

# Women Veterans in Transition

A Research Project of Business and Professional Women's Foundation



## ***Understanding the Complexity of Women Veterans' Career Transitions***

### **1. Overview**

The transition from the military into the civilian workforce for women veterans may be a longer and more complex process than previously thought by those working with women veterans. Women veterans responding to Business and Professional Women's (BPW) Foundation survey *Women Veterans in Transition* tell a compelling story about their triumphs and challenges as they transition.

**“One day you were in the military, the next you were home in a whole different world.”**

**Women Veteran in Transition Survey Respondent**

Separation from the military and entry into the civilian workforce is often viewed as a time-limited event by those providing transition supports. While the official physical separation occurs within a limited time frame, results from a recent survey of women veterans indicates that the psychological transition can take place over an extended period of time even for those who have successfully secured post-military employment. Standardized transition activities may not be taking into account the full breadth and range of the needs of women veterans. Similarly, employers seeking to engage women veterans in the workplace may not know everything necessary to take full advantage of this growing source of intellectual capital.

An initial look at the results of a 2007 survey of women veterans, undertaken by BPW Foundation as part of a pilot study on the career transition experiences of women veterans, indicates that the transition from the military into the civilian workforce is a multi-dimensional process for women veterans, and decision makers may need to look at a number of factors in order to craft programs and services that more fully support women veterans moving into the civilian workforce. This reality has implications not only for the types of resources needed by women veterans as they transition but also the timing and duration of those resources.

### **2. Research Rationale**

#### **Background**

As an organization dedicated to empowering all workingwomen to achieve their full potential and to partnering with employers to build successful workplaces, BPW Foundation actively seeks out information about under-recognized or under-utilized groups of workingwomen. Its goals include helping to create a more accurate picture of the role of women in the workforce, and through its research projects and educational programs, to inform the development of programs and resources that help workingwomen make successful career transitions.

**The Women Veterans in Transition Research Project is underwritten by  
BPW Foundation  
Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Charitable Service Trust  
and Harley-Davidson Foundation, Inc.**



For information on how your organization can support the Women Veterans in Transition Research Project, contact 202-293-1100 or [foundation@bpwfoundation.org](mailto:foundation@bpwfoundation.org)

By focusing on the career transition experiences of women veterans, BPW Foundation is accomplishing multiple goals. First, it is bringing to light the experiences of an important and largely under-recognized and under-utilized segment of the workforce. Secondly, research on the experiences of women as they leave the military and enter the civilian workforce allows BPW Foundation to study a discrete example of a career transition that may help illuminate the experiences of many other types of workingwomen undergoing transitions within their careers. Thirdly, results of the survey can have a direct impact on programming that supports women veterans. BPW Foundation partner organizations, such as Business and Professional Women/USA which operates the Women Joining Forces Program for women veterans, can now use information provided by the research to focus their own career-oriented programming for women veterans.

### Questions to Be Addressed

Women veterans are a growing segment of the U.S. labor force. In 1980, there were 1.1 million women veterans; as of 2007, their numbers had increased to 1.7 million. Increasing public dialogue around the specific issues facing women veterans helps ensure that services and supports are in place as they transition from the

**“Transitioning from the military was bittersweet. I was ready to part from the military, but I was also afraid because our household was losing a paycheck. All in all, I am very happy with my decision, and I can only hope for the best.”**

**Women Veteran in Transition Survey Respondent**

military into the civilian workforce and enables employers and community leaders to fully engage a growing, often highly-skilled segment of society. While women veterans are a growing segment of the civilian labor force, much remains unknown about them. Little information specific to the transition experiences of women veterans is available in the public realm. Very little is known about how women veterans deal with the transition from the military into the civilian world, how they fare after they have returned to the civilian world, the resources they find useful as they transition, the effectiveness of programs meant to support them, how their separation experiences may differ or be similar to male veterans and how they feel about leaving

the military and reentering the civilian world. Through the *Women Veterans in Transition* pilot research project, BPW Foundation is taking a first step in addressing these questions.

The results of this pilot study will help inform not only efforts to support women veterans but will, it is hoped, lead to a better general understanding of what resources and supports are useful within career transitions experienced by many different types of workers, not just women veterans. Additionally, a number of the issues important to women veterans as they transition, such as work-life balance, are important to many different types of workers. It is believed that by highlighting programs and policies that can support women veterans in the workplace these same programs will be of benefit to a larger pool of workers.

In seeking to develop a picture of what career transition experiences are like for women veterans, survey questions were designed to elicit information that could help those working with women veterans understand:

- How public and private organizations can promote and support the resources most useful to women veterans in the transition process;
- When the transition process actually begins for women veterans, when it ends and when resources and supports are desired by women veterans to support them during the process;

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- What constitutes a successful career transition (i.e. securing any job, securing the job wanted, feeling adjusted) and what actions can organizations take to increase the chances that women veterans will experience one;
- What employers can do to attract, retain and fully engage women veterans in the workplace;
- What veteran activities and characteristics appear to influence the success and duration of a career transition and which of these programs and services can help women veterans develop?

The *Women Veterans in Transition* research project offers a picture of the experiences of a group of women veterans from across all branches of service as they transition from the military into the civilian workforce. The results of this pilot study allows a conversation to begin with policy makers, employers and nonprofits and government agencies in order to explore what can be done to design and encourage programs and services that will be more useful to women veterans and their employers throughout the entire transition process.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, almost two-thirds of the more than 1,600 survey respondents agreed to participate in further research with BPW Foundation, which provides an unprecedented opportunity to follow the changing experiences of a group of women veterans over time.

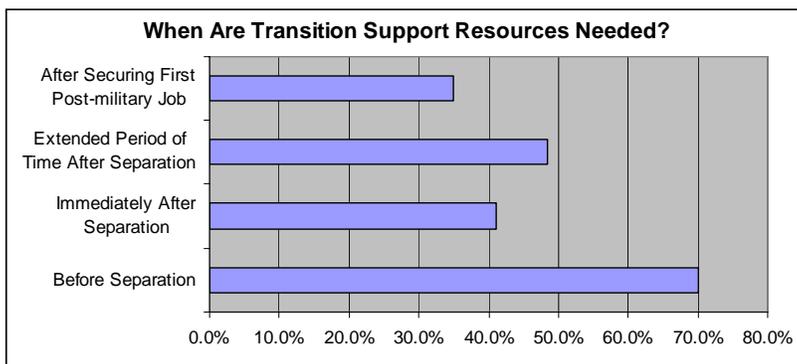
### Building a Sample

Currently, there is not a nationally representative database of women veterans that private researchers such as BPW Foundation can access. Large public databases containing veteran/military personnel information such as those housed at the Department of Defense (DoD) or Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) can only be utilized by organizations authorized to conduct research under the sponsorship of those agencies.<sup>2</sup> For legally-mandated privacy reasons and because government resources cannot be used for private efforts, access to these databases is strictly limited.

Therefore, women veterans were invited to participate in the *Workingwomen Speak Out II: (WWSOII): Women Veterans in Transition* online survey via e-mail invitations, newsletter announcements, web

postings and flyer handouts through veteran recruiting services (RecruitMilitary, Corporate Gray, Bradley-Morris, Inc.) and service organizations (BPW/USA-Women Joining Forces, Women In Military Service For America Memorial, AMVETS, National Association of State Women Veterans Coordinators, New Mexico Department of Veterans Services) providing access to a spectrum of women veterans across age ranges, conflicts and services. Women veterans answered the invitation with 2,177 attempting the survey and 1,629 completing it.

The sample of women veterans accessed by this research project is composed of women veterans actively involved in today’s labor force as well as women veterans retired from both the military and civilian workforces and other women veterans that are currently job hunting as comparisons. For more information on the demographics of the sample and the methodology used in building the sample, please see the Appendices.



**Figure A:** Women veterans provided a timeline for when supports were needed to help them fully transition from the military to the civilian workforce. See Appendix D for more information.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B: Methodology.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Defense. “Surveys of DoD Personnel” covering DoDI 1100.13 WHS/ESCD cannot license a survey without DMDC’s recommendation of approval. The process to approve a survey includes information provided by a “sponsoring” agency. Retrieved October 2007 from <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/110013p.pdf>

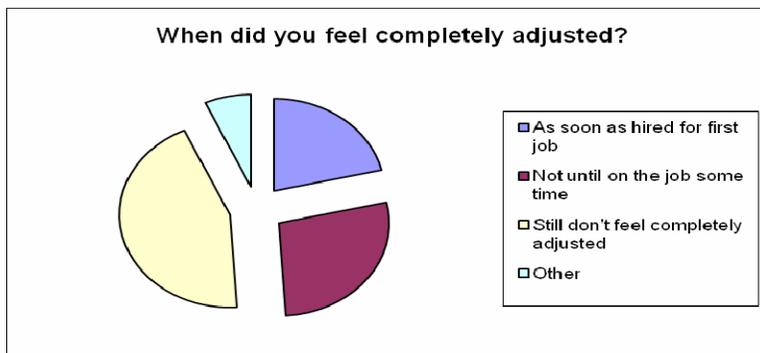
### 3. Results

Agencies wanting to support women veterans as they move into the civilian workplace should know that while general, short-term, pre-separation interventions may increase the success of initial job search activities, such programs may not be sufficient in terms of frequency, outreach to women veterans or breadth of services in order to address all their possible reactions to separation including their long-term adjustment to the civilian workplace.<sup>3</sup> While 37 percent of those responding to the survey reported that their participation in the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Employment Workshop (offered by the Department of Labor as part of the pre-separation process for military personnel) was very useful in their job search, additional resources were requested to help them through the full transition process.<sup>4</sup>

Responding to the survey, women veterans indicated that resources would be useful not only before they left the military but also for an extended period of time after separation. They also indicated that support to help them move from the military into the civilian workforce could go well-beyond, including after they secured their first post-military job.

An early conclusion that can be drawn from these preliminary results is that helping women veterans as they transition in to the civilian workforce involves a combination of both practical hands-on supports and psychological supports. Practical support varies from learning how to write a resume to dressing appropriately for the office. Psychological support is more complex, such as awareness of what veterans have to offer a civilian employer, what the veterans actually want from a new job and understanding the effects that workplace culture (i.e. how well their employer and co-workers value their military experience) can have on their transition experience.

Simultaneously, employers seeking to hire women veterans should understand that perceptions are



being formed as early as the interview process about their level of appreciation for the veteran's service. These perceptions potentially impact the veteran's feelings of job satisfaction. Other aspects of workplace culture can also have an impact on how well a newly acquired and highly skilled veteran employee may feel about her new job. For example, when women veterans felt their military service was appreciated by their co-workers, they were twice as likely to strongly assert that their first-post military job was what they were looking for when they left the military.

In fact, the sense that their co-workers had positive opinions about their military service appeared to correlate with higher ratings on women veterans' assessments of their job skills and feeling that they had

**Figure B:** Women veterans surveyed indicated that the transition process was not simply about finding a civilian job. Instead, 44 percent of respondents said that they still did not feel completely adjusted to the civilian workforce. See Appendix D for more information.

secured the jobs they wanted, it also went along with general feelings of satisfaction regarding their lives to date.

The transition into the civilian workforce is not as simple as finding a job. When asked how long it took to feel completely adjusted to the civilian workplace, 44 percent of respondents said they still did not feel completely adjusted to being in the civilian workforce.<sup>5</sup> Women veterans completing the survey had been out of the service seven years, on average.

<sup>3</sup> (2007) *Preseparation Guide, Transitional Assistance Program*. Retrieved October 2007 from <http://www.transitionassistanceprogram.com/register.tpp>

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix D. Also, DOL-VETS funds veterans' employment representatives to assist female veterans; according to the DOL website: 221,697 women veterans, including 10,852 disabled female veterans, have received employment assistance at local career One-Stop Centers around the world. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2002 data, the unemployment rate for female veterans was 5.0 percent, compared to 4.7 percent for male veterans, and 5.1 percent for female non-veterans. Information retrieved October 2007 from <http://www.dol.gov/21cw/2003-accomplishments.htm>

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix D: General Results\_ Section By Section for a breakdown of results question by question.

The matter of adjustment does not seem to be associated with feeling unprepared to compete; women veterans rated themselves highly on possessing a number of skills and attributes valued by civilian employers. Women veterans felt they had much to offer as well as had high expectations for their first post-military jobs, which were not always met. After leaving the military, women veterans responding to the survey said they still wanted jobs that were important (50 percent/very true), challenging (51 percent/very true) and interesting (59 percent/very true).<sup>6</sup>

Different factors related to job transitions, including when women veterans began to seek their first post-military job and the selection of a job within a specific employment sector, appear to correlate with differences in their reported levels of adjustment, job satisfaction and length of time to secure a civilian position.

Regardless of when the job search begins, it seems that the transition into the civilian workforce does not end with being hired. Only 21 percent of women veterans in the survey felt that their transition into the civilian workforce was completed as soon as they were hired for their first job; 28 percent said that they had felt “completely adjusted” only after having been on the job for some time. And, as stated earlier, a full 44 percent

**“...I think after getting out of the Military, people are on a continual transition. I have been out for a year, and I’m still not completely settled.”**

**Women Veteran in Transition Survey Respondent**

said that they still did not feel completely adjusted. The average time out of the service for respondents was seven years.

It is possible that the “real” length of the transition process may play a role in the adjustment factor. The job search process for women veterans separating from the military varied greatly.

Almost half (48.4 percent) of all women veterans surveyed began their job search before leaving the military; looking an average of five and a half months before their official separation. But, 51.7 percent did not seek civilian work until after leaving the military, and on average, this group began their job search nine months after leaving the service.

**“My career as a female in the military gave me a lot of experience in many different fields, but I appear to be either over or under qualified to get a job. . . . Quite frankly, I am very frustrated. I would rather work out of my home (i.e. telecommute), but I don’t see any resource that will let me tap into (information) on this subject.”**

**Women Veteran in Transition Survey Respondent**

In analyzing these results, the question emerged: **is there a psychological separation as well as physical separation involved in forging a successful career transition?**

Women veterans that began looking for a civilian job prior to their official separation from the military were twice as likely as those who started looking afterwards to say that they had found the job for which they were looking.<sup>7</sup> They were also twice as likely to say they felt well-prepared for the civilian workforce.

These early job hunters were also more likely to rate themselves highly for possessing the skills needed to succeed in the civilian workplace. A sample of the skills in which early job seekers were more likely to indicate a high level of confidence includes:

- Accurately communicates thoughts, ideas, information and messages in writing
- Uses math skills in job-related tasks such as budgeting, interpreting graphs, etc
- Allocates and manages resources well
- Communicates effectively with supervisors and colleagues
- Learns about and uses any office technology
- Possesses useful computer skills
- Thinks creatively and combines ideas and information in new ways
- Has decision-making abilities

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix D: General Results\_ Section By Section. Respondents were asked to rate their responses from 1 to 7 where one was “not at all true” and seven was “very true.”

