

DMDC Report No. 2000-003
June 2000

Analysis of Comments From The 1997 Survey Of Spouses Of Enlisted Personnel



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**ANALYSIS OF COMMENTS
FROM THE
1997 SURVEY OF SPOUSES
OF ENLISTED PERSONNEL**

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Executive Summary

Purpose

The *1997 Survey of Spouses of Junior Enlisted Personnel* was conducted to obtain information from spouses of service members on various aspects of military life. Of particular interest were employment-related issues. This project was undertaken to analyze the written responses to one of the open-ended items included in the survey. The item in question simply asked respondents for any comments or concerns they felt they were unable to express through the main body of the survey. The goal of this effort was to analyze these comments, develop categories to summarize the responses, and examine the frequency with which various issues were mentioned in light of background and demographic information supplied by respondents.

Method

Before this project began, clerical personnel entered all of the written responses into a database. A total of 2,672 individuals answered the general open-ended item. A sample of 130 such responses (5%) was drawn randomly and used to derive content categories. Two coders worked independently to accomplish this task, with differences reconciled upon completion. The resulting categories encompassed three levels of specificity: 10 very general (e.g., employment), 27 more specific (e.g., finding/keeping a job), and 94 very specific (e.g., discrimination due to frequent moves). They were applied in several additional iterations to ensure a common understanding between coders so that an acceptable level of reliability could be achieved. Overall, the final reliability was .74. However, for 28 categories the reliability statistic fell below .60. In three instances it was found that combining three of the most discrete categories resulted in acceptable levels of reliability. In all other cases where the reliability was below .60, the categories were not included in subsequent analyses. Finally, data were reported only in cases where both coders agreed on the category assigned. In those instances where the cases did not agree, the project director decided which category to use.

Results

The categories most frequently cited were:

- personal circumstances, in which respondents took the opportunity to provide details about their lives (n = 511);
- appreciation for the survey and the concern it demonstrates (n = 290);

- lack of awareness of the programs and services available to military spouses (n = 274);
- concern over the amount military members are paid (n = 269);
- childcare issues, including expense (n = 247) and availability (n = 193);
- indications that working spouses' salaries fail to cover living expenses, particularly childcare (n = 229);
- dissatisfaction with employment programs (n = 208);
- conflicts between childcare and work responsibilities (n = 187);
- concerns over continuing education (n = 178); and
- difficulties related to finding employment in the area currently assigned (n = 172), finding other than entry-level jobs (n = 164), and finding jobs that match the respondent's skills (n = 155).

In all, these categories accounted for over 50% of all codes assigned.

To further explore the data, the content frequencies were examined in light of respondent's background information to determine whether particular problems and issues were encountered more often by specific subgroups of the population. The variables included in this analysis included:

- paygrade
- race
- service
- location
- gender
- employment status
- English as a second language
- use of employment assistance programs, spouse preference programs, and military-provided daycare
- satisfaction with employment assistance
- likelihood of reenlistment
- highest level of education
- financial status
- children living at home

Among the major findings from these analyses were:

- Higher proportions of individuals stationed outside the contiguous United States (OCONUS) reported problems finding jobs and cited such issues as favoritism in hiring and local personnel being hired before spouses. At the same time, however, smaller proportions of those stationed OCONUS indicated an unawareness of programs and services.
- Higher percentages of spouses not working outside the home mentioned difficulties they had had or would have keeping a job while taking care of children and the conflicts that can arise between the spouse's job and the military member's schedule.
- Individuals who took part in employment assistance programs were more likely to cite problems with employer hiring practices and to express dissatisfaction with employment assistance efforts.
- Of those who commented on military/family life and the frequency/duration of deployments, a higher percentage said their spouses were unlikely than said there was a 50-50 chance of reenlistment or that their spouses were likely to consider another term.
- Commenters with higher levels of education disproportionately mentioned various aspects of getting and keeping a job, difficulties finding employment that uses their skills, and career sacrifices they have made as spouses of military members.
- Respondents who indicated they were having financial difficulties commented disproportionately on financial matters, as well as difficulties associated with childcare, housing, and military life in general.

Use of Findings

Information extracted from these comments can be used in conjunction with the survey data to inform efforts to assist military spouses and improve their quality of life. Two major suggestions were provided by spouses in this regard. The first was to enact or extend outreach efforts to individuals entering military life and those arriving at new duty stations. The lack of awareness of programs, particularly among spouses of very junior personnel, severely limits the effective delivery of services to the target audience. Another major area where positive change may be possible concerns expanded childcare services. The lack of affordable childcare was cited as a difficulty for spouses on many fronts as they attempt to raise families, assist in the financial maintenance of those families, and advance their own interests through continuing education.

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ANALYSIS OF COMMENTS FROM THE 1997 SURVEY OF SPOUSES OF JUNIOR ENLISTED PERSONNEL

Project Overview

The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Personnel Support, Families and Education (ODASD/PSF&E)¹ asked the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) to conduct a survey of non-military spouses of enlisted military members in paygrades E1 through E5 to identify strategies that might be successful in helping them pursue employment. The result of this effort was the *1997 Survey of Spouses of Junior Enlisted Personnel (SSJEP)*. A sample of 23,162 spouses of Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and Airmen was sent an instrument that requested family and background information and asked questions on such topics as economic and employment status and use of employment assistance programs. The final report for this project contains a detailed explication of the methodology used and the results achieved, along with breakouts of the data on key demographic variables (Bureika, Reiser, Salvucci, Maxfield, & Simmons, 1999).

The final item on the survey asked respondents for any comments or concerns they were unable to express in answering the other survey questions. The purpose of the present project was to perform a content analysis of these comments and to examine the results in conjunction with relevant background information. The insight gained through this process complements the findings obtained from the main body of the survey by suggesting areas of potential improvement to programs and services available to spouses.

The next section of the report provides an overview of the *SSJEP*, including the implementation methodology and pertinent facts about the sample. This is followed by a discussion of the steps taken to derive and apply content codes to the final open-ended item. Results are then presented for the demographics of spouses making the comments.. The report concludes with a discussion of the implications of the results obtained.

Background of the Survey

Rationale

Since the inception of the All Volunteer Force (AVF) a shift has occurred in the makeup of the Armed Forces from largely transient conscripts who serve one term and leave, to a higher percentage of career force personnel who desire to remain in the military until retirement. This, in turn, has resulted in a higher percentage of military members who are married and have children. Just in the two decades from 1973 – 1993, the percentage of married service members increased from approximately 40% to well over 50% (Department of Defense, 1998).

This demographic shift in the makeup of the active duty military resulted in a reexamination by the military of long-held attitudes about families. A recognition has developed

¹ This office was recently reorganized as Military Community and Family Policy (MCFP).

that the now hackneyed dictum, “if the Service wanted you to have a family, they would have issued you one,” was both small-minded and short-sighted. Research has created an increasing awareness of the important role families play in the reenlistment decision-making process. The support of spouses, in particular, has been demonstrated time and again to be a crucial element in the decision to remain in service beyond the first term (Griffith, Rakoff, & Helms, 1993).

Military families mirror those in civilian society in many respects. One dimension on which this is true is the increasing frequency with which both marriage partners are employed. For instance, 25 years ago, only about one quarter of wives of Army personnel were in the labor force. Two decades later, this figure had increased to three quarters of spouses in the labor market (Schumm, Bell, & Tran, 1993). This fact has led to increased attention to spouse employment issues and programs, and thus their emphasis in the *SSJEP*.

Survey Instrument

The goals of the *SSJEP* were to provide DoD with a demographic and employment profile of spouses of junior enlisted personnel and a program evaluation of employment assistance services as implemented by the Department and the individual Services (Bureika et al., 1999). Toward this end, a survey instrument was developed that addressed six major areas (see Appendix A for the instrument).

- family information, including time member spends away from home on official duties, current location, tenure at current station, number of children, childcare arrangements, and information to determine survey eligibility
- demographic information, including race/ethnicity and amount of education
- economic questions centered on respondents’ assessments of their current economic condition and benefit programs in which they participated (e.g., food stamps)
- employment information, including current status, income, type of work performed, skills used, and barriers to finding/keeping a job
- Employment Assistance Program items focusing on use of, and satisfaction with, such programs
- open-ended items designed to allow respondents to voice their opinions regarding what, if anything, DoD could do to help in spouses’ job searches, as well as any other issue that might be of concern to them

Survey Methodology

The population for this study was defined as all non-military spouses of military members in grades E1 to E5. This included individuals living within and outside the contiguous United States (CONUS and OCONUS, respectively). The sampling frame was created from a list of military members in the desired paygrades who were married to non-military persons, and included 355,629 individuals. The population was stratified by location (CONUS, other US, United Kingdom/Germany/Italy, Japan/Korea, Other), paygrade (E1-E3, E4, E5), and race (White, Black, Other), resulting in 45 strata. An additional stratum was created for those with missing information on one or more of the stratification variables. Stratum level sample sizes

were determined to meet estimation requirements. Individuals were selected with equal probabilities in a stratum, without replacement. The data were weighted to reflect the population on the stratification variables and to account for non-response. The final, weighted response rate estimate was 44.1%.

Demographics of Spouses of Junior Enlisted Personnel

Demographic information on junior enlisted members and their spouses is summarized in Table 1. Note that the data were weighted to reflect the population.

Table 1
Weighted Sample Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	Percentage of Respondents in the Category
Service of member:	
Army	28
Navy	26
Marine Corps	11
Air Force	35
Paygrade of member:	
E1-E3	13
E4	35
E5	53
Race of respondent:	
White	61
Black	15
Other	24
Education of respondent:	
No HS degree	5
GED or HS degree	28
Vocational school	8
Some college, no degree	36
2-year degree	10
4-year degree	13
Number of children:	
None	26
One	33
Two	28
Three	10
More than three	3

Note: From Bureika et al. (1999, pp. 17-32). Adapted with permission.

Other relevant survey findings reported in Bureika et al. (1999) include the fact that nearly three quarters of spouses (74%) had at least one child. The vast majority (82%) were living within the United States at the time of the survey, and only 5% were male spouses of female military members. Overall, 63% of spouses reported being employed at the time of the survey, with 62% of those employed working full-time. The largest segment (31%) were in clerical jobs, with service-related occupations (14%), childcare (9%), sales (8%), professional positions (8%), management jobs (7%), and technical positions (5%) being the other identified professions. While 52% of the spouses indicated that they were qualified for the jobs they held, 29% felt they were underqualified, and 19% said they were overqualified. Table 2 displays the percentage identifying each of the issues presented in the survey as major or minor problems in terms of finding and keeping a job.

Table 2
Barriers to Employment Reported by Junior Enlisted Spouses

Issue	Major Problem	Minor Problem
Finding job with acceptable pay	41%	34%
Finding job relevant to goals	31%	30%
Work-family conflicts	23%	28%
Lack of skills	17%	28%
Transportation	13%	19%
Employer reluctance to hire military spouses	13%	19%
Commuting time	10%	24%
Overqualification for available jobs	10%	20%
Opposition of military member to spouse working	2%	8%

Note: From Bureika et al. (1999, pp. 94-112). Adapted with permission.

Finally, only 10% of spouses indicated that they had participated in an Employment Assistance Program. In fact, 60% were unable to state whether such programs existed at the location where they were stationed.

Content Coding

Comment Response Rates

Before this study began, clerical personnel reviewed the entire set of completed surveys and typed all responses to the open-ended items. Responses were typed verbatim, and thus even include instances where the survey participant wrote “no comment,” or “N/A.” In all, 2,672 (32.3%) cases had some written response to item 60, the final open-ended question.

Developing Comment Coding Categories

As a first step in developing the content codes, the file of typed responses was formatted and new, sequential identification numbers assigned. Existing case identification numbers were retained; the sequential numbers simplified the data entry process described below.

Content codes were initially derived based on a random sample of 130 comments, or approximately 5% of the sample. These codes were developed by two individuals working independently. The resulting categories were then compared, and differences resolved so as to afford the most comprehensive coverage of the domains found. The codes were derived so as to encompass three levels of specificity, as demonstrated in Table 3 below.

Table 3
Examples of Coding Categories by Level of Specificity

Very General	More Specific	Very Specific
01 Employment	01 Finding/Keeping Job	01 Conflicts w/childcare responsibilities
	02 Employer Hiring Practices	16 Hiring discrimination against military spouses due to relocation
02 Finances	04 Spouse salary/benefits	23 Does not cover living expenses/childcare
	05 Member salary/benefits	26 Inadequate/need to increase

The most general codes signified a broad area of comments. There were ten such categories. Within each of these, the second-order categorization provided greater specificity while still maintaining a general flavor. There were 27 categories of this type. Table 4 lists the categories of comments. The final level of codes indicated specific areas of concern. There were 94 such codes, including “other” categories to accommodate comments that clearly addressed the second-order concern but could not be more precisely classified.² This three-level coding scheme was helpful because it served as a guide to coders during the assignment process (first two levels serve as a guide to the specific codes) and provided a way to collapse categories at a later time should reliability at the most discrete level fail to achieve acceptable levels. The codes, their definitions, and examples of each are presented as part of the instructions to coders in Appendix B.

² Note that when assigning numbers to the categories, skips were included to account for the possibility that additional categories would have to be added as the coding process continued. Thus, the codes do not run sequentially.

