

**Telling the Story of U.S. Army  
Women:  
Opportunities, Challenges and  
Benefits of Service**

by

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## **About the U.S. Army Women’s Foundation**

The U.S. Army Women’s Foundation is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization originally established in 1969. The mission of the U.S. Army Women’s Foundation is to promote public interest in the Army and the women who serve in the Army. The Foundation recognizes and honors the service of Army women and supports the U.S. Army Women’s Museum located at Fort Lee, Virginia.

The Army Women’s Museum is a showplace for the history of women in the Army from the Revolutionary War to conflict in Iraq. The Museum preserves this history and captures our current history. It is the only museum in the world dedicated to Army women. In addition to supporting the Museum, other Foundation programs help to spread the word about service in the U.S. Army.

For more information about the U.S. Army Women’s Foundation, visit the website at [www.AWFDN.org](http://www.AWFDN.org).

## **About the George Mason University Center for Regional Analysis**

The Center for Regional Analysis conducts research and analytical studies on economic, fiscal, demographic, and social and policy issues. Through its range of research and programs—major economic impact studies, economic forecasts, fiscal analyses, conferences and seminars, publications, information services, and data products—the Center's activities strengthen decision-making by businesses, governments, and other institutions.

The Center’s research reports and analysis can be found at the website: [www.cra-gmu.org](http://www.cra-gmu.org).

## Executive Summary

Service in the United States Army has had a substantial impact on the lives of respondents to the U.S. Army Women’s Foundation (USAWF) survey. Results from this pilot study indicate that service in the Army was a major influence on the educational advancement of respondents. Army service was also very important to respondents in the post-Army civilian careers. By and large, survey respondents were more economically successful than women nationally and many state that the Army was a primary reason for their achievements.

The following are some of the highlights from this report:

- The USAWF sample included women who joined the WAACs in 1942 up to women who began service in 2002. **The reasons respondents joined the Army varied significantly depending on the era in which they joined.** Nearly three-quarters of respondents who joined the Army during World War II stated that they joined the Army to serve their country. Respondents who had joined in 1975 or later were more likely to say they had joined to obtain an education compared with earlier cohorts.

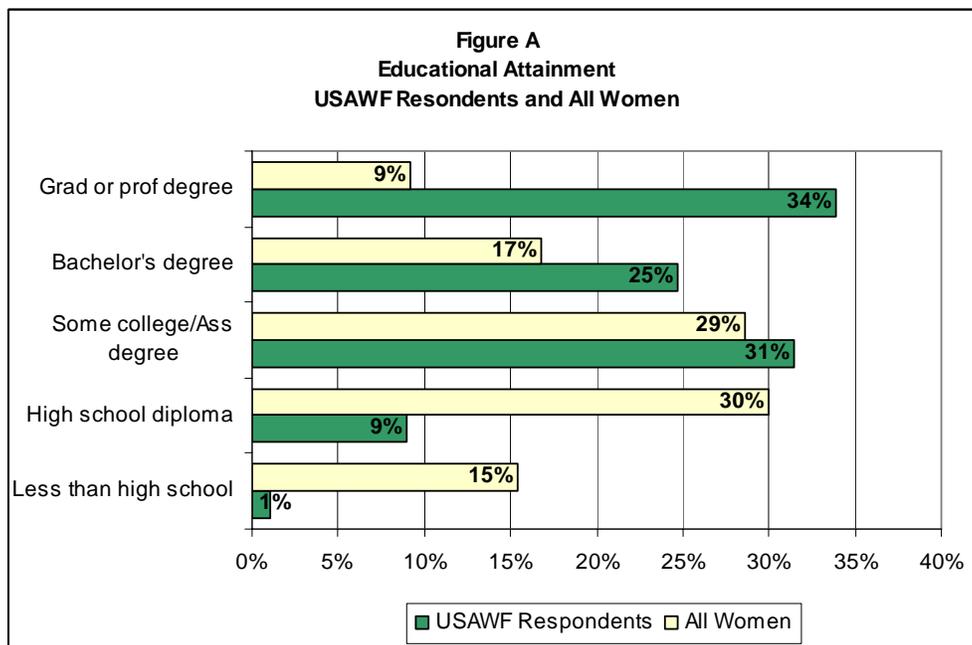
**Table A**  
**Most Important Reason for Joining**  
**By Era**

	Era			
	1942 - 1949	1950 - 1959	1960 - 1974	1975 – 2002
Gain Job Skills	1.6%	9.2%	7.0%	12.5%
Travel / Leave Home	8.5%	25.1%	16.2%	26.3%
Military career	2.3%	12.3%	9.7%	6.6%
Veteran's Benefits	0.8%	0.5%	4.3%	3.3%
To Serve Country	71.3%	35.9%	31.4%	23.7%
Obtain Education	1.6%	8.2%	11.9%	16.5%
Other	14.0%	8.7%	19.5%	11.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

- Respondents who joined the Army in the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s were **very likely to make a career out of the Army.** Almost 62 percent of these women served 20 years or more. The survey respondents were comprised by 59 percent enlisted personnel and 41 percent officers. Nearly half of the officers

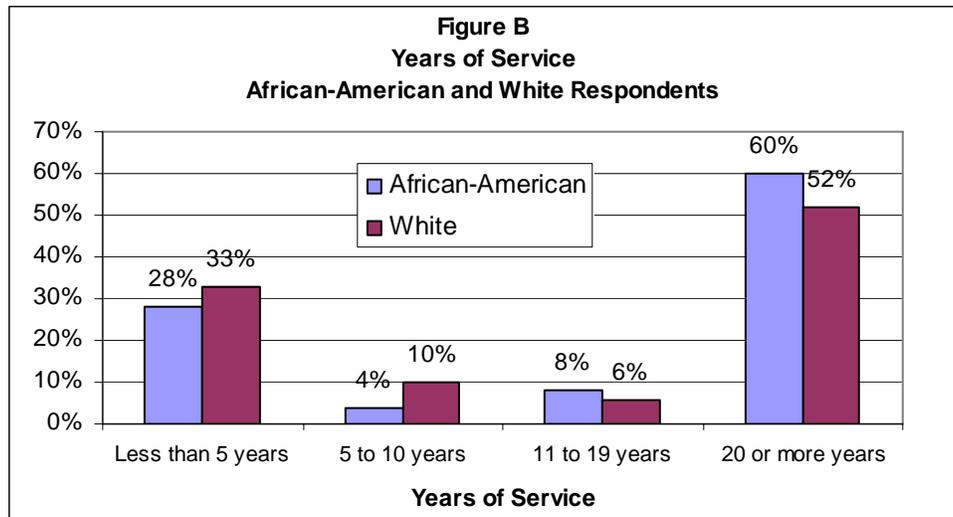
were commissioned directly into service. About one-quarter became officers through Officer Training School or Office Candidate School.

- Survey respondents were much more highly educated than women nationally and **many women advanced their education either while in the Army or when they left.** Nearly 60 percent of respondents had a bachelor’s degree or higher compared with 26 percent of women nationally. More than half of respondents had used the GI Bill to attend college or otherwise advance their education. Thirty-seven percent of respondents who had only a high school diploma when they entered the Army went on to complete a bachelor’s degree. More than two-thirds of women who were college graduates when they joined the Army eventually earned a graduate or professional degree.



- A large share of respondents made a career in the Army and many others had very accomplished civilian careers. As a result, **respondents had high personal incomes** compared with women nationally. More than one-third of respondents who had left the Army had annual *personal* incomes of \$60,000 or more, compared with only about 10 percent of women nationally. Many respondents received Army retirement benefits and others had successful employment after their Army service. Retirees generally had higher incomes than respondents who were either still serving in the Army or had civilian jobs.
- These survey results suggest that **Army service has an even bigger influence on the educational and employment achievements of minority women.** African-American survey respondents were more likely to make a career out of the Army

compared to white respondents. They made greater gains in their educational attainment levels. A greater share of African-American respondents used the GI Bill—59 percent compared with 53 percent of white respondents. Forty-one percent of African-American respondents had only a high school diploma at the time they joined the Army. At the time of the survey in spring 2006, all of these women had completed at least some college. Nearly 70 percent had a bachelor’s degree or higher and 44 percent had earned a graduate or professional degree.



- Respondents to the USAWF survey felt strongly that their Army service was important to their economic success. Nearly 60 percent agreed with the statements that **the Army made them more economically successful today than if they had not served** and **the skills they learned in the Army were critical to their career advancement**. Many respondents wrote lengthy testimonials about the self-confidence and leadership skills they gained from their service.
- The professional opportunities afforded by the Army did not come without a cost. Many survey **respondents sacrificed personal or family experiences for their Army experience**. Forty-three percent of survey respondents had never been married and 59 percent had not had children. When asked explicitly, more than 85 percent of respondents indicated they had to make personal sacrifices as a result of serving in the Army.

## Purpose of the Study

The George Mason University Center for Regional Analysis (CRA) received a research contract from the U.S. Army Women's Foundation (USAWF) to conduct a pilot survey of female Army soldiers and veterans in order to assess the impact Army service has had on the economic well-being of women. This study represents groundbreaking research on the impact of the Army on the educational achievements, employment advancements and economic success on generations of Army women. This pilot study also sets the stage for follow-up research, including focus groups and a large-scale survey of a representative sample of all female soldiers and veterans.

## Methodology

The sampling frame for the survey was the USAWF membership list. The mission of the USAWF is to promote public interest in the Army and the women who serve in the Army. Mailings were sent to 1,450 women, including Army veterans and women currently serving. The packet included a letter from the President of the U.S. Army Women's Foundation, a return envelope, and the 60-question survey. (See Appendix A for copy of cover letter and survey instrument.)

The survey instrument initially was developed by CRA based on a review of existing military and employment surveys. The survey questions were reviewed and edited by USAWF staff and members to ensure appropriate wording.

Participants were given the option of completing the hard-copy survey and mailing it back to CRA or completing the survey online. The web address of the online survey was included in the introduction to the survey instrument. The online survey was set up by CRA and hosted on the website [www.qualtrics.com](http://www.qualtrics.com). Responses from hard-copy surveys were entered into the online hosting site by CRA staff.

The survey was administered from April 1 through May 31, 2006. A total of 709 responses were received for a response rate of 48.9 percent. Approximately one-half of the surveys were completed online by respondents while the other half were returned in hard-copy format.

Survey data were cleaned. Tabulations were done for each of the survey questions. Caution must be used when drawing conclusions from these analyses. Because the survey sampling frame was the USAWF membership list, one cannot generalize results presented in this report to the broader U.S. Army women population.

In addition, subgroup analyses were also done for many questions. In some cases, the small sample size and the characteristics of the women in the sampling frame led to very small subgroups. For example, some analyses are presented by race/ethnicity but non-whites make up a very small proportion of the respondents. Thus, interpretations of the

subgroup analysis must be made cautiously. Data on the number of observations in each subgroup tabulation are included in the detail tables in the Appendix.

