



# Veterans Inventory Initiative

Quarterly Report, Fourth Quarter, FY 2009

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.





**Quarterly Report: 4th Quarter, FY 2009**

(July - September 2009)

**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 recommendation 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)
- 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 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:

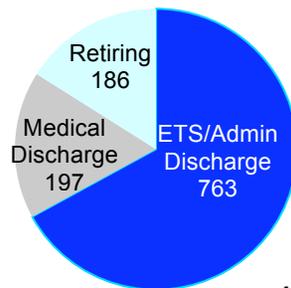
1. Develop and retain the region’s skilled and motivated military Veteran workforce;
2. Foster innovation and entrepreneurship; retain existing businesses, and attract new business to the region; and
3. Align the efforts of the participating agencies to enhance options for current and future/potential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

**B. DEMOGRAPHICS**

For the 4th Quarter (July through September 2009):

1. 1146 Soldiers completing their military service at Fort Hood responded to the survey.
2. 84 percent of respondents were leaving military service prior to becoming retirement-eligible (763 responses/67%), or were being medically discharged (197 responses/17%).
3. 16 percent (186 respondents) were retiring after 20 or more years of service.

**DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION**



**4th QTR 2009**

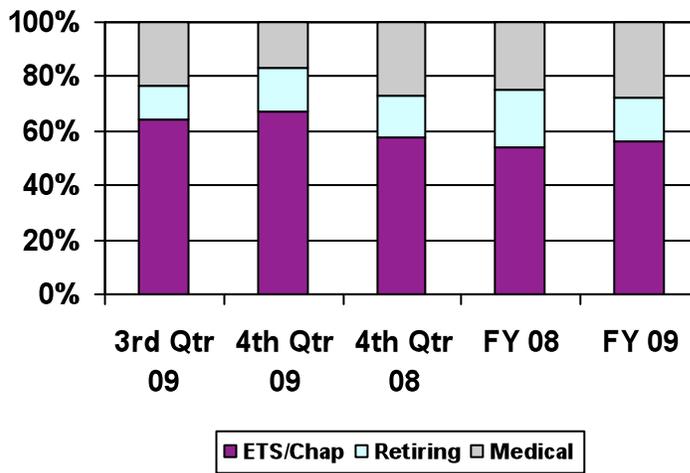
<sup>1</sup> Retiring Soldiers may participate in TAP up to two years prior to their retirement date, while non-retiring Soldiers may participate up to one year in advance. However, the Transition Services Manager reports the majority of soldiers attend the TAP workshop 6 months or less before separation.

**FORT HOOD REGION VETERANS INVENTORY INITIATIVE**



4. For the year-to-date for FY 2009 (October 2008 – September 2009)
  - a. 2953 Soldiers completing their service have responded to the survey.
  - b. 1651 (56%) were in the category of ETS/Administrative discharge.
  - c. 812 (27.5%) were being medically discharged.
  - d. 484 (16.4%) indicated their intention to retire with 20-plus years of military service.

Percentages according to the reason cited for leaving the service by comparing 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 09 with 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 09 as well as 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr 08, fiscal year 2008 and fiscal year 2009 are as follows:



5. Trends. While the number of Soldiers separating due to medical discharge increased from March 2008 to March 2009 (20% - 39%), in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter (for the second consecutive quarter) that percentage decreased to 17% which is the lowest since 2007. Creation of the Warriors in Transition Units (WTU) has resulted in more efficiencies in the medical evaluation process and has likely reduced the backlog of medical dispositions of discharged Soldiers assigned to the Fort Hood WTB.

**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 Temple-Killeen-Fort Hood Metropolitan Statistical Area) when their service ended.

