



Fort Hood Region Veterans Inventory Initiative

Quarterly Report, October-December 2021

An assessment of the intentions, educational level, skills, employment desires, and suggestions to improve the Central Texas region's "Quality of Place" for Soldiers leaving military service at Fort Hood, Texas.



Quarterly Report: 1st Quarter, FY 2022

(October-December 2021)

A. BACKGROUND: Operation Economic Transformation is the Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce (GKCC) plan to identify, measure, and capitalize on new and emerging economic development opportunities present in the Central Texas region. In April 2006, the Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce (GKCC) employed TIP Strategies, Inc. to conduct a study to identify, measure, and capitalize on the new and emerging economic development opportunities present in the Central Texas region. The results of their study were published in 2007.

One key recommendation from the study was to regularly administer a survey for veterans separating from military service at Fort Hood to capture insightful information regarding their skills and desired career fields post separation for all Soldiers and Spouses. In July 2006, the following parties entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to routinely inventory the intentions, educational level, skills, and employment desires of separating Soldiers in order to improve the Fort Hood regional "Quality of Place":

- Fort Hood Soldier for Life-Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP)
- Workforce Solutions of Central Texas - Board
- Workforce Solutions of Central Texas - Service Centers
- Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce
- Heart of Texas Defense Alliance
- Texas Veterans Commission

Data is collected via a voluntary digital ten-question survey administered during either the Soldier for Life - Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP) workshop or installation final clearance¹. The purpose for the collection and analysis of this data is threefold:

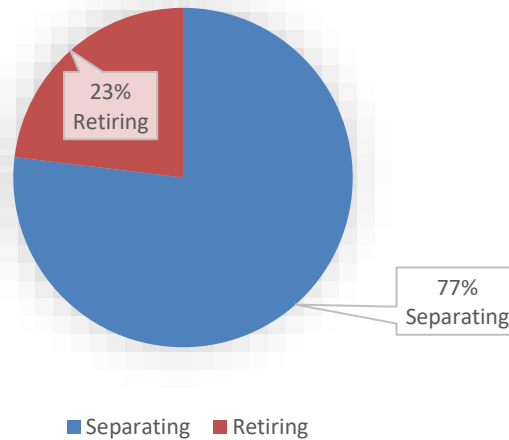
1. Develop and retain the region's skilled and motivated military Veteran workforce;
2. Foster innovation and entrepreneurship; retain existing businesses, and attract new business to the region; and
3. Align the efforts of the participating agencies to enhance options for current and future/potential residents.

B. DEMOGRAPHICS

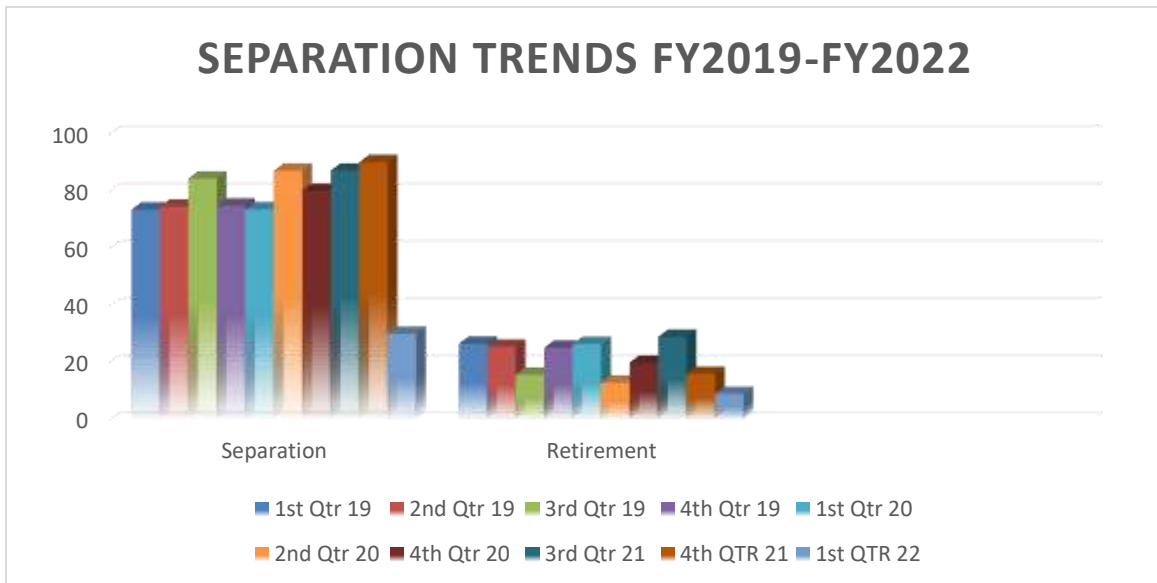
1. For the 1st Quarter FY 2022 (October-December 2021), 42 Soldiers completing their military service responded to the survey with the demographics graphed below. **This number is much lower than typical response levels. We have connected with survey administrators to emphasize the importance of the survey to our broader community. Administrators have agreed to be more diligent in the administration and collection of the surveys moving forward.**

¹ Retiring Soldiers may participate in TAP up to two years prior to their retirement date, while non-retiring Soldiers may participate up to one year in advance. Effective November 2012, all Soldiers separating from the military are required to attend the TAP seminar and will provide the opportunity for more Soldiers to participate in the optional Veterans Inventory Initiative survey.

