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# Lesbians and gay men in the U.S. military: estimates from Census 2000

by
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## Abstract

Very little is known about the extent to which gay men and lesbians choose to serve their country through military service. This lack of knowledge contrasts with intense policy debates about the compatibility between homosexuality and service in the United States armed forces. Bayesian inference techniques applied to data from Census 2000 that enumerates characteristics of same-sex "unmarried partners" provide a mechanism for estimating the size of the gay and lesbian population currently serving in the military and exploring historical gay and lesbian military service patterns. Analyses suggest that rates of gay men and lesbians in current military service range from 1.32 to 3.78 percent, implying that at least 30,446 gay men and lesbians and as many as 87,202 are currently in uniform. The findings also show that gay men and, to an ever greater degree, lesbians have served in relatively large portions in all of the major military conflicts of the later 20th century.

# Lesbians and gay men in the U.S. military: estimates from Census 2000

## Introduction

Very little is known about the extent to which gay men and lesbians choose to serve their country through military service.  This lack of knowledge contrasts with intense policy debates about the compatibility between homosexuality and service in the United States armed forces. The current "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) policy enforced in all branches of the U.S. military officially ensconces 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. However, Bayesian inference techniques applied to data from Census 2000 that enumerates characteristics of same-sex "unmarried partners" provide a mechanism for estimating the size of the gay and lesbian population currently serving in the military and exploring historical gay and lesbian military service patterns.

## Data

All data for these analyses are drawn from the United States 2000 Decennial Census. Specifically, estimates of characteristics of the same-sex unmarried partner population are derived from a combined 5% and 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS). The two PUMS samples represent independent draws from the responses to the census long-form, which contains detailed information about all members of the household, including military service.

The census household roster includes a number of relationship categories to define how individuals in a household are related to the householder (the person filling out the form). These fall into two broad categories: related persons (e.g., husband/wife, son/daughter, brother/sister), and unrelated persons (e.g., unmarried partner, housemate/roommate, roomer/border, 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. These same-sex couples are commonly understood to be primarily gay and lesbian couples (Black et al. 2000) 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.

There are several selection bias and measurement error issues associated with the same-sex unmarried partner data that could affect estimated rates of military service within the whole gay and lesbian population. There is reason to believe that some of the sample selection issues related to the same-sex unmarried partner sample bias estimates of military service rates among gay men and lesbians downward. First, it is important to note that the sample is only a representation of couples. Their characteristics may differ substantially from those of single gay men and lesbians. Coupling likely increases the difficulty of gay men and lesbians adhering to the military's DADT policy as they would be forced to not only hide their sexual orientation, but also

hide the existence of a partner.  As a result, military service rates among same-sex partners are likely lower than those of single gay men and lesbians.

Secondly, concerns about confidentiality may lead some same-sex couples to indicate a status that would not provide evidence of the true nature of their relationship. Other couples may believe that "unmarried partner" or "husband/wife" does not accurately describe their relationship. A study of undercount issues relating to 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). It seems reasonable to believe that census tends to capture same-sex couples who are more willing to acknowledge their relationship and are potentially more "out" about their sexual orientation.  This likely further biases the sample toward those who would have the greatest difficulty adhering to military policy regarding sexual orientation.

These selection biases suggest that estimates of gay and lesbian service rates derived from the census same-sex unmarried partner sample can be understood as a lower bound.  However, an unfortunate measurement error issue creates a potential bias in the other direction.  In the 1990 U.S. census, the Census Bureau edited a household record that includes a same-sex "husband/wife" such that, in most cases, the sex of the husband or wife was changed and the couple became a different-sex married couple in publicly released data (Black et al., 2000).  This decision is reasonable if most of the same-sex husbands and wives were a result of the respondent checking the wrong sex for either him- or herself or his or her spouse.  In Census 2000, officials decided that some same-sex couples may consider themselves married, regardless of

legal recognition.  As a result, these records were altered such that the same-sex "husband/wife" was recoded as an "unmarried partner."

