

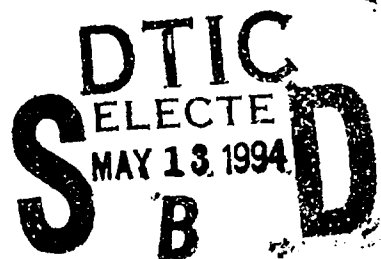


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Young Single Soldiers and Relationships

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13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) This research examines the impact of boyfriend and girlfriend relationships on the readiness, retention, and support service needs of young single soldiers in the Army. It is the first major investigation in this area and offers military leaders a new look at the transitions soldiers make from single to married status and the effects of those transitions on behavior, attitudes, and needs. The data were collected from a random sample of 11,035 soldiers in 1989. The analyses were conducted on 2,242 single soldiers in the junior enlisted (Private--Sergeant) and officer (Second Lieutenant--Captain) grades under 30 years of age with no children. A sample of 1,017 young married soldiers with no children who reported they were happily married was examined using the same variables for comparison purposes. It was found that involvement in relationships had a significant effect on soldiers and that effects varied according to the seriousness of the relationship, the gender of the soldier, and the race/ethnic status of the soldier. There was an overall trend toward higher job performance and Army commitment among those in (Continued)				
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relationships, but this was less true for minority and female soldiers than for male soldiers. Expressed lack of community and relationship support were greatest among those soldiers who were considering marriage.

The findings were interpreted in terms of their value to military service providers, trainers, leaders, and manpower personnel. Specific recommendations were offered to expand support program efforts to singles, offer more premarriage counseling and training on relationship issues, increase training on single-related issues to service providers and unit leaders, and conduct further research on this military population.

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FOREWORD

The Army Family Research Program (AFRP) is a 5-year integrated research program started in November 1986 in response to research mandated by the Chief of Staff of the Army's White Paper, 1983: The Army Family and subsequently by The Army Family Action Plans (1984-1989). Other AFRP products examine (1) service needs and access, (2) factors that influence adaptation to Army life, (3) how families influence career decisions, (4) how unit activities affect and are affected by families, and (5) how to better handle Army stressors such as family separation and relocations.

This report examines the impact of personal relationships on the readiness, retention, and support service needs of young single soldiers. The findings contained in this report were briefed to representatives from the Community and Family Support Center, Deputy Chief of Staff of Personnel, and Walter Reed Army Institute of Research on February 6, 1991. Conclusions and recommendations are offered to military service providers, leaders, manpower personnel, and researchers.

The U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) is conducting this research as part of its Advanced Development program pursuant to the ARI-CFSC Letter of Agreement dated 18 December 1986, "Sponsorship of ARI Army Family Research." This research is an important part of the mission of ARI's Leadership and Organizational Change Technical Area (LOCTA), which is to investigate the relationship between family factors and soldier retention and readiness and to explore family adaptation to the Army environment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Grateful appreciation is expressed to the team members who contributed to the development of this report. Janet Griffith of the Research Triangle Institute provided valuable comments on the development of the research plan. D. Bruce Bell, Jacquelyn Scarville, Martha Teplitzky, and Nora K. Stewart of the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) offered substantive comments that improved the analysis and the preparation of the report. Gerald Croan of Caliber Associates gave valuable comments and suggestions for the development of the measures. Although the contributions and feedback from these individuals are recognized, responsibility for the contents of the report lies solely with the authors.

YOUNG SINGLE SOLDIERS AND RELATIONSHIPS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Requirement:

The research supports The Army Family Action Plans by providing data and analysis on young single soldiers in the Army and their transition to family status. It is the first major investigation of the effect of boyfriend and girlfriend partner relationships on the readiness, retention, and support service needs of single soldiers. It supports the need for data on how to assist soldiers in making adjustments to military demands.

Procedure:

The data were collected from a stratified random sample of 11,035 soldiers in 1989. The analyses were conducted on 2,242 single soldiers in the junior enlisted and officer pay grades under 30 years of age with no children. A sample of 1,017 young married soldiers who reported that they were happily married was examined using the same variables for comparison purposes. Single soldiers were categorized into those with no relationships (independent), less serious relationships (involved), and marriage-oriented relationships (committed). Analyses compared soldiers on the following variables: job performance, retention plans, job attitudes, personal well-being, social and community support, and support services needs and use.

Findings:

The analyses indicate involvement of single soldiers in relationships has a significant effect on soldier performance, retention intentions, job attitudes, well-being, and support needs. There are significant differences, however, depending on the gender and race/ethnic status of the soldier. In general, there is a trend toward more positive job performance and Army commitments associated with involvement in relationships among singles. This is more likely to be the case for White male and female soldiers and less likely for Black and Hispanic soldiers, although the minority soldiers are the most likely to exhibit positive soldier characteristics when they are independent of relationships. Needs for support services are greatest among soldiers who are considering marriage.

Utilization of Findings:

The findings from this research will facilitate the work of military services providers, trainers, leaders, and manpower personnel. Specific recommendations were offered to expand support program efforts to singles, offer more premarriage counseling and training on relationship issues, increase training on single-related issues to service providers and unit leaders, and conduct further research on this military population.

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YOUNG SINGLE SOLDIERS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Introduction

The formation of intimate relationships is a normal and expected task of adult life. These relationships are not only a necessary precursor to marriage, they are also an important source of social support for single men and women. Despite the increased fragility of marriage in contemporary society, single men and women remain highly optimistic about their prospects for forming serious relationships and committed to the institution of marriage (Glick, 1989; Orthner, 1990; Thornton, 1989).

Nearly 368,000 single men and women are serving in the U.S. Army today. Many are involved in boyfriend and girlfriend relationships, and the majority will eventually marry. Still, single soldiers have been treated as a homogeneous group in both past research and in personnel policies, as if they had no relational obligations and commitments other than Army service. Consequently, other than anecdotal accounts, relatively little is known about the relationship involvements and commitments of these soldiers, and how these involvements and commitments influence their adaptation to Army life.

Such neglect stands in sharp contrast to the plethora of studies in recent years on the relationships of married soldiers (see Bowen & Orthner, 1989; Orthner & Bowen, 1990). These studies suggest that marital well-being and spouse support play a critical role in the adaptation and commitments of married soldiers, enhancing personnel performance, retention behavior, and social stability. Partners in single relationships may have similar effects on the attitudes and behavior of one another, especially as these relationships become more serious.

This report explores the relationship status of young single soldiers, as well as the influence that relationship status has on the adaptation of these soldiers to Army life. In this analysis, groups of single soldiers who are involved in relationships, but at different levels of commitment, are compared to those who are not involved in intimate relationships. These single groups are also compared to a similar group of young married soldiers who report that they are happily married.

Collected as part of the Army Research Institute's Army Family Research Program, the data for the analysis are based on a stratified probability sample of soldiers worldwide. The analysis was restricted to those soldiers who were under 30 years of age, either young enlisted (privates, corporals, and sergeants) or young officers (1st and 2nd lieutenants and captains), and childless. Single soldiers were further restricted to those who reported that they had never been married.

For purposes of analysis, single soldiers were classified into one of three relationship status groups: Independent (no girl-boyfriend), Involved (relationship involvement but with no or little discussion of marriage plans), and Committed (relationship involvement and frequent discussion of marriage). After presenting a descriptive and comparative profile of these soldiers by relationship status, including their happily married counterparts, the adaptation of these single soldiers is compared across relationship status groups. Indicators of adaptation include job performance, retention intentions, work-related attitudes, personal

well-being, social and community support, and the perceived helpfulness and prior use of social services in the Army community. These associations between relationship status and indicators of adaptation are examined within gender, race/ethnic, and rank groups, including the use of higher order interactions. However, because of sample size restrictions, Hispanic females are included only in selected descriptive and comparative profile analyses.

The results from this analysis have rich potential for assisting Army service providers, education and training specialists, commanders and supervisors, and manpower personnel in better understanding the characteristics and support needs of young single soldiers. Such information is critical to fostering the type of community and social support system that both optimizes the adult development of these soldiers and enables them to combine needs for intimacy and closeness with the challenges and rigors of Army life.

The Army as a Structural Context for Relationship Formation

In fiscal year 1989/90, approximately 100,000 individuals became active duty members of the U.S. Army. Of these soldiers, about three out of four were single at the point of entry. Yet, three out of five soldiers in the U.S. Army are married at any time; the majority of these men and women formed these relationships in the early years of their Army obligation. However, a higher proportion of male soldiers than female soldiers are married at any one time, especially in the more senior enlisted and officer grades. These statistics suggest that the Army is an important structural context for relationship formation. They also suggest that relationship formation may have different implications for men and women in the U.S. Army.

There are a number of competing theories about the dynamics of interpersonal attraction in establishing relationships. Still, the research literature identifies at least three factors that influence the field of eligibles from which singles select partners (Adams, 1979; Levinger & Rands, 1985): proximity (individuals select partners with whom they have had some personal contact), endogamy (the custom of forming relationships with those from one's own social group), and homogamy (individuals choose partners with whom they share similar personal and social characteristics).

The U.S. Army provides a social context in which each of these factors operates to influence relationship formation. It also exerts a strong normative value system that reinforces becoming married rather than remaining single, especially for male soldiers; defines values, traits, and characteristics most important in a prospective partner; and sets parameters on how personal commitments should be balanced against Army demands and responsibilities. In addition, it provides a set of structural conditions through its regulations, demands, and benefit structure that influence the relative attractiveness of marriage compared to being single.

First, service in the Army greatly influences the field of eligibles from which soldiers can select partners. Individuals who join the Army associate with others from various community and regional backgrounds, socioeconomic groups, racial/ethnic groups, and religious affiliations. In addition, soldiers are often assigned to locations that further expand their field of eligibles, including overseas assignments.

Coupled with this more diversified field of eligibles than is commonly found in most civilian locations, the Army is generally more open than many civilian communities to relationships between individuals with different personal and social characteristics. For example, while generally rare in the civilian sector, both interracial and intercultural relationships are relatively common in the Army. Because of this social context, young soldiers who form relationships may be less likely than their civilian counterparts to share similar personal and social characteristics with their partner.

Compared to males, females in the Army may be particularly advantaged by the ratio of men to women in forming relationships. This is particularly true for Black females who generally fare better in the military than in the civilian sector in finding a pool of eligible men. Not only is the ratio of young Black males to young Black females better balanced for Black females in the military than in the civilian sector, but also male prospects who are members of Armed Forces all have jobs--a situation that is less characteristic for Black males in the civilian sector (Taylor, Chatters, Tucker, & Lewis, 1990).

