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Military Marriages in the 1990s

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Foreword

The research described in this report will help add clarity to the roles of the increasing number of dual-working couples in our military services. While all the services have experienced in the previous two decades significant increases in the percentages of married service members, there have been similar increases in the number of dual-working couples. Where both members of the couple are service members (dual-military marriages), the personnel policies of the services have evolved over the years to better meet the demands of the couple, while continuing to address the needs of the military services.

This report focuses on a qualitative data set which resulted from an extensive series of personal interviews with a large sample of dual-working couples from all the services conducted in 1997 and 1998, and is combined with a secondary analysis of the quantitative data provided by the *1992 Department of Defense Survey of Spouses of Officers and Enlisted Personnel.* The secondary analysis of the 1992 DoD quantitative data stimulated the design of the qualitative research which is based on the personal interviews of these dual-working couples.

Dual-working couples wherever they reside, either affiliated with the military or in a purely civilian environment, face significant challenges: pursuit of a dual set of careers; the logistics of housing, commuting, and work related travel; and the raising of children if and when those decisions are reached, and in particular the challenge of child care, child development, and schooling. In this study, we have focused on those challenges as they are addressed by dual-working couples affiliated with the military and we have included in our sample a coverage of dual-military couples, marriages in which the wife is the service member, and marriages in which the husband is the service member.

In the course of analyzing both the qualitative data based on our interviews, and the secondary analysis of the quantitative data from the DoD survey we have consolidated our findings and made some suggestions for consideration by the policy makers within the Department of Defense and the military services. It is evident from this research that career aspirations and a strong desire for professional advancement in their chosen fields are at the centerpiece of discussion for these dual-working couples, and the talents which they bring with them are valuable human resource assets which must be considered. This research is designed to enlighten these future policy discussions.

Michael D. Shaler
Director

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Most important, we are deeply indebted to the many military members and their spouses who volunteered to share their experiences as dual-working military couples. Without them there would not have been a study.

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Military Family Institute of Marywood University conducted this research to compare the characteristics and attitudes of three groups of dual-working couples in the military: traditional military husbands with civilian wives, dual-military couples, and military women with civilian husbands. The goals of the study were:

(1) To contrast the experiences and responses of the three types of dual-working couples.
(2) To explore why dual-working couples within the military community chose their particular lifestyles despite the challenges.
(3) To ascertain how military members and their working spouses believe the Department of Defense (DoD) can continue to support dual-working couples.

Methodology

This study employed two methods of gathering data: secondary analysis of existing data and qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews. The 1992 Department of Defense (DoD) Surveys of Officers and Enlisted Personnel and their Spouses was the source for the secondary data analysis. This analysis provides descriptive information about the family demographics, family composition, and work experience of civilian wives, civilian husbands, and dual-military spouses. It also explores spouses' satisfaction with the military way of life and provides a context for the qualitative analysis.

The qualitative section of this report presents information from a series of interviews with 141 dual-working military spouses. It is designed to be an initial exploration of couples' choices to be in dual-working military relationships. The report describes the experiences and perceptions of the respondents, and highlights a set of themes that predominate. It also presents suggestions these couples would like to give the DoD in order to further support their dual-working lifestyle.

Research Results

Quantitative Analysis

There were 24,165 spouses who responded to the 1992 Department of Defense Survey of Spouses of Officers and Enlisted Personnel (response rate = 37%). Among these respondents, groups were identified by gender and military status versus civilian status. There were 2,859 (11.8%) who could not be classified or were not currently married to an active duty member and they were excluded from all analyses.

The demographic characteristics of each of the following types of spouses were reviewed separately:

- 2,912 (12%) civilian husbands
- 1,102 (4.6%) military husbands
- 207 (.9%) military wives
- 17,085 (70.7%) civilian wives.

The information spouses provided in the 1992 Survey about (1) their satisfaction with their experience as a military spouse, and (2) their satisfaction with their civilian work experience was then evaluated.

Demographic Characteristics

- 31 to 37 years was the average age across the four types of spouses in the 1992 Survey. Military women were the youngest on average, while civilian husbands were the oldest.
- 76% to 81% were Caucasian. The next largest racial/ethnic group was African Americans (8% to 13%). There were larger percentages of African Americans among civilian men and military women.
- 6 to 10 years was the average length of time the four groups of spouses had been married. Civilian women had been married longest while military husbands and wives were tied for the shortest length.
- 62% to 82% were married for the first time. Civilian wives had the highest percentage of first marriages, while civilian husbands had the lowest.
- 23% to 47% had no dependent minors in their home. Civilian wives most frequently reported having children at home. Dual-military couples most frequently reported having none.

- 43% to 59% were married to officers, while 41% to 57% were married to enlisted personnel. The group with the highest percentage married to officers was civilian husbands. Military wives had the highest percentage married to enlisted members.
- 36% to 40% had at least some college education, but had not completed a bachelors degree. This was the modal education level in the 1992 Survey. Military members tended to be more educated than civilians, and men had more education than women.

Satisfaction with the Military Experience

On a 7-point scale from very satisfied to very dissatisfied, most respondents felt good about the military way of life. Among all of the respondents, 40% to 50% were satisfied or very satisfied. Only 20% to 26% were somewhat to very dissatisfied.

Support for Partner's Military Membership

Across all four groups of spouses, 90% or more said they were supportive of their partner's military employment. However, there were some gender differences in the level of support reported:

- Civilian husbands were less supportive than the other spouse groups.
- Military and civilian husbands were more likely to want their partner to leave the military after their current obligation.
- Husbands were more likely to say they would like their partner to accept an option to leave their military obligation early.

Satisfaction with Specific Aspects of the Military Experience

The 1992 Survey asked spouses to rate their satisfaction with 22 aspects of military life. All four groups of dual working spouses listed their "marital relationship" quality, "partner's parental relationship" quality, and the quality of the "military environment for families" among their top five areas of satisfaction.

- Military spouses were least satisfied with "family separations," "their military partner's time for family," the "leadership practices at their partner's command," "military housing," and "promotion opportunities."

- "Dental care" was among the top five satisfaction areas for those on active duty, but it was one of the five areas of greatest dissatisfaction for civilians.
- Like military spouses, civilian wives were least satisfied with "family separations." Civilian husbands tended to be least satisfied with "employment opportunities."

Factor analysis identified sets of items among the 22 satisfaction areas which spouses rated similarly. These sets or factors represent domains of life satisfaction within the military. All 22 could be grouped into six domains:

1. Family Stress
2. Military Benefits
3. Military Employment
4. Family Finances
5. Family Relationships
6. Military Policies

Satisfaction with Civilian Employment

The majority of civilian spouses who were employed full time (wives: 73.8%; husbands: 63.3%) thought their partner's military jobs interfered little to none with their work. However, these same spouses reported high percentages of unemployment, little tenure in their jobs, and low earnings.

- 15% of the civilian husbands and 7.7% of the civilian wives considered themselves unemployed.
- Among civilian spouses with full-time employment, 69.5% of the husbands and 67.1% of the wives had been in their current job 1 year or less.
- Of those working 46 weeks or more in the previous year, 30.4% of the husbands and 53.5% of the wives earned $20,000 or less.

Qualitative Analysis

The second phase of the research consisted of a series of interviews. This was an exploratory qualitative study comparing the experiences and perceptions of three types of dual-working military couples. Transcripts of interviews from 141 spouses representing 75 marriages were analyzed. As much as possible, the numbers of couples were balanced by service branch, officer versus enlisted status, and couple group. In presenting the information couples shared, the report is written so that stories about their experiences are the focal point. There are two subsections in the quantitative analysis:

1) How spouses chose to be in a dual-working military marriage.
2) Couples' suggestions about how the military family support system might further help dual-working couples.

Employment Decisions Among Dual-Working Couples

This section initially lists 13 questions couples said they deliberated when they chose to be in the military. Listed alongside are 10 more questions that were important in their decisions to be dual-working. There are two important points to keep in mind when reviewing these lists:

- First, the choice to be a dual-working military couple involved two interdependent decisions: the choice to be dual-working and the choice to be in the military.

- Second, groups of couples were not totally distinct from one other, so the factors they considered in their decisions were not distinct either. Consequently, there is only one set of lists for all three groups.

Several themes emerged from couples descripions of their decision processes. These themes are illustrated in three subsections describing the decisions of civilian wives, civilian husbands, and dual-military couples. The themes for civilian spouses are:

1. Familiarity with the Military Way of Life
2. Work and Family Role Expectations
3. Values and Attitudes.

In the section for dual-working couples four themes have been illustrated:

1. Familiarity with the Military Way of Life
2. Work and Family Role Expectations
3. Interdependence of Rank and Relationships
4. Interdependence of Spouse's Career Choices.

Although the first two, in particular, are evident in interviews across all types of couples, there were differences in the way they played themselves out among dissimilar dual-working groups. In order to illustrate the diversity, the decisions of civilian wives, civilian husbands, and dual-military couples are addressed in separate subsections. The last two themes (Interdependence of Rank and Relationships and Interdependence of Spouses' Career Choices) were most prominent among dual-military couples and are only addressed in that subsection.

Civilian Wives and Military Husbands

In most cases civilian wives didn't choose to become part of the military. They chose to marry a military member (20 couples). In five cases the couple met while both were civilians. However, four of the five didn't actually get married until after the husband had committed to the Armed Forces: these couples never knew any other lifestyle together. Six couples met when both spouses were in the Armed Forces. Only one couple made the decision to become part of the military together after they had been married.

Familiarity with the Military Way of Life

- Women who had prior military experience had an easier time accepting the lifestyle.
- Women who had grown up in the military community were more prepared to cope with its challenges.
- Women with no prior experience with the military were more likely to accept it as they learned about the mission and its demands.

Work and Family Role Expectations

- Women whose primary expectation was to raise a family had an easier time accepting the military way of life.
- Women who chose a career field that was transferable had an easier time adjusting to the military way of life.

- The military lifestyle was less stressful for women who were not committed to a career progression.

Values and Attitudes

- Civilian spouses who were concerned about economic stability were more convinced the military was best for their family.
- Civilian spouses who placed a high priority on family were more satisfied with the military way of life.
- In early family and career stages it made sense to place a priority on family and to adjust employment plans around family demands.
- In later career and family stages it made more sense to adjust family priorities in order to pursue employment.

The majority of military husbands and civilian wives who participated in the interviews were committed to the military way of life. Twenty-one planned to serve until they were eligible to retire. Six husbands had been in the Armed Forces over 20 years already, four of whom planned to serve 30 years. Five couples were not sure whether they would remain in the military. All were struggling with the hours and the temporary duty assignments required by the military. Only one husband had plans to leave the Armed Forces at the next opportunity.

Civilian Husbands and Military Wives

Eleven civilian husbands were initially in the military along with their wives: they left the Armed Forces either because they were not promoted, they believed they would have better careers as civilians, they chose to take responsibility for their families, or they retired first. Seven of the couples married after the wife was in the Armed Forces or already had an obligation to fulfill. Six couples said their wives joined after they had been married for a while.

Familiarity with the Military Way of Life

- Husbands with prior military experience were more understanding of their wives' military career goals.
- Men who married later in life or who had retired from the Armed Forces sometimes seemed less concerned about their own careers.
- Husbands with prior military experience had a better understanding of how to cope with the stress of military life.

Work and Family Role Expectations

- Some husbands gradually accepted more of the caregiver role and relinquished the role of provider out of necessity.
- There were couples who had not reversed roles.
- Some civilian husbands were less tied to traditional role expectations from the beginning.

Values and Attitudes

- Husbands who were more concerned about family and financial security than career progression were more in favor of the military.
- Some civilian husbands were very flexible about their own career goals.
- There were husbands who preferred the military lifestyle despite the stress.
- Some husbands were able to accept the challenges of the military by seeing them as temporary.

About half (11) of the military women with civilian husbands had been in the Armed Forces more than 10 years and planned to stay in until they retired. Four at the mid-career decision point were uncertain whether or not they would stay. All found themselves trying to weigh their military career against their desire to have more time for family. None of the 12 couples who had been in the Armed Forces less than 10 years knew they would stay in the military, although three were fairly certain. Only one woman said she was going to get out at the next opportunity; her husband had a job which would support their family well, and they had decided he would become the primary breadwinner.

Dual-Military Couples

All but three dual-military couples interviewed said they met and married after they were in the Armed Forces or after they had committed to the military through the ROTC program. Two couples made the decision to join together. The last couple was together as a civilian wife and military husband while she worked in the civilian sector for 7 years. She finally joined the Armed Forces because she wanted to have a career with more continuity.

Familiarity with the Military Way of Life

- With both spouses in the Armed Forces some couples' family identity and family structure were defined by the military.
- The military was an important area of common ground that spouses shared together in marriage.

Work and Family Role Expectations

- A number of dual-military couples described themselves as very career oriented.
- Dual-military couples who were willing to forego having children or who planned to postpone having children found the military lifestyle easier to accept.
- Couples who were willing to share household responsibilities equally were able to juggle work and family more easily.
- Couples were more successful when they actively sought assignments which were compatible with their family goals.

Interdependence of Rank and Relationships

- Military rank structured military members' relationships in several ways.
- Marital relationships can affect spouses' military promotion potential and career goals.
- Rank determined some couples' choices to be in the military.

Interdependence of Spouses' Career Choices

- Dual-military members' career decisions were very interdependent with their spouse's career decisions.

Although 12 dual-military couples had definite plans for both spouses to remain in the Armed Forces until they could retire, nine were uncertain and three already had plans for at least one spouse to get out. Among those who were committed to both spouses' military careers, two couples were divorcing and would no longer be in dual-military marriages. Another was separated, so the future of their relationship was uncertain.

Supporting Dual-Working Military Couples

One of the issues addressed in this research was how people felt about the supports within the military that made their lives more feasible. In order to explore this, people were asked what the military might do that would make their lives easier. In the final section of this technical report those suggestions are listed within eight content areas:

1) Monetary Compensation—base pay rates, allowances, monetary value of military benefits, promotions, and bonuses.

2) Benefits—housing, medical care, installation services, and educational opportunities.

3) Job Opportunities—civilian and military employment opportunities. Some of the suggestions offered by dual-working military couples would help all dual-working couples.

4) Family Support Systems—needs of specific types of spouses including civilian husbands, dual-military spouses, and dual-working spouses.

5) Childcare—child development centers, family childcare programs, and dependent care plans.

6) Flexibility for Family Needs—the stress of long work hours, family separations and relocations, or the importance of time to care for occasional family responsibilities, and military policies regarding childbirth.

7) Availability of Information—those spouses and service members would benefit if they had more comprehensive and accurate information, particularly as they entered the military or as they relocated.

8) Military Organizational Culture—the assumptions and attitudes within the military community about families and their needs, rank and status, and nontraditional families all impact dual-working couples.

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Introduction

As trends in the military reflect those in the larger society, military researchers and policy makers are giving more attention to the emergence of the dual-working family. The traditional military wife who devotes herself full time to homemaking and support of her husband's career as hostess and volunteer worker is less and less common. Increasing numbers of spouses seek jobs outside the home as a source of additional income and personal satisfaction. In 1985 across the services, 54% of all military members' spouses were employed. According to the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), by 1992 that number had increased to 65% (DMDC, 1997). The military has recognized that, if it wishes to retain its careerists, it must consider the needs of both working spouses.

Emerging in the military are three types of dual-working marriages: (1) a civilian female is married to a male service member, (2) both spouses are active-duty service members, and (3) the more overlooked group—an active duty female is married to a civilian male. Although the numbers of the second and third types are fewer, they are very likely to increase in the future as gender roles evolve and economic opportunities in the civilian sector continue to shift. Among these three types of marriages, there are four groups of spouses divided along gender lines and military membership (civilian wives, civilian husbands, dual-military wives, and dual-military husbands). From a theoretical standpoint, a four-way comparison of these groups allows a systematic exploration of the interaction between gender and occupational culture.

A research goal in conducting this study was to compare the characteristics and attitudes of these four groups of military spouses. How satisfied are they with the military way of life and with various aspects of it? The goal was also to explore the factors which are important to dual-working military members and their spouses in decisions about work and family life: What might make it easier for them if they choose to remain in dual-working military marriages; and how might the Department of Defense support that choice?

Dual-working couples experience many pressures. Previous research on civilian dual-working couples reveals these strains to include: "role overload" especially for wives, as primary responsibility for the "second shift" falls on them; pressures for husbands to share more of the household tasks and childcare (although husbands' participation in these activities is far from equal to the amount of time wives spend at them); little time available for entertaining, other social activities, or leisure pursuits; decreased intimacy in the marital relationship due to role overload and time constraints (Gilbert, 1985; Hertz, 1986; Hochschild & Machung, 1989; Pleck, 1985; Silberstein, 1992). Clearly, all these sources of stress might be

intensified in military dual-working marriages because of the particular demands of the military career: long and unpredictable working hours, family separations due to training and deployment, frequent transfers which relocate families and disrupt the civilian spouse's employment and career development.

Although occupational organizations are under increasing pressure to make accommodations to the needs of families in which both partners work outside the home, they have been very resistant to change. There are, of course, examples of organizations which have instituted policies such as on-site childcare, flextime, job-sharing, and parental leave. However, these programs tend to be "piecemeal" and are not sufficiently widespread or adequate to fully meet the needs of the increasing numbers of dual-earner families (Hochschild & Machung, 1989; Hunt & Hunt, 1982; Sekaran, 1986; Silberstein, 1992). Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that at the top levels of corporate and professional organizations requests for or utilization of such accommodations (by women or men) are viewed as signs of weak career commitment and can limit career mobility. As a result, most dual-working couples find themselves struggling to work out individual solutions to what is essentially a structural problem (Gilbert, 1985).

That the military is not immune to such pressures for change can be seen in some of the research and policy initiatives undertaken by the Armed Forces and the Department of Defense. There may be more rigid limitations on the kinds of structural accommodations to the needs of dual-working families that the military can make than might be possible (theoretically, at least) in civilian occupations. Nevertheless, one could argue that within the constraints of the military mission and its demands on personnel, the Armed Forces have been somewhat more responsive to the concerns of dual-working families than many other organizations.

For example, there has been a proliferation of research on military spouses. These studies address a range of topics including: descriptions of spouses' backgrounds and characteristics (age, education, ethnic and national origins, etc.); spouses' attitudes toward quality of life issues in the military (such as housing, relocation, spouse employment opportunities, availability and quality of family services); how well spouses adapt to the stresses of military life (A few of many possible examples: Bowen, 1989; Bowen & Neenan, 1990; Bowen, Orthner, Zimmerman & Bell, 1994; Croan, 1991; Griffith, Doering & Mahoney, 1986; Griffith, Stewart & Cato, 1988; Rosenberg, 1993; Scarville & Bell, 1993; Schumm, Bell, Palmer-Johnson & Tran, 1994; Segal & Harris, 1993).

Military family research has clarified the importance of the role spouses play in members' decisions to remain in the military. For example, Lakhani and Gade (1992) explored the impact of joint-military Army spouses on one another in

making career decisions. In their research spouses' perceptions of each other's career intentions were most important in predicting their own career intentions. This was the case even when considering job satisfaction, years of service, and family happiness.

This body of research on military spouses provides some very useful descriptive data as well as some generalizations about how spouses play a role in readiness and retention. It points to an awareness and concern on the part of military policy makers that contented spouses make for more effective and committed service members. The Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Quality of Life also implicitly reflects concern for dual-working military families in its recommendations for improvement in personnel tempo (decreasing the frequency and length of family separations), childcare facilities (longer hours to accommodate working parents), and efforts to assist spouses looking for employment. (Defense Science Board Task Force on the Quality of Life, 1995).

A limitation of research on military spouses is that it has not systematically explored differences across the types of dual-working military couples. Comparing the four types of spouses could potentially provide insights into their concerns and circumstances that are not illuminated by considering them individually. In addition, some groups of dual-working spouses have not been the focus of much research at all. Civilian wives have received the most attention. Survey researchers may have excluded civilian husbands from studies of military spouses because their numbers are too small for statistical analysis (3-4%). Dual-military couples are more common (7% of marriages), and there has been more research focusing on them (Janofsky, 1989; Lakhani & Gade, 1992).

Although there are limited numbers of civilian husbands and dual-military couples, research on these groups has important implications for female military members. Among all women in the Armed Forces, 22% are in joint-military marriages. Because women represent a growing segment of the population of service members, more balanced insight into the roles and strains affecting all dual-working couples ought to be of great interest to the military. In the past 2 decades the percentage of women among U.S. military personnel has increased significantly from 1.6% in 1973 to 8.5% in 1980 to 11.8% in 1993. (Maisels & Gormley, 1994). As of 1997, 13.7% of active duty personnel were women, for a total of 195,609 female members in the Armed Forces. The individual service branches differ in percentages of active duty women, ranging from the highest (17%) in the Air Force to the lowest (5%) in the Marine Corps (DMDC, 1997). While the overall number of active duty personnel is decreasing, the percentage of active duty women is still growing monthly at a rate of 1.1% (Lt. Col. McMannis, DMDC, personal communication, February 15, 1996). Furthermore, military "jobs" open to women are increasing at rates which will ensure a larger active duty

percentage. Currently only 10% of the jobs open to women are filled by women (Lt. Col. McMannis). For example, 99% of Air Force jobs are open to women, and the Navy has recently opened shipboard assignments to women. This substantial growth pattern highlights the need to better understand these active duty women, 47.3% of whom are married (DMDC).

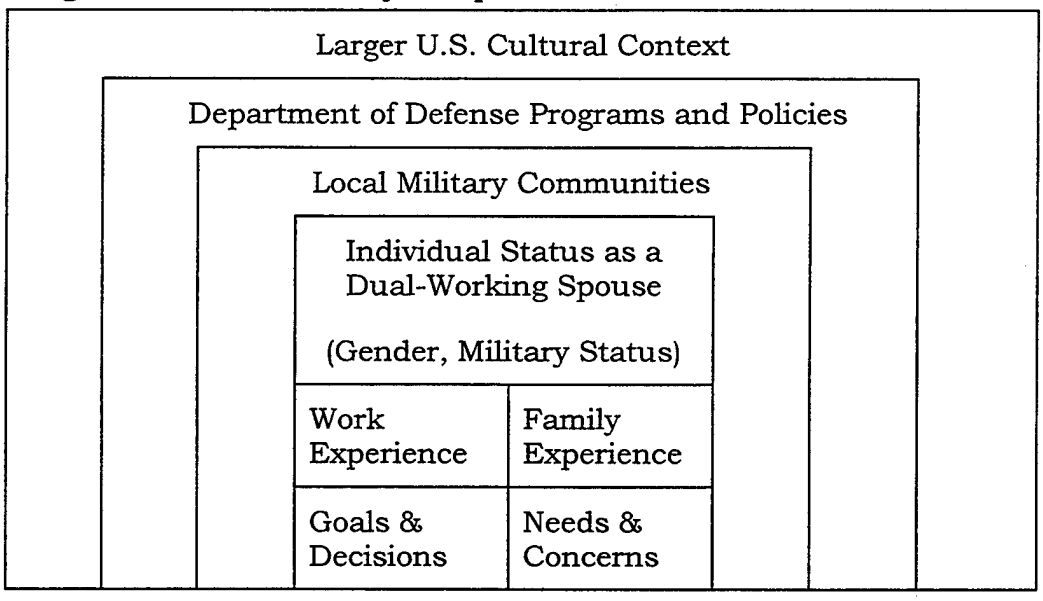
Research Design

In light of these research concerns, three objectives were identified:

(1) To contrast the experiences and responses of three different types of dual-working couples: military husbands with civilian wives, military wives with civilian husbands, and dual-military couples.
(2) To explore why dual-working couples within the military community have chosen this lifestyle despite the challenges they face.
(3) To determine how military members and their working spouses believe the DoD can continue to support dual-working couples.

It was expected that a unique pattern would emerge for each of the four groups of military spouses—male civilians, female civilians, male military members, and female military members. The underlying assumption of the design was that there are a number of interacting aspects in the lives of military families which impact the needs and decisions of dual-working couples. Diagram 1 illustrates the researchers' conceptualization of the context for dual-military couples.

Diagram 1: Dual-Military Couples in Context



This study employed two methods of gathering data: (1) secondary analysis of existing data and (2) qualitative analyses of in-depth interviews. The 1992 DoD Survey of Officers and Enlisted Personnel and their Spouses is the most recent survey containing data on all types of military spouses across all the services. The survey includes responses from 24,165 spouses of active duty military members. Based on this survey, the secondary data analysis provides descriptive information about the family demographics, family composition, and work experience of the four types of military spouses. It also explores satisfaction with the military way of life. This provides a context for the qualitative portion of this research.

The second phase of the research was an exploratory qualitative study based on in-depth interviews of the three types of dual-working military couples. The goal of the sampling was not to find a group of couples who could represent the exact parameters of the larger spouse population, but to describe the experiences and perceptions of these types of dual-working couples. The interest was to find respondents with salient concerns and experiences. These people are likely to have struggled most with the challenges inherent in their situation. They are also likely to have thought about their needs and concerns most thoroughly. Their stories could best illuminate the issues of interest to this study.

Secondary Data Analysis

This secondary data analysis was based on the 1992 Department of Defense Survey of Spouses of Officers and Enlisted Personnel (Westat, 1994a). It is part of a series of large scale surveys sponsored by the DoD. For this survey, 64,643 questionnaires were mailed to spouses of active duty personnel across all four military services as well as the Active Guard/Reserves. Of the 24,165 spouses who responded (response rate = 37%), 2,912 (12%) were civilian husbands. In addition to civilian husbands, 1,102 (4.6%) husbands and 207 (.9%) wives surveyed were military members involved in dual-military marriages. The largest group in the survey was 17,085 civilian wives (70.7%). The last 11.8% of the spouses surveyed were divorced or widowed from their military partner or they had not provided enough information or they gave inconsistent information so they could not be correctly categorized into one of the groups. These spouses were not included in further analyses.

Initially, the demographic characteristics of each of the four spouse groups were evaluated separately. Specific demographic variables of the groups were then compared; and, finally, the information spouses provided in the 1992 Survey about their satisfaction with their experience as a military spouse and their satisfaction with their civilian work experience was evaluated.

Identifying Groups of Spouses

Civilian Spouses

Spouses were included as civilians if they had:

- never been in the military (wives: 90.4%; husbands: 26.9%)
- either retired or separated from military duty (wives: 8.3%; husbands: 68.3%)
- Reserves/Guard experience only (wives: 1.3%; husbands: 4.8%).

A number of the civilian spouses included in this group reported they were still in the Reserves/National Guard at the time of the 1992 Survey (wives: 1.9%; husbands: 12.5%). It is clear that the majority of the civilian husbands had active duty military experience. Among the 779 men who said they had no military experience at all, almost half (41%) said they had a family member who had been in the military. The instance of a civilian husband with absolutely no relationship

to the Armed Forces outside of their military partner was rare in this survey of spouses (421 husbands or 2%).

Dual-Military Spouses

Dual-military career marriages are the minority among the spouses surveyed for the 1992 data set overall. However, this is much more the case for wives than husbands. One third (38%) of all the husbands who responded were military members themselves, while only 1% of the wives surveyed were military members. The largest group of dual-career spouses was in the Air Force (wives: 92; husbands: 460). This was followed by the Navy (wives: 59; husbands: 328), the Army (wives: 37; husbands: 208) and finally the Marine Corps (wives: 15; husbands: 103). There was a small number including three husbands and four wives who stated they were employed full time in the military, but did not specify which service.

Demographic Characteristics of Spouses in the 1992 Survey

With the exception of active duty wives, the modal age bracket for the spouses who responded to the 1992 Survey was between 30 and 34 years (refer to Table 1 for means). The modal age group for active duty military wives was between 25 and 29.

Spouses who responded to the survey had been married an average of 6 to 10 years (Table 1). However, the modal length of marriage was between 0 and 4 years. The discrepancy between the mean and modal length of marriage reflects a skewed distribution including a minority of fairly long-term marriages. The longest length of marriage reported was 39 years.

Civilian wives had generally been married once (82%). Some (16.3%) had been remarried following divorce. Only .7% reported having previously been widowed. Another 1% said they were currently separated from their spouses.

The current marriage was a first marriage for 62.3% of the civilian husbands. Another third (35.6%) had been divorced and remarried. A few (.9%) said they were currently remarried after having been widowed, and some (1.2%) reported that they were currently separated from their spouses.

Among dual-military spouses, 66.1% of the husbands and 68.1% of the wives had been married only once. The other 30.9% of the wives and 33.5% of the husbands had been divorced and remarried. Only one husband had been widowed before his current relationship. There were also three husbands and two wives who said they were currently separated from their partners.

Just over three fourths (77.4%) of the civilian wives reported that they had at least one dependent under the age of 23 living with them. A full third (35.2%) reported that they had two dependent children living with them. Only .8% reported any elderly dependents 65 years of age or older.

About half of the civilian husbands (51.7%) had one or two dependents under the age of 23 living with them. Another 38.9% said they had no dependent children at home, and 9.4% said they had three or more children. A few had elderly dependents over age 65 (1.8%).

Many active duty spouses (wives: 45%; husbands: 47%) reported that they had no dependent children living at home. Another 46.3% of the husbands and 48.3% of the wives had one or two children at home. Very few (wives: 1.9%; husbands: .5%) said they had any elderly dependents over age 65.

Some college was the modal education level for both active duty (female: 39.8%; male: 34%) and civilian spouses (wives: 36.6%; husbands: 35.7%). The next largest group of husbands had a bachelors degree (active duty: 15.5%; civilian: 18.5%), but the next largest group of wives had only a high school diploma (active duty: 15.5%; civilian: 22.3%).

Nearly half of the civilian wives and the military husbands were married to officers. Among military wives, 43% were married to officers and 57% to enlisted members. There were 41% enlisted and 59% officers among the partners of civilian husbands (Table 1).

This group of civilian spouses included very few individuals who were not U.S. citizens. In all, only 73 (2.5%) civilian husbands, and 868 (5.1%) civilian wives reported that they were not citizens. There were two active duty husbands and one active duty wife in this group who reported that they were not U.S. citizens.

The vast majority of the spouses who responded to the 1992 Survey said that they were Caucasian. Among the spouses who participated only 19% to 24% reported that they were members of a minority group (Table 2).

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Four Spouse Groups in the 1992 Survey

	Civilian		Military	
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Average Age	37	34	33	31
Years Married	8	10	6	6
In 1st Marriage	62%	82%	66%	68%
No Children at Home	39%	23%	47%	45%
Education				
< High School	2%	4%	--	1 spouse
> 4 yr. Degree	17%	7%	24%	19%
Military Partner				
Officer	59%	52%	53%	43%
Enlisted	41%	48%	47%	57%

Table 2
Racial/Ethnic Identity of Spouses in the 1992 Survey

	Civilian		Military	
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Caucasian	76.2%	78.8%	80.6%	77.8%
African American	13.3%	7.7%	9.5%	12.3%
Asian	2.3%	5.4%	1.8%	5.4%
Hispanic	5.3%	6.4%	5.4%	3.0%
Native American	1.0%	0.6%	1.5%	0.5%
Other	1.8%	1.1%	1.2%	1.0%
All Minorities	24.0%	21.0%	19.0%	22.0%

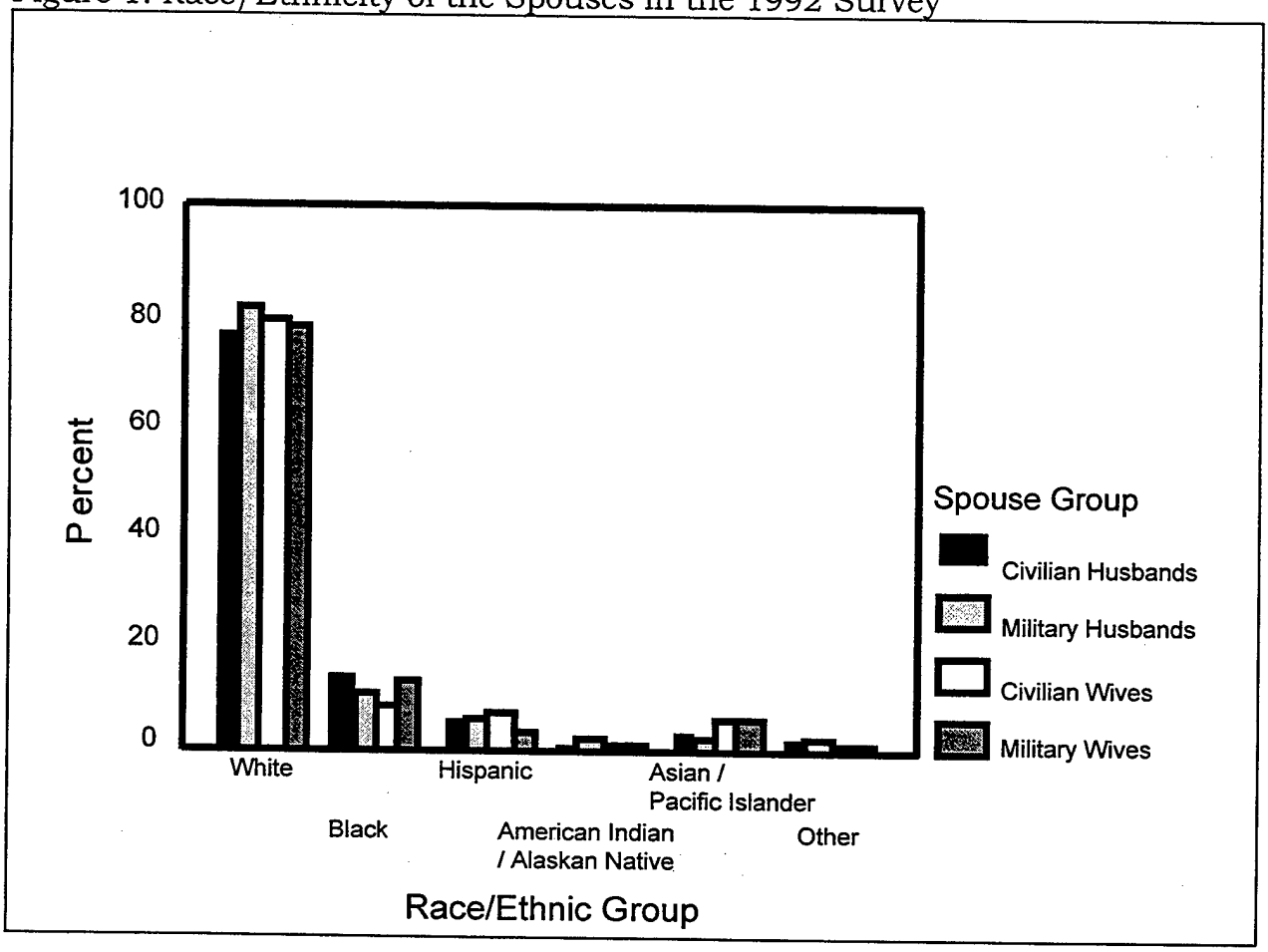
Demographic Comparison Across Groups

Demographic differences among the spouses as a function of the group to which they belonged were explored. Evaluations of race/ethnicity, education level, marital status, and the number of dependent children in the household were made using a chi square statistic. (In this and other analyses, a more conservative alpha level of $p<.01$ was used due to the number of analyses included.) There were significant differences between groups on all of four of these demographic characteristics.

