



# Fort Hood Region Veterans Inventory Initiative

Quarterly Report, January - March 2020

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: 2nd Quarter, FY 2020**

(January - March 2020)

***Survey responses for this quarter are lower than normal due to COVID 19 restrictions on Fort Hood's Transition Program.***

**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 clearance<sup>1</sup>. 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.

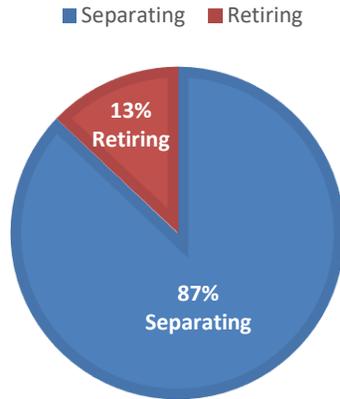
## **B. DEMOGRAPHICS**

1. For the 2nd Quarter FY 2020 (January - March 2020), 31 Soldiers completing their military service responded to the survey with the demographics graphed below.

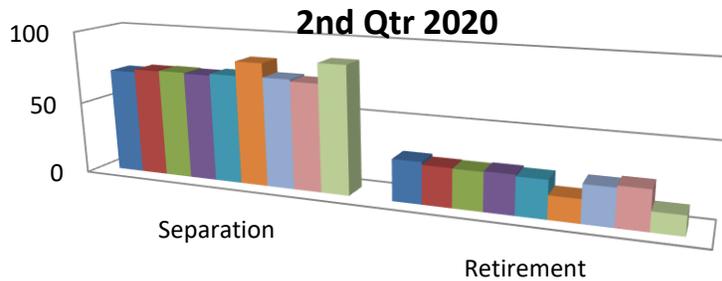
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<sup>1</sup> Retiring Soldiers may participate in TAP up to two years prior to their retirement date, while non-retiring Soldiers may participate up to one year in advance. Effective November 2012, all Soldiers separating from the military are required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

## DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION



### Percentage of Separations by Type



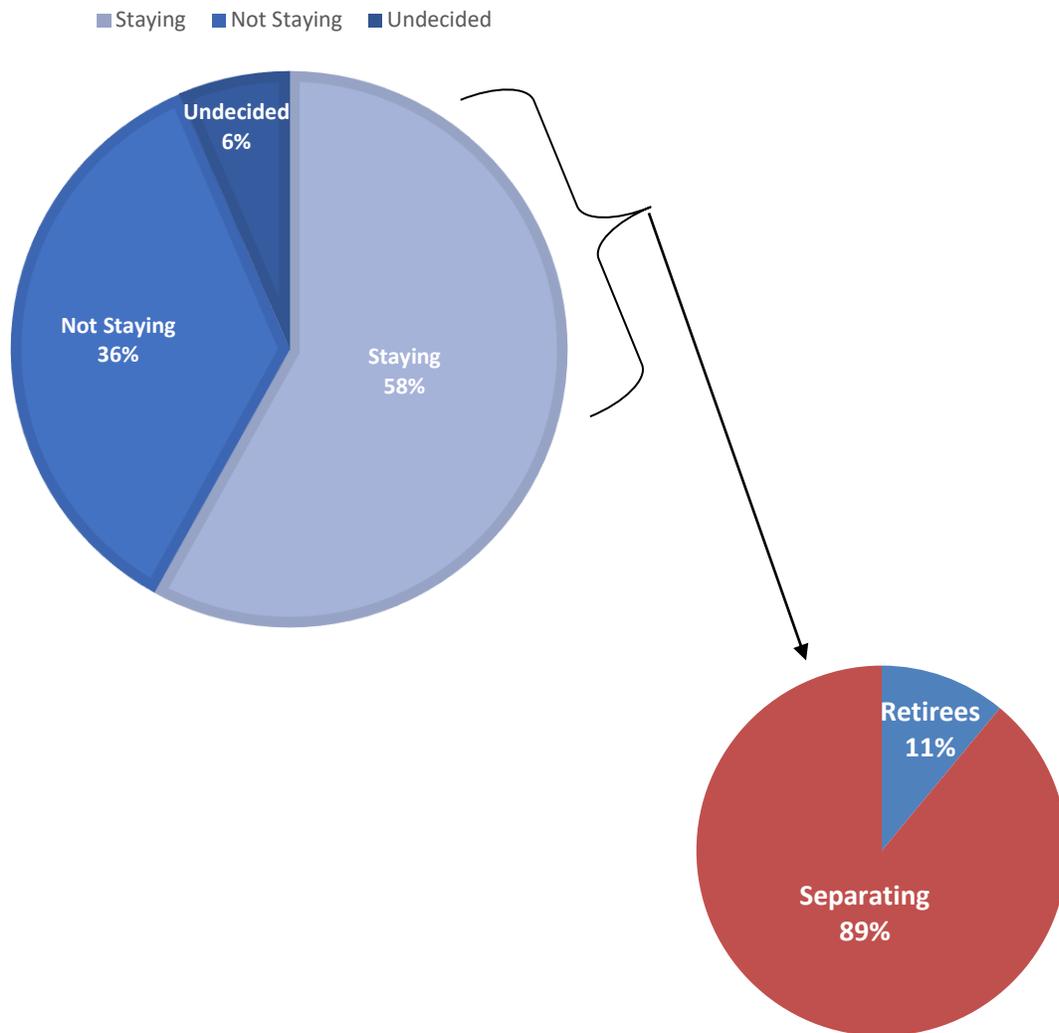
	Separation	Retirement
■ 2nd Qtr 18	71.7	28.3
■ 3rd Qtr 18	73.6	26.4
■ 4th Qtr 18	73.9	26.1
■ 1st Qtr 19	73.4	26.6
■ 2nd Qtr 19	74.5	25.5
■ 3rd Qtr 19	84.26	15.74
■ 4th Qtr 19	74.8	25.2
■ 1st Qtr 20	73.5	26.5
■ 2nd Qtr 20	87	13

