



# Fort Hood Region Veterans Inventory Initiative

Quarterly Report, October - December 2025

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: 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, FY 2026**

(October - December 2025)

**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. The results of their study were published in 2007.

One key recommendation from the study 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 digital 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:

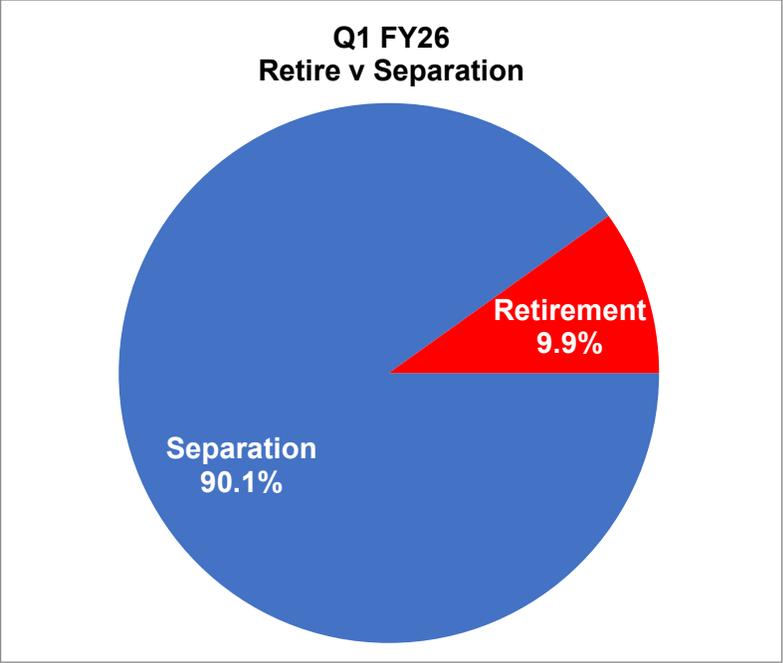
1. Develop and retain the region's skilled and motivated Military Veteran Workforce;
2. Foster innovation and entrepreneurship; retain existing businesses, and attract new business to the region; and
3. Align the efforts of the participating agencies to enhance options for current and future/potential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

## **B. DEMOGRAPHICS**

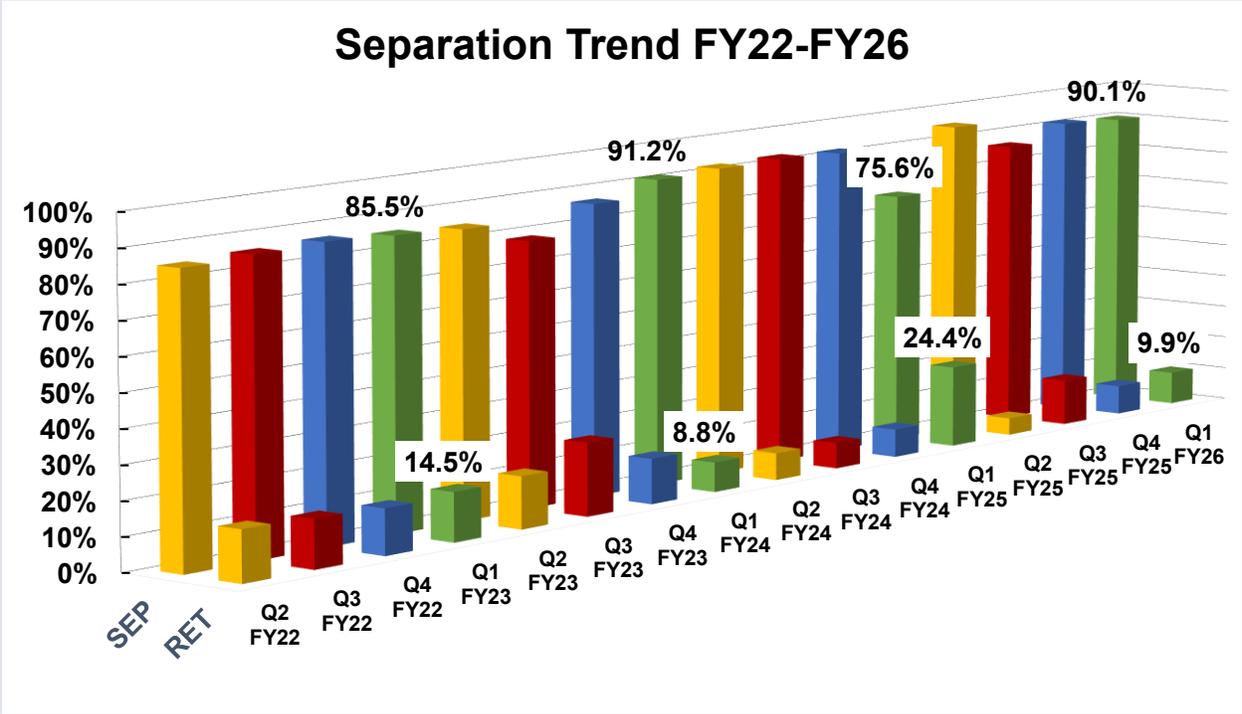
1. For the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter FY 2026 (October-December 2025), 354 Soldiers completing their military service responded to the survey with the demographics graphed below. This quarter, 35 of 354 (9.9%) transitioning soldiers are retiring with the remainder separating from service as seen in the chart 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.



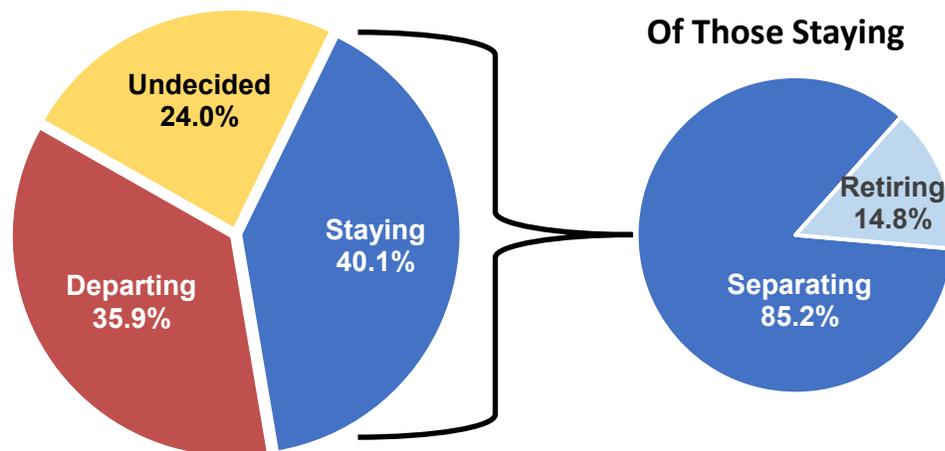
2. The Veterans Inventory Initiative has collected data on Soldiers separating from the service at Fort Hood since FY 2007 and reports have been based on responses from a total of 53,354 separating and retiring Soldiers. The amount of those separating from the service during the timeframe of April 2020 through December 2025 has fluctuated between 75%-95%, while the amount retiring has fluctuated between 5%-25%.