## Background on Women in the U.S. Army

Women have served the U.S. in military operations since even before the country was born. However, a formal role for women in the Army was first established during World War II. In 1942, the U.S. Congress established the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) to work *with* the Army "for the purpose of making available to the national defense the knowledge, skill, and special training of the women of the nation."<sup>1</sup> The Women's Army Corps (WAC), the successor to WAAC, was created in 1943 to be an integral *part* of the U.S. Army. Over 150,000 women served in the WAC during World War II. These women held a variety of jobs in the Aircraft Warning Sensors unit, Transportation Corps, Chemical Warfare Services unit, Quartermaster Corps, Signal Corps and other units. The women serving in World War II were file clerks, stenographers, motor pool drivers, mechanics, electricians, and radio operators. In April 1945, there were more than 16,000 WACs serving overseas.

New enlistments in the WAC were terminated in August 1945 in preparation for the closure of the last WAC training center at Fort Des Moines, Iowa. Women with prior WAC service were permitted to re-enlist, but women without prior service could not enlist until September 1948 following the passage of the Women's Armed Forces Integration Act (PL 80-625). By 1948 the number of women in the WAC on active duty had declined to about 5,000. The WAC Training Center at Fort Lee, Virginia opened in 1948 and the first new regular Army recruits graduated in December 1948.<sup>2</sup>

Congress passed the Women's Armed Forces Integration Act in 1948, which admitted women into the regular Army and Reserves. By the time the Korean War began in June 1950, the WAC had doubled to more than 7,000. No WAC unit was sent to Korea because no commander sought a WAC unit and because WAC recruiting was low. However, many WACs served in support positions in Japan, working as telephone operators, drivers, supply clerks, and medical specialists.

WAC strength increased again as the U.S. Army built up forces for the Vietnam War. In June 1971, there were a total of 12,781 women serving in the WAC. By September 1978, total strength was nearly 53,000 women.

Examination of the women-in-combat issue resulted in the loosening of policies authorizing women to serve in any officer and enlisted specialty except Infantry, Armor, Cannon Field Artillery, Combat Engineer, and Low Altitude Air Defense Artillery units of battalion squadron or smaller size.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, laws preventing women from

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/brochures/wac/wac.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Morden, Bettie J. 1990. *The Women's Army Corps, 1945-1978*. Center for Military History, United States Army: Washington DC.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 384.

serving on ships and aircraft were modified to permit women to service on ships and aircraft that would not be in combat.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, women were faced with regularly changing requirements for service in the Army. The WAC was abolished in 1978 by Public Law 95-584. Henceforth women were integrated with men. All enlistment qualifications became the same for men and women in 1979. In 1982, the Army returned to “separate basic training” for men and women.

**Table 1. Women in the Army**

Year	Officers	Enlisted	Total
1945	62,775	93,095	155,870
1950	4,431	6,551	10,982
1955	5,222	7,716	12,938
1960	4,263	8,279	12,542
1965	3,806	8,520	12,326
1970	5,248	11,476	16,724
1975	4,594	37,701	42,295
1980	7,609	61,279	69,338
1985	10,828	68,419	79,247
1990	12,404	71,217	83,621
1995	10,786	57,260	68,046
2000	10,814	62,889	73,703
2004	12,309	61,034	73,343

Source: U.S. Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Service, Information Technology Management Directorate.

Key policy changes during this time included the following:

- In November 1967, President Lyndon Johnson signed Public Law 90-130, which lifted promotion restrictions on WAC servicewomen and opened promotions to colonel (a rank previously limited to the Director) and general officer. The law also removed the 2 percent restriction on the strength of women.
- In December 1972, Army policy changed to allow women to command men. Thus, WACs could command any unit in the Army except one that had a combat mission.<sup>4</sup>
- Between 1972 and 1974, WAC detachments merged with male units. The number of women commanders increased by 30 percent during this time.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 274.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 274.

- In 1972, policies of the Army (and other services) changed to allow women in aviation. The first WAC entered rotary wing course in late 1973 and received her wings in June 1974.<sup>6</sup>
- In 1976, women were admitted to the service academies.

During the 1980s, the number of female active duty personnel serving in the Army increased 25 percent—from 69,338 in 1980 to 86,494 in 1989.<sup>7</sup>

Army women played important roles in U.S. military efforts in the late 1980s and 1990s. The first modern woman credited with combat action was Capt. Bray, who led MPs in the capture of a weapons cache in 1989 in Operation Just Cause in Panama. Approximately 24,000 Army women served in the Persian Gulf War in 1991. A number of women were killed in action in Gulf War I and two Army women were captured during the conflict. Women soldiers went into Somalia as a part of a United Nations coalition to assist in humanitarian aid to the Somali people. Army women took part in the 1994 invasion of Haiti which was undertaken to remove a repressive military regime and install the duly elected leader.

Women have become increasingly visible in the current war in Iraq. There are about 9,000 Army women in Iraq, accounting for more than one-quarter of the total Army strength. While women are still not technically allowed to serve in combat, many are often faced with combat situations in a war with no frontlines. The experience of the Iraq war will likely lead to more changes in the roles and responsibilities of women in the U.S. Army and perceptions of U.S. Army women.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 272.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Table 2-19 Female Active Duty Personnel – 1945 Through Present, Prepared by Washington Headquarters Services, Information Technology Management Directorate.

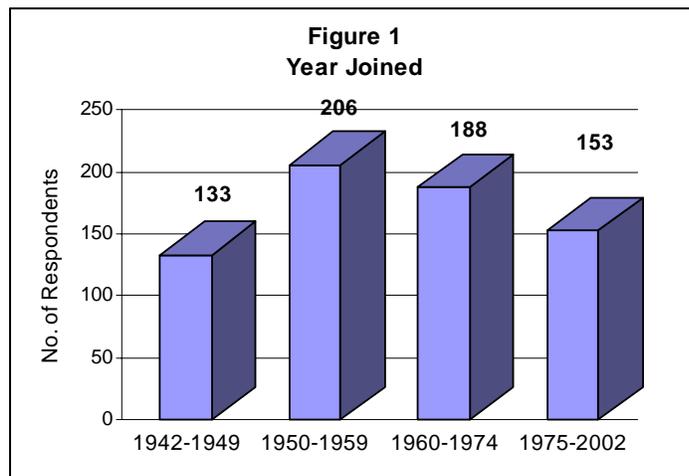
## Who We Are

This survey offers a unique look at the characteristics of Army women who served during World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the post-Vietnam era. In general, survey respondents joined the Army when they were younger than 25, were white and were less likely to be married or have children than women who did not serve. More recent Army servicewomen were more likely to be minority, be married and have children. The respondents that served during the 1940s comprise a unique group, with a substantial share marrying and having children. This finding is likely due to the short period of service many of the earliest respondents experienced.

### **Year Joined**

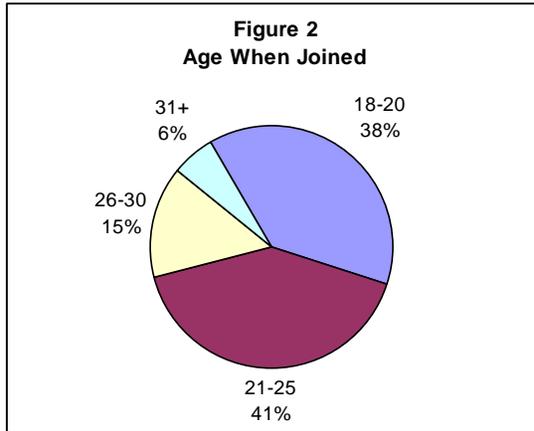
The USAWF sample included women who joined the WAACs in 1942 up to women who began service in 2002. The time period that women joined had a significant impact on their experience in the Army and their later course in civilian life. Survey respondents were categorized into four *eras* based on the year in which they joined, which corresponded generally to the World War II era (1942–1949), Korean War era (1950–1959), Vietnam War era (1960–1974) and post-Vietnam War era (1975–2002).

The survey respondents were fairly evenly split into respondents who joined the Army in each of these four eras (Figure 1). The largest group (30.3 percent) had joined the Army in the 1950s. Nearly 28 percent had joined between 1960 and 1974 and 22.5 percent had joined in 1975 or later. While the smallest group was the World War II era Army women, they made up a substantial share of the study respondents (19.6 percent) because they comprise a large portion of the USAWF membership.



**Age When Joined**

More than three-quarters of the women surveyed joined the Army when they were age 25 or younger (Figure 2). Thirty-eight percent of respondents joined when they were



between the ages 18 and 20 and 41 percent joined when they were between the ages of 21 and 25. Fifteen percent joined between the ages 26 and 30. Six percent joined when they were thirty years or older.

The age distribution for women who joined in the 1940s varied significantly from the age distribution of women who served during other eras (Table 2). Only 15.7 percent of respondents who joined in the 1940s were between the ages of 18 and 20, compared with 50.0 percent of respondents joining in the 1950s, 39.5 percent of respondents joining between 1960 and

1974, and 40.0 percent of women who joined in 1975 or later. The majority of women who joined in the 1940s (61.2 percent) were between the ages of 21 and 25.

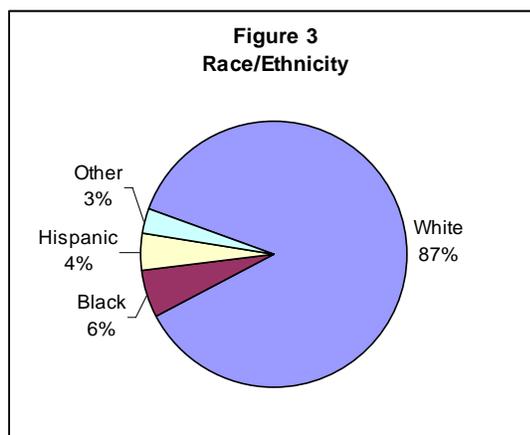
**Table 2. Age When Joined By Era**

Age	Era			
	1942-1949	1950-1959	1960-1974	1975-2002
18 to 20	15.7%	50.0%	39.5%	40.0%
21 to 25	61.2%	29.2%	42.4%	37.7%
26 to 30	15.7%	15.1%	14.7%	14.6%
31+	7.4%	5.7%	3.4%	7.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### **Race and Ethnicity**

The vast majority of the women who responded to the USAWF survey were white. The respondents' race was divided into four categories—White, Black, Hispanic, and Other. Eighty-six percent of the women surveyed were white. Six percent were black, four percent were of Hispanic origin, and three percent were in the other category (Figure 3).

