



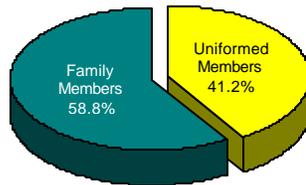
Military Families in the Millennium

Today's military family faces a military lifestyle that comprises higher operations tempo, more frequent deployments and thus increased family separations. They also experience more varied types of military missions and numerous relocations. These factors create stressful challenges for families that, if they are not able to manage successfully, can impact readiness.

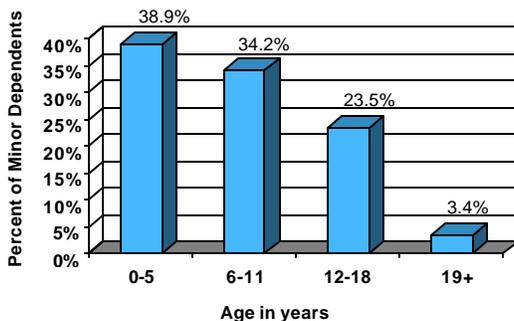
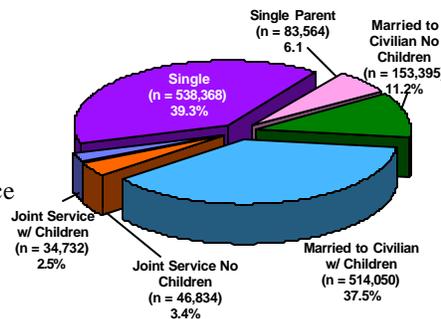
To assist the military's efforts in keeping troops and their families at the peak of preparedness, the Department of Defense (DoD) provides an array of programs to enhance the well-being of military families. To assist the policymakers and professionals who support military members and their families, the Military Family Resource Center (MFRC) has for a decade compiled and disseminated data on military demographics. This fact sheet presents a snapshot of military families and spotlights ways that DoD responds to the needs of military families.

Demographic Trends

In the two decades since the military became an all-volunteer force, the number of military family members has outnumbered service members 60 percent to 40 percent—a ratio that persists today.



The profile of military families is changing. Today approximately 55 percent of service members are married. More than 630,000 service members have children that collectively total 1.2 million children. The number of single parents is at 6 percent, up from 3.7 percent in 1989. The majority (73 percent) of children are 11 years of age or younger; 39 percent are below the age of 6.



Special Populations

With the changing demographics of military members, there is now a greater diversity of family structures, each with unique stresses and needs. These groups include junior enlisted members, women, and those in joint-service marriages. The junior enlisted comprise the most prominent group, at 46 percent of the military population. While the majority (71%) are single, 24 percent are married to civilians. Of these civilian spouses, approximately 63 percent are employed with 9 percent self-employed. A large percentage of junior enlisted spouses are working for financial reasons, largely due to trouble making ends meet on junior enlisted pay. In addition to financial and employment concerns, junior enlisted families have child care needs with 21 percent having young children.

Female service members represent another special population within the force. Women account for about 14 percent of the military population; this rate is equal across the ranks of officers and enlisted. With the entry of women to the military, joint-service marriages have emerged. Presently, 20 percent of female service members are in joint-service marriages, in contrast to only 4 percent of men.

Gender of Military Members	Percent in Joint-Service Marriages by Service				
	Army	Navy	Air Force	Marine Corps	Total
Female	19.3	12.9	25.6	24.3	20.1
Male	3.6	2.5	5.7	2.0	3.6
Total	6.0	3.9	9.3	3.4	5.9

Of the total force, about 6 percent are in joint-service marriages. The majority of these joint-service marriages are in the enlisted ranks with 75 percent in E1-E6 ranks. The Air Force has the highest percentage of joint-service marriages (9% of its members), and the Marine Corps has the lowest (3% of its members).

Dual-military families and single parents face issues that require special planning. At present, there are approximately 34,732 dual-military couples with children and 83,564 single parents. The planning, child care arrangements, and emotional issues regarding these military children gained national attention during the Persian Gulf War, when, for the first time, mothers as well as fathers deployed.

Number of Joint-Service Marriages and Single Members with Children					
	Army	Navy	Air Force	Marine Corps	Total
Joint-Service Parents	12,797	7,738	12,083	2,114	34,732
Single Parents	36,524	23,835	17,583	5,622	83,564

Military Families in the Millennium

Supporting Families

DoD views family support programs as important throughout the events and stages of a service member's career. The Office of Family Policy (OFP) issues policies that pertain to a cadre of family support programs addressing the military life cycle. To be responsive to the multiple needs of service members and families, a holistic and community-wide approach has been adopted to facilitate integration of programs.

To help OFP achieve its mission of "promoting self-reliance and resiliency in DoD's military and civilian members and their families," MFRC collects and synthesizes information on policies, military family research, and model programs. This information is shared with policymakers, commanders, and program staff to ensure a high level and quality of support is given to families. In this manner, OFP can meet its mission to provide "peace of mind for America's peacekeepers and their families" throughout the military life cycle.



Family Support in the Millennium

As we enter the 21st century, the military community's efforts to support families are focusing on strengthening local resources. In particular, coordinated, community-based efforts are needed to support families as the nation's defense budget and ranks of military personnel continue to decline, and issues related to recruitment, retention, and pay remain important. MFRC continues to support the Department of Defense mission by providing the most timely, complete, and relevant information and analyses available to assist DoD efforts to ensure military members and their families are afforded the highest possible quality of life.

Military Families Statistical Snapshot

- ❖ Junior enlisted (E1-E4) constitute 46 percent of the military population
- ❖ 80 percent of military members are younger than 35
- ❖ Women comprise 14 percent of the military population
- ❖ 52 percent of enlisted are married and 71 percent of officers are married
- ❖ 11 percent of all married personnel are in joint-service marriages
- ❖ 46 percent of service members have children; 40 percent are married with children
- ❖ 6 percent of military families are headed by single parents
- ❖ The average age of military members when they have their first child is under 25
- ❖ 39 percent of children in military families are younger than 6
- ❖ 56 percent of members stationed in CONUS locations live off base; 37 percent of those stationed OCONUS live off base.

Resources

Department of Defense Office of Personnel Support, Families and Education. (1999). *Profile of the Military Community: 1999 Demographics*. Arlington, VA: Military Family Resource Center. This reference publication provides demographic information on military members and families to guide policy and program decisions. Although the publication focuses on active duty, it does contain information on Reserve and DoD civilian personnel.

Office of Family Policy. (1988). *Office of Family Policy Strategic Plan (1998-2004)*. Arlington, VA: Department of Defense Office of Personnel Support, Families and Education. The plan charts the course for creating family support policy and programs that will meet the needs of service members and their families.

For more information and resources on all aspects of military family life, please contact:

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