SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES
JPMorgan Chase & Co., Founding Partner

HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH SERIES

MISSING PERSPECTIVES:

SERVICEMEMBERS' TRANSITION FROM SERVICE TO CIVILIAN LIFE

DATA-DRIVEN RESEARCH TO ENACT THE PROMISE OF THE POST-9/11 GI BILL

Corri Zoli
Rosalinda Maury
Daniel Fay

November 2015

About the Report

Developed with generous support from a Google Global Impact Award and in dialogue with our partners—the Student Veterans of America (SVA), the Posse Foundation, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)—this summary report uses an interdisciplinary, data-driven approach to understand how today's Post-9/11 military servicemembers are faring in their transition processes, especially in higher education. The report prioritizes an evidence-based approach through targeted surveys, interviews, and focus groups and centers the perspectives of recent servicemembers (active-duty, reserves, National Guard, veterans, and their families) in its analyses. Research findings are based on multi-method studies of servicemembers in their multiple roles: as warfighters, civilians, students, professionals, employees, and family members, among others. Research results are designed to elevate the public, academic, and policy discourse on Post-9/11 servicemembers, to inform recommendations to improve post-service transition, and to form the foundation for a second study on best strategies for servicemembers in higher education and civilian careers. All data and results will be made publically available online for military and veterans' communities; government, policymakers, and administrative staff at federal agencies; and the academic community, including scholars, administrators, and academic leaders.

Acknowledgments

The commitment and support provided by the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) at Syracuse University have made this research possible. We wish to thank J. Michael Haynie, James Schmeling, James McDonough, and Nicholas Armstrong. We are also indebted to the team at the Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism (INSCT): William Banks, Robert Murrett, and David Crane. Last and by no means least, we wish to thank our longstanding research partner in these endeavors, Laura J. Steinberg of SU's College of Engineering & Computer Science. The research team also benefited enormously from the hard work of the many graduate research assistants who worked on this initiative: Nyasha Boldon (Maxwell Ph.D. student in Sociology, SUNY Albany School of Public Health), Chris Beeler (College of Law), Chong Li (Maxwell Ph.D. in Economics), Zhan Gao (senior, College of Engineering & Computer Science), Alex Falevich (Maxwell Ph.D. candidate in Economics), Paroma Nandi (Maxwell M.P.A), and Jaclyn Petruzzelli (Maxwell Ph.D. student in Public Administration). We also wish to thank Gary Shaheen, Ph.D. student in social sciences, Maxwell, and Peg Stearns, SU Veterans Resource Center, for their assistance on the project. We also would like to thank Chris Cate (SVA) and Curtis L. Coy (Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs). Most of all, we dedicate this work to all those engaged in public and national service, all members of the U.S. armed forces and their families, and those who have committed to work in their respective capacities in the service of the public interest.

About the Authors

Corri Zoli, Ph.D., is Director of Research and Assistant Research Professor at the Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism (INSCT), an advanced joint research center at Syracuse University's College of Law and the Maxwell School. Zoli is also a senior researcher affiliated with the Institute for Veterans and Military Affairs at SU (IVMF). Rosalinda Maury is Director of Applied Research and Analytics at IVMF. Daniel Fay, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor of Public Management at Mississippi State University and an IVMF Research Associate.

Suggested Citation

C. Zoli, R. Maury, & D. Fay, Missing Perspectives: Servicemembers' Transition from Service to Civilian Life — Data-Driven Research to Enact the Promise of the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Institute for Veterans & Military Families, Syracuse University, November 2015).

FORWORD AND KEY HIGHLIGHTS

BY
NICHOLAS J. ARMSTRONG, PH.D.
J. MICHAEL HAYNIE, PH.D.

In 2013, the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University (IVMF) launched an ambitious research program, supported by a Google Global Impact Award, aimed to cultivate a deeper understanding of the social, economic, and wellness concerns of the newest generation of U.S. veterans. The research program's principal objective is to highlight the breadth and diversity of our transitioning servicemembers and veterans, in the context of their first-hand, lived experiences across multiple role identities including warfighter, family member, student, and community leader, among others.

To this end, the IVMF research team developed a comprehensive multi-phased research effort to capture these experiences and identities, with a keen interest on transitioning servicemembers and veterans considering or pursuing higher education. The first phase of this effort commenced with a robust survey, carefully designed and distributed through multiple partners in government, higher education, private sector, and the media. This effort resulted in what is arguably ***one of the most sweeping datasets*** to date representing the lived experiences of our latest generation of veterans and military families.

Specifically, more than 8,500 veterans, active duty servicemembers, members of the National Guard and Reserves, and military-connected dependents gave their time to take to share their motivations to serve, and subsequently return to civilian life; their post-service academic plans, aspirations, and barriers; their academic experiences and perceptions; and their broader, yet related transition experiences. These insights are both rich and remarkable.

The data, moreover, comprise one of the ***more representative*** nonrandom samples of the latest generation of veterans, especially on important demographic factors such as branch of service, ratio of enlisted to officer, and gender. Despite familiar challenges in reaching a wide number of veterans, the team's diligence and collaboration with key partners in the Department of Veterans Affairs, Student Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the ***Military Times,*** among others, proved critical to capturing this diversity.

This initial report, aptly titled ***Missing Perspectives,*** serves as the inaugural publication in what will be a continuing series of IVMF research papers and commentary over the next year, highlighting issues and opportunities related to veterans' transition broadly, and higher education specifically.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

To date, existing research related to veterans and higher education has focused on issues of persistence, attainment, and readjustment. The following report addresses what has been a critical gap in understanding the transition experience generally, particularly the transition from the military to higher education. That is, the report emphasizes the social and cultural barriers that affect the transition experience, narrated through the voices of veterans. Most importantly, it reveals veterans' first-hand experiences, their pre-, in-, and post-service motivations; their perceived strengths, skills, and shortcomings; their future educational and employment aspirations; and their enduring contributions to public service.

Overall, the survey suggests a strongly positive perception of the military experience and that military service was primarily motivated by education benefits (53%); a desire to serve the country (53%); and the opportunity for new experiences, adventures, or travel (49%). A strong majority of respondents (88%) reported that joining the military was a "good decision."

On higher education, the study suggests that experiences in the military motivate and promote a heightened interest in advanced education. An overwhelming majority (92%) agreed or agreed strongly that higher education is central to a successful transition from military to civilian life. This finding holds true regardless of gender, ethnicity and race, socio-economic background and geography, and military specialties and training.

At the same time, however, the study also highlights significant barriers to realizing the potential individual and societal gains from our country's massive investment in veterans' education. For example, while most veterans perceived that their military-learned skills and leadership would contribute positively to an educational setting (84%), a majority (53%) also voiced the belief that the colleges and universities they attend (or aspire to attend) do not recognize the value of these specific and military-learned skills. Further, veterans also cite inadequate financial resources or a financial burden (56%); conflict with personal or family obligations (28%); expiration of GI Bill benefits prior to degree completion (25%); issues related to wellness and/or disability (23%); and conflict between employment and school (22%) as barriers to educational persistence and attainment.

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

WHAT DOES SERVICE MEAN?

What Motivates Military Service?

- Educational benefits (53%)
- Desire to serve my country (52%)
- Opportunity to pursue new experiences, adventures, or travel (49%)

Was Military Service Worth It?

- 88 percent reported ("moderately" or "completely") that joining the military was a good decision
- 82 percent indicate that that military service has positively impacted post-service outcomes

Skills and Attributes Strengthened by Military Service?

- Work ethic and discipline (87%)
- Teamwork (86%)
- Leadership (82%)
- Mental toughness (81%)
- Ability to Adapt (78%)

Why Did You Leave Military Service?

- Lost faith or trust in military and/or political leadership (36%)
- The desire to pursue education and training opportunities outside the military (32%)
- For family reasons or obligations (31%)

ON THE TRANSITION FROM MILITARY TO CIVILIAN LIFE

Most Significant Transition Challenges?

- Navigating VA programs, benefits, and services (60%)
- Finding a job (55%)
- Adjusting to civilian culture (41%)
- Addressing financial challenges (40%)
- Applying military-learned skills to civilian life (39%)

Military Influence on Post-Service Aspirations?

- 66% reported that military service prepared them for their civilian career, yet
- 55% indicate the desire to pursue a career ***different*** from their military specialty (MOS, AFSC, etc.)
- 47% indicate the desire to pursue a career ***different*** from their actual (in practice) military role

Service-Connected Disability Impact on Transition Experience?

- 58% reported a service-connected disability
- 79% of those indicating a service-connected disability, report their disability/disability-status as an obstacle in transition:
- In their personal life (87%)
- In holding a job (40%)
- In getting a job (38%)
- Completing their education (28%)
- Starting their education (12%)

ON THE TRANSITION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Military Service Influence on Higher Education?

- 73% reported that the military service experience ***promoted*** their interest in education
- 71% reported that the military service experience ***promoted*** their interest in training, certification, or licensing programs
- 68% reported that the military service experience ***prepared*** them for education
- 43% indicated that their military specialization, job, or training was STEM related

Motivations to Pursue Higher Education?

- Career or job opportunities (86%)
- Self-improvement and personal growth (71%)
- Potential for improving economic status (69%)
- Professional advancement (56%)
- Leverage earned benefits (51%)
- A desire to "help people/society" (43%)
- Enhance technical skills (31%)

Barriers to Persist in Higher Education?

- Lack of financial resources/ financial burden (56%)
- Personal/family obligations (28%)
- GI Bill benefits expire before degree completion (25%)
- Issues related to wellness and/or disability (23%)
- Conflict between job and school (22%)

A CALL TO ACTION

Many recounted the post-WWII GI Bill's profound impact on American society as the impetus for enacting today's post-9/11 GI Bill. Notably, however, after WWII, our nation's veterans represented ***half*** of all college-age students in the U.S. The flood of veterans on campus were a natural incentive, if not necessity, for colleges and universities to develop programs, policies, and supportive services that enabled a smooth transition from military to college life.

But today veterans barely represent 3 percent of all U.S. college students. The natural incentive motivating institutional investment in supporting veterans' educational opportunity—particularly at our nation's best colleges and universities—is less evident, and (on the surface) less compelling.

So how has this played out in practice?

Consider, for example, that post-9/11 veterans make up barely 1 percent of the total undergraduate students enrolled at the U.S. News "Top 20 Colleges and Universities in America." Juxtapose that with the fact that, year over year, online for-profit colleges have received the greatest share of taxpayer-funded tuition under the post-9/11 GI Bill—***nearly 40 percent of all GI Bill tuition payments over the past five years.*** On average, veterans attending these schools drop-out at exceedingly high rates, and if they do graduate, are often overwhelmed by student-loan debt and persistently struggle to find living-wage employment in a labor market that does not uniformly value their expensive online degrees.

Why does this situation persist?

In part, as highlighted by the insights gained from the ***Missing Perspectives*** study, many of the barriers that veterans face in traditional higher-education settings are rooted in the fact that veterans are, by definition, ***non-traditional*** students. That is, they are older than their non-veteran student peers, more likely to be married and have children, and therefore need to hold down a job while in school. Unfortunately, non-traditional students represent a growing, yet long marginalized, population of students at our best public and private educational institutions. Too few top schools offer degree programs that complement the lifestyle demands of the non-traditional student. However, the challenge goes beyond programs and process.

It's also the case that the prevailing rhetoric related to veterans and traditional higher-education remains one largely grounded in the notion of obligation—a responsibility to 'repay a debt' to those who have served. In other words, too many leaders in higher education have yet to come around to the 'business case' for meaningful investment in student veterans' educational success. As a result, they unwittingly contribute to a missed opportunity of historic proportions—the opportunity to make our best academic institutions richer, more dynamic, more diverse, and ultimately

better by purposefully integrating and empowering veterans across our campus communities.

After WWII, veterans flooded our nation's colleges and universities, arriving on campus with global experiences, broad diversity, and a commitment to service. In our classrooms, on our athletic fields, and in our student organizations they proved themselves adept at team building, resilient, resourceful, and entrepreneurial, and they exercised dynamic leadership abilities that had been previously tested and proven under the most grave, real world conditions imaginable. They made our best academic institutions better, and in turn, those institutions, through education, literally empowered them to change our society, our economy, and the world for more than a half a century.

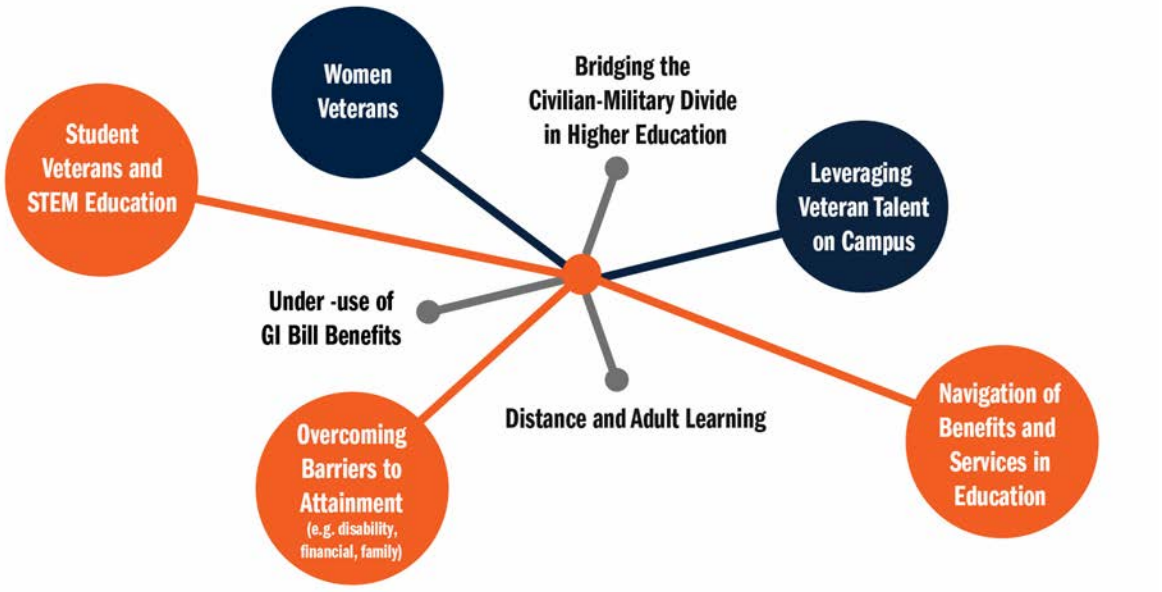
NEXT STEPS

Beginning with this study, we intend to give voice to student veterans in a way that seeds a new line of actionable scholarship and thought leadership related to veterans and higher education. Over the next year, the IVMF will launch a new research series on veteran education, highlighting various aspects from this and subsequent data collection efforts focused on themes that include:

- ***Student veterans and STEM education***
- ***Navigation of benefits and services in education***
- ***Leveraging veteran talent on campus***
- ***Overcoming barriers to attainment (e.g., disability, financial, family)***
- ***Dependent use of GI Bill benefits***
- ***Under-use of GI Bill benefits***
- ***Distance and adult learning***
- ***Bridging the civilian-military divide in higher education***
- ***Women veterans' post-service transition to, and experience in, higher education***
- ***Debunking myths about veterans in higher education***

After President Bush signed the Post-9/11 GI Bill into law (June 2008), President Obama later said as the bill went into force (in August of 2009): *"we do this because these men and women must now be prepared to lead our nation in the peaceful pursuit of economic leadership in the 21st century."* To that end, we aim to spark a new discourse on how our colleges and universities view and empower student veterans, a discourse that pushes higher education past the "veteran friendly" rhetoric to seize the long-term value of veteran students and alumni, and a discourse that makes real the intended promise of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, not only for our veterans, but for all Americans.

Higher Education Research Series: Future Themes



SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES
JPMorgan Chase & Co., Founding Partner

HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH SERIES

MISSING PERSPECTIVES:

SERVICEMEMBERS' TRANSITION FROM SERVICE TO CIVILIAN LIFE

DATA-DRIVEN RESEARCH TO ENACT THE PROMISE OF THE POST-9/11 GI BILL

Corri Zoli
Rosalinda Maury
Daniel Fay

November 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary

This report—part of a larger phased study on U.S. military servicemembers' post-service transition, with a special emphasis on education—explores recent Gulf War and Post-9/11 servicemembers' perspectives on their diverse service and post-service experiences, their educational and employment aspirations and pathways, and their ongoing contribution to public service.

We surveyed more than 8,500 servicemembers (active-duty, reserves, National Guard, veterans, and their families) and have built one of the few comprehensive, national datasets on recent servicemembers' experiences. Overall, we find that recent servicemembers report an overwhelmingly positive experience of military service and, furthermore, that service both motivates and promotes an interest in education and in developing professional post-service capabilities. We also find that military service—while it creates lasting impacts and challenges, including one of the highest rates of service-related disabilities for this generation of veterans—also tends to heighten servicemembers' belief that education is a key asset in the transition process and adds to servicemembers' sense of post-service success and confidence. Despite the diversity of the military, we also found broad agreement on these issues—across gender, ethnicity and race, background and geography, military jobs, training, and positions. At the core of this research rests our commitment to deepening the understanding of today's veterans by prioritizing servicemembers' diverse perspectives across the continuum of their experiences—as warfighters, family members, students, community members, among many other roles—to capture the bigger picture of veterans' post-service aspirations, lessons, concerns, and achievements. This summary report analyzes these responses,—including much qualitative data,—and presents initial findings that begin to fill in the gaps the "missing perspectives" of today's servicemembers – as we make the case for why this research is urgent and necessary.

This study also addresses a significant paradox facing recent U.S. military servicemembers. We are witnessing, on the one hand, one of the highest peaks in public support for members of the U.S. armed services. In public confidence studies, since 1989 the U.S. military has ranked as the top-most trusted institution, with 74 percent of Americans expressing confidence in the institution. Across the nation, calls to "support our troops" abound, along with public appreciation for uniformed servicemembers, preferential hiring for veterans in public and private-sector jobs, and one of the most generous educational benefits since the original GI Bill of Rights of 1944 in the Post-9/11 GI Bill. But despite such support, there is, on the other hand, a lack of deep public understanding and even interest in servicemembers' actual service experiences and post-service welfare.

In light of multiple deployments, new forms of asymmetric warfare, and high rates of injury and disability, many veterans struggle with defining a coherent narrative about their wartime experiences. As student veteran Sebastian Bae writes in Foreign Policy, "despite a decade of war, today's veterans remain faceless, marginalized from society—either heroes or villains"—while too often, "'thank you for your service' represents the banality of society's understanding of the nation's wars and the men and women who fought them."

In academic and federal research, an evidence-based picture of Post-9/11 military servicemembers—their perspectives on military service and post-service life—is largely missing from national policy discussions of service, security, and transition. We know from historical scholarship that prior veterans' cohorts, including World War II veterans, made significant contributions to post-war American life in education, employment and earnings, political and civic engagement, among other areas. Such gaps in our understanding of this generation's veterans, thus, raises the prospect of costly lost opportunities—not only for veterans and their families—but for the nation and its institutions as a whole if we fail to leverage the talent, training, expertise, dedication, and discipline of today's veterans.

Contribution

Our research intends to elevate the visibility of Post-9/11 servicemembers—their diverse experiences, post-service education, employment pathways, and ongoing social and public contributions—in national public discourse, academic inquiry, and policy discussions across state and federal government. By advancing data-driven research, these findings will help many understand the service and post-service experiences, opportunities, and challenges for recent servicemembers, including their transition challenges in civilian life, higher education, careers, and community endeavors. Our research will ultimately comprise both theoretical resources and practical tools for stakeholders across many communities.

MISSING PERSPECTIVES:
SERVICEMEMBERS' TRANSITION FROM SERVICE TO CIVILIAN LIFE

POPULATION

OVER 23 MILLION
LIVING, US MILITARY SERVICEMEMBERS

OF TOTAL POPULATION 18 AND OVER

9% ARE VETERANS (OVER 21.2 MILLION)

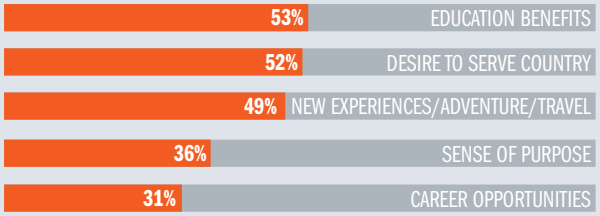
AND

1% ARE ACTIVE DUTY/ACTIVATED NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES (OVER 2.1 MILLION)

MILITARY SERVICE

MOTIVATION FOR SERVICE

TOP REASONS FOR JOINING



88% REPORTED THAT JOINING THE MILITARY WAS A **GOOD DECISION**

MILITARY SKILLS

SKILLS DEVELOPED DURING SERVICE

81% indicated that their military specialty (MOS, AFSC, Rating, or designator) accurately described the military jobs that they performed during service

43% **STEM RELATED MILITARY SPECIALIZATIONS/JOBS** report that their military specialization, job, or training is science, technology, engineering, or mathematics related

HIGHER EDUCATION

MOTIVATORS FOR PURSUING EDUCATION

86% CAREER/JOB OPPORTUNITIES
71% SELF-IMPROVEMENT
69% POTENTIAL FOR MAKING MONEY
56% PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT
51% TO USE BENEFITS

PROBLEMS OR BARRIERS THAT HINDERED PURSUIT OF EDUCATION

56% LACK OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES
28% PERSONAL/FAMILY OBLIGATIONS
25% GI BILL BENEFITS EXPIRED
23% HEALTH/DISABILITY ISSUES
22% CONFLICT BETWEEN JOB AND SCHOOL

PROBLEMS FACED WHILE PURSUING EDUCATION

37% AGE DIFFERENCES
32% LACK OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES
32% WORKING FULL TIME JOB
29% FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES
26% FEW VETERAN RESOURCES ON CAMPUS

84% felt there was a place for veterans' leadership, achievement, and/or excellence on campus at colleges/universities

YET ONLY 53% felt that colleges/universities recognize the specific strengths and skills veterans bring to campus

GI BILL

1,088,411 TOTAL NUMBER OF GI BILL USERS NATIONALLY AS OF 2014

—a number that represents about 12 billion dollars per year and covers higher education and training, licensing, and credentialing programs—but includes

LESS THAN HALF OF ELIGIBLE VETERANS

MILITARY SERVICE

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

FROM THE MILITARY ON SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES FOR EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

71% REPORTED THE MILITARY LEFT A LASTING IMPRESSION IN DEVELOPING SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES THAT WILL HELP SUCCEED IN EDUCATION

82% REPORTED THAT THE MILITARY LEFT A LASTING IMPRESSION ON THEIR LIVES

MILITARY INFLUENCES

73% MILITARY PROMOTED THEIR INTEREST IN EDUCATION

68% MILITARY PREPARED THEM FOR EDUCATION

66% MILITARY PREPARED THEM FOR THEIR CIVILIAN CAREER

71% PROMOTED THEIR INTEREST IN TRAINING, CERTIFICATION, OR LICENSING PROGRAMS

TRANSITION

TOP TRANSITIONAL CHALLENGES

60%	55%	41%	40%	39%
NAVIGATING VA ADMIN. OR BENEFITS	GETTING A JOB	GETTING SOCIALIZED TO CIVILIAN CULTURE	FINANCIAL STRUGGLES	SKILLS TRANSLATION

92% INDICATED THAT EDUCATION SHOULD PLAY A ROLE IN THEIR POST-SERVICE TRANSITION

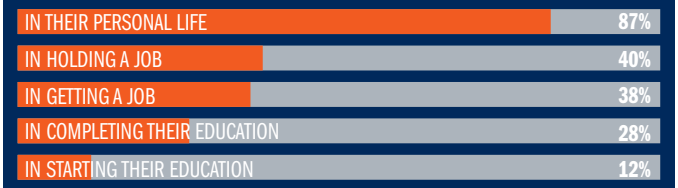
DISABILITIES

OVER **3.9 MILLION** DISABLED VETERANS ARE CATEGORIZED BY THE VA AS HAVING A DISABILITY. OF THOSE, 43% ARE OF GULF WAR AND POST-9/11 VETERANS

58% REPORTED A SERVICE-RELATED DISABILITY

32% REPORTED THEY DID NOT HAVE A DISABILITY

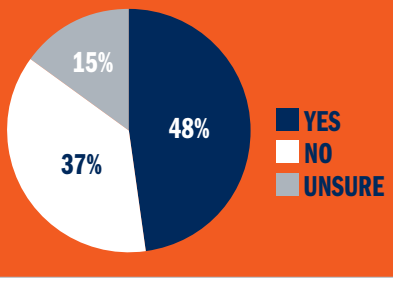
OF THOSE THAT HAVE SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES, 79% INDICATED THAT IT CREATES OBSTACLES:



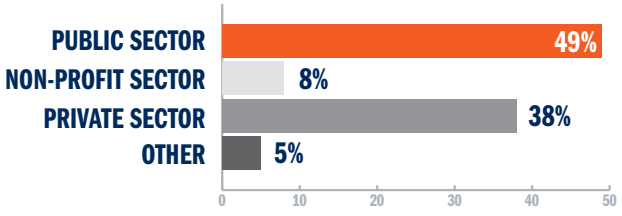
POST-MILITARY CAREER

55% OF SERVICEMEMBERS SAID THAT THEY ARE LIKELY TO PURSUE A DIFFERENT CAREER THAN THEIR MILITARY SPECIALIZATION

VETERANS' PREFERENCE INFLUENCES THEIR POST SERVICE JOB CHOICE



WHERE RESPONDENTS ARE WORKING POST SERVICE



79% INDICATED THAT THE MILITARY PLAYED A ROLE IN THEIR SUCCESS

1.0 Paradoxes of Post-9/11 Military Service: Public Support and Civil-Military Disconnect

We are currently witnessing one of the most robust periods of public support for members of the U.S. armed services. According to a long-running Gallop poll, since 1989 the military has ranked as the top most trusted institution, with 74 percent of Americans expressing either a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the institution, particularly in comparison to religious institutions (See Figure 1).[1] Such public commitment is manifested in the halls of government and across the nation's main streets: in calls to "support our troops," acts of public appreciation for servicemembers, preferential veterans hiring in federal jobs and the private sector, sponsored research to tackle health and wellness issues, and community-based veterans groups offering job training and stress reduction, among many other examples (See Figure 2).[2] Likewise, the newest iteration of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, enacted on 1 August 2009, provides one of the most generous educational benefits package since the original GI Bill of Rights of 1944, which educated over 8 million veterans.[3] Notably, by 2010 this permanently-authorized program had the largest numbers of participants and the highest total obligations as compared to all prior GI Bills.[4]

Yet, despite the special place that military servicemembers hold in American public life, several gaps—even paradoxes—frame recent veterans' post-service transition from service to civilian life, education, and careers beyond the military, including:

- Recent veterans often feel distanced from an appreciative American public, inattentive to the personal costs of the Post-9/11 wars or the sacrifices of national service.
- Veterans worry about post-service education and employment pathways specific to their needs and goals—areas often overlooked in federal benefits administration logistics and health and wellness issues.
- Gulf War and Post-9/11 servicemembers have been understudied and veterans' programs under-evaluated compared to earlier servicemember cohorts: publically-available research and data-collection efforts—including its funding and support—often remain limited across academic, federal, and other research institutions.
- U.S. civilian institutions have been slow to leverage the capacity, diversity, and technical expertise of the all-volunteer force for higher education, employment, and public life.
- Veterans express ambivalence about civilian life, including college campuses, on such issues as work ethic, discipline, teamwork and commitment to country. Many eligible veterans are not using (or transferring) their hard-earned education benefit by not pursuing higher education for reasons that we do not fully understand.

These concerns signal greater underlying issues, increasingly discussed in public, policy, and academic discourse: a growing civil-military divide and servicemembers' sense of social alienation; limited understanding of military-connected communities by many Americans; institutional indifference in receiving returning veterans; lack of coordination across government and other stakeholders in servicemembers' post-service reintegration and success; and limited and uneven research and research support for understanding servicemembers' service, post-service, and education experiences.[5]

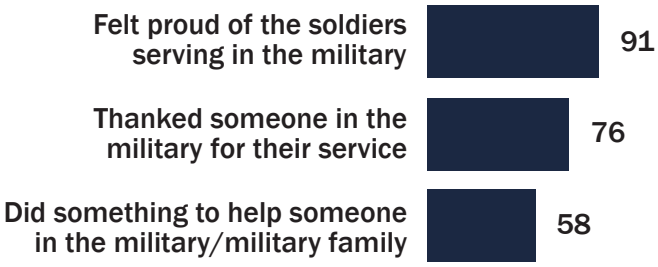
Figure 1. Source, Gallop NewsService, *Confidence in Instutions:* June 9–12, 2011

Trends in Confidence in the Church and the Military Figures represent % Great/Quite alot

Figure 2. Source: Pew Research Center, War and Sacrifice in the Post-9/11 Era (2011): p13.

Civilians and the Post-9/11 Wars

Percent saying they have done or felt the following since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began



Note: Based on general public, N=2,003.

Without addressing these gaps in our knowledge, it will be difficult to identify recent transitioning servicemembers' challenges, needs, and concerns. To take one resonant example, despite the wealth of post-service resources earned through service and the fact that the Post-9/11 GI Bill came into force more than five years ago, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) records only about 1,088,411 users for fiscal year 2014 of this and other service-related education benefits to date (see Table 1 and Figure 3).[12] This total number of GI Bill users—one that represents about $12 billion per year and covers higher education and training, licensing, and credentialing programs—represents less than half of eligible veterans (see Table 2).[13] Of the approximately 2.6 million plus veterans in the Post-9/11 cohort, most of whom were deployed or experienced some form of combat duty, many are not using or transferring their hard-earned benefit.[14] Even if an enlisted member does not wish to spend four years tackling a bachelor's degree, why are we not seeing a larger share of veterans using their benefits for ongoing learning, training, professional development, or credentialing programs? Low benefits-use persists despite the fact that education benefits are one of the top reasons that servicemembers join the military (see Figures 13 & 14 on page 21 & 22).

This narrowed landscape of GI Bill users may also indicate barriers for military and veteran students in pursuing degrees and programs. These issues must be explored in order to understand the nature of transition, particularly for recent generations of veterans, and to identify effective measures for veterans' education and employment. Without doing so, the challenges and opportunities inherent in this moment for both veterans and the nation as a whole might be overlooked, even as servicemembers increasingly become contributing members to local communities, higher education institutions, the U.S. labor force, and beyond. In short, this lost opportunity must be identified and addressed, especially given the significant public investment in veterans' education and reintegration.

