

LONG-MARRIED, LONG-MILITARY COUPLES IN THE POST 9/11 ERA

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to every military bride who thought she knew what she was getting into when she promised to make a life with someone in uniform. As Gloria Steinham noted, “The truth will set you free. But first it will piss you off.”

And to my Navy husband Brad who has witnessed and commiserated and struggled and soothed and fought and laughed and painted walls and folded laundry and deployed and deployed and deployed while I figured it out. Two people with callings can figure this out.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS OR SYMBOLS

Member of the United States Construction Battalion	CB (Seabee)
Department of Defense	DoD
Defence Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System	DEERS
Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan)	OEF
Operation Iraqi Freedom	OIF
Permanent Change of Station Move	PCS
Post-Traumatic Stress	PTS
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	PTSD
Stay At Home Mom	SAHM

ABSTRACT

LONG-MARRIED, LONG-MILITARY COUPLES IN THE POST 9/11 ERA

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Long-married, long-military couples have coped with multiple deployments, multiple moves and the multiplications of demands as a family grows and changes during the post-9/11 era. Research on military marriage in the past has focused on military marriages that have lasted less than five years, but what factors allow military marriages to endure?

In this research, I studied active duty Army and Navy couples with a male servicemember and a female civilian spouse who had been married more than 15 years. I used both survey data and in-depth interviews to examine themes of work orientation and gender ideology as a possible mechanism that contributed to marital duration. I found that couples achieved marital duration through interrelated processes created in order to adapt to and cope with the many structures of military life, particularly constant, unpredictable deployments and PCS moves. These long-married, long-military couples relied on the spouse to “create normal” for the family, thus they fashioned and accepted a family life

marked by separate spheres even when both partners espoused a more egalitarian gender ideology.

Among these long-married, long-military couples, work orientation did function as the motivator to continue in a demanding profession. Both husbands and wives in this research came to view the military member's service not as an "occupation" or a "job" or a "career," but as a "calling"—a meaningful, socially valuable part of the servicemember's identity that also provided financial gain and career advancement. The structure of retirement eligibility justified both continuing in the career and the sustained truncation of the wife's career. Some spouses were able to return to traditional full-time employment. Some spouses were able to find more portable employment that allowed them to engage in the labor market while still holding the primary caretaking role at home. Other spouses were adrift, unsure how or when to return to the labor market.

Military couples in this study managed multiple deployments, multiple moves and the multiple demands of families by employing separate spheres fired by a calling orientation toward the work of the military. At the end of a long military career, they are poised to emerge with a retirement income that will last the rest of their lives and the status attached to a long marriage.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Nearly 50 years ago, President Lyndon B. Johnson told a White House press conference that he believed that the lessons of history required the United States use its military power to resist aggression. “We did not choose to be the guardians of the gate, but there is no one else,” Johnson asserted (Department of State 1965). Johnson became the first of nine presidents who favored a kind of American statecraft that supported the idea that a global military presence is essential to the defense of American freedom--even when the threat to the United States is oblique or even imaginary (Bacevich 2010).

This policy has had a profound effect on military marriage, for these new “guardians of the gate” are not the citizen soldiers of the pre-Vietnam period. These individuals are now members of the all-volunteer force, a professional military cadre of nearly three million active duty members, National Guardsmen and Reservists stationed all over the globe. This volunteer force is more ‘occupation’ and less ‘institution’ than ever before (Moskos 1977). This volunteer force is more educated, more female and less white than the draft era military (Segal and Segal 2004). This force is also more likely to be married since than half of all enlisted men and nearly three-fourths of all male officers are married. Today’s servicemembers are also more likely to stay in the military longer than cohorts of the past because of the increased emphasis on reducing turnover and retaining trained and experienced personnel (Hosek 2006). One in five military members now stays in the military until eligible for retirement at the 20-year mark (Segal and Segal 2004) and they build a life with spouses and children right at the gate.

This rise of the professional military force has led to the existence of marriages marked by long military service. Military marriages are constructed within a constellation of stressful demands distinctive to military life. Although there are significant differences between branches of the service and specific jobs within each service, frequent separations, periodic moves, risk of injury or death, foreign residence and behavioral pressures are the factors that work together to make a marriage uniquely military (Segal 1986). In the draft era of the military, it was expected that the demands of the military would be accommodated by a military spouse who would always subjugate the needs of the family to adapt to the demands of the military. In 1986, Mady Segal set out to analyze the how the new all-Volunteer guardians of the gate and their spouses adapted to those demands.

Segal found that both the military and the family had evolved into what could be characterized as ‘greedy institutions’ under Coser’s definition (1974). Both the family and the military were situated in a competition for the loyalty and commitment of the servicemember. Segal posited that societal trends, particularly the labor force participation rates of women, were making these demands more problematic and that the normative legitimacy of this greed would lead to more conflict within the relationship. Segal concluded the more the military services adapted to family needs by taking family desires into account in the timing of relocation, giving advance notice of transfers, and providing various forms of assistance when separations are necessary, the more committed would be both service members and their families to the institution.

The military in the post 9/11 era has not significantly adapted to the needs of families despite the highest operational tempo in the all-Volunteer era. None of the

suggested improvements for military life made by Segal were made. Yet military members are still no more likely to divorce than their matched civilian counterparts (Karney and Crown 2007). How do military couples in the post-9/11 era manage multiple deployments, multiple moves, and the multiplication of demands as a military family grows and changes over time? Are the military and the family two greedy institutions that tear servicemembers apart? How do servicemembers and spouses adapt to the demands of the military and the demands of the family when they have, in fact, chosen to be ‘the guardians of the gate’?

In this research, structural factors that were already known to predict marital duration in the United States were examined in the context of a military marriage by survey. Uniquely military factors like deployment and combat that influence marital satisfaction and marital duration were investigated through in-depth interviews. Then two factors in particular—gender ideology and work orientation---were considered as possible mechanisms that could explain marital duration within the military. Is there something unique about these couples that allows them to cope with serious stressors and avoid divorce? Is there something about a long marriage that is particularly advantageous to military members? Are traditionally gendered military marriages with a breadwinner servicemember and a homemaking spouse sustainable in an era of the two-income- family norm?

For marriage in America—not just the military-- is now strictly optional. As the structure of the military has changed over the past fifty years, the status of marriage as the only acceptable way to raise children or conduct a sexual relationship has changed as well. Cohabitation and births outside of marriage now are common, yet marriage

continues to be a sought after living arrangement. Four out of five American women have been married at least once by age 40 (Goodwin 2009). Cherlin (2009) hypothesizes that in the United States marriage may be the most highly valued, prestigious way to have a family since marriage rates continue to be high despite the high rate of divorce. However, the benefits of marriage do not come from a trip to the Justice of the Peace or a framed copy of marriage certificate. Benefits of marriage come from a myriad of factors that change over time (Bradbury, Fincham and Beach 2000).

Factors that actually contribute to marital duration are hard to tease out of the research on marriage. Although there is a long tradition of research confirming that satisfying marriages tend to buffer spouses from psychological distress (Diener, Suh, Lucas and Smith 1999) and promote health and longevity (Karney and Bradbury 1995; Bradbury, Fincham and Beach 2000), there is little research on the factors that contribute to marital duration itself. When Karney and Bradbury (1996) performed their meta-analysis of 115 marital studies that included longitudinal factors, they found that marital duration was only studied three times. Marriage research, especially marriage research that takes place inside the military, tends to focus on factors that contribute to the prevention and treatment of marital discord as well as factors that contribute to marital dissolution. Yet divorce and duration are not necessarily two sides of the same coin. It is not clear that factors that contribute to marital dissolution are the pure opposite of factors that contribute to marital satisfaction, quality, or duration.

The present study is a step toward providing a more complete picture of how the military as a profession affects marriages over time. The conceptualization of the military and the military family as two greedy institutions fighting bitterly over the

commitment and loyalty of the servicemember during the early years of marriage may still hold true. This research suggests that over time the servicemember who intends to stay in the military for 20 years or more often stops thinking of the military simply as an institution or occupation. The servicemember often starts thinking about the military as part of his identity—a calling that offers meaning and fulfillment as well as professional status and financial gain. During that time of increased awareness of occupational identity, the spouse may stop pulling at the servicemember and start pushing at family structures instead. She pushes to create a kind of normal for her family that accommodates the frequent absences of the servicemember and pushes him back into the family when the deployment is over. This research shows that although long married spouses and servicemembers both report high levels of job satisfaction and marital satisfaction, there is a price elicited by the structures of the military that truncate the spouse's career.

It has been long established that the military spouse has the most profound influence on military retention (Harrell, Nelse, Castaneda, Golinelli 2004). As the military enters a time of post-war sequestration and budget constraints, programs that were developed to enhance and ease military life for spouses will be under scrutiny. This research suggests that in order to have the broadest choice of servicemembers and spouses for retention, those programs need not only to accommodate the early years of the formation of a military family, but they need to examine a more detailed picture of military spouses and military marriages over the lifespan of a military career. It is important to identify how military couples have navigated these demands over time

instead of attributing the ability to stay long in the military and stay long married to the lucky few.

To contextualize this work, the next chapter will address what is already known about military marriages. How does the decision to enter the military itself shape the kind of person who enters a marriage as a servicemember? What kind of person agrees to partner a member of the military? Does the financial premium that the military offers to servicemembers explain who marries and when? Will the combat experiences of this post-9/11 generation have a significant effect on marital duration? Finally, what about spouse education and employment? Is a more educated, more employable spouse more likely or less likely to accept the demands of the military? These questions helped shape the direction of the survey and interview research in order to discover how couples manage multiple deployments, multiple moves and the multiplication of demands as a military family grows and changes over time.

Chapter 3 will review the methods I used to conduct my research including the population of interest, the collection of my sample, and the selection of survey and interview questions.

Chapter 4 will examine the results of the survey, particularly which factors correlated to job satisfaction, marital satisfaction and gender ideology.

Chapter 5 reports on themes, patterns, and insights servicemembers and spouses revealed during the in-depth interviews.

Chapter 6 brings together both survey results and interview data in order to begin to describe and explain long-married, long-military couples

Chapter 7 concludes the research and discusses future suggestions for research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Military service itself has been shown to influence the formation of marriage, the likelihood of marriage, and how family life is experienced in the military. In this chapter I examine the scholarly literature which factors have a significant effect on marital duration among military couples. While historical timing, gender, age at first marriage, spouse education, spouse employment, deployment and combat have all been shown to effect marital duration among couples married less than five years, over time other factors emerge as more important indicators of whether a couple will remain both long-married and long military. The work orientation of the servicemember and the gender ideology of each husband and wife are unexamined factors when it comes to military couples and may be the mechanism which explains their ability to endure.

Factors that significantly effect marital duration among military couples

Military service matters.

All military couples have one thing in common--at least one of the partners in the relationship is a member of the military. It has been shown that military members are not a random group of Americans. In the all-volunteer force, members self-select into the service (Lundquist 2004; Segal and Segal 2004). Teachman (2008) suggests that military selection process itself may create a group more likely to have stable marriages than their civilian age cohort. For example, stable employment is a known predictor of marriage. A

husband's steady employment and income have also been correlated with marital satisfaction (Karney and Bradbury 1995). In a military marriage, at least one member of the relationship by definition has graduated from high school, holds full-time employment, and provides his or her family with full-time benefits.

Military members are also healthier than the average American. At the time of enlistment and throughout their career, military members must pass rigorous fitness requirements and be free of the limitations imposed by poor health, disease, drug abuse and disability (Segal and Segal 2004). Active duty members have also voluntarily signed up for a commitment of at least four years, which may signify a willingness to accept a long-term commitment at a young age (Teachman 2009). In fact, compared to matched civilians, marriage rates are unusually high in the military (Lundquist 2004; Teachman 2008; Karney, Loughran and Pollard 2011).

Military service may also encourage marriage in a way that other occupations do not. Using the National Longitudinal Study of Youth 1979, Teachman (2009) found that men serving on active duty were twice as likely to choose marriage over cohabitation than their civilian counterparts. Teachman suggests that these results could be a function of marriage incentives offered by the government as represented by extra pay and benefits only received when married. Karney and Crown (2007) also found that benefits attached to marriage within the military increased the likelihood of marriage, noting that military policies do lower the threshold for the benefits of marriage outweighing the benefits of cohabitation. Currently, there is not full agreement on whether the incentives to marry or the personal traits of military members themselves are more responsible for the increased rate of marriage inside the military, but there is some agreement that the

economic stability offered by military service contributes to the likelihood of marriage (Lundquist 2004; Teachman 2008; Karney, Loughran and Pollard 2011).

Military service may also affect marital duration through a promotion-incentivized marriage premium. Mehay and Bowman (2005) compared the fitness reports and promotion rates of naval officers to their marital status. They found that among line officers, married men received significantly higher performance ratings than single men and were more likely to be promoted. The directionality of the association between marriage and actual job performance or perception of job performance was unclear.

Finally, military service has also been shown to reduce or negate the effect of race on marriage (Lundquist 2004). Karney et. al. (2011) examined a DEERS data set that included service records for the entire military population from 1998 through 2005. They found that non-white servicemembers were far more likely to be married than their civilian peers, This pattern held true for officers, but was particularly strong among enlisted men and strongest among black enlisted men. Lundquist (2006) also found that black enlisted personnel were significantly more likely to marry than black civilians and also much less likely to divorce than their civilian counterparts.

Historical Timing Matters

Military outcomes have been shown to depend on timing and era of service as well as the veteran's initial background and individual characteristics (MacLean and Elder 2007). Previous studies of military marriage have examined populations of military members who served during World War II and the Vietnam War. These servicemembers were likely to be drafted into the military. After 1973, the United States military became an all-volunteer force. Military service changed in nature from being an

institution to occupation, ensuing rise of military professionalism (Moskos, Segal 1977). The force itself is also smaller. Since the end of the Cold War, there has been a 36% reduction in the size of the military resulting in fewer Americans choosing to serve (Jacobs, 2000). The ability to self select into the service (Segal and Segal 2004) and the smaller number of those who do choose to serve may affect the relevance of previous research on married military members by excluding those who do not wish to serve. The evolving nature of the military as a profession may have an effect on marital outcomes.

Historical timing may also have an effect on marital outcome due to the high operational tempo of the post 9/11 era. Service during Operation Enduring Freedom and/or Operation Iraqi Freedom has been shown to have many unique features with regard to military service. The National Academy of Sciences (2010) reports that the four major differences between OEF and OIF and previous wars include: 1) multiple redeployments to the war zone; 2) greater use of the reserve components of the military and National Guard; 3) deployment of high numbers of women and of parents of young children; 4) a high number of military personnel who survive severe injuries that in previous wars would have resulted in death. The resulting effects of multiple redeployments to a war zone and/or surviving injury will be discussed with other effects of combat.

Gender matters

In civilian heterosexual marriages, gender does matter. For every female civilian who divorces, there is an equally divorced male civilian in the population. The military is different. Only 15% of all military members are female (Segal and Segal 2004). Of these females, more than half are married to another member of the military. Only 10% of male

military members are married to another military member. Although nearly all military occupations are open to women, and women receive equal pay and benefits, women do not receive equal treatment when it comes to marriage outcomes. The risk of divorce for female servicemembers has been found to be several times higher than for their male counterparts (Karney and Crown 2007; Negrusa, Negrusa and Hosek 2013). The data on gender and military marriage may not be complete, however, because studies on marital outcome in the military are based on time dependent data sets and because many studies on military marriage eliminate females from the data set because of the difficulty of obtaining a significant sample of the population.

Age at marriage matters.

Male military members are more likely to have married at a younger age than the civilian population (Lundquist 2004; Karney, Loughran and Pollard 2011). Yet in the civilian population, age at first marriage is one of the strongest predictors of marital dissolution (Karney and Bradbury 1996; Ruger, Wilson, Waddroups 2002; Amato 2006; Goodwin 2010). Americans who marry between age 15 -19 have a lower probability of their marriages lasting 10 years than those who married at age 20 or older. Americans who marry between age 20 and 25 had a lower probability of their marriages lasting 10 years or more than those who first married at age 26 or higher (Goodwin 2010). So it is not surprising that young age at first marriage has been found to predict a higher rate of divorce in the military population, especially among young enlisted (Teachman 2008; Lundquist 2004; Lundquist 2007). It is important to note that most of these findings

about military members and divorce were conducted using data sets compiled prior to 9/11.

Karney et. al (2011) set out to compare marriage and divorce rates of the current population of military members with a group of comparable civilians. They constructed a set of “enlisted comparable” civilians and “officer comparable” civilians from the Current Population Survey. These groups were matched based on age, employment status and educational attainment. Data for both civilians and military was restricted to males only. They found that the current population of active duty male servicemembers was indeed more likely to be married than their civilian counterparts in every age group. Yet, even in the current period of greatly heightened demand, military members were no more likely to be divorced than their civilian counterparts. The difference was most significant for white enlisted males at every age who were divorced at lower rates than comparable civilians. It should also be noted that age continues to have an effect on marriage throughout a military career because as age increases, the probability of divorce decreases for military members (Ruger, Wilson and Waddoups 2002, Negrusa et. al. 2013).

Education matters

In military circles, education has been used as a substitute for socioeconomic class since enlisted members tended to be high school graduates and officers are required to hold a college degree (Segal and Segal 2004). One recent trend among officers and enlisted families is the prevalence of military spouses who have attained more college credits than found in the general civilian population. According to Department of Defense figures, more than half of all military spouses have some college credits. Twenty

one percent of military spouses have four-year Bachelors degrees. An additional eight percent have graduate degrees (Harrell 2004). This difference between military and civilian spouses is important because education strongly predicts marriage as well as marital satisfaction (Karney and Bradbury 1995; Martin 2006). In their research sample of military members, Ruger et. al. (2002) also found that educational attainment also lowered the probability of divorce. Education may also affect marital duration through its effect on spouse employment since higher levels of education generally increase the likelihood of both civilian and military wives being employed (Harrell 2004).

Spouse Employment matters

Spouse employment is one of the top areas of dissatisfaction for military spouses (Harrell 2004). Spouse employment has become emblematic for military families in recent years, signifying marital stresses that come from financial problems, dissatisfaction with affordable off-post housing and neighborhood quality, separation from social support networks of family and friends, and difficulties due to frequent relocations that are part of military life (Karney and Crown 2007).

Researchers have established that this dissatisfaction is more than simple perception. Military spouses suffer a demonstrable difference in career attainment from their civilian counterparts. When compared with civilian wives matched by age, education, race, and geographic location, military wives are less likely to work in a given year, work fewer weeks per year, and are less likely to work full-time (Hosek, Asch, Fair, Martin, Mattock 2002.) Military wives also earn lower wages than matched civilian wives, whether salaried or hourly employees. (Hosek et. al 2002).

Although these differences in spouse employment have been shown to have an affect on spouse satisfaction, no research to date has directly linked military spouse employment specifically to marital duration. However, some tentative connections might be inferred. In Karney and Bradbury's (1995) meta- analysis of marriage, they found that marital satisfaction has larger effects on marital stability than most other variables in research on marriage. It stands to reason that if spouse employment has a negative effect on marital satisfaction, then spouse employment may have a negative effect on marital duration. Rogers (2004) did examine how a wife's income and employment affected marital instability in the civilian population. Rogers found that the association between what a wife earned and the rate of divorce formed an inverted U-shaped curve. No matter how much a wife earned, when marital happiness was high, the probability of divorce was low. The highest levels of divorce were found when marital happiness was low and the husband and wife had equal economic resources. Rogers also ascertained that when there was some economic dependency between husband and wife, marriages were quite stable. This may be a revealing finding considering the economic dependency found in military marriages. Perhaps long marital duration within the military is a function of marital satisfaction along with the economic dependency brought about by deployment and limited opportunity for spouse employment.

Deployment may not matter

Deployment is a defining feature of military life (Segal and Segal 2004). Even in a time of increased operational tempo, servicemembers have been shown to view deployment as an opportunity to use their training in meaningful, real world operations (Hosek, Kavanagh and Miller 2006). So how does deployment affect married life?

Major life stressors (like being fired or suffering a serious car accident) have been shown to predict lower marital stability and less marital satisfaction over time (Karney and Bradbury 1995). Deployment would seem to qualify as a stressful event. Partners are separated for months at a time. Deployed servicemembers work exceedingly long hours under stressful and sometimes dangerous conditions. Spouses are left behind often to raise children alone as well as work or go to school. Yet deployment has had mixed results in studies of marital dissolution (Ruger et. al. 2002; Allen, Rhodes, Stanley and Markman 2010; Negrusa et. al. 2013). When Karney and Crown (2007) studied the records military members before, during and after deployment over a ten-year period, they found no significant dissolution of marriage related to deployment. Although the experience was stressful for military members and spouses, Karney and Crown hypothesized that deployment was like parenthood—an expected stressor that may leave partners in a stronger position than before the deployment. Other studies also found that deployment itself had no effect on marital dissolution, although deployments that last longer than six months are correlated with decreased marital satisfaction (Booth 2007).

Most recently, Negrusa, Negrusa and Hosek (2013) studied nearly half a million enlisted servicemembers who entered military service and married between March 1999 and June 2008. By examining the Defense Manpower Data Center’s Proxy Perstempo file, they found that every month of deployment caused an increase in the risk of divorce for military members. Again, these administrative records were for junior servicemembers who served on average four years and were married on average 1.75 years. The risk of divorce for these young couples increased steeply in the first years of marriage, but declined in later years. Researchers noted, “A longer tenure in the military

decreases the divorce hazard, which may indicate the development of skills to cope with the stress of deployment and the selective retention of those less stressed and those more adept at coping.”

Hosek et. al (2006) also found intention to stay in the military was not affected by deployment and the concurrent frequency of times worked longer than the duty day. In fact, married members were more likely to express an intention to stay in the military despite current working conditions. These researchers proposed that servicemembers who are “well matched to military service” may be more likely to intend to stay in the military past the 20 year mark and be more likely to be promoted to positions of more responsibility.

Combat does matter.