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 2018 to March 2020 has fluctuated between 71-87%, while the amount retiring has fluctuated between 13-28%. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, there were less surveys processed. The data this quarter may not reflect accurate numbers due to small sample size.

**C. INTENTIONS ON STAYING 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 31 respondents in the following categories.

1. 2 of 31 respondents representing 6.45% are listed as undecided since they did not know at the time of the survey.
2. 18 of 31 respondents representing 58.07% indicated they intended to stay in the region.
3. 11 of 31 respondents representing 35.48% indicated they would not stay in the region.

### INTENTIONS TO STAY IN KTMPO MSA



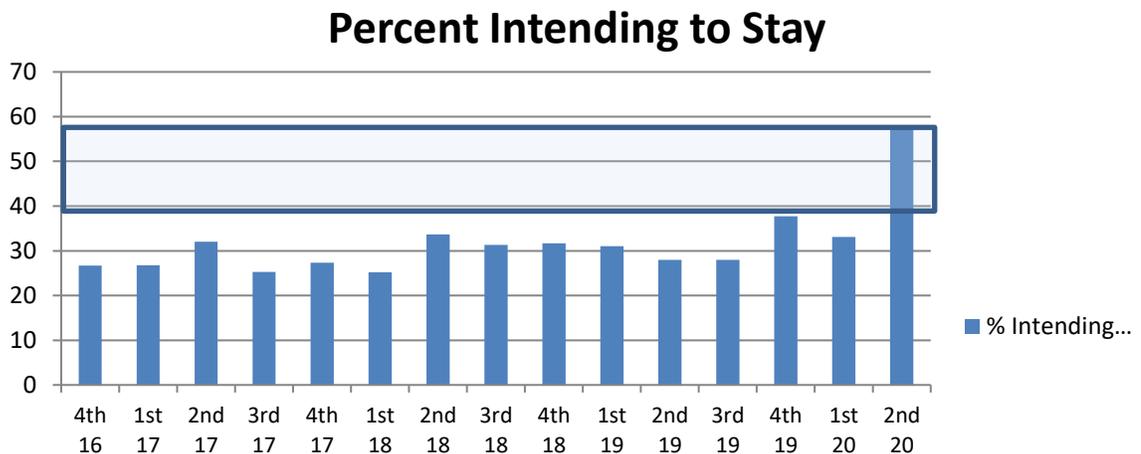
The survey also asks respondents that do not intend to remain in the MSA if a job available in the area would change their response.

