Employment Situation of Veterans 2017

Briefing by the Bureau of Labor Statistics
March 21, 2018

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BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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Where do the data come from?

- The Current Population Survey (CPS) is a joint program between the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the Census Bureau
- Voluntary; about 90% response rate
- Approximately 60,000 households; about 100,000 individuals age 16 and over are interviewed each month.
- Between 8,000 and 9,000 veteran respondents age 18 and over per month.
- Data are tabulated for veterans ages 18 and over.

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How do we define veterans?

- *Veterans* are men and women who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces and were civilians at the time of the survey. Members of the Reserve and National Guard are counted as veterans if they have ever been called to active duty by a Presidential Order.

- *Nonveterans* are men and women who have never served on active duty in the U.S. military.

- Because the gender and age profiles of veterans and nonveterans are so different (most veterans are men, most recent veterans are young), it is best to compare veterans and nonveterans of the same gender and age groups.

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Periods of Service

- Data about veterans are available by these periods of service:

Gulf War era II	=	Sept. 2001- present
Gulf War era I	=	Aug. 1990 - Aug. 2001
Vietnam era	=	Aug. 1964 - April 1975
Korean War	=	July 1950 - Jan. 1955
World War II	=	Dec. 1941- Dec. 1946

- "Other service periods" are the dates outside the war periods mentioned above:

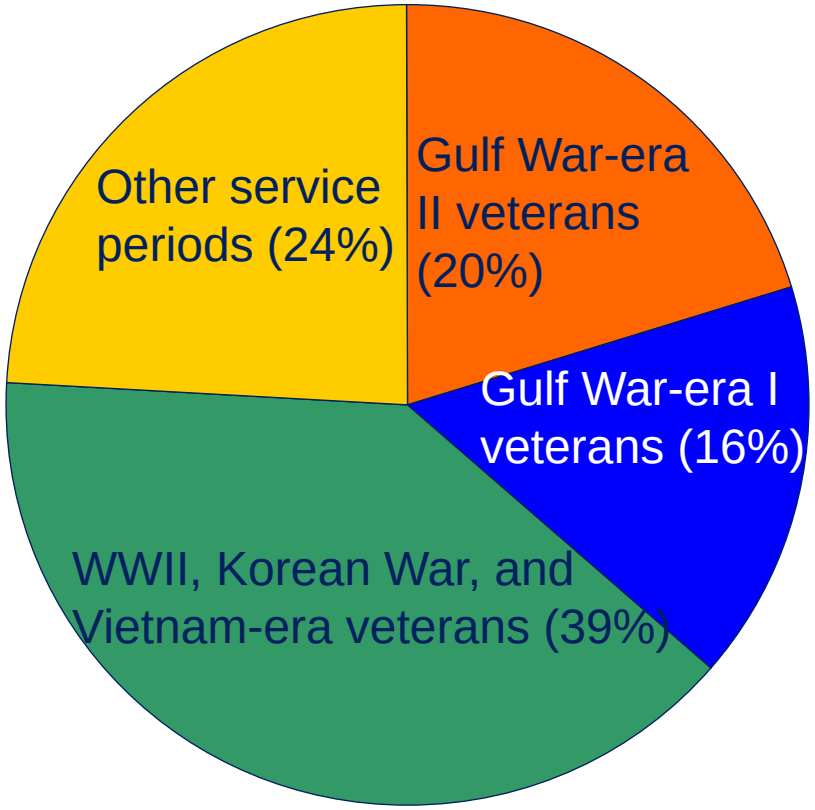
May 1975 - July 1990	Jan. 1947 - June 1950
Feb. 1955 - July 1964	Nov. 1941 or earlier

Note: Veterans may have served anywhere in the world during these periods of service.

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Chart 1. WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam-era veterans are the largest group of veterans in the population

Percent distribution

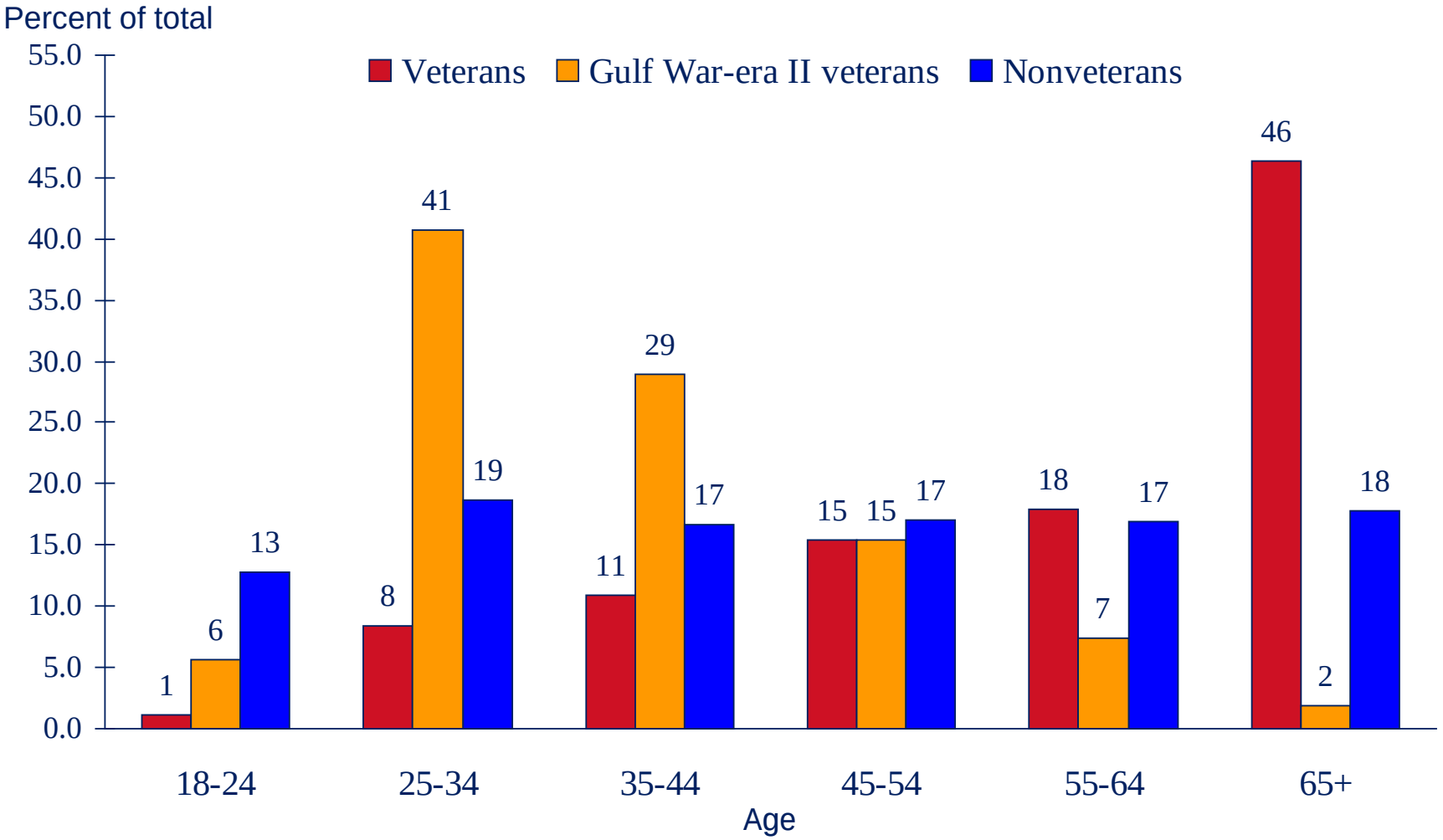


NOTE: Gulf War-era II veterans served anywhere on active duty since September 2001. Gulf War-era I veterans served anywhere between August 1990 and August 2001.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, annual averages 2017

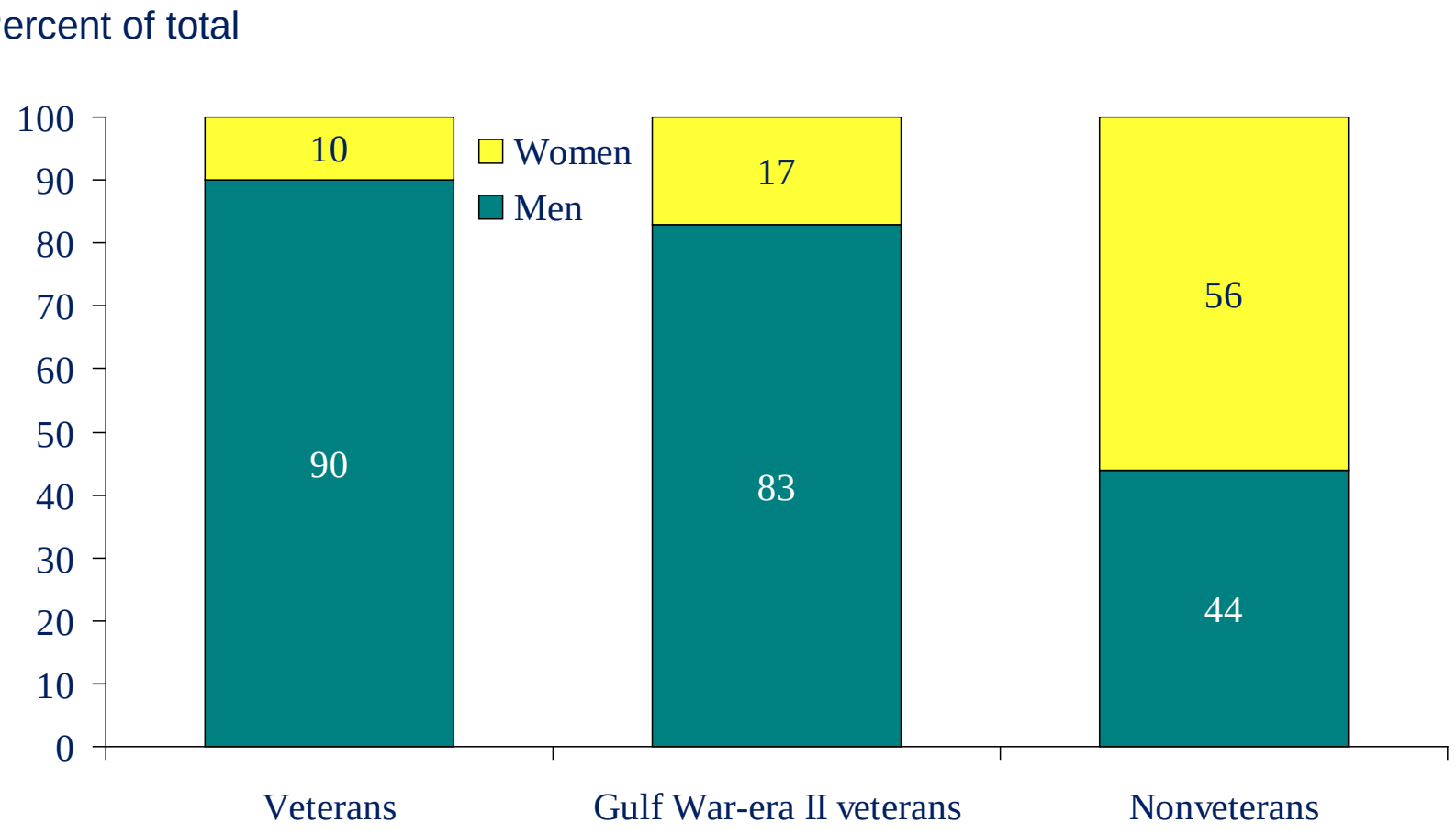
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Chart 2. Veterans and nonveterans have very different age distributions



SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, annual averages 2017

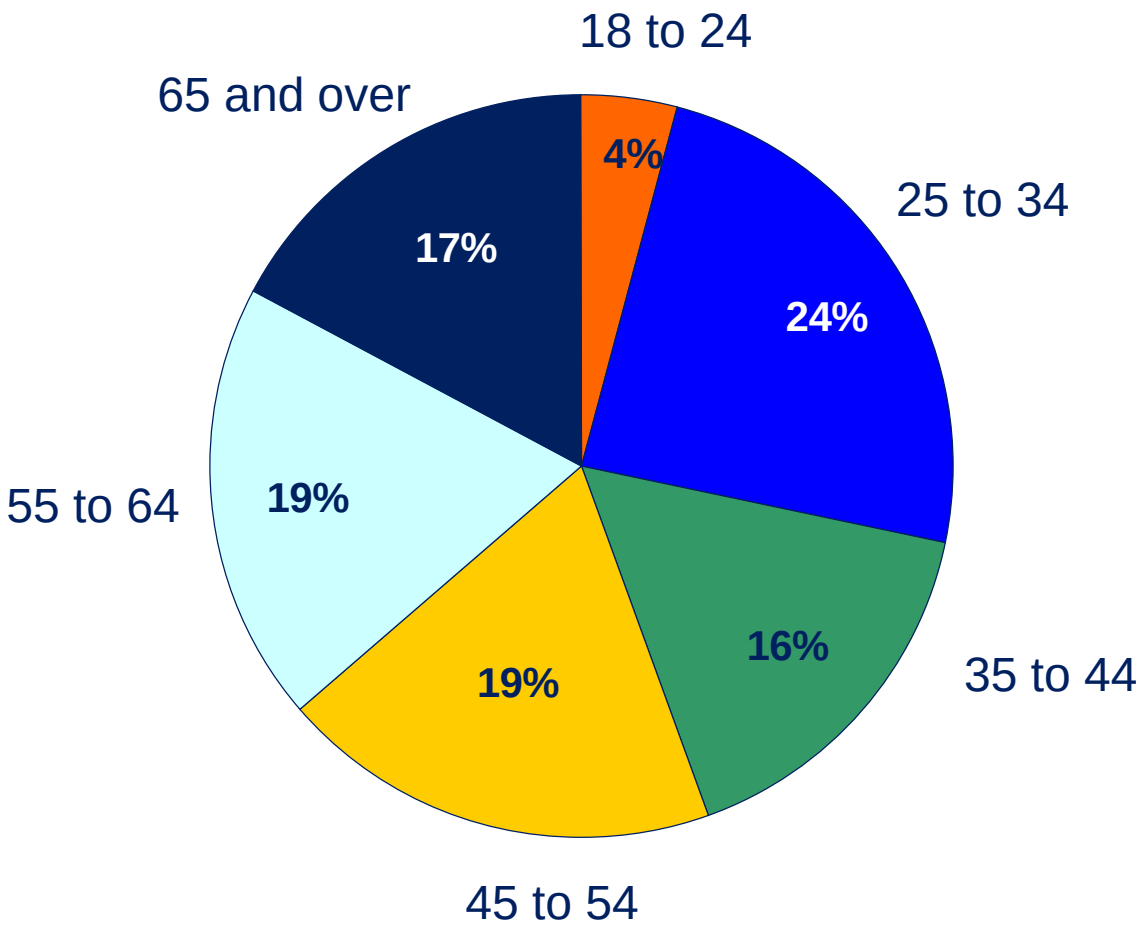
Chart 3. Veterans, Gulf War-era II veterans, and nonveterans have very different gender compositions



SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, annual average 2017

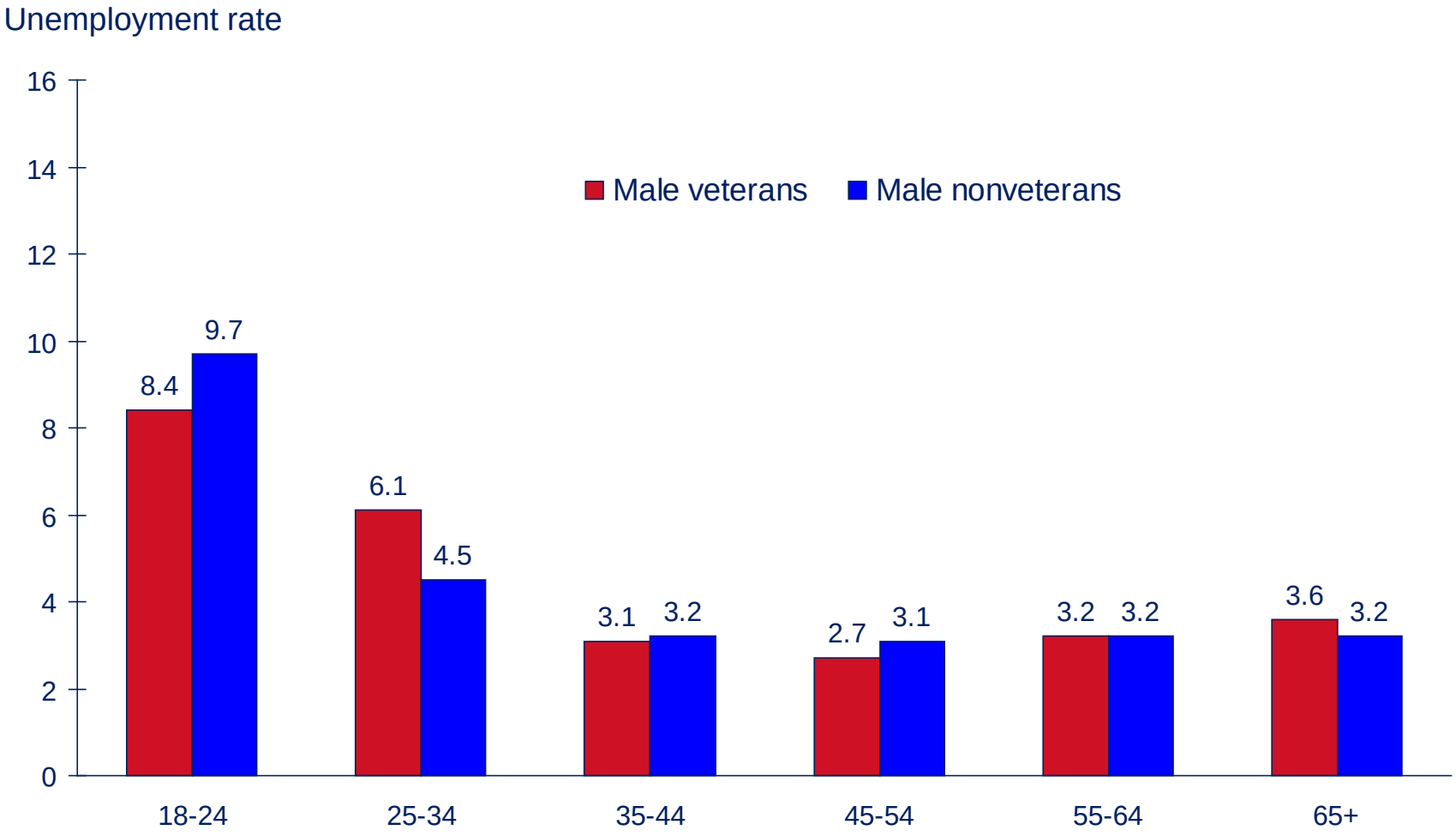
Chart 4. More than half of 370,000 unemployed veterans in 2017 were age 45 and over