Although all who experience combat do deploy, all those who deploy do not experience combat. While members of the Air Force, Navy or Coast Guard may have been placed in the OEF or OIF theater as individual augmentees, members of the Army, Marine Corps, or National Guard with combat specialties are more likely to have seen combat. I point out here that it is important to separate the effects of deployment from the effects of combat because combat is a game changer. Surviving combat can mean that an individual has experienced injury, has seen a friend injured or killed, or has seen the enemy injured or dead. These experiences while stressful themselves can also trigger symptoms of post traumatic stress (PTS) or posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In a 2008 RAND study of OEF and OIF veterans, 18.5% reported symptoms of PTSD or major depression (Tanielian and Jaycox 2008). The National Academy of Sciences (2010) suggests that posttraumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, anxiety

disorders and depression that are triggered or exacerbated by military service may hinder readjustment in veterans of OEF and OIF.

. For example, in a study of 434 Army couples, Allen et. al. (2010) studied how symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) affected a range of marital functioning following the return from deployment. Among the returning servicemembers with PTSD symptoms, Allen et. al. found an associated degree of lower marital satisfaction, lower confidence that the relationship would continue, and lower dedication to the relationship for both husbands and wives. PTSD symptoms were found to have significant negative effects on the marital satisfaction of husband. Ruger et. al. (2002) also found that higher levels of PTSD had a large effect on marital dissolution.

Injuries that result from combat may also have a long-term effect on marriages. These injuries can place the spouse in a caregiving role that increases the risk of depression and divorce (National Academy of Science 2010). Although injuries, PTSD, and combat experience appear to have negative effects on families, the magnitude of the effect is not the same for all families. Pre-existing vulnerabilities like less education, less supportive extended families, and pre-existing mental conditions have been shown to negatively effect marital outcomes (Tangelian and Jaycox 2008). In one study of Israeli soldiers who had been injured in combat, the quality of the marriage itself prior to the injury predicted better outcomes ((Mikulincer et. al.1995). Researchers suggested that combat acted on marriages like an earthquake—those that were stronger before the incident were better able to withstand the onslaught.

A Proposed Mechanism

Post 9/11 active duty servicemembers have experienced the highest rate of deployment in the history of the all-volunteer force (Hoge, Augtherlonie 2006). In civilian populations, stress like this is highly correlated with marital dissolution (Karney and Bradbury 1995). Yet active duty male servicemembers are no more likely to be divorced than their current civilian counterparts matched by age, race, education and employment status (Karney et. al 2011). I argue in this research that the most important factors that contribute to marital duration among long-married, long-military couples are not historical timing, age at first marriage, spouse education, spouse employment, deployment or combat. Instead I argue that two factors—gender ideology and work orientation--- in combination may be working as a mechanism that creates a prophylactic effect on marriage from the stress caused by a military career. If Hosek (2006) is correct in suggesting that some military members are better matched for military service than others and are thus retained, and Negrusa et. al. (2013) are correct in the idea that those who are less stressed and more adept at coping are retained, then these two factors may help connect some of the gaps in the current knowledge about long military marriage.

Gender Ideology

Gender ideology refers to attitudes regarding the appropriate roles, rights and responsibilities of each gender in society (Kroska 2000). This is often measured by an individual's levels of support for a division of paid work and family responsibility that is based on a notion of "separate spheres" (Davis and Greenstein 2009). Attitudes of

individuals tend to range from traditional gender roles in which husbands are breadwinners and wives are family tenders and homemakers, to more egalitarian gender roles in which men and women share both breadwinning and family making roles. In a review of 168 studies that measured support for separate spheres for work and family, Davis and Greenstein (2009) found that gender ideology affected six categories of outcomes: child care; division and perceived fairness of household labor; union stability and conflict; relationship quality; wife abuse; and work, earnings, and occupations.

Because two of the central features of military life are long working hours and deployment, and because these features require that one member of a military marriage is gone from the home often for months at a time, a certain degree of support for separate spheres of home and work may be a defining feature of military life. Thus, in long military marriages in which the husband is the military member, military couples were expected to identify with a more traditional gender ideology.

Work Orientation

Researchers have used a variety of terms to describe how military members orient toward their work including organizational attachment, career commitment, career satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Yet none of these measures delineates the meaning military members ascribe to their service. I suggest that these attitudinal measures have not sought to characterize these attitudes as a military identity. Military members are required to bear the required outward appearance of “a soldier”, “a sailor,” “an airman,” or “a Marine” in their dress and deportment on the job. Career military members—those who continue in the military for more than two terms of enlistment--

may carry that identity into their personal lives and into the lives of their families which forms a part of their identity.

One way to measure that identity may be the occupational psychology concept of work not as a job or a career, but work as a “calling” (Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin and Schwartz 1997; Carador, Dane and Pratt 2011.) A calling is defined as work that a person perceives as his purpose in life (Hall and Chandler 2005). Wrzesniewski et. al. (1997) conceptualized a person with a calling as “an individual who did not work solely for financial gain or career advancement, but instead for the fulfillment that doing the work brings to the individual. Those who subjectively believe that they have a calling see their work as socially valuable—“an end in itself.”

The working hypothesis for this research was that long married military couple was more likely to feature:

- a) a male servicemember who perceived over time that his work is a calling;
- b) a husband and wife who both have a more traditional gender ideology;
- c) a husband and wife who both characterize the stressors of military life as the legitimate and acceptable cost of a military calling.

This exploratory and descriptive research project set out to examine whether gender ideology and work orientation played a role in facilitating long-term military marriages and what kinds of gender strategies active duty military couples used to make that possible.

In testing this hypothesis, I have reviewed the literature, formulated hypotheses, administered a survey, conducted interviews, provided descriptive tables of

characteristics of long married military members, tested correlations, coded text for repetitive themes, and coordinated quantitative and qualitative findings.

Chapter Three describes the population of interest, how the data was collected for both quantitative and qualitative portions of the study and the method of analysis.

Chapter Four discusses the results of the quantitative survey. Chapter Five discusses how themes and codes in the qualitative interviews were identified and analyzed. Chapters Six and Seven discuss the results, suggest further research and conclude the study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Although marriage in the military has long been a subject of interest, most data is limited to quantitative research on young military couples married less than five years. In order to develop richer data that might reveal how couples achieve both a long military marriage and a long military career, I designed a mixed method approach that combined quantitative survey data and qualitative in-depth interviews with long married military couples.

Population of interest

Over three million people serve in the US armed forces. According to Department of Defense statistics (2010), about half the force is composed of active duty Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine and Coast Guard personnel who work full-time as members of the military. The other half of the force comprises the reserve component that includes the Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve and Coast Guard Reserve. These reservists are meant to hold full-time jobs in the civilian community and are called up to military service periodically. Although military reservist couples certainly may experience some of the factors that define military life like deployment and risk of injury or death to the servicemember, they do not experience all five factors that define a couple as specifically military. Studying how gender ideology and work orientation may affect marital outcomes for reservist couples is set aside for future study.

Active Duty Army

One specific population of interest is composed of active duty members of the Army and their spouses. The Army is the largest branch of the service with more than half a million members comprising about 40% of active duty members and 15% of the total force. During Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Army bore the brunt of casualties. Approximately 57% of all combat deaths were active duty Army members. According to Department of Defense reports active duty Army members sustained 54% of all reported injuries. The experience of active duty Army members may be the most relevant for this era of military life.

Active Duty Navy

As a comparison group I included active duty Navy members and their spouses. During the OIF and OEF period, the average length of Navy deployments on aircraft carriers has increased from six months to eight months with less turnaround time between deployments (McCall 2012). Since this group has been heavily deployed, yet has likely not experienced boots-on-the-ground combat with its attendant results, they may also experience different levels of martial satisfaction.

Male Servicemembers

Although issues surrounding long marriage and long military service are equally relevant for male and female service members, the current study focuses exclusively on male servicemembers, who make up approximately 85% of the current active duty force (Segal and Segal 2004).

Long Military

Since this study explores features of long married, long military couples, the active duty Army or Navy service member had to be age 35 – 48 in 2012. About 15% of the active

duty military population falls in this age range. This particular age cohort is relevant because the servicemembers would have joined the military between 1982 – 1995, prior to both the patriotic fervor of 9/11 and the economic downturn of 2008. Not all branches of the Army are equally likely to deploy to a combat zone. Yet the historic era of their service means that the active duty Army cohort has had a higher likelihood of having experienced combat and/or lengthy separation from their spouses during the highest deployment rate during the history of the all-volunteer forces (Hoge, Auchterlonie, & Milliken, 2006). Because they were over age 30 at the time of Operation Enduring Freedom, and 79% of OEF deaths occurred to those age 30 and younger (Leland and Oboroceanu 2010), this is an age group less likely to be decimated by combat death. Also, because of the “up or out” retention policy of the military, these individuals would have served more than 15 years at the time of this study. They would also have been well-established in their careers prior to 9/11 and be in the military equivalent of middle management positions. This population has not previously been studied in research on military marriage.

Long Marriage

The other necessary element in the population of interest is the possibility of long marriage. Marriages are most susceptible to divorce in the early years (Goodwin, Mosher and Chandra 2002). Consequently, most military family research focuses on couples that have been married less than five years. The factors that contribute to a long marriage are not merely the opposite of the factors that contribute to divorce in the early years. Since the average age of first marriage among military males is 25 and that average age of first marriage among civilian males is age 27 (Goodwin, McGill and Chandra 2009) this age

group was chosen in order to capture a sample in which members had enough chronological time to attain a long marriage.

Source of Data

In order to find members of this population to sample, I sent out a request via Military.com (APPENDIX A) inviting qualifying individuals to take the survey. Military.com is a news outlet that reaches over ten million active duty, reservists, retirees and National Guard members and their families. A sample was obtained from this source for long married, active duty, military families and respondents. The survey was taken online by 1256 participants via Survey Monkey.

Survey Method

In this exploratory and descriptive research, a combination of surveys and interview questions was used to explore factors that affect marital duration in the military. Surveys have been found to be a versatile, efficient and generalizable method to conduct this kind of research as long as the representative sample has been carefully selected and the survey itself is designed for a specific audience (Schutt 2009). A survey for the active duty husband (APPENDIX F) and a separate survey for the civilian wife (APPENDIX G) were made available through Survey Monkey.

Surveys and interview schedules were been designed to explore the following areas:

Demographic characteristics. The questionnaires asked about factors established in the literature review that affect marital duration in the military. These factors included

whether respondents were currently married, age at start of current marriage, if respondent were married more than once, race/ethnicity, officer, enlisted, civilian status, the length of military service for each member, and the highest educational attainment by each member.

Marital Satisfaction. In order to eliminate measurement error and improve reliability, the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale was used. The Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale asks three questions:

1. How satisfied are you with your marriage
2. How satisfied are you with your husband as a spouse?
3. How satisfied are you with your relationship with your husband

Responses range on a seven point scale for each question from extremely satisfied to extremely dissatisfied. Then these three questions were tallied for a total possible marital satisfaction score of 21. This scale has strong reliability and validity. It may be limited because of the ordinal scale of measurement, yet it has been determined to deliver results just as accurate as longer measures (Schumm 1986).

Gender ideology. To assess gender ideology, eight established indicators of gender ideology as described by Davis and Greenstein (2009) were included. Participants were asked to read the following items and then rate them a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 is completely disagree 4 is neither disagree nor agree and 7 is strongly agree.

1. Both the man and woman should contribute to the household income.
2. It is much better for everyone concerned if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.
3. A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.

4. Having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person.
5. Men should share the work around the house with women, such as doing dishes, cleaning and so forth.
6. Employment of both parents is necessary to keep up with the high cost of living.
7. It is more important for a wife to help her husband's career than to have one herself
8. Parents should encourage as much independence in their daughters as their sons.

When tallying responses, items 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 were flipped so that each indicator was measured on an ordinal scale from 1 – 7, with 1 as the most traditional response and 7 as the most egalitarian response. Then responses were tallied for a total possible score of 56 points.

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was determined by a single interview question for both servicemembers and spouses. “Please rate your satisfaction with your job on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 is completely dissatisfied, 4 is neither satisfied or dissatisfied, and 7 is completely satisfied.”

Work orientation. To assess work orientation Amy Wrzesniewski's Job, Career, Calling instrument developed in her much cited research was used. Because it is desirable to be able to compare a military population to other work environments, permission was granted to use Wrzesniewski's instrument within my questionnaires.

According to Wrzesniewski, people whose work orientation is “job” work for a paycheck. Their work is a means that allows them to get the resources they need to enjoy their time away from the job. Individuals with a “career” work orientation have a deeper

personal investment in their work and mark their achievements through advancement within the occupational structure, higher social standing, increased power within the scope of one's occupation, higher self-esteem as well as monetary gain. Those with a "calling" work orientation find that their work is inseparable from their life. In addition to financial gain and career advancement, they find fulfillment at work and see their work as socially valuable.

Participants were instructed to read the following paragraphs and then answer how much they were like the person featured in the paragraph on a four point scale with 1 being "not at all" and 4 being "very much":

Ms. A works primarily to earn enough money to support her life outside of her job. If she was financially secure, she would no longer continue with her current line of work, but would really rather do something else instead. Ms. A's job is basically a necessity of life, a lot like breathing or sleeping. She often wishes the time would pass more quickly at work. She greatly anticipates weekends and vacations. If Ms. A lived her life over again, she probably would not go into the same line of work. She would not encourage her friends and children to enter her line of work. Ms. A is very eager to retire.

Ms. B basically enjoys her work, but does not expect to be in her current job five years from now. Instead, she plans to move on to a better, higher level job. She has several goals for her future pertaining to the positions she would eventually like to hold. Sometimes her work seems like a waste of time, but she knows she must do sufficiently well in her current position in order to move on. Ms. B can't wait to get a promotion. For her, a promotion means recognition of her good work, and is a sign of her success in competition with her coworkers.

Ms. C's work is one of the most important parts of her life. She is very pleased that she is in this line of work. Because what she does for a living is a vital part of who she is, it is one of the first things she tells people about herself. She tends to take her work home with her and on vacations, too. The majority of her friends are from her place of employment, and she belongs to several organizations and clubs pertaining to her work. Ms. C feels good about her work because she loves it, and because she thinks it makes the world a better place. She would encourage her friends and children to enter her line of work. Ms. C would be pretty upset if she were forced to stop working, and she is not particularly looking forward to retirement.

The participants were also asked to rate the paragraphs by how much the reading was like their marriage partner on a four point scale with 1 being “not at all” and 4 being “very much.”

Race. In order to allow individuals the most breadth when describing their race, participants were asked “How do you describe your race?” Then responses were coded as “white,” “black,” “Hispanic,” and “Asian,” and “other.” For example, respondents who wrote that they were “black,” “black American” and “African American” were all coded as “black.” An individual who indicated he was “Black Filipino” was coded as “other.” Since less than five percent of the population who took the survey noted their race was Hispanic, Asian or any race other than white or black, all other races were marked as “other.”

Rank. Many servicemembers provided their rank with a name (lieutenant) others provided a number (0-3). Using a Department of Defense rank chart, these were coded as “Junior enlisted” E-6 and below. “Senior enlisted” E-7 and above. “Junior officer” 0-3 and below. “Field grade officer” 0-4 – 0-6.

Education. Respondents were asked to indicate the highest level of academic achievement. Those who had attended high school or graduated from high school were coded as a “1.” Those with an Associates degree or some college were coded as a “2.” Individuals who had completed their Bachelor’s degree and/or had some graduate education were coded as a “3.” Those with a completed Graduate degree were coded as a “4”

Interview Method

While survey research gives a solid start toward answering the research question, surveys are limited. It has been shown that research design is enhanced by using a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data (Risman 1993; Burawoy 1998; Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2006; Schutt 2009). Consequently, in-depth interviews were added to the research design in order to enrich the data collected for this research.

Although random selection is rarely used to select respondents for intensive interviews, Schutt (2009) cautions that the selection method for interviews must also be considered carefully so that the interviews do not represent a convenience sample. Using a random number generator, I selected a random sample of respondents who provided an email address when queried “Thank you for taking this survey. Long military marriages are far more nuanced than we can capture in a few questions. To contribute your story, please provide your email in the box below to be selected for a follow-up interview.”

Participants for the study were sent an invitation by email (APPENDIX I). If both the husband and wife agreed to participate, an appointment for the phone interview was established. Interview schedules were designed for both the male servicemember (APPENDIX D) and the female spouse (APPENDIX E). These interview questions were designed in order to elicit themes of gender ideology, work orientation, the military itself and family life. Calls were captured by digital recorder. An MP3 file was created then transcribed by a professional service. Participants were notified at the beginning of the interview that the call was being recorded, both on the consent form (APPENDIX C), and as a verbal reminder from the interviewer. After the interview, each husband and wife were sent an email thanking them for their participation and providing contact

information for the researcher in case they want to share other salient points at a later date (APPENDIX H).

Since the most important feature of qualitative data is the focus on text, grounded theory method was used to analyze transcripts. From the data collected, transcripts were reviewed, progressively focusing on the social context of events, actions, and thoughts of the couples while simultaneously ferretting out themes and meanings. Coding was conducted by noticing phenomenon, collecting examples, then analyzing and reanalyzing phenomena to find commonalities, differences, patterns, structures, and themes. Memos were used to clarify emerging themes and meanings of the respondents.

In the next chapters, I will examine the results of survey and interview data.

CHAPTER 4: SURVEY RESULTS

After reading an invitation on Military.com (APPENDIX A), 1256 servicemembers and spouses took the surveys (APPENDIX F, G) on long married, long military marriages as posted to Survey Monkey. These participants came from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. They were active duty, reservists, and spouses. Because this descriptive research is only focused on active duty male servicemembers in the Army or Navy married to female civilians for more than 15 years, four groups were identified.

- Female Army spouses married more than 15 years.
- Female Navy spouses married more than 15 years.
- Active duty Army males married more than 15 years.
- Active duty Navy males married more than 15 years.

Descriptive Statistics

The survey measured demographic characteristics of the participants and factors that have been shown to affect marital satisfaction. These are reported in Table 1.

Army wives

In the survey, 235 female civilians married more than 15 years to active duty Army males responded. The participants were married 20.35 years on average. Both brides and grooms were young at first marriage, 22.38 years and 23.14 years respectively. They moved on average 8.6 times during their marriages. The racial composition of the group was 81% white, 7% black and 11% other. They were most likely to identify their husbands as having a “calling” work orientation instead of a “job” or “career” orientation.

When it came to their own careers, the Army wives also identified with having a “calling” orientation. More than one fifth of Army wives reported that they had served in the military themselves at one time. In their educational attainment, 28% of respondents held a Master’s degree or above, 29% graduated from college with a Bachelor’s degree, 38% reported that they had some college but no degree and 9% graduated from high school. Instead of seeking information about whether wives were employed, unemployed or not seeking employment, this survey asked spouses how many hours of paid employment they worked per week. Three percent worked more than 41 hours per week; 24% worked 31-40 hours per week; 8% worked 10 -30 hours per week; 7% worked ten hours or less per week. Nearly 53% of all Army spouses reported that they had no paid employment. When asked whether they considered their primary occupation that of a full time Stay At Home Mom (SAHM), 68% agreed.

Navy wives

In the survey, 105 female civilians married more than 15 years to active duty Navy males responded. The mean number of years they were married was 21.40. Both brides and grooms were young at first marriage, 22.75 years and 23.48 years respectively.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Analytic Sample – Spouses

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Analytic Sample
Spouses Navy Wives N=105 Army Wives N=235

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max
	Navy				Army			
# years married	21.4	6.48	15	47	20.35	4.31	15	38
Bride age at marriage	22.75	3.51	17	32	22.38	3.61	16	45
Groom age at marriage	23.48	3.5	16	34	23.14	3.45	18	36
Education level	2.71	0.96	1	4	2.69	0.8	1	4
Work hours per week	18.09	19.53	0	70	14.56	17.9	0	65
# PCS moves	7.85	4.35	0	20	8.62	3.67	0	22
<i>Dummy variables</i>								
Prior military service	0.16	0.37	0	1	0.21	0.41	0	1
SAHM	0.64	0.48	0	1	0.68	0.46	0	1
Race								
white	0.78	0.41	0	1	0.81	0.39	0	1
black	0.069	0.25	0	1	0.078	0.27	0	1
other	0.14	0.35	0	1	0.11	0.31	0	1
<i>Work orientation</i>								
Job spouse	1.28	0.62	1	4	1.34	0.76	1	4
Job husband	1.57	0.9	1	4	1.5	0.79	1	4
Career spouse	2.06	1.14	1	4	1.9	1.06	1	4
Career husband	2.49	1.17	1	4	2.25	1.11	1	4
Calling spouse	2.29	1.24	1	4	2.22	1.2	1	4
Calling husband	2.47	1.14	1	4	2.55	1.13	1	4
<i>Measures of satisfaction</i>								
Job satisfaction	5.45	1.21	2	7	5.42	1.32	1	7
Marital satisfaction	18.05	4.18	3	21	18.1	3.55	3	21
Gender ideology	39.42	6.72	18	51	39.53	5.66	23	52

They moved on average 7.8 times. The racial composition of this group was 78% white, 7% black and 14% other. They were equally likely to report that their husbands had either a “career” or “calling” work orientation.

When reporting on their own careers, they were most likely to claim a “calling” work orientation. Sixteen percent of respondents had served in the military themselves at one time but were not currently serving. When it came to their educational attainment, 28% of respondents held a Master’s degree or above, 29% graduated from college with a Bachelor’s degree, 38% reported that they had some college but no degree and 9% graduated from high school. No one in the study had failed to graduate from high school. They reported their work hours as 6% who worked more than 41 hours per week; 29% worked 31-40 hours per week; 13% worked 10 -30 hours per week, 6% worked ten hours or less per week. Nearly 45% of all Navy spouses reported that they had no paid employment. When asked whether they considered their primary occupation that of a full time Stay At Home Mom (SAHM), 65% agreed.