Besides providing a social context for relationship formation, the organizational culture of the Army provides strong "informal" messages about marriage itself and about the values that are most important in selecting a partner. These messages imply that marriage is important to the career of a soldier, especially for males, and that soldiers need to select partners who understand the priority of Army demands and requirements to personal and relationship needs. Messages also apply to the relationship itself: Army couples are expected to work together as a team in support of the Army mission (Bowen, 1990; Orthner, Bowen & Beare, 1990; Segal, 1989). The effective communication of such messages has been evident in the interviews with civilian spouses about the deployment of their Army spouses to the Middle East.

Through its policies and requirements, the Army also provides a set of benefits and costs that become associated with relationship status. These policies and requirements may encourage relationship formation. For example, young single enlisted soldiers are required to live in the barracks. In general, a much higher proportion of these soldiers than their married counterparts are dissatisfied with their living quarters (Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, 1988). Such dissatisfaction may encourage singles to form relationships that lead to marriage to escape life in the barracks (Blucher, 1988).

Besides residential differences between young single and married soldiers, other aspects of the benefit structure may also encourage young singles to form relationships and become married. For example, since most soldiers who enlist do not plan a career in the Army (Defense Manpower Data Center, 1986), it is possible that they decide to start their families while on active duty since the military pays the costs of maternity care and delivery. Other benefits which advantage married members include higher weight allowances when they move and higher rates for Basic Allowance for Quarters (BAQ).

The recent deployment of troops to the Middle East represents a prime example of how military requirements can influence relationship formation. Similar to World War II and other wartime operations, a number of soldiers, both active duty and reserve, married just before departure. The success of these marriages often depends on the length of the separation and the degree of support that is given to the spouse by the military during the deployment.

In summary, the Army context provides an important structural context in which to understand relationship formation and development. It has established a set of values and expectations toward relationships, albeit implicit and often unspoken, as well as a reward and benefit system, that encourages relationships to develop toward commitment and marriage. In the context, it is not surprising that many young soldiers form relationships and become married before the end of their first enlistment or period of obligation.

Relationship Status and Adaptation

The association between relationship status and various measures of adaptation has been an important focus of research. In general, this research suggests that married men and women, as compared to their single counterparts, especially the divorced and separated, experience higher levels of physical and psychological well-being, including lower mortality rates, better physical health, lower rates of institutionalization (e.g., hospitals, correctional facilities), lower rates of mental illness, less depression and anxiety, and higher levels of reported happiness and life satisfaction (see Coombs, 1991; Gove, Style, & Hughes, 1990). Although these findings are subject to different interpretations, marriage is often described as a protective barrier against the external stressor events that challenge the coping resources of individuals.

Yet, there are several important caveats in this literature that help frame the contribution of the present study. First, the benefits of marriage accrue more to men than to women (Coombs, 1991). Second, the association between marital status and adaptation is conditional, depending on the perceptions of spouses toward the marital relationship. Individuals in unhappy marriages report the lowest levels of adaptation, even lower than individuals who are divorced and separated (Gove, Style, & Hughes, 1990). Third, the measures of adaptation employed have largely focused on physical and psychological well-being. Relatively little attention has been given to how social, community, and work attitudes and behavior may vary by marital status.

Fourth, it is possible that the impact of marital status on individual adaptation depends upon a number of factors, including socialization influences, structural conditions and normative considerations that influence the values, expectations, and beliefs of individuals. Such influences, conditions, and considerations have been shown to vary by such variables as gender, racial/ethnic group, and socioeconomic status, variables that have been generally absent in prior research examining the relationship between marital status and adaptation.

Fifth, while the quality of the marital relationship has been identified as an important mediator in the relationship between marital status and adaptation, the nature of relationships maintained by single individuals has not been examined in prior research. It is possible that outcomes for singles are influenced greatly by the extent to which they are involved in relationships, especially given the "protection/support" hypothesis that is used to explain differences in the adaptation of single and married respondents. Such relationships, especially committed ones, can greatly reduce the possible differences in personal and occupational outcomes between individuals who are single and happily married.

Last, the association between relationship status and adaptation has been limited largely to civilian populations. Although the adaptation of single and married soldiers to

Army demands has been compared in prior research (e.g., Bowen, 1989; Orthner et al., 1985), the influence of relationship involvement among singles on their adaptation has not received any attention in the military literature.

Although restricting its focus to those single soldiers who have never been married, this present study has the potential to shed considerable light on the association between relationship status and adaptation in the U.S. Army. Not only are a broader array of dependent outcomes examined than has been characteristic of prior research with civilian populations, but also, variations in these outcomes are examined across groups of single soldiers that have been categorized according to their relationship involvements and level of commitment. In addition, outcomes for these soldiers are compared to a group of soldiers who report that they are happily married, and group differences are examined in the context of gender, racial/ethnic group, and rank.¹

The data in this report were analyzed by tests for the significance between proportions produced in the analyses. As a rule of thumb, differences between proportions of less than 10 percent are less likely to be statistically significant. For small samples, even larger differences between proportions may be required to achieve significance. Appendix A includes a table of unweighted sample group totals and standard error estimates that provide a guide in interpreting differences between proportions in the report. It should be noted that special caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions where the unweighted sample group size is less than 30.

¹ Additional cross-tabulations from the data (beyond those reported in the text) are available from the authors or from the Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

Profile of Single Soldiers and Their Relationships

The information on young single soldiers in the Army is based on a probability sample of Army active duty personnel in 1989. The sample was randomly selected from installations and units in CONUS and overseas. Each of the soldiers had received PCS orders to their current assignment.

Approximately 30 percent of the 11,035 soldiers who completed the Army Soldier and Family Survey were included in the present analysis ($n=3259$), including 2,242 single soldiers and a comparison group of 1,017 married soldiers. These respondents were restricted to junior enlisted (privates, privates 1st class, corporals and specialists) and company grade officer (1st and 2nd lieutenants and captains) ranks (84% and 16% of the restricted sample, respectively). Respondents were further restricted to those under 30 years of age with no children. The single soldier sample included only those who had never been married. A demographic profile of the sample used in the present analysis is contained in Appendix A.

For purposes of this analysis, relationship status among young single soldiers was based on whether the soldier indicated he or she was "engaged or significantly involved" in a relationship with someone. Among soldiers who answered no, they were classified as *independent singles*. Among those who answered yes, the seriousness of that relationship was defined by how frequently the soldier had discussed marriage with his or her girlfriend or boyfriend. Those who indicated they never, seldom, or only sometimes discussed marriage were classified as being *involved*. Those who indicated they had discussed marriage often or very often were defined as *committed*. Among young single male soldiers, 55 percent were classified as independent, 27 percent were considered involved, and 18 percent were in committed relationships (see Figure 1). Among young female soldiers, 40 percent were classified as independent, 33 percent were involved, and 27 percent were in committed relationships (see Figure 1).

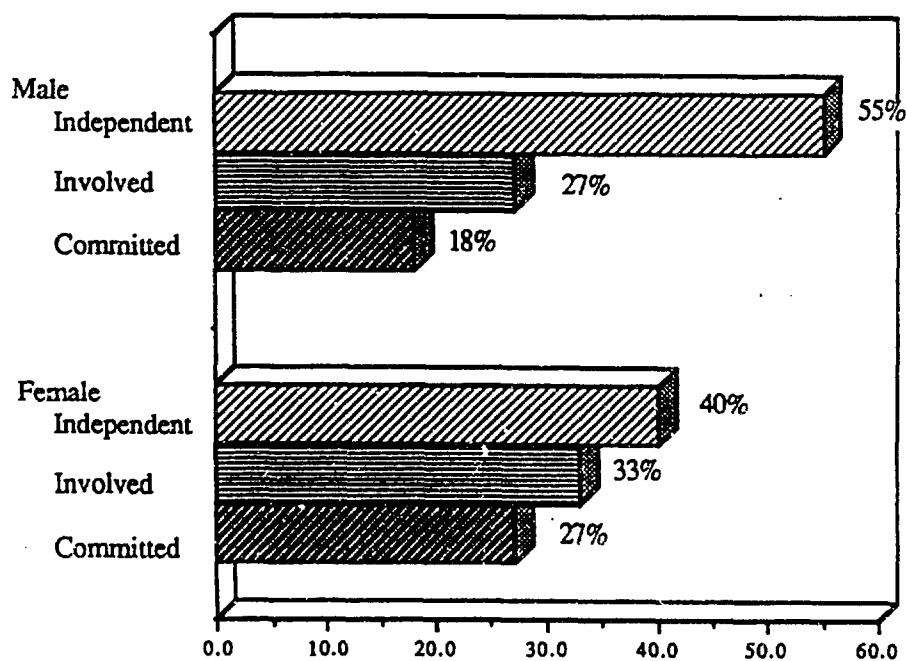


Figure 1. Young single soldiers and their relationships in the Army.

As expected, given the more optimal relationship formation environment that is found for minorities in the military as compared to the civilian sector, differences in relationship involvement by race and ethnic group were slight (see Table 1). A slightly higher proportion of White (57%) and Hispanic (55%) males were independent compared to Black males (51%). Similarly, a somewhat higher proportion of Black males were involved in committed relationships than other male soldiers.

Some differences were also found in relationship status according to the pay grade of the young soldiers (see Table 2). The pattern of relationship status by grade, however, was quite different for young male and female soldiers. Among males, a higher proportion of those in the most junior enlisted grades were independent (60%) compared to corporals/specialists (53%), sergeants (54%), or junior officers (52%).

Counter to the pattern for males, the proportion of female soldiers who were independent increased as pay grade increased: privates (32%) corporals/specialists (43%), sergeants (48%), and lieutenants (50%). Not surprisingly given the ratio of male to female soldiers, in comparisons between male and female enlisted soldiers, a greater proportion of males were independent. There were no significant differences in relationship status between male and female junior officers.

Table 1

Young Single Soldiers and Their Relationships: Gender and Race/Ethnic Differences

Relationship Status	<u>Males</u>			<u>Females</u>	
	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Independent	57	51	55	38	44
Involved	26	29	30	35	29
Committed	<u>17</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>27</u>
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 2

Young Single Soldiers and Their Relationships: Gender and Rank/Grade Differences

Relationship	Males				Females			
	Priv.	Corp./Spec.	Serg.	Offic.	Priv.	Corp./Spec.	Serg.	Offic.
Status	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Independent	60	53	54	52	32	43	48	50
Involved	23	29	28	26	32	30	26	28
Committed	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>22</u>
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

An analysis was conducted to determine if there were any differences in the relationship involvements of single soldiers according to the type of unit they were in or the location of that unit. No significant differences were found in the level of relationship involvement among soldiers in combat, combat support, combat services support, or TDA units. Likewise, there were no differences in relationship involvement among soldiers in CONUS, Europe or other OCONUS locations.