Percent distribution



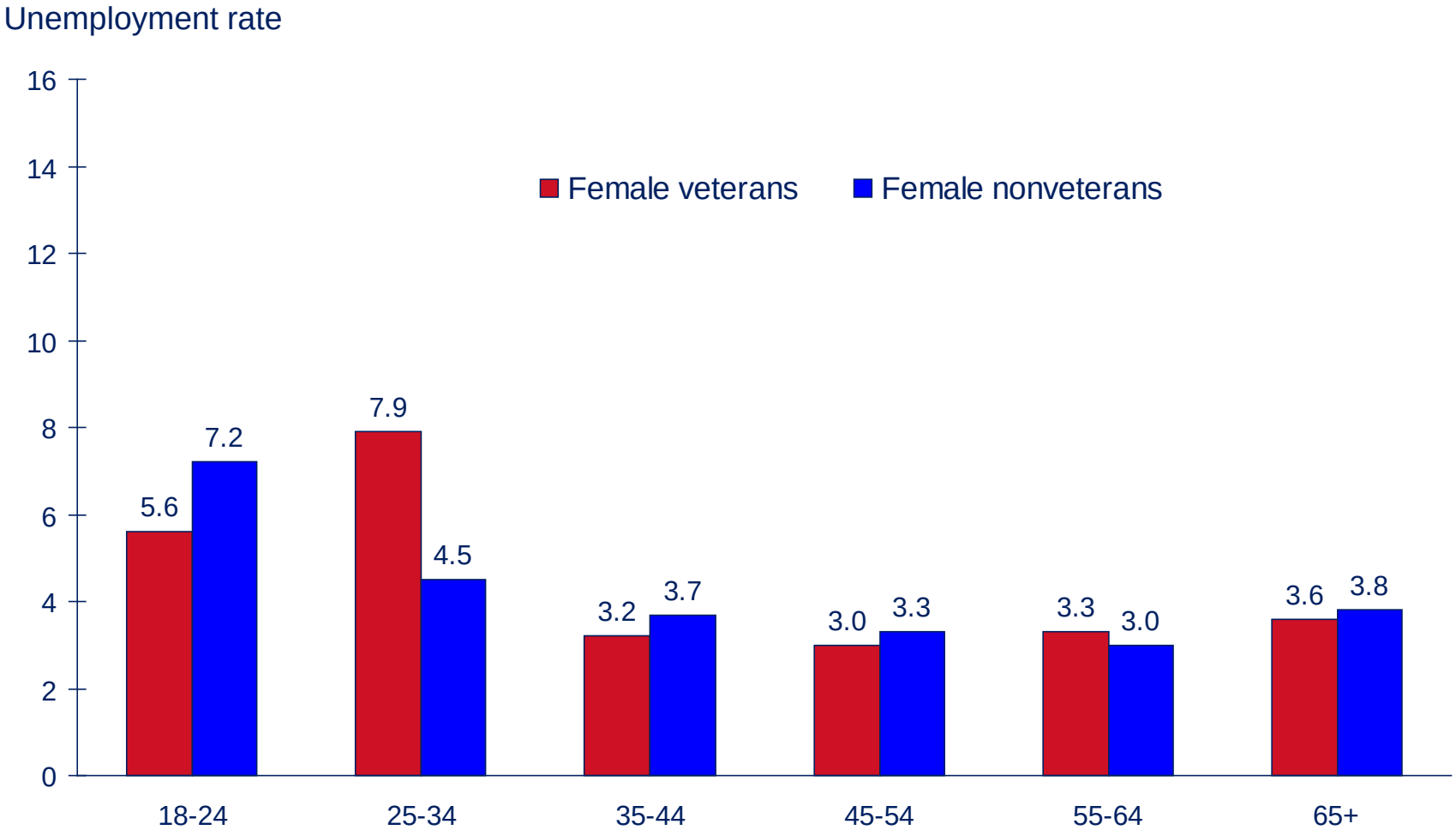
NOTE: Totals may not add to 100 because of rounding.
SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, annual averages 2017

Chart 5. Unemployment rates of male veterans and nonveterans by age



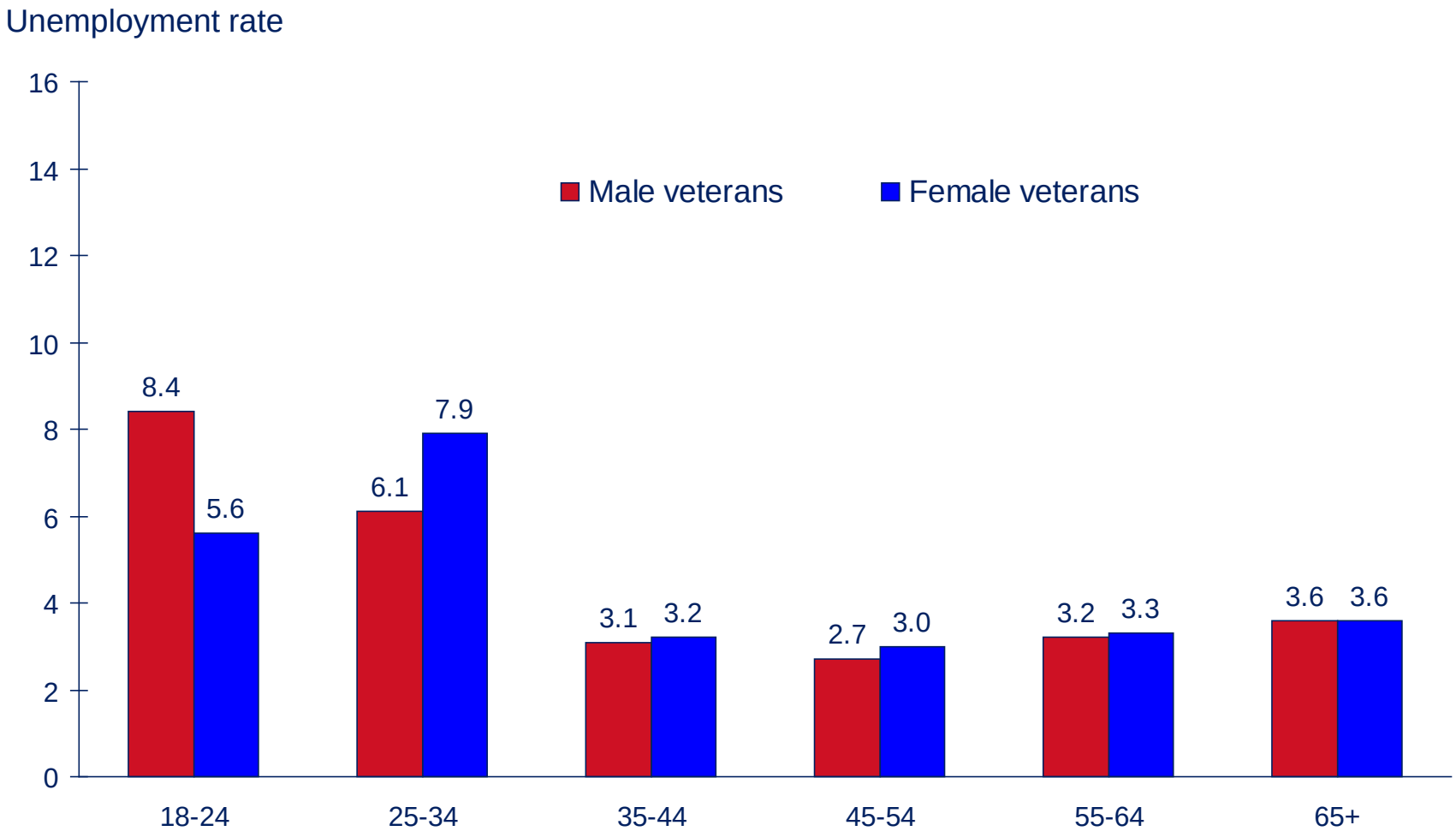
SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, annual averages 2017

Chart 6. Unemployment rates of female veterans and nonveterans by age



SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, annual averages 2017. Data for 18-24 year old veterans was not published because it did not meet BLS publication criteria

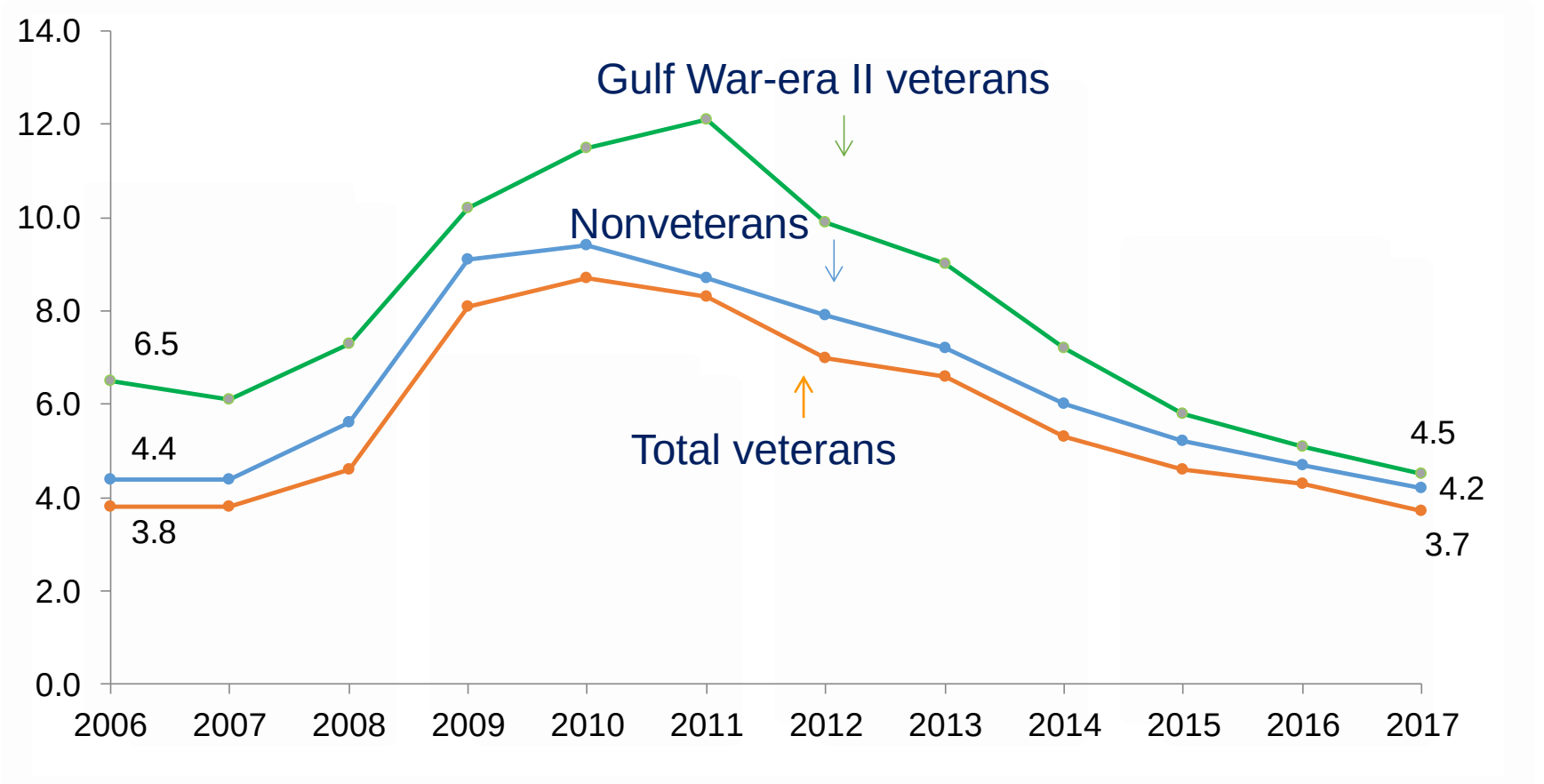
Chart 7. Unemployment rates of male and female veterans by age



SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, annual averages 2017

Chart 8. Unemployment rates of veterans and nonveterans continue to trend down

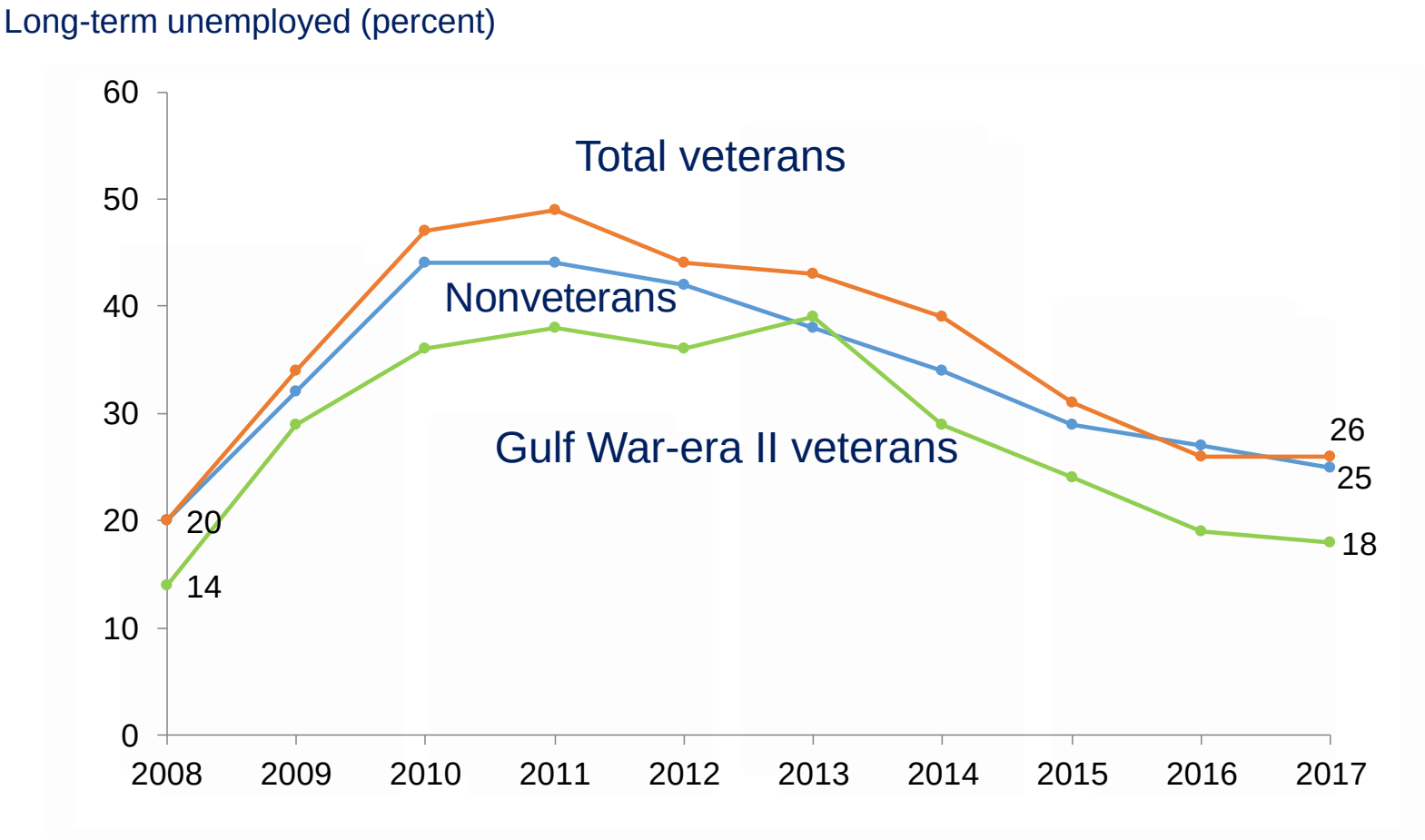
Unemployment rate (percent)



NOTE: The unemployment rate is the number of unemployed as a percent of the labor force.
SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), annual averages 2006-2017

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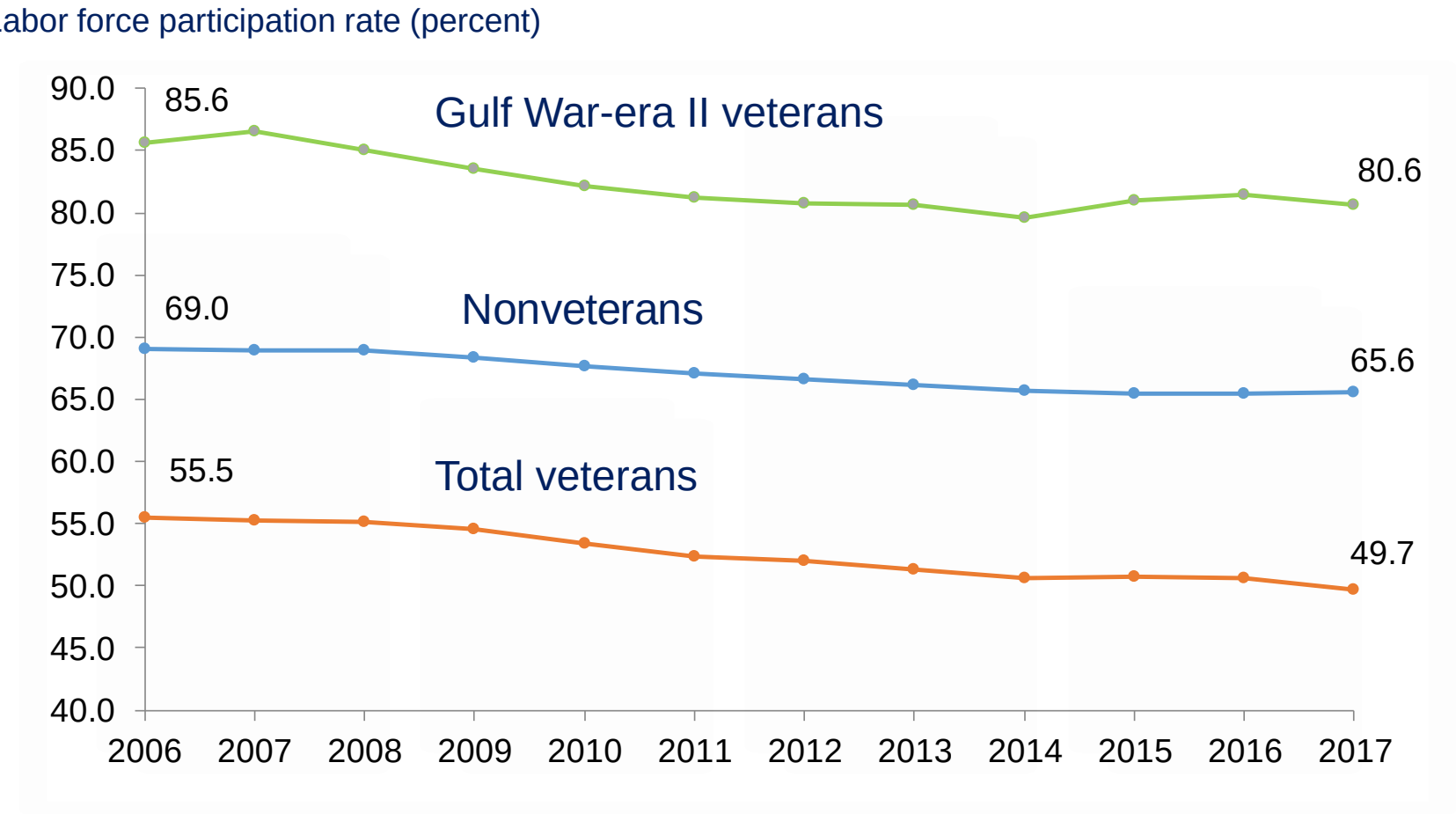
Chart 9. Gulf War-era II veterans were less likely to be unemployed for 27 weeks or longer than total veterans or nonveterans in 2017



NOTE: The percent long-term unemployed is the proportion of the unemployed looking for work for 27 weeks or more.
SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), annual averages 2008-2017