Based on responses from the USAWF sample, minorities have become an increasing share of new Army servicewomen. More than 95 percent of the respondents who joined the Army in the 1940s were white. Among the most recent group that joined between 1975 and 2002, the share had dropped to 72.3 percent (Table 3). These trends among USAWF survey respondents mirror wider trends of minority service in the Armed Forces.<sup>8</sup>



**Table 3.  
Race/Ethnicity  
By Era**

Race/ Ethnicity	Era			
	1942 - 1949	1950 – 1959	1960 – 1974	1975 - 2002
White	95.4%	93.6%	83.9%	72.3%
Black	3.1%	3.0%	7.5%	10.2%
Hispanic	0.8%	2.0%	5.4%	10.2%
Other	0.8%	1.5%	3.2%	7.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### **Marital Status and Children**

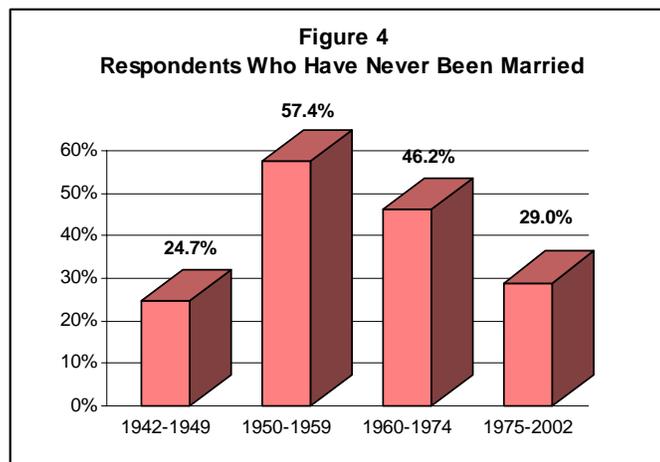
The survey data indicate that many women who serve in the Army do not marry or have children, suggesting a difficulty of combining military life and family life. However, there is some evidence that combining Army service and family life has become easier

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Defense. 1998. *Population Representation in the Military Services: FY97*, <http://www.dod.gov/prhome/poprep97/index.html>. According to this report, just 64.4 percent of all military service personnel were white in 1997, compared with 76.7 percent in 1973.

more recently, which likely reflect changes in Army policies and attitudes about female military service.

Forty-three percent of survey respondents had never been married. Twenty-eight percent were married or living as married, nearly 16 percent were divorced or separated, and 13 percent were widowed. Survey respondents were much more likely to be single compared with all women nationally. According to the 2005 American Community Survey, 25.5 percent of women aged 15 and older had never been married, 14.1 percent were divorced or separated and 9.4 percent were widowed.

Fifty-seven percent of respondents who served during the Korean War era had never married, compared with 46.2 percent of respondents who joined between 1960 and 1974 and just 28.8 percent of respondents who joined in 1975 or later (Figure 4).



Fifty-nine percent of survey respondents did not have children.<sup>9</sup> In a trend reflecting the trend in marital status, the younger respondents were more likely to have had children than the older respondents. While 71.1 percent of respondents who served during the Korean War era did not have children, the figure dropped to 61.1 percent for respondents who had joined the Army during the Vietnam era and 47.5 percent of respondents who had joined in 1975 or later.

The one anomaly to this trend is the World War II era respondents. Only 35.6 percent of these respondents had never been married and 51.5 percent had not had children. These differences are likely related not only to different characteristics of women joining the Army in the 1940s but also the nature of the service. In particular, women who joined the Army during World War II served for much shorter durations than later Army women.

<sup>9</sup> A woman with children was defined as “having children of her own or children she had raised/was raising as her own.”

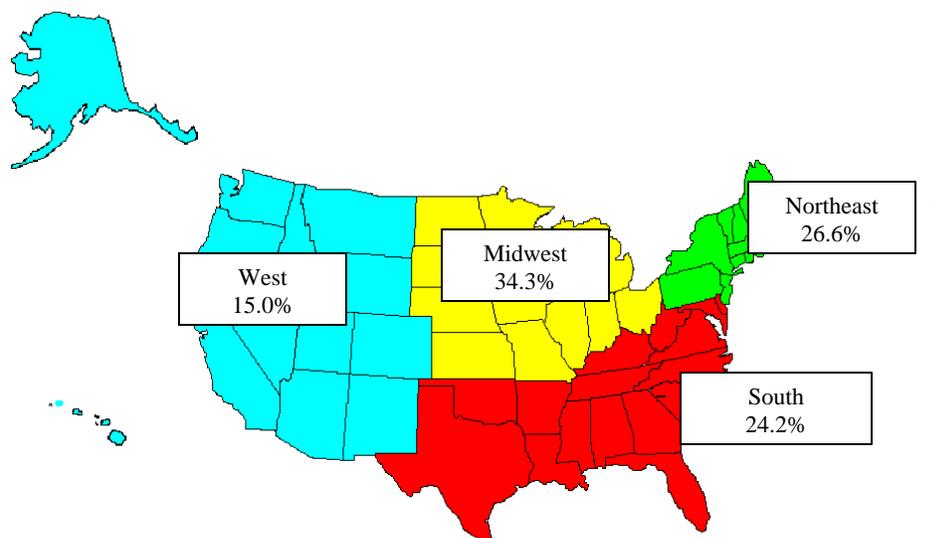
## Where We Came From

Geographic and socioeconomic backgrounds are important influences on women's decision to join the Army and their Army experience. USAWF survey respondents included women with a variety of backgrounds, though most had more education than their parents and many had relatives that had served in the military. The most illuminating finding is related to the primary reason respondents chose to join the Army. While patriotism, a sense of duty, and a desire for adventure were most important to the oldest Army women, while opportunities for education and career advancement opportunities became increasingly important to many younger respondents, particularly women of color.

### **Region of Origin**

The USAWF survey respondents lived in all parts of the country at the time they joined the Army. The largest share of survey respondents (34.3 percent) were living in the Midwest when they joined the Army. (Figure 5). In the Midwest, respondents were most likely to come from Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, or Minnesota. About 27 percent of respondents were living in the Northeast when they joined the Army. New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania were the states with the greatest number to join. The South accounted for 24.2 percent of respondents regions of origin, with Florida, Georgia, and Texas constituting the most prevalent states. Finally, the smallest share (15.0 percent) was living in Western states, primarily in California, when they joined the Army.

**Figure 5**  
**Region of Origin**



The respondents' regions of origin varied significantly depending on the era in which they joined the Army. This shift is somewhat related to more general trends in the geographic distribution of the population over the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Northeast accounted for 36.4 percent of all survey respondents who joined the Army in the 1940s, compared with 30.5 percent of respondents who joined in the 1950s, 21.5 percent of respondents who joined between 1960 and 1974, and just 17.9 percent of the most recent soldiers. Only 6.1 percent of respondents who joined the Army in the 1940s lived in the West, compared with 17.8 percent of Korean War era respondents, 20.4 percent of Vietnam War era respondents and 12.9 percent of the most recent Army women. The largest share of respondents lived in the Midwest when they joined, regardless of the era in which they joined, in spite of the fact that the Midwest lost population in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This trend suggests a strong Army connection in the Midwest that superseded this population loss.

**Table 4**  
**Region of Origin**  
**By Era**

Region	Era			
	1942 – 1949	1950 - 1959	1960 - 1975	1976 – 2006
Northeast	36.4%	30.5%	21.5%	17.9%
Midwest	33.3%	32.5%	33.9%	39.3%
South	24.2%	19.3%	24.2%	30.0%
West	6.1%	17.8%	20.4%	12.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 5**  
**Region of Origin**  
**By Race/Ethnicity**

Region	Race/Ethnicity			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
Northeast	28.6%	18.9%	15.4%	15.8%
Midwest	37.1%	24.3%	3.9%	31.6%
South	20.9%	54.1%	30.8%	10.5%
West	13.4%	2.7%	50.0%	42.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

There are also significant differences in region of origin for respondents of different races; these differences are representative of the larger geographic pattern of the population by race in the United States. Thirty-seven percent of white respondents lived in the Midwest, compared with 17.1 percent of non-white respondents (Table 5). The majority of black respondents (54.1 percent) lived in the South when they joined the Army and Western states were home to 50.0 percent of Hispanic respondents when they joined the Army.

**Mother’s and Father’s Education**

Overall, the parents of the survey respondents had lower levels of education than the respondents themselves and respondents’ mothers tended to be better educated than respondents’ fathers. The relatively higher education levels of respondents’ mothers could be one reason they felt encouraged to explore opportunities in the Army.

Surprisingly, the average education level of respondents’ mothers declined for women entering the Army more recently. At the same time, fathers’ education levels increased (Table 6). Twenty-seven percent of respondents who joined the Army in the 1940s had mothers with less than a high school education. For the most recent cohort, nearly 40 percent of respondents had a mother with less than a high school education. The percentage of mothers with a bachelor’s degree or higher was 19.3 percent for women who joined during the World War II era, but only 11.5 percent for respondents who joined in 1975 or later.

**Table 6. Mother’s and Father’s Education by Era**

	Era							
	1942-1949		1950-1959		1960-1974		1975-2002	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
Less than HS	26.9%	49.6%	29.2%	54.3%	40.8%	35.1%	39.9%	24.8%
HS diploma/GED	34.5%	9.9%	30.8%	15.1%	28.8%	31.4%	28.4%	34.9%
Some college/ Assoc degree	16.0%	10.7%	19.0%	12.7%	13.0%	16.2%	12.8%	14.1%
BA/BS degree	14.3%	5.3%	10.8%	2.5%	8.2%	4.3%	6.8%	10.1%
Grad or Prof Degree	5.0%	4.6%	4.1%	4.0%	2.7%	8.7%	4.7%	9.4%
Don’t Know	3.4%	19.9%	6.2%	12.1%	6.5%	4.3%	7.4%	6.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 7. Mother's and Father's Education  
by Race/Ethnicity**

	Race/Ethnicity							
	White		Black		Hispanic		Other	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
Less than HS	34.7%	40.6%	21.1%	46.2%	34.5%	57.1%	45.0%	35.0%
HS diploma/GED	29.7%	23.6%	50.0%	18.0%	24.1%	21.4%	30.0%	20.0%
Some college/ Assoc degree	14.2%	14.9%	15.8%	5.1%	31.0%	3.6%	15.0%	5.0%
BA/BS degree	10.3%	5.3%	7.9%	5.1%	3.5%	3.6%	10.0%	5.0%
Grad or Prof Degree	4.4%	6.4%	0.0%	0.0%	3.5%	3.6%	0.0%	20.0%
Don't Know	6.6%	9.2%	5.3%	25.6%	3.5%	10.7%	0.0%	15.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Another interesting finding from this question is the large percentage of respondents that did not know the education level of their fathers. Nearly 20 percent of respondents from the World War II era did not know their father's education (only 3 percent did not know their mother's education.) It is not clear whether this indicates a reduced role of the father in these women's lives or whether education was simply not discussed between fathers and daughters at the time. These omissions make it difficult to draw conclusions confidently about the trends in respondents' fathers' education.

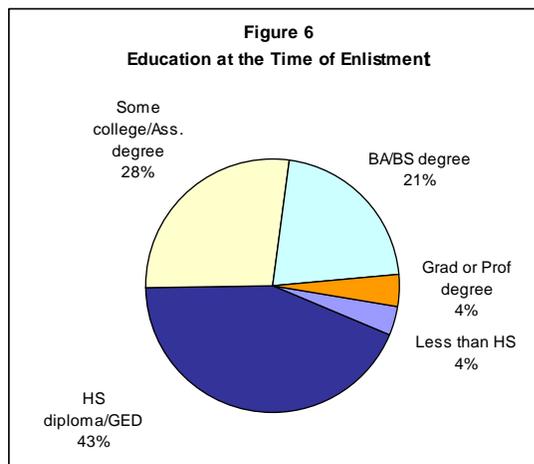
The education level of respondents' mothers also differed by race (Table 7). Mothers of black respondents were more likely to have a high school diploma than women of other races. Nearly 74 percent had a high school diploma, compared with 59.1 percent of the mothers of white respondents and 62.1 percent of the mothers of Hispanic respondents. However, white respondents were much more likely to have a mother with a bachelor's degree or higher. The mothers of Hispanic respondents were about twice as likely to have some college or an Associate degree, compared with the mothers of white or black respondents.