Race/Ethnicity *($X^2_{15, N=21166}=205.69, p<.001$)*

- Civilian husbands included a higher percentage of minority and, in particular, Black/African American spouses, than military husbands (Figure 1).
- There were more Black/African American spouses among military wives than among civilian wives.
- There were more Asian women among civilian and military wives than there were among either group of husbands.

Figure 1: Race/Ethnicity of the Spouses in the 1992 Survey

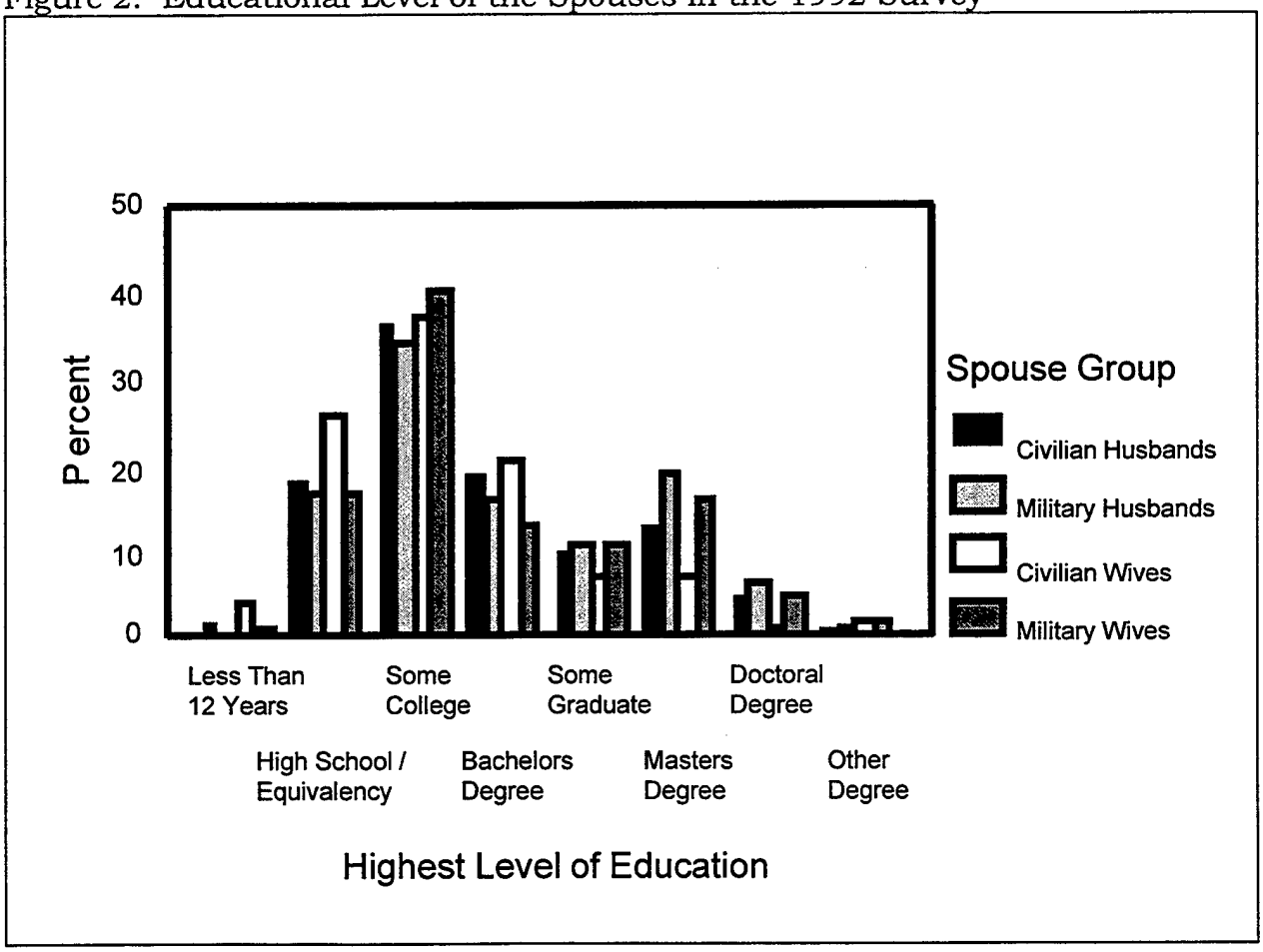


Education *($X^2_{21,\ N=20944}=960.49,\ p<.001$)*

- Military spouses tended to have more education than civilian spouses (Figure 2).
- Civilian wives tended to be the least educated.

Table 1 shows that only one military wife had less than a high school diploma, while 1.5% of civilian husbands and 3.6% of civilian wives fell into this group. Also, a larger percentage of military spouses (wives: 19.4%; husbands: 24.2%) had advanced college degrees in comparison to civilian spouses (wives: 6.8%; husbands: 16.5%).

Figure 2: Educational Level of the Spouses in the 1992 Survey

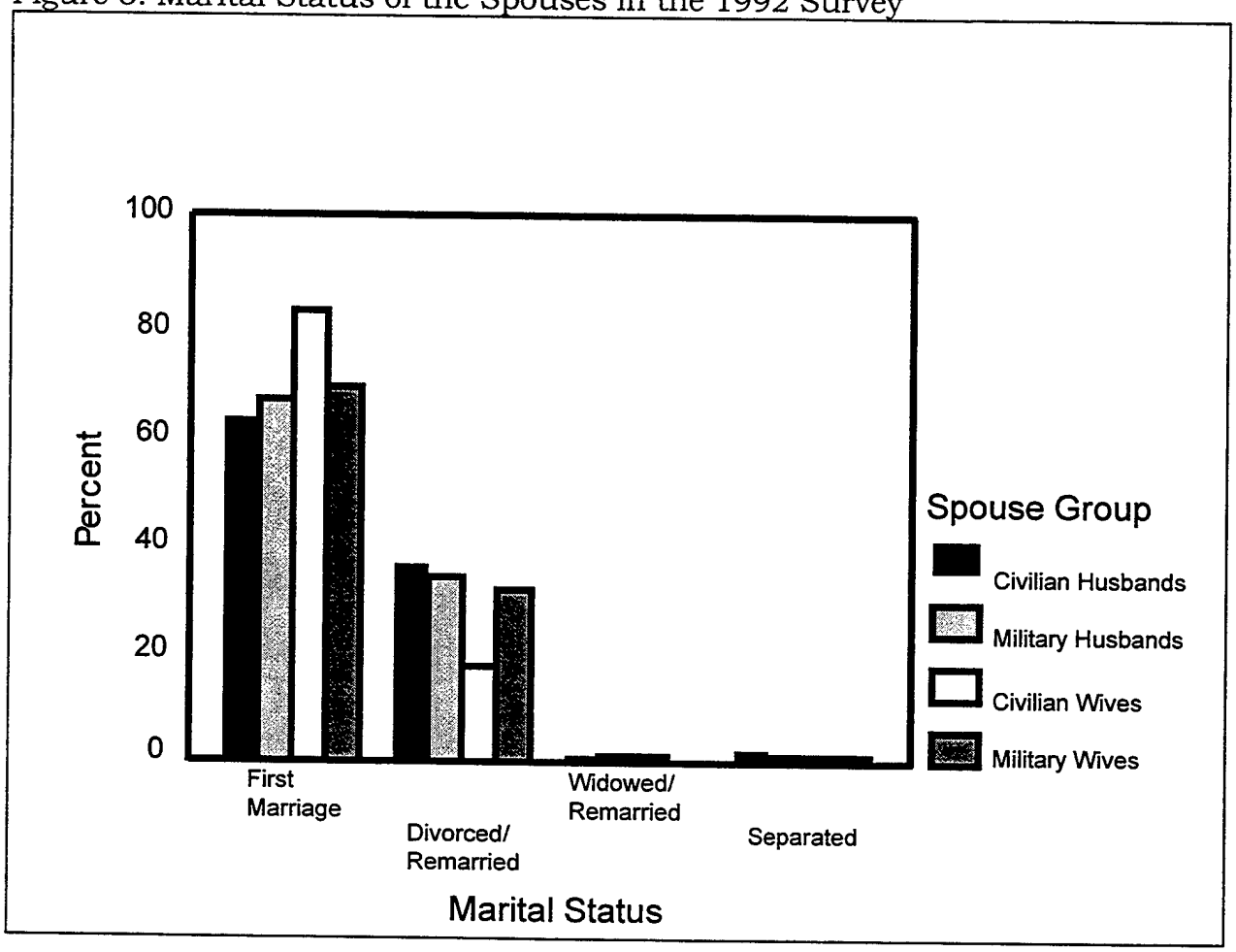


Marital Status *($X^2_{9, N=21251}=745.95, p<.001$)*

The relative number of spouses who were in their first marriage in comparison with those who had been married previously is illustrated in Figure 3.

- A greater percentage of civilian wives had been married only once compared to other spouse groups.

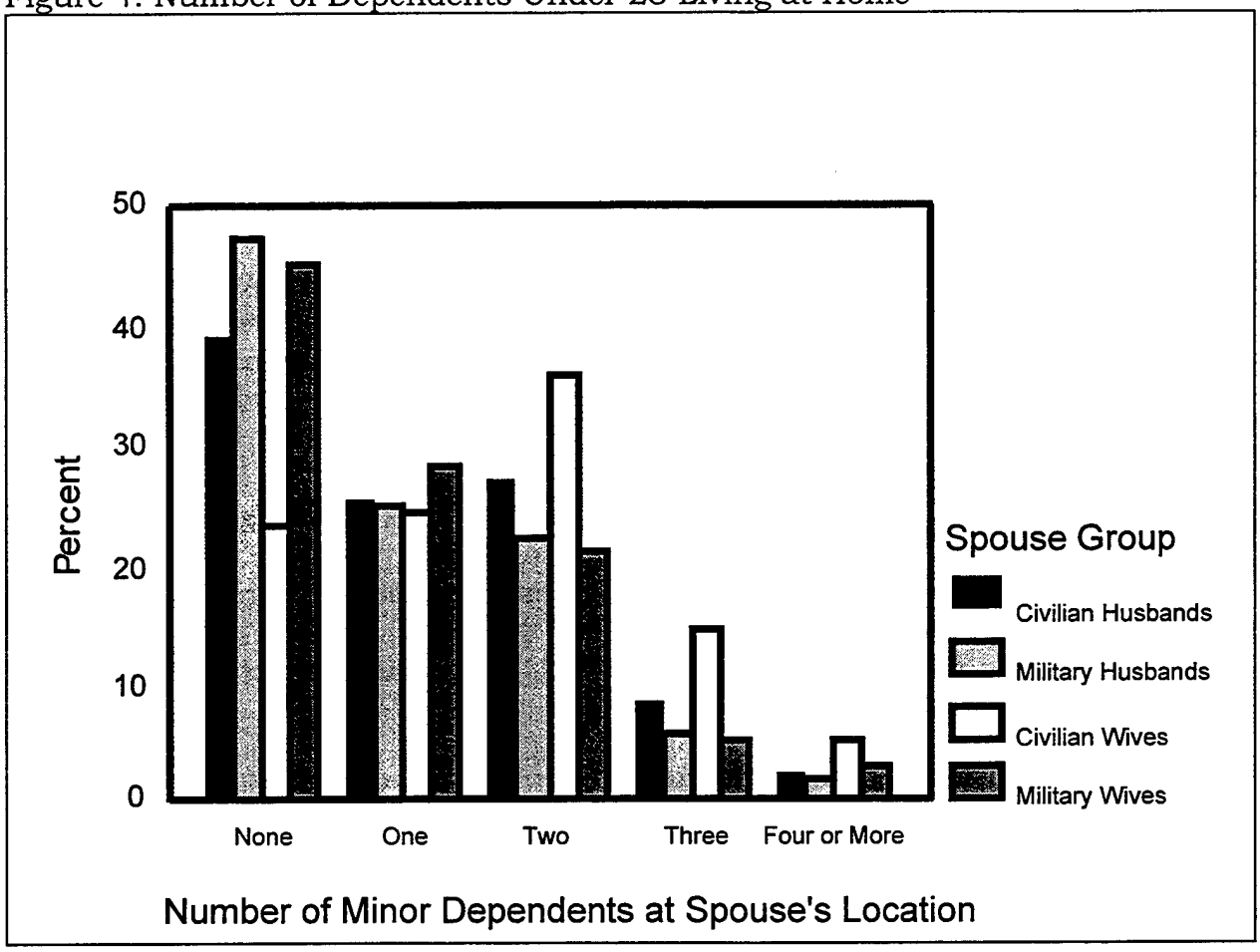
Figure 3: Marital Status of the Spouses in the 1992 Survey



Children in the Home *($X^2_{12, N=20863}=777.42, p<.001$)*

- Civilian spouses reported that they had children under the age of 23 at home more often than military spouses (Figure 4).
- Of the four groups of spouses, civilian wives most frequently had children at home.

Figure 4: Number of Dependents Under 23 Living at Home



Age

A two-way ANOVA[1] (gender by civilian/military status) was used to evaluate whether there were differences among the spouse groups based on age. There was a significant effect for both gender ($F_{1, 21170}=77.74$, $p<.001$) and civilian/military status ($F_{1, 21170}=105.5$, $p<.001$).

- Wives were often younger than husbands among military (wives: 33; husbands: 36) and civilian (wives: 31; husbands: 33) spouses.
- Military spouses tended to be younger than civilian spouses.

Length of Marriage

In addition to age, there was an overall difference between the groups in the length of time spouses had been married. In a two-way ANOVA with gender and military/civilian status as independent factors and age as a covariate, there was a significant main effect for military/civilian status ($F_{1, 21168}=35.9$, $p<.001$) and gender ($F_{1, 21168}=257.4$, $p<.001$). These findings were complicated because there was a significant interaction effect ($F_{1, 21168}=75.1$, $p<.001$) in this analysis. After adjusting length of marriage for age:

- Women (9.0 years) tended to have been married longer than men (5.9 years).
- On average, military wives (7.6 years) had been married a shorter length of time than civilian wives (10.4 years).
- On average, military husbands (6.2 years) had been married longer than civilian husbands (5.7 years).

Overall, civilian wives seemed to vary the most from all three of the other groups. They had the least education, they had been married the longest, and had been least often remarried. They also reported having the most children in their households. It is logical that civilian wives would differ from the other groups. Most of the civilian husbands and all of the military spouses were in dual-career marriages. Half of the civilian wives (51.9%) reported that they were homemakers. Only 10.9% of the civilian husbands reported this along with 14% of military wives, and 1.5% of military husbands. Couples who are juggling dual-careers are likely to have different life circumstances than those where one spouse has accepted the primary responsibility for home and family.

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[1] Levene's test evaluating the assumption of equal variances was significant both for the ANOVA evaluating age differences ($F_{3, 21170}=76.7$, $p<.001$) between groups and length of marriage ($F_{3, 21169}=57.7$, $p<.001$). Because of this we evaluated whether using the variance for the group which had the most variability in scores as our error estimate would change the significance of the results of our analyses. There was no change in the significant effects using this correction

Satisfaction with the Military Experience

The 1992 Survey explored how spouses felt about the military as a way of life in several ways:

(1) Respondents were asked to rate their global satisfaction with the military as a way of life.
(2) Spouses were asked how much they supported their military partner's careers.
(3) All participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with a series of 22 different aspects of military life.

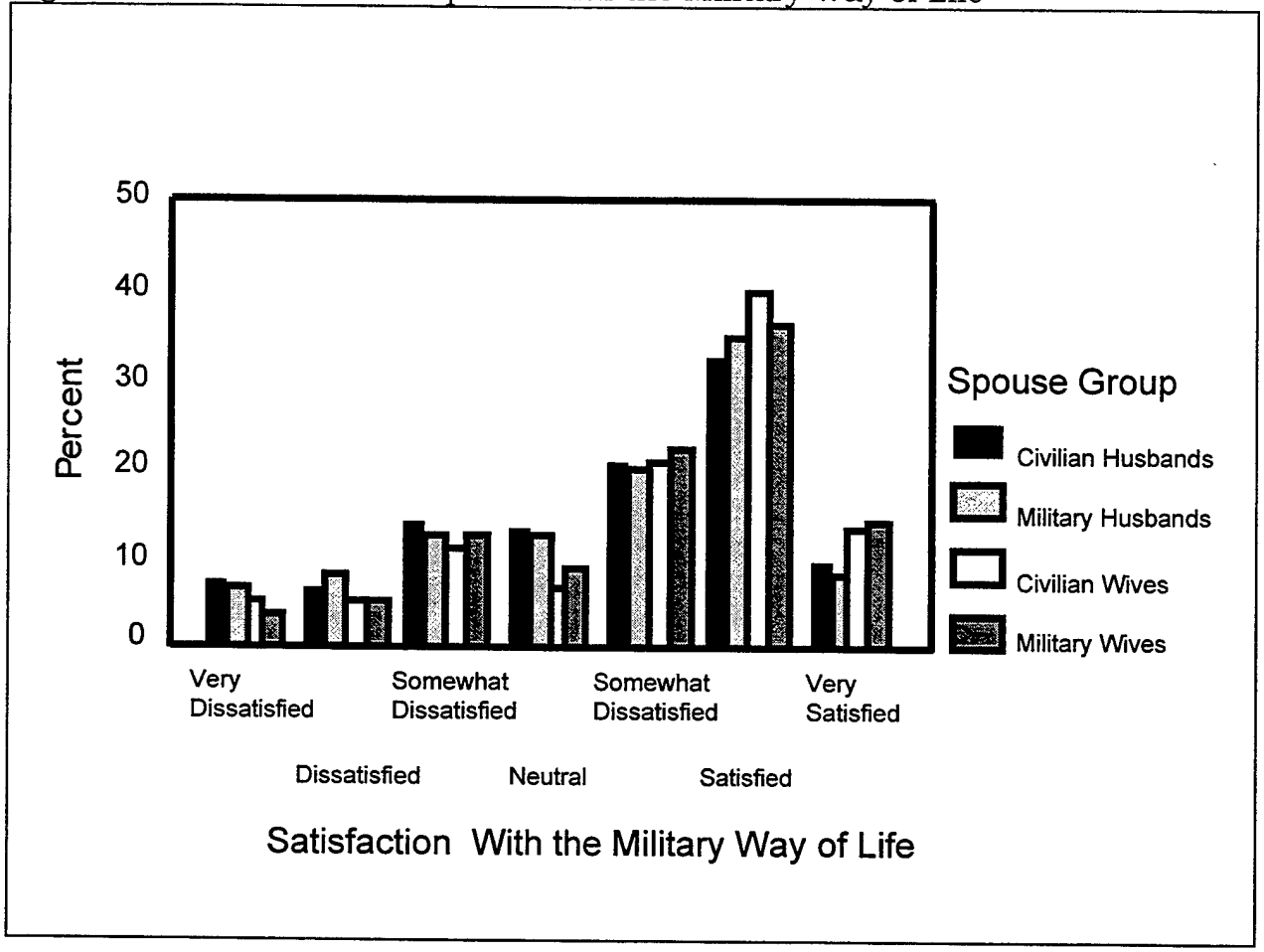
Global Satisfaction

On a 7-point scale from very satisfied to very dissatisfied, most respondents felt good about the military way of life. Figure 5 shows that among all of the respondents, 40% to 50% were satisfied or very satisfied:

- Civilian Husbands 41.1%
- Civilian Wives 52.3%
- Military Husbands 42.5%
- Military Wives 49.5%

Only 20 to 26% were somewhat to very dissatisfied.

Figure 5: Satisfaction as a Spouse with the Military Way of Life



Support for Partner's Military Membership

General Support

When asked how supportive they were, overall, of their partner's military employment, the response was overwhelmingly affirmative from all four groups. On a 5-point scale (very unsupportive, unsupportive, neutral, supportive, very supportive), most said that they were, at least, supportive:

- Civilian Husbands 89.6%
- Civilian Wives 91.9%
- Military Husbands 94.1%
- Military Wives 94.6%

There were small but significant differences in the average level of support spouses reported ($F_{(3, 21153)}=15.1$, $p<.001$). Civilian husbands tended to be less supportive than the other spouse groups ($p<.001$).

Support for Partner to Recommit After the Current Obligation

When asked whether they would like their military partners to remain in the military following the completion of their current obligation, spouses' responses were not as clear cut (Table 3). For example, only 52.7% of the civilian husbands answered positively. About 25.3% were neutral and 22.0% were doubtful or negative. Across the four groups there were statistically significant differences in how much spouses wanted their partners to remain in the military ($F_{(3, 21050)}=53.3$, $p<.001$). Husbands were significantly less in favor of their marital partner remaining in the Armed Forces ($p < .001$). However, there were no significant differences in the average level of supportiveness between military and civilian wives or military and civilian husbands.

Table 3
Support for a Future Military Commitment

	Civilian		Military	
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Supportive	52.7%	62.1%	56.0%	68.1%
Neutral	25.3%	21.9%	19.9%	18.6%
Unsupportive	22.0%	16.0%	24.1%	13.3%

Preference for an Early Option to Leave the Armed Forces

The 1992 Survey asked hypothetically what spouses would prefer if their partners had the opportunity to change their military job or end their obligation in the next month. Again, there were some differences in the distribution of responses across groups ($X^2_{12, N=21093}=225.8$, $p<.001$). Husbands were more likely than wives to say they wanted their partners to accept an early option to leave:

- Civilian Husbands 12.6%
- Military Husbands 13.9%
- Civilian Wives 6.7%
- Military Wives 7.8%

Satisfaction with Specific Aspects of the Military Way of Life

Spouses were asked to rate their satisfaction with 22 different aspects of the military experience from 1 (very satisfied) to 5 (very dissatisfied). These 22 items included things like the benefits of their partner's military employment, the quality of the military environment and support systems for families, and several aspects of the military experience for civilian spouses (Appendix A).

The Highest and Lowest Ranked Areas of Satisfaction

Of the 22 aspects of military life for which spouses rated their satisfaction, the five with which they were most and least satisfied were ranked. For military spouses, excluded were those variables specifically asking about the experiences of civilian spouses ("rights of civilian spouses," "level of demands on civilian spouses," "educational opportunities for civilian spouses," and "civilian job opportunities"). Many active duty spouses indicated that they were neutral or had no opinion/experience in these areas (husbands = 71%-81%; wives = 77%-87%). Far fewer civilian spouses reported having no opinion (husbands = 31%-58%; wives = 38%-48%). In the instance of "civilian job opportunities," for example, only 31% of the civilian husbands were neutral or had no opinion/experience, 40% of the civilian wives responded this way, 81% of the military husbands, and 87% of the military wives.

Table 4 compares the lists of mean satisfaction and dissatisfaction ratings for the four groups of spouses.[2] There are several interesting patterns in this table.

- All of the groups listed their "marital relationship quality," their "partner's parental relationship" quality, and the quality of the "military environment for families" among their top five areas of satisfaction.
- Excluding minor variations in ordering, the lists of satisfaction and dissatisfaction areas are identical for active duty husbands and wives.

[2] In this and subsequent analyses using these 22 satisfaction variables, 10 of them were transformed so that they would be more normally distributed (Square root: retirement benefits, PCS moves, dental care, medical care, environment for families, partner's job resources, ability to own a home, overall economic stability, partner's parental relationship; log 10: marital relationship). In addition, the neutral and no experience categories were combined and means were substituted for missing values. In Table 1 the reverse transform of the means for the new distributions are reported The transformations actually had little impact on any of the analyses. They changed some of the exact values of the statistics reported in this section, but they did not change the substantive results.

- "Dental care" is among the top five satisfaction areas for those on active duty, but one of the five areas of greatest dissatisfaction for civilians.
- The mean dissatisfaction level is greatest among three of the four spouse groups for "family separations."
- Civilian husbands tended to be least satisfied with "employment opportunities."

In addition to the rankings in Table 4, the satisfaction ratings across the four spouse groups were compared more formally using a 2 (gender: male, female) x 2 (work status: civilian, active duty) MANOVA. In this MANOVA, again the four variables specific to the civilian experience were excluded. Among the remaining 18 satisfaction items both main effects and the interaction were significant -- gender x work status: $F_{(18, 21285)} = 3.845$, $p<.001$; gender: $F_{(18, 21285)} = 6.78$, $p<.001$; work status: $F_{(18, 21285)} = 22.344$, p, .001. However, since there were large numbers of respondents in the 1992 Survey, only the group differences which explained at least 1% or more of the variability in scores were interpreted. Only the main effect for work status met this criteria with a multivariate effect size of .019.

In looking at work status differences among the individual satisfaction items, one difference was primarily responsible for this multivariate main effect. Satisfaction with "dental care" was different across active duty versus civilian spouses ($F_{(1, 21270)} = 222.59$, $p<.001$). The majority of the military husbands (53%) and wives (62%) were either satisfied or very satisfied with "dental care." Nearly half that percentage of civilian husbands (32%) and wives (34%) reported this. A greater percentage of civilian spouses (husbands: 21%; wives: 20%) than military spouses (husbands: 7.8%; wives: 5.8%) were very dissatisfied with "dental care."

These differences in satisfaction with "dental care" are understandable. When this survey was administered, the military dental system was overloaded and military members had priority over family members for appointments. At the time, the Delta Dental Care system was a recent innovation to help solve the problem. It provided family members with the option to seek care in the civilian sector.

Satisfaction with the Civilian Experience of the Military Community

The ratings of civilian husbands and wives were compared separately for the four satisfaction items which were specific to the civilian experience of the military environment. In this smaller one-way ANOVA the gender main effect was significant ($F_{(4, 19992)} = 85.38$, $p<.001$). This multivariate test reflected significant differences in only two of the individual satisfaction areas. These were the "rights of civilian spouses" ($F_{(1, 19995)} = 42.71$, $p<.001$) and "civilian job opportunities" ($F_{(1, 19995)} = 253.99$, $p<.001$). Looking at the effect sizes, only "civilian job

opportunities" met the criteria for meaningful explanation ($Eta^2 = .013$). In Table 4 the means for this satisfaction area show that civilian husbands' average satisfaction with job opportunities is lower than civilian wives'.

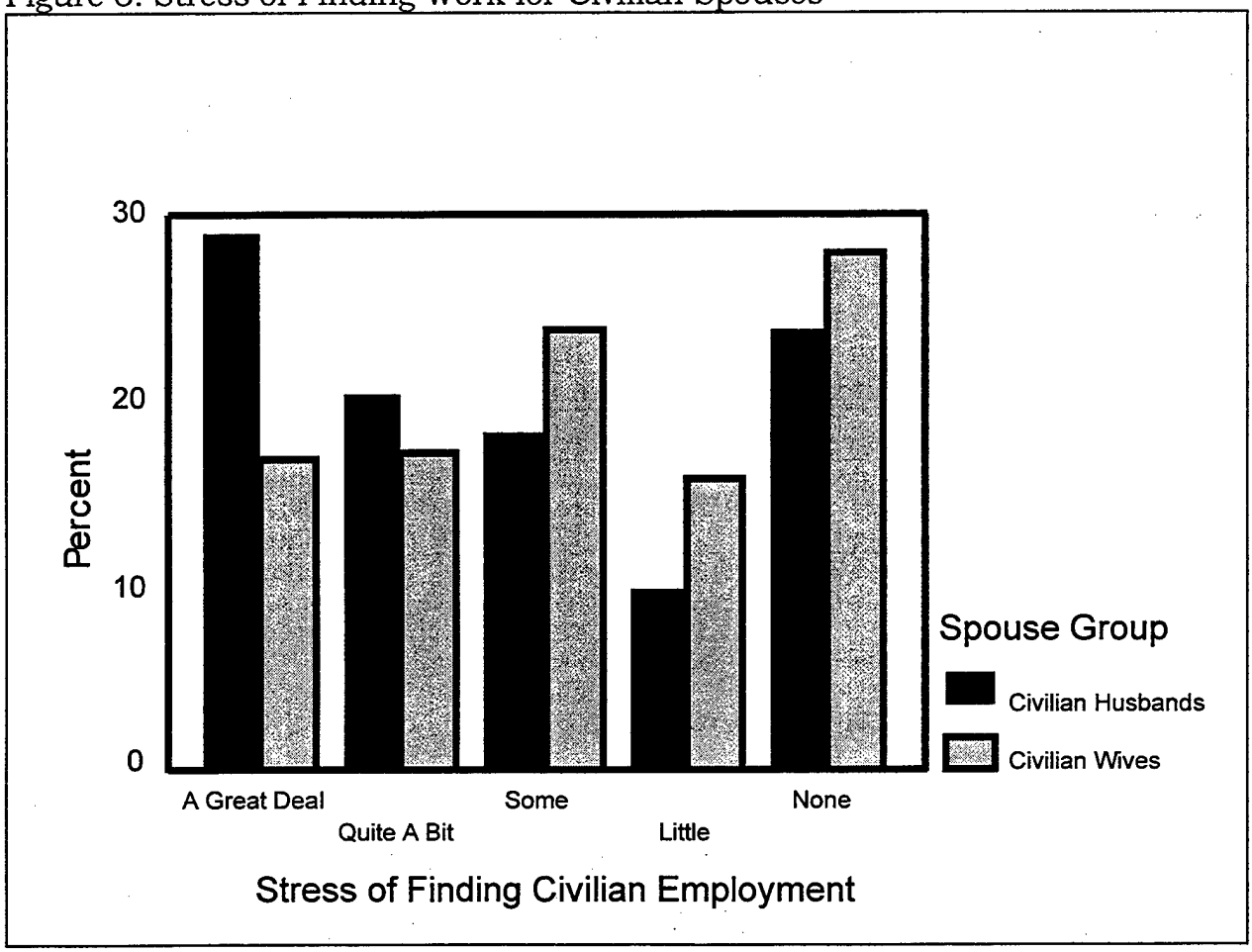
Table 4
Mean Satisfaction Ratings for Specific Aspects of Military Life*

Civilian Husbands		Civilian Wives	
Satisfaction Area	Mean Rating	Satisfaction Area	Mean Rating
Marital Relationship	1.64	Marital Relationship	1.54
Parental Relationship	2.07	Parental Relationship	1.89
Family Environment	2.57	Family Environment	2.47
Medical Care	2.63	Retirement Benefits	2.63
Retirement Benefits	2.71	Job Security	2.74
Civilian Husbands		**Civilian Wives**	
Dissatisfaction Area	Mean Rating	Dissatisfaction Area	Mean Rating
Civilian Job Opportunity	3.53	Family Separations	3.40
Leadership Practices	3.31	Civilian Job Opportunity	3.22
Family Separations	3.22	Dental Care	3.15
Dental Care	3.16	Partner's Time for Family	3.13
Rights of Civilians	3.14	Military Promotions	3.08
Military Husbands		**Military Wives**	
Satisfaction Area	Mean Rating	Satisfaction Area	Mean Rating
Marital Relationship	1.60	Marital Relationship	1.58
Parental Relationship	2.17	Parental Relationship	2.19
Dental Care	2.54	Dental Care	2.42
Family Environment	2.54	Medical Care	2.48
Medical Care	2.58	Family Environment	2.50
Military Husbands		**Military Wives**	
Dissatisfaction Area	Mean Rating	Dissatisfaction Area	Mean Rating
Family Separations	3.45	Family Separations	3.38
Leadership Practices	3.32	Partner's Time for Family	3.22
Military Housing	3.24	Leadership Practices	3.17
Partner's Time for Family	3.23	Military Housing	3.16
Military Promotions	3.17	Military Promotions	3.09

*Ratings were made on a scale from 1 (very satisfied) to 5 (very dissatisfied).

Given the differential socialization of men and women in society, it would make sense for wives to rate family separation as most dissatisfying while husbands tended to rate job opportunities as most distressing. Figure 6 shows the relative percentages of male and female spouses' ratings for the stress of finding employment. Half of the civilian husbands (48.8%) and a third of the civilian wives (33.4%) reported that they had "quite a bit" of stress looking for employment.

Figure 6: Stress of Finding Work for Civilian Spouses



Interrelationships Among Satisfaction Areas

Spouses answered several of the 22 satisfaction areas similarly. Since those items are likely to be interrelated in participants' minds, further exploration could help identify domains of life satisfaction within the military.

