, **military service rates for coupled lesbians far exceed rates for other women in every military era of the later 20th century**. Nearly one in 10 coupled lesbians age 63–67 report that they served in Korea, compared with less than one in 100 of other women. Even in the most recent service period from 1990 to 2000, service rates among coupled lesbians age 18–27 are more than three times higher than rates among other women.
- While years of service do not differ much between coupled gay men and other men, lesbians report longer terms of service than other women. Among all women age 18–67 who report military service, **nearly 82 percent of coupled lesbians and less than 74 percent of other women report serving more than two years**.
- Coupled gay men who are veterans or report training in the guard or reserve show greater racial and ethnic diversity than other men. Among men who report guard or reserve training, **the proportions of coupled gay men who are African American and Latino exceed those of other men**. Among female veterans, the pattern is the opposite of that shown with men. **Coupled lesbians are more likely to be white than other female veterans and are less likely to be African American**.
- **Coupled gay men who report guard or reserve training or who are veterans report annual incomes below that of other men, while coupled lesbians report incomes above that of other women**. An exploration of employment status provides some explanation for the income gaps observed. Coupled gay men with guard or reserve training are less likely to be employed full time and more likely to not be in the labor force than other men. Conversely, coupled lesbians who are veterans or report guard or reserve training have substantially higher rates of full-time employment than other women and are less likely to report not being in the labor force.

- **North Dakota, Hawaii, Alaska, Virginia, and Idaho have the largest proportion of veterans among same-sex couples.** Men and women in same-sex couples in North Dakota are twice as likely to be a veteran than the national average. Among metropolitan areas, **Pensacola, FL, Norfolk, VA, San Diego, CA, Dayton, OH, and Santa Rosa, CA, have the highest rates of veterans among same-sex couples.** Pensacola's rate of 34 percent is more than three times the national average.
- Nearly one million gay and lesbian Americans are veterans. **The states with the largest population of gay and lesbian veterans include California, Florida, Texas, New York, and Georgia.** Among metropolitan areas, **Los Angeles, Washington, DC, San Diego, Chicago, and New York have the highest populations of gay and lesbian veterans.**
- **The District of Columbia leads all states with a rate of 10.2 gay or lesbian veterans per one thousand adults, more than double the national average. Per capita rates are also high in Vermont, Hawaii, Maine, and Washington. Santa Rosa, Pensacola, San Francisco, San Diego, and Norfolk are among the metropolitan areas with the highest per capita rates of gay and lesbian veterans.**

Introduction

Despite intense policy debates about the compatibility between homosexuality and service in the United States armed forces, very little is known about the characteristics of gay men and lesbians who choose to serve their country through military service. Using data from Census 2000, this research brief begins to remedy this information gap and estimates the size of the gay and lesbian population serving in the military and offers a demographic portrait of this often invisible minority.

Data and Methodology

Data sources

All data for these analyses are drawn from the United States 2000 Decennial Census. Specifically, data used to describe characteristics of the gay and lesbian population are from the 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS). This represents a one in 20 sample of American households using information provided on the census long-form. The long-form contains detailed information about all members of the household, including a variety of demographic and economic characteristics.

Unless otherwise noted, the analyses are based on the sample of men and women age 18 to 67. The same-sex couple sample for this age group from the 5% PUMS includes 28,772 men and 30,351 women. Of those, 83 men and 91 women report active duty military service; 710 men and 714 women report guard or reserve training; 3,735 men and 2,373 women report prior service in active duty (veterans).

Estimates of characteristics in the broader population are derived from the 1% PUMS, a one in 100 sample of the US population. This sample includes 876,475 men and 897,736 women age 18–67.

Counting gay and lesbian couples

Same-sex couples are identified from the household roster that identifies how everyone in the household is related to the person filling out the census form (referred to as the “householder”). These same-sex couples are commonly understood to be primarily gay and lesbian couples even though the census does not ask any questions about sexual orientation, sexual behavior, or sexual attraction (three common ways used to identify gay men and lesbians in surveys). Rather, census forms include a number of relationship categories to define how individuals in a household are related to the householder. These fall into two broad categories: related persons (including husband/wife, son/daughter, brother/sister, and so on), and unrelated persons (including unmarried partner, housemate/roommate, roomer/boarder, and other nonrelative). Since 1990, the Census Bureau has included an “unmarried partner” category to describe an unrelated household member’s relationship to the householder. If the householder designates another adult of the same sex as his or her “unmarried partner” or “husband/wife”, the household counts as a same-sex unmarried partner household (see Gates and Ost 2004 for a detailed explanation of counting same-sex couples).

There are several potential reasons for suspecting an undercount of same-sex couples in the census. Concerns about the confidentiality of their responses may have led many gay and lesbian couples to indicate a status that would not provide evidence of the true nature of their relationship. Other couples may have felt that “unmarried partner” or “husband/wife” does not

accurately describe their relationship. A study of the undercount of same-sex unmarried partners in Census 2000 indicates that these were the two most common reasons that gay and lesbian couples chose not to designate themselves as unmarried partners (Badgett and Rogers 2003). Estimating the size of this undercount is challenging with estimates suggesting that the true counts are 10 to 50 percent higher than census figures (Gates and Ost 2004).

Assigning traits of couples to all gay and lesbian people

The estimates derived for this report are all based on same-sex couples. In order to apply these estimates to the entire gay and lesbian population, one must assume that the traits of same-sex couples do not differ from traits of single gay and lesbian people. This may not be true for all estimates. In the case of estimating the size of the gay and lesbian population serving in active duty, the analyses do attempt to correct for possible bias associated with coupling.