Father's education did not vary as dramatically by race as mother's education did. Hispanic respondents were more likely to report having a father with no high school diploma compared with other respondents. White respondents were most likely to have a father with a bachelor's degree or higher. Women were much more likely not to know their father's education level. More than nine percent of white respondents, 25.6 percent of black respondents and 10.7 percent of Hispanic respondents did not know the education level of their fathers.

### Own Education at the Time of Enlistment

Respondents tended to have higher education levels than their parents when they joined the Army. The education levels were generally higher for respondents who had served more recently.

Forty-three percent of women who completed the survey had a high school diploma or equivalent when they joined the Army. Twenty-seven percent had some college or an Associate’s degree, 21 percent had a bachelor’s degree, and four percent had a graduate or professional degree at the time they entered the Army. Only 3.6 percent had less than a high school education (Figure 6).



The education level of respondents when they entered the Army varied notably across eras. The biggest changes occurred in the 1960s. While 23.3 percent of respondents who joined the Army in the 1950s had a bachelor’s degree or higher, nearly 35 percent of those who joined between 1960 and 1974 had a college degree (Table 8). This percentage fell for the most recent cohort, with only 24.8 percent having a bachelor’s degree or higher when they joined the Army.

**Table 8. Education at Time of Enlistment by Era**

	Era			
	1942 - 1949	1950 - 1959	1960 - 1974	1975 - 2002
Less than HS	7.5%	4.0%	0.5%	2.0%
HS dip / GED	45.1%	52.5%	34.8%	39.6%
Some college / Assoc degree	30.1%	20.3%	29.9%	33.6%
BA/BS degree	12.0%	19.3%	31.0%	20.8%
Grad or Prof	5.3%	4.0%	3.8%	4.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

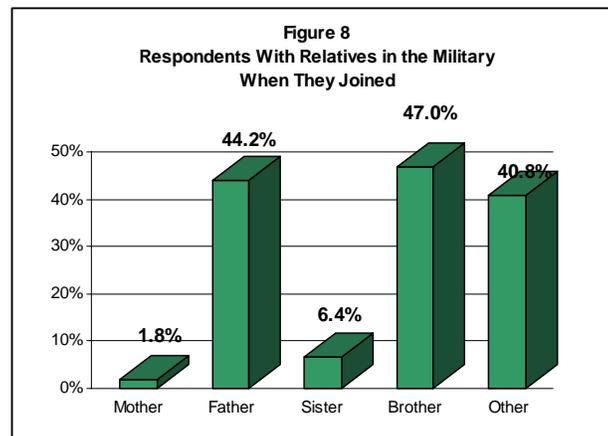
**Table 9. Education at Time of Enlistment  
by Race/Ethnicity**

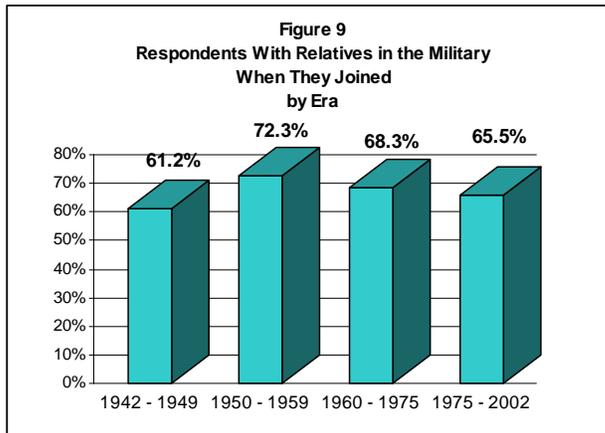
	Race/Ethnicity			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
Less than HS	3.7%	2.6%	0.0%	5.0%
HS dip / GED	43.4%	41.0%	31.0%	50.0%
Some college / Assoc degree	25.4%	48.7%	51.7%	15.0%
BA/BS degree	22.8%	7.7%	17.2%	30.0%
Grad or Prof	4.76%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The pre-service education level of USAWF respondents varied by race. The survey indicated that 43.4 percent of white respondents had only a high school diploma when they joined, compared to 41.0 percent of black respondents and 31.0 percent of Hispanic respondents (Table 9). Black women in the survey were the least likely to enter the Army with a bachelor’s degree. Eight percent had at least a bachelor’s degrees at the time they joined compared to 27.5 percent of whites and 17.2 percent of Hispanics. Hispanic respondents were the most likely to have had an Associate degree or some college when they joined. Nearly 52 percent had some college or an Associate degree, compared with 48.7 percent of black respondents and 25.4 percent of white respondents.

***Relatives in the Military***

About two-thirds of survey respondents had an immediate relative who had served or was serving in the military at the time they joined the Army. Of these women, 44 percent had a father who served in the military and 47 percent had a brother who served. Less than two percent of the women in this category had a mother who served and six percent had a sister who served. Forty-one percent had another relative (i.e. aunt, uncle, cousin, grandparent) who had served in the military (Figure 8).





The percentage of women with an immediate relative in the service varied somewhat depending on when the respondent joined the Army. Respondents who joined the Army in the 1950s were the most likely to have had an immediate relative who had served in the military (Figure 9). Nearly 40 percent of those women had a brother serving and 22.8 percent had a father who had served. All of the respondents with a mother who had served in the military had joined the Army between 1960 and

1974.

The percentage of black women in the survey who had an immediate relative in the military was lower than that of other races. Forty-nine percent of black women had an immediate relative in the Army at the time they joined, compared to 68.8 percent of white respondents and 62.1 percent of Hispanic respondents.

### ***Reasons for joining***

Respondents indicated a wide range of reasons for joining the Army. Most cited more than one reason for their decision. The most popular reason given for joining the Army was to serve one's country. More than five hundred women in the sample (72 percent) cited this reason (Table 10). Having the opportunity to travel/leave hometown was given by 61.8 percent of respondents.

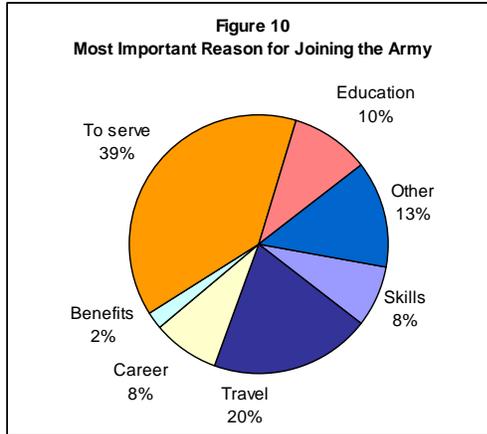
**Table 10**  
**Reason for Joining<sup>a</sup>**

Reason for Joining	Number	Percent of Total
To Serve Country	514	72.5%
Travel / Leave Home	438	61.8%
Gain Job Skills	204	28.8%
Obtain Education	201	28.4%
Military career	179	25.3%
Veteran's Benefits	112	15.8%
Other	151	21.3%

<sup>a</sup>Numbers add up to more than the total because respondents could indicate more than one reason.

When women were asked to cite the one most important reason they joined, nearly 39 percent said that it was to serve their country (Figure 10). Twenty percent said that to travel or leave their hometown was the most important reason. Gaining job skills, a career in the Army, and getting an education were also important reasons to join. Securing veteran’s benefits was the least cited as the most important reason to join the Army.

Respondents who joined the Army during World War II were more than twice as likely to say they primarily joined to serve their country compared with respondents who joined during later eras. The respondents who joined the Army in 1975 or later were the least likely to give service to one’s country as their primary motivator (23.7 percent). For respondents who joined in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s, to serve one’s country and to travel were the most important reasons given for joining the Army. Education became an increasingly important motivator for respondents who joined more recently. Travel and education were the most important reasons given by respondents who joined in 1975 or later (Table 11).



The most important reason to join also varied across races. Serving one’s country was cited as the most important reasons by 42.1 percent of white respondents, 18.9 percent of black respondents and 21.4 percent of Hispanic respondents (Table 12). To have a career in the Army was most the most important reason for joining for 16.2 percent of black respondents, compared to only 7.0 percent of white respondents and 14.3 percent of Hispanic respondents. Obtaining an education was the most important reason for about 14 percent of both black and Hispanic respondents, compared with just 9.5 percent of white respondents.

**Table 11**  
**Most Important Reason for Joining**  
**By Era**

	Era			
	1942 - 1949	1950 - 1959	1960 - 1974	1975 - 2002
Gain Job Skills	1.6%	9.2%	7.0%	12.5%
Travel / Leave Home	8.5%	25.1%	16.2%	26.3%
Military career	2.3%	12.3%	9.7%	6.6%
Veteran's Benefits	0.8%	0.5%	4.3%	3.3%
To Serve Country	71.3%	35.9%	31.4%	23.7%
Obtain Education	1.6%	8.2%	11.9%	16.5%
Other	14.0%	8.7%	19.5%	11.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 12**  
**Most Important Reason for Joining**  
**By Race/Ethnicity**

	Race/Ethnicity			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
Gain Job Skills	6.8%	10.8%	3.6%	19.1
Travel / Leave Home	19.4%	16.2%	21.4%	28.6%
Military career	7.0%	21.6%	14.3%	9.5%
Veteran's Benefits	2.0%	5.4%	3.6%	4.8%
To Serve Country	42.1%	18.9%	21.4%	28.6%
Obtain Education	9.5%	13.5%	14.3%	4.8%
Other	13.1%	13.5%	21.4%	4.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

## Our Army Experience

The respondents to the USAWF survey experienced Army service in many different ways. Some were in the Army only briefly; others made a career out of service. Some were officers and some were enlisted personnel. The majority served overseas at least once. Veterans left for diverse reasons, too, ranging from retirement and family reasons to dissatisfaction and discrimination.

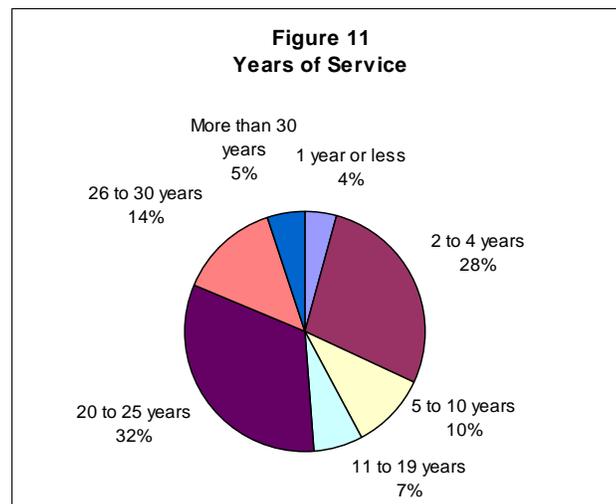
### **Length of Service**

Approximately 4 percent of respondents served in the Army one year or less; 38 percent served between two and 10 years; 39 percent served between 11 and 25 years; and 19 percent served more than 25 years (Figure 11).