Table 4
Very General and More Specific Coding Categories

Very General Categories	More Specific Categories
Employment	Finding/keeping a job Employer hiring practices Types available
Finances	Spouse salary/benefits Member salary/benefits Household salary/benefits
Programs and Services	General Employment Childcare Health care Education and training Outreach and information
Housing	Location Availability Adequacy Expense
Military/Family Life	General Opportunities provided Struggles and hardships Importance of family/serving country Treatment
Deployments	Amount Forewarning
Other	Unique responses Personal circumstances Continuations or restatements Not codeable
Survey-Related	Comments/questions
Missing	Missing data

Instructions for Coders

Instructions for coders included a brief description of the project, an outline of steps to be taken before beginning coding (e.g., review all codes, open and review data-entry program), and the procedures for assigning codes. Coders were told to assign as many codes as they felt were necessary to encompass the entire scope of the respondent's written message. They were instructed to write the codes in the margins of the hard copy of the comments, and for those

about which they were unsure, to flag them and ask the advice of the project director. Details were also provided about entering the codes into the database, with the admonition to save work frequently to avoid losing data. Finally, a detailed listing of the codes was provided along with examples/definitions for each and actual respondent quotations.

Testing Comment Coding Categories

Once the draft codes were reconciled and the instructions for coders developed, the codes were applied in two test iterations to samples of 130 randomly drawn responses. Additional refinements of the categories were carried out as part of these tests, and discussions were held with project staff in an effort to ensure a common understanding of the categories and their application. Reliability was examined using a measure developed by Dice to take into account the fact that the relative rarity of any single content code (and the resulting high number of joint occurrences of coding it correctly as “not that category”) can inflate the agreement measure (see Fleiss, 1981). Dice’s technique involves calculating the proportion of specific agreement that omits the category of agreement that the code is not present. The precise formula for inter-coder agreement is two times the proportion of cases where there is agreement on the presence of the category divided by that same number plus the proportion of the cases where there is disagreement about the presence of the category. The formula for the individual agreement coefficient is as follows:³

$$\frac{2 * (\text{number of agreements})}{(2 * \text{number of agreements}) + (\text{number of disagreements})}$$

The summary agreement coefficient is derived by weighting the individual agreement coefficients by the frequencies of their respective categories, summing them, and taking the mean.

The application of this procedure to the second set of 130 cases coded by the judges resulted in a .57 reliability level. (When this statistic was calculated on the second tier of codes, the agreement level was .65.) Discussions were held in an attempt to further clarify the category meanings. An additional 600 cases were then coded to provide a more robust indicator of inter-coder agreement. The reliability at this point was .60. The data were then examined to determine the areas of greatest disagreement. Several were identified, including:

- There was apparent confusion regarding the application of codes 26 (member income insufficient) and 30 (household income insufficient). It was agreed that the former should be assigned when it was specifically mentioned that the military (or a given branch) does not pay their members enough, while the latter is to be reserved for more general comments regarding not being able to make ends meet.

³ Note that in Tables 5-7, number of agreements corresponds to the “matches” column, while number of disagreements is shown in the “diffs” column.

- There were differences in the manner in which codes 01 (conflicts with childcare responsibilities) and 03 (conflicts with military member schedule) were being applied. This was resolved by agreeing that that code 01 should be specifically reserved for instances in which the respondent indicated that he/she was not working or was having trouble working because of parental responsibilities. Most often this applied in instances where respondents stated that they felt childcare was their number one priority. This contrasts with code 03, which applied when the comment specifically referred to the spouse’s schedule (e.g., long and/or unpredictable hours) and difficulties this caused in finding/keeping a job—whether or not this related to childcare duties.
- A final area of confusion concerned codes 91 (miscellaneous unique responses), 93 (miscellaneous personal circumstances), and 98 (miscellaneous non-codeable responses). This was addressed by reinforcing the meaning of each:
 - 91 was intended for instances when there was a meaningful response not covered by any of the other categories
 - 93 was meant to address comments that were, in whole or in part, explications of the respondents’ personal circumstances
 - 98 was intended for nonsensical comments

Comment Coding

After resolving these differences in understanding about the codes, the cases where they had been applied were reviewed and adjusted as necessary. In addition, another 900 cases were coded to provide a more robust reliability check. At this point, the reliability was .73. With assurances that the adjustments were successful in bringing about a closer alignment between the coders, the task was completed. Both coders coded each of the remaining cases.

Results

Coding Reliability and Frequency

Table 5 presents the final content codes sorted by final reliability and use count. The categories run from highest to lowest reliability; in the cases of ties, the category with the largest number of citations is shown first. The reliability after all cases were coded was .74. Combinations of some Tier 3 categories with low reliability improved overall reliability to .75. (See discussion on page 15.) As seen at the bottom of Table 5, the areas with the largest divergence between coders centered largely on miscellaneous and “other” categories. Table 6 shows this same information sorted by content code. Table 7 lists the content codes by the frequency with which they were cited. In all, the top 16 categories accounted for over half of the codes assigned.

Table 5
Content Categories Sorted by Reliability

More Specific category	Very Specific category	Content	Reliab	Count	Matches	Diff
6	31	Increase household benefits if living off base	1.00	8	4	0
19	83	Other comment re importance of serving	1.00	2	1	0
	107	No comment	0.99	419	207	5
25	95	Continuation of item 59	0.95	131	62	7
2	16	Discrimination against spouses due to moves	0.94	87	41	5
2	13	Problems with spouse preference program	0.92	107	49	9
15	69	Poor quality housing	0.90	40	18	4
18	79	Anxieties over drawdown	0.89	9	4	1
7	38	Satisfied with programs/services	0.88	16	7	2
8	41	Satisfaction with employment programs	0.88	41	18	5
2	12	Unaware of spouse preference program	0.86	14	6	2
4	23	Spouse salary doesn't cover living expenses	0.86	229	99	31
11	59	Limited ed opportunities	0.86	70	30	10
14	68	Housing limited/unavailable	0.86	58	25	8
27	102	Reasons for delay in responding	0.86	56	24	8
1	5	Excessive commute to work	0.85	101	43	15
8	43	Dissatisfaction with employment programs	0.85	208	88	32
12	62	Unaware of services	0.85	274	117	40
15	70	Housing too expensive	0.85	26	11	4
12	63	Request for information	0.84	237	99	39
27	101	Skepticism over survey usefulness	0.84	62	26	10
9	49	Childcare too expensive	0.83	247	103	41
10	57	Other comments re health care	0.83	70	29	12
9	50	Childcare unavailable	0.82	193	79	35
27	103	Appreciate survey	0.82	290	119	52
5	26	Member salary inadequate	0.81	269	109	51
9	51	Inadequate hours of childcare operations	0.81	37	15	7
11	58	Need education support	0.81	178	72	34
2	17	Locals hired before spouses	0.80	120	48	24
17	76	Military life provides positive opportunities	0.80	5	2	1
1	2	Difficulty finding job due to moves	0.78	131	51	29
1	7	No problem finding job	0.78	87	34	19
12	64	Need support group for spouses	0.78	18	7	4
3	19	Only entry level jobs	0.77	164	63	38
3	20	Jobs don't match skills	0.76	155	59	37
10	55	Poor quality health care—dependents	0.76	42	16	10
27	105	Survey doesn't apply to respondent	0.76	74	28	18
18	80	Excessive workload for member	0.75	24	9	6
27	100	Survey feedback	0.75	146	55	36
27	104	Clarifications of response to unrelated item	0.75	93	35	23
1	3	Difficulty with job due to member schedule	0.74	124	46	32
2	15	General discrimination against spouses	0.74	100	37	26
6	33	Need to increase COLA	0.73	33	12	9
20	84	Unfair treatment of members	0.73	22	8	6
21	87	Deployments too long	0.72	100	36	28
1	1	Job conflicts with childcare	0.71	187	66	55
13	67	Housing too far from base	0.71	14	5	4
11	60	Other comments re education	0.69	61	21	19
1	6	Difficult to find job on base	0.68	53	18	17
18	81	Sacrifices made to career	0.68	91	31	29

Table 5 (continued)
Content Categories Sorted by Reliability

More Specific category	Very Specific category	Content	Reliab	Count	Matches	Diffs
10	54	Poor quality health care—member	0.67	6	2	2
21	90	Other comment re deployment	0.67	18	6	6
25	96	Answer stated above	0.67	3	1	1
24	93	Miscellaneous personal circumstances	0.66	511	169	173
1	4	Difficult finding job at current location	0.65	172	56	60
1	8	Not looking for job	0.65	37	12	13
1	9	Need more jobs for spouses	0.65	34	11	12
2	11	Difficulty finding job due to favoritism	0.65	139	45	49
9	52	Other comments re childcare	0.64	94	30	34
20	85	Unfair treatment of spouses	0.62	55	17	21
3	21	Other comments re jobs available	0.61	23	7	9
2	14	Supportive of spouse preference	0.60	10	3	4
8	46	Need job market data	0.60	10	3	4
6	30	Inadequate household salary/benefits	0.58	135	39	57
7	36	Dissatisfaction with programs in general	0.58	52	15	22
23	91	Miscellaneous unique responses	0.58	182	53	76
8	47	Other comments re employment services	0.57	53	15	23
6	32	Need to continue benefits when member deployed	0.56	18	5	8
6	34	Other comments re household salary	0.56	36	10	16
7	37	Programs/services inaccessible	0.56	25	7	11
2	18	Other comments re hiring practices	0.53	83	22	39
8	44	Need to improve job listings	0.53	34	9	16
15	71	Other comments re housing	0.50	24	6	12
16	73	Dissatisfied with military life	0.50	109	27	55
10	56	Health care unavailable	0.48	21	5	11
27	106	Other survey-related comments	0.48	42	10	22
1	10	Other comment re finding jobs	0.46	87	20	47
	89	Insufficient notice for deployments	0.40	5	1	3
26	98	Miscellaneous non-codeable responses	0.40	80	16	48
	108	Other comments re struggle/hardship	0.40	5	1	3
4	24	Other comments re spouse salary/benefit	0.38	16	3	10
18	78	Stress due to military life	0.37	87	16	55
16	74	Other comment re military life	0.33	6	1	4
7	39	Other comments re services	0.27	22	3	16
20	86	Other comments re treatment	0.25	8	1	6
26	99	Ineligible to participate	0.20	10	1	8
19	82	Importance of mission	0.07	61	2	57
5	27	Increase leave benefits	0.00	2	0	2
5	28	Other comments re member salary	0.00	7	0	7
8	42	Neutral response re employment services	0.00	0	0	0
8	45	Need more diverse opportunities re employment services	0.00	0	0	0
12	65	Other comments re outreach	0.00	5	0	5
16	72	Satisfied with military life	0.00	5	0	5
17	77	Other comments re opportunities provided	0.00	0	0	0
TOTAL				7,656	2,842	1,972

Note. Column one displays the higher order category number (1-27). Column two provides the most discrete category number. Column three provides a category description. Column four presents the reliability calculated as described earlier. “Count” is the sum of the times the category was assigned by either coder. “Matches” is the number of times the category was assigned to a case by both raters. “Diffs” equals the number of times the category was assigned by one *or* the other rater but not both.

Table 6
Content Categories Sorted by Content Code

More Specific category	Very Specific category	Content	Reliab	Count	Matches	Diff
1	1	Job conflicts with childcare	0.71	187	66	55
1	2	Difficulty finding job due to moves	0.78	131	51	29
1	3	Difficulty with job due to member schedule	0.74	124	46	32
1	4	Difficult finding job at current location	0.65	172	56	60
1	5	Excessive commute to work	0.85	101	43	15
1	6	Difficult to find job on base	0.68	53	18	17
1	7	No problem finding job	0.78	87	34	19
1	8	Not looking for job	0.65	37	12	13
1	9	Need more jobs for spouses	0.65	34	11	12
1	10	Other comment re finding jobs	0.46	87	20	47
2	11	Difficulty finding job due to favoritism	0.65	139	45	49
2	12	Unaware of spouse preference program	0.86	14	6	2
2	13	Problems with spouse preference program	0.92	107	49	9
2	14	Supportive of spouse preference	0.60	10	3	4
2	15	General discrimination against spouses	0.74	100	37	26
2	16	Discrimination against spouses due to moves	0.94	87	41	5
2	17	Locals hired before spouses	0.80	120	48	24
2	18	Other comments re hiring practices	0.53	83	22	39
3	19	Only entry level jobs	0.77	164	63	38
3	20	Jobs don't match skills	0.76	155	59	37
3	21	Other comments re jobs available	0.61	23	7	9
4	23	Spouse salary doesn't cover living expenses	0.86	229	99	31
4	24	Other comments re spouse salary/benefit	0.38	16	3	10
5	26	Member salary inadequate	0.81	269	109	51
5	27	Increase leave benefits	0.00	2	0	2
5	28	Other comments re member salary	0.00	7	0	7
6	30	Inadequate household salary/benefits	0.58	135	39	57
6	31	Increase household benefits if living off base	1.00	8	4	0
6	32	Need to continue benefits when member deployed	0.56	18	5	8
6	33	Need to increase COLA	0.73	33	12	9
6	34	Other comments re household salary	0.56	36	10	16
7	36	Dissatisfaction with programs in general	0.58	52	15	22
7	37	Programs/services inaccessible	0.56	25	7	11
7	38	Satisfied with programs/services	0.88	16	7	2
7	39	Other comments re services	0.27	22	3	16
8	41	Satisfaction with employment programs	0.88	41	18	5
8	42	Neutral response re employment services	0.00	0	0	0
8	43	Dissatisfaction with employment programs	0.85	208	88	32
8	44	Need to improve job listings	0.53	34	9	16
8	45	Need more diverse opportunities re employment services	0.00	0	0	0
8	46	Need job market data	0.60	10	3	4
8	47	Other comments re employment services	0.57	53	15	23
9	49	Childcare too expensive	0.83	247	103	41
9	50	Childcare unavailable	0.82	193	79	35
9	51	Inadequate hours of childcare operations	0.81	37	15	7
9	52	Other comments re childcare	0.64	94	30	34
10	54	Poor quality health care—member	0.67	6	2	2
10	55	Poor quality health care—dependents	0.76	42	16	10
10	56	Health care unavailable	0.48	21	5	11
10	57	Other comments re health	0.83	70	29	12