Young soldiers in relationships were asked for some basic demographic information about their partner, including their military status or experience and their distance from the soldier. In terms of military status, very few male soldiers were in relationships with current or former active duty personnel (see Table 3). Only one in ten had a relationship with a person who was currently on active duty and very few had partners who had ever been on active duty. Among young female soldiers, the findings are quite different. Only one in ten of their partners had never been on active duty and eight out of ten were currently on active duty. There are no substantial differences in the proportions of active duty personnel in relationships with other soldiers between CONUS and OCONUS locations.

Table 3

Military Status of Single Soldiers' Partners

Partner:	Male		Females	
	Involved	Committed	Involved	Committed
	%	%	%	%
Currently on active duty	10	9	85	81
Formerly on active duty	2	3	6	12
Never on active duty	<u>88</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>7</u>
Total	100	100	100	100

Many single soldiers were involved in relationships with partners who lived relatively nearby (see Table 4). About half (49%) of the young male soldiers were in relationships with partners "living within a 2-hour drive" of their current location. This suggests that many of these relationships were initiated after the soldier joined the Army and probably at their current location. Among those males who were in less serious, involved relationships, 44 percent of their partners lived nearby. A greater proportion of those in more committed relationships lived nearby (55%). In contrast to males, a smaller proportion of females had a partner who lived nearby (24%). This was particularly true in the less serious involved relationships (18%) but was also true for those in committed relationships (30%). In contrast to the finding for males, there was a tendency for the more serious relationships of female soldiers to involve someone who lived nearby.

Table 4

Proximity of Single Soldiers' Partners

	<u>% with partners less than 2 hours away</u>	
	<u>MALES</u>	<u>FEMALES</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
CONUS (Total)	(49)	(24)
Involved	45	15
Committed	56	32
Europe (Total)	(45)	(29)
Involved	41	27
Committed	50	30
Other OCONUS (Total)	(63)	(11)
Involved	57	9
Committed	72	15
Total	(49)	(24)
Involved	44	18
Committed	55	30

The proximity to the partner was also influenced by the duty station of the soldier (see Table 4). A greater proportion of male soldiers in non-European, OCONUS locations (63%) lived near their partners than those in Europe (45%) or in CONUS (49%). A much smaller proportion of female than male soldiers lived near their partners at all locations. This was particularly true for those who were assigned to non-European OCONUS locations (11%) as compared to those in Europe (29%) and CONUS (24%). While it was not surprising that young male soldiers were dating others who lived nearby, it is somewhat noteworthy that a substantial proportion of male soldiers living overseas had partners who lived nearby, most likely foreign nationals. Since the overwhelming majority of males were dating civilians, the fact that nearly half of those living in Europe were dating someone who was also in Europe suggests that proximity is a powerful factor in the development of relationships.

Relationship Status and Adaptation to Army Life

Job Performance

This section of the report describes the analysis of variables reflecting soldier job performance and relationship status among single and married young soldiers. Primary analyses focus on variations in job performance among singles who are either independent, those who are in less serious relationships, or those in committed relationships. For comparison purposes, the analyses provide selected comparisons of singles with married soldiers who describe their relationships as happy, all of whom are of similar rank, grade, and age.

Four variables were examined as illustrative of job performance and soldier readiness: (1) the rating of soldier performance and readiness made by 1st and 2nd line supervisors, (2) the soldier's level of perceived preparation to perform wartime tasks, (3) the soldier's receipt of letters of appreciation, commendation or achievement in the last two years, and (4) the soldier's perceived success at dealing with current work responsibilities. For some soldiers, ratings were secured only from a 1st or 2nd line supervisor. In cases where ratings were available from both supervisors, an average supervisor rating was computed for purposes of analysis (Sadacca and DiFazio, 1991).

As the data on Table 5 indicate, there were no differences in ratings of performance among young single soldiers in different relationship statuses, whether those ratings were provided by supervisors or whether they were self-ratings. One-third of the soldiers were rated high in job performance by their supervisors, and this proportion did not differ significantly for those with or without relational partners. The highest performance indicators for single soldiers were associated with receiving administrative letters of support and perceived success in meeting work responsibilities. Approximately three out of four single soldiers across relationship status received high marks on these job performance indicators. Young married soldiers were somewhat more likely to receive higher ratings by their supervisors, and they were also more likely than independent single soldiers to feel that they were meeting their work responsibilities quite well.

In general, the data indicate that a similar proportion of single female soldiers and male soldiers received high job performance ratings from their supervisors. These similarities held irrespective of relational status.

Table 5

Job Performance Variables by Relationship Status

Variables	Single			
	Independent	Involved	Committed	Happily Married
	%	%	%	%
Above average supervisor-rated performance ^a	30	30	33	41
Well prepared for war ^b	66	68	67	70
Received Letters of Commendation, etc. ^c	71	75	74	71
Success meeting work responsibilities ^d	74	76	77	83

^a 3rd and 4th quartiles: coded from low to high performance
^b Percent responding "Well" or "Very Well" prepared
^c Received one or more letters
^d Percent responding to 5, 6, 7 (well) on 7-point item

Further analyses indicated that it is important to understand the racial/ethnic background of the single soldiers in understanding their job performance. It was anticipated that racial/ethnic factors might influence the job performance of the soldiers since previous research suggested cultural differences in courtship and marriage across race/ethnic groups (Bowen & Janofsky, 1988). Indeed, the data indicate that male and female soldiers from White, Black and Hispanic backgrounds were likely to vary in the way in which their job performance was affected by their relationship commitments, especially while still single.

Among young male soldiers, there are several significant differences between White, Black and Hispanic soldiers in their supervisor ratings within relationship status groups (see Figure 2). Among White and Black male soldiers, there were no differences in supervisor ratings of job performance among soldiers who were in relationships as compared to those who were independent singles. Among young White male soldiers, higher supervisor ratings were given to those who were married than to those who were single, but this was not true

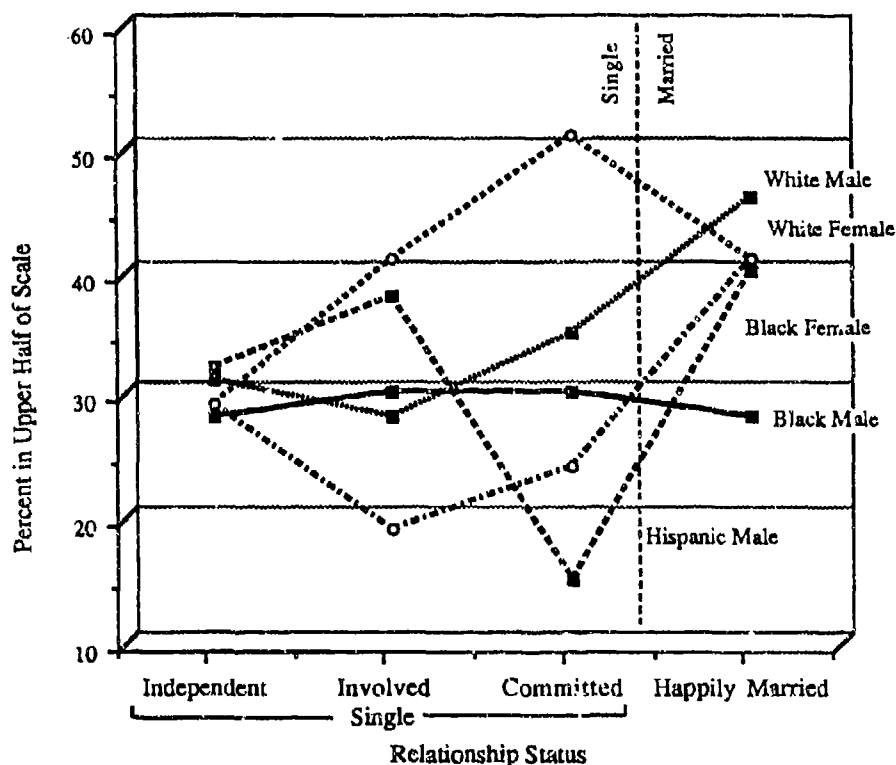
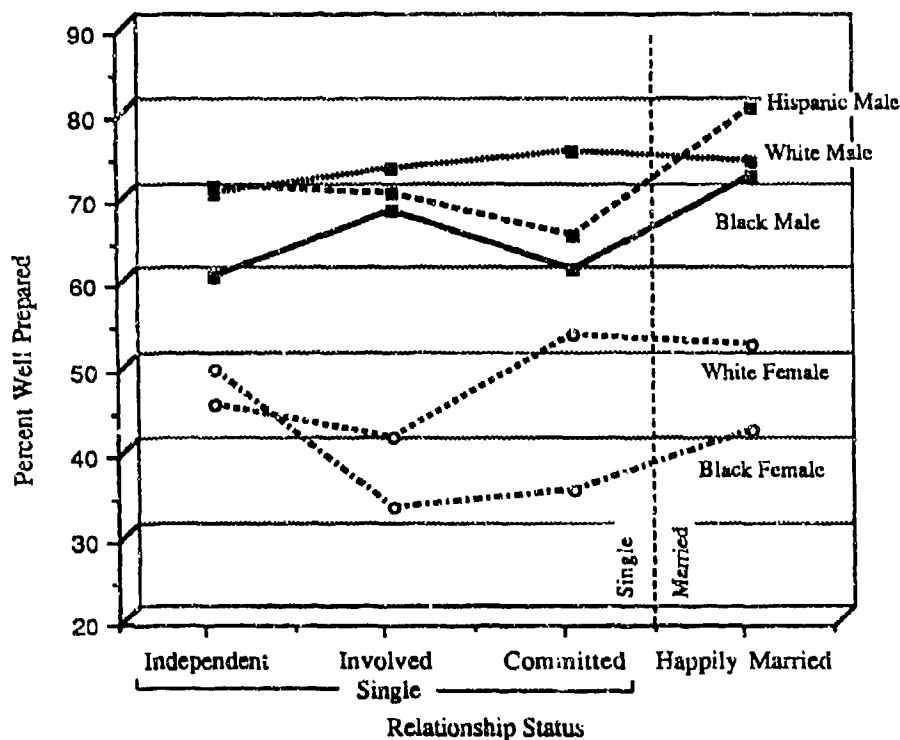


Figure 2. Supervisor ratings of performance.

for Black soldiers. Compared to their counterparts who were independent singles or involved in less serious relationships, a lower proportion of Hispanic males in committed relationships received high supervisor ratings. However, the proportion of Hispanic soldiers who were married that received high ratings on job performance was similar to those in less committed relationships. Among young female soldiers, the pattern of supervisor ratings of job performance indicators was somewhat different. A higher proportion of young, White females who were in relationships received above average job performance ratings than those who were not in relationships. There was a proportional increase in high supervisor ratings across relationship status groups for White females. In contrast, among young Black females, a lower proportion of those involved in less serious relationships received above average job performance ratings than those in the other relationship status groups.