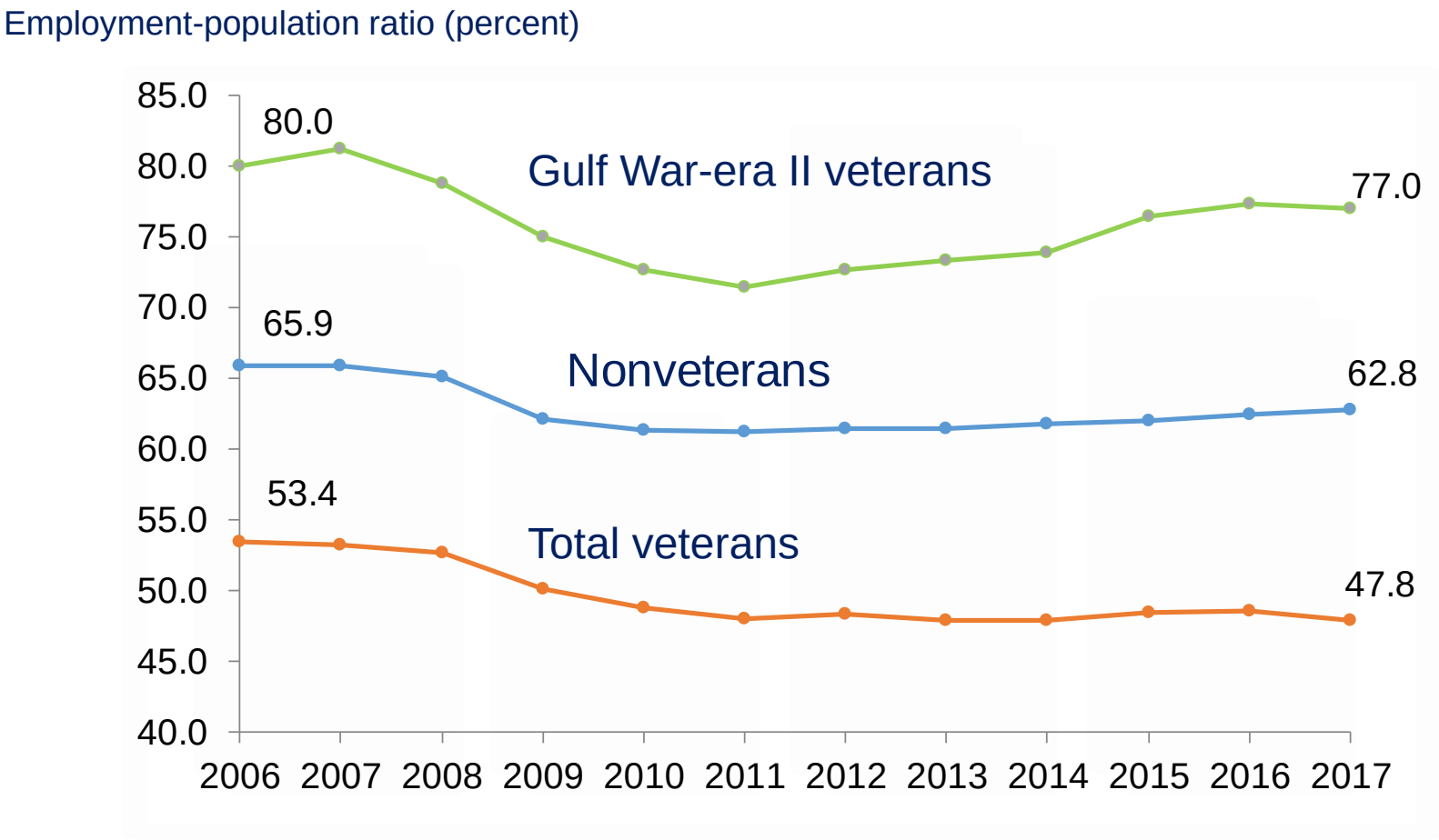
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Chart 10. Labor force participation rates of veterans and nonveterans



NOTE: The labor force participation rate is the proportion of the population that is in the labor force. The labor force includes the employed and people not working but actively seeking a job.
SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), annual averages 2006-2017.

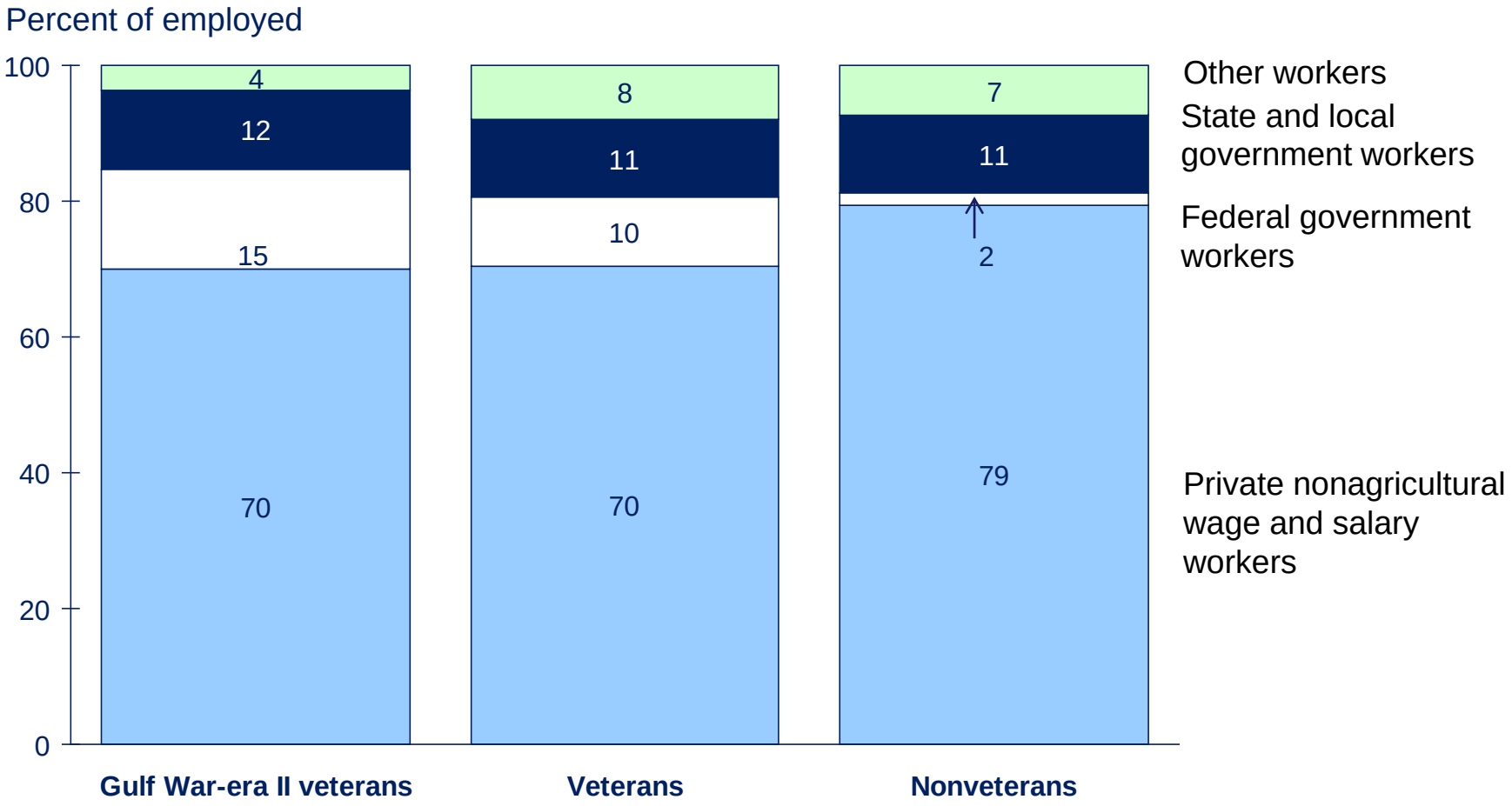
Chart 11. Employment-population ratios of veterans and nonveterans



NOTE: The employment-population ratio is the proportion of the population that is working.
SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), annual averages 2006-2017