Deriving the proportion of gay men and lesbians serving in the military

Estimating the size of the gay and lesbian population in the active military is not an easy task. Surveys asking the sexual orientation of active military personnel are not available. While the proportion of gay men and lesbians among men and women in the military is not known, Census 2000 data can provide an estimate of the proportion of coupled gay men and lesbians who report military service. In addition, the proportion of gay men and lesbians in the population can be estimated from several national surveys. With these estimates, a statistical procedure using Bayes' Rule provides a mechanism to estimate the fraction of military personnel who are gay or lesbian. Bayes' Rule is a widely accepted procedure used to calculate conditional probabilities (e.g., the probability that an individual is gay or lesbian given that he or she is serving in the military). Appendix A provides a detailed description of how estimates of the proportion of gay men and lesbians in military service are derived.

Estimating the size of the gay and lesbian population in the United States

The Bayes' Rule procedure used to derive an estimate of the number of gay men and lesbians in the military requires knowledge of their military service rates along with an estimate of the proportion of gay men and lesbians in the general population. Prevalence estimates of the proportion of men and women in the United States who are gay or lesbian drawn from samples that can be used to make nationally representative estimates are rare. Laumann et al. (1994) find that while 2.8 percent of men and 1.4 percent of women self-identify as homosexual, more than 4 percent of women and more than 6 percent of men report a sexual attraction to people of the same sex. Analyses reported in Black et al. (2000) consider other definitions of "gay" and "lesbian" based on reported sexual behavior. Their work shows that 3.6 percent of women and nearly 5 percent of men report having had sexual contact with a partner of the same sex since they were age 18. Using a more restrictive definition, they find that 1.8 percent of women and 3.1 percent of men had more same-sex than different-sex partners since age 18. Further, 1.5 percent of women and 2.6 percent of men report having exclusively same-sex sexual partners in the last five years. One consistency in all of these findings is that women are less likely than men to report same-sex attraction, behavior, or homosexual identification. From a very different source, voter analyses throughout the 1990s show that 4 to 5 percent of the U.S. electorate (not a representative sample of the population) consistently identify as gay or lesbian.

Given the variation in these estimates, the analyses include three possibilities for the prevalence of gay men and lesbians in the US population. In each case, consistent with most surveys, the

prevalence for women is less than that for men. Prevalence rates for women are varied from 2 to 4 percent while the rates for men are varied from 3 to 5 percent.

Estimates of gay and lesbian military service

Active duty service rates among coupled gay men and lesbians

The first step in estimating the number of gay men and lesbians in the military is to explore service rates among coupled gay men and lesbians compared to other men and women. In general, coupled gay men are less likely to serve in the military than other men, while lesbians are more likely than other women to serve. These patterns hold true for service in the active military, the national guard and reserve, and among veterans (see table 1).

Men age 18–60 who are not part of a same-sex couple are 3.4 times more likely than coupled gay men to report active military service (0.33 percent of coupled gay men versus 1.14 percent of other men). Similarly, 1.77 percent of men age 18–40 (the age of the majority of active duty personnel) who are not part of a same-sex couple report active duty service, compared with only 0.48 percent of coupled gay men. In contrast, the 0.32 percent of coupled lesbians age 18–60 serving in the active military represents a service rate 1.8 times higher than the 0.18 percent of other women serving. The pattern is similar for younger women age 18–40, with 0.46 percent of coupled lesbians reporting active service, compared with 0.29 percent of other women.

Service rates among those who report guard and reserve training do not differ as much between coupled gay men and lesbians and other men and women. While 2.17 percent of coupled gay men age 18–60 and 1.82 percent of those age 18–40 report training for the guard or reserve, the comparable figures for other men are 2.87 and 2.21 percent. This means that service rates in the guard and reserve are only 1.3 times higher for men who are not part of a same-sex couple than the comparable rates for coupled gay men. Rates of females who report guard and reserve training are also more similar between coupled lesbians and other women than are differences in the rates of active duty service.

Estimating the number of gay men and lesbians in military service

Using the mid-point estimate that 3 percent of women and 4 percent of men are gay or lesbian among adults in the general population, the findings shown in table 2 suggest that 1.8 percent of active duty personnel are gay or lesbian, meaning that nearly 26,000 gay men and lesbians are serving on active duty. The proportion of lesbians among active duty female personnel is approximately four times higher than the proportion of gay men among male personnel, regardless of the assumptions about prevalence in the population. The mid-range estimate of the proportion of lesbians among women serving on active duty is 5.2 percent while the comparable figure for gay men is 1.2 percent. These estimates imply that more than 11,000 lesbians and 14,500 gay men are currently serving in active duty.

One assumption used in these analyses is that coupled gay men and lesbians have military service rates that are the same as rates for their non-coupled counterparts. Since being coupled likely makes it more difficult to hide one's sexual orientation (as is required by military policy), it seems reasonable to suspect that, in fact, coupled gay men and lesbians are less likely to serve in active duty than single gay men and lesbian. If this is true, then the estimates of the percentage and number of gay men and lesbians in active duty are likely too low. One way to assess how this "under-representation" might affect the estimates is to consider how coupling affects service rates among all men and women. Single men are 1.17 times more likely than

men partnered with women to report being on active duty. Even more dramatic, non-partnered women are 2.25 times more likely than their partnered counterparts to report active military service. If single gay male and lesbian service rates follow the pattern of heterosexual rates, then the estimates for the proportion and number of gay men and lesbians in active duty would rise, as shown in table 3.¹ The mid-point estimates suggest that more than 36,000 gay men and lesbians are serving in active duty, representing 2.5 percent of active duty personnel.