Army husbands

Army active duty members married to female civilian spouses for more than fifteen years totaled 85 participants. This population was skewed according to officer or enlisted status. Although the DoD reports that the military is composed of 83.1% enlisted members and 16.9% officers, this population was 42% enlisted and 57% officers. The Army husbands were most likely to identify themselves as having a “calling” work orientation. The Army husbands had the highest “calling” score of 2.63. They also considered that their spouses had a “calling” orientation.

These participants were married on average 20.23 years. They had served in the military more than two years on average before they married. This was a first marriage for 94.11% of military members. This represented a second marriage for some of their brides with 21% having been previously married. The racial composition of this group was 64% white, 16% black and 18% other.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Analytic Sample
Servicemembers Navy N=33 Army N=84

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max
	Navy				Army			
years of service prior to marriage	2.98	2.83	0	10	2.2	2.69	0	11
# years married	20.68	4.62	15	31	20.24	4.74	15	38
% husband 1st marriage	0.88	0.33	0	1	0.94	0.24	0	1
% wife 1st marriage	0.94	0.24	0	1	0.78	0.41	0	1
<i>Dummy variables</i>								
Race								
white	0.83	0.38	0	1	0.65	0.48	0	1
black	0.1	0.31	0	1	0.16	0.37	0	1
other	0.07	0.26	0	1	0.18	0.39	0	1
education	3.18	0.97	1	4	3	0.89	1	4
armyenlisted	0.48	0.5	0	1	0.43	0.5	0	1
armyofficier	0.52	0.5	0	1	0.57	0.5	0	1
<i>Work Orientation</i>								
job	1.73	0.91	1	4	1.66	0.81	1	4
jobspouse	1.45	0.75	1	4	1.54	0.81	1	4
career	2.15	0.98	1	4	2.42	1.08	1	4
careerspouse	1.88	0.93	1	4	2.01	1.02	1	4
calling	2.52	1.15	1	4	2.64	1.04	1	4
callingspo~e	2.12	1.11	1	4	2.22	1.05	1	4
<i>Measures of Satisfaction</i>								
Job satisfaction	5.55	0.97	3	7	5.8	0.97	3	7
Marital satisfaction	17.79	4.82	3	21	18.34	4.11	3	21
genderideal	39.7	6.3	25	54	40.31	6.37	24	54

Navy husbands

Navy active duty members married to female civilian spouses for more than fifteen years totaled 33 participants, a small sample size. Like the Army active duty group, this population was skewed according to officer or enlisted status. This population was 48% enlisted members and 52% officers. They were most likely to report that their work orientation was “calling.” They were more likely to say that their spouses had a “calling” work orientation followed by “career” or “job.”

These participants were married on average 20.68 years. They had served in the military nearly three years on average before they married. This was a first marriage for most of their brides with 93.93% of partner never having been previously married. This represented a second marriage for some servicemembers with 13% having been previously married before they entered their current marriage. The racial composition of this group was 83% white, 10% black and 7% other.

Bivariate correlations

The survey measured how marital satisfaction, job satisfaction and gender ideology were affected by factors that had been shown to affect marriage in the civilian population as well as some factors that only affected military members. Bivariate correlations were performed using STATA. P values were collected to determine significance.

Marital Satisfaction

The Kansas Marital Satisfaction Survey uses a three item test to score marital satisfaction with the maximum score of 21 points. In this survey, Army wives reported KMSS scores of 18.10; Navy wives 18.05; Army husbands 18.34; Navy husbands 17.78.

Among Army wives, marital satisfaction was positively correlated with job satisfaction and negatively correlated to being married to a husband with a “job” work orientation. For Navy wives, marital satisfaction was negatively correlated to having a “job” work orientation themselves. Among Navy husbands, marital satisfaction was positively correlated with being enlisted and negatively correlated with being an officer. None of the factors measured significantly affected marital satisfaction for Army husbands.

Job Satisfaction

Among Army and Navy wives, their own job satisfaction was positively correlated with education or having a “calling” work orientation. The job satisfaction of Army wives was negatively correlated with having a husband with a “job” or “career” work orientation. Among Army and Navy husbands, job satisfaction was positively correlated with having a “calling” work orientation, with education, and with the number of years the service member was married. Navy husbands also reported a higher job satisfaction when married to a wife with a “career” work orientation. The job satisfaction of both Army and Navy husbands was negatively correlated with having a “job” orientation.

Table 3: Bivariate Correlation for Spouses

TABLE 3. Bivariate Correlation Matrices for Marital Duration

NAVY SPOUSE (N = 105)													
	Marital Sat	Gender Ideology	Job Sat	Job-Spouse	Job-SM	Career-Spouse	Career-SM	Calling-Spouse	Calling-SM	Education	White	Black	Other Race
Marital Sat													
Gender Ideology	0.03												
Job Sat	0.17	-0.08											
Job-Spouse	-0.11	0.10	0.31										
Job-SM	-0.13	-0.03	0.12	0.21									
Career-Spouse	-0.02	0.27	0.22	0.17	-0.02								
Career-SM	0.00	0.04	0.17	0.08	0.05	0.56							
Calling-Spouse	0.00	0.08	0.28	-0.23	-0.05	0.06	-0.05						
Calling-SM	-0.11	0.03	0.04	0.00	-0.25	0.03	0.00	0.40					
Education	0.10	0.10	0.14	0.01	-0.15	0.06	-0.15	0.16	0.03				
White	0.02	-0.03	0.00	-0.10	0.01	-0.17	-0.01	0.05	0.05	-0.11			
Black	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.14	0.01	0.13	0.09	-0.14	-0.12	0.10	-0.60		
Other Race	-0.09	-0.04	0.05	0.00	-0.02	0.10	-0.07	0.05	0.05	0.05	-0.73	-0.10	

p < .05

ARMY Spouse (N=235)

Table 4: Bivariate Correlation for Servicemembers

NAVY Service Member (N=33)														
Marital Sat	Gender Ideology	Job Sat	Job- Spouse	Job- SM	Career- Spouse	Career- SM	Calling- Spouse	Calling- SM	Enlisted	Officer	Education	White	Black	Other Race
Marital Sat	0.05	0.31	0.03	0.24	0.13	0.29	-0.04	0.07	0.39	-0.39	-0.31	0.01	-0.16	0.17
Gender Ideology														
Job Sat	-0.04	-0.09	0.16	0.34	-0.10	0.04	-0.17	-0.10	0.25	-0.25	-0.12	-0.11	0.13	0.00
Job- Spouse	-0.01	0.03	-0.50	0.03	-0.42	-0.10	0.50	0.40	-0.11	0.11	0.02	0.08	-0.09	-0.02
Job- SM	-0.07	-0.03		0.32	0.40	0.44	-0.64	-0.34	0.16	-0.16	-0.16	-0.14	-0.15	0.38
Spouse	-0.05	0.09	0.23		-0.14	0.22	-0.13	-0.11	0.06	-0.06	-0.12	-0.17	-0.08	0.35
Job-SM														
Career- Spouse	-0.16	-0.20	0.34	0.12		0.65	-0.27	-0.13	0.23	-0.23	-0.03	-0.01	0.06	-0.05
Career- SM	-0.14	-0.05	0.13	0.15	0.63		-0.20	0.11	0.33	-0.33	-0.19	-0.15	0.04	0.18
Calling- Spouse	-0.18	0.48	-0.37	0.09	-0.07	-0.03		0.63	-0.23	0.23	0.11	-0.05	0.26	-0.24
Calling- SM	-0.05	-0.10	-0.05	0.12	0.05	0.19	0.42		0.00	0.00	-0.15	0.06	0.06	-0.15
Enlisted	0.00	0.26	0.12	0.07	-0.04	0.06	-0.05	0.16		-1.00	-0.78	-0.26	0.10	0.26
Officer	0.00	-0.26	0.18	-0.12	0.07	0.04	0.05	-0.16	-1.00		0.78	0.26	-0.10	-0.26
Education														
White	0.06	-0.11	0.25	-0.28	0.13	-0.15	0.05	-0.13	-0.65	0.65		0.57	-0.18	-0.60
Black	0.05	-0.13	-0.04	0.03	0.08	-0.12	0.02	0.20	-0.03	0.03	0.09		-0.74	-0.60
Other Race	-0.16	0.18	-0.09	0.10	0.11	0.00	-0.21	-0.31	0.22	-0.22	-0.17	-0.60		-0.09
	0.10	-0.02	0.13	-0.12	0.01	0.22	0.18	0.04	-0.17	0.17	0.06	-0.65	-0.21	
ARMY Service Member (N=85)														

Gender ideology

Among Army and Navy wives, having a more egalitarian gender ideology was positively correlated with identifying as having a “career” work orientation and working more hours per week. It was negatively correlated with being a Stay At Home Mom (SAHM).

Among Army husbands, having a more egalitarian gender ideology was positively correlated with being enlisted and negatively correlated with being an officer.

Conclusion

In the scholarly literature, early age at first marriage is one of the primary predictors of divorce among military members. In this survey, the majority of respondents indicated that they married young and they stayed married. This contributes to Lundquist’s (2007) research that suggested that in the current generation of the all-volunteer force, early marriage in the military is so pervasive that it may be a normative process with significant social supports as well as economic supports for young couples. This finding also suggests that other factors come into play for some military couples as they age enabling them to achieve marital duration.

The development of a “calling” work orientation may be one of those factors. This survey research upholds my argument that long-married servicemembers experience their work as a “calling.” Job satisfaction was positively correlated with having a “calling” work orientation, as well as with having more education, and with age. For Army wives, it is interesting to note that work orientation of the servicemember had an effect on the marital satisfaction of their wives. This suggests that work orientation of the servicemember may, in fact, benefit families at home.

Although I expected long-married, long-military couples to have a traditional gender ideology that supported the kind of breadwinner husband/nurturer wife that exists

in traditional military life, my expectations were not borne out by the survey findings. All four groups espoused a more egalitarian gender ideology in which husbands and wives are meant to share breadwinning and nurturing roles. Also, as in previous studies, military spouses in this survey were more educated than the civilian population in the United States, yet they worked fewer hours. More than 65% indicated that they were SAHMs, but they were also more likely to indicate that they had a “calling” work orientation. Since beliefs about gender and gender relations have been shown to be a function of how adults actually navigate their lives (Davis 2007), this was particularly surprising. How do these couples with egalitarian beliefs continue in the traditional constructed set out by military demands and remain married?

Since the survey data could not address these issues, I conducted in-depth interviews with 18 military couples. In Chapter 5, I describe themes and patterns and ideas from Army and Navy couples that expand on how work orientation, gender ideology and the structures that create and sustain military life play out for long-married, long military couples.

In Chapter 6, I will bring together the results of both the survey and the interviews in order to identify how work orientation and an acceptance of separate spheres work together to enable military members to continue in their careers.

CHAPTER 5: INTERVIEW RESULTS

How do military couples manage multiple deployments, multiple moves, and the multiplication of demands as a family grows and changes over time? In this descriptive and explanatory research, structural factors that were already known to predict marital duration in the United States were examined in the survey section. However, as Esterberg (2002) notes, studying people is not like studying other things in the natural world. Human behavior is not mechanistic; it is context sensitive. People reflect on their behavior. They give and receive feedback. Their circumstances and relationships are shaped by their actions.

The survey data I collected told something about *which* people remain long married and in the military. Those Army and Navy members who married young, moved often, and thought of their own work and their spouse's work as a calling or as a career/calling made up the majority of this group. The survey data alone could not give much information about *how* they were doing that. It could not give any insight about what they thought about their lives or how they conducted the work of their families or how often the military actually influenced their lives day to day. The survey data could not explain how couples could have somewhat egalitarian views about what was

appropriate for each gender, yet choose a life in which as many as 68 percent of families surveyed had a Stay At Home Mom in the house.

Originally, I expected that long-married, long-military couples would share a traditional gender ideology and that the male servicemembers would experience their work as a “calling” which would legitimate the demands of military life. The survey confirmed the “calling” work orientation. Yet survey respondents had a far more egalitarian gender ideology than the traditional nature of their lives would lead one to expect. In in-depth phone interviews with nine Navy couples and nine Army couples randomly selected from survey participants, I found that the couples invested in separate spheres in which the military spouse is charged with “creating normal” for the family so that the military member can carry out the deployments and separations required from a permanent military cadre.

I talked to each of the partners individually. Some couples were not available on the same day so their phone interviews were held separately. Other partners stayed in the room while their husband or wife took the call, often tossing in a comment or detail into the conversation. When partners were in the room together or even within earshot, proximity may have influenced the kind of answers the husband or wife gave. The interplay between spouses sometimes served to increase the level of detail that partners contributed or spark a memory.

These interviewed couples were married between 15 to 35 years (Table 5). Thirteen of the active duty members were officers and five were enlisted. Two officers had been prior enlisted before they became officers. Three of the wives had prior

military service. Four of the families are currently stationed at military bases overseas.

All but one couple had children. In four of the families, the eldest child was in elementary school. Two families had children in middle school. The eldest child in five families was in high school. Six families had adult children either currently employed in the civilian workforce or in college. None of the adult children of the interviewed families still lived with the active duty parents. One of the adult children was also serving in the military.

Table 3: Participant Couples by Branch

#	Branch & Occupation	Years Mar.	Officer/ Enlisted	Deploy Status	SM Work Orientation	Spouse Employ	Residence	Age of Children
Army								
1	dermatologist	18	Officer	Deployed	Career	SAHM*	Stateside	4,8
2	Combat engineer	22	Enlisted	Combat	Calling	Self Employ	Stateside	19,21
3	Operations	32	Officer	Combat+	Calling/Car	Part time	Stateside	32,33
4	Platoon Sgt	15	Enlisted	Combat+	Calling	Self Employ	Stateside	9,13,15, 18
5	Battalion Cdr	25	Officer	Combat+	Calling	SAHM	Stateside	17,23
6	Strategist	20	Officer	Deployed	Calling	SAHM*	Germany	9,12,13
7	Nurse	24	Officer	Combat+	Calling	Full-time	Stateside	22,24
8	Psych Op Sgt	22	Enlisted	Combat	Calling/Car	SAHM*	Germany	9,14,15, 18
9	Acquisition	15	Officer	Deployed	Career	Self-employ	Stateside	11,13
Navy								
10	Seabee	24	Officer	Combat+	Career/call	SAHM	Italy	10,13,16
11	Frigate captain	15	Officer	Deployed	Calling	SAHM	Stateside	11,11,13
12	Hospital admin	29	Officer	None	Career	Full-time	Japan	27,29
13	Surface warfare	26	Officer	Deployed	Calling	Self-employ	Stateside	21,24
14	Helicopter pilot	15	Officer	Deployed	Calling	SAHM	Stateside	3,7,9
15	Submariner	24	Officer	Deployed	Calling	None	Stateside	none
16	Helicopter mechanic	19	Enlisted	Deployed	Calling	Con-tractor	Stateside	12,16,18
17	Fixed wing Pilot	15	Officer	Deployed	Calling	Self-employ	Stateside	7,10
18	Aircraft Supply Chief	15	Enlisted	Deployed	Career	SAHM	Stateside	8,32

+ = Post-traumatic stress reported

* = prior military service

In the interviews, uniquely military factors like deployment and combat that influence marital duration were investigated as well as how those factors may differ from couple to couple. I asked open ended questions on the interviews that were designed to elicit as much detail as possible about how each family worked day to day without influencing the kind of data they provided. I asked husbands and wives to describe how their day rolled out, what they did on the weekends, and what they thought their partners did all day. I asked about why they stayed in the military and what they admired about their spouses. Using the techniques of grounded theory, I went back over the transcripts of the interviews looking for themes, terms, concepts and patterns to emerge from the details. I first read through each interview and marked it for themes and key words and concepts. As I noticed themes and concepts emerge, I would start a memo then go back and check the other interviews for similar themes then jot down notes and quotes. When I noticed a keyword occur, I used the “find” feature to locate the same word in other interviews to see if the word was used in the same context. I wrote memos on each of these themes, concepts and patterns, often changing and developing the name of the theme as it became more evident what the interviewees were discussing. On the first page of every interview, I kept a running tally of each of the datapoints I wanted to keep track of to ease the ability to count through the stacks of interview transcripts. In order to keep track of nearly 40 participants, I found myself referring to the couples by the name of the servicemember’s job for convenience. The more I studied each couple’s transcript, the more the details of the servicemember’s job seemed to define their experience. Since

each of the participants had taken the survey online, they knew that the study was about military couples which may have influenced the type of detail they shared.

One of my first questions of analysis was to understand what the people in this group thought they were doing. I heard about servicemembers and spouses waking up at 5:00 a.m. to exercise. I heard about breakfasts being made. I heard about kids catching rides to school and sports and servicemembers reporting to the unit and spouses running errands or studying for tests or sitting down to the computer to do their own work. I heard from soldiers and sailors doing what we expect soldiers and sailors to do. But I also heard work stories from a servicemember who was a supply officer who is now a dermatologist. I heard from a nurse and a hospital administrator. I heard from an operations specialist who worked out of a tent and an acquisitions manager who worked in an office building. I heard from a guy in Louisiana who ordered parts for helicopters all morning then volunteered at the Morale Welfare and Recreation office all afternoon. If the uniforms and military acronyms were taken away from these couples, what exactly made these families any different than their civilian neighbors?

The Primacy of Deployment

One factor kept emerging in every interview without exception: deployment. Two of the questions that were asked about half way through the interview asked about deployment—how many times had the servicemember deployed since 9/11 and how had the servicemember's or spouse's role in the family changed during deployment.

Husbands and wives returned again and again to the theme of deployment, even when the

servicemember was not currently in a job that deployed. When asked about what he did during a typical day, one Navy surface warfare officer said, “You mean now? Or when I was deployed? I’m at the Pentagon now but I just got back from deployment.” Two servicemembers were quick to point out that their current schedule was not typical for them because they were stationed at a school and had more relaxed hours. They were each stationed at their schools for nearly two years, but that schedule was not “typical.”

When so much talk centered on deployment, I thought that perhaps these husbands and wives were describing a life organized around providing to their country a warfighter, warrior, a soldier or a sailor. But of the 18 active duty members I interviewed, only seven (Table 5) said they had been in combat, carrying a weapon and actively engaging the enemy. Six of those who had experienced combat were in Army combat specialties and one was a Navy Seabee (a “C.B.,” a member of a Construction Battalion) stationed with a battalion in Iraq and another in Afghanistan. Five of their spouses said that their servicemember had signs of post-traumatic stress (PTS) after returning from deployment. None of the participants ever used the word “warrior” or “warfighter.” This may have been because in order to qualify as long married (15 years or more of marriage) both officer and enlisted members are more likely to now be assigned to a non-combat managerial type role. Or it could be because deployment is the defining characteristic of these military marriages.

These servicemembers were deploying. Whether they were officer or enlisted, Army or Navy, they were anticipating deployment. They were training for deployment. They were actively deploying. They were returning from deployment. They were

transferring to a new job or new unit from which they would train to deploy, deploy others, or deploy themselves. Of the 18 servicemembers, 17 had deployed at least once since 9/11. Four had deployed six times. Of those four, three of them had multiple combat tours. Only the hospital administrator had not deployed since 9/11. “But not from a lack of trying,” his wife said. Both he and his wife talked about how many times he had tried to join a unit that was deploying overseas but missed due to timing or the needs of the military.

“What do you call a “deployment?”

The public may understand the word “deployment” to signify a group of servicemembers who leave the country for six months or a year or more to go do military operations overseas—particularly in Afghanistan or Iraq. The military, however, defines the word “deployment” very specifically. In the *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, the term “deployment” has four different definitions.

1. In naval usage, the change from a cruising approach or contact disposition to a disposition for battle.
2. The movement of forces within operational areas.
3. The positioning of forces into a formation for battle.
4. The relocation of forces and materiel to desired operational areas. Deployment encompasses all activities from origin or home station through destination, specifically including intra-continental United States, intertheater, and intratheater movement legs, staging, and holding areas.

Yet the definition does not include any particular time period or activity.

So when I asked, “How often have you deployed since 9/11,” servicemembers

and spouses struggled to define exactly what was meant by “deploy.” Few had a firm answer. One Army infantry officer did state flat out: “Four.” Most active duty servicemembers interviewed could not answer that question so quickly or unequivocally. Instead they typically worked their way from 9/11 forward—what they were doing on 9/11 and then where they were stationed. They fumbled to name the actual year of their deployments and worked through the question using the name or their unit or their geographic location to mark time. For example, an Army master sergeant who works in psychological operations told the story by first discounting the deployment he was currently on when 9/11 occurred. Then he counted forward by naming which task force he was assigned to instead of what year. “So all told, that’s five deployments I think,” he said. Then he went back and orally counted the months of deployment—30 months total.

The definition of what constitutes a “deployment” differed even within couples. When asked how many times he had deployed since 9/11, a Navy Seabee counted six times. His wife counted three. A Navy helicopter pilot said, “We’ve had some time when we were separated by distance from my job but not so much *deployed* deployed.” He then went on to describe at least three periods when he was stationed on a ship that was out to sea for periods that lasted four or more months each. His wife counted only one “deployment.” A Navy fixed wing pilot also counted separations differently. “Like obviously, I’m a Navy guy, so a deployment to me is a six month. There’s a deployment order, you go.” He counted two full six months deployment then there were what he called “detachments”—long periods of flying overseas for five to six weeks at a time. “I

would say at least a third of the time (gone), if all is said and done,” he said. His wife described the separations this way:

“I think sometimes people use that six month benchmark for a deployment, but he ended up going away a lot more, more often. I would say he was gone typically maybe half the year on any chosen year...So it’d be two months away and then back home for three months and then two week trips and back home for a week or two.”

Even when they were not “deployed,” some servicemembers had the kind of jobs in which they were constantly absent. An Army strategist did not deploy per se, but he said was on TDY (temporary duty) 80 times in the past nine years. “He was gone most of the time, but he would go for like a week, and then he’d come home for a week and then he’d be gone for like three months, and then he’d come home for a couple of weeks and then he’d be gone for two weeks,” his wife said. A Navy submariner deployed at least six times since 9/11 but also had a heavy travel schedule on his job ashore where he traveled two or more times a month to Europe. He was also stationed without his wife for a period of several months in Israel. He did a tour in Washington, DC as a “geographic bachelor” (when the servicemember moves to the new duty station and leaves in the family in place at the old duty station). He struggled to calculate what percentage of the time he had been gone and then gave up trying before coming up with an answer.