**C. INTENTION TO STAY 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. For this quarter, we received a total of 354 respondents in the following categories.

1. 142 of 354 (40.1%) respondents indicated they intended to stay in the region.
2. 127 of 354 (35.9%) respondents indicated they would not stay in the region
3. 85 of 354 (24.0%) respondents indicated they are undecided on staying.
4. The 40.1% (142 of 354) of those staying in the MSA represent two demographics: those retiring 14.8% (21/142) and those separating 85.2% (121/142). The second pie chart below represents the percentages of those separating and those retiring since each group represent a different demographic seeking employment in the MSA.

### Q1 FY26 Separation Trend

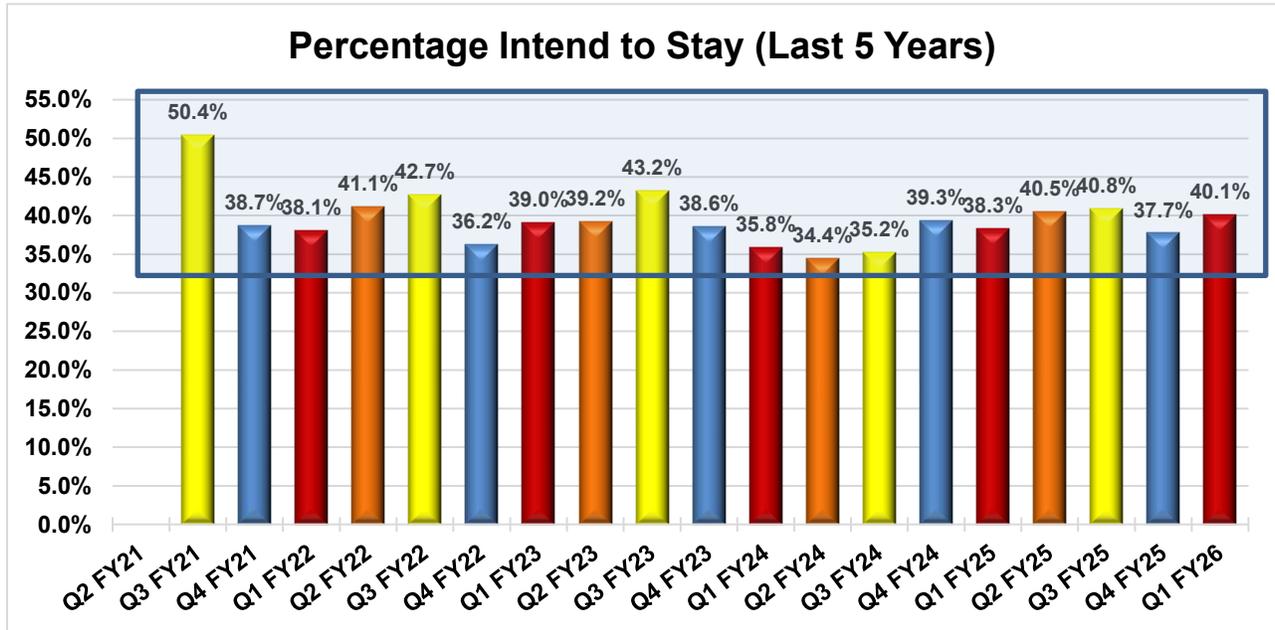


5. The survey also asks respondents that do not intend to remain and those undecided if a job available in the area would change their response. Of those two categories, 45.8% (97 of 212) indicated they would stay in the area if desirable employment were available. This represents an untapped source of recruitable talent.

### D. DEMOGRAPHICS OF THOSE INTENDING TO STAY IN THE REGION:

1. When analyzing data of Soldiers' intentions on remaining in the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA over the last five years, the graph below indicates that the historical percentage of Soldiers intending to remain in the area averaged 39.6% ranging between 27.9% and 58.1%. With the onset of COVID, we saw an increase in the percentage remaining in the MSA for 2<sup>nd</sup> QTR FY20 (58%) and 4<sup>th</sup> QTR FY20 (54%). These two spikes are likely a combination of impacts from the COVID19 pandemic and a decreased number of surveys processed. However, the pre-COVID average is 30.1% and the post-COVID average is 40.6% for those remaining which indicates an increase for those staying. Time will tell if this increase is an enduring change. It is also important to note that the numbers, according to the Retired Army Personnel System, show a continual increase in retirees remaining in the region throughout the past five years.

2. This quarter (FY26 1<sup>st</sup> QTR) 40.1% (142 of 354) of our separating service members are deciding to call Central Texas home. Of the reasons for staying, the #1 reason this quarter was the Central Texas quality of life at 37.3% (53/142). The Central Texas Quality of Life remains the #1 reason for staying.



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 Belton, Gatesville, Harker Heights, Nolanville, Salado, and Temple experienced retiree growth rates larger than the MSA overall growth of 91.0% for the period December 2007 to March 2024.

	DECEMBER 2007	March 2024	% GROWTH 2007 – 2024
KILLEEN	7,569	14,234	+88.1%
COPPERAS COVE	3,001	4,460	+48.6%
HARKER HEIGHTS	1,699	3,648	+114.7%
TEMPLE	1,058	2,508	+137.1%
KEMPNER	845	1,489	+76.2%
BELTON	792	1,990	+151.3%
LAMPASAS	342	561	+64.0%
GATESVILLE	327	682	+108.6%
NOLANVILLE	224	690	+208.0%
SALADO	202	540	+167.3%
FLORENCE	62	99	+59.7%
MSA	16,121	30,901	+91.7%
Other	66,734	126,385	+89.4%

4. In the latest estimate from March 2024, more than 141,657 retirees, survivors, and their families, remained within the Fort Hood area. While this number usually continues to grow each quarter with transitioning Soldiers remaining in the region and others moving into the region due to Quality-of-Life factors. Current estimates now show over 482,426 people are supported by Fort Hood locally and outside the MSA in the Fort Hood area of responsibility. Below are some key data points to provide additional insights into the growth rates locally:

a. In addition to these indicators of economic stability for the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA, the Texas Comptroller also stated in the June 2024 economic report that Fort Hood's economic impact was \$39.1 billion statewide. The report states that Fort Hood is responsible for 59,695 direct jobs and total employment of 173,730 jobs throughout Texas. Fort Hood is the largest single site employer in the state of Texas.