Estimates for gay and lesbian service rates in the guard and reserve are complicated somewhat because the census data do not indicate if individuals are currently in the guard or reserve, but rather if they have ever been trained for guard or reserve duty. Nonetheless, the findings in table 2 suggest that gay men are more common among men with guard or reserve training than among active duty personnel. Mid-range estimates suggest that 3.0 percent of men with guard or reserve training are gay while 4.2 percent of women are lesbian. If these figures are applied to active guard and reserve units, they imply that nearly 6,400 lesbians and an additional 22,000 gay men are serving in guard and reserve units. These gay men and lesbians account for 3.2 percent of all guard and reserve personnel.

Combining the estimates for both active duty and guard and reserve shown in table 2, mid-range estimates suggest that 2.4 percent or more than 54,400 military personnel are gay or lesbian. Lesbians comprise nearly 5 percent of all female military personnel while gay men account for nearly 2 percent of male personnel. Using active duty mid-point estimates adjusted for the partnership of gay men and lesbians shown in table 3, these numbers would rise to 2.8 percent or nearly 65,000 gay or lesbian military personnel.

Demographic characteristics of active duty gay men and lesbians

Demographically, coupled gay men serving in active duty do not differ much from other men. None of the differences shown in table 4 in relation to age, education and race/ethnicity are statistically significant. However, coupled lesbians are on average four years older and are more likely to be white and less likely to be African American than other women serving in active duty.

Characteristics of gay and lesbian veterans and those with guard or reserve training

Service rates over time

Assessing the service patterns of gay men and lesbians over time is a bit challenging, as the “unmarried partner” response used to determine same-sex couples was only first asked in the 1990 Census. However, Census 2000 forms do ask if individuals served in various military eras. The evidence from these responses suggests that gay men and lesbians have served in all military eras in the later part of the 20th century.

The figures shown in table 5 show the percent of coupled gay men and lesbians and other men and women within various age categories who report serving in different military eras. The age categories are chosen to roughly correspond to the military eras such that the members of the age cohort would all have turned 18 during the military eras shown.

¹ Details about the procedure to calculate gay and lesbian service rates adjusted for coupling can be found in appendix A.

Similar to the findings regarding military service rates of coupled gay men and lesbians in active duty, and those with guard or reserve training, table 5 demonstrates that military service rates for coupled lesbians have far exceeded rates for other women in every military era shown. Nearly one in 10 coupled lesbians age 63–67 report that they served in Korea, compared with less than one in 100 other women. Even in the most recent service period from 1990 to 2000, service rates among coupled lesbians age 18–27 are more than three times higher than rates among other women.

While coupled gay men show service rates below that of other men, the differences decrease over time. Among men age 63–67, 20.3 percent of coupled gay men report having served in Korea, compared with 33.6 percent of other men. Among men age 18–27, however, the differences in service rates are not statistically significant.

Years of service

Across age cohorts, reported rates of years of service do not differ much between coupled gay men and other men.² Among all men age 18–67 who report military service, table 6 shows that 83.5 percent of coupled gay men and 83.8 percent of other men report serving two years or longer. These estimates are similar in all age cohorts.

The picture differs for women. Coupled lesbians report longer military tenures than other women. Among all women age 18–67 who report military service, nearly 82 percent of coupled lesbians and less than 74 percent of other women report serving more than two years. The differences among various age cohorts confirm that in all but the era from May 1975 to July 1990, coupled lesbians report longer service in the military than other women.

Age

Few significant differences are apparent when comparing the age distribution of coupled gay men and lesbians to other men and women who report training for the guard or reserve (as shown in table 7). Among veterans, coupled lesbians are on average more than 3.5 years older than other women. The average age for coupled gay men does not differ from that of other men among veterans.

Education

Most surveys of gay or lesbian people report education levels in that population somewhat higher than education levels in the general population. This appears to be true among military personnel, but with an interesting caveat. Education levels shown in table 8 show a pattern whereby coupled gay men are both more likely to not have a high school diploma than other men, but also more likely to have a college degree. This pattern emerges among those with guard or reserve training and among veterans, although the differences in not having a high school education are statistically significant only for those with guard or reserve training.

The patterns differ among women. Coupled lesbians who report guard or reserve training have higher education levels than other women. Nearly 28 percent of coupled lesbians with guard or reserve training have a college degree, compared with less than 21 percent of other women. Among veterans, coupled lesbians are more likely to have a high school degree and less likely to have some college or an associate degree than other women. The differences in having a college education are not statistically significant in this group.

² Census reports years of service in only two categories: less than two years or two years or more. A continuous measure of years served is not available.

Race/Ethnicity

Coupled gay men who are veterans or report guard or reserve training show greater racial/ethnic diversity than other men. The proportions of coupled gay men who are African American and Latino also exceed those of other men with guard or reserve training. Conversely, while more than three-quarters (78 percent) of men with guard or reserve training who are not part of a same-sex couple are white, the comparable figure for coupled gay men is just 69 percent.

Among women, there are few differences in the racial/ethnic composition of coupled lesbians and other women with guard or reserve training. Among veterans, the pattern is the opposite of that shown with men. Coupled lesbians are more likely to be white than other female veterans and are less likely to be African American.

Disability status

There are virtually no differences in disability rates between coupled gay men and lesbians and other men and women with guard or reserve training or among veterans (see table 10). The only statistically significant difference observed was that coupled gay male veterans were more likely to report a mental health disability than other male veterans, 5.6 percent versus 4.6 percent respectively.