Women serving during the World War II era were most likely to have short lengths of service, but there was a substantial minority that served 20 years or more (Table 13). Nearly two-thirds of women who joined the Army during the World War II era served less than five years. Five percent served between 11 and 20 years and 29 percent served 20 years or more.

Women who joined the Army in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s were very likely to make a career out of the Army. (It is too early to tell if the most recent era of Army soldiers will rival these statistics.) Almost 62 percent of these women serve 20 years or more. Eighteen percent served less than five years, 21 percent served between five and 10 years, and five percent served between 11 and 19 years.

White respondents were no more or less likely to make a career out of the Army compared with minority (i.e. black, Hispanic and Other) respondents. About 52 percent of white respondents served 20 years or more, compared with 60.0 percent of black respondents and 47.4 percent of Hispanic respondents (Table 14). White respondents were more likely to have a short period of service. Nearly one-third of white respondents served less than five years, compared with 28.0 percent of black respondents and 26.3 percent of Hispanic respondents.



**Table 14**  
**Length of Service**  
**By Era**

# of years	Era			
	1942-1949	1950-1959	1960-1974	1975-2002
1 or less	9.0%	2.0%	4.7%	1.3%
2 to 4	54.9%	22.5%	18.0%	20.8%
5 to 10	2.5%	10.2%	10.5%	22.1%
11 to 19	4.9%	3.6%	6.4%	18.2%
20 to 25	15.6%	40.3%	37.8%	27.3%
More than 25	13.1%	21.4%	22.7%	10.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

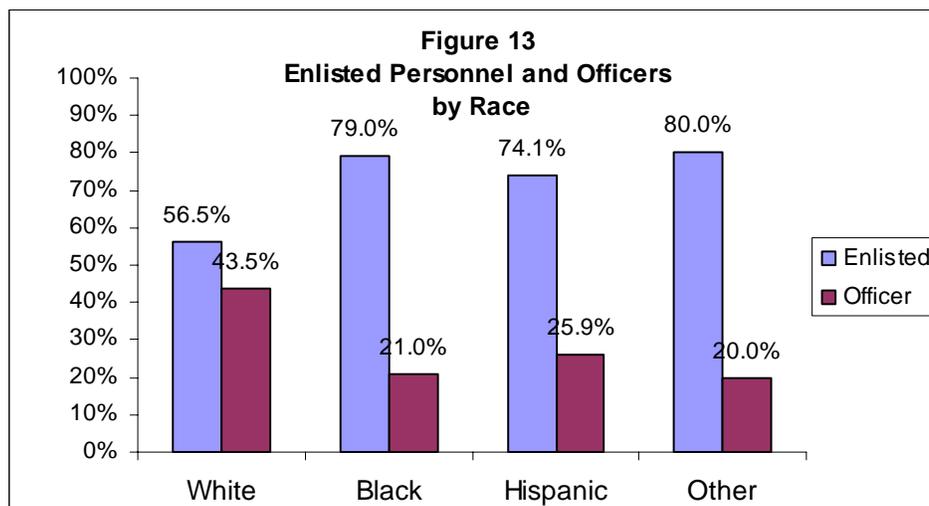
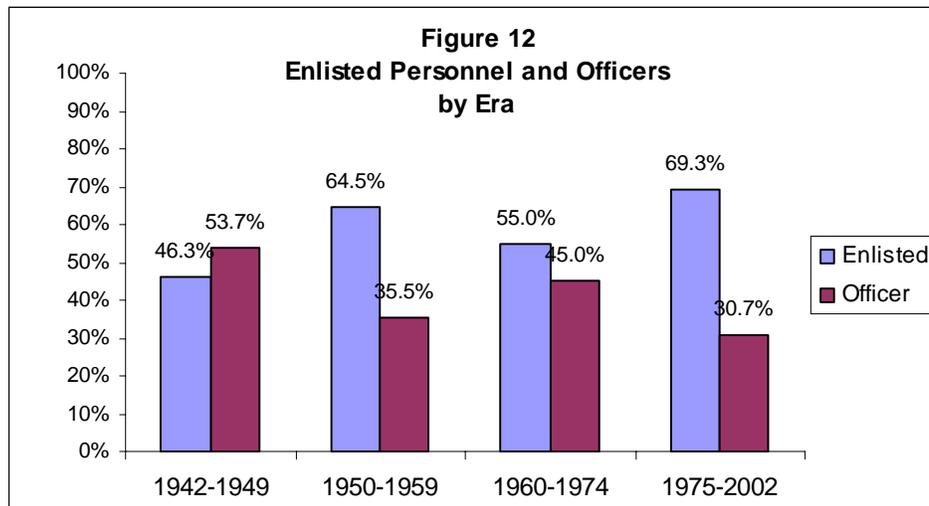
**Table 14**  
**Length of Service**  
**By Race/Ethnicity**

# of years	Race/Ethnicity			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
1 or less	4.2%	4.0%	5.3%	5.9%
2 to 4	28.7%	24.0%	21.1%	11.8%
5 to 10	9.8%	4.0%	15.8%	17.7%
11 to 19	5.6%	8.0%	10.5%	23.5%
20 to 25	32.9%	32.0%	26.3%	17.7%
More than 25	18.9%	28.0%	21.1%	23.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Rank or Rate**

The survey respondents were comprised by 59 percent enlisted personnel and 41 percent officers. Among the officers, the largest group (46.9%) was commissioned directly into service. Nearly one quarter (23.3%) became officers by attending Officer Training School (OTS) or Office Candidate School (OCS). Less than 10 percent received their commission through a service academy or ROTC.

Nearly 54 percent of women who joined in the Army in the 1940s were classified as officers. About 36 percent of the 1950s-era Army women were officers and 45 percent of women who joined between 1960 and 1974 were officers. Among those who joined



between 1975 and 2002 (including those still serving), 30.7 percent were officers (Figure 12).

There were substantial differences in the proportion of Army servicewomen that were officers by race. About 44 percent of white respondents were officers, compared with 21 percent of black respondents and 26 percent of Hispanic respondents (Figure 13). Black officers were more likely to become an officer through ROTC compared with white officers—30 percent compared with 9 percent. Black officers were quite unlikely to

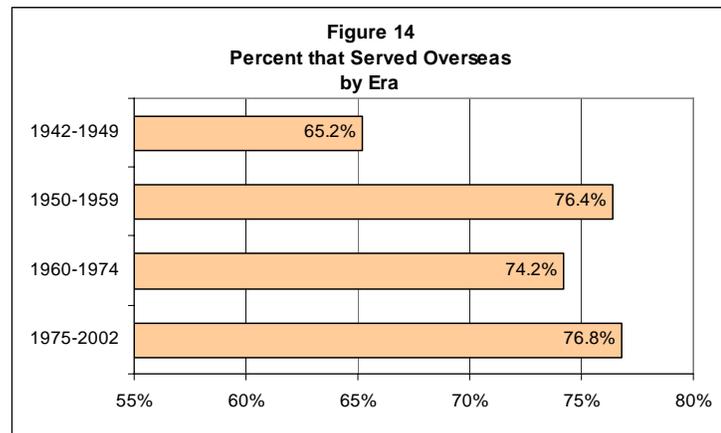
become officers through OTS or OCS; among the survey respondents, no black officers stated that OTS or OCS was the source of their commission.

### **Overseas Tours**

Nearly three-quarters of the survey respondents were stationed overseas during their service in the Army. More than 90 percent of respondents who had made a career in the Army (serving 20 years or more) had served at least one overseas tour. About 40 percent of those serving overseas served one tour, 29 percent served two tours, 18 percent served three tours and 12 percent served four or more tours.

The most recent cohort of respondents was more likely to have served overseas compared with those joining in the 1960s and early 1970s. About 77 percent of women joining the Army between 1975 and 2002 served at least one overseas tour, compared with 74 percent of those joining between 1960 and 1974 and 76 percent of those joining during the 1950s. A substantial portion of World War II era servicewomen served overseas—65 percent—but it was markedly lower than for women serving during other eras (Figure 14.)

Black respondents were significantly more likely than white respondents to have served overseas. While 73.3 percent of white respondents indicated they had served overseas, 79.5 percent of black respondents had had at least one overseas tour. Hispanic respondents were somewhat less likely to have served overseas (69.0%).



USAWF respondents had served in more than 20 different countries, including Afghanistan, Algeria, Bosnia, Egypt, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Panama, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Somalia, and Vietnam. Germany was the most common location of overseas tours, with nearly three-quarters of respondents indicating service in that country. Korea was the next most common location with about one in four indicating a tour in that country.

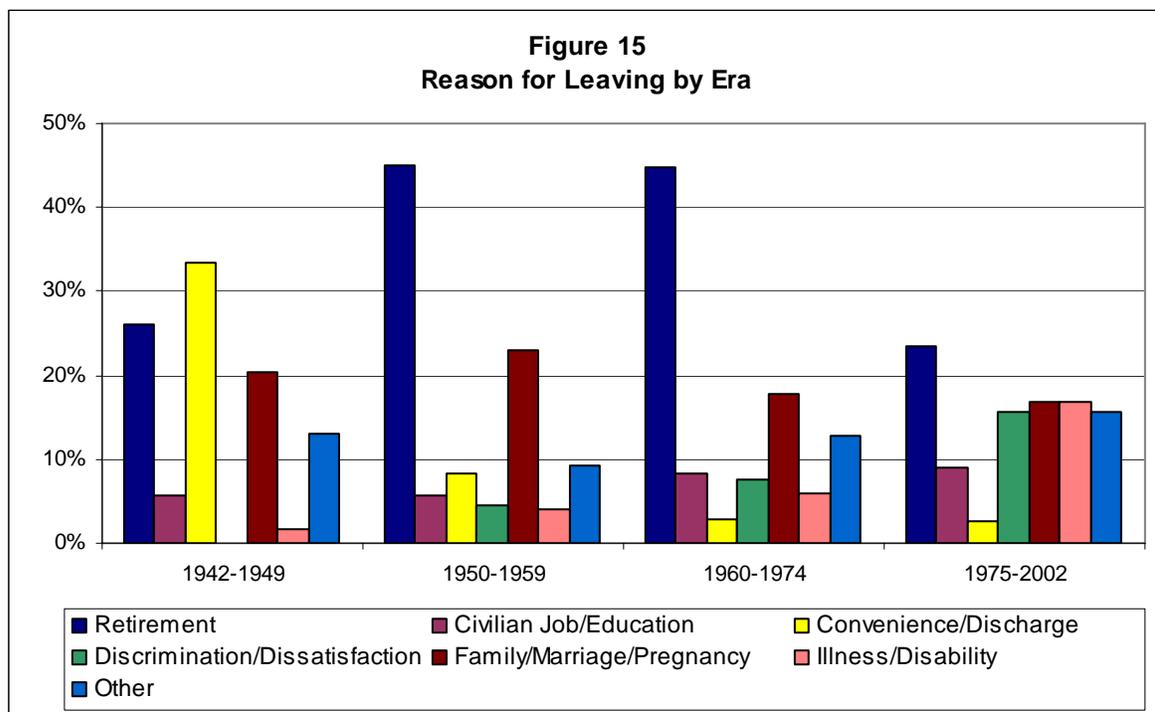
### **Reasons for Leaving**

Nearly 88 percent of survey respondents were no longer serving at the time of the survey in the spring 2006. They cited a variety of reasons for leaving the Army. The most common reason given was retirement, followed by family, marriage and/or pregnancy. Not surprisingly, the reason for leaving was correlated with length of service. Nearly 70 percent of women who had served 20 years or more cited retirement as their reason for

leaving. More than 37 percent of women serving 10 years or less said they left for family, marriage or pregnancy.

