

AUGUST 2006 STATUS OF FORCES SURVEY OF ACTIVE-DUTY MEMBERS: TABULATIONS OF RESPONSES

Introduction to the Survey

The *Human Resources Strategic Assessment Program* (HRSAP), Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), conducts both Web-based and paper-and-pencil surveys to support the personnel information needs of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness [USD(P&R)]. These surveys assess the attitudes and opinions of the entire Department of Defense (DoD) community on a wide range of personnel issues. An exclusively Web-based survey program, known as the *Status of Forces Surveys* (SOFS), provides data several times per year on active-duty and Reserve component members and DoD civilian employees. Paper-and-pencil surveys are used to supplement Web-based surveys to obtain data on sensitive topics (e.g., sexual harassment) and from populations who may have limited Internet access (e.g., spouses of active and Reserve members).

This report contains tabulations of responses from the active-duty SOFS Web survey conducted July 11 to August 31, 2006. This introduction (1) summarizes the survey content, (2) defines the total population surveyed and the subgroups used in tabulations of responses, (3) summarizes the survey methodology,¹ and (4) provides details on how to use the tabulations. The tabulations and a copy of the survey items follow this introduction.²

Survey Content

The topics covered in the *August 2006 Status of Forces Survey of Active-Duty Members* included those in the *Status of Forces Surveys of Active-Duty Members' Long-Term Content Plan*. The long-term content plan is at page 461. As indicated in that plan, there is a series of items included on all active-duty SOFS. These questions cover overall satisfaction, retention intention, perceived readiness, stress, tempo, and permanent change-of-station (PCS) moves. In addition, items were included on deployments since September 11, 2001, Military OneSource, detailed retention, deployments, satisfaction with aspects of military life, transition assistance, Servicemember's Group Life Insurance (SGLI), financial health, and attitudes toward drinking alcohol. The survey was subdivided into the following 15 topic areas:

1. *Background Information*—Service, gender, paygrade, education, marital status, spouse employment status, race/ethnicity, dependents, and location (both geographic and on/off base).

¹ Details on survey methodology are reported by Riemer and Kroeger (2003) and DMDC (2006b).

² Refer to DMDC (2006a) to view a screen-shot version of the survey as it appeared on the Web.

2. *Satisfaction*—Satisfaction with aspects of the military (e.g., compensation) and overall satisfaction with the military way of life.
3. *Retention*—Years of service, likelihood to stay on active duty, spouse/family support to stay on active duty, commitment to serve, and likelihood to join a National Guard or Reserve unit.
4. *Tempo*—PCS moves, days worked overtime, time away from permanent duty station, and the impact of time away on career intentions.
5. *Readiness*—Individual and unit preparedness, and training effectiveness.
6. *Stress*—Level of stress in work and personal life.
7. *Deployments Since September 11, 2001*—Number of times deployed for operations, time spent away, location of deployments, days spent in a combat zone, combat involvement, deployment expectations, and stop-loss.
8. *Military OneSource*—Use and satisfaction of Military OneSource and reasons for not using Military OneSource.
9. *Detailed Retention*—Current enlistment term, re-enlistment and service commitment bonuses, likelihood to stay at least 20 years, total expected years of service, important factors in decision to stay, steps taken to leaving the military (e.g., prepared a resume, interviewed for a job), plans if leaving the military, likelihood of recommending the service to a youth or child, and impact of eliminating “up-or-out” rule on the morale and quality of the officer corps.
10. *Deployments*—Member’s understanding of likelihood of deployments upon entering the military, number of times deployed in career, impact of hostile and non-hostile deployments on retention intention, satisfaction with care of family while deployed, impact of Military, Welfare, and Recreation support items on quality of life while deployed, and impact of deployment-related issues on retention intention.
11. *Satisfaction With Aspects of Military Life*—Satisfaction with tempo, job and off-duty educational opportunities, current level of member and unit morale, and unit cohesion.
12. *Transition Assistance*—Availability and likelihood of using transition assistance programs, awareness of unemployment benefits, access to and interest in information on transitioning to civilian life, participation of members who expect to separate or retire in the next two years, and reasons for leaving the Service.
13. *Servicemember’s Group Life Insurance (SGLI)*—SGLI and other life insurance coverage, amount of additional life insurance coverage, best way to communicate SGLI program changes, and awareness of SGLI features.
14. *Financial Health*—Annual military earnings.

15. *Attitudes Toward Drinking Alcohol*—Agreement with statements about drinking, drinking behavior, and recognition of military-sponsored educational programs discouraging excessive drinking.