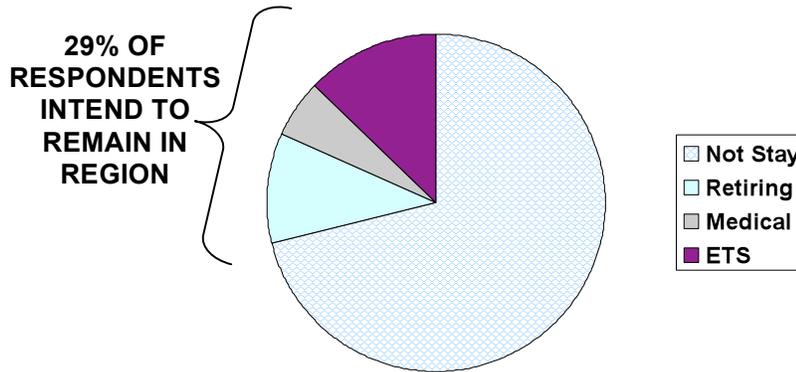
1. 332 respondents (representing 29% of all respondents) indicated they intended to stay in the region. This data represents:

- a. 123 retirees (66% of all retirement eligible respondents).
- b. 209 (22%) non-retirement eligible respondents.

In addition, 299 (37%) of the 814 who responded they did not intend to stay in the region, would do so if desirable employment were available.



**INTENDING TO STAY IN THE REGION WHEN SERVICE ENDS**



2. Conclusions. For the year to date (October 2008 – September 2009), a total of 932 Soldiers (31.6% of all respondents) leaving the service at Fort Hood indicate they intend to remain in the region once their service is complete. When comparing this to the current 4th Quarter data (29%), it would appear that the number of Soldiers planning to remain in the Temple-Killeen-Fort Hood MSA region at the time of this survey is just slightly lower than the average for the year. When comparing these percentages with the average from the previous year (October 2007 - September 2008) (35.2%), this shows that there has been a slight decrease at the time of the survey in the number of Soldiers intending to remain in the Temple-Killeen-Fort Hood MSA after leaving the service. However, because these surveys are completed up to a year before Soldiers actually leave the service, “intent” to remain (or leave) may change by the actual separation date.

However, for the past twelve months (October 2008 – September 2009), of those 2054 not intending to remain in the Central Texas region, 717 (35%) said they would stay if the respondent’s desired employment was available. This is a slight increase when compared to October 2007 – September 2008 which was 33%. This data clearly demonstrates that desirable employment readily available within the MSA is a strong driving force in retaining Soldiers in this area following their service in the military. In addition, the total amount of Soldiers retiring from Fort Hood began to decrease beginning in Apr 2008 when the economy began to do poorly, yet the percent of retirees desiring to remain in the Central Texas region averaged 64.6% from Apr 2007 – June 2009 with this quarter showing a slight increase at 66%. We will continue to monitor this data in the future quarters.

3. 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 fourth quarter in a row, the rate of growth for retirees in the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA increased slightly. From February 2008 to September 2009, the total number of military retirees grew by 7.7 percent in the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA. This is up from the 3rd quarter report which reported a 6.8% increase in the MSA from February 2008 to June 2009. For this quarter report, Killeen, Nolanville and Harker Heights experienced

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growth rates exceeding the MSA average. Based on the collected retiree data, the retiree growth rate in Nolanville has consistently averaged higher than the MSA since April 2007 whereas the retiree growth rate for Killeen has consistently averaged higher than the MSA since October 2007. The Harker Heights retiree growth rate has consistently trailed just behind the MSA growth rate since December 2008, but this quarter surpassed it. As stated earlier, the collected data indicates that there are fewer Soldiers retiring which may be an indication of the economic conditions (down from 21% in FY 2008 to 16.4% in FY 2009), yet the data shown below indicates the number of Soldiers who are actually retiring and living in Central Texas is increasing.

	<b>FEBRUARY 2008</b>	<b>SEPT 2009</b>	<b>DIFFERENCE</b>	<b>% CHANGE</b>
<b>KILLEEN</b>	7493	8189	696	9.3
<b>COPPERAS COVE</b>	2877	3034	157	5.5
<b>HARKER HEIGHTS</b>	1727	1880	153	8.9
<b>TEMPLE</b>	1093	1152	59	5.4
<b>KEMPNER</b>	844	885	41	4.9
<b>BELTON</b>	792	836	44	5.6
<b>LAMPASAS</b>	340	363	23	6.8
<b>GATESVILLE</b>	335	351	16	4.8
<b>NOLANVILLE</b>	242	269	27	11.2
<b>SALADO</b>	198	207	9	4.5
<b>MSA</b>	15941	17166	1225	7.7

