

# Census 2021: UK Armed Forces Veterans

**census**  
2021

The census is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales.

Census day was 21 March 2021

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**This bulletin presents 2021 Census data about residents in Kent who have previously served in the UK armed forces. Comparisons with Medway, the South East, and England & Wales are included.**

## Headlines

- There were 52,545 UK armed forces veterans living in Kent in 2021.
- Thanet had the highest number of veterans (5,765) accounting for 5% of the resident population aged 16 and over
- 3.2% of the adult population in Kent had served in regular armed forces while 0.8% served in reserve UK armed forces. 0.2% of the population had served in both regular and reserve forces.
- Veterans who served in regular UK armed forces make up 76.8% of veterans in Kent.
- 97.9% of Kent veterans were living in households while 2.1% were resident in communal establishments.

## Introduction

On 10th November 2022, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published data from the 2021 Census about UK armed forces veterans in England and Wales.

This is the first time that the census has asked a question about UK armed forces veterans.

The Census 2021 results about UK armed forces veterans include data about people who have previously served in the regular forces, reserve forces or both.

Service providers will use these data to support veterans in line with the Armed Forces Covenant. The Armed Forces Covenant is a national responsibility involving government, businesses, local authorities, charities, and the public, and promises to ensure that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly. The covenant focusses on helping members of the armed forces community have the same access to government and commercial services and products as any other citizen.

## Analysis

The 2021 Census tells us that there were 52,545 UK armed forces veterans living in Kent in 2021 accounting for 4.1% of the resident population aged 16 and above. This is above the national average of 3.8% and slightly lower than the regional figure of 4.2%.

In Kent the largest number of UK armed forces veterans were in Thanet (5,765 veterans) accounting for 11% of all veterans in Kent. Dover had the highest proportion of UK armed force veterans with 5.9% of the resident population aged 16 and above having served at some time in their life.

Dartford (2,328) and Gravesham (2,351) had the smallest number of veterans in Kent accounting for 2.6% and 2.8% of the respective adult populations.

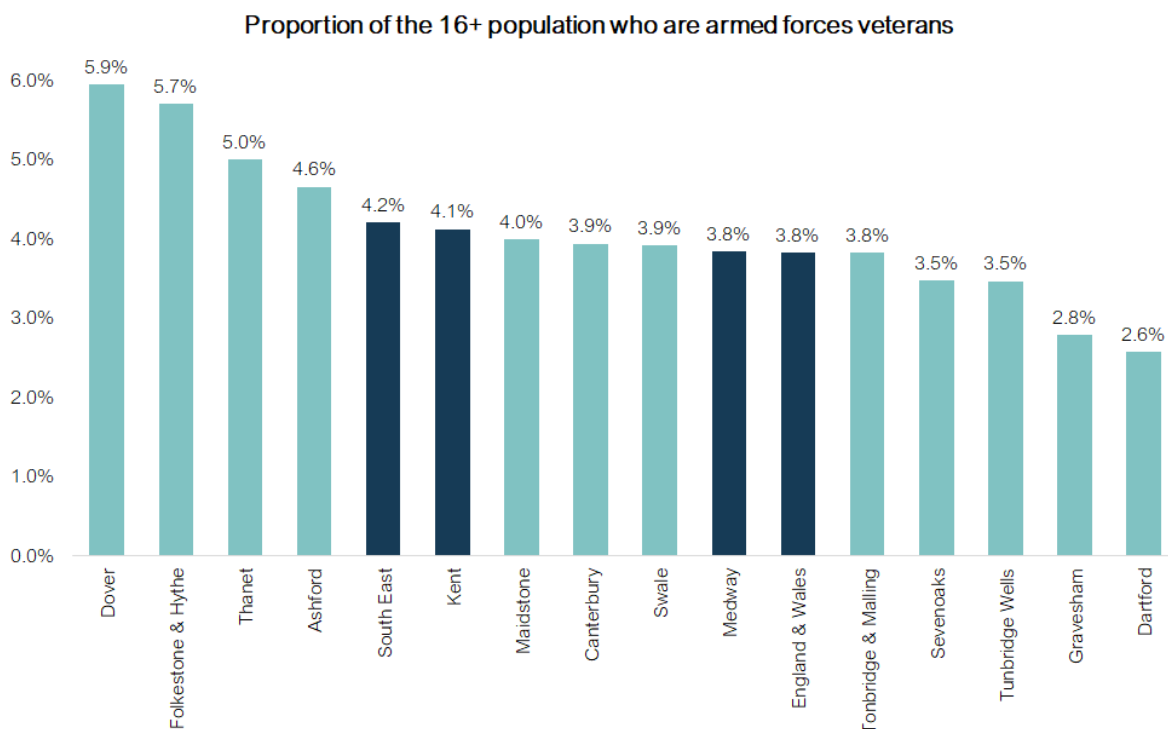
Table 1 shows the number and proportion of residents in Kent and Kent districts who are UK armed forces veterans. Chart 1 shows the proportion of residents aged 16 and above who are UK armed forces veterans.

