



# Veterans Inventory Initiative

Quarterly Report, First Quarter, FY 2008

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





## **FORT HOOD REGION VETERANS INVENTORY INITIATIVE**

### **Quarterly Report: 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, FY 2008**

(October - December 2007)

**A. BACKGROUND:** *Operation Economic Transformation* is the Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce plan to identify, measure, and capitalize on new and emerging economic development opportunities present in the Fort Hood region. One key proposal of the plan was to regularly administer a survey designed to capture insightful information regarding the skills and desired career fields of veterans separating from military service at Fort Hood. In July 2006, the following parties entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to routinely inventory the intentions, educational level, skills, employment desires, and suggestions of separating Soldiers in order to improve the Fort Hood regional “Quality of Place”:

- Fort Hood Adjutant General/Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP)
- Central Texas Workforce Board
- Central Texas Workforce Development Centers
- Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce
- Heart Of Texas Defense Alliance
- Texas Veterans Commission

Data is collected via a voluntary twelve-question survey administered during either the Transition Assistance Program (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**

For the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter (October through December 2007):

1. 621 Soldiers completing their military service at Fort Hood responded to the survey.
2. 79 percent of respondents were leaving military service prior to becoming retirement-eligible (295 responses/47.5%), or were being medically discharged (195 responses/31%).
3. 21 percent (131 respondents) were retiring after 20 or more years of service.

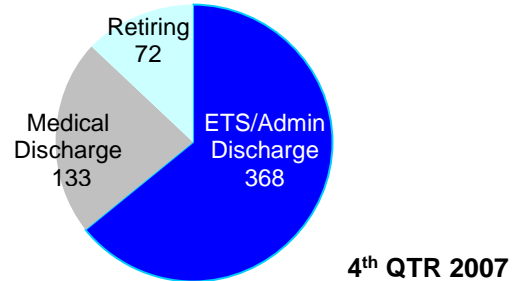
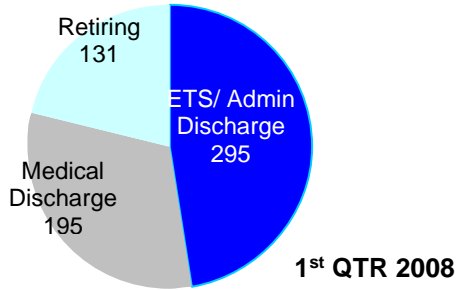
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<sup>1</sup> Retiring Soldiers may participate in TAP up to two years prior to their retirement date, while non-retiring Soldiers may participate up to one year in advance. However, the Transition Services Manager reports the majority of soldiers attend the TAP workshop 6 months or less before separation. Of the soldiers with a stated separation date in FY08, 3125 completed the TAP workshop. Of these, 57% completed the survey within the last six months. The other 43% completed it before October 2007.



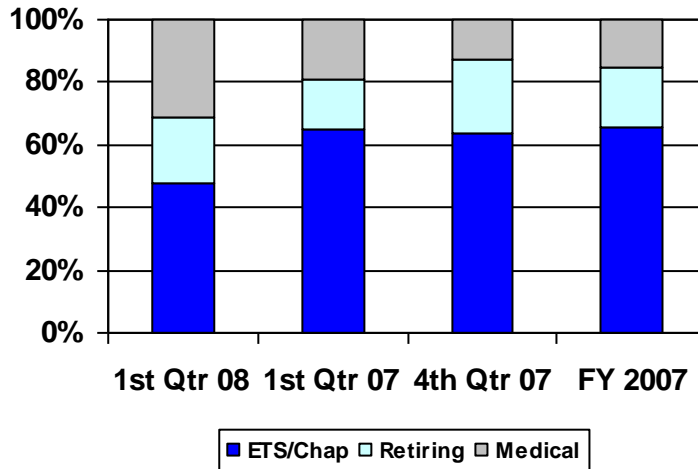
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**DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION**



4. For the year-to-date (December 2006 - December 2007)
  - a. 4312 Soldiers completing their service have responded to the survey.
  - b. 2808 (65%) were in the category of ETS/Administrative discharge
  - c. 744 (17%) were being medically discharged
  - d. 710 (16%) indicated their intention to retire with 20-plus years of military service.