<sup>7</sup> The report references only those differences where they were deemed significant based on the results of t-test for the difference between two means or a chi-square distribution and the resulting odds ratios.

- Recognizes problems and then define and implement solutions
- Uses reason to uncover the rules and principles applied on the job
- Uses the “mind’s eye” to organize and process symbols, graphs, pictures

This early preparation mind-set also correlates with a study of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) that showed that participating veterans secured their first post-military position three weeks prior to those who had not.<sup>8</sup> Participation in the TAP program is not mandated for military personnel separating from the armed forces, except for those in the Marine Corps. The program participation rate for the TAP Employment Workshop varies among the services with a reported range for the years of 2002 to 2004 from 56 to 86 percent.<sup>9</sup> In recognition of the importance of early preparation, those running the TAP have developed a goal to increase the average participation rate to 85 percent; the DoD also recently released a statement supporting that goal.<sup>10</sup>

Additionally, anecdotal reports emerging from those who work with women veterans are outlining emerging areas for research on the adjustment process of women veterans. These reports indicate that health care providers working with women returning from active combat are showing that they are under a great deal of stress relating to issues including parenting, marriage and re-integration into society and life in general. Those who work with women veterans are saying that some women veterans need time to recuperate from their experiences before they can resume the duties inherent in being a wife, mother or daughter.<sup>11</sup> Over half of all women veterans surveyed by BPW Foundation were married at the time they separated from the military, and similarly over half had dependents at the time of their separation.

A continuing review process will take place on why the adjustment to the civilian workplace was challenging for the group surveyed by BPW Foundation. Over the next year, further analysis is planned to fill in this critical gap in knowledge including focus groups and interviews with women veterans who have agreed to continue with the research project.

**“I worked hard, left my young children with child care providers for months at a time, deployed with mobile units, lived in tents...only to be divorced when I came home....I still won awards, (and) earned medals and promotions for 28 years and still loved my job when I had to retire. Now, I feel like I’ll (never) get a decent job because I didn’t have the time to ‘network’ with the right people before I retired.”**

**Women Veteran in Transition Survey Respondent**

Whether they started their job search before or after leaving the military, respondents consistently rated themselves highly on possessing a sense of responsibility, self-esteem, friendliness, goal-setting, honesty and integrity, team work, leadership skills, conflict resolution and the ability to work well with others from diverse backgrounds.

In trying to explain how a group of women veterans can so strongly assert their sense of preparedness for a civilian job while making an equally strong assertion that they still do not feel completely adjusted, researchers

began to look at the activities undertaken by women veterans as they searched for a civilian post.

One possible factor affecting the ultimate success of the transition process, as measured by the respondents’ feelings of adjustment to the civilian workforce, may be linked with their strong tendency to *not* join networks as part of the job search process. While the importance of networking is often emphasized as part of a job search among civilian job seekers, women veterans in the survey appeared reluctant to make extensive use of existing networks of other veterans or civilian contacts and to join new networks as part of their job seeking process. Fully 93 percent of women veterans surveyed said that they did not join a women’s network, veterans’ service organization or professional association to help find work.

<sup>8</sup> Winter, Tim (Interview) (October 5, 2007) Transition Assistance Lead for the Department of Labor; (2005); *Military and Veterans Benefits: Enhanced Services Could Improve Transition Assistance for Reserve and National Guard*. Retrieved October 2007 from <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d05544.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Trowell-Harris, Irene (Speaker) (2007). Director, Center for Women Veterans. *Supporting Women Veterans in the Workplace*. Retrieve from [www.bpwfoundation.org](http://www.bpwfoundation.org); CICCOLELLA, Charles (Testimony) (June 13, 2007). Retrieved on October 2007 from [http://nvti.cudenver.edu/resources/VETSNET/Vol15no3/VETSTestimony\\_SVAC\\_Ciccolella.pdf](http://nvti.cudenver.edu/resources/VETSNET/Vol15no3/VETSTestimony_SVAC_Ciccolella.pdf); Command Support for the Transition Assistance Program (Memo) (August 24, 2007). Office of the Undersecretary of Defense.

<sup>11</sup> Trowell-Harris, Irene (E-mail) (October 12, 2007). Director, Center for Women Veterans.

According to market research and anecdotal information supplied by women veterans through BPW/USA's *Women Joining Forces* (WJF) Program, "lack of networks" was a major obstacle for a successful transition both personally and professionally. This fact was a major factor in the organization's decision to create the WJF Program that facilitates women veterans tapping into the national BPW/USA network of working women who act as mentors, offer job leads and provide a professional support network.

One woman veteran in the survey commented: "I believe that although there may be many sites and associations that may offer assistance with this transition, they are not readily available. I would have liked to have had a conference where organizations like military recruiting companies and veterans (organizations meet)."

As a whole, women veterans surveyed did not seem to engage in the kinds of activities that appear to build the types of professional networks that can aid in either securing a job or a quicker adjustment to the workplace. Activities *not* undertaken by women veteran job seekers included joining professional, women-focused or veteran's organizations to find jobs, engaging a mentor or mining contacts made with civilians while in the military, to name a few.

An initial look at the results indicates that decision makers may need to look at a number of factors in order to craft programs and services that more fully support women veterans who are transitioning into the civilian workforce. The transition from the military to the civilian workforce is a multi-dimensional process, and this reality has implications not only for the types of resources needed by women veterans during their transition but also when those resources are needed.

### **Comments**

As part of the survey process, participating women veterans were given the opportunity to provide comments about their transition experience. The open-ended question provided a rich source of information

**"I did not anticipate the emotional challenge of this transition."**

**Women Veteran in Transition Survey Respondent**

that helped put feelings, attitudes and opinions around the issues already reported. One way to understand these quotes is to view them as possible challenges to be addressed or pointers to possible solutions. Readers will find quotes from women veterans interspersed throughout this report.

### **Special Topics**

In examining survey responses, several topics have already emerged that appear to shine a light on what a successful career transition includes for the women veterans surveyed. Results reported within the special topic sections indicate both areas for additional research as well as ideas for programs or policies that may support a successful career transition for more women veterans.

Special Topics:

- Effects of Self-Perceived Skill Mastery Among Women Veterans
- Impacts of Employer Attitudes
- Benefits of Public Service Sector Employment
- Impacts of Choices on the Job Search Process
- Reviewing Useful (and Not So Useful) Job Search Resources

## Effects of Self-Perceived Skills Mastery Among Women Veterans

Transitioning from the military and finding work in the civilian sector is easier for some women veterans than others. Those who make a more successful transition share some attitudes and beliefs, and engage in some practices, that appear to increase the likelihood of their feeling successful as a civilian worker. One set of these attitudes revolves around the broad topic of what women veterans perceive as their skill sets. Those who thought highly of their skill levels were more likely to say they felt successful with their civilian jobs and more likely to have felt appreciated by their employers and co-workers.

In this section of the survey, respondents were asked to rate 22 skills on a scale of one to seven, with seven being highest. These scores were then summed across the 22 items for those respondents that completed all questions. This resulted in a score that ranged from a minimum of 22 (for those who answered one to each item) to 154 (for those who answered seven to each item).

Women veterans surveyed were very aware of their skills and abilities, with more than half of the respondent group scoring 146 or more on this scale, showing overall comfort with their skills. Conversely, 25 percent scored 132 or less, thus showing relatively less comfort with their skills. While this may seem to be a small difference in absolute terms, this lower perceived skill level had a negative impact on women veterans' perceived success in the workplace. Those with a high skill set score, in the top 25 percent, were more likely than those with a low skill set score, in the bottom 25 percent, to perceive:<sup>12</sup>

**“I felt very fortunate to have had the resources from the military. It led to my education after the service and multiple opportunities since then. I owe much of my success to being a Veteran of the Air Force.”**

**Women Veteran in Transition Survey Respondent**

**“I found that my military background gave me a great advantage in interviewing for sales positions. Employers felt that my discipline, oral and written communication skills and the ability to self-manage would be key assets.”**

**Women Veteran in Transition Survey Respondent**

- The job was just what they were looking for;
- They were well prepared for the job;
- Compared to what they did in the military, the job was easy, and
- That being able to think in military terms helped them.

Additionally, feeling that they had high skill levels impacted how women veterans interacted with co-workers. As examples, those with a high score were more likely to:

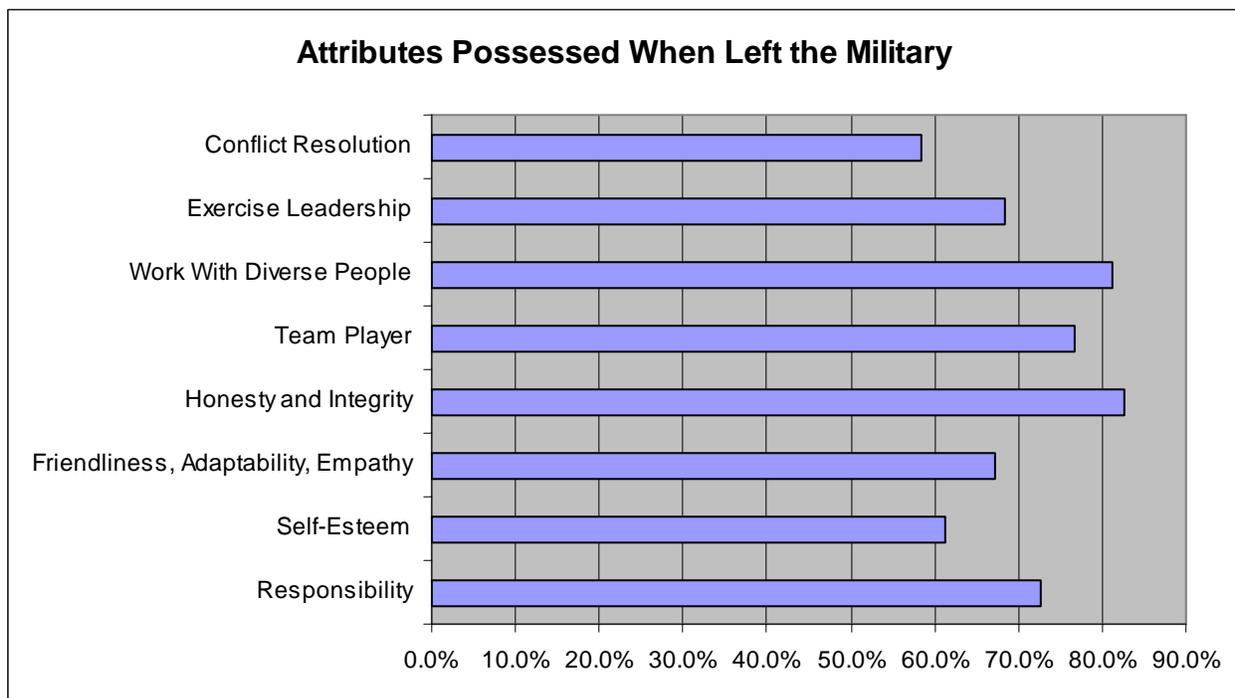
- Feel their co-workers appreciated their military background;
- Have an easy time communicating with their co-workers;
- Feel they worked better under pressure than their non-military co-workers;
- And, feel they got along well in the civilian workplace culture.

Further, belief in strong skill sets appears to have influenced what these women veterans both wanted and received from civilian employment. Those with high perceptions of their skills were more likely to have looked for and found a job in which they could do something important, challenging and interesting. They were more likely to want and find a job where they could apply their military knowledge, yet one that was different from what they did in the military. And, finally, women veterans with high skill perceptions were less likely to want to return to the job they had prior to going into the service; it appears these women veterans had little interest in looking back in life.

<sup>12</sup> The report references only those differences where they were deemed significant based on the results of t-test for the difference between two means or a chi-square distribution and the resulting odds ratios.

### Policy and Practical Implications

The policy and practical implications of these findings involves enabling women veterans’ understanding and appreciation of the skills and abilities they have gained from their military experience—skills and abilities that make them competitive in the civilian workplace. Many possess, in their own opinions, what can be termed skill verbs: Understanding, interpreting, communicating, managing, learning, creating, decision-making, and problem-solving, reasoning, organizing, and being responsible and persevering. Translating the military experience and skills of women veterans into a format that resonates with civilian employers is a skill set in itself that both employers and support agencies may find it beneficial to invest in. Those working with women veterans as they transition to the civilian workforce must enable a deeper understanding of the importance of the skills women veterans have and how valued they are in civilian workplaces.



**Figure C:** Women veterans were asked which of a series of skills and attributes they felt they possessed after leaving the military. By and large, women veterans had confidence in their skills and felt well-prepared for the demands of the civilian workplace. See Appendix D for more information.

## The Impact of Employer Attitudes

There are several ways an employer can show interest in a woman's military experience. Employers can talk about women veterans' military careers during the interview process and express appreciation for that service; they can value the training obtained and skills learned through service; and, they can give veterans the feeling that their military experience gives them an advantage in the workplace. When an employer shows they value the services a woman veteran provided to our country, respondents to the survey show that it can correlate with much more positive feelings about their civilian jobs. Unfortunately, not all employers encountered by women veterans studied in this research project had this attitude.

Women veterans were asked about the attitude of their first post-military employer towards their military service using seven questions, each with a scale of one to seven with seven being the highest. These seven responses were added for those women who answered all seven questions, giving a theoretical minimum of seven (a score of one on each question) to maximum of 49 (a score of seven on each question). The median total was 37, with 25 percent scoring 45 or higher, and 25 percent scoring 26 or lower. These two groups, the upper and lower quartiles, were used in the following analyses.

First, it appears from the data that employers displaying high levels of appreciation for military service were much more likely to employ women veterans in jobs in which veterans felt:

- The work was important and challenging;
- They could apply the knowledge gained in the military;
- They gained self-confidence.

Second, women veterans who said their employers valued their military service rated their jobs much higher – more satisfying – than those who worked for employers that appeared less-appreciative. When women veterans accepted jobs from employers that appreciated their service, they rated the jobs as more rewarding.

Nearly 80 percent of women veterans surveyed who said their first post-military job was “just what they were looking for” had an employer that scored high on the military appreciation scale. Likewise, 86 percent of women veterans who accepted a position with an employer that scored high on this scale felt well prepared for the demands of that job. When the employer was felt to appreciate the service of women veterans, the veterans felt that being able to

think in military terms helped them in performing the duties of that job.

Perhaps the most interesting finding from this set of questions involves how an employer's appreciation for military service appears to be reflected by the co-workers of women veterans: when an employer appreciates military service, it appears the co-workers do as well. This appreciative work environment appears to correlate with making it easier for these veterans to communicate with their colleagues and lessened the chances of problems with the workplace culture.

The benefits of working for employers that value the service given to the country extends into the veterans' lives as well. Women veterans who indicated that their first post-military employer appreciated their military service were more likely to speak positively about their lives to date.