The military retiree rate of growth for north Texas (174 counties less the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA) was 3.1 percent for the same period which was the same as reported last quarter. As reported in the pie graph above, the percentage of Soldiers intending to remain in the area after leaving the military gradually decreased from 40% in December 2008 to 29% in September 2009, yet as shown here, the number of retirees living in the area has actually continuously increased since October 2008. Because a retiring Soldier could complete the survey up to two years before actually retiring, this growth could be the result of Soldiers changing plans of where they will reside after retirement, or it could also be a result of previous retirees moving back into the Central Texas area after having lived somewhere else before. We will continue to monitor retiree data to determine the potential relationship between intent and the number of retirees that actually remain in the region. In April 2008, the Texas Comptroller certified that the direct economic impact of military retirees and surviving annuitants in the Killeen, Temple, Fort Hood MSA (Bell, Coryell and Lampasas counties) equates to \$791.5 million annually.

Additionally, while the national economy was continuing to experience the effects of the recession during this reporting period, the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA was:

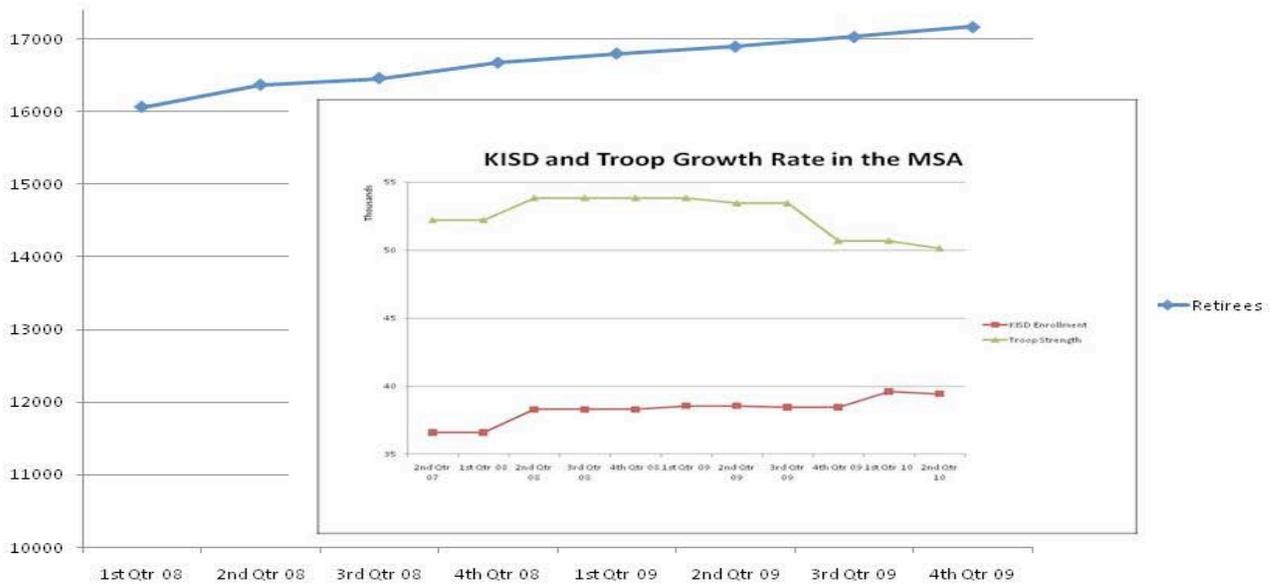
- a. the 14<sup>th</sup> fastest growing MSA in the nation (U.S. Census Bureau).
- b. Killeen's housing market ranked 27<sup>th</sup> least expensive in the nation and 4<sup>th</sup> least expensive in Texas (Coldwell Banker Home Price Index 9/23/2009).
- c. ranked #1 in renter livability (apartmentratings.com).
- d. rated one of the five best areas for military families (Babb Group - military.com).