b. In a November 2024 Military Times survey of Best for Vets, Central Texas College was ranked #1 for Texas Community Colleges, #8 for Texas Colleges & Universities, and #63 out of 304 institutions nationwide. This recognition highlights CTC's commitment to supporting our military-connected students with the best resources, programs, and services while demonstrating dedication to helping veterans succeed both in higher education and beyond. <https://bestforvets.militarytimes.com/>

c. In January 2024, GoBankingRates identified Killeen as the most affordable of the fastest growing cities in the nation. Analyzing both affordability and growth data, researchers at GoBankingRates considered one-year and five-year population changes, median household incomes, average rent, average home values, and overall cost of living ranked Killeen as the #1 location. [https://kdhnews.com/news/local/study-killeen-ranks-as-the-most-affordable-fast-growing-city-in-nation/article\\_d6eb32ee-b64d-11ee-ab4d-ef333f3dec63.html](https://kdhnews.com/news/local/study-killeen-ranks-as-the-most-affordable-fast-growing-city-in-nation/article_d6eb32ee-b64d-11ee-ab4d-ef333f3dec63.html) in the 18 January 2024 KDH Edition.

d. In August 2023, SmartAsset ranked Killeen as the #1 location for first-time homebuyers out of 185 metropolitan areas across the US. Killeen offered the best combination of affordability, available inventory, growth potential, and relaxed competition. [https://kdhnews.com/business/study-ranks-killeen-market-as-the-best-place-for-first-time-homebuyers/article\\_58f1039c-37df-11ee-8830-8b76cf38ab45.html](https://kdhnews.com/business/study-ranks-killeen-market-as-the-best-place-for-first-time-homebuyers/article_58f1039c-37df-11ee-8830-8b76cf38ab45.html) in 11 August 2023 KDH Edition.

e. In July 2023, the City of Killeen was ranked #2 for the lowest cost of living in Texas according to a study by Texas Real Estate Source. Ranking is based on several factors including city annual property tax, utilities, home price, transportation, clothing, groceries, and leisure costs. [https://kdhnews.com/news/killeen-ranks-second-in-state-for-lowest-cost-of-living/article\\_7b6cf888-1dd4-11ee-8470-e36489b84a80.html](https://kdhnews.com/news/killeen-ranks-second-in-state-for-lowest-cost-of-living/article_7b6cf888-1dd4-11ee-8470-e36489b84a80.html) in 8 July 2023 KDH edition.

f. Texas A&M-Central Texas is in the Top 100 of Online Masters Programs according to the Killeen Daily Herald. Texas A&M University-Central Texas received five awards for its online graduate programs from the U.S. News and World Report rankings for the best online programs. [https://kdhnews.com/news/education/a-m-central-texas-recognized-for-masters-programs/article\\_16ecbf5a-37d8-11ea-ae48-8f18eb44f4aa.html](https://kdhnews.com/news/education/a-m-central-texas-recognized-for-masters-programs/article_16ecbf5a-37d8-11ea-ae48-8f18eb44f4aa.html) in January 2019

g. Central Texas College designated a Top 10 Military Friendly School by Viqtory based on a survey of academic results of over 1800 schools which ranked CTC as the #6 Community College in the nation. [https://kdhnews.com/copperas\\_cove\\_herald/ctc-named-a-top-military-friendly-school/article\\_21231d28-a0c4-11ec-8074-2355915fcb92.html](https://kdhnews.com/copperas_cove_herald/ctc-named-a-top-military-friendly-school/article_21231d28-a0c4-11ec-8074-2355915fcb92.html) in May 2022.

h. Killeen ranked number #101 out of the top 125 metro areas to live based on the U.S. News and World Reports study, “125 Best Places to Live in the USA.” The study compared 125 metro areas in the U.S. based on quality of life and the job markets of each area, as well as value and desire to live in the area, <https://patch.com/texas/across-tx/u-s-news-where-killeen-ranks-best-places-live> in April 2019.

i. According to CNN Money, the City of Killeen has nearly closed the home ownership gap between black and white resident homeowners with only a 14.5% difference. This makes Killeen the lowest racial homeownership gap in the country, and the area supports integration that many of the larger cities lack [https://money.cnn.com/2018/04/17/news/economy/killeen-texas-homeownership/index.html?section=money\\_news\\_economy&utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+rss%2Fmoney\\_news\\_economy+%28CNMoney%3A+Economy+News%29](https://money.cnn.com/2018/04/17/news/economy/killeen-texas-homeownership/index.html?section=money_news_economy&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+rss%2Fmoney_news_economy+%28CNMoney%3A+Economy+News%29) in April 2018.

j. According to the Texas Association of Realtors, Bell County ranked eighth out of ten for the total number of residents coming from out of state. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, this is the fourth straight year for an increase in residents moving to Texas from out of state, [https://kdhnews.com/news/local/report-bell-county-among-top-destinations-for-new-texas-residents/article\\_7d7b52b2-0fa9-11e8-823c-67e0a141d1d4.html](https://kdhnews.com/news/local/report-bell-county-among-top-destinations-for-new-texas-residents/article_7d7b52b2-0fa9-11e8-823c-67e0a141d1d4.html) in February 2018.

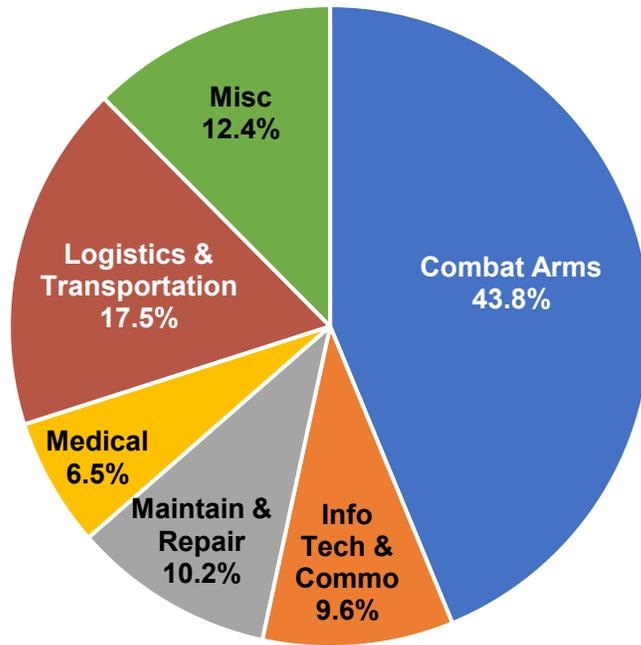
k. The Killeen unemployment rate was 4.4% compared with the Texas unemployment rate of 4.3%, <https://texaslmi.com/LMIbyCategory/LAUS> in December 2025.

l. In 2017, the Texas Transportation Commission approved the designation of 25 miles of US highway 190 in Bell County as a section of the new Interstate 14 which is part of the Interstate Highway System, and part of the new national Fort-to-Port strategic transportation system linking military facilities to deployment seaports, in 2017 and IH-14 expansion continues across Texas with ongoing expansion west from Copperas Cove and east from Temple. <http://www.gulfcoaststrategichighway.org/>

m. The American Defense Communities (ADC) designated Fort Hood as one of the eight “Great American Defense Communities” across the United States for providing continuous support to its service members and their military families, <http://www.hrmffa.org/images/Hampton-Roads-VA-GADC-2017-press-release.pdf> in January 2017.