The inability to define “deployment” as a finite number may represent the multiplicity of jobs available in the Army or Navy and how those absences are named

and counted in a particular field—deployments, detachments, flight hours, TDYs. It may also signify how separations are a constant, defining feature of military marriage. It may be so normal for the service member to be absent that it is not counted by the husband or wife as a finite thing.

“We’ve been lucky.”

Deployments are often seen by military members as a chance to use all the skills they have been training for over the years. Although deployments can be uncomfortable, lonely, dangerous, life-threatening, servicemembers have been shown to consider them a necessary opportunity for the kind of professional development and achievement required to advance to the next level (Hosek 2006). It might also offer a kind of fun or excitement not available in their normal lives. An Army officer described one of his deployments as “the best fun I’ve ever had during my adult life.” He said, “It was more like the Peace Corps with a gun. It was exciting. It was overseas. It felt like we were accomplishing something.” A Navy pilot went a little further:

“I’m sure you got this from other people. Like it’s kind of like boys camp when you get away. So, at some point, I don’t really—I know a lot of it is very hard, but some of it—I mean I love my kids, but sometimes its good to get a little bit of a break. So I don’t want to sound too crazy, but I really had actually a good time on almost all my deployments. And a couple of others were more stressful than others, but I mean, at some point, it feels good to be helping the war cause or just helping America’s cause somehow in some way.”

A combat engineer’s wife who has done six combat deployments of up to 18 months at a time, laughed as she described this “fun” part of the deployment. “And combat engineers

have to be a little crazy because they love to blow things up. They love to go out in the field, play with the C4, you know? They love to blow things up.”

However, one term that came up over and over between husbands and wives was the idea of being “lucky” or “blessed” to miss a deployment. Although “lucky” is defined as something having, bringing or resulting from good luck, that is not the way the word was used by these long married military couples. Sometimes the term was used to discount a personal advantage. One Army wife talked about how she was “lucky” in that her employer cuts her some slack when her husband is deployed. Lucky was used when it came to having “good” children. For example, an Army brigade commander’s wife said of her college bound children, “We’ve been really, really lucky haven’t—had minimal issues with them. We were blessed.”

Much more often “lucky” was used when referring to not deploying. “We were lucky,” said an Army dermatologist’s wife. “Med school protected us (from deploying.)” An Army product manager said, “Compared to my peers, I haven’t been on multiple deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, so I’d say I guess I’m considered one of the lucky ones where I do spend the majority of my time with the family.” A Navy husband and wife whose child has Down’s Syndrome referred to being lucky not to deploy. Seven times during their interviews they said they had been lucky or fortunate. “We’ve just been really, really fortunate for ourselves, for our family that I have not had to be away. I would call that an atypical situation,” said the husband.

Even though deployment was a central theme brought up in every interview, many couples considered themselves lucky when they were not required to undertake a separation. To long married couples, deployment represents a risk to the relationship. Every month of deployment in the first five years of marriage has been shown to cause divorce in young military couples (Negrusa 2013). Although military couples experience a lower risk of divorce as they get older, deployment may represent hazard, jeopardy, distance, separation, possibility of injury or death and thus the couples are “lucky” to have missed it. None of the couples I interviewed mentioned actively avoiding deployment. They did not confess to any purposeful strategies to avoid deployment, but they considered themselves “lucky” when multiple deployments and separations passed them by.

“My job could end quickly.”

In addition to frequent separation, risk of injury or death is another defining feature of a “military” marriage (Segal 1989). Consequently, I expected to see differences between Army and Navy servicemembers because of the difference in their assigned mission. Army personnel carry weapons on the ground and are continuously vulnerable in a ground conflict. According to the Department of Defense (2013), 4295 soldiers have died in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom to date. In contrast, 218 sailors have died in OIF/OEF. Navy personnel perform their duties on ships, submarines or aircraft with significantly less eminent danger. The difference in the interviews did not emerge strictly on Army and Navy categories. The biggest differences were seen between those who had experienced combat and those who had not. Of the 18

servicemembers interviewed, six Army members and one Navy member had experienced combat (Figure 5). Although servicemembers might have struggled to define deployment, all of them had quick answers when asked whether they had been in combat. Even though most had received combat pay for being in the war zone, they did not count this as “combat” in which the servicemember was understood to be in eminent physical danger. One surface warfare officer said:

Now, I got paid combat pay because of the locations we were in, but if you’re saying did I get in a firefight with anybody – no. Did we launch aircraft and bomb people and things – oh yeah. So it’s kind of how you define that. The Navy defines it as yes. I never felt – on those last two deployments especially I didn’t feel any threat. I think that you’d have to feel the threat to really feel like that was real combat.

The wives of the men who had been in combat, however, did not acknowledge this element of danger directly. When her daughter was in fifth grade, an Army nurse’s wife was asked to come to school and talk about her husband’s deployment. She told this story:

I grabbed some MREs, and I brought it to the class and talked that he’s over there, and this is what he eats. And you know, one kid raised his hand, and the – you know, “What are you going to do whenever he gets shot and killed?” I thought the teacher was going to pass out. And I looked at him, and I said, “Well, he’s not going to get shot and killed. I don’t know that he’s not, but in my mind, he won’t, and he will come back. And it’s just that simple.

Yet it was not “just that simple” on her husband’s combat deployment. During that time he experienced enough explosive blasts that he lost part of his memory and had trouble

fitting back into his family for months.

Among spouses, there seemed to be a certain amount of gating off that surface knowledge of physical risk. When asked whether his time overseas included time in combat, a psychological operations officer lowered his voice. “I’m reticent to answer because it’s stuff I haven’t even talked to my wife about. So yes. I guess the short answer is yes.”

A bomb disposal battalion commander who lost dozens of soldiers since 9/11, was talking about why his marriage worked: “I mean, this could all end very quickly, given my job I mean — you know, we – we kind of – we appreciate the time we have so we don’t waste it.” The “this” that could all end very quickly was his own life. His wife referred to the danger of his particular combat specialty as if it happened only to other people. “If something should happen – if their soldier should be killed, whether in combat, um, you know, in a car accident, training, I mean, it can – you know, from illness. It can happen in any way.” Throughout the interview she never directly referenced the idea that her own husband could have been killed or had ever been in any danger even though he had done three combat tours in Iraq and a 15- month tour in Afghanistan.

Sometimes this strategy of obfuscation came to right down to telling a lie. A Navy Seabee’s wife laughingly described a call on Skype in which she asked her husband what the loud noises were in the background. He claimed he did not hear anything. The noises must have been on her end of the phone. Another time when she asked why his face looked abnormally large on the screen, he claimed technical difficulty. Later he told

her he was in full battle gear that day because they were under attack and he did not want her to know. The Seabee's wife said, "He would just totally lie. So kind of silly that I was that stupid, but what you don't know won't hurt you."

The wife was not "stupid." Clearly, she picked up on alarming changes in the normal communications. It is as if the knowledge of danger was being held just outside of her peripheral vision. Her husband did not show her and she did not look. It is as if the knowledge of danger was a Pandora's Box that she did not have to deal with if she did not open it. This was a strategy used by other spouses as well—shutting off awareness of danger as much as possible, refraining from seeking detail of risk. Of the seven spouses whose husbands had been in combat, none of them said anything that appeared to deny the risk of war. They seemed to deliberately avoid examining it. While discussing issues of reintegration, the bomb disposal battalion commander's wife said she was not sure about what had happened to her husband overseas. "I really did not know where he was or what he was doing. I never asked because there are some things I just—you know, I don't ask, um, not because I don't care, but because I know that's just one of those things." The gating off of "just one of those things" may be a strategy servicemembers in combat occupations and their spouses use to handle the demands of military life. It seems to do the work of enabling spouses to conserve energy that might have been spent worrying about an injury or death that did not occur. It may also be a strategy that allows the servicemember to convince his wife that he should be allowed to continue in a dangerous occupation.

Job, Career or Calling?

Since military life is so demanding on servicemembers and families, I wanted to know if there was something else that was motivating long married servicemembers to stay in the military, especially after they were eligible to retire with full benefits. Wrezesniewski, McCauley, Rozin and Schwartz (1997) proposed a theory of work orientation in which people related to their employment as a job, career or calling. According to Wrezesniewski et. al., people with a “job” work strictly to earn a paycheck. They work so that they can pay for the things they do outside of work. Individuals with a “career” work orientation have a deeper personal investment in their work and mark their achievements through advancement within the occupational structure, higher social standing, increased power within the scope of one’s occupation, higher self-esteem as well as monetary gain. Those with a “calling” work orientation find that their work is inseparable from their life. In addition to financial gain and career advancement, they find fulfillment at work and see their work as socially valuable.

In the survey, 56 percent of Army servicemembers most strongly identified as either having a “calling” or having a combination of “calling/career.” Their spouses agreed. More than half of Army spouses surveyed characterized their husband’s work as a “calling” or “calling/career.” More than half of Navy servicemembers and their spouses also identified the servicemember’s work as a “calling” or “calling/career.” In order to elicit more information about what was keeping servicemembers in the military, I asked husbands and wives why they stayed in the military.

“His blood is Navy blue.”

Many servicemembers and spouses made a dutiful list of the benefits of military service and retirement. Then they said that the reason they stayed in the military was because the servicemember “loves” it. An Army officer’s wife said, “In his heart of hearts he loves the Army, and if they didn’t make him retire, he would probably do the Army until he just couldn’t do it anymore. You know, until he physically couldn’t or mentally couldn’t.” A Navy frigate commander’s wife said,

“I think because his blood is Navy blue. I really do. He loves it. He absolutely loves it. He really, really does. And he loves everything about it. I mean he doesn’t like the politics, but everything else, He loves the ins and outs of it. He loves ship life. He even likes to deploy. I mean he hates being away from the family, but he loves everything about it.”

An Navy surface warfare officer not only said that he loves his work, but he also credits his wife’s understanding of his profession as one of the secrets of their long relationship:

The reason she doesn’t say (get out of the military) is that she knows that I really enjoy and love what I do...she knows that if she said it, I would leave, but she wouldn’t say it because it would hurt me. So I think that one of the secrets is that there’s a lot of love and respect that we have for each other, an acknowledgement that we have passions for our work and that’s really also important.

Being “wired for” or “born for” the work of the military were themes reported by wives, but not husbands. An Army strategist’s wife said, “Actually, I knew when I married him that he was probably a lifer. I had a pretty good idea that this was what he wanted to do for the rest of his life, or rest of his job time or whatever. I figured if you married him, that’s what you were going to get.”

“There is a light in him.”

The military also may offer a kind of work that is not available to these interviewees in the outside world. A combat engineer left the Army after serving five years and went to work in corporate America. Then he reenlisted after 9/11. “Because I served in the peacetime Army the first time, so I never really felt like I'd done my part, and the biggest reason I came back in is I got tired of feeling guilty every time I watched the news about Iraq and Afghanistan.” He seems to perceive that the peacetime Army was not the real work of the Army. He seemed to feel he had something he was obligated to do. His wife also seemed to think that the Army was giving him more than a paycheck and benefits. She said:

I think that he – well, one, I do know is that he has such a sense of pride in what he's doing that I can't even imagine him doing anything else anymore. This – it's like I really believe someone who's career military, and I see it in him day in and day out, they're bred that way. He has this pride, this – even he still keeps his hair cut short when he's on leave, you know what I mean. It's [laughter] there's this pride, there's this – I don't know what it is, but there's a light in him that is there while he's serving that wasn't there in the 19 years. And it's not like that he wasn't happy, but he never had career satisfaction, and even on the worst day in the military, he is – there's a light in him that wasn't there on his best day as a plant manager in corporate. He ought to – there's a pride, there's a something that I think they're wired for.

A Navy surface warfare officer's wife also described her husband as having a “light.” “Whenever he calls me from the deck of the ship I can always tell because there is this light in his voice. He loves the ship and the sailors. He loves being out to sea. Sometimes I think that is his best self,” she said. The military may offer service members

meaning or a sense of what psychoanalyst Erik Erikson (1950) called “generativity” (a concern for establishing and guiding the next generation) One submariner said the best compliment he had ever received was when his admiral had been out golfing with some of the submariner’s junior officers. When he returned to the boat, the admiral asked the submariner, “Do you know they call you ‘Coach?’” The wife of a platoon sergeant said that one of the reasons her husband stays in the Army is,

“He gets to mentor a lot of people, a lot of guys that come in. He’s very hands on with all his soldiers....he’s able to leave his mark on every one of his soldiers.”

“The appeal doesn’t outweigh the sacrifice.”

Not every servicemember expressed unbridled affection for their work in the military. Some servicemembers gave answers that sounded like a combination between “calling” and “career,” with both intrinsic and extrinsic benefits as motivators for continued employment. For example, a Seabee said:

I’ve always been driven by, “Hey, I’m having fun, and I feel like I’m doing something meaningful.” So there’s nothing pulling me out of the Navy. No one has offered me \$1 million a year, and I make pretty damn good money in the Navy. I’m pretty comfortable. We’re not extravagant, but we don’t hurt for anything financially. So I think to some extent, (my wife) feels like we’re contributing as a family to something meaningful. I think that’s what keeps us in more than anything.

Yet even a calling work orientation may not give a family enough of a reason to stay in the military. The needs of a particular family might be too much to combine with a continued military life. When I asked the mother of a child with Down’s syndrome

what was keeping their family in the military, her helicopter pilot husband shouted, “I like my job!” His wife replied:

I know you like your job. I think we had - when we had a choice I donot think that (he) could conceive another career opportunity that was as appealing to him as the one that he was pursuing right then and there...At this point I think we are probably looking at the end. We’ve been in the same place for a while; we’re not going anywhere for a while. We want to be able to get in one place and stay in one place as soon as we can at this point, because we have a child with a disability who would benefit from being in a state where he can get on waiting lists and stay there and be familiar to his community and vice versa. So I think what kept us in was the appeal of the job for (my husband) and the appeal of military life for me, but as our children get older the appeal doesn’t outweigh the sacrifice that it would require for us and for our kids, and so that is starting to change.

“After 20 years, when she’s ready, I’ll be ready.”

Other servicemembers did not express the idea that their work had meaning outside of increased status, occupational expertise or monetary gain. Of those surveyed, 25 percent of Army members and 18 percent of Navy servicemembers most strongly identified that their work was a career. Four of the interviewees described their work in career terms (Table 5). They also referred to retirement eligibility as a structure that encouraged them to continue with their careers past the ten year point. An Army dermatologist explained that he stayed in because he had to stay in. His medical school training incurred a long commitment that brought him one year shy of retirement. He described the process this way:

Yeah, it’s a great bargain. I mean you owe seven years, and by this time, I have seven years in, a couple more years of medical school puts me over ten years. I might as well stay. And you know, you get a free medical education out of it, versus I get out of the army and go somewhere and

graduate four years later with \$175,000.00 to \$200,000.00 in debt. I like the army. It didn't make a lot of sense to us to do it any other way.

Although the dermatologist spoke movingly about his wife and children and his devotion to church during his interview, the Army was simply his employer offering a stated bargain in exchange for his work.

An Army acquisitions branch manager said that he and his wife had just decided to get out of the military. "I told (my wife) a long time ago that after 20 years, when she's ready, I'll be ready." He added later,

There's the obligation to volunteer and serve our country as well, but I'd say there's probably a tipping point, somewhere between ten and 12 years when you realize that leaving the military at this point probably has more disadvantages than continuing and enjoying the benefits of retirement....When I got promoted to major, and I realized that – I have a future. I have a future potentially nice career with the Army. I could have stayed in. I would have been promoted to full colonel this fall if I would have stayed in. So there was every indication that I would have been 30 plus years served in the Army if I would have chosen to do that.

But after he considered the next series of jobs, separations and subsequent moves in his Army career, he decided to get out because he and his wife thought it would be too hard on their kids. The unstated motivator to get out of the Army seemed to be that there were no further mitigating motivators to keep him in the Army past the point at which he was eligible for retirement benefits.

Commitment to Separate Spheres

Even as these couples deal with the demands of deployment, another theme emerged from their comments: the raising of children. Fourteen of the couples had children living at home. How do couples do the work of raising children when one of the marriage partners is so frequently absent? How do they manage a consistent family life when they move on average every 2.5 years (Segal and Segal 1989). Since gender ideology has been shown to affect work, earnings, and occupations as well as child care, spousal abuse, division and perceived fairness of household labor, and union stability (Davis and Greenstein 2009), I thought I would find that long married military couples would have a more traditional gender ideology. Beliefs about gender and gender relations have also been shown to be a function of how adults actually navigate their lives (Davis 2007), so I expected exposure to the demands of military life over time would have caused an acceptance of “separate spheres” in which family roles are based on traditional gender roles. Husbands would be expected to be breadwinners and wives would be expected to raise the family and take care of the home. In the survey, however, both servicemembers and spouses had a gender ideology that tipped toward more egalitarian values in which husbands and wives are expected to share both breadwinning and family tending roles. All four groups had nearly equal scores for gender ideology.

During the interviews when each partner was asked to describe their day, their weekend and what they thought their partner did all day, their answers suggested that these couples lived a far more traditional lifestyle than their more egalitarian views would lead one to expect. These dads left in the morning for early formation or physical training. Some left the house as early as 4:30 a.m. The latest departure time for a

servicemember was 7:00 a.m. Perhaps because of this departure time, moms reported varying degrees of how much they did to get kids ready for school. Of the children living at home, all were old enough to attend some school. The youngest child attended preschool daily. Even if the father was present, the mother was responsible for getting kids to school. Two of the mothers of the youngest children talked about getting their husbands to “help.” One Navy dad referred to the fact that he was his wife’s “helper” or that he “helps” his wife 19 times during the interview. Moms made the dinners. Moms did the shopping. Moms and dads seemed to share the duties that surrounded sports activities. Most of the moms did not work. Among 18 interviewees (Table 5), two wives were employed full time outside the home. Their children were in their mid-twenties and no longer resided in the home. Six other wives were self-employed or contractors working from their homes. One wife was employed part-time outside the home. Eight wives were full time Stay At Home Moms (SAHM), and one was unemployed and not looking for work. I will discuss the SAHMs in the following section.

Most of the moms expressed some satisfaction in the particular way they ran their family’s routine. Only the mother of two autistic twin boys described her household as “chaos.” An Army wife who had been an Army nurse described their morning routine:

He gets up early and takes off and does his thing, and then I’m up with the kids. We have raised them in a manner that it’s a little different than some other people. I am very adamant that my children will be self-sufficient when they go off to college. I don’t cook them breakfast. He says I do all these great things, and I’m sure from his point of view I do, but they pretty much fix themselves breakfast. I provide things in the house for them to do, but I need them to be self-sufficient. I don’t go up and wake them up. They all have alarm clocks, and they have all been doing that since about

second grade. They get themselves out of bed. They get themselves dressed. If they're over the age of ten, they do their own laundry.

This mom is in a supervisory role with her kids, but she is clearly the driver. It is her vision. She is the one who is adamant about self-sufficiency. Is this fully explained by her role as the wife and mother? Or are there more military factors in play?

In Arlie Hochschild's work *The Second Shift* (1997), this kind of division of real labor among husbands and wives was not unusual among families she studied. Seventy percent of husbands did substantially less household labor and childcare than their wives. Hochschild found that even when husbands happily shared the hours of work, their wives felt more responsible for home and children. The wives were more likely to notice a missing button or keep track of a dentist appointment or send a note to the teacher. Hochschild explained this difference between what people say they believe and what they do by explaining that people had gender ideologies "on top" and "underneath." In the top level of their consciousness, they could believe that men and women should equally share the responsibility of work and home. At the same time, their own lives could reflect an "underneath" ideology that shaped how household labor was actually divided.

While some of the division of labor in these military marriages could be attributed to a shared reality of family life with their civilian cohort, other differences emerged. For example, in Hochschild's book, one of the husbands insists he shares the housework equally by taking care of the dog (most of the time) and doing some yard work. Although his wife tries to get him to do more childcare and housework, she eventually gives in and agrees to division of labor in which she describes as "sharing the

housework.” The wife agrees to what Hoschschild calls a “family myth”—a version of reality that obscures a core truth in order to manage a family key family tension.

I could not identify this particular family myth surrounding the division of labor in these long married military couples, perhaps because Hochschild observed families in their homes over time. Hochschild also observed families with more labor intensive preschoolers, toddlers and babies. Hochschild’s families often had working mothers. The military families in my research were established families married more than fifteen years. Structures of family life were already in place. Perhaps the division of labor is so ingrained by year 15 that it is not as evident or contentious. Perhaps specific questions about the division of housework during the interview might have elicited different responses. In any case, these military couples did not talk about “sharing the housework.” Instead the servicemember’s housework and childcare were most often called “helping” or “his contribution” or “being a great dad.”

Unlike their civilian counterparts, these long married military couples had an additional factor: frequent, unpredictable absence. The absence of fathers is a structure that shapes the possible contribution of both fathers and mothers in a way that civilian families do not experience. These interviews seem to suggest that among these military couples the husband is not doing the work of raising the family often because he is not physically present. Unlike the fathers in Hochschild’s research who watched TV during bathtime or sorted the mail while the mom made dinner, these military dads talked about how they were not present because they were on TDY “stuck in a hotel room in Kansas.” They talked about 16 hour days spent clearing minefields outside Kandahar before taking

care of their soldiers. They talked about being able to send three emails during a five month period spent without communication in a ballistic submarine. Unlike periods of time in which the division of labor may be ambiguous when they are present in the home, their physical absence created periods where the division of labor into separate spheres was an absolute.

Again, deployment and other frequent, unpredictable separations are one of the structures that shape these military lives over time. These interviews suggest that regardless of the “on top” egalitarian or transitional gender ideology, an adherence to an “underneath” traditional gender ideology may often driven by distance and the unpredictable nature of military employment. A further discussion of how gender ideology and an acceptance of separate spheres and their ramifications will be discussed in future sections.