4. 5 of 13 respondents representing 38.46% indicated they would stay in the area if desirable employment were available. Of the total 31 respondents, 18 did not respond to this survey question.

5. The 58% (18 of 31) of those staying in the MSA represent two demographics of retiring and separating. The second graph above represents the percentages of those separating and those retiring since each group represent two different demographics potentially searching for jobs in the local area.

**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. This quarter shows an increase from 33% to 58%. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, there were less surveys processed. The data this quarter may not reflect accurate percentages. It is also important to note that the numbers, according to the Retired Army Personnel System, shows a continual increase in retirees remaining in the region throughout the past three years and we will continue to monitor these results.



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 70.8% for the period June 2009 to March 2020.

	<b>JUNE 2009</b>	<b>March 2020</b>	<b>% GROWTH 2009 – 2020</b>
<b>KILLEEN</b>	8120	14,356	+76.7%
<b>COPPERAS COVE</b>	3,028	4,408	+45.5%
<b>HARKER HEIGHTS</b>	1,843	3,454	+87.4%
<b>TEMPLE</b>	1,150	2,114	+83.8%
<b>KEMPNER</b>	884	1,322	+49.5%
<b>BELTON</b>	826	1,562	+89.1%
<b>LAMPASAS</b>	356	491	+37.9%
<b>GATESVILLE</b>	350	567	+62.0%
<b>NOLANVILLE</b>	266	530	+99.2%
<b>SALADO</b>	206	386	+87.3%
<b>MSA</b>	17,029	29,093	+70.8%

3. In an economic impact study released in May 2016, 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 50% of all retirees who completed the voluntary survey stated they planned to remain in the local area. Current estimates now show over 386,461 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](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+%28CNMoney%3A+Economy+News%29](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+%28CNMoney%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](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](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.

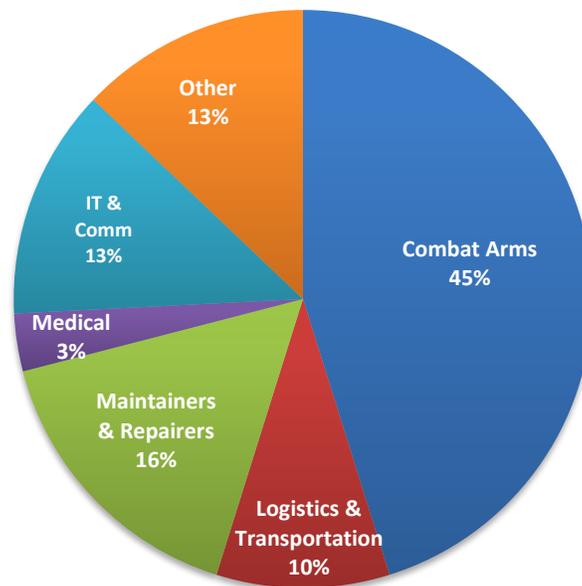
j. The American Defense Communities (ADC) designated Fort Hood as one of the eight "Great American Defense Communities" across the United States for providing continuous support to its service members and their military families, <http://www.hrmffa.org/images/Hampton-Roads-VA-GADC-2017-press-release.pdf>,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

I. According to the Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce, Wallprotex provided a study, based off of data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, on the job growth in the construction field. As of November 2016, Killeen ranked 10th nationally out of 358 cities. The city saw a growth of 12.66% compared to this time the previous year with 8,900 construction jobs. Consistent job growth in the construction field indicates more homes and buildings are being constructed, which is a sign that the local community and economy are growing, [https://killeenchamber.com/killeen\\_ranked\\_10th\\_nationally\\_in\\_construction\\_job\\_growth](https://killeenchamber.com/killeen_ranked_10th_nationally_in_construction_job_growth)

4. In addition to these indicators of economic stability for the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA, the Texas Comptroller also stated in the 2018 economic report that Fort Hood's economic impact was \$24.6 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 55,261 direct jobs and also indirectly responsible for 150,155 jobs throughout Texas.