- e. ranked 5<sup>th</sup> of the top 20 best MSAs for job growth (Forbes, citing Bureau of Labor Statistics).
- f. unemployment rate for MSA dropped to 7% while the Texas and national rate increased to 8% and 9.7% respectively (Texas Workforce Commission, Sept 2009).
- g. positive job market expected for Killeen-Temple-Ft. Hood MSA for 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2009 (Manpower Inc. press release Sept 2009).

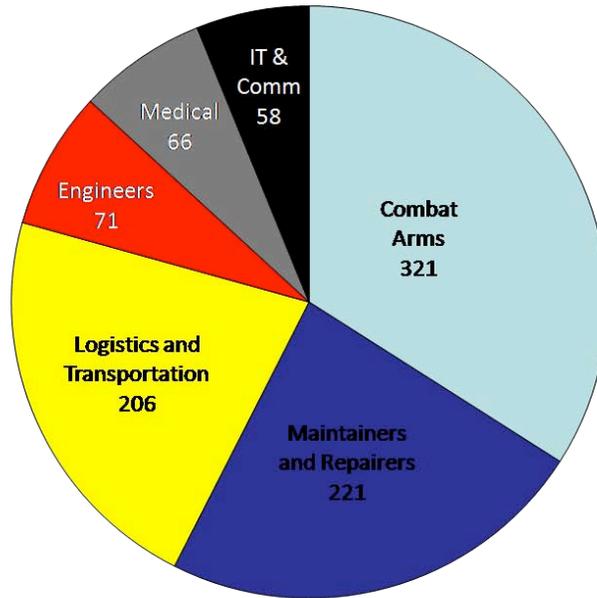
Closer examination of the growth rate of retirees in the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA indicates the number of retirees living in the area has steadily increased from October 2008 to September 2009. In addition, we can also see from the inset graph that while the amount of Soldiers stationed at Fort Hood decreased as a result of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Act, the amount of students enrolled in the Killeen Independent School District (KISD) increased. This could be the result of families remaining in the area until the end of the school year while the Soldier has relocated to another military post; it may also reflect the increase of retiring Fort Hood Soldiers remaining in the region with school-aged children. We will continue to monitor these growth rates in the future.

**Retiree Growth Rate in the MSA**



**D. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALITIES:** Departing Soldiers represented 140 different Military Occupational Specialities. However, 83% (943 respondents) can be grouped into six general areas: Combat Arms, Maintainers/Repairers, Logistics/ Transportation, Engineers, Medical and Information Technology and Communications. Traditionally, the Quarterly Report only lists the top five MOS categories, but because the numbers were very close this quarter, the top six are being reported.

**FORT HOOD REGION VETERANS INVENTORY INITIATIVE**



**COMBAT ARMS**

Given the types of units at Fort Hood (five Brigade Combat Teams and one Fires Brigade at the time of this report) 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.

Soldiers in combat arms comprise 28.4 percent of the reported fields.

<b>Infantry</b> (136)	Member or leader who individually employs small arms/heavy anti-armor weapons in support of combat operations
<b>Armor</b> (95)	Member or leader who employs main battle tanks or cavalry fighting vehicles in combat operations, and performs reconnaissance and security.
<b>Field Artillery</b> (74)	Operate or supervise high technology cannon artillery weapons, automated tactical data systems, intelligence activities, target processing, radar operations, artillery surveying operations, or meteorological observation
<b>Air Defense Artillery</b> (16)	Operate command/control/communications/computer information systems or the lightweight, highly mobile Avenger or medium weight Patriot Air Defense Missile systems.



**MAINTAINERS/ REPAIRERS**

Soldiers that work in the field of maintenance and repair comprise 19.6 percent of the population.

<b>Aviation repairers (69)</b>	10 different enlisted specialties (less pilots and air traffic controllers) ranging from aircraft structural repairers to airframe-specific armament/electrical/avionics system repairers.
<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 (38)</b>	10 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 and special purpose equipment (such as HVAC and refrigeration systems).
<b>Tracked Vehicle Mechanics (34)</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.

**LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORTATION**

Soldiers serving in the logistics and transportation fields comprise 18.2 percent of reported fields.

