

## FACT SHEET

### From Joining Forces

- Since September 11, 2001, more than 2 million US troops have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup> About 40% of current military service members have been deployed more than once.
- There are 1.4 million active duty service members—14% of whom are women—and 1.1 million Guard and Reserve members.<sup>2</sup>
  - There are 2.0 million spouses and children/dependents of active duty service members.
  - 44% of active duty service members have children—76% of these children are age 11 and younger.
  - Only 37% of families live on military installations; the remaining 63% live in over 4,000 communities nationwide.
- With the end of the war in Iraq and the drawdown in Afghanistan, over one million service members are projected to leave the military between 2011 and 2016.
- There are an estimated 22.2 million Veterans in the U.S.—8% of whom are women.<sup>3</sup>
- In the current conflicts, the military has experienced multiple redeployments, short dwell time between deployments, greater dependence on the National Guard and reserve components, deployment of high numbers of women and parents of young children, and a higher number of service members who survive serious injuries that in previous wars would have been fatal.<sup>4</sup>
- The majority of returning service members and their families are resilient to the stresses of war and successfully readjust to life after deployment.
- About one in three U.S. service members returning from Iraq or Afghanistan experiences signs of combat stress, depression, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or symptoms of a traumatic brain injury (TBI).<sup>5</sup>
- Only 53% of returning troops who screened positive for PTSD or major depression sought help from a provider for these conditions in the preceding year.<sup>5</sup> Of those who had PTSD or depression and sought treatment only slightly over half received adequate treatment.

- Only 57% of those with a probable TBI had been evaluated by a physician for a brain injury in the preceding year.<sup>5</sup>
- Although 53% of recent Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans receive their health care through the VA,<sup>6</sup> many Veterans and their families will seek care in community settings from primary care and community mental health clinicians.
- Of recent Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Veterans who used VA care, 48% were diagnosed with a mental health problem.<sup>6</sup>
- In the 5 years from 2005 to 2010, on average, one service member committed suicide every 36 hours.<sup>7</sup>
- U.S. Army suicides reached an all-time high in July 2011 with the deaths of 33 active and reserve component service members.
- Mental and substance use disorders caused more hospitalizations among U.S. troops in 2009 than any other cause.<sup>8</sup>
- Children of deployed military personnel have more school, family, and peer-related emotional difficulties, compared with national samples.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Strengthening Our Military Families: Meeting America's Commitment January 2011

<sup>2</sup> Demographics 2010: Profile of the Military Community

<sup>3</sup> National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, Veteran Population Projection Model (VetPop) 2007

<sup>4</sup> Returning Home from Iraq and Afghanistan: preliminary assessment of readjustment needs of veterans, service members and their families. 2010. Institute of Medicine

<sup>5</sup> Tanielian, T. L., RAND Corporation & Center for Military Health Policy Research. (2008). *Invisible wounds of war: Psychological and cognitive injuries, their consequences, and services to assist recovery.*

<sup>6</sup> National Center for PTSD. Mental health effects of serving in Afghanistan and Iraq.

<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/overview-mental-health-effects.asp>

<sup>7</sup> Losing the Battle: the challenge of military suicide. Center for a New American Security. October 2011

<sup>8</sup> Zoroya, G. (2010, May 14). Mental health hospitalizations up for troops. *USA Today*. (Original source: Pentagon's Medical Surveillance Month Report.)

<sup>9</sup> Chandra, A., Lara-Cinisomo, S., Jaycox, L. H., et al. (2010). Children on the homefront: The experience of children from military families. *Pediatrics*, 125, 16–25.