Table 6 (continued)
Content Categories Sorted by Content Code

More Specific category	Very Specific category	Content	Reliab	Count	Matches	Diff
11	58	Need Education Support	0.81	178	72	34
11	59	Limited ed opportunities	0.86	70	30	10
11	60	Other comments re education	0.69	61	21	19
12	62	Unaware of services	0.85	274	117	40
12	63	Request for information	0.84	237	99	39
12	64	Need support group for spouses	0.78	18	7	4
12	65	Other comments re outreach	0.00	5	0	5
13	67	Housing too far from base	0.71	14	5	4
14	68	Housing limited/unavailable	0.86	58	25	8
15	69	Poor quality housing	0.90	40	18	4
15	70	Housing too expensive	0.85	26	11	4
15	71	Other comments re housing	0.50	24	6	12
16	72	Satisfied with military life	0.00	5	0	5
16	73	Dissatisfied with military life	0.50	109	27	55
16	74	Other comment re military life	0.33	6	1	4
17	76	Military life provides positive opportunities	0.80	5	2	1
17	77	Other comments re opportunities provided	0.00	0	0	0
18	78	Stress due to military life	0.37	87	16	55
18	79	Anxieties over drawdown	0.89	9	4	1
18	80	Excessive workload for member	0.75	24	9	6
18	81	Sacrifices made to career	0.68	91	31	29
19	82	Importance of mission	0.07	61	2	57
19	83	Other comment re importance of serving	1.00	2	1	0
20	84	Unfair treatment of members	0.73	22	8	6
20	85	Unfair treatment of spouses	0.62	55	17	21
20	86	Other comments re treatment	0.25	8	1	6
21	87	Deployments too long	0.72	100	36	28
	89	Insufficient notice for deployments	0.40	5	1	3
21	90	Other comment re deployment	0.67	18	6	6
23	91	Miscellaneous unique responses	0.58	182	53	76
24	93	Miscellaneous personal circumstances	0.66	511	169	173
25	95	Continuation of item 59	0.95	131	62	7
25	96	Answer stated above	0.67	3	1	1
26	98	Miscellaneous non-codeable responses	0.40	80	16	48
26	99	Ineligible to participate	0.20	10	1	8
27	100	Survey feedback	0.75	146	55	36
27	101	Skepticism over survey usefulness	0.84	62	26	10
27	102	Reasons for delay in responding	0.86	56	24	8
27	103	Appreciate survey	0.82	290	119	52
27	104	Clarifications of response to unrelated item	0.75	93	35	23
27	105	Survey doesn't apply to respondent	0.76	74	28	18
27	106	Other survey-related comments	0.48	42	10	22
	107	No comment	0.99	419	207	5
	108	Other comments re struggle/hardship	0.40	5	1	3
TOTAL				7,656	2,842	1,972

Note. Column one displays the higher order category number (1-27). Column two provides the most discrete category number. Column three provides a category description. Column four presents the reliability calculated as described earlier. "Count" is the sum of the times the category was assigned by either coder. "Matches" is the number of times the category was assigned to a case by both raters. "Diffs" equals the number of times the category was assigned by one *or* the other rater but not both.

Table 7
Content Categories Sorted by Frequency

More Specific category	Very Specific category	Content	Reliab	Count	Matches	Diff
24	93	Miscellaneous personal circumstances	0.66	511	169	173
	107	No comment	0.99	419	207	5
27	103	Appreciate survey	0.82	290	119	52
12	62	Unaware of services	0.85	274	117	40
5	26	Member salary inadequate	0.81	269	109	51
9	49	Childcare too expensive	0.83	247	103	41
12	63	Request for information	0.84	237	99	39
4	23	Spouse salary doesn't cover living expenses	0.86	229	99	31
8	43	Dissatisfaction with employment programs	0.85	208	88	32
9	50	Childcare unavailable	0.82	193	79	35
1	1	Job conflicts with childcare	0.71	187	66	55
23	91	Miscellaneous unique responses	0.58	182	53	76
11	58	Need education support	0.81	178	72	34
1	4	Difficult finding job at current location	0.65	172	56	60
3	19	Only entry level jobs	0.77	164	63	38
3	20	Jobs don't match skills	0.76	155	59	37
27	100	Survey feedback	0.75	146	55	36
2	11	Difficulty finding job due to favoritism	0.65	139	45	49
6	30	Inadequate household salary/benefits	0.58	135	39	57
25	95	Continuation of item 59	0.95	131	62	7
1	2	Difficulty finding job due to moves	0.78	131	51	29
1	3	Difficulty with job due to member schedule	0.74	124	46	32
2	17	Locals hired before spouses	0.80	120	48	24
16	73	Dissatisfied with military life	0.50	109	27	55
2	13	Problems with spouse preference program	0.92	107	49	9
1	5	Excessive commute to work	0.85	101	43	15
2	15	General discrimination against spouses	0.74	100	37	26
21	87	Deployments too long	0.72	100	36	28
9	52	Other comments re childcare	0.64	94	30	34
27	104	Clarifications of response to unrelated item	0.75	93	35	23
18	81	Sacrifices made to career	0.68	91	31	29
2	16	Discrimination against spouses due to moves	0.94	87	41	5
1	7	No problem finding job	0.78	87	34	19
1	10	Other comment re finding jobs	0.46	87	20	47
18	78	Stress due to military life	0.37	87	16	55
2	18	Other comments re hiring practices	0.53	83	22	39
26	98	Miscellaneous non-codeable responses	0.40	80	16	48
27	105	Survey doesn't apply to respondent	0.76	74	28	18
11	59	Limited ed opportunities	0.86	70	30	10
10	57	Other comments re health care	0.83	70	29	12
27	101	Skepticism over survey usefulness	0.84	62	26	10
11	60	Other comments re education	0.69	61	21	19
19	82	Importance of mission	0.07	61	2	57
14	68	Housing limited/unavailable	0.86	58	25	8
27	102	Reasons for delay in responding	0.86	56	24	8
20	85	Unfair treatment of spouses	0.62	55	17	21
1	6	Difficult to find job on base	0.68	53	18	17
8	47	Other comments re employment services	0.57	53	15	23
7	36	Dissatisfaction with programs in general	0.58	52	15	22
10	55	Poor quality health care—dependents	0.76	42	16	10
27	106	Other survey-related comments	0.48	42	10	22

Table 7 (continued)
Content Categories Sorted by Frequency

More Specific category	Very Specific category	Content	Reliab	Count	Matches	Diff
8	41	Satisfaction with employment programs	0.88	41	18	5
15	69	Poor quality housing	0.90	40	18	4
9	51	Inadequate hours of childcare operations	0.81	37	15	7
1	8	Not looking for job	0.65	37	12	13
6	34	Other comments re household salary	0.56	36	10	16
1	9	Need more jobs for spouses	0.65	34	11	12
8	44	Need to improve job listings	0.53	34	9	16
6	33	Need to increase COLA	0.73	33	12	9
15	70	Housing too expensive	0.85	26	11	4
7	37	Programs/services inaccessible	0.56	25	7	11
18	80	Excessive workload for member	0.75	24	9	6
15	71	Other comments re housing	0.50	24	6	12
3	21	Other comments re jobs available	0.61	23	7	9
20	84	Unfair treatment of members	0.73	22	8	6
7	39	Other comments re services	0.27	22	3	16
10	56	Health care unavailable	0.48	21	5	11
12	64	Need support group for spouses	0.78	18	7	4
21	90	Other comment re deployment	0.67	18	6	6
6	32	Need to continue benefits when member deployed	0.56	18	5	8
7	38	Satisfied with programs/services	0.88	16	7	2
4	24	Other comments re spouse salary/benefit	0.38	16	3	10
2	12	Unaware of spouse preference program	0.86	14	6	2
13	67	Housing too far from base	0.71	14	5	4
2	14	Supportive of spouse preference	0.60	10	3	4
8	46	Need job market data	0.60	10	3	4
26	99	Ineligible to participate	0.20	10	1	8
18	79	Anxieties over drawdown	0.89	9	4	1
6	31	Increase household benefits if living off base	1.00	8	4	0
20	86	Other comments re treatment	0.25	8	1	6
5	28	Other comments re member salary	0.00	7	0	7
16	74	Other comment re military life	0.33	6	1	4
10	54	Poor quality health care—member	0.67	6	2	2
17	76	Military life provides positive opportunities	0.80	5	2	1
	89	Insufficient notice for deployments	0.40	5	1	3
	108	Other comments re struggle/hardship	0.40	5	1	3
12	65	Other comments re outreach	0.00	5	0	5
16	72	Satisfied with military life	0.00	5	0	5
25	96	Answer stated above	0.67	3	1	1
19	83	Other comment re importance of serving	1.00	2	1	0
5	27	Increase leave benefits	0.00	2	0	2
8	42	Neutral response re employment services	0.00	0	0	0
8	45	Need more diverse opportunities re employment services	0.00	0	0	0
17	77	Other comments re opportunities provided	0.00	0	0	0
TOTAL				7,656	2,842	1,972

Note. Column one displays the higher order category number (1-27). Column two provides the most discrete category number. Column three provides a category description. Column four presents the reliability calculated as described earlier. “Count” is the sum of the times the category was assigned by either coder. “Matches” is the number of times the category was assigned to a case by both raters. “Diffs” equals the number of times the category was assigned by one *or* the other rater but not both.

Combining Categories

In an effort to salvage as much information as possible, certain categories with low reliabilities (< .60) were combined to determine whether doing so would bring the figure into an acceptable range. Table 8 shows the combinations attempted and the results.

Table 8
Very Specific Categories Combined to Increase Reliability

Category Numbers	Category Titles	Combined Reliability
27	Need to increase leave benefits	.00
28	Other comments re salary/benefits	
30	Inadequate household salary/benefits	.65
32	Need to continue BAS when deployed	
34	Other comments re household salary/benefits	
36	Dissatisfaction with programs/services available	.57
37	Programs/services not available/accessible	
39	Other comments re programs/services in general	
44	No problem with employment services—neutral response	.71
45	Dissatisfaction with employment services	
47	Other comments re employment services	
73	Dissatisfied with military/family life	.49
74	Other comment re military/family life	
91	Miscellaneous unique response	.64
98	Miscellaneous non-codeable response	
99	Ineligible to participate	

Given the positive outcomes for 30/32/34, 44/45/47, and 91/98/99, these were combined for future analyses. This had a negligible impact on the overall reliability, which increased from .74 to .75.

Based on the outcomes of this analysis and review, two decisions were made regarding the reporting of the data. The first was that categories with reliabilities below .60 would not be considered in future analyses. Given the inability of the two judges to agree with adequate precision on the application of these codes, the prudent course was to simply disregard them.

The second decision concerned which codes to use in subsequent analyses. As seen in Table 3, there were 7,656 codes assigned by the two raters. In 2,842 cases these represented matches, where the same code was assigned to the same comment by each rater. (These represent 5,684 (2 x 2,842)/7,654 or 73% of all the codes assigned.) An additional 1,972 codes were mismatches, assigned to a comment by only one coder. It was first decided that codes on which both raters agreed would be assigned to each comment. However, there were 420 comments on which there was no agreement. When the unreliable categories were eliminated, this number decreased to 352. The final decision was to assign the codes given by the project director in these cases.

The next section contains examples of comments provided by respondents in some of the most frequently cited categories. These comments illustrate the issues of concern to respondents and provide a context for the analyses that follow. Some of these comments received codes for multiple categories. Additional examples, covering all of the coding categories, can be found in Appendix B.

Sample Very Specific Category Citations

Personal circumstances were the most frequently written-about topic (n = 511). Apparently, the forced-choice nature of the survey left respondents feeling the need to explain and clarify their situations. These comments were diverse, as the following examples demonstrate.

I “settled” for the job I have now because I have an EFMP child and my employers were willing to work with me and be flexible with the hours I could work. But my hours of work has been drastically cut and I am now in the process of looking for either a second job or a better paying one.

...I am a full-time student at a two-year college desiring a transfer to a four-year university. My intent is to pursue a Masters Degree in Communications and English and a Bachelors Degree in Spanish. However, having the responsibility for a night job, a one-year old son, and a husband active duty Marine Corps, I rarely spend time with my family. Being a military spouse impacts everything attempted and reflects upon my marriage, my career and my motherhood.

I worked for MWR on [location]. I was pregnant and could no longer stand and there was no possibility for a transfer and even if I would have stayed, there was no chance for a pay raise until minimum wage went up.

Many respondents (n = 290) took time to express *appreciation for the survey*, indicating that attention to spouse concerns is appreciated.

Thank you kindly for allowing me to take part in this survey and for allowing me to express my concerns on employment for spouses of enlisted personnel.

I truly hope this provides a little insight in the lives of military spouse and what we need to keep our head afloat. Thank you for listening!

Almost as frequent as thanks for the survey were comments indicating a *lack of awareness of services* available (n = 274). Apparently, the survey inspired many of these respondents, who read about services in the survey instrument that they had been unaware of until that time.

I was not aware of any program to assist military spouses in job finding. Childcare is a major concern for us.

How would I find out about the military assistance program for military spouse? If I had known about this program I would have consider looking for a job, to be with my husband than to be so far away from him. I didn't consider quitting my job for financial reasons and I'm not yet old enough for retirement though I have 25 years on my primary job.

Also of great concern was the *pay received by the military member* (n = 269). Not surprisingly, commenters stated that the recompense was inadequate, especially given the vital nature of the jobs military members are performing.

Football players and baseball players make way more than the guys who defend our country. Do you think this is fair for someone who is going to die for you and your family?

It is the same thing everyone has been "crying about." If the pay was better so that one spouse could afford to stay home and raise the family, the world would be a better place. I was active duty myself until 12 months ago, and now our "ends" are barely met. The Armed Services should be better pay than our welfare system.

The *expense* (n = 247) and *availability* (n = 193) of *childcare* also were frequently mentioned concerns.

