PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR BOOTS: TRENDS, CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES & RESOURCES FOR MILITARY MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES
HOW’S YOUR COMMUTE?
(language alert)
WHAT’S IN IT FOR YOU?

• Amaze your boss with facts of how the culture and demographics of the military differs from non-military folks (and the difference between Branches, too).

• Wow friends at your next party by explaining current trends and issues affecting military members and their families.

• Astonish coworkers with your knowledge of the perks of military life.

• And dazzle clients by referring them to available resources based on their eligibility status.
ACTIVE DUTY?  RESERVE?  GUARD?
A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

• Proportion of U.S. population that fought in WWII: 12%

• Proportion of U.S. population that fought in Vietnam War: 2%

• Proportion of U.S. population fought/fighting in OEF/OIF/OND/OIR: 0.5%

• Active-duty armed forces, end of Cold War (early ‘90’s): 2.2 million

• Active-duty armed forces today: 1.3 million
• OEF – Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan, October 2001 & on-going)

• OIF – Operation Iraqi Freedom (March 2003 – August 2010)

• OND – Operation New Dawn (Iraq, September 2010 – December 2011)

• OIR: Operation Inherent Resolve (Iraq/Syria, June 2014 & on-going)
THE POST-9/11 GENERATION

2,453,036 deployed for OEF/OIF/OND

• 1,759,457 Active (72%); 693,579 Reserve (28%)
• 88% male; 12% female
• 62% younger than age 29 (at deployment)
• 86% enlisted; 14% officer or warrant officer
• 76.5% high school or some college; 15.9% college or higher education

Source: DoD Contingency Tracking System, July 31, 2012

Taken From: Center for a New American Security
UNIQUENESS OF TODAY’S MILITARY MEMBER/VETERAN

• Draft vs. All-Volunteer Force
• Guard/Reserve vs. Active Duty Duty
• Age
• Family Status
• Male vs. Female
• Combat Roles
• Types of Injuries
LET’S COMPARE MIL TO CIV:

• Age distribution in the Work Force:
  • Military: 18-30, 66%
  • Civilians: 18-30, 28.5%

• Gender distribution
  • Military: about 15% women
  • Civilian labor force: 47.6% women

• Education

• Race/Ethnicity
  • 31.2% of military identify themselves as a minority
  • US population, 22.9% identify as ethnic minority
JUST ANOTHER DAY AT THE OFFICE
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY FORMATION

• Just over half (55.3%) of Active Duty military members are married

• In addition, 6.4 percent of DoD’s Active Duty members are in dual-military marriages.

• 69% of officers are married; 52.1% of enlisted are.

• The divorce rate among both officers and enlisted troops was an even 3 percent in 2015.
% Married among Junior Enlisted & Comparable Civilians

Men
- Military: 38%
- Civilian: 24%

Women
- Military: 37%
- Civilian: 33%
FAMILY DYNAMICS

• Socioeconomic status
  • Enlisted/Officer = Blue collar/White collar
  • Military is more “blue collar” (83%) than civilian labor force (61%)

• Spouse employment
  • Unemployment and underemployment
  • Earnings penalties*

• Dual service and single parents
  • Family separation
  • Distance from extended family networks
There are 1.4 dependent family members for every service member. These include over 700,000 spouses and 1.2 million children in active duty families, and 400,000 spouses and nearly 750,000 children in Guard and Reserve families.
SCHOOLING

• About 13% of military children in Department of Defense (DoD) schools

• Remaining 87% in civilian schools
  • Many in high military-presence communities
  • Educators in non-military communities have become more responsive to challenges facing military children over past 10 years
SCHOOLING CHALLENGES

• Challenges in non-military communities:
  • Particularly children in Guard/Reserve/geo-dispersed families
  • Isolated from on-base resources
  • Only child in school with deployed parent
  • Delayed enrollment, inappropriate grade-level placement, exclusion from educational programs and extracurricular activities, and delayed graduation.
Normal everyday stressors
every family experiences:
Finances, In-laws, Disciplining
Children, Teenagers, Time
Together, Scheduling
Conflicts…

TBI & PTSD
Single parenting
during deployment

Anxiety of military
member in imminent danger
Depression
Re-establishing roles
FAMILY SEPARATION

• Branches experience different operational tempos
  • Army: 39% of force, 54% of deployments
  • Navy: 6 month rotations on land or sea
  • Guard/Reserve comprised one-third of all deployments in OEF and OIF

• Older and younger children face different stressors
  • Young children: grief, confusion, and loss
  • Teenagers: understand dangers, renegotiation of family roles
Even in stable families, family members may initially experience the following:

- Numbness or disorientation
- A sense of abandonment
- Mood and sleep problems
- A period of emotional and behavioral disorganization, anger and resentment
Wisconsin teen Sabrina Brady won a Google Doodle contest with the theme “My Best Day Ever...” by depicting her reunion with her father after an 18-month deployment.
• The extent to which service members, spouses, and children have been changed by the experience of deployment will increase the complexity of the integration process.

• Physical and/or psychological injuries may challenge ability to reintegrate and contribute to marital problems and family dysfunction.