Thus, this inquiry is designed to fill present gaps in academic research, national data collection efforts, and public understanding on transitioning servicemembers. While military servicemembers are a longstanding subject of interdisciplinary scholarship, including many historical studies of military servicemembers' socioeconomic and educational attainment, much of this work has focused on pre-Gulf War cohorts. The experiences of today's servicemembers—active duty, veterans, guard, reserve, students, and military families—is understudied in academic research and in federally-sponsored research efforts, including at the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Education, Defense, Census/Bureau of Labor Statistics, and among oversight units, such as Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports. Likewise, intensive inquiry on servicemembers' post-educational experiences in their professional lives or in receiving community-based services and care is also limited or missing for this cohort.[15]

The problem, however, is not only limited knowledge of the growing population of returning veterans—a gap this work intends to help remedy—but also the lack of veterans' perspectives integrated into current research efforts and in public discourse more generally. That is, despite vibrant traditions of soldier-

Table 1. U.S. Government (USG) Education Beneficiaries by Program & Fiscal Year

Program	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010[6]	2011[7]	2012[8]	2013[9]	2014[9]
All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance Program(Montgomery GI Bill - Active Duty or MGIB-AD)	332,184	343,751	354,284	341,969	247,105	185,220	118,549	99,755	77,389
Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Program (Post-9/11 GI Bill) [10]	-	-	-	34,393	365,640	555,329	646,302	754,229	790,408
Educational Assistance for Members of the Selected Reserve (Montgomery GI Bill - Selected Reserve or MGIB-SR)	66,105	60,298	62,390	63,469	67,373	65,216	60,393	62,656	63,745
Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP)	23,747	41,388	44,014	42,881	30,269	27,302	19,774	17,297	13,784
Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) [11]	-	-	-	-	-	-	12,251	67,918	52,288
Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance (DEA)	75,460	77,339	80,191	81,327	89,696	90,657	87,707	89,160	90,789
Post-Vietnam Era Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)	627	568	560	448	286	112	76	29	8
Total	498,123	523,344	541,439	564,487	800,369	923,836	945,052	1,091,044	1,088,411

authored writing historically and today[16], recent servicemembers have not had a strong voice in national debates on these matters. In fact, persistent stereotypes from earlier generations of soldiering—the stoic or quiet professional—may discourage many from speaking openly about wartime or post-war experiences. This gap in both knowledge and perspectives is reflected in national data efforts that remain limited, uneven, and often incommensurate in methods and findings (see Appendix I for a more thorough discussion of this issue).

Relatedly, a shift in narrative is also needed—something we also work toward in the pages of this summary report—from presuming veterans as a constituency in need of social supports, entitlements, and resources, to advancing veterans as national assets and as contributors to the communities and organizations in which they participate.[17] This theoretical reorientation often remains implicit in interdisciplinary studies and is, therefore, long overdue for explicit examination. Such a shift in explanatory narrative also requires emphasizing that post-service supports for veterans are not only a "debt" owed to those who have served but also a public commitment the nation makes to itself: socially supporting servicemembers, wounded warriors, and military families is, at bottom, designed to sustain an effective, professional all-volunteer force. This force, according to distinctive U.S. traditions of civilian control of the military, is designed to integrate back into civilian life. Veterans' welfare is, thus, a core element, not only in the nation's effective security and defense postures, but also in its robust, democratic civil-military relations. Attracting and retaining exceptional volunteers requires treating military service, not only as a pathway to national service, but as a means to continue to achieve in and beyond service, especially for those who seek opportunities that may be out of reach for many Americans. We know, in fact, from longstanding studies, confirmed in our own data that educational and other opportunities count as one of the most important motivations for individuals in choosing military service (see Figures 13 & 14 on page 21–22).

Social scientists and military historians have persuasively argued that much of the story of contemporary military service must be framed by the shift to the all-volunteer force, the organizational changes from general military conscription to the professional military, and the resulting attributes of those who now largely self-select for service.[18] The shift to the all-volunteer force[19] has, by multiple measures, resulted in a more professionalized, disciplined, coherent, and effective fighting force than in previous generations.[20] We also can see certain distinctive features of the very small sector of the U.S. population that chooses military service, including regional, economic, and family aspects, as well as post-service educational motivations.[21] Part of the distinctiveness of the all-volunteer force involves not only self-selection and assimilation into a specific organizational culture but also highly advanced training, concentrated professional experiences, elevated personal and social responsibilities, working with advanced technologies, and collaboration with other service branches, governmental and nongovernmental entities, and nations. We also know that the very structure of the all-volunteer force has meant greater isolation for servicemembers, who comprise only a tiny percentage of the U.S. population, even though taken together as a whole, veterans encompass a significant percentage of the population.[22] We also believe that first-hand experiences of war, especially during protracted campaigns and counterinsurgency and counterterrorist operations, may exacerbate such alienation. Likewise, certain servicemembers—including women, as well as those facing long or multiple deployments and high rates of disability—face distinctive challenges that remain difficult to address under current support paradigms.[23]

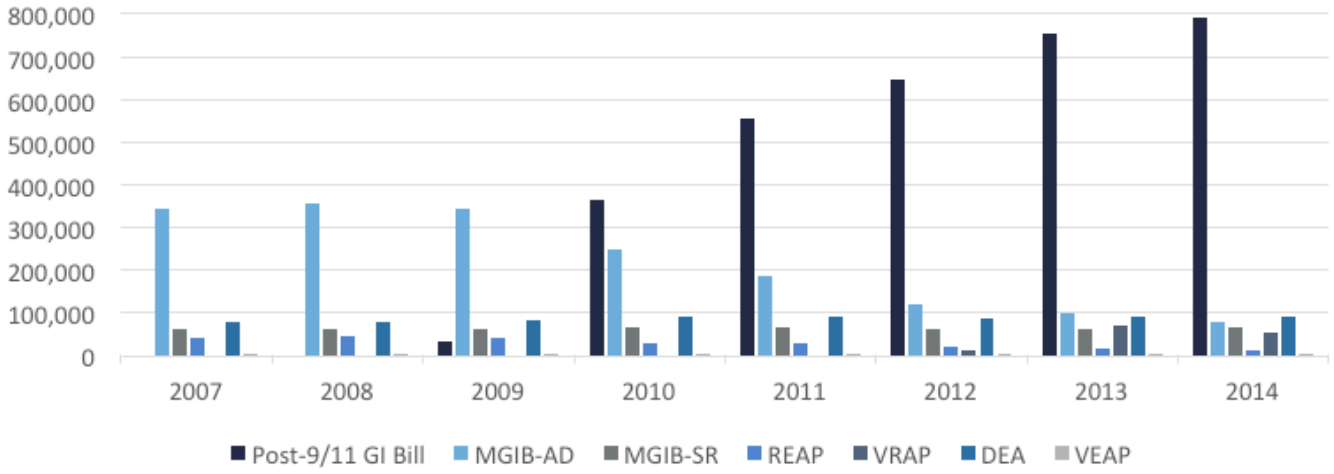
What has been less understood, however, are the often hidden costs of the all-volunteer force—both for individual soldiers, who have faced unprecedented deployment rates during the post-9/11 wars and injuries, and for U.S. society itself in the understudied impacts of the all-volunteer force on transforming how the nation prosecutes its armed conflicts and deals with volunteer veterans coming home.[24] Thus, while such professional attributes, organizational culture, training and experiences are

Table 2. Beneficiaries Receiving Education Benefits FY2014

Program	Total Beneficiaries	Total Payments ($000)
Post 9/11**	790,408	$10,754,649
MGIB-AD*	77,389	$511,652
MGIB-SR	63,745	$149,804
VRAP	52,288	$412,606
REAP	13,784	$56,357
DEA	90,789	$513,633
VEAP	8	$424
Total***	1,088,0411	$12,399,125 Billion

* MGIB-AD Includes Peacetime Veterans and Service members
** Based on service in the Selected Reserve
*** Total payment dollars include Section 901 Program participants although beneficiaries are not included

Figure 3. Education Beneficiaries by Program & Fiscal Year



critically important to understand, there are also broader lessons to be learned about these topics from servicemembers themselves, as they contemplate their own post-service aspirations, goals, and concerns in relation to higher education and civilian life generally. Such perspectives are not mere ideas; they inform veterans' practical choices, both in joining the armed services and in choosing post-service education and career pathways, which in turn shape their experiences of transition. Ultimately, such perspectives tell us something about how today's generational cohorts approach volunteer national service, survive war, cope with its aftermath, and find their way back to civilian life.

Taken together, these fundamental challenges and opportunities for veterans indicate ways to strengthen pathways for servicemembers' success in post-service transition: in higher education and training programs, in careers and professions beyond the military, and in community-based initiatives and social entrepreneurship. It is for these reasons that we posit the key role of higher education and other post-service opportunities in veterans' transition as a shared public commitment—a commitment best advanced by evidence-based research, by integrating veterans' perspectives into the discovery process, and by creating an interdisciplinary and multi-sector dialogue on the challenges and opportunities veterans currently face.[25] Seizing these opportunities now—as several million veterans are transitioning from military service into education and civilian life—depends, importantly, upon involvement in their success: military-connected communities, veterans service organizations (VSO), the higher education community, policymakers at the local, state and federal levels, and leaders from the private and nonprofit sectors. Making the most of this moment also requires synthesizing existing scholarship, identifying gaps in relevant literatures, strengthening data-collection efforts, and identifying needed avenues for future research. It is, thus, essential to take the time to understand the conditions veterans face to establish clarity on the current dynamics that may influence both our core American notions of service and next-generation servicemembers in their choice to undertake national service and its rewards.

2.0 The Research Effort: A Multi-Pronged Approach to Post-Service Transition

The prioritized goal of this research is to begin to redress the gaps in our understanding of Gulf War I and Post-9/11 servicemembers' experiences in and after war. Our research gives special weight to higher education because, as one student veteran noted, higher education has become one important "frontline" in the successful transition process.

Study Research Questions
Who serves and what are servicemembers' motivations for and perceptions of service?
How do servicemembers experience service, post-service transition, and civilian life?
Does military service influence post-service transition, educational, and career aspirations, goals, and pathways?
What challenges do servicemembers face in post-service life and in the higher education setting?
What strengths do servicemembers bring to post-service employment, education, and beyond?
What best practices affect servicemembers post-service transition, achievement, and success?

Critically, this research is designed to prioritize the perspectives of Gulf War I and Post-9/11 servicemembers in identifying and understanding the factors influencing their experiences in service, transition, reintegration, and post-service education and employment trajectories.

The research effort is divided into two phased studies focused, first, exclusively on servicemembers' experiences along the continuum of service and post-service life and, second, on the educational institutional contexts supporting servicemembers' transition, education, and employment.

STUDY 1

The first phase of research is a national data-collection effort focused on servicemembers' perspectives in their transition and educational experiences. This includes comprehensive instrument development and cross-cutting, interdisciplinary analyses of results in the context of existing social science literatures. One strength of Study 1 is the development of the *Servicemember to Student Survey: Veterans' Perceptions of Transition, Higher Education, and Success,* launched May 2014 (still ongoing), which has received over 8,500 responses to date—making it one of the largest and most comprehensive datasets on servicemembers' transition experiences.

This survey includes motivations for service, service and combat experiences, the role of military service in education, career, and life-skills preparation, servicemembers' educational aspirations and challenges, degree program choices, career pathways, recommendations for success, and education and employment interest in certain sectors, such as the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields and professions.

STUDY 2

The second phase of research shifts the focus from servicemembers' experiences and perspectives to higher educational institutional settings. We developed an innovative multiple-respondent survey for higher education administrators and veterans program leaders: *Serving Student Veterans: Programs, Policies & Practices for Servicemembers' Success on Campus,* launched September 2014 (still ongoing). This survey—plus an associated focus group interview protocol—gathers information at academic institutions about student veterans populations; best practices and methods promoting success; servicemember needs, aspirations, challenges, and barriers on campus; and recommendations for post-service successes throughout and beyond the education life cycle.

This summary report focuses on Study 1/Phase one research results only, including the approximately 8,561[26] responses from servicemembers, individual and informal interviews with military and veteran students, insights and responses from thought leaders and experts in the service and post-service domain, and a thorough review of the interdisciplinary social science literature pertaining to all aspects of servicemembers' experiences (in excess of 1,500 sourced documents).

2.1 Study 1 Methods: Survey Design, Sample, and Recruitment Strategy

This research represents one of the first national initiatives to develop data-driven research—including several large primary datasets—focused on recent (Gulf War and Post-9/11) military servicemembers' post-service transition, education, and employment experiences. We use a mixed-methods approach, marrying qualitative and quantitative data techniques, and integrating servicemembers' input into our findings. Our survey and interview participants were selected using national sampling strategies to ensure that we reach the widest and most diverse respondents. We developed new survey, interview, and focus group instruments, tailored these to the military population, and conducted several rounds of substantive surveys, as well as individual and group interviews. Every aspect of this instrument design and deployment process relied upon a thorough review of existing literature.

The Servicemember to Student Survey: Veterans' Perceptions of Transition, Higher Education, and Success instrument was designed as a purposive (not representative) sample and reviewed by a range of individuals (servicemembers themselves, scholars, and other experts) to ensure clarity, relevance, and precision. Questions were designed to encourage respondents to recall specific information about service, postsecondary education, the transition to civilian life, and respondents' experiences as students. In total there were 152 questions, and the number of total respondents varies per question based on applicability (e.g., servicemember status, education attainment, employment status, etc.).

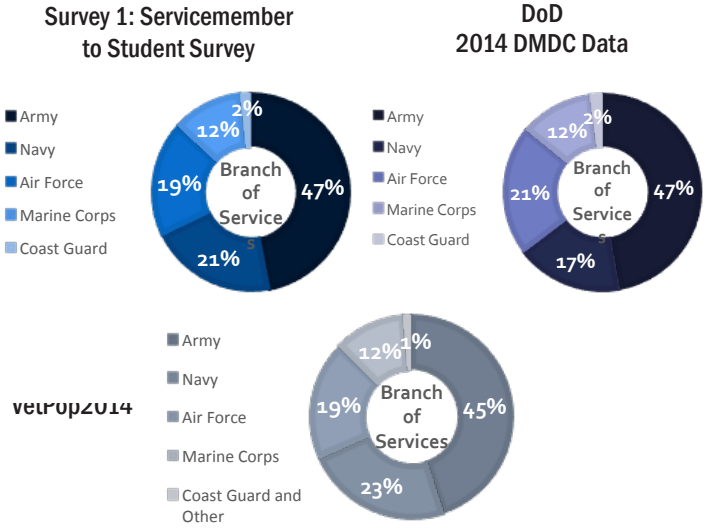
Recruitment for the survey leveraged a unique five channel approach for instrument dissemination: Channel 1 appealed to the academic community of servicemembers, including student veterans; Channel 2 mobilized U.S. government networks, with active duty divisions and the VA playing central roles; Channel 3 relied upon social media outlets, including an article in Military Times and IVMF social media messaging; Channel 4 utilized veterans service organizations (VSOs) and nonprofit organizational support; and Channel 5 used private-sector support networks. The vast majority of respondents were recruited through government channels at 78 percent; 16 percent came through academic channels; 3 percent were recruited via nonprofit organizations; 2 percent came from social media; and less than 1 percent were reached via corporate channels.

All survey participation was voluntary and no identifying information was collected. Possible biases may be introduced through outreach and sampling methods (including over- and under-representation of certain groups), so the sample cannot be understood as a direct representation of the military personnel population. Nevertheless, the survey's breakdown (into active duty, gender, branches, and other key demographics) comports with the national military population, according to Departments of Defense (DoD) and Veterans Affairs (VA) federal datasets (See Figure 4).

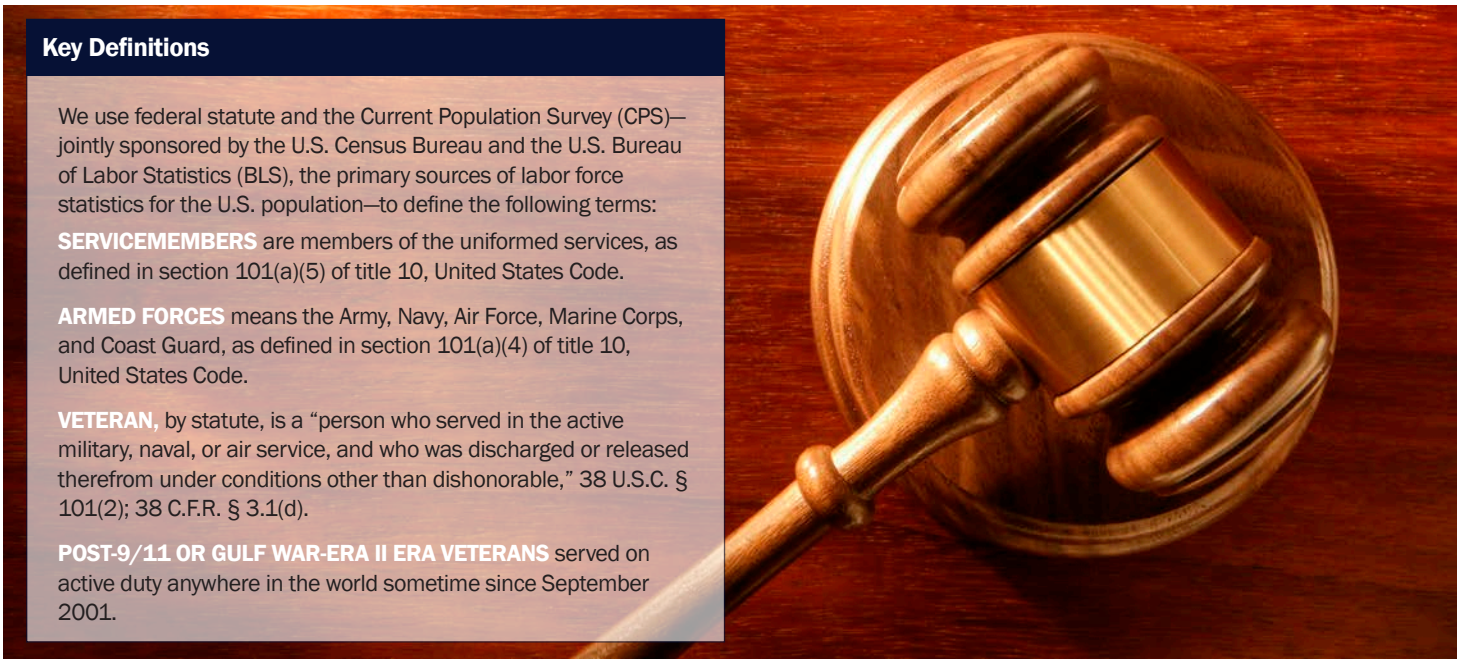
Survey results were compiled from analysis conducted from February to May 2015 with 8,561 respondents who began the survey and 58 percent (4,933) who completed the entire questionnaire (almost doubling the typical online response rate at 34%).[27] Survey questions combined multiple choice and open-ended answer styles to allow for detailed and diverse responses: a total of 117 questions were open-ended options; 66 were demographic and "other, please specify" format; and 51 were open-ended questions with qualitative, "write-in" answers. Nearly all questions were optional—with the exception of eligibility-qualifying questions (i.e., servicemember status), service characteristics (period of service, branch) and some demographic questions—thereby, allowing respondents to skip any questions they preferred not to answer. Some questions allowed respondents to select all applicable responses, some were rank ordered, and some were branched from previous questions. Thus, as mentioned, the actual number of respondents per question varies throughout the survey. All "Does not apply" or "Prefer not to answer" responses were coded as missing, and multiple response sets were created for questions that permitted multiple responses. Frequencies and basic crosstabs were performed.

The data collected provides a fulsome description of especially recent servicemembers' perspectives on service and post-service life to supplement existing, national aggregate data and qualitative research in the interdisciplinary social sciences, including research in higher education and public affairs. The data are intended to give diverse stakeholders in military-connected communities a clearer descriptive picture of servicemembers' views on service, transition, and education experiences and of the interactions between service, transition, and post-service education and career issues.

Figure 4. Dataset Comparison with Service Branch Composition



2.2 Law-Based Definition of U.S. Military Servicemembers'



Key Definitions

We use federal statute and the Current Population Survey (CPS)—jointly sponsored by the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the primary sources of labor force statistics for the U.S. population—to define the following terms:

SERVICEMEMBERS are members of the uniformed services, as defined in section 101(a)(5) of title 10, United States Code.

ARMED FORCES means the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, as defined in section 101(a)(4) of title 10, United States Code.

VETERAN, by statute, is a "person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable," 38 U.S.C. § 101(2); 38 C.F.R. § 3.1(d).

POST-9/11 OR GULF WAR-ERA II ERA VETERANS served on active duty anywhere in the world sometime since September 2001.

There is no single, universal, or standardized definition of "military veteran" in national, comparative, and international research, which represents a significant issue in conducting veterans research and in comparing data.[28] Therefore, we use the definition of "servicemember" set out in U.S. public law: a servicemember is "a member of the uniformed services," including all five branches of the U.S. armed forces, as defined in section 101(a)(5) of title 10, United States Code.[29] Likewise, we define veteran, again, according to federal statute and regulation as a "person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable" (although this issue of "dishonorable" or "other than honorable" discharge is changing and in need of further critical analysis).[30] While these definitions taken from U.S. federal statutes and regulation are largely used by government agencies to define eligible beneficiaries, for our purposes, they offer a consistent reference point for establishing clarity and coherence in conducting research on military-connected communities.[31] Using our preferred definition of veteran, all separated servicemembers are veterans once released or discharged from the service—no matter how long they served or the conditions under which they served.[32]

In this report we thus refer to four often overlapping populations under consideration: (1.) the most general term, military "servicemembers," is reserved for all persons who are serving or have served in the U.S. armed forces, i.e., those active-duty members currently serving as part of the active or reserve components of the armed forces and veterans, those who have separated from the armed services (many active and reserve component servicemembers qualify as veterans, so these phases of service may overlap); (2.) "veteran" includes all persons who have served in the U.S. armed forces on active duty (even if only in training) and were discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorably; (3.) "student veterans" are defined as those veterans engaging in education, certification, training or related programs, often receiving veterans-based benefits;[33] and (4) "military students," those active-duty, Reserve, and National Guard servicemembers undergoing education, certification, and/or training programs, often receiving military Tuition Assistance and other U.S. Department of Defense-based education benefits.[34]

For a more thorough discussion of the U.S. law-based framework and federal regulation of armed conflict, which itself frames the very notion of "service," including the determination of a veteran and "wartime" and peacetime periods, see Appendix II (page 47).

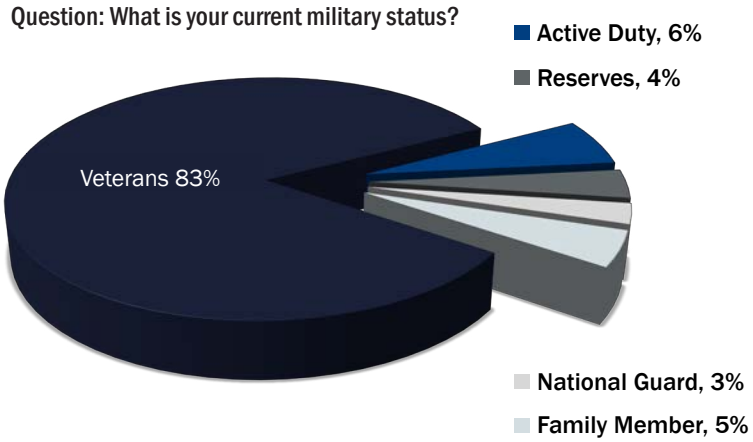
3.0 Data and Findings: Servicemembers' Experiences and Perspectives

Ultimately, this research is committed to increasing awareness of servicemembers' experiences and perspectives: on war, deployments, and the meaning of national service; on the struggles and challenges in transitioning from service to civilian life; on educational aspirations, experiences, and goals; on the opportunities that veterans represent for the nation; and on the personal costs of war, conflict, and national service.

In this section and the following subsections, we describe the various conditions and factors shaping and informing recent servicemembers' experiences across the five branches of the armed services. Beginning with demographics, we show the increasing diversity of the all-volunteer force, including how women are the fastest growing segment of the veterans' population. We also describe how U.S. civilian institutions—notably colleges and universities and the private sector—have been slow to take up the wealth of diversity and educational capacity that comprises much of the current armed forces. Relatedly, our findings indicate that disability is a subtle—but powerful—feature of contemporary service in ways that have not been fully explored or cross-correlated with other phenomena associated with volunteer service, including combat stress, mental health struggles, and suicide rates.

Lastly, we want to reiterate that the critical element in our research is servicemembers' perspectives on service and post-service life. That is, we aim to begin the process—using rigorous social scientific methods—of bringing servicemembers' missing perspectives into our national public discourse and research agendas. Not only does this inquiry thus give researchers—in academia, government, think tanks, and elsewhere—a wealth of information about today's servicemembers, it also provides an overarching vantage point on the nature of service today, the ethical and social challenges and responsibilities associated with it, as well as the lessons learned and skills acquired during service. These insights are designed to help in the process of shaping a national research agenda, already begun by interdisciplinary scholars, especially on recent cohorts of servicemembers and military connected-communities.

Figure 5. Military Status, IVMF Servicemember to Student Survey (Survey 1), 2015



It is also worth noting that, by default, the first Gulf War and the Post-9/11 wars—and related contingency operations beyond Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation New Dawn (OND)—are among the first functional tests of the all-volunteer force model of military service since its institutionalization in 1973. Unlike conscription-based militaries in which the burden of national service is spread across a nation's population, the volunteer model depends upon an engaged and educated public, aware of the nation's security and defense institutions and challenges. That is, implicit in the volunteer service model are the social and political obligations simultaneously "conferred" upon "the great majority of others who benefit from the service of a few."[35] While that responsibility is institutionalized in U.S. democratic and bureaucratic laws and administrative procedures and, hence, somewhat indirect, at the very least it implies the need for some manner of public awareness about the small minority of Americans who choose to serve on behalf of the nation.[36] This inquiry—insofar as it explores factors and findings affecting recent servicemembers' experiences—represents one of the few large studies and associated datasets devoted to that public commitment.

3.1 Who Serves? A Note About Broadening Diversity Beyond the Military

Despite the fact that U.S. colleges and universities have championed especially demographic diversity over the last several decades, these institutions struggle to establish viable pathways designed to recruit and support active military students and separated student veterans in all of their diversity—whether in college or career advising, education preparation, degree attainment, and persistence.[37] Too often, servicemembers are not seen on college campuses as part of otherwise well-established diversity initiatives and, instead, student veterans are often relegated to the vague category of "nontraditional student," given some of their attributes, such as age, or the fact that many support families while in school. Universities, thus, remain slow to grasp and leverage the distinctive traits of the military student population that could be transformative to U.S. higher education institutions themselves, traits that include veterans' demographic diversity, service experiences, and training, as well as the fact that many veterans are highly motivated, disciplined and self-directed, and the beneficiaries of professional and experientially-based training programs, including those that prioritize technical and leadership skills.

Military sociologists and demographers, among others, have long observed that there are few U.S. institutions that maintain such demographic and organizational diversity as the armed services—one of the first U.S. institutions to embrace racial integration[38] and the nation's largest employer (employing about 1 percent of the population) since the inception of the all-volunteer force in 1973.[39] Today, when servicemembers join up, they enter a complex organizational culture crisscrossed by multiple axes of difference (including gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and race); well-defined identities of each of the five service branches (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard); numerous specialized units and subunits of the joint, special forces, and professional communities, including Judge Advocate General's Corps attorneys (JAGs) and military physicians; and highly-stratified ranking, ranging from the four-star general to the enlisted private, each with its own traditions. In fact, the demographic and geographic diversity of the armed forces, also strikingly high in certain areas (see Figures 7-9), makes the military both a test case and often a historical leader on social matters of racial, ethnic, and gender inclusion—itself a longstanding U.S. cultural strength.[40] Notably, large numbers of African Americans, members of other ethnic groups, women, even immigrants, make up the armed services. The advantages of diversity—a deep-seated tenet of U.S. national cultural identity and a distinctive global strength—are increasingly studied as key ingredients for organizational innovation, creativity, problem solving and entrepreneurship, among other dimensions of adaptive organizations. [41]

Aside from sheer numbers, the military develops programming to manage and enhance diversity. As a matter of integrative training, all military members receive "Equal Opportunity" (EO) training courses—a universal diversity curriculum that emphasizes egalitarian values of equity, dignity, and respect across traditional racial, ethnic, class, and gender status categories, as well as the role of social and economic opportunities to promote general excellence.[42] Some of the most interesting research threads and post-service insights may lie at the intersection of military service and demographic diversity. For instance, military experiences, including training, may have lasting impacts in matters of diversity even after service. Several studies have shown, for instance, that African-American servicemembers, as well as other minorities, use their military status and training to offset social, economic, and/or racially-imposed barriers, thereby exceeding their non-military peers in achievement and attainment.[43]

This rich diversity, also evident in the large number of women and underrepresented ethnic groups encompassed in our sample, reveals the changing demographics of servicemembers and a military culture struggling at times to keep abreast of such changes, especially given the steep personnel demands on certain segments of the armed forces in recent conflicts. This phenomenon is described in the comments by servicemembers themselves. One respondent noted the friction experienced in Post-9/11 service: "At times, there was the good old boy system, especially if you were Caucasian." Equally impactful, multiple deployments and transition in and out of military service, as well as the extensive use of the Reserves and National Guard, also influences servicemembers' experiences of service. As one respondent notes: "An individual with three years active duty has more veteran recognition than 20 years Reserve/Guard." Another writes: "Figure that out and stop ignoring the Reservists and Guardsman specific issues. Active duty members transition once ... we do it constantly and it's just as difficult as Active (if not more so) and has 90% less support effort." These comments show that the diversity of the current military force includes challenges based not only on traditional demographics (gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity) but also on organizational structure, including service branch status and method of service.

Recognizing the broad diversity of the military as an asset in higher education and in professional careers—and moving beyond the nontraditional student label—is necessary for unlocking servicemembers' post-service potential and for challenging colleges and universities to achieve higher standards of achievement with respect to their own values.

TOTAL U.S. POPULATION OF SERVICEMEMBERS' AND VETERANS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates the contemporary, total veteran population at about 21,999,108.[44] A slightly lower number is reported from annual averages in the most recent Current Population Survey (CPS 2014) at the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics: 21.2 million living, U.S. military veterans, about 9 percent of the total U.S. population.[45] For Active Duty personnel, the most recent U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) data indicates a population of about 1,315,473 servicemembers[46] and about 827,458 servicemembers[47] in the Selected Reserves. Veterans, thus, represent about 9 percent of the total U.S. population, while active duty/activated selective reserves represent about one percent of the total population.[48] This number—one percent—is what commentators reference when noting the small size of the U.S. armed forces. Likewise, the force structure in 2014 comprised of about 1,326,273 servicemembers (1,020,636 of whom do not hold a college degree), with projections of 5 million members of the armed services likely to enroll in universities by 2020.[49]

MILITARY STATUS, PERIOD OF SERVICE, RANK, AND BRANCH

In our sample, the majority of respondents identified themselves as veterans (83%), followed by a smaller number of servicemembers not yet separated from the armed forces, which includes 6 percent Active Duty, 4 percent Reserves, and 3 percent National Guard (see Figure 5). About 5 percent of our sample are military family members (i.e. dependents). More than 87 percent of our sample are enlisted members of the armed services; 11 percent are officers; and about 1 percent are warrant officers.

