



NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS

“Civilian Employment Among Recently Returning Afghanistan and Iraq National Guard Veterans” Inger Burnett-Zeigler Marcia Valenstein, Mark Ilgen, Adrian J. Blow, Lisa A. Gorman, Kara Zivin | [Full Report](#)

Quick Takeaways:

- Recent combat exposure and multiple deployments were not associated with higher unemployment among recently returned National Guard or Reserves veterans.
- Better overall mental health and financial security linked to higher family income was associated with employment among returned Guard and Reserve veterans.

Study:

This study examined employment status of recently returned National Guard and Reserves veterans in relation to other variables including education, marital status, race, physical health, alcohol use, gender, number of deployments, combat exposure, and family income. Researchers recruited 585 service members from mandatory reintegration workshops following their return from deployment. Participants completed a survey to identify instances of PTSD, depression, anxiety, and alcohol abuse.

Findings:

At the time of the reintegration workshop (45-60 days post return), 41 percent of the National Guard Service members were employed. Of those, 21 percent were employed part-time. Being younger, unmarried, or female, was associated with higher likelihood of unemployment. Other factors associated with decreased likelihood of being employed included poor mental health status, having a high school education or less, and having a lower family income.

Service members who had been deployed two or more times and who had recent combat exposure were more likely to be employed. A significant number of service members who were employed during this period also reported mental and physical health issues and using a variety of coping mechanisms, including alcohol use, to deal with hardship upon returning home.

Conclusion:

This study’s findings on the connection between National Guard and Reserves OEF/OIF deployment and employment provide divergent results from other literature and popular opinion on the relationship between employment and multiple deployments. The inconsistency suggests both the need for further research and the need to further integrate mental health and vocational support to ensure National Guard and Reserve veterans easily transition into full-time positions and maintain their employment.