Demographic Distribution

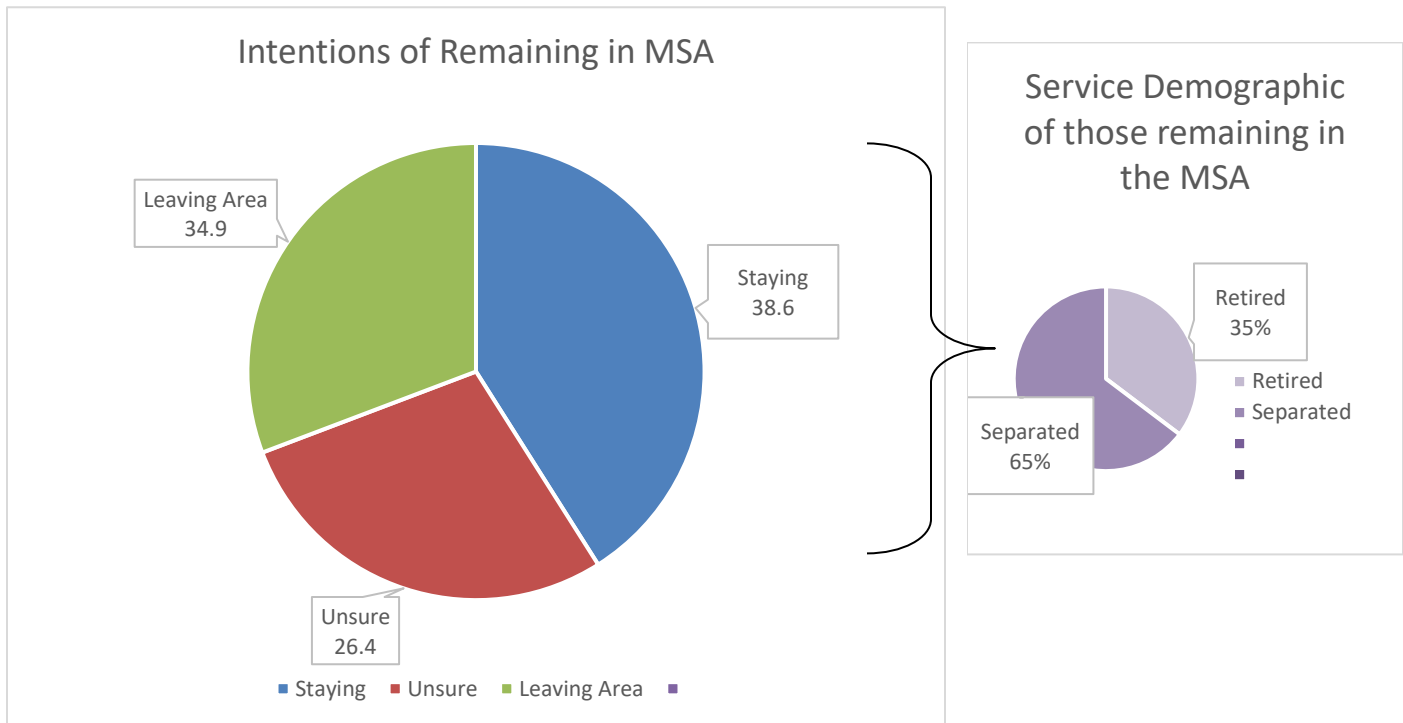


2. The Veterans Inventory Initiative has collected data on Soldiers separating from the service at Fort Hood since FY 2007 and reports have been based on responses from a total of 46,340 separating and retiring Soldiers. Using a new survey implemented in 2014, the amount of those separating from the service during the timeframe of January 2019 through September 2021 has fluctuated between 73-87%, while the amount retiring has fluctuated between 26-29%. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, data was not available for 3rd Qtr 20, 1st Qtr 21, and 2nd Qtr 21.



C. INTENTION TO STAY IN THE REGION: The respondents were surveyed regarding their intentions on remaining in the region (within 30 miles of Fort Hood – generally equating to the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)) when their service ended. For this quarter, we received a total of 106 respondents in the following categories.

1. 11 of 42 respondents representing 26.4% are listed as undecided.
2. 16 of 42 respondents representing 38.6% indicated they intended to stay in the region.
3. 12 of 42 respondents representing 34.9% indicated they would not stay in the region.



The survey also asks respondents that do not intend to remain in the MSA if a job available in the area would change their response.