This process inadvertently creates a measurement error issue.  Some very small fraction of the different-sex couples likely make an error when completing the census form and miscode the sex of one of the partners.  Under Census 2000 editing procedures, all these miscoded couples would be included in the counts of same-sex unmarried partners.  Because the ratio between different-sex married couples and same-sex couples is so large (roughly 90 to 1), even a small fraction of sex miscoding among different-sex married couples adds a sizable fraction of them to the same-sex unmarried-partner population, possibly distorting some demographic characteristics.  Gates and Ost (2004) observe that if 1 in 1,000 different-sex married couples miscode the sex of one of the partners (and get reclassified as same-sex unmarried partners), then approximately 10% of the same-sex unmarried partner couples are actually miscoded different-sex married couples.

Black et al. (2003) propose a method for at least identifying the direction of the bias when considering various demographic characteristics of same-sex couples.  Same-sex unmarried partner households where one member of the couple was identified as "husband/wife" are the "at-risk" group for this form of measurement error.  There is no simple way to identify this group, but one way to isolate same-sex "spouses" is to consider the marital status variable allocation flag (a variable indicating that the original response had been changed).  Census Bureau officials confirm that their editing procedures altered the marital status of any unmarried partners who said they were "currently married." (Changes in marital status occurred after editing all of the same-sex

"husbands" and "wives" into the "unmarried partner" category.) A large portion of the same-sex unmarried partners who had their marital status allocated likely originally responded that they were "currently married" given that one of the partners was a "husband/wife."[1]  Same-sex partners who have not had their marital status variable allocated are likely free of significant measurement error.  Using the Black et al. (2003) procedure, Carpenter and Gates (2004) show that the census same-sex couple sample may suffer from some "contamination" with different-sex couples.  As such, the analyses include estimates of military service rates among only same-sex partners who have not had their marital status allocated.

Since most active military personnel exit the military by age 60, the analyses of current military service calculate rates for the population aged 18–59.  The same-sex couple sample for this age group from the combined PUMS sample includes 31,868 men and 34,144 women. Of those, 102 men and 106 women report active duty military service; 715 men and 755 women report guard or reserve training.   Estimates of characteristics in the broader population are derived from the 1% PUMS alone. This sample includes 788,093 men and 803,949 women.  All estimates are derived using the person-level weights provided in the PUMS.

Estimates of historical military service calculate service rates within "age-eligible" groups, meaning anyone who was aged 18-59 within a given era of military service.

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[1] Using internal files to compare same-sex unmarried partners with an without marital status allocation, Census bureau officials find that ten percent of couples where both partners have a marital status allocation did not actually have their relationship status changed from "husband/wife" to unmarried partner, and conversely approximately 10-15 percent of the couples that were edited in this fashion are not included in those with a marital status allocation. Thanks to Martin O'Connell and Jason Fields at the US Census Bureau for this analysis.

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

Eq. (1) shows the Bayes' rule calculation used to derive *P(GL/M)*, the probability that

someone is gay or lesbian, given that he or she is in the military.

$$P(GL \mid M) = \frac{P(GL)P(M \mid GL)}{P(GL)P(M \mid GL) + P(H)P(M \mid H)} \qquad \text{Eq. (1)}$$

The terms of the equation and sources for each are as follows:

*P(GL):*    Probability that an adult in the population is gay or lesbian. The analyses 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/GL):*  Probability that someone is in the military given that he or she is gay or lesbian. This estimate is derived from the census figures of the proportion of same-sex female unmarried partners who report active military service.

*P(H):*     Probability that an adult in the population is heterosexual. This is calculated as one minus the fraction of gay men and lesbians in the adult population.

*P(M/H):*   Probability that someone is in the military given that he or she is heterosexual. This estimate is derived from the census figures as the proportion of the adult population other than same-sex unmarried partners who report active military service.

Estimates are calculated separately for men and women since they differ both in

terms of the likelihood of reporting homosexual behavior or orientation and in the

probability of serving in the military.

Three additional sensitivity analyses are conducted for the estimates of those

currently serving in the military.  These analyses compensate for the potential biases

correlated with military service.  First, to compensate for the measurement error issue

related to the possible presence of men and women from different-sex couples within

the same-sex couple sample, results are shown using estimates for same-sex partners without a marital status allocation.

