



# Fort Hood Region Veterans Inventory Initiative

Quarterly Report, October - December 2015

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





**Quarterly Report: 1st Quarter, FY 2016**  
(October - December 2015)

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

One key recommendation from the study, published in 2007, was to regularly administer a survey for veterans separating from military service at Fort Hood to capture insightful information regarding their skills and desired career fields post separation for all Soldiers and Spouses. In July 2006, the following parties entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to routinely inventory the intentions, educational level, skills, and employment desires of separating Soldiers in order to improve the Fort Hood regional “Quality of Place”:

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

Data is collected via a voluntary ten-question survey administered during either the Soldier for Life - Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP) workshop or installation final clearance<sup>1</sup>. The purpose for the collection and analysis of this data is threefold:

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

**B. DEMOGRAPHICS**

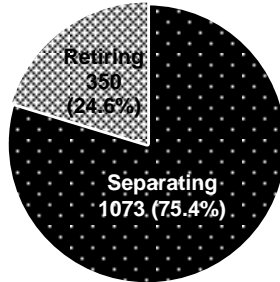
1. For the 1st Quarter FY 2016 (October - December 2015), 1423 Soldiers completing their military service responded to the survey with the demographics graphed below.

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



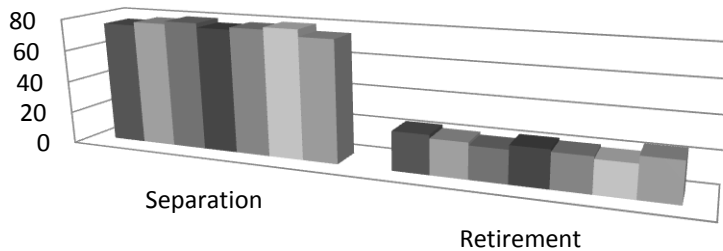
**DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION**



1st Qtr 2016

2. The Veterans Inventory Initiative has collected data on Soldiers separating from the service at Fort Hood since FY 2007 and reports have been based on responses from a total of 35,059 separating Soldiers. For ease of viewing, the graph below charts the results of those who responded to this new survey implemented during the TAP seminar since 3rd Quarter 2014. During this timeframe of April 2014 to December 2015, the amount of those separating from the service has fluctuated between 75-80%, while the amount retiring has fluctuated between 20-25%. The results have been fairly consistent for the past seven quarters since changing to the new survey in 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2014, and we will continue to monitor these results.

**Percentage of Separations by Type**

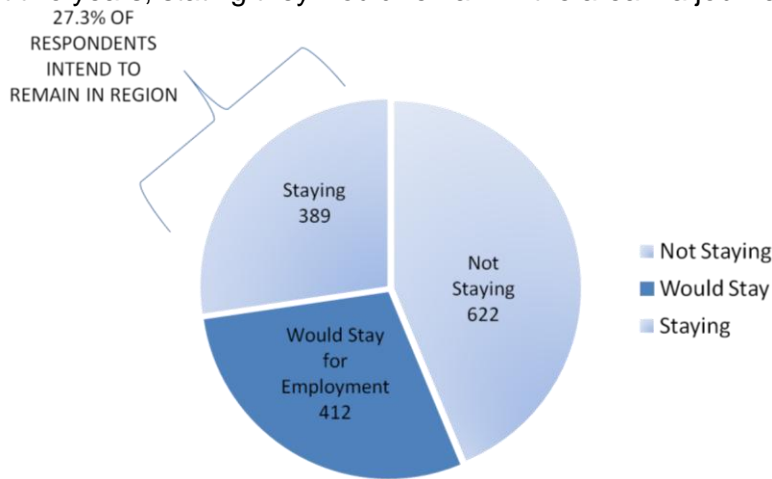


	Separation	Retirement
■ 3rd Qtr 14	75.9	24.1
■ 4th Qtr 14	78	22
■ 1st Qtr 15	79.7	20.3
■ 2nd Qtr 15	77	23
■ 3rd Qtr 15	78.4	21.6
■ 4th Qtr 15	79.8	20.2
■ 1st Qtr 16	75.4	24.6