<b>Motor Transport Operator (53)</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>Petroleum Supply Specialists (35)</b>	Supervise the receipt, storage, accountability, and cares for dispensing, issuing and shipping bulk or packaged petroleum, oils, and lubricants.
<b>Food Service Specialists (29)</b>	Supervise or prepares, cooks and serves food in field or garrison food service operations.
<b>Unit Supply Specialists (23)</b>	Supervise or perform duties involving the request, receipt, storage, issue, accountability, and preservation of individual, organizational, installation, and expendable supplies and equipment.
<b>Automated Logistical Specialists (21)</b>	Supervise and perform management or stock record/warehouse functions pertaining to receipt, storage, distribution and issue, and maintain equipment records and parts.
<b>Ammunition Supply Specialists (5)</b>	Assists in receipt, storage, issue, maintenance, modification, destruction, and demilitarization of explosive items. Performs ammunition supply stock control and accounting duties using both automated and manual procedures.
<b>Water Treatment Specialists (4)</b>	Supervise or performs installation, operation of water purification equipment, water storage and distribution operations and activities.



**ENGINEERS**

The engineer field makes up 6.3% of the fields reported.

<b>Combat Engineer</b> (43)	Engaged in providing mobility, counter-mobility and survivability support to combat forces. Operates, directs and assists in the operation of various light and heavy engineer wheeled and tracked vehicles. Directs construction of shelters and assembly of military fixed bridges.
<b>Other</b> (28)	10 Construction Equip Operators, 13 Carpentry and Masonry Specialists, 2 Terrain Data Specialists, 1 Firefighter

**MEDICAL**

Personnel in the medical field make up 5.8% of the reported fields.

<b>Health Care Specialist</b> (45)	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</b> (21)	4 Dental Specialists, 2 Physician Assistants, 3 Radiology Specialists, 2 Mental Health Specialists, 2 Medical Lab Specialists, 1 Operating Room Specialist

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS**

The information technology and communications field makes up 5.1% of the fields reported.

<b>Signal Support Systems Specialist</b> (22)	Supervise, install, employ, maintain, troubleshoot and assist users with battlefield signal support systems, terminal devices, satellite communications equipment and automated telecommunications computer systems, to include local area networks, wide area networks and routers. Integrate signal systems and networks; performs unit level maintenance on authorized signal equipment and associated electronic devices; train and provide technical assistance to users of signal equipment.
<b>Information Technology Specialist</b> (12)	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).

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<b>Radio Operator-Maintainer (5)</b>	Radio Operator-Maintainers are primarily responsible for all maintenance checks and services on assigned radio communication equipment including single channel radios, radio teletypewriters, Army Special Operations communications equipment, and enhanced position locating and reporting system net control stations.
<b>Nodal Network System Operator-Maintainer (4)</b>	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.
<b>Multichannel Transmission System Operator-Maintainer (4)</b>	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.

**E. DESIRED POST- MILITARY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT:** 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 14 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. For the 4th Quarter report, the top five desired categories of post-military service employment were<sup>2</sup>:

**SOLDIER**

- 1. Law Enforcement/Security: 413
- 2. Other: 282
- 3. Management/Business: 254
- 4. Administrative/Office: 246
- 5. Education/Teaching: 206

**SPOUSE**

- 1. Medical/Health Field: 164
- 2. Administrative/Office: 138
- 3. Other: 137
- 4. Education/Teaching: 91
- 5. Management/Business: 69

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

- 1. Administrative/Office: 72 responses
- 2. Management/Business: 69 responses
- 3. Transportation/Warehouse: 57 responses

<sup>2</sup> Employers with an employment website may post their employment website link to the ACAP website at [www.acap.army.mil](http://www.acap.army.mil). There is no cost for this service. 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.



- 4. Education/Teaching: 50 responses
- 5. Law Enforcement/Security: 47 responses

The anomalies in Military Occupational Specialty data may have been carried over to the types of post-service employment desired. Because of the higher number of Combat Arms respondents eligible to leave the military this quarter due to the redeployment cycles, Law Enforcement as a desired career after military service remained the number one desired job as has traditionally been seen in the past quarters. 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.