**E. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTIES:** Departing Soldiers represent over 100 different Military Occupational Specialties (MOS). All of the 354 responses to the MOS question recorded can be grouped into six (6) general areas: Combat Arms (43.8%), Maintainers & Repairers (10.2%), Logistics & Transportation (17.5%), Intelligence, Information Technology & Communication (9.6%), and Medical (6.5%). The other represented series of job classifications are quantified within the ‘Miscellaneous’ category representing (12.4%) of transitioning soldiers.

**FY26 Q1  
MOS Categories**



**COMBAT ARMS**

1. Traditionally, Combat Arms has been the largest group. As operations have ended in Afghanistan and forces reduced in Iraq-Syria, we have seen an increase in operational deployments to Europe and other locations in response to world events. Many transitioning Soldiers will not be combat veterans of the Iraq/Afghanistan campaigns but will have deployed for non-combat operations. Therefore, in addition to the skills listed below, these Soldiers will likely have a broad leadership skillset and staff planning skills (soft skills) that would be a tremendous asset to any organization.

2. Soldiers in combat arms comprise 43.8% (155/354) of the 1<sup>st</sup> QTR FY26 transitioning population. The top seven categories are shown below along with officers and warrant officer transitions.

<b>Infantry (50)</b>	Member or leader who employs small arms/heavy anti-armor weapons in support of combat operations. Operates both mounted and dismounted to close with and destroy the enemy. Employs, operates, and maintains assigned weapons, equipment, and personnel.
<b>Combat Engineer (16)</b>	Member or leader who supervises or assists traveling over rough terrain in combat situations. The combat engineer needs to be an expert in mobility, counter-mobility, survival, and general engineering. Employs, operates, and maintains assigned weapons, equipment, and personnel. Duties may include construction or repair to build bridges, roads, airfields or other facilities.

<b>Field Artillery (20)</b>	Member or leader who employs indirect fire artillery and rocket systems. Loads and fires artillery and rocket systems to include setting fuses and charges on a variety of munitions, including high explosive artillery rounds, laser-guided projectiles, mines, and rocket assisted projectiles. Employs, operates, and maintains assigned weapons, equipment, and personnel.
<b>Aviation (23)</b>	Member or leader who operates, employs, and maintains Army manned/unmanned aircraft to support operations. Includes a range of positions from flight operations, aircraft maintenance, air traffic control, and others. Employs, operates, and maintains assigned weapons, equipment, and personnel.
<b>Cavalry Scout (12)</b>	Member or leader who performs reconnaissance, security, and other combat operations to gather information about enemy positions, equipment, personnel, and activities. Employs, operates, and maintains assigned weapons, equipment, and personnel.
<b>Air Defense (16)</b>	Member or leader who operates and employs surface-to-air weapons and detection systems to defeat threats including manned/unmanned aircraft, rockets, missiles, and other threats while protecting friendly personnel, equipment, and critical assets. Employs, operates, and maintains assigned weapons, equipment, and personnel.
<b>Armored Crewmember (9)</b>	Member or leader who operates and employs armored tanks and assault vehicles to rapidly overwhelm and destroy enemy personnel, equipment, and positions. Employs, operates, and maintains assigned weapons, equipment, and personnel.
<b>Miscellaneous (1)</b>	Other military skills in this area transitioning this quarter are: Special Forces Communications Sergeant (1).
<b>Warrant Officers (2)</b>	Warrant Officers are the technical and subject matter experts in their respective field. Warrant Officers this quarter included: Field Artillery Targeting Technician (1) and Fixed Wing Aviator (1).
<b>Officers (6)</b>	Leaders who plan, organize, and lead troops and activities in military operations. Manages enlisted personnel and equipment. Commands units to accomplish assigned objectives. Officers this quarter included: Infantry (1), Engineer (1), Field Artillery (2), and Armor (2).

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS**

1. This group includes not only traditional information technology and communications skills but also includes Soldiers in the military intelligence field because of their data collection, analysis, and dissemination skills.

2. Soldiers that work in the Information Technology and Communications field comprise 9.6% (34/354) of 1<sup>st</sup> QTR FY26 transitioning population. The top six categories are shown below along with officer and warrant officer transitions.

<b>Information Technology Specialist (2)</b>	Member or leader who is responsible for maintaining, processing, and troubleshooting military computer systems and operations. Responsible for highly sensitive information and possesses technical skills and aptitude for programming and computer languages.
<b>Signal Support System Specialist (7)</b>	Signal support systems specialists are responsible for battlefield signal support systems and terminal devices. Signal support specialists are part of the Army Signal Corps (USASC), which handles communications and information systems support for the combined armed forces.
<b>Nodal Network Systems (5)</b>	Member or leader responsible for maintaining strategic and tactical network communication systems, including IP-based networks, routers, and satellite systems. Installs, operates, and maintains associated equipment.
<b>Intelligence Systems Integrator (4)</b>	Member or leader responsible for configuring, maintaining, and repairing complex intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems, networks, and, computer hardware/software for aerial and ground intelligence information systems.
<b>Intelligence Analyst (3)</b>	Member or leader who uses information derived from all intelligence disciplines to determine changes in enemy capabilities, vulnerabilities, and probable courses of action. Analyzes, assesses, processes, and distributes intelligence information.
<b>Human Intelligence Collector (3)</b>	Member or leader responsible for responsible for collecting intelligence through human sources, including interrogations, debriefings, and developing intelligence networks. Work to identify adversarial elements, their intentions, capabilities, and locations by interacting with people in the operational environment.
<b>Miscellaneous (8)</b>	Other military skills in this area transitioning this quarter are: Electromagnetic Spectrum Manager (1), Cable System Installer (2), Multi-Channel Transmission Systems (2), Satellite Communications Systems (1), Geospatial Intelligence (1), and Counter Intelligence Agent (1).
<b>Warrant Officers (0)</b>	Warrant Officers are the technical and subject matter experts in their respective field. Warrant Officers this quarter included: N/A.
<b>Officers (2)</b>	Leaders who plan, organize, and lead troops and activities in military operations. Manages enlisted personnel and equipment. Commands units to accomplish assigned objectives. Officers this quarter included: Signal (1) and All Source intelligence (1).

### **MAINTAINERS/ REPAIRERS**

1. This group is comprised of Soldiers who maintain a variety of military equipment including weapons systems, vehicles, generators, specialty equipment, communications, and other types to ensure the operational capability of the equipment.

2. Soldiers that work in the field of Maintenance/Repair comprise 10.2% (36/354) of 1<sup>st</sup> QTR FY26 transitioning population. The top six categories are shown below along with officers and warrant officer transitions.