When the data were analyzed in light of perceived self-preparedness for war, similar patterns to supervisor rated performance appeared in the results (see Figure 3). In contrast to the other indicators of job performance, a lower proportion of female than male soldiers reported being well prepared to perform their jobs under wartime conditions. This may reflect more about the specific job responsibilities of female soldiers than about their overall readiness, since females are prohibited from performing certain wartime job responsibilities.



*Only includes soldiers in combat support and combat service support units.

Figure 3. Perceived preparedness for war.

Overall, it would appear that a slightly higher proportion of both male and female White soldiers who were in relationships, especially those in committed relationships, felt better prepared for war than those who were in no relationships. The pattern for Hispanic male soldiers, however, paralleled findings for supervisor ratings of performance, with a slightly lower percentage of those in committed relationships feeling prepared to perform their tasks in war. Among young Black female soldiers, a lower proportion of those who were either in involved or committed relationships reported feeling well prepared for war compared to those who had no relationships. Among young Black male soldiers, a lower proportion of those who were independent or in committed relationships felt well prepared for war than Black males who were married. In addition, a lower proportion of independent or committed Black males felt well prepared for war than their White male counterparts.

It should be noted that the four indicators of job performance were also examined in terms of the grade and rank of the young single soldiers. Compared to their enlisted counterparts, a higher proportion of officers both rated themselves high on these measures and were rated above average by their supervisors. In addition, within enlisted groups, a higher proportion of corporals/specialists and sergeants were rated high in performance by supervisors compared to privates.

In general, the findings related to job performance and relationship status among young soldiers indicate that the presence and level of relational commitment among single soldiers can have an impact on the way soldiers are rated by their supervisors and how they are performing their jobs or are prepared to perform those jobs in time of war. Among young White men and women, relationship involvements and commitments appear to be reconciled quite effectively with their work, resulting in higher or no differences in ratings of performance and preparedness among those in more committed relationships. The pattern of responses to balancing work and relationship demands among Black and Hispanic soldiers was somewhat less clear. Hispanic male soldiers, in particular, appeared to experience more difficulty in maintaining high levels of job performance and preparedness when they were in more committed, non-marital relationships. Among those who were happily married, however, high ratings on performance and preparedness were again reported by young Hispanic soldiers. A lower proportion of young, Black female soldiers similarly reported high ratings on performance and preparedness when they were in less serious relationships. Their Black male counterparts, however, did not experience this pattern of lower ratings; instead, they appeared to be slightly advantaged by involvements in less serious relationships.

Retention and Relationships

The potential impact of relationships on the retention of young, single soldiers is of importance to the Army. Considerable attention has been given to the contribution of spouses to the retention of married soldiers; yet little is known about how the retention-related attitudes and behaviors of single soldiers are affected by their relationship status.

In the present analysis, six retention-related variables were examined (see Table 6). Two of the indicators were based on scales that assessed the probability of remaining in the Army and the level of current commitment to the Army and its values. Two additional variables addressed the issue of how good or bad soldiers would feel if they decided to stay or leave the Army after their current obligation. Two other variables addressed the extent to which soldiers felt their Army job was better or worse than a civilian job, and beliefs that the Army or they were getting a better deal from their current obligation.

Table 6

Retention Variables by Relationship Status

Variables	Single			
	Independent	Involved	Committed	Happily Married
	%	%	%	%
Plan to remain in Army ^a	29	29	34	47
Committed to the Army ^b	57	57	54	66
Feel good about staying in ^c	26	29	27	36
Feel good about leaving ^d	58	59	55	45
Army job better than civilian ^e	37	37	39	44
Army getting better deal than self ^f	62	62	66	60

^a 3rd and 4th quartiles: coded from 'planning to leave' to 'planning to stay'

^b Percent responding medium or high commitment

^c Percent responding "Quite Good" or "Extremely Good" about staying

^d Percent responding "Quite Good" or "Extremely Good" about leaving

^e 3rd and 4th quartiles: coded from 'civilian job better' to 'Army job better'

^f Percent responding 'getting a much worse deal than Army'

As the data in Table 6 suggest, a higher proportion of young married soldiers felt positive about a continued Army obligation than single soldiers. However, in general, few proportional differences were found in the retention-related attitudes of single soldiers across relationship status groups. As was the case with job performance, more specific analyses are necessary in order to determine if relationship status among singles is related to retention plans or the factors that might influence those plans.

First, it is important to examine differences between men and women in their retention plans and the role that relationship status can play in those plans. The data in Figure 4 indicate that a higher proportion of single women without relationships planned on staying in the Army than single men without relationships. However, as men became more involved with partners, there was a noticeable increase in the proportion of men who planned to remain

in the Army, as compared to females, especially when they were married (49%). Meanwhile, a lower proportion of women who were in relationships than those who were independent (42%) had high retention probability, whether those relationships were less serious (24%) or committed (30%). Apparently, the prospect of having to balance a relationship with Army responsibilities concerns many women, and this may cause them to consider leaving the Army. These women may also marry or become involved with soldiers who are leaving the Army, since women who marry soldiers staying in the Army may also stay in the Army themselves.

The potential effect of relationship status varied somewhat by gender and race. In general, a higher proportion of Black men (26%) and women (52%) who were independent planned to continue their Army obligation than independent White men (26%) and women (32%). A higher proportion of White males in committed relationships wanted to continue their obligation (35%) than those with no relationships (26%). Among Black males, however, level of relational commitment had no effect on Army career plans. Among female soldiers, a reverse pattern was observed. A lower proportion of Black females in committed relationships planned on staying in the Army (34%) compared to those who were independent (52%). Among White females, the same pattern was observed, although the differences were not significant: 27% of those in committed relationships planned to remain compared to 32% of those with no relationship.

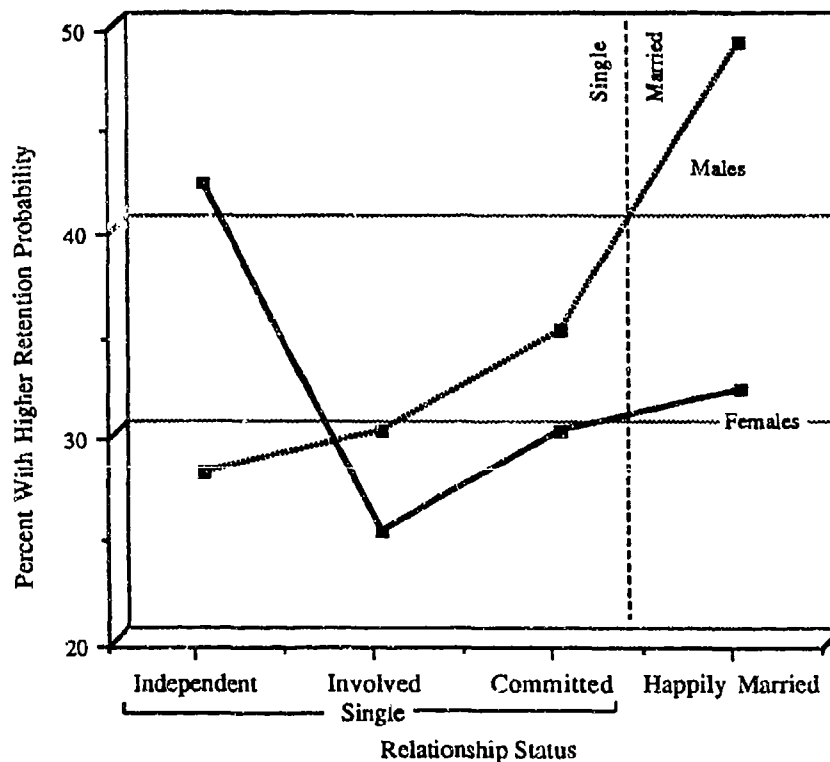


Figure 4. Higher probability of retention.

The attitudes underlying these retention intentions also reflected the differential role of relationships for young male and female soldiers (see Figure 5). While there were no differences between White male and female single soldiers in their attitudes toward staying in the Army, for both Black and White young men and women, a somewhat higher proportion of those in less serious relationships reported feeling good about staying in the Army than those who were either independent or involved in committed relationships. Overall, anticipation of feeling good about an Army career is higher among young Black soldiers, compared to White soldiers, and these attitudes appear to be enhanced during earlier stages of relationship development. For Black women, there was a very high percentage who felt good about staying in the Army when they were in less involved relationships (44%); but among those who were in either independent (34%) or in committed relationships (37%), the perceptions were slightly less positive.

Among Hispanic male soldiers, the data suggested that those in relationships may have special concerns. Independent Hispanic males reported relatively high levels of interest in staying in the Army (34%) compared to those in less involved relationships (26%) and those in committed relationships (20%). These data suggest that Hispanic male soldiers may experience somewhat more distress related to anticipated problems in reconciling committed interpersonal relationships and the career demands of being a soldier.

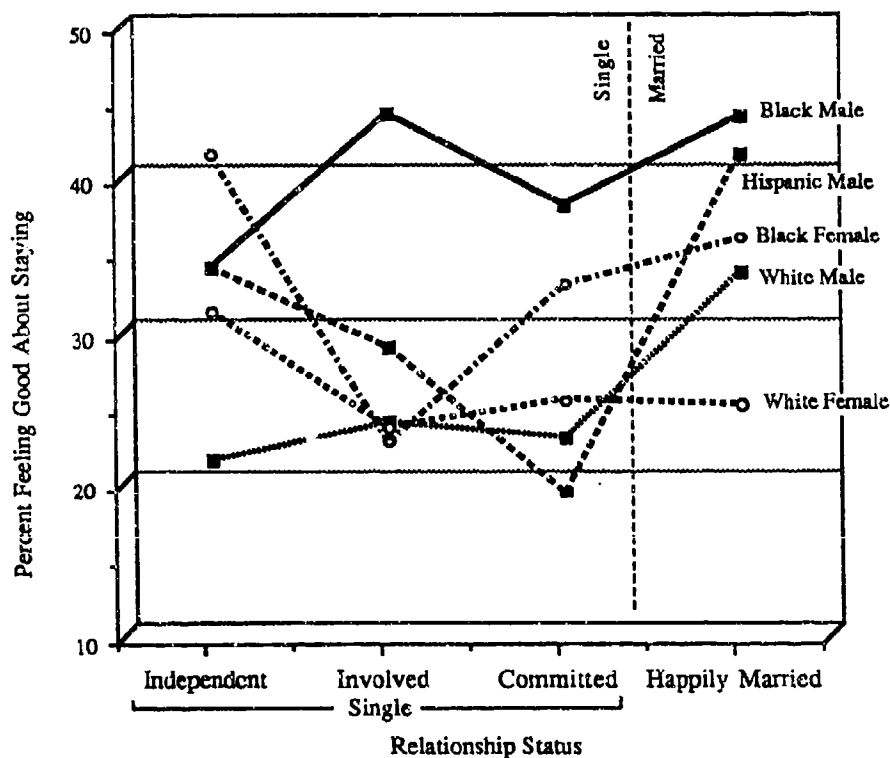


Figure 5. Feeling good about staying in the Army among young single soldiers.