For the fifth quarter in a row, Medical topped the list for desired spouse employment whereas it had consistently been the second desired career since October 2007. Retiring Soldiers listed Transportation as an area for post-service employment – the fourth time it has been listed since 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2008. Again, this is most likely a function of the high volume of respondents this quarter whose MOS was Transportation and Logistics. Education still remained one of the top choices after retirement.

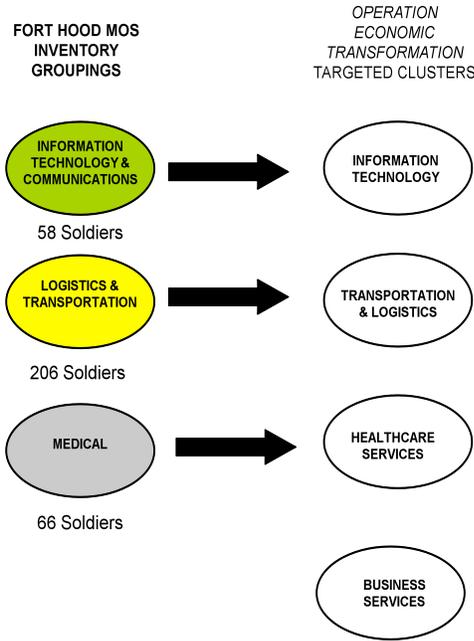
Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers eligible to retire have spent many years leading increasingly larger and more complex organizations, are graduates of an Army Professional Education system that focuses on developing their leadership skills, and have demonstrated success as a result of their longevity 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.

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, the data directly correlates to these 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. EDUCATION LEVEL OF THOSE REMAINING IN THE REGION:** Respondents were asked to indicate their highest level of educational attainment. Forty-seven percent of all respondents indicated they had “Some College.” Fourteen percent had an Associates degree, 8 percent have a Baccalaureate degree, while 2 percent have a Masters degree.

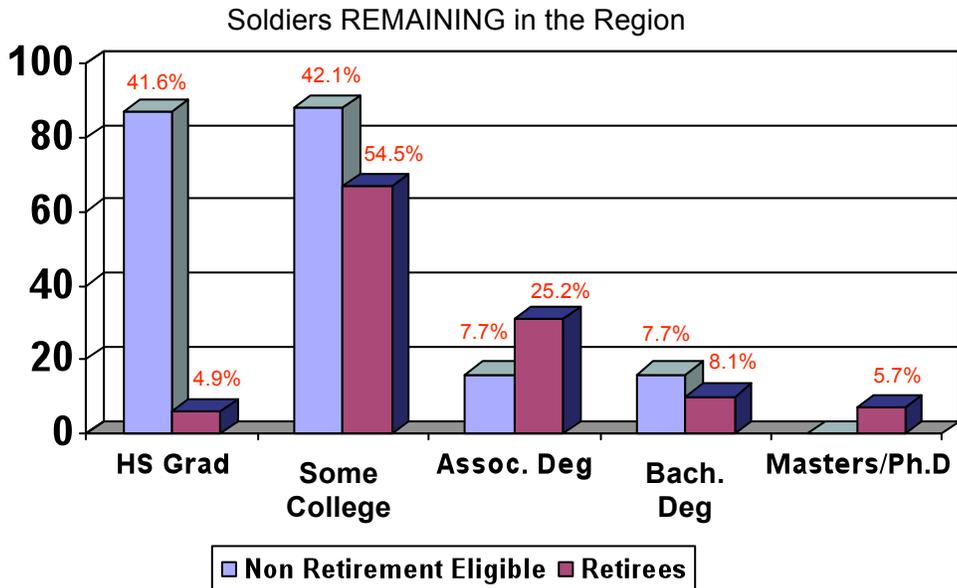
The data depicted below represents only the 332 respondents who indicate they intended to stay in the region upon completion of their service, and is separated by those eligible for retirement and those Soldiers leaving the service that are not retirement eligible.<sup>3</sup>

The data indicates that an overwhelming majority (93.5%) of retirement-eligible respondents who intend on remaining in the region have some post-secondary education. Fifty-four percent list their highest education level as “Some College” while 25 percent have received an Associates degree. In addition, 8 percent have received a Bachelors degree and 5 percent have completed a Masters degree. Fifty-seven percent of non retirement-eligible Soldiers have a post-secondary education with 42 percent indicating they have “Some College.”