**Table 1: Residents who have previously served in the UK armed forces**

	Usual residents aged 16+	Number previously served in UK armed forces	Percentage previously served in UK armed forces
<b>2021 Census: UK Armed forces veterans</b>			
England & Wales	48,566,373	1,853,112	3.8%
South East	7,554,580	317,082	4.2%
<b>Kent</b>	<b>1,276,567</b>	<b>52,545</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
Ashford	106,771	4,962	4.6%
Canterbury	132,774	5,217	3.9%
Dartford	90,698	2,328	2.6%
Dover	96,131	5,710	5.9%
Folkestone & Hythe	91,555	5,211	5.7%
Gravesham	84,555	2,351	2.8%
Maidstone	142,136	5,664	4.0%
Sevenoaks	96,603	3,344	3.5%
Swale	121,998	4,773	3.9%
Thanet	115,414	5,765	5.0%
Tonbridge & Malling	105,526	4,023	3.8%
Tunbridge Wells	92,403	3,194	3.5%
Medway Unitary Authority	222,757	8,529	3.8%

2021 Census - TS071 - Previously served in the UK armed forces

The Office for National Statistics (ONS), Table presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

**Chart 1: Proportion of the 16+ population who are UK armed forces veterans**


2021 Census: The Office for National Statistics (ONS), Chart presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

In Kent 3.2% of the population aged 16 and above previously served in regular UK armed forces, the same as seen in the South East and above the national figure of 2.9%.

0.8% of the adult population in Kent had previously served in reserve UK armed forces (South East 0.8%, England 0.7%) and 0.2% had previously served in both regular and reserve armed forces (0.2% in both England and Wales, and the South East).

95.9% of the adult population in Kent had never served in any UK armed forces.

In Kent the largest number of veterans who had served in regular UK armed forces lived in Dover (4,638). The largest number that had served in reserve UK armed forces (1,053) or in both regular and reserve UK armed forces (256) lived in Maidstone. This is shown in chart 2.