The Creation of Normal.

Military service is not “normal.” Less than one percent of our nation serves in the military (Department of Defense 2011). The constellation of military demands is not a normal feature of American life. Yet one of the primary tasks these wives said that they were doing was, in fact, creating “normal.”

“*Normal?* There is no such thing,” said a Navy pilot’s wife who flies overseas several times a month. “We were just laughing about that this week. He has not had a normal, typical week since he served at the Pentagon. So his typical workweek is not really knowing what the workweek will be like until the beginning of the week.” Other

spouses described the military schedule as “unpredictable,” “all over the place,” and “a rollercoaster.” A Navy officer’s wife whose husband has deployed six times since 9/11 deliberately established these frequent separation as the norm in their family. She said, “I don’t keep a calendar. I don’t mark off days. I don’t make ribbons. I don’t make anything. It is just his job. And as a matter of fact as I can be, I think that helps them to just realize that that (deployment) is our norm. This is our normal.” She said that even when her mother pled with her to remember that the kids’ dad was deployed, she could not give in. “And I’m like, ‘Yeah and that’s their norm. So if they can act up just because Dad’s deployed, we’re in trouble.’ This is normal for them. We need to keep them under control the whole time. “

“Somebody had to be the standard and someone had to be the foundation.”

This strategy of a normal that is established and maintained by the mother was standard in every single family with children I interviewed. Partly that role seemed forced upon families by the frequent absence of their servicemember. An Army battallion commander’s wife who worked on and off as a schoolteacher during her husband’s career described the way she explained her routine to her children as, “Whether dad’s home or dad is gone, this is the way things will be.” A Navy enlisted wife who works as a therapist also described her role in the family in terms of creating a very firm normal:

I can tell you something about the role – my role. I can’t speak for everyone, of course, but my role as a military wife, that I think the most important thing, just specifically with my connection with my husband when he is deployed, is things at home have to stay as normal or as much the same as they were before he left as much as possible.

There were also indicators that spouses were willing to take on this role and,

indeed, preferred it. An Army wife married 22 years said, “I take care of everything. I mean, I’d rather—he just wants me and I like to be in charge. I—that’s just my thing. If you’re not here, just let me do my thing...Don’t be trying to micromanage from halfway across the world, that just is not working in my life.” A Navy surface warfare officer’s wife said that she knew she always wanted to be a Stay At Home Mom to her kids. An Army wife who is studying to be a nurse framed it this way: “Thinking back on it, my perfect world was raising my kids. It was raising my kids. And we moved so much that somebody had to be the standard and someone had to be the foundation.”

Some Army and Navy wives described this position in creating and maintaining the normal as being “the one.” “I’m flying solo, so it’s just me all the time,” said an Army wife who works as a therapist. “The kids come to me first because I’m the one.” Another wife described herself as an “only parent” the way you might describe someone without siblings as an only child. Only two of the wives referred to their time during deployment as being a “single parent.” Three others used the term “single parent” but only to refer to people raising children without a partner.

“We were able to keep life normal, and that’s my goal.”

A routine that marked their deployed partner as absent, not nonexistent, enabled families to become accustomed to the norm of being without dad. By having the mom hold the routine steady, it created a structure from which the father could leave and return while family life continued. An Army wife with four kids said that setting the routine was her goal. “There were a lot of times the children and I just found our rhythm, we found our routine, and we were able to keep life normal, and that’s my goal. That’s kind

of been my goal every time is to keep our life as normal as possible,” she said. The wife of an Army strategist who had been on TDY 80 times since 9/11 put it this way:

And it’s really sad to say, but they kind of got used to dad coming and going all the time. You know? I mean they were excited when dad was home and they got to see him. But even when dad came home when he was gone all the time, I still did a lot of the parenting because I think he really just wanted to have fun with them. He just wanted to be with them and enjoy them.

Sports and other activities for kids seemed to be part of this strategy. Of the 12 parents with kids living at home, nine mentioned sports or other extracurricular activities: swimming, tennis, diving, cheerleading, softball, baseball, hip hop dance team, violin, dance, Italian language classes, trombone, Boy Scouts, basketball, church activities. Three families mentioned that their children were on travel teams and that the parents often split up on weekends to take different children to different sports. An Army wife who is a triathlete said that having her two daughters on the same swim team (even though one of the daughters was officially too young at the time) helped organize the family the year her husband was stationed unaccompanied in Korea. This may indicate that sports are being used to organize the family time that occurs outside of school on an axis that does not require the presence of the servicemember. Families with children involved in extracurricular activities described their weekends as being shaped by these activities. “I think having three very busy kids helps keep you from being able to focus too much on yourself,” said a Seabee’s wife.

“You’re still the dad; you’re just far away.”

When asked how their roles during deployment changed, some wives and husbands did use the language of the wife being “the mom and the dad” in order to refer to assuming the physical responsibilities of the dad when deployed. This language did not refer to the wife taking over his role as breadwinner or to imply that the husband had no interaction with the children or that the role of the father was unimportant. Many participants said that the father’s role didn’t change very much during deployment. A Navy captain explained:

The functions that you perform (in your role as the dad) change. You’re still the dad; you’re just far away. You’re engagement, obviously, changes greatly especially if you have relatively – especially my middle son. He is a very physical person and when he was growing up he didn’t want to talk on the phone or anything, so even if I had that opportunity, which was rare, it was hard because he wasn’t really engaged in that way. So I think (your role) changes because you’re, by definition, more remote to your family but you’re still the dad.

Wives did not dismiss the importance of the servicemember as a parent even during their absence. Many of them talked about things that they did in order to bring the deployed husband into coparenting. Husbands talked about how great Skype was because they could participate in the family. The wife of an Army combat engineer devised a way that her 13-year old son could consult his deployed dad about issues that surrounded puberty. The wife of a helicopter maintenance chief said that she struggled to give pitching advice to her son while her husband was deployed. “I try really, really hard to give him the same kind of feedback that I know my husband would give in almost like the words my husband would because I think that that’s how it works best. “

Wives typically mentioned that they had to pick up the chores that their husbands used to do. Chores mentioned included garbage, floors, laundry, computers, cars, yards, bedtime, coaching, billpaying, sports, homework and the hamster cage. However, after listing the things their husbands did, there was sometimes a kind of confession. “(My role) doesn’t change that much, honestly,” said a Navy wife, mother of a teenage daughter and autistic twin sons.

But normally, we don’t count on John for much because even though he might not be deployed, if he’s on a ship, he’s never home because they’re doing exercises and they’re doing workups, or this ship broke, so we have to go take that ship’s place and do their exercise, and we have to do this and do that. So it’s we don’t count on John for anything. I mean usually my role is exactly the same. I’m mom. I’m dad. I’m fix it. I’m the plumber. I’m the gardener. That’s me.

While the wives often referred to the role of their husbands in the family, the role of fathers in their traditional gender role as breadwinners was nearly invisible to couples. One father talked about how he was suddenly aware of his role as the “breadwinner” when his son was diagnosed with Down’s Syndrome. The Army dermatologist’s wife and the Army program manager’s wife both referred to their husband’s as “great providers.” A Navy captain’s wife when reflecting on why her husband was still in the military referred to the fact that he had earned “the lion’s share” of all their income.

For these military husbands, traditional gender conventions mean that the servicemembers employment is never framed as a choice. The role of the father was understood to include reliably providing for the family as a servicemember until he chose to leave the military. That assumption may be a function of the structure of retirement

pay in the military or the structure of frequent moves that limit spouse employment. It may also be evidence that a “calling” or “career” work orientation on the part of the servicemember combined with the wife’s ability and willingness to “create normal” work together to enable couples to stay long married and long military. Individual couples seemed aware of their personal choices, but unaware of structures both within the military and within the American culture that influence and shape their decisions. When it came to the routine that was holding these families together, the father’s contribution as the underwriter of that routine may have been unobserved, but his adherence to the routine was vital.

“I don’t mess with the routine.”

Many husbands who were interviewed also seemed to agree in the power of a “normal” that did not require their physical presence. When husbands were asked what they admired about their wives, nine of them specifically listed something that had to do with her creation and maintenance of a routine for the family and her ability to nurture. “She’s been phenomenal as far as making sure that the household is taken care of, and that our children have stability even when I’m gone,” said an Army father of four children. An Army officer pitied his friends whose wives could not “handle” military life so they had to get out. “Part of what makes it easy is my wife is supportive and she able to handle everything when I’m not around,” he said.

Several of the husbands talked about “the routine” as if it existed as a separate entity from the family. “You know, I learned very early on that our family has a routine,

and that routine is going to continue whether I'm there or not," said an Army battalion commander and father of two college kids. He explained,

I think we – we've kind of set the conditions for our kids to be successful, but a big part of it is when I'm gone, the kids' routines and my wife's routine and the family routine keeps going, and mom, you know, just kind of wears both dad's hat and mom's hat and then when I come back, I insert myself back into their routine, and I don't try to disrupt it and change it just because it isn't exactly what I think it should be.

Even though the creation of normal with the enforcement of the routine gives the family a reliable foundation, sometimes the magnitude and intensity of the routine itself is a shock to the returning servicemember. The wife of a Navy helicopter maintenance tech tried to prepare her husband before he comes back from deployment by telling him more about the current routine.

The biggest thing he needs is time. He needs time to get used to things. I mean I don't know that he's going to be home for another three or four weeks, but I've always started emailing him about events that are occurring around that time. So Owen has baseball game this day, blah, blah, blah just because it's happened in the past, where he gets home, and it's kind of like a holy shit moment. I can't believe there's so much to do, like, oh, my god.

While the routine is seen as a positive thing, it also has implications for growing families. One Navy helicopter pilot looks into a future with his three active children:

That's something we're starting to just realize how that will change for us as the kids get older, is how little time we may end up spending with each other on the weekends as the kids get older, because it will require us to be in two different places at the same time. We haven't had a ton of that yet, but we can see it coming.

“He’ll come back and join in like everything’s OK.”

For many families, the routine represents a mechanism for the servicemember to reenter the family after a separation. Some husbands I interviewed seemed to be well aware that that when they were not deployed their job in the family was to get back into the routine. This may have been the result of lessons learned following multiple deployments. This may reflect the demand of a spouse or it may be the natural inclination of these servicemembers. Some of the husbands seemed to intentionally take on routine household tasks or childcare as a way to signal to the spouse that they wanted back into the family. An Army dad stationed with his family in Germany immediately took on the hour-long commute to drive the kids to school on his way to work. A Navy dad came home from deployment and started doing all the laundry again. This trick of having the service member take a place within the established routine may represent a skill long married military members use to manage change after deployment. Although four husbands mentioned that they were told in a reintegration brief not to “take over the checkbook,” (Or as one soldier called it the *‘Hey, don’t go home and beat your wife because she bought new curtains’* speech) some commanding officers may be transmitting that message as well. “Nondeployment is a time for making up, shoring up,” said a Navy commander. “Most of the guys in our squadron are either coming off of or going to a very hard Navy sea tour and so they’re going or coming from a carrier or going to a carrier. So I always like to say, like, ‘This is your time to like reconnect with your family.’”

The routine was a tool that was used to ease reintegration following combat. The wife of a platoon sergeant was deliberate about the way she wields the routine. “He has learned that I have a schedule and I don’t change my schedule, and the reason why I don’t change my schedule is for him to reintegrate. So he knows what my schedule already is.” A Navy helicopter pilot’s wife also thinks getting into the routine of the family is crucial. “After having children, I think the difficulty is mostly (my husband’s) in trying to figure out how to fit back into the kids’ lives...They were not used to having him around and so they don’t necessarily go to him or want him to take care of their physical needs.” Even though their toddler had sat and watched a video of his dad reading a story “hundreds of times,” the little boy did not want his dad to read to him in person at first. “Once he was there in person (the toddler) was like, ‘No thank you. I’ve got this lady over here; I’m doing just fine.’” The toddler resisted the change in the routine for several weeks and then adapted to having his dad at home.

In my sample, the wives of four of the servicemembers who experienced combat said that their husbands had some of the behaviors that characterize post-traumatic stress (Table 5). None of the husbands admitted more than “a few nightmares.” In at least one home, the routine was being used to manage those symptoms. A wife of a combat soldier who has cleared minefields during six deployments and lost nine soldiers from his platoon during the most recent deployment says that her husband has a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress. He is often short tempered, startles very easily, and has nightmares. She adapted an old routine of family life to deal with this new circumstance. She said,

He used to get really upset with me. He really and truly used to get upset with me. I would say, “You need a time out, go to,” because he has a little

man cave, I'm like, "Go to your man cave [*laughter*] chill." He used to get really upset with me and now he understands it. If I give him the look of like, you're losing it, he'll go. I don't even have to say, "You need a time out," anymore. I can just look at him, and be like, *it's enough*, and he'll go ahead and he'll take his time and it usually takes him about half an hour to an hour and then he'll come back and join in like everything's OK.

She says that her kids recognize this routine and accept it. "The kids know if I say your dad needs some time, they know OK, let's find something for us to do and let's give him his space." The wife set up the routine. The wife explains the routine. The wife administers the routine. The family complies and then moves forward "like everything's OK."

Failing to become part of the routine represents a risk to the family. One Navy captain's wife told a story about a young Army family with a new baby stationed on the same base. The soldier had a rough deployment. His sergeant was killed in front of him. The two families had been close. The wives remained close even after the sergeant's death. When the soldier returned from deployment, however, he would not participate in the routine of the family.

He would be on his phone. I mean sitting on my couch. We're talking. Melissa and I would be chatting, and the kids would be in the room. And he would be on the phone playing a game or texting someone. Like, *Dude, put that thing away...* He would go to bed or do whatever. Just not engage with the child. Not connected

The Navy wife wanted the soldier's wife to sit him down and tell him that not engaging in the family was not OK. In her own marriage, she credited the way her husband makes an effort to fit into their children's lives as a big part of their success. She likes the way her husband will sit on the bed with each kid each night and talk to them about something

silly. “You know, so it’s simple things. It’s reading a book to your kids every night. It’s checking in with them. It’s going to baseball games and softball games and going to distance competitions,” she said. Her husband has found a way to be part of the routine of the family.

“I didn’t get married to be a single parent.”

Even though spouses create the norm and may even take pride in what they do, and even though servicemembers participate and revere the work of the routine, there may still be some lingering resentment over the maintenance of separate spheres. Egalitarian beliefs do not melt away because the structures of the military impose traditional roles on marriage partners. Wives and husbands actively struggle with making sense of their roles. Wives told disapproving stories about husbands who wanted to be the “fun parent” or who did not do enough with the kids until the wife insisted. These stories were often told as part of the early years of parenting or by families who had younger children still at home. A former Army captain who is now a SAHM told this story:

If he’d be home for a more weeks, I’m like, “Look, you’ve got to engage. You just can’t always be the fun parent. I understand you’re only home for like a couple weeks, but if you see something that you know is wrong, you’ve got to say something.” And I think it was kind of an interesting balance. It took us a while to get that. While we were there, it was kind of a hard situation to remedy.

Some spouses resented some of the demands a servicemember’s career put on the family.

A Navy captain’s wife said, “Sometimes I get mad because I think there is something selfish about him being in the Navy. I raised our kids. I took care of the dog. I found

work that would move. I moved houses 14 times. ” She went on to describe how she rationalized those thoughts by thinking about how his income supported their family and about how the Navy was “a part of him.” Other wives also described adaptive thoughts when it came to justifying separate spheres. The wife of an Army sergeant said that she had to “physically quiet” her dissatisfaction with their separate spheres.

And then there’s always kind of the nag in the back of your head that you have to quiet. You have to actually physically mentally quiet of, “I didn’t get married to be a single parent.” So you have to physically quiet that. He’s there. He’s doing something. This is what we’ve agreed we’re doing right now. This is where he’s at. This is what we’re going to do. So it’s kind of – sometimes it’s hard to quiet that voice of, “I didn’t get married to be a single parent. I know I am right now, and I’m going to get through this.

The Army brigade commander’s wife described a similar set of adaptive thoughts. She said that there seemed to be a line that people cross that justifies the need for the servicemember to be absent so often :

Some people just never cross that line. So marriages just become miserable and stay miserable. I just figured out pretty quick, ‘You know what? This is the way it’s going to be, and you just either have to accept it or you’re – or you’re just never going to be able to – to do this, and you’re going to have to just figure out what you’re going to do.’ I just thought, “You know what? It’s the way it is. This guy’s a great guy. Just accept it, and we’re just going to move on,” and we’ve been married like 25 years now.

Servicemembers are not necessarily completely satisfied with the status quo as represented by frequent absence and the drive of the routine either. An Army nurse who deployed six times says that he feels like he lost his daughters during those years of deployment. He said,

I raised them as boys. They went off to college. They came back young ladies. I'm like, "What happened? What happened?" And I gave them all shotguns and rifles, pistols, revolvers, and they come home. They're like, "Well, daddy, we don't do that anymore. We had to put all our hunting stuff downstairs in your hunting room." I go, "*No.*"

A Navy frigate commander expressed some displeasure over his perceived role in the family. He said, "The real challenge is when I am home and the constant shift between the 'at-home' and 'away' situations. I have often struggled with my perceived role as a visitor and hired labor in my own home that comes as a result of being gone so much." A Navy submariner also questioned the value of how much time he had spent away from his family. "I kind of wonder about the last ten years, and I look back and I say, "Was it worth it?" It's been a long time away."

I posit that the establishment of "normal" or "routine" in a family by the wife is a large part of how long-married, long-military couples manage deployments, moves and the demands of a growing military family. The wife must make room for the servicemember to enter and exit the family routine. The servicemember also must be capable of and interested in reinserting himself into the routine in order to be reintegrated into the family. This mechanism requires both the husband and wife to accept a life marked by separate spheres even when their beliefs are far more egalitarian. While the structures of military life may allow traditionally gendered roles to "make sense" for these long married military couples, more "on top" egalitarian beliefs are not diminished. The demands of the military may, by necessity, shape family life, but the military is only one part of the culture in which families participate. Spouses actively struggle between their egalitarian beliefs and their traditionally gendered lives. In her interview, the Navy

Seabee's wife who had been a broadcast journalist before the birth of her second child revisited the subject of paid employment again and again. She put it this way:

Yeah. I could have done it. I chose not to which is kind of hard for me to sometimes admit because it was a choice. And I do feel like, though – I feel like I could do whatever – I still feel whatever it was my mother said to me, when I was a little girl, like I can do anything. If someone said, “I need you to be a surgeon. You’ve got to go back and go to,” “Okay, all right. What do I need to do? Get me the training I need, and I’ll be a surgeon. I do feel like I could do anything which is silly maybe at my age, but I don’t feel like limited. But it is hard having not worked for as long as I have not worked. How do you market yourself? How do you sell yourself? How do you jump back in? There – I can imagine, for a military – for anybody but for a military spouse specifically, we don’t have a place history.

As in Damaske's work (2011), this spouse, like every other spouse in the interviews, not only framed her work as a “choice” but she recognized the structural limitations on her career that were part of the marital bargain she had made. An Army battalion commander's wife said that she was raised by her mother not to depend on anyone for an income and to take care of herself. Then she married her husband and moved to Germany. She said:

Some duty stations, I have worked. Some duty stations, I haven't worked, and it's been my choice. He's never, ever said to me, “I need you not to work because I need you to do this for me.” It's like... I'm going to support him and this is going to be my choice, and I will work when I can, and when – I'll stay home and raise the kids when I – when I want, and then, you know, when I want to go back to work, I will go back to work, and it's never been something that he's expected.

The theme of altering engagement in the labor market depending on the location of the current duty station and the deployment demands of the servicemember's work was

repeated by many of the spouses. These spouse experienced exactly what the research has shown—that frequent moves to less urban or overseas locations with limited access to childcare and no support from extended family demonstrably limits the career trajectory for spouses (Harrell 2004). Spouse employment is consistently one of the top areas of dissatisfaction for military spouses, contributing to marital stresses that come from financial problems, dissatisfaction with affordable off-post housing, separation from social support networks of family and friends, and difficulties due to frequent relocations that are part of military life (Karney and Crown 2007). When attempting to describe and explain the lives of long married, long military couples, it is essential to remember the cognitive dissonance spouses often encounter when combining their egalitarian beliefs with their traditional lives as structured by the constraints of military separations, permanent change of station (PCS) moves, and the lure of retirement eligibility for servicemembers.

The Myth of Spouse Employment

Family myths are a version of reality that obscure a core truth in order to manage a family key family tension (Hochschild 1997). For long married military couples, I suggest that structures of military life that include constant, unpredictable absences, frequent PCS moves, and the lure of retirement eligibility for servicemembers are accepted as necessary by military couples in which the servicemember has a career or calling orientation toward their work. This drives a need for the wife to be responsible for “creating normal” and maintaining the routine that creates a foundation from which the family operates. These demands on the wife combined with structural limits created

by the military greatly limit her ability to fashion a career of her own. Consequently, I suggest that a family myth of spouse employment is constructed in order to obscure the fact that spouses are sacrificing their own ambitions for in order to accommodate the demands of the military.

Women in America have been shown to frame their labor market participation in terms of their families' needs and not their own. In Sarah Damaske's work *For the Family* (2011), due to gender beliefs, women's workforce participation is nearly always structured as a choice, even though this frame ignores the structural constraints that force that choice. For these military spouses, structural constraints in the society at large, in the military in general, and in the specific family lead women to career choices that are greatly constrained "for the family."

Proliferation of Stay At Home Moms

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2012), about 23 percent of married couple families with children under 15 years old had a Stay At Home Mother (SAHM).

In my survey, 64 percent of Navy wives and 68 percent of Army wives married more than 15 years agreed that their primary role in the family was to be a Stay At Home Mom. This could be a limitation of the study—perhaps more SAHMs use Military.com where the survey was posted than employed moms do. Perhaps more SAHMs are online and have time to take surveys. It could also mean that the large number of SAHMs represented in the survey could signify a hidden population in the military community.