On the job related side, women veterans who strongly supported the assertion that their first post-military employer appreciated their service were also more likely to say that on the job:

- They really like the people they interact with;
- People they know tell them they are good at what they do;
- They get along with people;

**“I found that while employers generally appreciated my time and work in the military, they rarely accepted the experience in lieu of certifications given by civilian schools.”**

**Women Veteran in Transition Survey Respondent**

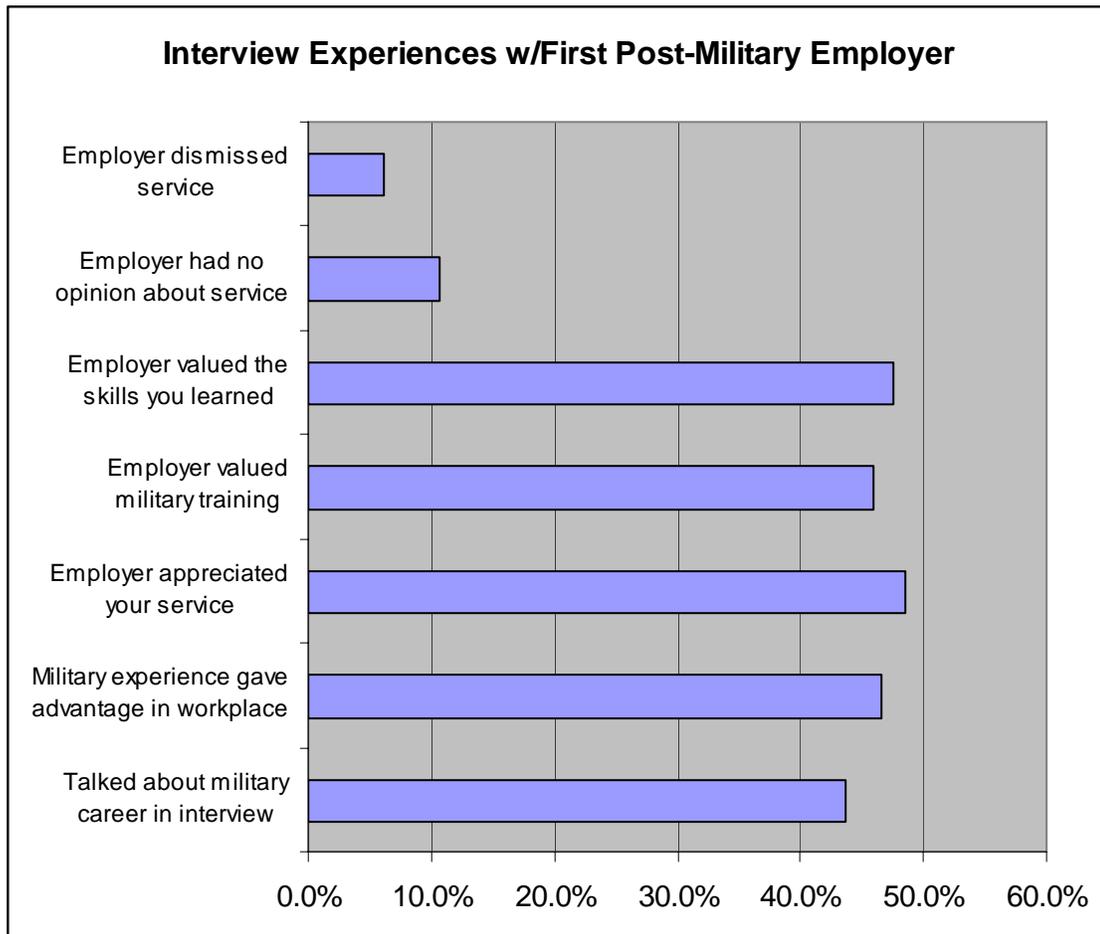
**“As a female soldier I reached a position of leadership and respect. The civilian sector does not acknowledge those leadership skills...”**

**Women Veteran in Transition Survey Respondent**

- Most days they feel a sense of accomplishment;
- Most days they can pretty much be themselves.

**Policy and Practical Implications**

Those who help women transition from the military to the civilian workforce need to also make an effort to work with potential employers. A successful transition for women veterans appears to strongly correlate with their working for and with appreciative employers and co-workers. Supporting employers by enabling their understanding and appreciation for what women veterans bring to the civilian workplace has the potential to create a win-win opportunity for both employers and women veterans. Employers can attract a highly skilled group of workingwomen, and women veterans are engaged in work that better utilizes all their skill sets. Women veterans assert types of skills that are related to leadership and given a growing need for leaders within the succession pipelines of employers because of the impending retirement of a generation of Baby Boomers, employers may find additional benefits in supporting the full engagement of women veterans in the workplace. In order for this to happen, employers must also proactively promote themselves as women and veteran friendly and then ensure that the workplace structures and culture support that assertion. These implications can also apply to other groups of workingwomen, particularly with regard to retaining highly-skilled workers.



**Figure D:** Women veterans were asked about their experiences interviewing for their first post-military job. When asked about their experiences with their first post-military employer, many indicated that their employers showed that they valued their skills and military experience. See Appendix D for more information.

## Benefits of Public Service Sector Employment

The majority of women veterans who indicated in the survey that they had held a full-time job since leaving the military found their first post-military position in the private (for-profit) sector, 73 percent. But, those who said they were happiest with their first post-military position were the 27 percent that worked for the public service sector, which includes both the government and non-profit sectors. Whether this reflects actual differences in the workplaces or the expectations of veterans towards their workplaces or the ability of different employment sectors to effectively communicate their benefits to women veterans is an area ripe for additional research.

Those who worked in the public service sector were more likely to report that they felt their employers valued their military service, 64 percent to 44 percent. While discussions about the employee's military service were no more likely to come up with public service sector employers than private sector employers during the job interview, women veterans were more likely to report that public service sector employers showed appreciation for their military service. Public service sector employers were perceived by women veterans as valuing the military training and skills of women veterans. Also, women veterans that had found employment in the public service sector were more likely to say they felt a sense of accomplishment from what they did most days, 61 percent to 51 percent.

**“Feeling insecure about whether my job will last based on (the availability of ) government contracts bothers me. In the military, I felt secure.”**

**Women Veteran in Transition Survey Respondent**

However, contrary to what might be expected, there were no measurable differences found across the 22 skill measurements for the women veterans surveyed. That is, there were no differences found between public service sector and private sector employers in terms of the kinds of women veterans they attracted: both sectors were equally attractive to women of all skill levels.

An interesting difference between public service sector and private sector employers is reflected in how well women veterans felt the different sectors provided them with jobs that matched their goals and aims. Women veterans who entered the public service sector, compared to those who entered the private sector, were more likely to report that they had found something:

- They found important;
- The work was challenging and interesting;
- They served in a position where they could apply their military knowledge;
- They could gain self-confidence in their abilities.

Most importantly, perhaps, women veterans who took a position in the public service sector were more likely than their private sector counterparts to believe that their first post-military position was just what they were looking for when they left the military. Forty-one percent of public service sector veterans surveyed expressed this opinion compared to only 27 percent of those who entered the private sector. Women veterans employed in the public service sector were also slightly more likely to believe they were well-prepared for the demands of the job, more likely to express the opinion that being able to think in military terms helped them in the job, and that they felt they were more appreciated by their co-workers.

The above findings hold true for both officers and non-officers and for those who did and did not serve in combat or combat zones. That is, both groups find the public service sector just as attractive.

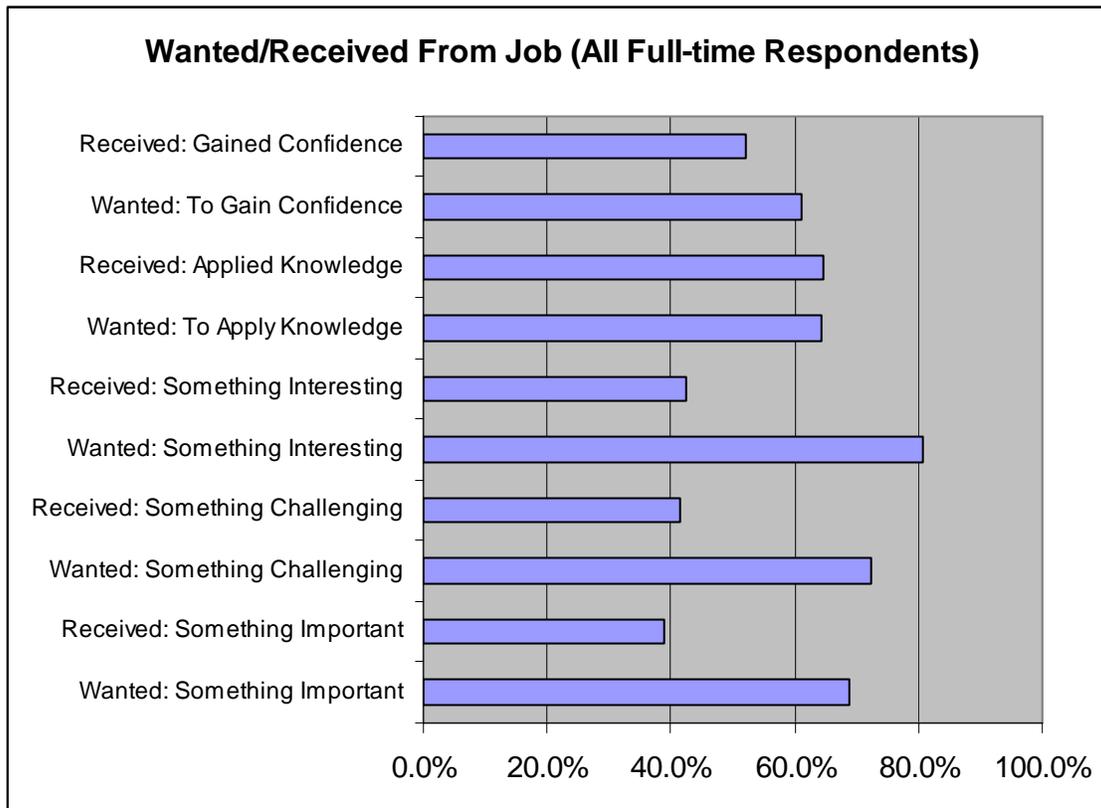
**“Today, I work for the state of (Pennsylvania) as a Veterans Service Officer, and it is the most gratifying position I have had and will ever want.”**

**Women Veteran in Transition Survey Respondent**

### Policy and Practical Implications

Those engaged in helping women veterans transitioning into the civilian workplace can help them understand the opportunities offered in the public service sector. Likewise, government agencies and nonprofit

organizations may benefit from becoming more aware of how well women veterans fit within their workplace culture, how applicable their skills are and how to better recruit women veterans. Conversely, it appears for-profit sector employers may want to find out how to better communicate their support, benefits and professional development opportunities to women veterans as well as to ascertain if there are disconnects between their workplace culture and their veteran employees' expectations. This disconnect could be preventing them from fully utilizing the abilities of this highly-skilled group of workingwomen and retaining them in the workplace. Almost 50 percent of respondents reported that their first post-military job was in the for-profit sector, but less than 30 percent are still employed in the for-profit sector. Approximately the same percentage worked in the government, non-military sector for their first post-military job as did at the time of survey (20 percent). Again, whether this shift in the employment sector presence of women veterans reflects the retirement of veterans from the for-profit workforce or an actual change in preferred sectors of employment is an area for further research.



**Figure E:** Women veterans had high expectations for their first post-military position. They wanted jobs that were interesting, challenging and important. Their perceptions of what they received from their first post-military job often feel short of their ambitions. For more information, see Appendix D.

## Impact of Choices within the Job Search Process

Women separating from military service have choices to make, including when to start the civilian job search process, what resources to use, and how much time to take off between the end of military service and entering the job market. As shown below, how veterans handle these issues has an impact on how soon they become employed and how well they like the jobs they find.

Women nearing separation from the military can begin their job search prior to leaving or afterward. As one example, women who start the job search prior to leaving are more aware of the skills they have to offer as measured on the overall skills scale, found in Appendix D. Specifically, women veterans who started their job search prior to leaving the military felt, in comparison to those who started their job search after separation, that they were:

- Better at communicating in writing;
- Possessed stronger math skills;
- Better at allocating and managing resources;
- More skilled at communicating with their colleagues;
- More comfortable with technology and computers;
- Better thinkers, decision-makers, and problem-solvers;
- More adaptable and better able to work and use reason.

Given the above, it appears that among the women veterans surveyed who started their job search prior to leaving the military, they may be more confident in their abilities than those who started their job search some time after separation.

On average, those who started before separation began their job search about six months prior to separation, while those who started after separation began their job search about nine months after separation, a difference of 15 months. For both groups, however, it took about three months, on average, for them to secure a job once they were available and in the job market. Those starting their job search prior to leaving found a civilian job, on average, about three months after leaving the service; while those that started the job search after leaving, began about nine months after their official separation and secured a job within 12 months of separation--the same three month time span. However, it is important to realize that those starting earlier were able to devote nearly nine months to their job search (six months prior, three months after) as opposed to the three months their peers took. This extra time appears to impact the quality of the job found.

Those who started their job search prior to separation found jobs with which they were more satisfied. They were more likely to describe the job as being just what they were looking for and more likely to say they were better prepared for the demands of the position they accepted. They were also more likely to think that their co-workers appreciated their military background and to feel they had an easier time communicating with their colleagues.

As might be expected, women veterans who began a job search prior to separation were more likely to report discussing their military career with their employer during the interview and more likely to feel that this employer appreciated their service to our country. They are also more likely to feel that their military experience gave them an advantage in the workplace and that their employer valued the skills they learned in the military.

### Practical Implications

There are several practical things that can be done to help women veterans make good career transition choices: encourage women service members to begin their transitions before they separate from the military, help them to appreciate the benefits of taking more time to find the right job and enable their understanding of all they have to offer employers.

**“People do not know how hard it is in the civilian sector. So, they want to get out and not make plans. It is so important to make plans.”**

**Women Veteran in Transition Survey Respondent**

## Reviewing Useful (and not so Useful) Job Search Resources

Success in entering the civilian job market can be facilitated by taking advantage of resources available outside the military. As is shown below, the use of these resources varies greatly and with varying levels of success among the women veterans surveyed. Some of these resources were, in a relative sense, seldom used successfully, including working with a mentor or paying for a search consultant (i.e. headhunter/recruiter).

### Mentorships

Working with a mentor was used by about one-third of women veterans surveyed, and only one-third of this group thought it was a useful experience. As an example, women veterans who worked with a mentor found it useful and were more likely to report that the job they found was just the one they were looking for; this successful

mentor experience is a relatively rare event. Likewise, slightly less than 30 percent of women veterans participating in this survey reported paying a search consultant and less than 30 percent of those – nine percent overall – rated the experience as useful. Looking at the initial results, it appears women veterans seem either not to benefit from these resources or are simply not aware of them as viable job search options. Further research

appears to be warranted to ascertain “how” women veterans make use of these resources and if any positive effects can be enhanced.