I have found that the military does not offer quality childcare, but I have also found that the cost exceeds a lot of military families income. I know it is done on an income qualification basis, but I still find the cost very high. This makes it difficult to find employment which will cover these costs.

The cost of childcare is too much for E1 to E5. The waiting list for [location] is about one year. I'm a working mother that work weekends and childcare center is only open Monday-Friday.

In a related vein, many respondents (n = 229) commented that the *amount they would or do make working barely covers the costs* associated with doing so.

Day care runs on the average \$1-\$1.50 per hour per child. I have 4 children minimum wages is \$5.15 what's left?! I made \$9.23 per hour at my last job. For the same job here I would get \$6. I think wages should somehow be based on the size of the family you have. A teenager down the street makes just as much as a mother of 4. I had myself well established at our last duty station but we had to move here and I have to start at the bottom again, but no one cares or listens!

Dissatisfaction with employment programs was also frequently expressed (n = 208), and such comments often were related to the resources available and the demeanor of personnel.

...Family Services seems to be unable to hire more than clerks to assist clients, and uses the manager as a "meeting liaison" more than a manager. Information is out of date, resources are scantily more than the state offers, and by the time applications are forwarded most jobs are filled.

People at the employment assistance center need to be friendlier and more helpful. They always seem to be in a rush and can be rude.

Given that nearly three quarters of the sample had children, it is natural that *conflicts between childcare and employment* would be a major concern (n = 187).

You didn't ask why I wasn't currently working or what has kept me from working. In about a years time I had a baby and moved twice. I am being moved again next year. Now I have another baby on the way. I choose not to work during pregnancy due to the stress I've had.

Our family has chosen to be a one income family because we feel it would be a waste of time and a lack of responsibility if we handed over our children to be reared and disciplined by people other than ourselves for 4-8 hours a day. Financially it would be easier if I worked for pay outside the home other than during the holiday season but being able to see that our children are being reared in accordance with our beliefs and convictions makes the sacrifice worth it.

Many spouses were continuing their *education* or desired to do so. The need for more support in this regard was a common theme (n = 178).

I believe that spouses lives would be more productive and less stressful if better programs were provided for spouses to attend school. When I left home to move here with my husband I had a fully paid scholarship to school towards a career of my own. Now I am unable to afford school.

We have been in three different places in the last 4 years. It is very hard to go to school. Whether it is too expensive. No colleges around or the colleges do not offer what I want/need. This means I am stuck in jobs I do not want because I am not qualified for the jobs I want. This is the worst thing about moving.

Finally, there were a large number of comments about the *difficulty of finding a job at the respondent's current location (n = 172), finding other than entry-level jobs (n = 164) and finding jobs that match the respondent's skills (n = 155).*

I just feel that the economy in [location] area is very low. The business don't pay what they probably should. I also feel that if I don't say I know Spanish I won't get hired.

I believe that one of the biggest problems that I had in trying to find a job was that the town that I live in is predominantly military until the military showed up there was no town. The industry here is commercial—strictly retail. There is not very much business here in terms of professional corporations. It's very hard to find a job when one is used to making \$10.00 an hour or more in a challenging setting the job market is very slow.

In my life, I never imagined being 26, with a BA, with previous employment by a Fortune 100 company, and be unable to find a job that pays more than minimum wage! I graduated college with a B average and I know I am not stupid. I have been in Germany for over one year and I have applied for 38 different jobs in both the Air Force and Army branches. For each job I received a letter stating that a veteran was given the position and though I was highly qualified, there was no reason for me to seek employment in that specific area. I guess you can understand why I am slightly frustrated with the current system of employment.

I found it to be very depressing when stationed overseas that one has to wait sometimes one year or more to get a good job. Meanwhile, one who has a good education has to work at Burger King or at the BX. Spouses should have the honest truth about the job market before they move to their new station. Let them know what types of jobs are available and an idea what the pay is for these jobs in that location.

Analyses

Several analyses were carried out to explore the data and determine whether meaningful relationships existed between the comments made and other respondent characteristics. As a first step, individuals who provided comments in response to item 60 were compared with those who did not to see whether there were characteristics that differentiated the two groups. Chi-square tests were used to isolate significant differences ($p < .01$). These same comparisons were then carried out for each of the content categories. This was done first on the broadest level (employment, finances, programs and services), then on the secondary level (finding/keeping a job, employer hiring practices), and finally on the most discrete level (conflicts with childcare responsibility, conflicts with military member schedule). In each case, those providing comments were compared with those who did not in terms of:

- paygrade of member (E1/2, E3, E4, E5)
- race (White, Black, Other)
- Service
- location (CONUS, OCONUS)
- gender
- employment status (unemployed not looking, unemployed looking, working part-time, working full-time)
- English as a second language
- use of the Employment Assistance Program (EAP), spouse preference programs, and military-provided childcare
- satisfaction with EAP (satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, dissatisfied)
- likelihood of reenlistment (likely, 50-50, unlikely)
- highest level of education (non-high school graduate/GED, high school diploma/vocational-technical school/some college, 2-year degree or more)
- financial status (very comfortable/able to make ends meet without difficulty, occasionally have some difficulty making ends meet, tough to make ends meet but keeping my head above water/in over my head)
- children living at home(have, have not).

In all cases, comparisons were carried out on unweighted data. Comparisons of commenters and non-commenters include all respondents, while specific category comparisons include only those who provided a written response to item 60. The remainder of this section presents the results, organized around the broad content areas. It starts by comparing those who provided comments with those who did not, in light of the variables listed above. Then each of the comment areas will be discussed in turn, moving from the broadest level to the most discrete. Only significant differences (based on chi-square statistic with $p < .01$) are reported.

Differences Between Commenters and Non-commenters

Overall, a higher percentage of Army, Navy, and Marine Corps spouses (33% each) responded to item 60 of the *SSJEP* than did Air Force spouses (30%). In addition, a higher proportion of native English speakers provided written input (33% vs. 28%), as did those with children (34% vs. 31%).

As might be expected, higher percentages of those who participated in military-sponsored programs provided written feedback. This was true for EAP participants (48% vs. 34% of non-participants), and those using military-provided daycare (35% vs. 31%). Seventy-seven percent of those who were dissatisfied with the EAP commented, as compared to 50% of those who were neutral or positive in this regard. Finally, 40% of those who were experiencing major financial difficulty took the time to write something, as compared to 30% of those who were only experiencing some problems, and 27% of those in good financial shape.

Employment

General Categories

When examined at the broadest level, it was found that among those making comments, employment was mentioned disproportionately by those:

- stationed CONUS (35%) rather than OCONUS (24%)
- living in military (32%) as compared to civilian (23%) housing
- EAP participants (33% vs. 26% of non-participants)
- holders of at least a 2-year college degree (32%) as compared to high school graduates (27%) and nongraduates (21%).

Specific Categories

Comments on *finding and keeping a job* came disproportionately from those who were neither working nor looking for work (25% vs. less than 15% of others). Higher percentages of those commenting on employer hiring practices were:

- stationed OCONUS (17% vs. 7%)
- living in military housing (13% vs. 7%)
- male (17% vs. 10%)
- employed or looking for work (11% vs. 5%)
- participants in the EAP (16% vs. 9%)
- dissatisfied with the EAP (24% vs. 10% of those who were neutral or satisfied)
- more highly educated (13% of those with at least a 2-year degree, 9% of high school graduates, 6% of nongraduates).

Higher percentages of those commenting on the *types of jobs available* were:

- employed part time (8% vs. < 5% of others)
- under- (10%) or over- (7%) qualified for the jobs they held as opposed to qualified (4%)
- participants in the EAP (9% vs. 5%)
- more educated (9% of those with at least a 2-year degree, 4% of those with a high school diploma, 2% of nongraduates).

Very Specific Categories

Table 9 presents the significant differences between those of varying employment status in regard to their comments on employment-related issues. Higher proportions of commenters who were not employed and not looking for a job at the time of the survey commented on potential/actual conflicts between work and childcare and work and the military member's schedule. Conversely, those who were employed full-time disproportionately commented on the fact that they had no problem finding or keeping a job.

Table 9
Percentage Making Specific Employment Comments by Employment Status

	Not employed, not looking	Not employed, looking	Part- time	Full- time
Conflicts with childcare	10.6	2.9	0.5	0.7
Conflicts with member's schedule	4.1	1.9	2.5	1.1
No problem finding/keeping a job	0.5	0.1	1.9	2.4

As seen in Table 10, higher percentages of commenters with children cited conflicts between work and childcare, conflicts between work and the military member's schedule, and discrimination in hiring practices due to the frequency with which military families move. On the other hand, childless commenters disproportionately cited difficulties in finding a job at their current duty station.

Table 10
Percentage Making Specific Employment Comments by Family Status

	Children	No children
Conflicts with childcare	2.7	0.4
Conflicts with member's schedule	2.8	0.5
Difficult at current location	2.1	4.0
Discrimination due to moves	1.0	2.8

Higher percentages of commenters who participated in the Employment Assistance Program commented on difficulties in finding a job at their current location, favoritism in hiring practices, problems with the spouse preference program, and the lack of match between jobs and skills (see Table 11). Non-participants in the EAP disproportionately commented that they had no problems finding or keeping a job.

Table 11
Percentage Making Specific Employment Comments by Participation in EAP

	Participated in EAP	Did not participate in EAP
Difficult at current location	4.8	2.4
No problem finding/keeping a job	0.0	1.7
Favoritism in hiring	3.7	1.4
Problems with spouse preference	3.7	1.8
Jobs don't match skills	5.9	1.9

As seen in Table 12, higher percentages of those who expressed dissatisfaction with the EAP commented on favoritism in hiring, problems with the spouse preference program, and the practice of hiring local individuals before military spouses.

Table 12
Percentage Making Specific Employment Comments by Satisfaction with EAP

	Dissatisfied with EAP	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with EAP	Satisfied with EAP
Favoritism in hiring	8.2	2.8	1.3
Problems with spouse preference	6.8	0.7	0.7
Locals hired first	4.8	0.7	0.7

In addition to these results, significant differences were also found in the following domains:

- Favoritism in hiring practices was mentioned disproportionately by: those living in military housing (2.6%) as compared to those in non-military housing (1.1%); males (4.9%) as compared to females (1.7%); those with a 2-year degree or higher (3.2%) as compared to those with a high school diploma (1.7%); and those with a GED or no high school diploma (0.9%).
- The practice of hiring first from the local population was disproportionately commented on by those in military housing (2.7%) as compared to those in civilian

- housing (1.3%) and those with children in military daycare (3.9%) as compared to those with no children in military daycare (1.5%).
- Problems with the spouse preference program were raised by a higher percentage of those with children in military daycare (3.9%) as compared to those with no children in military daycare (1.7%) and those who obtained their jobs through the program (5.9%) as compared to those who did not (1.8%).
 - Whites disproportionately commented that they had no problem finding or keeping a job (2%) as compared to Blacks (0.2%) and individuals of other races (0.7%). Similarly, a higher proportion of those who reported their financial condition to be sound indicated that they had no problems getting a job (2.6%) as compared to those having some financial concerns (1.3%) and those with severe fiscal problems (0.6%)
 - Comments on the lack of a match between jobs and skills came disproportionately from those with a 2-year college degree or better (5.3%) as compared to those with a high school diploma (1.5%) or those with a GED or no high school diploma (1.3%). In this same vein, higher percentages of commenters who indicated that they were underqualified (4.1%) or overqualified (3.8%) for their current jobs mentioned a lack of job-skills fit than did those who stated they were qualified for their current positions (0.9%).

Finances

General Categories

Those commenting on finances were disproportionately:

- female (12% vs. 3%)
- unemployed and not looking (18%) as compared to those unemployed and looking (13%), employed part-time (10%), or employed full-time (9%)
- participants in the EAP (13% vs. 8%)
- having serious financial difficulty (18%) as compared to having some (11%) or no (5%) difficulty
- parents (14% vs. 6%).

Specific Categories

Higher percentages of those commenting on *their own salary and benefits* were:

- living in military housing (5% vs. 3%)
- unemployed and not looking for work (7%) as compared with unemployed and looking (5%), employed part-time (4%), or employed full-time (2%)
- experiencing major financial difficulty (6%) rather than some (5%) or no (2%) difficulty

- parents (6% vs. 1%).

Higher percentages of those making comments on *member salary and benefits* were:

- stationed CONUS (6% vs. 3%)
- not employed and not looking for work (8%) as compared to those not employed and looking (4%), employed part-time (3%), or employed full-time (5%)
- GED holders or non-high school graduates (9%) as compared to high school graduates/some college (5%), or 2/4-year degree holders (4%)
- experiencing major financial difficulty (8%) as compared to some (4%) or no (2%) difficulty.

Very Specific Categories

The percentage of spouses commenting that their salary would not cover expenses associated with working (primarily childcare) was highest among those who were not employed and not looking for a job at the time of the survey, and lowest among those employed full time (see Table 13). Similarly, commenters who were not employed and looking for work disproportionately cited the need to increase the military member’s salary.

Table 13
Percentage Making Specific Comments on Finances by Employment Status

	Not employed, not looking	Not employed, looking	Part- time	Full- time
Spouses salary doesn’t cover living expenses	7.3	4.9	3.0	2.2
Member salary needs to be increased	8.1	4.3	3.4	4.7

As seen in Table 14, higher percentages of those who reported having financial problems commented that that the money they make/would make working would not cover expenses and suggested that military salaries need to be increased.

Table 14***Percentage Making Specific Comments on Finances by Financial Condition***

	Good financial condition	Some financial problems	Difficult financial condition
Spouse salary doesn't cover living expenses	1.6	4.3	5.9
Member salary needs to be increased	1.5	4.1	8.3

Finally, higher percentages of those in military housing (5.2%) as compared to non-military housing (2.8%) and those with children (5.7%) as compared to those with no children (0.4%) commented that their salary wouldn't or doesn't cover the expenses associated with working.