In order to evaluate these interrelationships, a separate factor analysis for each of the couple groups was conducted. A more thorough description of these analyses is reported in Appendix B. The results suggested that there were six general dimensions or domains into which the 22 satisfaction areas in the 1992 Survey could be grouped. The solution for military husbands actually included only five dimensions, one of which combined Military Employment and Family Finances. Table 5 summarizes these six domains, and shows how the 22 satisfaction areas were grouped.

Table 5
Summary Across All Groups of the Factors
for the Military Life Satisfaction Areas in the 1992 Survey

Title	Family Stress	Military Benefits	Military Employment
*All groups	Family Separations Military Moves Time for Family	Medical Care Dental Care	Military Job Security Military Retirement Military Promotions
**Some groups	Attitude toward Family Demands on Civilian Spouse Rights of Civilian Spouse Education for Civilian Spouse Family Environment Military Housing	Family Environment Attitude toward Family Rights of Civilian Spouse Education for Civilian Spouse Civilian Job Opportunities	Military Pay & Allowances
Title	**Family Finances**	**Family Relationships**	**Military Policies**
*All groups	Home Ownership Economic Stability	Partner's Parental Relationship Marital Relationship	Leadership Practices Military Job Resources
**Some groups	Military Pay & Allowances Civilian Job Opportunities	Military Job Resources	

*Satisfaction areas related to the factor analysis dimensions for all groups
**Satisfaction areas related to the factor dimensions for only some groups

The relationships among each of these dimensions of military life and spouses' level of global satisfaction with the military way of life were explored using a series of four regression analyses. Each one predicted global satisfaction for spouses in one of the four groups. The six dimensions that were identified using factor analysis were the predictors. With the results, an assessment of how strong each dimension's unique relationship was to spouses' ratings of their overall satisfaction with the military was compared. Table 6 lists the results of this comparison. In interpreting these results, the researchers only considered variables which explained at least 1% of the differences in spouses' global satisfaction with the military ($sr^2 > .01$) to be meaningful.

- These six dimensions of military life satisfaction predicted 31%-39% of the differences in spouses global satisfaction. (Multiple R^2 was significant for all the equations, $p<.001$.)
- Satisfaction with military employment was related to overall satisfaction for all spouse groups.
- Family stress was related to overall satisfaction for all but military husbands. This dimension was most closely related to overall satisfaction for both civilian husbands and wives.
- The quality of spouses' family relationships was related to overall satisfaction for all but military wives.

Table 6
Overall Satisfaction with the Military Way of Life
and Satisfaction with Specific Aspects of Military Life

Civilian Spouses

Husbands $R^2 = .39$				Wives $R^2 = .34$			
Factor	β	r^2	sr^2	Factor	β	r^2	sr^2
Family Stress**	.27	.30	.04	Family Stress**	.28	.27	.04
Military Employment**	-.19	.22	.02	Family Relationships**	.14	.12	.02
Family Relationships**	.15	.09	.02	Military Employment**	-.13	.15	--
Military Policies**	.13	.22	--	Military Benefits**	.09	.23	--
Family Finances**	.08	.16	--	Family Finances**	-.07	.16	--
Military Benefits*	.06	.17	--	Military Policies**	-.07	.18	--

Military Spouses

Husbands $R^2 = .38$				Wives $R^2 = .31$			
Factor	β	r^2	sr^2	Factor	β	r^2	sr^2
Military Policies**	-.31	.28	.06	Military Employment**	.29	.18	.06
Employment/ Finances**	.24	.25	.04	Family Stress*	-.21	.04	.03
Family Relationships**	-.13	.16	.01	Military Policies	.14	.16	.02
Military Benefits*	.08	.15	--	Military Benefits	.14	.14	.01
Family Stress	.05	.06	--	Family Relationships	.09	.12	--
				Family Finances	-.09	.08	--

*p<.01; **p<.001

R^2 Percentages representing how accurately all six factors were able to predict spouses' ratings of their overall satisfaction with the military way of life.

β Values used to weight factors which were important in predicting global satisfaction. Factors important in these prediction equations were weighted more.

r^2 Percentages showing the total relationship between factors and global satisfaction (i.e. those with high factor scores should also have high satisfaction ratings).

sr^2 Percentages representing how much each factor uniquely contributed to the accuracy of prediction. If each were removed, R^2 would be reduced this amount.

Civilian Work Experience

Looking at the civilian work experience of the husbands and wives who responded to the 1992 Survey helps to illuminate some of the work-stress they reported. Over 15% of the husbands and 7.7% of the wives considered themselves unemployed (Table 7). Because these spouses were all living in the military environment, their personal work experience was probably in stark contrast to that of their spouses or other military members. The military community by definition is characterized by full-time employment.

Table 7
Work Status of Civilian Spouses in the 1992 Survey

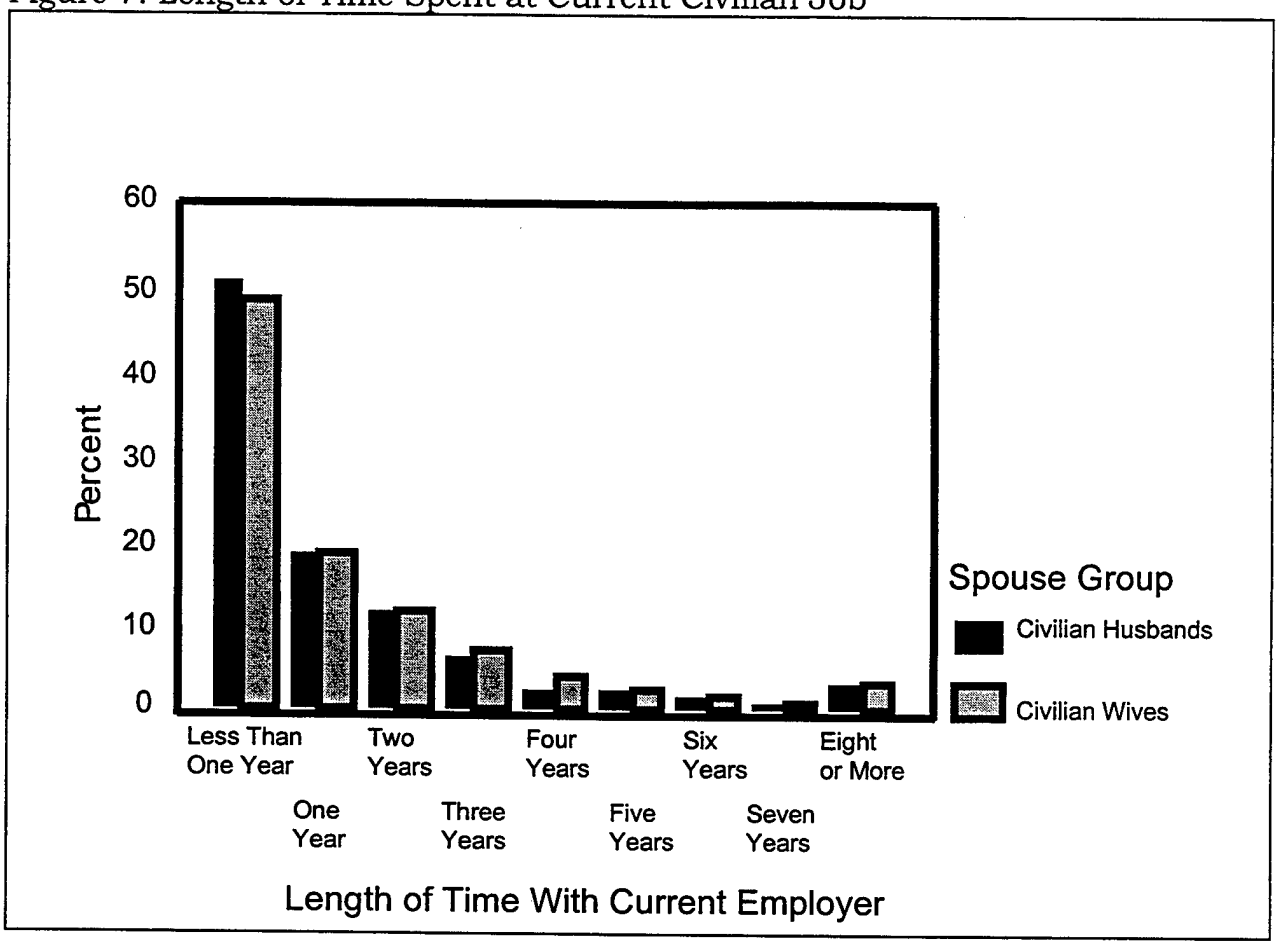
Status	Husbands	Wives
Employed Full Time	52.3%	31.0%
Employed Part Time	11.7%	17.5%
Self Employed	6.1%	4.2%
Student	4.0%	4.4%
Homemaker	4.0%	31.2%
Unpaid Work	3.0%	0.5%
Retired	3.0%	1.0%
Temporarily Off	1.1%	0.1%
Unemployed	15.6%	7.7%
Other	1.9%	2.3%

There were significant differences in the work status of civilian husbands in comparison to the vast numbers of civilian wives ($X^2_{9,19914}=1682.35$, $p<.001$).

- Fewer than a third of the wives said they were working full time while over half of the husbands were.
- Almost a third of the wives reported that they were homemakers, although many more (51.9%) considered this to be one of their jobs. Only 10.9% of the civilian husbands considered homemaking one of their roles.
- About twice as many civilian husbands (15.6%) as civilian wives (7.7%) considered themselves to be unemployed.

Among the civilian husbands with full-time employment, 69.5% had been at their current job less than 1 year (Figure 7). Seventy-three percent had worked 46 or more weeks during the previous year.

Figure 7: Length of Time Spent at Current Civilian Job



Of those working 46 weeks or more, 30.4% earned $20,000 or less in that year (Figures 8 and 9). Among civilian wives who were employed full time, 67.1% had been in their current job 1 year or less. In the last year 66.4% had worked 46 weeks or more. Over half (53.5%) earned $20,000 or less in that time.

Figure 8: Number of Weeks Worked in 1991 by Full-Time Civilian Employees

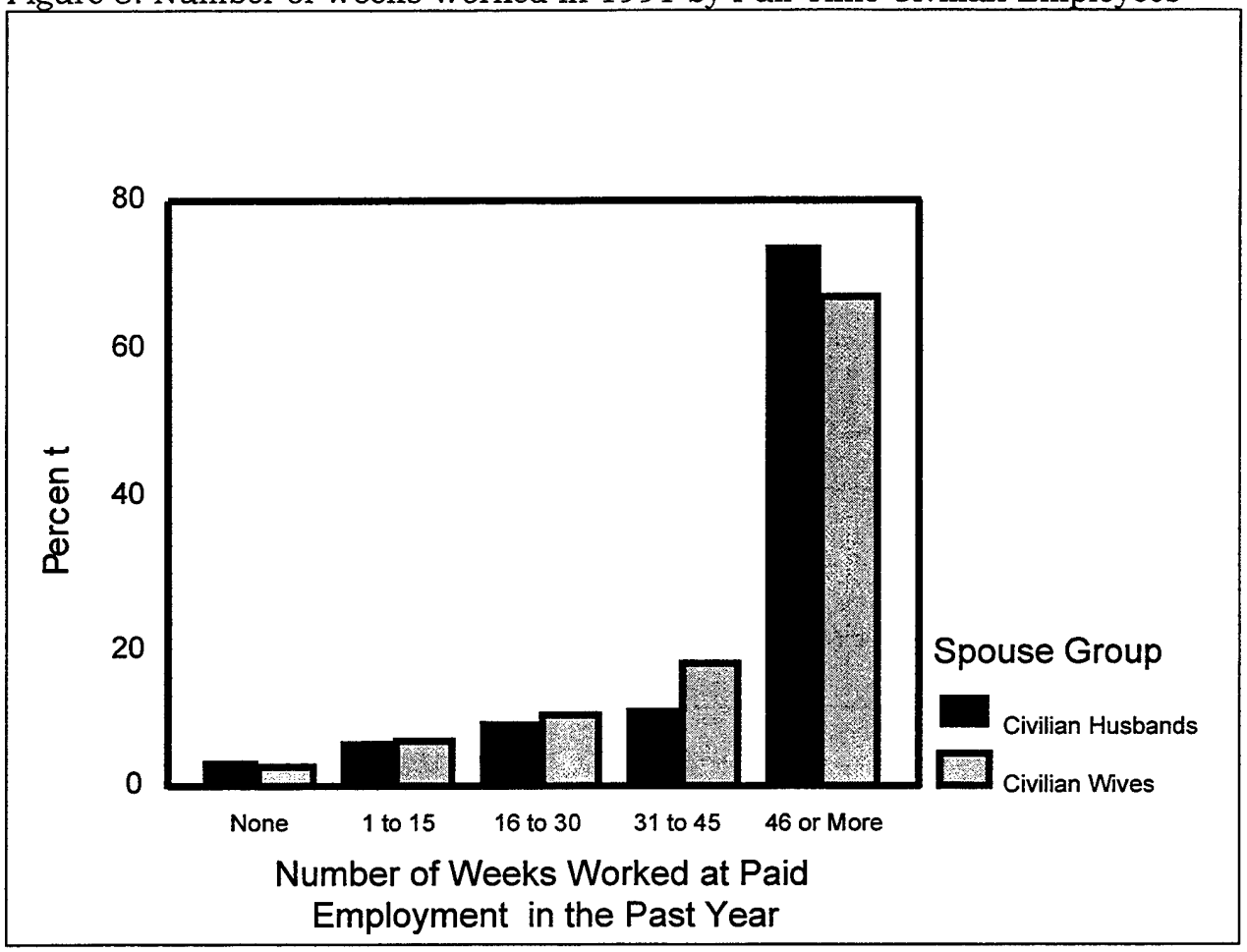
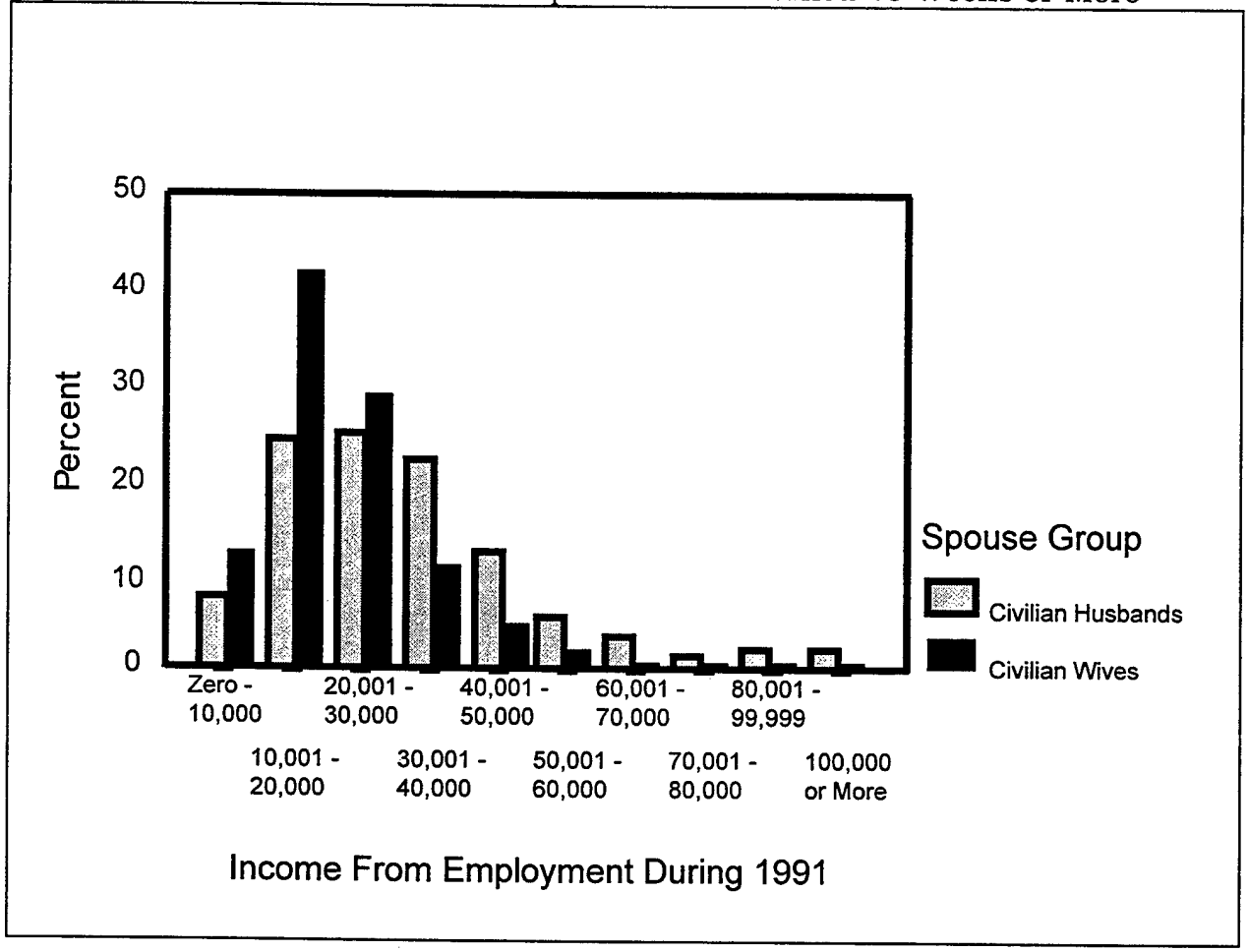
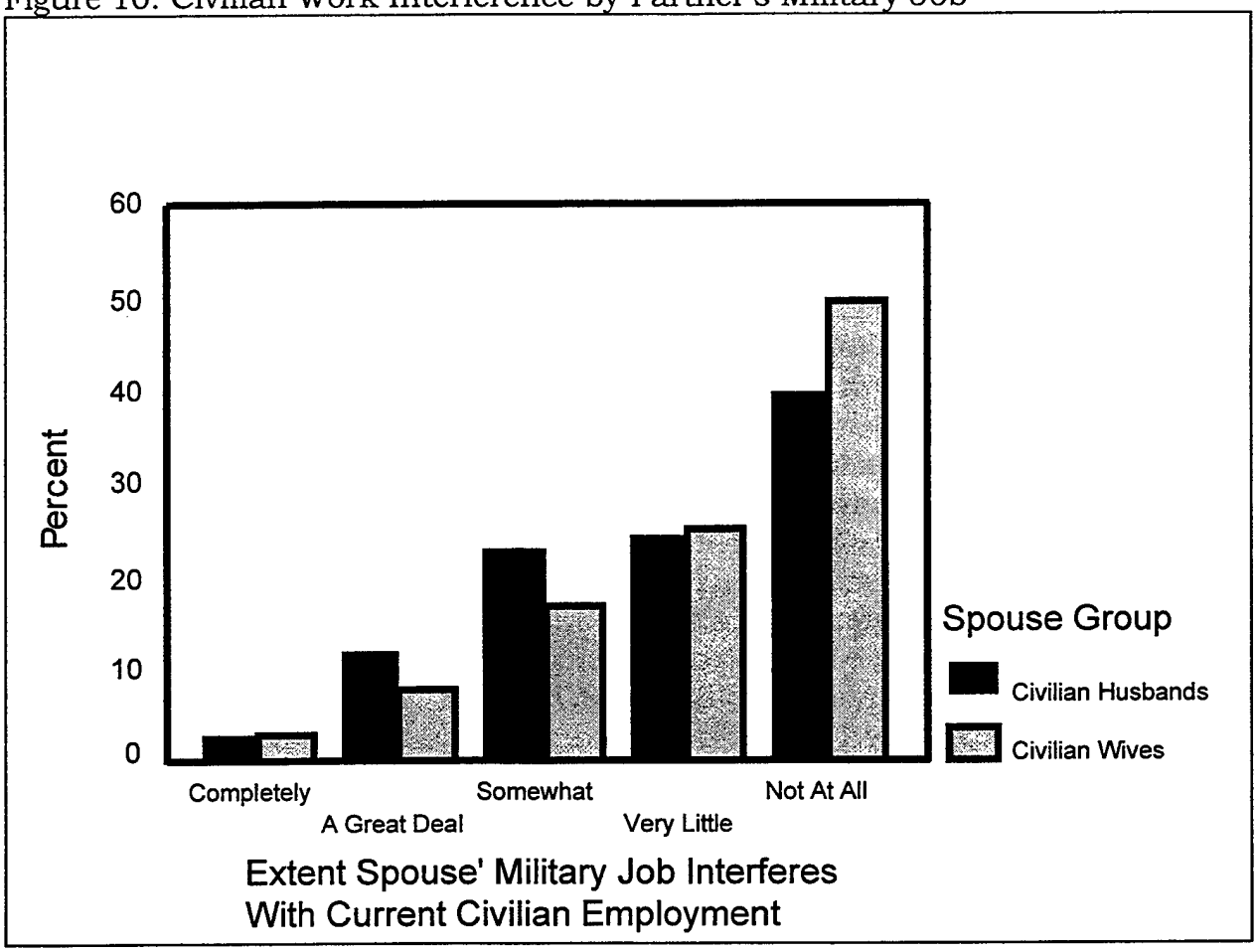


Figure 9: 1991 Income of Civilian Spouses who Worked 48 Weeks or More



It is difficult from the information included in this survey to form a clear picture of how civilian husbands perceive the civilian/military employment fit. Most of these spouses did not seem to think that their jobs and their spouse's military jobs were in conflict. Figure 10 shows that the majority of full-time employed civilian spouses (wives: 73.8%; husbands: 63.3%) thought their partner's military jobs interfered little to none with their work. In addition, 72.4% of the civilian husbands and 83.5% of the civilian wives believed that their employment interfered little to none with their military spouses' work.

Figure 10: Civilian Work Interference by Partner's Military Job



As a result of the way the questions were worded, it is likely that these spouses were considering the immediate circumstances of their employment rather than the long-term impact. Clearly, their spouse's military jobs did interfere with their employment over time, since 38.8% of the civilian husbands and 44.0% of the wives reported that they had left their last civilian job because their spouse received a permanent change of station.

The 1992 Survey asked a series of questions about potential problems encountered by spouses in finding suitable employment. These were helpful in creating a clearer picture of the problems the civilians encountered. For each item in the list, spouses simply answered whether they had experienced the problem or not, or whether the item was applicable.

Out of 14 items, the difficulty husbands most frequently experienced (59.1%) was that there were no jobs available that required their skills. The second most commonly experienced difficulty was that there were no jobs available in an acceptable salary range (47.6%). Nearly a third (29.9%) said they had found that the available jobs were too far away, and 26.7% said that they had encountered

employers who did not want to hire military spouses. About 17.7% said they did not have the necessary skills to get a good job.

Few (6.7%) husbands reported that they did not have transportation to work; others said that family responsibilities (8.8%) or their spouse's military job demands (11.2%) impinged on their ability to work. There were four separate questions about childcare. About 9% of the husbands reported trouble with the availability (9.7%) and quality (9.2%) of care. The cost was a problem for 17.7%, and the hours were difficult for 13.2%. Very few (2.1%) husbands cited a lack of support from their military spouse, while 15.9% said their spouse's'command was not supportive of civilian spouses working.

The two most common problems civilian wives had encountered were the same problems civilian husbands faced. They had found there was a lack of jobs which used their skills (39.1%) and a lack of jobs in a reasonable salary range (38%) available to them. Overall, a smaller percentage of wives than husbands reported that they had encountered these difficulties. A greater percentage of wives felt that they did not have enough training or skills themselves (21.7%) and that they had too many family responsibilities (23.7%). Another 29.2% said the available jobs were too far away, while 27.8% said they had found that employers did not want to hire spouses of military members. There were 19.3% who felt that their spouse's work demands were an issue. The most common problem with childcare was the cost (25.9%). Some wives felt that the availability (14.5%), the quality (15.7%), or the hours (14.9%) of the available childcare had been a problem for them as well. Transportation was a problem for 9.9%. Not many (5.2%) reported that their partner was unsupportive of their employment, but twice as many (10.2%) had experienced their partner's command leadership discouraging them from working.

Conclusion

This analysis provides interesting information comparing civilian wives, civilian husbands, and dual-military husbands and wives. The finding that there was a higher percentage of Black/African Americans among civilian husbands and active duty wives compared to the other groups is noteworthy. However, it is not a surprising or new finding. Based on the 1992 Survey of Active Duty Officers and Enlisted Personnel, it is estimated that 29.6% of active duty women are Black, compared to only 18.2% of men (Westat, 1994b). It may be that African American women, in particular, perceive more job opportunities for themselves within the Armed Forces. Caputo (1995) noted that job opportunities in the United States at large rose for White women more than they did for Black women during the seventies and eighties. It would be helpful for future research to better document the relationship between civilian employment opportunities for Black versus White women and their participation in the military.

It is interesting that both military and civilian husbands were somewhat more likely to want their wives to leave the Armed Forces. Is this the military version of the civilian tendency for men to feel their careers should come first and that their wife's career is less important? Civilian husbands were somewhat less supportive of their spouse being in the Armed Forces. Might this be related to their experience of civilian job opportunities? Civilian husbands were more stressed by work issues than other groups of spouses; they were least satisfied with job opportunities, and they were more stressed by employment issues than by family separations. This lack of support for their wife's military career may also be a reaction to role reversal issues, or it may reflect feelings about the way civilian men are treated in the military community. Note that civilian husbands were the only group for whom the "rights of civilian spouses" was one of the top five areas of dissatisfaction.

All four groups of spouses indicated satisfaction with marriage and family life in the military. Most spouses also felt satisfied with the military way of life overall. It is not clear from these data why spouses generally felt positively about their experience in the Armed Forces despite all the well known stresses that the military imposes on families. Civilian spouses working full time only averaged 1 year with their current employer, but the majority reported that their partner's military job did not interfere with their own. Spouses were dissatisfied with family separations and the lack of time their military partner had to spend at home. Still, they rated the military environment as a good place for families. Are civilian spouses making a trade-off between their careers and the quality of family life they experience in the military? Are joint-military couples willing to remain in this high

pressure situation because they feel the medical and retirement benefits will outweigh the stress on their families in the long run?

Since the spouses in the analyses were all currently married to an active duty military member, it is possible that their high satisfaction levels are artifacts of self-selection. Those who really dislike the military lifestyle will not remain in the Armed Forces for long. The satisfaction level of the general population of military couples will probably never sink very low, as those who are dissatisfied continue to leave. This process may also keep the levels of satisfaction across different types of dual-working spouse groups more homogeneous than it might be otherwise. Dual-military couples and civilian husbands are likely to be in the minority if the general United States population is not willing to deal with the challenges of those family situations. Still, among those who do choose this family structure, satisfaction is likely to be reasonably high.

In the 1992 Survey, spouse group was related to overall satisfaction and support for retention, but that relationship was not as large as it might have been without the mitigating factor of selective attrition. Resnick, Schumm and Maxfield (1997) examined a subset of the 1992 Survey which linked the responses of military members with their spouses. They were interested in discrepancies between married spouses' satisfaction; stress; and use of Manpower, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs; and they regressed difference scores on ratings of the military way of life, retention intentions, and perceived readiness. What is most relevant for this research is that in all of their analyses they included couple group (traditional, dual-military, civilian husband), paygrade, and service branch as control variables. Couple type made a significant contribution in all of their prediction equations, but they noted that in every case that contribution was small. For example, using couple type, paygrade, service branch and discrepancies in the use of MWR programs, they were only able to predict 2% to 4% of the variability in overall satisfaction with the military way of life.

In January 1999, the DoD will begin mailings for the 1999 Survey of Active Duty Members and Spouses. It will be interesting to look at the relationship between couple type and satisfaction with the military lifestyle in this data set as well. There is also a longitudinal component of these surveys. With the new data it may be useful to look at the relationship between satisfaction, couple type, and attrition in this longitudinal subset of the data.

The 1992 Survey explores a very specific set of factors that spouses might consider in evaluating their overall satisfaction with the military lifestyle, but it cannot resolve some of the contradictions that seem apparent in their responses. It also cannot illustrate how people weigh different factors together to decide whether they are satisfied enough with the military way of life to continue in a

dual-working military marriage. How have the considerations which are important to them changed over time? What experiences have facilitated those changes? Furthermore, among couples who decide that they will remain in this lifestyle, what life circumstances and personal preferences have come together to make this choice the most reasonable one?

Qualitative Study

The 1992 Survey data cannot adequately describe how couples negotiate their career choices and evaluate their options in choosing to remain in a dual-working military lifestyle. It also does not answer the question of what might make it easier for military spouses to remain in their dual-working lifestyle and how the military might better support these couples. In order to address these issues, the next step was to undertake a qualitative study which compared the experiences and perceptions of the different types of dual-working military couples. The initial plan was to interview 60 couples, or 120 spouses, regarding their experiences in a dual-working military marriage. The Washington, DC area was targeted due to its diverse population of military couples.

There were several ways the research was advertised in order to recruit couples. First, advertisements were placed in the newspapers for the 11 military installations in the greater metropolitan area of Washington, DC. There were 37 spouses who volunteered in response to the advertisements. Seventeen spouses were recruited by word of mouth. The Military Family Institute has an Internet homepage which includes information about the study. Three spouses volunteered to be interviewed after seeing that information. Finally, the Army Times published a feature article about the Military Marriages study. More responses were received as a result of this article than to any other mode of advertising. About 230 people called from around the U.S. and overseas expressing interest in participating. A decision was made to interview only spouses who were residing within the 50 states, and 84 of the 230 were chosen. Since it was not possible to include every interested individual, an offer was made to place all who were interested on a mailing list for a summary of the completed research.

An attempt was made to interview both the husband and the wife for every couple contacted. However, in nine cases it was possible to interview only one spouse. As a result, the data includes 141 interviews, but 75 couples are represented among them. There were various reasons for the inability to interview both spouses in every case. Two couples were separated and moving toward divorce; another was already divorced. One spouse was on temporary duty and could not be contacted at that assignment. There was difficulty scheduling interviews for three of the spouses who were either busy or no longer interested. One husband wanted to complete the interview by e-mail; however, his response was incomplete and, therefore, not used. The ninth spouse's interview was unable to be transcribed due to a damaged audio tape.

A balance was sought in the numbers of couples interviewed within each of the Armed Forces, within each couple group, and between officer and enlisted

members. Table 8 lists the couples who participated in the interviews according to each of these characteristics. The spouses were fairly evenly divided among the three couple categories with 36% civilian wives with military husbands; 32% civilian husbands with military wives; and 32% dual-military couples. There was an equal split between officer (35) and enlisted (36) couples. There were four dual-military couples in which one spouse was an officer and the other was enlisted. Air Force couples comprised one-third of the participants; Army and Navy couples comprised one-fourth each, and Marine couples were one-sixth. Two couples from the Coast Guard were included in the interviews.

Table 8
Numbers of Couples Included in the Qualitative Interview Analysis

	Civilian Wife		Civilian Husband		Dual Military		
	27 (36%)		24 (32%)		24 (32%)		
Service	Enlisted (20%)	Officer (16%)	Enlisted (13%)	Officer (19%)	Enlisted (15%)	Split (5%)	Officer (12%)
Army 18 (24%)	3	3	2	3	1	2	4
Navy 19 (25%)	3	5	--	5	3	1	2
Air Force 24 (32%)	2	3	5	6	6	--	2
Marines 12 (16%)	7	1	2	--	1	--	1
Coast Guard 2 (3%)	--	--	1	--	--	1	--

Table 9 lists some demographic characteristics of those who participated. Among the three couple groups, civilian wives and military husbands had been married an average of 10.8 years and they had 1.7 children including those from previous marriages. Civilian husbands and military wives had been married 8.9 years on average with 2.1 children. Dual-military couples had a mean of 8.0 years of marriage with 2.0 children.

Table 9
Mean Demographic Characteristics of Spouses Included in this Research

	Civilian Wife		Civilian Husband		Dual Military	
	Wives *N = 27	Husbands *N = 23	Wives *N = 23	Husbands *N = 22	Wives *N = 23	Husbands *N = 23
Average Age	36.0	35.5	33.9	37.3	33.4	35.6
Ethnicity						
Caucasian	19	21	18	18	16	16
Black	3	2	4	4	1	4
Hispanic	3	--	1	--	5	2
Asian	2	--	--	--	--	--
Education						
High School	3	4	1	2	2	4
Some College	5	5	7	6	8	7
Bachelors Degree	10	9	7	9	6	4
Masters Degree	7	4	6	2	5	5
Doctorate	2	--	2	1	2	2
Years Active Duty	1.5	14.8	10.7	6.2	11.7	14.8

*Total counts vary for some areas due to missing data.

The length of the interviews varied between 45 minutes and 3 hours. Spouses were interviewed individually and the protocol covered four topic areas. First, the work experience of each spouse was explored. This included their account of how they and their partner decided on a dual-working lifestyle, and how the lifestyle affected their career development. Second, the impact of the dual-working lifestyle on their family life and household roles was discussed. The effects of this lifestyle on their marital and parental relationships were areas of interest. The third topic was spouses' experiences within the military community. Concerns included how

well integrated they felt with the community, its activities and services, and how well the environment supported civilian spouses and families. Finally, general questions were asked about their perceptions of the changing roles of spouses within the military, the impact of dual-working couples on the Armed Forces, and how the military could better support couples like themselves.

Initially the interviews were conducted in person in the Washington, DC area. A male and female interviewer went to couples' homes or places of business. With two interviewers present it was possible to conduct the interviews simultaneously, but in separate rooms. When possible, the male and female interviewer were alternately paired with the husband and the wife. Forty-three (30%) spouses were interviewed in person.