Military spouses are not asked whether they are stay at home parents by the annual Department of Defense Status of Forces Survey of Active-Duty Members, the annual

Blue Star Families Military Families Lifestyle Survey, or even the Military Officer's Association of America's Military Spouse Employment Survey. Instead, the Department of Defense reports that:

- a) 42 percent of military spouses are in the civilian labor force employed (which includes 13 percent of total population who are currently serving as active duty military members.)
- b) 15 percent in civilian labor force unemployed and looking for work.
- c) 43 percent not in civilian labor force and not looking for work.

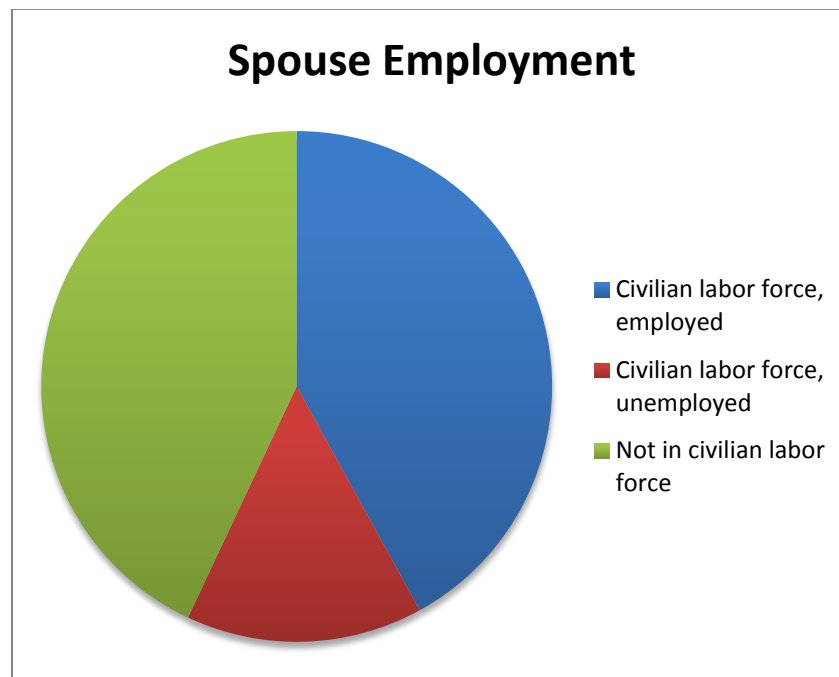


Figure 1: Spouse Employment
Spouse Employment Department of Defense Status of Forces Survey of Active-Duty Members 2012

Most studies and surveys about military families report this Department of Defense statistic as “more than half of all military spouses are in the civilian work force.” This seems to imply that more than half of all spouses are employed full time. For example, in the 2013 Blue Star Families Military Families Lifestyle Survey, this was reported as “more than half of all military spouses are employed.” Because the surveys do not differentiate between being employed full-time 40+ hours a week with a civilian employer, contracting with a civilian employer from home, part-time employment, self-employment, or working two hours a week as a Tupperware consultant, my survey may represent a more accurate view of the real employment status of military spouses. For example, the average number of hours Army wives reported working per week was 14.55 hours. Navy wives reported working 18.08 hours. When grouped by the number of hours of paid employment per week (Figure 2), it is evident that hours are not evenly distributed. More than half of military spouses surveyed worked less than ten hours per week. An additional third work 30 or more hours per week. This is not a story of spouse employment. This is a story of two paths that diverge in a wood. Spouses choose full-time employment or they choose full-time-mothering and there is little crossover.

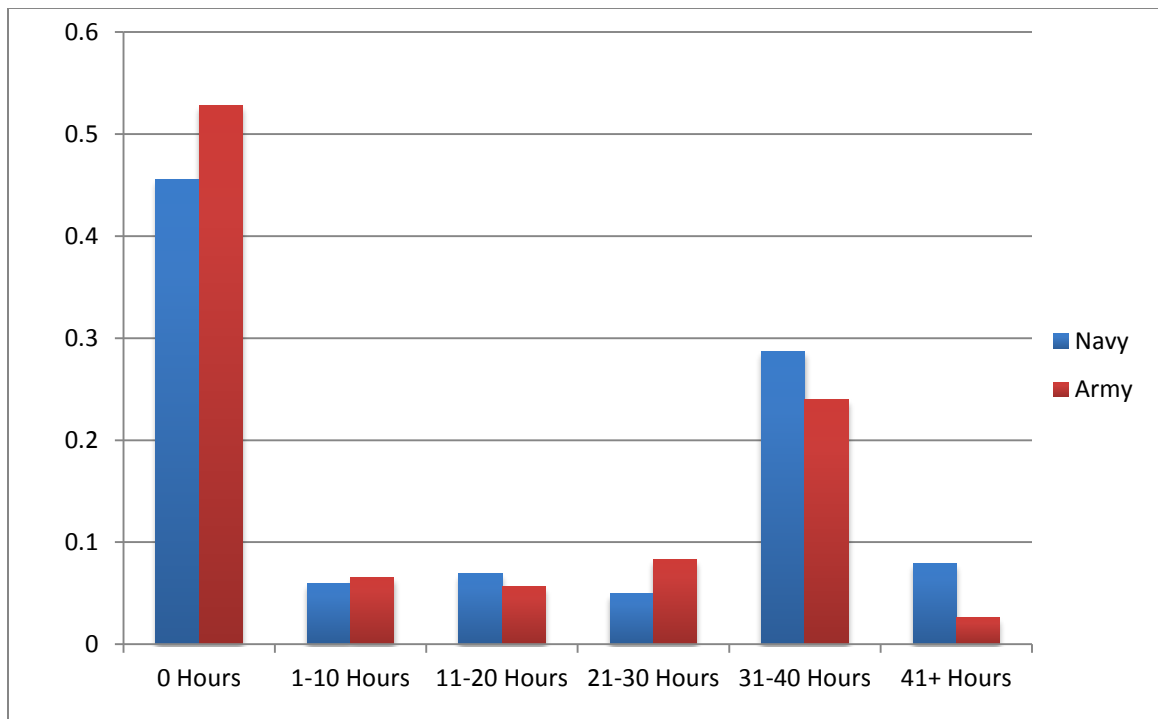


Figure 2: Paid hours of employment per week by Navy and Army spouses

Among my 18 interviewees, two wives were employed full time, one wife was employed part time, six were self-employed and working from their homes, eight were full time Stay At Home Moms (SAHM), and one was unemployed and not looking for work. The two wives who were employed full-time had no children living at home. Whether they worked any hours outside the home or not, I propose that the 16 long married military wives I interviewed made work and family choices that enabled them to be at home administering the routine that enabled their families to cope with deployment, separations, moves and uncertainty.

In some ways, this is surprising to me. The life of a SAHM is not something that military wives say that they want. The gender ideology of those who took my survey is more egalitarian than traditional. These spouses are educated—42 percent of Army spouses and 28 percent of Navy spouses report that they have a completed Bachelor's degree. An additional 16 percent of Army wives and 27 percent of Navy wives have a completed graduate degree. Spouse Employment was one of the top three concerns reported by military spouses (Blue Star Families 2013) and has been reported as one of the top areas of dissatisfaction for military spouses (Harrell 2004). So how do so many women who say they believe that men and women should share the responsibility of career and family commitments and who invest in their own education and careers, then marry military men and become Stay At Home Moms instead of full-time employed workers?

According to Damaske (2011), mothers often have elaborate explanations for why they believe one thing and then do another when it comes to their career and family choices. Middle class women in particular were found to frame their decision to leave the workforce and become a SAHM as a choice, in order to reclaim illusion of having options even when real options may have been quite limited. Among Damaske's interviewees, both employed mothers and SAHMs explained their career choices by claiming that they were doing it "for the family." Damaske's interviewees used those words "for the family."

I expected to get the same “for the family” responses from the military wives I interviewed. As Damaske instructs, I did not ask whether or not spouses were employed. Instead I asked how they had related to the labor market since graduating from high school. The responses to this question were the longest responses of any during the interviews. I did not hear the phrase “for the family” used by any interviewees. Nor did I hear accounts framed to make the interviewees appear particularly “selfless.” Only the homeschooling mom offered rhetoric about the importance of staying home with children during their formative years. Instead I heard many stories about the inability of spouses to find jobs at new duty stations that covered the cost of childcare. “I got to stay home and take care of my kids, which I loved. Besides, childcare was so expensive there was no point in it,” said an Army spouse who is now a therapist. “I had a lot of trouble finding daycare that would take my son overnight if I had to work the nightshift,” said a former Army nurse. Other spouses had stories of taking jobs to make ends meet. The wife of a Navy helicopter mechanic said:

“Having three kids, I had really silly jobs. I mean I worked overnights in a toy store. I worked night shift for an online catalogue magazine, just kind of did what I needed to do for extra money. That was very early in my husband’s career, and finances were really, really tight. And so I just kind of did whatever I needed to do.

Otherwise, these spouses did not offer any explanation for why they left the workplace and became SAHMs. The story of their employment included a pattern in which the wife had her first baby and stayed home as if it were a matter of course. If she struggled with the decision, she did not describe that struggle. This could be because the question may have been framed in a way that excluded any account of struggling with the SAHM decision. It could also be that by the time children are in their teens the struggle is so far

in the past that it is less significant. Spouses often talked for half a page about what they planned to do in their future careers.

I suggest that among military wives, the reason the “choice” to leave the marketplace is framed in this way is structural. Deployments and the constant, unpredictable separations that characterize military life as described in previous sections dictate a perceived need for the non-military partner to establish and maintain “the routine.” The PCS moves that characterize military life and have been found to be barriers to spouse employment (Hosek et. al. 2002), also contribute to this phenomenon among the spouses that I interviewed. Additional structural factors that may contribute to the “choice” for military wives to become SAHMs may include mate selection, lack of structures that would support a return to the workplace, and a “calling” work orientation among spouses.

The role of opportunity in mate selection

People are not born with a gender ideology. Gender ideology is formed from childhood and develops throughout the lifespan (Hochschild 1997; Davis 2007). People unconsciously synthesize certain cultural ideas with certain feelings and perceptions. They also develop their gender ideology by taking opportunity into account. Hochschild (1997) writes:

A woman sizes up her education, intelligence, age, charm, sexual attractiveness, her dependency needs, her aspirations, and she matches these against her perception of how women like her are doing in the job market and the “marriage market.” What jobs could she get? What men?...Then a certain gender ideology will ‘make sense’ to her.

This kind of assessment may contribute to the kind of woman who self-selects into a military marriage. She may size up all her attributes and then choose a life with a military man because that makes sense to her. All of the military husbands in the interviews either joined the military right out of high school or after graduating from college, the United States Military Academy at West Point, or the United States Naval Academy. These husbands had started a career that required at least a four-year commitment. Military pilots have a longer commitment, up to eight years. For some women, marrying a partner who is career-driven when she is not may seem like an acceptable, even desirable, option.

Not all of the wives were in a similar place on their own career paths at the same age. Among the spouses I interviewed, two spouses had babies within the first year of their marriage and immediately became SAHMS. One was enlisted in the military. One was an Army nurse. Nine were graduated from college and found jobs in their career fields within a year. Their jobs were teacher, registered nurse, speech therapist, physical therapist, public relations, and marketer. Except for the jobs in the military, none of these jobs was rooted in a place or in a particular company or corporation.

The remaining seven spouses were unsure about their career paths at the time they met their husbands. An Army wife who has worked full time for the past ten years as an office manager for a high stress sales team did not have a career plan when she met her husband. “My career? I absolutely had no career coming out of high school. I tried a couple of years at college. I was not very good at it. So I left, and I went to work in a

record store. I was kind of like a person that different companies would hire me for a certain amount of time.”

A Navy wife who is now a therapist says she did not get off to a great start after high school:

I did okay in high school, but when I got out, for various reasons, I just did not do well when I initially went to college and so I really took a few years off. There have been jobs. I delivered pizza. I worked retail. I did what I had to do... But so I've been on my own for a very long time and really just worked two and three jobs at a time before.

I suggest that women who self-select into nurturing professions and those who do not have firm career plans may find a servicemember an acceptable mate in a way that a woman with a more intensive career path would not. It is also important not to lose sight of the fact that these brides and grooms are younger than their peers at age of first marriage. Their ability to see into a future in which the military is a lifetime commitment, not a four-year commitment, is extremely limited. Decisions made in one's youth may represent a further structure that shifts military spouses toward becoming SAHMs.

“We just wanted to be together.”

None of the spouses mentioned any kind of concern about what marrying a military member would do to their own career plans at the time of their marriage. As Howard Becker (1972) noted, when sociologists consider a particular population, it is a better alternative to think that things people do make sense to them instead of assuming that they are just crazy. Becker wrote, “Things often seem like a good idea because their consequences aren't visible when the action is undertaken.” I suggest that when these

spouses made a decision to marry someone in the military they did not have enough information about themselves, their servicemember or military life in order to accurately predict their affect on a wife's career or how much or how little that would matter.

For example, the wife of an Army dermatologist who now homeschools her kids met her husband when he had an Army ROTC scholarship and she had a Navy ROTC scholarship. They thought they could be stationed together, but when they could not, they decided she would give up her scholarship and they would pay back the cost of her tuition, which was daunting. "We just wanted to be together," she said. Eleven couples mentioned "being together" as a major motivator at the time of the marriage. The homeschooling wife describes her experience immediately following her decision to give up her scholarship:

Of course now, I'm drifting, not knowing what in the world am I going to do because I was planning on being a Naval officer all this time. I didn't know what to do with myself. You know, of course, in the military you move around, and that hurts you a lot. I started with some temp agencies in the beginning and got some horrible, horrible jobs, like receptionist work and filing. I mean I don't want to put those jobs down. They're important, but they weren't for me. I wasn't happy in those. (My major was) Communications, which is worth nothing. I mean it's just – it's not – you can't do anything with that except go to grad school. So – which I did do eventually because I couldn't do anything else...I got my masters in historic preservation. Never used it because a month after I graduated, I promptly had a baby and have since forgotten everything I learned.

Although moves figured in most stories of spouse employment and unemployment, babies—particularly the impending arrival of the second baby—represent the moment of directional change. Again, the spouse's career was framed as a choice. Husbands often told the story in terms of "it was her choice" or "I left it up to her" or "I

wanted her to do whatever she wanted.” These decisions, however, were not made solely by the wife. An Army officer described how the decision was made for his wife (an Army captain) to stay home with their children after their second child was born (italics added for emphasis):

When suddenly you realize half of *her* paycheck is going to paying for daycare, and they don't – because of the jobs we had at the time, I was in the infantry, and as a nurse, *she'd* have to work crazy hours. So we would have to get one of the family care providers. So basically, you're taking your kids over to drop them off at somebody else's house, and somebody else is basically raising your kids.

Instead of calculating the cost of daycare for their children as part of both of their paychecks, the cost is taken from her check alone. His job as an infantry officer who was often in the field or on a training or headed for deployment was not considered as “crazy hours.” Only her work hours were “crazy”. The assumption that the male's career was the dominant career, and that the children were mainly the responsibility of the wife, was shared by every couple I interviewed. This does not necessarily reflect the experience of every couple that ever enters the military. The acceptance of this state of affairs may be shared by long married couples who decide to stay in the military. The truncating of a spouse's career may be the cost of a long military career. Couples who did not accept this division of labor may have left the military or divorced. Women with career plans that require residence in one place for a number of years may have opted not to date, much less marry, military men.

Lack of structures that support the return to work.

Although deployments, separations and PCS moves are structural characteristics of military life that limit the career trajectories of military wives, these characteristics do not exist as absolutes. As Davis noted (2007), it may be the lack of structures that support egalitarian gender ideologies that may cause the acceptance of more traditional beliefs. Consequently, it might be expected that if the military wanted to retain every possible servicemember, then structures could be created to ameliorate the effects of military life.

For example, lack of childcare is cited as a primary reason spouses do not work (Hosek 2004; Castaneda and Harrell 2008). According to the Blue Star Families Lifestyle Survey, more than half (53%) of respondents who use on-installation childcare indicated that long waiting lists were the top challenges to securing care at installation CDCs. More than one third of those who use on installation childcare were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the care provided. Long waiting lists exist at every installation and the lists are longest for infant care (Zellman, Gates, Moini, Suttorp 2009). Childcare that was structured so that a military spouse could earn enough to more than cover the cost of childcare would indicate a support for spouse employment. Availability of infant childcare at the moment profound career decisions are being fashioned would be particularly supportive.

Spouses themselves have long suggested remedies to the employment situation including improved spouse employment programs, spouse hiring preferences on military bases, and less frequent moves (Castaneda and Harrell 2008). While spouses I interviewed often had dreams for their future careers, the ones who were currently

SAHMs did not have specific plans with starting dates. A former Navy nurse and mother of four children talked about her future career in some detail:

When I grow up, I do want to be a counselor. It's taken me 20 years to figure out that that's really what I want to do. I want to be some sort of substance abuse counselor or veteran services counselor. There's gonna be a big need. There's already a big need for help in that area. Some of these young guys coming out of Iraq and some of the places in Afghanistan are struggling, and the VA just wants to give them pills. It's hard. It's not helping. So they're going to end up in a situation where they're going to need help. That's my plan right now. I haven't taken too many steps towards it, but that's my plan.

Although she has a dream, this not a plan. She and her husband are stationed in Germany for at least another year. Her husband is aware of her career dream and says that he is going to stay in the military "to provide her with an opportunity to go back to school." In the same breath he also says that he and his wife were both latchkey kids and don't ever want that for their children. Their youngest child is nine. Existing structures neither support nor encourage her dream. The only thing supporting her dream is a myth of spouse employment.

The Role of Calling for Wives

Although spouses had lost career ground during their child raising/military supporting years, some of the wives I interviewed were well on their way to a career now that they are in their 30s and 40s. One spouse gets up at 3:30 a.m. to study for nursing school. She said, "The thing is, I'm ambitious and I'm stubborn and I want it, and you have to sacrifice." An enlisted wife graduated from college and is now working as a family

therapist. Four more spouses run businesses from their homes working full-time hours. Two are employed full-time in offices. The Seabee's wife is actively in the job hunt. She started as a journalist then worked as a television producer before her second child was born. Since then she has worked as a volunteer. She singlehandedly raised \$250,000 for Operation Homefront during Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi. She founded a chapter of Operation Homefront in Hawaii that saved the lives of at least two National Guardsmen. She started a small newspaper. Now she seems to be searching for paid employment that would also be a calling. She said:

. "I guess I feel like, for me now, at this age that I am – and I'm sure you feel this way, too – is you want to do something that matters. I don't want just a job. And even if it means I don't get paid a lot, I don't care about the money. I care about making a difference, making something, doing something that matters.

Many of the wives also seemed to have a "calling" work orientation. They, too, talked about how they "loved" their work. Three who work online confessed to working seven days a week and logging on late at night in order to "keep up." Most of the wives interviewed did not stay on the career track they intended when they first married. A physical therapist is now a personal trainer and a triathlete. A speech therapist now runs her own social media business. Other spouses took jobs that were available at the time. Some moms discussed their work as a mother as if it were a calling. A homeschooling mother imagines how much she can teach her daughter without the constraints of the public school schedule. The wife of an Army sergeant detailed sporting activities and scouts and meetings with the battalion and lunch with her husband. She also little family rituals and secret pleasures that kept her family together—like serving egg sandwiches

and popcorn every Sunday night. Even when she is dealing with worry for her husband's safety during deployment, she reaches a little further the way one might if one had a calling:

So it's being able to manage that, to put it away, and not let it exhaust you. Just get through today, and then figure out a way tomorrow to do a little better. To not just get through – maybe to thrive a little bit and find the joy and the laughter and the fun that's always there. You've just got to find it today. Today, make an agreement to put that mag away and find the joy and find the love that you know is there and your kids need and you need and – it's there. You've just got to find it.

An Army battalion commander's wife has taken on family issues in her husband's battalion as a kind of calling. Her husband describes her efforts like this:

So we've got people all over, and she's kind of constantly coordinating families issues and taking care of families across all those installations. As a senior spouse with 25 years in, she's kind of the – the – the voice of experience and wisdom. They rely on her a lot to help because generally things that more junior spouses are dealing with, she's already done. So she's able to provide kind of sage wisdom to them.

She describes her own efforts in more of a teaching and nurturing capacity. “I don't want to get in their business because, really, I'm here to support and advise them. They all have my email. They all have my phone number. They know to call me if they need anything. I'm more like the mom.”

These spouses found ways to be engaged in work. Whether their work as at home with their children, in the workplace outside of the home or in a volunteer capacity, they found a place for themselves which may be a requirement for maintaining a long military marriage.

The Taxman Cometh

Some of the military husbands credited their wives with the success of their families and their ability to stay in the military long enough to make it to retirement eligibility. The battalion commander referred to his wife (who worked on and off as a substitute teacher) with respect and gratitude over and over during the interview. He says she “gets it.”

A huge part of why I’ve been successful is because my family supports it so well, especially my wife. I mean, she has really – she has chosen to make her career secondary to my career – I recognize that every day. I know that’s exactly what she’s doing, and I truly appreciate it. That may also be part of why, you know, we’ve lasted as long as we have.

Fondness and admiration are two of the most crucial elements in a rewarding and long-lasting romance (Hawkins, Carrere, Gottman, and Gottman 2002). Fifteen of the 18 couples not only made lists of things that they admired about their spouse, they also frequently referred to their partner’s admirable traits throughout the interviews. As much as these servicemembers admit to appreciating the way their spouses run their families, I did find that servicemembers expected their spouses to return to work—despite the obstacles to employment military life inflicts on spouses. Of the 18 husbands interviewed, 12 expressed an expectation that their wives would return to work. Husbands whose wives were already working thought that their wives would continue in their chosen fields. When asked to tell about his wife’s career plans, a Navy pilot said, “Oh, God, I wish I knew.” Other servicemembers said that they expected their wives would return to their previous employment as teachers, nurses, and counselors (despite the large gaps in their work history.) One husband said that his wife would probably

retire since she is older than he is. A Navy helicopter maintenance tech said that maybe his wife would return to work as a secretary. Then he said, “For the most part, she does not really want to work. She wants to stay at home and just enjoy life.”