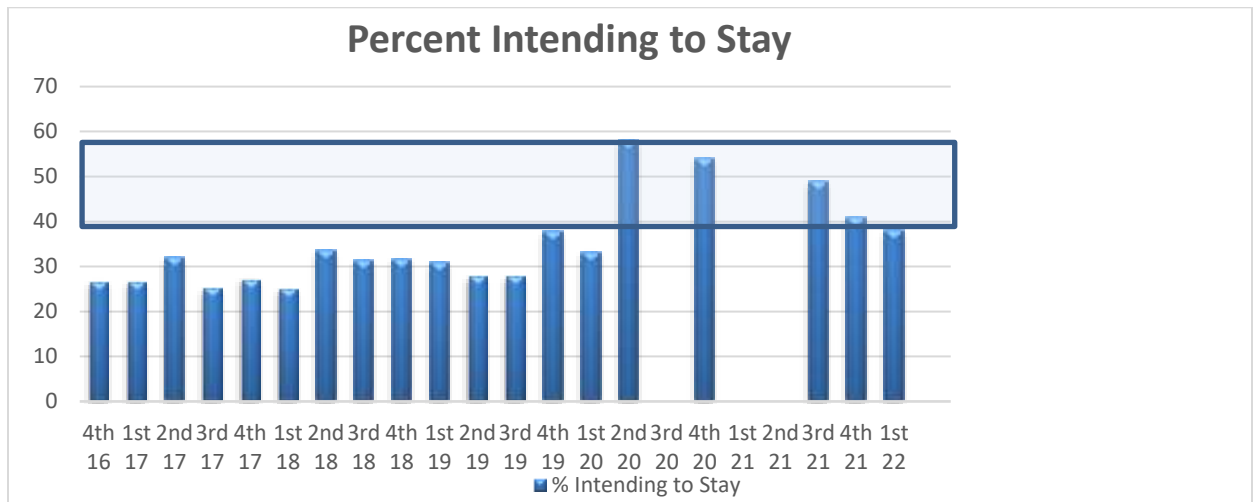
4. 11 of 42 respondents representing 26.19% indicated they would stay in the area if desirable employment were available.

5. The 39% (16 out of 42) of those staying in the MSA represent two demographics: those retiring and those separating. The second graph above represents the percentages of those separating and those retiring since each group represent two different demographics seeking employment in the MSA.

D. DEMOGRAPHICS OF THOSE INTENDING TO STAY IN THE REGION:

When analyzing data of Soldiers' intentions on remaining in the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA over the last three years, the graph below indicates that the percent of Soldiers intending to remain in the area consistently averaged between 22 and 33 percent. With the onset of

COVID we saw an increase in the percentage remaining in the MSA. 2nd QTR FY 20 rose to 58% and 4th QTR FY 20 was 55%. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, there were less surveys processed. It is also important to note that the numbers, according to the Retired Army Personnel System, show a continual increase in **retirees** remaining in the region throughout the past three years. This quarter (FY 22 1st QTR) 38% of our separating service members are deciding to call Central Texas home. Of the reason provided, there was a tie this quarter between the Central Texas quality of life and the ability for themselves/their significant others to find local employment/



2. Military retirees residing in the MSA: While the Veterans Inventory Initiative only surveys the intent of Soldiers departing the service, we are able to more accurately track the disposition of the retiring population using data from the Retired Army Personnel System (RAPS), which is based on the actual retired Soldiers' zip code. According to RAPS, the cities of Killeen, Harker Heights, Belton, Nolanville, Salado, and Temple experienced retiree growth rates larger than the MSA overall growth of 77.4% for the period June 2009 to September 2021.

	JUNE 2009	December 2021	% GROWTH 2009 – 2021
KILLEEN	8120	14,260	+75.61%
COPPERAS COVE	3,028	4,458	+47.22%
HARKER HEIGHTS	1,843	3,589	+94.74%
TEMPLE	1,150	2,400	+108.69%
KEMPNER	884	1,465	+65.72%
BELTON	826	1,889	+128.69%
LAMPASAS	356	543	+55.34%
GATESVILLE	350	647	+84.86%
NOLANVILLE	266	649	+143.98%
SALADO	206	494	+139.8%
MSA	17,029	30,394	+78.48%

3. In an economic impact study released in January of 2019, Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar reported that more than 287,000 retirees, survivors, and their families remained within traveling distance of Fort Hood. While this number usually continues to grow each quarter with 70-90% of all local retirees remaining in the region and many others moving into the region due to Quality-of-Life factors, this quarter the number was 66.67% of all retirees who completed the voluntary survey stated they planned to remain in the local area. Current estimates now show over 410,531 people are supported by Fort Hood locally and outside the MSA. Below are some key data points to provide additional insights into the growth rates locally:

a. Texas A&M-Central Texas is in the Top 100 of Online Masters Programs according to the Killeen Daily Herald. Texas A&M University-Central Texas received five awards for its online graduate programs from the U.S. News and World Report rankings for the best online programs. https://kdhnews.com/news/education/a-m-central-texas-recognized-for-masters-programs/article_16ecbf5a-37d8-11ea-ae48-8f18eb44f4aa.html, January 2019

b. Killeen ranked number #101 out of the top 125 metro areas to live based on the U.S. News and World Reports study, "125 Best Places to Live in the USA." The study compared 125 metro areas in the U.S. based on quality of life and the job markets of each area, as well as value and desire to live in the area, <https://patch.com/texas/across-tx/u-s-news-where-killeen-ranks-best-places-live>, April 2019.