A second selection bias relates to the age distribution of same-sex couples. They have proportionally fewer individuals at both ends of the age distribution, particularly within the 18-21 year old range, when compared to the adult population. It is difficult to determine if and how the age distribution of the "true" gay and lesbian population might differ from that of the general population. It could certainly be that individuals within same-sex couples are on average older than their single counterparts and the skewed age distribution amounts to a selection bias related to using only same-sex couples to estimate traits of the whole gay and lesbian population. One strategy to compensate for this potential selection bias is to standardize the age distribution of the same-sex couples to that of the adult male and female populations. Methodologically, this means multiplying all of the person-level weights for those in a same-sex couple by the proportion of the population of a given age divided by the proportion of those in same-sex couples of the same age. This amounts to assuming that the true age distribution of the gay and lesbian population is no different than that of the general population. It could very well be that the gay and lesbian population is actually older than the general population since some fraction of gay or lesbian people likely do not identify as such until later in life.

Another bias associated with using only same-sex couples as a proxy for the gay and lesbian population is that coupled gay men and lesbians are probably less likely to serve on active duty than their single counterparts as they would be forced to hide their relationships. Indeed, even among those in different-sex partnerships, uncoupled men

are 1.16 times more likely than those coupled with women to report service on active duty, while uncoupled women are 2.29 times more likely than women partnered with men to report serving on active duty.  For service in the guard and reserve, coupling has the opposite effect for men.  Those coupled with women are 1.2 times more likely than men who are not coupled to report service in the guard and reserve.  Non-coupled women are slightly more likely than those coupled with men (1.1 times) to serve in the guard or reserve.  Eq. (2) offers a mechanism to adjust for the lack of single gay men and lesbians in the sample.  Adjusted estimates of *P(M/GL)* (see Eq. 1) are calculated as a weighted average of service rates for single and coupled lesbians as follows:

$$P(M \mid GL)_a = \left( A_{GL} D \left( 1 - C_{GL} \right) \right) + A_{GL} C_{GL} \qquad \text{Eq. (2)}$$

Where:

$A_{GL}$:  Active duty rates among same-sex partners (observed in census).
$D$:  Differential between service rates of single and coupled people calculated as the active duty service rate of uncoupled adults divided by the active duty service rate of coupled adults (among those not in same-sex partnerships).
$C_{GL}$:  Proportion of gay men and lesbians who are coupled.

The calculations also assume that 25 percent of gay men and 42 percent of lesbians are coupled (see Black et al. 2000).  Eq. (1) is then recalculated using *P(M/GL)_a* in place of *P(M/GL)* to estimate gay and lesbian service rates adjusted for partnership status.

Estimates of historical military service are adjusted only for marital status allocation.  The relationship between partnership status and military service over time is not clear.  Further, the delineation of age-eligible populations over time provides a control for differences in age distribution.

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. In the National Health and Social Life Survey (NHSLS), 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 uses the NHSLS and the General Social Survey (GSS) to show 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.[2]

Given the variation in these estimates, the analyses of current military service include two possibilities for the prevalence of gay men and lesbians in the U.S. population. In each case, consistent with most surveys, the prevalence for women is assumed to be 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.

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[2] It should be noted that these calculations to not attempt to address the issue of bisexuality.  It could very well be that the differences observed between men and women with regard to defining same-sex behavior may be mitigated when bisexuality is considered, but research in this area is quite limited and clear patterns in this regard are not available.

## Estimates of current gay and lesbian military service

The first step in estimating the number of gay men and lesbians in the military is to explore service rates among individuals within same-sex couples compared to other men and women. In general, men in same-sex partnerships are less likely to serve in the military than other men, while lesbians are more likely than other women to serve (see Table 1). Using the unadjusted samples, 0.35 percent of men in same-sex couples report being on active duty compared to 1.16 percent of other men. Conversely, 0.32 percent of women in same-sex couples report being on active duty, compared to just 0.18 percent of other women. Adjusting for partnership increases the rate among men in same-sex couples to 0.39 percent and nearly doubles the rate among women in same-sex couples to 0.63 percent.

