



# Veterans Inventory Initiative

Quarterly Report, Third Quarter, FY 2007

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: 3rd Quarter, FY 2007

(April - June 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:

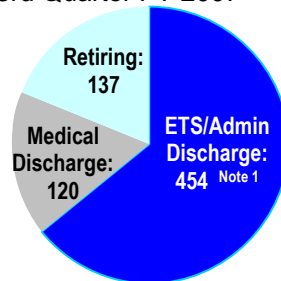
1. develop and retain the region’s skilled and motivated military Veteran workforce;
2. foster innovation and entrepreneurship; retain existing businesses, and attract new business to the region; and
3. align the efforts of the participating agencies to enhance options for current and future/potential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

**B. DEMOGRAPHICS:** For the period comprising April through June 2007:

1. 711 Soldiers completing their military service at Fort Hood responded to the survey.
2. 81 percent of respondents were leaving military service prior to becoming retirement-eligible (454 reponses/64 percent), or were being medically discharged (120 responses/17 percent).
3. 19 percent (137 respondents) were retiring after 20 or more years of service, compared with 23.5 percent (370 respondents) the previous quarter.

#### DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

3rd Quarter FY 2007



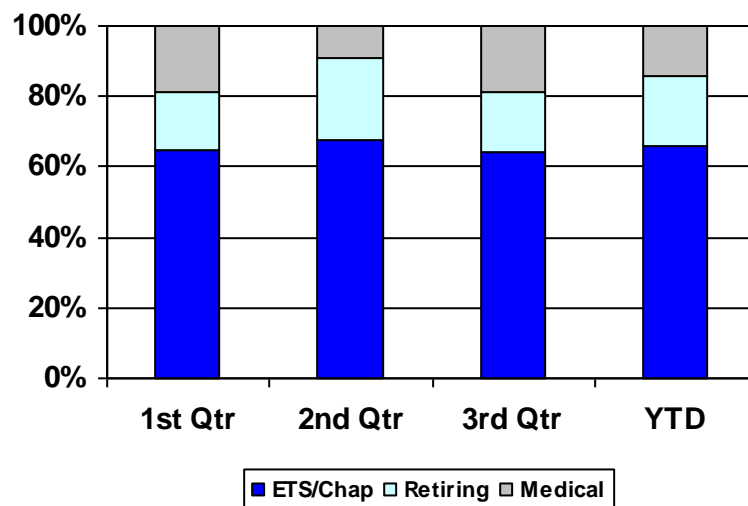
<sup>1</sup> Retiring Soldiers may participate in TAP up to two years prior to their retirement date, while non-retiring Soldiers may participate up to one year in advance. Approximately 60% of all Soldiers leaving the service at Fort Hood currently attend a TAP workshop, and of those, over 85% respond to this survey of post-military intentions.

## FORT HOOD REGION VETERANS INVENTORY INITIATIVE



4. For the year-to-date (September 2006 – June 2007):
  - a. 3,812 Soldiers completing their service have responded to the survey.
  - b. 2,513 (66 percent) were in the category of ETS/Administrative discharge
  - c. 549 (14.4 percent) were being medically discharged
  - d. 747 (19.6 percent) indicated their intention to retire with 20-plus years of military service.

Percentages according to the reason cited for leaving the service by quarter for the year-to-date are as follows:



Note 1: Reasons Soldiers leave military service prior to becoming retirement eligible (usually after 20 years of Active service) include Expiration of Term of Service (ETS), i.e. their contractual enlistment term has ended; administrative discharge for a variety of reasons prior to their ETS date; and for medical reasons based upon the recommendations from a board of physicians who determine that a Soldier does not meet medical/fitness retention standards for continued military service.

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

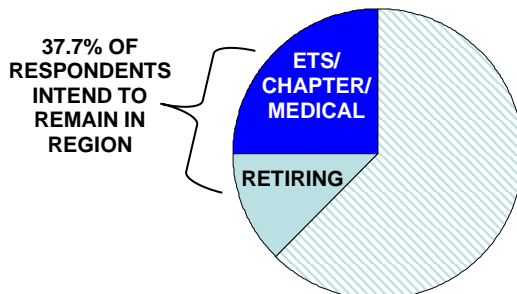
The respondents were asked to indicate if they intended on remaining in the region (within 30 miles of Fort Hood – generally equating to the Temple-Killeen-Fort Hood Metropolitan Statistical Area) when their service ended.