<b>Wheeled Vehicle Mechanics</b> (14)	Member or leader responsible to supervise and perform maintenance and recovery operations on light and heavy wheeled vehicles, associated trailers, material handling equipment, and select armored vehicles. Inspects, services, maintains, repairs, and replaces automotive systems subsystems including electrical systems.
<b>Power-Generation Specialist</b> (2)	Member or leader responsible to supervise and perform maintenance and repairs on power generation equipment, internal combustion engines, and associated equipment in mobile and stationary power plants.
<b>Small Arms/Towed Artillery Repairer</b> (1)	Member or leader responsible for performing field-level maintenance and repairs on small arms, other infantry weapons, and towed artillery.
<b>M1 Abrams Tank Maintainer</b> (4)	Member or leader responsible for diagnosing, troubleshooting, and repairing the M1 Abrams tank's turbine engine, transmission, suspension, steering, and fire suppression systems.
<b>Bradley Fighting Vehicle System Maintainer</b> (4)	Member or leader responsible for maintenance and repairs on the range of Bradley fighting vehicles including anti-aircraft and similar systems. Maintains the fire control system, engines, suspension, steering, and controls.
<b>Stryker Systems Maintainer</b> (4)	Member or leader responsible for maintenance and repairs on the Stryker family of vehicles. Keeps the vehicles and the operating systems running smoothly.
<b>Miscellaneous</b> (7)	Other military skills in this area transitioning this quarter are: Track Vehicle Repairer (1), Self Propelled Artillery Repairer (2), Mechanical Maintenance Supervisor (2), Communications Security Equipment Repairer (1), and Avionics & Survivability Equipment Repairer (1).
<b>Warrant Officers</b> (0)	Warrant Officers are the technical and subject matter experts in their respective field. Warrant Officers this quarter included: N/A.
<b>Officers</b> (0)	Leaders who plan, organize, and lead troops and activities in military operations. Manages enlisted personnel and equipment. Commands units to accomplish assigned objectives. Officers this quarter included: N/A.

### MEDICAL

1. This group provides preventive, routine, and emergency medical treatment, limited primary care & health protection & evacuation from a point of injury or illness. Includes select types of specialty care.

2. Personnel in this group make up 6.5% (23/354) of 1<sup>st</sup> QTR FY26 transitioning population. The top four categories are shown below along with officers and warrant officer transitions.

<b>Combat Medic (17)</b>	Member or leader who provides 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. Serves as a first responder and triages illnesses and injuries. Trains other Soldiers in lifesaver/first responder courses and provides care on base while not deployed.
<b>Dental Specialist (3)</b>	Member or leader who assists the dental officer in prevention, examination, and treatment of diseases of teeth and oral region, or assists with the management of dental treatment facilities.
<b>Biomedical Equipment Specialist (2)</b>	Member or leader responsible for servicing and maintaining all medical equipment with mechanical, hydraulic, pneumatic, electronic, digital, optical, and radiological principles. Perform calibrations and preventive maintenance, inspect equipment for serviceability.,
<b>Behavioral Health Specialist (1)</b>	Member or leader responsible working under the supervision of psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers to administer mental health care. Conducts interviews, counsels patients, and helps Soldiers learn to manage any existing mental health conditions, behavior problems, struggles, and stresses that arise
<b>Miscellaneous (0)</b>	Soldiers with various medical specialty MOS including: N/A.
<b>Warrant Officers (0)</b>	Warrant Officers are the technical and subject matter experts in their respective field. Warrant Officers this quarter included: Veterinary Services Technician.
<b>Officer (0)</b>	Leaders who plan, organize, and lead troops and activities in military operations. May provide general and specialty medical care. Medical Officers this quarter included: General Dentist (1).

### **LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORTATION**

1. Logistics & Transportation is frequently the second largest transitioning group. This group plans, coordinates, and sustains military units and operations with equipment, supplies, ordnance, while providing Soldiers with food, water, ammunition, petroleum, repair parts and other services.

2. Personnel in this group, make up 17.5% (62/354) of 1<sup>st</sup> QTR FY26 transitioning population. The top seven categories are shown below along with officers and warrant officer transitions.

<b>Motor Transport Operator (12)</b>	Member or leader who supervise and operate wheeled vehicles over all types of terrain to safely transport cargo, troops, and provide advanced mobility on all missions. Manages loading, unloading, and distribution.
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<b>Automated Logistical Specialist (11)</b>	Member or leader responsible for supervising and performing accountability management or warehouse functions to maintain equipment records and parts. perform maintenance management and warehouse functions in order to maintain equipment records. Responsible for the quality and accuracy of performance, cost, and parts data through improved data management.
<b>Unit Supply Specialist (13)</b>	Member or leader primarily responsible for supervising or performing tasks involving the general upkeep and maintenance of all Army supplies and equipment. Receives, inspects, inventories, loads and unloads, stores, issues, and delivers all supplies and equipment. Secures and controls weapons and ammunition in security areas.
<b>Ammunition Specialist (3)</b>	Member or leader responsible to receive, store, and issue conventional ammunition, guided missiles, large rockets and other ammunition related items. Performs maintenance, modification, destruction and demilitarization on ammunition and explosive components. Performs stock control and accounting of ammunition.
<b>Petroleum Supply Specialist (14)</b>	Member or leader who supervise and manage the reception, storage, and shipping of bulk or packaged petroleum-based products. Performs quality assurance, dispenses and distributes petroleum products for vehicles, aircraft, and ancillary equipment.
<b>Food Service Specialist (4)</b>	Prepare and service food in both in the field and at home station, as well as ordering, inspecting food supplies, and keeping the kitchen safe and sanitary.
<b>Transportation Management Coordinator (2)</b>	Member or leader responsible for supervising, monitoring, and controlling the movement of personnel, equipment, and cargo via air, rail, highway, and water. Determines the most efficient transportation methods, coordinates with commercial and military agencies, and manages cargo documentation.
<b>Miscellaneous (1)</b>	Soldiers with various medical specialty MOS including: Petroleum Laboratory Specialist (1).
<b>Warrant Officers (1)</b>	Warrant Officers are the technical and subject matter experts in their respective field. Officers this quarter included: Petroleum Laboratory Technician (1).
<b>Officers (1)</b>	Leaders who plan, organize, and lead troops and activities in military operations. Manages enlisted personnel and equipment. Commands units to accomplish assigned objectives. Officers this quarter included: Quartermaster (1)

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

1. The Miscellaneous group includes others not in one of the broader categories above or a few who failed to indicate their specialty. They are traditionally lower density military occupation specialties Personnel in this category provide unique functions and represent 12.4% (44/354) of the 1<sup>st</sup> QTR FY26 transitioning population.