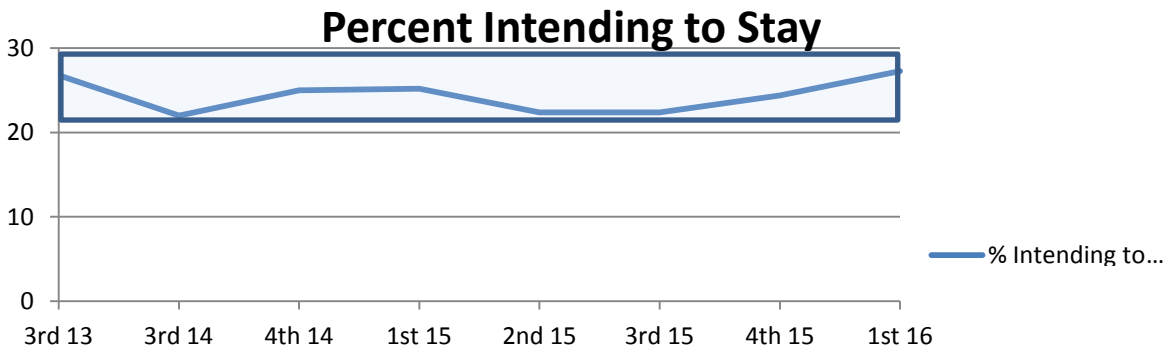


**C. INTENTIONS ON STAYING IN THE REGION:** The respondents were surveyed regarding their intentions on remaining in the region (within 30 miles of Fort Hood – generally equating to the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)) when their service ended. Of the 1423 respondents, 173 did not know at that time.

1. 389 respondents (representing 27.3% of all respondents) indicated they intended to stay in the region. The inventory survey also asks respondents that if they do not intend to remain in the MSA upon leaving the service, would a job available in the area change their response. An additional 412 (29%) indicated they would do so if desirable employment were available. This has resulted in another 26%-35%, over the past two years, stating they would remain in the area if a job was available.



2. When analyzing data of Soldiers' intentions on remaining in the Temple-Killeen-Fort Hood MSA from April 2013 to December 2015, the graph below indicates that the percent of Soldiers intending to remain in the area consistently averaged between 22 and 27 percent within this time period. Prior to November 2012, TAP was voluntary, and many participating Soldiers were close to their separation date when they participated in the survey, and it is likely that many already intended to remain in Central Texas which significantly increased the percentage of Soldiers intending to stay. As such, we have chosen to focus on more current data. It is important to note, however, that the numbers according to the Retired Army Personnel System shows a continual increase in retirees remaining in the region. We will continue to monitor these results.



## FORT HOOD REGION VETERANS INVENTORY INITIATIVE



3. Military retirees residing in the MSA: While the Veterans Inventory Initiative only surveys the intent of Soldiers departing the service, we are able to more accurately track the disposition of the retiring population using data from the Retired Army Personnel System (RAPS), which is based on the actual retired Soldiers' zip code. According to RAPS, the cities of Killeen, Harker Heights, Belton, and Nolanville experienced retiree growth rates exceeding the MSA overall growth of 27.5% for the period June 2009 to November 2015.

	<b>JUNE 2009</b>	<b>NOV 2015</b>	<b>% GROWTH 2009 - 2015</b>
<b>KILLEEN</b>	8120	10787	+32.8
<b>COPPERAS COVE</b>	3028	3489	+15.2
<b>HARKER HEIGHTS</b>	1843	2542	+37.9
<b>TEMPLE</b>	1150	1340	+16.5
<b>KEMPNER</b>	884	1031	+16.6
<b>BELTON</b>	826	1088	+31.7
<b>LAMPASAS</b>	356	393	+10.4
<b>GATESVILLE</b>	350	413	+18.0
<b>NOLANVILLE</b>	266	368	+38.3
<b>SALADO</b>	206	256	+24.3
<b>MSA</b>	17029	21707	+27.5