**“The TAP program I went through was excellent. .... I found (the classes) very helpful and stress reducing.”**

**Women Veteran in Transition Survey Respondent**

### Coursework

Women veterans in the survey reported more success in taking classes to improve job specific skills, but still less than half – 46 percent – did so. However, more than half, nearly 60 percent, who took such a course reported it as being useful, and such women veterans were more likely to be happy with the job they found. Likewise, women veterans reported taking classes in the job search process as a successful strategy. Including classes in things such as resume writing, interviewing and networking, about 60 percent of women veterans reported using these kinds of resources, and half of them found them useful. These findings suggest that these types of resources have potential for expansion.

Job fairs are popular with women veterans, with nearly two out of three reporting they attended such events. However, of those who attended, only about one-third reported they were useful.

### Membership/Professional Organizations

The final item in this category of external resources available to help women veterans includes veterans’, professional or women’s organizations that a veteran may have joined to help her find her first post-military job. Note that this question asks about specifically joining to help in the job search, thereby excluding those who may have joined one or more organizations for some other reason. When getting help in the job search is put forth as the primary reason for joining, only 6 percent of this survey’s respondents report this as being true.

Further, only one-third of those who did join reported that such joining was useful in helping in their job search. It is not possible to discern from the collected data if women veterans are aware of how these kinds of organizations can help them in the job search, but the results suggest that whatever the reason, these organizations are not seen as a job-search resource by the majority of women veterans.

**“The transfer was difficult. Fortunately, I come from a military family; so, my father and mother gave me the support and benefit of their experience transitioning...”**

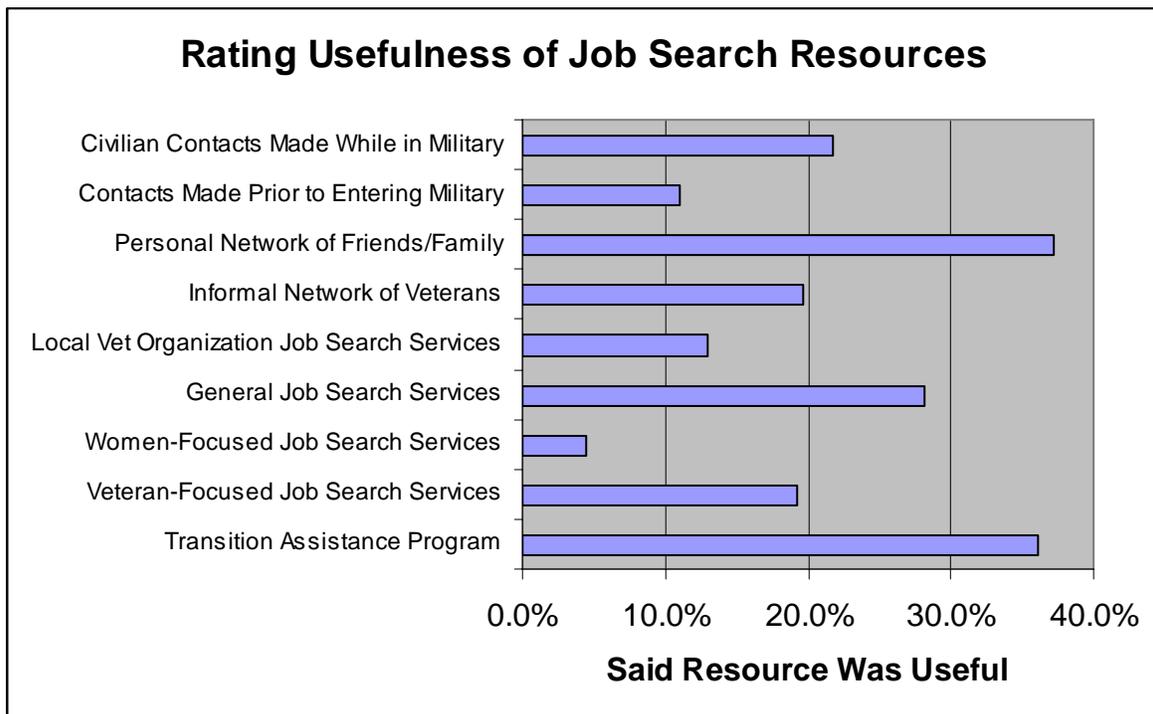
**Women Veteran in Transition Survey Respondent**

Other resources studied in this survey are activities women veterans did on their own, without the intervention of another person (i.e. mentor, job coach) or organization (i.e. job fair, classes), specifically, working online. Using the internet to gain information on job search skills (resume help, interviewing, and networking) was

one area that was asked about in the survey; the other was posting one's resume online. Both were used by more than three-fourths of the respondents to this survey, and more than 60 percent thought these were valuable resources. To conclude, women veterans found that the resources they could find on their own on the internet were more useful than the resources they had available in other forms. It should be noted that women veterans answering BPW Foundation's survey may have a bias towards internet-based services given their comfort-level with completing an online survey.

### Practical Implications

The role for support organizations appears to be three-pronged. The first is delivering concrete job-search assistance by offering job fairs and classes on job search skills such as resume-writing and interviewing skills. The second prong revolves around building on women veterans comfort with using the internet by offering enhanced services online such as webinars on job skills or perhaps even providing job search/resume listing services focused on women veterans. The final avenue for exploration involves working with women veterans to ascertain if engaging them in business and professional networks can, in fact, facilitate their job search process as well as their sense of adjustment to the civilian workforce even if they don't originally perceive their help in securing a civilian job.



**Figure F:** What resources did more women veterans surveyed find useful in their job search: personal and family networks, the Transition Assistance Program and general job search services. Far fewer of them made use of or found useful networks beyond their immediate friends and family or targeted search services. For more information, see Appendix D.

#### 4. Implications

As a research and education institution, BPW Foundation traditionally focuses on providing action-oriented research that clarifies the role of workingwomen in society as well as the challenges they face to full engagement in the workplace. BPW Foundation will often highlight ideas and opportunities ripe for change or adoption or provides insights that can help refine programs meant to support workingwomen.

In this pursuit, BPW Foundation often undertakes exploratory projects to emphasize and promote areas for further research and development by nonprofit, academic or government agencies. The initial *Women Veterans in Transition* survey as well as upcoming focus groups and interviews with women veterans and their employers has been undertaken as a first step to determine whether further research is warranted with a larger and more representative sample—a very costly project. Upon review, BPW Foundation believes that even the initial findings of this report support an expanded study of the transition experiences of women and men veterans as they separate from the military and enter the civilian labor force and as they adjust to the civilian workforce.

Several of the findings emerging from the pilot study show sufficiently large effects on attitudes or outcomes that even in a more representative sample, it is likely that these findings, even if at a modified level—such as the time it takes to feel adjusted within the civilian workforce—will be confirmed.

The *Women Veterans in Transition Report* offers the clearest picture to date of the experiences of women veterans transitioning between the military and civilian worlds. BPW Foundation asserts that further research and program development are warranted and those interested in supporting women veterans in their career transitions are encouraged to explore the following areas:

##### *For Researchers:*

- Create public/private partnerships to conduct research to understand the circumstances and experiences of women and men veterans especially as it relates to their transition back into the civilian labor force.
- Collect and publish success stories and lessons learned at both the organizational and individual level on how to support successful career transitions and adjustment.
- Explore further the potential impact of reassuming the caregiver role on women veterans as they transition.
- Explore the nature of the disabilities experienced by women veterans and how they impact the career transition and adjustment experience.

##### *For Decision Makers:*

- Offer transition supports to women veterans over a broader time frame to enable women veterans with differing priorities and objectives to benefit. For example, 31 percent of women veterans who had reported that they had not secured a job since leaving the military also said that part of the reason for their delay was that they were thinking about what to do next.
- Explore opportunities to provide a respite/transition period for women veterans as they separate from the military before they must re-enter the civilian workforce. This may be a challenge as more than half of women veterans surveyed by BPW Foundation named themselves as the primary income earners of their families.
- Support efforts to increase the participation of women veterans in the Transition Assistance Program Employment Workshops and Disability TAP prior to leaving the military.<sup>13</sup>
- Understand that while what distinguishes women veteran from other workingwomen are the issues unique to their transition out of the military and their military experiences, similar to other workingwomen they must also

**“The camaraderie is not the same and people really don’t understand that.”**

**Women Veteran in Transition Survey Respondent**

<sup>13</sup> Trowell-Harris, Irene. (E-mail October 12, 2007) , Director, Center for Women Veterans. According to Dr. Trowell-Harris, a DoD Command Support Memorandum signed on August 24, 2007 by Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the Honorable Michael L. Dominguez, encourages at least 85 percent participation of all veterans in TAP programs, which is a strong first step in achieving this goal.

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contend with challenges associated with balancing work and care giving roles, convincing employers of the value of their skills and shouldering a substantial share of the financial responsibilities for their families. Therefore, services that enable women veterans to contend with challenges in the workplace may also be applicable to the greater population of workingwomen.

- Expand efforts by organizations and employers who want to work with former members of the military to help women identify themselves as veterans. Women veterans tend to not identify themselves as veterans and this may undermine their tendency to access the benefits and services available to them.<sup>14</sup>
- Help women veterans understand the importance of the skills they bring to the civilian workplace.

### *For Service Organizations/Employers:*

- Encourage the development or expansion of mentoring programs for and between women veterans (either informal mentoring or formal mentoring programs).
- Tap into existing diversity initiatives with organizations to support this unique population.
- Explore what is not working for women veterans at job fairs and then tailor job fairs to be more of what women want/perceive as useful.
- Combine or promote resources shown to be helpful to job searchers with resources that are used by women veterans; for example, providing online mentoring or chat rooms or webinars on job search skills.
- Make an effort to proactively work with the potential employers of women veterans. These employers need to be helped to understand and appreciate what women veterans have to offer, and how to take advantage of their valuable skill sets and leadership abilities.
- Urge employers to proactively advertise themselves as women-veteran friendly workplace and to ensure that structures and workplace cultures support this assertion.
- Encourage and expand upon the leadership abilities of women veterans within the civilian workforce by bettering integrating them into existing leadership training within employers and through organizations as well as explore the development of specialized tracks.
- Encourage women service members to begin their transitions before they separate from the military and help them appreciate the benefits of taking more time to find the right job.
- Encourage women veterans to explore the opportunities offered in the public service sector. Likewise, government agencies and nonprofit organizations need to become more aware of the how well women veterans fit with their culture, the skills they have to offer, and how to better recruit women veterans.
- Stress the importance of networking to women veterans in transition and strongly encourage them to join veterans' service organizations and professional organizations to access crucial health care, job, family, education and financial information. Link the building of social, business networks to "mission-oriented" activities that women veterans relate to their job search.
- Develop a strong collaboration between social and business organizations to support DoD, the VA and the Department of Labor as they educate women veterans about veteran benefits and services.

BPW Foundation will be publishing a "Top Ten Ways to Support Women Veterans in Transition" list in time for Veterans Day 2007. Visit [www.bpwfoundation.org](http://www.bpwfoundation.org) on Veterans Day, November 12, 2007, to download this informative document.

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<sup>14</sup> "Bill Designed to Inform/Increase Recipients" (October 2, 2007). Retrieved October 2007 from <http://www.military.com/features/0,15240,151353,00.html>. Currently, the VA is NOT allowed, by law, to advertise benefits and services in the national media. Recently, U.S. Representative John Boozman, (R-AR), the ranking Republican on the Veterans Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, introduced bipartisan legislation (The Veterans Benefits Awareness Act of 2007) that would authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to purchase advertising in national media outlets to promote awareness of benefits that are available to veterans and their dependents.

## Appendix A: Demographics

### **Demographics of Sample**

Of the 2,117 responses to the BPW Foundation survey, 1,629 are considered valid based on their military status as discharged, separated or retired. Almost half of the respondents served in the Army (46 percent), along with respondents from the Navy (24 percent), Air Force (22 percent) and Marine Corps (10 percent). The remaining respondents came from the Coast Guard, Public Health Services and other branches of service.

A large percentage of respondents (86 percent) report that they live within 100 miles of a military base at time of answer, but only 35 percent of respondents consider themselves involved in an organization or association associated with the military.

A quarter of survey respondents are under the age of 30, almost half of the respondents are under the age of 40, and over four-fifths of respondents are under the age of 50. Comparable population parameters list almost 70 percent of women veterans over the age of 40 as of 2006.<sup>15</sup>

The average time spent in the service for respondents was approximately 12 years. The average age of women veterans upon leaving service was 32.7 years. A quarter of veterans surveyed were 25 or younger when they left service. The average number of years respondents had been out of the service is approximately seven years as of the time of survey. Most of the respondents had been out of the service for 10 years or less (77 percent). Twenty-five percent had been out less than one year at the time of the survey.

Over 50 percent of respondents reported themselves as being White, non-Hispanic, almost 30 percent reported themselves as being Black, non-Hispanic, and 10 percent reported themselves as being Hispanic. Comparable population parameters report a higher percentage of women veterans in the general U.S. population as White, and a smaller percentage as either Black or Hispanic.<sup>16</sup>

Respondents had their first post-military job in every U.S. state, and 3 percent of respondents took their first post-military job outside of the U.S. Almost half reported themselves as having some kind of disability, and approximately 95 percent of the disabilities were related to their military service. More than half responded that they did not serve in a combat/war zone.

Over 80 percent of respondents had some college education or more at time of separation, and this number increases to over 90 percent of respondents with some college or more at time of survey response.<sup>17</sup> Approximately 60 percent used military benefits to attain their level of education.

Almost 50 percent of respondents reported that their first post-military job was in the for-profit sector, but less than 30 percent are still employed in the for-profit sector. Approximately the same percentage worked in the government, non-military sector for their first post-military job as did at the time of survey (20 percent). Over half of respondents reported themselves as the primary income earner in their household.

### **Demographics of General Population**

As readers view the demographic information of the survey sample, the following information is offered as a comparison. It reflects current government data on the demographic characteristics of women veterans. Women veterans are a vital and growing part of the American labor force. Women make up over 15 percent of the military and a growing percentage of veterans. In 1980, women veterans were 4 percent of veterans (1.1 million women veterans); in 2007, they make up 7 percent of the veteran population (1.74 million women veterans). While the proportion of women veterans in the population is expected to increase over the coming decades, the percentage of male veterans is expected to decline.

According to a 2005 report on the history of women veterans published by the Department of Veterans Affairs:

“In contrast to the population of male veterans in the United States, the population of female veterans has actually increased over the last decade or so because (a) of the increasing number and proportion of women entering (and leaving) the military, (b) a more favorable survival rate of women

<sup>15</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics (August 2005). Current Population Survey Data. Unpublished report.