<b>Military Police (12)</b>	Member or leader who protects lives and property on Army installations by enforcing military laws and regulations, traffic control, crime preventing, and emergency response. Conducts force
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	protection, anti-terrorism, area security, police intelligence, corrections, and includes Military Working Dog handlers.
<b>Human Resources Specialist (4)</b>	Member or leader who performs and supervises specific human resources functions in a personnel office at various organizational levels. Member or leader who is responsible for financial management duties such as budgeting, disbursing and accounting for government funds.
<b>Chemical, Biological, Radiological, &amp; Nuclear Specialist (8)</b>	Member or leader who protects against the threat of CBRN weapons of mass destruction and decontaminates hazardous material spills or accidents. Employs advanced equipment and coordinates defense systems against CBRN weapons.
<b>Military Working Dog Handler (2)</b>	Member or leader responsible for training and caring for dogs, both at home and abroad, supporting missions and daily law enforcement. Searches search for drugs or explosives and works to neutralize threats in law enforcement operations.
<b>Financial Management Specialist (4)</b>	Member or leader responsible for accounting, finances, budget reporting, and disbursing of government funds.
<b>Miscellaneous (10)</b>	Soldiers with various specialty MOSs including: Public Affairs & Mass Communications Specialist (1), Paralegal Specialist (2), Special Duty Assignment (1), and No Response (6).
<b>Warrant Officers (0)</b>	Warrant Officers are the technical and subject matter experts in their respective field. Warrant Officers this quarter included: N/A.
<b>Officers (4)</b>	Leaders who plan, organize, and lead troops and activities in military operations. Manages enlisted personnel and equipment. Commands units to accomplish assigned objectives. Officers this quarter included: Student Officer (1), Cyber Operations Officer (1), Financial Management Officer (1) and Space Operations Officer (1).

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

1. 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 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. Because this survey is voluntary and can be taken up to a year before the date of separation during the Soldier for Life-Transition Assistance Program, it may be very possible that at the time of the survey, the majority just did not know what area of employment he/she would prefer. For this 1<sup>st</sup> QTR FY26 report, of those who did respond to this question (334 Soldiers), the top five desired categories of post-military service employment are below<sup>2</sup>. There were 182 responses for the spouse preference of their desired employment categories and the top five are depicted below as well.

<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 TAP Mr. Adrian B Thompson: at (254)288-0827; [adrian.b.thompson.civ@army.mil](mailto:adrian.b.thompson.civ@army.mil); or by posting their opportunity and company website URL on the TAP website (<https://www.armytap.army.mil>).

### SOLDIER

1. Skilled Trades: 112
2. Information Technology: 73
3. Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics: 60
4. Business: 51
5. Medical/Healthcare: 50

### SPOUSE

1. Medical/Healthcare: 44
2. Business: 36
3. Education/Training: 19
4. Skilled Trades: 15
5. Public Safety: 14

2. Employment: The Labor Market & Career Information Department (LMCI) of the Texas Workforce Commission provides a monthly snapshot of the area economy within the Texas labor market using statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. This is broken down by industry profiles, and graphs the top ten groups consisting of seventeen different industries.

a. This list can be compared to the Veteran's Inventory Initiative list of top desired employment after the service. The following list indicates the top ten industry profiles for the Killeen-Temple MSA according to the monthly Texas Labor Market Information - <https://texaslmi.com/EconomicProfiles/MSAProfiles> for more info.

b. This list can be compared to the responses above for Soldiers' top desires for employment when retiring from their service in the military. We will continue to monitor and compare these reports in the future.

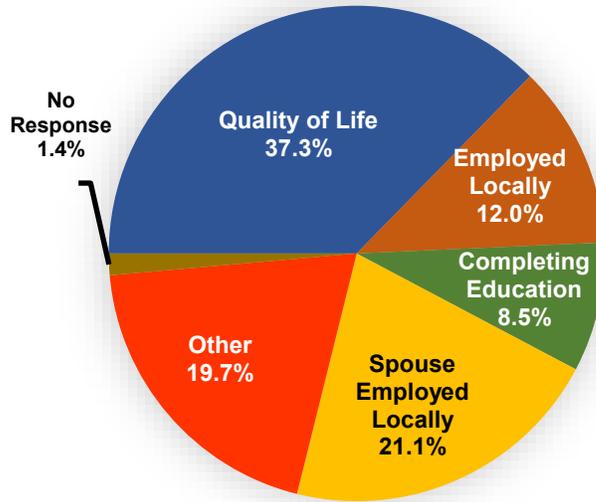
### **G. REASONS FOR REMAINING IN THE MSA:**

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 that identified they were staying in the area said it was due to Quality of life. The second largest group staying was due to their spouse finding employment locally. The next largest groups staying have found employment locally, or completing 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 Bachelors or Master's degree while remaining in an area with a lower cost of living compared to other areas with universities. We will continue to monitor this response for future quarters. The chart below depicts the respondent's reasons for remaining in Central Texas.

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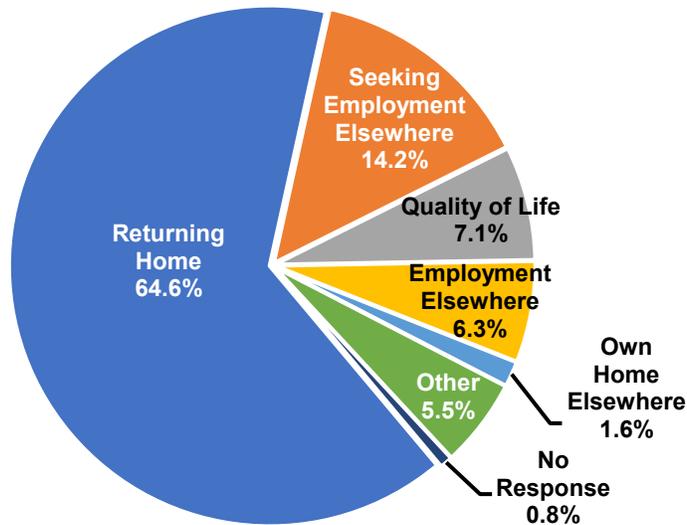
Employers may place a job posting via "Work in Texas" ([www.workintexas.com](http://www.workintexas.com)) - a statewide, internet-based job-matching system through Workforce Solutions of Central Texas (WF SCT) (254) 200-2020. The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) staff work closely with the Central Texas Workforce Business Services including job development, direct referrals, and military skills-civilian occupations matching. [tvcemployment@tvc.texas.gov](mailto:tvcemployment@tvc.texas.gov) (512) 463-2333