In order to determine some of the factors that may play a role in encouraging or discouraging retention for young single soldiers, several additional analyses were conducted. First, as a test of an instrumental factor, comparisons between Army and civilian jobs and the perceived equity of the Army environment were examined across relationship status. In terms of job comparisons, few proportional differences in relationship status among singles were found in beliefs about whether jobs were better in the Army or in civilian life. Relationship status differences were found for Black females, with 58 percent of those not in relationships considering jobs better in the Army compared to 37 percent of those who were involved in less serious relationships and 29 percent in committed relationships. In addition, Hispanic males in less committed, involved relationships were significantly less likely to consider Army jobs better (19%), compared to those who were independent (38%) or in committed relationships (40%).

A higher proportion of both Black and White female soldiers who were involved in relationships saw the Army as a less equitable environment than those who were not in relationships. Over two-thirds (71%) of the women in committed relationships considered the Army to be getting a better deal than they were from their obligation compared to only half (51%) of those who were independently single. While the issue of equity was not a significant discriminating factor among young male soldiers, these differences for women suggest that more serious, committed relationships may prompt many of these women to question whether the Army will take unfair advantage of their military obligations and unfairly compete with their relational needs and obligations.

As a measure of the degree to which the girlfriend or boyfriend might have a direct impact on soldier retention attitudes and behavior, additional analyses were conducted to determine the extent to which the soldier perceived their partner to be supportive of their being in the Army, as well as the effect of their partner living nearby or having experience with active duty status. In terms of support for staying in the Army, soldiers were asked to indicate whether their partner or spouse supported their staying in the Army. In general, the data indicated that the more committed the relationship the stronger the perception of support for staying in the Army (see Figure 6). The strength of this support is particularly strong for young male soldiers. Only 24 percent of those in less involved relationships believed that their partners supported their staying in the Army compared to 33 percent of those in committed relationships and 44 percent of those who were married. Among single female soldiers, fewer than one out of four felt that their partners were supportive of their staying in the Army, even among those who were in committed relationships (24%).

It should be noted that a higher proportion of young Black soldiers felt that they were getting support for staying in the Army in comparison to young White soldiers. For example, a significantly lower proportion of White males in committed relationships believed that their partners wanted them to stay in the Army (23%) compared to Black males (43%). This pattern also held for females but not as strongly. Only 22 percent of White females in committed relationships believed that their partners wanted them to stay in the Army in comparison to 28 percent of Black female soldiers in these relationships.

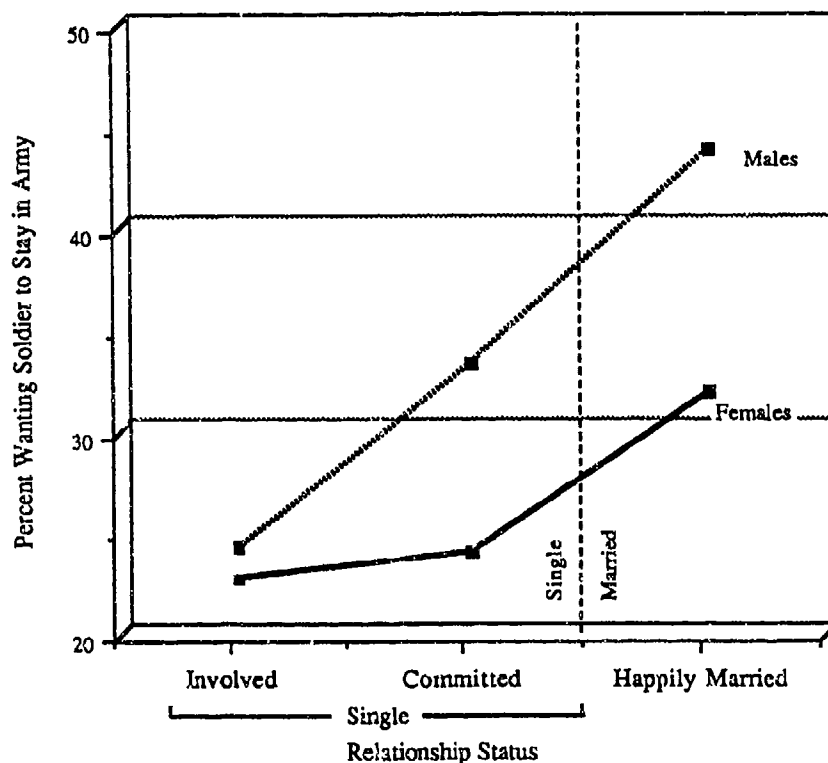


Figure 6. Friend/spouse wants soldier to stay in the Army.

It is possible that the support that partners provide is affected by their experiences with the military and their proximity to the soldier. The data suggest that when partners also have military experience, they are less likely to be supportive of their partner remaining on active duty. Among those whose partner was also on active duty, 29 percent of the males and 18 percent of the females believed that their friend/partner was supportive of their staying in the Army. Among those whose friend was previously on active duty, a similar percentage of males (33%), but a lower percentage of females (10%) felt their friend/partner was supportive.

Nevertheless, of soldiers whose partner had not experienced active duty status, a higher proportion received high support for remaining on active duty. This was true for both males (38%) and females (30%). If the partner was living nearby (less than two hours away), this was more likely to be a positive factor for female soldiers than for male soldiers. Among those who had a friend nearby, 24 percent of the males and 41 percent of the females considered their friend to be supportive of their staying in the Army. When their friend was farther away, 31 percent of the males and 25 percent of the females considered their friend to be supportive.

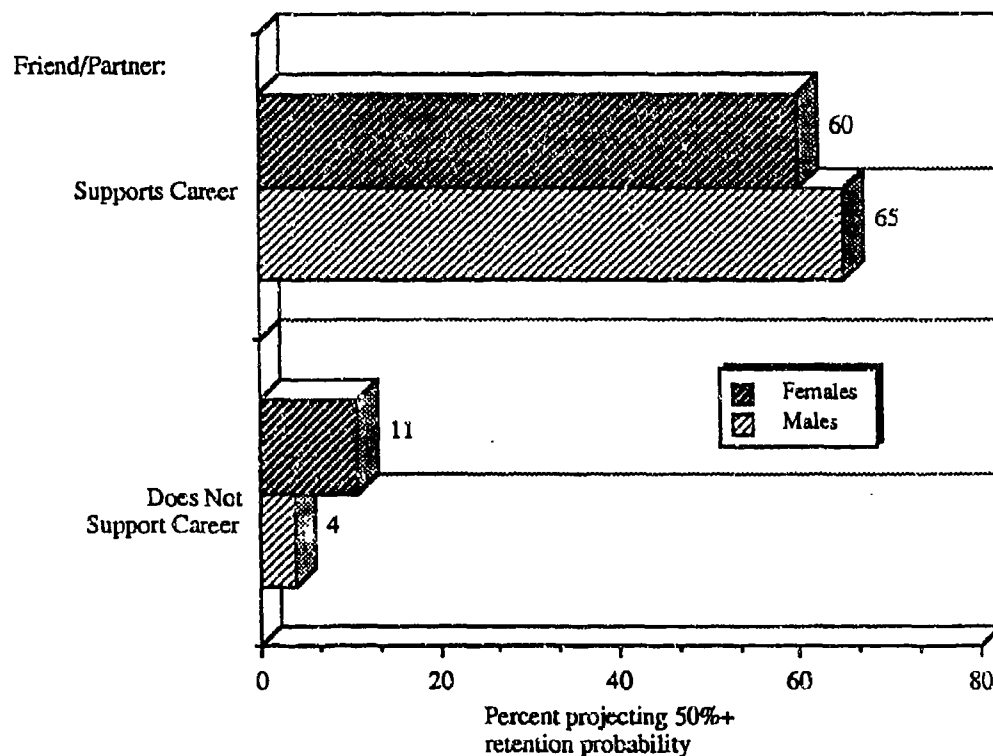


Figure 7. Friend/partner supports Army career among young single soldiers.

The bottom line for this discussion of the impact of relational status on retention can be seen in the data reported in Figure 7. It is apparent that when the partner does not support the soldier's career in the Army, the probabilities of either male soldiers (4%) or female soldiers (11%) staying on active duty is rather low. In contrast, when the soldier believed that the partner was supportive of their staying in the Army, they were much more likely to indicate plans to remain beyond their current obligation. These findings are similar to those that have been found among married personnel and spouses, suggesting that partners in single relationships can have a significant impact on the soldier's career decision making.

Job Attitudes and Relationships

In addition to job performance and retention, job-related attitudes may also be associated with the relationships of single soldiers. In fact, it is anticipated that variations in job attitudes may serve as a factor influencing some of the differences already examined in retention intentions and job performance among these young single soldiers. The attitudes towards the Army and Army work can play a significant role in conditioning subsequent behaviors such as performing well on one's job and continuing one's obligation and career.

Five Army job-related variables were examined in this analysis (see Table 7). Three of these variables were assessed by scales incorporated into the survey questionnaire. These included scales on satisfaction with work, level of work stress, and soldiering importance. In each case, the percentage of the soldiers who scored in the upper half of these scales for the total sample of soldiers is reported on Table 7. In addition, analyses included two single item variables that are of potential importance. The first is a measure of the satisfaction with the Army as a way of life. The second is the perception of the level of work demands that the Army makes on the soldier.

With only one exception, work stress, a higher proportion of happily married soldiers than single soldiers gave an affirmative response to each job-related variable. In general, few proportional differences were found in the job-related attitudes of single soldiers across relationship status groups. However, a higher proportion of single soldiers in committed relationships believed that they experienced higher work demands compared to their independent counterparts. The latter finding may be the result of having to meet their work demands while also meeting the obligations and responsibilities associated with close, interpersonal relationships.

Table 7

Job Attitude Variables by Relationship Status

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Single</u>			
	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Involved</u>	<u>Committed</u>	<u>Happily Married</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Satisfied with Army ^a as a way of life	35	38	38	50
Satisfied with Work ^b	39	40	37	47
Higher work stress ^c	52	53	50	48
Soldiering importance ^d	40	43	44	55
Perceive high work demands ^e	36	38	45	48

^a Percent responding in upper half of the scale: coded from low to high satisfaction

^b 3rd and 4th quartiles: coded from low to high satisfaction

^c 3rd and 4th quartiles: coded from low to high stress

^d 3rd and 4th quartiles: coded from low to high importance

^e Percent responding in lower third of the scale: coded from low to high demand

When male and female soldiers were compared on their job attitudes according to their relationship status, several important differences emerged. For example, a lower proportion of females in relationships had high levels of Army job satisfaction compared to independent females; however, no such proportional differences were found for single males across relationship status groups (see Figure 8). In addition, a higher proportion of females who were not in relationships reported high levels of job satisfaction (57%) than their male counterparts (38%). However, there were no differences in ratings of job satisfaction among males and females in committed relationships (39% and 38%, respectively). These patterns hold for both Black and White males and females across each of the status groups.

