A set of population statistics detailing how many active and inactive military personnel make up the United States population. There are currently over 23 million living U.S. military service members. Of the total United States’ population 18 years old and over, 9% are veterans, equaling over 21.2 million people. 1% are active duty/activated National Guard and Reserves, equaling over 2.1 million people.

A set of statistics exploring individuals’ motivation to join the service. Of the reasons for joining, 53% reported the education benefits, 52% reported a desire to serve the country, 49% reported the new experiences/adventure/travel, 36% reported wanting a sense of purpose, and 31% reported the career opportunities.

88% reported that joining the military was a good decision.

A set of statistics exploring the skills developed during service in the military. Of the skills reported, 87% developed a work ethic/discipline, 86% developed teamwork, 82% developed leadership and management skills, 81% developed mental toughness, and 78% developed an adaptation to different challenges.

81% indicated that their military specialty (MOS, AFSC, Rating, or designator) accurately described the military jobs that they performed during service.

In regard to stem related military specializations and jobs, 43% report that their military specialization, job, or training is science, technology, engineering or mathematics related.

A series of statistics related to service and higher education. Of the motivators for pursuing education, 86% reported career/job opportunities, 71% reported self-improvement, 69% reported potential for making money, 56% reported professional advancement, and 51% reported it was to use benefits.

Of the problems or barriers that hindered pursuit of education, 56% reported a lack of financial resources, 28% reported personal/family obligations, 25% reported that their GI Bill benefits expired, 23% reported health/disability issues, and 22% reported conflict between job and school.

Of the problems faced while pursuing education, 37% reported age differences, 32% reported a lack of financial resources, 32% reported working a full-time job, 29% reported family responsibilities, and 26% reported few veteran resources on campus.

84% felt there was a place for veterans’ leadership, achievement, and/or excellence on campus at colleges/universities, yet only 53% felt that colleges/universities recognize the specific strengths and skills veterans bring to campus.

A series of statistics related to the GI Bill. As of 2014 there was a total 1,088,411 GI Bill users nationally. The total cost represents about 12 billion dollars per year and covers higher education and training, licensing, and credentialing programs, but includes less than half of eligible veterans.

A set of statistics detailing the lasting impressions from the military on skills and attributes for educational success. 71% reported the military left a lasting impression in developing skills and attributes that will help succeed in education. 82% reported that the military left a lasting impression on their lives. 73% reported that the military promoted their interest in education, 69% reported that the military prepared them for education, 66% reported that the military prepared them for their civilian career, and 71% reported that the military promoted their interest in training, certification, or licensing programs.

A series of statistics reporting the top transitional challenges reported by veterans. Of the top challenges cited, 60% reported navigating VA Administration or benefits, 55% reported getting a job, 41% reported getting socialized to civilian culture, 40% reported financial struggles, and 39% reported skills translation.

92% of respondents indicated that education should play a role in their post-service transition.

A series of statistics related to disabilities and the military. Over 3.9 million disabled veterans are categorized by the VA as having a disability, of those, 43% are of Golf War and post-9/11 veterans.

58% reported a service related disability, and 32% reported they did not have a disability.

Of those that have service-connected disabilities, 79% indicated that it creates obstacles in their lives. Of this 79% of responders, 87% indicated it creates obstacles in their personal life, 40% in holding a job, 38% in getting a job, 28% in completing their education, and 12% in starting their education.

A series of statistics related to veterans’ post-military career. 55% of service members said that they are likely to pursue a different career than their military specialization.

A circular chart showing responses to the prompt, “Veterans’ preference influences their post service job choice.” 58% said yes, 37% said no, and 15% said unsure.

A bar chart reporting where respondents are working post service. 49% are working in the public sector, 8% in the non-profit sector, 38% in the private sector, and 5% in other areas.

79% indicated that the military played a role in their success.

Suggested citations for the above statistics are: C. Zoli, R. Maury, & D. Fay, Missing Perspectives: Service members’ Transition from Service Civilian Life — Data-Driven Research to Enact the Promise of the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Institute for Veterans & Military Families, Syracuse University, November 2015).