As a result of the numerous inquiries following the publication of the feature article about the study, it became too difficult to conduct all of the interviews in person: participants were scattered throughout the 50 states. Consequently, 98 (70%) of the participants were interviewed by phone. This is an unusually large number of participants for a qualitative study. However, it was felt that the input of military couples across the country was important. Without the phone interviews, this information would have been lost. Four interviewers used a standardized list of topic areas to conduct the telephone interviews. The telephone interviews were purposefully shorter than those conducted in person. Nevertheless, all who participated were invested in sharing their experiences and contributing to the research. Overall, they were not any more hesitant to share their thoughts than those interviewed in person.

All of the interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. Only fictitious names were included in the final copies of the transcriptions in order to protect the confidentiality of those who helped with the research. QSR NUDIST (Qualitative Solutions and Research — Nonnumerical Unstructured Data-Indexing, Searching & Theorizing) was used to facilitate the data analysis. This program is designed to help summarize qualitative information by creating a complex coding and indexing system. For the purposes of this research, the transcripts were read and coded for the information pertinent to the research questions: the decision process in becoming a dual-working military couple and the ways the military now supports and could continue to support dual-working couples. Each transcript was coded by two readers in order to better identify all of the pertinent content.

The differences and similarities among the comments of spouses across the three groups of couples have been highlighted. In presenting the results, an attempt was made to keep the couples' stories as the focal point. The first section reports information about couples' decisions to have dual-working military lifestyles, the second presents the information on military support systems for families and working couples.

Employment Decisions Among Dual-Working Military Couples

In the 1992 Survey of Officers and Enlisted Personnel, 87.8% of the respondents were uncertain about what their future military career would be like (Westat, 1994c). There were 44.1% who were unsure due to promotion and assignment criteria. Members who are not promoted are, of course, unable to remain in the military. However, 17.1% reported that their own career goals were uncertain (men 16.7%; women 20.1%). Many of these military members were not sure whether they would remain in the Armed Forces, or whether they would leave. In addition, of those who would remain, many were unsure about their long-term career aspirations. What factors influence military members' final conclusions about remaining in the Armed Forces versus separating? How do they arrive at these decisions? If between 15% and 20% of all military members are making decisions about their military career goals at any given time, these processes are important to examine.

There have been many studies of military retention that explore the variables that influence member's decisions about whether or not to remain in the Armed Forces. Most of this work was done after the institution of the all-volunteer force in 1973, since the military has been in direct competition with civilian employers for personnel since that time. The relationship between family and retention became the primary focus for some researchers fairly quickly (McCubbin, Marsden, Durning & Hunter, 1978; Grace & Steiner, 1978; Woelfel & Savell, 1978).

Reviews of retention research suggest that there are a relatively small number of domains from which the variables included in these studies have been drawn. Croan et al. (1990) lists only three: economic variables, job satisfaction variables, and family variables. Vernez and Zellman (1987) explained that early research tended to study variables within these domains independently rather than considering them simultaneously. In response to some of the disjointedness of retention research, a number of reports came at the end of the 1980s summarizing research on family factors in retention. These reviews also attempted to create integrated models of retention that included variables representing a broad range of factors, such as job satisfaction, economics, demographics, the personal and interactional characteristics of Armed Forces personnel and their families, military organizational and community culture, and military policies and programs that support families (Bell, 1990; Bowen, 1989; Croan et al.; Etheridge, 1989; Vernez & Zellman).

Over the last 10 years, studies of family factors in retention have specifically explored the relationship between types of family structures and retention or readiness issues. These studies have compared traditional military families, dual-military couples, single parents, and civilian husbands with military wives in various combinations (Johnson, 1998; Lakhani & Gade, 1992; Resnick, Schumm & Maxfield, 1997; Schumm & Bell, 1994; Teplitzky, Thomas, & Nogami, 1988). Research has not shown couple type to be highly related to retention. This research could be replicated and explored further, but couple type may simply not statistically predict retention well. Despite this, might there be differences in the factors involved in retention decisions for different couple groups? Although researchers have explored retention factors for traditional and dual-military couples using qualitative methods, they have not systematically compared the issues spouses consider in making career decisions across all three of the groups of spouses included in this study.

This section focuses on the results of the analysis of spouses' military decision processes. The goal was to provide a comprehensive listing of all the issues mentioned. It is also noted when a particular issue or pattern was common among those interviewed. Because this is qualitative research, it is not possible to estimate the percentages of the entire military population that might fit any particular pattern or description. The strength of qualitative research is the ability to richly describe experiences and the meanings they have for those involved. It is also an important way to generate patterns or themes across the experiences of different couples. These themes can then inform future quantitative research which can evaluate how frequently representative groups of military members have specific experiences, opinions, or preferences. Future quantitative research might also compare how military couples' experiences in choosing a dual-working lifestyle compare with those of couples in the civilian sector.

The Factors Couples Considered in Making Decisions

Table 10 summarizes the considerations which couples said they deliberated when choosing whether or not to be in a dual-working military lifestyle. Two decisions were involved: couples had to decide whether to remain in the military and whether they would both work. Spouses' considerations for these two decisions were listed separately; however, this is an artificial division.

Couples really considered multiple decisions simultaneously when they chose the course they were going to take in their lives. In addition, every spouse interviewed balanced many interrelated factors before their decision was made. An Air Force officer described how he and his wife considered the possibility of his separation from the Armed Forces, their economic security, their future retirement, and the flexibility to find jobs they enjoy in their decision for both of them to work.

> *Now, let's say I don't make lieutenant colonel by some chance. I hope I do, but, if I was kicked out of the service, we would not really have to worry because the money that she would make as a nurse practitioner would cover any shortfall until I found another job. We have positioned ourselves so that we can have two good dual-income contributions. She can spend whatever she wants, we can build up our accounts, plan for retirement, and do those types of things. It also will give us flexibility once I do get out of the service and I start working and she starts working. Depending on our status at the time, if she doesn't like where she's employed, she could say "take a hike" and go and do something else. It's not a requirement for her to work. And it's not a requirement for me to work now. But one of us has to work!*

Table 10
Considerations in the Decision to be a Dual-Working Military Couple

The Decision to be in the Military	The Decision for Dual-Working
1. Is military job security important?	1. Is a dual income important financially?
2. Are educational opportunities worth a military commitment?	2. Are spouses happier when they are working?
3. Are retirement benefits worth working toward?	3. What expectations do spouses bring to marriage about the roles they will play?
4. How satisfying is military employment (challenge, interest, autonomy, responsibility, etc.)?	4. How well defined are spouses' personal employment goals?
5. How does the military compare with available civilian alternatives?	5. How willing are spouses to change the career goals with which they entered marriage?
6. What is the likelihood of military promotion and eventual retirement?	6. How viable do spouses believe alternative pursuits to working would be for them?
7. How familiar are both spouses with the military way of life?	7. How much time is needed to care for family responsibilities right now?
8. Are both spouses happy with the military culture and community?	8. What is the relative importance of family and work in the list of priorities?
9. Is the stress of military life on families acceptable?	9. If both spouses are employed, what are the best working arrangements under the family's circumstances?
10. How will the military affect a civilian partner's employment opportunities?	10. How feasible is it to pursue a civilian job during each military assignment?
11. How important is the military mission versus family responsibilities?	
12. Are military members willing to reconsider a prior commitment to the Armed Forces?	
13. What alternatives to employment might be worth pursuing?	

Boundaries Separating Couple Groups

Unique concerns were raised in each of the three types of dual-working marriages. However, the amount of overlap found among the considerations raised across groups was a surprise. All of these areas were mentioned in one way or another by spouses from all three groups. This was partly the case because these groups are not mutually exclusive. Many of the couples interviewed would have been included in a different group had they been questioned at a different point in their lives.

A civilian husband who was trying to decide whether he should join the Armed Forces shared his story. He and his wife were both in school, but she was a medical student through the Air Force. He thought he might have a better chance at a progressive career if he joined the Air Force himself. He wasn't sure he wanted to do that though. The thought of wearing a uniform just seemed foreign to him, and he also wasn't sure he would enjoy working for the Air Force given the level of autonomy he would have.

> *Well, I've thought about it—after I've finished up: either going into the Air Force myself, going to grad. school, or going to grad. school and then going into the Air Force, but I haven't really made a concrete decision on that yet. . . I think it would be pretty nice being in the military, but I think it would just be strange for me to be in the military. . . I just can't see myself as being in the uniform. . . It's almost like I'm signing away my life to the government, and they can tell me what I can and cannot do, and I don't like that idea.*

Many spouses went through many different family contexts during the course of their military careers. The most direct route from one group to another was by way of a dual-military relationship. For many of the participants, a dual-military marriage seemed to be a life stage or a transition rather than a permanent choice. There were 24 couples in the group of dual-military spouses interviewed. Among half of them, at least one spouse was considering resigning his or her commission or not re-enlisting. There were 21 spouses among the civilian husband couples who had been in a dual-military relationship previously, and two couples were considering becoming dual-military. Among civilian wives with military husbands, 11 spouses had been dual-military before.

Janet S. had been in two dual-military marriages, she had been a single parent, and in her second marriage her husband separated from the Armed Forces so she was married to a civilian. She and her first husband joined the Air Force together because they needed money to go to college. After they had children, the stress of

juggling home and family life began to pile up. Janet didn't see her husband taking any responsibility to help balance those pressures.

> *We split up because I would put the kids in my car and take them to the day care center or day care provider and he would go straight into work. . . That went all the way down to "why is dinner at 6:30 or 7:00?" It's like "if you want it any earlier, then you come in the kitchen and cook. . . If I was an at-home wife, I could do the laundry all day long, or I could clean up the house and vacuum and do the dishes and have dinner waiting for you as you come through the door, but I don't. I work. You work. . ." Then his job started sending him on the road more often and he took on the attitude that "I'm more important than you are" and I just said "if I'm basically doing this all on my own and you're just getting up and going to work and coming home, then I don't need to be doing that. You can go ahead and have your own life."*

Janet met her second husband because they worked together in the military. However, he left the Armed Forces shortly after they were married. He wanted to get his degree, but he had to work weekend and night shifts so he couldn't enroll in school part time. She remained in the Armed Forces and he became a civilian.

> *Stan decided he wanted to finish off college and they wouldn't let him go to school on this all weekend long program that I told you about. They said, "No, we need you to work weekends and we need you to work night shift." And Stan said, "I want to go to college. Can't you do something else?" And the boss said, "No" and Stan said, "Then, I'm not going to reenlist. I'm going to quit the Air Force." And he did.*

Identifying Themes in Couples' Stories

The next three subsections of this report describe the career and family decisions of civilian wife, civilian husband, and dual-military couples. The way spouses initially chose to be a dual-working military couple is described. Next, consistent themes in the stories people shared about their chosen lifestyles are discussed. The thoughts couples shared about their future plans conclude each of these subsections.

Themes previously identified, which cut across couples' stories, appear as headings within the text of these subsections. For civilian spouses these are:

1) Familiarity with the Military Way of Life
2) Work and Family Role Expectations
3) Values and Attitudes.

"Work and family life stage," as well as "family economics" are also important themes. However, since all of these topics are substantially interrelated, they are not treated individually. The section on dual-working military couples includes two unique themes:

4) Rank and Relationships
5) The Interdependence of Spouses' Career Choices.

With two spouses in the Armed Forces, military rank becomes a more complicated issue since both ranks come into play. Also, married couples' career choices are always interdependent, but this is intensified among dual-military couples. For example, military couples must carefully consider their work priorities and plan well in advance if they hope to remain in the same location. Finally, many of the ways attitudes and values influence dual-military couples' choices are similar to the ways they influence civilian spouses. Therefore, the Values and Attitudes theme is not repeated for dual-military couples.

Civilian Wives and Military Husbands

Nathan & Tara

Nathan S. is a sergeant in the Air Force, but now is in a Commission Education Program. After completing a bachelors degree, he will be a second lieutenant. Nathan says he initially enlisted in the military on a whim. He hadn't really thought about it much, he "just did it one day." Once he was in, however, things went very well. He got the duty assignments he requested, excelled in them, and had no trouble with promotions. He really enjoyed what he was doing. When it came time to reenlist he says it was pretty much "automatic." Now that he has the opportunity to be commissioned as an officer he says it makes no sense for him to leave before he has put in 20 years.

> *Once I get commissioned I'll have 10 years in. Then I'll owe the Air Force another 4 years, so it seems kind of silly to me to make it to 15 and not finish out to 20. Not only would it seem silly, just like I said, it's something I really enjoy doing. It's not something I want to give up.*

Nathan is married to Tara S. They have a 2-year-old son, and she is expecting another child. Tara was in the Army Reserves for 8 years. After their son was born, she and Nathan experienced conflicting schedules that made it difficult to juggle childcare. At that time she decided to separate from the Reserves.

> *The unit I was in had moved 2 hours away. My husband's duties were on the same weekends that I had drill weekends. The duties he had to pull were normally 24-hour shifts and we had no one to watch our son because he was still an infant. . . So it came down to me making a decision. Which was more important?*

Now Tara is employed as a billing clerk. She feels that it is a financial necessity for her to work. She plans to quit her job after their second baby arrives. Nathan feels that their financial situation will be more stable when he gets his commission. He even thinks Tara could quit work and finish the education she has "put on the back burner because of his schedule."

Why Civilian Wife Couples Chose the Military Way of Life

Civilian wives had little to do with their husband's initial decision to join the military. All but one got married with the military already in their wedding picture. In five cases the couple met when they were both civilians. However four of the five didn't marry until after the husband had committed to the Armed Forces. Most commonly, military men met and married civilian women (20 couples). These couples never knew any other lifestyle together. Six couples met when both spouses were in the Armed Forces.

Civilian wives rarely chose the military way of life. They chose to marry a man who happened to be in the military.

Couples Who Met as Civilians

Women who met their husbands before they joined the military might have influenced that decision, but generally they did not. They were fairly young at the time, and, even though they met before their husbands actually signed up, these men already had their sights set on the Armed Forces. One couple met when they were in second grade! Their families moved apart for a number of years, but they wound up in the same high school. They were friends until the middle of their senior year when they decided it was love. She says it was too late then, because he had made a vow to the Marine Corps two months earlier. She had no intentions of marrying into the Armed Forces, but, after he left for boot camp, she realized she wanted to be with him.

Another woman described how she tried to discourage her husband from joining the Marine Corps. He had made up his mind, though, and enlisted. She believed he might not have joined if they had met earlier. He would have been more committed to her than to his plans.

> *I begged him before he went in the military, "don't go, don't go." My mom begged him! Had I probably known him a while before that, he may not have. And then I wonder if he would have felt like he missed out on something that he always wanted to do. He had always wanted to be a Marine, so we've gotten a lot of benefits from it, and we probably have done really well, so I can't regret that. It's just that I wish that I had more time.*

Only one couple was married before they became involved with the military. At the time they had just had their first child. Neither had completed college, and he said he was having trouble finding work that would adequately support a family.

I tried going part time [to school], and working full time, and living with my in-laws and a new baby and a new wife too. It just didn't work. There was too much going on. I couldn't think, couldn't study. . . So what I did was join the military.

She had family in the Navy and liked that service branch, but she was concerned about her family life. Sea duty can be very stressful. She said they decided on the Air Force together because they didn't want to be separated routinely.

We chose the Air Force. It was a joint decision, although my love has always been the Navy. I wanted to go into the Navy. My brother went to the Navy; my nephew is in the Navy; all of my medical care is through the Navy; and my volunteer work is for the Navy. . . They promote a lot faster. The Navy is very, very traditional. . . You get a Navy person and compare him to an Air Force person, and you notice the difference. It's always "Yes, sir," "Yes, ma'am."—they are very, very formal. . . But I think that it's not really as family oriented because you have to do your time away. You have to do your time at sea. And the Navy people that I know get sent away a lot more than Air Force people do, because they have to go out on the ship. . . I didn't feel that it was good for a young family, and I know a lot of military families that feel that way. They have young children, and by the time the father comes back 6 months later, the children don't know him. So that's why we chose the Air Force.

Civilian Women who Married Military Men

The military can be an unquestionable assumption or the status quo that is taken for granted when it has taken chronological precedence in couples' lives. First, the longer the military member has been in Armed Forces, the more likely it will be that the couple will not question the decision to work toward retirement. Second, the Armed Forces is more likely to be taken for granted the more satisfied and committed the service member is to the military.

- **If the military member was already close to retirement, it made no sense to question whether to stay in for 20 years.**

Two couples interviewed met after both wives were well established in their careers. Both husbands had too many years in the Armed Forces to question whether they were in for a full career or not. In both cases the wives were in the Civil Service and had too many years invested for it to make sense to leave their jobs as well. Because of this, these couples spent time apart. However, they expected this type of stress to be short-lived. When asked, "If given the chance,

would the choice be for the military way of life again?", one woman responded that she didn't really know how to answer that question because her husband and the military were not separable.

> *That's sort of a funny question because that amounts to asking me would I have married my husband. I guess if I had to ask myself, one thing is that when I married my husband he was a commander. He was so senior in his career that I knew there wouldn't be these long periods away from him. . . He doesn't go out to sea anymore unless it's for a couple of hours if they are doing a test on a submarine. So I do think that it would be a difficult life if you had a husband that went to sea. . . I think it's a hard life! I don't know if I had met my husband when I was younger. I can't really say, but I think it's a very hard life from what I've observed.*

- **The more committed to the Armed Forces the member was before they married the more unquestioned military life was for the newlyweds.**

The possibility of leaving the Armed Forces never entered the minds of some of the couples who began marriage in the military. The military and marriage were a package deal. The only issues they considered in choosing to be a dual-working military couple were concerns about the civilian spouse's employment. During one interview a woman talked about her and her husband's choice for both of them to work. She discussed her choice to work at length, but did not bring up any considerations about her husband changing his career path. When asked whether military membership had ever been negotiable, she said, "absolutely not." Clearly, her husband had set the goal to go as far in his military career as he could before the thought of marriage entered his mind. That goal was an unquestionable assumption. It was not on the table for negotiation.

When the military comes before marriage, it can become an unquestionable assumption of married life.

- **If members were uncertain about their commitment to the Armed Forces, family financial security played a big role in the decision process.**

If the service member was uncertain of his decision to be in the Armed Forces at the time he got married, the real choice came when it was time for him to recommit. Some couples hashed out their decision through two or three commitment cycles. The military is unique among employers because members cannot quit anytime with 2 weeks notice. Some of the couples explained that this made it more economically difficult to leave. Some were not willing to quit one job without another already in hand. However, it was hard to get a job offer in hand during the window of opportunity at recommitment time. More than one person

said that they received an offer immediately after they had signed up again. It was too late then, but they would have made a different choice had they known.

Getting married and having a family made it more difficult to quit working for the military. Several people mentioned that job security became more important to them once they had a family. The responsibility to provide for a spouse and children changed their priorities. One husband said, "Change is scary with a wife and two children. I couldn't just get out without anything to go to."

Getting married may make financial security more critical. Marrying a working spouse, however, may bring more financial freedom.

On the other hand, marrying a working spouse gave military members more freedom of choice when it came time to decide if they wanted to recommit to the military. It afforded them a measure of financial security if they left the Armed Forces. Dual-working military members had some time to find another job without leaving themselves completely in the lurch. However, this seemed to be a two-sided coin. With a working spouse it was more feasible to choose to stay in the military despite the fact that the pay was low. The second income made up for the fact that military income was insufficient. A Navy commander said:

> *I think it kept me in the military longer because I didn't have to worry about the fact that military pay was somewhat less than I could make in an outside job by the fact that there were two incomes coming in so there was a little stability there.*

- **If husbands weren't really happy in the Armed Forces, family stress played a bigger role in the decision process.**

Husbands who were not very committed to the military frequently mentioned the stress it placed on their families. One young Marine Corps captain was unhappy with the long hours and the constant pressure he experienced at work. When he first signed up he was single and had expected to be out in the field on assignments. Within 4 years he had gotten married and found himself at a desk job. The stress the military would place on his wife and their future children became a higher priority.

> *I know my job is affecting both of our satisfactions. Both of our happinesses are affected by my job. So I guess I wouldn't want to be faced with the kind of hours I have or the kind of pressure I have for a full career. I know some people do that; and that's why I don't want to complain about it that much; because I know people that are faced with that, and they deal with it. But I guess I prefer not to, if given a choice.*

On the other hand, he and his wife first met because she was interested in the military. She liked the idea of being in the Armed Forces. She wanted to have a family and remain in the Marine Corps more than she wanted a career. She also knew he would be uncomfortable if she had to give up a career for him, so she was putting off getting one started.

> *If Bob is going to be staying in after his next contract is up, even if I was working on a career, which I am not right now, I think it would make the decision much more difficult. He doesn't want in any way for me to feel like I have to give up something in a career to move on. So maybe in a way I am using it as an excuse not to move into a career.*

Couples who Started out Dual-Military

- **Among couples who started out dual-military, wives frequently left the Armed Forces to take care of family demands.**

Almost everyone that had been dual-military said they found it too difficult to juggle work and family once they had children. Some anticipated this and planned accordingly. For instance, a Navy nurse planned to get out once she and her husband began their family.

> *We knew even early on that everything would be fine until we had children. Then it would be very different, because we saw other friends we worked with. We saw what worked for them. We knew it wouldn't work—not the way we wanted to raise our children.*

Another woman left the Navy after 4 years because she couldn't find childcare. She had hoped to get back on active duty but she had two more children and then she had a set of twins. It was absolutely impossible then. She said she was in the Reserves for some time, but left because she didn't feel comfortable with the risk that both she and her husband could be deployed, leaving all of their children behind.

> *Oh, yeah, I was planning to stay in the military when I had David, but as I got into my pregnancy closer to the delivery date, it was hard to find anyone to watch him. I didn't know anybody or how to go about interviewing people, you know looking in the paper. And we talked about it, and it was my best choice to get out, because I didn't have the childcare like they do now. Because, when he was born, if he could have gone into a day care on the base, I probably would have stayed in. But, like I said, childcare has changed so much.*

- **Some women left the Armed Forces because they did not like being in the military.**

Sometimes family stress was the last straw for women who didn't enjoy military life anyway. A staff sergeant said his wife hated being in the military. He said, "It's really not for a woman; I mean, not for her. I don't know how the other women take it, but for her, it wasn't her speed."

Even though she didn't like the Armed Forces, family circumstances kept this woman in for a while. She said that the first time her reenlistment came up she had just lost a baby. She wanted to separate, but there were a number of medical bills CHAMPUS (Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services) was not covering. She could not afford to get out. The next time she had the chance to leave she had just had a second child and it was premature. The baby was on an apnea monitor and couldn't go to a regular day care. This time she couldn't afford to stay in the military.

Only one woman seemed to have left the Armed Forces for reasons that had nothing to do with family. She and her husband met in the Marine Corps, but she became a civilian before they were married. In her case she had finished college before she went in, but she was enlisted. It was very hard for her to accept the rank system. She had a fairly high stress job, yet she made the same amount of money that anyone at her rank made. She also felt she couldn't respect people just because they were higher ranking when she knew more about the job than they did.

> *I guess maybe because I had gone through college and I went in as an enlisted person I didn't care what rank they were. I respected you for the type of person you were, the knowledge you had, and the type of worker you were. Now just because you've been in 9 years, and you just fell in the cutting scores, and got promoted even though you don't know your job and you're lazy as heck, I'm supposed to respect you. I had a hard time with that whole thing. I was a good Marine. I mean, I got an honorable discharge, but the whole scenario was just hard for me too -- I guess I questioned it too much.*

- **Other women left the Armed Forces so that their husband's military careers could progress.**

All of the services will make it a priority to assign military members who are married to the same location. In the process, however, assignments may be based primarily on the possibility of a joint domicile rather than on what is most career enhancing. There may not be openings for the married members in an area where both can take assignments that will advance their careers. This frequently interferes with their promotion potential. In one example of this scenario, a woman said that at a certain point it was not possible for both her and her husband to get good assignments. She accepted the fact that she was in a job that was not going to progress rather than a career with potential.

> *The military tries to keep you together, the understanding being that you have to stay in large areas where you can both find jobs or career enhancing jobs. For a while that was very important, to try to stay career enhancing. After a while, it was very apparent to me that I had a job and that I probably would not continue in the military. At that point it was: you get what you need and I'll follow.*

When dual-military couples are faced with a conflict between their careers like this, they must decide who will leave the Armed Forces. Promotion potential can, again, play a role. The spouse with the best potential is likely to be the one chosen to stay in the Armed Forces. That was the case for this couple. Actually, there seemed to be an interaction between promotion potential and role expectations for them. People, most likely, have already made choices based on their gender role expectations that have put one career ahead of the other.

> *Now I do know couples where the wife had the more promising career; and we kind of looked at that, too; and there was no doubt about it. He was going to be the one. He had the more promising career. And we're fairly traditional, I think, the two of us, in the way we look at things. He'd be the breadwinner. I think that may have made it different as well. But I would follow him. It was more important to me that he got the best job and then, you know, we'd worry about me afterwards.*

Why Civilian Wives Accepted the Challenges of Military Life

Familiarity with the Military Way of Life

- **Women who had prior military experience had an easier time accepting the lifestyle.**

Women who had prior military experience or were accustomed to a military environment found it easier to accept a military lifestyle. They understood it and often knew how to cope with the challenges. During Nathan's and Tara's interviews, Tara admitted that scheduling conflicts were "very trying" but she could understand and empathize with her husband. Nathan said that Tara understood because she had been in the Reserves and could identify with situations that came up in his military career.

> *Since she has been in the service, she can relate to it. She went to different schools when she was enlisted. So, if I have to go to school in San Diego or Florida, she is understanding of the situation and we can usually deal with it.*

A woman who had been a Marine when she met her husband—but was a civilian during the time of the interview—said that it was helpful that she understood her husband had no say in how long his hours were and that he clearly tried to spend as much time contributing at home as he could.

> *It really hasn't affected us badly yet. My 1-year-old sees his dad and knows his dad; and I think that's just because of the type of man that I'm married to. When he is home, he spends time with the family. And he'll tell you he feels bad leaving. He misses us and that's why he comes home; and, when he is home, he overdoes. . . He does over and beyond what he needs to be doing, or is expected of him, only because he wants. . . to pull his weight.*

She mentioned that he had previously been married to a woman who did not understand the Air Force. It was more stressful for him, because his first wife didn't understand that long hours aren't a personal choice in the military. They are a requirement, not a personal choice.

> *Basically, his wife knew the days he got paid. She didn't know anything about the Air Force, you know. There are probably a lot of spouses out there that are like that. And so he probably had a lot more stress, actually, when he was married to her than he does when*

married to me; because I know that he has no say in when he goes or what he does or what he doesn't. It's just, if he's going to be in the Air Force, that's just part of the job.

- **Women who had grown up in the military community were more prepared to cope with its challenges.**

The wife of a military police officer said that she had grown up in a military family and had married her husband without ever leaving the military community. She had a power of attorney from her husband and felt she knew how to solve the problems she encountered, even though he had frequently been separated from her. This woman was actually much more concerned about how hard it would be to adjust to a civilian lifestyle some time in the future. She said, "To me, the civilian world is totally different. For one, I'm going to have to get used to paying for everything. I didn't know how much people paid monthly for birth control! I mean just everything. It's going to be a culture shock for me."

- **Those with no prior experience with the military were more likely to accept it as they learned about the mission and its demands.**

Women who had no prior experience with the military talked about how they came to understand and accept military life. For each of them it seems learning more about the military mission and how military employment operates was critical in accepting their spouse's dedication. They also had to readjust their expectations about what married life would be like.

Marsha, a civilian wife married to a naval officer, said that through her husband's first obligation she was fairly angry at him and the military because he was gone so much that her life was not at all the picture of marriage she had expected. When the time came for him to reenlist, she suggested he get out. He was certain that he needed to remain in the Armed Forces because he didn't know if he could find work he would be satisfied with as a civilian. She did not want to push him to a decision he would regret, so she agreed he should remain in the Armed Forces. His next assignment was shore duty, and she found that married life became more what she had expected. She said it took her a while to understand the mission of the Navy; but, once she understood that and once she knew shore duty would be better, she was able to accept Navy life.

Some of the anger women experienced before they better understood the military was rooted in their uncertainty that the stress they experienced was necessary. Civilian wives have to accept the necessity of long hours and separations. Even spouses who have military backgrounds are often not sure that all of the demands are necessary for the military mission.

Tara is still not convinced that the military is doing all it can to support family life for her and Nathan. She said:

> *I get my schedule a week in advance. The company that I work for is pretty good if you need time off or you need to come in later, as long as you just let them know right before the schedule comes out. But the military doesn't do that. They don't give you that kind of warning or notice. They will call you at the last minute and they don't care if your spouse does have to work. They want you in when they want you in.*

If the mission doesn't make sense, women are likely to blame the Armed Forces or their spouse for the stress of military life on their family.

The recent changes in the military that have come with downsizing and peacekeeping deployments are a new source of uncertainty. Marsha, who felt she had come to understand the Navy mission and accept it, was not willing to accept some of the new demands the Armed Forces was making.

> *The Navy spends more time doing drug operations than they do doing operational stuff at sea with foreign navies. It doesn't make sense. We're involved in this whole drug thing. My husband missed Christmas 2 years ago because he was on drug operations in the Caribbean. I resented that! I don't mind telling you. That wasn't defense related!*

Some civilian wives discussed coming to terms with being number two in their husband' life The military openly asserts that the Armed Forces must be first, but this is not what most women expect in marriage. For some women it was also unclear whether it was really the military mission that kept their spouse away from home so frequently. It may just be their spouse's choice to be married to the military instead of married to them. Understanding the reality of the pressure on their service member to put in long hours and do more with less makes it easier. One woman whose spouse was a drill instructor said:

> *They cram a lot of stuff into 12 weeks and that's probably why I never see him or never did see him. It's very different. I don't know how even to explain it. It's very hard to explain and it used to be 11 weeks and then they added this. . . Since he's been here they implemented the crucible which is something I really didn't have a lot of understanding on. But being a key volunteer we've been able to go out and do the things that these recruits have done and had the opportunity to see what it was like and see what they were going through, so that's really good.*

Work and Family Role Expectations

- **Women whose primary expectation was to raise a family had an easier time accepting the military way of life.**

Military life is a more compatible choice for women who want to have traditional gender roles. Many of the women interviewed had decided that family rather than a career was going to be their priority. One woman, a lawyer, had chosen to move around with her husband who was a naval officer. The couple had considered the option of leaving the military as he neared the 10-year mark. She had a job she loved at the time, and would have to leave it if he did not separate from the Armed Forces. The couple planned to have children and she wanted that to be a priority for a number of years. She was not ready to assume the role of primary breadwinner for the family, either. They decided she would put her career on the back burner and he would remain in the Armed Forces.

Because the military is organized with the traditional family in mind, non-traditional families frequently drift toward a more traditional family arrangement. It is much less stressful that way.

Even spouses who were originally intent on having a career drifted toward more traditional gender roles. A traditional family was the feasible option. Because of this trend, civilian wives may be a more family oriented group than women in the general public. Many of them have come to a point where they have chosen family over work. One woman said she struggled through three moves trying to maintain a career she had started before she married. She had no prior experience with the military, and she had not really understood how impossible it would be to maintain her career and remain married to an Army officer. At a certain point she assessed her situation and decided that her husband's career would just take precedence over hers. Her priority was her family. She said her stress level dropped dramatically after making that decision.

> *I decided I do want a career, but it's not going to be on the career path that I had first thought I wanted. That was just not going to be possible. And your choice is to divorce your husband and give up the kids or take the kids and divorce him and go do your own thing. That wasn't my most important thing. My most important thing is still Steven and the children, so I changed my way of thinking on my career path.*

Another civilian spouse had planned to be an elementary school teacher, but found she couldn't get a job once she finished school. States have different educational requirements for teachers that made it difficult moving around. She

also felt she was not considered because she was a military spouse. As she began to understand these challenges she decided to stay at home and have her family.

- **Women who chose a career field that was easily transferrable had an easier time adjusting to the military way of life.**

Working women were more able to accept the military lifestyle if their career field was easily transferable. These women looked for creative ways to make this less difficult by choosing occupations that would be available at any location. They learned to sell their skills in a number of jobs. One of the women who was most creative in making her occupation transferable was self-employed. She had clientele all over the country who contacted her using a toll free number that did not change no matter how many times she and her family moved.

- **The military lifestyle was less stressful for women who were not committed to a career progression.**

Women who were not set on a career progression could pursue the best working arrangements for their family in any given situation. At times that might mean civilian wives worked because their military partner was not making enough money to support all of the family's needs. Conversely, in a particularly demanding assignment, it may not be feasible for both to work with young children at home. One military husband with a school-aged son talked a little about how their decision to be a dual-working couple changed over the years.

> *We were young and in love and we got married. Of course, being that young, I was an E-3, and so it wasn't really an option. We never considered anything else. Then as we got older, especially the last two or three years, we wanted her to be home instead of her working. We'd rather her be home so she can help him with school and all kinds of other things that need to be done. Because I travel so much, she's mom and dad 90% of the time because I'm not here.*

Spouses who needed to work while they had a lot of family responsibilities often tried to find a job that would be flexible enough to make it easier to juggle both work and family. Tara chose to leave the Reserves and take a job that she could do at night. That allowed her to care for her son during the day and then leave him with his dad at night.

The conflict between the military and the civilian spouse's employment was most acute if both spouses were beginning their careers at the same time they were starting their family. Women in this situation were juggling their employment around their children with little support from their military spouse whose life was dominated by the Armed Forces. Some decided they could only do well at one or

the other, so they choose to alternate work and family. In the typical "Mommy career track" women worked full time before having children, they quit while they had young children at home, they returned to work part time until their children were in school, and then they returned to work full time.