In an economic impact study released in December 2012, Texas Comptroller Susan Combs reported that more than 250,000 retirees, survivors, and their families remained within traveling distance of Fort Hood. This number continues to grow each quarter due to 85-90% of all local retirees remaining in the region and many others moving into the region due to Quality of Life factors. Current estimates now show over 280,000 supported by Fort Hood. Below are some key data points to provide additional insights into the growth rates locally:

a. WalletHub.com reported that while the United States experienced the lowest population growth since the 1930s, Killeen was ranked number 6 in the nation for the fastest growing city out of 515 nationwide, <https://wallethub.com/edu/fastest-growing-cities/7010/>, December 2015.

b. The Killeen-Fort Hood Regional Airport was awarded two grants totaling more than \$1.3 million by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) which will benefit the economic development in Central Texas, November 2015.

c. Killeen was named Playful City USA by KaBOOM! for the seventh year in a row based on the city's efforts to increase the quantity and quality of playgrounds, park acreage per capita, and the number of youth served, <http://killeenchamber.com/news/killeen-named-playful-city-usa-for-seventh-year>, June 2015.

d. The Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA holds the 3<sup>rd</sup> spot in the state of Texas for Leading Mid-Size City in the Prime Workforce category and 12<sup>th</sup> overall in the United States, <http://killeenchamber.com/index.php/news/article/area-development-ranks-the-killeen-temple-fort-hood-msa-12th-nationally-7th>, July 2014.

e. According to the June 2014 Texas Labor Market Review, the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA increased employment over the year by 10.3 percent and decreased unemployment

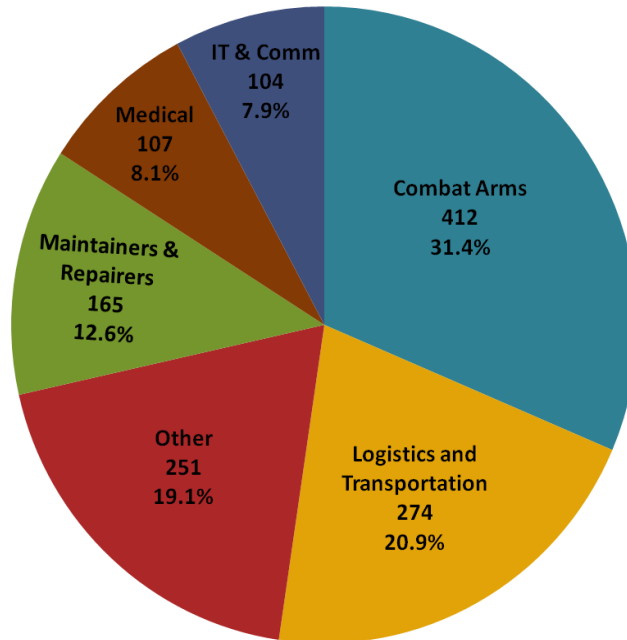


by 1%, <http://killeenchamber.com/index.php/news/article/area-development-ranks-the-killeen-temple-fort-hood-msa-12th-nationally-7th>, July 2014.

f. The Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA economy ranked fourth strongest in the state, and 13th strongest in the nation - just behind Houston, San Antonio, and Austin (according to Policom Corporation, <http://www.policom.com/2014%20MetroRank.htm>, June 2014.)

In addition to these indicators of economic stability for the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA, the Texas Comptroller also stated in the 2012 economic report that Fort Hood's economic impact climbed to \$25.3 billion statewide, which was a 150% increase in comparison to the 2008 report. Comptroller Susan Combs stated "Fort Hood is an economic engine that helps growth in Texas." The report states that Fort Hood was also indirectly responsible for 214,344 jobs throughout Texas, in addition to the 68,942 jobs in the Fort Hood MSA. An updated economic impact report for Fort Hood will be executed in 2016.

**D. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALITIES:** Departing Soldiers represented 190 different Military Occupational Specialties (MOS). However, 81% (1062 of the 1313 valid respondents) can be grouped into five general areas: Combat Arms, Logistics/Transportation, Maintainers/Repairers, Medical, and Information Technology/Communications. The sixth area on the following chart, Other, is comprised of the remaining 251 Soldiers leaving the service with an MOS other than those five areas.