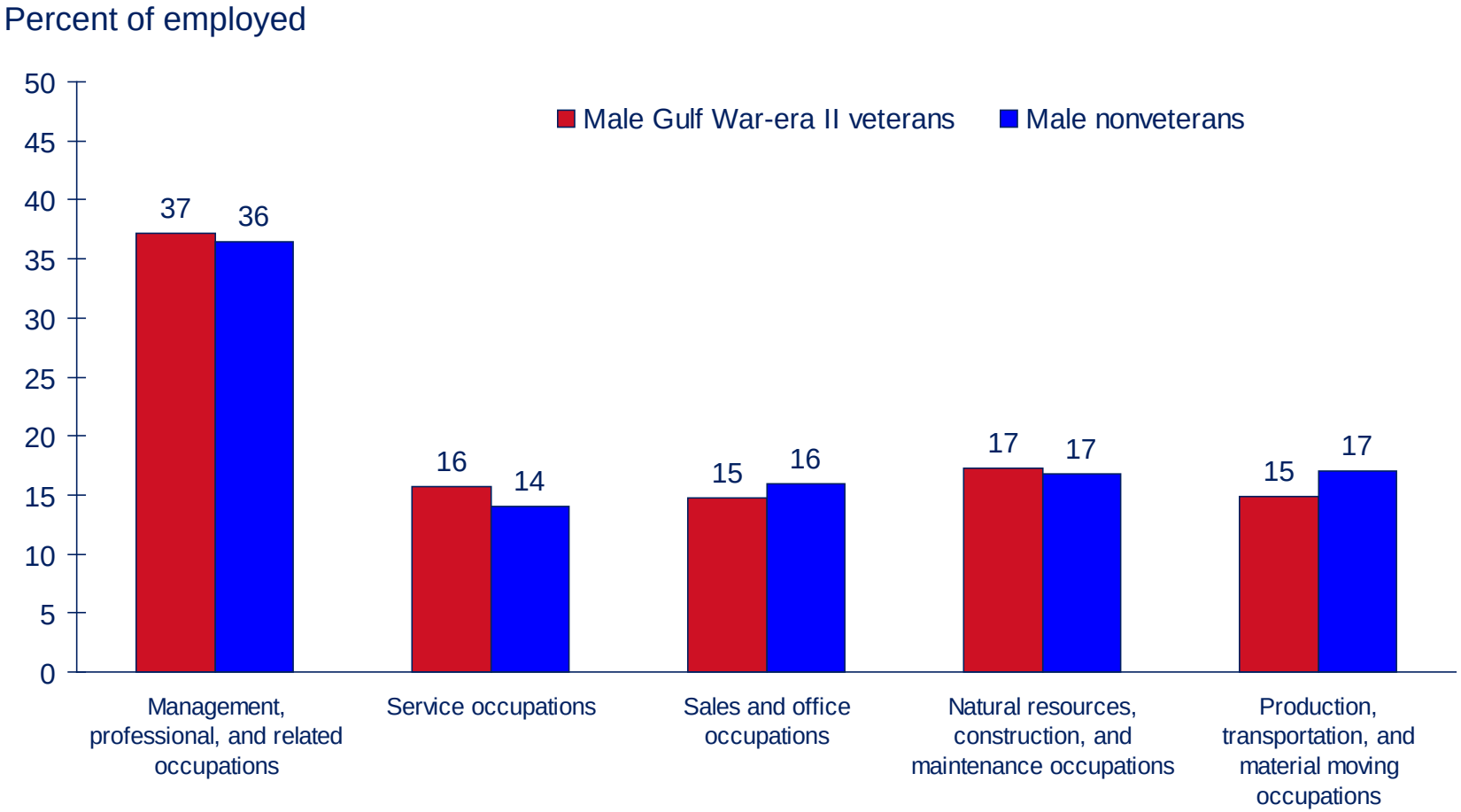
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Chart 12. Veterans are much more likely to work for the Federal government than nonveterans



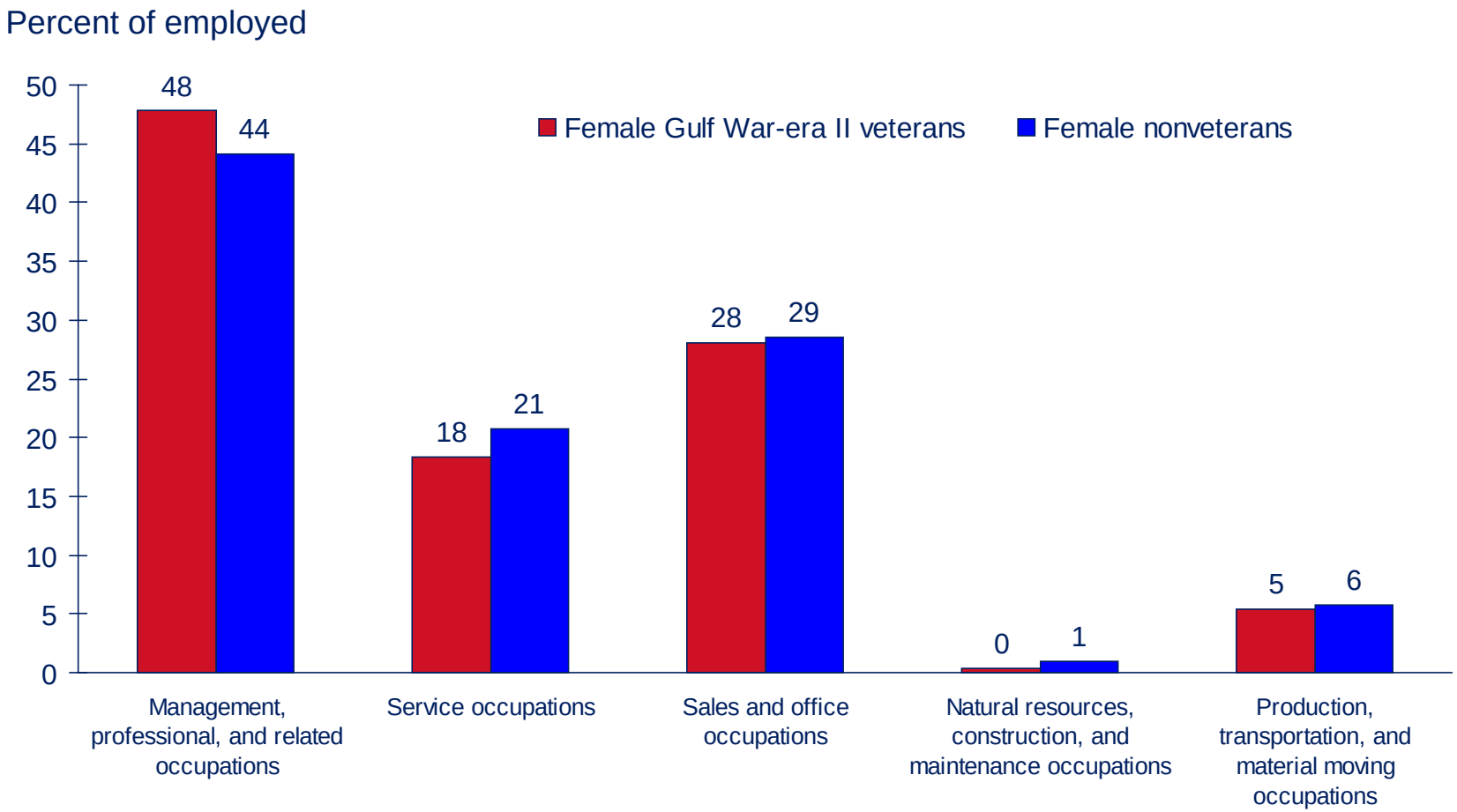
NOTE: “Other workers” includes persons employed in agriculture, the self-employed, and unpaid family workers. Totals may not add to 100 because of rounding.
SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, annual averages 2017

Chart 13. Male Gulf War-era II veterans were more likely to work in service occupations and less likely to work in sales and office occupations and in production, transportation, and material moving occupations than male nonveterans



NOTE: Service occupations include a wide variety of professions including healthcare support, protective service, food preparation and serving, building and grounds cleaning and maintenance, and personal care and service.
SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, annual averages 2017

Chart 14. Female Gulf War-era II veterans were more likely to work in management and professional occupations than female nonveterans



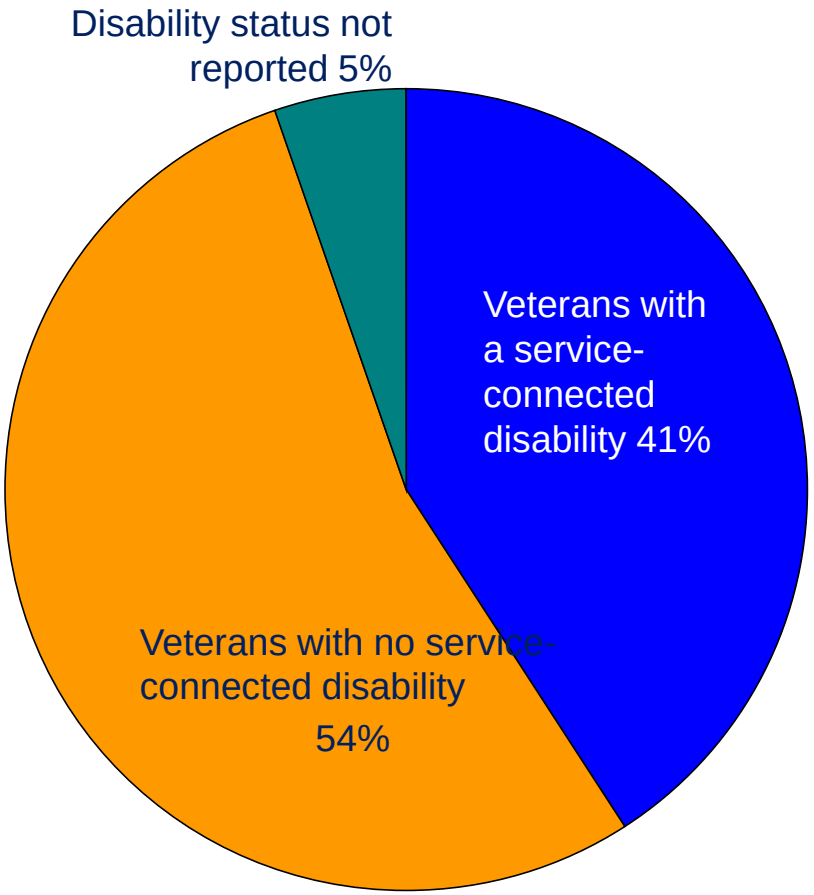
NOTE: Service occupations include a wide variety of professions including healthcare support, protective service, food preparation and serving, building and grounds cleaning and maintenance, and personal care and service.
SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, annual averages 2017

Veterans supplement, August 2017

- Additional questions are asked of veterans on topics such as service-connected disability, current or past membership in the Reserve or National Guard, and location of service for Gulf War-era II veterans.
- Typically 1 respondent per household. In the veterans supplement, the interviewer asks to speak with the veteran and contacts up to 2 extra times to reach him or her before accepting a response from another household member.
- Collected every 2 years since 1985; has been conducted annually in August since 2009 (except in July 2010).
- Co-sponsored by the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