Income and employment status

Several studies have observed that gay men tend to earn less than other men, while lesbians tend to earn more than other women (Black et. al 2000, 2003). Among those with guard or reserve training and among veterans, these same patterns hold. In each case, coupled gay men report an annual income below that of other men, while coupled lesbians report incomes above that of other women (see table 11). The income differences in women are more substantial than those in men. For example, coupled gay male veterans have incomes that are on average nearly \$2,400 below the incomes of other male veterans. But coupled lesbian veterans report incomes that are on average more than \$13,000 above the income of other women.

An exploration of employment status provides some explanation for the income gaps observed. Coupled gay men with guard or reserve training are less likely to be employed full time and more likely to not be in the labor force than other men. This could explain why their incomes are lower. Conversely, coupled lesbians who are veterans or report guard or reserve training have substantially higher rates of full-time employment than other women and are less likely to report not being in the labor force. It makes sense then that they would also have higher incomes.

Geographic distribution of gay and lesbian veterans

The census cannot provide a direct estimate of the number of gay and lesbian veterans as only same-sex couples are counted. However, estimates of the total number of gay and lesbian veterans among states and large metropolitan areas can be made using a procedure that considers characteristics of coupled gay and lesbian veterans and assumes that 4 percent of adults in the United States are gay or lesbian. Details about this procedure are provided in appendix A. Estimates are provided for all states and for 53 metropolitan areas where the census sample included 25 or more observations of veterans who are part of a same-sex couple.

The proportion of veterans among coupled gay men and lesbians in the census is a key characteristic used to estimate the size of the gay and lesbian veteran population. Nationally,

10.3 percent of individuals within same-sex couples report being a veteran. The top 10 states and large metropolitan areas with the highest proportion of veterans among the same-sex couple population are shown in table 12. Among states, North Dakota, Hawaii, Alaska, Virginia, and Idaho have the largest proportion of veterans among same-sex couples. Men and women in same-sex couples in North Dakota are twice as likely to be a veteran than the national average. Among metropolitan areas, Pensacola, FL, Norfolk, VA, San Diego, CA, Dayton, OH, and Santa Rosa, CA have the highest rates of veterans among same-sex couples. Pensacola's rate of 34 percent is more than three times the national average.

Nearly one million gay and lesbian Americans are veterans. The states with the largest population of gay and lesbian veterans include California with an estimated 137,000, Florida, Texas, New York, and Georgia (see table 13). Of course, this list is dominated by the country's most populous states. Table 13 also shows states ranked by the per capita rate of gay and lesbian veterans (number per thousand adults). Nationally, there are an estimated 4.2 gay and lesbian veterans per thousand adults, but the rate is more than double that figure in the District of Columbia with a rate of 10.2. Per capita rates are also high in Vermont, Hawaii, Maine, and Washington.

Among metropolitan areas, Los Angeles, Washington, DC, San Diego, Chicago, and New York have the highest populations of gay and lesbian veterans. Santa Rosa, Pensacola, San Francisco, San Diego, and Norfolk are among the metropolitan areas with the highest per capita rates of gay and lesbian veterans.

The estimates shown in tables 13 and 14 are shown for all states and the metropolitan areas studied in appendix B.

Discussion: the impact of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"

The current "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy enforced in all branches of the U.S. military officially enforces a policy of invisibility and silence in relation to gay and lesbian military service. Gay men and lesbians must remain silent about their sexual orientation if they are to serve in the military and in turn, the military is restricted from asking personnel about their sexual orientation. In this legal climate, data collection that focuses on sexual minorities within the military is virtually impossible.

This is only one of many arenas in which policies that affect the rights and responsibilities of gay men and lesbians are enacted in the absence of sound empirical data and analyses that could inform those policies. Debates regarding marriage rights, adoption rights, and domestic partner benefits all suffer a similar fate. Census 2000 data on same-sex unmarried partners have become an important resource for remedying the disparity between these policy debates and sound empirical analyses. For example, the Congressional Budget Office used these data to estimate the fiscal impact of same-sex marriage.

Of course, the census data come with a variety of caveats. Issues of undercount, possible measurement error, and the limitations associated with only having information on same-sex couples all present analytical challenges. Given these challenges, how confident can policymakers be in these findings? The estimates used in this report suggest that some 36,000 gay men and women are serving in active duty. When the margin of error is taken into account, this estimate is likely accurate within approximately 20 percent above and below this figure. While this range is relatively large, the census still represents perhaps the only available data source where any such estimate can be made. The caveats associated with using the census

data must be viewed relative to the benefits of shedding light on an essentially invisible population and helping to shed light on the impact of the highly controversial “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy.

This policy was essentially a political compromise with competing objectives. For those who object to gay and lesbian military service, “don’t ask, don’t tell” poses formidable obstacles designed in part to discourage such service. For those who favor the rights of gay men and lesbians to serve, the policy provides an official mechanism to permit such service (albeit not openly).

The findings from this brief suggest that for men at least, both objectives are being met. The proportion of gay men in the military is lower than that in the adult male population, suggesting that the policy does discourage the service of gay men. However, the historical analyses demonstrate that differences in military service rates between coupled gay men and other men have decreased, suggesting that gay men are more comfortable serving today than in the past.

The effects of “don’t ask, don’t tell” are not as obvious with regard to women. Lesbians are significantly more likely than other women to serve in the military. Their proportions among active duty military personnel exceed the proportion of lesbians within the adult female population. While service rate gaps between lesbians and other women have decreased over time (similar to the pattern observed in men), among 18- to 27-year-olds, lesbians are still over three times more likely than other women to report military service. Further, among women who serve, lesbians report longer duration of service than other women. These findings demonstrate that if the policy discourages gay men and lesbians to serve, the effects are not uniform and are not nearly as pronounced among women.