The reasons for leaving varied significantly for women serving during different eras, which likely reflects changes in Army policies and attitudes (Figure 15). Nearly one-third of women who served during the 1940s indicated they left the Army “at the convenience of the U.S. government,” meaning their service was no longer required. Twenty-six percent cited retirement as the reasons for leaving and 20 percent indicated family, marriage or pregnancy as their exit reason.

Respondents who had served more recently were more likely to indicate discrimination and/or dissatisfaction with the Army as the reason for leaving. No respondent who had served in the 1940s indicated that discrimination or dissatisfaction was the reason they left. For women who joined in the 1950s, nearly five percent cited discrimination/dissatisfaction. Among the most recent cohort, nearly 16 percent of respondents indicated they left the Army because of discrimination or dissatisfaction.



Respondents serving most recently were also more likely to cite illness or disability as their reason for leaving. Only about five percent of women who joined the Army in the 1950s, 1960s, or early 1970s said they left due to illness or disability. In contrast, nearly 17 percent of respondents who joined between 1975 and 2002 cited illness or disability as their reason for leaving.

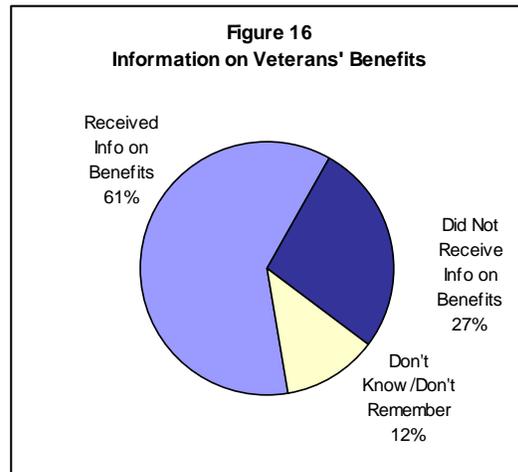
## Veterans' Benefits

The Army continues to provide valuable benefits to women after their service, which is why it is important that they receive information on their veterans' benefits when they leave the Army.

According to the survey respondents, more than 61 percent had received information about veterans' benefits, 26.9 percent had not, and 12.1 percent did not know or did not remember (Figure 16).

Women who joined between 1960 and 1974 were the most likely to have received information on veterans' benefits when they left the Army. Seventy-six percent indicated they had received information, 20.0 percent indicated they had not, and 3.8 percent indicated they did not know or could not remember. The respondents who joined between 1995 and 2002 were the least likely to have received information on veterans' benefits. Only 53 percent said they had received information, compared with 31.3 percent who had not received any information and 15.7 percent who did not know or could not remember.

Black respondents were more likely than whites or other racial/ethnic groups to say they received information on veterans' benefits. About 71 percent of black respondents indicated they had received veterans' benefits information, compared with 62.1 percent of whites and 48.3 percent of Hispanics.

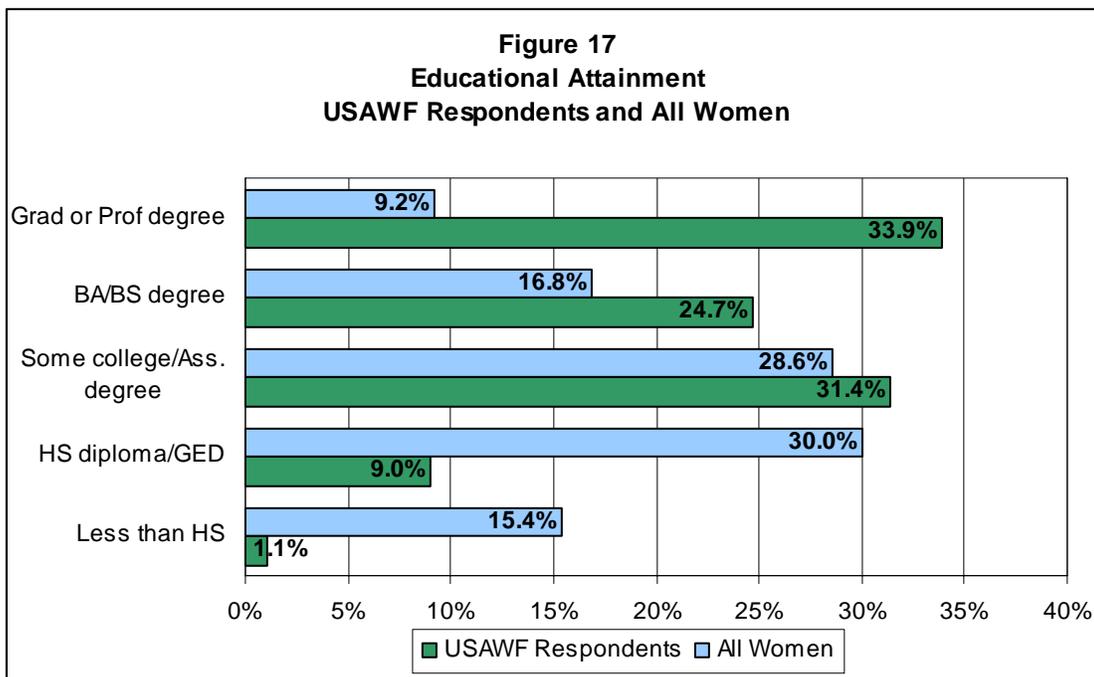


## How We Benefited

Army service had a major impact on the educational achievements and economic success of the USAWF survey respondents. A substantial share pursued their education either while in the Army or after leaving. Many have had interesting and successful civilian careers. By many measures, including educational attainment and income, USAWF respondents fare much better than women nationally.

### ***Educational Attainment***

The respondents to the USAWF survey are an extremely well-educated group of women. A substantial share of survey respondents advanced their education either during or after their service in the Army. Nearly all of the respondents had a high school diploma at the time of the survey. Nearly 60 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher and 33.9 percent had a graduate or professional degree. According to the 2005 American Community Survey, Census, only 84.6 percent of all women ages 25 and older had a high school diploma, 26.0 percent had a college degree and 9.2 percent had a graduate or professional degree (Figure 17).



Women who joined during the 1960 to 1974 period were the most educated group of respondents (Table 15). Nearly three-quarters had a bachelor's degree or higher and 44 percent had a graduate or professional degree. However, the 1940s era respondents had a

significantly higher level of education compared with other women of that era. Forty-three percent of these respondents had a college degree or more and 25.2 percent had a graduate or professional degree. Among women aged 65 and older nationally, only 11.8 percent of women have a college degree and 4.5 percent have a graduate or professional degree.

**Table 15**  
**Educational Attainment**  
**by Era**

	Era			
	1942-1949	1950-1959	1960-1975	1976-2005
Less than HS	2.4%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%
HS diploma/GED	17.3%	15.8%	2.2%	1.4%
Some College/Assoc Degree	37.8%	35.0%	24.4%	27.7%
BA/BS Degree	17.3%	17.7%	29.4%	35.1%
Grad or Prof Degree	25.2%	29.6%	44.0%	35.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 16**  
**Educational Attainment**  
**by Race/Ethnicity**

	Race/Ethnicity			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
Less than HS	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
HS diploma/GED	10.3%	0.0%	3.5%	5.0%
Some College/Assoc Degree	30.3%	30.8%	34.5%	45.0%
BA/BS Degree	23.9%	25.6%	41.4%	20.0%
Grad or Prof Degree	34.4%	43.6%	20.7%	30.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Black respondents had higher levels of education than white respondents. More than 69 percent of black respondents had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 58.3 percent of white respondents. About 44 percent of black respondents had a graduate or professional degree, compared with 34.4 percent of white respondents (Table 16). This result is in contrast to the data on education level before service in the Army. Black respondents indicated much lower levels of education than white respondents at the time they joined the Army. These survey data suggest the importance of Army service to the educational advancement of black survey respondents.

The most appropriate indicator of the educational benefits afforded women by service in the Army is to compare respondents' educational attainment at the time they joined the Army with their ultimate educational attainment. There is a significant correlation

between the number of years of Army service and a respondent's ultimate educational attainment level. This association suggests that more time in the Army creates more opportunities for educational advancements. Sixty-eight percent of respondents that had served 20 years or more had a bachelor's degree or higher and 42.2 percent had a graduate or professional degree. In contrast, among women that had served 10 years or less, only 43.0 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher and 23.9 percent had a graduate or professional degree. Fifteen percent of these respondents had only a high school diploma, compared with 6.5 percent of respondents that had served 20 years or more in the Army.

Table 17 shows the relationship between pre-service educational attainment level and the educational attainment level at the time of the survey in spring 2006. Eighteen percent of respondents that had just a high school diploma when they joined the Army had attained a bachelor's degree at the time of the survey; 18.8 percent had earned a graduate or professional degree. Among women who had some college at the time they joined the Army, 11.3 percent ultimately got an Associate's degree, 32.1 percent earned a bachelor's degree and 25.2 percent got a graduate or professional degree. More than two-thirds of the respondents that had a college degree when they joined the Army eventually earned a graduate or professional degree.

**Table 17**  
**Educational Attainment Before and After Service**

Level of Education Before Service	Level of Education Today					
	Less than HS	HS diploma	Some college	Associate Degree	BA/BS	Grad or Prof Degree
Less than HS	22.7%	9.1%	27.3%	9.1%	18.2%	13.6%
HS diploma	0.3%	19.5%	29.1%	14.0%	18.2%	18.8%
Some college	0.0%	0.0%	31.4%	11.3%	32.1%	25.2%
Associate degree	0.0%	0.0%	8.3%	25.0%	37.5%	29.2%
BA/BS	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.6%	66.4%
Grad or prof degree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

One of the reasons servicewomen were able to advance their education was the GI Bill. More than half (53.0%) of respondents used the GI Bill to attend college or otherwise advance their education. Black respondents were somewhat more likely than white respondents to have used the GI Bill—59.0% versus 53.4%. Respondents who joined the Army between 1960 and 1975 were, not surprisingly, the most likely to have used the GI Bill. Nearly three-quarters of respondents who joined in the 1960s and early 1970s took advantage of the GI Bill to further their education.

## **Employment**

Employment history and experiences are often used to explore economic self-sufficiency. Respondents to the USAWF survey reveal a wide range of work experiences, both in the Army and in civilian life. Their experiences generally have led to economic success and job satisfaction.

More than 40 percent of the survey respondents were employed at the time of the survey; more than 55 percent were retired. Less than four percent were unemployed and/or looking for work at the time of the survey.