**COMBAT ARMS**

Traditionally, Combat Arms is the largest group and remains the largest group this quarter. Most, if not all, will be combat veterans of the Iraq/Afghanistan campaigns, which have a distinctive small-unit focus by their nature. Therefore, in addition to the skills listed below, these Soldiers would likely have extensive leadership and staff planning skills that may surpass those of their civilian peers.

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Soldiers in combat arms comprise 31.4%(412/1313) of the separating population.

<b>Infantry (139)</b>	Member or leader who individually employs small arms/heavy anti-armor weapons in support of combat operations
<b>Armor (80)</b>	Member or leader who employs main battle tanks or cavalry fighting vehicles in combat operations, and performs reconnaissance and security.
<b>Field Artillery (73)</b>	Operate or supervise high technology cannon artillery weapons, automated tactical data systems, intelligence activities, target processing, radar operations, artillery surveying operations, or meteorological observation.
<b>Engineer (60)</b>	Of the 60 Soldiers, 30 are combat engineers and are directly engaged in providing mobility, counter-mobility and survivability support to combat forces. Operates, directs and assists in the operation of various light and heavy engineer wheeled and tracked vehicles. Directs construction of shelters and assembly of military fixed bridges. Another 35 have engineer MOS specialties of construction, plumber, firefighter, horizontal construction, interior electrician, technical, carpentry and masonry and terrain data specialists.
<b>Air Defense Artillery (60)</b>	Operate command/control/communications/computer information systems or the lightweight, highly mobile Avenger or medium weight Patriot Air Defense Missile systems.

### LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORTATION

Soldiers serving in the logistics and transportation fields comprise 20.9%(274/1313) of the separating population. The top five categories are shown below.

<b>Automated Logistical Specialists (53)</b>	Supervise and perform management or stock record/warehouse functions pertaining to receipt, storage, distribution and issue, and maintain equipment records and parts.
<b>Petroleum Supply Specialists (43)</b>	Supervise the receipt, storage, accountability, and cares for dispensing, issuing and shipping bulk or packaged petroleum, oils, and lubricants.
<b>Unit Supply Specialists (42)</b>	Supervise or perform duties involving the request, receipt, storage, issue, accountability, and preservation of individual, organizational, installation, and expendable supplies and equipment.
<b>Motor Transport Operator (40)</b>	Supervises and operates wheel vehicles to transport personnel and cargo. Oversees and checks proper loading and unloading of cargo on vehicles and trailers.
<b>Food Service Specialists (22)</b>	Supervise or prepares, cooks and serves food in field or garrison food service operations.



**MAINTAINERS/ REPAIRERS**

Soldiers that work in the field of maintenance and repair comprise 12.6%(165/1313) of the separating population. The top four categories are shown below.

<b>Wheeled Vehicle Mechanics (67)</b>	Supervise and perform unit, direct support and general support level maintenance and recovery operations on light and heavy wheeled vehicles, their associated trailers and material handling equipment.
<b>Special purpose (53)</b>	8 different low-density fields that require a degree of technical skills that would support the repair and maintenance of Army vehicles and equipment. These skills include metal workers (welders), machinists, small arms and fire control repair, power generation, computer/detection systems, radar, avionic communication equipment, and special purpose equipment (such as HVAC and refrigeration systems).
<b>Aviation repairers (36)</b>	5 different enlisted specialties (less pilots and air traffic controllers) ranging from aircraft structural repairers to airframe-specific armament/electrical/avionics system repairers.
<b>Tracked Vehicle Mechanics (20)</b>	Perform or supervise unit maintenance, diagnose, and troubleshoot malfunctions on gas turbine and diesel power plants; the suspension, steering, hydraulics, auxiliary power units, and the armament/fire control systems on tracked vehicles including the M1 Abrams main battle tank and Bradley Fighting Vehicle.

**MEDICAL**

Personnel in the medical field make up 8.1%(107/1313) of the separating population. The top two categories are shown below.

<b>Health Care Specialist (63)</b>	Provide emergency medical treatment, limited primary care, force health protection, evacuation in a variety of operational and clinical settings from point of injury or illness through the continuum of military health care under the supervision of a physician, nurse or physician's assistant. As a field combat medic, provides emergency medical care/treatment at point of wounding on the battlefield or to battle and non-battle casualties during wartime .
<b>Other (44)</b>	6 Behavior Health Specialists, 5 Dental Specialists, 3 Physician Assistants, 3 Veterinary Food Inspection Specialists, 3 Radiology Specialists, 2 Army Practical Nursing Specialists, 1 Biomedical Equipment Specialists, and 21 other Soldiers with various medical specialty MOSSs.