A number of women said they were prepared to be flexible with their employment whether or not they were involved with the military. They wanted to have a progressive career at some time, but not at the expense of their children. They planned from the time they married to stay at home while their children were young. A civilian wife who ran a small home day care so that she could be with her young son said that moving and changing jobs in the military had no influence on her willingness to stay home with him.

> *There's nothing in my life right now that could make me walk out the door with him screaming. And so, in that respect, probably, I would have made the same decision. . . whether I would have babysat or maybe tried to do a computer tie in with my corporation, you know, had I worked there 10 years. I don't know.*

Values and Attitudes

- **Civilian spouses who were concerned about economic stability were more convinced the military was best for their family.**

Some women were not concerned about adjusting work to meet family demands because working was the best way to care for their family anyway. They never expected to be able to live on their husband's income alone. These women wanted to have a job they enjoyed, but it was a job, not a career. Women married to enlisted military members more frequently expressed this attitude, although some officers' spouses did as well.

For wives who were concerned about economic security, the military could be more stress reducing than stress producing. It provided secure employment with better benefits than many civilian employers offered. Civilian spouses may have had to change jobs as they followed their military partner, but their family would not be without an income.

Socioeconomic level influenced satisfaction with the military way of life. Spouses who valued military job security highly, seemed more satisfied with it.

The particular occupational specialty and level of education of service members played a role in job security. One wife knew that jobs in her husband's field in the civilian sector were generally contract work. The military could offer them more job security. A woman

married to a platoon sergeant in the Army simply stated, "With the education that he's got right now, he wouldn't be able to make what he's making anywhere else. That's for sure."

- **Civilian spouses who placed a high priority on family were more satisfied with the military way of life.**

Civilian wives who perceived their families as most important were more likely to have role expectations that were compatible with the military way of life. However, some women firmly wanted to have a career, but ended up having to weigh their value on family against that desire in a very conscious way. Others really did not want to accept the challenges of military life, still, they chose to sacrifice their own interests because they believed it would be best for the husband or their children. For some this resignation felt like the only alternative to divorce. A spouse of an Army officer explained that she resented the military until she realized that, if she loved her husband and wanted to remain married, she was going to have to deal with the stresses of military life. His military career was important enough to him that she couldn't ask him to give that up. She said:

Civilian spouses are a fairly family oriented group. Many have had to make a clear choice to put their own personal goals in second place.

> *Five years ago, I asked him to leave, and I was at wit's end. He was on a tour where he came home every weekend. He drove me nuts! I'd work all week, he'd show up Friday night. . . It was horrible! So I woke up one morning; and it was one of those moments in your life; and I decided my husband eats the Army for breakfast. He was born to do this. He loves it. Hello! Get a clue. So that was very important. The day I did that was a huge change in my life.*

- **In early family and career stages it made sense to adjust employment plans around family demands.**

Women who were just beginning their careers when they married into the military could sometimes choose their career field to match a mobile lifestyle. They got into careers where there would be many job opportunities at almost any location. They tried to get into the Civil Service where they might be able to transfer to different locations without losing their seniority. Spouses did consider separating from each other, particularly if they knew that a military assignment would not last long. School or military training often requires members to be gone for short periods of time.

It's a 6 month school that I go to Virginia for; and after that I get sent to another school; and I don't know where that'll be. Then after that I'll finally get a duty station. So we're kind of up in the air about whether or not Rita is going to come with me to these different schools. It's such a short period of time, it doesn't seem to make sense just to follow me to an area where she's going to be able to get a job for 6 months.

- **In later career and family stages it made more sense to adjust family priorities in order to pursue employment.**

For the couples who married after they were well established in their careers, work was temporarily first priority for both. It did not make sense for the wife to leave in the middle of a Civil Service career. The military member was close to retirement anyway, so potential work conflicts would be a short-lived stress. Family could take priority soon enough. These couples never really faced the choice between their military and civilian careers head on.

As retirement approached, even couples who had been in the Armed Forces for a long time together reported that they began to place more importance on the civilian spouse's employment. The demands of small children were a thing of the past, and her job would be their security during his transition out of the Armed Forces. After having been together for a number of years couples may be less worried about building their relationship in comparison to pursuing employment opportunities. Family separations might be acceptable during the military spouse's last assignment or two. One woman explained that they had been together long enough that:

My husband and I are not fearful any more of having a long distance relationship. Now the objective is to put myself in a situation where, when he retires, there is a steady income coming in aside from his retirement.

Some couples had agreed that in order to be fair, the civilian wife would have the primary career once the member retired. They might have more potential career growth since the military member's possibilities were shrinking. One husband also saw it as his opportunity to be freed from the responsibility of being the primary source of the family's income. He planned to work part time in things he wanted to do and to be the primary caregiver for his children while his wife took over as breadwinner.

Couples' Future Plans Within the Military

Couples Committed to a Military Career

The majority of military husbands and civilian wives who participated in the interviews were committed to the military way of life. Twenty-one planned to serve until they were eligible to retire, and almost all had served more than 10 years. One husband had only been in 9 years. He enjoyed the military, however, and he was currently in Officer Candidate School. He would have an obligation when he finished, so it wouldn't make sense for him to leave.

Six husbands had been in the Armed Forces over 20 years, four planned to serve for at least 30 years. All four realized the military life suited them very early in their careers. They just enjoyed the job. None had any trouble moving up in rank either. A captain said he learned to love working for the Navy in his first term.

> *Well, during the first 4 years I did a sea tour. I had a lot of challenges and excitement and fun on that. And then I did a tour at one of the plants where I was associated with this program where they make missiles. I worked for some very good people there that gave me lots of responsibility and lots of assignments. . . There was plenty to do, and it was very important, I thought. The job satisfaction, I think, hit me during the first 4 years of doing a critical mission and doing it in a way that I felt I had control over a lot of stuff—a lot of responsibility a lot quicker than I would anywhere else. So I think that all added up, and I said, "Hey, this is a good job, so I'll keep it."*

The other 17 couples were going to stay in until they were eligible to retire. Many clearly enjoyed the military, but not so much that they wanted to continue dealing with the stress of the lifestyle longer than they needed. A few really didn't like it, even though they had dedicated a large part of their lives to it.

An officer in the Navy Nurse Corps was particularly disenchanted with the system. He enjoyed it at first, but that changed after he married and had children. His oldest daughter was an exceptional family member which had been particularly stressful.

> *When I first came in, I was single. [My focus] was kind of what types of opportunities and things I would get, and where they would send me, and that kind of thing. After becoming married, that, of course, changed. . . We have an exceptional family member, a member that requires special medical treatments, and that is the biggest issue right*

now -- how that's handled. . . I'm actually up for retirement in April of 1998, which is what I'm going to do. Things have changed quite a bit from when I came in in '82 as an officer, and I haven't adjusted so well to those changes.

Both he and his wife thought the Navy had not been particularly supportive of their family's needs. In their experience, it had not been okay to have special needs. There was one instance, in particular, that really seemed to have alienated him. He had requested to come home early from an unaccompanied tour. After that, he felt like he was no longer taken seriously by his colleagues.

I was sent away on an unaccompanied tour to Guam which was supposed to be a 24-month deal, and with the exceptional family member it was just difficult to deal with that 10,000 miles. As a result of that, I did some research on my own on instructions for exceptional family members, and what applies, and how it's to be handled. It really wasn't, so I wrote back to Washington and requested to be sent back and they did. But, since that time, it's interesting in that the Nurse Corps attitude is like, "He's out of here." I can walk in the hallways, and they just kind of ignore you. . .I think the Guam experience which was good, I was in charge of the OR there, it was a great job, but the distance was really the stress in trying to deal with the issues there and the issues at home. Actually, I came back in '95, and there have been some interesting instances. My director of nursing came right out and told me it wasn't career enhancing to have an exceptional family member, like I chose that. It made me more comfortable with my decision to retire, which is where my goals are now.

Couples at the Mid-Career Decision Point

Five couples were not sure whether they would remain in the military. All of them were struggling with the hours and the temporary duty assignments (TDYs) required by the military. Four couples were actively weighing these challenges against the benefits of the military. Downsizing and cutbacks were changing the equation for some. For example, a staff sergeant who had been in the Marine Corps for 10 years said he was routinely absent from his family.

> *I enjoy the military. I enjoy a lot of what the military stands for. I enjoy a lot of the professionalism in the military. I enjoy when somebody says at 7:00 you're going to do this and we're going to start, not wait until 7:30. It's going to happen when it's supposed to happen. . . There for a while I even considered staying in for 30 years. That's just changed recently because of the way we travel so much—the way we're gone. I don't want my kid to be 30 years old and I still don't know him; or to be married for 30 years and I still don't know my wife the way I want to.*

Military retirement is, of course, one of the biggest incentives to remain in the Armed Forces. This staff sergeant said it was the most important consideration keeping him in. As the stress of the work pace built up, he wasn't sure whether the benefits were worth it anymore.

> *I used to think it was worth staying in. In 10 more years or 9 more years it would be worth it. But where the medical when I retire wouldn't be anything, the only thing I would get out of retirement would be about $1,000 a month paycheck. That's it. Sometimes it doesn't seem like it's worth it anymore to stick it out for $1,000 a month of retirement. Money's not everything.*

The fifth couple unsure about their future in the military talked about the stress of unpredictable work schedules. However, that didn't seem to be critical in their decision to stay or leave. The husband had been in the Marine Corps only 5 years, so he did not have a lot of time invested. He planned to stay in the Armed Forces as long as he enjoyed the job. If he got an assignment that he didn't enjoy, he would leave.

> *As long as things are going good, I will stay here and retire. But, if the military asked me to fly an aircraft that I didn't like, I would say, "Well, I think I'll retire now."*

Couples Planning to Separate

Only one man said he already planned to leave the Armed Forces at the next opportunity. He was an Air Force staff sergeant with 13 years invested. His occupational specialty had been seriously affected by military downsizing. People in his specialty were putting in longer hours and spending more time away from home. He had gotten tired of the increasing demands to "do more with less," and he believed he could make enough money as a civilian to make up for the loss of a military pension.

> *You get half your base pay the rest of your life. I mean, that is nice, you know. It's a house payment, but it's not worth it to put up with the hassle. If I get out now, I have seven years to make up the money that I would miss. You can do that in a civilian job.*

His wife really didn't like the military, but she wasn't sure whether or not he had actually decided to get out. She didn't want to get too involved in his decision because she believed he needed to make it on his own. She said he loved his job, but he was "disgusted" by a lot of the changes in the military. People were frustrated with temporary duty assignments (TDY) and were "just TDYed to death."

> *He's been on real heavy TDYs where he's gone for, like, 4 weeks—home for a week—and he's gone again, you know, repeatedly for a long period of time. He told me that he feels like a boarder in the house rather that a member of the family. It's just easier for me to let him come in and do his laundry, spend some time with the kids, go and fill out his paper work, and leave again. [It's harder] for me to turn over [things] to him that he's not going to be there, you know, he's not going to be there to finish.*

Civilian Husbands and Military Wives

Peter & Maria

Sergeant Maria P. is currently in administrative support for the Air Force She lives with her husband Peter and their daughter who is 5 years old. Maria and Peter met about 8 years ago while stationed together. After 4 years of service, Peter separated from the Air Force because of health problems. Maria was not willing to leave the Armed Forces at the same time. She felt she needed the job security since her husband was getting out.

Maria likes working for the Air Force. From the time she first enlisted, she says she has been given assignments and opportunities that many other members at her rank are not given. She works hard for the trust that she receives from her supervisors.

> *It's nice for me to be in control; and nobody monitors what I do and everyone gives me the benefit of the doubt that I'm a capable enough person that I don't have to have my hand held. As long as I'm doing my work—doing what they need—they don't bother me. They don't ask me questions; they don't ask me where I've been if I wanted to take a break for 15 minutes. . . It is real nice. They trust me, but I had to work real hard to get that trust. It didn't just happen.*

Since her daughter has entered school, Maria has felt more and more conflict with her role as a working mother. She feels it is very important to be involved in school activities and has found most supervisors to be supportive and flexible for family needs. In her current position, though, she finds it difficult to request time off to participate in activities with her children. She thinks her supervisors are somewhat less understanding because they are older, single, without children, and do not have similar family responsibilities.

Because of the conflict she experiences between her role as a mother and her work for the military, Maria has chosen not to advance in her career as much as she might have. For example, she opted not to apply to become a warrant officer because of the additional time and responsibility that position would take.

> *I know I would get selected, but I feel I wouldn't be able to give it everything that I would want to give it just because my priorities are different now. My priorities changed, so I've opted to stay enlisted.*

Maria and Peter are very content with their current location. Peter has a very good job. It is probably the best one he has had since he and Maria have been together. In some of the places they have been stationed, it was harder for him to find work than it was here. Maria is also very pleased with the school her daughter attends.

Although Maria knows her reassignment is inevitable, she has requested a new assignment at an Air Force installation nearby. According to Maria, her job is not highly specialized and is needed at many locations. She has been told unofficially that remaining in this area looks promising; however, it is far from certain. If she received an assignment that would be stressful for her family, Maria is not sure that she would remain in the Air Force. She is particularly worried that she might be assigned overseas. Since her husband has good employment, it would be hard for him to leave, and she doesn't feel the need to rely on the security of her job.

Peter wants Maria to decide for herself whether to stay in the military or not. He thinks they are working together and have a "tight" relationship. Peter feels he has transferable job skills because he is a carpenter. He said "I don't like the manual labor any more, but, if that's what I have to do to support my family, I will. I'm a very skilled laborer."

How Civilian Husband - Military Wife Couples Evolved

Civilian husbands and military wives comprise the smallest percentage of dual-working military couples. Of particular interest was how these spouses chose to adopt that lifestyle. Why would couples choose to be in a nontraditional family structure? In our culture many men are still raised with the expectation that they will be the primary breadwinner in their families. Women are far more likely to expect to have primary responsibility for home and family. There are many demands inherent in military service that make it impossible for military employment to take a back seat. Civilian husbands and military wives are faced with a role reversal. The interviews suggest that a number of roads led the couples into this family context. It was not a lifestyle spouses had envisioned for themselves before the situation presented itself.

The ways couples ended up in a civilian husband - military wife family context were diverse. This is the couple group with the most variability in their initial choice of the lifestyle.

Marriage and the Military as the Starting Package

- **Some husbands were forced out of the Armed Forces.**

Almost half of the spouses interviewed from this group said they were initially a dual-military couple. For some reason the husband ended up leaving the Armed Forces while the wife remained in. This may have been because he was not promoted and couldn't remain in the Armed Forces. For example, an Air Force couple said that originally the husband wanted to stay in the Armed Forces and the wife planned to get out after they had children. That did not happen. She said, "It wasn't so much that we had a change of plans - the military had a change of plans. When all the drawdowns and cutbacks came along, it was my husband who got cut and not me!" He said, "I've always felt like they broke contract with me. I couldn't have done the same if I had been in the military and decided I didn't want to do this any more." This couple decided the wife needed to stay in the military for the economic security. Neither spouse seemed really happy with the way things worked out, but they made the best of it.

- **Some left because they did not foresee good military career potential for themselves.**

Some husbands chose to leave voluntarily. A few decided they wanted to pursue their work goals in some other way. The challenges of a dual-military lifestyle with a family fueled that thought. A Marine Corps staff sergeant said she and her husband met while stationed together in Japan. They were not married when they

transferred back to the States, but they applied to be transferred to the same location again and were successful. After they married they decided they wouldn't both stay in because life would be too difficult. At that point, it made sense for him to leave the Armed Forces and for her to stay in.

> *We knew that it would be hard for us to stay together. He was 2 years older than me, but he was junior rank because he went into the Air Force after I did, and he always felt from the time he came in that, if he couldn't be an officer, he'd rather be on the outside. He knew he could do better on the outside financially and all that. So we opted for him to get out because he was junior rank and I had more time in; and we made a decision that he would follow me until I finished my 20, because at that time I already had 8 years in.*

In more than one instance it seemed that husbands realized they did not have a future in the military: either their wives' careers were progressing well, they enjoyed the Armed Forces, or they wanted the financial security and potential retirement. In these situations, a husband's decision to leave the military was a choice to pursue a path that would make his career the more lucrative of the two when that did not look feasible in the military. One dual-military couple—the best example of this—had already decided that the husband would leave the Armed Forces at the next opportunity.

Among dual-military couples the choice for the wife to stay in and the husband to get out might be an attempt to make his career primary if he had poorer military career potential.

- **Husbands chose to place their careers second and take care of family responsibilities.**

By comparison, another couple who had been dual-military decided that the husband should be a civilian and the wife remain in the Armed Forces with the clear understanding that it was a decision to place her career first. Their primary concern was the stress that both of them pursuing careers would place on family.

- **Husbands retired from military service first.**

Three of the civilian husbands interviewed had retired from the military earlier than their spouses. It is interesting that none of the three were forced to end their careers when they did. They all retired from Armed Forces when they were first eligible because of the stress a dual-military lifestyle places on families. Getting out lowered that stress and made it easier for their wives to complete their military careers. In one case, the couple had decided ahead of time that, when he was eligible, he would retire and pursue jobs that wouldn't interfere with her career until she could retire, too.

> *Well, we've always both been career oriented, but from the time we got married, we sought out joint assignments that would expand both of our career opportunities. When I became retirement eligible, however, especially after my last remote tour, we decided it was more important for me, as I approached 20, to put my Air Force career secondary to hers. Although it's always been our intent that we would—how do I put it? I guess I was going to be the primary breadwinner when she finished her military career, so we weren't going to necessarily limit my opportunities, you know, when I became a civilian.*

- **Wives chose to remain in the Armed Forces because they liked the job or they wanted the economic security.**

Among couples who start out dual-military, the husbands' reasons for leaving the Armed Forces were just half of the equation. The second half was, of course, the wife's choice to remain in. Among the participants in this research, there seemed to be two predominant factors in this decision. First, some women still wanted to pursue their careers and the goals they had been working toward. They enjoyed their work or simply believed it made sense to continue working toward retirement at their career stage. Depending on how long spouses had been in the Armed Forces and how committed they were to their work, leaving the military may not even be an option. One woman said:

Some military women, like their male counterparts, were not willing to leave the Armed Forces. Their membership was an assumption that could not be questioned.

> *I knew I wasn't getting out because I love what I do. I did then and I still do now. It's just a little more demanding now. But I pretty much told him. And he knew that the Marine Corps was what I do and what I like to do, and that wasn't an option to talk about.*

In another set of interviews a Navy lieutenant commander and her civilian husband shared their stories. She really enjoyed her work and felt she had a career with potential. He asked her if she'd like to stop working; she said "No"—and that was the end of their discussion. He said, "I mean, who am I to say no. If it's that big a deal to her, then let her do that, I guess. For us that's working out okay. There's been things where I'd say, I'm going to do this, or I'm not going to do that."

The second factor that played a role in wives remaining in the military was financial security including benefits and retirement. This could loom particularly large since that was the couples' only income during the husbands' transition out of the Armed Forces. In some instances both spouses equally agreed that the wife's military job was important for job security. In other situations it appeared that the wife was insistent on staying in because she felt she needed financial security and independence. For one reason or another she was unsure whether she could depend on her partner or his income at the time. A young woman in the Army said that she had gotten pregnant after dating for a short while, and that is when she and her husband decided to get married. When he got out of the Army, she chose to stay in.

> *I've always been very independent, and I don't ever want to have to rely on a man's income. I wasn't so sure at the time, but we knew each other and had dated for a short period of time, and I wasn't ready to trust him.*

Marriage after the Military or the Military after Marriage

Many relationships did not start out dual-military. Seven of the couples married after the wife was in the Armed Forces or already had an obligation to fulfill. Six couples said the wife joined after they had been married for a while. In several cases the husband had been in the Armed Forces before meeting and marrying, but as a couple they had never been in the military simultaneously. These civilian husbands shared a number of reasons why they were initially willing to support their partners in a military career.

- **A number of husbands didn't believe military life would be much of a disruption to their careers.**

A few husbands didn't see much difference between agreeing to support their spouse in the military and agreeing to be in any other dual-working situation. They were aware that they would have to move, but they believed they would be able to continue working in their field wherever they went. Two men, both computer programmers, felt this way; they thought their skills would be in demand anywhere. One said he was planning to start his own consulting business, but that would have to wait until they were in a more stable position. If his wife needed to do a hardship tour, he hoped she could get that done right away. Then, since his wife was in the Navy, he believed it would be possible to get into a location where she could stay for 15 years or so. In areas like Norfolk it is possible to transfer several times without having to move.

Some civilian husbands who had not been in the military saw the Armed Forces as just another job. They didn't see any reason why it should structure their marriage or the preeminence of either of their careers.

> *Well, I mean, as far as getting situated in locations, it's not too bad. I support her career, and, if she's got to move, we move, because my computer skills will allow me to do that. I mean I can get a job any where doing the stuff I do. I don't mind it. I support her all the way.*

- **Among young couples some husbands didn't have clear career goals yet, but their wives did.**

Some men said that at the time their wife joined the Armed Forces they did not have their hearts set on a specific career, but she did. Under those circumstances they were willing to follow her. A particular civilian husband and his wife had moved across the country so she could attend medical school at Bethesda. He said:

> *I was 2 years older, so I was working before she had graduated. I had already started working. I don't know if you could call it a career, but I was doing something that I wanted to do. You know, I realized that her goal was to become a doctor and go to medical school, so I was already resigned at that point to support her in that and do whatever it took to have her accomplish it. So it wasn't a problem when she got accepted to medical school in the military and we had to move from California. It was assumed, when I got out here, that I would find a job and work.*

- **Family finances were insecure and the military was a good option for the wife, but not the husband.**

Several couples said that they were having trouble finding employment and becoming economically secure. In two cases the husband had been in the Armed Forces and had separated. One had health trouble and the other found he was not comfortable with the lifestyle. For their wives, however, the Armed Forces was still an option. One said he encouraged his wife to go into the Navy because she would have better options for career progression there and he was unable to find permanent employment himself. After she joined, he found a job with the Civil Service. It was not hard for him to transfer within the Civil Service when they had to move. Both of them had better economic security and a career progression at that point.

> *I was going all day, trying to make ends meet because jobs weren't that plentiful. I was always trying to find a job here and there, working temporary jobs, you know, whatever I could do. The goal that we had to get a house would have probably never come about if she wasn't in the military. We would probably still be living in an apartment in Massachusetts or back in DC. . . Through the [Civil Service], at least, I can transfer and just about guarantee myself a job somewhere.*

Why Civilian Husbands Accepted the Challenges of Military Life

After couples had chosen to be in a dual-working military relationship with the wife in the Armed Forces and the husband working as a civilian, what kept them there? Being in a dual-working military relationship is stressful. What leads couples to believe they can continue to shoulder these challenges?

Familiarity with the Military Way of Life

- **Husbands with prior military experience were more understanding of their wife's military career goals.**

In general, prior military experience seemed to make it easier for civilian husbands to accept their wife's military membership. All but six of the husbands interviewed had been on active duty, in the Reserves, or in the Guard. Those who had retired from the military said they were very supportive. They seemed to want to promote their spouse's career progression because they understood what it was like to work toward those goals. A captain who thought her husband had actually been a helpful coach in her promotion was interviewed. She had been in the Navy

roughly 3 or 4 years when they met. He had 18 years in already and retired 4 years later. She said:

> *If I had not been married to my husband, I don't think I would be as sophisticated in my approach to the Navy and career issues. He knew a lot more than I did when I met him, and I always paid attention.*

- **Men who married later in life or who had retired from the Armed Forces sometimes seemed less concerned about their own careers.**

Husbands who were married later in life or who had retired from military service seemed to be less concerned about succeeding in their own careers. This may be related to the fact that they had already achieved some of the more traditional goals with which many men enter adult life. An Air Force couple was a good example of this. They married after the husband had been in the military for 14 years; the wife had only served for 6. When they had children, they considered how they would deal with the stress of balancing work and family. This man left the Armed Forces to be the primary caregiver of his children. He never would have considered this possibility until after he had finished his career. He said, "That was a landmark that had to be crossed for me to make this decision."

> *Yeah, I think my wife and I had talked about her getting out under the pregnancy clause, but that was a very brief, kind of a "no brainer" conversation. She had already been in a number of years, and it didn't really make sense for her to go ahead and get out. . . What we had basically said was that looking at the long term, I knew that I was going to reach the 20-year point well before she would. So I would say, even after the first child was born, 5 years ago, I had already looked that far ahead and we discussed that I would be the first one to get out and allow her career to continue.*

- **Husbands with prior military experience had a better understanding of how to cope with the stress of military life.**

Husbands who had separated from the Armed Forces said that their prior military experience helped them to be understanding and tolerant of the demands of their wives' military job. A man who had been in the Air Force for 10 years said, "You don't let the stress and problems get next to you as much." It is easier to roll with the punches"because you know this is just how things work. There are a lot of things unique to the military experience that civilians know nothing about."

He felt this way even though cutbacks forced him out of the military. The circumstances under which he separated could have made it harder for him to accept his wife's choice to remain in. He had to overcome some anger and resentment toward the military. He was able to separate his frustration with those in charge of service-wide policies from his feelings toward members in the community around him.

> *I'll go to my wife's functions if she has a function to go to, and I think I've always felt like I have a military connection. I've had the experience, and I think that is different from most people who are just straight civilians with no military experience. I still think there's a bit of a connection. Part of it is being personable, too. I mentioned earlier that I was angry when I first got out because they broke contract and all that, but I think I was more angry with the 'powers that be' as opposed to an individual. I think once you have that military experience, you have it for life, and I think you can relate to folks in the military.*

Work and Family Role Expectations

Civilian husbands who remained married to a military spouse, eventually made a considerable commitment to family responsibilities.

It can be very difficult for civilian husbands to play the traditional male role in their families because married to military women, they have poor chances for consistent employment, and their wives cannot possibly assume all of the family responsibilities. Among couples who had passed the wife's 10-year mark together and committed to a 20-year military career, all of the husbands had stepped outside the lines of the traditional male role considerably: five had agreed to assume primary responsibility for their homes; seven had quit work and

cared for their children full time for a while; and five had voluntarily retired or separated from the Armed Forces specifically so they could support their wife's career and care for their families.

Although all long-time civilian husbands had made sacrifices for their families, several were not comfortable with the role of full-time "Mr. Mom." Four men said they had done this once and decided it was not for them. One decided he needed to pursue a career, even if that meant he would be separated from his wife. He was at home for a short time while he was looking for work after completing college.

> *When I moved up to Washington, DC with a college degree, I was looking for a job and I stayed home with my son. Maybe it was just the time she was going to school in Washington at Walter Reed, but it put a tremendous strain on us for me to stay home. So I made the vow that I was going to go ahead and earn my fair share of the money. It wasn't really a financial strain, it was kind of like an emotional strain. It didn't feel right to be home. I don't know. I'm not built to be a househusband, I guess.*

All of the other couples who were interviewed said that they were not willing to be separated in order to promote their careers. However, this couple had chosen to be apart several times because neither the husband nor the wife was happy without a career progression. He said that their marriage stayed together because his wife liked to talk on the phone.

- **Some husbands gradually accepted more of the caregiver role and relinquished the provider role out of necessity.**

Some husbands had not been prepared to take on family responsibilities at first. They evolved into that role with time. One impetus toward change was family separation due to military duty assignments or deployments. Husbands suddenly found themselves thrown into the role of single parent. This forced training exercise came sooner than later in some cases. For one man boot camp was the call to "babes in arms."

> *John: She went out on boot camp and ran off and left me with both. So, I had them for a couple months.*
>
> *Interviewer: What was that like?*
>
> *John: It was kind of wild, kind of out of control. I almost lost it.*
>
> *Interviewer: Oh, did you? Was that the first time that you had. . .*

John: Yeah, it's the first time that I ever had to take care of the children on my own. It was an experience that I probably wouldn't want to do again. If I had to do it again, I probably wouldn't.

Interviewer: Oh, really, you wouldn't do it again if you had to?

John: No, I wouldn't. I mean, if she had to leave for 3 or 4 months now, I'd do it. I mean, but knowing back then, I probably would have never done it.

Interviewer: What route would you have chosen instead?

John: Not to have children.

Interviewer: How did you cope with it? How did you get through that first boot camp experience?

John: I went up to my mother's ranch house and was still working and having my mother help me take care of them while I was working. Because I didn't trust anybody else. I didn't want to just drop my babies off (for a whole day) at somebody's home that I didn't know. And I had an 8-year-old, I mean 8-month-old and a 2-year-old.

Interviewer: How far away did your mother live?

John: 100 miles.

Interviewer: From where you were working?

John: Um, hum.

Interviewer: So you were commuting during that time then.

John: Um, hum.

Many husbands found ways to cope with separations. An Army sergeant with three children said she was married to a civilian husband and she had two other friends in the Armed Forces who were married to civilian husbands. None of their spouses tried to talk them into leaving the military, even though they were not pleased with the separations.

There's none of 'em that say, "You need to get out"—none. My husband doesn't say that, Anne's husband, Deirdre's, none of our husbands say that. They're like, "Hey, go for it!" But, at times, you know, like, if on a deployment, now that they do not like. They know they have to do it, but. . . if they have to do it, they do it reluctantly.

Jack, a civilian husband, described a gradual evolution in his life from avid workaholic to primary caregiver for his daughter. He was far from ready for the role at first, but over time he had embraced it. He was a retired naval officer, and his initial decision to retire was far from premeditated. About the time he became eligible for retirement, he and his wife were not able to find a joint location for their next assignment. This was his second marriage, and he suddenly decided he was not willing to risk losing his family again.

> *They were sending my wife to the Naval War College in Newport for a year and the Navy was going to send me to Norfolk. It was one of those times where you have to ask: which one of you wants to take the kid with you? At this point I was on an aircraft carrier and had been going 90 miles an hour for 3 years, and I just thought that, 'Well, I've done everything I wanted to do in the Navy.' At the time I was a lieutenant commander. I had one more promotion that I could look forward to, and I thought: It's not worth being separated, just for the sake of sticking around the Navy for another 8 years. It was a fairly easy decision to make, but then, when it happened, it felt like jumping off a train that was going 90 miles an hour.*

When he first became a civilian, Jack pursued his own business as actively as he had his career in the Armed Forces. He said both he and his wife were "workaholics–me in construction and my wife in her career–and she actually had more free time to do the nurturing and the domestic stuff as opposed to me." It was not until his wife received orders to a location where he didn't think he could continue his business that he decided he would try staying home temporarily.

> *I made the conscious decision to take 2 years off and concentrate on other things. I went with that as an option, but, when I went there, I did look for work. That was when I was offered the job with the company that built the hospitals and medical centers. The real decision was when I turned that down and I got the call saying, 'You know, we'd like for you to come to work and I said, 'Well I've got to think about this overnight,' and I made the decision to turn it down. And that was predicated primarily on the requirement to be able to spend time with my daughter, going into the sixth grade at that time. I did that with the idea that I was only going to do in for 2 years.*

Several factors worked together during this time which led Jack to make the transition from working himself to supporting his wife's career. One factor was that all of their household goods were stolen when they were moving. His wife had to start work right away, and he was the one who could rebuild their household. Next, although he expected to be able to pick up with his business again when

they left that area, that never happened: They received back-to-back assignments outside the continental U.S. where he, again, was not able to pursue work.
Jack talked about some of the reasons he believed he was able to successfully deal with these challenges. He could have chosen to separate from his wife in order to work, but he had decided that staying together was the most important thing when he first retired from the Navy. He was not going to change that priority. His wife was happy in the Armed Forces, and he wanted her to be able to continue that way. It was also important to him that she have the retirement pension she was working toward, in case anything happened to him.

Jack also talked about some of the challenges civilian husbands in his situation have to deal with. One that he felt he had faced successfully was the conflict between supporting his wife in her Navy career, while he was simultaneously putting his own career ambitions to rest. Jack said he knew other retired civilian husbands for whom this had been more difficult.

> *Staying within the military and becoming a military spouse, that is definitely different. Now I have a very good friend who was in almost the same situation that I was; he retired from the Navy and his wife was just a bit younger than my wife, and both of us were dealing with second marriages. He had a lot of problems with that continuous contact [with the military], and to a certain degree you're taking a back seat to your spouse's career, if you will. You either sign on for that and become a support to that, or you can become a liability in that there's a certain amount of jealousy that comes in. You can have quite a spectrum of relationships spin off from that. In my particular case, when we reached a certain point and she became more senior than I and we would go to the Navy ball, I hung my uniform up and got me a tux.*

Jack also emphasized that he had to let go of some of the stereotyped notions that people have about the role men should play in families. From his comments, it seemed that a clear sense of the priorities and goals he and his wife had was important in this.

> *If nothing else, you have to be very flexible, you can't be hung up on a real strong need to be the major breadwinner. In my case, I'm what you'd call a non-traditional spouse as far as the military goes. Most military spouses are still female. The women, there's more of them now than there used to be, but they're still somewhat of a minority. So with a non-traditional spouse being the male spouse, sometimes there's that paternal urge to be the breadwinner in the family. Well, you've got to sort of let go of that, and sometimes that's frustrating. . . Well, it's*

something I still deal with. There're times when I find myself frustrated. But, if you keep it all in perspective, our long term goal is for my wife to eventually retire and then when she retires, we will readjust. Then she may enjoy doing whatever it is she wants to do, and I may find time to go off and perhaps do other things. Although as I get older, I find less and less need to go out and build bridges, if you will.

- **There were couples who had not reversed roles.**

Not everyone had reversed roles. Seven couples seemed to share the responsibilities of both family and work. It was difficult to tell how much of the "second shift" women were responsible for. One man said, "Everybody has to sacrifice a little bit." He thought he would be working in management if he and his wife didn't have to move. He explained, "My career is probably going to progress a little slower, but so will hers, because we're probably going to try to do what's best for both of us."