**FY26 Q1  
Reason for Staying**

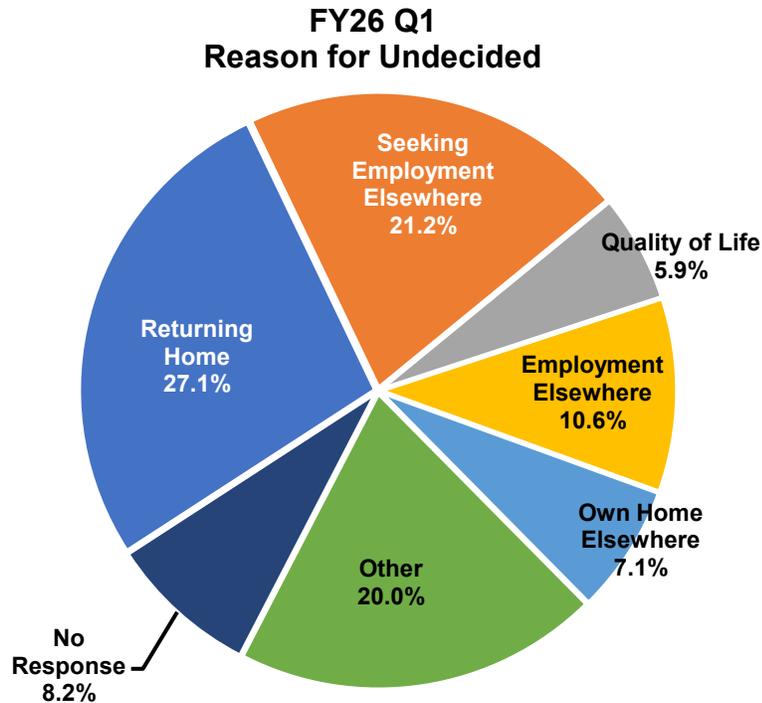


2. The reasons for those service members not staying in the MSA after separation are depicted below. The majority of those choosing to live outside of the MSA after separation wanted to return to their home of record, while the second largest group stated that they are seeking employment elsewhere. Returning home has been the primary reason for leaving the MSA since the inception of this survey. 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.

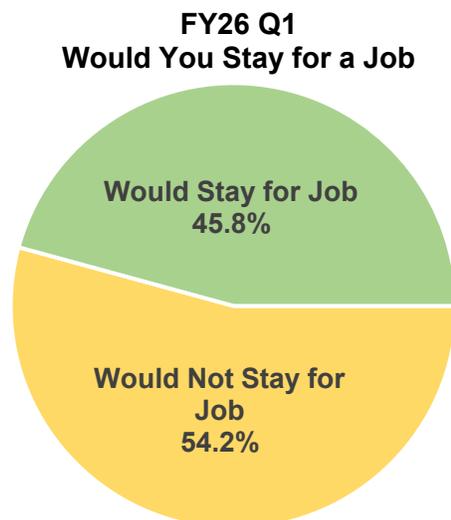
**FY26 Q1  
Reason for Leaving**



3. The third group that hasn't decided to stay or depart Central Texas represent a significantly different dynamic in their reasons. The majority of the 79 service members in this category are distributed across three categories of 27.1% Returning Home, 21.5% Seeking Employment Elsewhere, and 20.0% Other Reason. Interestingly, these three categories are historically the largest for the Undecided group.



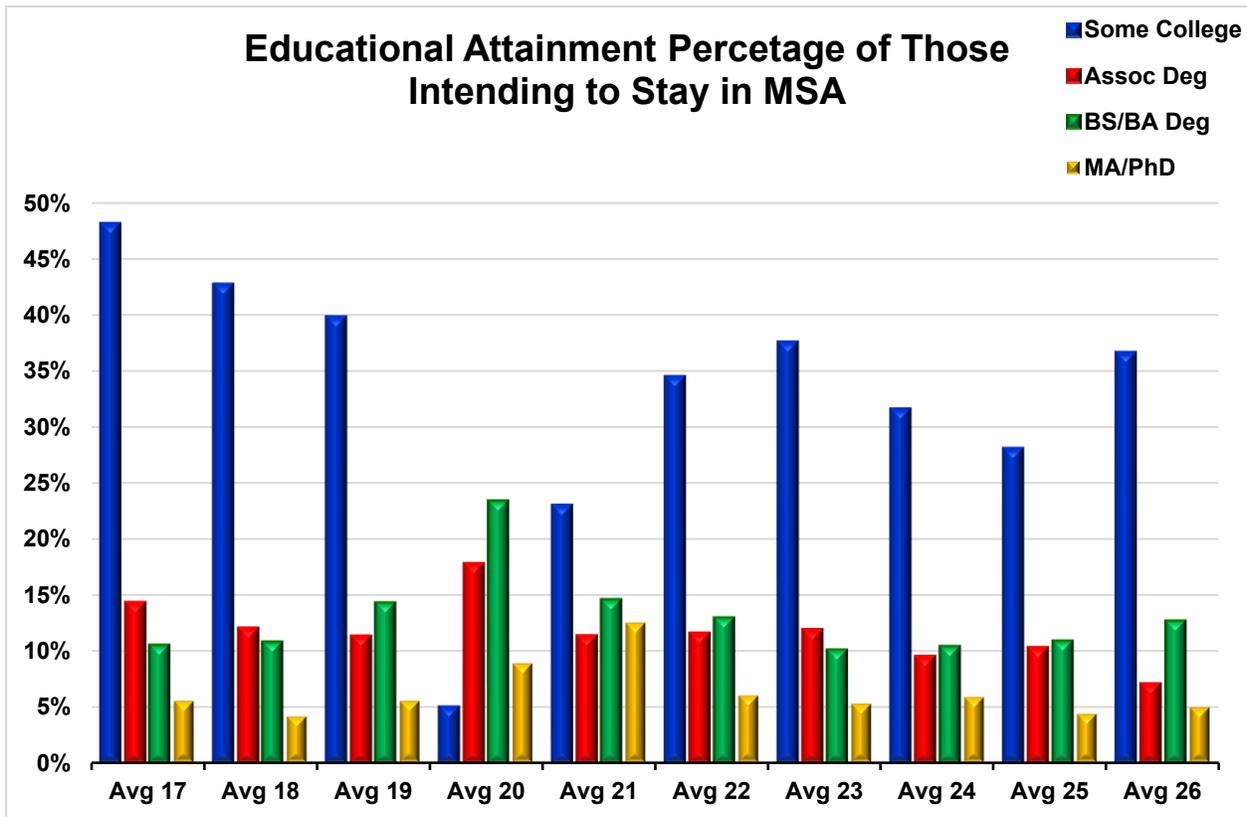
4. There is an untapped resource in the pool of 206 service members in the categories of those who are departing (127) or undecided (85) about remaining in Central Texas. Of these two categories, 45.8% (97 of 212) service members would stay in Central Texas for meaningful employment. This 45.8% represents a missed opportunity for the Central Texas labor market and a potential pool to recruit new industries seeking talent.