Male and female soldiers also appeared to respond differently to work stress and perceptions of soldiering importance according to their relationship status. In general, a greater proportion of young male Black single soldiers reported high work stress than White soldiers, whether or not they were involved in relationships. Among Hispanic soldiers, however, the proportion of those reporting high work stress was lower among those in committed relationships (43%) than those who were independent (64%) or in involved relationships (59%).

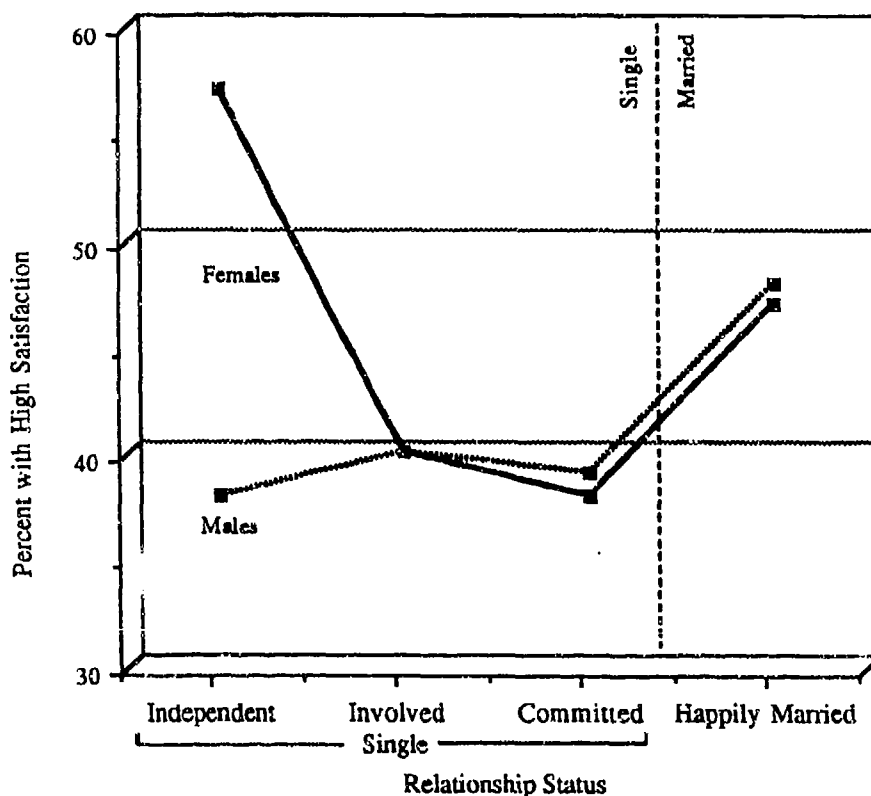


Figure 8. Satisfaction with Army job.

In terms of soldiering attitudes, there was a trend toward a higher proportion of Black and white male soldiers who were involved in relationships reporting higher levels of soldiering importance than independent singles, especially if those relationships were committed (see Figure 9). Again, a reverse trend was noted among Hispanic males, with those in committed relationships less likely to report soldiering importance.

Among young women, the pattern of responses to perceptions of soldiering importance is quite different from that of male soldiers. As the data on Figure 9 indicate, a significantly lower proportion of those in more committed relationships reported high soldiering importance, suggesting that women in these relationships were experiencing more conflict between soldiering and relationship demands.

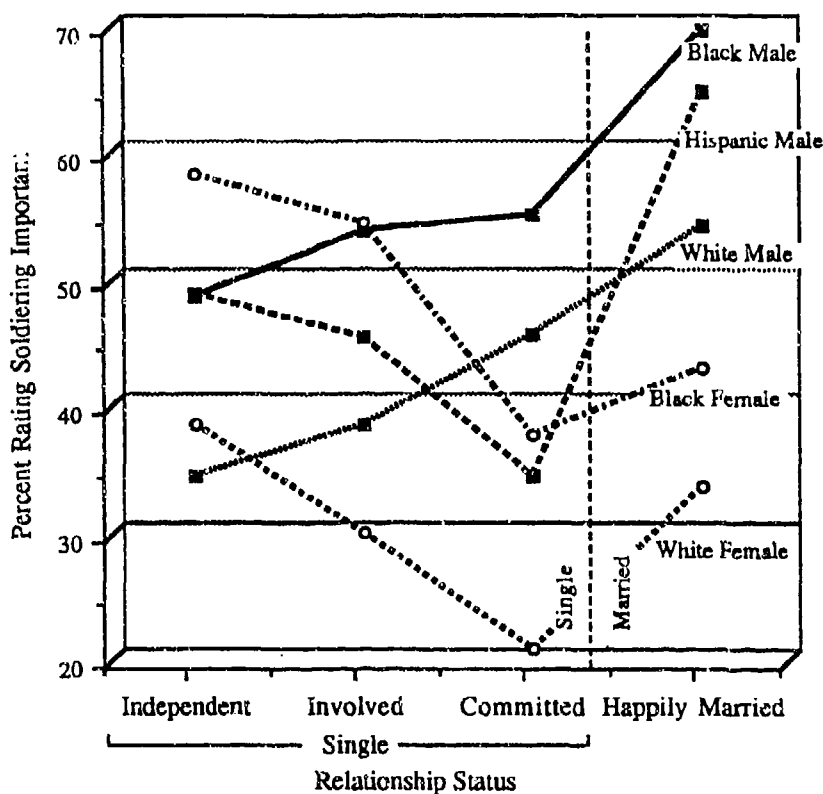


Figure 9. Perception of soldiering importance.

When perceptions of work stress were examined, Black and White women responded somewhat differently. The proportion of single White women in less involved relationships who reported high work stress (43%) was not different from those who were independent (47%). In contrast, a significantly lower proportion of young Black women in less involved relationships reported high levels of stress (31%), compared to those in committed (50%) or no relationships (48%). This suggests, as was noted earlier, that Black and White female single soldiers may respond differently to relationships; in this case, Black women appeared to be somewhat less likely to experience work distress when they were in less serious relationships, while the work stress of White women was largely unaffected by relationship involvement.

Finally, substantial differences were found in perceptions of satisfaction with the Army way of life (see Figure 10). A higher proportion of female soldiers who were not involved in relationships felt satisfied with the Army (53%) than their male counterparts with no relationships (32%). Among those who were in relationships, the proportional differences between males and females in satisfaction with the Army were inconsequential. These trends in satisfaction for single males and females were maintained even in the context of

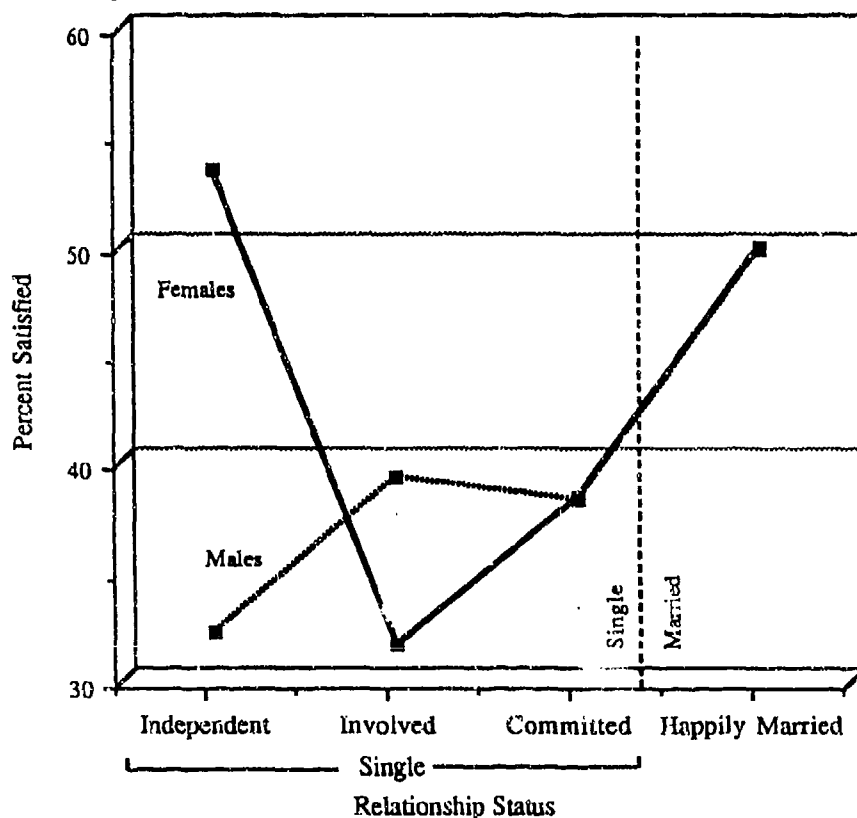


Figure 10. Satisfaction with Army way of life.

racial/ethnic group and rank and grade comparisons. Compared to their single counterpart, a higher proportion of happily married soldiers reported high levels of satisfaction with the Army way of life. These data are consistent with the overall data on Army job attitudes reported above.

Overall, the data on Army job and quality of life attitudes suggest that involvement in relationships is more likely to be associated with neutral to positive influences on male single soldiers, but have mixed influences on female single soldiers. These impacts are most dramatically revealed on overall satisfaction with the Army way of life and on satisfaction with Army jobs. Male soldiers appear able to enter into relationships without substantially threatening their attitudes toward their work and the Army. If anything, participation by males in relationships is transferred into somewhat more positive perceptions among some of these soldiers. On the other hand, single female soldiers are less clear in the way in which they accommodate close relationships with their job responsibilities. Relational involvement tends to be associated with some deterioration in their otherwise high levels of Army job satisfaction and satisfaction with the quality of Army life and the importance women give to soldiering roles. But relationships do not appear to have a negative effect on work stress and may lower stress on Black women under conditions of less commitment to marriage.

Psychological Well-Being and Relationships

The importance of psychological well-being is often recognized by military leaders, especially its influence in promoting positive work attitudes and behaviors. Soldiers who feel a greater sense of self-worth, integration, and self-control are often considered better able to perform assigned tasks and to contribute to unit morale and readiness. The level of psychological well-being may be tied to the nature and quality of intimate relationships between men and women. By providing a viable source of social support, personal relationships may play a catalytic role in enhancing psychological well-being, helping to explain some of the comparisons noted earlier between relationship status and work attitudes and behavior.