**Chart 2: Number of UK armed forces veterans in Kent & Medway in 2021**

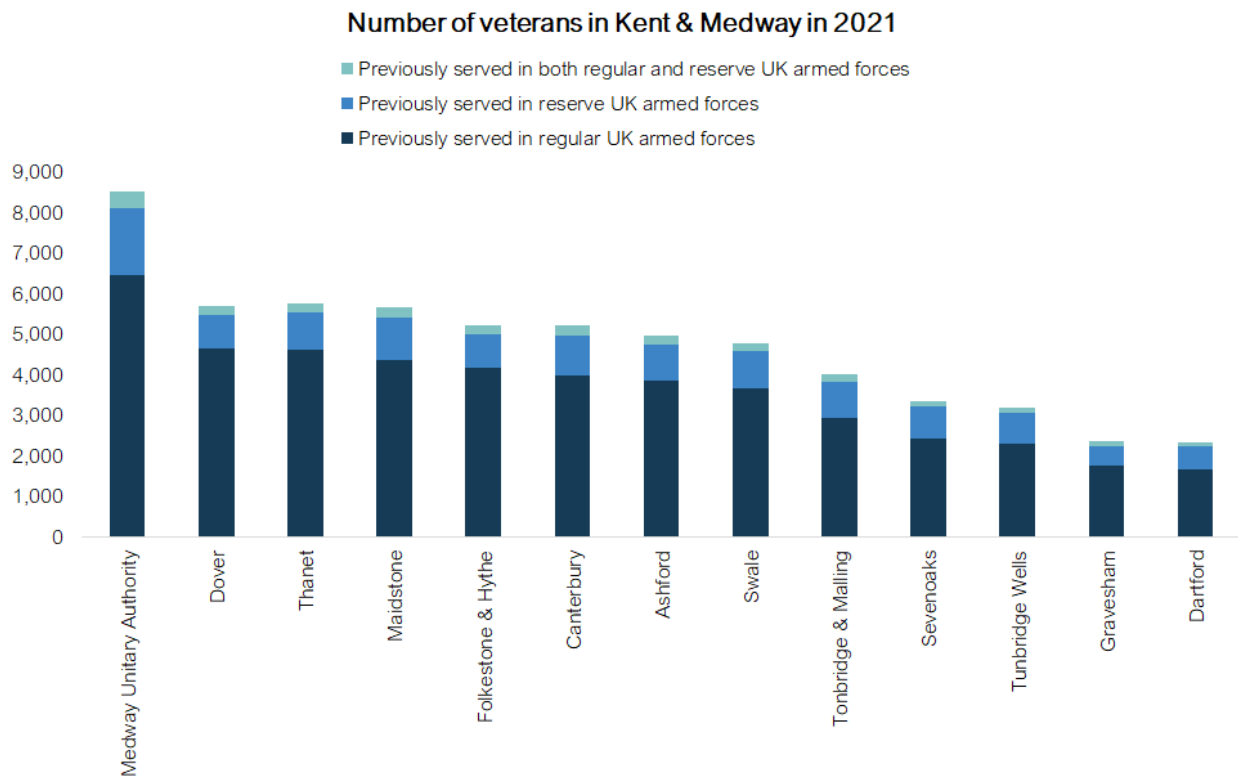


Table 2 shows the number and proportion of the resident population who previously served in the regular, the reserve, or the regular and reserve UK armed forces.

**Table 2: The number and proportion of the resident population who previously served in the regular, the reserve, or both the regular and reserve UK armed forces**

	Usual residents aged 16+	Number previously served in regular UK armed forces	% Previously served in regular UK armed forces	Number previously served in reserve UK armed forces	% Previously served in reserve UK armed forces	Number previously served in both regular and reserve UK armed forces	% Previously served in both regular and reserve UK armed forces	Number has not previously served in any UK armed forces	% Has not previously served in any UK armed forces
<b>2021 Census: UK Armed forces veterans</b>									
England & Wales	48,566,373	1,413,296	2.9%	360,770	0.7%	79,046	0.2%	46,713,261	96.2%
South East	7,554,580	245,235	3.2%	58,250	0.8%	13,597	0.2%	7,237,498	95.8%
<b>Kent</b>	<b>1,276,567</b>	<b>40,343</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>9,922</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>2,280</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>1,224,022</b>	<b>95.9%</b>
Ashford	106,771	3,851	3.6%	906	0.8%	205	0.2%	101,809	95.4%
Canterbury	132,774	3,992	3.0%	971	0.7%	254	0.2%	127,557	96.1%
Dartford	90,698	1,668	1.8%	559	0.6%	101	0.1%	88,370	97.4%
Dover	96,131	4,638	4.8%	830	0.9%	242	0.3%	90,421	94.1%
Folkestone & Hythe	91,555	4,155	4.5%	840	0.9%	216	0.2%	86,344	94.3%
Gravesham	84,555	1,743	2.1%	490	0.6%	118	0.1%	82,204	97.2%
Maidstone	142,136	4,355	3.1%	1,053	0.7%	256	0.2%	136,472	96.0%
Sevenoaks	96,603	2,420	2.5%	795	0.8%	129	0.1%	93,259	96.5%
Swale	121,998	3,667	3.0%	908	0.7%	198	0.2%	117,225	96.1%
Thanet	115,414	4,600	4.0%	928	0.8%	237	0.2%	109,649	95.0%
Tonbridge & Malling	105,526	2,942	2.8%	886	0.8%	195	0.2%	101,503	96.2%
Tunbridge Wells	92,403	2,308	2.5%	755	0.8%	131	0.1%	89,209	96.5%
Medway Unitary Authority	222,757	6,469	2.9%	1,633	0.7%	427	0.2%	214,228	96.2%