Population and Reporting Categories

The target population for all active-duty SOFS consists of active-duty members of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force, excluding National Guard and Reserve members, (1) who have at least 6 months of service at the time the questionnaire is first fielded and (2) are below flag rank. Survey results are presented for the total population and by a variety of reporting categories. To form the reporting categories for the tabulations, respondents are classified primarily by survey self-report. If the self-reported data are missing, then DMDC's *Active Duty Master Edit File* data, at the time of sampling, are used to impute the subgroup classification. Survey results are tabulated by: Service, paygrade, location, education level, race/ethnicity, family status, gender, officer/enlisted by gender, and Service by paygrade. Definitions for reporting categories follow:

- *Service*—The categories include *Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force*.
- *Paygrade*—The *Enlisted* subgroup includes all enlisted paygrades (E1-E9). The *Enlisted* subgroup is broken into the following groups: *3 to 5 years* (i.e., first-term decision window), *6 to 9 years* (i.e., second-term decision window), *E1-E4s*, and *E5-E9s*. The *Officers* subgroup includes warrant officers (W1-W5) and commissioned officers (O1-O3 and O4-O6).
- *Location*—Geographic locations (Figure 1, page 4) are collapsed into geographic regions as defined by the *Department of Defense Worldwide Manpower Distribution by Geographic Area* (DoD Washington Headquarters Services, 2001). The primary classification distinguishes *Overseas* from *US (including territories)*. *US (including territories)* includes respondents with permanent duty stations located in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and United States territories or possessions. Within the *Overseas* classification, two regions can be reported separately: (1) *Europe*, which includes countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany, Italy, Serbia, and the United Kingdom; and (2) *Asia and Pacific*, which includes countries such as Australia, Japan, and Korea. Housing locations are classified primarily for financial analyses based on whether respondents are provided housing directly or by allowance, rather than community analyses based on geographic location of the housing. From self-report data, *On Base* includes living in or aboard ship, in barracks/dorm/BEQ/UEPH/BOQ/UOPH³ military facilities, or in on-base military family housing. *Off Base* includes living in military family housing off base, in privately owned or rented housing, or in privatized military housing. If the self-reported data are

³ Bachelor/Base Enlisted Quarters, Unaccompanied Enlisted Personnel Housing, Bachelor Officers' Quarters, and Unaccompanied Officers Personnel Housing, respectively.

missing, then On Base and Off Base are imputed from personnel record data indicating whether the respondent qualifies to receive either Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) or Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA), respectively.

Figure 1.
Geographic Locations Used for Analyses



- **Education**—Respondents are classified based on self-reported educational attainment. *No College* includes anyone without college credit. *Some College* includes those with some college credit, including a 2-year degree, but does not include those with a 4-year degree. *Four-year Degree* includes those with a 4-year degree and those with some graduate school, but no graduate or professional degree. *Graduate/Professional Degree* includes those with masters, doctorates, and first professional degrees (i.e., MA/MS/MEng/MBA/MSW/PhD/MD/JD/DVM).
- **Race/Ethnicity**—Respondents are classified based on self-reported categories consistent with requirements of the *Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity* (1997). *Total Minority* includes

all persons marking one or more of the races other than White and/or marking that they are Spanish/Hispanic/Latino. *Non-Hispanic Black* includes persons marking only⁴ Black or African American and not reporting being Spanish/Hispanic/Latino. *Hispanic* includes anyone marking that they are Spanish/Hispanic/Latino, regardless of how they answered the question on race.

- *Family Status*—Respondents are classified based on self-reported marital status, spouse employment, and legally dependent children (ages 22 and under). Except for *Working Spouse*, missing data can be imputed from personnel record data if the respondents do not answer these questions.⁵ *Single* includes those who have never been married or are divorced/widowed and have not remarried. *Married* includes those who are married or legally separated. *With Child(ren)* includes those with dependent child(ren) aged 22 and under, regardless of where the child(ren) live(s). *Working Spouse* includes those members whose spouse is working as measured by the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) questions, and those in military service. *Dual Service Spouse* includes military members married to (including separated from) another military member (active or Reserve components).
- *Gender*—This category is self-explanatory.
- *Service by Paygrade*—The categories include each of the Services by enlisted and officer paygrade groups.

Survey Methodology

The Web survey administration process began on July 11, 2006, with the mailout of notification letters to sample members. This notification letter explained why the survey was being conducted, how the survey information would be used, and why participation was important. Throughout the administration period, additional e-mail and postal reminders were sent to encourage survey participation. Data were collected on the Web between July 24 and August 31, 2006.