c. According to Military Times, Killeen ranked 21 out of 234 medium-sized cities as "Best for Vets: Places to Live 2019. Three categories were used to compare all of the locations: 1) Veteran and military culture and services; 2) economic indicators; and 3) livability factors such as crime, health, school quality, and traffic, <https://rebootcamp.militarytimes.com/transition/news/2018/09/10/best-for-vets-places-to-live-2019/>, September 2018.

d. According to CNN Money, the Texas military town of Killeen has nearly closed the home ownership gap between black and white resident homeowners with only a 14.5% difference. This makes Killeen the lowest racial homeownership gap in the country, and the area supports integration that many of the larger cities lack, http://money.cnn.com/2018/04/17/news/economy/killeen-texas-homeownership/index.html?section=money_news_economy&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+rss%2Fmoney_news_economy+%28CNNMoney%3A+Economy+News%29, April 2018.

e. According to the Texas Association of Realtors, Bell County ranked eighth out of ten for the total number of residents coming from out of state. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, this is the fourth straight year for an increase in residents moving to Texas from out of state, http://kdhnews.com/news/local/report-bell-county-among-top-destinations-for-new-texas-residents/article_7d7b52b2-0fa9-11e8-823c-67e0a141d1d4.html, February 2018.

f. Bell County was awarded a \$3.1M grant from the state's Defense Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant (DEAAG) program for security improvements at the Robert Gray Army Airfield and the Killeen-Fort Hood Regional Airport, http://kdhnews.com/news/local/bell-county-awarded-million-for-airfield-security/article_99a030c2-e086-11e7-8eb1-f7511932809f.html, December 2017.

g. In January 2017, the Killeen unemployment rate was 4.5% compared with the Texas and national unemployment rate of 4.8%, <http://www.deptofnumbers.com/unemployment/texas/killeen/>, June 2017.

h. Killeen ranked 7 out of 10 in the Value Index according to the U.S. News and World Report Best Places to Live study. Killeen's cost of living is lower than the national average of other large Texas metro areas with median home values and median monthly rental expenses. Because of this, Killeen residents are able to stretch their dollar further than residents of other major metro areas, and have easy access to the larger more expensive areas like Dallas-Fort Worth, Austin, and Houston, <https://realestate.usnews.com/places/texas/killeen>, February 2017.

i. The Texas Transportation Commission approved the designation of 25 miles of US highway 190 in Bell County as a section of the new Interstate 14 which is part of the Interstate Highway System, and part of the new national Fort-to-Port strategic transportation system linking military facilities to deployment seaports, <http://www.gulfcoaststrategichighway.org/>, January 2017.

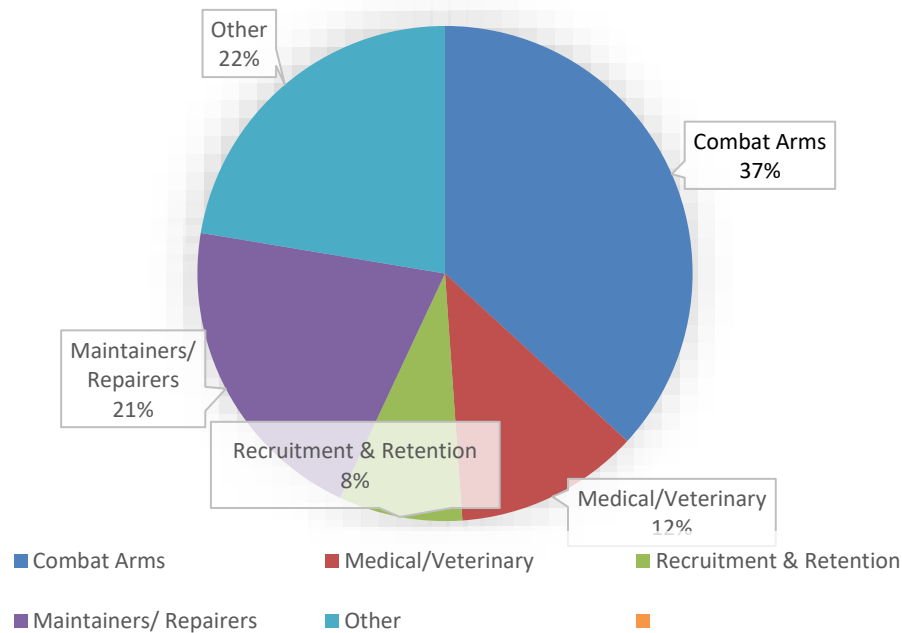
j. The American Defense Communities (ADC) designated Fort Hood as one of the eight "Great American Defense Communities" across the United States for providing continuous support to its service members and their military families, <http://www.hrmffa.org/images/Hampton-Roads-VA-GADC-2017-press-release.pdf>, January 2017.

k. Killeen was ranked number 20 overall out of 505 cities nationwide, and 4 out of 158 mid-sized cities for the most 2008 recession-recovered city based on 18 economic indicators including "inflow of college educated workers," "share of households receiving public assistance," and "home ownership rank," <https://wallethub.com/edu/most-least-recession-recovered-cities/5219/#city-size>, January 2017.