The adjustment for marital status allocation decreases the service rates among men in same-sex couples to 0.23%. If heterosexual men are more likely than their gay counterparts to serve in the military, then this finding is consistent with the same-sex unmarried couple sample being "contaminated" with men actually coupled with women. Like men in same-sex couples, adjusting the sample of women in same-sex couple based on marital status allocation decreases military service rates. This finding is somewhat puzzling as the opposite is to be expected if lesbians have higher service rates than heterosexual women (a finding of Black et al. 2000 using data from the 1990 Census, the GSS, and the National Health and Social Life Survey). It could be that the same-sex female couple sample includes a sufficient number of miscoded men from different-sex couples to skew the unadjusted figures toward higher rates of military service. Given that men are more than six times more likely than women to serve on

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active duty, even a small group of miscoded men within the female same-sex couple sample could significantly affect this statistic.

Service rates among those who report guard and reserve training[3] do not differ as much between men and women in same-sex couples and other men and women. While 2.15 percent of men in same-sex couples report training for the guard or reserve, the comparable figures for other men are 2.81 percent.  Adjusting for marital status allocation and partnership status lowers estimated service rates for men in same-sex couples.  Rates of females who report guard and reserve training are also more similar between coupled lesbians and other women (2.26 percent vs. 1.55 percent among the full sample) than are differences in the rates of active duty service.

Standardizing the age distribution of men and women in same-sex couples to that of the adult population generally increases active duty service rates among men in same-sex couples and has very little effect on these rates for women in same-sex couples (see Table 2).  The age adjustment slightly lowers reserve and national guard service rate estimates for men and women in same-sex couples.

Applying Eqs. (1) and (2) to figures shown in Tables 1 and 2 yields estimates of the proportion and size of the gay and lesbian population serving on active duty and within the National Guard and reserve forces (see Tables 3 and 4).  Without adjusting for the age distribution and assuming that three percent of adult men are gay, findings from Table 3 suggest that likely less than one percent of men on active military duty are gay (the range of estimates run from 0.69 percent to 1.03 percent).  Age adjusted

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[3] Estimates for 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.   For simplicity, the figures in these analyses assume that all are currently in the guard or reserve.

estimates shown in Table 4 increase the estimated probability of being a gay man on active duty to between 0.78 percent and 1.23 percent. If five percent of adult men are gay in the population, the range of estimates for gay men on active duty runs from 1.04 percent to 2.08 percent.

The estimated proportion of lesbians among women on active duty is substantially higher than that for men and the variation among the estimates is substantially greater. Assuming that two percent of women are lesbians in the population yields estimates of lesbians on active duty that range from 1.88 percent to 6.8 percent. Under the assumption that four percent of women in the adult population are lesbians, the estimates of the proportion of lesbians on active duty range from 3.76 to 12.96 percent. Regardless of assumptions, the proportion of lesbians among women on active duty is always much higher than the proportion of gay men among men on active duty—in most cases by a factor of three to four times.

The estimates of gay men and lesbians serving in the guard and reserve are much closer to the assumed rates of homosexuality in the population. Under an assumption that three percent of adult men are gay in the population, estimated proportions of gay men within men in the guard and reserve range from 1.78 to 2.31 percent. Assuming five percent of adult men are gay yields comparable estimates of 3 to 3.86 percent. Assuming that two percent of women are lesbian in the general population, the estimated proportions range from 2.49 to 3.34 percent. The range is 4.95 to 6.6 percent under the assumption that four percent of women are lesbian.

# Estimates of historical military service

Patterns of military service over time are shown in Table 5.  The findings again demonstrate the increased probability of military service among women in same-sex couples relative to other women, although these differences have apparently decreased over time.  The findings also again demonstrate that the measurement error issue that potentially adds members of different-sex couples to the same-sex couple sample likely adds men to the female same-sex couples sample.  The rates of service for these women drop substantially among those who did not have their marital status allocated.  But even among that group, rates of military service among women in same-sex couples are typically more than four times the service rates of other women.