Percentages according to the reason cited for leaving the service by quarter and for calendar year 2007 are as follows:



**C. INTENTIONS ON STAYING IN THE REGION:**

The respondents were surveyed regarding their intentions about remaining in the region (within 30 miles of Fort Hood – generally equating to the Temple-Killeen-Fort Hood Metropolitan Statistical Area) when their service ended.

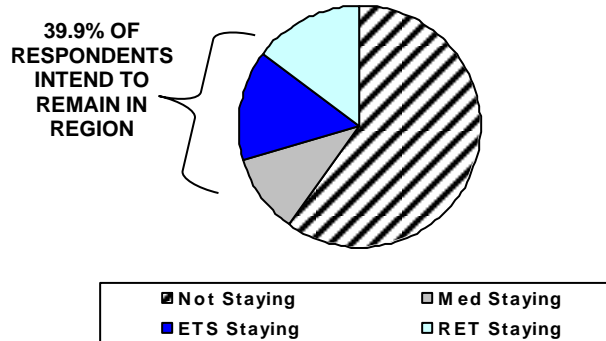
1. 248 respondents (representing 39.9% of all respondents) indicated they intended to stay in the region. This data represents:
  - a. 92 retirees (70.2% of all retirement eligible respondents)



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- b. 156 (31.8%) non-retirement eligible respondents
- c. 125 (20%) responded they did not intend to stay in the region, but would do so if desirable employment were available.

### INTENDING TO STAY IN THE REGION WHEN SERVICE ENDS 1st QUARTER SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS



2. For the year-to-date (December 2006 – December 2007) a total of 1562 Soldiers (36% of all respondents) leaving the service at Fort Hood indicated they intended to remain in the region once their service was completed.

3. Trends and Conclusions. The number of respondents to the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter survey was significantly lower than previous quarters. The decrease is most likely a result of the lengthening of tours in Iraq from 12 to 15 months coupled with Fort Hood deployment cycles. III Corps HQ, the separate brigades, and 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division redeployed to Ft. Hood late 1<sup>st</sup> quarter/ early 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. Indications are 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter responses will be significantly higher. On average, 35 percent of the respondents indicate they intend to remain in Central Texas when their service ends. In the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 125 (20%) additional respondents would stay in the region if desirable employment were available. For the year to date, 40 percent of Soldiers leaving Central Texas would stay if the type of employment the respondent desires was available. Retiring Soldiers represent 457 of the number remaining in the region – an average of 38 per month.

4. While the Veterans Inventory Initiative only surveys the intent of Soldiers departing the service, it is possible to more accurately track the disposition of the retiring population, using data from the Retired Army Personnel System, which provides the actual numbers of retired Soldiers to zip code level. For the 12-month period ending in December 2007, the total number of military retirees grew by 2 percent in the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA. All cities, excluding Copperas Cove, Lampasas, and Salado experienced growth rates exceeding the MSA average.

	January 2007	DECEMBER 2007	DIFFERENCE	% CHANGE
KILLEEN	7556	7745	189	2.5
COPPERAS COVE	2998	2975	(23)	0
HARKER HEIGHTS	1697	1765	68	3.8
TEMPLE	1058	1094	36	3.3
KEMPNER	843	873	30	3.5



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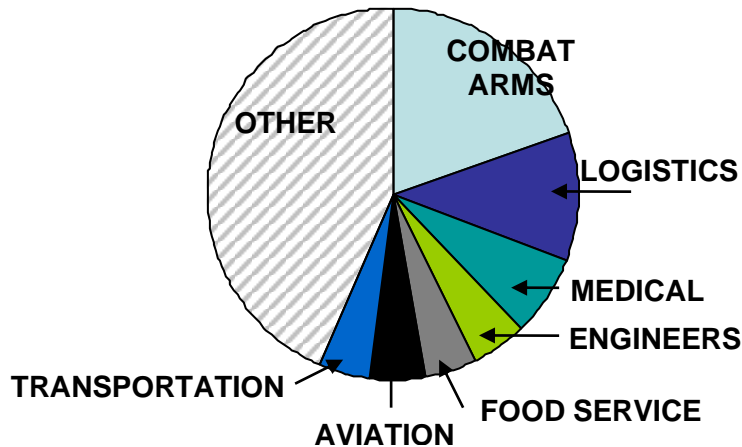
BELTON	792	803	11	1.4
LAMPASAS	342	338	(4)	0
GATESVILLE	327	337	10	2.9
NOLANVILLE	224	238	14	5.9
SALADO	202	199	(3)	0
MSA	16039	16367	328	2

The military retiree rate of growth for north Texas (174 counties less the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA) was 1 percent for the same period.