1. 268 respondents (representing 37.7 percent of all respondents) indicated they intended to stay in the region. This data represents:
  - a. 89 retirees (65% of all retirement eligible respondents)
  - b. 178 (31%) of non-retirement eligible respondents
  - c. an additional 167 (23.5 percent) responded they did not intend to stay in the region, but would do so if desirable employment were available.

## FORT HOOD REGION VETERANS INVENTORY INITIATIVE



### INTENDING TO STAY IN THE REGION WHEN SERVICE ENDS 3rd QUARTER SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS



2. For the year-to-date (September 2006 – June 2007) a total of 1,374 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. Consistently, 1/3 of the respondents indicate they intend to remain in Central Texas when their service ends. In the 3rd Quarter, 167 additional respondents would stay in the region if desirable employment were available. For the year to date 1,314 Soldiers ending their service at Fort Hood indicated they intended to remain in Central Texas, and that number would nearly double if the type of employment the respondents desire was available. Retiring Soldiers represent 479 of the number remaining – an average of 53 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 June 2007, the total number of military retirees grew by 2.7 percent in the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA. Nolanville, Harker Heights, Salado, Belton, and Temple each experienced growth rates exceeding the MSA average.

	JULY 2006	JUNE 2007	DIFFERENCE	% CHANGE
KILLEEN	7407	7565	158	2.1
HARKER HEIGHTS	1560	1698	138	8.8
TEMPLE	1023	1058	35	3.4
BELTON	762	792	30	3.9
SALADO	194	202	8	4.1
NOLANVILLE	200	224	24	12.0
COPPERAS COVE	2997	3000	3	0.1
GATESVILLE	326	327	1	0.3
KEMPNER	824	845	21	2.5
LAMPASAS	341	342	1	0.3
MSA	15,364	16,053	419	2.7

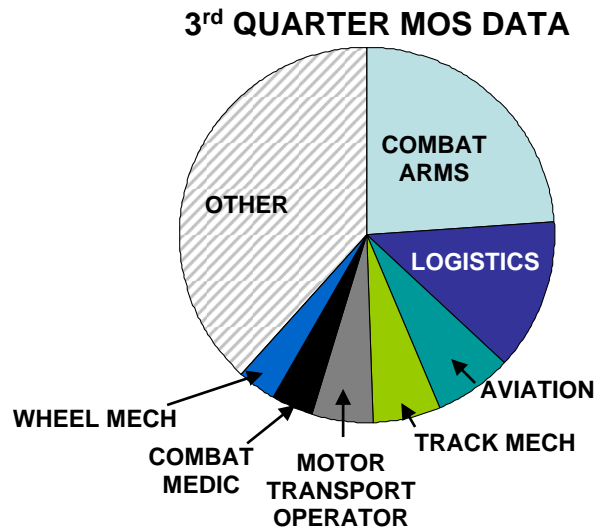
The military retiree rate of growth for north Texas (174 counties less the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA) was 1.3 percent for the same period.

## FORT HOOD REGION VETERANS INVENTORY INITIATIVE



The data for rates of growth remains consistent this quarter, compared to previous data. However, the number of retirement-eligible Soldiers indicating they intend to remain in the region after retirement for survey purposes (which may be up to two years before they retire) appears to be higher (by approximately 1/3) than the number actually staying. We will continue to monitor retiree data during 2008 to determine the potential relationship between intent and fact. It is possible that the intent to stay may erode as the actual retirement date approaches. The survey data clearly indicates that the availability of desirable employment plays a major role in the intention to remain in the area.

**D. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALITIES:** Departing Soldiers represented 134 different Military Occupational Specialities. The top five categories/specialties amounted to 54.7 percent of the total responses received. The top four categories (Combat Arms, Logistics Specialist, and Aviation) from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter remained the top four in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter. Motor Transport Operators moved back to the number five position.



1. **Combat Arms** (170 responses) comprises four separate specialties, listed below, along with the number of respondents. Given the units at Fort Hood (seven Brigade Combat Teams and two Fires Brigades), 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. **Armor/Cavalry** (60): member or leader who employs main battle tanks or cavalry fighting vehicles in combat operations, and performs reconnaissance and security.

b. **Artillery** (55): 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. **Infantry** (43): member or leader who individually employs small arms/heavy anti-armor weapons in support of combat operations.