Among six couples, the husband's job had been clearly defined as primary, and the wife clearly had primary responsibility at home. A senior airman said her husband had been working over 70 hours a week until he recently changed jobs. She was the one who had to juggle her work with the responsibility to care for their preschool-aged daughter.

I still carry the burden of the child rearing and the military because he has to work. Granted, now he works only 50 hours a week. He just switched jobs about 6 months ago, but for the last 3 years he worked an average of 70-75 hours a week, so it was like being a single parent with the military. . . Most of the female military, probably, still raise their kids, not like most of the men in their careers. . . I don't have the luxury of the dependent husband who doesn't work. It's like my role isn't reversed like theirs. Yes, my role is a military person, but my spouse isn't sitting at home taking care of my daughter, keeping the house clean.

- **Some civilian husbands were less tied to traditional role expectations from the beginning.**

Among five of the couples interviewed, the wife was openly defined as the primary breadwinner and the husband was primarily responsible at home. Another couple hadn't defined a primary breadwinner, but the husband had 80% of the household responsibilities. Three more husbands said they and their wives were planning to have children and they would be the one to take primary responsibility when that happened. One of these men was an optometrist. He and his wife had married in their thirties, so both already had been working for a

while. He said he would be the one who would work part time or quit his job in order to parent.

> *Oh, sure, I know that with her job in the Navy she couldn't decrease her hours at work, so I would definitely decrease my hours to stay at home with a kid a little bit more. I mean, I would stay home with a kid period, and I would probably drop to part time. I know if things were otherwise, she would drop down to part time, but that's not possible with her work.*

A young Air Force second lieutenant believed her husband was more willing to accept responsibility for children than the average man. She said, "If I could clone him, I could make a million dollars." She was concerned about how she would balance work and family roles, but she would have been far more concerned if her husband wasn't as willing to take over.

> *He's still a student, and he's willing to be able to be home. Because it is really hard for me to think about a nanny or a babysitter watching the baby and seeing first words and first steps and things like that and you have to hear it from them. But, if my husband were the one telling me, it would be okay. It would be much more easy to handle. And he's willing. He's actually wanted children maybe more than I have, so he's willing to be home and take care of the baby.*

Civilian husbands who were primarily responsible for their children talked about the experience in many of the same terms that civilian wives frequently do. They were trying to juggle work and family the best they could. They described making typical adjustments in their careers in order to accommodate family responsibilities. For instance, they might ask for more flexible hours or request a night shift so that they could be home when their children were. One husband said he and his wife were currently unable to be together. She was stationed far enough away that she could only come home on the weekends. Since this was her last assignment he had chosen to keep his job rather than follow her again. The children had stayed with him, so he was a *de facto* single parent during the week. This was not the first time he had been on his own with their children.

> *When we were stationed in Key West, basically she was out on a boat for 30 days. So, I was "Mr. Mom," you know, for 30 days while she was gone. . . Basically I would have to say, 'You know I can't work this many hours. I can't work the weekends or nights, you know, because my wife is gone.' And they would try to be flexible, you know, try to give me the hours that I needed. . . If I did have to work when the kids were in school, I had to have somebody pick up the kids and arrange baby-sitting. I was in the Reserves at the time also; so, if she was gone*

while I had reserves, I had to find a baby sitter for three days. My reserve unit was up in Jacksonville, and we were stationed in Key West. So, you're looking at about a 12-hour drive. That was about the roughest part about it.

Several husbands were either currently at home full time with their children or had been at some time. Some described quitting their jobs because it was too difficult for both to work when the children were young. They went back to work later in a classic "daddy track."

I have a job with a local theme park and right now we're only open weekends. Last year, when we didn't have a baby, I got the kids to childcare and worked full time. This year, since I have a baby, I've just been working weekends when my wife's home. Maybe next year I will work full time again. They're offering me a 401K where they're going to put money in and, the more money I make next season, the more money will go into this 401K. So, what I hope to do is get the baby to a day care center, whether it's the day care center on post, or last year since we were living off post, we had our kids in a private childcare. Under those circumstances I was able to work full time and cover the cost of the childcare and at least come up with a little profit.

A few of the civilian husbands said that their extended families had trouble accepting their role reversals even if they, themselves, were comfortable with it. One man said he accepted responsibility for their first child even before it was born. His wife and her father were not really comfortable with his making that a full-time job, however.

I didn't know exactly how active a role she would be able to have bringing up the first child, and I took all the classes that were available. I continued to do that as we went, and it got even to the point where she was wanting me to go out and get jobs. I said, 'Look, the children need to be taken care of,' you know. And for a long time, even up to one point where we were getting counseling because of a possible divorce, she and her military father thought, 'Oh, childcare is nothing.' You just take him over to the building there and give them money and they take care of him. Up until about 2 years ago, actually with the birth of our third son, she came to the realization that, yes, indeed, this may be a job. This may be something I can let you do at home full time.

Values and Attitudes

- **Husbands who were more concerned about family and financial security than career progression were more in favor of the military.**

The relative value civilian husbands placed on career versus family made a difference in how acceptable the stress of military life was to them. Some spouses clearly placed their highest value on family. As long as their family was together and their relationships were good, they felt successful. One husband said that he was a great "Mr. Mom":

> *Well, it's partly the fact that I take pride in having a kind of "old time" family situation. My wife and I have been married now for 14 years. Our situation is very unique in today's society in that it's a first-time only married couple and kids. You find so many times people are in their second or third marriages and all that. I take pride in the fact that I've got one wife—I've only had one wife—and I've got three kids, no outside children and all that. It takes a lot to work at that.*

Another couple that had been in five locations in nine years shared their thoughts. The husband said he joined the Civil Service in order to have some job continuity. He said, if he and his wife had not had children, their priorities and how situations were handled would have been different.

> *I went into the Civil Service job because my wife went into the military. And, for me to hold a real job, and her floating around the United States is kind of difficult. It's: learn to adapt and change. That's all we did. . . [If] we didn't have children, it would be different. Then she could go off on her little adventures with the military and then come back home. But, we have children, so it doesn't work that way.*

He said that the military has been good to him in the sense of keeping him with a job. It had been "fairly easy" for him to transfer in the Civil Service when they moved. However, this husband's priorities again played a role in how he felt. He was fairly concerned about his family's financial security and health care because they had a daughter with diabetes. He was willing to be flexible in order to support his family and have the benefits of government employment. His wife described how he adjusted to a Civil Service hiring freeze when the family moved to Europe.

> *When we moved, there was a freeze on and they were only hiring essential job positions. And so, he was applying for everything and got hired on as a janitor at the hospital. . . He'd never done janitorial work,*

but he didn't care. He just wanted to get into the government system. So he said, 'Look, you know, I'll take what ever you got. . .' He was there about 6 months—which is the minimum time you have to stay in a position—and he transferred to another job.

This husband's attitude was very practical. He was happy knowing that he and his wife were enjoying whatever work they were doing at the moment and that their income was sufficient for their needs. This practical focus on the job security of the military was not unusual, particularly among husbands who were not focused on a specific career.

- **Some civilian husbands were very flexible about their own career goals.**

Some men weren't particularly concerned about their family's financial security, but they just did not have their sights set determinedly on a career. An Air Force major described how she and her husband just had totally diverse levels of interest in pursuing a career. She said she was fairly ambitious. Her husband was not nearly as interested as she was. She felt this made the two of them fairly well matched.

The military lifestyle worked for some couples because of the unique fit between their personalities. Their levels of desire to invest in work and family responsibilities complimented one another.

He knew what he was getting into and I have to say I couldn't do what he does. I couldn't follow someone around the country... It doesn't seem to bother him at all. He kind of likes it. He looks at it as an adventure, so we're just very well matched that way. . . He knew I was career driven and always wanted to work. At that time I had no intentions of having any children, so I guess he knew what he was getting into with that, too. I don't know, he went through various things that he was interested in doing, but he really doesn't have the same kind of interest in it that I do. He would really like to have a lot of land and raise dogs, and what he does to support that is not as important.

- **There were husbands who preferred the military lifestyle despite the stress.**

One husband said that he had to adjust his career in a number of ways because he was following his wife around the country in the Air Force. However, he was not the type of person who could stay in one place anyway. He did not see a lot of conflict between his career goals and the military because he knew he would be moving for himself, if not for the Air Force.

And the moving around, I think we both kind of liked that. I would go crazy if I had to stay in my current office for the next 15 years. I just couldn't do it! I'd find another reason to move. . . And, actually, they make it kind of easy. I mean, they come and pack up your house. We've got to sell the house and all that stuff, but the actual physical part of moving—they make it easy.

- **Some husbands were able to accept the challenges of the military by focusing on their temporary nature.**

Sometimes the amount of stress couples experienced in the military depended on the "luck of the draw" with each new assignment. Couples may have thought that the husband would be able to work anywhere they went, but it was just a matter of time before that was proved wrong. Since the duration of a military assignment is about 2 to 3 years, it was easy for some to put up with a difficult assignment. It would be better at the next place. Furthermore, an entire military career is relatively short. It is worth it to some to wait out the difficulties until their spouse can start receiving a retirement pension and benefits.

One husband who thought he would be able to find work wherever he went was a civil engineer. It had never been hard in the U.S. to find employment. When his wife was transferred to Europe, it was a different story. He described feeling surprised at how hard it was to find work there. He coped by normalizing the difficulty and looking at it as a temporary problem.

There have always been plenty of jobs out there, so that really hasn't been that difficult except for going overseas. It's a whole different ball of wax. That was a real shock. . . When we were going over there, there was an open position of civil engineer, so, I thought that would be something that would be available. That had been vacant for a year or so. It was a tough bill to fill, so I thought that might be available; and it wasn't, so that was a real shock. But I think that was not a unique situation. I mean everyone is shocked at the job market when you go out there. Whatever job is available, you fill it. . . That's part of the nineties. I mean, it's not that different than what the rest of society is doing, but, in my case, I knew it was just temporary until I got back to the States.

Couples' Future Plans Within the Military

Late Careerists

About half (11) of the women interviewed had been in the military more than 10 years and planned to stay in until they retired. For many this decision was not premeditated. They had thought they would have a more traditional family life at some point. But when the time came to recommit, it always made sense to stay in one more time. A lieutenant colonel in the Army Medical Service Corps said she originally came in through an ROTC (Reserves Officers Training Corps) scholarship. She planned to work until she had completed her obligation and her husband's civilian career was underway. The opportunity to further her education kept her in, though.

> *I kept getting some kind of enticement to keep me in. At one point it was the masters program, and then I had to pay back some time from that. It wasn't very long, but then, after you have over 12 years, you start thinking about staying in for 20. It just makes sense.*

Another woman in the Army Nurse Corps said she thought she would only work part time at some point. However, she found that her paycheck was always too important for her to quit.

> *I always thought at one point that I would just be a part-time nurse and a full-time mom type thing, but it got to be where my paycheck was the best paycheck that we had going for us. So I couldn't pull back, and never have had that as an option. I just kept on going.*

Military women did not set out to reverse roles with their husbands, and most planned to retire and have more time for family when they could.

Because many women had expected to have a more traditional family life than they did, all but one planned to leave the Armed Forces when they were retirement eligible. In their second careers most hoped to have more time for their families. A Marine Corps NCO (non-commissioned officer) said she was going to be a stay-at-home mom for her second career. She had earned that. She and her husband had been married only a few months. She was only 3 years away from retirement, and that would be a good time to start their family.

> *I plan to be a stay-at-home wife when I retire. We've already discussed that. That's my main goal. That's why we're getting everything debt-*

free, so my retirement check should pay for the mortgage and insurance. I'm staying home and having babies. I'm not planning on working.

There was only one woman who planned to stay in the Armed Forces more than 20 years. She had already been in for 22. She loved her work and felt she had a lot of support from her husband which other women at her level did not enjoy. He was self-employed part time and took primary responsibility for their family. She believed that was why she had been able to stay in the Armed Forces when so many other women with families left. She thought she even had an advantage over single women she knew. They still had to take care of bills and responsibilities that her husband handled.

I think there are a lot of senior women not married who would say I have less to worry about. In Japan, paying utility bills is a pain. You have to do it at the convenience of the Japanese which means during the day. If you miss a bill when deployed, they are not receptive. . . so you always have to arrange your life very carefully if you are a single woman. You have to have things taken care of. He has always done that, and, you know, it relieves the burden. . . A lot of [married] women, from what I have seen, still have traditional "take-care-of-the-household" responsibilities. That is why it is so hard for them, and why most of them get out. I have seen it over and over.

Couples at the Mid-Career Decision Point

Four women seemed to be at the mid-career decision point. They had been in the military for 9 to 13 years. All of them found themselves trying to weigh their military career against their desire to have more time for family. A nurse with 11 years in the Navy said that she had an obligation because of the education she had received through the military. She hoped to take an "early out" once she had paid that back. With hindsight, she wasn't sure she would even join the Armed Forces because of the stress it placed on her family.

Having known what I do now, yeah, I think I may not have joined the military, which may have saved some stress on our relationship—the moves, the illness of my daughter, just the long hours that are required. I'm on leave this week, and we had to get a schedule in. You know, it was my leave and I was in my job this morning.

Some civilian husbands were more pro-military than their member wives. They valued military job security despite the cost of family stress. Their wives were more concerned by family stress and less impressed by economic security.

It is interesting that the husbands in this group were more converted to the military and more convinced their wives would be in for a full 20-year career than these women were themselves. In one case the two spouses may not have been communicating their intentions with each other very well. There did seem to be a trend, however, for husbands to value the benefits of military job security despite the family stress they had to cope with. Wives appeared to be more concerned by family stress and less impressed by economic security.

An NCO in the Marine Corps and her husband are a good example of this. He knew she would like to spend more time with family, but he thought it would be better for her to finish her career since she had fewer than 10 years to go to get her retirement. He planned to get himself into a position to apply for the job he really wanted when they got to her last duty station.

> *If we can stay here for another 2 years and then my wife wants to transfer, I think she'd have 4 or 5 years left. We'd have a better chance of staying there until she retires. That's when I'll pretty much cash in the car with the company. . . In the meantime I'm doing all I can to bring my salary level up along with my training, plus my experience. . . Now what happens at 20? I know my wife has thought about selling real estate and getting out and getting a part-time job so that way she can spend time with the kids, get them off to school, that sort of thing. So that's our overall goal, but it's still kind of a crap shoot.*

She seemed aware that he wanted her to continue working toward retirement. She felt he already had a pretty good job, though. She could quit and they would be fine. She really wanted to have more time with her family.

> *There are days when I say, 'Geez, I really need to just hang it up and stay home,' and more so this year just because my daughter started kindergarten and I like to be involved in her activities. . . Every week I am saying, 'We really need to revamp where we're going and what we're doing. . .' I know that I could easily get a government job, and so I'm always saying, 'Well, you need to keep your job, and you really need to stay there.' And he goes, 'Yeah, yeah, I know.' So that's one of the things we go all over every day, you know. I know that when the time comes and when they say, 'You're out of here' I'm really going to*

have to step back and reassess the situation. But the bad thing about that is I'm over the fence so they say. I'm over the 10-year mark.

Another husband said, "We're afraid that we'll lose some of the medical that we have." He spoke very positively about the security of the military and said he wasn't worried about finding work himself—he could work anywhere. He and his wife had two daughters with special needs. He said, "That kind of locks us in. It's a lifetime thing." His wife, on the other hand, didn't know if she would stay 20 years. Whenever she did reenlist, it was always for short tours. She felt she had more control over her life and her assignments that way. The option to separate came up frequently.

I haven't even actually said, you know, 'I'm staying in 20' yet. A lot of it has to do with 'Gee, what assignment will I be facing next? Can I get an assignment where my family can be a part of it?' And I have a daughter who has some medical problems and another daughter who has some learning difficulties. So, you know, I need to be in a place that can address their needs.

Couples in the Early Career Stage

Most couples who had been in the Armed Forces less than 10 years could not predict how long they would stay in the military. A few thought it was likely they would make it a career. Three women were attending medical school through the military at the time of the interviews. They knew they would be past their mid-career point before they had paid back their obligation. Two of these couples thought they would be in for 20 years. One husband planned to join the Armed Forces himself, and another was considering it. The third said he was still not sure whether his wife was committed to a 20-year career. It would depend on how well she liked the Armed Forces once she finished school.

The relative possibility of promotion and advancement loomed fairly large for an Air Force officer who had been in the military for 7 years. She had finished a Ph.D. before she entered as a direct commission. At that time, she was in a postdoctoral position. She was hoping to be offered a tenure track position, but the university was dragging its feet. She said she wasn't sure she would like the military, but she was so disillusioned with academics that she had nothing to lose. During the interview she said she had been pleasantly surprised once she began active duty. She enjoyed her work and her colleagues. The only thing that would lead her to leave at that time was if she felt there were no longer any opportunities for her to advance in the Air Force. She thought she would probably have been in for 20 years before she even had time to decide whether she wanted to make the Air Force a career anyway.

The rest of the early-career stage couples interviewed were less sure about the future. They were consciously thinking about the possible demands of military life, trying to decide how they might deal with them. A civilian husband who was working as a sales manager for a large chain store said he was supportive of his wife's remaining in the Air Force and he thought he could get a job anywhere. However, as his interview progressed, it became clear that he and his wife were ambivalent. He thought she would probably get out if she knew it was going to disrupt his employment.

> *Right now, I think, if she had to transfer, she would probably get out because she knows that my job is going real well and she would find another job. . . I want her to [stay in] because that would be nice. She has already been in 5 or 6 years and has another 2. But she doesn't know because her next tour might be overseas.*

He was ambivalent about the possibility of his wife being deployed. He did not think he could care for their preschool-aged daughter. He said she would probably have to stay with extended family because, if he took care of her, he would have to quit his job.

> *Yes, but we wouldn't know what to do. That would tear us apart because we got a certain amount of bills each month and, if I had to quit my job, it would be over. I definitely need my income.*

A civilian husband married to an Army officer in her first term struggled with his desire to support his wife in what she wanted, realizing her military career would interfere with his own career. He was moving into a management position in his company. After that it would be difficult to transfer his job and stay together when she had to move. It would also be hard to take care of their child with both of their work demands. The couple had even discussed having a family member or a nanny move in with them.

> *I would want her to work less, if it was possible, if I knew that she wanted to work less. But the type of young lady she is, she's the type that, you know, is independent and wants to work. . . The one thing I want her to get out for is if we go somewhere and they're deploying a lot or they are constantly going to be doing a lot of training in other states, other regions of the country, maybe overseas, something like that. . . If I know that she's going to a company or a position like that, you know, I would say, 'Hey, it's time to go. It's time to get out.' Because that's what she'd want too, she'd really want to get out.*

Only one couple had definite plans to leave the military. An enlisted Air Force member of 8 years said she realized she was not willing to deal with the stress of the Armed Forces the first time she was separated from her children. She decided she would never agree to be separated from her family again.

> *I think he felt I was unfair to him because he didn't have a choice in the matter; he had to drop his job, go with his family. Of course, I'm how many miles away, and I'm the one who always took care of my babies, and I didn't know, you know, how well he was taking care of them. Then it was like, 'Well, then, you don't trust me to raise our kids.'*

This family did not actually leave the Armed Forces immediately. According to her they were sort in of a "Catch 22." She was interested in a more traditional family life, but she didn't want to let go of her military job security until her husband had stable employment. Moving around in the Armed Forces made it much harder for him to find good employment. He wanted her to get out because the lifestyle was "holding him back." At the time of the interview he finally had a job with benefits, and she planned to get out when her commitment was up. Both of them seemed happy about that.

> *He's got to get a secure job because here our biggest factor of getting out is we can never get evicted for not paying our rent. I mean, up until then we never really considered it. . . Up until now, just because he's got a job and his company is the equivalent of the military. I mean, it's got a great, great, 401K plan, and got stock options—with the military you don't get either of those. Medical benefits, dental, just as good as the military. You know, I think in a couple of years it will be better than the military because we're all losing our benefits so quickly.*

Dual-Military Couples

Dan and Andrea

Andrea N. is an Army major on active duty. Her occupational specialty is military intelligence. She joined the military for several reasons. She grew up "as an Army brat," so the military lifestyle was familiar, and she enjoys moving around. She also was able to attend college through an ROTC scholarship.

Major Dan J., her husband, is also a military intelligence officer. Andrea met Dan while they were both in college. At the time they were both in the ROTC program. Dan was a couple years ahead of Andrea, so he went on active duty before she did. When Andrea finished, Dan said, "she got commissioned one day, graduated the next, and we got married the third day." Having a dual-military marriage was "kind of preordained or predetermined" this way explained Andrea, "because we both had commitments to the military from our college scholarships."

When we interviewed them, Dan and Andrea had been married for 15 years and had two children, ages 8 and 5. We asked them what it was like to be in a dual-military marriage. Dan said it was "very difficult."

> *You have conflicting priorities in terms of career advancement, opportunities for jobs that provide career enhancement, and not to mention the additional strains of both being subject to long hours. Both being officers, you tend to work a little longer hours overseeing functions versus just doing certain parts of them. Having a child, that creates a significant problem with childcare arrangements, the potential of both parents being deployed, or sent on temporary duty assignments at the same time (which has happened more than once). Those are probably some of the greatest distracters. And I would have to add another one, the possibility that at every move we may be separated. There are no guarantees for joint spouse assignments.*

Andrea pointed out that their lives have definitely changed over time. Before they had their children, it was easier. She says they intentionally put off having a family because they wanted to focus on building their careers. Then, as they moved up in rank, their work became more demanding. She said, "just overall your accountability in the system is much greater."

Dan noted that there were some clear advantages with both of them in the Armed Forces. It had been a good way for both of them to pursue careers at the same time. However, he was not sure whether he would choose the lifestyle again if he had it to do over.

> *On the positive side the greatest benefit, I think, is it provides a venue for both of us to pursue professional careers within the same setting. If one of us had been a civilian married to military, then you would have the issue of starting over every time you move. In some of the, perhaps, clerical positions and so forth it may not be as hard to do that, but when you are dealing with professions. . . it is really hard to pick up and move every 2 or 3 years and start all over again with a new company. The transfer opportunities may or may not be available. The opportunity that we have had to travel in terms of experiencing different cultures and ways of life, we feel that has been very enriching for both us and our daughter. But there are a lot of strains, as I said, with both being active duty. I'm not so sure if we were to make a choice again whether we would make the same choice.*

How Spouses Chose a Dual-Military Relationship

- **Most couples met because they were both serving in the military.**

Almost all of the dual-military couples interviewed met each other after they were already involved in the military.

All but three of the dual-military couples interviewed met and married after they were in the Armed Forces or after they had committed to the military through the ROTC program. Many couples met during their first tour of duty. They happened to be stationed together and perhaps were in the same unit. More than one couple said that being in the military system played a role in the way their relationship progressed. One woman said she and her husband met in officer training school. When they each received their first assignment, they already knew they wanted to stay together.

> *He was going to Korea and I was going to Germany and we kind of knew we were going in two different directions. We kind of tried wheeling and dealing assignments with other people and couldn't really make anything happen; and we were told by the assignments officer that the Army does have a joint domicile [policy]. They don't guarantee that you're stationed together if you're married, but they do at least guarantee that it will be considered. In other words, if my name comes up for some assignment, his name will come up on the computer too. . . that kind of speeded up us getting married because we really didn't intend getting married that quickly.*

Couples who met in the military had no choice other than to begin married life as a dual-military couple. The only alternative was not to get married, because their military commitments had to be fulfilled. A young Air Force member described how she and her husband met during their first term. They were both stationed in Europe at the time.

> *In Germany is where we met and we were already in the Air Force. We had been in, I guess, a full 3 years, each of us, so it wasn't an option of not to be [dual-military]. I guess the only option we would have had was not to get married and we didn't want to face that situation.*

- **Two couples had joined the military together after they were married.**

The three couples who had not met through the military took dissimilar paths into the Armed Forces, but in two cases they made the decision to join together. The first of these two said they chose to go through Army ROTC together. Job opportunities were not plentiful and the military would pay for their education and employ them afterwards.

> *Most of the reason we went through ROTC together was because we made $100.00 a month to do it. And we were just like any other students, we didn't have a whole lot of money, so we did that. Rick had been in the service before and got out in the early '70s when the job market was not too great. I think, when he got back into ROTC, he kind of enjoyed being back in the military environment again. I really had no intention of going on active duty. I was going to accept a reserve commission and go to my drills once a month, and that was going to be it. He got his first assignment in the Army to Germany. That was the same year that the West Point scandal hit, and they were short about 300 officers coming in the Army. So they called all the people that had taken the reserve commission and asked us if we wanted to reconsider going on active duty. Well, since I knew I was going to Germany, and I had no idea what I was going to do over there—maybe work in the PX or commissary or something which didn't sound too exciting to me—I said, 'Sure, I'll go on active duty for a couple* of years.' *The rest is history! So here I am 20 years later!*

The other couple said they joined the Armed Forces after they had both finished law school. They thought it would be a good opportunity to get some work experience. After joining, it seemed that the military was a more reasonable context for two lawyers trying to practice and have a family at the same time.

> *We joined together after law school, initially just to get some experience. We liked the military a lot and what's very nice is to be able to understand each other's jobs. So if we have a question I can call him, he can call me. . . when we go home, we know pretty much what the other person's day has been like, so we can discuss it. We don't have to do a lot of explanations about what's been going on during the day again because we pretty much understand the system. So it's very easy to talk. And then we always wanted to have a family, and I found that it's been very good for me, someone who wants to have a career and also have a family. I've found that I've been able to combine that pretty easily in the military. And I'm not sure as a civilian lawyer if I would have been able to do it as easily as I can do it here.*

- **In one case a civilian wife had decided to join the military in order to have a better career progression.**

One couple met in college. He was already in ROTC, but she had no plans to join the Armed Forces. After he was commissioned, she worked for 7 years in the private sector as a hospital dietitian. She joined the Reserves first, and then went on active duty during Desert Storm.

> *The active duty medical area was looking for reservists to come on active duty. I inquired about the possibility of doing that with the pinpoint assignment of going to Korea, because I knew my husband's next assignment would be in Korea, and they said, 'Yes, that would be okay.' So I transferred from the Reserves to the active military.*

This woman said she went on active duty because she was tired of starting over in her career every time her husband was transferred. When they married, she said, "I knew that one person's career was going to have to take precedence over the other." She went on to explain, "I knew that Uncle Sam was going to have to take precedence, so I knew my husband's job was going to have to take precedence over mine." Although she had been lucky enough to consistently find jobs in her field, she also wanted to progress in her career. In hindsight she wished that she had become an active duty military member earlier in life; then she and her husband would have had similar career time-lines and the opportunities for career progression would have been better.

If you can't beat them join them. Civilian spouses who really want to have a career progression may find it to be feasible only if they join the military themselves.

> *I had excellent jobs and, when my husband would transfer, naturally, I gave up one job to go to the other. . . After a while that gets to be a drag. . . You usually hear about jobs through friends, networking, etc. Moving around you don't always have these networks and aren't able to find jobs in management and administration that you're looking for. So right now I'm in the military. I don't have to worry about that. As I move, I progress with the military.*

Factors that Influenced Dual-Military Career and Family Choices

Familiarity with the Military Way of Life

Dual-military couples' lives can become inextricably intertwined with the military way of life. Many thought having the support of a military partner was an advantage to them in their work and that the common ground they shared in the military was an advantage to them in their marriage.

- **With both spouses in the Armed Forces some couples' family identity and family structure was defined by the military.**

When asked why she thought she and her husband were able to have a successful dual-military marriage whereas others might not, one woman said the two of them were from the same unit. They applied the principles they learned there about building a team at home. Home really became an extension of their unit.

Jessica: Being in the military you get the training to always discuss things. I find that if we discuss things we are more understanding of each other's faults and we pick up the slack where if one's not there the other one will pick up the slack. . . We're really a working team—an extension of our unit at home—it really is.

Among dual-military couples the boundary between work and family can become blurred.

Interviewer: Do you notice yourselves kind of using that model to run the house?

Jessica: Doing chores we do. We have lists for everything. Assigning chores we have our duties.

Interviewer: Just transfer the model?

Jessica: Yes. Unfortunately, we have our kids saying, "Yes, ma'am; yes sir." They salute me.

Interviewer: Really? That's funny.

Jessica: A couple of times, my little son's like, "Yes, ma'am" and I'm like "who'd he learn that from?" You should see it. It's funny. . . You try to give them that discipline. I think we're a little more strict with them than say some of our civilian counterparts. We know what's out there, and

we try to pass it on to them as far as the discipline and the work ethics and all that stuff.

- **The military was an important area of common ground that spouses shared together in marriage.**

Dual-military spouses can readily identify with the stresses of their military partners since they have had similar experiences. This provides a great deal of support that military members with civilian spouses do not enjoy. A number of the people interviewed mentioned this. An Army officer said he wouldn't be a lieutenant colonel if his wife weren't a military member, too.

> *I will tell you that both of us being in the military has been great. The Army has got more because of that. One is, for the most part, she understands that I work a lot of hours. I don't think she understands every part of it, but certainly she understands more of it than if she wasn't military. Number two, she is a great officer in her own right. So when something comes up and I maybe don't know how to handle it, if I've got my choice of X, Y, or Z, here's the pros and cons of this, I can bounce ideas off of her.*

Couples who work in the same unit or at the same location have more time together, because they see each other at work.

Additionally, a few dual-military couples enjoyed the extra time they got to spend together as a result of working in the same environment. They might ride to work together or have lunch together. One woman said:

> *[In] a lot of the situations we've been stationed in we see a lot of each other during the day on the job. We've been lucky. . . In certain instances we've ended up working together, so that makes it easier. . . It's not like I say good bye in the morning and don't see him again until dark.*

Interdependence of Rank and Relationships

- **Military rank structured military members' relationships.**

Rank can become intertwined in couples relationships in various ways. First, it directly shaped the options members had in choosing a romantic partner, because the military discourages officers from dating and marrying enlisted personnel. In the interview pool was a couple who decided to marry despite the fact that they were on opposite sides of the fence in rank. They felt they had the support of their supervisors, however. In fact, one of the wife's previous commanding officers gave her away at the ceremony.

Some of the couples said they knew dual-military couples who were competitive with each other. If one was promoted faster than the other, it became a problem. None of the couples interviewed for this report said this was the case for them. Many were at the same rank, so it wasn't an issue. They met when they first entered the Armed Forces and they had progressed evenly together. Even where there were rank differences, those who were interviewed seemed encouraged by each other's progress rather than threatened by it.

> *We encourage each other, and, if she makes two more ranks higher, that's fine. That's part of the family, and it's all geared toward the family. If she gets awards or whatever she gets, we're all there to support her or vice versa. We support each other and build each other up. Some families aren't like that. I know some dual-military couples who are very competitive and get upset when their husband or spouse outranks them and gets a different award or recognition and they don't. It breeds competitiveness sometimes.*

One naval officer said she went through a commissioned education program after she and her husband had been married for some time. He was still enlisted, so some of his military colleagues would tease him about being married to an officer. They wondered if he had to salute her at home. Although these colleagues were joking, she said at times she was aware that rank affected their relationship. He was somewhat antagonistic toward officers because of the power and privilege they have. She felt that antagonism was occasionally directed toward her.

- **Marital relationships affected spouses' military promotion potential and career goals.**

Spouses' military rank can affect their partner's career options and promotion potential. One of the men said that he would be retiring earlier than he planned if his wife got into a commission education program. He would not be allowed to remain in the Navy as an enlisted member if she became an officer.

Another challenge couples faced was trying to stay together and find jobs that would promote both of their careers. This became more difficult as they progressed in rank. There are fewer positions at higher levels and fewer positions at the same location.

> *The only time we'd foresee any separation is if we stay in long enough and make more rank. . . If we advance together, E-7, E-8, or E-9, then it's hard to place us together as our career goes. . . We're at the working level right now, at a technician level. That means we're not management yet, and once we get management they need more managers in different locations. That's when it will become a problem. That's when we'll have to make that decision: which one of us will get out?*

Among both the civilian husbands and civilian wives interviewed, there were spouses who had left the Armed Forces so that their military career would not conflict with their partner's. Rather than leaving the Armed Forces, some dual-military couples made the decision to accept temporary separations so both could take career enhancing positions. Others made the choice to place one spouse's career above the other's. That person would look for assignments that would maximize their promotion potential, and their partner would find what they could at those locations. A dual-military officer said she considered her occupation a job, not a career. She had to pass up some important opportunities in favor of her husband's career. Her husband said:

> *We made a decision as to whose career was going to take front seat. . . since I've been in longer, we consider mine a career. The decisions we made were always based on that.*

- **Rank determined some couples' choice to be in the military.**

Couples were not in control of the decision to be dual-military if either of them did not make the next rank. One couple had some concerns about this. When they originally met, she planned to stay in for the full 20 years; however, he was unsure about his goals. After they had a family, he felt the need to provide for

them and decided to remain in the military. Now, however, they were facing the possibility that he would not be promoted and he would have to leave. She was an E-5 and could remain at that rank for 20 years, so she was not faced with the possibility of forced separation. She was concerned about the effects his involuntary separation from the military might have on their marriage.

Another pair of officers said that they had come up for their next promotion and neither made the next rank. They were very satisfied with their careers and extremely disappointed that they were forced to leave the military. All of their future plans relied on the fact that they would both be collecting retirement at a relatively young age. Now they had to find an occupation in the civilian world and fully expected to work until they were 65 years old.

Interdependence of Spouses' Career Choices

- **Dual-military members' career decisions were very interdependent with their spouses' career decisions.**

Rita and Tom, a dual-enlisted couple, said that neither of them individually intended to remain in the military, but now they encourage each other to stay in. He said, "She definitely encourages me. If I wasn't married to her, I'd probably have a different career now. Probably would've gotten out in 4 years." She isn't sure she wants to stay in, but he tells her she would probably miss it if she left. It has grown on her more than she thinks.