Single-stage, nonproportional stratified random sampling⁶ procedures were used. The sample consisted of 39,389 individuals drawn from the sample frame constructed from DMDC's *Active-Duty Master Edit File*. Members of the sample became ineligible if they indicated in the survey or by other contact (e.g., telephone

⁴ Persons marking they are Black or African American and another race are not in this category.

⁵ Because there are no personnel record data for working spouses, this category cannot be imputed.

⁶ In stratified random sampling, all members of a population are categorized into homogeneous groups. For example, members might be grouped by gender and Service (e.g., all male Army personnel in one group, all female Navy personnel in another). Members are chosen at random within each group. Small groups are oversampled in comparison to their proportion of the population so there will be enough responses from small groups to analyze. Weights are used so that groups are correctly represented in the analyses.

calls to the data collection contractor) that they were not on active duty as of the first day of the Web survey, July 24, 2006 (0.79% of sample).

Completed surveys (defined as 50% or more of the survey questions asked of all participants are answered) were received from 9,656 eligible respondents. The overall weighted response rate for eligibles, corrected for nonproportional sampling, was 28%. Data were weighted to reflect the population of interest. These weights reflect (1) the probability of selection, (2) a nonresponse adjustment factor to minimize bias arising from differential response rates among demographic subgroups, and (3) a poststratification factor to force the response-adjusted weights to sum to the counts of the target population as of the month the sample was drawn and to provide additional nonresponse adjustments.

Table 1 (pages 8-9) shows the number of respondents and the portion of total respondents in each reporting group. Also shown are the estimated number of members and the portion of total members in each reporting group. Differences in the percentages of respondents and population for the reporting categories reflect differences in the number sampled, as well as differences in response rates.⁷

Tabulation Procedures

Tabulations⁸ for each question from the survey are shown on a set of facing pages. The text of the questions and response options are shown at the top of the even-numbered pages with only the question repeated on the odd-numbered pages. To compress the width of columns in the tables, the response options are shown with a number, letter, or DNA (i.e., *Does not apply*); then that number, letter, or DNA is used as the column heading for the responses. The central feature of the tabulations is the percentage of members choosing the response options indicated by the column heading. Within a set of response options, percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding error.

Where an item lends itself to presentation as an average, that average is also shown as both a number estimate and in a bar chart. The averages lend themselves to a quick scan for reporting groups differing from other similarly defined groups. Where a true response continuum is available (e.g., number of children, nights away), the mean of that continuum is presented; in other cases, the responses are averages of the numeric scales presented with the response options. Where there is a simple binomial response (e.g., yes/no), only one percentage is presented. In this case, the bar chart represents that percentage.

On each page of tabulations, the first column lists the reporting group shown in that row. The second column, *Percent Responding*, lists the portion of the reporting

⁷ There is also a slight difference in treatment of missing data. Cases with missing data are included in counts of respondents, but are excluded in population estimates.

⁸ Details of data editing and preparation are provided by DMDC (2006a).

group represented in the estimates in that row. In most cases, if this percentage is not 100, it reflects item nonresponse, and the table note indicates that “Percent responding are Service members who answered the question.”

Not all questions will apply to every respondent. Where possible, the Web survey is programmed to skip respondents over questions that do not apply to them. For example, Q44 (Since September 11, 2001, how many times have you been deployed?) does not apply to those who marked in Q43 that they were not deployed for any operation since September 11, 2001. The table note for this question indicates, “Percent responding are Service members who answered the question and had been deployed for at least one operation since September 11, 2001 (Q43).”

The survey does not always skip questions that do not apply to the respondents. In the tabulations, *Does not apply* responses are typically included in the percentages in the *Percent Responding* column. For example, Q5 asked members to indicate how many years they had been in a relationship with their current significant other. Survey participants can indicate that the question does not apply. Q5 is also an example requiring caution in interpreting responses because Q5 was within a skip pattern and had an individual item response of *Does not apply*.

Combining Information From Multiple Items

Tabulations in this volume generally present data for individual survey questions. There are three exceptions. The first type of exception is where the results for multiple items are presented on a single set of pages.

- In Q15, members are asked how many dependents they have in each of the age ranges. For this question, the tabulations show the percentage of the reporting category with dependents in that age range. The averages shown on these pages are based only on those with at least one dependent and; therefore, show the average number of dependents for those who have dependents.

The second exception is where members can provide multiple answers to a single question (e.g., race).

- In Q17, members are asked to mark one or more races. The tabulations show the percentage who responded that they were White, Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, and/or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. Respondents who indicated more than one race are also shown in the percentage of More Than One Race Marked. For example, if a respondent indicated they were Asian and White, they were counted in the percentage as Asian, White, and More Than One Race Marked.