<sup>16</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics (August 2005). Current Population Survey Data. Unpublished report.

<sup>17</sup> Not including vocational or technical school.

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compared to men at any given age, and (c) the younger age distribution of women veterans compared to male veterans, which means relatively more women at younger ages, with lower mortality rates.”<sup>18</sup>

The population of women veterans in the United States is projected to continue to rise reaching 1.9 million in 2020 when they will make up 10 percent of the veteran population. In contrast, the projected population of male veterans is projected to decline from 24.8 million in 2000 to 16.2 million by 2020.<sup>19</sup>

Women veterans tend to be younger than their male counterparts. In 2007, the estimated median age of male veterans was 60 years but the median age of women veterans was 47.<sup>20</sup> The proportion of older women veterans to younger women veterans is also smaller than the proportion of older male veterans to younger male veterans. In 2007, 18 percent of women veterans were 65 and older while an estimated 40 percent of male veterans were in that age bracket. By 2010, the proportion of women veterans over 65 is estimated to shrink to 17 percent of the total women veteran population while the proportion of that age bracket among male veterans will increase to 42 percent.<sup>21</sup>

Nearly 30 percent of women veterans identified themselves as a member of a racial minority, reports the Department of Veterans Affairs. As of 2007, most (19 percent) identified themselves as Black or African-American/Non-Hispanic; seven percent as Hispanic, one percent American Indian/Non-Hispanic, two percent Asian/Non-Hispanic; less than one percent Pacific Islander/Non-Hispanic, two percent some other racer or multiple race/Non-Hispanic. Seventy-percent of women veterans identified their race as White/Non-Hispanic.<sup>22</sup>

In August 2005, the unemployment rate for all veterans was 3.9 percent. Female veterans had a labor force participation rate of 60 percent about the same as the non-veteran population. Women veterans had a 5.9 percent unemployment rate which was similar to that of non-veterans at 5 percent. Among women veterans about 40 percent worked in management and professional occupations while about one-third were employed in sales and office occupations. This contrasts with male veterans where about 30 percent were employed in management and professional occupations with 20 percent employed in each of natural resources, construction and maintenance; sales and office, and production, transportation and materials moving.<sup>23</sup>

In 2001, the median family income for women veterans was \$43,000 compared to \$44,000 for non-veteran women. Data from a 2007 Current Population Survey indicates that women veterans are less likely to be at the low end of the family income distribution range when compared to non-veteran women but they are also less likely to be at the high end of the range. While 10 percent of women veterans had a family income less than \$15,000, 14 percent of non-veteran women were at that income level. In contrast, 28 percent of women veterans earned \$75,000 or more while 29 percent of non-veteran women did. Other income levels for women veterans in 2007 were: 29 percent earned \$15,000 to 29,999 and 33 percent earned \$40,000 to 75,000.<sup>24</sup>

High levels of education are attained by women veterans. Approximately, 72 percent have had at least some college experience with nearly 40 percent of those possessing at least a bachelor's degree. High school was the highest level education for 24 percent of women veterans.<sup>25</sup>

The Bureau of Labor Statistics also reported that in 2005, 11 percent of veterans reported having a service-connected disability. Of the 800,000 Gulf War Veterans who were discharged between January 2002 and August 2005, about 20 percent reported a service-connected disability.

Interestingly, results from a March 2002 Current Population Survey, indicates women veterans, aged 30 and older, were less likely to be married than non-veterans.

Women veterans live throughout the United States and Puerto Rico, but as of 2007 nearly 50 percent of them were clustered in nine states: California, Texas, Florida, Virginia, Georgia, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and North Carolina.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Klein, Robert (2005) *Women Veterans: Past, Present, Future*. Department of Veteran Affairs Office of Planning.

<sup>19</sup> (September 2007) *Women Veterans: Past, Present, Future*. Department of Veteran Affairs Office of Planning.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> "Employment Situation of Veterans" (May 2006). Bureau of Labor Statistics.

<sup>24</sup> (September 2007) *Women Veterans: Past, Present, Future*. Department of Veteran Affairs Office of Planning

<sup>25</sup> American Community Survey (2006) (as cited in *Women Veterans: Past, Present, and Future*. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Planning, 2007).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

## Appendix B: Methodology

### Securing a Sample

As BPW Foundation began to develop its research framework for the *Workingwomen Speak Out II: Women Veterans in Transition* project, it began by searching out a nationally representative database of women veterans to tap into.

This process quickly became its own interesting and ultimately frustrating research project. Currently, there is not a complete, publicly-available sampling frame for the population of women veterans that private researchers such as BPW Foundation can readily access. Large public databases with military personnel/veteran information such as those at the Department of Defense (DoD) or Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) can only be utilized by organizations authorized to conduct research on behalf of those agencies. For privacy reasons and because government resources can not be used for private purposes, access to these databases is strictly limited.

For organizations seeking to understand the attributes and resource needs of veterans (male and female) challenges exist to reaching out to a fully representative cross-section of this population. For those, that especially want to understand the forces shaping the lives of women veterans, it is particularly challenging.

BPW Foundation and its Board of Trustees felt strongly about the importance of the research project and made the decision to dedicate sufficient resources to conduct a pilot project on women veterans and their career transitions, even before other funding partners were secured. With funding for a pilot project approved, BPW Foundation began the process of securing a sample of women veterans.

In the first stages of building a sample of women veterans, BPW Foundation, working through the research firm of ResearchUSA, Inc., attempted to purchase a sample of women veteran e-mails from a survey sample firm. Lists of general mailing addresses for veterans (male and female) were available but could not be broken down by male or female, they also did not include e-mail addresses. BPW Foundation explored the option of a mailed survey, but it was outside the scope of this research project. The feasibility of securing sufficient numbers of women veterans and the cost of conducting such a survey were not feasible given the scope of the pilot research project. BPW Foundation also considered the feasibility of purchasing a large general market sample including e-mails and screening it for women vets, but given the small proportion of the U.S. population made up of women veterans (less than 1 percent), this also was deemed not to be feasible.

In its second stage of seeking a database with current information about women veterans including e-mail addresses, BPW Foundation contacted members of BPW/USA's *Women Joining Forces* Advisory Council, partner organizations with veteran databases and DoD. Privacy regulations prevented those representing government agencies from allowing BPW access to their databases. All databases (except the DoD ones) also represented opt-in samples of the population. Often, even government-funded surveys of women veterans are generally based on sampling from opt-in databases in which women veterans have opted in to the services of a given organization or agency such as the Department of Veteran Affairs or VA hospitals or clinics. In some instances, outside agencies that are contracted by DoD or a military branch to conduct research, for example, may have access to their databases which would contain the most comprehensive list of women who were ever in the military but would not necessarily contain current data about veterans.

Contacts within DoD's Defense Manpower Data Center were gracious enough to review BPW Foundation's request to e-mail the survey link to a sample drawn from DoD's database. Because of privacy regulations as well as stipulations that government resources cannot be used for private sources, this request could not be approved.

Building a nationally representative database of women veterans or even attempting to approximate one can be a very expensive proposition even for a government agency. Even so, it is encouraging to see that government agencies are attempting to expand the pool of data about veterans (including women veterans). Recently, a Veterans Supplement to the Current Population Survey was approved and implemented by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for August 2007. The August 2007 questionnaire, which was estimated by those interviewed to cost approximately \$400,000 to conduct, included revisions made to the supplement since the August 2005 edition.<sup>27</sup> The supplement provides information on the labor force status of veterans that have service-connected disabilities, are combat veterans, veterans of the National Guard and Reserve or recently discharged veterans. The

<sup>27</sup> Winter, Tim (Interview) (October 5, 2007) Transition Assistance Lead for the Department of Labor.

information is used by the Veterans Employment and Training Service and the Department of Veterans Affairs to determine policies that better meet the needs of veterans.<sup>28</sup> The August 2007 supplement also included questions about Reserve or National Guard status, branch of Armed Forces and combat exposure.<sup>29</sup> The Current Population Survey (CPS) covers a total of 60,000 households; those with veterans present were included in the Veteran Supplement. It is important to note that challenges exist even with CPS data for those trying to understand the lives of women veterans, explained those who work with women veterans. While the Veterans Supplement covers a fairly large sample, the information collected about women veterans is often not statistically significant when broken down into smaller slices such as rank, age or ethnicity.<sup>30</sup>

Still, the ability to add on to the CPS or similar government-sponsored surveys is not one open to most private research organizations. Determined to begin its pilot project, BPW Foundation built a sample by utilizing the databases and outreach efforts of a collection of for-profit, nonprofit and government agencies whose outreach included a cross-section of women veterans actively engaged in the labor force. These included some organizations represented on the BPW/USA's *Women Joining Forces* (WJF) Advisory Council as well as other contacts developed through outreach for the WJF program. It was decided to limit overall outreach to a manageable number of partner organizations to make the survey duration and analysis manageable given BPW Foundation's time frame for completing the project and cost constraints. Organizations instrumental in helping BPW Foundation reach out to women veterans in order to take the survey included recruiting firms (RecruitMilitary, Corporate Gray, Bradley-Morris, Inc.) and service organizations (BPW/USA-Women Joining Forces, Women In Military Service For America Memorial, AMVETS, National Association of State Women Veterans Coordinators, New Mexico Department of Veterans Services).

Organizations that helped distribute information about the survey were able to provide varying degrees of outreach. Some organizations sent regular e-mail alerts to their databases of veterans over a period of three weeks from April through May 2007. For those unable to differentiate their databases between male or female veterans, the alert was sent to all members; those who could differentiate their contact information sent only to female veterans. For groups consisting of representatives of networks such as state-level veteran coordinators, for instance, notices were sent to the network's membership, and individual coordinators could opt to place the notice on their websites or in a newsletter or send to their specific database. One organization allowed flyers about the survey to be distributed at a state convention of women veterans.

### **Building an Instrument**

Simultaneous with its attempts to secure a sample of women veterans, BPW Foundation began to develop the survey instrument. Input into the content of the survey instrument was provided by members of the *Women Joining Forces* Advisory Council, which consists of representatives of veteran service organizations, governmental agencies and corporate supporters.<sup>31</sup> Members of BPW Foundation's Research and Education Committee also provided input and insight to the research team.<sup>32</sup> The survey instrument adapts elements from prior studies including issues important to workingwomen (*Workingwomen Speak Out*, 2004), employee skills and attributes that are important to employers (*SCANS Report For America: 2000*) as well as reflects original questions and ideas emerging out of the research process.

This launch report reflects the beginning of a pilot study that will include deeper analysis of the data from the survey and the use of focus groups and interviews with women veterans, employers, veteran service organizations and government agencies to probe questions emerging from the analysis. BPW Foundation will also collaborate with other agencies to encourage the expansion of research about the career transition experiences of veterans beyond this initial pilot project into a broader and more comprehensive examination of the experiences, attributes and needs of transitioning female and male veterans.

<sup>28</sup> Federal Register, Vol. 72, No. 37/ Monday, February 26, 2007/Notices

<sup>29</sup> Currently, results from the August 2005 CPS may be requested from the Bureau of Labor; the August 2007 results will be released in summer 2008.

<sup>30</sup> Manning, Lory (Interview) (Summer 2007). Women's Research and Education Institute.

<sup>31</sup> Visit the Women Veterans in Transition web page at [www.bpwfoundation.org](http://www.bpwfoundation.org) for a listing of the WJF Advisory Council members.

<sup>32</sup> Visit the Women Veterans in Transition web page at [www.bpwfoundation.org](http://www.bpwfoundation.org) for a listing of the Research and Education Committee members.

## **Strengths and Limitations of Sample**

Data for this study comes from an internet-based opt-in survey of women veterans obtained from a limited pool of various non-governmental agencies that had available sources of women veteran e-mail addresses. Because researchers were unable to obtain permission to use an exhaustive list of women veterans and, as there does not exist a nationally representative database, it is therefore impossible to estimate the extent to which the survey base is like or dislike the actual population under study. For this reason, the researchers are cautious in drawing generalized conclusions where it is not possible, but this caution may not suffice to alleviate potential sampling problems. Therefore, the researchers caution readers to consider the extent to which the full population of women veterans might be different from those invited to participate in this study as they form opinions about the research conclusions.

As with any research that incorporates a survey as a means to gather data, BPW Foundation's Women's Veterans data is subject to a number of potential limitations. Where possible and if applicable, the researchers in connection with this research project will make every effort to fully identify and address these risks when discussing specific results. Additionally, BPW Foundation will supplement quantitative data with qualitative information gathered through a variety of sources over the course of the pilot study.

As a general disclaimer, in this and future reports, the reader should be aware of some possible issues. Since the survey sample is not completely random, while examination may still be suitable for specific situations, the results of the study may not be appropriate to generalize without appropriate analysis. BPW Foundation is in the process of evaluating whether the sample size can make inferences regarding the total population of women veterans. In the study, BPW Foundation targeted eight organizations to gather survey responses. From these organizations, greater than 70 percent of the respondents came from three organizations and some branches of service and age groups are more represented than others. Veterans who are not connected to an established group may not have been reached, and an online survey may tend to have a bias towards more computer literate users.

Survey data analyses also frequently bear common data issues. While surveys are effective in establishing relationships between key variables, they often cannot determine causality. Since the survey is "self-reported," there is potential for inaccurate response, due to over- or under-reporting, personal motivation, ability to definitively recall topics, or simple response error. While the data may bear some risk, it represents an unprecedented view into the experiences of women veterans.

The information collected as part of the study provides researchers and policymakers the ability to gain first-hand information to study and promote successful transition for women veterans to the civilian workforce. Over 60 percent of respondents agreed to participate in follow-up focus groups and interviews, allowing BPW Foundation to delve deeper into the circumstances and events facing veterans. This continued involvement will provide BPW Foundation the opportunity to control some of the external factors affecting survey response and gain even more insight into the transitions of women veterans.

## **Research Team**

Rajeev Darolia is a consultant with an economics and business consulting firm. He has formerly held positions on the faculty of City College of San Francisco and in the technology industry. Mr. Darolia holds a Master's degree in Economics from the University of San Francisco and a Bachelor's degree in Finance from Washington University in St. Louis.

Tricia Dwyer-Morgan is Director of Programs at BPW Foundation. Ms. Dwyer-Morgan holds a Master's degree in Public Policy from Georgetown University and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of North Texas.

Chris Toppe, Ph.D. is a research and evaluation consultant in Washington, DC with a specialty in survey research. He is also an instructor in the graduate school of Georgetown University.

Also contributing to the research project were members of BPW Foundation's Research and Education Committee (2006-2007 and 2007-2008) and BPW/USA's Women Joining Forces Advisory Council.