Dual-military enlisted couples with children have a particularly difficult time finding time to pursue their education.

Job security seemed to be the pivotal issue for Rita and Tom. Their commitments to work and family created circular pressures on them. Although they both entered the military to get their education they didn't have sufficient time to take classes. With her long work hours Rita felt guilty spending any more time away from home than necessary. She hoped that it would be easier to go to school as her daughter got older. It would be hard for either one of them to afford to leave the Armed Forces without their education. Tom said,

> *Probably financial, I would say, is the main reason. Neither one of us is marketable enough, I feel, to get out of the military yet. We've done a little college here and there, but neither of us has finished our degree.*

Married spouses' work options are always interdependent, but many of the dual-working couples described making particularly well-thought-out, joint-career decisions. This seemed more critical the more committed the husband and wife

were to their professional development. Finding a way for both to pursue their interests in the Armed Forces can be a balancing act. An Army major said she never considered getting out of the Armed Forces because she knew her husband wanted to stay in and she couldn't have the career progression she wanted unless she stayed in, too. Rita said,

> *Getting out and getting a civilian job was not really an option either because I knew he wanted to stay in. As an engineer, I never thought I could ever get a well-paying job that would be rewarding, that they would hire me and I would leave in 3 years, or for 2 years and I'd leave, or I'd leave at any moment or whatever.*

Another major in the Army said he might have left the Armed Forces if his wife had not been accepted into an educational program. She could work on her degree while she received full pay. It was a good financial choice for their family. It meant she would have an obligation to the Army almost until the time she was retirement eligible. Her choice to accept this appointment was really the choice for both of them to make the Army a 20-year career.

Work and Family Role Expectations

- **A number of dual-military couples described themselves as very career oriented.**

Dual-military couples were more likely to be genuinely intent on having dual-careers rather than just jobs.

Couples were more likely to remain in a dual-military lifestyle if both spouses were fairly career-oriented and they were happy with their work in the military. In fact, dual-military spouses seemed to be the most career-oriented of the three groups of dual-working couples interviewed. A lieutenant in the Navy described how she and her husband were both committed to Navy careers and that had not changed over the years. She said, "It really hasn't [changed] because we had both decided that we pretty much were going to be career military before we met." Although she wanted to have a family and her marriage was important, she had never really considered being a full-time homemaker. She continued,

> *Well, I'm one of those people that isn't satisfied with just staying at home. And that sounds bad, I don't want to say 'just staying at home,' because staying home and raising a family is very challenging. But I know that I would be frustrated if that was what I did. I've got my college education. I've just gotten my second masters degree, and right from the beginning I've always been a very competitive person. I've*

always had to compete with the guys in their territory, and prove that I can do better than they do. I've always been in the technical field and that's just the way I was raised and the way I grew up. So, I know that I would be unhappy staying at home full time. But that doesn't mean that I didn't want to still have a family.

This woman's husband was a lieutenant commander in the Navy. She said that even before they were married she had expected that his career would come first. However, he had never expected her to sacrifice her career for his. She said he never asked her to accept positions that would compromise her promotion potential, and he was always very encouraging. During his interview, he said that they both were set on military careers from the beginning. He believed that commitment was critical. They were able to find a way to make things work because they were clear about their goals.

Anything that you do, you have to make a commitment to do it, whether it's being in the military, both being in the military, or even one of us being in the military, or working in a civilian company. You have to make a commitment to do what you're going to do. Having a family is making a commitment. And if you don't have that, you know, drive, to make a commitment and stay with it, then nothing is going to help you anyway.

- **Dual-military couples who were willing to forego having children or who planned to postpone having children found the military lifestyle easier to accept.**

Having children was very challenging for the dual-military couples interviewed. Both spouses had long and unpredictable work hours. Even in times of peace, temporary duty assignments and training exercises took them away from home. In the event of a military crisis, many had to be able to leave at a moment's notice on a deployment. Among dual-military couples with children, the possibility of dual-deployment was always present. Because these spouses were often separated from their extended families, it was more difficult for the partner left behind. He or she was essentially a single parent. As one dual-military enlisted spouse with 7 years in the military said:

I tell people this all the time, 'It's different when your spouse isn't active duty.' If I get orders to go to Okinawa, Japan, he's still going to have to stay here, take care of three kids, because his job is here. Now, if he was a civilian and he needed to, he could go back home and have plenty of help, but, since he's in the military, he can't go anywhere. He's stuck here with no family.

Some dual-military couples made the decision not to have children. To them, the military lifestyle was simply not compatible with a family. A lieutenant colonel in the Army said when he and his wife discussed their decision to commit to a dual-military lifestyle, the real issue was whether or not they wanted to have children. It would not be possible to do both well: Something's got to lose, either your family or your military career.

> *We both signed up, and we went to Europe. That was a 3 ½ year assignment. When we came back, we talked it over, and it really wasn't a decision if she was going to stay in the Army as much as it was a decision if we were going to have children. So we sat down and talked about 'are we going to have children.' We decided to hold off for 3 more years because your second assignment in the Army is normally when you get your company command. She liked what she was doing, and I liked what I was doing. We both decided to do our company command tour and then make a decision after that. . . Staying in the Army was the decision not to have children, and after that we had almost 8 years in the Army, and we both decided to make both choices permanent. We elected not to have children and elected to stay in the Army.*

If couples did have children, as long as their careers were well underway beforehand, it was more likely that they would not separate from the Armed Forces early. During one of the interviews a father of two said he wasn't sure he and his wife would have remained in the Armed Forces if their children had come earlier. They were both working 12-hour days, and their children were in day care all the time. They both had more than 10 years invested in the Armed Forces, though, and his wife had a military obligation since she had completed an advanced degree through the military. They were pretty committed to 20-year careers.

Senior ranking military members and dual-military officers had an easier time juggling work and family. They were able to substitute money for time.

When couples had children later in their careers they also had the advantage of additional income. If you don't have time to take care of family responsibilities yourself it is possible to hire someone else to help. Couples who could better afford the cost of day care had an advantage. It also made a big difference if it was possible to hire someone to help with household cleaning.

> *Any time that we can free up so that we just have time for us is something that is worth, in our opinion anyway, the money. So someone comes in and does the heavy-duty kind of cleaning, and we just have the small 'keep things picked up' kind of tasks.*

- **Couples who were willing to share household responsibilities equally were able to juggle work and family more easily.**

With both spouses working long hours at a military job, it was almost impossible for either to take primary responsibility for all of the household tasks. Couples had to help take care of family responsibilities together. One woman said, "Because we both work, and we understand that neither one of us has more time than the other, we pretty much share those kinds of things—the dishes and laundry, that kind of stuff."

Many dual-military couples said they were able to juggle work and family better by sharing responsibilities equally.

Conversely, it is helpful if both spouses feel equally supported in their careers. Neither must make all of the sacrifices in order to care for their family. Two women related that they had divorced their spouse because, although they were in a dual-military marriage, their jobs had always taken second place to their spouse's and they were also expected to care for family demands. A third woman was uncertain about the future of her marriage. She didn't necessarily blame her marital difficulties on the way she and her husband balanced household tasks, but she had always taken the primary responsibility.

> *If you saw us, or came to our house after I got done with work, you would think I was a housewife. Really. I was brought up in a very traditional housewife/breadwinner kind of family that I've always done all the housewifey type things. Not completely, not that he's not doing anything. I see when the lawn needs to be done and do it and when the kitchen needs to be cleaned and I do that. . . With his personality those are details that he doesn't notice, and I guess that's my doing. From the beginning I've just done all that so he doesn't have to. . . I call it the administrative details of the family; so all that stuff just gets done by me. We've had controversy over that and I'm sure he has good intentions and tries to notice things like that, but it just doesn't happen.*

- **Couples were more successful when they actively sought assignments which were compatible with their family goals.**

Couples frequently said that in order to make a dual-military lifestyle successful they had to actively plan and work toward their family goals. They would never succeed passively or by accident. One of the first things couples had to constantly be on top of was joint assignments. At the very least, these couples were in close contact with their assignment officers. They were hustling for jobs that would promote their careers and keep them together. One husband said that trusting the military and the joint domicile program was "just asking to be separated."

Spouses had to carefully consider their occupational specialties since they would be more likely to stay together if they had jobs that were needed at most installations. They were also more likely to choose occupations that made it possible to take care of their family responsibilities. This was more important for couples who were committed to having children and spending time together.

Some spouses had switched specialties so that their careers would be more compatible. One man switched into the same specialty area that his wife was in because it was easier for them to coordinate assignments if they only had to work with one assignment officer. Moving into this career area made it less likely that either of them would be promoted as quickly, but it was a sacrifice they chose for their family.

> *Wife: We've been fortunate enough to be stationed [together]. We've moved three times in 11 years. Three different cities, and we've always been able to be transferred at the same time and together.*
>
> *Interviewer: Do you think that's because you have the same career?*
>
> *Wife: Yes, most definitely. Because he used to do something else, and he changed over to what I do so that we deal with the same person in Washington, DC, all the time.*
>
> *Interviewer: I know no one in the military has regular hours, but are your hours less demanding than some other jobs in the military?*
>
> *Wife: They are much less demanding because of the occupation I have. That's why he chose to change to my occupation, so that his hours would be more stable as well.*
>
> *Interviewer: So it helps as far as juggling the kids' schedules and things like that.*

Wife: Right. If we had another job in the Navy, we probably would not both be in. It's only because of the job we do. If I was like most of my friends and had a different job, there's no way I would have stayed in.

Spouses Future Plans Within the Military

Of the three groups of dual-working couples interviewed, dual-military spouses were least certain that they would continue with their current family lifestyle. Although 12 couples had definite plans for both spouses to remain in the Armed Forces until they could retire, nine were uncertain and three already had plans for at least one spouse to get out. Among those who were committed to both spouses' military careers, two couples were divorcing and would no longer be in dual-military marriages. Another was separated, so the future of the relationship was uncertain.

Committed Dual-Careerists

Most of the spouses who said that they and their partners were both career military had committed only until they were retirement eligible. After that it was likely they would leave the Armed Forces. Four couples mentioned explicitly that they would leave as soon as they qualified for a retirement pension. These four felt it was stressful to be a dual-military couple, but they were putting up with the challenges for military educational opportunities or retirement benefits. A couple of Air Force officers with 30 years of service between them clearly felt this way. They had too many years invested to leave without their pensions. However, they felt it had become more difficult for them to be a dual-military couple over the years. One thing that had contributed to that was the fact that they had started out enlisted, but had both been commissioned during the course of their careers. They found they were busier with the added responsibility of officers. Having a 5-year-old daughter had made a difference in their ability to juggle their work and family life as well. The wife wasn't sure she would do it again given the opportunity to change her life's decisions.

A second class Navy petty officer said that when he and his wife first met and married they discussed how nice it would be to have two military retirement pensions someday. At the time of their interviews, they had each been in the Navy for 11 years. She said she would stay in and retire, but she felt it was difficult with two children aged 9 and 7. He said he wasn't sure what she was thinking for herself, but it was a given he would retire. He went on to say that they didn't talk about it much, but with two pensions, they would have the equivalent of one

paycheck. He said, "we do know that as soon as I get out and retire, I will go back to work and then she can stay home and do whatever she wants to do." In this case it seemed that the couple's retirement pensions would give them the financial freedom to have a more traditional family arrangement in the future.

Five couples hadn't decided if they would stay in the Armed Forces after they were eligible for retirement. For the most part, spouses in this situation had between 10 and 15 years invested. They were past the mid-career decision point, but they weren't close enough to the 20-year mark to know what their circumstances would be like at that time.

One couple wasn't sure how long they would remain in the Armed Forces after they were eligible for retirement, even though they both lacked only 1 or 2 years to qualify. They were in the process of a divorce, and that influenced their plans. Sophie, the wife, said she had second thoughts about the 18 years she had been in the Army. The time she had spent away from her children bothered her. It was also hard never knowing from one day to the next how her assignments would change. Becoming a single parent with 15-, 13-, and 5-year-olds made it difficult to be sure she could leave the military within 2 years, though. Because of the divorce, her children were in counseling, and she would have to assess all of their needs when the time came to decide whether to stay or go.

Five men eligible for retirement (20 to 23 years of service), had no immediate plans to leave the military. They were all looking forward to the possibility of meaningful assignments and further promotions. However, no women said they had voluntarily chosen to remain in the military after they were eligible to retire.

An Air Force NCO said that his next promotion meant a larger pension when he left active duty. He would have to leave after 24 years of service if he was not promoted to senior master sergeant within the next year. Even if he got that promotion, he wasn't sure he would take it. He had remarried a year ago, and he and his new wife were not willing to be separated. She only had 1 more year to be eligible; so, if they faced a separation, one or both of them would retire.

Dual-Military Wives Uncertain of their Military Commitment

Wives most frequently considered leaving the Armed Forces. Several had considerably fewer years invested in the Armed Forces than did their husbands. Senior Airman Yvonne T. and her husband Staff Sergeant Hector T. were in this situation. He had been in the Air Force for 12 years, and, although he had no plans to leave the Armed Forces in the near future, the only reason he would consider it was in order to pursue his education. If he could support his family better by getting out and taking time to pursue a degree, he would do it.

Yvonne, on the other hand, still wasn't comfortable being in the Armed Forces, and she was "very much considering" getting out. She had been in the Air Force only 4 years, so retirement was a long time away. Hector was concerned about their finances. If she separated, they would have only one paycheck. Still, with three children aged 8, 6, and 4, the amount the couple would save in day care would just about make up for the loss. Yvonne had figured out that she could be self-employed by cleaning military housing units, take the baby with her, and come out ahead. It seemed most likely that she would get out before long, although it wasn't settled yet.

> *At first, my husband was like, 'We can't afford for you to quit.' And what happened was over the summer I had to take a second job to pay for the day care, because all our money was going to day care. We didn't have enough money for groceries, or shoes, or clothes for the kids. . . At my second job cleaning houses for people who were "PCSing" out, I would make more money doing that. And I told him that and I could take our youngest one with me while the other two were in school, and it would not be that I wouldn't be working. I wouldn't be working all the time, and I could set my own schedule and my own hours, and be my own boss. And when he started looking into it, he started seeing the pros and cons of it, too.*

An Army major for 11 years thought she would probably stay in, but she wasn't sure. She had 9 fewer years of service than her husband who was lieutenant colonel. The couple had no children, and, though he was eligible to retire, he planned to stay in long enough to see if he could be promoted to full colonel. She said she went into marriage fully accepting the condition that his career would take precedence. She just wished that she had been in the Army as long as he had so that she could be considering retirement herself. She and her husband together discussed her options. He felt she couldn't get a good retirement package leaving the military at that point in her life. On the other hand, enjoying her job was of primary importance.

That's one thing my husband and I were just talking about yesterday. His comment to me was, 'Well, if you want to stay in the military, one of the things you have to ask yourself is 'Are you having fun? Are you enjoying what you're doing?' And I said to him, 'There are things about the military that bug me; there are things about military medicine. But, overall, there are opportunities in the military I never would be able to experience in the civilian sector.'

Mel and Florence A. were both in the Navy, he for 5 years and she for 4. They had decided jointly that Florence would not reenlist. She said she would continue to work to support their standard of living, but she did not have her heart set on a Navy career. He said it was too hard to find assignments where they could be together and progress in their careers. If she got out, it would give him a chance to work more actively toward promotion.

Tony and Arlene O. had been in the Armed Forces an even shorter time than Mel and Florence. They each had served under 2 years in the Army. Both of them planned to leave after their first term and use their educational benefits. Arlene wanted to become a lawyer and Tony hoped to become a geologist. The Army was not what Arlene had expected it to be. She felt that her recruiters had signed her up without fully informing her of what the commitment entailed.

You sign a contract, [but] they don't fully explain what that entails as far as what you're actually going to be doing. . . I didn't make the choice fully informed; and I wouldn't choose it. . . Where I work, and, in general, in the military, as long as it looks pretty, as long as it looks like you know what you are talking about, they are going to accept it. But to me, it's like, 'That's what gets people killed. That's what could get someone hurt.' Either it's not done right or people don't do their job right, whatever. . . whatever. The military, as I perceived it to be before I joined, and the military after I see what goes on are two totally different pictures. If I could go back now I would, but I just try and focus on the good things. The best thing that came out of me joining the Army is I met my husband.

Dual-Military Husbands Reconsidering their Commitment

Six husbands who thought they might leave the Armed Forces short of retirement were among those interviewed. Two couples, mentioned earlier, were unsure of their fate because they had not been promoted. In the first situation, both spouses were going to be forced out. In the second, the wife could stay in but the husband probably wouldn't be able to. She was committed to the Army and didn't

plan to separate voluntarily in order to leave with him. However, she was concerned about how their relationship might be affected.

> *What really puts a strain on any dual-military [couple] is you always want your spouse to make the next pay grade as much as possible; so you don't have to worry about the one person being out. . . and he'll hold it against you because you're still in and he's not; and he would like to make it a career just as bad as you do.*

Mel and Tony were among the remaining four men reconsidering their commitments. Like his wife, Tony had already decided to leave after a single term and use his educational benefits. Mel hadn't made a decision. It was early in his career and he wanted to see how well things might go.

The last two men were pretty sure they would leave. They believed they would have more promising careers as civilians. Getting out would place both of them in the role of a civilian husband, but they believed that would give them more, not less, opportunity to be the primary breadwinner in the family.

The husband and wife whose situation illustrated this most clearly were both enlisted in the Marine Corps. They had been married just under 2 years, and had both been married previously. Between them they had four children, three of whom lived with them. They found it very difficult to have a family as a dual-military couple. They had been separated during their first year of marriage, and they still struggled with the threat of joint deployments and temporary duty assignments. They believed it would be too difficult for both of them to stay in.

> *If say tomorrow I get orders to Okinawa, Japan, he's still going to have to stay here, take care of the three kids, only because his job is here. Now if he was a civilian and he needed to, he could go back home and have plenty of help. . . There's a lot that you put up with, but we like the lifestyle. That's just the only thing, is the 1-year separations. Especially because we heard that right now Okinawa, Japan, is becoming a 2-year tour. It was hard enough doing it 1 year. Forget about 2 years!*

It had not been hard for her husband to decide he wanted to get out. He had separated from the Armed Forces once before. He felt some of his NCOs had betrayed him. He said, "I figured if I was going to get that now, I might as well go out in the civilian community." He returned to the Marine Corps after getting laid-off from a job as a police officer. When he went back in, he initially decided to stay in for the whole 20 years. During our interview he said, "Since I got married to my wife, it would be just too hard for both of us to stay in."

She explained further that he had more time in the Armed Forces, but he was at a lower rank. He felt he had less potential in the military than she did. He would have better opportunities if he got out. He planned to go to school so that he could get a better paying job on the outside.

> *He's got more time in service than I do, but there's limitations on how long you can go before you pick up a certain rank. And being the MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) we were in before, it was a lot harder for him to pick up rank. And now the MOS we're in, it's a lot faster to pick up rank; so then you have people that have less time in service and have less knowledge than you do over you. And he just doesn't deal well with that.*

Supporting Dual-Working Military Couples

One of the important issues addressed in this research was how people felt about the supports within the military that make their lives more feasible. In order to explore this, people were asked what the military might do that would make their lives easier. Many spouses had clearly come to the interview with some specific suggestions that they wanted to share. The research team was interested to find that some had no immediate answer to this question. People asked if they could "have a minute to think about" the question. One spouse said, "Oh Lord! Let's see." Another commented "Gads! This is one I wish I would have had in advance so I could have given it some thought." Responses like these were received despite the fact that spouses frequently volunteered for the research because they wanted to help improve the military as an environment for dual-working couples.

For some of those interviewed, there may have been a loss for words because it is difficult to translate needs and concerns into constructive and potentially feasible policy solutions. Others were openly very positive about the military and said they could not think of a way the military could do more. Across the board, respondents mentioned an array of supports which they already appreciated within the Armed Forces in addition to things that they would like to see available in the future. Consequently, in this section are highlighted not only the needs of these couples, but also the things they appreciate and would like to see continue.

Many of the supports spouses talked about would help solve problems they struggled with in their decision to be a dual-working military couple. As a result, there is some overlap between these two areas. Suggestions which address issues that figure prominently in decisions to remain in the military have obvious implications for retention. However, there are issues in this section that did not figure prominently in couples' decision processes. That does not necessarily mean they do not play a role in retention. It may just be an indirect role. For example, past research does not show clear direct links between marital satisfaction or spouse employment and retention. However the Military Family Institute's secondary data analysis of the 1992 Survey (as well as past research) found a connection between such family characteristics and overall satisfaction with military life. Overall satisfaction with military life is, in turn, related to retention both empirically and in theoretical models of the retention decision process (Croan, et al., 1990; Etheridge, 1989; Segal & Harris, 1993).

In order to organize the information spouses shared about supports for dual-working couples, a list of broad categories that encompassed all of their comments was created. As the transcripts were originally read and coded, readers took notes on the salient themes that predominated each couple's story. These lists were

used to construct an initial set of categories of supports that cut across all of the transcripts in the data set. Next the couples' comments about these support systems were reread and each segment cross-referenced into one of the initial eight categories. Based on this, initial categories were modified so that they better encompassed all of the couples' comments. The final set of categories used to summarize couples' ideas about military supports for their dual-working lifestyle included: 1) Monetary Compensation, 2) Benefits, 3) Job Opportunities, 4) Family Support Systems, 5) Dependent Care, 6) Flexibility for Family Needs, 7) Availability of Information, and 8) Military Organizational Culture. These categories have been used as the structure for the remainder of this report.

Monetary Compensation

> *Since we are both working and we are both officers, I don't want to say we don't have it as rough, but having the higher income does make us able to do a few more things and be a little bit more flexible than a lot of the enlisted. . . Just because of where we are and where we've been able to, you know how far up we've been able to work, it's not quite as rough as a lot of other people are going to have it. We've been pretty lucky.*
>
> Danielle
> Navy Officer
> Dual-Military

According to a report of the 1992 Survey of Active Duty Officers and Enlisted Personnel, respondents were fairly satisfied with their military employment in terms of working conditions, training, assignment stability and job security (Westat, 1994b). The areas with which they were less satisfied were pay and allowances, retirement benefits and promotion opportunities. These last three areas are all monetary issues. Only 29% of the respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their pay and allowances. By comparison, 44% said that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (23% neutral). This suggests that the numbers dissatisfied with pay in the military are approaching one half. Actually, it is even closer to half for enlisted personnel (47%-49% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied vs. 22%-31% satisfied or very satisfied), while for officers the picture is almost the reverse (53% satisfied or very satisfied; 25%-27% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied).

Of course, it is easy to assume that anyone would be happier with more money. Wanting a raise is a standard complaint. Some of the spouses interviewed seemed to have a hard time taking themselves seriously as they suggested pay raises, realizing how much like a cliché it sounded. One naval submarine officer said, "You always wish you made more money or got promoted quicker, or something like that. But, overall, I think the process is fair and it's treated me fairly." By

contrast, there were many spouses that felt money was an important issue they would like to see addressed. Furthermore, pay and allowances are important factors in models of military personnel retention (Croan et al., 1990; Smith, 1988). They are clearly the primary incentives in the employment context, and as such they are unavoidable issues. Table 11 summarizes the concerns that couples expressed about monetary compensation.

Those with higher rank, and particularly dual-military officers were the only spouses who spontaneously expressed satisfaction with their level of pay. These spouses almost always talked about their concern for those who did not have such favorable circumstances. A dual-military wife who had been in the Air Force for 14 years explained that her income level bought her some flexibility that enlisted members can't afford. When she and her husband were transferred to Europe, they could pay for her in-laws to fly there and care for their children until they could find adequate day care. Money bought her and her husband more choices. Among dual-working couples money can be a substitute for the time they might otherwise need to take care of family responsibilities.

Participants also said they liked receiving bonuses for difficult or important assignments. One soldier mentioned the additional pay he made for participating in exercises like scuba diving and parachuting. He was happy to be paid to do things he loved to do. Pay associated with command positions or sea duty was mentioned, also.

Table 11
Spouses' Concerns About Monetary Compensation in the Military

Base Pay

- Base pay does not keep many military families above the poverty line.
- Inadequate income leaves members feeling devalued or forgotten. Some feel that it is the U.S. Congress that doesn't understand their needs. Others think senior military leaders have forgotten what it is like at the bottom.

Allowances

- Dislocation allowances are too low to cover all the expenses of moving.
- Housing allowances are not adequate for families with children.
- Cost of living adjustments are not adequate or they are simply not considered in all areas where they are needed.
- Dual-military spouses lose allowances and health care benefits by getting married. One spouse is essentially treated as if he or she were single. Dual-military spouses feel they should be able to combine both of their benefit packages.

Monetary Value of Benefits

- The monetary value of benefits does not compensate for low base pay although it is often used to justify low pay rates.
- The monetary value of benefits varies depending on what Armed Forces members and their families use. Those who use few services would prefer to have the money rather than the benefits.

Promotions and Bonuses

- Many feel that bonuses and promotions do not fairly reward good performance. The process appears arbitrary and very uncertain in the downsizing atmosphere.
- Military raises do not keep up with inflation.
- Because of the downsizing, there are more financial rewards offered for leaving the military than for staying in. There are also more rewards for performing poorly and being forced out than for separating with a good record.

Benefits

> *I was satisfied in the beginning, but later on in my career I started to see some things taking place in the system that I am not too happy about. I don't regret my decision to be in the military. I love what I do; I love serving; but over the last couple years I've kind of watched the organization turn its back on the very people that have dedicated their lives to serve. It's kind of disillusioning after this many years. You know the eroding of military benefits and health care and that kind of thing and the attitude that they are not going to change. It makes you stop and think: has it been worth it?*
>
> Jesse
> Navy Enlisted
> Military Husband

With the advent of the all-volunteer force, military organizational objectives changed and the number of military families increased. In response, benefit systems have grown proportionally. Today's complex system of military benefits includes housing or housing allowances, commissary and exchange privileges, use of recreation facilities, medical and dental care, survivor's benefits, career and family counseling, and many free services and programs that support families through each stage of the family and career life course (Albano, 1994). Military families can be assured that there is a structured set of supports and benefits wherever they are stationed.

Most respondents were pleased by the obvious effort the military makes to provide benefits within the community. People generally had good things to say about gyms, golfing facilities, legal services, discounted programs for such things as theater and movie tickets, swimming pools, libraries, and adult class offerings for such things as ceramics. Others told of taking advantage of available cabins and discounts on hotel rates. Several people mentioned that base chaplains assisted them when they were experiencing problems within their marriage and credit this assistance for helping to keep the family together (see also Table 12).

Many military personnel feel their benefits are dramatically being affected by cutbacks. A Marine Corps officer expanded on the subject by saying that he understands that the military family benefits are going to cost a lot more with the budget steadily decreasing: "I understand it will take some real creativity and planning to increase benefits for military families." Still another spouse commented that "across the board, on all services, the military tries very hard to do the right thing for families."

Many spouses expressed skepticism about the way military health coverage is changing, but this concern seemed to stem from the high value military members place on the health care they receive. Some people said that military health care

was the primary reason they remained in the Armed Forces. One spouse talked about the ear surgeries her son needed and that they would never have been able to afford that level of health care had it not been for being in the military. A civilian wife stated, "The advantage of our military medical benefits may be declining; however, at least we have them. There are a lot of people in the civilian world who cannot afford or have access to health care at all."

Table 12
Spouses' Concerns About Benefits in the Military

Housing

- The demand for military housing is much greater than current availability.
- Installation housing is frequently in poor condition.
- Affordable and decent civilian housing is difficult to find, especially in high cost of living areas.
- The military contracts civilian apartment complexes for military members, but contracting a housing development where homes would be available could support the needs of families with older children better.
- In city areas, many installations and contracted housing complexes are in crime ridden neighborhoods.
- Dual-military couples can only have one spouse listed as a sponsor for their family. If the sponsor is separated from the family during a move, it can be difficult for the other partner to apply for housing. Transferring sponsorship back and forth is complicated and error prone.

Medical Care

- Current demand for health care outstrips the availability of military providers and specialists.
- Military members are concerned that the move to Tri-care is a sign that the military does not plan to care for its own any longer.
- It can be difficult to find good medical care using Tri-Care, because many physicians will not accept it.
- In locations where contracted civilian health care is more accessible or superior to military care, military members could benefit from the opportunity to use the same providers to which their families have access.
- Dual-military couples have difficulty coordinating care for their children because only one of them can be identified as the sponsor. Having both members' social security numbers on the records would solve a lot of confusion.

Installation Services

- It would be easier for parents with children to use fitness facilities if childcare were available.
- The Exchange system is no less expensive than some of the large civilian discount chain stores. Where adequate civilian alternatives are available, money spent on these types of supports might be better used elsewhere.
- Family Support Centers are essential and should continue to be supported and funded adequately.

Educational Opportunities

- Educational benefits are available, but while in the military they can be impossible to take advantage of due to demands on time, work schedules, and frequent moves. Dual-military enlisted couples with children find that it is particularly difficult to make time for school.
- Distance education programs could be utilized more in order to cut down on military moves and separations.
- The amount of paperwork necessary for members to apply for educational opportunities through the military is excessive.
- The military could promote educational opportunities for civilian spouses more actively.
- In city areas where public school systems are inadequate, more installations could support Department of Defense schools for children.

Job Opportunities

I've grown up in the military. I've grown as an individual. But at the same time, I see that the military puts a lot of stress on the family, and I'm thinking, 'Had I not gone that way. . . I think I would have been a bit further along in my personal career and my personal development than I am now.' But then at the same time, it was while I was in the military that I realized my goals. So, I don't know; it's twofold. I can't say that I'd be much further along because I didn't come into what I wanted to do until I was further along in the military.

Andrea
Army
Civilian Wife

I think we'll look back on these years and say, 'Well, you know, we really made a difference, we were actually doing something.' And, I guess, when you go to church and you see a guy next to you and say, 'What do you do for a living?' 'Well, I'm an insurance salesman' or 'I'm a refrigerator salesman.' I don't look down on them, but I just kind of say, 'Well, that's nice; you're making money; you'll obviously use the money to support your family or do something and that's good.' But I just have always been really proud that I've been in the Air Force, you know, making a difference in the defense of the country. Also, I feel really lucky because I've been able to do research, and I've been able to get two degrees, a Masters and a Ph.D., that the Air Force paid for in really neat areas and neat topics. For me it's a dream job. I can do the research I've always wanted to do, and I can do it for a good cause. I can do it for the defense of the country, not just for my own personal profit or whatever. So I feel both our jobs have a tremendous amount of meaning, and I still feel that way. My wife is, you'll have to talk with her, but I think she's lost a lot of her idealism for the military. She's in acquisitions, and it's a different world than what I work in. It's been very, very frustrating for her, and so I think she's lost a lot of that, you know, identity—being able to relate to the Air Force. But I still have that, and I'm still very proud and very thankful for being able to serve my country in that capacity.

Harry
Air Force Officer
Dual-Military

Both civilian and military spouses were asked to describe their current occupation and their long-term occupational goals. Of particular interest to this study was whether those goals had been affected by the fact that their spouse was a military member. How might the military support the work goals of dual-working spouses better?

The challenges of military life for employed civilian spouses are well-documented. When military families relocate due to reassignments or a change of station, civilian spouses are often forced to leave profitable and satisfying employment. Each move is at best a disruption in the family lifestyle and at worst a devastating setback affecting the morale, finances, and sometimes the configuration of the family. Frequent relocations to places not of their choosing often necessitate that civilian spouses accept jobs for which they are overqualified or jobs that do not match their aptitude or training. Relocation drastically affects career seniority which for many spouses means going from one entry-level job to another (Rosen, Ickovics & Moghadam, 1990). Finally, civilian spouses face a high incidence of unemployment and underemployment (Croan, LeVine & Blankinship, 1992).

The military sponsors employment services for civilian spouses to help them deal with all of these challenges. Some people said these programs were helpful. They had found an individual or a specific employment assistance office that was invested in helping them. Tara, a civilian wife, explained that she looked for help at an employment office at a large installation and received little assistance. However, at her husband's next duty assignment the installation was smaller and she found her job through the military employment assistance office there.

> *That's how I found out about my job in the place here. . . They're good here. It's a smaller base, and on our last base, which was very big, they weren't any help at all. I don't know, maybe they didn't have as much time at my last duty station.*

An NCO said her husband had been unemployed for a several months following a move. He was getting depressed and then he was getting on her nerves. There was more than one installation in their area and they had been working through employment services for a few months already without finding it helpful. Then she went to a transition assistance office in another location and found an entirely different mind set. She said, "I called the general and told him that, if it was not for that office, I think I probably would have had to kill my husband."

> *I was walking through the halls one day and was at my wit's end, and thought I was just going to go home and murder Chris and put him in the backyard. I told this lady that, and she started laughing. She said, 'No, you don't have to do that; we can help. . .' I was frazzled, and she just*

let me talk, and she didn't kick me out of her office. She had time for me. She said, 'We have a lot of spouses coming in, and we deal with this every day.' She was just so sweet. And then they called him. They called me back at work, and said, 'We talked to your husband today, he's going to do fine.' They gave him some books on dealing with the stress of being a man and not working. It wasn't even part of the relocation thing, it was just something the guy gave him. I think his name was Mr. Smith. He called to say, 'I'm the head of the thing, and they told me you came in today. I really wanted to reach out to you. . .'

Although military members are fully employed, military spouses were still very actively engaged in seeking out assignments and occupational areas that would be conducive to their career and family goals. Juggling assignments can become a job all by itself. Table 13 lists some of the ways both civilian and military spouses thought the Department of Defense might make it easier for them to pursue their occupational goals.