Programs and Services***General Categories***

A smaller percentage of spouses who were not employed and not looking for work commented on programs and services (22%) than did those who were employed or looking for work (32-34%). A larger percentage of native English speakers commented on services (34%) than did those who speak English as a second language (25%).

Specific Categories

A higher percentage of those who participated in the EAP made *general comments about programs and services* than did non-participants (4% vs. 2%). Similarly, a higher percentage of participants made *specific comments about the EAP* (12%) than did non-participants (5%). A smaller percentage of spouses who were not employed and not looking for a job commented on programs and services (3%) than did those who had a job or were looking for work (5-8%). Education level was also related to the tendency to comment on the EAP, with a higher percentage of those holding at least a 2-year degree making statements about the program (10%), followed by those with a high school diploma, vocational degree, or some college (5%), and those with no high school degree or an alternative credential such as the GED (3%). Finally, a higher percentage of commenters who had no children commented on the EAP (9%) as compared with those with children (5%).

Childcare services were commented on by higher percentages of those with children (11% vs. 0.2%), those living in military housing (11% vs. 5%), females (8% vs. 2%), and those with children in military-sponsored daycare (14% vs. 10%). Higher percentages of those stationed CONUS commented on *health care services* (3% vs. 1% OCONUS), while the reverse was true for *education/training services* (7% of those stationed OCONUS, 4% of those stationed CONUS).

Higher percentages of those in lower pay grades mentioned *outreach efforts* (15% of E1/E2, 6% of E5). By Service, nearly 13% of Marine Corps spouses commented on outreach and information services as compared with 11% of Navy spouses, 8% of Army spouses, and 6% of commenters married to Air Force members. A higher percentage of those stationed CONUS mentioned outreach efforts (11%) than did those stationed OCONUS (5%). Overall, 10% of those living in non-military housing commented on outreach efforts as compared to 7% of those in military housing. A higher percentage of females cited outreach efforts (9% vs. 3% of males), as did those who were unemployed and looking for a job (12% vs. 6-9%). Finally, a lower percentage of those who participated in military-sponsored programs commented on outreach issues (day care 5% vs. 9%, spouse preference program 4% vs. 9%, EAP 5% vs. 10%).

Very Specific Categories

As seen in Table 15, commenters living in military housing disproportionately commented on the expense and availability of childcare, while a higher percentage of those in civilian quarters indicated a lack of awareness of available programs and services.

Table 15
Percentage Making Specific Comments on Programs/Services by Housing Type

	Military housing	Non-military housing
Childcare too expensive	5.2	2.5
Childcare limited/unavailable	4.3	2.4
Unaware of programs	3.8	6.3

A higher percentage of commenters stationed OCONUS commented that educational opportunities were limited, while a higher proportion of CONUS commenters indicated that they were unaware of programs intended for military spouses (see Table 16).

Table 16
Percentage Making Specific Comments on Programs/Services by Location

	CONUS	OCONUS
Limited educational opportunities	0.6	2.5
Unaware of programs	6.4	2.7

Several other significant differences were found between commenter subgroups in regard to their comments on programs and services. Dissatisfaction with the EAP was expressed disproportionately by:

- those employed part-time (4.8%) or full-time (4.6%) as compared to those not employed and not looking (2.2%) and those not employed and looking for a job (2.3%)
- commenters who participated in the EAP (6.1%) as compared to those who did not (3.2%)
- those who were dissatisfied with the EAP (10.1%) as compared to those who were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (4.2%) and those who were satisfied (2.0%)
- commenters who had at least a 2-year college degree (6.3%) as compared to those with a high school diploma (2.9%) and those with a GED or no high school diploma (1.7%).

Commenters who indicated that they were experiencing some financial difficulty disproportionately commented that childcare is too expensive (5.3%) as compared to those experiencing major fiscal problems (3.6%) and those with no financial woes (2.5%). Lack of awareness of programs and services was related to grade, with 8% of commenters married to E1-E2 commenting in this manner as compared to 6.7% of E3-E4 spouses, and 1.4% of spouses of E5s. Similarly, a higher percentage of those who did not obtain their jobs through the spouse preference program commented that they were unaware of services (5.6%) as compared to those who obtained employment through spouse preference (1.6%). Finally, commenters without children disproportionately indicated a lack of awareness of programs (7.1%) as compared to those with children (4.2%).

Housing

General Categories

Higher percentages of those who lived in non-military housing (2% vs. 1%) raised housing as an issue, as did those who were experiencing major financial difficulty (4% vs. 2% of those with reporting some difficulty and 1% of those reporting no financial problems). There were few statistically significant differences on the more discrete levels of this category.

Military Family Life

General Categories

Higher percentages of those living CONUS raised issues regarding military family life (7% vs. 4% OCONUS). The same result was found for those living in non-military housing, 8% of whom commented on this issue as compared to only 4% of those in military quarters. Overall, 8% of those who reported major financial difficulty raised issues regarding family life as compared to 4% of others. In addition, a higher percentage of those making comments in this vein said their spouses were somewhat or very unlikely to reenlist (9%) as compared to a 50-50

likelihood (5%) or better (4%). Furthermore, 44% of those who commented on military/family life said their spouses were unlikely to reenlist in the military, as compared to 18% who indicated their was a 50-50 chance, and 38% who said reenlistment was likely.

Specific Categories

On a more specific level, *the struggles and hardships of military family life* were mentioned by a greater percentage of college graduates (4%) than of high school graduates (1%) or nongraduates (3%). A disproportionate percentage of those living in non-military housing also mentioned this factor (4% vs. 2% of those in military housing). *Treatment of members and spouses* was commented on by a higher proportion of males (4%) than females (1%), and those unlikely to reenlist (3% vs. 1% of likely).

Very Specific Categories

A higher proportion of EAP participants commented on career sacrifices they have made because of the military (1.9%) than did non-participants (1.1%). In this same vein, those with at least a 2-year college degree disproportionately mentioned career sacrifices (3.2%) as compared to those with a high school diploma (1%) and those with a GED or no high school diploma (0%). A higher percentage of males (4.3%) commented on unfair treatment of spouses by the military than did females (1%).

Deployments

Specific Categories

Comments on the frequency and/or duration of deployments were related to Service, with the highest percentage of Navy and Army spouses mentioning this factor (3%), followed by those married to Marines and Air Force members (1%). This element was also cited disproportionately by those living in non-military housing (3% vs. 1%). Finally, the assessed likelihood of the military member reenlisting was related to deployments, with 4% of those unlikely to continue citing this factor, as compared with 3% of those indicating a 50-50 likelihood that their spouses will stay for an additional term, and 2% of those who stated it was likely that they will remain in the military. Correspondingly, 43% of those who commented on the frequency/duration of deployments said their spouses were unlikely to reenlist as compared with 26% who said the chances were 50-50 and 31% who said reenlistment was a likely option.

Other Comments

A higher percentage of those experiencing major financial difficulties expressed doubts as to the usefulness of the survey (2% vs. 1%). In contrast, a disproportionate percentage of those who speak English as a second language expressed appreciation for the survey (9% vs. 4%), as did those who obtained jobs through the spouse preference program (8% vs. 4%).

Summary and Conclusions

This section summarizes the results presented and highlights any apparent implications for spouse-related programs and practices. Illustrative respondent comments are presented where appropriate. This discussion is organized around demographic groups so as to focus on specific steps that can be taken to help subgroups of spouses.

Before discussing specific population subgroups, however, it should be noted that the overall tenor of the comments received was somewhat negative. This is reflected in the examples provided above and those that follow. Although the comments provide valuable information beyond that available from the forced-choice items that make up the bulk of the survey, generalizations based on the written comments should be made with care. This is true for several reasons, including the fact it is often the case that individuals who were dissatisfied with some aspect of their life circumstances were more apt to take the time to write about this than those who were content. Therefore, it is important to examine the results presented here in conjunction with the main survey data (Bureika, et al., 1999).

Paygrades

The range of paygrades included in this study was purposefully restricted to those thought to be most likely to experience problems—junior enlisted personnel. As a result, few differences were found between these groups, the most notable being that a higher percentage of respondents married to members of lower rank indicated an unawareness of services available. This is most likely a function of tenure; spouses of junior personnel have had less time to become familiar with the “lay of the land.” Possible solutions to this problem offered by respondents included outreach efforts targeted toward this group, perhaps in the form of a more formalized or widespread sponsorship program for new spouses or spouses of new members.

I strongly wish that someone would put together a packet of information for new spouses. New spouses come to meet the military with paperwork for an I.D. card and a book that explains (in minor detail) health benefits. As a new spouse meeting the military, I was very upset to not have something that would tell me where to go or who to contact at a job agency. These packets could be handed out with the I.D. card, and could include; Welcome Letter, List of Job Agencies, Information on how to make health care appointment and where you will be seen and Extra Benefits you are entitled to. I wish the spouses could have a sponsor program like the enlisted personnel have for new recruits. I would be more than happy to help someone become comfortable with the military. It is very stressful also for my spouse. After all, enlisted people don't see our side of the military. Now I know where to go or what to do, but at first I was confused and scared. Thank you.

Service

There were also few differences noted between respondents married to members of the various Services. Higher percentages of Marine Corps (13%) and Navy (11%) spouses mentioned a lack of outreach efforts as compared to Army (8%) and Air Force (6%) spouses.

Predictably, greater proportions of Navy and Army spouses (3% respectively) mentioned problems with the frequency/duration of deployments than did respondents married to Marine Corps or Air Force personnel (1%). Most comments regarding deployments suggested that their length be limited.

Yes, as for being a military wife, I think the six month deployment should be cut down to at least 3 months, if not that ³/₄only take the single men and women that don't have a family. Do you realize that a family should be together everyday. It causes a lot of problems when you're away from each other for six months. I don't think 6 months is necessary. The Navy only cares about the Navy and that's not right. Something should be done!

Location

A good number of differences existed between those stationed in the contiguous United States and those overseas. Although a higher percentage of OCONUS respondents cited employment problems such as finding jobs, favoritism in hiring, and locals being hired first, *smaller* percentages mentioned problems with outreach or lack of awareness of programs. This suggests that, because of their location outside of the country, more efforts are being made to establish contact with these spouses and inform them of the services available.

Respondents related several reasons for problems with favoritism and hiring of local individuals. These involved such factors as inability to speak the language at the location where stationed and concern on the part of employers that military spouses will be transferred.

The hospital in which I work at will not promote military spouses. I am over qualified for my current job and have seen the locals who are less qualified take higher paying positions. There is an un-said policy about not giving dependent or military spouses a fair shake because we could "get orders" and move. I don't blame the hospital, it is something you must sacrifice along with the many others. I would like to go to CRNA school but can't until my wife retires in 5 years. I could join USAF³/₄NAA!

I find it to be very discouraging to look for employment each time we relocate. It is sad to say that the most difficult jobs to obtain are the Civil Service jobs. We also find in local areas, that employers lower the salaries around military bases. It is sometimes very difficult to live on these salaries, as well as very insulting. Spouse employment difficulties make it hard on the military service members and the family, as a whole.

In an overseas duty station your job choices are very limited. And the majority of these jobs are held by local nationals (i.e. [location]). It is not fair for the Americans who do not know the language well enough to go out on the local economy when (illegible), Commissary and CPO are giving the "on-post" jobs to the people who are able to speak the language and would not have a problem working on the economy.

Gender

Few differences were uncovered between male and female respondents, although a higher percentage of males cited employer hiring practices and favoritism, and a smaller proportion commented on financial concerns. Males were also somewhat more likely to mention unfair treatment of spouses by the military, which may be related to their somewhat unique status as husbands of service members.

As a military spouse I feel that the treatment of military spouse who are husbands not wife is very unfair. We do not get respect or our concerns met because we are the husband not the wife of a military person. We too have to relocate and give up jobs because of the military (PCS). Put our career on hold. I personally just would like a little help in the area of respect and meeting some of my career needs, at least give us a chance with preference on jobs that you (the military) control.

Employment Status

As might be expected, employment status was related to several content categories. A smaller percentage of those who were not working and not looking for work outside the home commented on aspects of finding/keeping a job or related assistance programs than did those who were working or looking for work outside the home, while a greater proportion mentioned financial problems. The reason for their not seeking employment may be related to the fact that they disproportionately cited conflicts with childcare responsibilities and military members' schedules.

My biggest frustration comes when I think I should have to work. Our spouses are serving our country and yet many families are forced to use food stamps, WIC, etc. It's very aggravating to think that so many military families are just above the poverty level³⁴even with all our "benefits." Don't get me wrong³⁴I'm very proud of my spouse and our armed services but why shouldn't they receive their due when they are defending the country and going TDY, separated from family sometimes months at a time. Families suffer financially many times. The biggest reason I'm not working is daycare costs. I can't afford to work and yet, can't really afford not to. What do you do???

My biggest concern at this point is returning to college to complete my degree. Unfortunately, to do this I need childcare which I can't afford while I'm not working and attending college. I feel that working and going to school would jeopardize my family life which is my main priority. I feel that the education in the long run would benefit my family and I more than a minimum wage paying job. The military provides all of the benefits of education to its members but, the spouses, aside from occasional grant or scholarship we qualify for, are left in the dust. Often the wives of your members are young with children and are trying to complete their college education as well. Unfortunately, we wives must move with our husbands (which is fine) to places where more than likely we don't have family or friends to support us (childcare) in our goals. This is difficult on all

those involved and possibly the military could look into a form of childcare for this situation.

Language

Overall, there were few differences between native English speakers and those for whom English is a second language. Smaller percentages of the latter group commented on programs/services, while higher percentages expressed appreciation for the survey.

Employment Assistance Program

As might be expected, those who participated in specific programs commented disproportionately on the elements those programs are intended to address as well as the programs themselves. Thus, a higher proportion of those who took part in employment assistance efforts commented on various aspects of finding/keeping jobs and the EAP itself. Higher percentages of individuals with children in military-sponsored daycare commented on daycare issues.