The Army dermatologist seemed particularly uncertain about his wife’s career plans:

My wife’s career plans. It depends on which career she’s thinking of at the moment. Her career plans are, I think at the moment to home school our kids for the near future. We’re still in discussions on how long that’s going to be. It’s looking more and more like it’s going to be longer term. But I think once the kids are educated and/or hopefully out of the house, she’s obviously got – I do not know how much she told you about her educational background, but she’s got an interest in historic preservation. She’s got a degree in it. We’re still paying for her degree. I’d love to see her use the degree at some point.

Their children are among the youngest of those interviewed, both under eight years old. He still owes the military eight years so the employment ball seems to be in her court—even as they pay for a Master’s degree she cannot use and expresses no desire to use.

As couples approach their transition out of the military, the press toward spouse employment comes more into the open. Some of the husbands joked about it. The Seabee’s wife who had worked for Operation Homefront and raised \$250,000 without a salary talked about how this was brought up in her own family. “That was all volunteer because I didn’t want to take money out of the hands of people who needed it, and I didn’t need it. I just could do the work. And my husband always says, “Yeah. We’re going to be rich in heaven. Right? Is that what you keep telling me? When is my bank account going to get a little richer?”

The Navy administrator showed open contempt for his wife when asked about his wife's career plans. He said:

She doesn't have a career. She has a job. She's great with that. Yeah, I'm the one that has problems with it. I'm the one who says 'when we retire'-- when WE retire-- get this "we" stuff! I'm the only one with a retirement! She's not contributing anything towards the retirement fund. So [you know] that's why [you know] she's working now she'd prefer not to work now and the reality is the situation is being a Navy Captain and it's just being the two of us she doesn't necessarily have to work but if she didn't work she'd be sitting at home and she'd be quilting all day long. You can have a job right now and when I do retire she won't be working any longer and like I say she's not going to be contributing anything so while she has the ability to work now then it's a good thing for us to be able to bank some money.

When I interviewed his wife, she talked about going back to work mostly part time once her boys were in school full-time at whatever jobs were available. Her sons are now in their 20s and live in the United States. She is currently employed full-time as a compensation specialist at Marine Corps Community Services in Okinawa. During their 10 moves, her husband was stationed in metropolitan areas only four times. Rural and overseas locations have been shown to be high unemployment areas for military spouses (Castaneda and Harrell 2007). How would a military spouse be expected to get the kind of job that yields a retirement income by moving to high unemployment areas so often? Looming retirement seems to represent the end of the work of the myth of spouse employment. As children grow up and move away and the number of unpredictable separations dwindle, the spouse is expected to find employment post haste.

In this chapter, I found that a "calling" work orientation was the primary motivator for the servicemember to continue with military employment, reinforced by the

structure of military retirement eligibility. The primacy of deployment then dominates the family and represents an element of risk to relationship. Spouses deliberately go against their “on top” egalitarian gender ideology and accept separate spheres in which the servicemember departs and returns and the spouse is tasked with “creating normal” for their families. This “normal” is the foundation from which the family operates despite deployments, combats, PTSD and moves. There is respect and even a sense of “calling” in the creation of this foundation. Yet the egalitarian gender ideology does not disappear. Instead families invest in the myth of spouse employment which sustains belief in a career-to-be for the spouse while the structures of the military truncate that career

In the next chapter, the survey findings and the interview findings come together to suggest how couples who marry into the military adapt their ambitions, desires and family circumstances in order to stay long married and long military.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

The military family is often characterized as a greedy institution eternally locked in an unending struggle with the military over the loyalty and commitment of the servicemember (Segal 1986). That kind of struggle may persist for a time in military families. Then the acceptance of separate spheres and the creation of normal within the bounds of the military starts to emerge as the dominant activity. Marital duration within the military results. In their work about the increased risk of divorce among young military couples caused by months of deployment, Negrusa et. al. (2013) hinted at this occurrence when they observed, “A longer tenure in the military decreases the divorce hazard, which may indicate the development of skills to cope with the stress of deployment and the selective retention of those less stressed and those more adept at coping.”

I propose that my descriptive research about long married military couples demonstrates how those three factors (1) skills to cope with the stress of deployment; 2) selective retention of those less stressed; and 3) selective retention of those more adept at coping;) indicated in Negrusa et. al.’s prior research does, in fact, result in marital duration for military couples. My descriptive research more fully depicts some of the behaviors and strategies that long-married, long-military couples of the post-9/11 professional force employ in these categories.

My original expectation was that male servicemembers would stay in the military because they felt a calling orientation toward their work. Since these male servicemembers and their wives would have a more traditional gender ideology, then they would judge the demands of the military as an acceptable price for the cost of a calling. My expectation was only partially correct. After serving 15 years or more in the military, the majority of those surveyed said that they had a “calling” or a “calling/career” work orientation. These servicemembers found work inseparable from their lives. In addition to financial gain and career advancement, they found meaning and fulfillment at work and saw their work as socially valuable. Their wives in both the survey and in interviews agreed with that assessment of the husband’s military employment. The servicemembers and their spouses did seem to judge the current demands of the military as acceptable when weighed against a calling and the benefits associated with a military retirement.

Yet when it came to gender ideology, these couples exhibited a more egalitarian gender ideology “on top.” Their “underneath” gender ideology may have appeared more traditional. Their beliefs may, in fact, share many of the same drivers as civilian couples in America. Among military couples, however, the traditional structure of their lives seemed less driven by what couples believed and allowed themselves to believe about the role of men and women and more driven by the demands of a job that requires an unusual amount of separation from the family for trainings, detachments, temporary duty and deployments. Very few jobs in America require a partner to be away from the family for 18, 12 or even six months at a time. Long married spouses seemed to reflexively adapt

their thoughts and behaviors in order to accommodate a lifestyle that required them to take on the vast majority of nurturing and childrearing activities.

So what characterizes couples that manage to stay long married and long military? And what limitations may be hidden in this research?

Skills to cope with the stress of deployment

What are the skills that long married military couples develop in order to cope with the stress of repeated deployments and moves over time? Of all the factors I observed in this descriptive research, I propose that the most important finding is that of the ability of established couples to create a “structure of normal” that allowed for the frequent absence of the servicemember and that was independent of a particular geographic location. This skill is greatly enabled by an acceptance of living with separate spheres even when personal beliefs and desires are more egalitarian. My research suggests that the mechanism of creating the structure of normal works for military couples who have children like this:

1. Some time between the birth of the first and second child, the spouse finds herself with the primary responsibility for creating the structure of normal. She envisions, establishes and enforces a routine for the family that allows for the constant absences of the servicemember.
2. The structure of normal is independent of geographic location in order to

accommodate frequent moves. The surveyed families moved on average more than eight times in 20 years of marriage. The structure of normal does not depend on extended family members. It does not depend on a particular set of friends. It does not require a particular school, congregation or organization--including the military unit. The structure of normal is personal and particular to the individual family.

3. The servicemember is not independent of the structure of normal. The servicemember acknowledges and actively participates in the structure of normal. He participates with some childcare and housework when he is physically present. He is a founding and contributing member of the structure, depended upon for “the lion’s share” of the income, benefits, and financial security.
4. Following deployment and other separations, the husband signals that he wants to be back in the structure of normal with childrearing and housework activities--reading to child, doing laundry, driving, bedtime rituals, participating in sports parenting and other extracurricular activities.
5. The spouse actively courts, pressures and defines the scope of the participation of the servicemember.
6. The spouse is either inclined to become a Stay At Home Mom, is edged into SAHMing by structures of American society or the military culture, and/or arranges her worklife so that she is able to be present upholding the structure of normal.

7. The couple uses the family myth of spouse employment to belay financial worries and career desires of spouses until children are self-sufficient and the military career is ending.

Although 16 of 18 interviewed couples shared this process, this research may be limited by the kind of person who agreed to undergo the interview. Both husbands and wives had to agree to the interview. Also, not every randomly invited couple agreed to the interview. Perhaps those couples who did not agree to the interview significantly differed from the couples that did.

Selective retention of those less stressed.

The second factor Negrusa et. al. (2013) hinted at in order to become long married and long military was the selective retention of those less stressed. In this research, couples were stressed. They married young. They had limited incomes. They moved. They deployed. Some saw combat. Some lived overseas. Most had children, some with special needs. Were these couples less stressed than the people who left the military or who divorced? Did these couples experience fewer stressful events? That is a topic for future research I discuss in the following chapter. However, it is also important to consider some of the factors that might have contributed to experiencing less chronic stress among military couples.

Work related stress can be created by many factors from poor pay to tyrannical supervisors to monotonous uninteresting work. Work stress that is brought on by alienation is thought to be one of the worst kinds of stressors. Karl Marx (1844) was

particularly interested in this theme because he thought work was an essential human activity, the basis of physical survival as well as the means to express their capabilities as participants in a social activity. Work that is alienating has been found to have components of powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation and self estrangement (Blauner 1964). I assert that as the servicemember moves up the ranks as either officer or enlisted, servicemembers are less likely to be in the kind of jobs that include the stress that comes with alienation. This is borne out in my research by the presence of a promotable breadwinner, high job satisfaction due to a 'calling' work orientation, and high marital satisfaction.

Servicemember is a promotable breadwinner.

One of the hidden-in-plain-sight elements of this research is that the servicemember in these long married couples is promotable. With the military's up-or-out policy, those servicemembers who were not successful on the job or not promotable could not and did not stay in the military. Many of the linkages between military life and marital satisfaction have been found to be related to the manifestation of a steady paycheck and benefits (Karney and Bradbury 1995; Lundquist 2004; Teachman 2008; Karney, Loughran and Pollard 2011).

By focusing only on the stressors of military life, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that the military represents a way that these 'guardians at the gate' have chosen to support their families. In interviews, these long married military members indicated that they weighed their prospects inside and outside the military and chose again and again to stay

in the military. Military retirement does present a structure that interviewed couples said helped to frame that decision.

High job satisfaction correlated with ‘calling’ work orientation

Among Army and Navy husbands in the survey, job satisfaction was positively correlated with having a “calling” work orientation. In both the survey and in interviews, the majority of servicemembers indicated that they experienced their work either as a ‘calling’ or as a ‘calling/career.’ This signifies that despite a dozen years of the highest operational tempo in the history of the all-volunteer force (Hosek et. al. 2006), these servicemembers found meaning and fulfillment at work and saw their work as socially valuable in addition to seeing it as a source of professional status and financial gain. I submit that the kind of person who finds meaning and satisfaction in their work is by nature less stressed than one who perceives their work as a job alone.

Job satisfaction was also correlated with the number of years a servicemember was married. That factor is a substitute for the age of the service. As the servicemember gets older, he usually experiences a higher rank and a greater perception of control and influence. The servicemember may be less stressed simply by attaining more occupational power.

High marital satisfaction

Few factors in the interviews were strongly correlated with marital satisfaction. This may imply that marital satisfaction is little influenced by factors related to the military. I think it is more likely that the marital satisfaction of the surveyed participants is already quite high. For each of the three questions in the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Survey (How satisfied are you with your marriage? How satisfied are you with your spouse? How satisfied are you with your relationship with your spouse?), respondents answered that they were either very satisfied or extremely satisfied to nearly every response. As is found with other research, by the time these long-married, long-military couples pass the 15-year mark, marital satisfaction is well established. A satisfying relationship in addition to a promotable breadwinner and a 'calling' work orientation contributes to the assessment of couples as "less stressed."

Selective retention of those more adept at coping.

The third factor Negrusa et. al. (2013) hinted at was the selective retention of those more adept at coping. I suggest that those long married military couples who were adept at coping were a) married young; b) able to find equilibrium between gender beliefs and life style choices created by structures of the military

Marry young then grow up.

In this research, military couples married young. Although this is usually considered a risk factor for marriage both inside and outside the military, among these long married couples it was a defining characteristic. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), the

median age at first marriage in 1993 for all Americans was 26.5 for men and 24.5 for women. When these long married military couples wed, the servicemembers were on average 23.31 years of age and the median age of their brides was 22.56 years. These results concurred with other research about military couples. This was also a first marriage for nearly all couples. They married on average two years into their servicemember's military career.

This could represent a limit of the research. In order to be married at least fifteen years before the age of military retirement eligibility *and* qualify for the study, the participants had to marry young. Perhaps husbands and wives who marry later in the career and thus do not approach their fifteenth anniversary until after military retirement differ significantly from those who marry young. Future longitudinal research may be able to follow couples from their marriage through their military career and beyond.

Until then, I think it is worth noting that youth at first marriage may very well represent an element of risk to the relationship, but youth does not necessarily represent the mark of doom itself. Youth at first marriage is also a characteristic of these long-married, long-military couples. I suggest that this ability to stay married even though they married younger than their civilian counterparts may indicate that they were better able to cope with the demands of military life as they emerged. Whether this ability is due to events that occurred during their military tenure or whether this represents personality differences is a subject for future study.

Find temporary equilibrium for gender beliefs and life choices.

The couples in my research had more egalitarian beliefs than the rate of SAHMs would suggest. In the interviews, SAHMs discussed actively shifting their thoughts to bring their gender beliefs and the demands of their lives together. This is what Hochschild (1997) called “graceful accommodation.” It is easy to see how structures of military life like deployments, moves, rural locations, overseas locations, lack of childcare, lack of substantive spouse preference programs that result in employment and this compelling need to create normal for a family can contribute to the truncating of career ambitions for military spouses to a point that Weber himself might have considered it a prodigious “Iron Cage.” In order to sing in that cage, the spouse has to be capable of weighing her options, adapting her thoughts, believing in a myth of spouse employment.

Many spouses are able to create normal and sustain a military marriage while employed. Among surveyed Army and Navy wives, their own job satisfaction was positively correlated with their own education. It was also positively correlated with espousing a “calling” work orientation. Among the 18 interviewed spouses, two worked full time outside the home. Four created their own jobs. Two worked as contractors from inside the home. The ability of a spouse to adapt career ambitions to the demands of military life and the ability of a servicemember to buy in to that adapted career path may be one of the traits that makes a couple more adept at coping. This may also reflect that spouses who stay married to military members may already be drawn to the kind of work that can move.

In this research, couples who were able to stay long married and long military commonly had a servicemember who found that over time the military was not an institution or occupation but a calling, a part of his identity. This prompted spouse and servicemembers to judge the demands of military life as the acceptable cost of a calling. Consequently they adapted their gender ideologies in order to accept the separate spheres required by the structures of military life. The spouse created a normal for her family that enabled family members to navigate frequent, unpredictable absences of the servicemember as well as PCS moves. Both servicemembers and spouses bought in to the myth of spouse employment when family demands were particularly high. Spouses may adapt their career plans to enable them to work from home. Both servicemembers and spouses report high levels of job satisfaction and marital satisfaction.

In the last chapter, final questions and suggestions for future research are explored. How can this descriptive research aid lawmakers and program managers to enhance military life for long-married, long-military couples? What other strategies for coping with military life can be explored? What is the future for couples who marry into the military now?

CHAPTER 7: SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

“Work and love...love and work, that’s all there is.” –Sigmund Freud.

Following the foundation of the all-volunteer force, a professional military force emerged in which one in five military members served long enough to reach retirement eligibility. These servicemembers married young and brought their spouses and children with them to duty stations around the world. In the post 9/11 era, they served during a time of the highest operational tempo since the creation of the all-volunteer force (Hoge, Auchterlonie, & Milliken, 2006). Long-married, long-military couples in this research typically coped with multiple deployments, multiple moves, and the multiplication of demands as their families grew and changed over time. How did they do that? How did these long-married, long-military couples achieve marital duration in a time of increased stress?

In my research, I found that couples achieved marital duration through interrelated processes created in order to adapt to and cope with the many structures of military life including deployments, PCS moves and retirement eligibility. These long-married, long-military couples fashioned and accepted a family life marked by separate spheres even when both partners espoused a more egalitarian gender ideology. The majority sacrificed the wife’s career in exchange for the “creation of normal” by the spouse, as well as for the promise of the servicemember’s future retirement income. Both

husbands and wives came to view the military member's service not as an "occupation" or a "job" or a "career," but as a "calling"—a meaningful, socially valuable part of the servicemember's identity that also provided financial gain and career advancement. They also identified the wife's paid and unpaid employment as a "calling" and framed her employment as a "choice".

As these couples married more than 15 years near the end of their servicemember's military career, they bear the costs of truncating a spouse's employment. They are also poised to emerge with a retirement income that will last the rest of their lives and the status attached to a long marriage (Cherlin 2009).

Implications

The findings in this study contribute to the sociological knowledge about the factors that contribute to marital duration among military couples, particularly in the Army and Navy. Previous studies about military marriage focused on couples married less than five years. While the majority of servicemembers do leave the military well before completing ten years of service, the population that continues to the age of retirement eligibility is substantial. There is also an institutional value in examining long married military couples. Because of the military's up or out policies, both officers and enlisted members headed for retirement are in positions of power and authority. By the nature of their status, they are often the individuals who make policy, enforce decisions, deliver trainings, and convey institutional beliefs. My findings about this group may also have implications for future study.

What happens between “greedy institution” and “calling”?

In previous research about how families come to divide the labor of the family and accept separate spheres, the civilian and military families studied are quite young. They are at the beginning of childrearing, in the midst of the most intensive labor required from parents. In Mady Segal’s (1989) research, she found military families behaving like “greedy institutions” locked in a battle with the military itself for the servicemember’s loyalty and commitment. Among long married military couples whose children were mostly in middle school or high school, I found that the military family was at a different stage of life. Instead of the military being an outward foe, the military had become a recognized part of the servicemember’s identity. This implies that the meaning of military service changes over time. Future research might examine when that shift occurs. Is there a recognizable, repeatable pattern in families who decide to stay in the military over the lifespan? Do servicemembers who stay in the military differ significantly from those who leave the military?

This finding also points out a need to better study the role of work orientation for military members over the course of their career. My research shows that having a calling reduces the stress of a military career. Callings are highly correlated with job satisfaction. Military members with a calling report themes of meaning, contribution, and commitment. This concurs with the Wrezeniewski et. al. (1997) findings about jobs, careers, and callings. One area in which future research might focus is on how work orientation changes over time for military members. Do those who have a job orientation in early years develop a career or calling orientation later? At the end of the career, do people lose a calling orientation and find that their work has turned to a career or even a

job? This has particular implications for families in which the servicemember now sees his profession as a job since marital satisfaction is negatively correlated with being married to a servicemember with a job orientation. Future studies could also look at how work orientation affects the transition of servicemembers when they leave the military. What happens to those with a career or calling when they leave the military? Is their transition from military life more or less difficult for them?

How do separate spheres aid military families?

One of the strongest findings of my research is that of recognizing the work of spouses as they “create normal” in response to constant, unpredictable deployments and frequent PCS moves. This offers both insight into how families manage the demands of military life as well as offering a pathway back to the family after deployment. This work might be used by commanding officers and military family professionals who create the reintegration briefs offered to every unit when returning from deployment. Instead of offering what my interviewees called the “don’t-beat-your-wife-cuz-she-bought-new-curtains speech,” perhaps returning servicemembers could be offered the image of a spouse “creating normal.” Perhaps reintegration issues might be alleviated with my finding that long-married, long-military servicemembers signal their willingness to reintegrate by taking on housework and childrearing chores. This family strategy might be framed as a structure that is constantly being built, dismantled and rebuilt in order to accommodate the servicemember.

There might be a significant avenue for future research about military marriage by broadening this study to include female servicemembers in dual military marriages and female servicemembers married to civilians. Female servicemembers experience a divorce rate that is several times higher than their matched male military counterpart (Negrusa et. al 2013). The acceptance of separate spheres among male servicemember/civilian female military couples and the way the wife's work is framed as a choice may offer the beginning of some speculation about the higher divorce rate among military females. Do military females have the same kind of calling as their male counterparts? Even though they serve in the military, are their careers also framed as a choice by their families so that it becomes harder for a female to choose a life of lengthy, unpredictable deployment? Do male spouses experience their own careers being framed as a choice and is that less socially acceptable for men than women? Could this cause male spouses to experience more stress and thus increase the divorce rate for female servicemember?

How can the military accommodate spouse employment?

Spouse employment is consistently ranked as one of the primary areas of discontent by military members and their spouses. Where past research implied that the military would be forced to adapt to two income families (Segal 1989), my research shows that currently a myth of spouse employment dominates. Current programs and services do not ameliorate the structural barriers to spouse employment. On one hand, this might be viewed as part of 'the machine.' As Becker (1974) observed in *Tricks of the Trade*,

institutions can be seen as machines that do exactly what they were designed to do. It might be argued that the military intends to create a force in which structures come together on purpose to force the spouse to give up her work in aid of the military mission. In past generations, this might have been true. Yet in this study, all but one senior spouse had very little to do with the military unit. As the children in the family aged, there was less for spouses to do and spouses indicated a willingness to return to work. Some spouses found a way to become self-employed so that they could both “create normal” and earn an income. Couples did not indicate that a working spouse was any barrier to promotion which makes this theory seem dubious.

The machine also might be seen as providing a myth of spouse employment in order to trap the servicemember in the military by limiting the financial resources of the family to just one income. The servicemember would be kept in the military because he did not possess the financial resources to make the jump to the outside world. The finding that these long-married, long-military couples have a servicemember who sees his work as a calling seems to nullify that argument.

Another way to look at the myth of spouse employment is to assume that the programs and services that have been designed to overcome the barriers that the structures of the military create are simply the wrong structures designed for the wrong population. The findings of this study demonstrate that the current focus on spouse employment needs to accommodate the portions of military life in which spouses have the most trouble finding work. In past research, young spouses indicate that the military has not been a barrier to their employment. Harrell and Castanda (2008) found that after

the third move spouses begin to indicate that the military becomes a barrier. This may be due to the fact that young spouses have not moved or that as the spouse ages and expects to be in a more senior position at work the transition is more difficult. Among senior spouses, 87% indicated that the military is a barrier to career (Harrell 2004). Among my interviewees, I found the same barriers to employment as in prior studies. While spouses were able to accommodate the military at first, as they became more senior at work and as they started having children, the added demands of the military pushed them into becoming Stay At Home Moms or into work they could do from their homes..