4. In addition to these indicators of economic stability for the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA, the Texas Comptroller also stated in the 2019 economic report that Fort Hood's economic impact was \$29.9 billion statewide. Comptroller Glenn Hegar stated "Fort Hood is an economic engine that helps growth in Texas." The report states that Fort Hood is responsible for 56,023 direct jobs and also indirectly responsible for 152,701 jobs throughout Texas.

E. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALITIES: Departing Soldiers can represent over 100 different Military Occupational Specialties (MOS). 42% (of the 42 responses to MOS question recorded) can be grouped into four (4) general areas: Combat Arms (21.4 %), Medical (7%), Recruitment & Retention (4.7%), and Mechanics/Equipment Repair & Support (4.7%). The other represented series of job classifications were: Construction, Communication, Transportation, Information Technology and Chemical, Biological, Radiological & Nuclear (CBRN); these are quantified within the 'Other' category.

Military Occupational Specialty



COMBAT ARMS

1. Traditionally, Combat Arms has been largest group. As we move out of large-scale military conflicts, we may see a rise in non-combat arms, or combat support, medical and administrative positions rise. Many will not be combat veterans of the Iraq/Afghanistan campaigns, which have a distinctive small-unit focus by their nature. Therefore, in addition to the skills listed below, these Soldiers will likely have a broad leadership skillset and staff planning skills (soft skills) that would be a tremendous asset to any organization.

Soldiers in combat arms comprise 37% of this quarter's separating population.

Infantry	Member or leader who individually employs small arms/heavy anti-armor weapons in support of combat operations.
Armor	Member or leader who employs main battle tanks or cavalry fighting vehicles in combat operations and performs reconnaissance and security.
Field Artillery	Operate or supervise high technology cannon artillery weapons, automated tactical data systems, intelligence activities, target processing, radar operations, artillery surveying operations, or meteorological observation.

MAINTAINERS/ REPAIRERS

1. Soldiers that work in the field of maintenance and repair comprise 21% of 1ST QTR 22 separating population.

Tracked Vehicle Mechanics	Perform or supervise unit maintenance, diagnose, and troubleshoot malfunctions on gas turbine and diesel power plants; the suspension, steering, hydraulics, auxiliary power units, and the armament/fire control systems on tracked vehicles including the M1 Abrams main battle tank and Bradley Fighting Vehicle.
Special purpose	6 different low-density fields that require a degree of technical skills that would support the repair and maintenance of Army vehicles and equipment. These skills include metal workers (welders), machinists, small arms and fire control repair, power generation, computer/detection systems, radar, avionic communication equipment, and special purpose equipment (such as HVAC and refrigeration systems).
Wheeled Vehicle Mechanics	Supervise and perform unit, direct support and general support level maintenance and recovery operations on light and heavy wheeled vehicles, their associated trailers and material handling equipment.

MEDICAL

4. Personnel in the medical field make up 11% (12/106) of the separating population.

Health Care Specialist	Provide emergency medical treatment, limited primary care, and force health protection, evacuation in a variety of operational and clinical settings from point of injury or illness through the continuum of military health care under the supervision of a physician, nurse or physician's assistant. As a field combat medic, provides emergency medical care/treatment at point of wounding on the battlefield or to battle and non-battle casualties during wartime .
Animal Care Specialist	Provides routine daily care for animals in veterinary treatment or research and development facilities, obtains medical history from owners and/or handlers and measures and records animal vital signs. Performs physical examinations to detect obvious abnormalities and reports findings to veterinarian, Positions and restrains animals for examination and treatment. Calculates doses and administers oral and topical medications as directed by the veterinarian. Maintains sanitary conditions for all components of the veterinary treatment facilities to include operating room and equipment. Assists veterinarian in surgical procedures and performs euthanasia when instructed by veterinarian. Cleans, debrides, and sutures superficial wounds. Collects, preserves, and prepares blood, urine, feces, skin scrapings, and post mortem specimens for shipment and evaluation. Performs routine diagnostic laboratory tests such as

	fecal smears, urinalysis, blood counts, and chemistries. Records laboratory test results. Takes and develops radiographs of designated animal body parts. Initiates and maintains animal health records, immunization records, animal registration files, animal bite case reports, and other administrative office files. Provides technical guidance, management, and training to junior personnel. Performs advanced emergency medical procedures on animals such as triage, tracheotomy, bum and poison management, venous cutdown, and insertion of stomach tubes.
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RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

5. Recruitment & Retention Specialists make up 8% of this Quarter's out-processing soldiers

Recruiter	Recruits qualified personnel for entry into the Army in accordance with applicable regulations, supervises recruiting and recruiting support activities.
Career Counselor	Counsels, reenlists, extends or transitions qualified Soldiers in the Active and Reserve Component to achieve the command's retention mission.