The data for rates of growth remains relatively consistent this quarter with 6 communities exceeding the MSA growth rate. We will continue to monitor retiree data during 2008 to determine the potential relationship between intent and the number of retirees that actually remain in the region. The survey data clearly indicates that the availability of desirable employment plays a major role in the intention to remain in the area. The current direct annual economic impact of military retirees and surviving annuitants in the region equates to \$791.5 million.

**D. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALITIES:** Departing Soldiers represented 125 different Military Occupational Specialities. The top five categories/specialties amounted to 47.3 percent of the total responses received. The top two categories (Combat Arms and Logistics Specialist) from the 4<sup>TH</sup> Quarter remained the top two in the 1<sup>ST</sup> Quarter. Medical Specialists moved into the 3<sup>rd</sup> position. Engineers and Food Service specialists were 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, respectively.

### 1<sup>ST</sup> QUARTER MOS DATA



1. **Combat Arms** (119 responses) comprises four separate specialties, listed below, along with the number of respondents. Given the units at Fort Hood (seven Brigade Combat Teams and one Fires Brigade) and deployment cycles, the number of Combat Arms Soldiers leaving the service is predictable. 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 far surpass those of their civilian peers.

a. Infantry (37): member or leader who individually employs small arms/heavy anti-armor weapons in support of combat operations.



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b. Artillery (33): operates or supervises high technology cannon artillery weapons, automated tactical data systems, intelligence activities, target processing, radar operations, artillery surveying operations, or meteorological observation.

c. Armor/Cavalry (33) member or leader who employs main battle tanks or cavalry fighting vehicles in combat operations, and performs reconnaissance and security.

d. Air Defense (16): operates command/control/communications/computer information systems or the lightweight, highly mobile Avenger or medium weight Patriot Air Defense Missile systems.

2. **Logistics Specialist** (66 responses) comprises three separate specialties, listed below, along with the number of respondents in each specialty.

a. Automated Logistical Specialists (92A; 27) 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 (92F; 20) supervise the receipt, storage, accountability, and cares for dispensing, issuing and shipping bulk or packaged petroleum, oils, and lubricants.

c. Unit Supply Specialists (92Y; 19) supervise or perform duties involving the request, receipt, storage, issue, accountability, and preservation of individual, organizational, installation, and expendable supplies and equipment.

3. **Medical Specialists.** There were 41 responses representing 7 different enlisted specialties including health care specialists, dental specialists, and pharmacy specialists. Health Care Specialists (68W – 30) were the most prevalent MOS.

4. **Engineers.** There were 30 responses representing 10 different enlisted specialties in the Engineer field. Construction Group operators, Construction Equipment operators, Carpentry and Masonry Specialist, Technical Engineers

5. **Food Service Specialist** (28 responses – 92G). The food service specialist supervises or prepares cooks and serves food in field or garrison food service operations.

Aviation (28 responses) and Transportation (27 responses) were the number six and seven most prevalent MOS', respectively



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**E. DESIRED POST-MILITARY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT<sup>2</sup>:**

Respondents are asked to indicate the type (or types) of post-military employment they desire. In order to standardize input for ease of analysis, the survey provides 12 broad categories conforming to industry categories found in the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS), but respondents may write in and/or amplify any area not listed. The data indicates for all respondents the top four categories of post-service employment desired are:

**SOLDIER**

- 1. Management: 191
- 2. Law Enforcement: 179
- 3. Administrative: 177
- 4. Transportation: 135

**SPOUSE**

- 1. Administration 114
- 2. Medical 109
- 3. Management 97
- 4. Education 75

For only those respondents who are retirement eligible, the top four categories of desired post-service employment are:

- 1. Management: 60 responses
- 2. Administrative: 44 responses
- 3. Transportation: 43 responses
- 4. Education: 38 responses

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. In most cases, their skills would include human resource development, supervision of large numbers of subordinates, fiscal planning, etc. Therefore, Management and Administration are areas of post-service employment that are consistent with their training and experience.