## Appendix C: The Official Transition Process

Veterans transitioning from the military, as prescribed by federal law, have a four part transition process available to them. The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is offered under a partnership between the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Homeland Security (e.g. the Coast Guard), and the Department of Labor.<sup>33</sup>

Veterans who are retiring from service have 24 months prior to their retirement to access the TAP and those separating from the military (i.e. ending a tour of duty or coming to the end of a contracted enlistment) have 12 months prior to their separation to access TAP.

### Four Steps:<sup>34</sup>

1. Pre-separation counseling—a mandatory process run through the DOD for all military personnel separating from the military, which addresses the logistics of transition such as moving household goods, getting a final physical or dental exam. Participants can also ask to take the TAP Employment Workshop.
2. TAP Employment Workshop—a 2.5 day workshop run by the Department of Labor—Veteran’s Employment & Trainings Services. The workshop is mandatory only for those separating or retiring from the Marine Corps. Military personnel can take the TAP program or access TAP services as many times as desired during their final year before separating (or 24 months for retirees). Currently, about 60 percent of separating military personnel participates in the TAP Employment Workshop.
3. Veterans’ Benefits Briefing—a four hour briefing run by the Department of Veterans Affairs to familiarize military personnel with the veteran benefits for which they are eligible.
4. Disabled Veterans’ Transition Program—a two-hour briefing conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs for those with service connected disabilities.

Members of the Guard and Reserve arms of the armed services demobilize back to their guard and reserve units in their home states, which may not have a standing TAP program such as those found on military bases. Units demobilizing have time constraints as well as mandatory aspects to their demobilization, which makes participating in a TAP program problematic. The availability of the TAP program may also vary based upon the state to which the unit belongs. A number of states offer a mini-TAP that is a half day or one day program. The DOL-TAP has developed a version of the curriculum for guard and reserve units, which offers a core module that covers the local labor market, instructions on how to access the Department of Labor’s Career One-Stop Centers, the risks of homelessness, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), and small business opportunities.<sup>35</sup>

When veterans are discharged from the military, they are discharged based on their character of service.<sup>36</sup> Character of service refers to honorable or dishonorable discharge. If dishonorable (undesirable), or bad conduct, they usually are unable to qualify for benefits.

Upon leaving the military, veterans receive a DD214 (discharge). The DD214 is a one-page document containing the veteran’s name, social security number, character of discharge and list of awards. Veterans are given the original. They then can take the original to a local Veteran’s Affairs Office to have certified copies of the discharge made. The certified copies are used to access any service for which a veteran wants to apply.

Once a veteran has officially separated from the military, the veteran can no longer access the TAP program. Instead, they have access to one of the 3,100 One-Stop centers run by DOL in local communities. Veterans have priority access to their services.

<sup>33</sup> Public Law 101-510. Title 10 Sections 1141 to 1143 and 1144 to 1150.

<sup>34</sup> Winter, Tim (Interview) (October 5, 2007) Transition Assistance Lead for the Department of Labor; (2005) *Military and Veterans Benefits: Enhanced Services Could Improve Transition Assistance for Reserve and National Guard*. Retrieved October 2007 from <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d05544.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> USERRA prohibits employers from discriminating or retaliating against any employee or applicant because of the individual’s past, present, or future application for uniformed service or performance of such service. The prohibition extends to decisions regarding hiring, reemployment, retention, promotion, or any benefit of employment.

<sup>36</sup> Manning, Lory (Interview) (Summer 2007). The Women’s Research and Education Institute.

**Appendix D: General Results\_Section By Section**

Results are reported following the order of the survey instrument.

*Screener: ..... Veteran Status and Sex*

Which of the following describes your military status? (Base: 2,114)

- Discharged, separated or retired: ..... 77.8 percent
- Never in the Military: ..... .9 percent
- Currently on active duty: ..... 11.6 percent
- Reserve: ..... 9.1 percent
- Not on active duty: ..... .6 percent

Any answer other than discharged, separated or retired and respondents were exited from the survey.

Are you female? (Base: 1,633)

- Yes: ..... 99.8 percent
- No: ..... .2 percent

An answer other than female exited respondents from the survey.

*You and the Military*

**Branch of Service/Rank**

In which branch of the service did you serve? (Base: 1,606 )

Respondents were asked about their service in regular services, reserve and guard. Aggregate totals were created for each branch of service and are reported here.

- Total Army: ..... 45.9 percent
- Total Navy: ..... 24.4 percent
- Total Air Force: ..... 22.3 percent
- Total Marine Corps: ..... 9.7 percent
- Total Coast Guard: ..... .9 percent
- Public Health Services: ..... .2 percent
- Other: ..... .2 percent

What was your pay grade when you left the service? (Base: 200)

Commission Officer (O-1 to O-10): .....

Top 3 Pay Grades:

- O-3: ..... 32.5 percent
- O-4: ..... 17.0 percent
- O-5: ..... 21.5 percent

Warrant Officer (W-1 to W-5): ..... (Base: 20)

- W-1: ..... 20 percent
- W-2: ..... 15 percent
- W-3: ..... 45 percent
- W-4: ..... 15 percent
- W-5: ..... 5 percent

Enlisted (E-1 to E-10): ..... (Base: 1,398)

Top 4 Pay Grades:

- E-4: ..... 26.1 percent
- E-5: ..... 25.7 percent
- E-6: ..... 15.7 percent
- E-7: ..... 15.7 percent

### Service History

What was the reason for separation from the military? (Base: 1,599)

- Retired: ..... 34.7 percent
- Completed Contract: ..... 17.6 percent
- Tour of duty ended-honorable discharge: ..... 29.2 percent
- Medical discharge: ..... 10 percent
- Discharged under EO 10240: ..... .1 percent
- Discharged under Public Law No. 103-160: ..... .1 percent
- Prefer not to state reason: ..... 1.8 percent
- Other: ..... 7.8 percent

How many years were you in the military? (Base:1,579 )

Respondents were asked to enter a number. The responses were then aggregated into ranges.

- 2 years or less: ..... 5.4 percent
- 3 – 4 years: ..... 21.6 percent
- 5-9 years: ..... 26.1 percent
- 10-19 years: ..... 12.8 percent
- 20-24 years: ..... 28.1 percent
- 25 years or more: ..... 6 percent

How many years have you been out of the service? (Base:1,581 )

Respondents were asked to enter a number. The responses were then aggregated into ranges.

- 5 years or less: ..... 62.1 percent
- 6-10 years: ..... 14.7 percent
- 11-20 years: ..... 12.2 percent
- 21-25 years: ..... 3.5 percent
- Over 25 years: ..... 6.5 percent

Did you serve in combat/war zone? (Base:1,582 )

- Yes: ..... 37 percent
- No: ..... 63 percent

How old were you when you were discharged, separated or retired from the military? (Base: 1,588 )

Respondents were asked to enter a number. The responses were then aggregated into ranges.

- 20 years or under: ..... 2.5 percent
- 21-24 years: ..... 21.5 percent
- 25-29 years: ..... 23.5 percent
- 30-34 years: ..... 11.9 percent
- 35-39 years: ..... 12.2 percent
- 40-49 years: ..... 24.1 percent
- 50 years or above: ..... 4.1 percent

Were you married at the time you were discharged, separated or retired from the military? (Base: 1,594 )

- Yes: ..... 51.6 percent
- No: ..... 48.4 percent

(If yes) was your spouse also in the military at that time? (Base: 821)

- Yes: ..... 58.6 percent
- No: ..... 41.4 percent

(If yes to “were you married at the time”) are you still married to the same spouse? (Base: 821 )

- Yes: ..... 70.8 percent
- No: ..... 29.2 percent

Did you have a dependent at the time you were discharged, separated or retired from the military? (Base:1,587)

- Yes: ..... 53.2 percent
- No: ..... 46.7 percent

What was the highest level of education you had completed at the time of separation?

(Base: 1,595 )

- Less than high school: ..... None
- High school graduate: ..... 16.2 percent
- Vocational/Technical school: ..... 2.7 percent
- Some college: ..... 38.3 percent
- Associate Degree: ..... 13.9 percent
- 4-Year College Degree: ..... 15.4 percent
- Postgraduate study, no degree: ..... 4.1 percent
- Master’s Degree: ..... 8.6 percent
- Working toward Ph.D.: ..... .4 percent
- Ph.D.: ..... .4 percent

81.1 percent of women veterans responding had completed some college or better.

Were military benefits used to attain this level of education? (Base:1,590)

- Yes: ..... 57.7 percent
- No: ..... 42.3 percent

### **Initial Transition**

Since leaving the military, have you worked for pay as a member of the civilian workforce? (Base: 1,591)

- Yes: ..... 80.9 percent
- No: ..... 19.1 percent

If respondents answered “No,” they skipped to a shortened version of the survey which asked why they had not entered the civilian job market; they were then directed to final section of demographic questions.

Did you begin seeking a civilian job prior to or after your official separation from the military? (Base: 1,153)

Please approximate number of months prior:

**Prior to:** 48.3 percent (Base: 557)

Respondents were asked to enter a number. The responses were then aggregated into ranges.

Women who began

- 1 month or less: ..... 12.4 percent
- 2 months: ..... 18.1 percent
- 3-4 months: ..... 26.8 percent
- 5-6 months: ..... 27.4 percent
- 7-11 months: ..... 6.9 percent
- 12 to 24 months: ..... 6.6 percent
- 2 years or longer: ..... 1.8 percent

The average pre-separation search began 5.4 months prior to separation for those who responded to the survey. Among those women who had worked since leaving the military, those who began their search prior to separation secured a job within 5.3 months of leaving the military which is about four months earlier than women who said they began looking for a job only after leaving the military.<sup>37</sup>

It is recommended that those separating from the military begin preparing for their transition about a year before separation. The TAP Preparation Guide recommends that those leaving the military make an appointment with their Transition Assistance Office at least 180 days prior to separation; by law pre-separation counseling must occur no later than 90 days prior to separation.<sup>38</sup> Only 9.2 percent of women veterans surveyed began to look for a job one year or more before their official separation date.

Please approximate number of months after:

**After:** 51.7 percent (Base: 596)

Respondents were asked to enter a number. The responses were then aggregated into ranges.

Please approximate number of months after:

- 1 month or less: ..... 30.9 percent
- 2 months: ..... 11.5 percent
- 3-4 months: ..... 16.8 percent
- 5-6 months: ..... 13.8 percent
- 7-11 months: ..... 5.9 percent
- 1 to less than two years: ..... 9.9 percent
- 2 years or longer: ..... 11.2 percent

The average post-separation search began 9.3 months after separation for all women veterans surveyed. Among those who began looking for a job after leaving the military and who said they eventually did secure a position, the average time to secure a position was 9.2 months.

Even among the full group of those who began their search after leaving the military, there appears to be a division between those who began looking with at least two months of leaving service (40 percent) and those who waited

<sup>37</sup> The report references only those differences where they were deemed significant based on the results of t-test for the difference between two means or a chi-square distribution and the resulting odds ratios.

<sup>38</sup> (2007) *Preseparation Guide, Transitional Assistance Program*. Retrieved October 2007 from <http://www.transitionassistanceprogram.com/register.tpp>

longer. About 20 percent of these women veterans waited until more than a year out of service to begin their job search.

Anecdotal reports from those who work with women veterans indicate that a number of women veterans are beginning to say that they need a respite after they've left the military and before they re-enter the civilian workforce.<sup>39</sup> Say those who work with them closely, women veterans are returning home and are expected to resume care giving responsibilities immediately before they can even address their own needs.<sup>40</sup>

How long after separating from the military did it take you to secure your first job? Please approximate the number of months: ..... (Base:1,246)

Respondents were asked to enter a number. The responses were then aggregated into ranges.

On average, it took all respondents 7.7 months after separation to secure their first post-military job. Thirty-nine percent of women veterans secured their first job in one month or less.

- Less than one month: ..... 13.6 percent
- 1 month: ..... 24 percent
- 2 months: ..... 9.6 percent
- 3-4 months: ..... 14.4 percent
- 5-6 months: ..... 12.7 percent
- 7-11 months: ..... 8.2 percent
- 1 to less than two years: ..... 10 percent
- 2 years or longer: ..... 7.5 percent

When did you feel you completely adjusted to being in the civilian workforce? (Base:1,268)

- As soon as you were hired for your first civilian job: ..... 21.4 percent
- Not until you had been on the job for some time: ..... 27.6 percent
- You still don't feel completely adjusted: ..... 44.2 percent
- Other: ..... 6.8 percent

Was your post-military job at the same civilian workplace at which you were employed just prior to entering the military/active duty? (Base: 1,259)

- Yes: ..... 6.2 percent
- No: ..... 93.8 percent

As you think about when you needed resources and support to help you shift from the military into the civilian workforce, when do you think having these resources would have been most useful to you? Check all that apply. (Base:1,262)

- Before separation: ..... 70 percent
- Immediately after separation: ..... 41.1 percent
- For an extended period of time after separation: ..... 48.5 percent
- Even after securing your first post-military job: ..... 35 percent
- Other: ..... 4.3 percent

### *Post Military Employment Seeking Experiences*

#### **Post-Military Job Basics**

In what state was your first post-military job located? (Base: 1,241 )

<sup>39</sup> Trowell-Harris, Irene (E-mail) (October 12, 2007). Director, Center for Women Veterans.

<sup>40</sup> Hart, Velma (Interview) (July 2, 2007). National Finance Director of AMVETS.

Top five states only reported here.

- California: ..... 10.6 percent
- Virginia: ..... 10.6 percent
- Texas: ..... 10.5 percent
- Florida: ..... 7.2 percent
- Georgia: ..... 6.4 percent
- North Carolina: ..... 5.4 percent

In what employment sector was your first post-military job? (Base:1,260)

- For profit: ..... 47.3 percent
- Nonprofit: ..... 8.1 percent
- Government, non-military: ..... 19.8 percent
- Military as civilian: ..... 9.3 percent
- Self-employed: ..... 1.8 percent
- Other: ..... 13.7 percent

If respondents answered “self-employed,” they skipped to a shortened version of the survey which asked why they had not entered the civilian job market; they were then directed to final section of demographic questions.

Was your first post-military job full-time or part-time? (Base:1,233)

- Full-time: ..... 78 percent
- Part-time: ..... 22 percent

If respondents answered “part-time,” they skipped to a shortened version of the survey which asked why they opted for a part-time position; they were then directed to final section of demographic questions.

If respondents answered “full-time,” they were asked to complete the sections of the survey starting here with the section described as Job Goals, Aims and Fulfillment through the final demographic section.

Did you seek full-time or part-time? Based on those who responded “part-time” to the prior question. (Base: 271)

- Full-time: ..... 62 percent
- Part-time: ..... 37.6 percent
- Neither/retired: ..... .4 percent

### **Job Goals, Aims and Fulfillment**

When a woman veteran felt her first post-military job exhibited the following characteristics, her responses correlated with a greater likelihood of saying the job was what she was looking for when she left the military.