In this analysis, three areas of psychological well-being were examined: self-esteem, alienation, and locus of control. Each are considered important attributes of the self. Self-esteem is one of the most consistently studied variables in psychology. In the present analysis, it is defined as the extent to which the individual soldier feels secure, hopeful, and pleased with self.

Alienation is defined as the extent to which the individual soldier feels isolated, lonely and afraid. People who are alienated often separate themselves from others and feel vulnerable in both their day-to-day life and their relationships with others. Locus of control refers to whether a person is internally or externally directed. Internal control suggests greater levels of independent thinking and confidence in producing intended results.

The responses of soldiers to each of these psychological scales were divided into quartiles representing low, moderately low, moderately high and high values. Using the third and fourth response quartiles, psychological well-being is discussed below as high self-esteem, low alienation, and internal locus of control. As the data on Table 8 indicate, a lower

proportion of singles than happily married soldiers reported a high level of psychological well-being. For the most part, however, comparisons across the single groups revealed relatively small proportional differences.

Table 8

Psychological Well-Being Variables by Relationship Status

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Single</u>			
	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Involved</u>	<u>Committed</u>	<u>Happily Married</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Low Alienation ^a	31	36	32	53
Internal Locus of Control ^b	38	38	35	43
High Self-Esteem ^c	45	48	46	58

^a 3rd and 4th quartiles: Coded from high to low alienation.

^b 3rd and 4th quartiles: Coded from external to internal locus of control.

^c 3rd and 4th quartiles: Coded from low to high self-esteem.

In the case of all three indicators, the association between psychological well-being and single relationship status is further clarified when experienced in the context of gender and racial/ethnic group breakdowns. Looking first at the critical variable of high self-esteem, young, single male soldiers did not appear to be influenced by relationship status (see Figure 11). The proportion of males who reported high self-esteem was remarkably consistent across the three relationship status groups for each racial/ethnic group examined. However, compared to White male soldiers, a higher proportion of Black and Hispanic males reported high self-esteem irrespective of single relationship status. Thus, minority male soldiers generally had more positive feelings about themselves than White males, a factor that is likely to foster their commitments to the Army and to their jobs. Only about two-fifths (41%) of single White males who were not involved in a relationship reported high self-esteem.

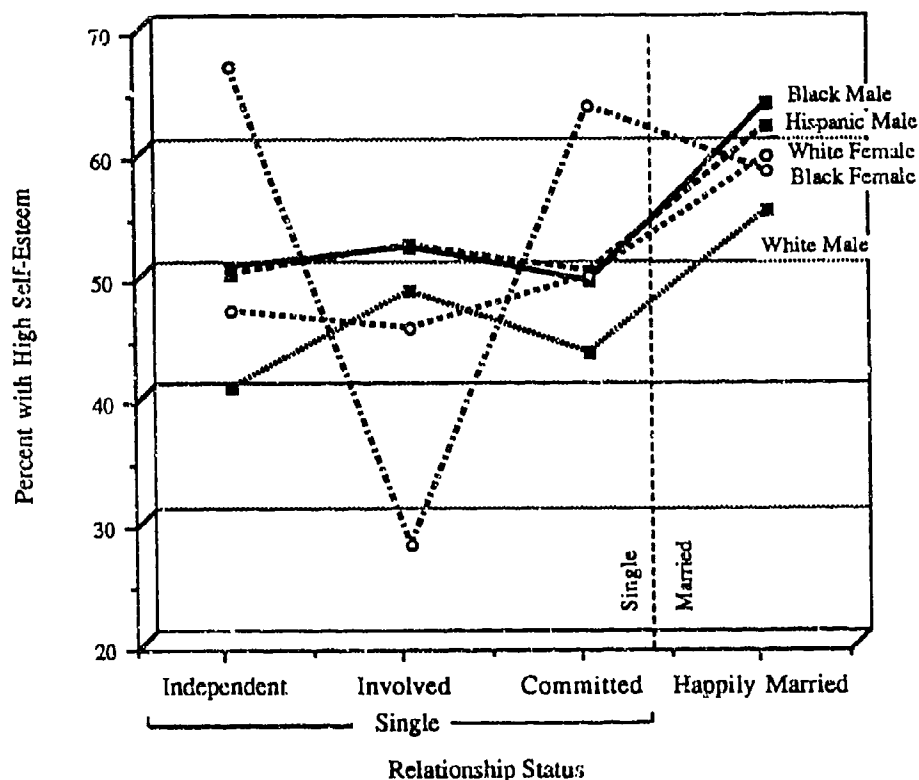


Figure 11. High self-esteem.

Among young, single Black female soldiers, a comparatively high proportion who were independent or who were in committed relationships reported high self-esteem (67% and 64%, respectively). However, among those in less serious relationships, a much lower proportion reported high self-esteem (28%) than was the case for any other group--female or male. These findings suggest that single Black females may have some difficulty in reconciling their personal and relationship needs and obligations when they become involved in less serious relationships. No similar pattern was found for White female soldiers, suggesting that relationship status may have different consequences for the self-esteem of Black and White females.

As with self-esteem, the association between alienation and relationship status must be considered in the context of gender and racial/ethnic group breakdowns. Among White and Black single females, the findings for low alienation were similar to those for self-esteem. That is, a lower proportion of Black females in less serious relationships (22%) than those in committed relationships (38%) experienced low alienation. For White single females, the findings were just the opposite: the relationship status group reporting the highest level of low alienation was the less seriously involved (37%). A similar proportion of White independent and committed females reported low alienation (25% and 25%, respectively).

Among single male soldiers, the findings for low alienation were more dramatic across relationship status groups than was the case for self-esteem. Although the proportion of single White males who reported low alienation varied little across relationship status group, more variation was present for male soldiers in the two minority groups, especially for Black males. Compared to their counterparts who were independent (28%), a higher proportion of Hispanic males in involved (38%) and committed relationships (35%) reported low alienation. However, directly contrary to their single female Black counterparts, a higher proportion of Black males in less serious relationships reported low alienation (48%) than Black males who were either independent (38%) or in committed relationships (32%).

The data on internal locus of control provides information on how relationships among singles influence the way in which they construct their social environments and shift their orientation either inward or outward in terms of psychological direction. The data in Figure 12 indicate that the proportion of White male and Black female soldiers who reported an internal locus of control varied little across single relationship status groups.

More dramatic group differences were found among White females. Although 61 percent of White females reported an internal locus of control when they had no relationship, this internal control was significantly lower among those involved in relationships. Slightly less than one-half of those involved in less serious relationships (46%) or in committed relationships (48%) reported an internal locus of control.

It is interesting to note that these findings for White females in committed relationships paralleled those for low alienation. Combined, the data for White females may help explain the greater difficulties that these women experience in committing themselves to the Army and maintaining high levels of job satisfaction and performance. Still, within relationship status groups, a higher proportion of independent White females than other gender and racial/ethnic group combinations reported an internal locus of control, suggesting that independent White females are generally more internally directed and personally motivated than other soldiers.

Similar to the pattern for White females, compared to their independent counterparts and those in less serious relationships, a lower proportion of Black (25%) and Hispanic (40%) males in committed relationships reported an internal locus of control. This pattern of findings for Hispanic males, while not dramatic, may be a factor in the findings noted earlier in which a higher proportion of those in committed relationships experienced more difficulty in their work-related roles. The lower proportion of Black males in committed relationships who reported an internal locus of control is similar to findings presented earlier regarding low alienation. Compared to their White male counterparts, committed relationships may be associated with some perceived loss of personal control and greater yielding to the needs of others among males from these minority groups.

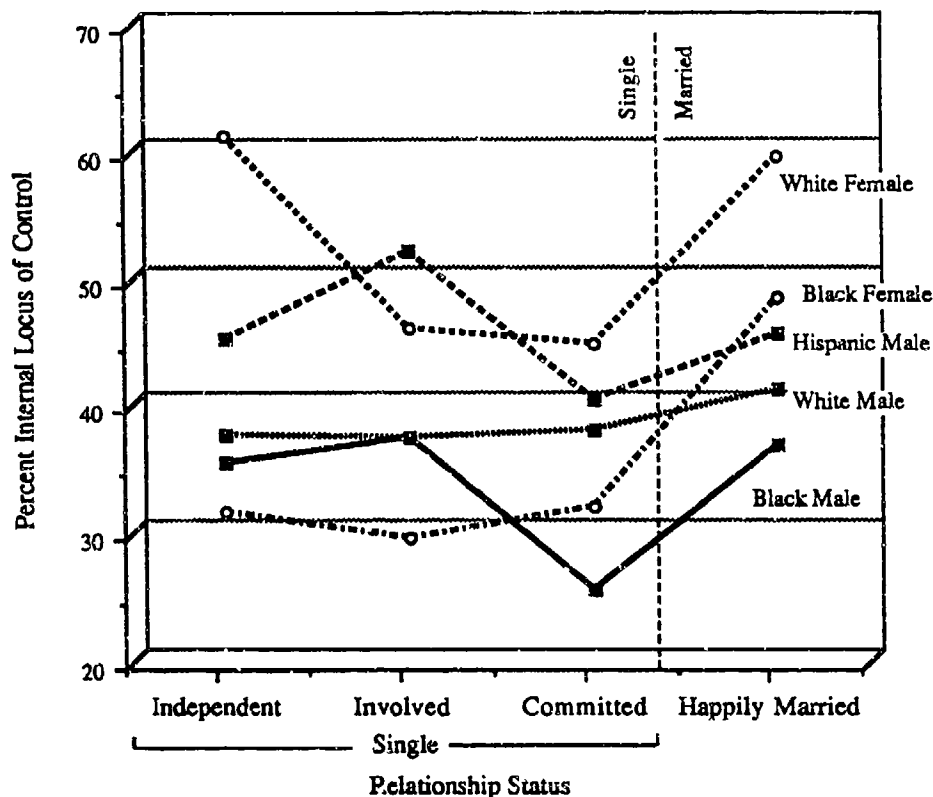


Figure 12. Internal locus of control.

Overall, the results from the analysis indicate that young soldiers who were married reported higher psychological well-being than their single counterparts across all gender and racial/ethnic group breakdowns. This trend was most apparent in group comparisons on low alienation; it was least apparent in comparisons on internal locus of control, most notably for Hispanic males. Although measures of psychological well-being among soldiers in happy marriages do vary by gender and racial/ethnic group status, in general, a happy marriage appears to be a great equalizer in the psychological well-being of young soldiers. The latter finding was confirmed for all the pay grades examined in the investigation.

All in all, the summary picture is one of personal relationships among singles having somewhat more of a negative effect on the psychological well-being of young women than on young men in the Army. However, the nature of the findings suggest the critical importance of considering both gender and racial/ethnic group in considering the association between psychological well-being and relationship status among single soldiers.