Future research might examine funding spouse employment benefits and educational benefits for the families of those servicemembers who have served more than ten years. This could be an added commitment by the military to the servicemember as an acknowledgement that their spouses may have to retrain or access an additional network in order to accommodate the continued demands of military life. It may serve to increase the ability of the military to retain families.

One group that emerged in the survey that was underrepresented among those interviewed were couples with a career/career work orientation. In these couples, the servicemember viewed his employment as a career and his wife's employment as a career. Only one of the couples interviewed shared this view, but it was a strong correlation in the survey. This may be evidence of another working pathway in which military couples accommodate two incomes. Perhaps future research could identify and study these couples more closely in order to determine whether servicemembers who view their work as a career in the latter years refuse a transfer to a more career enhancing

job in order to accommodate their spouse's profession. How else might they differ from couples in which both members have a calling work orientation?

Do Army and Navy members experience different outcomes?

One thing that this research set out to examine was whether there would be a difference between Army and Navy couples. I theorized that Army couples in the OEF/OIF era would have been more likely to experience combat and the kind of experiences that can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder. In previous research, PTSD has been strongly correlated with lower marital satisfaction, lower confidence that the relationship would continue, and lower dedication to the relationship for both husbands and wives (Allen 2010). In my research, there were not significant differences between Army and Navy members when it came to marital satisfaction. Instead, the differences emerged along the lines of those who had experienced combat as eminent danger and purposeful violent contact with the enemy and those who had simply deployed for long periods of time. More Army members than Navy members indicated that they had experienced combat. These couples used the structure of normal created by wives as part of their strategy to cope with the symptoms of PTSD. Since the interviewed servicemembers were so certain about whether or not they had experienced "combat" perhaps future studies about marital outcomes need to include specific questions about combat instead of using the data point of "combat pay" as an indicator of combat.

Limitations of the Study

A key limitation of the current study is the relatively small number of active duty Navy members who took the initial survey. The survey was also skewed toward the officer side of the house. Half of the interviewed active duty members were officers even though officers only compose about 15% of the total active duty force. Although this may appear to indicate that officers are more likely to be part of the long-married, long-military group, past research indicates that this is probably not true. White enlisted males are less likely to divorce than even their matched civilian counterparts (Karney et. al. 2011), so this is most likely a limitation of the study not a finding of the study.

This study is also limited because it does not compare those couples who stayed married with those couples who eventually divorced. Among military couples, there are those who marry young and divorce young. There are those who divorce in the middle years. There are those who divorce near the end of a career as the marriage breaks down. There are also those who divorce after military life is over. How do those couples differ from long-married, long-military couples? An opportunity for future study exists in identifying a population of servicemembers at the beginning of their careers and interviewing them at intervals both inside and outside the military over time. Perhaps those who remain in the military are, as Negrusa et. al. (2013) suggest, “less stressed.” Perhaps they ended up getting “lucky” and deploying less often. Perhaps they marry people more adept at coping. Perhaps they are taught deployment skills that others never see.

Conclusion

At the end of my first series of interviews, I asked the last question on my interview schedule about what the individual admired about his or her partner. This ended the interview a little awkwardly because it did not signal that the interview was ending. On the fifth interview, a Navy helicopter mechanic stopped my farewell and asked, “Aren’t you going to ask me what our secret is?” So I dutifully asked him to tell me the secret of a long military marriage. He told me that it was all about commitment. He seemed much more satisfied with the interview than the prior interviewees, so I tacked on that question as a courtesy not really as an interview question.

None of the interviewees talked about the secret of their long marriage as a function of retirement benefits or from sacrificing a wife’s career or from their particular gender ideology. Instead their replies fell mainly into two categories. One group gave various replies on the theme of commitment—“Divorce was never an option.” “We are from stable traditional families.” “We were made for each other.” “This is a forever kind of thing.” “We will be together until the ends of the earth.” “We won’t give up without a fight.”

The other group framed their replies on the theme of the military career. “My wife is completely supportive.” “She is my best friend—she understands my career.” “She gets me. She really gets me.” When asked their secret to a happy marriage, one wife answered. “It’s me! I’m awesome that way!” When her husband took the phone from her he was still laughing. “She really is awesome that way,” he said. “I couldn’t do what I do without her.”

While I am confident about describing long military marriages in which wives sacrifice some of their own career ambitions in order to create normal for their families and husbands stay military because they find their work to be a calling, I keep thinking of the Karney et. al (2007) finding that servicemembers of all ages are more likely to be married than their matched civilian counterparts. The kind of people who self-select into the military are the kind of people who can commit to a job for four years when they are 18. They are people who think they can commit to a life partner when they are 22. They are people who are certain that commitment is the secret to their happily-ever-after by the time they turn 40. What they don't predict--what they perhaps can't predict at 18 or 22 or even 32---is how important it will be for their spouses to understand and accommodate their military career as they grow older. They can't predict when or if their work in the military will stop being their employment and start being their identity.

Perhaps in the end, the secret to a long military marriage (between a male servicemember and a female civilian) depends on a servicemember who finds his "calling: in the work of the military. It relies on a spouse who is capable of creating a foundation of "normal" for her family despite constant absence and frequent moves that must—by their very nature—limit her career ambitions. It depends on a servicemember who signals that he wants to return to the family circle and a spouse who eases his way in with both of them committed to the duration of the relationship --as long as they both shall live.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT BLOG POST

Long Military Marriage: How Did You Do That?

Have you been married more than 15 years? And you (or your spouse) are still in the military? How did you do that? The world wants to know.

Currently, most of what we know about military marriage researchers was discovered by surveying military members who have been married less than five years. On one hand, this is a good idea—marriages are most susceptible to divorce in the early years. It is good to know what causes young couples to break up.

On the other hand, we don't know what causes military couples to stay together. We don't know what you fight about. We don't know how you divide up the housework. We don't know how you deal with all those deployments and moves. We don't know if you are happy. We don't know how you did that.

That is why I decided to do my Master's thesis on long military marriages. I want to identify some of the attitudes and behaviors that help keep military marriages together. If you would like to participate, please take this ten minute survey online at Survey Monkey. You will be asked some quick questions about your attitudes toward work and family life. Easy!

Some survey participants will also be asked to give a phone interview that will not last longer than thirty minutes. During the interview, participants and their spouses will be asked open-ended questions about their marriage, their work force participation and their deployment cycle.

That is the part I am really looking forward to doing. I find that military people surprise me and enlighten me and educate me in ways books never do. An interview gives researchers the kind of rich detail that really tells the "how" of military life.

If you are an active duty member married more than 15 years, you and your spouse have managed to do something that we all strive to achieve. Help the next generation by sharing your experiences in this project by taking this survey now.

APPENDIX B: EMAIL INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

Dear Professional Colleague:

As we have discussed, I am working on my thesis on long military marriages. It continually surprises me that although post 9/11 active duty service members have experienced the highest rate of deployment in the history of the all-volunteer force, the divorce rate has not escalated.

In civilian populations, stress like a deployment is highly correlated with marital dissolution. Yet active duty male service members are no more likely to be divorced than their current civilian counterparts matched by age, race, education and employment status.

My thesis examines whether two factors—gender ideology and work orientation--may create a prophylactic effect on marriage from the stress caused by a military career.

Study participants will be asked to participate in a ten-minute online survey about their attitudes toward work and family life. Some survey participants will also be asked to give a phone interview that will not last longer than thirty minutes. During the interview, participants and their spouses will be asked open-ended questions about their marriage, their work force participation and their deployment cycle.

That is why I am contacting you. I need 100 active duty Army and 100 Navy couples to take my survey. Would you please examine your network and extend an invitation to Army or Navy couples you know who have been married for 15 years to participate? I would so appreciate any help you can offer.

Jacey Eckhart

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

A SPARTAN MARRIAGE: AN EXPLORATION OF LONG MILITARY MARRIAGES

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This research is being conducted to examine and describe the factors that affect marital duration among military members. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in a ten-minute online survey about your attitudes toward work and family life. Some survey participants will also be asked to give a phone interview that will not last longer than thirty minutes. During the interview, participants and their spouses will be asked open-ended questions about your marriage, your work force participation and your deployment cycle.

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research.

BENEFITS

There are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research in how marriages endure through the demands of military life.

NOTICE OF AUDIO RECORDING

Some participants will be asked to give a phone interview as noted above. These interviews will be audiotaped by the researcher then transcribed in order to identify themes and patterns. Confidentiality of participants will be maintained as noted below.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The data in this study will be strictly confidential. Names and other identifiers will not be placed on surveys, interview notes or other research data. Participants in the survey will create a unique user name and password. When accessing secured areas of the site, Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) technology protects user information using both server authentication and data encryption. All data is transmitted over a secure, encrypted connection. Interview tapes and transcripts will be kept in a lockbox during the research and destroyed following the conclusion of the research. All other data used or created by the researcher will be stored on a password protected computer so that confidentiality is maintained.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no

penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party.

CONTACT

This research is being conducted by Jacey Eckhart Skillman, Department of Sociology at George Mason University. She may be reached at (619) 400-9558 or at jacey87@mac.com for questions or to report a research-related problem. Faculty advisor Shannon Davis may also be reached at (703) 993-1443. You may contact the George Mason University Office of Research Subject Protections at 703-993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

CONSENT

By continuing this interview, I agree to participate in this study.

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MALE SERVICEMEMBER

Before beginning the interview, make this statement:

This call is being recorded for the purpose of this research and will not be used for any other purpose.

Questions for military member:

- How did you meet your wife?
- Do you have kids? How many and how old?
- Tell me about a typical weekday for you.
- Tell me a typical weekday for your wife.
- How does your weekend roll out?
- How often have you deployed over the past ten years? When and for how long? Did this include time in combat?
- How does your role in the family change during deployment?
- Why do you stay in the military?
- What are your wife's career plans?
- Tell me something you admire about your spouse.
- What is the secret to your long military marriage?

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR FEMALE SPOUSE

Before beginning the interview, make this statement:

This call is being recorded for the purpose of this research and will not be used for any other purpose.

Could you State your name and then spell it?
Navy or Army?

Questions for spouse:

1. How did you meet your husband?
2. Do you have kids? How many and how old?
3. Tell me about a typical weekday for you.
4. Tell me about a typical weekday for your husband.
5. How does your weekend roll out?
6. Since you graduated from high school, tell me a little about how you have related to the labor market.
7. How many times did your husband deploy in the past ten years? And for about how long?
8. How does your role in the family change during deployment?
9. Tell me about your reintegration process after deployment.
10. Why does your family stay in the military?
11. Tell me about something you admire about your spouse.
12. What do you think is the secret to your success?

APPENDIX F: QUESTIONNAIRE MALE MILITARY MEMBERS

SECTION I: Your Marriage

Please complete the following questions.

1. How many years were you in the service before you married?
2. What is your wedding date?
3. Was this your first marriage?
Yes
No
4. Was this your wife's first marriage?
Yes
No
5. How satisfied are you with your marriage
Extremely dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Somewhat dissatisfied
Mixed
Somewhat satisfied
Very satisfied
Extremely satisfied
6. How satisfied are you with your husband as a spouse?
Extremely dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Somewhat dissatisfied
Mixed
Somewhat satisfied
Very satisfied
Extremely satisfied
7. How satisfied are you with your relationship with your husband?

Extremely dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Somewhat dissatisfied
Mixed
Somewhat satisfied
Very satisfied
Extremely satisfied

SECTION II: Work and Family Attitudes

Read the following questions and then rate them a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 is completely disagree 4 is neither disagree nor agree and 7 is strongly agree

8. Both the man and woman should contribute to the household income.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. It is much better for everyone concerned if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with his children as a mother who does not work.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. Having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. Men should share the work around the house with women, such as doing dishes, cleaning and so forth.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. Employment of both parents is necessary to keep up with the high cost of living.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. It is more important for a wife to help her husbands career than to have one herself

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. Parents should encourage as much independence in their daughters as their sons.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

SECTION III: Work Orientation

Please read the paragraphs below. For each answer note how much YOU are like the individual described. Then note how much your WIFE is like the individual described.

Mr. A works primarily to earn enough money to support his life outside of his job. If he was financially secure, he would no longer continue with his current line of work, but would really rather do something else instead. Mr. A's job is basically a necessity of life, a lot like breathing or sleeping. He often wishes the time would pass more quickly at work. He greatly anticipates weekends and vacations. If Mr. A lived his life over again, he probably would not go into the same line of work. He would not encourage his friends and children to enter his line of work. Mr. A is very eager to retire.

16. How much are YOU like Mr. A?

Very much
Some what
A little
Not at all

17. How much is YOUR WIFE like Mr. A?

Very much
Some what
A little
Not at all

Mr. B basically enjoys his work, but does not expect to be in his current job five years from now. Instead, he plans to move on to a better, higher level job. He has several goals for his future pertaining to the positions he would eventually like to hold. Sometimes his work seems like a waste of time, but he knows he must do sufficiently well in his current position in order to move on. Mr. B can't wait to get a promotion. For him, a promotion means recognition of his good work, and is a sign of his success in competition with his coworkers.

18. How much are YOU like Mr. B?

Very much
Some what
A little
Not at all

19. How much is YOUR WIFE like Mr. B?

Very much
Some what
A little
Not at all

Mr. C's work is one of the most important parts of his life. He is very pleased that he is in this line of work. Because what he does for a living is a vital part of who he is, it is one of the first things he tells people about himself. He tends to take his work home with him and on vacations, too. The majority of his friends are from his place of employment, and he belongs to several organizations and clubs pertaining to his work. Mr. C feels good about his work because he loves it, and because he thinks it makes the world a better place. He would encourage his friends and children to enter his line of work. Mr. C would be pretty upset if he were forced to stop working, and he is not particularly looking forward to retirement.

20. How much are YOU like Mr. C?

Very much
Some what
A little
Not at all

21. How much is YOUR WIFE like Mr. C?

Very much
Some what
A little
Not at all

22. Please rate your satisfaction with your job on a scale from 1 to 7, in which 1 is completely dissatisfied, 4 is neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 7 is completely satisfied.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

SECTION IV: Additional Demographics

23. In which branch of the military do you serve?

Air Force

Army

Coast Guard

Navy

Marine Corps

24. How do you describe your current status?

Active Duty

Reserve

Active Reserve

National Guard

Retired

None of the above

25. What is your current rank?

26. How do you describe your race?

27. What is the highest level of education achieved?

Did not graduate from high school

High school graduation or GED

Some college, no degree.

Associates Degree

Bachelors Degree

Some graduate education

Graduate degree

28. When do you expect to leave the military?

APPENDIX G: QUESTIONNAIRE FEMALE MILITARY SPOUSES

SECTION I: Your Marriage

Please complete the following questions.

1. What is your wedding date?
2. How old were you when you got married?
3. How old was your groom?
4. Did you ever serve in the military?
5. How many times have you moved since your marriage?
6. How satisfied are you with your marriage
Extremely dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Somewhat dissatisfied
Mixed
Somewhat satisfied
Very satisfied
Extremely satisfied
7. How satisfied are you with your husband as a spouse?
Extremely dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Somewhat dissatisfied
Mixed
Somewhat satisfied
Very satisfied
Extremely satisfied
8. How satisfied are you with your relationship with your husband?
Extremely dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Somewhat dissatisfied
Mixed

Somewhat satisfied
Very satisfied
Extremely satisfied

SECTION II: Work and Family Attitudes

Read the following questions and then rate them a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 is completely disagree 4 is neither disagree nor agree and 7 is strongly agree

9. Both the man and woman should contribute to the household income.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. It is much better for everyone concerned if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. Having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. Men should share the work around the house with women, such as doing dishes, cleaning and so forth.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. Employment of both parents is necessary to keep up with the high cost of living.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. It is more important for a wife to help her husband's career than to have one herself

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. Parents should encourage as much independence in their daughters as their sons.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- 17. Do you consider yourself PRIMARILY as stay-home parent?**

No.

Yes

18. How many hours per week on average do you have paid employment.

19. I enjoy talking about my family to others

Not at all like me

A little like me

Somewhat like me

A lot like me

20. Raising my kids is one of the most important things in my life.

Not at all like me

A little like me

Somewhat like me

A lot like me

21. My main reason for staying home with my kids (or combining child rearing with work I do at home) is because of the heavy demands of military life

Not at all like me

A little like me

Somewhat like me

A lot like me

Does not apply

22. I am eager for my spouse to retire from the military.

Not at all like me

A little like me

Somewhat like me

A lot like me

23. If we were not in the military, I would be able to get the kind of job I want.

Not at all like me

A little like me

Somewhat like me

A lot like me

24. I would choose to stay home with my kids no matter what employment my spouse had.

Not at all like me

A little like me

Somewhat like me

A lot like me

25. I have expectations that I will have paid employment about five years from now.

Not at all like me

A little like me

Somewhat like me

A lot like me

26. I expect to still be working at home five years from now.

Not at all like me

A little like me

Somewhat like me

A lot like me

SECTION III: Work Orientation

Please read the paragraphs below. For each answer note how much YOU are like the individual described. Then note how much your HUSBAND is like the individual described.

Ms. A works primarily to earn enough money to support her life outside of her job. If she was financially secure, she would no longer continue with her current line of work, but would really rather do something else instead. Ms. A's job is basically a necessity of life, a lot like breathing or sleeping. She often wishes the time would pass more quickly at work. She greatly anticipates weekends and vacations. If Ms. A lived her life over again, she probably would not go into the same line of work. She would not encourage her friends and children to enter her line of work. Ms. A is very eager to retire.

27. How much are YOU like Ms. A?

Very much

Some what

A little

Not at all

28. How much is YOUR HUSBAND like Ms. A?

Very much

Some what

A little

Not at all

Ms. B basically enjoys her work, but does not expect to be in her current job five years from now. Instead, she plans to move on to a better, higher level job. She has several goals

for her future pertaining to the positions she would eventually like to hold. Sometimes her work seems like a waste of time, but she knows she must do sufficiently well in her current position in order to move on. Ms. B can't wait to get a promotion. For her, a promotion means recognition of her good work, and is a sign of her success in competition with her coworkers.

29. How much are YOU like Ms. B?

Very much

Some what

A little

Not at all

30. How much is YOUR HUSBAND like Ms. B?

Very much

Some what

A little

Not at all

Ms. C's work is one of the most important parts of her life. She is very pleased that she is in this line of work. Because what she does for a living is a vital part of who she is, it is one of the first things she tells people about herself. She tends to take her work home with her and on vacations, too. The majority of her friends are from her place of employment, and she belongs to several organizations and clubs pertaining to her work. Ms. C feels good about her work because she loves it, and because she thinks it makes the world a better place. She would encourage her friends and children to enter her line of work. Ms. C would be pretty upset if she were forced to stop working, and she is not particularly looking forward to retirement.

31. How much are YOU like Ms. C?

Very much

Some what

A little

Not at all

32. How much is YOUR HUSBAND like Ms. C?

Very much

Some what

A little

Not at all

33.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

SECTION IV: Additional Demographics

34. What branch of the military is your family affiliated with?

Air Force

Army

Coast Guard

Navy

Marine Corps

35. When do you expect your service member to leave the military?

36. How do you describe your race?

37. What is the highest level of education you achieved?

Did not graduate from high school

High school graduation or GED

Some college, no degree.

Associates Degree

Bachelors Degree

Some graduate education

Graduate degree

APPENDIX H: THANK YOU EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

A Spartan Marriage: An Exploration Of The Long Military Marriage
Introductory Letter

[Date]

Dear _____:

Thank you so much for our interview today. The stories you told and the details you shared are exactly the kind of thing that informs and describes military life.

If you think of anything else you want me to know or you have any questions about my research, please contact me at jacey87@mac.com or call me at 619-400-9558.

When my research is finished, I will send you and your spouse an executive summary of my research. Please know that by sharing your story you have helped a new generation of military families.

Sincerely,

Jacey Eckhart

APPENDIX I: INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO SURVEY RECRUITS

A Spartan Marriage: An Exploration Of The Long Military Marriage
Introductory Letter

[Date]

Dear _____:

I can't thank you enough for participating in my study about long military marriages. Like you, I've been married a long time—25 years to my Navy husband. Most of our military friends have been married a long time. I think of long marriage and military life as two things that go to together.

I could be wrong.

In my graduate work in Sociology at George Mason University, I was surprised to find out that most studies about military marriage focus on couples that have been married less than five years. Yet I know that the military factors that weighed on our marriage when we were young are much different than the factors that mattered later in our life together.

When it comes to family programming and leadership education, we military families have very little knowledge about what it takes to build both a long military career and a long marriage. In order to build a more complete body of knowledge about couples who manage a long military career and a long marriage, I invite you to participate in my study of long military marriages.

If you and your spouse agree to participate in an interview, we will set up a convenient time to interview each of you individually by phone. During the 20 – 30 minute interview you will be asked questions about how you met your spouse, your experience in the military and how you and your spouse meet family obligations while meeting the needs of the military.

Taking part in this interview is voluntary and confidential. I will use the information you provide for research purposes only, and will not disclose your identity or information that identifies you to anyone outside of the project team.

Thank you so much for your willingness to participate in this project. Your thoughts and stories may make the lives of our younger soldiers and their families just a little bit easier.

Jacey Eckhart

Second Invitation To Survey Participants

Two months ago you were so kind to take my survey on Military.com about long military marriages. Now that the quantitative analysis is complete, I find that there are some empty places in the research that a survey can't answer.

You and your wife have been identified as a couple that could benefit other Army families by sharing some of the things you have learned over the years. Would you be available to take part in a phone interview with me this month?

During the 20 minute interview you will be asked questions about how you met your spouse, your experience in the military and how you and your spouse meet family obligations while meeting the needs of the military.

Please call or email to set up a time that would be convenient for you both.

All the best,

Jacey Eckhart
George Mason University
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
(619) 400-9558

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