If two percent of women in the adult population are lesbian, the analyses suggest that more than one in ten women serving during the Korea and Vietnam conflicts were lesbian.  It should be noted that during these eras, women who got married or pregnant were automatically discharged from the military, perhaps at least partially explaining the relatively high rates of lesbian service.  In the early 1990s, the estimates suggest that eight percent of women in the military were lesbian.  The figure drops to four percent in the later 1990s.

A puzzling finding with regard to men concerns the sensitivity analysis using the marital status allocation flag.  In the case of current military service, restricting the sample to those without a marital status allocation reduced military service rates.  In the case of historical service patterns, the same restriction either increases or does not substantially alter the probability of military service among men in same-sex couples.

There are notably few differences between service patterns of men in same-sex couples and other men among those who could serve during World War II and the

Korean conflict. In both eras, estimated proportions of gay men serving do not differ much from the estimated rate of gay men in the general population. This is perhaps predictable since these are eras that included a military draft. However, beginning with Vietnam (which also included a draft but perhaps a larger resistance to service among those drafted than in earlier conflicts), estimates suggest a decline in service rates among gay men. The trend is most notable in the later 1990s when the analyses suggest that only 1.5 percent of men in the military are gay assuming that three percent of men in the population are gay.

## Discussion

Census data provide perhaps the only data source available to make credible estimates of the size of the gay and lesbian population among those serving in the U.S. military. Exploring the range of estimates shown in Tables 3 and 4, the analyses suggest that rates of gay men and lesbians in any military service (active, guard, or reserve) range from 1.32 to 3.78 percent, implying that at least 30,446 gay men and lesbians and as many as 87,202 are currently in uniform.

The census data also provide the rare opportunity to examine historic service patterns among the gay and lesbian population. The findings show that gay men and, to an ever greater degree, lesbians have served in relatively large numbers in four major conflicts of the twentieth century: World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf.

Of course, these analyses also highlight some of the difficulties associated with using census data to measure the number of gay men and lesbians serving in the military with great precision. Estimates, especially those for women on active duty, are

sensitive to potential measurement error and to assumptions designed to overcome sample bias. Changes in key assumptions, among them the underlying proportion of gay men and lesbians within the adult population, can have a substantial effect on any point estimates of the military service rates of gay men and lesbians.

Despite the sensitivity of the estimates to the various assumptions, several general observations can be drawn from the results:

- The proportion of gay men currently serving in the military tends to be below the proportion within the general population. However, historically, their service rates do not differ substantially from those of other men.

- The proportion of lesbians in military service, both currently and historically, exceeds the proportion of lesbians within the population and they are substantially more likely to serve than gay men.

- The proportion of gay men and lesbians within the guard and reserve corps are generally more similar to their rates in the population than the differences observed for those on active duty.

## Conclusion

These analyses offer a heretofore unavailable glimpse at military service patterns among a population that is hidden implicitly by social stigma and explicitly by U.S. military policy. This study does not attempt, nor do census data really allow for, either a comprehensive analysis of U.S. military treatment of gay men and lesbians or an assessment of the effects of particular policies like "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." However, 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, including with regard to military service. Despite formidable obstacles placed in their way, they have and continue to serve in America's armed forces.

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# Tables

**Table 1.  Military service rates for men and women in Census 2000.**

| | Other men | Male same-sex unmarried partners | | Other women | Female same-sex unmarried partners | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | All | No marital status allocation | | All | No marital status allocation |
| % Active duty | 1.16 | 0.35 | 0.23 | 0.18 | 0.32 | 0.18 |
| % Reserves/national guard | 2.81 | 2.15 | 1.89 | 1.55 | 2.26 | 2.03 |
| | | Partnership status adjustment | | | | |
| % Active duty | - | 0.39 | 0.26 | - | 0.63 | 0.35 |
| % Reserves/national guard | - | 1.89 | 1.66 | - | 4.47 | 4.02 |

**Table 2. Military service rates for men and women in Census 2000, age distribution adjusted for same-sex couples.**

|  | Male same-sex unmarried partners | | Female same-sex unmarried partners | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | All | No marital status allocation | All | No marital status allocation |
| % Active duty | 0.42 | 0.30 | 0.32 | 0.17 |
| % Reserves/national guard | 2.11 | 1.87 | 2.19 | 1.94 |
|  | Partnership status adjustment | | | |
| % Active duty | 0.47 | 0.33 | 0.64 | 0.33 |
| % Reserves/national guard | 1.86 | 1.65 | 4.34 | 3.83 |