The fact that greater proportions of those who were dissatisfied with EAP mentioned such factors as favoritism in hiring, problems with the spouse preference program, and locals being hired first is also not surprising. This suggests that these commenters had some difficulty finding work, which would logically translate into dissatisfaction with programs intended to help them in this regard.

Few relationships were found between likelihood of reenlistment and comments made, although comments on military family life and deployments came disproportionately from those who indicated that they were unlikely to reenlist.

When we decided to have kids, I wanted to stay at home and raise them myself. At one point when the kids go to school I will probably go back to work or volunteer. I don't think the military will be very helpful. My husband is getting out of the Air Force because we cannot afford to stay in. I strongly agree in raising my kids myself instead of going to work, and paying for daycare. The military cannot pay for that point of view, so we will be moving on.

In the 24 months that my wife and I have been stationed in [location], we've only had 9 months together. I personally believe that a 3 year tour in [location] is too long! Why does it have to be 3 years when the service member is deployed the whole time? It's no wonder why so many people get out these days, (in my opinion) the military asks too much of families.

Education Levels

Greater percentages of individuals with higher levels of education commented on various aspects of getting and keeping a job as a military spouse than did those with less education. For instance, a higher percentage of more educated spouses mentioned difficulties in finding jobs

that use their skills and the fact that they have made sacrifices in their careers to be a military spouse.

My professional career has been put on hold or hindered due to my spouse's dedication to the military, which I do support. However, with the continual loss of benefits and draw downs in my spouse's career security is threatened. I have no career in place to take up the slack if my spouse loses his career in the name of draw downs. This is a common fear military spouses and members have to live with.

The need for relocation interrupts career advancement. It causes a level of consistency in work record. Inability to complete continuing education necessary to gain higher level degrees and qualifications. It causes a loss of pension and retirement benefits because of vesting policies in employers. It costs money to transfer [illegible] to new localities and course work to meet additional requirements in various localities.

Finances

Higher percentages of individuals who indicated that they were having financial difficulties commented on financial matters (their own salary, members' salary), as well as difficulties associated with childcare, housing, and military life in general.

I feel in today's world the military pay is very low for a family to live on. I have to work full time just to make ends meet. Just for living expenses is what the military check pays. I have to work to pay to go to school and anything else that may go wrong or that we need. I know that we would not make it if I did not work. I feel that military pay should be higher. That is one of the reasons we may not re-enlist.

I know the government is currently in a deficit. However, I feel for the amount of time and hardship dependents face, the enlisted should have a pay increase and housing increase. To make it in today's society, we are not in a very good economy. It is very difficult to make ends meet. I also feel there should also be more military housing available so our families have a safe place to live. At most military bases there is currently a 4-5 year wait for housing. Which in turn means we have to go "in town". Since there is not enough money allocated to the pay area, families are forced to find housing in unsafe areas or low rent districts. In the past 3 years we have had a "high" driver drive their vehicle through our home, been burglarized 4 times and had our apartment building set on fire by a drunk man fighting with his wife. I feel our men fight for the country's safety, but our country is not fighting for my family's!

Children

Finally, a greater proportion of respondents with children cited work-childcare and work-spouse schedule conflicts as being problematic than did those without children. A sizeable

number of these individuals indicated that working simply would not be worthwhile, given the amount they would have to pay for childcare.

I don't think it would be such a good idea to say what I really think. At this time I am still looking for a job with hours in which I can see my kids, my husband occasionally and me manages to sleep sometimes. It might be easier if three quarters of my paycheck would not be going to childcare and if there wasn't a six month to one year waiting list for childcare that is state accredited.

I feel mothering (in my case) is very important. Kids need to be with their mother, especially those under 5. I feel the military needs to help in any way possible to make it easier for mothers to stay home if they choose to. What about a subsidy to mothers who choose to stay home with their kids? Enlisted personnel hardly make enough for a comfortable living, especially here in [location]. It is almost a must that the mother has to work as well.

On the positive side, it seems that having children is one way of staying in touch with events, as higher percentages of those *without* kids said they were unaware of programs and services.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it appears that the concerns of military spouses largely overlap with their civilian counterparts. In many cases spouses feel they must work in order to help support their families even though they might prefer to stay home to raise their children. Many expressed concerns over the challenges associated with balancing work and family responsibilities. And, as is true in the civilian world, finding quality, affordable childcare is often a difficult task.

Having noted these similarities, it must also be acknowledged that military spouses face particular challenges and obstacles that are not common in civilian life. Frequent moves raise the prospect of being forced to look for new jobs in locations with which they may be unfamiliar. Particularly in the case of overseas and remote duty stations, the range of available employment may be restricted because of factors such as language barriers and the nature of the local economy. An additional challenge faced by many military spouses is the frequent and often long deployments required of military members. As a result, spouses are often required to function as single parents for significant periods of time.

Many of the conditions commented on by these military spouses are simply part of life in the Armed Forces and cannot be changed without fundamentally effecting the ability of the military to accomplish its mission. Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines must go to the locations where they are needed to perform their jobs. This means either long separations from family, family moves, or both. If a family chooses to move with the member, disruptions will occur, including the need for the spouse to find new employment. And little can be done to affect the employment situation in any given location. For instance, it is simply a fact of life that overseas, jobs off the military installation may require someone to speak the indigenous language.

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APPENDIX A

1997 Survey of Spouses of Enlisted Personnel

RCS: DD-P&R (OT) 2023
Exp. 05/13/98

SURVEY OF SPOUSES OF ENLISTED PERSONNEL



DMDC Survey No. 97-0012

DEFENSE MANPOWER DATA CENTER
ATTN: SURVEY PROCESSING ACTIVITY
C/O DATA RECOGNITION CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 9004
MINNETONKA, MN 55345

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SERIAL #



Privacy Notice

In accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-579), this notice informs you of the purpose of the survey and how the findings will be used. Please read it carefully.

Authority: 10 United States Code, Sections 136 and 2358, P.L. 104-106, Sections 1782, 1784.

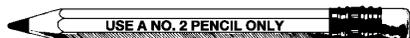
Principal Purpose: Information collected in this survey will be used to assess the employment needs of spouses of enlisted personnel. Results will assist in improving policies and programs that benefit military families. Some findings may be published in DoD reports or professional journals or reported in manuscripts presented at conferences, symposia, and scientific meetings. In no case will data be reported or used for identifying individuals.

Routine Uses: None.

Disclosure: Providing information on this survey is voluntary. There is no penalty if you choose not to respond. However, maximum participation is encouraged so that the data will be complete and representative. You may skip any question(s) you do not wish to answer, but please answer questions honestly. **Your responses will be confidential and your identity will be closely guarded.** Identifying information will be used only by persons engaged in, and for purposes of, mailing and tracking the survey materials. When data collection and data preparation are complete, all identifying information will be removed from the data files. Survey answers will be combined so that individuals cannot be identified. Only group statistics will be reported and no data that could identify individuals will be released to anyone.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY

- Please use a No. 2 Pencil only. (Please do not use ink, ball-point, or felt-tip pens.)
- Make heavy black marks that fill the circle for your answer.
- Please do not make stray marks of any kind.



Correct Mark

Incorrect Marks

Sometimes you will be asked to "Mark ALL that apply." When this instruction appears, you may mark more than one answer. For example,

How did you find your current job(s)? (Mark all that apply)

- Answered an ad in newspaper/trade journal
- Contacted the employer directly
- Job fair
- Information provided by a friend or relative

Sometimes you will be asked to "Mark ONE for each item." For example,

Did any members of your household receive any of the following in the last 12 months? (Mark one response for each item)

- a) Earned income tax credit Yes No Don't Know
- b) Food stamps Yes No Don't Know
- c) Free or reduced price school breakfasts Yes No Don't Know
- d) Free or reduced price school lunches Yes No Don't Know

If you are asked to give numbers for your answer, please record them as shown below. For example,

How old were you on your last birthday?

Age

2	6
1	0
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9

12. Is your current residence more than 50 miles from your previous residence?

- Yes
- No

13. How soon after relocating to your current location did you begin an active job search?

- Does not apply. *I did not search for a job after relocating.*
- Began before I moved
- Less than one month
- 1 to 3 months
- 4 to 6 months
- 7 to 9 months
- 10 to 12 months
- More than a year

14. How many children, in each of the following age categories, live at home with you?

Does not apply. *I do not have any children living at home with me.* → Go to Question #18

(Mark one in each row)

	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five or more
a. Under age 2	<input type="radio"/>					
b. Ages 2 to 5 years.....	<input type="radio"/>					
c. Ages 6 to 12 years.....	<input type="radio"/>					
d. Ages 13 to 18 years.....	<input type="radio"/>					

15. On average, what is the total amount you spend per week on child care (e.g., nursery school, daycare, babysitter), for the children who live at home with you?

- Does not apply. *I do not spend money on child care.*
- Less than \$50 per week
- \$51 to \$100 per week
- \$101 to \$150 per week
- \$151 to \$200 per week
- \$201 to \$250 per week
- \$251 to \$300 per week
- More than \$300 per week

16. How many children are covered by this weekly child care cost?

- Does not apply. *I do not spend money on child care.*
- One child
- Two children
- Three children
- Four children
- Five or more children

17. Do any of your children participate in military-provided day care (Child Development Center or Family Day Care)?

- Yes
- No

18. Which of the following describes your access to and use of a personal computer (PC)? (Mark all that apply)

- I regularly use a PC as part of my employment
- I have access to a PC at my job but do not regularly use it
- I do not have access to a PC either at home or work
- I have a PC at home
- I have access to an on-line service (e.g., CompuServe, America Online)
- I have access to the Internet
- None of the above

19. Have you done any volunteer work during the last 12 months?

- Yes
- No

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

20. Are you of Spanish/Hispanic origin or descent? (Mark only one)

- No (not Spanish/Hispanic)
- Yes, Mexican, Mexican-Amer., Chicano
- Yes, Puerto Rican
- Yes, Cuban
- Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic

21. What race do you consider yourself? (Mark only one)

- White
- Black or African-Amer.
- Indian (Amer.), Eskimo, or Aleut
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Other race (Please specify below)

38. Which one category BEST describes the kind of work you do in your current primary job? (If you have more than one job, respond for the job you consider to be your principal job.)

(Mark only one)

- Clerical such as bank teller, bookkeeper, secretary, typist, ticket agent, cashier, customer service representative
- Service such as barber, beautician, practical nurse, private household worker, janitor, waiter/waitress, food service worker, teacher's aide
- Child Development such as child care provider working with preschool children
- School Teacher such as elementary or secondary teacher
- Technical such as draftsman, medical or dental technician, computer operator, desktop publisher, paralegal
- Sales such as salesperson, advertising or insurance agent, real estate broker
- Crafts such as baker, automobile mechanic, machinist, painter, plumber, telephone installer, carpenter, seamstress/tailor
- Laborer such as construction worker, car washer, sanitary worker
- Manager, Administrator such as sales manager, office manager, school administrator, buyer, restaurant manager, government official
- Operative such as assembler, machine operator, welder, taxicab/bus/truck driver
- Professional such as social worker, accountant, computer programmer, artist, registered nurse, engineer, librarian, writer
- Advanced Professional such as dentist, physician, lawyer, scientist, college professor
- Proprietor or Owner such as owner of a small business, contractor
- Other (Please specify)

39. About how long have you been in your current primary job?

- Less than 1 month
- 1 to 3 months
- 4 to 6 months
- 7 to 9 months
- 10 to 12 months
- More than 1 year

40. From the time you started your job search, about how long did it take you to find your current primary job?

- Less than 1 month
- 1 to 3 months
- 4 to 6 months
- 7 to 9 months
- 10 to 12 months
- More than 1 year

41. To what extent does your current primary job allow you to use your skills and training?

- To a large extent
- To a minor extent
- Not at all

42. How well do your qualifications match the work you do in your current primary job?

- I am greatly overqualified for the work
- I am somewhat overqualified for the work
- My qualifications are appropriate for the work
- I am somewhat underqualified for the work
- I am greatly underqualified for the work



EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

49. Employment assistance programs offer services to individuals looking for work. Examples of such services are career counseling and training in resume preparation. Did you participate in an employment assistance program sponsored by the military within the last 12 months?

- Yes
- Don't know
- No → Go to Question #55

50. Below is a list of services you may have received the last time you used an employment assistance program sponsored by the military. For each service, (1) indicate whether you received the service, and (2) for each service you received, indicate whether the service was useful to you personally.

Service	1. Did you receive the service?				2. If you received the service, was it useful?		
	Yes	No	Not Available		Useful	Not Useful	Not Sure
a. Orientation on job-searching skills and services (for helping a person get a job)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. One-on-one assistance with my job search	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Help deciding what kind of work I should do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Training in how to write a resume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Training in how to interview for a job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Training in how to operate my own business	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Training in job skills (e.g., word processing)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Support group in which I could discuss my job search with people like myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Referrals to "temp" agencies (i.e., agencies that provide temporary jobs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Advice on how to dress for a job interview	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Announcements of job openings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Job fairs (i.e., opportunities for job seekers to meet with a number of employers about jobs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. Information about colleges or schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n. Information about financial aid for college or school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o. Child care during use of employment assistance services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
p. Help in completing job application forms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
q. Use of word processing equipment for resume preparation, job applications, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



51. Did you make use of a list of job openings at the military-sponsored Employment Assistance Center you last used?

- Yes
- No → Go to Question #53

52. If yes, were most of the job openings that were listed . . .

a) . . . within commuting distance from your home?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

b) . . . still available by the time you learned of them?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

53. Overall, how satisfied were you with the military-sponsored employment assistance program in which you last participated?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

54. Was this program at your current location?

- Yes → Go to Question #56
- No → Go to Question #56

55. If you did not participate in an employment assistance program, what were your reasons for not participating?

(Mark all that apply)

- Does not apply. I participated in the program.
- I was not looking for a job
- I had a job already lined up
- The program was not available
- I was not aware of the program
- I thought I could get a job on my own
- I didn't think the program would help me
- It took too long to get the services I wanted
- The hours of operation were inconvenient for me
- It was too difficult for me to get to the location where the program was offered
- The program staff was not helpful
- I was too busy
- Other

56. For the area in which you currently live, does the military provide an employment assistance program in which you, as a military spouse, are eligible to participate?