For service branch composition, about 47 percent of respondents were either enlisted or commissioned in the Army; 21 percent were in the Navy; 19 percent were in the Air Force; 12 percent were in the Marine Corps; and 2 percent were in the Coast Guard. This breakout compares with federal data, including the DoD DMDC 2014 Demographics: Profile of the Military Community report, which shows: 47 percent of servicemembers in the Army; 17 percent in the Navy; 21 percent in the Air Force; 12 percent in the Marine Corps; and 2 percent in the Coast Guard (see Figure 4).[50] The VA VetPop2014 data estimates similar breakouts: 45 percent Army; 23 percent Navy; 19 percent Air Force; 11 percent Marine Corps; and 1 percent Coast Guard.[51] In this respect, our sample is only slightly over and under-represented in relation to certain branches (see Figure 4).

The majority of our sample (80%) are from the Gulf War Era: about 63 percent served during the Post 9-/11 period (September 2001 or later); 20 percent served prior to August 1990; and 17 percent served from August 1990 to August 2001 (See Figure 6). Based on the most recent U.S. Census data available, Gulf War era II (Post-9/11) veterans comprise a cohort of about 3,185,000 individuals—15 percent of all U.S. military veterans. Gulf War I veterans (those serving between August 1990 and August 2001) represent a slightly larger cohort of about 3,356,000 individuals, or 16 percent of all veterans.[52] Those among the World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam veterans population (combined) represent the largest and oldest veteran cohort of 9,372,000 individuals or about 44 percent of all U.S. military veterans. "Other Service Period" veterans—those with service at all other time periods, including largely peacetime periods—represent a cohort of about 5,317,000 individuals, or 25 percent of all U.S. military veterans.

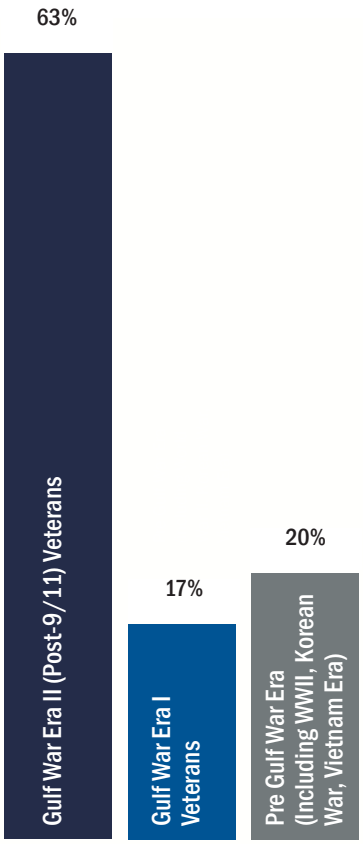


Figure 6. Period of Service, Survey 1, 2015

The majority of our sample—40 percent—served in the military for 4 to 8 years; about 22 percent served 3 years or less; 18 percent served for 9 to 20 years; and 20 percent served for 20 or more years.

GENDER, AGE, ETHNICITY

About 75 percent of our respondents are men and 25 percent are women. The average age is 43.71 years old, and most surveyed were older than 25 years: 27 percent were between 25 and 34 years

Figure 7. Survey Demographics–Gender, Age, and Ethnicity/Race, Survey 1, 2015

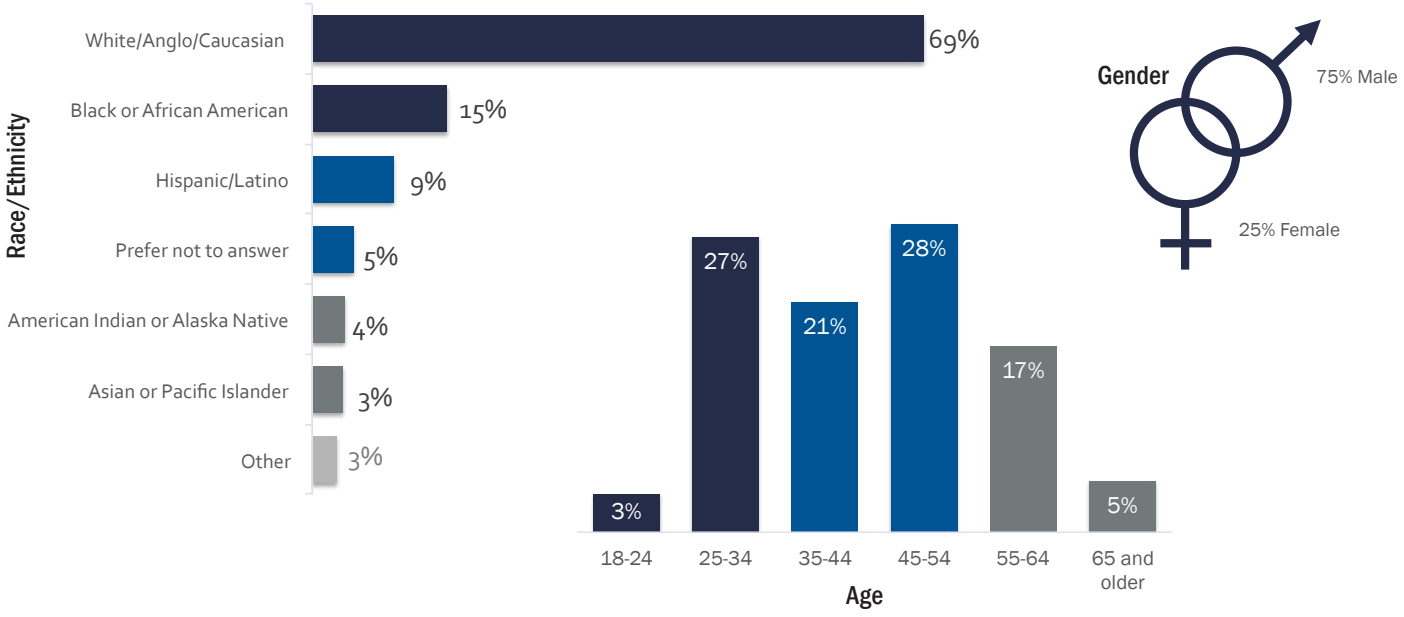
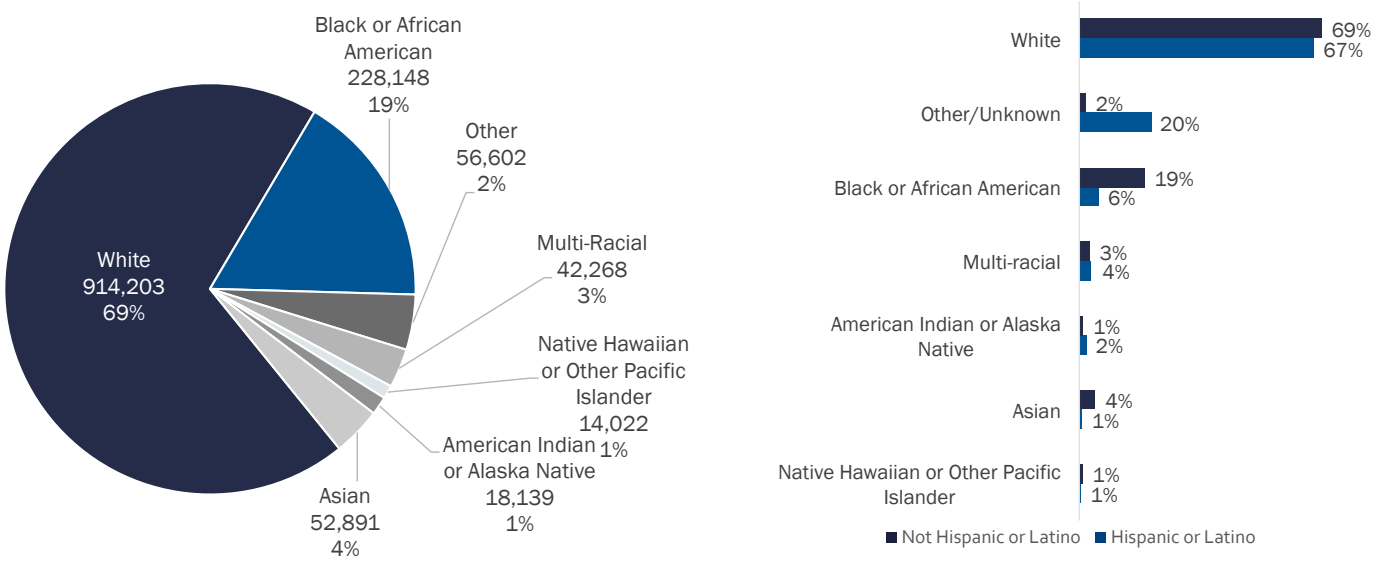


Figure 8. Force Structure Active Duty Members by Ethnicity/Race, DMDC, 2014



old; 21 percent were 35 to 44 years old; 28 percent were 44 to 54 years old; and 22 percent were older than 55. Only about 3 percent of servicemembers in our sample were 18 to 24 years of age.

Most respondents (69%) identified themselves as White/Anglo. More than 15 percent identified as Black/African-American, 9 percent were Hispanic/Latino, 4 percent were American Indian or Alaska Native, 3 percent were Asian or Pacific Islander, 3 percent identified as an "other minority group," and 5 percent preferred not to answer. Most respondents (98%) currently reside in the United States with only 2 percent living elsewhere.

DISABILITY STATUS

As Table 4 and 5[53] show, the highest number of disabled veterans served in the Gulf War Era, including servicemembers deployed in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).[54] In this context, more than 1.6 million Gulf War veterans are categorized by the VA as having a disability, which accounts for 43 percent of all disabled veterans receiving compensation.

Moreover, Gulf War era veterans with disabilities have a higher average number of disabilities: nearly six disabilities per person (see Table 5). This number exceeds the average number of disabilities by Vietnam veterans (nearly four disabilities on average per individual). In fact, the total number of disabilities reported by Gulf War veterans (10,067,893) is nearly double those of Vietnam veterans (4,834,770). Likewise, as Table 5 indicates, even among Gulf War era veterans, those who served in the Global War on Terror (GWOT) campaigns have a higher percentage of disabilities than non-GWOT veterans.[55]

When we asked respondents about disability status and rating (see Figure 10), we found that about 58 percent of our sample reported a service-related disability, while 32 percent said they did not have a disability (9% preferred not to answer). Of those with a service-related disability, about 53 percent reported their disability rating at 50 percent or higher, echoing nationally-high disability percentages, compensation benefits, and health services for current servicemembers. The total number of disabilities reported by Gulf War veterans was 1,678,698 (see Table 4); however, extrapolating these findings to the entire population of Gulf War era veterans, Active Duty members, and Selected Reserve members of the armed

Figure 10. Disability Status, Survey 1, 2015

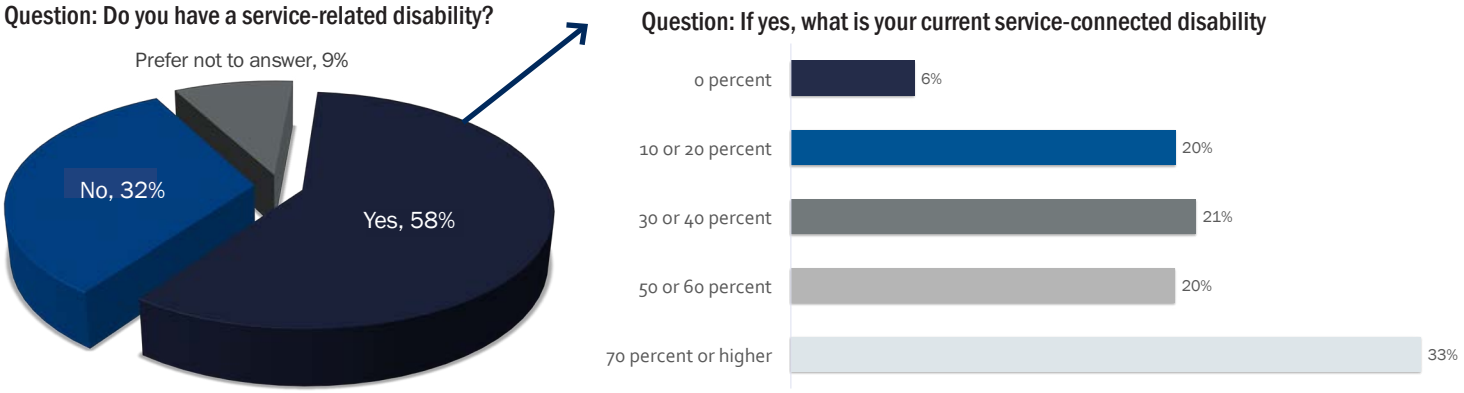


Table 4. Disabilities and VA Compensation by Period of Service, VBA, 2014

War	Disabled Veterans	Percent	Total # of disabilities	Average # of disabilities	Annual total amount Paid (estimated)
WW II	122,993	3%	295,250	2.40	$1,482,144,579
Korean Conflict	136,578	3%	331,804	2.43	$1,565,678,973
Vietnam Era	1,310,586	33%	4,834,770	3.69	$22,407,764,579
Gulf War Era- GWOT	837,024	21%	5,841,236	6.98	$11,638,424,599
Gulf War Era- non-GWOT	841,674	21%	4,226,657	5.02	$9,659,572,330
Peacetime Periods	700,211	18%	2,253,921	3.22	$7,474,941,041
Total	**3,949,066**	**100%**	**17,783,638**	**4.50**	**$54,228,526,101**

Table 5. Gulf War Era Compensation Recipients by GWOT Status, VBA 2014

	GWOT	Non-GWOT
# of Disabilities (percent)	5,841,236 (58%)	4,226,657 (45%)
Average # of disabilities per Veteran	6.98	5.02

forces (8,798,421),[56] one would expect 5,191,069 servicemembers with service-related disabilities.

This analysis, importantly, points to the unprecedented rates of disability among recent veterans and helps to build both a conceptual and evidence-based foundation for exploring why this is so and what are its implications, especially in relation to other issues, such as wellness, educational attainment, employment aspirations, among other items. This finding also provides an important example of how our data may help to elaborate important results that are also evident—but understudied—in federal datasets.

GI BILL USERS

As mentioned, the total number of GI Bill users nationally—a number that represents about 12 billion dollars per year and covers higher education and training, licensing, and credentialing programs—includes less than half of eligible veterans (see Table 2 on page 9).[57] In our sample, 70 percent of respondents indicated that they have used the Post-9/11 GI Bill, a result consistent with the fact that our sample includes more Post-9/11 era servicemembers.

As mentioned, despite broad-scale public investment in the Post-9/11 GI Bill and related benefits, few studies have explored military and veteran student experiences in post-service higher education, training, and professional development programs.[58] This gap in research stands in stark contrast with historical inquiry on veterans' education and earnings and recent federal research support for veterans' health and wellness issues—even though many of these issues (i.e., health and wellness, homelessness, unemployment, stress, anxiety and depression) are intertwined with and may be alleviated by educational and other forms of attainment.[59] Thus, despite the significant public investment in servicemembers' post-service transition and education, little systematic follow-on research has been planned, sponsored, or devised to assess such post-service experiences from servicemembers' perspectives and to determine which policies and programs work best—for individuals, organizational sectors, and the country as a whole.

Our own research efforts captured in this report are designed, as mentioned, to redress this gap in understanding veterans' post-service experiences in higher education, in professional careers, in veterans' social and community contributions, and beyond—as well as their national implications. Consistent with this gap, other relevant government agencies—the Departments of Education, Veterans Affairs, Defense—have not taken charge of sponsoring independent research initiatives that would explore or substantiate servicemembers' experiences in the course of their post-service transition, including whether such policy initiatives designed to support transition are working.[60]

The G.I. Bill of Rights

The nickname of the original Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (P.L. 78-346)—the "GI Bill of Rights"— has persisted, so that we now refer to all subsequent veterans post-service education and transition benefits as "GI Bills." The emphasis on "rights"—earned by virtue of service to the nation—is mentioned in both the original and current bill's legislative histories and in comments made by presidents upon signing the bills into law.

As President Franklin D. Roosevelt noted on June 22, 1944:

"With the signing of this bill a well-rounded program of special veterans' benefits is nearly completed. It gives emphatic notice to the men and women in our armed forces that the American people do not intend to let them down. This bill therefore and the former legislation provide the special benefits which are due to the members of our armed forces – for they 'have been compelled to make greater economic sacrifice and every other kind of sacrifice than the rest of us, and are entitled to definite action to help take care of their special problems."

3.2 What Does Service Mean? From the Perspective of Servicemembers'

Generally, we found that both individual interests (i.e., education benefits, adventure) and public service values informed respondents' motivation to join the armed services. This was especially true for Post-9/11 veterans. This dual commitment was repeated across many responses: both individual and public service interests motivated respondents' choice to serve in the first place (i.e., education benefits, serving one's country) and in their post-service education and employment pursuits (i.e., public sector employment). In many respects servicemembers' conception of national service—both their motivations to serve and their actual military experiences—contributed longer lasting impacts that can be seen across their education and employment experiences, most especially in their continuation of public service values and activities. As one respondent states: "I am proud to have served my country, it was an honor and a privilege," evincing the public service sentiment often associated with service, common in responses. Another respondent provided a more holistic picture: "From my experiences I've had to mature and look at situations from both sides of the coin. Even bad or stressful situations have provided me with an outlook on life and my future that I otherwise would not have had. Deployments, training, and people have all help make me a more rounded person."

Question: If You Wish to Provide More Detail, Please Do So Here

- I'm glad I did it, because it's a lot harder to join the military than to enroll into college.
- Overall, I am very proud of serving this country. While the nagging bureaucracy of the Army frustrated me, the overall experience was tremendously positive and formative on my character.
- Amazing opportunities. Commanded at the Brigadier General level in an organization of 2800 employees. Commanded organization with 3.5 billion in design and construction. Commanded organization building schools and clinics in central and South America. Earned 4 Masters Degrees and taught at USMA.
- My service OCONUS was far more positive than my service CONUS.
- My experience taught gave me discipline and leadership experience.

MOTIVATION FOR SERVICE: WHY JOIN?

Both individual interests (education benefits, adventure) and a commitment to public service tend to frame the motivation to join the military, especially for Post-9/11 veterans—a dual commitment seen in many other dimensions of veterans' post-service life. Most (88%) respondents reported that joining the military was a good decision ("moderately" or "completely"), as shown in Figure 12a. The top reasons for joining included: education benefits (53%); a desire to serve your country (52%); and new experiences, adventures and/or travel (49%).[61] These findings echo longstanding research, including that education benefits often motivate national service.[62] Along with benefits, the desire to serve one's country is also ranked as a key reason for joining.

Overall, servicemembers also perceived their service experiences positively (see Figure 11): about 82 percent indicated a positive experience; 10 percent reported a neutral experience; and 8 percent noted a negative experience.

Despite this positive finding, ambivalence about service is visible in our results, especially in the qualitative ("write-in") responses to this and related survey questions. Respondents made negative comments about leadership, operational tempo, military bureaucracy, unaddressed health and mental health concerns, morale, and family complications. As one respondent noted: "A

Figure 11. Service Experience, Survey 1, 2015

Question: As you reflect on your experiences throughout the course of military service—including negative and positive aspects—how would you describe your service experiences in general?

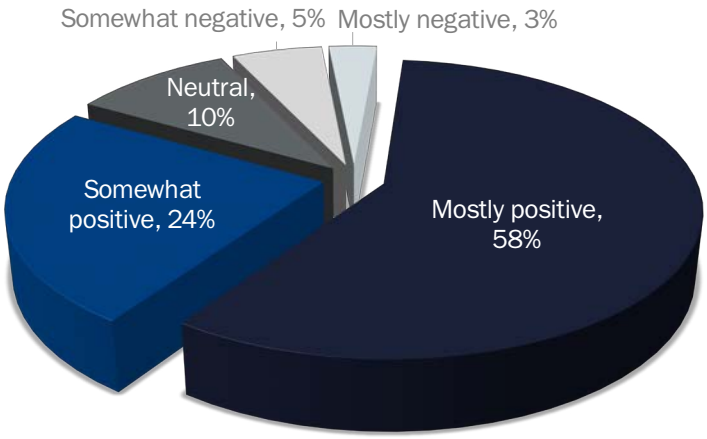


Figure 12. OCONUS, Survey 1, 2015

Question: Have you served outside the continental United States (OCONUS) for more than 30 consecutive days for purposes of deployment, mobilization, training, PCS, etc.?

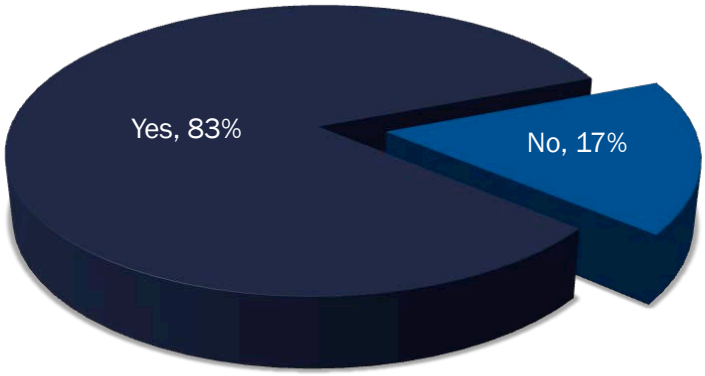


Figure 12a. Military Good Decision, Survey 1, 2015

Question: Overall, was joining the military a good decision for your personality?

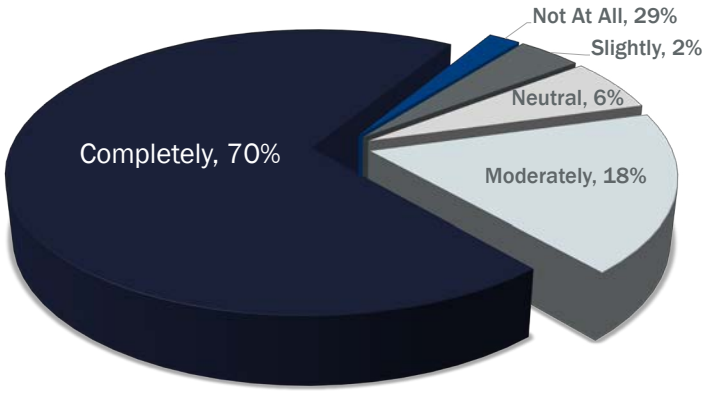


Figure 13. Reasons for Joining the Armed Service, Survey 1, 2014-15

Question: Why did you join the armed services? Rank your top choices up to five.

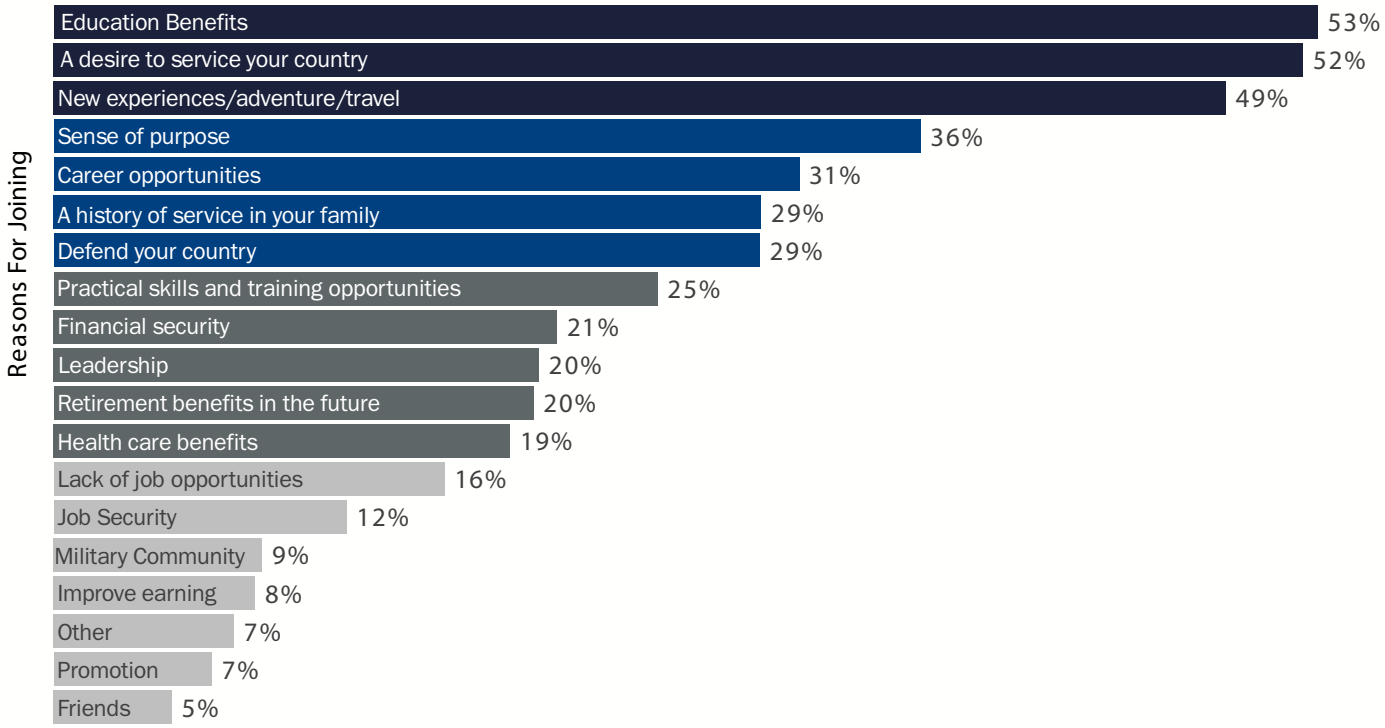
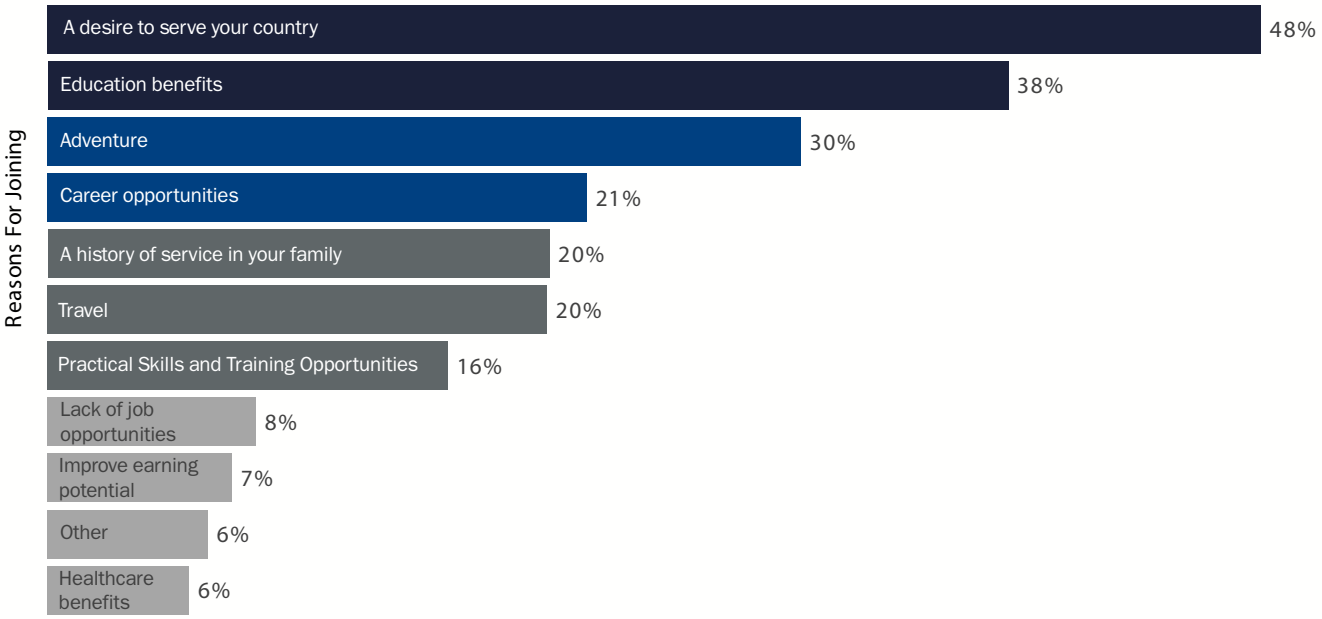


Figure 14. Reasons for Joining the Armed Service, NSF Battlefield to Classroom Survey, 2009–12

Question: Why did you join the armed services? Rank your top choices up to five.



well-known statement in my career field is: 'I love the people, but I hate this job and place.' Service was great; leadership in my career field and in the higher ranks was completely idiotic to the point of insanity. Simple tasks were made nearly impossible by micromanagement at all levels and extreme favoritism toward certain individuals." Another respondent noted: "As with any experience in life, there were high points and low points. Some of my greatest friends and memories have come out of my military experience. It made me financially independent and opened up networking connections that would otherwise be closed. However, there are costs. Losing friends, long thankless hours, time away from home, friends, and family (both deployed and duty stations not within the lower 48 states), and very little support for those on their way out." Another respondent articulated well this common sentiment: "For every negative thing, and there are many negative things, there are at least two positive. I'm angrier and have a shorter temper than I would have without the military, and I am worn out for my age. However, I'm more disciplined, experienced, detail oriented, motivated, and more capable overall." In short, national service was largely perceived as a source of pride overall, even if various aspects of military life—the "bureaucracy," unaddressed health and mental health concerns, morale, transition, and family complications—rankled many.

Respondents also emphasized the important "opportunities" gleaned from service: getting a higher degree, commanding a unit, traveling outside the United States and developing enduring relationships. A large percentage of respondents associated opportunities with travel outside the continental United States (OCONUS): as Figure 12 shows, more than 83 percent of respondents served outside the country for more than 30 consecutive days.

Beyond individual interests and even instrumentalist interpretations of service (i.e., what service provided in benefits or skills), respondents often described their experiences in the military in normative, value-oriented terms, such as a way to build "character" and "make a difference," as a means to contribute publicly and socially, and to develop "leadership" capacity. Likewise, many appreciated the discipline and structure of basic training and the confidence and esprit de corps developed in the process.

While some scholarship has explored the public contribution of previous veterans' cohorts, there has been far less study of Post-9/11 servicemembers civic, social, public, and political engagement and contribution, particularly after service.[63] We expect this thread of inquiry to become increasingly more important in our own research efforts and as more researchers explore Gulf War and Post-9/11 servicemembers' community and public engagement activities, even beyond veterans service organizations.[64]

3.3 Military Skills, Occupations and Attributes: Post-Service Outcomes

We generally found that Post-9/11 servicemembers wholeheartedly believe their skills and attributes learned during military service and training played a role in their post-service success, both in the classroom and in their career and employment pursuits. One respondent puts it succinctly: "The military helped make me who I am and completed me. The confidence and leadership I gained in the military, helped me achieve a promotion to an hourly supervising position in the company I currently work for." Another respondent describes how the military contributed to their education success specifically beyond education benefits: "It has played a role in my success as a student with excellent grades, always on time, and consistently giving of myself." This important feature of our research aims to understand—in much detail—how military service training experiences in multiple dimensions (i.e., leadership mentoring and development, on the job training, and skill and competency preparation) plays a role in veterans post-service lives and educational and employment pathways. Our findings on these skill-related questions show that servicemembers' military specialty or job overwhelmingly encouraged them to pursue education after service (74%) and to a slightly lesser degree (66%) promoted their interest in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Slightly fewer, about 66 percent of respondents, reported that their military specialty or job prepared them for their civilian career.