**Table 3. Estimated percentages and numbers of gay men and lesbians serving on active military duty and who report National Guard and Reserve training.**

| | Est. % Lesbian/Gay in the Adult Population | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | 2% / 3% | | | | 4% / 5% | | | |
| | | | Partnership status adjustment | | | | Partnership status adjustment | |
| | All | No marital status alloc. | All | No marital status alloc. | All | No marital status alloc. | All | No marital status alloc. |
| **Active Duty** | | | | | | | | |
| Est. % lesbians among women | 3.49 | 1.96 | 3.56 | 1.88 | 6.87 | 3.92 | 12.74 | 7.46 |
| Est. % gay men among men | 0.92 | 0.61 | 1.03 | 0.69 | 1.56 | 1.04 | 1.74 | 1.17 |
| Est. % GL | 1.31 | 0.82 | 1.88 | 1.16 | 2.36 | 1.47 | 3.40 | 2.11 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Est. lesbians | 7,475 | 4,195 | 14,300 | 8,142 | 14,727 | 8,393 | 27,299 | 15,991 |
| Est. gay men | 11,148 | 7,428 | 12,501 | 8,333 | 18,850 | 12,587 | 21,120 | 14,112 |
| Est. GL | 18,623 | 11,623 | 26,801 | 16,475 | 33,577 | 20,980 | 48,419 | 30,103 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| **National Guard and Reserve** | | | | | | | | |
| Est. % lesbians among women | 2.89 | 2.61 | 3.34 | 3.02 | 5.74 | 5.19 | 6.60 | 5.97 |
| Est. % gay men among men | 2.31 | 2.03 | 2.04 | 1.80 | 3.86 | 3.41 | 3.42 | 3.02 |
| Est. % GL | 2.41 | 2.13 | 2.26 | 2.01 | 4.18 | 3.72 | 3.97 | 3.53 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Est. lesbians | 4,396 | 3,966 | 5,078 | 4,584 | 8,712 | 7,883 | 10,019 | 9,073 |
| Est. gay men | 16,842 | 14,857 | 14,880 | 13,122 | 28,204 | 24,926 | 24,966 | 22,052 |
| Est. GL | 21,238 | 18,823 | 19,958 | 17,706 | 36,916 | 32,809 | 34,985 | 31,125 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| **Combined Active Duty and Guard and Reserve** | | | | | | | | |
| Est. % lesbians among women | 3.24 | 2.23 | 5.29 | 3.48 | 6.40 | 4.44 | 10.19 | 6.84 |
| Est. % gay men among men | 1.44 | 1.15 | 1.41 | 1.11 | 2.42 | 1.93 | 2.37 | 1.86 |
| Est. % GL | 1.73 | 1.32 | 2.03 | 1.48 | 3.06 | 2.33 | 3.61 | 2.65 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Est. lesbians | 11,871 | 8,161 | 19,379 | 12,726 | 23,439 | 16,276 | 37,318 | 25,064 |
| Est. gay men | 27,990 | 22,285 | 27,381 | 21,455 | 47,054 | 37,513 | 46,086 | 36,165 |
| Est. GL | 39,861 | 30,446 | 46,760 | 34,181 | 70,493 | 53,789 | 83,404 | 61,229 |

*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/rg0209f.pdf).