F. DESIRED POST- MILITARY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT:

Respondents are asked to indicate the type (or types) of post-military employment they desire. If married, they can indicate their spouse's employment preferences as well. In order to standardize input for ease of analysis, the survey provides 14 broad categories conforming to industry categories found in the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS). The choice "other" is offered when a specific desired category is not provided. Because this survey is voluntary and can be taken up to a year before the date of separation during the Soldier for Life-Transition Assistance Program, it may be very possible that at the time of the survey, the majority just did not know what area of employment he/she would prefer. For this 1st Quarter report, of those who did respond to this question (32 Soldiers), the top five desired categories of post-military service employment were²:

SOLDIER

1. Business. Professional Services: 12
2. Skilled Trades: 10
3. Information Technology: 10
4. Construction & Engineering 10
5. Transportation/Distribution 8

SPOUSE

1. Education/Training: 8
2. Medical/Health Care 8
3. Medical/Healthcare 4
4. Business/ Professional Services 4
5. Transportation/Distribution 3

²Employers desiring to hire Fort Hood veterans should contact Fort Hood Soldier for Life -Transition Assistance Program (formerly known as ACAP) directly through TAP Mr. Adrian B Thompson: at (254)288-0827; adrian.b.thompson.civ@army.mil; or by posting their opportunity and company website URL on the TAP website (<https://www.armytap.army.mil>).

Employers may place a job posting via "Work in Texas" (www.workintexas.com) - a statewide, internet-based job-matching system through Workforce Solutions of Central Texas (WFSCCT) (254) 200-2020. The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) staff work closely with the Central Texas Workforce Business Services including job development, direct referrals, and military skills-civilian occupations matching. tvcemployment@tvc.texas.gov (512) 463-2333

3. Employment:

a. The Labor Market & Career Information Department (LMCI) of the Texas Workforce Commission provides a monthly snapshot of the area economy within the Texas labor market using statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. This is broken down by industry profiles, and graphs the top ten groups consisting of seventeen different industries. This list can be compared to the Veteran’s Inventory Initiative list of top desired employment after the service. The following list indicates the top ten industry profiles for the Killeen-Temple MSA according to the monthly Texas Labor Market Information - <https://texaslmi.com/EconomicProfiles/MSAProfiles>.

b. For comparison, the similar Veteran’s Inventory Initiative categories are placed in parentheses. This list can be compared to the responses above for Soldiers’ top desires for employment when retiring from their service in the military. We will continue to monitor and compare these reports in the future.

linci.state.tx.us/ (December 2021)

Employment by Industry (December 2021)

Industry	Dec-21	% Monthly Change	% Yearly Change
Total Nonfarm	148,500	0.1%	3.8%
Mining, Logging and Construction	7,200	0.0%	7.5%
Manufacturing	7,700	0.0%	4.1%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	29,200	1.0%	3.2%
Information	1,000	0.0%	-9.1%
Financial Activities	6,200	-3.1%	1.6%
Professional and Business Services	13,200	0.0%	5.6%
Education and Health Services	24,100	0.0%	1.7%
Leisure and Hospitality	16,800	0.0%	16.7%
Other Services	4,600	0.0%	4.5%
Government	38,500	0.0%	0.0%

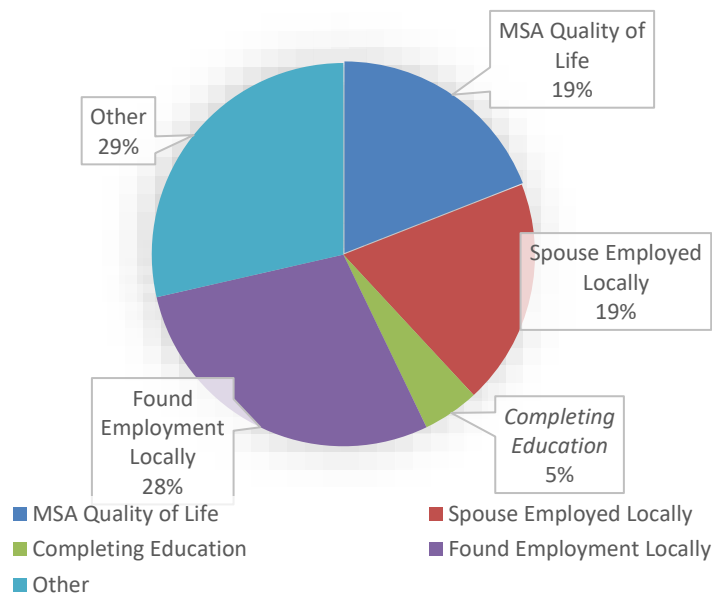
Employment by Industry (December 2021)

Mining, Logging and Construction 4.8% Manufacturing 5.2% Trade, Transportation and Utilities 19.7% Information 0.7% Financial Activities 4.2% Professional and Business Services 8.9% Education and Health Services 16.2% Leisure and Hospitality 11.3% Other Services 3.1% Government 25.9%