SKILLS DEVELOPED DURING SERVICE

A distinctive feature of our survey is the exploration of the role of skills and attributes acquired during military service and veterans' post-service use of these skills in transition, education and training programs, employment, community engagement, and in life in general. Figure 15 demonstrates some key findings in this area: namely, that servicemembers generally believe their military skills and attributes contribute to their post-service success, particularly in education and employment pursuits.

We also wished to understand the specific skills and traits perceived as most helpful by servicemembers in education, future careers, and in daily life. Therefore, we asked servicemembers to identify all the skills developed during service and those skills strengthened or enhanced by service experiences. In this combined multiple choice and write-in question, the top five skills

Figure 15. Skills Developed During Service, Survey 1, 2014-15

Question: In thinking about your skills developed during service, please select all those that were strengthened or enhanced by your military experience. Select all that apply.

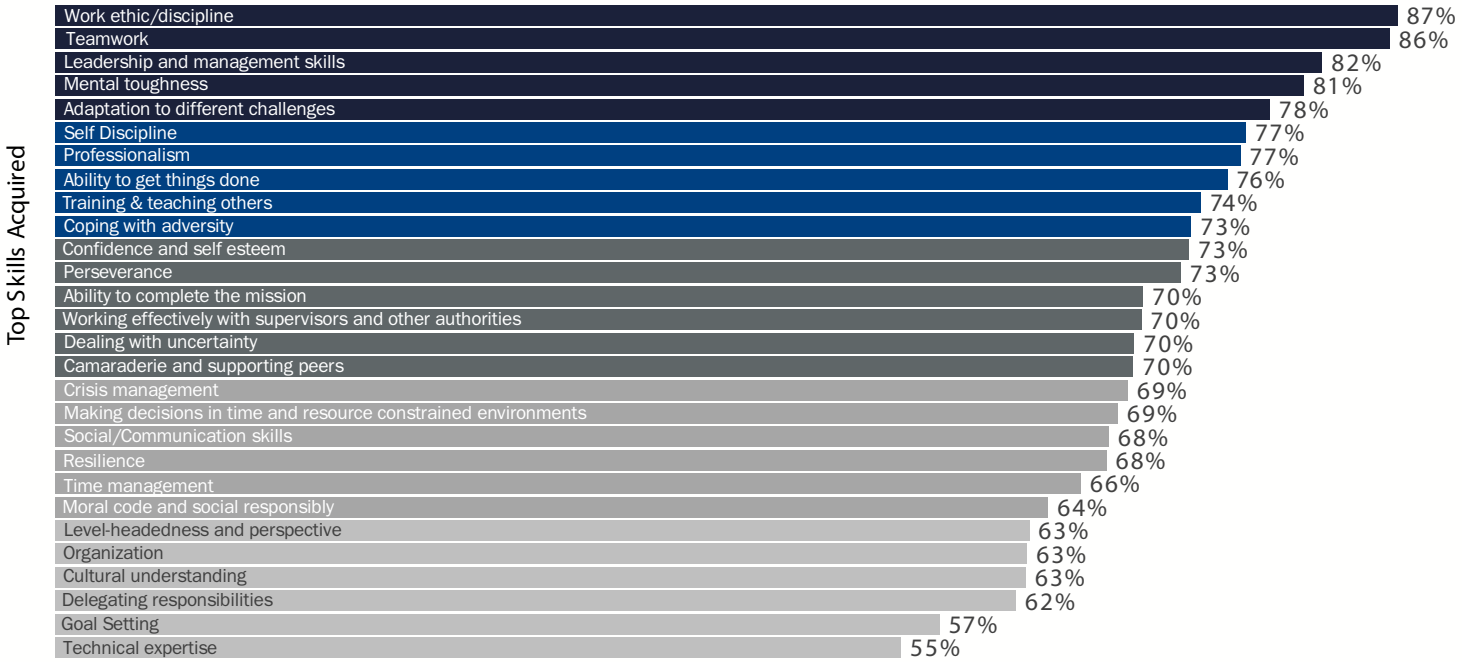
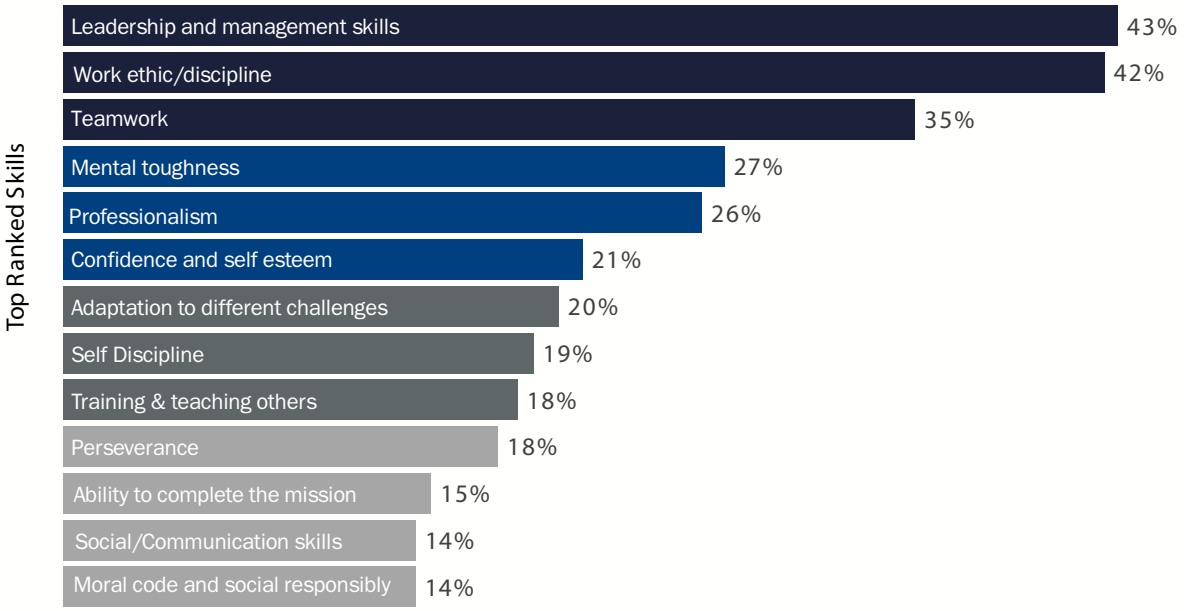


Figure 16. Top Ranked Skills Developed During Service, Survey 1

Question: In assessing those skills, rank those that you selected up to five.



respondents selected were: work ethic/discipline (87%), teamwork (86%), leadership (82%), mental toughness (81%), and adaptation (78%).

Of those acquired during service, servicemembers were then asked to rank those military-acquired skills (see Figure 16). Respondents' top five choices included: leadership (43%), work ethic/discipline (42%), teamwork (35%), mental toughness (27%), and professionalism (26%). Nearly half indicated that military service increased leadership and management skills and their resulting work ethic/discipline.

MILITARY JOB, STEM, PROMOTED INTEREST IN EDUCATION

Servicemembers across all branches receive significant training (including on-the-job training) for a given job, occupation, role, and/or profession often specific to the armed services. This means that in addition to universal courses (such as Equal Opportunity training), every servicemember leaves service with some specific training and expertise in a process organized by military occupational specialty (MOS), "ratings" for the Navy and Coast Guard, and the Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC). Most of our sample (about 81%) indicated that their military specialty (MOS, AFSC, Rating, or Designator) accurately described the military jobs that they performed during service (see Figure 17).

In addition to training in this specific area, all members of the armed services also develop skills and competencies needed in an organization dependent upon small-unit leadership and teamwork under conditions of warfare, including discipline, mission-focus, and perseverance, among other attributes. Leadership development in the armed services, especially among officers, for instance, is a well-established and sought-after training program outside the military.[65] In all branches—but especially in the Air Force, Coast Guard, and Navy—servicemembers often also receive significant training in technical subfields, as well as exposure to advanced technologies and equipment. Such fields include aerospace, aviation, and space systems; information, cyber, signals, cryptologic, and electronic systems; chemical, civil, geotechnical, logistics, and structural engineering; nuclear and other weapons systems engineering, and many other fields.[66] These highly specialized occupations may thus make veterans "pre-qualified" for civilian STEM educational disciplines and professions.[67]

Our findings in these series of skill-related questions also indicated that military jobs or duties encouraged education after service and (to a slightly lower degree) promoted an interest in the STEM fields: about 73 percent of respondents (see Figure 18) reported that their military specialty or job promoted their interest in education; 68 percent said it prepared them for education; and 71 percent said it promoted their interest in training, certification, or licensing programs. Also, slightly fewer, about 66 percent of respondents, indicated that their military specialty or job prepared

them for their civilian career, as compared to 34 percent who reported it did not. About 66 percent found their military specialty or job promoted their interest in STEM, as compared to 34 percent who did not.

While we know many military jobs are technically focused and that military training often encourages education after service, the significance of the science and technology fields has not often been emphasized or studied in post-service educational and occupational interests and preferences. Likewise, as Figure 19 shows, about 43 percent of servicemembers reported that their military specialization, job, or training is STEM related.

While some might expect this number to be even higher, given the technologically advanced nature of the contemporary U.S. military, nearly 45 percent of our sample has some STEM training that likely included practical or applied skills. Our earlier NSF studies also revealed that respondents often had more training in STEM fields than they were aware of because many servicemembers lacked familiarity with both STEM and engineering education degree programs and professional careers, even for those who expressed a preference for STEM fields.[68]

In addition to lack of research in this area, there is also limited programmatic emphasis on military skills and professional

Figure 17. Military Specialization, Survey 1, 2015

Question: Does your military specialization (MOS, AFSC, Rating, or Designator) accurately describe the military jobs you performed during service?

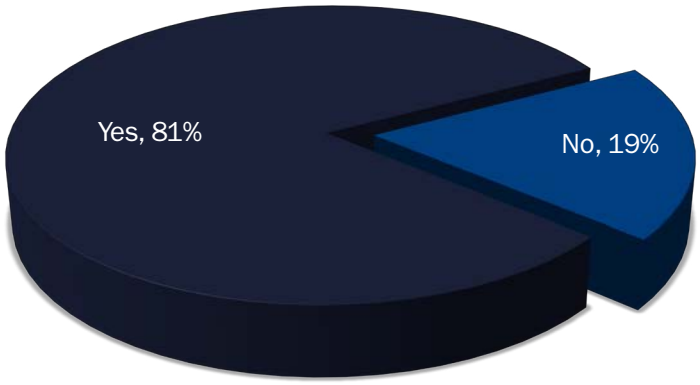


Figure 18. Military Specialization and Jobs Influence on Education, STEM & Career, Survey 1, 2015

Question: Did your military specialization or job(s):

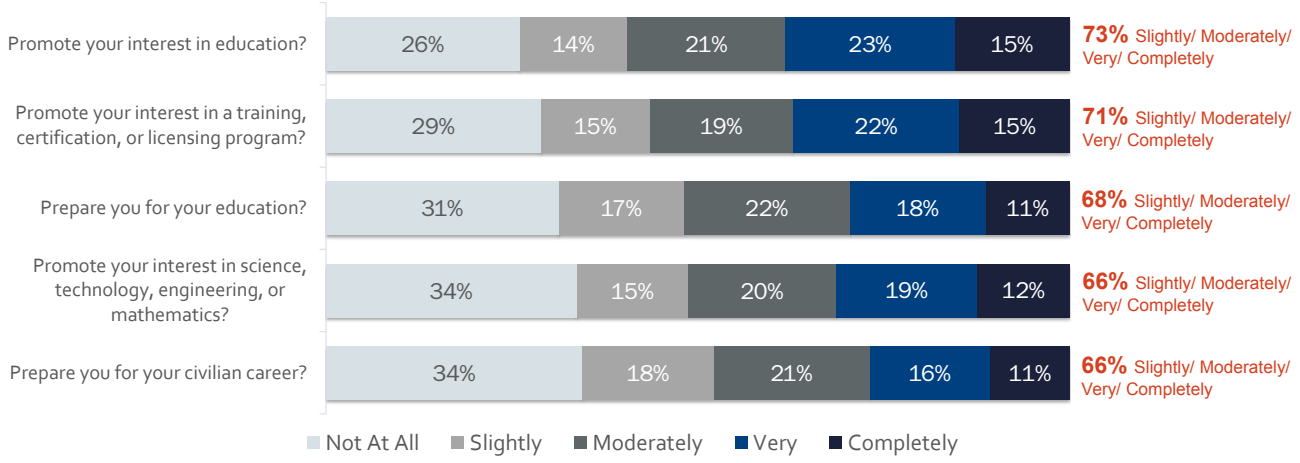
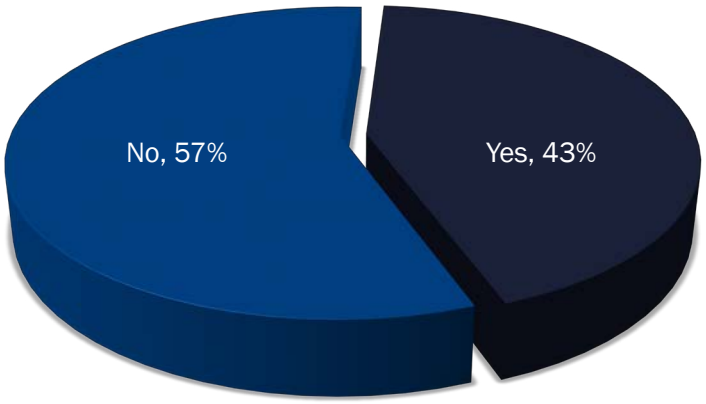


Figure 19. Military Specialization Related to STEM, Survey 1, 2015

Question: Is your military specialization, job, or training related to science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) fields?



development in the STEM fields by potential employers and higher education institutions. That is, despite the fact that Post-9/11 servicemembers are generally (and compared to earlier cohorts) highly educated and despite their often advanced training and technical capacity, few higher education programs target such military competencies or military students' interests in these areas; likewise, few private sector, nonprofit, or public organizations leverage servicemembers' potential training and technical capacity for post-service professional positions. This oversight is unfortunate in light of the well-documented shortage in qualified candidates in the U.S. STEM workforce, including projected degree recipients. The shortage of potential STEM field recruits—and its implications for a diverse and robust technical U.S. work force, competitive advantage, and economic prosperity—has been well described in many national reports over the last three decades.[69] Furthermore, few policymakers have made this link between U.S. labor force needs and existing veterans' capacity and supportive benefits programs.

In short, in many ways recent generations of servicemembers have the potential to contribute to the professional workforce generally and to the STEM fields in particular, to share their military talent and training in education and career pursuits, and to spark leadership and entrepreneurial initiatives across many professions and fields. Servicemembers also consistently show higher rates of interest and participation than corresponding nonmilitary peers in entrepreneurial activities and in social entrepreneurship and social giving.[70] These and other skills, capacities, and attributes—the cornerstone of a distinctive post-service professional cohort—are important to recognize and to mobilize in ways that may strengthen existing professional pipelines and mechanisms in and beyond the STEM fields.

3.4 Servicemember Transition: Perceptions and Challenges

Generally, we found that servicemembers look back positively on their military service experiences and express a common desire to return to service and that many express regrets about leaving the military. Although the most common reason for wanting to leave the military was a loss of faith in the military and national political leadership, we also see—from the perspective of hindsight—that many respondents felt that that loss of faith was ultimately misguided. As one respondent states: "I miss life in the military because I have matured. All the things that did not make any sense, to me, make sense now." We also see that the military culture leaves lasting impressions on individuals and that many struggle to fit in with civilians after living among military communities. As one respondent noted: "Although I felt isolated over the course of the last year of service due to my job position, I miss the brotherhood. In a lot of ways it was simpler and more straightforward than civilian life. Miss the security and dependability of military life." This view was common among respondents: "I have absolutely no regrets. Would've stayed in had I not received involuntary discharge after having surgery."

REASON FOR LEAVING, REGRETS, AND LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Another innovative element in our study involved asking servicemembers—not only why they joined the armed forces—but why they left. Our respondents identified and ranked their "top reasons" for leaving. Dominant answers were spread fairly evenly across these top five contenders: lost faith or trust in military or political leadership (35%); the desire to pursue education and training opportunities outside the military (32%); family reasons (31%); the completion of one's military service obligation (28%); and military retirement (26%).

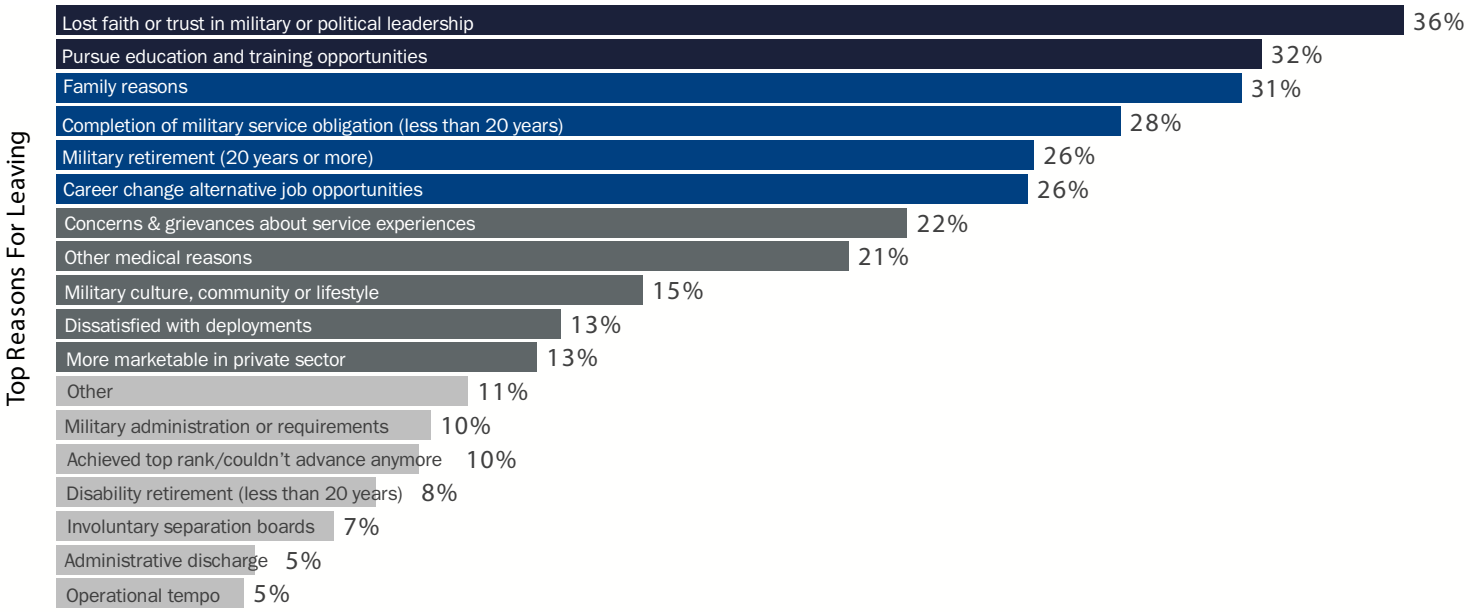
But when asked if they wished to return to service, 59 percent of our sample indicated that they wished to return to military service (either "always/often/sometimes"), while 37 percent said that they "never" or "rarely" wished to go back to the armed forces. In a related question, when asked whether they regretted their decision to leave military service, 43 percent indicated (see Figure 21) that they regretted it (either "always," "often," or "sometimes"), while 47 percent said they "never" or "rarely" regretted their decision regretted their decision.

Most of our sample, about 82 percent (see Figure 22), reported that the military left a lasting impression on their lives (either "moderately" or "completely"). Although this may seem obvious—it would be hard to imagine especially wartime service that did not make an impression on participants—this finding echoes studies that show military service often functions as a life-altering experience that may change an individual's life trajectory.[71]

As in our discussion above, respondents (71%) also said

Figure 20. Skills Developed During Service, Survey 1, 2014-15

Question: Why did you leave the armed services? Rank your top choices up to five.



that service left a lasting impression (either "moderately" or "completely") on their skills and attributes for educational success (see Figure 22). Such findings show that servicemembers self-identify military service both as a motivating factor for pursuing education and as a means to succeed in future education endeavors. Previous studies have examined servicemembers' educational attainment (as compared to civilian counterparts in various periods of service) but have often failed to explore servicemembers' own perceptions (beyond correlative data) on these matters—that is, whether servicemembers identified the skills and attributes gained in service as translating into interest and success in postsecondary education.[72]

Figure 21. Regrets about Leaving Service, Survey 1, 2015

Question: As you reflect upon leaving the service, do you sometimes regret your decision? Or find yourself wanting to go back?

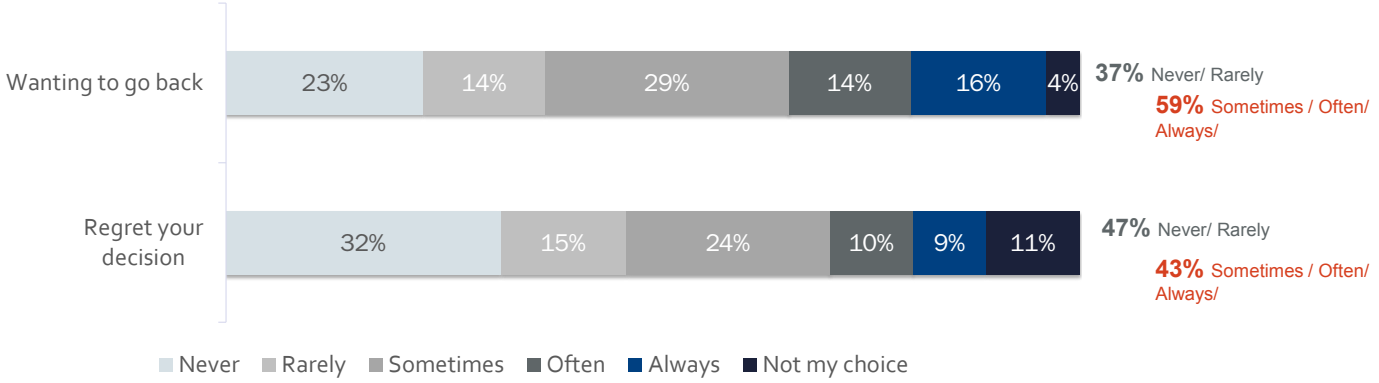
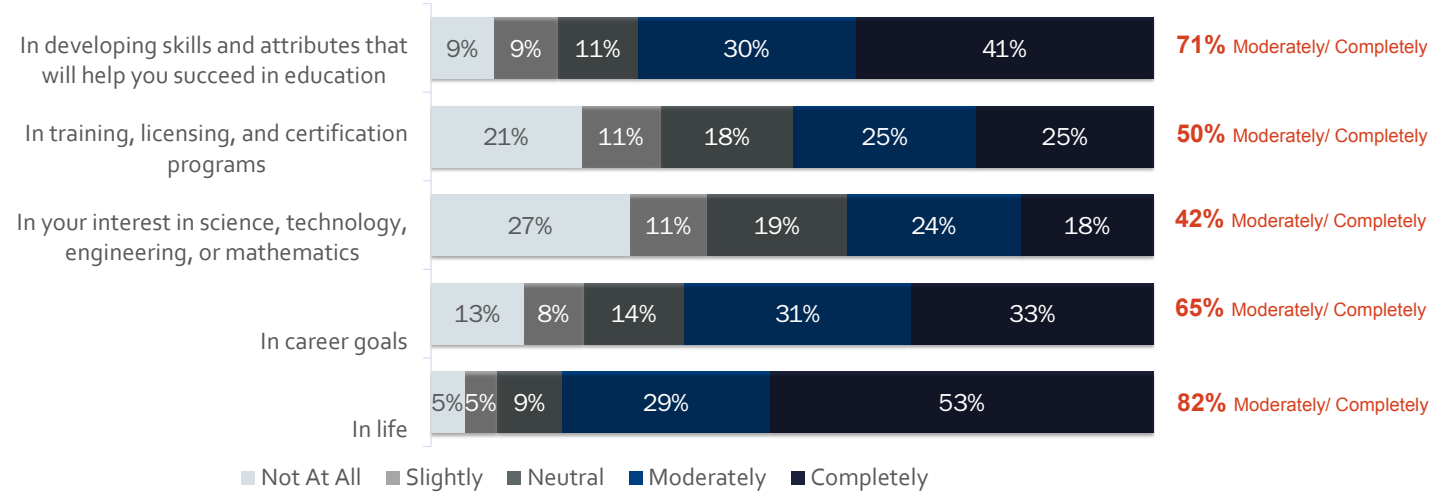


Figure 22. Military Lasting Impressions, Survey 1, 2015

Question: Has your military experience left a lasting impression on you?

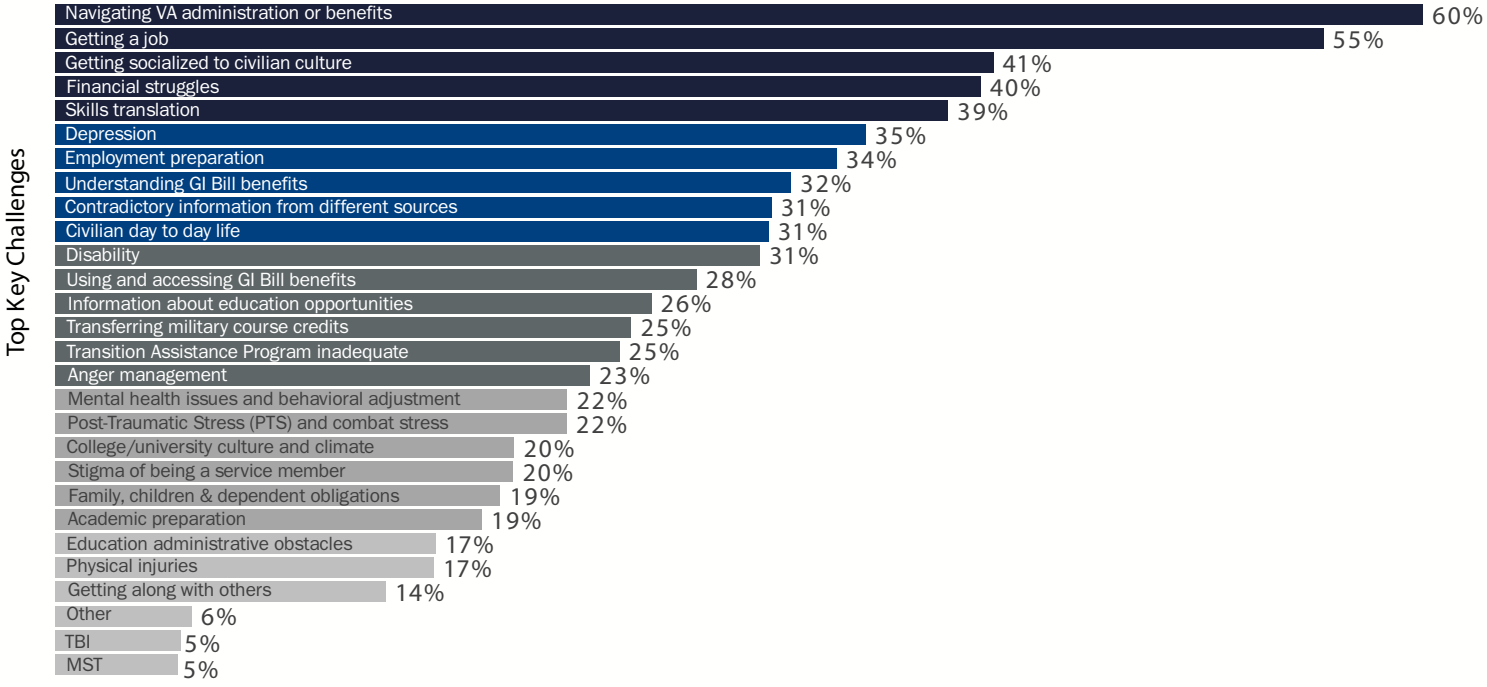


TRANSITIONAL CHALLENGES

When we asked respondents to identify the key challenges in their own process of transition (see Figure 23), servicemembers' top five challenges were: navigating VA administration or benefits (60%); getting a job (55%); getting socialized to civilian culture (41%); financial struggles (40%); and skills translation (39%). Such results indicate that returning servicemembers are often frustrated with the organizations designed to assist in their transition—whether such concerns arise from unfamiliar or confusing processes for accessing benefits, for instance, or sorting out the civilian job sector, including translating military skills into civilian careers. Servicemembers often view getting a job after service as a significant challenge, second only to navigating the VA. This expressed post-service employment challenge contrasted with servicemembers' views of their education pursuits, as only 26 percent of respondents identified information about education opportunities as a key transitional challenge and only 20 percent said college culture was a challenge in their transition process.

Figure 23. Top Key Transitional Challenges, Survey 1, 2014-15

Question: From the following choices, what are the key challenges in your transition? Select all that apply.



SENSE OF PURPOSE, CONFIDENCE, AND DIFFICULTY:

We also asked servicemembers (see Figure 26) whether they noticed changes in their confidence levels after transitioning from the armed services (using a 1 to 5 point scale, choice 1 meant "more confident as a civilian;" choice 3 meant "confidence remains the same;" and choice 5 meant, "more confident as a servicemember"). About 41 percent of respondents said they were more confident as servicemembers; 36 percent said their confidence remained the same; and 24 percent reported feeling more confident as civilians.

When asked whether they felt more comfortable in military or civilian life (using a similar scale), servicemembers again responded in fairly proportionate terms across all answers: 35 percent said they were more comfortable as servicemembers; 33 percent felt the same; and 32 percent reported being more comfortable as a civilian (see Figure 24).

When asked if they had difficulty establishing a sense of purpose, value, or meaning in post-service life, using the same 1 to 5 point scale, nearly half (46%) indicated difficulty, 20 percent were neutral, and 34 percent indicated no difficulty (see Figure 25).

Figure 24. Comfortable Level, Survey 1, 2015

Question: Are you more comfortable in military or civilian life?

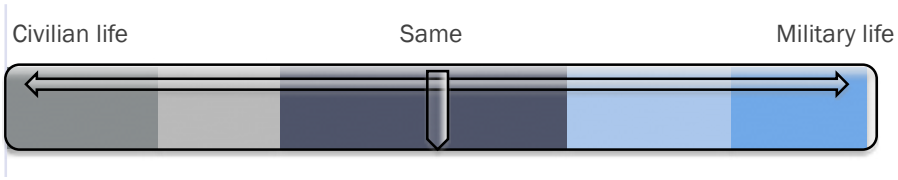


Figure 25. Difficulty Establishing Sense of Purpose, Value, Meaning in Post-Service Life, 2015

Question: Do you find it difficult to establish a sense of purpose, value, or meaning in post-service life?