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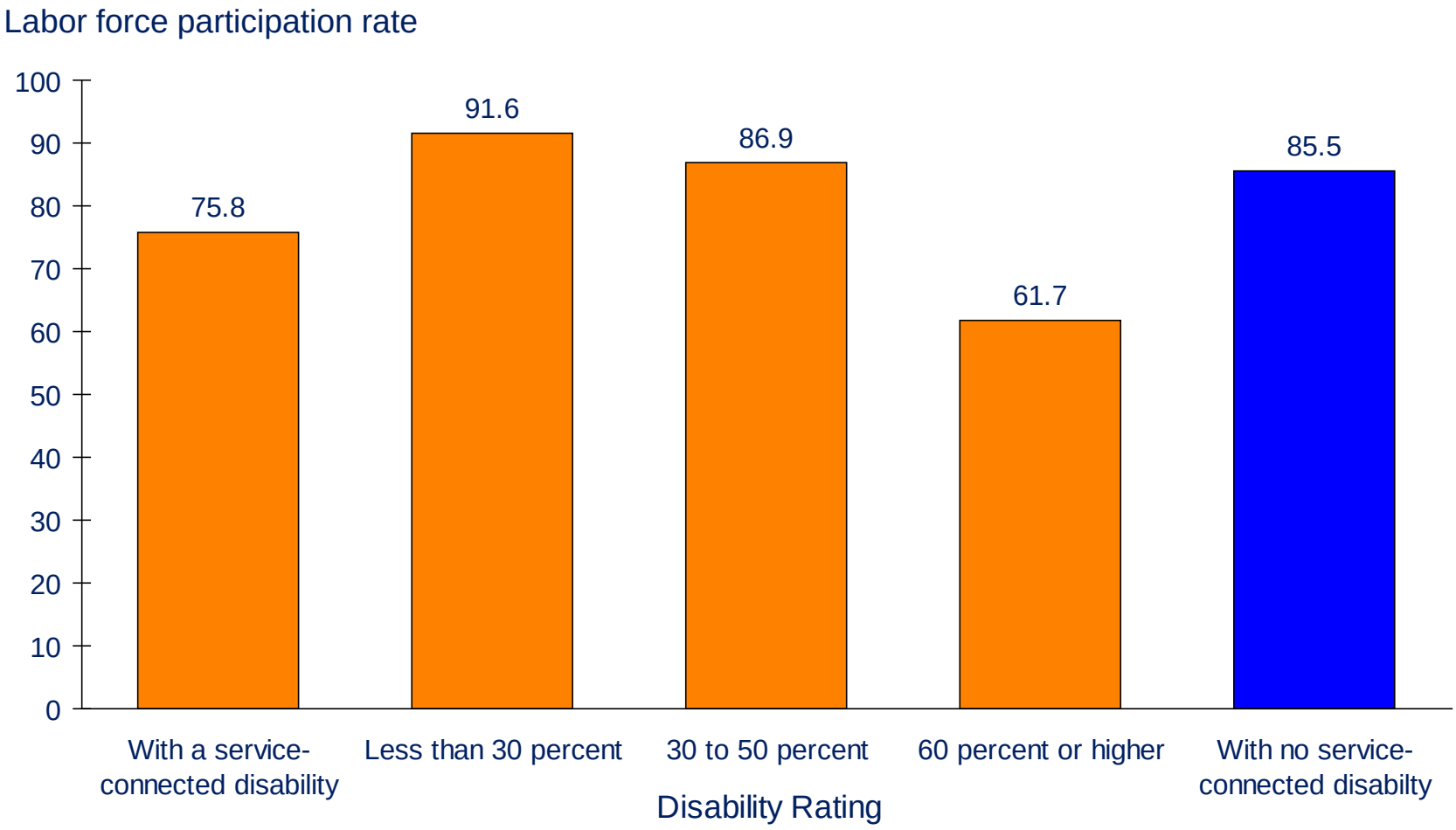
Chart 15. Service-connected disability status of Gulf War-era II veterans, August 2017



NOTE: Gulf War-era II veterans are those who served anywhere in the world sometime since September 2001. Totals may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

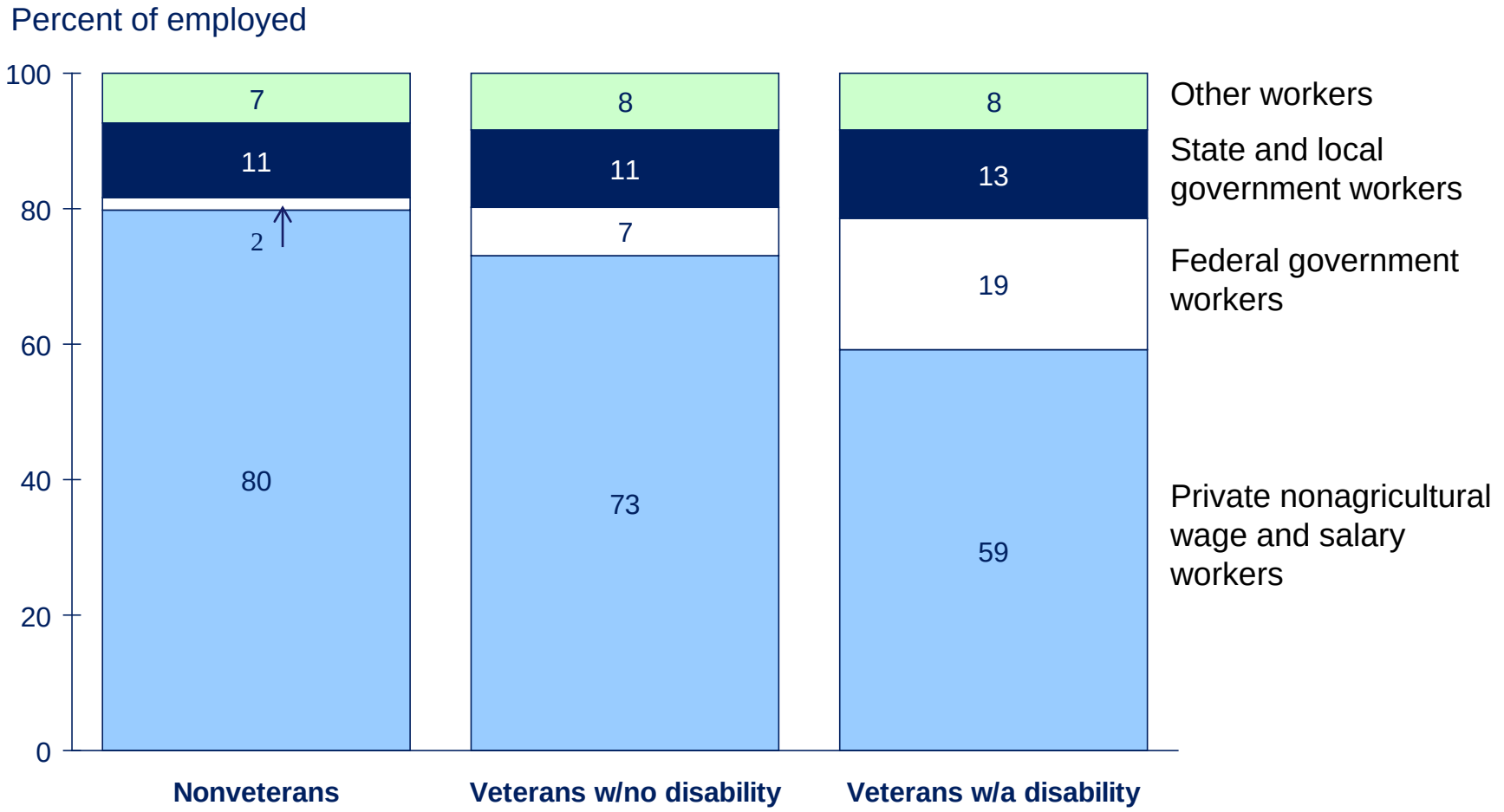
SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, August 2017 veterans supplement

Chart 16. Labor force participation rates of Gulf War-era II veterans are affected by presence and degree of disability



SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, August 2017 veterans supplement

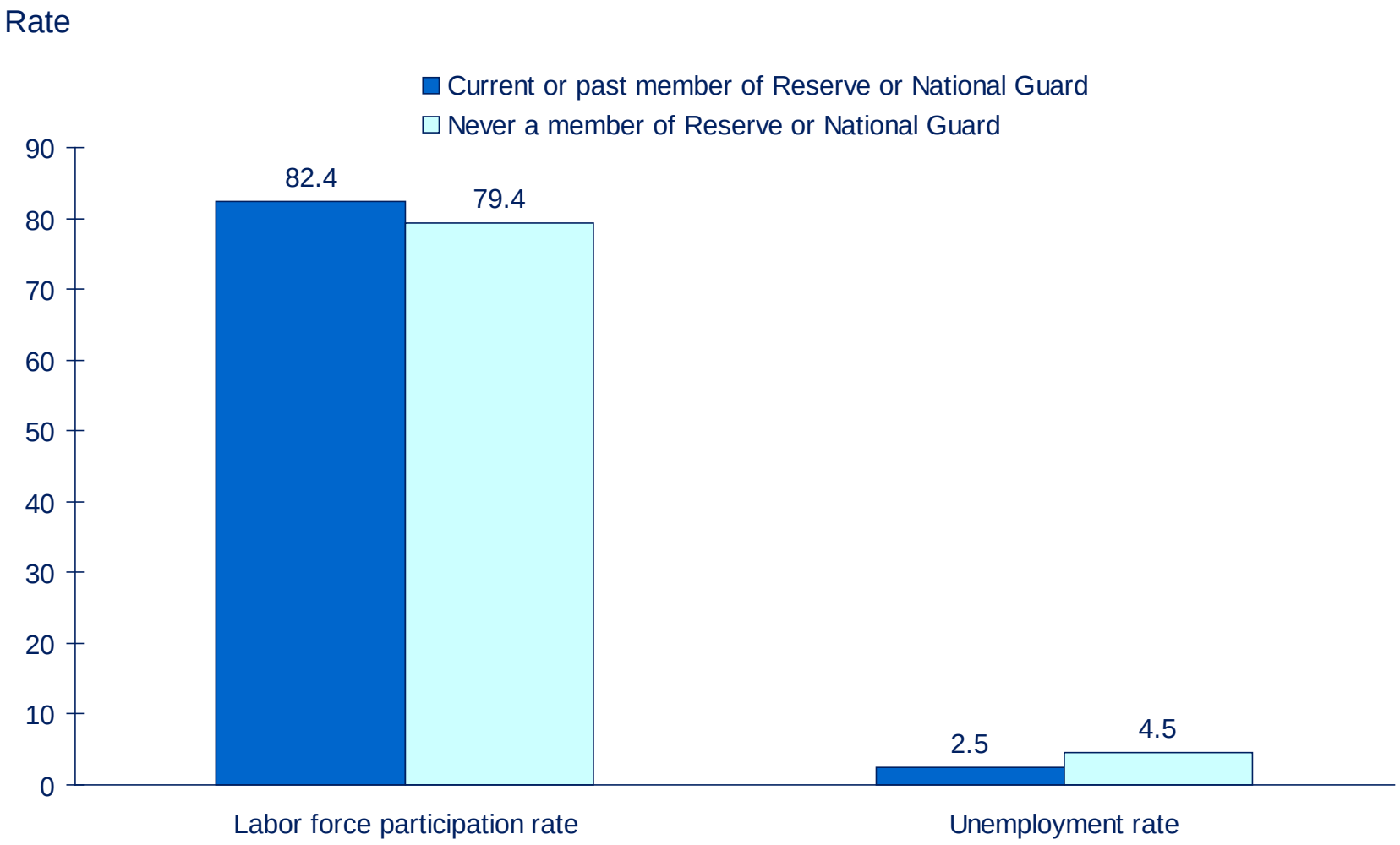
Chart 17. Veterans with a service-connected disability are more likely to work for the Federal government than veterans with no disability or nonveterans