Table 1.
Number of Respondents and Estimated Population by Reporting Categories

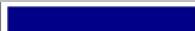
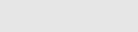
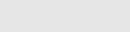
	Respondents		Estimated Population					
	Count	Percent	Totals		Percent		Max ME	
OVERALL AND SERVICE								
Total	9,656	100%		1,300,089	± 16,392	100%		
Army	3,465	36%		457,201	± 8,337	35%		± 1%
Navy	2,443	25%		337,484	± 8,908	26%		± 1%
Marine Corps	1,688	17%		170,302	± 5,652	13%		± 1%
Air Force	2,060	21%		335,103	± 9,127	26%		± 1%
PAYGRADE								
Enlisted	5,855	61%		1,081,538	± 16,205	83%		± 1%
3 to 5 Years of Service	1,883	20%		280,313	± 14,106	22%		± 2%
6 to 9 Years of Service	1,090	11%		184,648	± 10,735	14%		± 1%
E1 – E4	2,432	25%		495,881	± 13,650	38%		± 1%
E5 – E9	3,423	35%		585,657	± 11,478	45%		± 1%
Officers	3,801	39%		218,551	± 4,330	17%		± 1%
W1 – W5	576	6%		17,857	± 2,511	1%		± 1%
O1 – O3	1,456	15%		112,801	± 2,966	9%		± 1%
O4 – O6	1,769	18%		87,892	± 3,640	7%		± 1%
LOCATION								
US (Incl. Territories)	8,250	85%		1,107,615	± 19,342	85%		± 1%
Overseas	1,406	15%		192,474	± 11,962	15%		± 1%
Europe	718	7%		95,272	± 8,395	7%		± 1%
Asia and Pacific	595	6%		80,907	± 8,699	6%		± 1%
On Base	2,622	27%		473,899	± 18,602	36%		± 2%
Off Base	7,034	73%		826,190	± 18,943	64%		± 2%
EDUCATION								
No College	1,600	17%		327,105	± 18,053	25%		± 2%
Some College	4,150	43%		691,631	± 20,883	53%		± 2%
4-year Degree	2,071	21%		174,487	± 9,223	13%		± 1%
Grad/Prof Degree	1,835	19%		106,866	± 4,724	8%		± 1%
RACE/ETHNICITY								
Non-Hispanic White	6,245	65%		823,204	± 14,820	63%		± 1%
Total Minority	3,403	35%		475,940	± 14,404	37%		± 1%
Non-Hispanic Black	1,515	16%		216,460	± 13,096	17%		± 1%
Hispanic	1,126	12%		156,931	± 11,833	12%		± 1%

Table 1. (continued)

	Respondents			Estimated Population				
	Count	Percent		Totals		Percent		Max ME
FAMILY STATUS								
Single w/ Child(ren)	718	7%		76,133	± 7,359	6%		± 1%
Single w/o Child(ren)	2,320	24%		442,521	± 19,387	34%		± 2%
Married w/ Child(ren)	4,849	50%		548,270	± 17,127	42%		± 2%
Married w/o Child(ren)	1,769	18%		233,165	± 14,507	18%		± 2%
Working Spouse	3,582	37%		433,394	± 17,354	33%		± 2%
Dual Service Spouse	906	9%		105,547	± 7,923	8%		± 1%
GENDER								
Male	7,969	83%		1,108,294	± 15,997	85%		± 1%
Enlisted	4,768	49%		923,146	± 16,197	71%		± 1%
Officers	3,201	33%		185,148	± 4,260	14%		± 1%
Female	1,687	17%		191,795	± 8,426	15%		± 1%
Enlisted	1,087	11%		158,392	± 8,372	12%		± 1%
Officers	600	6%		33,402	± 1,160	3%		± 1%
SERVICE BY PAYGRADE								
Army Enlisted	2,158	22%		376,622	± 8,751	29%		± 1%
E1 – E4	902	9%		174,060	± 8,431	13%		± 1%
E5 – E9	1,256	13%		202,562	± 5,257	16%		± 1%
Army Officers	1,307	14%		80,579	± 3,974	6%		± 1%
O1 – O3	382	4%		35,077	± 1,580	3%		± 1%
O4 – O6	486	5%		31,528	± 3,207	2%		± 1%
Navy Enlisted	1,579	16%		288,673	± 8,862	22%		± 1%
E1 – E4	645	7%		120,921	± 7,787	9%		± 1%
E5 – E9	934	10%		167,752	± 5,727	13%		± 1%
Navy Officers	864	9%		48,811	± 1,092	4%		± 1%
O1 – O3	386	4%		26,789	± 1,399	2%		± 1%
O4 – O6	452	5%		20,405	± 830	2%		± 1%
Marine Corps Enlisted	842	9%		152,727	± 5,625	12%		± 1%
E1 – E4	355	4%		96,112	± 5,740	7%		± 1%
E5 – E9	487	5%		56,614	± 2,676	4%		± 1%
Marine Corps Officers	846	9%		17,575	± 571	1%		± 1%
O1 – O3	320	3%		9,300	± 724	1%		± 1%
O4 – O6	415	4%		6,009	± 207	0%		± 1%
Air Force Enlisted	1,276	13%		263,517	± 9,053	20%		± 1%
E1 – E4	530	5%		104,788	± 4,829	8%		± 1%
E5 – E9	746	8%		158,729	± 8,093	12%		± 1%
Air Force Officers	784	8%		71,586	± 1,359	6%		± 1%
O1 – O3	368	4%		41,635	± 2,013	3%		± 1%
O4 – O6	416	4%		29,951	± 1,498	2%		± 1%