**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS**

The information technology and communications field makes up 7.9%(104/1313) of the separating population. The top six categories are shown below.

<p><b>Signal Support Systems Specialist</b> (24)</p>	<p>Supervise, install, employ, maintain, troubleshoot and assist users with battlefield signal support systems, terminal devices, satellite communications equipment and automated telecommunications computer systems, to include local area networks, wide area networks and routers. Integrate signal systems and networks; performs unit level maintenance on authorized signal equipment and associated electronic devices; train and provide technical assistance to users of signal equipment.</p>
<p><b>Information Technology Specialist</b> (18)</p>	<p>Supervise, install, operate and perform unit level maintenance on multi-functional/multi-user information processing systems, peripheral equipment, and associated devices. Perform analyst and information assurance functions and conducts data system studies. Perform Information Services Support Office (ISSO) duties of printing, publications, records management and Communication Security (COMSEC) custodian functions and certification authority duties in support of the Defense Message System (DMS).</p>
<p><b>Multichannel Transmission System Operator-Maintainer</b> (15)</p>	<p>Supervise, install, operate and perform unit level maintenance on multi-channel line-of-site and tropospheric scatter communications systems, communications security (COMSEC) devices, and associated equipment.</p>
<p><b>Cable Systems Installer-Maintainer</b> (9)</p>	<p>Cable Systems Installer-Maintainers are primarily responsible for installing, operating and performing maintenance on cable and wire communications systems, communication security devices and associated equipment.</p>
<p><b>Satellite Communication Systems Operator-Maintainer</b> (8)</p>	<p>Satellite Communication Systems Operator-Maintainers are responsible for making sure that the lines of communication are always up and running. They install, operate, maintain and repair strategic and tactical multichannel satellite communications.</p>
<p><b>Nodal Network System Operator-Maintainer</b> (6)</p>	<p>The Nodal Network Systems Operator-Maintainer supervises, installs, operates, and performs systems maintenance on large and small electronic switches; system control centers; node management facilities; associated multiplexing and combat net radio interface (CNRI) equipment; short range line of sight radio systems; communications security (COMSEC) devices; and other equipment associated with network switching operations.</p>

**E. DESIRED POST- MILITARY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT:**

Respondents are asked to indicate the type (or types) of post-military employment they desire. If married, they can indicate their spouse's employment preferences as well. In order to

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standardize input for ease of analysis, the survey provides 14 broad categories conforming to industry categories found in the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS). The choice "other" is offered when a specific desired category is not provided. For this 1st Quarter report, the top five desired categories of post-military service employment were<sup>2</sup>:

### 1. Soldiers Separating:

#### **SOLDIER**

1. Other:	112
2. Medical/Health:	91
3. Law Enforcement/Security:	80
4. Management/Business:	51
5. Computers/Software:	43

#### **SPOUSE**

1. Medical/Health Field:	161
2. Other:	149
3. Administrative/Office:	79
4. Education/Teaching:	62
5. Management/Business:	38

The anomalies in Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) data may have been carried over to the types of post-service employment desired. Soldiers with a medical-related specialty are usually considered "low density," however 8.1% of respondents came from that field; it is likely most, if not all, would desire post-service employment in the medical field. Law Enforcement/Security has always ranked as one of the top five desired career choices for post-service employment, which continues to be the case this quarter and is most likely attributed to the large number of Soldiers separating with a Combat Arms MOS. While Management/Business has been one of the top desired careers for post-service employment since 2007, it was the fourth highest desired career for this quarter. Since October 2007, the top desired careers for spouses have always included Administrative/Office, Education/Teaching, and Management/Business, and this trend continued this quarter. The Medical/Health Field has been reported as one of the top five desired careers for spouses since July 2008, and continues to be the number one choice for spouses this quarter. On the survey, Soldiers are given fifteen different choices of desired jobs after separation for them, as well as their spouse, and "other" is one of those choices. For the second quarter in a row, this is the top choice for the Soldiers and the second highest for their spouse.