• 54% of teenagers reported fitting returned parent back into home routine most difficult problem
• As the family begins to reorganize to accommodate the military member, stress and conflict can arise.

• Major decisions
• Confusion in altered roles or routines
• Independence and control
• Criticism/disagreements about child rearing
• Family shifts in social support
WHY IS INTEGRATION DIFFICULT?

**Military Induction**
- Duration Scheduled by Organization
- Intense Transition
- Subordination of Self to Organization
- Must Embrace Organizational System, Values, Culture

**Civilian Induction**
- Duration Determine by Individual
- Not Organized, Exogenous Intensity
- Self Becomes Primary
- Individual Chooses System, Values, Culture

**Dependent Conclusion**
"You are now a Marine"

**Independent Conclusion**
"I am now a civilian"

**Risk Factors**
- Unemployment
- Homelessness
- Addiction
- Suicide
- Isolation

**Conditions**
- VA Backlog

**Conclusion**
- Civil Society (the >99%)
- Military Service (<1%)
- Civil Society (the >99%)
“Life after the military is hard. Because from day one in the military, we’re told where we rank and how to act accordingly. You spend years knowing exactly where everyone stands in the hierarchy of command… Now, you don’t know your place, everyone thinks they’re the most special flower, and I’m over here losing my mind because I’m trying to stay in my designated lane, but people keep crashing into me! Then I’m the bad guy when I verbally assist them back to where they belong. I struggle with this every single day.”
1. Did you kill anyone?
2. What was worst thing you saw over there?
3. Are you glad to be home?
4. Did you see the news...? *
5. Do you feel guilty about what you had to do over there?
6. What do you think about the U.S. being over there? Don’t you think we should get out?
7. DO NOT tell a veteran that they should be grateful they made it home alive and in one piece.

*Unless it’s good news. Or about free food.
POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER
&
TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY
What Is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder?

• Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a natural emotional reaction to a deeply shocking and disturbing experience.

• It is a normal reaction to an abnormal situation.
TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

• Damage to the brain due to externally inflicted trauma

• Mild traumatic brain injury is the lower-grade forms of TBI

• Mild TBI with little or no loss of consciousness may not be diagnosed in the field and the SM returned to duty
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<thead>
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<th><strong>TBI</strong></th>
<th><strong>PTSD</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>• Insomnia</td>
<td>• Insomnia</td>
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<td>• Impaired memory</td>
<td>• Impaired memory</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Poor concentration</td>
<td>• Poor concentration</td>
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<td>• Depression</td>
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<td>• Impulse control</td>
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<td>• Headache*</td>
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<td>• Emotional numbing*</td>
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SIGNS OF ADJUSTMENT DIFFICULTIES

• Increased anger, irritability
• Shortened tempers
• Sleep problems
• Unable to relate to children or spouse
• Reckless behavior
• Spending money excessively

• Apparent lack of interest to spend time with family, children, spouse
• Communication problems
• Difficulty re-establishing roles and responsibilities
• Difficulties driving, refusal to drive, or determined to drive when shouldn’t
• Isolation
SIGN OF ADJUSTMENT DIFFICULTIES

• Financial stressors
• Family lacks understanding or empathy
• Anxiety/panic attacks
• Feeling society doesn’t understand
• Denial of problems/refusal to get help
• Drug and alcohol misuse
• Arrests (esp. DUI's, drug charges, assault, domestic violence)
POSSIBLE TRIGGER WARNING
8 BATTLEFIELD SKILLS THAT MAKE REINTEGRATION CHALLENGING

1. Safety. Military personnel in the war zone must be on constant alert for danger.

2. Trust and Identifying the Enemy. To survive, it’s better to assume that everyone is the enemy until proven otherwise.

3. Mission Orientation. The primary task in the military is to complete the mission ordered from above.

Adapted with permission from James Munroe, Ed.D, VA Boston Healthcare System
4. **Decision Making.** In the war zone, following orders is critical to personal safety, the well-being of comrades and the success of the mission.

5. **Response Tactics.** In the war zone, survival depends on automatic response to danger. It is critical to act first — with maximum firepower — and think later.

6. **Predictability and Intelligence Control.** In the war zone, troops are in serious danger if the enemy can predict their movements, routine, location or intentions.
7. Emotional Control. Combat exposes military personnel to overwhelming events that elicit fear, loss and grief. Yet the job requires that they move on quickly, staying alert and vigilant.

8. Talking about the War. It’s hard to talk about how the war changed the individual. War may challenge the service member’s core beliefs about humanity and justice in the world.
BARRIERS TO SEEKING CARE

• Stigma
• Survivor’s guilt
• Belief that they don’t deserve help
• Don’t want to be a burden on family/system
• Concerns about impact on career
• Lack of information about resources
• Need for civilian partners and providers trained in military/veteran culture & key issues
• Complexity of systems of care
• Service Members
• Family Members
• Veterans
THE BIG FIVE ISSUES: SERVICE MEMBERS

• Military Pay & Benefits
• Changes in Retirement Benefits
• Family Stability/Quality of Life
• Impact of Deployments on Kids
• Op-tempo/Deployments/Training
THE BIG 5: SPOUSES

• Military Pay & Benefits
• Spouse Employment
• Changes in Retirement Benefits
• Impact of Deployments on Kids
• Family Stability/Quality of Life
THE BIG 5: VETERANS

• Military Pay & Benefits
• Changes in Retirement Benefits
• Number of SM and Veteran Suicides
• PTSD/Combat Stress/TBI
• Veteran Employment
LET’S TALK ABOUT THE GOOD STUFF

DONT MIND ME

JUST MAKING FREEDOM ANGELS
BENEFITS OF MILITARY LIFE:

• Travel
• Well-rounded children
• Personal Growth
• Community
BENEFITS OF MILITARY LIFE:

• Military benefits/consistent pay.