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



d. Air Defense (12): operates command/control/communications/computer information systems or the lightweight, highly mobile Avenger or medium weight Patriot Air Defense Missile systems.

2. **Logistics Specialist** (93 responses) comprises three separate specialties, listed below, along with the number of respondents in each specialty.

a. Automated Logistical Specialists (92A; 36) supervise and perform management or stock record/warehouse functions pertaining to receipt, storage, distribution and issue, and maintain equipment records and parts.

b. Unit Supply Specialists (92Y; 30) supervise or perform duties involving the request, receipt, storage, issue, accountability, and preservation of individual, organizational, installation, and expendable supplies and equipment.

c. Petroleum Supply Specialists (92F; 27) supervise the receipt, storage, accountability, and cares for dispensing, issuing and shipping bulk or packaged petroleum, oils, and lubricants.

3. **Aviation Specialties.** There were 48 respondents representing eight different enlisted specialties, ranging from aircraft structural repairers to airframe-specific armament/electrical/avionics system repairers. There were three officer/warrant officer specialties including six helicopter pilots and one C-12 fixed wing pilot.

4. **Track Vehicle Mechanics** (41 responses – 63A/H/M/X/Z) performs or supervises unit maintenance, diagnose, and troubleshoot malfunctions on gas turbine and diesel power plants; and 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.

5. **Motor Transport Operator** (37 responses – 88M/N) supervises (truckmaster/dispatcher) or operates wheel vehicles ranging from sedans/High-Mobility Multipurpose Wheel Vehicles (i.e. Humvee) to the Heavy Equipment Transporter (capable of line hauling a main battle tank) to transport personnel and cargo. An overwhelming majority of respondents indicated they possess a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). In addition to drivers, two respondents indicated they were multi-modal transportation management coordinators (88N) that monitor, control, and supervise the movement of personnel, equipment, and cargo by rail, highway, and water.

Combat Medics (26 responses - 68W) and Wheel Vehicle Mechanics (24 responses – 63B) were the number six and seven most prevalent MOS', respectively

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

Respondents are asked to indicate the type (or types) of post-military employment desired. In order to standardize input for ease of analysis, the survey provides 12 broad categories, generally 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 the five categories of post-service employment desired are:

1. Law Enforcement: 223 responses
2. Management: 219 responses

## FORT HOOD REGION VETERANS INVENTORY INITIATIVE



3. Administrative: 175 responses
4. Transportation: 152 responses
5. Equipment: 130 responses<sup>2</sup>

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 high. 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 and Equipment areas most likely reflect the numbers of Motor Transport Operators and Track/Wheel Vehicle Mechanics responding to the survey.

While not a major focus of this initiative, Soldiers responding to the survey question about the type of employment their spouse desired, listed Medical (92 responses), Administrative (68 responses), Management (72 responses) and Education (69 responses).

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

Respondents were asked to indicate their highest level of educational attainment. The data depicted below represents only those 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 over 92 percent of retirement-eligible respondents who intend on remaining in the region have post-secondary education. 51.7 percent list their highest education level as "Some College", and 27.3 percent have received their Associates Degree. Nearly 60 percent of non retirement-eligible Soldiers have post-secondary education, with 40.2 percent indicating they have "Some College."

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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, 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 work 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.

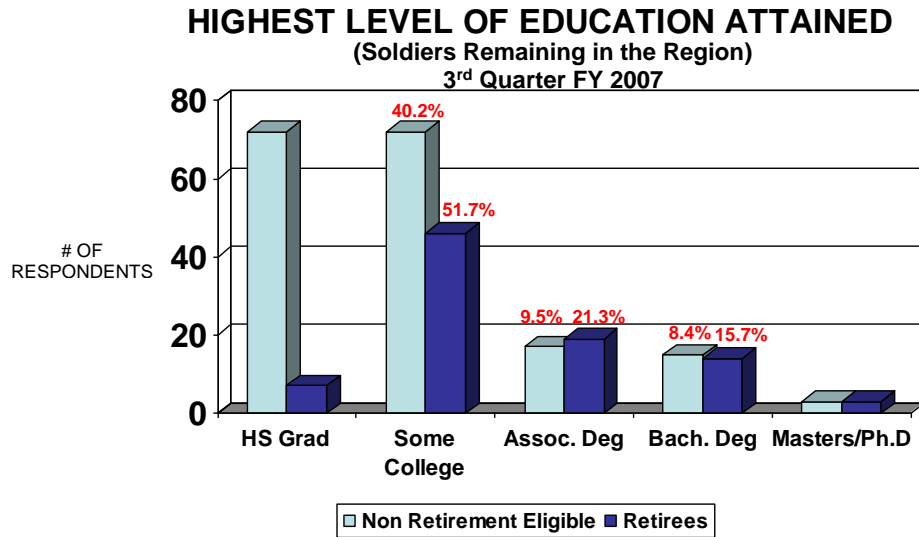
<sup>3</sup> Data is for 89 retirees and 179 non-retirement eligibles; n=268