<sup>3</sup> Data is for 123 retirees and 209 non-retirement eligibles;



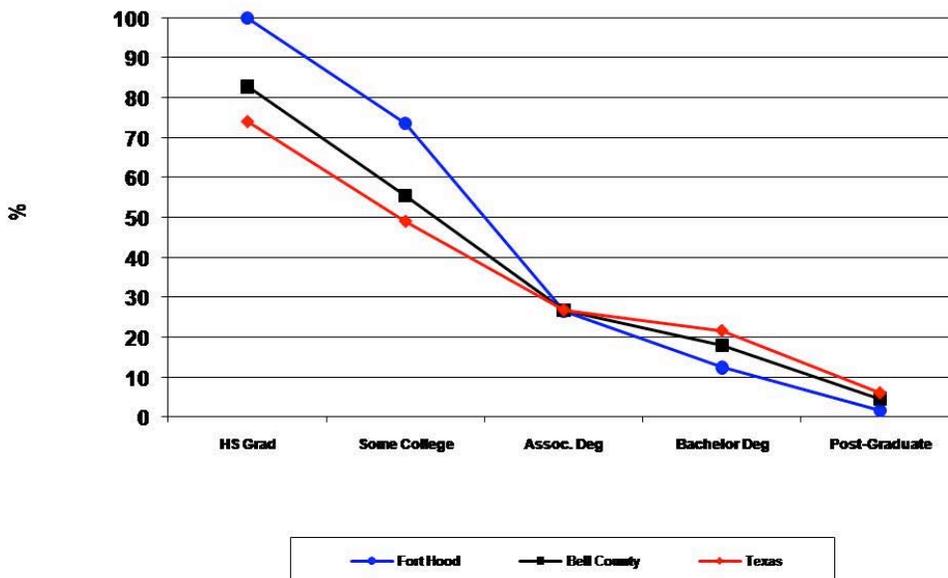
## HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED



1. For all of FY 2009, the educational attainment of separating Soldiers remaining in the region compared to Bell County and the state of Texas is depicted in the following graph<sup>4</sup>.

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT COMPARISON

Soldiers REMAINING in the Region



<sup>4</sup> Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board; also cited on the Texas A&M University Real Estate Center - Market Overview 2008.

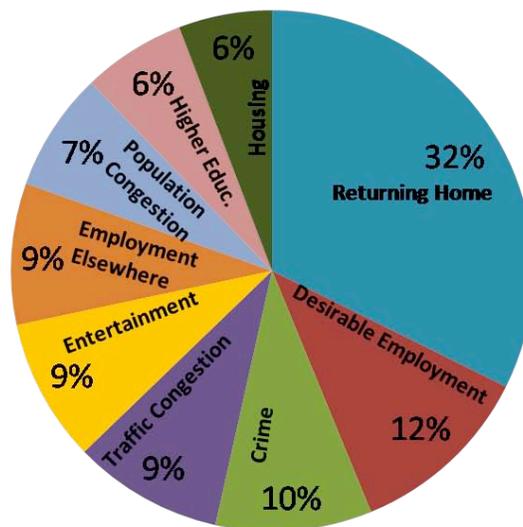


The data generally indicates Soldiers are better-educated than their civilian counterparts, both in the region and statewide. Yet, when the data is graphed for only those Soldiers intending to remain in the region, we can see that the Fort Hood MSA has a large group of potential employees who have a high degree of self initiative and demonstrates that these Soldiers willingly embrace the notion of lifelong learning. Continuing education is an important component to retention and it is also routine for Soldiers to perform in an increasingly sophisticated and technical operating environment in the execution of their duties. The creation of Texas A&M-Central Texas in May 2009 provides additional opportunities for Soldiers pursuing (or finishing) baccalaureate and masters degrees.