The job was:

- Something important
- Something challenging
- Something interesting
- A job where you could apply knowledge learned in the military
- Something that gave you confidence in what you could do

Respondents were asked to score their responses from one to seven where one was “not at all true” and seven was “very true.” In reporting their responses, the “True” percentages reflect the total of responses scored for six and seven, “very true.” (Four marks the mid-way point as “somewhat true.”) On those occasions when survey participants responded strongly, with high instances of seven, “very true,” or one, “not at all true,” these responses are highlighted.

What you wanted (from your first post-military job): ..... (Base: 785 to 805)

- To do something important...True: ..... 68.8 percent (Very True: ..... 50 percent)
- To do something challenging...True: ..... 72.4 percent (Very True: ..... 50.8 percent)
- To do something interesting...True: ..... 80.8 percent (Very True: ..... 58.5 percent)
- A job where you could apply knowledge you learned in the military...True: ..... 64.3 percent (Very True: ..... 46.7 percent)
- A job different from what you did in the military...True: ..... 27.3 percent
- A job that was physically easy...True: ..... 27.8 percent
- A job that was not emotionally stressful...True: ..... 39 percent
- To gain confidence in what you could do...True: ..... 61 percent (Very True: ..... 42.9 percent)
- You wanted to return to the job you had prior to going into active duty...True: ..... 5.4 percent (Not at all true: ..... 77.8 percent)

What you received (from your first post-military job): ..... (Base: 792 to 805)

- Something important...True: ..... 38.8 percent
- Something challenging...True: ..... 41.6 percent
- Something interesting...True: ..... 42.4 percent
- A job where you could apply knowledge you learned in the military...True: ..... 64.7 percent
- A job different from what you did in the military...True: ..... 46.4 percent A job that was physically easy...True: ..... 46.3 percent
- A job that was not emotionally stressful...True: ..... 27.4 percent
- Confidence in what you could do...True: ..... 52.1 percent
- Returned to the job you had prior to going into active duty...True: ..... 7 percent (Not at all True: ..... 81.2 percent)

### **Interview Experiences**

In examining the results of the survey, it appears women veterans that reported encountering positive attitudes towards their military experience from prospective employers during the job search were more likely to have said that their first post-military job was what they had been looking for when they left the military.

When encountering employers in general on their job search, women veterans that reported positive responses to the following statements were also more likely to have reported finding the right job than those who did not:

- You talked a lot about your military career
- Your military experience gave you an advantage in the workplace
- Employers appreciated your service to your country
- Employers valued your military training
- Employers valued the skills you learned in the military

Positive responses by women veterans to the following statements related to their first post-military employer correlated with feeling they had found the job for which they had been looking: .....

- You talked a lot about your military career

Respondents were asked to score their responses from one to seven where one was “not at all true” and seven was “very true.” In reporting their responses, the “True” percentages reflect the total of responses scored for six and seven, “very true.” (Four marks the mid-way point as “somewhat true.”) On those occasions when survey participants responded strongly, with high instances of seven, “very true,” or one, “not at all true,” these responses are highlighted.

What was the impact of a woman veteran's skills and military experience on her job seeking experience with employers in general with which she interviewed and with her first-post military employer in general? (Paraphrase of actual question.)

For employers, in general, encountered during the job search: ..... (Base: 773 to 780)

- You talked a lot about your military career during your job interview(s)...True: ..... 42.8 percent
- Your military experience gave you an advantage in the workplace...True: ..... 46.6 percent
- Employer(s) appreciated your service to your country...True: ..... 48.8 percent
- Employer(s) valued your military training...True: ..... 45.2 percent
- Employer(s) valued the skills you learned in the military...True: ..... 45.9 percent
- Employer(s) had no opinion about military service...True: ..... 12.2 percent (Not at all True: ..... 40.3 percent)
- Employer(s) dismissed your military service...True: ..... 11.3 percent (Not at all True: ..... 52.5 percent)

For the first post-military employer: ..... (Base:773 to 776)

- You talked a lot about your military career during your job interview(s)...True: ..... 43.7 percent
- Your military experience gave you an advantage in the workplace...True: ..... 46.6 percent
- Employer(s) appreciated your service to your country...True: ..... 48.5 percent
- Employer(s) valued your military training...True: ..... 45.9 percent
- Employer(s) valued the skills you learned in the military...True: ..... 47.5 percent
- Employer(s) had no opinion about military service...True: ..... 10.6 percent (Not at all True: ..... 46.3 percent)
- Employer(s) dismissed your military service...True: ..... 6.1 percent (Not at all True: ..... 55.4 percent)

### **Skill Readiness**

The skill categories used in this section are adapted from the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS Report for America: 2000) Report which listed skills and attributes identified by employers as critical to the success of entry-level/incoming employees. Women veterans consistently scored themselves high in each category intimating that they felt prepared to meet the skills-based demands of the civilian workforce when leaving the military.

A high proportion of women veterans surveyed expressed confidence in their job skills. Further analysis of the data indicated that women veterans that expressed higher levels of confidence in certain job skills were more likely than those expressing less confidence to have said that their first post-military job was what they had been looking for when they left the military<sup>41</sup>. Confidence in some concrete and highly transferable skills was associated with those who had felt they'd found the right job.

When women veterans expressed confidence in the following skill sets, they were more likely than those who did not to have said they had found the right job: .....

- Ability to locate, understand and interpret written information
- Ability to communicate effectively with co-workers
- Useful computer skills
- Ability to think creatively
- Decision-making abilities
- Ability to recognize and solve problems
- Ability to learn on the job
- Ability to use reason to uncover rules and principles of job
- A sense of responsibility

<sup>41</sup> This section refers only to data about women veterans who had indicated they had secured a paid position since leaving the military.

## WWSOII: Women Veterans in Transition

- A sense of self-esteem
- Ability to demonstrate friendliness
- Ability to set and achieve goals

Respondents were asked to score their responses from one to seven where one was “not at all true” and seven was “very true.” In reporting their responses, the “True” percentages reflect the total of responses scored for six and seven, “very true.” (Four marks the mid-way point as “somewhat true.”) On those occasions when survey participants responded strongly, with high instances of seven, “very true,” or one, “not at all true,” these responses are highlighted.

When you left the military, you felt for your first post-military that you possessed (an ability to: ..... (Base: 739 to 767)

- Locate, understand and interpret written information... Very True: ..... 69.7 percent
- Accurately communicate thoughts, ideas, information and messages in writing... Very True: ..... 65 percent
- Use math skills in job-related tasks such as budgeting, interpreting graphs, etc. . . Very True: ..... 44.5 percent
- Allocate and manage resources well... Very True: ..... 55.6 percent
- Communicate effectively with your supervisors and colleagues... Very True: ..... 60.6 percent
- Learn about and use any office technology... Very True: ..... 70.4 percent
- Useful computer skills... Very True: ..... 63.3 percent
- Think creatively, to combine ideas and information in new ways... Very True: ..... 62.3 percent
- Decision-making abilities... Very True: ..... 64.6 percent
- Recognize problems and then define and implement solutions... Very True: ..... 64 percent
- Learn on the job and to apply and adapt new knowledge to changing situations... Very True: ..... 66.3 percent
- Use reason to uncover the rules and principles applied on the job... Very True: ..... 58.3 percent
- Use your “mind’s eye” to organize and process symbols, graphs, pictures... Very True: ..... 50.4 percent
- A sense of responsibility... Very True: ..... 72.6 percent
- A positive self-esteem... Very True: ..... 61.2 percent
- An ability to demonstrate friendliness, adaptability, empathy and politeness to customers and colleagues... Very True: ..... 67.2 percent
- Set and achieve realistic and well-defined personal goals... Very True: ..... 58.8 percent
- Honesty and integrity... Very True: ..... 82.6 percent
- Work well on a team... Very True: ..... 76.6 percent
- Work with men and women and with a variety of ethnic, social, religious or educational backgrounds... Very True: ..... 81.2 percent
- Exercise leadership appropriately... Very True: ..... 68.4 percent
- Conflict resolution and negotiating skills... Very True: ..... 58.5 percent

### *Job Search Services/Activities*

#### **General**

Respondents were asked to score their responses from 1 to 7 where one was “not at all useful” and seven was “very useful.” In reporting their responses, “True” percentages reflect the total of responses scored from six to seven, “very useful.” (Four marked the mid-range as “somewhat useful.”) Respondents also had the option of indicating Not Sure/Not applicable or Not Used. On those occasions when survey participants responded strongly with high instances of seven, “very useful,” or one, “not at all useful,” or “not used,” these responses are highlighted.

Indicate the usefulness of each career transition support resource used in the job hunt. (Base: 452 to 734)

## WWSOII: Women Veterans in Transition

- Transition Assistance Program...Useful: ..... 36.1 percent (Very Useful: ..... 27.2 percent; Not Used 17.1 percent)
- Veteran – focused job search services (i.e. HireVetsFirst, RecruitMilitary, Bradley-Morris, Inc., Corporate Gray)...Useful: ..... 19.2 percent (Not Used: ..... 32.6 percent)
- Women-focused job search services...Useful: ..... 4.4 percent (Not Used: ..... 59.1 percent)
- General job search services...Useful: ..... 28.1 percent (Not Used: ..... 15.9 percent)
- Job search services through local veterans organizations...Useful: ..... 13 percent (Not Used: ..... 44.9 percent)
- An informal network of other veterans ...Useful: ..... 19.7 percent (Not Used: ..... 37.4 percent)
- Your network of personal friends and family to ...Useful: ..... 37.2 percent (Not Used: ..... 19.6 percent)
- Contacts you made prior to entering the military...Useful: ..... 11 percent (Not Used: ..... 44.5 percent)
- Civilian contacts made as part of your military service...Useful: ..... 21.8 percent (Not Used: ..... 36.2 percent)
- Not applicable, you returned to your pre-military employer: ..... Not at all Useful: ..... 23.4 percent (Not Used: ..... 49.6 percent)

Indicate the usefulness of each career transition activity used in the job hunt. (Base: 615 to 723)

- Working with a mentor...Useful: ..... 12 percent (Not Used: ..... 62.6 percent)
- Going to job fairs...Useful: ..... 19.1 percent (Not Used: ..... 32.3 percent)
- Taking classes in job search related skills (i.e. resume writing)...Useful: ..... 27.1 percent (Not Used: ..... 39 percent)
- Using online resources in job search related skills (i.e. resume writers)... Useful: ..... 39.5 percent (Not Used: ..... 24.6 percent)
- Hiring a head hunter... Useful: ..... 8.1 percent (67.3 percent)
- Posting your resume online...Useful: ..... 37 percent (Not Used: ..... 21.3 percent)
- Taking classes to improve job-specific skills...Useful: ..... 20.6 percent (Not Used: ..... 52.6 percent)
- Not applicable, you returned to your pre-military employer: ..... Not at all Useful: ..... 12.8 percent (Not Used: ..... 61.1 percent)

### Memberships

Civilian job hunters are often encouraged to join or make use of business, social or professional networks to help them find jobs. Survey participants were asked if they joined any veteran, professional or women's organizations to help them find their first post-military job. Overwhelmingly, women veterans that participated in this survey said they did not join any such organizations in order to find a job (**93.7 percent**). Additional questions within this section were designed to ascertain which organizations respondents joined and the usefulness of membership services to those job seekers. Given the extremely small response rate, the usefulness of this information is in question and responses to these questions are not being included in this initial report.

Did you join a veteran's, professional or women's organization to help you find your first post-military job? (Base: 734)

- Yes: ..... 6.3 percent
- No: ..... 93.7 percent

First Post-Military Employment Experiences

**Job Experiences**

As women veterans answered questions about their first post-military job experience attitude-related aspects of their first full-time job experience seemed to correlate with whether or not veterans felt that their first full-time post-military job was what they had been looking for when they first left the military.<sup>42</sup>

For example, those who said they felt their military experience was appreciated by their co-workers were three times as likely as other to say the job was what they had been looking for.<sup>43</sup> The likelihood of feeling their first post-military job was what they were looking for was also correlated with: .....

- Feeling it was exactly like the job they had done in the military
- Thinking in military terms being seen as a help on the job
- Feeling that military experience was NOT an obstacle on the job
- Having an easier time communicating with colleagues
- Feeling they did not have problems with civilian workplace culture

Respondents were asked to score their responses from one to seven where one was “not at all true” and seven was “very true.” In reporting their responses, the “True” percentages reflect the total of responses scored for six and seven, “very true.” (Four marks the mid-way point as “somewhat true.”) On those occasions when survey participants responded strongly, with high instances of seven, “very true,” or one, “not at all true,” these responses are highlighted.

The following questions concern your feelings about your first post-military job. You felt: ..... (Base:771-722)

- That the job was just what you were looking for when you first left the military...True: ..... 23.9 percent (Not at all True: ..... 34.4 percent)
- This job was exactly what you did in the military...True: ..... 14.4 percent (Not at all True: ..... 51 percent)
- Well-prepared for the demands of this job...True: ..... 62.5 percent (Very True: ..... 44 percent)
- That compared to what you did in the military, this job was easy...True: ..... 52.7 percent (Very True: ..... 42.1 percent)
- That being able to think in military terms helped you in this job...True: ..... 44.5 percent
- This job required very different skills than the ones you learned in the military...True: ..... 23.7 percent (Not at all True: ..... 28.1 percent)
- That having military experience was an obstacle as far as this job was concerned...True: ..... 7.2 percent (Not at all True: ..... 66.4 percent)
- Your co-workers appreciated your military background...True: ..... 38.9 percent
- You had an easy time calling your civilian managers by their first names...True: ..... 35.9 percent
- You had an easy time communicating with your colleagues...True: ..... 52.2 percent
- You worked better under pressure than your non-military co-workers...True: ..... 59 percent (Very True: ..... 42.7 percent)
- That you had problems with the workplace culture in the civilian world...True: ..... 19.2 percent (Not at all True: ..... 36.6 percent)
- That military experience neither helped nor hindered you on this job...True: ..... 14.2 percent (Not at all True: ..... 43.9 percent)

<sup>42</sup> This section refers to data about women veterans who had indicated they had secured a paid position since leaving the military.

<sup>43</sup> The report references only those differences where they were deemed significant based on the results of t-test for the difference between two means or a chi-square distribution and the resulting odds ratios.

### Importance and Receipt of Benefits

Respondents were asked to score their responses about the importance of certain benefits from one to seven where one was “not at all important” and seven was “very important.” In reporting their responses, “true” percentages reflect the total of responses scored from six to seven, “very important.” (Four marked the mid-range as “somewhat important.”) On those occasions when survey participants responded strongly with high instances of seven, “very important,” or one, “not at all important,” these responses are also highlighted.

Women veterans were also asked a follow-up question about benefits to ascertain if they received the benefits that they valued.