NOTE: “Other workers” includes persons employed in agriculture, the self-employed, and unpaid family workers. Totals may not add to 100 because of rounding.

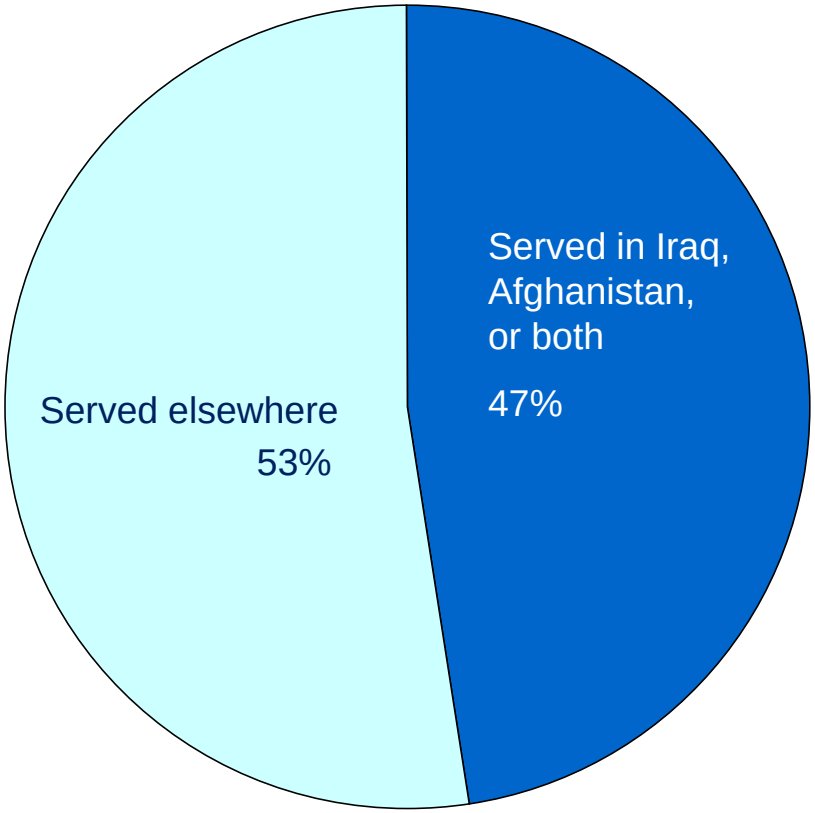
SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, August 2017 veterans supplement

Chart 18. Gulf War veterans (1990-present) who served in the Reserve or National Guard had higher a labor force participation rate than veterans who were never members



SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, August 2017 veteran supplement

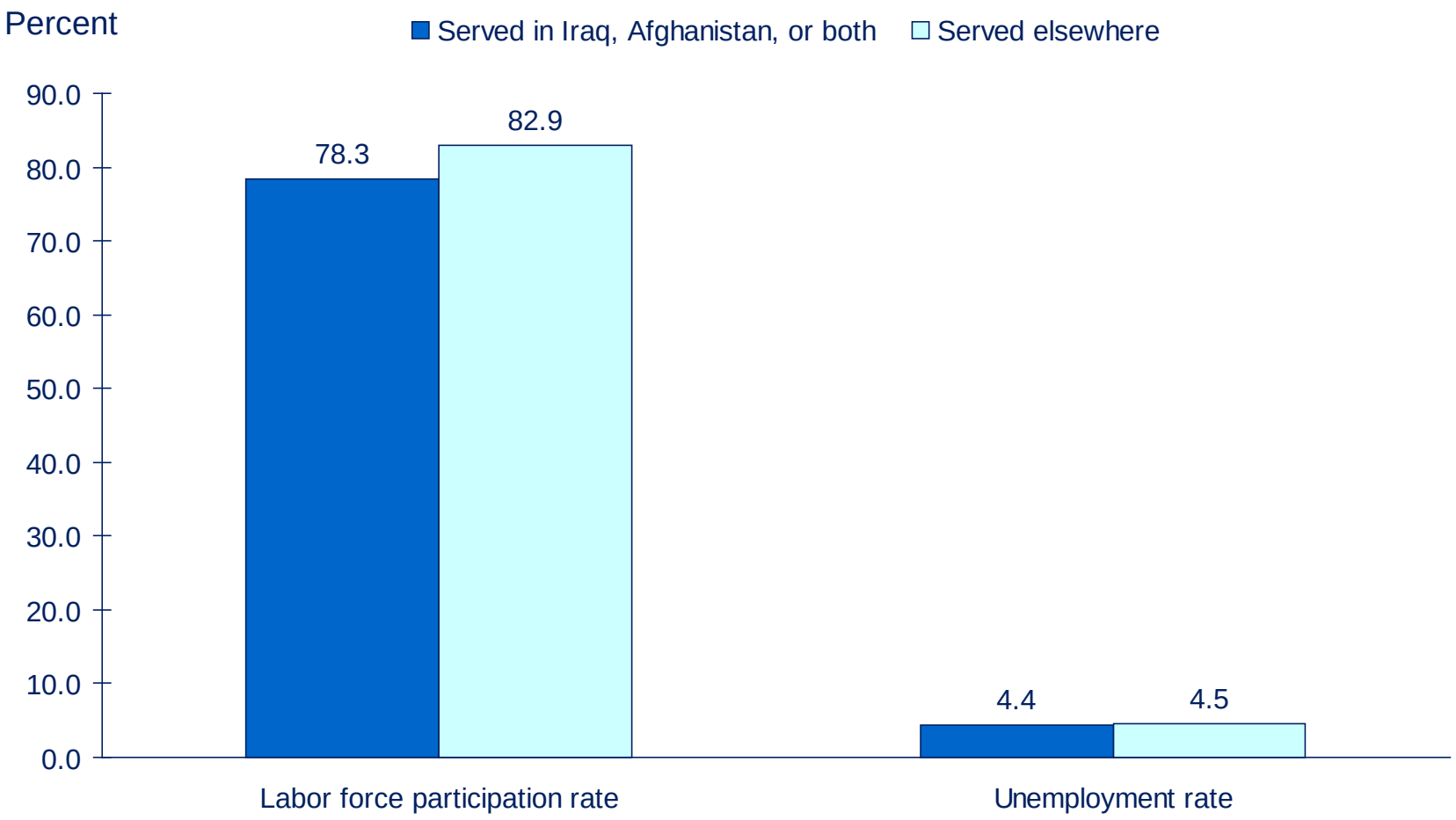
Chart 19. Gulf War-era II veterans 18 years and over by location of service, August 2017



NOTE: Gulf War-era II veterans are those who served since September 2001.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, August 2017 veterans supplement

Chart 20. Among Gulf War-era II veterans, labor force participation rates and unemployment rates were not statistically different regardless of location of service



SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, August 2017 veteran supplement

Highlights from the 2017 data:

- The unemployment rate for Gulf War-era II veterans edged down to 4.5 percent in 2017. The jobless rate for all veterans declined to 3.7 percent.
- The unemployment rate for male veterans fell to 3.6 percent in 2017, and the rate for female veterans changed little at 4.1 percent.
- Among the 370,000 unemployed veterans in 2017, 59 percent were age 25 to 54. About 37 percent were age 55 and over and 4 percent were age 18 to 24.
- The unemployment rate of veterans varied across the country, ranging from 1.7 percent in Maine and Vermont to 7.3 percent in Rhode Island.

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Tabulated veterans data available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics

- **General Info on Veterans**: *CPS Webpage*
  - https://www.bls.gov/cps/demographics.htm#vets
- **Monthly data by period of service for 18+** : *Employment Situation* news release (table A-5)
  - https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t05.htm
- **Monthly and Quarterly data for other characteristics**: https://www.bls.gov/cps/demographics.htm#vets
- **Veterans supplement data (i.e. August 2017)**: *Employment Situation of Veterans* news release
  - https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/vet.pdf
- Unpublished tables available upon request

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