



NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS

The Impact of Prior Deployment Experience on Civilian Employment after Military Service

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Quick Takeaways

- Military deployments (both combat and noncombat-related) and PTSD were not significantly associated with employment status after leaving military service.
- After taking into account reasons for leaving the military, the main reasons associated with unemployment are: depression, panic/anxiety, and poor physical health.
- Women and non-Hispanic black veterans are at increased odds of unemployment following separation from service.

Summary

The Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) began in 2001 and examines the impact of military service on the health and well-being of service members during and after their military careers over time. This report uses the MCS to assess whether differences in post-service employment status existed between veterans with deployment experience and veterans without deployment experience. Further, the report discusses whether the effect of military deployments taken together with mental health concerns made a difference to civilian employment status.

Findings

Of the 9,099 military personnel studied, 17% reported unemployment after military service. Of the 9,099 veterans, 60.3% retired with at least 20 years of service and a pension, 23.8% separated after fulfilling their service term, and 15.9% left for other reasons. They also found that positive screens for mental disorders were significantly higher for those who were unemployed.

The unemployment rate for those who routinely retired was 14.2% and, for those who fulfilled their service term, it was 19.3%. At 26.5%, the unemployment rate was highest for those veterans who separated from the military for other reasons. Within this group, 48.8% of the unemployed left military service due to a disability, 12.5% left for a pregnancy or parenthood, and most of the remaining members underwent administrative discharge (e.g. due to drug abuse, misconduct, unfitness etc.).

Conclusion

This report found no association between OEF/OIF deployment experience and post-service employment status, but found a significant negative association between employment status and both mental disorders and physical disability. The authors believe this data offers a look at subpopulations that may be disadvantaged in achieving civilian employment and offer suggestions for continued research on training and education during service in those subpopulations to influence post-service employment.