• Tax-free housing allowance (BAH)

• Comprehensive no-cost/low-cost health care

• Savings Deposit Program

• SCRA protection
BENEFITS OF MILITARY LIFE:

• Post-911 GI Bill

• The feeling of “Belonging”

• Resources for employment, relocation, child-care, elder care and everything in between.

• Ability to sleep anywhere, at any time.*

*Applies to SM only. Most Spouses haven’t developed this super-power yet.
PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

SCAM
SIGNS OF MILITARY ROMANCE SCAMS

• Met on a dating site or social media
• Cannot access his bank account.
• Needs money to come home
• Commanding officer calls
• Can’t get internet, food or travel money.
• Claim to be Special Forces
• Deployed for over a year
• Family and friends think it’s crazy

http://www.romancescams.org/
REAL SOLDIERS DON’T NEED:

• A satellite phone, calling card, or permission to call

• Access to your bank account

• Money from Western Union, I-Tune Cards, or MoneyGram

• Money to apply for leave, retirement, flight home, a replacement or “fiancé benefits”

• An “agent” to ship a box

• Money for food or medical expenses (for themselves or family member)
NOW BACK TO OUR REGULARLY SCHEDULED PROGRAM
THREE WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT MILITARY MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

• Educate yourself about military culture

• Be informed of the added issues and stressors that military families experience

• Become knowledgeable of resources available to military families
OTHER WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT MILITARY MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

- Encourage your elected leaders to support initiatives and legislation to support this population

- Volunteer with USO, Red Cross, and other non-profits

- Encourage corporate and business to develop best practices for supporting military families
RESOURCES: ONLINE, IN-PERSON & VIA PHONE
SERVICE RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS: HOW THEY CAN HELP

- Emergency Travel
- Health Care Expenses
- Food Purchases
- Essential Furniture
- Funeral Expenses
- Rent or Mortgage
- Initial Rent and Deposit
- Appliance Maintenance
- Minor Home Repairs
- Utilities
SERVICE RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS

- Army Emergency Relief: https://www.aerhq.org/
- Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society: http://www.nmcrs.org/
- Air Force Aid Society: https://www.afas.org/
- Coast Guard Mutual Assistance: https://www.cgmahq.org/
FOR VETERANS IN CRISIS

• Dial 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1 to talk to someone

• Start a confidential online chat session at http://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/chat

• Send a text message to 838255 to connect to a VA responder

• Take a self-check quiz at http://www.vetselfcheck.org/

• Vet Centers by phone at 877-WAR-VETS (927-8387) or through https://www.vetcenter.va.gov/
MILITARY AND FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS

• Provide assistance to service members and their families.

• SMs and families are eligible to receive services from any center, regardless of branch of service.

• Each branch has a different name: Army Community Services Center, the Marine and Family Services Center, the Navy Fleet and Family Support Center, and the Air Force Airman and Family Readiness Center.
• The National Guard and Reserve operate Military and Family Support Centers to Guard and Reserve members/families, as well as ADSMs and their families when they are not located near an active-duty installation.

• Contact Military OneSource for the nearest Center: 800-342-9647
PHONE RESOURCES

- AMERICAN RED CROSS  (877) 272-7337
- MILITARY CHILDCARE  (800) 424-2246
- MILITARY ONESOURCE  (800) 342-9647
- NATIONAL GUARD FAMILY PROGRAMS (800) 233-7758
- SAFE HELPLINE ON SEXUAL ASSAULT (877) 995-5247
- Vet Center Call Center 877-WAR-VETS (927-8387)
ON-LINE RESOURCES

• Military OneSource:  www.militaryonesource.com

• Tutor.com (free tutoring for military children and ADSMs) www.tutor.com/military

• Defense Centers of Excellence: http://www.dcoe.mil/

• Defense & Veterans Brain Injury Center: http://dvbic.dcoe.mil/

• Veterans Administration Provider Toolkit: http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders/clinic_suicideprevention.asp
QUESTIONS?

U.S. Marines landing on Guadalcanal, August 1942.
DATA SOURCES

• DoD: *Demographics Profile of the Military Community*
• Office of Personnel and Readiness: *Population Representation in the Military Services*
• DoDEA: Annual *Demographics Report and Report Cards*
• Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC)
• Army OneSource Resource Center
• Military OneSource: http://www.militaryonesource.mil
• Blue Star Families Military Lifestyle Survey 2016
I’D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU:

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