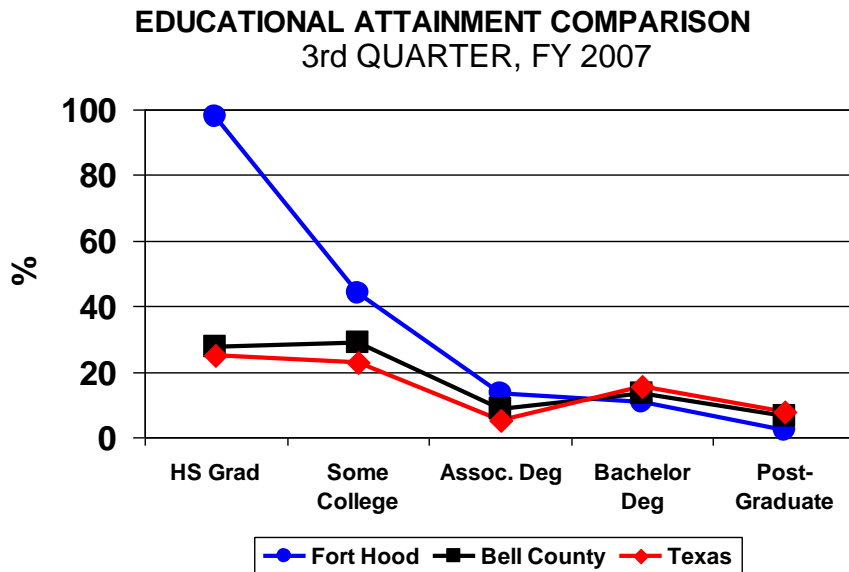
**FORT HOOD REGION VETERANS INVENTORY INITIATIVE**



The percentage of retiring Soldiers with baccalaureate degrees dropped slightly from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, but the percentage with at least “some college” increased by 5.2 percent. The percentage of non-retirement eligible Soldiers who already possess an Associates Degree or Bachelor’s degree (17.9 percent) increased 4.5 percent and 0.9 percent respectively over the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter.



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



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



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 2006, there were 3,415 Fort Hood Soldiers enrolled in Central Texas College, the local community college, pursuing Associates Degrees and/or vocational/technical training; and for academic year 2006, an average of 73 Soldiers were enrolled in upper-level/graduate coursework at the Tarleton State University System Center – Central Texas.

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

1. A key consideration in the retention of a talented military Veteran workforce is how those individuals perceive the “Quality of Place” in which they choose to live upon separation from military service. Respondents were asked to indicate the recommended improvements they would desire in the areas of higher education, retail shopping, health care, entertainment, child care and “other” that would positively affect their decision to remain in the region.

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
- b. more college classes/degrees
- c. community activities (which may be linked to, but is not necessarily inclusive of entertainment, retail shopping, etc.)
- d. crime rate
- e. taxes

24 percent of respondents listed higher education (second-highest response). Housing was third (17.3 percent), and entertainment was fourth (16.9 percent). Less than 10 percent of respondents listed child care, health care, or retail shopping as Quality of Place factors they perceived needed improvement.

3. Perceptions versus reality. Specific comments on the improvements departing Soldiers cite as desired to improve 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. Several efforts such as the future Texas A&M University-Central Texas (including more seamless articulation agreements with the local community colleges), the IH-35/U.S. 190 improvements, planned retail shopping and restaurant venues, etc. are positive indications that the Fort Hood region is aggressively addressing these areas. 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*

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



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Harker Heights, TX 76548.*

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