2021 Census - TS071 - Previously served in the UK armed forces

The Office for National Statistics (ONS), Table presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

In Kent those veterans who had previously served in only the regular UK armed forces accounted for 76.8% of all veterans living in the county. This was slightly lower than the regional figure (77.3%) and slightly higher than the national figure (76.3%).

Dover had the highest proportion of veterans who had previously served in only the regular UK armed forces (81.2%).

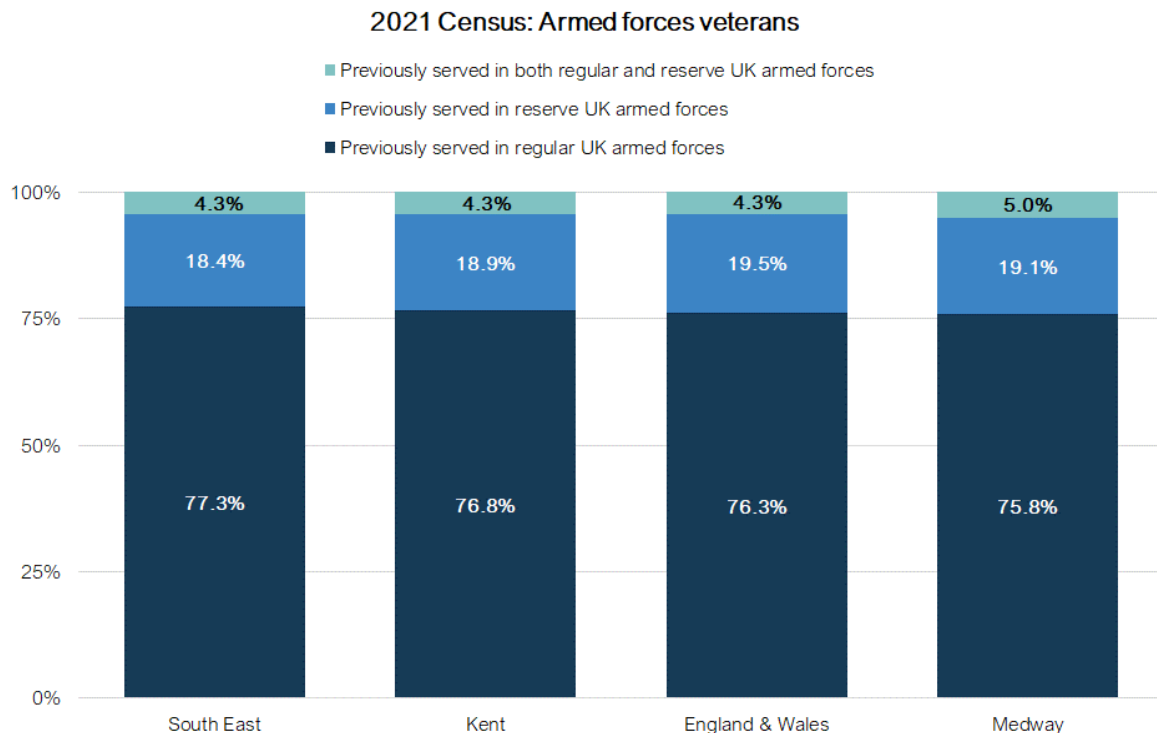
Veterans who had previously served only in the reserve UK armed forces made up 18.9% of Kent's veteran population (South East 18.4%, England and Wales 19.5%).