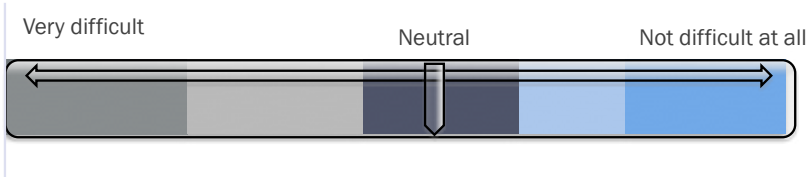
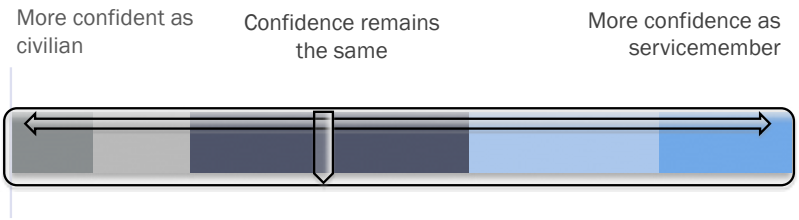


Figure 26. Difficulty Establishing Sense of Purpose, Value, Meaning in Post-Service Life, 2015

Question: Do you notice changes in your confidence level as a service member or civilian?



3.5 Post-Service Transition and Education

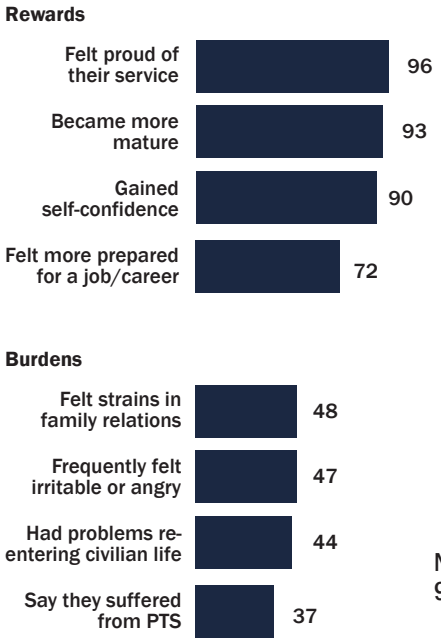
One critical takeaway from respondents' was the pivotal role of education in transition. We know from other studies, including Pew survey research, that service-members in the Post-9/11 cohort in particular report a difficult time with post-service transition into civilian life, as compared to earlier generations of veterans (see Figure 28).[73] Like our own results, the Pew studies found that most Post-9/11 era veterans were proud of their service (96%), but 44 percent also reported that readjusting to civilian life was difficult—a contrast to just 25 percent of veterans who recorded transition difficulties from earlier eras.[74]

When we asked whether education should play a role in their post-service transition, more than 92 percent of our sample either "agreed" or "strongly agreed"—indicating a high value is placed on education's role in military transition (see Figure 27). Likewise, servicemembers in our sample were asked to indicate their top motivations for pursing education (see Figure 29). These included: career/job opportunities (86%); self-improvement and personal growth (71%); potential for making money/Improving economic status (69%); professional advancement (56%); and to use benefits (51%). Some interesting choices by respondents also included the following: 43 percent of our sample reported that they wished to "help people/society" as a motivation for education, while 31 percent said they hoped to increase their "technical skills." Also, 13 percent mentioned that education was a way to "ease transition."

We also asked servicemembers (see Figure 30) to identify the top problems or barriers that hindered their pursuit of education goals. These included: lack of financial resources/ financial burden (56%); personal/family obligations (28%); GI Bill benefits expire before I complete my degree (25%); health/disability issues (23%); and conflict between job and school (22%).

Figure 28. Pew Research Center, War and Sacrifice in the Post-9/11 Era (2011):p7

Percent of post-9/11 veterans saying that as a result of their military service, they...



Note: Based on post-9/11 veterans, n=712

Figure 27. Education's Role in Post-Service Transition, Survey 1, 2015

Question: How much do you agree with the following statement: Education should play a role in post-service transition?

92% Strongly Agree/ Agree

Figure 29. Motivations for Education or Training Programs, Survey 1, 2014-15

Question: Identify your motivations for education or training programs. Select all that apply.

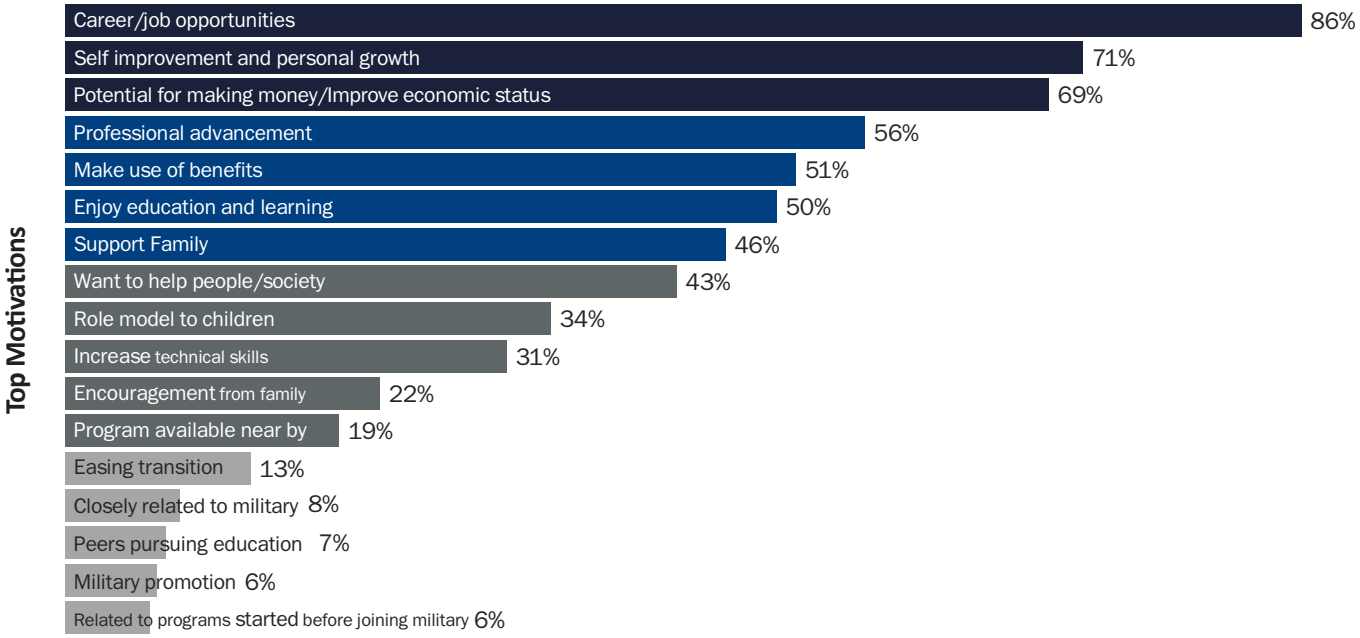


Figure 30. Problems Barriers in Achieving Goals, Survey 1, 2014-15

Question: Are there any problems or barriers that hindered you in pursuing or achieving your education goals? Select all that apply.

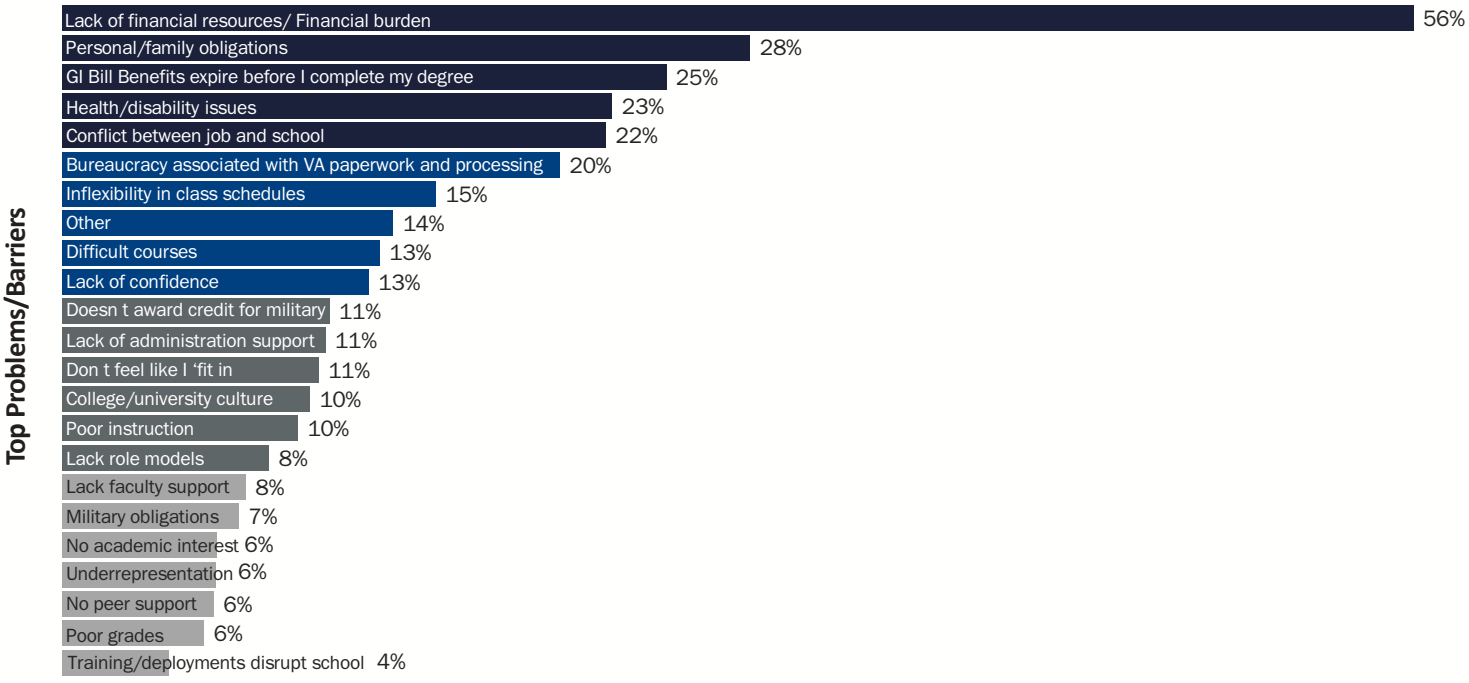
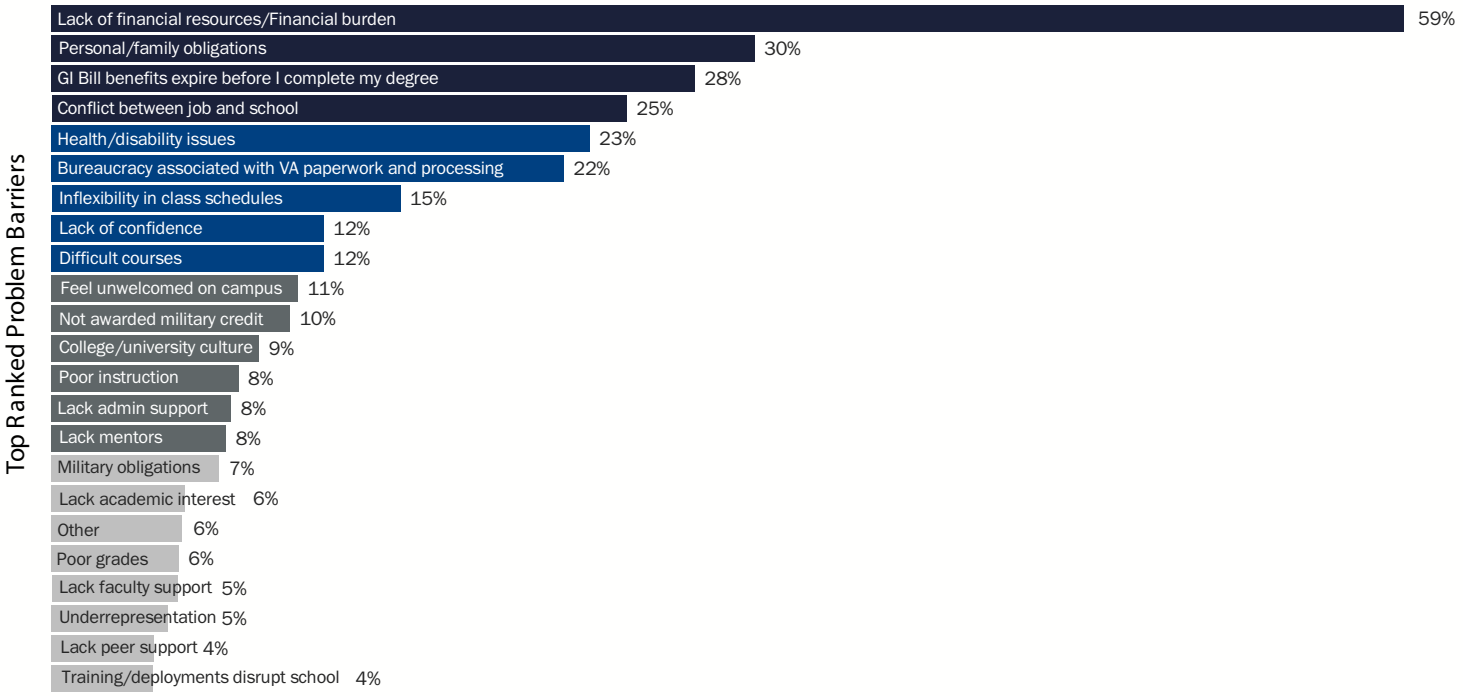


Figure 31. Top Ranked Problems Barriers in Achieving Goals, Survey 1, 2014-15

Question: Of problems or barriers identified, rank those that you have selected up to five.

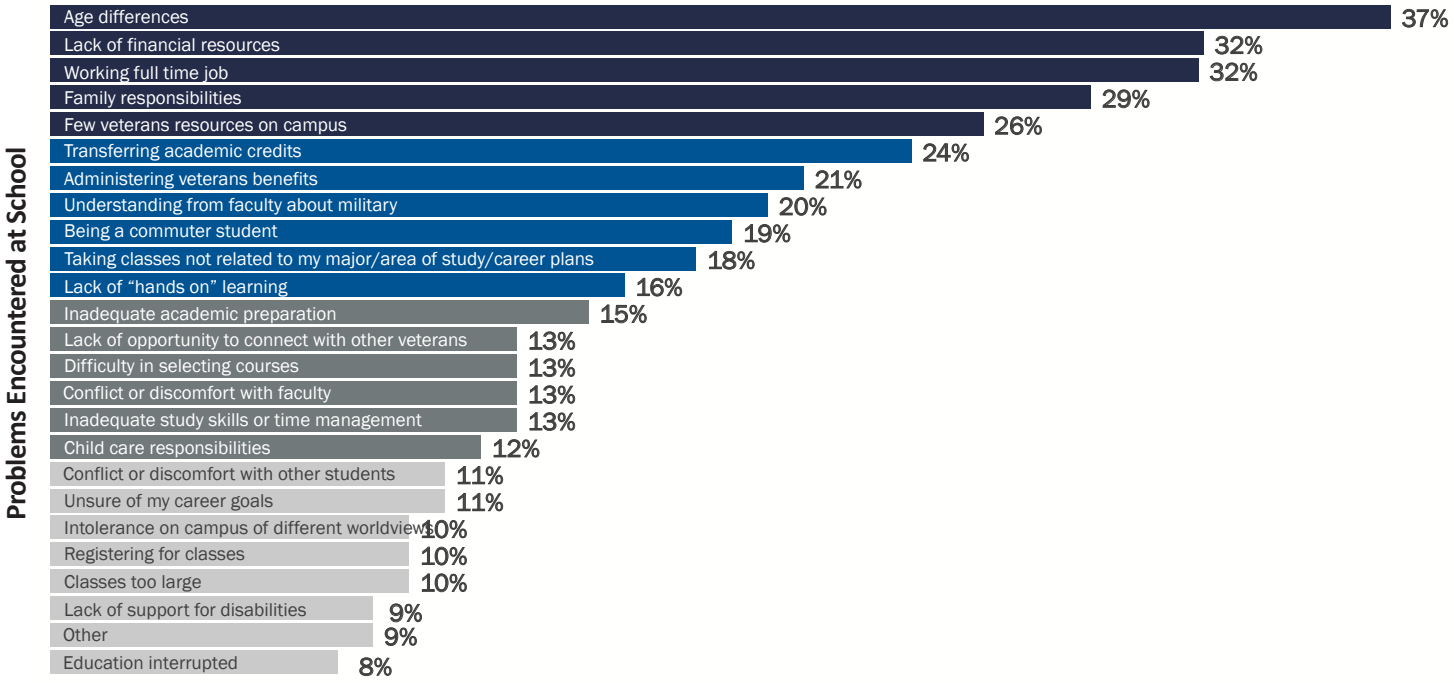


Of those concerns, respondents then ranked their top five choices: lack of financial resources/ financial burden (59%); personal/family obligations (30%); GI Bill benefits expire before I complete my degree (28%); conflict between job and school (25%); health/disability issues (23%); and bureaucracy associated with VA paperwork and processing (22%)—see Figure 31. Note that in the case of educational pursuits—versus transition as a whole—VA benefits administrative challenges did not appear to rank as highly as a barrier (22% versus 60%).

When we asked respondents whether they had encountered any problems while pursuing their education, respondents identified these top five problems: age differences (37%) between themselves and other students; lack of financial resources (32%); working full time jobs (32%); family responsibilities (29%); and few veterans resources on campus (26%)—see Figure 32 on the next page.

Figure 32. Problems Encountered While Pursuing Education, Survey 1, 2014-15

Question: Have you encountered any problems at your school while pursuing your education? Select all that apply.



MILITARY STATUS IDENTIFICATION

The majority of servicemembers identified themselves as servicemembers during the college/university application process (78%) or during the administering of their benefits (74%), but fewer chose to self-identify during special programs, such as graduation and orientation (36%), or veteran faculty and/or peer mentor services (42%), see Figure 33.

Likewise, the majority (79%) of servicemembers reported feeling comfortable sharing their experience as servicemembers at their schools. The top reasons explaining this choice included pride in service (83%); part of my identity (81%); expected to be well received by peers (30%); and expected to be well received by faculty/staff (29%)—see Figure 34. Notice that positive views of service and military identity far outweighed servicemembers'

Figure 33. Military Status Identification, Survey 1, 2015

Question: Does your school identify you as a veteran/service member?

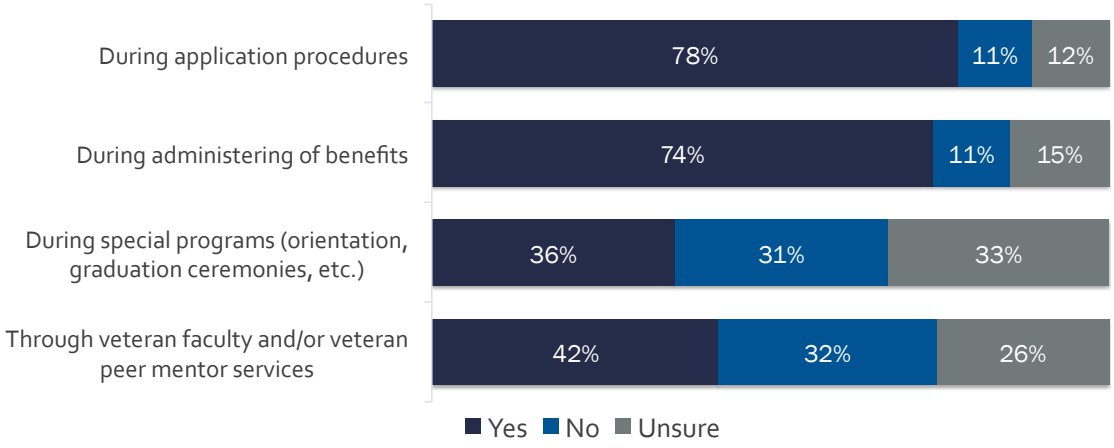
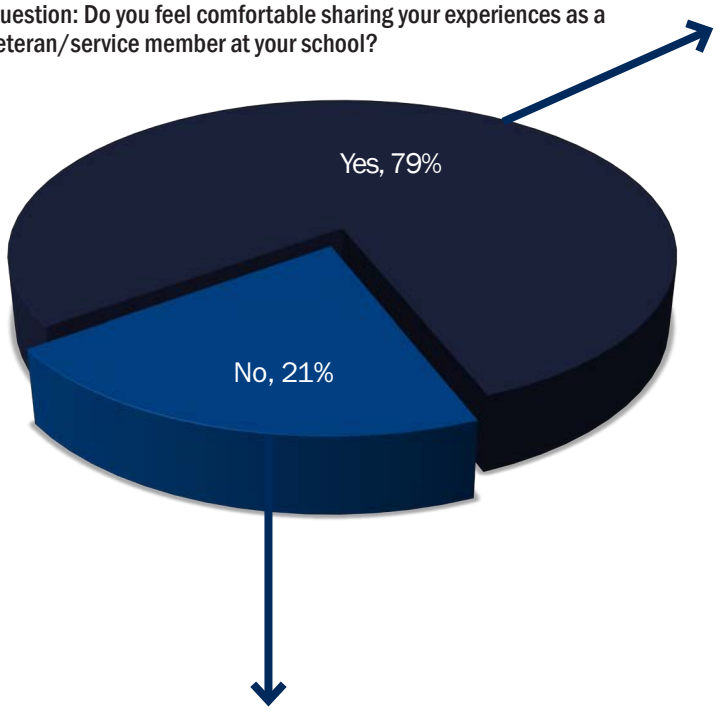
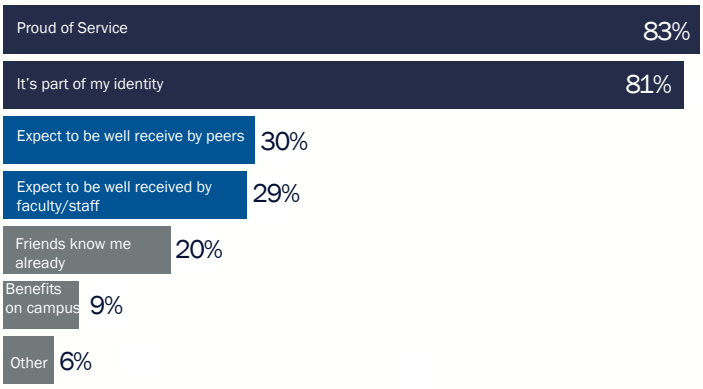


Figure 34. Comfortable Sharing Service Experiences at School, Survey 1, 2015

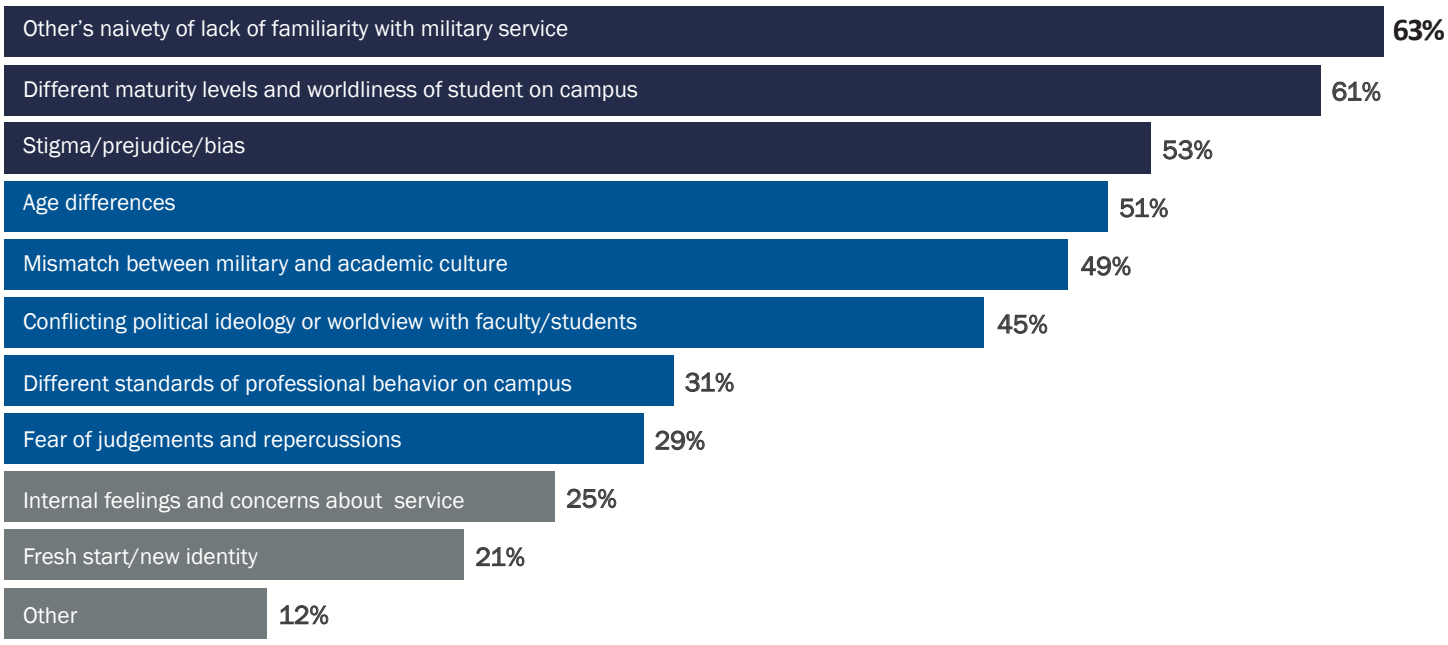
Question: Do you feel comfortable sharing your experiences as a veteran/service member at your school?



Question: If yes, why do you feel comfortable sharing your experiences as a veteran/service member at your school?



Question: If no, why do you not feel comfortable sharing your experiences as a veteran/service member at your school?



perceptions that their military status would be well received by student peers or faculty/staff (approximately 81% versus 29%).

Though most (79%) servicemembers felt comfortable sharing their service experiences at their schools, one in five (21%) indicated that they did not.[75] Respondents explained the top reasons that discouraged them from sharing their service experiences at school: civilian naivety or lack of familiarity with military service (63%); different maturity levels and the worldliness of fellow students (61%); stigma/prejudice/bias (53%); and age differences (51%)—see Figure 34. It is significant that of the 21 percent of respondents who did not feel comfortable sharing their service experiences, more than half—most of whom have previous experience in the college/university classroom—believed that bias or prejudice against servicemembers played a role in their decision.

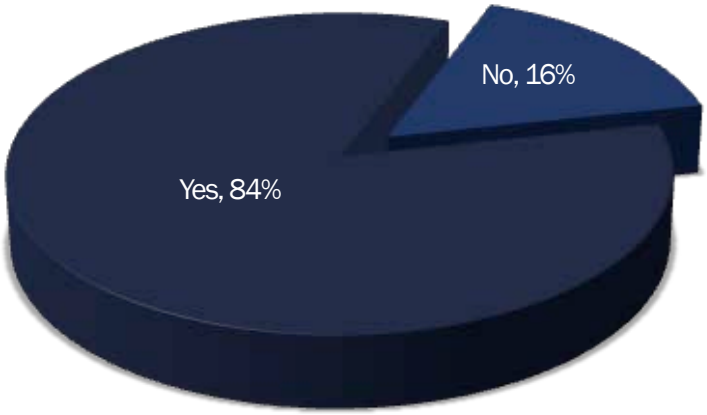
STRENGTH AND SKILLS RECOGNITION

Respondents were also asked if they felt there is a place for veterans' leadership, high achievement, and/or excellence at their school, and if veterans' specific strengths and skills were recognized on campus. Most (84%) felt there was a place for veterans' leadership, achievement, and/or excellence; however, a majority (53%) also felt that colleges/universities do not recognize the specific strengths and skills that veterans bring to campus.

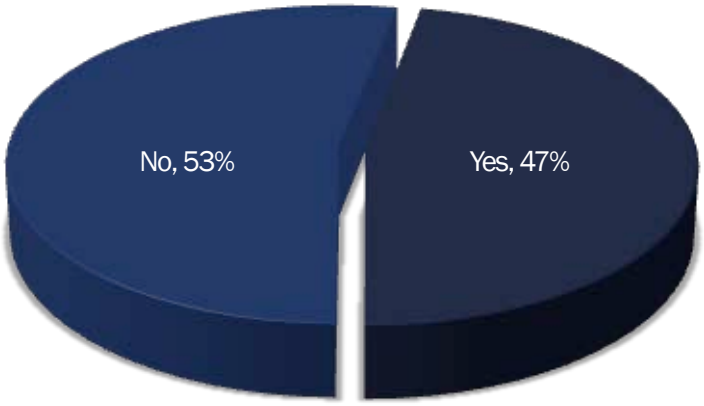
Several existing studies, including our own NSF-sponsored Battlefield to Classroom research, find significant and consistent concerns expressed by servicemembers as they contemplated pursuing higher education and as they enrolled in higher education programs.[76] These concerns included: poor transition preparation; issues of academic preparedness; lack of guidance, discomfort, even distaste for campus culture; concerns about degree progress and professional development programs; length of time to degree; concerns about supporting family members while completing degrees; financial issues; wellness and health concerns; the unstructured nature of academic work and the lack of roadmap for degree and career pursuits. In our NSF studies, servicemembers often identified a basic incompatibility between military and academic culture at multiple pressure points, including an inhospitable academic climate for serious and collaborative work; misperceptions of military service and/or veterans on college campuses and even a distinct sense that civilians remained aloof or uninformed about the post-9/11 wars; the nuts and bolts of governance; current events; and veterans' commitments to national service.[77]

Figure 35. Strength and Skill Recognition, Survey 1, 2015

Question: Do you feel there is a place for veterans' leadership, high achievement, or excellence at colleges/universities?



Question: Do you feel colleges/universities recognize the specific strengths and skills that veterans bring to campus?



3.6 Service, Education and Employment

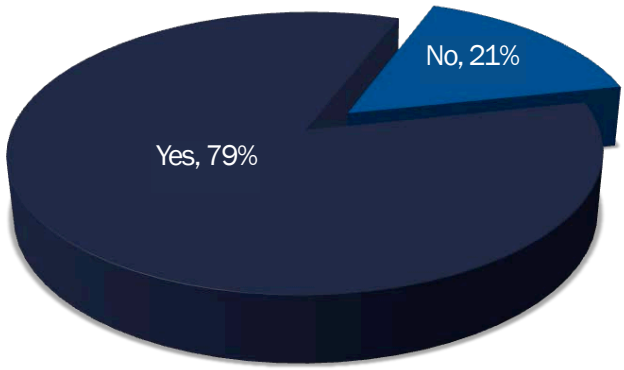
Generally, we found that the military played a role in respondents' notions of success, but that these effects were nuanced and often conflicting. While most (79%) respondents stated that the military played a role in their success, we also saw frustration with some of the programs designed to aid veterans in post-service transition, education, and employment success. For instance, one respondent addressed the unique nature of their military job, which failed to translate into civilian work: "It has not helped me to get a job due to the type of Military Job I had. It does not translate to a civilian job." Many respondents felt as if their military job did not have a civilian analogue, and, furthermore, many respondents did not necessarily wish to continue their military work post-service. We also see that the skills gained during service may be more effective than the specific federal and state policies designed to give veterans an advantage in hiring (i.e., veterans preference). As one respondent noted: "It [military service] provided me with my initial job skills when I transitioned to the civilian workforce. Even though companies state they have a vet preference I don't see that during the hiring process." We see this view repeated frequently. As another respondent noted: "Many companies claim they are Veteran friendly, but it seems that most of the jobs offered are for low-paying entry level positions and not compared to the level on which we separated from the military. Also, if I claim that I am a veteran but if I don't have a specific skill they are looking for, but if I am confident I could excel at, I still get looked over."