**E. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALITIES:** Departing Soldiers can represent over 100 different Military Occupational Specialities (MOS). 100% (31 of 31 answered the question) can be grouped into five general areas: Combat Arms, Logistics/Transportation, Maintainers/Repairers, Medical, and Information Technology/Communications. The sixth area shown on the following chart, Other, is comprised of the remaining 4 Soldiers leaving the service with an MOS not covered in the five areas above.



### COMBAT ARMS

1. Traditionally, Combat Arms is the largest group and remains the largest group this quarter. Most, if not all, will 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 would likely have extensive leadership and staff planning skills (soft skills) that would be a tremendous asset to any organization.

2. Soldiers in combat arms comprise 45% (14/31) of the separating population.

<b>Infantry (5)</b>	Member or leader who individually employs small arms/heavy anti-armor weapons in support of combat operations.
<b>Engineer (3)</b>	Engaged in providing mobility, counter-mobility and survivability support to combat forces. Operates, directs and assists in the operation of various light and heavy engineer wheeled and tracked vehicles. Directs construction of shelters and assembly of military fixed bridges.
<b>Armor (3)</b>	Member or leader who employs main battle tanks or cavalry fighting vehicles in combat operations and performs reconnaissance and security.
<b>Field Artillery (0)</b>	Operate or supervise high technology cannon artillery weapons, automated tactical data systems, intelligence activities, target processing, radar operations, artillery surveying operations, or meteorological observation.
<b>Air Defense Artillery (3)</b>	Operate command/control/communications/computer information systems or the lightweight, highly mobile Avenger or medium weight Patriot Air Defense Missile systems.

### **LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORTATION**

3. Soldiers serving in the logistics and transportation fields comprise 10% (3/31) of the separating population. The top two categories are shown below.

<b>Unit Supply Specialists (2)</b>	Supervise or perform duties involving the request, receipt, storage, issue, accountability, and preservation of individual, organizational, installation, and expendable supplies and equipment.
<b>Food Service Specialists (1)</b>	Supervise or prepares, cooks and serves food in field or garrison food service operations.

### **MAINTAINERS/ REPAIRERS**

4. Soldiers that work in the field of maintenance and repair comprise 16% (5/31) of the separating population. The top four categories are shown below.

<b>Tracked Vehicle Mechanics (1)</b>	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.
<b>Special purpose (1)</b>	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, avionics communication equipment, and special purpose equipment (such as HVAC and refrigeration systems).
<b>Wheeled Vehicle Mechanics (3)</b>	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.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS

5. The information technology and communications field make up 13% (4/31) of the separating population. The top two categories are shown below.

<b>Signal Support Systems Specialist</b> (3)	Supervise, install, employ, maintain, troubleshoot and assist users with battlefield signal support systems, terminal devices, satellite communications equipment and automated telecommunications computer systems, to include local area networks, wide area networks and routers. Integrate signal systems and networks; performs unit level maintenance on authorized signal equipment and associated electronic devices; train and provide technical assistance to users of signal equipment.
<b>Information Technology Specialist</b> (1)	Supervise, install, operate and perform unit level maintenance on multi-functional/multi-user information processing systems, peripheral equipment, and associated devices. Perform analyst and information assurance functions and conducts data system studies. Perform Information Services Support Office (ISSO) duties of printing, publications, records management and Communication Security (COMSEC) custodian functions and certification authority duties in support of the Defense Message System (DMS).