- Yes
- No → Go to Question #59
- Don't know → Go to Question #59

57. If yes, how did you learn about this program?

(Mark all that apply)

- Newsletter or calendar of events
- Newspaper
- Announcement on a bulletin board
- Flyer
- Orientation for spouses of service members
- TV
- Radio
- E-mail or some other computer message
- Word of mouth
- "Welcome Packet" when I moved to this location
- Family Support Center at my current or previous location
- My spouse
- Information received while getting other services
- Other

58. Which Service sponsors the program?

- Army
- Navy
- Marine Corps
- Air Force
- Don't know

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA



SERIAL #

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY!



PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED SURVEY IN THE BUSINESS REPLY ENVELOPE.

IF YOU ARE RETURNING THE SURVEY FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY, BE SURE TO RETURN THE BUSINESS REPLY ENVELOPE ONLY THROUGH A U.S. GOVERNMENT MAIL ROOM OR POST OFFICE.

FOREIGN POSTAL SYSTEMS WILL NOT DELIVER BUSINESS REPLY MAIL.

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THE AREA BELOW



SERIAL #

APPENDIX B

Instructions for Coders

Background

The Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Personnel Support, Families and Education (ODASD/PSF&E) requested that the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) conduct a survey of non-military spouses of junior enlisted members. The primary goal was to collect attitude/opinion data from the target population relative to employment issues. This information was intended for use by policy makers to devise possible strategies for assisting spouses in their pursuit of employment within the military lifestyle.

The *1997 Survey of Spouses of Enlisted Personnel* comprises 60 items, several of which require multiple responses. The topics covered include:

- Family information (e.g., branch, separation time, station, children);
- Demographics (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, education);
- Economic data (e.g., ratings of status, assistance received);
- Employment information (e.g., status, earnings, tenure, reasons for working); and
- Employment assistance programs (e.g., use of, satisfaction with).

There are three items in the survey (paygrade, race, occupation) where written answers are requested if the respondent's situation is not described by the options presented (e.g., other, please specify). In addition, two items specifically ask for written input. The responses to the second of these (Item #60), in which additional comments or concerns not addressed in the survey were solicited, are to be analyzed under this delivery order.

Your task is to read each of the comments provided by respondents to Item 60 of the survey. Using a set of pre-determined codes, you will assign category numbers to each of the comments so as to describe the input provided by the respondent.

Please read these instructions carefully before you begin.

Before You Start

1. Take a moment and look over the survey itself. This will give you an idea of the types of issues that were addressed and provide some context for the comments that follow. Whenever you are unsure about the meaning of a word, phrase, acronym, or apparent typographical error, notify the project director.

2. Take a few minutes and carefully review each of the categories, their definitions, and the supporting examples given. If there are terms or other aspects to them that you don't understand, see the project director. You will see that there are three levels of codes, as follows:

Very General	More Specific	Very Specific
Employment	Finding/Keeping Job Employer Hiring Practices	Conflicts w/ child care responsibilities Hiring discrimination against military spouses due to relocation
Finances	Spouse salary/benefits Member salary/benefits	Does not cover living expenses/childcare Inadequate/need to increase

The numbers you assign will be the three digits at the “very specific” level. The other levels are there to serve as a guide as you search for the most applicable code. Application of the codes is explained in more detail below.

3. Take a moment and look over the set of comments that you have been given. You will notice that each individual comment begins with a four-digit respondent ID number (e.g., 0023, 2134). You will also note that the comments vary widely in terms of their length. Some people have written a good deal, while others only wrote a word or two.

4. Open the data-entry program. You will find this on the f:drive under f:/corp/project/dmdc/fn. Once you have opened the program, save it under your personal directory with a unique name. When you open the program, you will see that for each case the following is given: (1) the respondent ID number (in the same order as the printed-out comments); (2) the first two lines of the respondent's comment; (3) cells for entering comment codes.

Procedures for Assigning Codes

1. Before assigning code(s) to a respondent, please read their entire comment. This will give you the total picture of what the respondent said and may prevent unnecessary coding.
2. Some comments will express a single thought. For instance:

They need to take into consideration the cost of living. It's gone up but the military pay has not.

Other comments will express multiple thoughts. For instance:

They need to take into consideration the cost of living. It's gone up but the military pay has not. Some spouses can't work because the family only has one car. The military person needs it because he's at [location] and their training is all over. She stays home with the kids because even if she was to work part time, by the time she gets done paying for day care there's no pay left.

3. Before assigning codes, divide up the comment into its separate parts. That is, take a pencil and put brackets around the segments of the comment that are addressing the same issue. For instance:

[They need to take into consideration the cost of living. It's gone up but the military pay has not.] [Some spouses can't work because the family only has one car. The military person needs it because he's at [location] and their training is all over.] [She stays home with the kids because even if she was to work part time, by the time she gets done paying for day care there's no pay left.]

In this example, the first two sentences deal with inadequate pay. The second two are concerned with the lack of transportation for getting to work. The last two concern the issue of day care costs eating up the spouses' salary. Each of these are distinct ideas that will receive their own codes.

4. Assign as many codes as you feel are necessary to describe what the person has said. At the same time, try to capture the main theme of what the person has said rather than each individual thought that may have gone into that theme. Take the following example:

It's really hard to find a good paying job in this area. What with childcare costs, it really means you have to spend some time to find a job that is worth the effort to go to. The jobs that are mostly open are in places like Burger King, and they pay next to nothing. It's been easier in other places we've been, but here it's pretty tough.

Although there the cost of childcare is mentioned in this comment, it is done so in passing. The true thrust concerns the low-paying nature of the jobs available, and this should be reflected in the code assigned (019).

5. When looking for the code that applies to a given comment, use the first two levels of codes as a guide to finding the very specific category that fits a given response, and then assign the associated number. For instance, when you encounter a comment that deals with monetary matters, the "very general" code of "finances" should guide you to the more specific codes that you will assign.
6. When you have found the code(s) that you feel best describe the comment, write them in the right margin next to the comment itself. Please do so as legibly as possible.
7. Please use the miscellaneous categories as sparingly as possible. Resort to this only when you feel that a comment (1) does not fit any of the categories provided, and (2) is likely to be unique or nearly so. In other words, it there is no code to apply and it is unlikely that there will be enough comments of this type to make such a code worthwhile. NOTE that if you encounter several comments of a similar vein that you are putting in the miscellaneous category for want of a code, notify the project director immediately. He will decide if another code should be created.
8. If you have doubts about what code to assign a given comment, flag the text and seek the advice of the project director at the earliest opportunity.
9. Please note the following instructions that are intended to resolve issues that have arisen in the early application of the codes.
 - Code 26 (member income insufficient) should be assigned when it was specifically mentioned that the military (or a given branch) does not pay their members enough. Code 30 (household income insufficient) is reserved for more general comments regarding not being able to make ends meet.

- Code 01 should be specifically reserved for instances in which the respondent indicated that he/she was not working or was having trouble working because of their parental responsibilities. Most often this applied in instances where the respondent stated that they felt child care was their number one priority. This contrasts with code 03 which applied when the comment specifically refers to the spouse's schedule (e.g., long and/or unpredictable hours) and difficulties this caused in finding/keeping a job--whether or not this related to child care duties.
- A final area of confusion concerned codes 91 (Miscellaneous unique responses), 93 (Miscellaneous personal circumstances), and 98 (Miscellaneous non-codeable responses).
 - 91 is intended for instances when there is a meaningful response not covered by any of the other categories.
 - 93 is meant to address comments that were, in whole or in part, explications of the respondents' personal circumstances.
 - 98 is intended for nonsensical comments.

Entering Codes Into the Database

1. You may begin entering codes into the database at any time. That is, you may choose to code a set of responses and then perform data entry, or complete the entire task and do data entry at one sitting.
2. Open the data entry file that you have saved under its unique name.
3. Verify that the on-screen ID number and initial text match that which appears on the page from which you are transcribing.
4. Position the cursor in the first code space and enter the three-digit code as marked in the margin (e.g., 007, 058, 105).
5. Ensure that the cursor is in the next code space for the same respondent.
6. Enter the next code.
7. Repeat until all codes for that respondent have been entered.
8. Before moving on to the next case, compare the codes you just entered to those on the hard copy to verify that they are correct.
9. Move to the next case and repeat steps 3 through 8.

NOTE: Save your file often (e.g., after every ten cases). At the end of each day (or more frequently if desired), back up your file on the f: drive or on a diskette. We will request a copy of your file periodically to perform statistical reliability checks.

Codebook

Code	Very General	More Specific	Very Specific	Examples/Definitions	Example Quotations
001	Employment	Finding/ Keeping Job	conflicts with child care responsibilities	“can’t get a job because I have kids to care for”	My only concern is for my son. I would have to find a job from 8am to 4pm so I could be with him after school. My husband is a recruiter and is away from home between 7am and 11pm. (5626)The main reason I don’t have a job is that I stay and watch my children. (0906)
002			difficult due to moves and relocation	Frequent relocations; military transferring system, etc.	Another problem that I have is that we move so many times that in my resume I do not show any stability. Only unfinished collect (lack of money and time to finish) and eight jobs in almost eight years. (1182)
003			job conflicts with military schedule	“can’t take a job because my spouse has irregular schedule and I have to take care of the kids.”	It would be a lot easier to work if my husband didn’t leave so much or his shifts stayed the same. (1493)It’s hard to find jobs that work with the Marine Corps’ schedule. (8241)
004			difficult to find job in area where stationed	Due to lack of business in area; intense job scarcity or demand, etc.	The industry here is commercial -- strictly retail. There is not very much business here in terms of professional corporations. It’s very hard to find a job when one is used to making \$10.00 an hour or more in a challenging setting... the job market is very slow.(9473)
005			excessive commute/ transportation issues	Nearest job is many miles away; no car, etc.	We have one car, so it is virtually impossible for me to get a job off base.(1273)

Code	Very General	More Specific	Very Specific	Examples/Definitions	Example Quotations
006			difficult to find job on base or post	on-post jobs are scare or unavailable	It is very hard to get a government job on post. (9170)I feel it is very hard to get a job on base. It seems that you have to have the right connections or know someone. I would love to work on base instead of driving 30 miles away.(5607)
007			no problems finding or keeping job	"I found a job easily"	In the past, when looking for a job I always start with the telephone book. I am in the dental field so I look up dentist, then I look for Doctors near my home. Then I call all of them and make appointments to drop off my resume and letters of recommendations. I find at times employers will hire from word of mouth and it works in almost any field that you might be in. (2878)I transferred from my previous job to a store where I live now. I didn't need to look for a job. (3043)
008			not looking/do not want or need a job	I am self-employed; I am a homemaker; haven't looked yet	My goal...to have my second and last child, complete last year of college, get on the proper medication and then get back into teaching. I figure in late 1998 I will go back to teaching. (6573)
009			need more jobs for spouses	jobs should be set aside for spouses	More jobs should be available for new coming families who wish to work. (285)
010			other comment re getting/keeping jobs		
011		Employer Hiring Practices	difficulty with hiring based on favoritism and not qualifications	"getting a job is based on who you know and not what you know"	The only reason why I got my job 2 years ago is because my husband office boss put in a good word for me and it still took 6 weeks for them to call me back. It shouldn't be who you know it should be on your skills and own merit alone that gets people hired. (0718)
012			unaware of spouse preference program		I was not aware of the Spouse Preference Program. (1679)

Code	Very General	More Specific	Very Specific	Examples/Definitions	Example Quotations
013			problems with spouse preference program	ineffective; program should be structured differently; don't like it, etc.	I think that the spouses should get several jobs offered to them instead of one. If you turn it down, you are no longer helped. I did not know that you should accept the spouse preference job just to get your foot in the door.(7587)I disagree with the spouse preference law I feel people should be considered for a job based on their knowledge rather than spouse preference. (0868)
014			supportive of spouse preference program	likes the program; agrees with the program, etc.	The spouse program for jobs should be considered a #1 priority especially for military families (dependents) that moves with the active military spouse. (0865)
015			general hiring discrimination against military spouses	general; discrimination of respondent due to pregnancy, gender, ethnicity, quotas, etc.	They've hired a lot of oriental people and less whites. I have put my application in several times. And I haven't even been called. (9356)...The employers here is in Hawaii, for some reason, always hire their kind of people instead of military. (4924)I feel that I have been discriminated. (2971)
016			hiring discrimination against military spouses due to relocation	specific; discrimination of spouse caused by relocation	I have found it hard to get a job off-base because every employer is worried I will be transferred. The first question they ask is about being transferred. (3027)
017			locals hired first	local nationals hired for on-base jobs; locals preferred by off-base employers	Here in [location] we also need better jobs, or at least more jobs. Too many Germans have our jobs. (400)
018			other comment re hiring practices		
019		Types Available	entry level/minimum wage jobs	entry/level, minimum wage, etc.	The area where I live mostly have fast food type jobs available. I prefer to work where I can be trained-on-job and able to attend school. (5448)