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



## 2. Soldiers Retiring:

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

1. Management/Business:	120 responses
2. Other:	87 responses
3. Admin/Office:	82 responses
4. Transportation/Warehouse:	74 responses
5. Medical/Health Field:	66 responses

Management/Business, once again, remained the top desired area of employment for this 1st Quarter 2016. Administration/Office and Other continued to be the other top two desired areas of employment for retirees as well. Medical/Health Field moved up to the top five desired areas of post-service employment, and this may have been due to the increase in the service members with a medical MOS leaving the service this quarter.

## 3. Employment:

a) According to a previous study by Payscale.com in 2012, management consultation is at the top of the list for best jobs for veterans. The following is a list of the 16 most common and well-paid occupations that veterans of all services across the United States have entered since transitioning from the military service.

- Management consultant
- Program manager, information technology
- Systems analyst
- FBI agent
- Field service engineer, medical equipment
- Systems engineer
- Information technology consultant
- Intelligence analyst
- Helicopter pilot
- Network engineer
- Project manager, construction
- Technical writer
- Business development manager
- Network administrator, information technology
- Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning service technician
- Fireman

b) Orion International, an employment placement service for former military personnel, finds that officers and senior-enlisted personnel typically find success in high-level management positions, with many major corporations offering "fast-track" leadership development for veterans. Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers eligible to retire have spent many years leading increasingly larger and more complex organizations, are graduates of an Army Professional Education system that focuses on developing their leadership skills, and have



demonstrated success as a result of their longevity of service. Employers are looking to former military personnel due to their leadership experience, transferrable skills, and proven accountability. These veterans are known for being highly energetic and motivated and are also known for being career-oriented, goal-oriented, and are very familiar with being in a position where accountability is high. As such, it is essential to help place those with strong leadership skills back into the private sector work force who have mastered the skills of management during military service, and many companies are looking to veterans to fulfill that need.

c) The Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University performed a comprehensive study in March 2012 on the traits of military veterans and developed a report of the results titled, "The Business Case for Hiring a Veteran."

This study reported that previous military service resulted in leadership ability and a strong sense of mission, which are highly valued traits in a competitive business environment. Of the ten traits discussed in the paper, it identified that Veterans are adept at skills transfer from their past military experience to the new work environment, they are able to act quickly and decisively in a changing environment, they demonstrate high levels of resiliency, exhibit advanced team-building skills, and possess a strong organizational commitment. This research supports very compelling reasons for hiring individuals with military background and experience. The Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA has a large pool of educated veteran job applicants to choose from and it is clear that many would respond favorably to remaining in the area if the right job was available to choose from at the end of their service in the military.

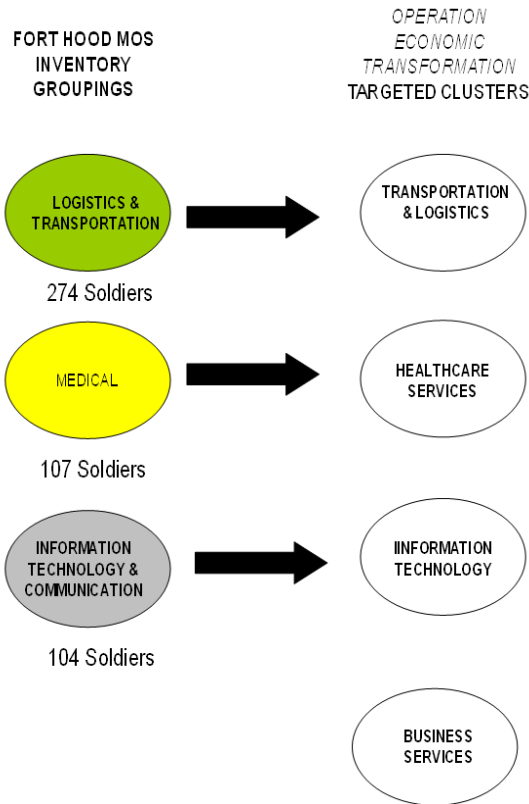
While it is understandable that jobs readily available within the area would retain many more Soldiers within the MSA upon leaving the service, the Census Bureau has confirmed that 2.4 million businesses are owned by military veterans. Veterans have many years of military experience preparing them for the rigors of running a small business. Their discipline, drive, and motivation are characteristics that make them desirable employees. The combination of self-driven veterans and an inexpensive cost of living makes the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA a desirable place to remain after their service.