**Table 4. Estimated percentages and numbers of gay men and lesbians serving on active military duty and who report National Guard and Reserve training, age distribution adjusted for same-sex couples.**

| | Est. % Lesbian/Gay in the Adult Population | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2% / 3% | | | | 4% / 5% | | | |
| | | | Partnership status adjustment | | | | Partnership status adjustment | |
| | All | No marital status alloc. | All | No marital status alloc. | All | No marital status alloc. | All | No marital status alloc. |
| **Active Duty** | | | | | | | | |
| Est. % lesbians among women | 3.56 | 1.88 | 6.80 | 3.65 | 7.00 | 3.76 | 12.96 | 7.18 |
| Est. % gay men among men | 1.10 | 0.78 | 1.23 | 0.88 | 1.86 | 1.33 | 2.08 | 1.49 |
| Est. % GL | 1.47 | 0.95 | 2.07 | 1.30 | 2.63 | 1.69 | 3.71 | 2.34 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Est. lesbians | 7,620 | 4,026 | 14,569 | 7,821 | 15,003 | 8,062 | 27,777 | 15,383 |
| Est. gay men | 13,303 | 9,495 | 14,914 | 10,649 | 22,466 | 16,070 | 25,162 | 18,010 |
| Est. GL | 20,924 | 13,521 | 29,483 | 18,469 | 37,468 | 24,131 | 52,940 | 33,393 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| **National Guard and Reserve** | | | | | | | | |
| Est. % lesbians among women | 2.81 | 2.49 | 3.25 | 2.88 | 5.57 | 4.95 | 6.41 | 5.70 |
| Est. % gay men among men | 2.27 | 2.02 | 2.00 | 1.78 | 3.79 | 3.39 | 3.36 | 3.00 |
| Est. % GL | 2.36 | 2.10 | 2.22 | 1.97 | 4.10 | 3.66 | 3.88 | 3.46 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Est. lesbians | 4,268 | 3,779 | 4,931 | 4,368 | 8,465 | 7,520 | 9,737 | 8,658 |
| Est. gay men | 16,541 | 14,737 | 14,614 | 13,016 | 27,708 | 24,729 | 24,525 | 21,877 |
| Est. GL | 20,809 | 18,516 | 19,545 | 17,384 | 36,174 | 32,248 | 34,262 | 30,535 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| **Combined Active Duty and Guard and Reserve** | | | | | | | | |
| Est. % lesbians among women | 3.25 | 2.13 | 5.33 | 3.33 | 6.41 | 4.26 | 10.24 | 6.57 |
| Est. % gay men among men | 1.54 | 1.25 | 1.52 | 1.22 | 2.58 | 2.10 | 2.56 | 2.05 |
| Est. % GL | 1.81 | 1.39 | 2.12 | 1.55 | 3.19 | 2.44 | 3.78 | 2.77 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Est. lesbians | 11,888 | 7,804 | 19,499 | 12,189 | 23,468 | 15,581 | 37,515 | 24,041 |
| Est. gay men | 29,844 | 24,232 | 29,528 | 23,665 | 50,174 | 40,798 | 49,687 | 39,887 |
| Est. GL | 41,732 | 32,036 | 49,027 | 35,853 | 73,642 | 56,380 | 87,202 | 63,928 |

*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/rg0209f.pdf).

**Table 5. Historical military service rates of gay men and lesbians.**

| Military era | Percent in military service among age-eligible population | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Other men | Same-sex male partners | | Other women | Same-sex female partners | |
| | | All | No marital status alloc | | All | No marital status alloc |
| World War II | 53.1 | 43.8 | 50.4 | 1.6 | 15.9 | 4.1 |
| Korea | 22.1 | 15.5 | 21.9 | 0.3 | 7.3 | 2.0 |
| Vietnam | 16.5 | 10.9 | 13.6 | 0.4 | 5.2 | 2.9 |
| Aug 90 – Apr 95 (inc. Persian Gulf) | 1.8 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 0.3 | 1.1 | 1.2 |
| May 1995 and later | 2.3 | 1.2 | 1.1 | 0.4 | 1.0 | 0.9 |
| | Estimated percent gay and lesbian in military service (assuming 2/3% gay/lesbian in population) | | | | | |
| World War II | | 2.5 | 2.9 | | 16.5 | 4.9 |
| Korea | | 2.1 | 3.0 | | 30.3 | 10.8 |
| Vietnam | | 2.0 | 2.5 | | 20.7 | 12.7 |
| Aug 90 – Apr 95 (inc. Persian Gulf) | | 2.1 | 2.3 | | 7.6 | 8.0 |
| May 1995 and later | | 1.6 | 1.4 | | 4.8 | 4.3 |