Soldiers leaving the military prior to becoming eligible for retirement have consistently rated Law Enforcement within the top two categories for post-service employment. Given the skills of the predominant Military Occupational Specialties (Combat Arms), a high rate of recent combat experience, and advanced educational attainment of the respondents, a wide range of possibilities available in the Law Enforcement area is apparently appealing. The Transportation area most likely reflects the numbers of Motor Transport Operators and Mechanics responding to the survey. The number of retirement eligible soldiers expressing an interest in education as a post military career is higher than in previous quarter.

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<sup>2</sup> Employers desiring to hire Fort Hood veterans may post their job announcement on the ACAP website ([www.acap.army.mil](http://www.acap.army.mil)). Large employers with an employment website can post the URL on the ACAP website which will directly link to their employment website. Employers can also coordinate with the Fort Hood Transition Services Manager (Linda Christ at (254)288-6735) to arrange to recruit potential Veteran employees in person Tuesday through Thursday, and briefly address the TAP workshop (industry they represent, skills they are seeking, and availability to discuss job opportunities.) Employers can place a job posting via "Work In Texas" ([www.workintexas.com](http://www.workintexas.com)) – a statewide, internet-based job matching system through the Central Texas Workforce Center (254) 200-2020. The Texas Veterans Services staff works closely with the Central Texas Workforce Business Services including job development, direct referrals, and military skills-civilian occupations matching. Contact Jerry Butts (Killeen: (254)200-2026) or Eugene Hall (Temple: (254)773-1607, ext. 4032) for more information.



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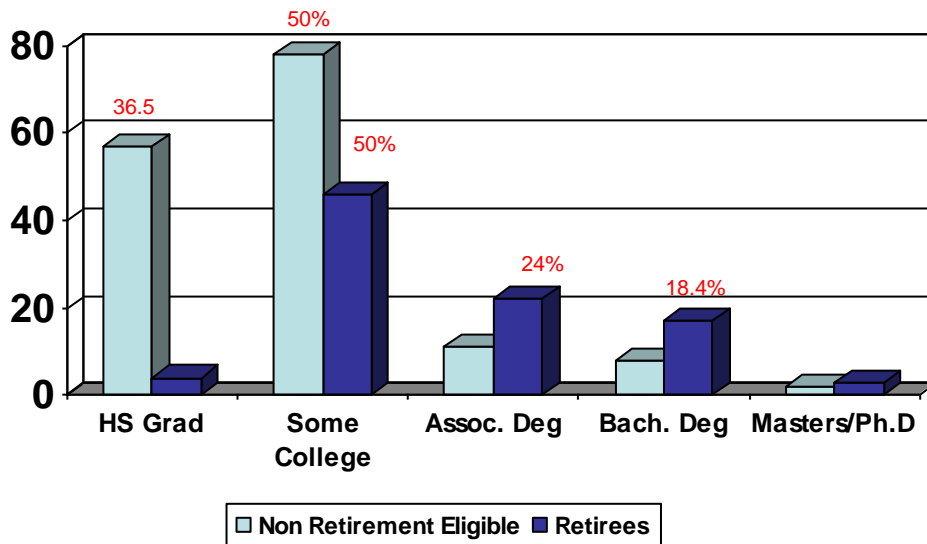
**F. EDUCATION LEVEL OF THOSE REMAINING IN THE REGION:**

Respondents were asked to indicate their highest level of educational attainment. Forty five percent of all respondents indicated they had “Some College” or greater. Eleven percent have an Associates degree, and 9.8 percent have a Baccalaureate degree.

The data depicted below represents only the 248 respondents who indicated they intended to stay in the region upon completion of their service, and is separated by those eligible for retirement and those Soldiers leaving the service that are not retirement eligible.<sup>3</sup>

The data indicates that an overwhelming majority (96%) of retirement-eligible respondents who intend on remaining in the region have some post-secondary education. 50 percent list their highest education level as “Some College”, and 23.9 percent have received their Associates degree. 63.4 percent of non retirement-eligible Soldiers have post-secondary education, with 50 percent indicating they have “Some College.”

**HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED**  
**Soldiers REMAINING in the region.**



1. When the highest level of educational attained by Soldiers leaving the service at Fort Hood is expressed as a percentage of all respondents (rate of educational attainment) and compared to educational attainment for Bell County Texas and the state of Texas as a whole, the following comparison can be made<sup>4</sup>:

<sup>3</sup> Data is for 92 retirees and 156 non-retirement eligibles;

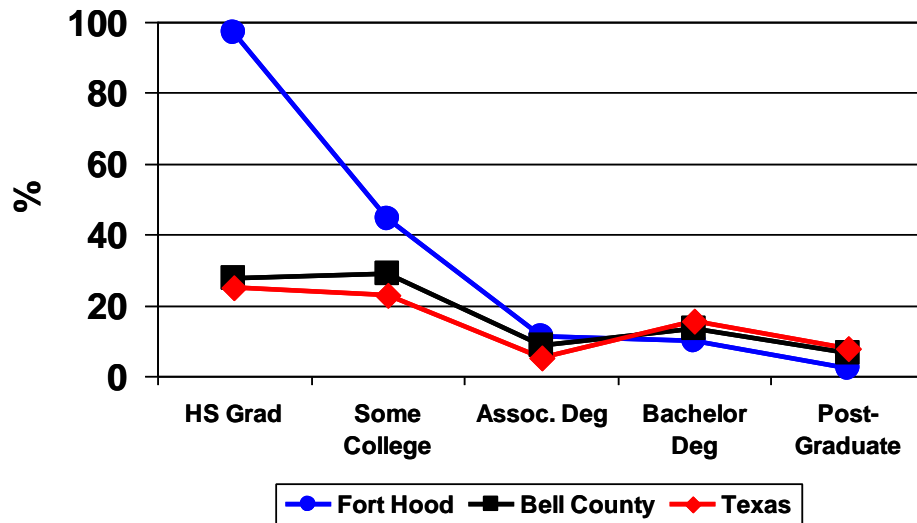
<sup>4</sup> Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board; also cited on the Texas A&M University Real Estate Center – Market Overview 2006.





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**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT COMPARISON**



2. Conclusions. The data indicates Soldiers are better-educated than their civilian counterparts in the region and statewide. This is reflective of a high degree of self initiative and demonstrates that Soldiers willingly embrace the notion of lifelong learning. Continuing education is an important component to retention, and it is routine for Soldiers to perform in an increasingly sophisticated and technical operating environment in the execution of their duties. In 2007 there were 5,274 Fort Hood Soldiers enrolled in 12,275 Central Texas College courses (resident and on-line), pursuing Associates Degrees and/or vocational/technical training; this represents a 54% increase in enrollments over 2006. For academic year 2007, 201 Soldiers were enrolled in 399 upper-level/graduate courses at the Tarleton State University System Center – Central Texas.

**G. DESIRED “QUALITY OF PLACE” IMPROVEMENTS:**

1. An important consideration in retaining a talented military Veteran workforce is how they perceive “Quality of Place” when deciding where to live upon separation from military service. Respondents were asked to indicate the improvements they would desire (their perception of the Central Texas Quality of Place) in the general areas of higher education, retail shopping, health care, entertainment, child care, or “other” that would positively affect their decision to remain in the region. 23.2 percent of respondents listed entertainment, followed by higher education (22.4%), housing (20.3%), and health care (11.7 %). Less than 10 percent of respondents listed child care or retail shopping as Quality of Place factors they perceived needed improvement.

2. The most frequently recurring response was “other.” The survey affords respondents the opportunity to provide additional written comments, and the most often-noted areas respondents perceive needing improvement are:

- a. more pay/better jobs (55 comments)



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- b. *Family/ community activities- including comments concerning schools (32 comments, mostly citing a lack of children and family-oriented recreation and entertainment)*
- c. *crime rate/ traffic/congestion (26 comments)*
- d. *more college classes/degrees (15 comments)*

Note: Higher education and entertainment are general survey categories, but respondents have consistently provided amplifying comments on both of those areas. It is also noteworthy that for this quarter, desired improvements in entertainment moved ahead of higher education and housing for the first time in the five quarters that data has been analyzed and reported.

3. Perceptions versus reality. Specific comments separating Soldiers cite as desired improvements to the Central Texas “Quality of Place” remain consistent from previous reports. As 75 to 80 percent of Fort Hood Soldiers reside in the communities of Central Texas (98% within 10 miles of the Fort Hood main gate), the comments 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 place is about providing options, not just for current residents, but for those who will be residents in the future.” 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 Quality of Place improvements are important feedback to be considered in future planning. We will continue to monitor the responses for any significant changes in subsequent reports.

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

***Special thanks to Ms. Linda Angel, Central Texas Workforce Center for the design of the report cover and logo; and to Mr. Gerry Fluharty, Texas Veterans Commission, who compiles the data for these reports.***