d) The *Operation Economic Transformation* Report identified four "target industries" or clusters that present the Greater Fort Hood Region with immediate opportunities for economic growth:

- Information Technology
- Transportation and Logistics
- Healthcare Services
- Business Services

Clusters are geographic concentrations of interconnected firms and institutions utilizing related applications and serving similar markets. When fully developed, clusters can act as the principal drivers of economic growth and innovation in a region. The report recommended pursuing the development of these four clusters through a coordinated strategy of business retention, recruitment and entrepreneurship.

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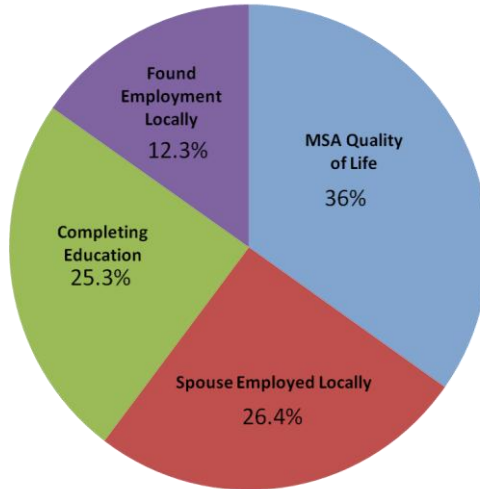
When separating the respondents into major MOS categories, there is a strong correlation between the numbers of separating Soldiers with those skills and the target clusters in the Operation Economic Transformation Report as shown in the chart above. In addition, because Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers eligible to retire have spent many years of their military career in leadership positions and are graduates of an Army Professional Education system, they have acquired many skills in Management and Administrative roles. This training and experience, regardless of their MOS, would directly correspond with the Business Services cluster.

**F. REASONS FOR REMAINING IN THE MSA:**

1. In 2013, the survey was revised to gain more clarity on the Quality of Life factors cited by separating Soldiers that impact their decision to remain in Central Texas or go elsewhere after their service ends. The majority of those completing the survey who were staying locally said it was due to the MSA quality of life, while two other large groups were staying due to their spouse being employed locally, or the Soldier's intent for completion of their education. With the addition of Texas A&M-Central Texas to the MSA, the Soldiers and their spouses now have the opportunity to complete their baccalaureate or master's degree while remaining in an area with a lower cost of living compared to other areas with universities.

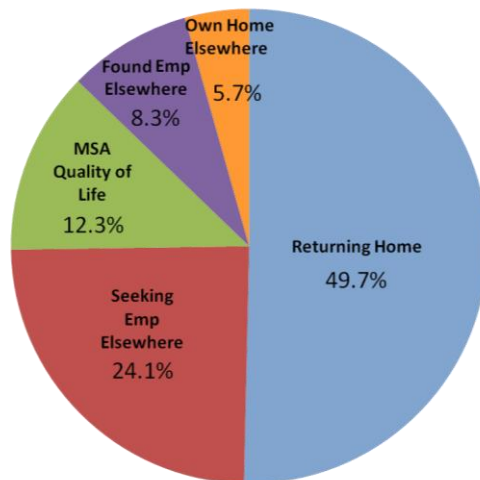


**Reasons for Remaining Inside the MSA  
1st Quarter FY 2016**



2. The graph below addresses the reasons for those service members not staying in the MSA after separation. The majority of those choosing to live outside of the MSA after separation was mainly due to wanting to return to their home of record, and the second largest group stated that seeking employment elsewhere was their primary reason. These have been the top two reasons for the past six quarters. While returning to home of record is not something that can be improved for the area, available and desirable employment and the perception of the MSA quality of life are areas that can be improved.