**H. EDUCATION LEVEL OF THOSE REMAINING IN THE REGION:** Respondents are asked to provide their highest level of educational attainment. All soldiers have a High School Diploma/GED. For this quarter, 87 of 142 (61.3%) of the respondents who intend to remain in the region have some level of post-secondary education:

- ❖ Some College – 52 (36.6%)
- ❖ Associates Degree – 10 (7.0%)
- ❖ Bachelor’s Degree – 18 (12.7%)
- ❖ Masters/PhD Degree – 7 (4.9%)

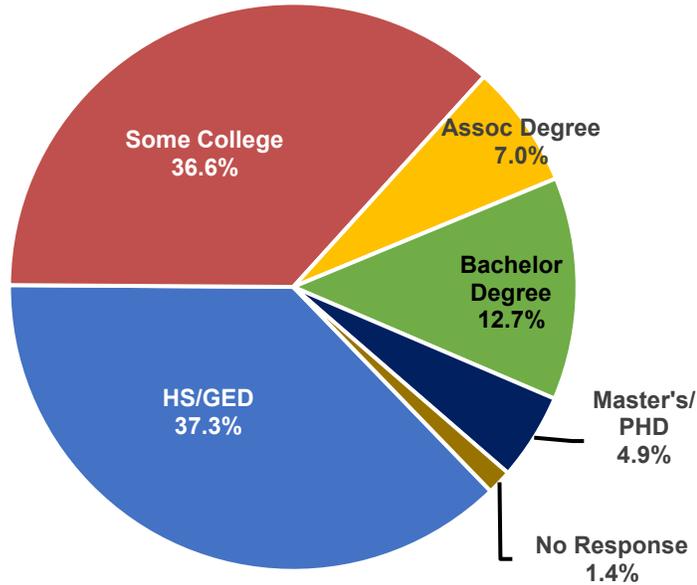
1. The data from over 53,000 Soldiers separating over the last seventeen years indicates that for those Soldiers who intend to remain in the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA (both retirement eligible and non-retirement eligible), educational attainment for those completing the survey has remained stable for post-secondary degrees. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, there were less surveys processed in 2020 thru 2022. The chart below depicts average yearly education levels for those remaining in Central Texas for the last ten years. We will continue to monitor these results quarterly from those separating from the service.



Traditionally with the availability of Texas A&M Central Texas as an area university of distinction, the numbers of those Soldiers pursuing post-secondary degrees has been higher than before the opening of this area upper-level university. This data is further affirmation that those Soldiers leaving the service provide a solid foundation of education as well as real-world experience as future employees for the area.

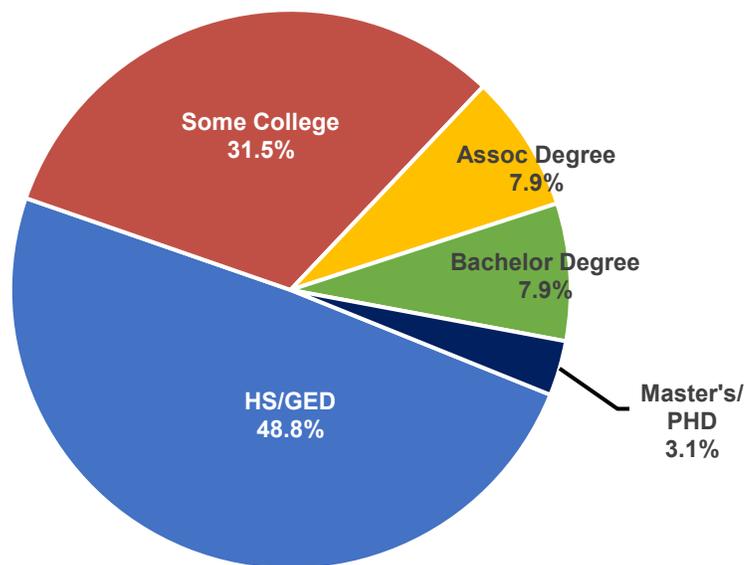
2. The chart below depicts the education for those 142 service members who responded they are remaining in the MSA. The education level is diverse with 61.3% (87 of 142) having at least some college or a degree. The remaining 38.7% (55 of 142) all have a high school diploma or GED certification.

**FY26 Q1  
Education Level - Staying**

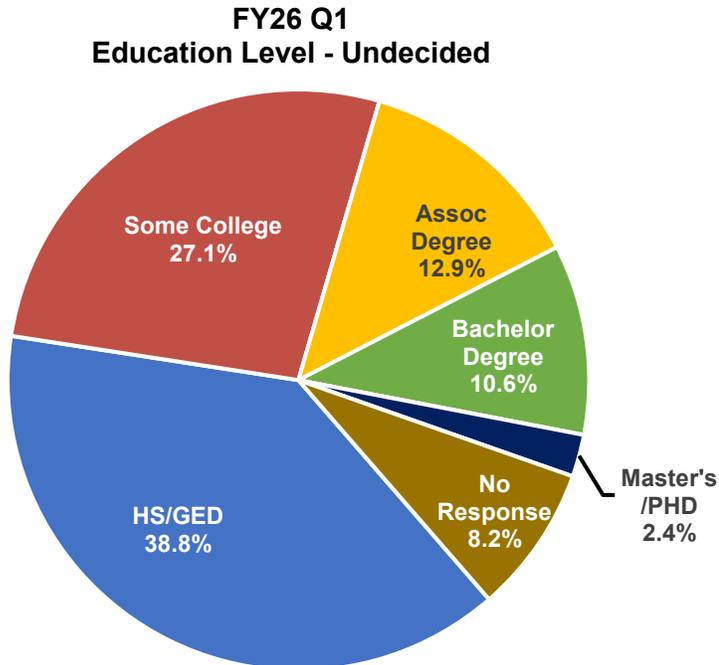


3. The graph below depicts the educational attainment levels for the 127 Soldiers who are not staying in the MSA and reflects lost opportunity for our area.

**FY26 Q1  
Education Level - Leaving**



4. A third dynamic includes the Soldiers who are unsure if they will stay in the MSA or depart. This quarter 85 transitioning Soldiers indicated they were unsure if they would remain in the MSA or depart. This group represents both workforce and economic potential that may be influenced to remain in the MSA.



5. Anecdotally, businesses indicate they want to hire veterans. Educational attainment is a key variable in that process, given the current national unemployment rate. Due to extra benefits of health care, tuition assistance, housing and food allowances while in the service, the military remains a favorable career choice. However, the standards of recruiting continue to be more stringent, so candidates applying to the military with a GED are accepted on an exception to policy basis. 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 complete their degrees, and the fact that a large percentage of Soldiers separating from the service desire to remain in the area, the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA is a very desirable region for potential business partners to relocate to the area. This opportunity would also likely 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 satisfying employment in the area after leaving the service.

6. Perceptions versus reality: As 96% percent of Fort Hood Soldiers either 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. Quality of Life within the MSA is important to retaining Soldiers in the area after separating, as seen in the previous graph on page thirteen. In addition, 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 a strong way to make the Quality of Life in the MSA more desirable, helping to retain the Soldier and their family in the MSA.

7. 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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