## MEDICAL

6. Personnel in the medical field make up 3% (1/31) of the separating population.

<b>Health Care Specialist</b> (1)	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.
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### 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 2nd Quarter

report, of those who did respond to this question (28 Soldiers), the top five desired categories of post-military service employment were<sup>2</sup>:

1. Soldiers Separating:

**SOLDIER**

1. Medical/Health Field:	6
2. Information/Technology:	6
3. Public Safety/Criminal Justice:	5
4. Construction/Engineering:	2
5. Transportation/Logistics:	2

**SPOUSE**

1. Medical/Health Field:	7
2. Other:	4
3. Business/Professional Services	2
4. Information Technology:	2
5. Food Service:	1

The anomalies in Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) data may have been carried over to the types of post-service employment desired. Criminal Justice has always ranked as one of the top five desired career choices for post-service employment, which continues to be the case this quarter and is most likely attributed to the larger number of Soldiers responding to the survey who were separating with a Combat Arms MOS. Since October 2007, the top desired careers for spouses have usually included Business/Professional Services, Medical/Health Field. This is the first quarter Education/Teaching is not included in the top 5. The choice "other" continues to remain one of the top five choices spouses.

2. Soldiers Retiring:

a. The top categories of desired post-service employment for those retiring from military service are:

1. Management/Business:	1
2. Public Safety/Criminal Justice:	1
3. Education/Teaching:	1
4. Other:	1

b. Management/Business, and Public Safety remained in the top desired post-service employment jobs this quarter. Medical/Health did not make the top 5 this quarter it usually does, instead Education/Teaching did.

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

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<sup>2</sup>Employers desiring to hire Fort Hood veterans should contact Fort Hood Soldier for Life -Transition Assistance Program (formerly known as ACAP) directly through the TAP Director of Marketing, Mr. Robert Schumacher: at (254)288-0827; [Robert.c.schumacher.civ@mail.mil](mailto:Robert.c.schumacher.civ@mail.mil); or by posting their opportunity and company website URL on the TAP website ([www.acap.army.mil](http://www.acap.army.mil)). Mr. Schumacher can coordinate employer participation in a host of TAP transition events, as well as assist with highly specialized targeted hiring initiatives. Employers may place a job posting via "Work in Texas" ([www.workintexas.com](http://www.workintexas.com)) - a statewide, internet-based job-matching system through Workforce Solutions of Central Texas (WFSCT) (254) 200-2020. The Texas Veterans Services (TVC) staff work closely with the Central Texas Workforce Business Services including job development, direct referrals, and military skills-civilian occupations matching. Contact Adam Jones, TVC Supervisor, (254) 200-2038.

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.

#### **LMI.com (March 2020)**

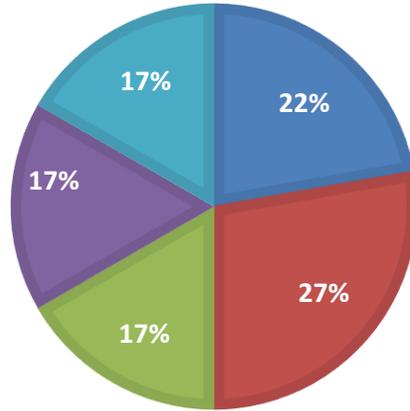
- 1) Government (Law Enforcement-Security)
- 2) Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (Transportation/Aviation)
- 3) Education and Health Services (Education-Teaching/Medical-Health)
- 4) Leisure and Hospitality (Hospitality Industry/Food Service-Culinary Arts)
- 5) Professional and Business Services (Management-Business/Admin-Office)
- 6) Manufacturing (Manufacturing)
- 7) Mining, Logging, Construction (Construction)
- 8) Financial Activities (Management-Business/Admin-Office)
- 9) Other Services (Other/Equipment Maintenance Repair)
- 10) Information (Computer-Software/Communication-Electronics)

#### **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 2ND QUARTER FY 2020

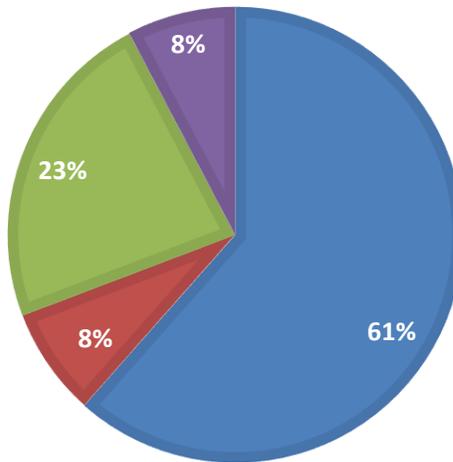
■ MSA Quality of Life      ■ Spouse Employed Locally      ■ Completing Education  
■ Found Employment Locally      ■ Other