G. REASONS FOR REMAINING IN THE MSA:

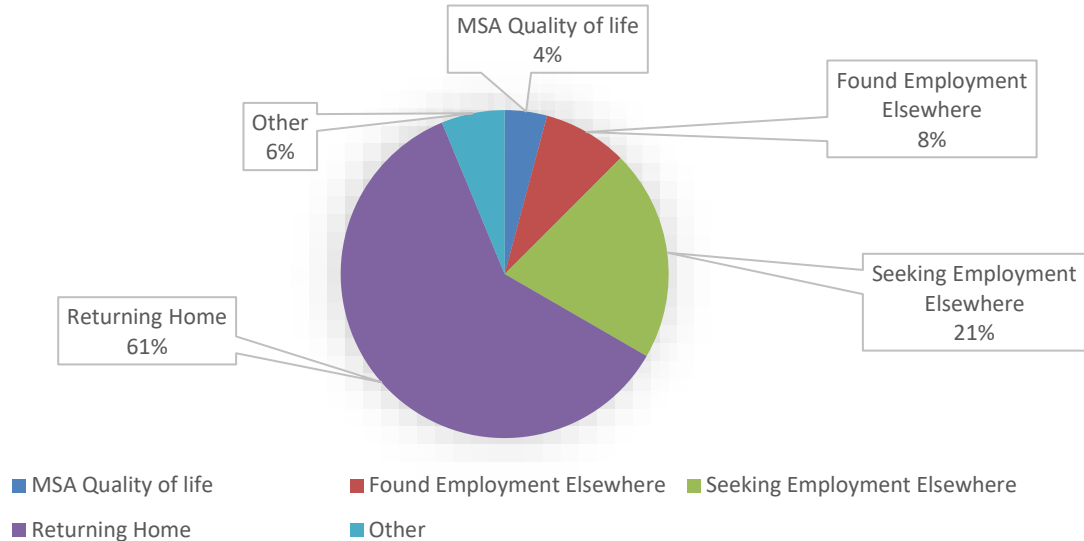
1. In 2013, the survey was revised to gain more clarity on the Quality of Life factors cited by separating Soldiers that impact their decision to remain in Central Texas or go elsewhere after their service ends. For the first time, the majority of those completing the survey that identified they were staying in the area said it was due to their spouse being employed locally. The second largest group staying was due to the Central Texas quality of life. The next largest group staying are those who are completing their education, or found employment locally. With the addition of Texas A&M-Central Texas to the MSA, the Soldiers and their spouses now have the opportunity to complete their baccalaureate or master's degree while remaining in an area with a lower cost of living compared to other areas with universities. We will continue to monitor this response for future quarters.

**Reasons for Remaining Inside the MSA
1st QTR FY 2022**



2. The graph below addresses the reasons for those service members not staying in the MSA after separation. The majority of those choosing to live outside of the MSA after separation wanted to return to their home of record, while the second largest group stated that they are seeking employment elsewhere. Returning home has been the primary reason for leaving the MSA since the inception of this survey. This quarter, the only change in the reasoning for leaving the MSA is to seek other employment rather than having necessarily obtained other employment. While returning to home of record is not something that can be improved for the area, available and desirable employment and the perception of the MSA quality of life are areas that can be improved.

Reasons for Living Outside the MSA 4th Quarter FY 2021

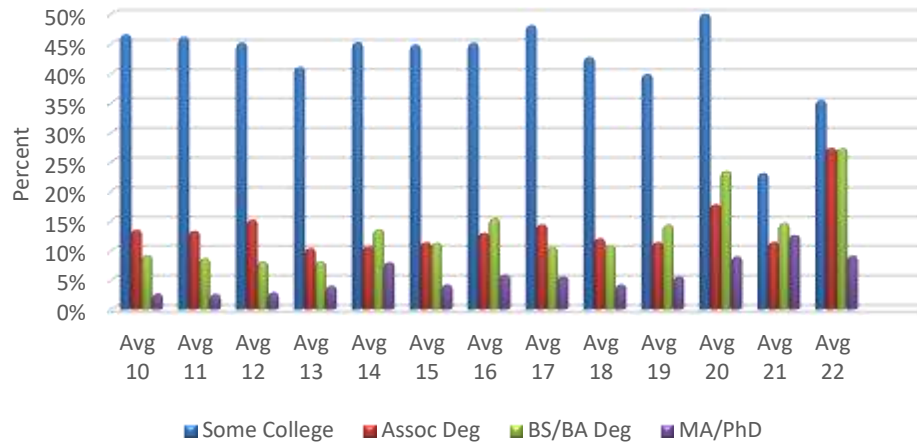


H. EDUCATION LEVEL OF THOSE REMAINING IN THE REGION: Respondents are asked to provide their highest level of educational attainment. All soldiers have a High School Diploma/GED. For this quarter, 11 of 16 (68.8%) of the respondents who intend to remain in the region have some level of post-secondary education:

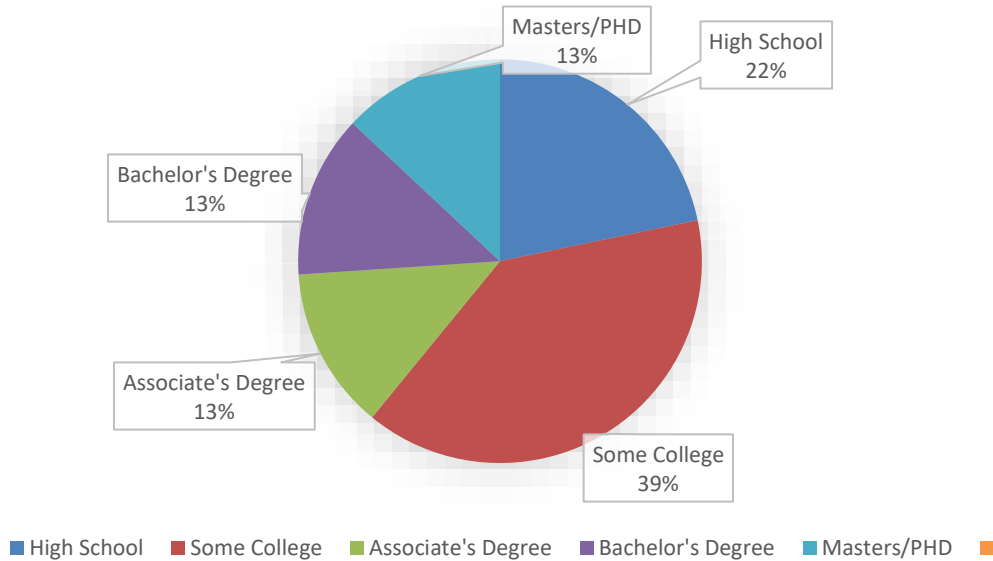
- ❖ Some College – 4 (35.36%)
- ❖ Associates Degree – 3 (27.27%)
- ❖ Bachelor’s Degree – 3 (27.27%)
- ❖ Masters/PhD Degree – 1 (9%)

1. The data from over 55,000 Soldiers separating over the last decade indicates that for those Soldiers who intend to remain in the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA (both retirement eligible and non-retirement eligible), educational attainment for those completing the survey has increased for post-secondary degrees. Due to COVID 19 pandemic, there were less surveys processed in 2020 and 2021, thus the data may not represent the most honed-in accuracy typically achieved during normal years. We will continue to monitor these results quarterly from those separating from the service. Traditionally with the availability of Texas A&M Central Texas as an area university of distinction, the numbers of those Soldiers pursuing post-secondary degrees has been higher than in the past before the opening of this area upper-level university. This data is further affirmation that those Soldiers leaving the service provide a solid foundation of education as well as real-world experience as future employees for the area.

Educational Attainment % of Those Intending to Stay in MSA



Educational Attainment for those Not Staying



2. Anecdotally, businesses indicate they want to hire veterans. Educational attainment is a key variable in that process, given the current national unemployment rate. Due to extra benefits of health care, tuition assistance, housing and food allowances while in the service, the military remains a favorable career choice. However, the standards of recruiting continue to be more stringent, so candidates applying to the military with a GED are accepted on an exception to policy basis. When taking into account that Central Texas offers a low cost of living, has several post-secondary educational institutions within the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA where Soldiers are able to complete their degrees, and the fact that a large percentage of Soldiers separating from the service desire to remain in the area, the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA is a very desirable region for potential business partners to relocate to the area. This opportunity

would also likely motivate many other Soldiers who have started their degree as indicated in the above graph to complete their education through the use of their Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits, with the potential of satisfying employment in the area after leaving the service.

3. Perceptions versus reality: As 98% percent of Fort Hood Soldiers either reside on-post or within 10 miles of the Fort Hood main gate in the communities of Central Texas, the survey choices reflect their perceptions of areas where improvements might further influence their decision to remain in the region when their military service ends. Quality of Life within the MSA is important to retaining Soldiers in the area after separating, as seen in the previous graph on page thirteen. In addition, Veterans ending their service at Fort Hood are clearly a talented and educated workforce worth retaining in the Central Texas region and their perceptions of the Quality of Life is important to be considered in future planning. While the Quality of Life is affected greatly by perception, bringing in larger industry and providing those employment opportunities is a strong way to make the Quality of Life in the MSA more desirable, helping to retain the Soldier and their family in the MSA.

4. Additional information not addressed in this quarterly report may be available for release to eligible entities. Requests for specific information should be addressed in writing to Executive Director, Heart of Texas Defense Alliance at 2916 Illinois Avenue, Killeen TX 76543.

Special thanks to Ms. Linda Angel, Workforce Solutions of Central Texas, for the design of the report cover and logo; to Mr. Jared Porritt, Workforce Solutions of Central Texas, who compiles the data for these reports; and to Mr. Mark Phillips for administering the surveys at the SFL-TAP workshops.