MILITARY PLAYED A ROLE IN SUCCESS:

About 79 percent of respondents indicated that the military played a role in their success.[78] This perception has been overlooked by previous scholarship. Existing work has compared the earnings of drafted military servicemembers with general civilians to capture the role that military service plays in civilian earnings as a proxy for success.[79] But few if any studies examine the subjective perceptions of servicemembers themselves. Beyond adding a new perspectival dimension to studies of servicemembers and success, our findings also contrast with commonly-cited scholarship that finds a wage penalty for service, because in our study servicemembers report that the military has contributed to their overall success even if service itself may (not always) result in lower lifetime earnings.[80]

Figure 36.Military Role in Success, Survey 1, 2015

Question: Has the military played a role in your success?

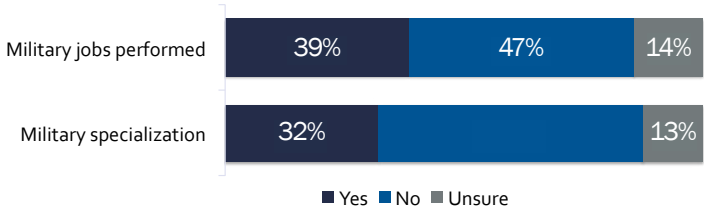


EMPLOYMENT RELATED TO MILITARY:

Respondents were asked if the work performed during service would likely be pursued after service. The majority of servicemembers said that they are likely to pursue a different career than their MOS (55%) or actual job performed in the military (47%). Given the changing nature of combat and military service in general, it is important to undertake further study of this issue to understand how these changing military jobs, roles, and responsibilities may influence the transition, educational and career trajectory of servicemembers. Insofar as the U.S. military is increasingly relying on advanced technologies, thus, requiring more servicemembers to fill high-tech jobs and receive needed training, this capability could potentially translate into science and technology education and careers aspirations. Because our initial findings suggest that servicemembers are not likely to pursue a similar career to their MOS and/or military job, this potential link, as well as our initial findings, should be interpreted with some caution. In the case of STEM jobs, for instance, it may be that servicemembers with STEM-focused work responsibilities during service may be more likely to pursue another field or occupation within the STEM arena after service, as compared to members with non-STEM responsibilities. It also may be the case that the military specialty performed during service is not available in the civilian sector and a good "translation" does not exist. It also may be true that servicemembers learned valuable competencies in their military jobs but they seek to apply such skills to very different occupations and professions. We plan to examine these perception-based issues in future research.

Figure 37. Military Related to Employment, Survey 1, 2015

Question: Has the military played a role in your success?



EMPLOYMENT, BARRIERS, AND DISABILITY

Approximately 48 percent of respondents are currently working, but 16 percent of those are looking for another job at the same time. About 27 percent are not working but looking for a job currently, and 13 percent are not working and not looking for employment. The top reasons reported for not working are: 50 percent are going to school; 20 percent are disabled; 18 percent stopped looking because they could not find work; 13 percent are retired; and 20 percent indicated some other reason for not working.

These findings may contribute to the substantial and growing literature about servicemember unemployment issues.[81] Our work adds to these discussions by examining unemployment through servicemembers' eyes, as well as through an education and career trajectory lens, rather than focusing primarily on health and wellness issues—the predominant focus in recent scholarship.[82] It is also clear from our findings that although many servicemembers are unemployed (or underemployed) due to disability, the majority

Figure 38. Employment and Reasons for not Working, Survey 1, 2015

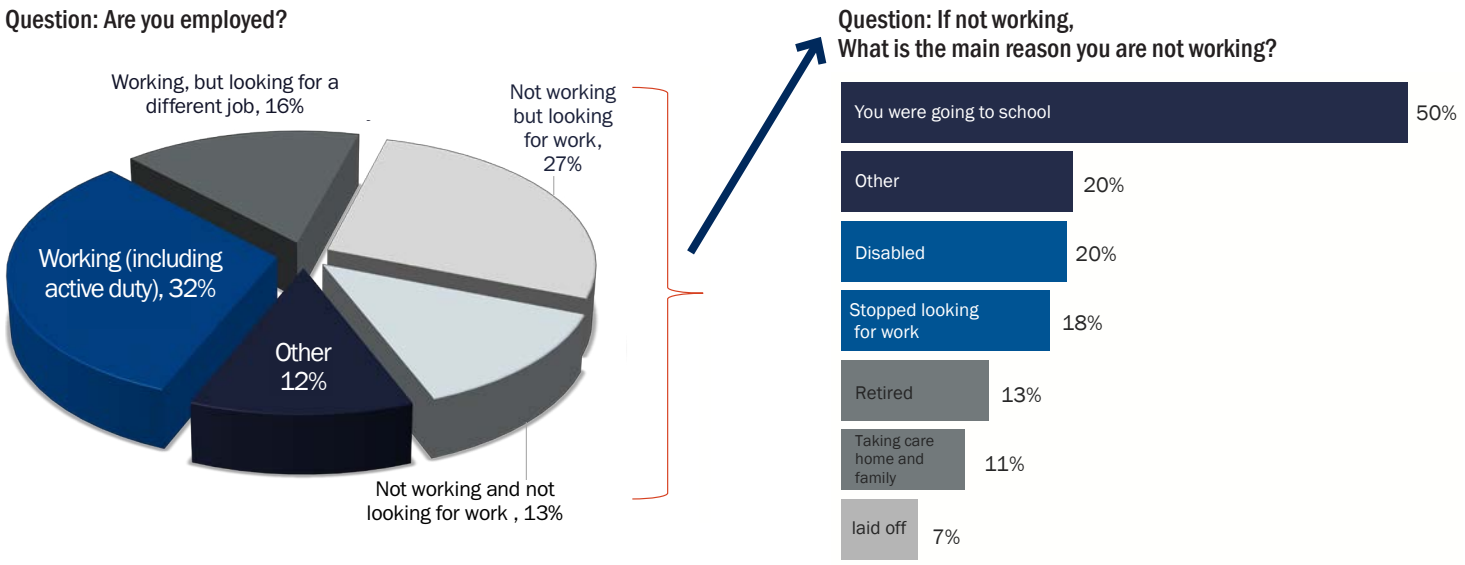
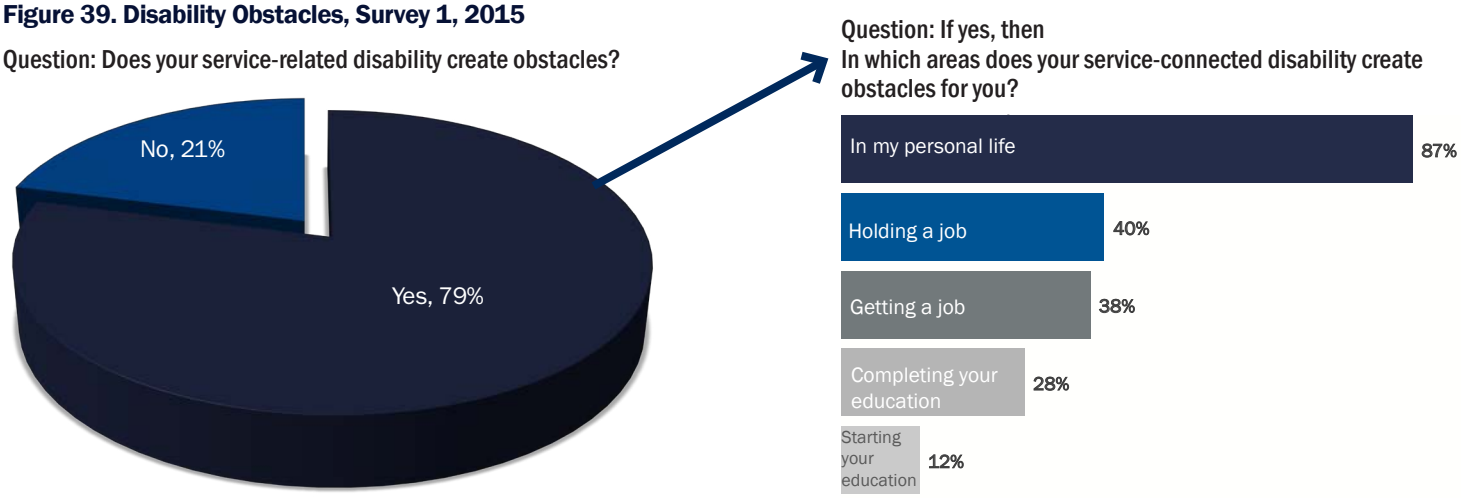


Figure 39. Disability Obstacles, Survey 1, 2015



is unemployed because these servicemembers are currently pursuing education. This finding suggests that servicemembers may face higher rates of temporary unemployment while improving earning potential through post-service educatio n.

About 58 percent of our sample reported a service-related disability (see figure 10), while 32 percent said they did not have such a disability (and 9 percent preferred not to answer). Of those with a service-related disability, about 53 percent reported that disability rating at 50 percent or higher, echoing high percentages nationally, as well as elevated use of compensation benefits and health services for current servicemembers. The majority (79%) of those with service-connected disabilities indicated that it creates obstacles in various areas of their lives: in their personal life (87%); in holding a job (40%); in getting a job (38%); in completing their education (28%); and in starting their education (12%), see figure 39.[83]

We were somewhat surprised to see that the most commonly reported obstacle for those with service-connected disabilities occurred in respondents' personal lives, but this finding itself may contribute to the growing dialogue about psychological (or moral) injury among servicemembers.[84] We were encouraged by the fact that only 12 percent of injured respondents reported the process of beginning their education as a substantial obstacle, a finding that may suggest that servicemembers with service-related injuries do not view the initial matriculation to education as problematic—although completing an education program or degree may prove more difficult for this subpopulation. Given these results, colleges and universities might provide more support and assistance to injured veterans on campus to thereby ensure successful completion of education programs after servicemembers have enrolled.

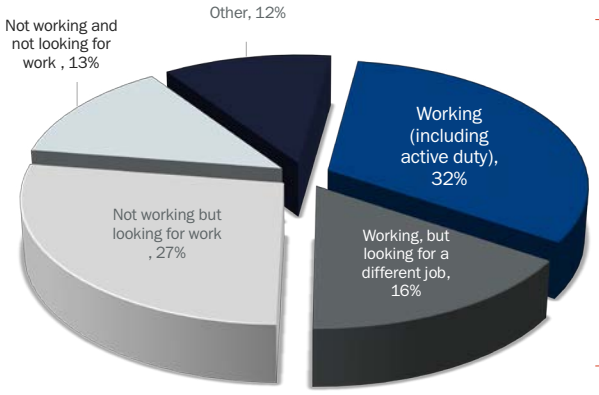
EMPLOYMENT SECTORS AND PREFERENCES

Of the 48 percent of respondents currently working (including the 16 percent working while looking for another job), 49 percent are in public sector (government) jobs; 38 percent are working in the private sector; 8 percent are employed in the nonprofit sector; and 5 percent are in the category of "other."[85]

Moreover, about 48 percent of respondents indicated that veterans' preference influences their jobs choice (e.g. federal government, private company).[86] Taken together, these findings indicate that veteran's preference is an important motivator for job selection among servicemembers—though it is not the primary way veterans choose career pathways. We also see that the number of servicemembers in the public sector closely mirrors the number of servicemembers who report veteran's preference contributes to their sector selection. This finding suggests that veterans' preference may play a significant role in successfully retaining servicemembers for national service after military service.

Figure 40. Employment and Work Sector, Survey 1, 2015

Question: Are you employed?



Question: Which of the following best describes the sector in which you work?

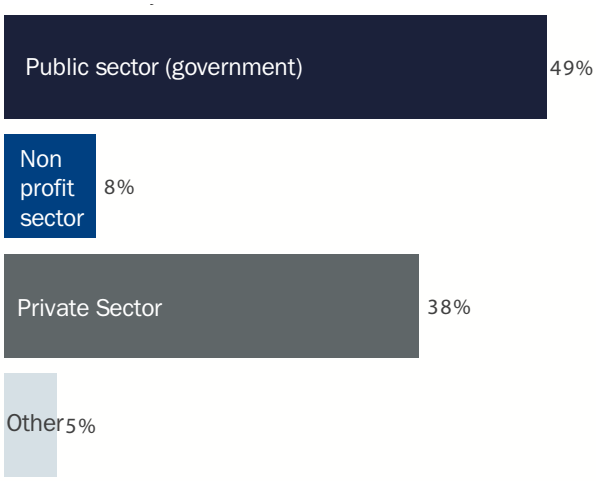
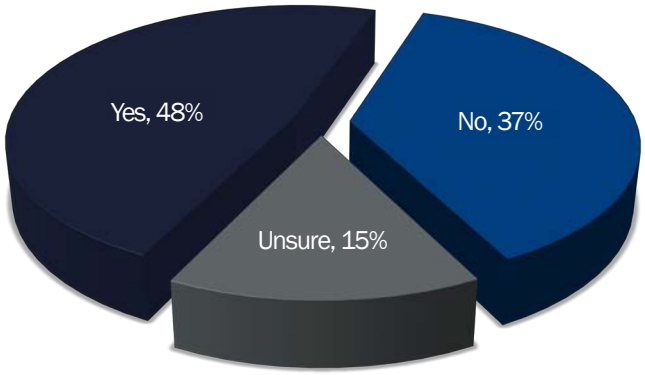


Figure 41. Veteran Preferences, Survey 1, 2015

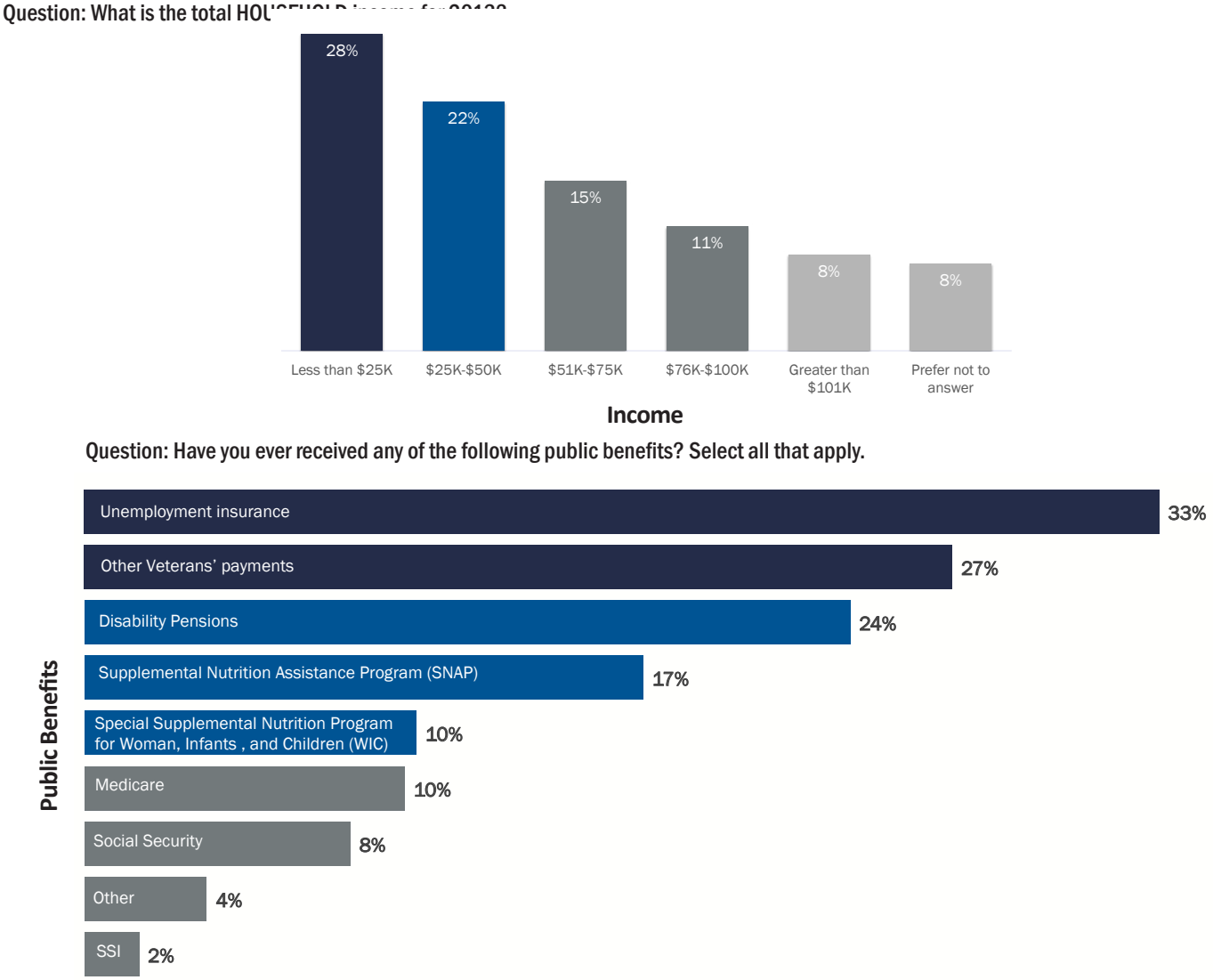
Question: Does veterans' preference influence your jobs choice (e.g. federal government, private company)?



INCOME

About 50 percent of respondents make less than 50K a year. According to the 2013 U.S. Census' American Community Survey (ACS), the median U.S. household income in 2013 was $52,250. Moreover, 33 percent of respondents indicated they have received unemployment benefits; 24 percent received disability pensions; 27 percent received some other veterans payments; 17 percent received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, or "food stamps"); 10 percent have received Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); and 10 percent received Medicare. These findings suggest that servicemembers receive most of their public assistance from veterans benefit programs, rather than through general public assistance programs.[87] Despite that finding, we also see that servicemembers are more likely to report use of SNAP benefits, but less likely to use Medicaid. This result may be largely due to the health benefits provided to servicemembers by the VA, thereby reducing the need for Medicaid. Future research will examine the proportion of servicemembers under the poverty threshold (based on family size) and the use of public assistance programs. Given the low use of these benefits and the low income reported, it would appear as if veterans are less likely to pursue other poverty-alleviation programs for which they are eligible.

Figure 40. Employment and Work Sector, Survey 1, 2015



4.0 Conclusion: Recommendations and Future Research

In this final section, we return to the problem of missing perspectives, captured in the report's title. In devoting rigorous attention to the service and post-service perspectives and experiences of active-duty servicemembers and veterans, including the nearly three million recent Post-9/11 veterans involved in the nation's longest and most complex wars to date, we have aimed to begin to remedy the troubling lack of public understanding, data, and knowledge about recent servicemembers. By staying close to servicemembers' perspectives and by trying to organize large numbers of diverse responses into a coherent picture of service, transition, and post-service experiences of recent cohorts, we present a better understanding of the conditions, challenges, and opportunities servicemembers face today, particularly in higher education.

More subtly, this research offers a sobering account of the nature of especially Post-9/11 service—its responsibilities, burdens, and lessons—as seen from veterans' perspectives. It is our firm belief that this subject must be the topic of greater national discussion involving servicemembers among the public at large, scholars and experts, lawmakers and policy developers, and stakeholders in veterans' success, including the VSO community and academic institutions. We know historically, in large part thanks to Suzanne Mettler's work on World War II veterans, that service—despite the deficits of any given military campaign—often creates signal opportunities for renewed commitment to social and political engagement within democratic traditions and norms.[88] No doubt, part of that national conversation will involve the urgent need to collectively process the disorienting, often disruptive experiences of war and its lasting impacts and the importance of bridging the gap between our cultural narratives of service and the actual experiences of war. Additionally, understanding how servicemembers navigate the divergent worlds of war fighting and civilian life is critically important, as is taking seriously the role that veterans may play in reflecting back the limits, even the contrivances, of American policy aims and the actual results of those policies, as well as insights about how to do better in the future.

Our findings tell us that servicemembers join the military to serve one's country—a generally positive and powerful experience for most—and as a means to earn an education. We consistently see this relationship between military service and post-service education in the widely-held belief among most servicemembers that education should play a key role in one's life and in post-service transition and that service itself contributes to one's educational goals and overall success in life. Once again, we see the importance of integrating servicemembers' perspectives into this inquiry in order to understand the dynamic relationships between service, education, transition, and post-service success. We see this perspective in the consistent finding that service is motivated by an interest in pursuing education, for instance, and in the fact that both service and education are believed by servicemembers to influence their post-service transition and success.

Such dynamic relationships also hold in the challenges reported after service. Despite generous education benefits in the Post-9/11 GI Bill, we know that financial hardships rank as the most commonly reported barrier to achieving education goals. While one might expect that service-related disabilities would likewise create obstacles, servicemembers report that disabilities create the greatest friction—not in education and employment contexts—but in their personal lives. In fact, disabled veterans are slightly more likely than those without disabilities to pursue higher education. Moreover, one might expect that campus culture could be a potential stumbling block for servicemember success, but we found, instead, that servicemembers were comfortable and proud to share their military status and experiences on campus. Frequently cited work also argues that recent veterans earn less than their civilian counterparts, but it could also be that many continue to serve after service in their choice to pursue public sector (i.e., less lucrative) employment, which our findings also demonstrate. Each of these discoveries—some counterintuitive—paint a more complex and complete picture of service and transition, even though more work is needed to explore these findings and to understand the policies and programs that most impact servicemembers' lives.

Our future work will attempt to systematically address these and other issues. We hope to further understand the role of military occupations in relation to service experiences and education pursuits, for instance. We have found that most servicemembers are not likely to pursue education programs and careers which are similar to their prior military jobs, so we hope to explore why this is so and if some specific jobs leave a lasting impression (negative or positive) on servicemembers' education and career paths. We also see that most servicemembers leave the military due to a loss of faith or trust in the military or political system, but that most wish to return to military service. We hope to understand what experiences contribute to that loss of faith or trust and how servicemembers reconcile their desires to return to service with their transition back to civilian life. It is clear that we need to understand the role of postsecondary education in servicemembers' success, which entails assessing such issues as campus organizational policies for veterans, interactions

with peers and faculty, support programs, and curriculum, among others. We also hope to explore more fully post-service employment trajectories for servicemembers: we see high levels of unemployment in our sample, but this is primarily due to education enrollment, so it will be fruitful to understand how this gap in employment ultimately impacts career trajectories. These are just a few lines of inquiry we hope to pursue while adding to the public and academic understanding of recent servicemembers through their own perspectives.

In the remainder of this section, we outline several "big picture" issues that require further exploration and that are promising avenues for enhancing servicemembers' post-service transition and success.

1. The future of the force: Studying the hidden impacts of the all-volunteer force model of military service for servicemembers and for the nation as a whole.

If the Gulf and Post-9/11 wars are one of the first functional tests of the all-volunteer force model of military service, it is time to think empirically about the potential implications of that model, especially for servicemembers, in creating a minority institution and in relegating the nation's defense to a small portion of the nation's citizenry.[89] The point of doing this is not to debate all over again the value of the all-volunteer force but to think proactively about its costs and consequences, including those that may be mitigated, especially for servicemembers and for the nation as a whole. Beyond longstanding concerns about a standing army in American political traditions, there are subtle ethical and social aspects to a professionalized force: notably, a public that may increasingly lack awareness of those who serve on behalf of the nation or feel a sense of ownership about their missions. It is for these and other reasons that rigorous, independent, and interdisciplinary attention to servicemembers and veterans—in their perspectives, challenges, opportunities, and contributions—gives concrete force and focus to the often repeated invocation to "support our troops." It is imperative to involve the critical vantage point of the "policy implementers" in this national conversation about the meaning and complexities of contemporary national service, citizenship, and security—with manifold implications across the social and economic dimensions of the nation.[90]

2. Shaping an interdisciplinary research agenda and supporting rigorous data-collection efforts for understanding Gulf and Post-War servicemembers' and their contributions.

Despite earlier robust traditions of research on World War II, Korea, and Vietnam veterans-era cohorts in their education and career experiences, the subject of veterans has too often fallen out of scholarly attention, federally-supported research, and informed-policy debate today.[91] This is not to suggest there are no education or transition studies of U.S. veterans, including the Post-9/11 cohort. On the contrary, social science inquiry in education and student services, psychology and social psychology, political science, public affairs, and especially economics and sociology, have explored veterans in education and post-service employment and earnings, among other issues. But recent studies are generally limited in their orientation on specific areas: baseline health and wellness studies predominate, for instance.[92] Likewise, empirical studies, particularly in the education literature, use either highly limited federal data or small and unrepresentative samples, a real challenge in studying recent veterans. It is also true that much analysis tends to address highly specialized issues impacting only certain segments of the military population, and studies tend to prioritize practice rather than theory or research design and methods.[93] For instance, too few studies have explored such questions as veterans as business and social entrepreneurs; veterans' employment and earnings in the STEM fields; the impact of the gender, ethnic, and racial diversity of the all-volunteer force on recent education and career trajectories; the nature of veterans' post-service aspirations for success; and the impacts of veterans' policy on educational experiences, among other avenues of inquiry. Likewise, in higher education, missing research on servicemembers and veterans perspectives is evident in the now prevalent student veterans "handbook" genre that dominates discussions.[94] While critically important, these works tend toward general analyses, use a small number of respondents to ground findings, and they focus on highly specialized subjects tailored almost exclusively for a higher-education student services audience.[95] Ironically, such missing Post-9/11 perspectives are in direct tension with veterans' increasing value in U.S. society. Moreover, though federal policies impacting servicemembers are an active area of policy debate in Congress and among the military, defense, and veterans communities today, such discussions often remain untouched by a rigorous body of research that offers insights into how servicemembers are faring in and after service (beyond baseline health issues) or how newly-adopted policies, including the Post-9/11 GI Bill and its

amendments, may impact the targets of these policies, including overall quality of life for veterans and military families. In many respects, it is as if the recent story of veterans' service and post-service experiences, as well as their contribution to U.S. public life, has somehow fallen out of public consciousness, particularly for Gulf War-era servicemembers.[96]

In addition to the priorities mentioned, we intend to build empirical resources to redress this present gap in research on recent servicemembers in general, as well as in their transition experiences in and beyond the higher education domain. While we have robust interdisciplinary traditions of research on servicemembers at multiple levels, including socioeconomic and educational attainment as correlates of military service, servicemembers' actual experiences in education—military students, student veterans, and military families—is understudied in both the recent academic literature and in federal data-collection and survey efforts. Servicemembers' post-service career experiences and professional trajectories, as well as their community engagement, is also largely missing.[97] Recent writing by Post-9/11 veterans has, in fact, addressed this silence, the difficulty in capturing these experiences, and even identified the often-numbing period "after-war," much like war proper, as a definite phase that itself requires deliberate processing.[98]

3. Servicemembers', transition, and the role of higher education institutions: Integrating servicemembers into college life and transforming institutions

At stake in these diverging views on military service—overwhelming public support yet decline in the value of service among younger generations, and servicemembers' own complex views on these issues—are clear avenues for further research and exploration. Most notably, few recent studies have thoroughly investigated the educational dimension of servicemembers' experiences beyond whether education was a key choice in joining up to begin with. This gap includes veterans' own educational aspirations and concerns, and, critically, their experiences once they arrive on campuses, and specifically whether those experiences in any way change perceptions about transition and even service in its rewards and burdens. In our own involvement with servicemembers, the prospect of higher education and training programs comprise a "mixed bag" of anxiety and excitement. We continually see, on the one hand, a clear-eyed commitment to country, to comrades, and to ideals larger than self, but on the other hand, significant worries about combat stress, employment, health-related challenges and depression, and academic preparation and academic cultural differences.

In fact, in servicemembers' transition, post-service education, and employment aspirations and challenges—the focus of the following studies—we see vital opportunities for veterans to reflect upon and tell their stories about military service, transition, and education programs; articulate anew their aspirations, goals, concerns, and challenges; explore the often hard-won lessons of war for their own lives and "civilian life" in general; and shed light on needed pathways for post-service transitioning into careers and professions that may leverage attributes and skills gleaned in service. Therefore, it is our intention that servicemembers' perspectives are captured in these studies; that the subject of veterans' post-service experiences, including higher education aspirations, become a critical part of robust academic research on servicemembers; and that these stories and perspectives enrich the longstanding themes that animate American public life on matters of citizenship and service.

APPENDIX I. General Veteran Population

The following tables attempt to describe the general population of U.S. veterans, drawing on national data from the U.S. Veterans Administration (VA), Current Population Survey (CPS), and American Community Survey (ACS). The purpose of these figures is to convey the degree of variance, as mentioned, among overall veterans population estimates, the percentage of Post-9/11 veterans in relation to the total and to other veterans' populations, and key demographic trends relevant to our research, among other items.

Based on the CPS (2014) annual averages, there are approximately 21.2 million living, U.S. military veterans: approximately 9 percent of the total U.S. population (see Table 1, below).[99] Based on the same, most recent U.S. Census data available, Gulf War era II (Post-9/11) veterans comprise a cohort of about 3,185,000 individuals, which is 15 percent of all U.S. military veterans but only 1.3 percent of the U.S. population. Gulf War I veterans (those serving between August 1990 and August 2001) represent a larger cohort of about 3,356,000 individuals, or 16 percent of all veterans. Those in the World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam veterans population (combined) represent the largest and oldest veteran cohort of 9,372,000 individuals, or about 44 percent of all U.S. military veterans. "Other Service Period" veterans—those veterans with service at all other time periods, including largely peacetime periods—represent a cohort of about 5,317,000 individuals, or 25 percent of all U.S. military veterans.

Having noted these populations, Table 2 (see below) illustrates the fairly significant differences in veteran population estimates across different data sources.[101] In 2014, the CPS, for instance, estimates more than 21 million veterans, whereas the ACS estimates more than 19 million—although the ACS three-year estimate finds the veterans population at more than 20 million.[102] The VA Veteran Population Projection model (VetPop2014) estimates more than 22 million veterans. Thus, among these three high-quality federal datasets alone we see the current population estimate of veterans varying by as much as 3 million veterans. This is not a small or insignificant number in matters of budgets and benefit disbursement, or in matters of recognition and respect for service.

