

APPENDIX D.

Veterans in the Fort Carson Region

Apart from the impacts that additional active duty postings to Fort Carson may have on the immediate economy and the need for various services in the region, there is interest in the potential effects these postings may eventually have on the number of veterans living in the area. This appendix discusses the current veteran population in the region and the potential relationship between the number of military personnel assigned to the area and its future population of military veterans.

Note that this appendix uses the standard census definition of veteran to refer to anyone who has served in the armed forces, but is now a civilian. Veterans are not limited to individuals who served in actual combat, or to individuals that are now retired from the workforce, though these are important subgroups of the overall population of veterans.

Current Veteran Population in El Paso County and Colorado Springs

There is a large and distinctive population of military veterans living in the City of Colorado Springs and in El Paso County as a whole. While the City of Pueblo is also home to a relatively large number of veterans, particularly older individuals who served during the World War II and Korean War eras, this narrative focuses primarily on El Paso County (and Colorado Springs) because of their unusually large populations of relatively recent, younger veterans.

As shown in Exhibit D-1, military veterans represent approximately 19 percent of the El Paso County population over the age of 18. This proportion is nearly double the national average (10 percent). The most unusual characteristic of the veteran population, however, is their relative youth. Fifty-six percent of the veterans in El Paso County are under age 55 which compares with a national average of 35 percent.¹

In contrast to the U.S. as a whole, the number of veterans in El Paso County has grown over the past two decades, although the growth in the number of veterans appears to be slowing. The proportion of the county's population that are veterans also declined slightly from 1990 to 2000 and from 2000 to 2007.

Exhibit D-1.
2007 Veterans by Age, El Paso County and U.S.

Age	Number	Percent	Veteran Pct. of Population by Age
2007 El Paso County Veterans by Age			
18-34	13,128	17%	10%
35-54	30,680	39%	18%
55-64	16,890	21%	29%
65-74	10,220	13%	33%
75+	7,793	10%	32%
Total	78,711	100%	19%
2007 U.S. Veterans by Age (thousands)			
18-34	1,894	8%	3%
35-54	6,137	27%	7%
55-64	5,875	26%	18%
65-74	4,163	18%	21%
75+	4,823	21%	26%
Total	22,892	100%	10%

Source: American Community Survey.

¹ Note that the overall population in El Paso County is also younger than the nation as a whole, but the difference is relatively small. Fifty-five percent of all El Paso County residents are ages 18 to 54, compared to 52 percent of all U.S. residents.

Consistent with the finding noted earlier that the county has an unusually large number of relatively young veterans, 54 percent of the veterans in El Paso County completed their military service since the Vietnam War ended. Nationally, only 31 percent of all veterans finished their service after the Vietnam era.

Exhibit D-2 depicts the makeup of the veteran population in El Paso County and the U.S. by era of military service, and shows changes in the veteran population for both geographic areas from 1990 through 2007.²

**Exhibit D-2.
Veteran Population of El Paso County and the U.S. 1990, 2000 and 2007**

Veterans	1990	2000	2007	Change from Previous Period	
				1990-2000	2000-2007
El Paso County Veterans by Era of Service					
Period of Service:					
Post 9/11/2001	-	-	14,586	-	14,586
Pre 9/11/2001	12,249	34,431	27,709	22,182	(6,722)
Vietnam	27,517	25,889	24,312	(1,628)	(1,577)
Pre-Vietnam	18,441	14,672	12,104	(3,769)	(2,568)
Total Veterans	58,207	74,992	78,711	16,785	3,719
Total Population (all ages)	397,014	516,929	587,272		
Percent Veterans	14.7%	14.5%	13.4%		
U.S. Veterans by Era of Service (thousands)					
Period of Service:					
Post 9/11/2001	-	-	1,778	-	1,778
Pre 9/11/2001	3,352	6,473	5,399	3,121	(1,074)
Vietnam	8,232	8,052	7,672	(181)	(380)
Pre-Vietnam	15,867	11,879	8,043	(3,988)	(3,837)
Total Veterans	27,451	26,404	22,892	(1,048)	(3,511)
Total Population (all ages)	248,710	281,422	301,621		
Percent Veterans	11.0%	9.4%	7.6%		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Summary Tape File 3, 1990 and 2000. American Community Survey, 2007.

² Note that Exhibit D-2 shows the percentage of the total population of all ages that are veterans, and is not directly comparable to Exhibit D-1, which shows the percentage of the population over 18 that are veterans.

The concentration of veterans in El Paso County, and particularly veterans of more recent military service, is also reflected in the population of Colorado Springs. Among communities with more than 100,000 residents in 2000, Colorado Springs was the only non-Southern community ranked in the top 10 in terms of veterans as a percentage of civilian residents over 18. Colorado Springs ranked 5th in total percentage of veterans among the population; 3rd in percentage of Vietnam era veterans and 8th in percentage of Gulf War era (post-1975) veterans³ in 2000. While Colorado Springs did not rank among the top 10 communities in percentage of veterans from the Korean War and World War II eras, the City of Pueblo was among the top 10 communities for veterans from these earlier periods of military service.⁴

Potential Relationship between the Regional Veteran Population and Postings to Regional Military Facilities

There is clearly a relationship between the large number of individuals that serve at least a portion of their military careers in the Fort Carson region and the extensive population of veterans living in the region. As noted in the Census 2000 Brief on veterans,

“ The tables suggest that the places with the highest concentration of Vietnam veterans tend to contain or be near military facilities in the South and West, and that the highest concentration of Korean War and World War II veterans tend to be in retirement areas in Florida, Arizona or California, and other places with warm climates.”⁵

As shown in Exhibits D-1 and D-2 earlier in this memorandum, the proportion of younger veterans among the El Paso County population – and the proportion of post-Vietnam era veterans – is approximately three times the national average. Based on this relationship, it is plausible to infer that up to two-thirds of the population of younger, post-Vietnam, veterans in El Paso County may have chosen to live in the region because they were exposed to the area at some point during their active duty military service.⁶ This hypothesis would encompass approximately 28,000 of the post-Vietnam veterans that currently live in El Paso County.