Conclusion

This research brief does not attempt, nor do census data really allow for, a comprehensive analysis of the historical effects of U.S. military treatment of gay men and lesbians. However, the analyses do offer a first glimpse at both current and historical military service patterns among this hidden population. The findings highlight a consistent pattern observed in other analyses of census data. Demographically speaking, large numbers of gay and lesbian Americans do not look very different from their heterosexual counterparts. Census data show that increasing numbers of gay men and lesbians typify the “American dream” of settling down with a life partner, owning a home, and raising children. This research suggests that the same can be said of military service. Despite formidable obstacles placed in their way, gay and lesbian Americans have and continue to serve their country in the armed forces.

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Tables

Table 1. Military service rates for coupled gay men and lesbians and other men and women in Census 2000.

Panel 1: Age 18–60	Coupled gay men	Other men	Coupled lesbians	Other women
% active duty	0.33*	1.14	0.32*	0.18
% veteran	11.11*	16.52	7.20*	1.37
% reserves/national guard	2.17*	2.87	2.21*	1.56
% no active duty	86.39*	79.47	90.26*	96.89
Panel 2: Age 18–40				
% active duty	0.48*	1.77	0.46*	0.29
% veteran	6.66*	7.87	5.44*	1.33
% reserves/national guard	1.82*	2.21	1.97*	1.36
% no active duty	91.05*	88.16	92.12*	97.02

*Difference is statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level

Table 2. Estimated percentages and numbers of gay men and lesbians serving on active military duty and who report National Guard and Reserve training.

Active Duty	Est. % Lesbian/Gay in the Adult Population		
	2% / 3%	3% / 4%	4% / 5%
Est. % lesbians among women	3.5	5.2	6.9
Est. % gay men among men	0.9	1.2	1.5
Est. % GL	1.3	1.8	2.3
Est. lesbians	7,541	11,225	14,852
Est. gay men	10,857	14,582	18,361
Est. GL	18,398	25,806	33,213
National Guard and Reserve			
Est. % lesbians among women	2.8	4.2	5.6
Est. % gay men among men	2.3	3.0	3.8
Est. % GL	2.4	3.2	4.1
Est. lesbians	4,273	6,382	8,475
Est. gay men	16,658	22,265	27,901
Est. GL	20,930	28,648	36,376
Combined Active Duty and Guard and Reserve			
Est. % lesbians among women	3.2	4.8	6.4
Est. % gay men among men	1.4	1.9	2.4
Est. % GL	1.7	2.4	3.0
Est. lesbians	11,814	17,607	23,327
Est. gay men	27,515	36,847	46,261
Est. GL	39,329	54,454	69,589

Note: Estimates of the total number of gay men and lesbian on active duty are derived by multiplying the proportions shown in the table by total number of men and women on active duty. Counts of active duty personnel are derived from military strength reports for January 2004 (Department of Defense, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, Military Personnel Statistics: <http://web1.whs.osd.mil/mmid/military/RG0404.pdf>). Counts of male and female personnel assume the male/female sex ratio found in military strength figures reported in September 2002 (<http://web1.whs.osd.mil/mmid/military/rq0209f.pdf>).

Table 3. Estimated percentages and numbers of gay men and lesbians serving on active military duty, adjusting for partnership status.

Active Duty	Est. % Lesbian/Gay in the Adult Population		
	2% / 3%	3% / 4%	4% / 5%
Est. % lesbians among women	6.3	9.3	12.1
Est. % gay men among men	1.0	1.4	1.7
Est. % GL	1.8	2.5	3.3
Est. lesbians	13,546	19,881	25,948
Est. gay men	12,228	16,416	20,662
Est. GL	25,774	36,296	46,610

Note: Estimates of the total number of gay men and lesbian on active duty are derived by multiplying the proportions shown in the table by total number of men and women on active duty. Counts of active duty personnel are derived from military strength reports for January 2004 (Department of Defense, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, Military Personnel Statistics: <http://web1.whs.osd.mil/mmids/military/RG0404.pdf>). Counts of male and female personnel assume the male/female sex ratio found in military strength figures reported in September 2002 (<http://web1.whs.osd.mil/mmids/military/rq0209f.pdf>).

Table 4. Demographic characteristics of men and women in active duty.

	Coupled gay men	Other men	Coupled lesbians	Other women
Mean age	31.68	29.51	32.27*	28.08
% college degree or higher	25.29	20.57	30.68	21.95
Race/ethnicity				
% white	63.32	69.16	65.84*	52.58
% African American	20.74	15.42	20.01*	29.24
% Hispanic/Latino(a)	9.93	9.72	8.39	11.02
% Asian/Pacific Island	5.02	3.03	3.96	3.18
% other	0.99	2.68	1.80	3.98

* Difference is statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level

Table 5. Military service rates by age cohort and military era.

% Reporting Military Service within Each Age Cohort					
Ages	Turned 18 during military era	Coupled gay men	Other men	Coupled lesbians	Other women
63–67	June 1950–January 1955 (Korea)	20.3*	33.6	9.7*	0.6
54–62	February 1955–July 1964	13.2*	21.9	5.8*	0.5
43–53	August 1964–April 1975 (Vietnam)	12.9*	22.4	6.4*	0.8
28–42	May 1975–July 1990	6.1*	9.7	5.1*	1.4
18–27	August 1990–2000	5.0	5.7	3.9*	1.2

* Difference is statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level

Table 6. Proportion of veterans reporting more than two years of service on active duty by age cohort and military era.