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 mainly wanted to return to their home of record, while the second largest group stated that they found employment elsewhere. These have been the top two reasons for the past nineteen quarters. 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 OF THE MSA 2ND QUARTER FY 2020

■ Returning Home      ■ Seeking Employment Elsewhere  
■ Found Employment Elsewhere      ■ MSA Quality of Life

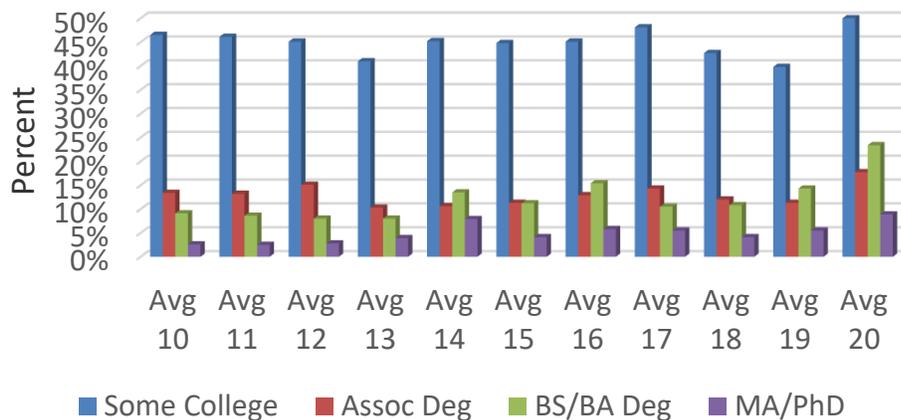


**H. EDUCATION LEVEL OF THOSE REMAINING IN THE REGION:** Respondents are asked to provide their highest level of educational attainment. All soldiers have a High School Diploma/GED. For this quarter, 9 of 18 (50%) percent of the respondents who intend to remain in the region have some level of post-secondary education:

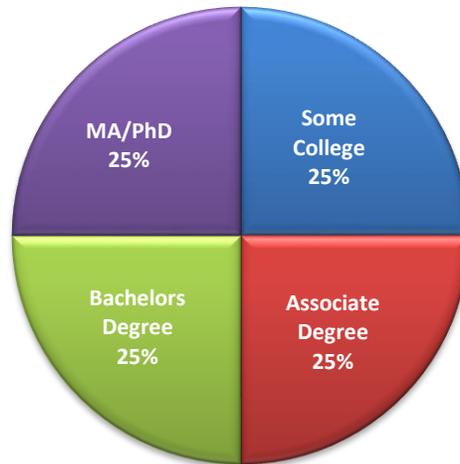
- ❖ Some College – 7 (77.78%)
- ❖ Associates Degree – 0 (0%)
- ❖ Bachelor’s Degree – 1 (11.11%)
- ❖ Masters/PhD Degree – 1 (11.11%)

1. The data from over 46,000 Soldiers separating during the last ten years 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. Due to COVID 19 pandemic, there were less surveys processed and the data may not represent an accurate report. We will continue to monitor these results in future reports of those separating from the service. Traditionally with the availability of Texas A&M Central Texas as an area upper university, the numbers of those Soldiers pursuing a higher education degree has been higher than it had been 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 large amount of highly educated potential 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 often turned away and encouraged to complete at least 15 college credits before re-applying, which guarantees a more educated group of veterans<sup>3</sup>. 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 percent of Soldiers separating from the service desire to remain in the area, the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA is becoming a very desirable region for potential business partners to relocate to the area. This opportunity may also 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 a job 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.

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<sup>3</sup> Annalyn Kurtz, Getting Into the Military is Getting Tougher, <http://money.cnn.com/2013/05/15/news/economy/military-recruiting/>, 15 May 2013.

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.

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