The survey elicited information about each respondent's job or their most recent job if they were unemployed or retired at the time of the survey. Table 18 summarizes respondents' current or more recent (if retired or unemployed) employer type. Nearly 13 percent of survey respondents were still serving in the Army at the time of the survey. Thirty-two percent worked for a private company, 18.4 percent worked for state or local government, 15.0 percent worked for the federal civilian government, 10.1 percent worked for the military (non-Army) and 7.1 percent were self-employed (Table 18). Five percent did not provide information on most recent type of employer.

**Table 18**  
**Current or Most Recent Employer**

	Number	Percent
Still Serving in Army	84	12.6%
Current or Most Recent Employer (Not in Army)		
Private	213	32.0%
Local Government	55	8.3%
State Government	67	10.1%
Federal Government	100	15.0%
Military (non-Army)	67	10.1%
Self-employed	47	7.1%
Employer type not provided	33	5.0%
Total	666	100.0%

Many Army women take civilian jobs after their service in the Army. The biggest share of respondents who left the Army held jobs in the private sector, regardless of the era in which they joined the Army. The likelihood that a respondent worked for a private company increased for more recent cohorts. For example, 44.4% of the respondents who joined the Army between 1975 and 2002 worked for a private company, compared with 43.2% of women who joined the Army in the 1960s/early 1970s and 34.2 percent of women who joined during the 1950s.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The percentages reported here only apply to respondents who held a job after Army service.

Significantly more respondents from the most recent cohort worked for the federal civilian government. Twenty-five percent of Army respondents that joined in 1975 or later had worked for the federal civilian government after serving, compared with 22.5 percent of the 1960-1975 cohort, 17.9 percent of the 1950-1959 cohort and 7.8 percent of the 1942-1949 cohort (Table 19).

Women who joined the Army in the 1940s were more likely to work for state or local government after service. About 32 percent of respondents who served in World War II held jobs in state or local government. Many of these jobs were as teachers or librarians. Among respondents who joined the Army in the 1950s, only 21.5 percent held jobs in state or local government and for women who joined in the 1960s and early 1970s, an even smaller percentage—17.2 percent—had jobs in state or local government. There was a slight uptick in the percentage of respondents from the most recent cohort, with 20.9 % of this group having had a job in state or local government.

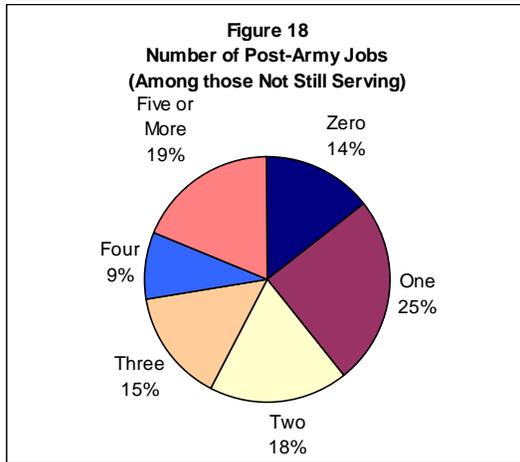
**Table 19**  
**Post-Army Employment**  
**by Era**

Post-Army Employer Type	Era			
	1942-1949	1950-1959	1960-1974	1975-2002
Private	36.2%	34.2%	43.2%	44.4%
State/Local Govt	31.9%	21.6%	17.2%	20.8%
Federal Civilian Govt	7.8%	17.9%	22.5%	25.0%
Military	14.7%	16.8%	8.9%	4.2%
Self-employed	9.5%	9.5%	8.3%	5.6%

**Table 20**  
**Post-Army Employment**  
**by Race/Ethnicity**

Post-Army Employer Type	Era			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
Private	38.7%	28.6%	47.4%	41.2%
State/Local Govt	23.3%	19.0%	15.8%	5.9%
Federal Civilian Govt	17.2%	33.3%	10.5%	35.3%
Military	12.3%	14.3%	10.5%	11.8%
Self-employed	8.6%	4.8%	15.8%	5.9%

Among those who have left the Army, white respondents were much more likely to have jobs with a private company compared to black respondents (Table 20). Black respondents were more likely than white respondents to have had a job with state or federal government. Nearly 40 percent of white respondents worked for a private company, compared with 28.6 percent of black respondents. Approximately 17 percent of white respondents worked for the federal civilian government; about 33 percent of black respondents reported jobs federal civilian government.



Respondents have had an average of three post-Army jobs (among those who were not still serving in the Army at the time of the survey.) About 14 percent had no job after leaving the Army, 25 percent have had one job, 18 percent have had two jobs, 15 percent have had three jobs, 9 percent have had four jobs, and 19 percent have had five or more jobs (Figure 18). The majority of multiple job holders (60.1%) indicated that they changed fields; 39.9 percent indicated the job changes were to advance in their current field.

The benefit of service to a post-Army career can only be capitalized on with sufficient information on the transition from military to civilian life. This is information in addition to veterans' benefits information. About 35 percent of respondents who were no longer serving in the Army indicated that they had received information about transition to civilian life and civilian careers from the Army; 45.5 percent said they had not received any information and 19.2 percent did not know or could not remember. This information included the formal Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP), as well as other briefings on benefits, information on resume writing and interviewing, and skills assessments. More than three-quarters of respondents that received this type of transition information reported finding the information helpful; 12.6 percent said it was not helpful and 11.1 percent did not know or could not remember.

### **Income**

The survey respondents had relatively high personal incomes. More than 37 percent of respondents reported *personal* monthly earnings of \$5,000 per month (\$60,000 per year) or more (Table 21). Only 10.7% of women nationally reported personal earnings of \$55,000 or more in the 2004 American Community Survey. Thirty-eight percent of respondents earned between \$2,500 and \$4,999 per month; 19.0 percent earned between \$1,000 and \$2,499 per month; and 5.5 percent had personal earnings of less than \$1,000 per month.

**Table 21**  
**Monthly Income**

	Active Duty	Veterans
Less than \$500	0.0%	2.3%
\$500-999	0.0%	3.6%
\$1,000-2,499	6.7%	20.6%
\$2,500-4,999	36.7%	38.3%
\$5,000-7,499	31.7%	15.4%
\$7,500-9,999	8.3%	4.5%
\$10,000 or more	16.7%	15.4%

Data from survey respondents indicate that women who are still serving in the Army have substantial higher personal incomes than women who were retired or unemployed at the time of the survey. While 56.7% of women still serving earned more than \$5,000 per month, only 35.3% of women no longer serving had that level of income.

Retirees had higher personal incomes than women who were working at the time of the survey. While 41.3% of retirees had incomes of \$5,000 per month or more, only 31.4% of women employed outside of the Army had incomes in that range.<sup>11</sup> About one half of respondents indicated that they received Army retirement income.

This information on personal income suggests that the respondents to the USAWF have been relatively successfully financially. While many are not married and therefore do not have a second person's income, these data suggest that personal earnings alone provide a high level of economic self-sufficiency for these survey respondents.

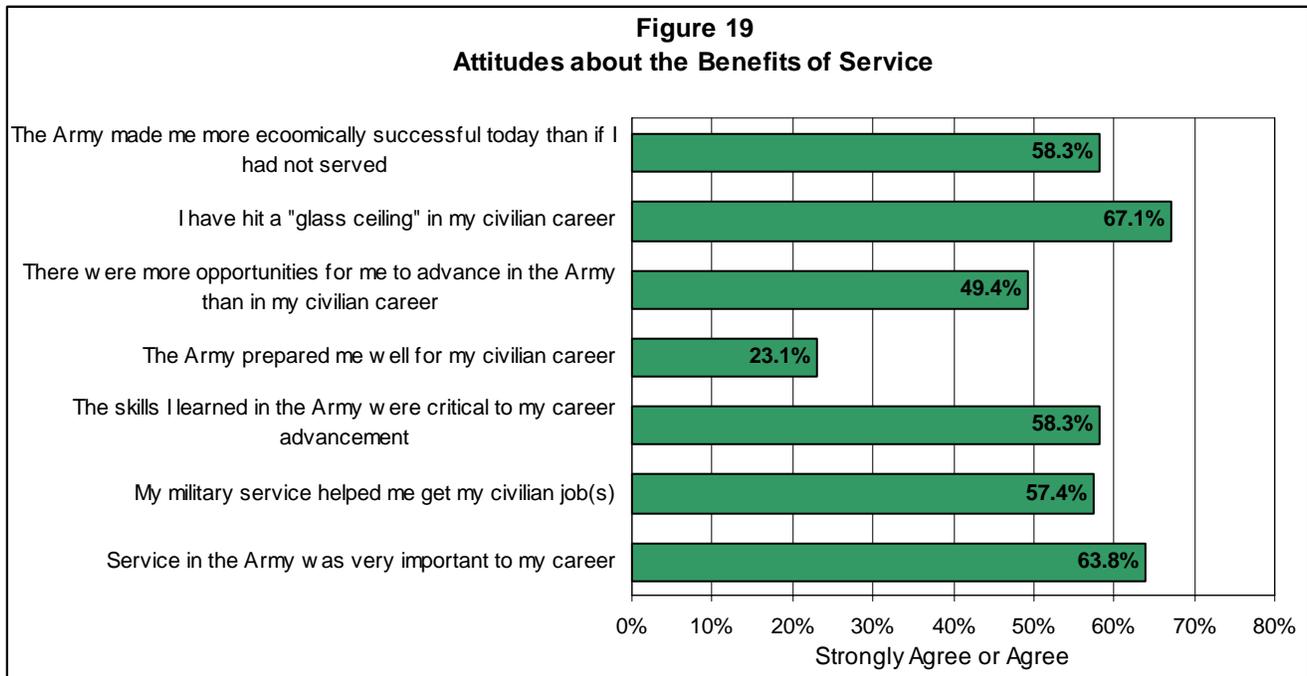
### ***Attitudes About Economic Benefit of Service***

The survey included several questions to gauge respondents' attitudes about how the Army prepared them for employment after service and to what extent service increased their economic opportunities in the civilian world. Overall, these responses indicate that the respondents felt as though their service in the Army was an important contributor to their success in their post-Army careers.

Nearly two-thirds (63.8%) of respondents who were not still in the Army at the time of the survey agreed with the statement that **service in the Army was very important to their civilian career**. Eighteen percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement and 18 percent said they did not know. White respondents were notably more

<sup>11</sup> Income data are notoriously difficult to collect through a survey. The question about income in the USAWF survey is somewhat more complicated because it asks for **monthly** income and for the respondent's **own** income, rather than household income. Therefore, the data collected on income are probably not as reliable as the other information collected via the survey.

likely to indicate that service in the Army was important compared with minority respondents. More than 65% of white respondents indicated they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, compared with just 54.1 percent of minority respondents.



About 57 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that **military service helped them get their civilian job(s)**. Twenty-three percent disagreed and 20.0 percent did not know. White respondents were again more likely to say they agreed that military service helped them in their civilian job. Fifty-eight percent of white respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement above, compared with 50 percent of minority respondents.