**G. DESIRED “QUALITY OF PLACE” IMPROVEMENTS:** In the past, the Veteran's Inventory Initiative reports have tracked the respondents' desired improvements (their perception of the Central Texas Quality of Place) if remaining in the Killeen-Ft. Hood MSA after separation from the military service. Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide additional comments regarding their response to "quality of place." The survey was revised effective July 2009 to gain more clarity on the quality of place factors separating Soldiers specifically indicated needed improvement.

1. Respondents were asked to indicate the improvements they would desire in the general areas of desirable employment, available higher education, housing, crime, traffic congestion, population congestion, or entertainment that would positively affect their decision to remain in the region. "Returning to home of record" or "moving for employment elsewhere" were optional responses if not staying in this region. For this quarter as indicated in the graph below, 32% of the respondents stated that they would be returning to their home of record, and 9% stated that they were leaving the area due to finding employment elsewhere.

**Desired Quality of Place Responses  
4th Quarter 2009**

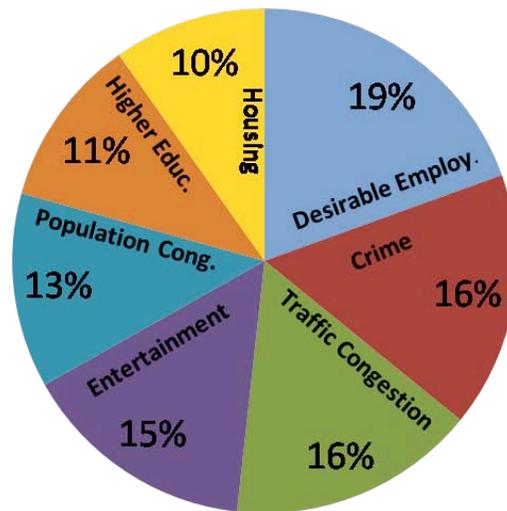


2. Of the remaining respondents (59%), we can clearly track the common desired quality of life improvements ("other" on previous versions of the survey) to the MSA by charting the



responses in the following graph. After removing the "returning to home of record" or "moving for employment elsewhere" responses, the following graph depicts the factors that would positively affect the respondents' desire to remain in Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA upon leaving the service. We can see that the number one factor is available desirable employment (19.5%), followed by improvement in crime and traffic congestion (16%), and available entertainment (15%). As previously stated, the availability of desirable employment plays a major role in attracting those Soldiers ending their military service to remain in the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood area which, in turn, directly affects the economic impact for the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA.

### **Quality of Place Desires Needing Improvement 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2009**



3. Previously, available higher education and affordable housing have always been the top two desired quality of place improvements. However, this quarter, these are ranked as the last two desired improvements. Texas A&M-Central Texas is now an established upper level university in the area and the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor and Central Texas College have both recently received improved ratings in their rankings of colleges in the U.S. and Texas. It is possible that Soldiers have seen improvements in post-secondary education for the past three years. We will continue to monitor this response in future reports. This quarter, affordable housing had the lowest ranking in desired quality of life improvements. In September 2009, Coldwell Banker released its annual Home Price Comparison Index of homes and reported that Killeen's housing market is the 27th least expensive in the nation and the fourth least expensive in Texas. This reinforces the fact that the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA does offer very affordable housing for those Soldiers leaving the service. In previous reports when reporting the "other" desired improvements, the top three comments added have always been regarding available desired employment, improvement in crime and improvement in traffic. The graph



above depicts that these still remain the top three desired quality of life improvements that would positively affect Soldiers' desire to remain in the area once leaving the service. TxDOT is currently working on trying to keep up with the demand on the transportation infrastructure by reversing entrance/exit ramps through Killeen and Harker Heights while Hwy 190 expansion from four to six lanes from Fort Hood to Copperas Cove was recently completed. The perceived high rate of crime in the area also remains one of the top reasons for Soldiers not staying in the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood area, but it was recently reported that violent crime (murders, robberies and aggravated assault) in Killeen for the first nine months of 2009 were down by 21%. We will continue to monitor these responses in future reports now that the rate of crime in the area is on the decline.

Perceptions versus reality. Specific comments that 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.

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