Dartford had the highest proportion of veterans who had previously served only in the reserve UK armed forces (24.0%).

Veterans who had previously served in both the regular and the reserve UK armed forces made up 4.3% of Kent's veteran population, the same as seen regionally and nationally.

Gravesham had the highest proportion of veterans who had previously served in both the regular and the reserve UK armed forces (5.0%).

### Chart 3: Proportion of veterans who have previously served in the regular, the reserve, or both the regular and reserve UK armed forces



2021 Census: The Office for National Statistics (ONS). Chart presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 3: Proportion of veterans who have previously served in the regular, the reserve, or both the regular and reserve UK armed forces**

2021 Census: UK Armed forces veterans	All veterans	Previously served in regular UK armed forces	Previously served in reserve UK armed forces	Previously served in both regular and reserve UK armed forces
England & Wales	1,853,112	76.3%	19.5%	4.3%
South East	317,082	77.3%	18.4%	4.3%
<b>Kent</b>	<b>52,545</b>	<b>76.8%</b>	<b>18.9%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
Ashford	4,962	77.6%	18.3%	4.1%
Canterbury	5,217	76.5%	18.6%	4.9%
Dartford	2,328	71.6%	24.0%	4.3%
Dover	5,710	81.2%	14.5%	4.2%
Folkestone & Hythe	5,211	79.7%	16.1%	4.1%
Gravesham	2,351	74.1%	20.8%	5.0%
Maidstone	5,664	76.9%	18.6%	4.5%
Sevenoaks	3,344	72.4%	23.8%	3.9%
Swale	4,773	76.8%	19.0%	4.1%
Thanet	5,765	79.8%	16.1%	4.1%
Tonbridge & Malling	4,023	73.1%	22.0%	4.8%
Tunbridge Wells	3,194	72.3%	23.6%	4.1%
Medway Unitary Authority	8,529	75.8%	19.1%	5.0%

2021 Census - TS071 - Previously served in the UK armed forces

The Office for National Statistics (ONS), Table presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

## Households with UK armed forces veterans

7.7% of households in Kent have at least one veteran living there. 7.4% have one UK armed forces veteran resident, 0.3% have two veterans resident. 0.01% have three or more veterans resident.

Table 4 shows the number of households with veterans in Kent and Kent districts compared to the national and regional figures.