Code	Very General	More Specific	Very Specific	Examples/Definitions	Example Quotations
020			jobs available mismatch skills/interests/career aspirations	mismatch, over, or under qualified; not in keeping with career aspirations	mismatch, over, or under qualified; not in keeping with career aspirations
021			other comment re types of jobs available		
022					
023	Finances	Spouse Salary/Benefits	does not cover living expenses/child care	“all the money I make working goes to child care”	The cost of child care is so high at {location}, it was more than I could make part-time at \$7.00 per hour. (6911) It would cost more for child care than most part time jobs would pay me.(0453)
024			other comment re spouse salary/benefits		
025					
026		Member Salary/Benefits	inadequate/need to increase	general in nature; “for all they do, they should get more pay”	My husband works hard.... He should make enough to fulfill our basic needs and have a little to save. I’m not saying we should be rich but we make enough just to barely pay our bills, let alone have any quality life. (9659)I think the military should be paid more and for the job they do putting their lives on the line it’s a shame. (4530)
027			need to increase leave benefits	“they don’t give my husband enough time off”	...My husband has been an outstanding Marine and has caused to problem in anyway, but yet you all make it a point to be all in his family life, won’t give him anytime off to be with his family. (1794)
028			other comment re member salary/benefits		
029					
030		Household Salary/Benefits	inadequate/need to increase	general in nature; “we need more money to live on”; “we are struggling to get by on what we make”	I’m trying to support my family because we have too many bills; no food because we make too much and can’t get food stamps.... (0341)

Code	Very General	More Specific	Very Specific	Examples/Definitions	Example Quotations
031			need to increase if living off-base		I would say, maybe, if active duty personnel were to get more money ...for living off base, maybe we can, and could be either home with our children or going to school instead of wondering if we're going to get by this month.... (1237)
032			need to continue BAS during deployment		I think it is unfair that they take away BAS when my husband goes to the field. (1760)
033			need to increase cost of living allowance/adjust COLA		...I don't think it's fair that my husband's cost of living raise is always at least 2% less than the rest of the country. (1222)
034			other comment re household salary/benefits		
035					
036	Programs & Services	General	dissatisfaction	dissatisfied with programs and services	The one thing I have experienced through the years of being a military spouse is the programs that are offered to the dependents is really a waste of time. The attitudes of the employees is unacceptable. (5479)
037			programs and services not available or inaccessible	programs/services not available or accessible	With no commissary, no medical, no support groups available, it's rough. Our closest USAF base is 500 miles away. We need more facilities and better medical coverage. (0241)
038			satisfaction	satisfied with programs/services	
039			other comment re general programs/services		
040					
041		Employment	satisfaction with employment programs	satisfied with employment programs	The ACAP office on post was helpful and they never stopped helping me look for a job in my field. (6691)
042			no problems	neutral response	

Code	Very General	More Specific	Very Specific	Examples/Definitions	Example Quotations
043			dissatisfaction with employment programs	dissatisfied with employment program	
044			need to improve job listings and contacts	need better listings, need more employers that seriously considering hiring military	As a college graduate, who successfully entered the job market prior to marriage, I did not need tips on resumes or interviewing. What I did need was a list of employers willing to hire military spouses or a contact at such businesses. (0967)
045			need to provide more diverse job opportunities	job opportunities should not be limited to nursing or sales, for example	Nurses are not the only professional occupation that spouses may have. All the jobs I was referred to turned out to be office jobs, cashiers, child care “technology”, etc. I now have a digital photo/art computer based high tech design studio for my art and publish my own art work on the international level on web pages, a growing area the counselor was not aware of. They seemed to be in their own little paper work world, behind the times and not really in today’s technically advanced job search market. (6889)
046			need to provide job market data		
047			other comment re employment programs and services		
048					

Code	Very General	More Specific	Very Specific	Examples/Definitions	Example Quotations
049		Child Care	too expensive	child care is too expensive or not affordable	In my opinion, the day care provided on the base is way too expensive. I've heard that rates go by your pay-grade. Whether that's true or not, most of the military families I am acquainted with can't afford the day care for one child, let alone two or more. Most people have too many bills. Families need quality day care that's affordable. Not take up to three fourths of their paychecks. Expensive rates does not a good day care center make.(2988)
050			limited or not available	can't get in because of excessive waiting list, etc.	...day care was absolutely impossible to find. (1920)
051			inadequate hours of operation	need to extend hours, etc.	One of my concerns is the fact that there is no late or after hours day care provided by the military for families who work late shifts of those standing military watches. (3904)
052			other comment re child care		
053					
054		Health care	poor quality medical care to member		Whenever he goes to the doctor on the boat, no matter what he goes for, he always gets ibuprofin. He had an upper respiratory infection, an ear infection, and a sinus infection all at the same time. As good as ibuprofin is, it is not a cure-all. I am worried about the medical treatment he receives. (5053)
055			poor quality medical care to spouse and/or dependents		I believe we have one of the worst care. It's a goes mistreatment to the dependents...(9713).
056			health care unavailable	difficult to get to, services not available	I have to return to my home state and obtain civilian health care when I had health problems. (232)
057			other comment re health care		

Code	Very General	More Specific	Very Specific	Examples/Definitions	Example Quotations
058		Education and Training	need to support	especially financial assistance, but not limited to this	One problem we experience overseas both in Europe and Asia is that none of the Universities offer education degrees. With DoD's having such a wide span of school this would be a good opportunity for many dependents to attend college and start a career as soon as they finish. That's if DoD would be willing to develop a program with the universities to give dependent wives the opportunity to have a career as soon as they finish.(6492)Why are spouses not eligible for tuition assistance? (7476)
059			limited opportunities available	no programs in field of study or in area	My husband and I are stationed in [location] and I am a full-time student. My only complaint is the 4 year programs are very limited in choice. I am now forced to change majors simply because that program of study is not offered (nor is there anything even remotely related.) (2217)
060			other comment re education and training programs		
061					
062		Outreach and Information	unaware of current services/ services should be publicized		If I had known about these programs earlier, I would have gotten a job a lot quicker.(4584)As a new spouse meeting the military, I was very upset to not have something that would tell me where to go or who to contact at a job agency. (9944)
063			request for information	could you send me information about...?	Please let me know how to reach the Spouse Employment Assistance Program here. (3978)

Code	Very General	More Specific	Very Specific	Examples/Definitions	Example Quotations
064			need support groups for spouses		I would like to see maybe some sort of program where Military members with children, and similar certain needs, can meet around their areas and provide support for Spouses who need assistance on child care where helping each other would lean towards a better quality of life. (2471)
065			other comment re outreach and information services		
066					
067	Housing	Location	too far from base	housing is too far from base	
068		Availability	limited or unavailable	military housing non existent or not plentiful	Military housing is another issue. Why is there not enough housing to accommodate everyone? We have be here one year. And the housing list is 2 years long! (9003)
069		Adequacy	poor quality	substandard	...I am curious why the military, when living in military housing, those officials concerned are so worried about the exterior of the house when the inside is falling apart. ...Our current quarters are the worst I have ever lived in. Constant flooding from anyplace in the house that has water pipes, cracked walls, broken doors, etc. (3813)
070		Expense	rent is too expensive		
071			other comment re housing		
072	Military/ Family Life	General	satisfied with military/ family life		

Code	Very General	More Specific	Very Specific	Examples/Definitions	Example Quotations
073			dissatisfied with military/family life		It is really pathetic that politicians sit fat and happy while enlisted poor people fight for their lives. Some way of showing their patriotism. If my husband would believe there is a better life after military, we'd be gone but he truly believes this is a great place. I strongly disagree.(6369)
074			other comment re military/family life		
075					
076		Opportunities Provided	military life provides positive opportunities		I appreciate the opportunity that the Armed Forces has given me in the past months. I was trained to be a certified family child care home. (1286)
077			other comment re opportunities provided		
078		Struggles and Hardships	stress due to living apart, other strains on marriage		At this time, I am not really sure how to answer some of these questions because my husband had to send my children and myself to live with my parents (my parents had to even pay for our tickets) because we would not be able to survive with a newborn and rising rent. I am in tears just filling out this survey. (8946)
079			anxieties over military drawdown and job security		...With the continual loss of benefits and drawdowns in my spouse's career security is threatened. I have no career in place to take up the slack if my spouse loses his career in the name of drawdowns. This is a common fear military spouses and members have to live with. (2801)
080			excessive workload	too many duties, too much work	Firstly my Husband's work environment is so unmanned that the many billets and extra duties he does, takes him away from home much more of the time then should.

Code	Very General	More Specific	Very Specific	Examples/Definitions	Example Quotations
081			sacrifices made to career or education		My career and education suffer greatly because I am a military spouse. I love my wife and absolutely refuse to live apart to go to school or work. (0111)
81a			other comment re struggles and hardships		
082		Importance of Family/ Serving Country	importance of military mission and family support	<p>“I am proud that my husband is serving his country.”</p> <p>“I feel it is important to support this mission and my family.”</p>	<p>My husband is very proud to be a soldier, and I of him also.... (1760).</p> <p>I think it is sadder to know that my husband and I have to struggle to provide for our family. My husband has the most important job in the world. He protects his country. (2661)</p>
083			other comment re importance of serving		
084		Treatment	unfair treatment toward members	e.g., officers towards enlisted	Another concern is treatment of [location] in general. Because they don't have as much rank as the others they still need to be treated and respected in the same manner as other high ranking service members. (9000)
085			unfair treatment toward spouses/dependents	esp., military towards spouses	Officer's wives are the biggest pain overall. ...Always thinking they are better, never giving enlisted wives a chance to grow, without being looked down upon. (6230)
086			other comment re treatment by military		
087	Deployments	Amount	excessive	too long/too many/too often	My husband has been gone since May and a lot of married men have to spend large spans of time away from their families. That does not make a happy or healthy lifestyle for either partner. Children suffer the most though. My son is at a very impressionable age and his father has been absent for several months due to a remote tour. (3862)
088					

Code	Very General	More Specific	Very Specific	Examples/Definitions	Example Quotations
089		Forewarning	insufficient notice	not notified with enough advance notice	Most of the time they get their orders days before they are supposed to leave. (7582)
090			other comment re deployments		
091	Other	Unique Responses	miscellaneous unique responses	“think they need to have one boat for men and one for women”	I would like the military to discourage extramarital affairs more, considering the men are alone and go to ports where the women are very loose. I also disagree with men and women on a ship, together, especially when the ship is out for 8 months. Let the women have a ship for themselves. (6038)
092					
093		Personal Circumstances	miscellaneous personal circumstances		I have no concerns related to this survey. I just wanted to add my special circumstances that I moved to my current residence without military assistance in moving although my husband is in [location]. I chose to return to [location] to go to graduate school.... I will be geographically separated from my husband for a total of two years while I complete my MA in Spanish linguistics....(5151)
094					
095		Continuations or Restatements	comment continued from #59		Question #59's answer continued here. (5620)
096			answer stated “above” or “before”		As stated above. (1693)
097					
098		Not Codeable	miscellaneous non-categorizable comments	e.g., name/address; nonsense, not legible	My address is [location]. (1120)\ (1968)I'm a honest worker and get along with 95% of the public. (8587)
099			ineligible	respondent ineligible due to divorce, separation from military	

Code	Very General	More Specific	Very Specific	Examples/Definitions	Example Quotations
100	Survey-Related	Comments/Questions	survey feedback	“you should add another survey item about . . .”	I think you should add questions like...why did you move to another job? Are you happy with your current job? Does it pay well? Are your boss OK? (4615)
101			questions and skepticism over usefulness	“this is a waste of time” or “what good is this”	What does the survey contain to me [but] the liability of my response? (6358)I don’t understand the reason for this survey, because it’s no like if you are gonna find me a good job. (4924)
102			apologies and reasons for delays		Sorry for the delay. (4615)
103			appreciate opportunity to give input/optimistic about reform	“thanks for letting me comment”; “this is a good idea”; is not “hope this is helpful”	What a wonderful way to collect data from the backbone of the men and women who serve our country. Keep up the good work! (2027)
104			clarification of response to an unrelated item	explanation of an answer to a previous and unrelated survey item	The answer to 28c is yes only because all the children in the county receive free breakfast at school. (9247)
105			survey did not apply to respondent	respondent stated survey is not applicable to him or her; e.g., unable to work	I don’t know why I was sent this exact survey. It is all about jobs services and in the eight years I’ve been married and in the Navy I have never worked! I am a homemaker that is my job which is grossly underpaid. (0376)
106			other survey-related comment		
107	Missing	Missing Data	no comment	blank, erased, missing, none, no comment; n/a or na	None. (3136)

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE*Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188*

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave Blank)		2. REPORT DATE June 2000	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Final (2 October 1997 -- 2 February 1998)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Analysis of Comments from the 1997 Survey of Spouses of Enlisted Personnel			5. FUNDING NUMBERS M67004-98-D-0002-DO-0001	
6. AUTHOR(S) Peter F. Ramsberger, Dawn E.. (Sunny) Sipes (HumRRO), and Cynthia V.W. Helba (Westat)				
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9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Defense Manpower Data Center 1600 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 400 Arlington, Virginia 22209			10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER 2000-003	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES				
12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) The 1997 Survey of Spouses of Enlisted Personnel was conducted to obtain information from spouses of junior enlisted service members on various aspects of military life. Of particular interest were employment-related issues. While the main results are reported elsewhere, in this paper the authors analyze the written responses when respondents were asked for any comments or concerns they felt there were unable to express through the main body of the survey. A total of 2,672 individuals answered the general open-ended item. This report examines the frequency with which various issues were mentioned in light of background and demographic information supplied by respondents. Highlights of the report include the following: a) compared to spouses of members in CONUS, a higher proportion of those located OCONUS reported problems finding jobs; b) participants in employment assistance programs were more likely to express dissatisfaction with employment assistance efforts than non-participants; and c) those who indicated financial difficulties commented disproportionately higher on financial matters, as well as difficulties associated with childcare, housing, and military life in general than those not indicating financial difficulties.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS enlisted personnel, spouse, employment, Employment Assistance Program, junior enlisted personnel			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 84	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THE PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL	

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