% Reporting 2+ Years of Service within Each Age Cohort					
Ages	Turned 18 during military era	Coupled gay men	Other men	Coupled lesbians	Other women
18–67	Combined	83.5	83.8	81.9*	73.7
63–67	June 1950–January 1955 (Korea)	90.2*	85.8	87.7*	72.5
54–62	February 1955–July 1964	83.5	85.3	85.4*	67.5
43–53	August 1964–April 1975 (Vietnam)	82.3	83.6	82.5*	78.3
28–42	May 1975–July 1990	84.6	85.9	81.5	78.8
18–27	August 1990–2000	68.8	66.1	67.8*	55.8

* Difference is statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level

Table 7. Age distribution of men and women in active duty, with guard or reserve training, and among veterans.

Panel 1: Men		Guard or Reserve		Veteran	
Age	Turned 18 during military era:	Coupled GL	Other	Coupled GL	Other
% 18–27	August 1990–2000 (inc. Persian Gulf)	8.93*	13.79	3.89	3.83
% 28–42	May 1975–July 1990	38.28*	26.81	28.65*	21.5
% 43–53	August 1964–April 1975 (Vietnam)	26.31	24.68	32.58	32.75
% 54–62	February 1955–July 1964	18.58*	25.25	23.77*	26.57
% 63–67	June 1950–January 1955 (Korea)	7.9	9.47	11.1*	15.35
Mean age		44.38	45.34	48.06*	50.05
Panel 2: Women					
% 18–27	August 1990–2000 (inc. Persian Gulf)	7.01*	13.99	5.68*	11.63
% 28–42	May 1975–July 1990	44.83*	35.20	40.06*	46.19
% 43–53	August 1964–April 1975 (Vietnam)	26.78	26.93	32.56*	27.91
% 54–62	February 1955–July 1964	15.43	16.30	14.84*	9.97
% 63–67	June 1950–January 1955 (Korea)	5.95	7.58	6.86*	4.30
Mean age		43.16	42.96	44.48*	40.92

* Difference is statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level

Table 8. Education distribution of men and women in active duty, with guard or reserve training, and among veterans, age 18–67.

Panel 1: Men		Guard or Reserve		Veteran	
		Coupled gay	Other	Coupled gay	Other
Below high school		22.46*	15.3	10.77	9.69
High school diploma		21.56*	29.29	25.23*	31.73
Some college, associate's degree		25.87*	29.89	38.01	36.31
College and/or graduate degree		30.11*	25.52	25.99*	22.27
Panel 2: Women					
Below high school		16.83	19.72	7.89*	6.35
High school diploma		24.28	27.49	24.98*	22.36
Some college, associate's degree		31.14	32.17	42.60*	47.53
College and/or graduate degree		27.75*	20.62	24.54	23.76

* Difference is statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level

Table 9. Racial/ethnic distribution of men and women in active duty, with guard or reserve training, and among veterans, age 18–67.

	Guard or Reserve		Veteran	
	Coupled GL	Other	Coupled GL	Other
Panel 1: Men				
White	68.67*	77.62	77.37*	80.68
African American	15.75*	11.68	11.34	10.90
Hispanic/Latino	10.35*	6.78	6.75*	4.92
Asian/Pacific Island	2.50	1.93	1.11	1.22
Other	2.74	1.99	3.43*	2.28
Panel 2: Women				
White	66.48	64.07	75.32*	67.22
African American	20.36	22.87	14.28*	20.02
Hispanic/Latina	10.59	8.46	6.36	7.18
Asian/Pacific Island	0.95*	2.32	1.04*	1.75
Other	1.62	2.28	3.00	3.80

* Difference is statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level

Table 10. Disability status of men and women in active duty, with guard or reserve training, and among veterans, age 18–67.

	Guard or Reserve		Veteran	
	Coupled gay	Other	Coupled gay	Other
Physical disability				
Men	9.72	7.99	11.66	11.52
Women	10.29	10.06	10.61	9.70
Mental disability				
Men	6.03	4.14	5.56*	4.56
Women	6.28	5.46	5.50	4.82

* Difference is statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level

Table 11. Income and employment status among men and women with guard or reserve training and among veterans, age 18–67.

	Guard or Reserve		Veteran	
	Coupled GL	Other	Coupled GL	Other
Panel 1: Men				
Annual income (mean)	\$36,887*	\$45,423	\$42,917*	\$45,305
% employed full time	57.2*	62.6	64.8	64.9
% unemployed	4.0	4.1	3.4	3.1
% not in labor force	30.1*	24.5	23.8	25.2
Panel 2: Women				
Annual income (mean)	\$33,137*	\$21,352	\$38,280*	\$25,133
% employed full time	60.1*	43.7	71.9*	56.1
% unemployed	3.8	4.3	2.4*	3.8
% not in labor force	26.4*	35.6	17.6*	26.7

* Difference is statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level

Table 12. Top ten states and metropolitan areas by the proportion of veterans (age 18–67) among same-sex couples.

Rank	State	% veteran among same- sex couples	Metropolitan Area	% veteran among same- sex couples
1	North Dakota	20.7	Pensacola, FL	34.1
2	Hawaii	16.4	Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News, VA	27.5
3	Alaska	15.9	San Diego, CA	18.8
4	Virginia	15.8	Dayton-Springfield, OH	16.9
5	Idaho	15.1	Santa Rosa, CA	16.3
6	Wyoming	14.8	Honolulu, HI	15.8
7	Montana	14.5	San Antonio, TX	15.2
8	West Virginia	14.3	Nashville, TN	15.0
9	Maine	14.3	Jacksonville, FL	14.8
10	Nevada	13.8	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	13.5

Table 13. Top ten states and metropolitan areas ranked by the number and per capita rate of gay and lesbian veterans.