Another example of high variance involves the Post-9/11 veteran population. The CPS, for instance, estimates more than 3.1 million Post-9/11 veterans (in the CPS, veterans serving in more than one wartime period are counted and classified only in the most recent period of service), whereas the ACS estimates (including those that served in both eras) more than 2.8 million (more than 1.8 million in Gulf War Era II and more than 1 million in Gulf War Era I). The VA VetPop2014 estimates more than 2.6 million Post-9/11 veterans only. However, if you include the same definitions as the CPS (those that served in both Post-9/11 actions) then the comparable estimation for the VA is more than 3.8 million. Note (in Table 2) that according to VA VetPop2014 projection data, the Post-9/11

Table 1. Veteran Population by Period of Service, CPS 2013/2014

	CPS 2013		CPS 2014	
Total Population	**Estimated Number**	**%**	**Estimated Number**	**%**
All Americans	**236,737,000**		**239,049,000**	
Non-Veterans	215,339,000	91%	217,820,000	91%
All Veterans	21,397,000	9%	21,229,000	9%
Period of Service	**Estimated Number**	**%**	**Estimated Number**	**%**
Total Veteran Population	**21,397,000**		**21,229,000**	
Gulf War Era II (post-9/11)	2,837,000	13%	3,185,000	15%
Gulf War Era I	3,233,000	15%	3,356,000	16%
WW II, Korean War and Vietnam Era	9,828,000	46%	9,372,000	44%
Other Service Period	5,500,000	26%	5,317,000	25%

Note: *Population 18 and over; for this data, veterans who served in more than one wartime period are classified by the most recent wartime period of service only.*[100]

cohort will increase past 3 million veterans in 2017. In comparing these totals, one can see the value and importance of not only strengthening national datasets by adding additional survey questions related to veterans and military communities but also rectifying methodological and definitional discrepancies, where possible, so that data are more easily interrelated and comparable.

At stake in these discrepancies are meaningful ways to project populations for all matter of purposes: force structure projections at the core of definitions of readiness; benefits (health and education among others) budget projections with impacts on the federal budget and deficits; evidence-based estimates of veterans populations likely to enroll in postsecondary education, training, and certificate programs; and projections for needed supports and resources for veterans in transition.

Table 2. Comparison of Estimated Population of Veterans among National Datasets, 2014

	U.S. Department of Labor CPS Annual Average 2014		U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2014 1-year estimate		U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Vet Pop 2014 September 2014	
	Estimates	%	Estimates	%	Estimates	%
All Americans (18 and over)	239,049,000		244,298,660		–	
Non-Veterans	217,820,000		225,038,943		–	
All Veterans	21,229,000	9%	19,259,717	8%	21,999,108	
Gulf War Eras	6,540,000	31%	5,453,042	28%	7,033,181	32%
WWII, Korean War and Vietnam Era	9,372,000	44%	9,366,344	48%	10,151,280	46%
Other Service Period	5,317,000	25%	4,440,331	23%	5,496,294	25%
Gulf War Era II (post-9/11)	3,185,000	15%	1,832,500	9%	2,604,055	12%
Both Gulf War Eras	Number included as Gulf War Era II		1,059,546	5%	1,271,146	6%
Gulf War Era I	3,356,000	16%	2,213,467	11%	2,789,415	13%
Vietnam and Both Gulf War Eras	Number included as Gulf War Era II		62,544	0%	55,697	0%
Vietnam and Gulf War Era I	Number included as Gulf War Era I		284,985	1%	312,869	1%

Note: *Population 18 and over.*

APPENDIX II.
Servicemember, Veteran and Wartime Periods Defined by Statute

In many ways, the Gulf War and the Post-9/11 cohort of veterans exist in a different moment of service and security—historically, culturally, economically, and technologically. The following analyses attempt to provide readers—specialists and non-specialists alike—with a picture of transitioning U.S. servicemembers in relation to such factors as period of service, gender, diversity, transition, education, military skills, and employment, among other items. To develop our own data and conduct analyses, we also have relied upon some of our co-authors' earlier National Science Foundation (NSF) studies and the following federal datasets: the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), Current Population Survey (CPS), American Community Survey (ACS), and the VA Veteran Population Projection Model (VetPop2014). Ours is the only research project to our knowledge that has attempted to build a primary national dataset on recent servicemembers in their service and post-service experiences and that also draws upon available federal data on servicemembers, veterans, and military connected communities.

In this section, we describe the key definitions and concepts we have used to guide our research, and to promote consistency, rigor, and accessibility across servicemembers and veterans inquiry for multiple stakeholders.

SERVICEMEMBER AND VETERAN

There is no single, universal, or standardized definition of "military veteran" in comparative and international research—a significant issue in conducting veterans research studies and comparing datasets.[103] Thus, we advocate for the definition of "servicemember" set out in U.S. public law: a servicemember is "a member of the uniformed services," including all five branches of the U.S. armed forces, as defined in section 101(a)(5) of title 10, United States Code.[104] Likewise, we define veteran, again, according to federal statute and regulation, as a "person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable"—though this issue of "dishonorable" or "other than honorable" discharge is changing and in need of further clarification and critical analysis.[105] While these definitions, taken from U.S. federal statutes and regulation, are largely used by local, state, and federal government agencies to define eligible beneficiaries, for our purposes, they offer a consistent reference point for establishing clarity and coherence in conducting research in relation to military-connected communities. It should be noted, however, that research communities define servicemembers and veterans in various ways suited to their scope of research and their population under consideration. Also, in public discourse colloquial or historical notions of "veteran" still persist. For example, servicemembers often define themselves as "veteran" only if they have served in combat.[106] Using our preferred definition of veteran, all separated servicemembers are veterans once released or discharged from the service—no matter how long they served or the conditions under which they served.[107]

In this summary report we also refer to four, often overlapping populations of servicemembers with many shared concerns: (1.) the most general term, military "servicemembers," is reserved for all persons who are serving or have served in the U.S. armed forces, i.e., those active-duty members currently serving as part of the active or reserve components of the armed forces, and veterans, those who have separated from the armed services (many active and reserve component servicemembers qualify as veterans, so these phases of service may overlap); (2.) "veteran," includes all persons who have served in the U.S. armed forces on active duty (even if only in training) and were discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorably; (3.) "student veterans" are defined as those veterans who are engaging in education, certification, training, or related programs, often receiving veterans-based benefits;[108] and (4) "military students" are those active-duty, reserve, and National Guard servicemembers undergoing education, certification, and/or training programs, often receiving military Tuition Assistance and other U.S. Department of Defense-based education benefits.[109]

Within this context, we adopt the following terms for military personnel and branches of service: (1.) an "officer" means a commissioned or warrant officer;[110] (2.) a "general officer" means an "officer of the Army, Air Force, or Marine Corps serving in or having the general grade of general, lieutenant general, major general, or brigadier general," whereas the term "flag officer" means "an officer of the Navy or Coast Guard serving in or having the grade of admiral, vice admiral, rear admiral, or rear admiral (lower half)";[111] (3.) the term "enlisted member" refers to a person in an enlisted grade, the "step or degree in a graduated scale of office or military rank, that is established and designated as a grade by law or regulation";[112] and (4.) the term "active duty" refers to "full-time duty in the active military service of the United States," including training (the term does not include full-time National Guard duty), whereas "active service" means service on active duty or full-time National Guard duty and "active status."[113]

Likewise, traditional wartime veterans are categorized into the following eras, reflective of period of service, as described:

- Gulf War Era II (September 2001-present)
- Gulf War Era I (August 1990-August 2001)
- Vietnam Era (August 1964-April 1975)
- Korean War (July 1950-January 1955)
- World War II (December 1941-December 1946)

These major classifications of wartime veterans are commensurate across the different data sources (see below), whereas all other timeframes are considered peacetime veterans, despite the combat entailed in contingency and other related operations.[114]

NEW WARS AND ASYMMETRIC CONFLICT

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks, the nature of military service has shifted in ways aligned with changing global conflict dynamics and related U.S. national security policies. Not only has irregular warfare dominated political violence in the latter half of the twentieth century, the post-9/11 wars and ongoing contingency operations have been increasingly defined by counterinsurgency (COIN) and counterterror operations, a light military footprint, small military teams rather than expansive conventional forces, the increased use of special units and special operations task forces, high-tech systems integrated into combat units, and innovative tactics designed to combat asymmetric adversaries.[115] Because threats often span multiple geographical regions—including rural and urban centers at once—traditional forms of military training, planning, even targeting have proved insufficient.

While political scientists, legal scholars, and conflict analysts have debated these issues in security and strategic studies, less attention has been devoted to military force structure, preparedness, and readiness outside the military and defense policy communities.[116] This gap is also evident in studies of veterans with respect to these same issues. While we describe this changing military in demographics, deployment location and cycles, and employment and education below, it is worth noting that the very nature of military service itself has changed significantly in ways reflective of changing patterns of global conflict. These changes have profound implications for the battlefield space—as burgeoning literatures about 9/11 have captured—and for how servicemembers experience service, operations (combat and otherwise), and deployments. For instance, an increasing operational role for intelligence—itself rapidly integrated with targeting policies and special operational units—is a mainstay of new strategic planning and execution.[117]

Such changing battlespaces also impact Post-9/11 warfighters in highly specific ways that we are still trying to understand, including the rate and tempo of deployments and the concomitant increase in injuries, compensation claims, and numbers of disabilities associated with this cohort (see Tables 4 & 5 and Figures 10 & 39). Our own data confirms this disproportionately high rate of injuries and disability rating.[118] While health studies have explored post-traumatic stress (PTS), combat stress, traumatic brain injuries (TBI), and other "signature" injuries for Gulf War generations, important work is just beginning to understand how these physical and mental injuries are symptomatic of distinctive operational conditions.[119] As Table 4 and Figure 10[120] both show, the highest numbers of disabled veterans are connected to the Gulf War Era, including servicemembers deployed in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).[121] More than 1.6 million Gulf War veterans are categorized by the VA as having a disability, which accounts for 43 percent of all disabled veterans receiving compensation. As Table 5 indicates, even among Gulf War Era veterans, those who served in the GWOT campaigns have a higher percentage of disabilities than non-GWOT veterans.[122]

Such conditions have created unique and lasting experiences for Gulf War veterans, which may influence their post-service life and professional trajectories. That is, while health and wellness issues are important factors in post-service life for all veterans, the nature of post-9/11 warfare also has inculcated related and other important identity-defining cohort experiences. This is to say that injuries, disabilities, and related health and wellness issues are indicators of changes in the nature of service, battlefield conditions, and the demands and challenges of service. We are emphatic in the belief, therefore, that this and related inquiry must involve servicemembers' own reflections on these changing conditions and experiences, as well as the significant attributes, skills, training, and expertise gained in the course of service. In and beyond education and employment, these experiences—hard won, practical, and life-changing in many cases—count as critical contributing factors in distinguishing today's service and servicemembers from those of previous generations.

Endnotes

1 See Jeff Jones & Lydia Saad, Gallup News Service: June Survey, Timberline: 937008 IS: 029, Princeton Job #: 14-05-006 (Jun. 5-8, 2014), available at: http://www.gallup.com/poll/171710/public-faith-congress-falls-again-hits-historic-low.aspx.

2 Pew Research Center, Social & Demographic Trends, The Military-Civilian Gap: War and Sacrifice in the Post-9/11 Era (5 Oct. 2011): 13: http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2011/10/veterans-report.pdf.

3 See Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 (Post-9/11 GI Bill), Title V of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (P.L. 110-252) codified at Title 38 U.S.C., Chapter 33 (effective Aug 1 2009) and amendments: Congress found that "service on active duty in the Armed Forces" was "especially arduous for the members of the Armed Forces since September 11, 2001" so that there was a need for an educational assistance program that provided "enhanced educational assistance benefits … worthy of such service." See, also, G. Altschuler & S. Blumin, The GI Bill, A New Deal for Veterans (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). According to the Veterans' Benefits in the United States: Findings and Recommendations (Apr. 23, 1956 p. 287) by the U.S. Presidents' Commission on Veterans' Pensions (headed by General of the Army Omar N. Bradley), established by Executive Order (EO) No. 10588 (Jan. 14, 1955) to study the laws and policies concerning pensions, compensation, and related nonmedical benefits for veterans and dependents, 51% of all returning veterans (7.8 million) used their education benefits; by 1947, those veterans using the G.I. Bill comprised 49% of students enrolled in U.S. universities; and by 10 years post-World War II, 2,200,000 veterans had attended college and 5,600,000 had participated in vocational or on-the-job training under the G.I. Bill. See Michael March, "President's Commission on Veterans' Pension Recommendations," Social Security Bulletin, 19(8), Aug. 1956: http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/ssb/v19n8/v19n8p12.pdf

4 Cassandria Dortch, The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 (Post-9/11 GI Bill): Primer and Issues (28 Jul. 2014), R42755, Congressional Research Service, Washington, DC: http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42755.pdf.

5 N. Armstrong & M. Haynie, A National Veterans Strategy: The Economic, Social, and Security Imperative, Institute for Veterans and Military Families and the Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism, February 2013

6 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Annual Benefits Report: Fiscal Year 2010, Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), Washington DC, http:/www.vba.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/2010_abr.pdf

7 VA, Annual Benefits Report: Fiscal Year 2011 (Veterans Benefits Administration: Washington DC: April 16, 2012), http:/www.vba.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/2011_abr.pdf

8 VA, Annual Benefits Report: Fiscal Year 2012 (Veterans Benefits Administration: Washington DC: June 20, 2013), http:/www.vba.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/2012_abr.pdf

9 VA, Annual Benefits Report: Fiscal Year 2013 (Veterans VA, Annual Benefits Report: Fiscal Year 2013 (Veterans Benefits Administration: Washington DC: Sept. 26, 2014), http://www.benefits.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/ABR-Combined-FY13-09262014.pdf. VA, Annual Benefits Report: Fiscal Year 2014 (Veterans Benefits Administration: Washington DC: Oct. 20, 2015), http://www.benefits.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/ABR-Combined-FY14-11032015.pdf

10 The Post 9/11 GI Bill went into effect August 1, 2009; no program beneficiaries 2006- 2008.

11 VRAP went into effect July 2012; thus, no program beneficiaries from 2006-2011.

12 The VA collects benefits data annually in the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Annual Report. For this data, see VBA Annual Report 2010-2012, including these tables: Table: "Beneficiaries by Program by Fiscal Year," p. 46, http://www.vba.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/2012_abr.pdf, VBA 2012; Table: "Beneficiaries Who Received Education Benefits During Fiscal Year 2012," p. 48, VBA 2012; "Additional Educational Opportunities," p. 49, VBA 2012. See, also, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO 13-338) Veterans' Education Benefits-VA Needs to Improve Program Management and Provide More Timely Information to Students (May 2013). For 2013-2009, see VBA Annual Benefits Report Fiscal Year 2013, Education section, Table: "Beneficiaries who received education benefits by fiscal year" p. 8, http://www.benefits.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/ABR-Combined-FY13-09262014.pdf. For 2014, see VBA Annual Benefits Report Fiscal Year 2014, Education section, Table: "Beneficiaries who received education benefits by fiscal year" p. 8, http://www.benefits.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/ABR-Combined-FY14-11032015.pdf. For 2008-2006 see VBA Annual Benefits Report Fiscal Year 2010, Education section, Table: "Beneficiaries by Program by Fiscal Year," p. 32, available at: http://www.benefits.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/2010_abr.pdf

13 VA, Annual Benefits Report: Fiscal Year 2014, (Veterans Benefits Administration, Washington, DC: Oct. 20, 2015), http://www.benefits.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/ABR-Education-FY14-10202015.pdf

14 VA, Office of the Actuary, Veteran Population Projection Model 2014, Table 2L: VETPOP2014 Living Veterans by Period of Service, Gender, 2013-2043, data available at: http://www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran_Population.asp. The VA divides the Gulf War cohort into Pre-9/11 (8/1990–9/2001) veterans and Post 9/11 (9/2001 or later) veterans. For a discussion of the VETPOP projection model assumptions, see Lijia Guo, "Executive Summary," www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/Demographics/New_VetPop_Model/VetPop2014_ExSum_093014_Final.pdf

15 N. Armstrong, J. McDonough Jr., D. Savage, Driving Community Impact: The Case for Local, Evidence-Based Coordination in Veteran and Military Family Services and the AmericaServes Initiative, Institute for Veterans and Military Families, April 2015

16 Robust studies of veterans in higher education after World War II include Norman Frederiksen & William Benton Schrader's massive, "Adjustment to College. A Study of 10,000 Veteran and Nonveteran Students in Sixteen American Colleges" (Princeton: Educational Testing Service, 1951, ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED05856). Despite its limits, Frederiksen & Schrader found that "veteran students prove to be superior achievers as compared with nonveteran students" and those from families with lower income did better than the students whose families earned more.

17 For this perspective in the context of management studies, see James Michael Haynie, "The Business Case for Hiring a Veteran: Beyond the Clichés," The Institute for Veterans & Military Families (IVMF), 5 Mar. 2012, Syracuse University: http://vets.syr.edu/pdfs/The%20Business%20Case%20for%20Hiring%20a%20Veteran%203-6-12.pdf

18 Morris Janowitz, "The Social Demography of the All-Volunteer Armed Force," The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 406, no. 1 (1973): 86-93; Morris Janowitz & Charles C. Moskos. "Five Years of the All-Volunteer Force: 1973-1978," Armed Forces & Society 5, no. 2 (1979): 171-218; Beth Bailey, America's Army: Making the All-Volunteer Force (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009); and R.R. Krebs, Fighting for Rights: Military Service and the Politics of Citizenship (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

19 Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams, & David Segal, The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces after the Cold War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). Moskos, Williams, and Segal find that the "mass conscription army" tied to the fortunes of the nation-state—which was once "war-oriented in mission, masculine in makeup and ethos, and sharply differentiated in structure and culture from civilian society"—has given way to a postmodern military, with loosened ties to the nation-state and its clear missions, becoming instead a multipurpose force, smaller and agile in mission and force structure, "greater permeability with civilian society."

20 John F. Shortal, "20th Century Demobilization Lessons," Military Review 78, no.5 (Sept-November, 1998): 5; Bernard Rostker & K.C. Yeh. I Want You! The Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force (Rand Corporation, 2006); Richard Cooper, Military Manpower and The All-Volunteer Force (Rand Corporation, 1977).

21 In the military context, see Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 6-11C, Combat Stress—Navy Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (NTTP) 1-15M, Commander's Handbook on Combat Stress; and Army Field Manual (FM) 90-44/6-22.5, Combat Stress, Department of the Navy, Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps (Washington, D.C. 20380-1775: 23 June 2000). See also, Richard A. Kulka et al., Trauma and the Vietnam War Generation: Report of Findings from the National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study (Brunner/Mazel, 1990). In the psychological and neurobiological literature, the condition is linked to acute stress reaction, post-traumatic stress disorder, and related conditions, which comprise physical-hormonal, cognitive, even moral injuries. See, for example, Jon D. Elhai & Patrick A. Palmieri, "The Factor Structure of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: A Literature Update, Critique of Methodology, and Agenda for Future Research," Journal of Anxiety Disorders 25.6 (2011): 849-854 and Brett T Litz, Nathan Stein, Eileen Delaney, Leslie Lebowitz, William Nash, Caroline Silva, & Shira Maguen, "Moral Injury and Moral Repair in War Veterans: A Preliminary Model and Intervention Strategy," Clinical Psychology Review 29, no. 8 (2009): 695-706.

22 Diane C. Cowper and Charles F. Longino find veterans "are more mobile and move longer distances than the general population of the same age" (1992, 44) and Robert J. Sampson (1988) finds residential stability significantly increases friends/acquaintances, participation in social activities, and integration into the surrounding community. Given the strong relationship between residential stability and integration into one's community, we might expect increased migration among veterans to also result in a greater degree of social isolation.

23 See S. Maguen, B. Cohen, L. Ren, J. Bosch, R. Kimerling, & K. Seal, "Gender Differences in Military Sexual Trauma and Mental Health Diagnoses Among Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder," Women's Health Issues 22, no. 1 (2012): e61-e66.

24 A rich body of creative nonfiction has emerged from the post-9/11 wars to describe these experiences. For two prominent examples, see Phil Klay, Redeployment (Penguin, 2014) and Kevin Powers, The Yellow Birds (Back Bay Books, 2013).

25 See Dynarski (2002), DiRamio, Ackerman and Mitchell (2008) and Bound & Turner (2002) for examples of educational influences on student veterans in a variety of contexts. S. Dynarski, "The Behavioral and Distributional Implications of Aid for College," American Economic Review 92, no. 2 (2002): 279-285; D. DiRamio, R. Ackerman * R.L. Mitchell, "From Combat to Campus: Voices of Student-Veterans," Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice 45, no. 1 (2008): 73-102; J. Bound & S. Turner (2002), "Going to War and Going to College: Did World War II and the GI Bill Increase Educational Attainment for Returning Veterans?," Journal of Labor Economics, 20(4), 784-815.

26 Data analyzed for this report include those that responded from May 1,2014 to May 1, 2015

27 Tse-Hua Shih & Xitao Fan, "Comparing Response Rates from Web and Mail Surveys: A Meta-Analysis." Field Methods 20, no. 3 (2008): 249-271.

28 See Umar Moulta-Ali, Who is a "Veteran?"—Basic Eligibility for Veterans' Benefits. Congressional Research Service Report R42324 (23 Jan., 2014). Available at: http://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42324.pdf

29 Title 10 U.S.C. 101(a)(5) includes all the branches of the armed forces; the commissioned corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service. Benefits and services provided to veterans of the U.S. armed forces are codified in Title 38 of the U.S. Code. The term "armed forces" means the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard (see 10 USC §101(a)(4)); the term "uniformed services" means the armed forces; the commissioned corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service (see 10 USC§101(a)(5)).

30 38 U.S.C. § 101(2); 38 C.F.R. § 3.1(d). See, also, Barton F. Stichman et al., Veterans Benefits Manual, at §221.

31 It should be noted that research communities define servicemembers and veterans in various ways suited to their scope of research and their population under consideration. Also, in public discourse, colloquial or historical notions of "veteran" still persist. For example, servicemembers often define themselves as "veteran" only if they have served in combat. A classic colloquial understanding of a veteran is this ironic assertion of the definition of the veteran among servicemembers: "a veteran is someone who, at one point in his/her life, wrote a blank check made payable to 'The United States of America' for an amount of 'up to and including my life.'"

32 Critics have rightly pointed out problems with the "other than dishonorable" service designation as a threshold consideration for benefits eligibility. Congress could simply pass legislation to align the statutory language with VA discharge categories so that the definition of the eligible beneficiary is clear and so that VA benefits administrative staff do not have to weigh in on a case-by-case basis on service discharge status, an unnecessary, time-consuming, bureaucratic process.

33 Note that the National Survey of Veterans (2010) documents approximately 8 percent of active-duty members using their VA educational benefits to pursue a degree, so student veterans are not always separated from the armed services.

34 Since GI Bill benefits may support this military tuition assistance, these educational benefits usually associated with "student veterans" and "military students" may also overlap.

35 James Michael Haynie, Insights Informing the Concerns of Post-9/11 Veterans and Families: A Survey of Thought Leaders & Influencers (Jan. 15, 2013), Syracuse University, Institute for Veterans & Military Families (IVMF) Report for the George W. Bush Institute research to serve and empower Post-9/11 veterans and military families, p. 2.

36 Ibid.

37 For examples, see P. Gurin et al., "Diversity and Higher Education: Theory and Impact on Educational Outcomes," Harvard Educational Review 72.3 (2002): 330-367; S. Hurtado, et al. Enacting Diverse Learning Environments: Improving the Climate for Racial/Ethnic Diversity in Higher Education, ASHE-ERIC, ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education (Washington, DC: 1999); S. Zirkel & N. Cantor, "50 Years after Brown v. Board of Education: The Promise and Challenge of Multicultural Education," Journal of Social Issues 60.1 (2004): 1-15; F.C. Santos, M.D. Santos & J.M. Pacheco, "Social Diversity Promotes the Emergence of Cooperation in Public Goods games," Nature 454.7201 (2008): 213-216.

38 See Daniel P. McDonald, & Kizzy M. Parks, eds., Managing Diversity in the Military: The Value of Inclusion in a Culture of Uniformity (New York: Routledge, 2013); and Leo Bogart, ed., Social Research and the Desegregation of the U.S. Army (Chicago: Markham, 1969). The Army effectively desegregated in 1954 and found integrated units performed better.

39 David R. Segal & Mady Wechsler Segal, "America's Military Population," Population Bulletin, Population Reference Bureau 59(4) Dec. 2004, 1-40, p. 3. Available at: http://www.prb.org/Source/ACF1396.pdf (p. 37).

40 Segal & Segal, "America's Military Population" (2004): 19. Also note that "Black men (and, increasingly, black women in noncombat forces) perceived the military to be a more racially fair employer than the civilian labor force, and indeed the volunteer force would not have met its manpower goals without the increased representation of blacks."

41 For examples of this literature, see C. Armstrong, et al., "The Impact of Diversity and Equality Management on Firm Performance: Beyond High Performance Work Systems," Human Resource Management, 49, no. 6 (2010): 977–998; J.A. Chatman & F. J. Flynn, "The Influence of Demographic Heterogeneity on the Emergence and Consequences of Cooperative Norms in Work Teams," Academy of Management Journal, 44, no. 5 (2001): 956–974; C. Herring, "Does Diversity Pay?: Race, Gender, and the Business Case for Diversity," American Sociological Review, 74(2) 2009: 208–224.

42 See U.S. Department of the Army, Commander's Equal Opportunity Handbook (Training Circular/TC 26-6), April 1, 2005, Washington, DC, pp. 1-2 (note that "EO philosophy is based on fairness, justice, and equity. It places the responsibility for sustaining a positive EO climate within a unit on its commander. The U.S. Army will provide equal opportunity and fair treatment for military personnel and family members without regard to race, color, religion, gender, or national origin, and provide an environment free from unlawful discrimination and offensive behavior").

43 Sarah Turner & John Bound, "Closing the Gap or Widening the Divide: The Effects of the GI Bill and World War II on the Educational Outcomes of Black Americans." The Journal of Economic History 63, no. 1 (2003): 145-177; Jay Teachman, "Military Service in the Vietnam Era and Educational Attainment," Sociology of Education 78, no. 1 (2005): 50-68.

44 For VetPop2014 see U.S Department of Veterans Affair, National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, Veteran Population Projection Model 2014 (VetPop2014), Table 2L, Living Veterans by Period of Service, 2013-2043, available at: http://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/Demographics/New_Vetpop_Model/2L_VetPop2014.xlsx

45 For 2014 CPS data see U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Table Employment status of persons 18 years and over by veteran status, age, and sex, not seasonally adjusted, annual averages 2014, online data retrievable available at: http://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/veterans_by_age_and_sex.htm.

46 U.S. Department of Defense, Active Duty Military Personnel by Service by Rank/Grade August 2015, Defense Manpower Data Center, Data Source: Active Duty Master Personnel File, Military Academies, available at: https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/dwp_reports.jsp, Retrieved November 6, 2015

47 U.S. Department of Defense, Selected Reserve Personnel by Reserve Component and Rank/Grade August 2015, Defense Manpower Data Center, Data Source: Active Duty Master Personnel File, Military Academies, available at: https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/dwp_reports.jsp, Retrieved November 6, 2015

48 See Appendix I table 1.

49 U.S. Department of Defense. 2014 Demographics: Profile of the Military Community, Section 2.45 Education Level of Active Duty Members, available at http://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2014-Demographics-Report.pdf

50 U.S. Department of Defense. 2014 Demographics: Profile of the Military Community, Section 1.02 Active Duty and Ready Reserve Personnel, available at http://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2014-Demographics-Report.pdf

51 U.S Department of Veterans Affair, National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, Veteran Population Projection Model 2014 (VetPop2014), Table 4L, Living Veterans by Branch of Service, 2013-2043, available at: http://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/Demographics/New_Vetpop_Model/4lVetPop11_Branch.xlsx

52 See Appendix I table 1.

53 Table 4 data is derived from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefit Administration Annual Benefits Report, FY 2014, "Compensation

section," available at: http://www.benefits.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/ABR-Combined-FY14-11032015.pdf. "Disabled veterans" column compiled from Table (p. 6): " All Compensation Recipients by period of service," Table (p. 7): "All Gulf War Era compensation recipients by GWOT status" ; "percent" column compiled from Table (p. 6): "Recipients and Disabilities by Period of Service: All Compensation Recipients by period of service," and by dividing GWOT and non-GWOT compensation recipients by total compensation recipients to get the two percentages"; "Total number of disabilities" column compiled from Table (p. 6): "Period of Service Average disabilities per Veteran by period of service—all compensation recipients," Table (p. 7): Number of disabilities of all Gulf War Era compensation recipients by GWOT status" ; "Average number of disabilities" compiled from Table (p. 41): "Number of SC disabilities of all compensation recipients by period of service," Table (p. 7): "Number of SC disabilities of all Gulf War Era compensation recipients by GWOT status"; "Annual total amount paid" column compiled from Table (p.18): "All compensation recipients and estimated annual payments," Table (p.20): "All GWOT compensation recipients and estimated annual payments," the Gulf-War era-non-GWOT was calculated by taking the total amount spent annually on Gulf War Era compensation recipients, 21,297,996,929, (according to Table (p.18): "All compensation recipients and estimated annual payments") and subtracting the amount spent on GWOT compensation recipients, 11,638,424,599.

54 According to (p. 3) "Global War on Terror (GWOT) Information Integrated into Period of Service Sections" in the compensation section, The Global War on Terror (GWOT) include troops whom have been deployed overseas since September 11, 2001 in support of GWOT. GWOT includes Operation Iraqi Freedom/ Operation Enduring Freedom/ Operation New Dawn (OIF/OEF/OND), available at http://www.benefits.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/ABR-Combined-FY14-11032015.pdf

55 VBA, 2014. Compensation, p. 7, Table: "Number of SC disabilities of all Gulf War Era compensation recipients by GWOT status."

56 This population number is calculated by adding totals from DMDC Active Duty Master Personnel File as of July 31, 2014 and CPS 2014 (Involuntary Activation Reserves = 29,729, Voluntary Activations = 7,695, Active Duty = 1,395,240, Selected Reserves = 824,757, Gulf War Era II =3,185,000, Gulf War Era I = 3,356,000)

57 VA, Annual Benefits Report: Fiscal Year 2013: Veterans Benefits Administration, Washington, DC (Sept 26, 2014) available at: http://www.benefits.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/ABR-Education-FY13-09262014.pdf. VA, Annual Benefits Report: Fiscal Year 2014, (Veterans Benefits Administration, Washington, DC: Oct. 20, 2015), http://www.benefits.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/ABR-Education-FY14-10202015.pdf

58 Exceptions include the National Science Foundation (NSF): see, Sue Kemnizer's program leadership and Veterans Education for Engineering & Science: Report of the NSF Workshop on Enhancing the Post 9/11 Veterans Educational Benefit (Apr. 2009): http://www.nsf.gov/eng/eec/VeteranEducation.pdf.

59 For federally-sponsored research in this area beyond the VA, see the Defense Medical Research and Development Program (DMRDP), http://dmrdp.dhhq.health.mil/about_dmrdp/About.aspx, part of the Defense Health Program (DHP), which contributes to Defense Department medical research and development (R&D) focused on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), prosthetics, eye care, and other conditions directly relevant to battlefield injuries.

60 Without robust research, it is nearly impossible to understand how veterans are faring post-service, whether education and training programs are playing a role in their successful transition, how the Post-9/11 GI Bill, among other benefits, are supporting veterans' educational attainment and success, and whether our veterans policy initiatives are adequate to ensure successful transition.