The third exception pertains to composite measures on this survey, which include spouse employment, organizational commitment, and unit cohesion.

- Spouse employment indicators are derived from Q6-Q12 and are comparable to employment measures used in the U.S. Census Bureau's *Decennial Census* and *Current Population Survey* (CPS). Two sets of tabulations are presented. In the first set, labor force participation is shown for the spouses of those in the reporting category. The four categories contain percentages of (civilian) employed, unemployed, not in the labor market, and Armed Forces member. Those not in the labor market include those who are permanently or temporarily not working or not actively looking for work.⁹ The second set of data shows only those in the labor market. That is, the percent responding are married Service members who answered the items and whose spouses are in the labor market (civilian employed, unemployed but looking for work, and in the Armed Forces). The unemployment rates shown in these tables are the percent of those who need or want to work and are unemployed. These rates are comparable to those reported monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics based on the CPS data.
- Three measures of organizational commitment (Q26) are presented. *Affective Commitment* can be defined as emotional attachment to, an identification with, and an involvement in an organization (Q26a, b, e, h, j, and m). *Continuance Commitment* can be defined as attachment based on the perceived costs of leaving an organization (Q26c, f, i, l, and n). *Normative Commitment* can be defined as a sense of obligation to remain in an organization (Q26d, g, and k). In the tabulations, individual items in this measure are presented first; after the individual items, there are three sets of tabulation pages that show composite measure results. Lower scores on these measures indicate less organizational commitment, whereas higher scores represent more commitment.
- In Q92, members are asked about their unit cohesion. The unit cohesion measure was developed by Siebold and Lindsay (1999). In the tabulations, individual items in this measure are presented first; after the individual items, there is an additional set of tabulation pages that show the composite measure results. Lower scores on this measure indicate less unit cohesion, whereas higher scores represent more unit cohesion.

⁹ Those who have not actively looked for work in the past 4 weeks are considered to be out of the labor market. This category includes some percentage of spouses who are in the midst of a PCS move and, therefore, only temporarily out of the labor market.

Margins of Error

The complex sample design required weighting to produce population estimates (e.g., percent female).¹⁰ Because of the weighting, conventional formulas for calculating the margin of error will overstate the reliability of the estimate. For this report, variance estimates were calculated using SUDAAN[®]PROC DESCRIPT (Research Triangle Institute, 2004).

By definition, sample surveys are subject to sampling error. Standard errors are estimates of the variance around population parameters, such as percentages or means, and are used to construct margins of error (i.e., confidence interval half-widths). Percentages and means in these tabulations are reported with margins of error based on 95% confidence intervals. In order to compress the data display, only the maximum margin of error (Max ME) for each reporting category is shown. That is, the tab volume shows only the largest margin of error for the percentages or means in each row. For each average shown in these tabulations, its margin of error is also printed.

The following reporting conventions are used:

- “0” indicates that no one in any reporting group selected the response option,
- NR indicates the estimate is *Not Reportable* and is suppressed because of low reliability. Estimates of low reliability are suppressed based on criteria defined in terms of nominal sample size (less than 5), effective sample size (less than 30), or relative standard error (greater than 0.225),
- NA indicates the question was *Not Applicable* because the question did not apply to respondents in the reporting category based on answers to previous questions,
- no Max ME is printed when all percentages in the row are shown as NR,
- no margin of error is printed for an average when it is shown as NR.

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¹⁰ This differential weighting means that only certain statistical software procedures, such as PROC DESCRIPT, correctly calculate standard errors, variances, or tests of statistical significance for stratified samples.

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