**Reasons for Living Outside of the MSA  
1st Quarter FY 2016**



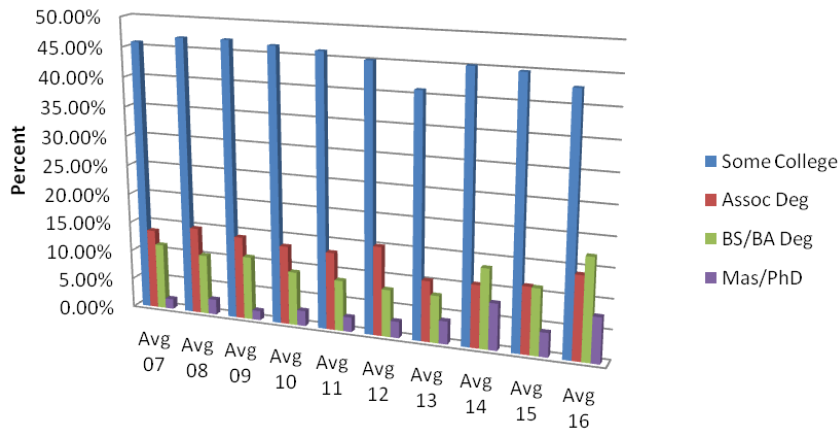


**G. EDUCATION LEVEL OF THOSE REMAINING IN THE REGION:** Respondents are asked to provide their highest level of educational attainment. For this quarter, 319 of 389 (82%) percent of the respondents who intend to remain in the region have some level of post-secondary education:

1. Some College – 167 (42.9%)
2. Associates Degree – 55 (14.1%)
3. Baccalaureate Degree – 67 (17.2%)
4. Masters/PhD Degree – 30 (7.7%)

The data from over 35,000 Soldiers separating during the last eight years indicates that for those Soldiers who intend to remain in the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA (both retirement eligible and non-retirement eligible), educational attainment for those completing their Masters or PhD has increased. This could be a direct result of the availability of upper level universities in the area, especially with the addition of TAMU-CT. This data is further affirmation that those Soldiers leaving the service provide a large amount of highly educated potential employees for the area.

**Educational Attainment % of Those Intending to Stay in MSA**



Anecdotally, businesses indicate they want to hire veterans. Educational attainment is a key variable in that process given the current national unemployment rate. With the sluggish job market and the extra benefits of health care, tuition assistance, and housing and food allowances while in the service, the military remains a favorable career choice. However, with the downsizing of troop levels, the standards of recruiting continue to be more stringent, so candidates applying with a GED are often turned away and encouraged to complete at least 15 college credits before re-applying which guarantees a more educated group of veterans<sup>3</sup>. When taking into account that Central Texas offers a low cost of living, has several post secondary educational institutions within the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA where Soldiers are able to

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

## FORT HOOD REGION VETERANS INVENTORY INITIATIVE



complete their degrees, and the fact that a large percent of Soldiers separating from the service desire to remain in the area, the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA is becoming a very desirable area for potential business partners to relocate to the area. This opportunity may also motivate many other Soldiers who have started their degree as indicated in the above graph to complete their education through the use of their Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits, with the potential of a job in the area after leaving the service.

Perceptions versus reality: As 98% percent of Fort Hood Soldiers reside on-post or within 10 miles of the Fort Hood main gate in the communities of Central Texas, the survey choices reflect their perceptions of areas where improvements might further influence their decision to remain in the region when their military service ends. As Operation Economic Transformation points out, “Economic development planning that is responsive to new opportunities ...recognizes the increasing importance of quality of place in the attraction and retention of business and workers. Quality of Life is about providing options, not just for current residents, but for those who will be residents in the future.” Quality of Life within the MSA is important to retaining Soldiers in the area after separating, as seen in the previous graph. Veterans ending their service at Fort Hood are clearly a talented and educated workforce worth retaining in the Central Texas region, and their perceptions of the Quality of Life is important to be considered in future planning. While the Quality of Life is affected greatly by perception, bringing in larger industry and providing those employment opportunities is one strong way to make the Quality of Life in the MSA more desirable, which is a strong point to retain the Soldier and their family in the MSA.

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

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