



Office of Research & Planning

# STATISTICS MEMO

## *Veteran Inmates in the Custody of North Carolina Division of Adult Correction*

*July, 2013*

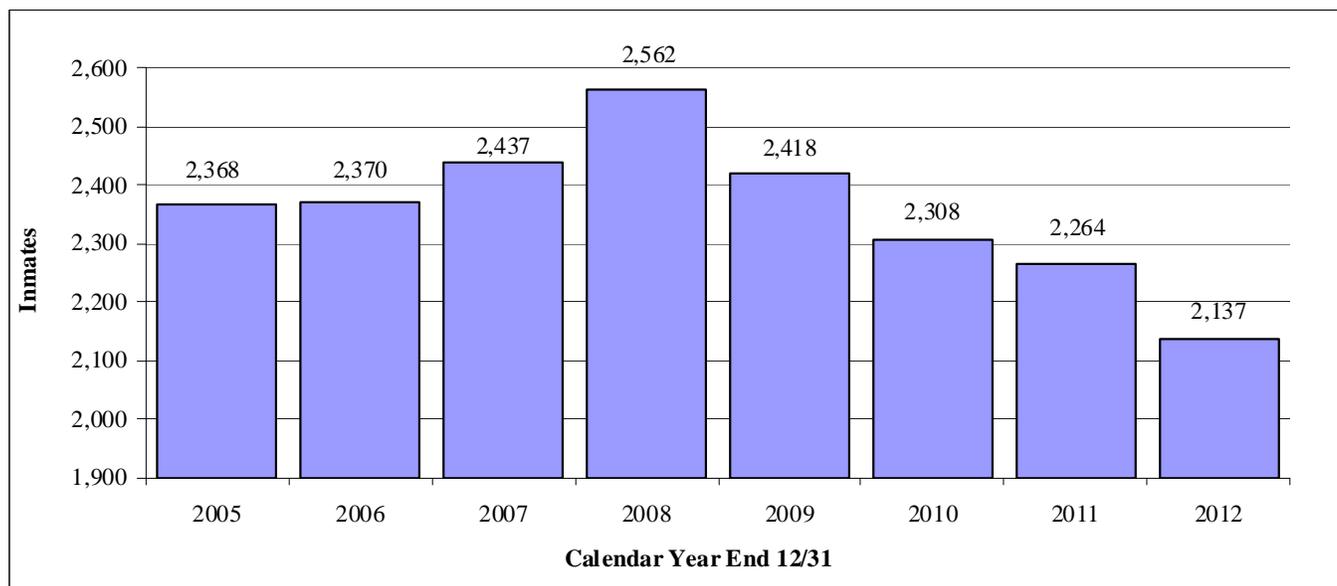
### PURPOSE

North Carolina is home to several major military installations. According to the North Carolina USO, 11% of active duty forces are located in North Carolina.<sup>1</sup> The Bureau of Justice Statistics found that 10% of all state prisoners in 2004 reported prior military service.<sup>2</sup> Since most inmates who enter a North Carolina prison will be released back to the community, the North Carolina Division of Adult Correction (DAC) offers services intended to prepare inmates for this eventual return. As a consequence, DAC collects for planning purposes self-reported information on military service in order to make educational, programmatic, and job assignments during incarceration and for veterans to access benefits at the time of their release from prison. This memo provides a quick reference to information about inmates who report that they are veterans of the five active service branches of the US military – Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, or Coast Guard.

### VETERAN INMATES IN CALENDAR YEAR END PRISON POPULATION

Beginning with calendar year 2005, the year end population of inmates reporting military service has represented approximately 6% of the inmate population.<sup>3</sup> Figure 1 shows the number of inmates in the prison population at calendar years end reporting military service.

**Figure 1: Veteran Inmates in Prison Population at Calendar Year End: 2005-2012**



<sup>1</sup> USO of North Carolina. 2013. Overview of USO NC. <http://uso-nc.org/about-uso-nc/> (accessed July 17, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Veterans in State and Federal Prison, 2004*. By Margaret E. Noonan and Christopher J. Mumola. NCJ 217199 (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, 2007), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Excludes inmates entering on commitment as Safekeeper, Pre-Sentence Diagnostic, or Confinement in Response to Violation order.

## VETERAN INMATES IN CURRENT PRISON POPULATION

These statistics represent a snapshot of the veteran population incarcerated in a DAC prison on a given day. Veteran is defined as an inmate who reported work skills obtained via military service in the US Army, US Marine Corps, US Air Force or US Coast Guard. DAC staff do not verify reported military service and do not have access to military service records for inmates who do not report veteran status.

<b>Veteran inmates in prison on July 13, 2013 .....</b>					<b>2,024 (5.5%)<sup>4</sup></b>
	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Hispanic<sup>5</sup></i>	<i>Other<sup>6</sup></i>	<i>Number/ Total Percent</i>
Male	50.5%	45.6%	1.7%	2.2%	1,985 / 98.1%
Female	69.2%	30.8%	0%	0%	39 / 1.9%

### Demographics

The average age at admission for these inmates was 42 years. Female inmates reporting veteran status were slightly younger than males at admission (38 years). Nearly all (92%) of veteran inmates reported a high school diploma or equivalency. Slightly less than one-third (31%) reported that they were single when entering prison. The remaining reported that they were divorced (28%), separated (11%), currently married (26%), or widowed (4%). Though nearly 66% of veteran inmates reported that they were employed at the time of arrest, more than half (51%) reported that they were in the “low” socio-economic class or in poverty.

### Military Service

More than half of male inmates (56%) reported service in the Army, followed by the Marine Corps (19%) and the Navy (17%). Nearly half (49%) of female inmates reported service in the Army, followed by the Air Force (21%) and the Navy (18%). Nearly two-thirds of the inmates (64%) reported an honorable discharge from service. Relatively few (6%) were dishonorably discharged. The remaining were discharged for medical (6%), administrative (3%), or “other” (16%) reasons; 5% reported an “unknown” discharge reason.

### Criminal History

The overwhelming majority of veteran inmates are felons (96%). Inmates reported on average 4 felony and 5 misdemeanor convictions prior to the current incarceration period. Prior periods of incarceration were less frequent with veteran inmates reporting on average 2 prior entries to prison. About a quarter (22%) reported that a family member other than himself or herself had been convicted of a felony, misdemeanor or both.

### Most Serious Convictions

The most serious crimes of conviction for these inmates covered numerous categories and were for crimes against a person, property crimes, and public order crimes. The types of crimes for which these inmates were convicted are different for male and females. Male veterans were most frequently incarcerated for sexual assaults (26%), followed by homicides (20%), and convictions as habitual felons (12%). Female veterans were most frequently incarcerated for homicides (18%) and fraud (18%) followed by drug trafficking (16%).

### Sentences Received

The majority of veteran inmates are serving sentences of at least 10 years. Both male and female veterans received similarly lengthy sentences. There are 311 veteran inmates serving a life sentence – (15% of male veteran inmates and 12% of female veteran inmates). The largest proportion of males (42%) and females (23%) have sentences that run from 10 years to less than life. Not counting life sentences, the average sentence for veteran inmates was 195 months, approximately 16 years. Slightly more than 30% of male veterans are required to register as sex offenders.

<sup>4</sup> Prison population of 36,749 on 07/13/2013 excludes inmates entering on commitment as Safekeeper, Pre-Sentence Diagnostic, or Confinement in Response to Violation order.

<sup>5</sup> Inmates of any race reporting Hispanic ethnicity were counted as Hispanic.

<sup>6</sup> Includes Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander, and those reporting “other”.