61 Several studies have found that education benefits are an effective military recruitment tool in encouraging voluntary service: see Kleykamp (2006) and Segal, Bachman, Freedman-Doan, P., & O'Malley (1999) for examples of education benefits effects on the likelihood of joining the military. M.A. Kleykamp, "College, Jobs, or the Military? Enlistment during a Time of War," Social Science Quarterly 87, no. 2 (2006): 272-290; D.R. Segal, J.G. Bachman, P. Freedman-Doan & P.M. O'Malley (1999), "Propensity to Serve in the US Military: Temporal Trends and Subgroup differences," Armed Forces & Society, 25(3), 407-427.

62 Evidence is somewhat mixed, but that benefits may encourage a desire to join the military based on Woodruff, Todd, Ryan Kelty, and David R. Segal, "Propensity to serve and motivation to enlist among American combat soldiers." Armed Forces & Society, 32, no. 3 (2006): 353-366; the desire to pursue education mitigates that choice set as well Kleykamp, Meredith A, "College, Jobs, or the Military? Enlistment during a Time of War", Social Science Quarterly, 87, no. 2 (2006): 272-290.

63 For recent cohort studies, see M. Brænder & L.B. Andersen, "Does Deployment to War Affect Public Service Motivation? A Panel Study of Soldiers before and after their Service in Afghanistan," Public Administration Review 73, no. 3 (2013): 466-477. For prior veterans cohorts, see S. Mettler & E. Welch, "Civic Generation: Policy Feedback Effects of the GI Bill on Political Involvement over the Life Course," British Journal of Political Science 34, no. 03 (2004): 497-518;

64 N. Armstrong, J. McDonough Jr., D. Savage, Driving Community Impact: The Case for Local, Evidence-Based Coordination in Veteran and Military Family Services and the AmericaServes Initiative, Institute for Veterans and Military Families, April 2015

65 J.E. Fredland & Roger D. Little, "Long-Term Returns to Vocational Training: Evidence from Military Sources," Journal of Human Resources (1980): 49-66; L.S. Csoka & Fred E. Fiedler, "The Effect of Military Leadership Training: A Test of the Contingency Model, Organizational Behavior & Human Performance, 8, no. 3 (1972): 395-407.

66 See the Army and Marines Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) codes, Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSC), and the Navy job "ratings." For an example, see U.S. Army Regulation 611–1, Personnel Selection and Classification: Military Occupational Classification Structure Development and Implementation (Department of the Army, Washington, DC: Sept. 30, 1997).

67 L.J. Steinberg & C. Zoli, From Battlefield to Classroom: Findings, Barriers, and Pathways to Engineering for U.S. Servicemembers (NSF Report, Directorate for Engineering/Division of Engineering Education and Centers #0948147), February 2011

68 L.J. Steinberg & C. Zoli, From Battlefield to Classroom: Findings, Barriers, and Pathways to Engineering for U.S. Servicemembers (NSF Report, Directorate for Engineering/Division of Engineering Education and Centers #0948147), Feb. 2011

69 National Academies, Rising Above the Gathering Storm (National Academies Press: Washington, DC: 207); Assuring the U.S. Department of Defense A Strong Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Workforce (National Academies Press: Washington, DC: 2012); Expanding Underrepresented Minority Participation: America's Science and Technology Talent at the Crossroads (National Academies Press: Washington, DC: June 2011).

70 G.W. Haynes, "Income and Wealth of Veteran Business Owners, 1989-2004" (U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy, 2007) and "Income and Net Worth of Veterans Business Owners Over the Business Cycle, 1989-2010," (U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy, 2014); B.T. Hirsch & Stephen L. Mehay "Evaluation the Labor Market Performance of Veterans Using a Matched Comparison Group Design," The Journal of Human Resources, 38, no. 3 (2003): 673-700; B. Richard & A. Wilhite, "Military Experience and Training Effects on Civilian Wages," Applied Economics, 22, no. 1 (2006): 1-25; J.H. Hope et al, "Factors Affecting Entrepreneurship among Veterans," Small Business Research Summary (2011); S.A. Kerrick et al., "Military Veterans Marching towards Entrepreneurship: An Exploratory Mixed Methods Study," The International Journal of Management Education 12, no. 3 (2014): 469-478.

71 See Paul Gade, "Military Service and the Life-course Perspective: A Turning Point for Military Personnel Research," Military Psychology, 3(4), 1991, 187-199; Janet M. Wilmoth, Andrew S. London, eds., Life Course Perspectives on Military Service (New York, Routledge 2013); Teachman & Tedrow, "Wages, Earnings, and Occupational Status" (2004); Glen H. Elder, ''Military Times and Turning Points in Men's Lives,'' Developmental Psychology 22 (1986): 233–45: 233, which posits the armed forces "as a mechanism by which unpromising beginnings lead to opportunity and fulfillment instead of to failure"; and Ryan Kelty, Meredith Kleykamp, and David R. Segal, ''The Military and the Transition to Adulthood,'' Future of Children 20 (2010): 181–207.

72 For a specific example, see Gade, "Military Service and the Life-course Perspective," Military Psychology, 3, no. 4 (1991): 187-199.

73 Pew Research Center, Social & Demographic Trends, The Military-Civilian Gap: War and Sacrifice in the Post-9/11 Era (5 Oct. 2011), conducted two surveys that included a total of 1,853 veterans, 712 who served in the military after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 and members of the general public, 2,003 adult respondents. http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2011/10/veterans-report.pdf

74 See Pew Research Center, The Military-Civilian Gap: War and Sacrifice in the Post-9/11 Era (5 Oct. 2011).

75 For Figure 78, see the question, "Do you feel comfortable sharing your experiences as a veteran/service member at your school?" Those who answered "yes" responded to question, "Why do you feel comfortable sharing your experiences as a veteran/service member at your school?"

76 See L.J. Steinberg & C. Zoli, From Battlefield To Classroom: Findings, Barriers, and Pathways to Engineering for U.S. Servicemembers (NSF Report, Directorate for Engineering/Division of Engineering Education and Centers #0948147), Feb. 2011; C. Zoli & L.J. Steinberg, Building Awareness of Technology Careers, Pathways & Academic Preparation for Service Members: NSF/American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE), Advancing Action Plans for Transitioning Post-9/11 Veterans into Engineering Technicians, Engineering Technologists, and Engineers (ETETE), 19 Feb. 2013. Such examples include S.E. Burnett & John Segoria, "Collaboration for Military Transition Students from Combat to College: It Takes a Community," Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability 22, no. 1 (2009): 53-58; D.A. Clark, "The Two Joes Meet. Joe College, Joe Veteran: The GI Bill, College Education, and Postwar American Culture," History of Education Quarterly (1998): 165-189; D. DiRamio, et al., "From Combat to Campus: Voices of Student-Veterans," Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice 45(1) 2008: 173–34; C.B. Rumann & F.A. Hamrick, "Student Veterans in Transition: Re-Enrolling after War Zone Deployments," The Journal of Higher Education 81, no. 4 (2010): 431-458.

77 L.J. Steinberg & C. Zoli, From Battlefield to Classroom: Findings, Barriers, and Pathways to Engineering for U.S. Servicemembers (NSF Report, Directorate for Engineering/Division of Engineering Education and Centers #0948147), February 2011

78 Figure 88. Question "Has the military played a role in your success?"

79 See Angrist, Joshua D. "Lifetime earnings and the Vietnam era draft lottery: evidence from social security administrative records." The American Economic Review (1990): 313-336 and Teachman, Jay. "Military service during the Vietnam era: Were there consequences for subsequent civilian earnings?." Social Forces 83, no. 2 (2004): 709-730.

80 See J.D. Angrist, "Lifetime Earnings and the Vietnam Era Draft Lottery: Evidence from Social Security Administrative Records," The American Economic Review (1990): 313-336

81 See Angrist, "Lifetime Earnings" and Teachman, "Military Service," as well as M.A. Kleykamp, "Unemployment, Earnings, and Enrollment Among Post-9/11 Veterans," Social Science Quarterly, 42 (2013): 835-851

82 See P. Routon, "The Effect of 21st Century Military Service on Civilian Labor and Educational Outcomes," Journal of Labor Research, 35, no 1 (2014), 15-38, and M.A. Kleykamp, "Unemployment, Earnings, and Enrollment among Post-9/11 Veterans," Social Science Quarterly, 42, (2013): 835-851.

83 Of those that identified the barrier to starting their education, when asked "Do you want to pursue higher education or training?", 54% were currently in school either part-time or full-time, 23% plan to enroll in school, and 14% had indicated they had no plans or unsure about pursuing higher education, when also asked "Are there any problems or barriers that hindered you in pursuing or achieving your education goals? Select all that apply", the number one barrier identified was health and disability issues.

84 C. Zoli, R. Maury, and D. Fay, "In Search of the Post-9/11 Veterans' Missing Perspectives," War on the Rocks, April 23, 2015, available at: http://warontherocks.com/2015/04/in-search-of-post-911-veterans-missing-perspectives/

85 Question "Are you employed?" Those that answered working responded to question "Which of the following best describes the sector in which you work?"

86 Question "Does veterans' preference influence your jobs choice (e.g. federal government, private company)?"

87 Unemployment insurance operates as a public insurance program and not a means-tested public assistance program such as SNAP or WIC.

88 Suzanne Mettler, Soldiers to Citizens: The G.I. Bill and the Making of the Greatest Generation (Oxford University Press, 2005).

89 See economist Uwe E. Reinhardt, "Economix Blog: The Moral Hazard of the All-Volunteer Army," 31. Jan 2014, The New York Times, http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/01/31/the-moral-hazard-of-the-all-volunteer-army/. For a broader discussion of the role of economic debate in the military recruitment federal policy shift, see Walter Y. Oi,"The Economic Cost of the Draft," The American Economic Review (1967): 39-62; Gary Becker (1957), "The Case against Conscription," Working paper no. D-4514 (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation); Martin Anderson (1976), Conscription: A Select and Annotated Bibliography (Hoover Bibliographical Series 57); John Chambers, Draftees or Volunteers: A Documentary History of the Debate Over Military Conscription in the United States, 1787-1973 (Garland Press, 1975).

90 See David R. Segal & Mady Wechsler Segal, "America's Military Population," Population Bulletin, Population Reference Bureau 59(4) Dec. 2004, 1-40, p. 3, available at: http://www.prb.org/Source/ACF1396.pdf noting: the "American military has been viewed as a form of national service, an occupation, a profession, a workplace, a calling, an industry, and a set of internal labor markets." See Morris Janowitz, The Professional Soldier (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1960); Charles C. Moskos, "From Institution to Occupation," Armed Forces & Society 4, no. 1 (1977): 41-50; David R. Segal, "Stratification and Labor Market Dynamics in the American Military," in The Oxford Companion to American Military History, ed. John Whiteclay Chambers et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 695-97.

91 For a sample of early studies, see Wilma T., Donahue & Clark Tibbitts, "College and University Procedures in the Reorientation of Veterans," Journal of Clinical Psychology 2, no. 2 (1946): 131-139; Loren S. Hadley, "Scholastic Adjustment Problems of the Returning Veterans," Educational Research Bulletin (1945): 87-112; J.R. Kinzer, "The Veteran and Academic Adjustment," Educational Research Bulletin (1946): 8-12; S.H. Kraines, "The Veteran and Postwar Education," The Journal of Higher Education (1945): 290-298; H. Morris, (1947), "What the Veteran Thinks of Education," Educational and Psychological Measurement (0013-1644), 7, p. 512; C.H. Titus, "The University and the New Veteran," The Journal of Higher Education (1944): 71-116; S.M. Vinocour (1947), "The Veteran Flunks the Professor: A GI Indictment of Our Institutions of Higher Education!". School & Society (0036-6455), 66 (1712), p. 289; Norman Frederiksen, "Predicting Mathematics Grades of Veteran and Nonveteran Students," Educational and Psychological Measurement, 9, 1949, 73-88; Norman Frederiksen & William Benton Schrader, "The Academic Achievement of Veteran and Nonveteran Students," Psychological Monographs: General and Applied 66, no. 15 (1952): i-52; "Adjustment to College: A Study of 10,000 Veteran and Nonveteran Students in Sixteen American Colleges," (Princeton, 1951); Harvey Joanning, "The Academic Performance of Vietnam Veteran College Students," Journal of College Student Personnel (1975); and W.A. Owens & W.A. Owens Jr. "Some Factors in the Academic Superiority of Veteran Students," Journal of Educational Psychology 40, no. 8 (1949): 499.

92 Important work has been conducted in veterans' suicide; homelessness; PTS and related symptoms of combat stress; the impacts of military life on children; military sexual assault; etc. For recent studies in these important areas, see Margaret C. Harrell & Nancy Berglass, Well After Service: Veteran Reintegration and American Communities, Center for New American Security (CNAS) (Apr. 11, 2012). Available at: http://www.cnas.org/sites/default/files/publications-pdf/CNAS_WellAfterService_BerglassHarrell.pdf; Oliver Gould, et al., The Mission Continues: A Case Study of the Well After Service Model, CNAS (Nov. 2014). Available at: http://www.cnas.org/sites/default/files/publicationspdf/CNAS_WellAfterServiceCaseStudy_VoicesFromTheField_updated.pdf; Katherine Blakeley & Don J. Jansen, Congressional Research Service Report R43175, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Other Mental Health Problems in the Military: Oversight Issues for Congress (Aug. 8, 2013); George M. Rutherford, Returning Home From Iraq and Afghanistan: Assessment of Readjustment Needs of Veterans, Service Members, and Their Families, Institute of Medicine Committee on the Assessment of Readjustment Needs of Military Personnel, Veterans, and Their Families (Mar. 23, 2013).

93 For challenges in sample size, see the American Council on Education (ACE)'s important two-part reports: 1) Bryan J. Cook & Young Kim, From Soldier to Student: Easing the Transition of Service Members on Campus (July 2009) (collaborators: ACE; Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC); American Association of State College and Universities (AASCU); NASPA, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education; and National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators (NAVPA)), which is based on survey results from 723 institutions; and 2) Lesley McBain, Young M. Kim, Bryan Cook, & Kathy Snead, From Soldier to Student II: Assessing Campus Programs for Veterans and Service Members (July 2012) (ACE, AASCU, NASPA, and NAVPA), which is based on 690 participating institutions. See also Jennifer L. Steele, Nicholas Salcedo, & James Coley, Service Members in School: Military Veterans' Experiences Using the Post-9/11 GI Bill and Pursuing Postsecondary Education (Rand, ACE, and Lumina, 2010), available at http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2011/RAND_MG1083.pdf, which is based on 230 military/veterans student survey respondents; and Wendy Lang, Brian Harriett, & Marvin Cadet, Completing the Mission II: A Study of Veterans' Student Progress toward Degree Attainment in the Post 9/11 Era (Pat Tillman Foundation, Operation College Promise, and Got Your Six, November 2013), available at: http://www.operationpromiseforservicemembers.com/Completing_Mission_II.pdf, and W. Lang & J.T. Powers, Completing the Mission: A Pilot Study of Veteran Students' Progress Toward Degree Attainment in the Post-9/11 Era (November 2011), available at: http://www.operationpromiseforservicemembers.com/Completing_the_Mission_Nov2011.pdf, which are based on 741 students on 23 voluntarily participating campuses and 160 students during the 2010-2011 year at seven public universities, respectively.

94 See Florence A. Hamrick & Corey B. Rumann, Called to Serve: A Handbook on Student Veterans and Higher Education (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2012); Robert Ackerman & David DiRamio, eds., Creating a Veteran-Friendly Campus: Strategies for Transition and Success, New Directions for Student Services 126 (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2011); David DiRamio & Kathryn Jarvis, Veterans in Higher Education: When Johnny and Jane Come Marching to Campus, Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) Report 37, no. 3 (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2011); Bruce Kelley, Justin Smith, & Ernetta Fox, Preparing Your Campus for Veterans' Success: An Integrated Approach to Facilitating The Transition and Persistence of Our Military Students (Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2013); and Jan Arminio, Tomoko Kudo Grabosky, Josh Lang, Student Veterans and Service Members in Higher Education (New York: Routledge, 2015).

95 One of many important exceptions is David T. Vacchi & Joseph B. Berger, "Student Veterans in Higher Education," in Michael Paulson, ed., Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research (Spring 2014): 93-153.

96 In essence there is a paradox: on the one hand, reverence for the military in ways that may strain constitutionally based civil-military relations, and, on the other, a lack of public attention to veterans' well-being. See D.H. Mazur, A More Perfect Military: How the Constitution Can Make Our Military Stronger (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Deborah N. Pearlstein, "The Soldier, the State, and the Separation of Powers," Texas Law Review 90 (2012): 797-858; Diane Mazur, "The Constitutional Bond in Military Professionalism: A Reply to Professor Deborah N. Pearlstein," Texas Law Review, 90: 146-156; and Robert Goldich, "American Military Culture from Colony to Empire," Daedalus, 140, no. 3: 58-74. James Fallow argues in "The Tragedy of the American Military," The Atlantic (Jan/Feb 2015), that the "American public and its political leadership will do anything for the military except take it seriously." Fallow's article is available at: http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/12/the-tragedy-of-the-american-military/383516/.

97 Robust studies of veterans in higher education after World War II include Norman Frederiksen and William Benton Schrader's massive, "Adjustment to College. A Study of 10,000 Veteran and Nonveteran Students in Sixteen American Colleges" (Princeton Educational Testing Service (1951), ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED05856). Frederiksen and Schrader found that "veteran students prove to be superior achievers as compared with nonveteran students" and those from families with lower income did better than the students whose families earned more.

98 For creative nonfiction and fiction addressing "after war," see David Finkel, Thank You for Your Service (London: Picador, 2014); Kevin Power, The Yellow Birds (Boston, MA: Back Bay, 2013); and Phil Klay, Redeployment (New York: Penguin, 2014). For a description of this groundswell of writing, see Michiko Kakutani, "Human Costs of the Forever Wars: Enough to Fill a Bookshelf," The New York Times, Dec. 25, 2014, available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/26/books/human-costs-of-the-forever-wars-enough-to-fill-a-bookshelf.html, and the veterans' literary organization, Words after War, dedicated to building a community of veteran writers with the skills to tell their own stories (http://www.wordsafterwar.org).

99 For 2013 CPS data see U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Table 1: Employment status of persons 18 years and over by veteran status, period of service, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, annual averages 2013, available at: http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/vet_03202014.htm; For 2014 CPS data see U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Table Employment status of persons 18 years and over by veteran status, age, and sex, not seasonally adjusted, annual averages 2014, online data retrievable available at: http://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/veterans_by_age_and_sex.htm.

100 Veterans who served in more than one wartime period are classified only in the most recent one in CPS. Veterans who served during one of the selected wartime periods and another peacetime period are classified only in the wartime period.

101 Comparison of data is for 2014. For CPS see U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Table 1 Employment status of persons 18 years and over by veteran status, period of service, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, annual averages 2014 —available at: http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/vet_03182015.htm. For ACS see U.S Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), table B21002, period of military service for civilians veterans 18 and over, 2014 1 year estimate. For VetPop2014, see U.S Department of Veterans Affair, National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, Veteran Population Projection Model 2014 (VetPop2014), Table 2L, Living Veterans by Period of Service, 2013-2014—available at: http://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/Demographics/New_Vetpop_Model/2L_VetPop2014.xlsx

102 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), Table B21002: "Period of Military Service for Civilian Veterans 18 and over, 2014 3-year estimate".

103 See Umar Moulta-Ali, Congressional Research Service Report R42324 Who is a "Veteran?" Basic Eligibility for Veterans' Benefits Analyst in Disability Policy (Jan. 23, 2014). Available at: http://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42324.pdf.

104 Title 10 U.S.C. 101(a)(5) includes all the branches of the armed forces, the commissioned corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service. Benefits and services provided to veterans of the U.S. armed forces are codified in Title 38 of the U.S. Code. The term "armed forces" means the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard (see 10 USC §101(a)(4)). The term "uniformed services" means the armed forces; the commissioned corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service (see 10 USC§101(a)(5)).

105 38 U.S.C. § 101(2); 38 C.F.R. § 3.1(d). See also Barton F. Stichman et al., Veterans Benefits Manual, at §221.

106 A classic colloquial understanding of a veteran is this ironic definition among servicemembers: "a veteran is someone who, at one point in his/her life, wrote a blank check made payable to 'The United States of America' for an amount of 'up to and including my life.'"

107 Critics have rightly pointed out problems with the "other than dishonorable" service designation as a threshold consideration for benefits eligibility. One possible solution would be for Congress to simply pass legislation to align statutory language with VA discharge categories so that the definition of the eligible beneficiary is clear and so that VA benefits administrative staff do not have to weigh-in on a case-by-case basis on service discharge status—an unnecessary, time-consuming, bureaucratic process.

108 Note that the National Survey of Veterans (2010) documents approximately 8 percent of active-duty members using their VA educational benefits to pursue a degree, so, again, student veterans are not always separated from the armed services.

109 Since GI Bill benefits may support this military tuition assistance, these educational benefits usually associated with "student veterans" and "military students" may also overlap.

110 See 10 USC §101(b)(1).

111 See 10 USC §101(b)(4); 10 USC §101(b)(5).

112 See 10 USC §101(b)(6); 10 USC §101(b)(7).

113 See 10 USC §101(d)(1); 10 USC §101(d)(3).

114 As VA, Gulf War Era Veterans Report: Pre-9/11 (2 Aug. 1990-10 Sept. 2001) Feb. 2011, p. 4, available at: http://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/GW_Pre911_report.pdf: notes, "From Operation Desert Shield to 9/11 to the ongoing Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (transitioned to Operation New Dawn in September 2010), these events and many others define the "Gulf War Era." As a term used only for the purposes of this reporting series, it represents a period in time from August 2, 1990 through a date to be prescribed by Presidential proclamation or law." See, also, Barbara Salazar Torreon, Congressional Research Service (CRS) 7-5700/RS21405, U.S. Periods of War and Dates of Current Conflicts, 28 Dec. 2012: http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/202883.pdf; Jennifer K. Elsea & Matthew Weed, CRS Report 7-5700/RL31133, Declarations of War and Authorizations for the Use of Military Force: Historical Background and Legal Implications (18 Apr 2014), https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL31133.pdf; Barbara Salazar Torreon, CRS Report R42738, Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2014 (15 Sept. 2014): http://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42738.pdf

115 See Field Manual 3-24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5, Counterinsurgency (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army; Headquarters, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Department of the Navy, Dec. 2006); Steven Metz, Armed Conflict in the 21st Century: The Information Revolution and Post-Modern Warfare (Strategic Studies Institute, Carlyle, PA: 2000); David Ucko, The New Counterinsurgency Era: Transforming The US Military For Modern Wars (Georgetown University Press, 2009);; Daniel Byman, "Friends like These: Counterinsurgency and the War on Terrorism," International Security 31.2 (2006): 79-115; Lewis Irwin, "Irregular Warfare Lessons Learned: Reforming the Afghan National Police," Joint Force Quarterly 52 (2009); Lawrence Freedman, The Transformation of Strategic Affairs, (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, Adelphi Paper No. 379, 2006); Stanley A. McChrystal, "The Evolution of Joint Special Operations Command & the Pursuit of Al Qaeda in Iraq" (Brookings, Washington, D.C., 28 Jan. 2013), available at: www.brookings.edu/~/media/events/2013/1/28%20mcchrystal%20zarqawi/mcchrystal%20transcript.pdf

116 As this "new war" literature is vast, see these important examples: Martin Van Creveld, The Transformation of War (New York: The Free Press, 1991); Mary Kaldor, New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2013); Paul Collier & Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," Oxford Economic Papers 56, no. 4 (2004): 563-595; Stathis Kalyvas, The Logic of Violence in Civil War, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); George Lucas Jr, "Postmodern War," Journal of Military Ethics 9, no. 4 (2010): 289-298; and James R. Blaker & Robert A. Mannin, eds., Understanding the Revolution in Military Affairs: A Guide to America's 21st Century Defense (Washington, DC: Progressive Policy Institute, 1997). For the implications for the armed forces, see Charles Moskos, John Allen Williams, & David R. Segal, eds, The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces After the Cold War (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

117 For statements of these shifts, see U.S. Joint Publication 3-05, Special Operations (Jul. 16, 2014)—available at: http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_05.pdf; Colin S. Gray, Irregular Enemies and the Essence of Strategy: Can the American Way of War Adapt (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, March 2006); H.R. McMaster, "When Gadgetry Becomes Strategy," World Affairs 171, no. 3 (winter 2009): 31–43; Mike Flynn, Matt Pottinger, & Paul D. Batchelor, Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Century, January 2010); Stanley McChrystal, "It Takes a Network: The New Front Line of Modern Warfare," Foreign Policy (Feb. 21, 2011)—available at: http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/02/21/it-takes-a-network/; Gian Gentile, "A Strategy of Tactics: Population-centric COIN and the Army," Parameters 41, no. 4 (2011): 116; Chris Gray, Postmodern War: The New Politics of Conflict (New York: Routledge, 2013); and Lawrence Freedman, The Revolution in Strategic Affairs (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

118 C. Zoli, R. Maury, & D. Fay, Survey 1: Service Member to Student Survey: Veterans' Perceptions of Transition, Higher Education, and Success (Institute for Veterans and Military Families, May 2014-Jan. 2015). Questions: "Does your service-related disability create obstacles for you?" and "In which areas does your service-related disability create obstacles for you?" (responses displayed only for those who indicate "yes" to having a service connected disability).

119 Following Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism Deputy Director VADM (Ret.) Robert B. Murrett's suggestions, we use and prefer the term "post-traumatic stress" (PTS) to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) so as both to reduce the tendency to pathologize stress conditions (i.e., disorder) and to acknowledge the widespread nature and broad spectrum of stress conditions after combat and deployments. Likewise, James Mattis argues for "post-traumatic growth" in a recent OpEd, "The Meaning of their Service," The Wall Street Journal (April 17, 2015)—available at: http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-meaning-of-their-service-1429310859. See also, Richard J. McNally & B. Christopher Frueh, "Why Are Iraq and Afghanistan War Veterans Seeking PTSD Disability Compensation at Unprecedented Rates?" Journal of Anxiety Disorders 27, no. 5 (June 2013): 520—note that, "As of the late spring of 2012, 45% of veterans of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have applied for service-connected disability compensation for psychiatric and nonpsychiatric medical problems and 28% of have already secured it (Marchione, 2012) as compared to 14% of other veterans (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013). Moreover, the average number of medical conditions cited by each disability applicant has ranged from eight to nine, increasing to as many as 14 conditions per applicant during the past year (Marchione, 2012). Importantly, these figures apply to all veterans of these two wars, not merely those with combat experience. This is a historically unprecedented rate of seeking disability compensation. The percentage of World War II, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf War veterans who have received disability compensation for any reason are 11%, 16%, and 21%, respectively (Marchione, 2012). The average number of conditions cited per applicant has risen dramatically as well. For example, World War II recipients averaged two conditions per veteran, whereas Vietnam recipients averaged about four conditions per veteran (Marchione, 2012). Taken together, these data imply that our recent veterans suffer from far more disabling psychiatric and nonpsychiatric medical problems than have veterans of previous conflicts." See also, M. Tracie Shea, Madhavi K. Reddy, Audrey R. Tyrka, & Elizabeth Sevin, "Risk Factors for Post-Deployment Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in National Guard/Reserve Service Members," Psychiatry Research, 210, no.3 (2013): 1042-1048 and Sohyun C. Han et al., "Military Unit Support, Postdeployment Social Support, and PTSD Symptoms Among Active Duty and National Guard Soldiers Deployed to Iraq," Journal of Anxiety Disorders, 28, no. 5 (2014): 446-453.

120 Table 4 data is derived from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefit Administration Annual Benefits Report, FY 2014, "Compensation section," available at: http://www.benefits.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/ABR-Combined-FY14-11032015.pdf. "Disabled veterans" column compiled from Table (p. 6): " All Compensation Recipients by period of service," Table (p. 7): "All Gulf War Era compensation recipients by GWOT status" ; "percent" column compiled from Table (p. 6): "Recipients and Disabilities by Period of Service: All Compensation Recipients by period of service," and by dividing GWOT and non-GWOT compensation recipients by total compensation recipients to get the two percentages"; "Total number of disabilities" column compiled from Table (p. 6): "Period of Service Average disabilities per Veteran by period of service—all compensation recipients," Table (p. 7): Number of disabilities of all Gulf War Era compensation recipients by GWOT status" ; "Average number of disabilities" compiled from Table (p. 41): "Number of SC disabilities of all compensation recipients by period of service," Table (p. 7): "Number of SC disabilities of all Gulf War Era compensation recipients by GWOT status"; "Annual total amount paid" column compiled from Table (p.18): "All compensation recipients and estimated annual payments," Table (p.20): "All GWOT compensation recipients and estimated annual payments," the Gulf-War era-non-GWOT was calculated by taking the total amount spent annually on Gulf War Era compensation recipients, 21,297,996,929, (according to Table (p.18): "All compensation recipients and estimated annual payments") and subtracting the amount spent on GWOT compensation recipients, 11,638,424,599.

121 According to (p. 3) "Global War on Terror (GWOT) Information Integrated into Period of Service Sections" in the compensation section, The Global War on Terror (GWOT) include troops whom have been deployed overseas since September 11, 2001 in support of GWOT. GWOT includes Operation Iraqi Freedom/ Operation Enduring Freedom/ Operation New Dawn (OIF/OEF/OND), available at http://www.benefits.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/ABR-Combined-FY14-11032015.pdf

122 VBA, 2014. Compensation, p. 7, Table: "Number of SC disabilities of all Gulf War Era compensation recipients by GWOT status."

About

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES
JPMorgan Chase & Co., Founding Partner

THE INSTITUTE FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES (IVMF)

The IVMF is the first interdisciplinary national institute in higher education focused on the social, economic, education and policy issues impacting veterans and their families post-service. Through our focus on veteran-facing programming, research and policy, employment and employer support, and community engagement, the institute provides in-depth analysis of the challenges facing the veteran community, captures best practices and serves as a forum to facilitate new partnerships and strong relationships between the individuals and organizations committed to making a difference for veterans and military families.

INSCT
INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AND COUNTERTERRORISM
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AND COUNTERTERRORISM(INSCT)

The Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism (INSCT) at Syracuse University provides cutting-edge interdisciplinary research, graduate-level education, and public service on law and policy challenges related to national and international security. INSCT faculty and staff expertise ranges across several disciplines and specialties, including security studies, foreign affairs, homeland security, counterterrorism, national security law, peace and conflict studies, defense policy and military operations, and cybersecurity. INSCT places a special emphasis on forming research partnerships with national and international academic and nonacademic institutes to advance common goals, such as the co-sponsorship of the leading Journal of National Security Law and Policy.

CONTACT IVMF RESEARCH

AT IVMFRESEARCH@SYR.EDU

STAY IN TOUCH

p 315.443.0141
f 315.443.0312
e vets@syr.edu
w vets.syr.edu

IVMFSyracuseU

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES
JPMorgan Chase & Co., Founding Partner