Panel 1: States		Est. # of GL veterans		Est. # of GL veterans per 1,000 adults
1	California	136,821	District of Columbia	10.2
2	Florida	66,991	Vermont	7.2
3	Texas	65,409	Hawaii	6.9
4	New York	37,757	Maine	6.7
5	Georgia	33,966	Washington	6.5
6	Virginia	30,822	Nevada	6.5
7	Pennsylvania	29,706	Alaska	6.0
8	Washington	28,577	Arizona	6.0
9	Illinois	26,788	Virginia	5.8
10	Ohio	26,669	Georgia	5.6
Panel 2: Metropolitan Areas				
1	Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	26,599	Santa Rosa, CA	14.2
2	Washington, DC	25,399	Pensacola, FL	12.2
3	San Diego, CA	21,465	San Francisco, CA	11.3
4	Chicago, IL	18,246	San Diego, CA	10.3
5	New York, NY	17,057	Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News, VA	8.6
6	San Francisco, CA	15,822	Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA	7.8
7	Atlanta, GA	15,074	Fort Lauderdale, FL	7.4
8	Phoenix-Mesa, AZ	14,403	Austin-San Marcos, TX	7.0
9	Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA	14,295	Washington, DC	6.9
10	Houston, TX	13,842	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	6.4

Appendix A

Bayes' Rule calculations

Applying Bayes' Rule, Eq. (1) estimates $P(L|M)$, the probability that a woman is a lesbian, given that she is serving in the military. Put another way, this equation calculates the fraction of lesbians among female active military personnel. The equation can be similarly applied to gay men.

$$P(L | M) = \frac{P(L)P(M | L)}{P(L)P(M | L) + P(NL)P(M | NL)} \quad \text{Eq. (1)}$$

The terms of the equation are defined as follows:

- $P(L)$: Probability that an adult in the female population is lesbian. Put another way, this calculation is the fraction of lesbians in the female adult population. The report will use several estimates derived from surveys representing the U.S. population where questions of sexual behavior and/or sexual orientation were asked.
- $P(M|L)$: Probability that someone is in the military given that she is lesbian. Put another way, this calculation is the fraction of active duty military personnel among lesbians. This estimate is derived from the census figures of the proportion of same-sex female unmarried partners who report active military service.
- $P(NL)$: Probability that an adult in the population is not lesbian. Put another way, this calculation is the fraction of non-lesbians in the adult female population. This will always be calculated as one minus the fraction of lesbians in the adult female population.
- $P(M|NL)$: Probability that someone is in the military given that she is not a lesbian. Put another way, this calculation is the fraction of active duty military personnel among non-lesbian women. This estimate is derived from the census figures of the proportion of the adult female population other than same-sex unmarried partners who report active military service.

Rates of military service among gay men and lesbians are derived by calculating service rates of same-sex unmarried partners. Military service rates for heterosexuals can be estimated from the census by determining what portion of men and women (excluding same-sex unmarried partners) are currently serving in the military. Since most active military personnel exit the military by age 60, the analyses calculate all rates for the population age 18–60.

Adjusting for differences in service rates based on partnership status

The estimates that adjust for differential service rates based on partnership status use the differences observed among men and women who are not in same-sex couples to calculate service rates both single and coupled gay men and women. Among men and women not in same-sex partnerships, single men are 1.7 times more likely than those coupled with women to report service on active duty, while single women are 2.25 times more likely than women partnered with men to report serving on active duty. The calculations also assume that 25 percent of gay men and 32 percent of lesbians are coupled (see Black et al. 2000).

Adjusted estimates of $P(M|L)$ (see Eq. 1) are then calculated as a weighted average of service rates for single and coupled lesbians as follows:

$$P(M | L)_a = (A_L D(1 - C_L)) + A_L C_L \quad \text{Eq. (2)}$$

Where:

- A_L : Active duty rates among coupled lesbians (observed in census).
- D : Differential between service rates of single and coupled women calculated as the active duty service rate of single women divided by the active duty service rate of coupled women (among those not in same-sex partnerships).
- C_L : Proportion of lesbians who are coupled.

Equation 1 is then recalculated using $P(M|L)_a$ in place of $P(M|L)$ to estimate the number of gay men and lesbians serving on active duty adjusted for partnership status.

Deriving estimates of the size of the gay and lesbian veteran population

The estimates of the size of the gay and lesbian population within states and metropolitan areas are derived with two key assumptions:

- a1. The geographic distribution of the full gay and lesbian population across states and metropolitan areas is the same as the distribution of same-sex couples.
- a2. The proportion of veterans among the full gay and lesbian population equals the proportion of veterans among same-sex couples.

The procedure begins by first estimating f_s , the proportion of gay men and lesbians within the adult population of a given state (the same procedure can be applied to metropolitan areas):

$$f_s = 0.04 \left(\frac{\left(\frac{C_s}{H_s} \right)}{\left(\frac{C_N}{H_N} \right)} \right) \quad \text{Eq. (3)}$$

Where C_s represents the number of same-sex couples in state S and H_s represents the number of households in that state. C_N and H_N represent the number of same-sex couples and households counted in the nation. The calculation shown in equation 3 multiplies a constant (0.04) by a ratio of the fraction of households in a state that are same-sex couples and the fraction of households in the nation that are same-sex couples. This odds-ratio quantifies the over- or underrepresentation of same-sex couples within a given state relative to the national figure. If a1 holds, then multiplying this odds-ratio by the fraction of gay men and lesbians in the adult population (0.04) derives an estimate of the proportion of gay men and lesbians within the adult population of the state.

If a2 holds, then an estimate of the size of the gay and lesbian veteran population within the state (V_s) can be derived as follows:

$$V_s = v_s (f_s A_s) \quad \text{Eq. (4)}$$

Where v_S , the proportion of veterans among same-sex couples in state S , is multiplied by the number of gay and lesbian adults in the state, the product of f_S and A_S , the number of adults in state S .