About 58 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that **the skills they learned in the Army were critical to their career advancement**. Twenty-five percent disagreed or strongly disagreed and 16.4 percent did not know. In contrast to the previous statements, white respondents and minority respondents were about as likely to say they agreed with the statement about skills learned in the Army. About 58% of white respondents agreed or strongly agreed while 55% of minority respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed. However, a substantially greater share of minority respondents said they disagreed or strongly disagreed. While 33 percent of minority respondents disagreed that Army skills were critical to their career advancement, only 24.3 percent of white respondents made that assertion.

Despite agreeing with the specific statements about how the Army served them in their civilian careers, a relatively small percentage of respondents—23.1 percent—indicated

that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that **the Army prepared them well for the civilian careers**. Thirty-seven percent of respondents disagreed with the statement and 33.3 percent strongly disagreed. Minority respondents were more likely than white respondents to disagree or strongly disagree. While 69.7 percent of white respondents said they disagreed with the statement, 76.7 percent of minority respondents disagreed.

Part of the explanation for these responses is that many respondents felt like they could not progress as fast or as far in their civilian careers as they would have liked. Nearly half of respondents agreed with the statement that **there were more opportunities for them to advance in the Army than in their civilian careers**. White respondents were more likely to express disappointment with their civilian career prospects relative to the Army prospects. While 49.9 percent of white respondents agreed the Army offered more opportunities for advancement, the percentage was 43.4 for minority respondents. A full 40 percent of minority respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, compared with 31.3 percent of white respondents.

More than two-thirds of respondents agreed that **they had hit a “glass ceiling” in their civilian careers**. Again, white respondents were more likely to be dissatisfied with their civilian careers than were minority respondents. Sixty-seven percent of white respondents agreed they had hit a glass ceiling compared with 63 percent of minority respondents.

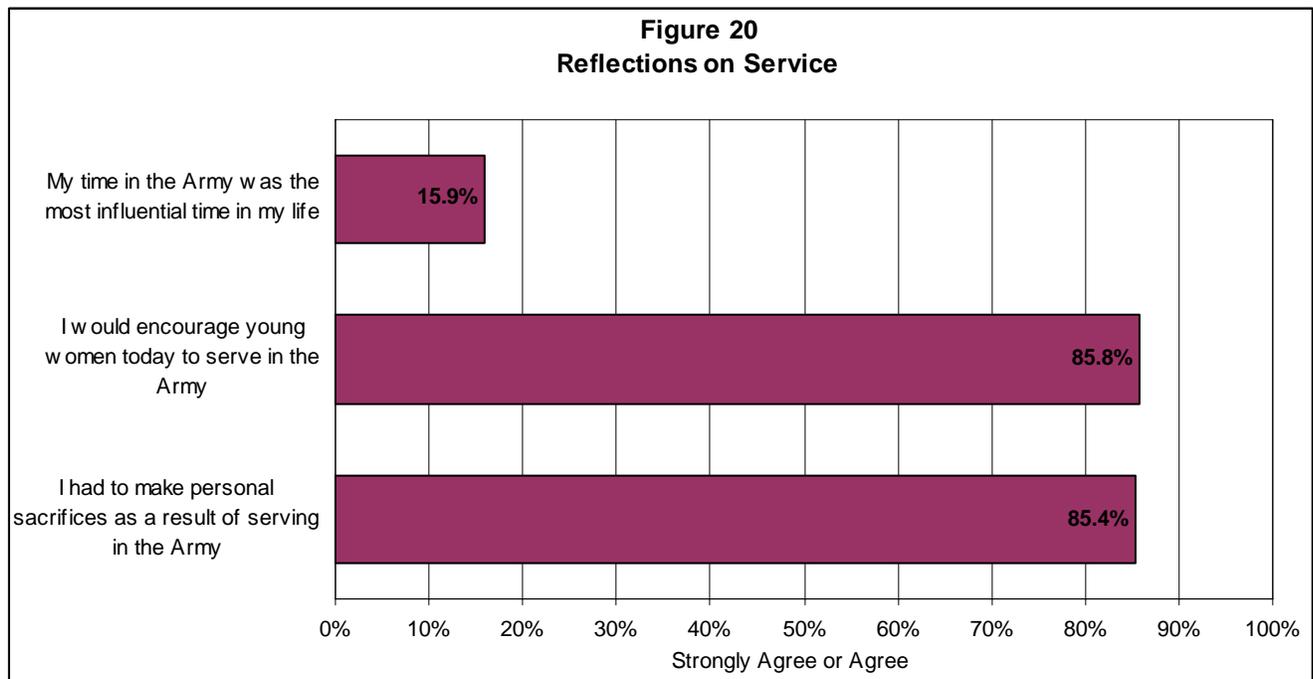
All in all, though, respondents felt strongly that their Army service was important to their economic success. Fifty-nine percent agreed with the statement that **the Army made them more economically successful today than if they had not served**; 20.5 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed and 20.9 percent did not know. There were not significant differences across races of respondents.

## Reflections on Service

Service means more to Army women than just the economic opportunity it provides. While the focus of the USAWF survey was on the economic impact of service, the survey did include several questions about other aspects of service. Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide additional information about their experiences. These comments, perhaps more than any other survey responses, reveal how service in the Army enhanced the lives of USAWF survey respondents.

### **Personal Sacrifices**

More than 85 percent of respondents indicated **they had to make personal sacrifices as a result of serving in the Army**. Survey data indicate that respondents who served in the 1940s were somewhat more likely to indicate they had made personal sacrifices, though there was still a strong indication of personal sacrifice. While 87.6 percent of respondents who joined the Army in the 1940s stated they agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement, 80.6 percent of the most recent cohort (those who joined in 1975 or later) agreed or strongly agreed.



### ***Encourage Young Women to Serve***

Despite the personal sacrifices Army servicewomen had made, the survey data indicate respondents feel very positive about the Army and would recommend service to other women. About 86 percent of respondents stated they agreed or strongly agreed that **they would encourage young women today to serve in the Army**. White respondents were more likely to recommend Army service, with 86.6 percent agreeing, compared with 79.8 percent of minority respondents. The respondents who had served during World War II were the least likely to say they would recommend Army service to women today. About 77 percent of respondents who joined in the 1940s agreed they would encourage young women today to enter the Army, compared with 88.2 percent of respondents who joined in 1975 or later.

### ***Most Influential Time***

While Army service was obviously very important to the survey respondents, only 15.9 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that **their time in the Army was the most influential time in their lives**. The women who joined during the 1960s—and therefore could have experienced Army service during Vietnam—were the most likely to say that their time in the Army was the most influential of their lives. About 24 percent of the 1960s era respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. The women who joined in the 1940s—many of whom served only a short time during World War II—were the least likely to say Army service was the most important time of their lives—just 8.8 percent agreed or strongly agreed.

### ***Most Important Things Gained by Serving***

Survey respondents listed a litany of things they felt they gained by the service in the Army. Among the most often-cited were confidence/self-esteem (20.1%), adaptability/discipline/responsibility (10.4%), and honor/pride/courage (6.7%) (Table 21).

**Table 21 Most Important Thing Gained by Service in Army**

	Number	Percent
Confidence / Self-Esteem	120	20.1%
Other	105	17.6%
Adaptability / Discipline / Responsibility	62	10.4%
Tolerance / Cultural Understanding	44	7.4%
Honor / Pride / Courage	40	6.7%
Independence / Maturity	37	6.2%
Leadership	37	6.2%
Friends / Meeting New People	35	5.9%
Patriotism / Country Appreciation	30	5.0%
Career / Job Skills	28	4.7%
Education	23	3.8%
Sense of Accomplishment / Fulfillment	13	2.2%
Retirement	10	1.7%
Spouse	7	1.2%
Travel	7	1.2%
Total	598	100.0%

### ***In Our Own Words***

Respondents were given the opportunity to share additional information and attitudes about their service in the Army. Many took this opportunity to write lengthy essays on what service meant to them. Others wrote short, poignant statements about how they felt about the Army. Still others used the opportunity to comment on aspects of Army service not covered in-depth by the survey, including separation of men and women in the Army, discrimination and sexual harassment.

A complete catalogue of responses is available from the USAWF. Below is a selection of quotes chosen to represent some of the most common themes raised by respondents. All in all, these personal words convey better than the rest of the survey questions how service in the Army has impacted the lives of these women.

“Prior to joining the WAAC I worked in the Aircraft Warning Service...I attended the first OCS class at Ft. Des Moines, IA and was appointed a 3<sup>rd</sup> officer. When the WAAC became WAC I was a captain commanding a WAC Detachment. As a captain, I commanded a two-company battalion at Camp Attebury, Indiana. On promotion to field grade I was assigned as Adjutant at Utah Military District in Fort Douglas, Utah. There I met and married my husband, a career Army man, and left the service to raise a family.”

“I left my teaching career for my commission and intended to stay two years. Ended up staying 22 years. AS a WAC I always had to prove myself before being accepted. That was OK. It just motivated you to learn fast and excel. When the WAC was disestablished, and assignments were made by branches, acceptance in new assignments became routine. I commanded two companies, a battalion, and a school. It doesn’t get any better than that.”

“I feel that I paved the way for women now serving in the Army. I was in the only unit of women considered ground forces in WWII. Serving with General Bradley’s 12 Army group, we went ashore at Omaha Beach August 1, 1944. As the armies advanced we followed...It was great being part of the command that had the largest army ever to exist.”

“I enlisted in the Army in January 1973, soon after completing high school, because I wanted to be part of something greater than myself. That fact that the ‘something greater’ was a patriotic venture was important an personally fulfilling because, in addition to the fact that numerous family members (although no women) had served in World War II, I grew up very near West Point, N.Y. and was much impressed by the ‘pride, pomp, and circumstance’ displayed at the U.S. Military Academy....My military service was a mixed blessing. I enjoyed traveling throughout this country and Europe and learned much from numerous experiences that I would not have had as a civilian. However, I and many other women also waged ongoing battles to be accepted by the men with whom we served....We endured frequent harassment and discrimination and often were regarded as renegades, misfits, and burdens. On a more positive note, I tried to do well and believed then, as I do now, that I made a contribution to my country.”

“I spent 16 months in China, Burma and India. Before WWII I had never left the state of Louisiana...Service experience gave me the desire to see more and new places and to meet new, interesting people. Every day I have beautiful memories the share with all whom I come in contact.”

“It enriched my life in many ways. I became more aware of being an American and loving my country (more patriotic).”

“I have such fond memories of the WAC band and its members, a group of true professionals. It was an honor to serve with them.”

“I firmly believe the Army gives you opportunities to be what you set your goals to be. I know to do that you may have to work 7 days a week, 15, 16, or 18 hours a day. But if you believe in what you are doing you can do it and you must set realistic goals, re-evaluate and motivate yourself to set even higher goals when you see how much you really can do. The Army helps you mature and grow (sometimes a little painful) but both the mentoring and financial support is there.”

“I loved every minute I served and felt very fortunate to obtain my degrees as a result of the Army. I had great positions from clinical to education research and administration. I don’t think I would have all that experience without serving in the Army. I loved the camaraderie, the expertise of the professional and paraprofessional staff, and the opportunities to see different parts of the U.S. and Europe.”

“Joining was the most important and best decision of my life. I would do it again.”