

National Guard/Reservists are Healthier than Post 9/11 Veterans

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Background:

- Military service members employed in the civilian workforce fall into 3 broad categories – veterans separated from Active Duty, veterans separated from the National Guard/Reserves, and those currently serving in the National Guard/Reserves.
- This paper compares the work, health, and well-being outcomes across these groups who have transitioned to civilian life.

Research Conducted:

- Qualified volunteers (Post 9/11 service members of the 3 identified groups employed 20+ hours per week) from 35 different participating organizations were asked to complete a survey with questions describing their work, health, family and well-being characteristics.

Results:

- Current Guard/Reserve members reported higher levels of physical and psychological health than veterans of the Guard/Reserves or veterans of Active Duty. Specifics include:
 - better perceived health, less chronic pain, and less functional impairment
 - less emotional distress, perceived stress, agitation, and loneliness
 - higher levels of veteran supervisor supportive behaviors and higher social support from friends and family

Why this is important:

- Those still serving in the Guard/Reserves appear to report better social support, physical, and psychological health relative to those separated from the military, especially compared with those who last separated from regular active duty.
- Perhaps our active NG/R have the best of both worlds, including increased finances and support for both work and active duty responsibilities, and they are provided a respite from family demands during active drills that allows them to focus on bonding with their fellow service members.

Summary based on the following paper:

Hammer, L. B., Wan, W. H., Brockwood, K. J., Mohr, C. D., & Carlson, K. F. (2017). Military, work, and health characteristics of separated and active service members from the Study for Employment Retention of Veterans (SERVe). *Military Psychology*, 29(6), 491-512. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/mil0000196>

For more information, please see the SERVe website at <https://servestudy.org/>