Table 13
Spouses' Concerns About Job Opportunities

Civilian Employment Opportunities

- If military relocations were less frequent, it would make the careers of many civilian spouses more feasible.
- Military employment services for civilian spouses are designed to support those looking for entry level and non-professional jobs. It would be helpful to have employment services geared toward those in professional careers.
- Employment offices don't always appear to have enough staff or enough time to really help people find employment.
- Some spouses feel as if staff look down on them or treat them incompetently when they seek employment assistance.
- It would be helpful if the Civil Service and the military could work together to coordinate job transfers for dual-working couples.
- The preferred consideration military spouses are supposed to receive for Civil Service jobs is not as helpful as it could be. Spouses still find themselves behind a number of people who receive higher priority in getting hired.
- Civilian husbands have an easier time finding employment than civilian wives because people are more anxious to find a man a job.

Military Employment Opportunities

- Dual-military couples must actively work to find assignments in the same location themselves, because detailers frequently don't make this effort. Relying on the joint domicile program alone is just asking to be separated.
- People feel that the joint domicile program is becoming less effective or that it may be in the future with the downsizing. They do not want to see that happen.
- The military joint domicile programs can assign dual-military spouses some distance apart and still consider them in the same location. Given the demands of the military and the regulations of some units, this distance needs to be shortened for couples to see each other regularly.
- Dual-working couples need more flexibility and control over the assignment process so that they can negotiate assignments in locations where both spouses can work.
- Dual-military couples often have to make a choice between being stationed together and taking assignments that promote both of their careers. These couples need more information about military job openings and more control over assignments so that they can choose their own tradeoffs.
- Dual-working couples need more information about military job openings, so that they can identify jobs which would place them in an area where both of them can work. Spouses are already using the internet to locate assignments.
- Dual-military couples have different chances of staying together and progressing in rank depending on their occupational specialties. When couples enter the service or when they marry, they need more information about how various career choices will mesh with their priorities and life goals.
- Dual-military couples who have occupational specialties that make it difficult to stay together could benefit from opportunities to cross-train into another area, or to have two specialty tracks so that they have more assignment options when they transfer.

Dual-Working Spouses

- Dual-working couples need more advance notice about transfers so that they have time to negotiate new jobs for both spouses, and time to take care of family needs.

Family Support Systems

> *I think that it's really good. For example, they have the Spouse's Club. It used to be the "Wives Club" a long time ago, and they've changed that. Now it's called the "Spouse's Club," and they have a lot of activities going on all the time. The one that is for our school is very active. . . they also will have meetings for the spouses and kind of explain to them things that are going on at our school, and what to expect, and what the students will be going through. So I think they are really supportive.*
>
> Hope
> Air Force Officer
> Military Wife

Military families face an aggregate of stresses. Often families are geographically separated from their extended families and may be socially isolated within civilian communities due to frequent moves (Black, 1993). For this reason, spouses often cannot rely on a continual source of support or assistance and are often left to cope on their own. The military has organized a broad network of family support systems in order to assist military families.

Since families play a role in soldier readiness, the services have paid particular attention to the needs of families during deployments. Many of the difficulties that spouses face during separations are well known. The soldier's well-being and safety, the spouse's inability to predict how long the operation would last, and spouse concern over the soldier's living conditions have been identified as stressors during deployments (Segal & Harris, 1993). Additionally, getting reliable information and financial difficulties pose problems for some families of deployed soldiers (Segal & Harris). In response to these challenges, the military has made numerous efforts to help spouses prepare and adjust.

One of the supports—the importance of being a part of the military community—is shown by the quotes from the research participants:

> *I think that one of the most important things to survive in the military is to become part of the military family. That does not mean excluding the civilian community, but you are surrounded by people that are in the same situations that you are in.*
>
> *I am proud that I have raised good kids in the military environment. It's helped me as a parent, the structure and the discipline and that kind of thing has helped me deal with my kids and keep them on the straight and narrow.*
>
> *My job involves a lot of integrity, honor, loyalty, and duty. These words mean everything to us and being associated with the Air Force makes us very proud. We feel like family.*

Table 14 summarizes comments spouses made regarding the support networks set up to help them cope with the military way of life. They often felt support systems were not designed to meet their unique needs.

Table 14
Spouses' Concerns About the Military Family Support Systems

Civilian Husbands

- Civilian husbands are not consistently invited into spouse support groups. In one instance female unit members were invited to join the unit's wives club, but male spouses were not.
- Wives support groups are gradually acknowledging male spouses by renaming themselves "spouse" groups, but this transformation is slow and piecemeal.
- Civilian husbands may not access support networks because men are not socialized to identify with their spouses work, and they don't perceive that the military requires their involvement more than any other job. They may even avoid involvement if they are emphasizing their continued role as primary provider.
- Spouse support groups often overlook supporting civilian husbands. They do not think of men being in need in the way they do wives. Some people may be uncomfortable with men expressing needs for support.
- Civilian husbands can feel uncomfortable in "wives' clubs, because they are in the minority, and the activities aren't geared toward them.

Dual-Military Spouses

- Dual-military spouses are not invited into the support networks of their military partner's units because they are viewed as military members rather than as spouses.
- Dual-military spouses can feel out of place in spouse support groups because they are different from the majority of the participants.
- Dual-military spouses are not offered help like civilian wives are, because wives' support groups don't realize they have as many or more needs during deployments and separations as any other spouse.
- Dual-military spouses don't necessarily have the option of participating in organized sports as a spouse with their partners' units. They are required to participate through their own unit as military members.
- Family Support Centers provide numbers of services for spouses and parents. These programs do not target dual-military spouses, though. In some cases only dependent spouses are invited to participate.
- Dual-military spouses are not recognized during spouse support week.

Dual-Working Spouses

- The activities and programs of spouse support groups are often directed toward stay-at-home women. They are not of interest to working spouses.
- Services for families like the "Mommy and Me" program or swimming lessons for children are frequently offered only during the day when dual-working spouses cannot take advantage of them.

All Spouses

- It can be difficult to feel a part of the military family support system if you are not living on an installation. In areas where military members are scattered throughout civilian communities some members miss being more a part of the military family.

Childcare

> *I must say they are doing a fantastic job with the childcare. It's excellent care, it's reasonable, it's safe. Wonderful! So keep up with the childcare.*
>
> Grace
> Marine Corps
> Civilian Wife

It has been estimated that half of all military members have one or more children under school age. The children of military dependents who are under age five exceed 2 million, with over 60% of them in families where both spouses are currently employed. These families all have childcare needs. There has also been a steady and significant increase in single parent families requiring childcare in the military (Zellman & Johansen, 1995).

The military has been providing childcare to help maintain and improve military member morale, readiness, and productivity. The Department of Defense has implemented and provided two types of childcare. Child Development Centers (CDC) operate on a "fee-for-service" basis. Family Child Care (FCC) operates by training military spouses to provide care in their homes, not to exceed the supervision of six children. In addition to these provisions, the military maintains lists of civilian providers who can give childcare services to military members. Since most families cannot have their childcare needs met solely by one particular type of program, 45% of families rely on more than one type of care.

In the conversations with dual-working spouses, the topic of childcare was discussed very frequently (Table 15). Some spouses said it was the primary problem they struggle with as dual-working parents. There were a number of respondents who were happy with their childcare arrangements. They commented on the quality of the Child Development Centers in the military and the flexibility of Family Child Care. For example, CDCs require comprehensive background checks before employing individuals. Some facilities have installed security cameras to monitor the quality of the care provided. Spouses mentioned that the military CDCs were either accredited or were attempting to become accredited.

> *When I took the kids to the day care center, I was just flabbergasted by the amount of things and the level of training of the people there. It wasn't anything that I had suspected it would be. It was all very updated, all very clean, and all very "high class," I guess, is a good word to use in this particular thing.*

In addition to day care, a variety of support services are sometimes offered to parents through CDCs. People noted that centers have training programs that assist parents to spend quality time with their children. They also might provide the opportunity for parents to spend time together.

> *The day care center that we had them in before had what they called Parent's Night Out, which was one night a week. They'd keep the kids until 10:30, which was nice because they could stay at day care and you could actually go out and have a meal and see a movie or see each other. That was nice.*

One of the spouses interviewed had been a Civil Service employee for Army Manpower Welfare and Recreation for a number of years. She was aware of many ways the military was supporting dual-working families by providing programs for children.

> *The military, at least for the Army, is bending over backwards to take care of dual-working families. They've increased all kinds of youth programs. They've increased childcare programs. They've developed good parenting programs. They've got family time in youth centers now. They've got crisis management. We're doing so much for family members and for the military person because they are gone all the time. No one is taking care of these kids. It's the next generation, so we are growing our next generation of military.*

Table 15
Spouses' Concerns About Childcare

Child Development Centers

- There are not enough spaces for children at the Child Development Centers (CDC) to meet the demand.
- Dual-military and single parents should have priority at CDCs, but they often do not. When they are assigned in a new area, they have to begin work immediately and do not have time to look for safe alternatives.
- Child Development Centers do not provide enough organized educational activities. Parents mentioned that the policy at CDCs promotes free play rather than structured learning.
- Child Development Centers don't open early enough and close too early to accommodate the schedules of military members.
- There is a policy that children cannot be cared for at a CDC longer than 10 hours a day. Without flextime options, many dual-military parents require longer hours than this.
- CDCs have no provisions for emergency or sick childcare.
- Childcare is too expensive, despite the cost supports provided by military day care centers.
- CDCs charge different rates for after school care, summer care, and care during school vacations. There isn't a standard rate for everything.
- The sliding fee scale at Child Development Centers doesn't seem fair to everyone. For example, it takes housing allowances into account, whether you receive them or not.

Family Childcare

- Family Child Care (FCC) can be more flexible in providing childcare at odd or long hours and providing care for sick children. It also feels like an extension of your own family. However, lists of home care providers need to be kept more up-to-date.
- Spouses of military members often provide FCC and are more understanding of work demands on military members. It would be helpful, however, if the training programs for FCC providers focused more on the types of demands dual-military spouses face.

Dependent Care Plans

- Dependent Care Plans should be required of all parents with children rather than just dual-military and single parents.
- Dependent care plans need to be more adequately monitored and enforced. They are frequently not organized or maintained well enough to be viable.
- Dual-military couples need more time after transferring to a new area to put together a dependent care or dependent evacuation plans. It takes time to find people who are trustworthy and willing to take their children during a crisis.
- It would be helpful if the military would keep lists of people who would be willing to help dual-military couples in the event of deployments. The services could provide these lists to service members trying to put together dependent care plans after moving to new locations.

Flexibility for Family Needs

> *We're in the Armed Forces. We have a mission to perform. While I think that you should consider family whenever it's feasible, there does have to be a bottom line, and that is our national defense. We can't say that we can't defend our Nation because we have too many babies that parents have to stay home with. I'm not saying that, that's wrong. I don't know where the balance is; I don't know if anybody does. I'm skeptical whether they're going to change things, because they say, 'Oh, my God, there are all these separations with these dual-working couples. We'll have to change X, Y, and Z.' I don't know whether that's really going to happen or not.*
>
> Lynn
> Army Officer
> Dual-Military

Military life presents a number of challenges for families. According to a study done by Anderson & Stark (1988) relocating families alone creates a common array of stresses including loss of support networks, additional role demands, and interruption of personal growth and development. The dual-working military families interviewed have the challenges of both a dual-working and a military lifestyle. They suggested a number of areas where the military could be more flexible to their needs as they coped with family stresses.

Military members seemed somewhat conflicted as they discussed the types of flexibility they needed. Many prefaced their remarks by saying, "I'm not asking for special treatment, but. . ." People understood that the demands of the military have to come first. One enlisted Marine said, "This is the military; you signed a contract. Whatever you're assigned to do has a purpose; you do as you are told." However, everyone who was interviewed needed some exception or some unique support some time due to their personal needs or family responsibilities. Many also said that their own priority was their family rather than their military job, and this made it hard to maintain a military lifestyle. Some of the concerns dual-working spouses said they would still like to see addressed are listed in Table 16.

Many of the people interviewed were happy to see progress in the military toward a more family-friendly environment. They had noticed changes in the time they had been in the service. Many reported they never had any trouble getting the time they needed to care for family responsibilities.

> *If something came up, if my children got sick when they were in day care, they wouldn't hesitate. They'd say, 'Oh, go, go take care of your children. There's nothing here, if you're not here for one day, that the mission is going to stop or fall apart.' Not that I don't have a job that*

impacts on the mission, but, if I miss one day, everything is not going to fall apart. They say, 'Go ahead and take care of your children; they need you now.'

They do the best they can working around when you have to go pick up your child. At least in my experience, I haven't had anybody say no. They understand. They understand rules and regulations, and they understand that your child can only be in a day care for 10 hours, and they understand that you HAVE to go.

Personally, I have never had a problem with any of my bosses where I've gone and said, 'Sir, I need to take a couple of hours off. . .' I have the same philosophy. If a soldier comes and says, 'I need a couple of hours off,' to me they're not really asking permission. Technically, they are; but they're not really asking permission. They're just letting me know where they are going to be for the next couple of hours. That's almost a courtesy. And because I'm an officer, I've always worked for an officer. I'm not knocking the NCO Corps, but. . . I think there are some people that don't understand that.

Table 16
Spouses' Concerns About the Level of
Flexibility Within the Military for Family Needs

Work Hours

- There is not enough flexibility and advance notice in the scheduling of work hours.
- Flextime would enable spouses to juggle family responsibilities better. In some occupations this is impossible, but in many, where it could be implemented, it is not supported.
- Members should be given compensation time for working longer hours.
- It can be difficult to take leave because of the demands of the job.

Separation and Relocation

- There is no effort to limit the number of family separations required of individual military members.
- The possibility of dual-deployments is a big concern for dual-military couples with children. It would be helpful if dual-military parents did not have to deploy at the same time, at least during peacetime.
- The possibility of dual-military parents both deploying to an area where their lives are in danger places children at great risk of being orphaned.
- Couples would benefit from having more definite information about the possibility, timing, and length of hardship tours. Spouses could volunteer early for required tours in order to get them out of the way or find other ways to plan their lives around them.
- Staying in one place too long, for whatever reason, can be harmful to a military career. Families would benefit if remaining in a single area were more feasible and acceptable.

Occasional Responsibilities and Emergencies

- It would be helpful to have a policy supporting spouses' ability to take the time to care for family responsibilities and emergencies, such as sick children. Many supervisors are understanding of this, but support is not consistent.
- Supervisors shouldn't assume that military members with families can rely on their spouse to take care of family responsibilities. Among dual-working couples, spouses often have just as many or more work demands.
- Dual-military spouses who are assigned in the same unit or squadron need supervisors to be particularly supportive of family responsibilities. It can be uncomfortable asking for flexibility when it is obvious whenever either of them takes time to care for family needs.

Childbirth

- The leave policies for parents after childbirth are limited to sick leave for women. Parental leave is not available to both parents.
- Women who choose to breast-feed have a hard time after they return to work. Restrooms are not set up for nursing women to pump their breasts. Where there are limited facilities for many people, it's even harder because it takes time to pump.
- It is impossible to take a leave of absence or a reduced workload for a year or two during a time of increased family responsibility. The only options are to leave the Armed Forces entirely or remain on the fast track.

Availability of Information

> *There are all these agencies on military bases which provide assistance to the soldier and his or her family. So, it's extremely important that people understand what is available to them and how to utilize resources to their fullest potential. Absolutely no good is done if the military family does not know such assistance exists. It does not do any good at all.*
>
> Frederick
> Army Officer
> Dual-Military

Programs and services can only be useful if their intended audience is aware of them. Awareness of programs, even when not used, increases satisfaction with military life and enhances retention (Etheridge, 1989). Awareness and use of programs is uneven and those at greatest risk for experiencing family problems, like junior enlisted families, are least likely to be aware of the plethora of support services available to them according to Segal and Harris (1993). Information about programs must reach more people, and the targeted populations must feel confident to utilize offerings for their own well being and that of their family members.

The challenge to the military is how to reach those who are vulnerable and may benefit from available services. The study, "Barriers and Facilitators to Use of Air Force Family Support Centers," concluded that under-utilization of FSCs is a common issue that confronts many military service providers (Albano, 1995). The author suggests that information about services needs to be much more prominent, starting from the time family members first apply for an identification card.

The interviews suggest that both spouses and service members alike would benefit if there were better methods of educating people about the military system, its community, services, and benefits (Table 17). Military use of modern communication resources are making a difference, however. A naval officer explained, "The military is providing a valuable service by establishing and expanding informational web sites." He indicated that military members are often hesitant to seek out information on support services that may have a stigma attached to them. The "military culture" often encourages people to pull themselves up by the bootstraps on their own. He expressed his confidence that utilization of informational web sites will continue to expand, since accessing these sites does not require user identification information. People can access supports without the fear of being labeled.

Marsha was a civilian wife married to a naval officer with over 20 years invested in the military lifestyle. During that time, she raised a family, worked as a professional, and experienced first hand how advances in technology radically changed communication resources available to family members. She said:

> *I think today, for example, on ships it's a little bit easier. You can e-mail your kids, you can use your cellular phone, and link up with a line if you're in port and phone home far more easily than you ever could years ago when our kids were young. Probably the communication that we used the most when my husband and I were first married was through the mail. We wrote to each other. Phone calls were rare. And, even if he was in port and he would try to telephone me, the phone calls then were so expensive. I remember getting a phone bill one time for $90.00, and it was for like a 3-minute phone call. And we couldn't afford that. So we really limited our phone calls. Communication was very limited.*

A military husband from another Navy family shared his experiences from being aboard ship for extended periods. He said, "E-mail has helped immensely on ships. It has gone a long way in boosting morale. Problems still arise at home, but now you at least have a quick way to communicate." An essential link has been established in keeping families connected.

Table 17
Spouses' Concerns About the Availability of Information

- Sponsorship programs for relocating families are important and should be expanded to include sponsors for spouses.
- Command Sponsorship could be reinstated for "at risk" families.
- The recruitment process should include more accurate and extensive information about the numerous job opportunities and benefits in the military system.
- At the time of recruitment, members and spouses could be provided with help in identifying career options and coping strategies that will best facilitate their personal and family priorities.
- Military command leadership must recognize the extent of their responsibility for information dissemination. Commands also need additional time allocated to their schedules to better counsel and support their personnel.
- Families living off base are less likely to be aware of services. Methods of information dissemination need to target these dispersed military populations.
- The flow of information needs to be directed at spouses more specifically. They may not seek it out, especially if they are employed. Military members do not necessarily relay information to them either.
- Enlisted personnel feel they need a better way to voice their concerns. A "Council for Enlisted Personnel" could be organized to promote this.
- Annual Family Forums are not publicized well enough, and the agenda at the forums does not seem focused enough to make changes for families.

Military Organizational Culture

> *I think that when you're dealing with families in the military. . . people really appreciate other people caring about them. If it seemed like there really was a caring attitude and there were actions that reflected that, I think it would improve things 100%.*
>
> Cynthia
> Air Force Enlisted
> Dual-Military

Culture is a broad term which can refer to all the behavior, knowledge, and artifacts of a group of people. It can include every aspect of the way people live together. Spradley (1980) wrote perhaps what is the classic book on observing and documenting culture. He used a more narrow working definition of it, which focuses on the unobservable understandings that people share. Culture is "the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behavior." This is the definition we would like to apply within the context of the military. What are the assumptions, understandings, and beliefs that service members share about families? What expectations do they hold about dual-working couples?

Bowen (in Croan et al., 1990) explained that the process of identifying culture is the process of uncovering the assumptions which govern interactions among a group of people. The military is a complex organization composed of multiple cultures. It is impossible to definitively describe it. Bowen suggests that military culture has to be explored from the perspective of the lived experience of individual military members. How do individual dual-working spouses believe the military organizational culture shapes the social interactions which impact their lives?

Spouses talked about many facets of military organizational culture. The importance of shared attitudes and beliefs about how things are and should be was a subtext underlying all of the experiences. These issues could not be separated from the suggestions spouses made in other content areas included in this section. Table 18 summarizes some of the comments which most clearly reflect the beliefs and attitudes of members of the military community.

Table 18
Spouses' Concerns About Military Organizational Culture

Families and Family Needs

- Couples and families have very different needs, yet asking for "special treatment" is unfair to others. Members with families struggle because they believe benefits and services should be the same for everyone, but they have no choice but to ask for special supports.
- You cannot require special treatment and be a soldier capable of pulling your own weight. People shy away from using services such as the exceptional family member program because of this.
- People would like to be assured that the military is committed to helping them. The military provides many support programs; but, when push comes to shove, the prevailing attitude is that a family is a private choice and a private responsibility. It isn't the military's concern.
- The military expects members to make their job their first priority. Members with families would like leaders to understand that this can't always be their priority. Some say it doesn't even make sense to make it first priority, since spouses and parents commit to each other for life. The military is a short-term partner.
- Choosing to be a dual-military spouse is tantamount to agreeing not to bother the military with family needs. Dual-military spouses need support, but supervisors seem more open to the concerns of civilian spouses because they have not committed themselves to putting military service first.
- Efforts to move away from the use of the term "dependent" are appreciated because the term does not acknowledge spouses' independent goals and careers.

Rank and Status

- The distinction between officer and enlisted status preserves inequities which are not really based on concrete abilities such as work experience or education.
- The military community controls who can and can't be in relationships based on rank. Dating or marrying someone of the wrong rank is stigmatized and sometimes openly discouraged.
- Rank not only organizes work roles, but social roles, and it extends to family members. Spouses shouldn't have to wear their military partner's rank. For example, it should be possible to have a single support group, rather than separating the spouses of officers and enlisted personnel.

Table 18 (continued)
Spouses' Concerns About Military Organizational Culture

Non-traditional Families

- The military community still expects manhood to be synonymous with the role of military member and womanhood to be part of the role of spouse:
- Civilian husbands are stereotyped as "wimps," while military women are stereotyped as "butch."
- Military women are sometimes treated with less respect initially by service providers because they assume they are "dependents."
- Civilian husbands often have to explain that they are not service members "on vacation."
- It is difficult for civilian husbands and for military women to form a clear sense of their gender identity and their role in the military community.
- Civilian husbands sometimes feel like their existence is not acknowledged because there is no substructure organized to support them.
- Civilian husbands are not supported for taking on the role of full-time parent. That role is acceptable for women, but not men.
- Service policy and organization are designed for a traditional family with a wife at home:
- The paperwork necessary to claim family benefits is not designed for dual-working spouses.
- Family support programs sometimes turn away military parents (and civilian husbands) because they are designed for "dependent" spouses.
- Supervisors assume that military members have someone else taking care of family responsibilities for them.
- It is less stressful to be in the military the closer you conform to the traditional family lifestyle.
- Dual-military spouses in the same area of work can have a difficult time establishing their own professional identity. It is important to consider their work and merits independently of each other.
- It is easy to assume that dual-military spouses can relay information to each other when they work in the same unit or area. However, supervisors and coworkers should address important information directly to the recipient, rather than depending on indirect communication.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

22 Areas of Military Life Satisfaction in the 1992 Survey of Officers and Enlisted Personnel and their Spouses

1. Military Pay and Allowances
2. Military Job Security
3. Military Retirement Benefits
4. Military Promotion Opportunities
5. Leadership Practices at My Spouse's Command
6. Adequate Resources and Support for My Spouse to Do His/Her Job
7. Rights of Civilian Spouses
8. Levels of Demands on Civilian Spouses
9. Opportunities for Education/Training for Civilian Spouses
10. Availability of Job Opportunities/Employment for Civilian Spouses
11. PCS Moves
12. Family Separations
13. Time Available for Military Member to Spend with Family
14. Service's Attitude toward Families and Family Problems
15. Environment for Families
16. Marital Satisfaction
17. Relationship Between My Spouse and His/Her Children/Other Dependents
18. Dental Care
19. Medical Care
20. Military Housing
21. Ability to Be a Homeowner
22. Overall Economic Stability

Appendix B

FACTOR ANALYSIS OF 22 AREAS OF SATISFACTION WITHIN THE MILITARY WAY OF LIFE

We were interested in the interrelationships between the 22 aspects of the military way of life which spouses rated in the 1992 survey. We explored the structure of the variability underlying these satisfaction areas using factor analysis (principal-axis factoring). This analysis was helpful in understanding which satisfaction items spouses responded to similarly. Sets that received similar responses might be considered separate domains or aspects of military life. Oblimin rotation was used to better identify specific groups of variables with unique factors. This type of rotation allows the factors or domains to be correlated. It was not expected that the areas of spouses' military life satisfaction to be independent of each other.

Table A lists the factors for each of the four groups along with the factor loadings for the satisfaction areas associated with them. The factor loadings represent the amount of unique relationship each factor has with the 22 satisfaction areas. Loadings can range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating satisfaction areas that spouses rated most similarly within each factor domain. In Table A, only those areas with a loading of at least .30 were considered important to a particular factor. Those with loadings lower than this were not listed.

In this analysis we calculated a separate solution for each group. This resulted in different numbers of factors for each group. Only factors with eigenvalues over 1 were included. For the civilian spouse groups this meant factors had to account for at least 4.5% of the variance among the 22 variables. We excluded the four satisfaction areas specific to civilians in analyses for the military spouses, so factors for these two groups had to account for at least 5.5% of the variance among the remaining 18 variables.

There were some notable differences in the factors across groups. The solution for military husbands included only five, because Military Employment and Family Finances were combined. Furthermore, there was a discrepancy across the groups about whether "military pay and allowances" should fall under Military Employment (civilian husbands), Family Finances (military wives) or both (civilian wives). Finally, among civilian husbands, rather than "military pay and allowances," "civilian job opportunities" loaded on Family Finances. It is likely they perceive their families' finances more in relationship to their own employment than their military partners'.

The loadings for the variables unique to civilian spouses were interesting. For civilian husbands "civilian educational opportunities," "rights of civilian spouses," "demands on civilian spouses," and the "service' attitude toward families" all loaded on the family stress factor. As noted above, "civilian job opportunities" was included in Family Finances.

The civilian wives' solution initially included an extra factor which was based on the satisfaction areas specific to civilian spouses with the exception of "demands on civilian spouses." The "service's attitude toward families" loaded on this Civilian Experience factor as well. "Rights of civilian spouses" actually contributed with a loading above .30 on both the Civilian Experience factor and the Military Employment factor. "Demands on civilian spouses" loaded on the Family Stress factor as it does in Table A.

In evaluating how well this satisfaction data met the assumptions for factor analysis, multivariate outliers (patterns of scores quite different from the majority) appeared to be an issue for civilian wives. We identified outliers conservatively using a Mahalanobis distance significant at $p<.001$ as the criteria. There were 218 civilian women out of 17,085 with outlying response patterns. Running the analyses with and without outlying respondents there were no differences for civilian husbands or military spouses. Excluding outliers, the solution for civilian wives did change. The Civilian Experience factor combined with the Military Benefits factor and "rights of civilian spouses" no longer loaded on the Military Employment factor. Because there were so many civilian wives included in the 1992 survey, having a number of extreme responses is to be expected. Since excluding them simplified the solution, it is likely that there was a small minority of civilian women for whom an additional Civilian Experience factor was appropriate, but for the vast majority it was not.

We tried to identify ways this group might be different from the rest of the civilian wives. On all 22 of the satisfaction items, they were more willing to respond with an extreme rating of "very satisfied" or "very dissatisfied" than the rest of the women were. The mean number of total extreme ratings for the majority was 3.6 while it was 11.2 for the 218 women with outlying responses, $t_{(17083)} = -33.8$, $p<.001$. These women also tended to rate the variables focused on the civilian spouse experience more negatively than the rest of the civilian wives -- Rights: $F_{(1, 17083)}= 22.30, p<.001$; Demands: $F_{(1, 17083)}= 5.59$, $p<.02$; Education: $F_{(1, 17083)}= 6.98$, $p<.008$; Jobs: $F_{(1, 17083)}= 12.51$, $p<.001$. Mean ratings were not significantly different for "medical care," "dental care," or the "family environment," which loaded consistently on the Military Benefits factor. In addition, this group of 218 women had more negative mean satisfaction ratings for the "service's attitude toward families" $F_{(1, 17083)}= 52.74$, $p<.001$; "partner's time for

family" $F_{(1, 17083)}$= 17.58, p<.001; "military pay and allowances" $F_{(1, 17083)}$ = 25.29, p<.001; "promotion opportunities" $F_{(1, 17083)}$ = 14.69, p<.001; "overall economic stability" $F_{(1, 17083)}$ = 24.06, p<.001; and "command leadership practices" $F_{(1, 17083)}$ = 54.37, p<.001.

Because there are a number of methods that can be used to compute a factor analysis the principal-axis (PA) solution was compared with several others (maximum likelihood - ML, generalized least squares - GLS, and unweighted least squares - ULS). There were very few variations in the solutions based on the method of extraction. The only ones for military spouses were in the Family Stress Factor. Using either ML or GLS, the same set of variables loaded on this factor by excluding "military housing" for husbands and including the "family environment" for wives. Using ML or GLS "civilian job opportunities" loaded on the Family Stress factor for civilian husbands. At the same time, for GLS, "job opportunities" did not load on the Family Finance factor leaving only "home ownership" and "overall economic stability" identifying it. Finally, for Civilian wives' ML solution "military housing" had a loading of .31 on the Military Benefits factor. Since "military housing" had a loading of .29 on this factor using all of the other three extraction methods, this is not very discrepant.

Table A

FACTORS UNDERLYING THE 22 AREAS OF MILITARY LIFE SATISFACTION IN THE 1992 SURVEY

Civilian Spouses

Husbands		Wives	
Satisfaction Area	*Loading	Satisfaction Area	*Loading
1 = Family Stress		1 = Military Benefits	
Demands on Civilian Spouses	.66	Medical Care	.59
Family Separations	.57	Civilian Education Opportunities	.48
Rights of Civilian Spouses	.55	Dental Care	.48
PCS Moves	.48	Environment for Families	.46
Attitude Toward Families	.43	Attitude Toward Families	.35
Partner's Time for Family	.34	Civilian Job Opportunities	.33
Civilian Education Opportunities	.32	Rights of Civilian Spouses	.32
2 = Family Relationships		2 = Military Employment	
Partner's Parental Relationship	.66	Military Retirement Benefits	-.62
Marital Relationship	.62	Military Promotions	-.60
3 = Family Finances		Military Job Security	-.55
Overall Economic Stability	.78	Military Pay and Allowances	-.36
Ability to Own a Home	.63	3 = Family Relationships	
Civilian Job Opportunities	.32	Partner's Parental Relationship	.75
4 = Military Policies		Marital Relationship	.70
Command Leadership Practices	.81	4 = Military Policies	
Military Job Resources	.76	Military Job Resources	-.76
5 = Military Benefits		Command Leadership Practices	-.71
Medical Care	.74	5 = Family Finances	
Dental Care	.63	Overall Economic Stability	-.86
Environment for Families	.36	Ability to Own a Home	-.56
6 = Military Employment		Military Pay and Allowances	-.33
Military Retirement Benefits	-.67	6 = Family Stress	
Military Promotions	-.56	Family Separations	.80
Military Job Security	-.54	Demands on Civilian Spouses	.53
Military Pay and Allowances	-.50	Partner's Time for Family	.50
		PCS Moves	.38

Table A Continued

FACTORS UNDERLYING THE 22 AREAS OF MILITARY LIFE SATISFACTION IN THE 1992 SURVEY

**Dual-Military Spouses

Husbands		Wives	
Satisfaction Area	*Loading	Satisfaction Area	*Loading
1 = Employment/Finances		1 = Military Employment	
Overall Economic Stability	.68	Military Job Security	.73
Military Pay and Allowances	.65	Military Retirement Benefits	.72
Military Promotions	.64	Military Promotions	.64
Military Retirement Benefits	.60	2 = Family Relationships	
Military Job Security	.54	Partner's Parental Relationship	.66
Ability to own a Home	.44	Marital Relationship	.66
2 = Military Policies		Military Job Resources	.32
Command Leadership Practices	.86	3 = Family Stress	
Military Job Resources	.66	Partner's Time for Family	.65
3 = Military Benefits		Family Separations	.63
Medical Care	.81	PCS Moves	.48
Dental Care	.79	Attitude Toward Families	.41
4 = Family Relationships		4 Military Benefits	
Partner's Parental Relationship	.67	Medical Care	.70
Marital Relationship	.56	Dental Care	.69
5 = Family Stress		Environment for Families	.39
Family Separations	-.72	5 = Family Finances	
Partner's Time for Family	-.63	Overall Economic Stability	-.97
PCS Moves	-.53	Ability to own a Home	-.54
Attitude Toward Families	-.43	Military Pay and Allowances	-.42
Military Housing	-.32	6 = Military Policies	
Military Environment for Families	-.32	Command Leadership Practices	-.90
		Military Job Resources	-.35

* Only satisfaction areas with loadings of .30 or more are listed for each factor.

** The analyses for military spouses exclude the four life areas specific to the civilian spouse experience.

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This study represents the first step in exploring how three groups of dual-working couples experience changing gender and marital roles in the military. These groups are: 1) traditional couples - military husbands and civilian wives; 2) military wives with civilian husbands; and 3) dual military couples. The study includes a secondary analysis of the 1992 Department of Defense Survey of Spouses of Officers and Enlisted Personnel as well as a qualitative analysis of 141 in-depth interviews. The results describe spouse's satisfaction with the military way of life and civilian employment opportunities. Those interviewed describe the reasoning and decision processes that resulted in the choice to be in dual-working military marriages. This report also lists ways in which dual-working couples believe the Department of Defense can continue to support them.

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