



Examination of Recent Deployment Experience Across the Services and Components

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This research compares deployment experience across the services and components and characterizes the service members who deploy. It also examines the transitions of soldiers between Army components to determine whether the Army retains soldiers with the most deployment experience.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How does deployment experience vary among the services and components?
- Does the Army retain soldiers with the largest amounts of deployment experience?
- What are the characteristics of soldiers who deploy?



KEY FINDINGS

Since 9/11, 2.77 Million Service Members Have Served on 5.4 Million Deployments

- 86 percent deployed were enlisted; 10 percent were women.
- On average, deployed personnel were under 30 years old; more than half were married, and about half had children at the time of the deployment.
- The average length of deployment varies across the services; multiple deployments are not uncommon.

Soldiers Across the Army’s Three Components Have Provided the Majority of the Person-Years of Deployments

- The majority of soldiers with deployment experience were no longer serving in the Army as of September 2015, but the majority of heavily deployed soldiers remained in the Army.

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- These heavily deployed soldiers make up about 13 percent of all soldiers but possess half the Army's deployment experience.
- The experience of the most–intensely deployed service members represents a unique resource.

The Selected Reserve Provides One Way to Retain the Army's Deployment Experience

- Some soldiers with deployment experience transitioned from the Regular Army to the Selected Reserve; the Selected Reserve thus provides an avenue for retaining deployment experience.
- The deployment experience of former Regular Army soldiers makes up about one-quarter of the total deployment experience within the Selected Reserve.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Because the same amount of total time deployed could have different impacts on members of different services and may need to be managed differently across the services, a good first step would be to track both the number of deployments and the total time deployed carefully.
- The resilience of the most heavily deployed service members and their families should be carefully tracked; it may also be appropriate to focus key resources and services on this group.
- Continuing to encourage soldiers to consider the Selected Reserve upon leaving the Regular Army will help retain deployment experience.
- Managing the experience of the most intensely deployed and seeking ways to transfer the knowledge and skills obtained during deployment before those service members leave military service could enhance the effectiveness of training.