³ Gulf War era veterans are represented in Exhibit D-2 by the rows labeled “Pre 9/11/2001” and “Post 9/11/2001”.

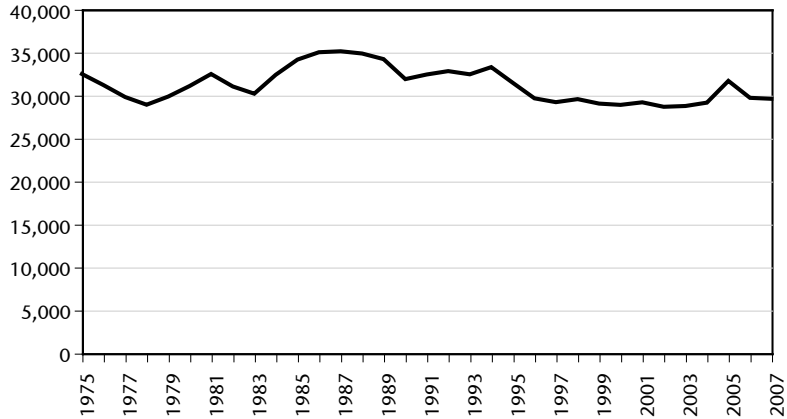
⁴ *Veterans: 2000*. Census 2000 Brief. Pages 8 and 9.

⁵ *Veterans: 2000*. Census 2000 Brief. Page 8.

⁶ Another factor that may contribute to the large number of working age veterans in El Paso County is the relatively large number of Department of Defense contractors in the region, presuming these contractors are more likely than other firms to employ veterans.

**Exhibit D-3.
El Paso County Active Duty
Military Population, 1975-
2007**

Source:
Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional
Economic Information System, Table CA25.



To take this analysis a step further, Exhibit D-3 shows the number of active duty military personnel that lived in El Paso County during each year from 1975 through 2007 – which Census defines as the years since the Vietnam era. The graphic shows that the county’s active duty military population has been remarkably stable in the range of 29,000 to 35,000 personnel.

The average number of active duty personnel living in El Paso County over the thirty two year period shown in Exhibit D-3 was approximately 31,200. Available sources suggest that military personnel move, on average, once every three years. This implies that roughly 10,400 new active duty military personnel move into the region each year, on average. Over the thirty-three year period from 1975 to 2007, about 340,000 active duty personnel may have at some point been stationed in the Fort Carson region.

Comparing the 340,000 people estimated to have spent part of their active duty service in the region since 1975 to the 28,000 post-Vietnam veterans in El Paso County hypothesized to have spent part of their service in the region suggests that for every twelve active duty personnel assigned to one of the region’s military facilities one person will remain in the region (or return to the region) after their service is completed.

For simplicity, the preceding analysis does not account for some individuals being posted to El Paso County military facilities on multiple occasions (e.g. serving at Fort Carson, transferring elsewhere, and then returning). To the extent that this occurs, the number of different active duty personnel that have been stationed in the region between 1975 to 2007 (shown as 340,000) is overstated, and the proportion of personnel who serve in the region that remain in the region as veterans after their service is completed is correspondingly understated. For example, if all active duty personnel served two tours in the region, the number of personnel cycling through the region from 1975 to 2007 would have been 170,000 and the proportion that eventually become veterans in the region would be estimated at one in six.

Summary and Conclusion: National data suggest that the presence of a military base correlates with higher levels of local veteran populations in all age groups. It is likely that this relationship is more pronounced in physically attractive areas, or larger communities with broader employment options, such as Colorado Springs. Perhaps surprisingly, this effect is most pronounced among younger area residents.

- The presence of Fort Carson and other military facilities appears to have increased the veteran population of El Paso County age of 55 and above by fifty percent above the national norms: 30 percent of this age group versus 21 percent nationally are veterans.
- The presence of the local military facilities, or perhaps other undetermined factors, has an even greater impact on the demography of the area's middle-aged residents. As a percent of all residents, the veteran population of El Paso County for persons age 35-54 is far greater than national norms: 18 percent versus 7 percent.
- For reasons that may have to do with the changing role of Fort Carson in Army operations, national and local economic conditions, the changing demography of the military, or other factors that have not been identified, Fort Carson's presence (and the other military installations in the region) appears to have most greatly influenced the composition of the region's younger population. For El Paso County residents, aged 18-34, veterans make up 10 percent of the local population, which compares with 3 percent at a national level.
- It should be noted that the veteran population of the United States, in terms of absolute numbers and veterans as a percentage of all residents, has been declining for many years. As of 2007, approximately 7.6 percent of the U.S. population are veterans. This compares with 9.4 percent in 2000.
- Based on historical relationships, a reasonable correlation can be drawn between the number of active duty military personnel in the region (including soldiers assigned to Fort Carson) and the presence of veterans within El Paso County—in essence an additional impact of Fort Carson on overall all population growth. Over a long period of time, it appears that for every twelve active duty personnel assigned to one of the region's military facilities, one person will remain in the region (or return to the region) after their service is completed.