**Table 4: Households with UK armed forces veterans**

	All occupied households	Number with no people in the household previously served in UK armed forces	% with no people in the household previously served in UK armed forces	Number with 1 person in the household previously served in UK armed forces	% with 1 person in the household previously served in UK armed forces	Number with 2 people in the household previously served in UK armed forces	% with 2 people in the household previously served in UK armed forces	Number with 3 or more people in the household previously served in UK armed forces	% with 3 or more people in the household previously served in UK armed forces
2021 Census: Households with UK Armed forces veterans									
England & Wales	24,783,199	23,038,121	93.0%	1,675,603	6.8%	67,714	0.3%	1,761	0.0%
South East	3,807,966	3,510,942	92.2%	284,817	7.5%	11,942	0.3%	265	0.0%
<b>Kent</b>	<b>648,393</b>	<b>598,715</b>	<b>92.3%</b>	<b>47,955</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>1,673</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
Ashford	53,583	48,911	91.3%	4,460	8.3%	201	0.4%	11	0.0%
Canterbury	63,793	58,874	92.3%	4,746	7.4%	166	0.3%	7	0.0%
Dartford	45,696	43,474	95.1%	2,153	4.7%	67	0.1%	2	0.0%
Dover	50,549	45,173	89.4%	5,143	10.2%	229	0.5%	4	0.0%
Folkestone & Hythe	48,338	43,469	89.9%	4,661	9.6%	202	0.4%	6	0.0%
Gravesham	41,722	39,463	94.6%	2,198	5.3%	61	0.1%	0	0.0%
Maidstone	71,207	65,895	92.5%	5,122	7.2%	185	0.3%	5	0.0%
Sevenoaks	49,014	45,840	93.5%	3,094	6.3%	77	0.2%	3	0.0%
Swale	60,495	56,004	92.6%	4,353	7.2%	136	0.2%	2	0.0%
Thanet	62,200	56,733	91.2%	5,279	8.5%	181	0.3%	7	0.0%
Tonbridge & Malling	53,573	49,680	92.7%	3,796	7.1%	94	0.2%	3	0.0%
Tunbridge Wells	48,223	45,199	93.7%	2,950	6.1%	73	0.2%	1	0.0%
Medway Unitary Authority	111,458	103,328	92.7%	7,837	7.0%	292	0.3%	1	0.0%

2021 Census - TS072 - Number of people in households who have previously served in UK armed forces

The Office for National Statistics (ONS), Table presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council



## UK armed forces veterans by resident type

97.9% of UK armed forces veterans in Kent are household residents. This is similar to the proportion seen nationally (98.0%) and in the South East (97.6%).

1,095 veterans in Kent are communal establishment residents and account for 2.1% of all veterans living in Kent. A communal establishment is an establishment providing managed residential accommodation providing full-time or part-time supervision of the accommodation. Communal establishments include hospitals, care homes, prisons, defence bases, boarding schools, and student halls of residence.

Thanet has the largest number of UK armed forces veterans living in households (5,663), Maidstone has the largest number living in communal establishments (151).

**Table 5: UK armed forces veterans by resident type**

2021 Census: UK Armed forces veterans by resident type	Usual residents aged 16+ who have previously served in the UK armed forces	Number who have previously served in the UK armed forces and are household residents	% who have previously served in the UK armed forces and are household residents	Number who have previously served in the UK armed forces and are communal establishment residents	% who have previously served in the UK armed forces and are communal establishment residents
England & Wales	1,853,112	1,816,299	98.0%	36,813	2.0%
South East	317,082	309,477	97.6%	7,605	2.4%
<b>Kent</b>	<b>52,544</b>	<b>51,449</b>	<b>97.9%</b>	<b>1,095</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
Ashford	4,960	4,892	98.6%	68	1.4%
Canterbury	5,217	5,093	97.6%	124	2.4%
Dartford	2,328	2,291	98.4%	37	1.6%
Dover	5,710	5,611	98.3%	99	1.7%
Folkestone & Hythe	5,211	5,085	97.6%	126	2.4%
Gravesham	2,351	2,324	98.9%	27	1.1%
Maidstone	5,664	5,513	97.3%	151	2.7%
Sevenoaks	3,344	3,254	97.3%	90	2.7%
Swale	4,775	4,631	97.0%	144	3.0%
Thanet	5,768	5,663	98.2%	105	1.8%
Tonbridge & Malling	4,023	3,993	99.3%	30	0.7%
Tunbridge Wells	3,193	3,099	97.1%	94	2.9%
Medway Unitary Authority	8,529	8,423	98.8%	106	1.2%

2021 Census - TS073 - Population who have previously served in UK armed forces in communal establishments and in households

The Office for National Statistics (ONS), Table presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

## Related documents

Information about the population and the 2021 Census can be found on our [Population & Census](#) webpages.

Additional information from the Census about the characteristics of the population can be found on our [Equality & Diversity](#) webpages.