Appendix B

Estimates of the size of the gay and lesbian veteran population within states and metropolitan areas with a population above one million.

State	% veteran among same-sex couples	Est. # of GL veterans	Est. # of GL veterans per 1,000 adults
Alabama	12.2%	13,433	4.0
Alaska	15.9%	2,635	6.0
Arizona	13.0%	22,551	6.0
Arkansas	11.9%	7,169	3.6
California	9.7%	136,821	5.6
Colorado	10.8%	14,980	4.7
Connecticut	10.7%	11,119	4.3
Delaware	10.2%	2,686	4.6
District of Columbia	9.7%	4,680	10.2
Florida	11.8%	66,991	5.4
Georgia	12.3%	33,966	5.6
Hawaii	16.4%	6,336	6.9
Idaho	15.1%	3,981	4.3
Illinois	8.2%	26,788	2.9
Indiana	9.8%	13,801	3.1
Iowa	10.3%	5,180	2.4
Kansas	10.8%	5,832	3.0
Kentucky	11.2%	10,922	3.6
Louisiana	8.9%	10,998	3.4
Maine	14.3%	6,511	6.7
Maryland	10.6%	16,916	4.3
Massachusetts	7.0%	16,890	3.5
Michigan	9.9%	21,083	2.9
Minnesota	9.7%	12,131	3.3
Mississippi	13.4%	8,996	4.3
Missouri	9.5%	12,125	2.9
Montana	14.5%	2,352	3.5
Nebraska	11.6%	3,664	2.9
Nevada	13.8%	9,655	6.5
New Hampshire	7.4%	2,787	3.0
New Jersey	9.3%	22,734	3.6
New Mexico	10.1%	6,231	4.8
New York	5.6%	37,757	2.6
North Carolina	11.3%	25,329	4.2
North Dakota	20.7%	1,945	4.0
Ohio	10.4%	26,669	3.2
Oklahoma	11.8%	9,240	3.6
Oregon	11.5%	14,125	5.5
Pennsylvania	10.1%	29,706	3.2
Rhode Island	9.6%	3,317	4.1
South Carolina	10.3%	10,965	3.7
South Dakota	5.4%	610	1.1

Tennessee	13.0%	18,120	4.2
Texas	10.6%	65,409	4.4
Utah	7.3%	3,761	2.5
Vermont	12.5%	3,301	7.2
Virginia	15.8%	30,822	5.8
Washington	13.1%	28,577	6.5
West Virginia	14.3%	5,684	4.0
Wisconsin	9.2%	10,339	2.6
Wyoming	14.8%	1,601	4.4
Metropolitan Areas			
Atlanta, GA	8.9%	15,074	5.0
Austin-San Marcos, TX	12.0%	6,555	7.0
Baltimore, MD	9.3%	7,345	3.9
Boston, MA	5.7%	8,193	3.1
Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC	9.1%	4,034	3.6
Chicago, IL	7.3%	18,246	3.0
Cleveland-Lorain-Elyria, OH	9.9%	4,984	3.0
Columbus, OH	11.3%	6,026	5.3
Dallas, TX	8.1%	10,637	4.2
Dayton-Springfield, OH	16.9%	3,681	5.1
Denver, CO	9.6%	7,733	4.9
Detroit, MI	10.1%	9,349	2.9
Fort Lauderdale, FL	11.4%	9,157	7.4
Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	12.0%	5,505	4.5
Honolulu, HI	15.8%	3,961	5.9
Houston, TX	9.9%	13,842	4.7
Indianapolis, IN	7.7%	3,585	3.0
Jacksonville, FL	14.8%	4,746	5.8
Kansas City, MO-KS	8.4%	3,882	3.0
Las Vegas, NV	12.1%	6,814	5.8
Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	6.8%	26,599	3.9
Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ	12.8%	4,215	4.8
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN	8.2%	7,669	3.5
Monmouth-Ocean, NJ	12.5%	3,437	4.1
Nashville, TN	15.0%	5,515	6.0
Nassau-Suffolk, NY	6.2%	5,160	2.5
New Orleans, LA	6.8%	3,264	3.3
New York, NY	4.1%	17,057	2.4
Newark, NJ	9.4%	5,923	3.9
Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News, VA	27.5%	9,960	8.6
Oakland, CA	8.0%	10,095	5.7
Orange County, CA	8.2%	7,104	3.4
Orlando, FL	9.5%	6,013	4.9
Pensacola, FL	34.1%	3,806	12.2
Philadelphia, PA	8.7%	13,049	3.4
Phoenix-Mesa, AZ	12.7%	14,403	6.1
Pittsburgh, PA	9.5%	4,711	2.6
Portland-Vancouver, OR	8.3%	6,573	4.6
Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, NC	11.3%	4,521	5.0
Richmond-Petersburg, VA	11.5%	3,021	4.1
Riverside-San Bernardino, CA	10.7%	11,647	5.2

Rochester, NY	11.3%	3,357	4.1
Sacramento, CA	9.8%	5,951	5.0
San Antonio, TX	15.2%	6,587	5.8
San Diego, CA	18.8%	21,465	10.3
San Francisco, CA	9.0%	15,822	11.3
San Jose, CA	8.4%	5,247	4.1
Santa Rosa, CA	16.3%	4,933	14.2
Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA	11.5%	14,295	7.8
St. Louis, MO	9.1%	5,333	2.8
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	13.5%	11,984	6.4
Washington, DC	13.0%	25,399	6.9
West Palm Beach-Boca Raton, FL	9.2%	3,756	4.2