Indicate how important it was to receive the following benefits from your first post-military job. (Base:766 to 774)

Did you receive this benefit in your first post-military job? (Base: ..... 772 to 777)

- Paid vacations...Very Important: ..... 59.9 percent  
Yes/Received: ..... 75.5 percent
- Child care coverage/reimbursement...Important: ..... 26.3 percent  
Yes/Received: ..... 9.7 percent
- Retirement plan...Very Important: ..... 53.7 percent  
Yes/Received: ..... 62.4 percent
- Family leave...Very Important: ..... 44.9 percent  
Yes/Received: ..... 48.4 percent
- Health insurance coverage...Very Important: ..... 56.3 percent  
Yes/Received: ..... 71.3 percent
- Dental insurance coverage...Very Important: ..... 57.2 percent  
Yes/Received: ..... 67.3 percent
- Flexible work schedule...Very Important: ..... 41 percent  
Yes/Received: ..... 47.2 percent
- Job sharing...Important: ..... 18.4 percent  
Yes/Received: ..... 14.2 percent
- Opportunities for advancement...Very Important: ..... 63.9 percent  
Yes/Received: ..... 51.5 percent
- Help with relocation costs...Important: ..... 33.1 percent  
Yes/Received: ..... 11.1 percent
- Training/professional development...Very Important: ..... 55.7 percent  
Yes/Received: ..... 54.4 percent
- Fair compensation with male counterpart...Very Important: ..... 72.3 percent  
Yes/Received: ..... 50.5 percent

#### *Part-time Job Overview*

Respondents who replied that their first post-military job was part-time were asked the following series of questions regarding their decision to take a part-time job.

Women veterans were asked to score their responses from one to seven where one was “not at all true” and seven was “very true.” In reporting their responses, the “True” percentages reflect the total of responses scored for six and seven, “very true.” (Four marks the mid-way point as “somewhat true.”) On those occasions when survey participants responded strongly, with high instances of seven, “very true,” or one, “not at all true,” these responses are highlighted.

Indicate how true each of the following statements is regarding your decision to take a part-time job. (Base: 255 to 259)

## WWSOII: Women Veterans in Transition

- You were interested only in a part-time job... True: ..... 22.8 percent (Not at all True: ..... 54.9 percent)
- You have not found a full-time position to apply for... True: ..... 22.2 percent (Not at all True: ..... 53.7 percent)
- You have not found a full-time position that you wanted... True: ..... 24.2 percent (Not at all True: ..... 45.3 percent)
- You needed the money so you took a part-time job... True: ..... 63.2 percent (Very True: ..... 56.9 percent; Not at all True: ..... 17.3 percent)
- You were completely retired from the paid workforce... True: ..... 6.2 percent (Not at all True: ..... 87.9 percent)
- You are still seeking a full-time position... True: ..... 37.2 percent (Not at all True: ..... 41.6 percent)
- You are no longer seeking a full-time position... True: ..... 27 percent (Not at all True: ..... 52.1 percent)
- You are the primary caregiver for your children and care giving obligations keep you from taking a full-time position... True: ..... 10.3 percent (Not at all True: ..... 72.9 percent)
- You are the primary caregiver for an elderly or ill relative and care giving obligations keep you from taking a full-time position... True: ..... 2.4 percent (Not at all True: ..... 91.7 percent)
- You find that potential employers do not value your service to your country... True: ..... 35.4 percent
- You find that military training did not prepare you for the civilian work marketplace... True: ..... 28 percent
- You are seeking to return to military service... True: ..... 6.3 percent (Not at all True: ..... 68.2 percent)
- A physical disability keeps you from seeking a full-time position... True: ..... 9.2 percent (Not at all True: ..... 74.7 percent)
- A mental or emotional disability keeps you from seeking a full-time position... True: ..... 7 percent (Not at all True: ..... 83.6 percent)

If a physical disability keeps you from seeking a full-time position, was it incurred while in the service? (Base: 263)

- Yes: ..... 19.8 percent
- No: ..... 7.2 percent
- Does not apply: ..... 73 percent

If a mental or emotional disability keeps you from seeking a full-time position, was it incurred while in service? (Base 265)

- Yes: ..... 11.7 percent
- No: ..... 6.4 percent
- Does not apply: ..... 81.9 percent

### *Non-Traditional Job or Unemployed*

Respondents who replied that they had either not worked for pay since leaving the military or were self-employed were asked the following series of questions regarding their experiences since leaving the military.

Women veterans were asked to score their responses from one to seven where one was “not at all true” and seven was “very true.” In reporting their responses, the “True” percentages reflect the total of responses scored for six and seven, “very true.” (Four marks the mid-way point as “somewhat true.”) On those occasions when survey participants responded strongly, with high instances of seven, “very true,” or one, “not at all true,” these responses are highlighted.

Indicate how true each of the following statements is regarding your decision to not enter the civilian workforce or to be self-employed. (Base: 307 to 314)

- You are actively seeking a civilian job... Very True: ..... 53.1 percent
- You are seeking a return to military service... True: ..... 5.2 percent (Not at all True: ..... 77.8 percent)
- You are taking time off between military service and a civilian job... True: ..... 17.5 percent

## WWSOII: Women Veterans in Transition

- (Not at all True: ..... 47.9 percent)
- You retired from the military and had no interest in a civilian job...True: ..... 3.5 percent  
(Not at all True: ..... 84.1 percent)
- You are interested in volunteer or pro bono work...True: ..... 12.1 percent  
(Not at all True: ..... 46.2 percent)
- You own your business/self-employed...True: ..... 9.7 percent (Not at all True: ..... 79.3 percent)
- You were completely retired from the paid workforce...True: ..... 5.7 percent  
(Not at all True: ..... 88.6 percent)
- You are a stay-at-home parent...True: ..... 21.2 percent (Not at all True: ..... 61.5 percent)
- You are the primary caregiver for an elderly or ill relative...True: ..... 3.5 percent  
(Not at all True: ..... 91.8 percent)
- You are attending school or college...True: ..... 36.1 percent (Not at all True: ..... 47.5 percent)
- You are coping with a physical disability which hinders your ability to job search...True: ..... 10.1 percent
- You are coping with an emotional or mental disability which hinders your ability to job search...  
True: ..... 7.7 percent
- You are deciding what to do next in your life...True: ..... 31 percent

If coping with a physical disability hinders your ability to job search, was it incurred while in service? (Base: 310)

- Yes: ..... 25.5 percent
- No: ..... 8.1 percent
- Does not apply: ..... 66.4 percent

If coping with an emotional or mental disability hinders your ability to job search, was it incurred while in service?  
(Base: 310)

- Yes: ..... 19.9 percent
- No: ..... 8.0 percent
- Does not apply: ..... 72.1 percent

### *Life Since the Military*

When examining the data as it related to women veterans who had secured a paid position since leaving the military veterans, those who had expressed more positive feelings about their post-military life were also more likely to have said their first post-military position was what they had been looking for when they left the military. Those who responded positively to the following (paraphrased) statements were more likely to have said they found the right first post-military job:

- You feel like you are free to decide how to live your life
- You really like the people you interact with
- People tell you are good at what you do
- You get along with people
- People in your life care about you
- Most days you feel a sense of accomplishment
- You feel you can be yourself
- People are friendly toward you

Conversely, women veterans who said they missed the military life were only two-thirds as likely as others to say their first post-military job was what they had wanted when they left the military.

The general responses below reflect the total responses from all women veterans that completed the survey including those who had worked part-time since leaving the military, were self-employed or had not worked for pay since leaving the military.

## WWSOII: Women Veterans in Transition

Respondents were asked to score their responses from one to seven where one was “not at all true” and seven was “very true.” In reporting their responses, the “True” percentages reflect the total of responses scored for six and seven, “very true.” (Four marks the mid-way point as “somewhat true.”) On those occasions when survey participants responded strongly, with high instances of seven, “very true,” or one, “not at all true,” these responses are highlighted.

Indicate how true the following statements are regarding how has your life turned out since leaving the military. (Base: 1,392 to 1,410)

- You feel like you are free to decide for yourself how to live your life...True: ..... 67.3 percent (Very True: ..... 54.5 percent)
- You really like the people you interact with...True: ..... 56.4 percent
- You feel pressured in your life...True: ..... 27.7 percent
- People you know tell you that you are good at what you do...True: ..... 75 percent (Very True: ..... 52 percent)
- You get along with people you come in contact with...True: ..... 79 percent (Very True: ..... 50 percent)
- People in your life care about you...True: ..... 79.8 percent (Very True: ..... 59.2 percent)
- Most days you feel a sense of accomplishment from what you do...True: ..... 51.5 percent
- You feel like you can pretty much be yourself in your daily situations...True: ..... 65 percent (Very True: ..... 43.7 percent)
- People are generally pretty friendly with you...True: ..... 76.3 percent (Very True: ..... 47 percent)
- You miss the military life...True: ..... 41 percent

### Current Demographics

This section outlines the current demographics for all respondents at the time of the survey (April 27, 2007 to July 31, 2007) including those who indicated their first post-military jobs were full-time, part-time or self-employment as well as those who have indicated that had not worked for pay since separating from the military.

Do you live within 100 miles of a military base? (Base: 1,416 )

- Yes: ..... 85.5 percent
- No: ..... 14.5 percent

Are you involved in any organizations or associations associated with the military (i.e. volunteer, member)? (Base: 1,414 )

- Yes: ..... 34.7 percent
- No: ..... 65.3 percent

What is your age? (Base: 1,422)

- 25 or under: ..... 10.3 percent
- 26-30: ..... 15.9 percent
- 31-35: ..... 10.9 percent
- 36-40: ..... 11 percent
- 41-45: ..... 18.6 percent
- 46-50: ..... 15.6 percent
- 51-55: ..... 11.3 percent
- 56-60: ..... 4.1 percent
- 66 and above: ..... 1.4 percent

What is your race/ethnicity? (Base: 1,413)

- Black/Non-Hispanic: ..... 29.8 percent
- White/Non-Hispanic: ..... 54.3 percent

## WWSOII: Women Veterans in Transition

- Hispanic: ..... 9.1 percent
- Asian/Pacific Islander: ..... 2.5 percent
- Alaskan Native/Inuit: ..... .1 percent
- Native American: ..... 1.2 percent
- Other: ..... 3 percent

Do you have a disability? (Answer all that apply) (Base: 1,388 )

- Physical disability: ..... 38.3 percent
- Mental disability: ..... 10.7 percent
- Other disability: ..... 8.3 percent
- Do not have a disability: ..... 53.5 percent

(If yes, had a disability,) was the disability incurred, related to your military service? (Base:645)

- Yes: ..... 94.9 percent
- No: ..... 5.1 percent

Are you? (Base:1,419)

- Married/Living with a partner: ..... 52.3 percent
- Single: ..... 21.7 percent
- Divorced/Separated: ..... 24.6 percent
- Widow: ..... 1.4 percent

How many dependents do you currently have? (Base:1,398)

- One or more: ..... 57.2 percent
- None: ..... 42.8 percent
  - One: ..... 25.8 percent
  - Two: ..... 19.8 percent
  - Three: ..... 8.4 percent
  - Four: ..... 2.3 percent
  - Five or more: ..... .9 percent

Average: ..... 1.1 dependents

Currently, what is the highest level of education you have completed? (Base: 1,418)

- Less than high school: ..... None:
- High school graduate: ..... 5.9 percent
- Vocational/Technical school: ..... 3.0 percent
- Some college: ..... 30.9 percent
- Associate Degree: ..... 15.8 percent
- 4-year college degree; 20.8 percent
- Postgraduate study, no degree: ..... 7.5 percent
- Master's degree: ..... 13.4 percent
- Working toward Ph.D.: ..... 1.4 percent
- Ph.D.: ..... 1.3 percent

91.1 percent achieved some college or better.

Were veterans benefits used to acquire this level of education? (Base: 1,410)

- Yes: ..... 60.4 percent
- No: ..... 39.6 percent

In what type of area do you currently live? (Base:1,415 )

- Rural: ..... 21.1 percent
- Suburban: ..... 53.4 percent
- Urban: ..... 22.3 percent
- Other: ..... 3.2 percent

In what sector are you currently employed? (Base: 1,405)

- For profit: ..... 27.4 percent
- Nonprofit: ..... 5.6 percent
- Government, non-military: ..... 20 percent
- Military as civilian: ..... 7.5 percent
- Self-employed:4.2 percent
- Retired: ..... 7.3 percent
- Other: ..... 6 percent
- School/University: ..... 1.6 percent (write-in response)
- Unemployed: ..... 15.6 percent (write-in response)
- Disabled, not working: ..... 1 percent (write-in response)
- Student: ..... 2.2 percent (write-in response)
- Homemaker: ..... 1.6 percent (write-in response)

What is your current personal income (not including others in your family)? (Base: 1,387)

Average salary: ..... \$39,740

- Less than 15,000: ..... 21.5 percent
- 15,000 - 19,999: ..... 8.3 percent
- 20,000 – 29,999: ..... 16.3 percent
- 30,000 – 39,999: ..... 16 percent
- 40,000 - 49,999: ..... 11.2 percent
- 50,000- 59,999: ..... 8.3 percent
- 60,000-69,999: ..... 5.8 percent
- 70,000 – 79,999: ..... 7.3 percent
- 80,000-89,999: ..... 2.7 percent
- 90,000-99,999: ..... 1.6 percent
- 100,000-149,999: ..... 3.1 percent
- 150,000 or more: ..... .9 percent

What percent of your total household income does your income comprise? (Base: 1,394)

For 52.3 percent of respondents, their personal income comprises more than 50 percent of their household income.

- 0 percent: ..... 10.7 percent
- 1-10 percent: ..... 7.6 percent
- 11-25 percent: ..... 8.5 percent
- 26-50 percent: ..... 20.9 percent
- 51-75 percent: ..... 14.8 percent
- 76-100 percent: ..... 37.5 percent

In what state do you currently live? If outside the U.S., in which country?

The top five responses only are listed in these results. (Base:1,401)

## WWSOII: Women Veterans in Transition

- Texas: ..... 12.2 percent
- California: ..... 10.8 percent
- Virginia: ..... 9.4 percent
- Florida: ..... 8.6 percent
- Georgia: ..... 7.9 percent

With which political party do you identify?

- Democrat: ..... 38 percent
- Independent: ..... 9.8 percent
- Republican: ..... 25.6 percent
- None: ..... 24.4 percent
- Other: ..... 2.2 percent

### *Comments—General Categories*

Would you like to participate in focus groups or interviews as part of the study? (Base: 1,397)

- Yes: ..... 64.1 percent
- No: ..... 35.9 percent

Recommended other women veterans to take the study: ..... (Base: 1,388)

- Yes: ..... 14.8 percent
- No: ..... 85.2 percent

Over 770 women veterans submitted personal comments about their experiences in transferring to the military to the civilian workforce. Examples of their comments are interspersed throughout this report. These comments will be compiled into a subsequent report.



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