Social and Community Supports

Social and community supports are considered important variables impacting on quality of life and adaptation to personal and organizational demands. Such supports are particularly important in environments that require individuals to adapt frequently to new circumstances and where work requirements may cause personal and relational stress. Social and community supports, in this analysis, include the availability of both informal and formal sources and types of support as well as satisfaction with different aspects of community life. Such supports have been found to buffer and moderate the impact of stressor events on individual and family well-being.

Three social and community support variables were reviewed in this analysis: social support, community support, and community satisfaction. Social support was measured by a scale that assessed the level of support that the soldier could expect at the current location from either a friend, neighbor, or relative (besides the spouse, if married) outside the home under six hypothetical situations (e.g., listen to you when you need to talk; make a short-term loan of \$25.00-\$50.00). Because of differences in the categories of responses for married soldiers, only the data for singles are presented.

Unlike social support that reflected different types of instrumental and expressive support, the assessment of community support focused on six different sources of support from whom the soldier could potentially count on for help with a personal or family problem (e.g., a leader at your place of work; staff of an Army service agency). Last, community satisfaction was assessed by having soldiers rate five features of the local environment that are often associated with the quality of community life (e.g., quality of housing, recreational programs, and services for singles).

Based on their respective frequency distributions, the responses of soldiers to each of these social and community support constructs were divided into quartiles for purposes of analysis. Using the upper two quartiles, social and community supports are discussed below as high social support, high community support, and high community satisfaction.

As the data in Table 9 indicate, a higher proportion of young single soldiers perceived they were receiving high levels of social and community support if they were in a relationship, especially if the relationship was committed. This was particularly true for social support, an item set that includes more instrumental than expressive types of support. However, satisfaction with the community appeared to be largely unaffected by relationship status.

Table 9

Social and Community Support Variables by Relationship Status

Variables	Single			
	Independent	Involved	Committed	Happily Married
	%	%	%	%
Social Support ^a	55	66	70	(NA)
Community Support ^b	42	53	55	50
Community Satisfaction ^c	45	43	44	45

^a 3rd and 4th quartiles: Coded from low to high social support.

^b 3rd and 4th quartiles: Coded from low to high community support.

^c 3rd and 4th quartiles: Coded from low to high community satisfaction.

Before examining each of three social and community support variables, there are several trends across the variables that are important to note. First, the combined influence of gender and racial/ethnic group were important moderators in the association between relationship status and each dependent outcome. Second, contrary to the findings for psychological well-being across gender and racial/ethnic groups, there were fewer dramatic differences between soldiers in the single soldier groups and those who were happily married in levels of reported high community support and high community satisfaction.

While there was a trend toward greater levels of social support among single soldiers who were in relationships compared to those who were not, there were some important differences in how men and women from different racial/ethnic backgrounds felt about the availability of social support (see Figure 13). For single White soldiers, both males and females, a higher proportion of those in relationships than independent singles reported high social support. These proportions were even higher for those in committed relationships.

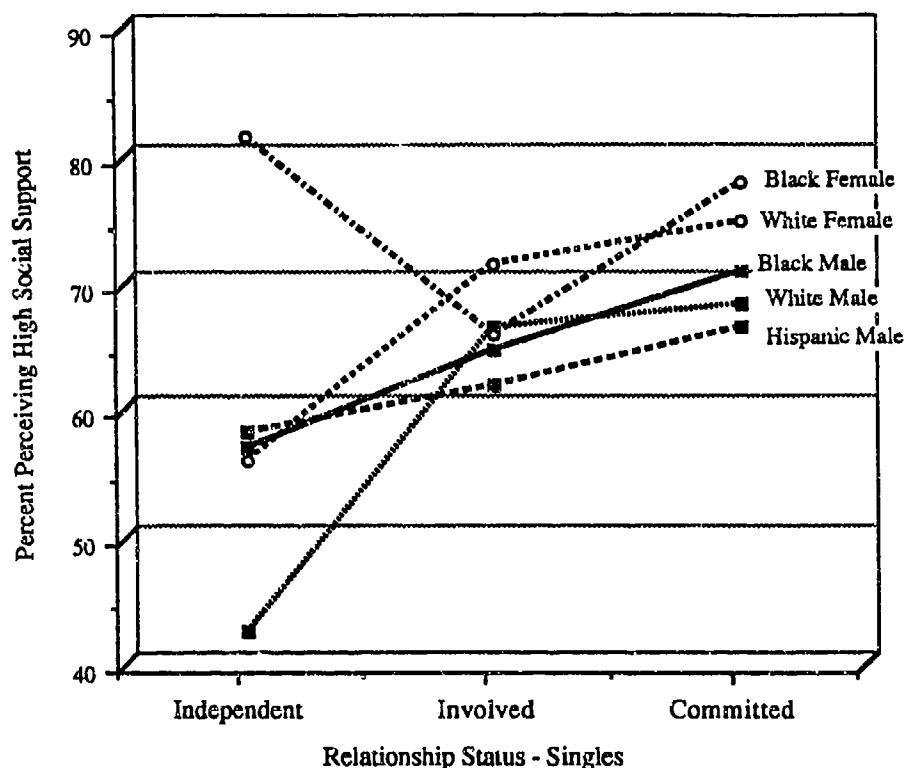


Figure 13. Social support among young single soldiers.

The differences in social support between single minority men and women were less dramatic. Very similar proportions of Hispanic Black and White males involved in relationships reported high social support. The exceptionally high levels of social support reported by independent Black females (81%) were moderated somewhat by involvement in a relationship (66%), but overall, the proportion of soldiers reporting high social support was greater in all groups among those in committed relationships, especially Black females (77%). Taken together, these findings suggest a trend toward social support increasing as the level of commitment increases in single relationships.

Patterns of community support also varied according to relationship status among young single soldiers. While the overall trend suggested that a higher proportion of single soldiers in relationships reported a viable community support system, further analysis by gender and racial/ethnic group revealed that this trend in the data was not displayed amongst all groups. While more than one-half of White and Black males in committed relationships reported high community support (57% and 53%, respectively), only than one out of three (34%) Hispanic males in this type of relationship reported high community support. This finding for Hispanic males in committed relationships suggests a level of personal and relational isolation that was somewhat unique among males in the study.

Among young female soldiers, there were substantial differences in the proportion of Black and White women who reported high community support, especially among those in less serious relationships. While a higher proportion of White women in less serious relationships (60%) reported high community support than those who were independent (43%), the opposite pattern was true for Black women. While 63 percent of independent Black women reported high community support, only 34 percent of those in less serious relationships reported high community support. Among those White and Black women who were in committed relationships, the relative proportions that reported high community support reversed again. Compared to those in less committed relationships, the proportion of women in committed relationships who reported high community support was lower for White women (52%) and higher for Black women (60%).

It should be noted that these findings regarding social and community support by relationship status type generally held across the junior rank and grade categories reviewed in this analysis. However, there are several caveats in the data that deserve mention. For example, among junior enlisted soldiers (PFCs and corporals/specialists), there was a clear association between relationship involvement and high social and community support: a lower proportion of independent singles reported high social and community support than soldiers in relationships. It is interesting to note, however, that among those soldiers in committed relationships, a lower proportion of junior officers than those in other rank groups reported either high social support or high community support. In fact, within the junior officer ranks, a lower proportion of those in committed relationships than those in less serious relationships reported high social and community support. These findings suggest that junior officers may be more likely to withdraw from their social and community support systems when they enter into committed relationships, and they also may receive less potential support from their personal relationships than soldiers in other rank groups.

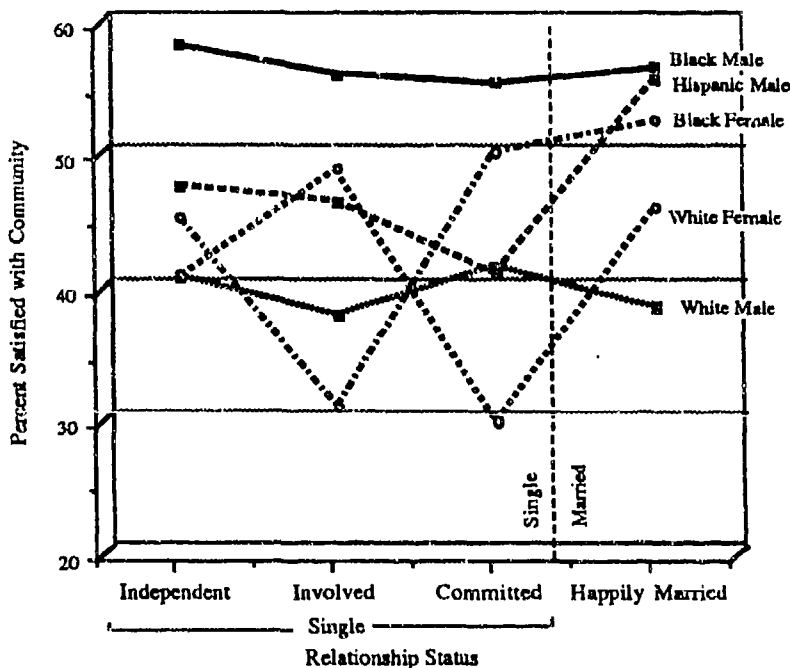


Figure 14. Community satisfaction.

Like the data on social and community support, the data on community satisfaction are best understood in the context of gender and racial/ethnic group breakdowns (see Figure 14). For the most part, the proportion of males who reported high community satisfaction varied little by relationship status. Among female soldiers, the pattern of response to community satisfaction was also very similar to that of community support. A lower proportion of Black females who were in less serious relationships reported high satisfaction with their community (31%) than those who were either independent (45%) or in committed relationships (50%). On the other hand, a lower proportion of White females who were in committed relationships reported high community satisfaction (30%) than those who were either independent (41%) or in less serious relationships (49%).

An interesting trend in the data is the relatively high proportion of Black males who reported high community satisfaction irrespective of relationship status type. Approximately, three out of five Black males in each relationship status group reported high community satisfaction--these proportions are higher than for any other combination of relationship status, gender, and racial/ethnic group.

Support Services

A number of support services currently exist in the Army community as a preventive and remedial safety net for single soldiers. Ranging from financial information and assistance to emergency relief, these Army-sponsored support services are designed to augment and strengthen the informal social and community supports systems that also provide a protective barrier and resource for single soldiers.

In this analysis, nine services were examined: Budget Counseling, Emergency Loan Services, Sponsorship Assistance, Relocation Counseling, Community Directory of Services, Information & Referral Services, Crisis Hot Line, Emergency Phone Calls and Premarriage Counseling (see Figure 15). Soldiers were asked to evaluate each at their current location in terms of both its actual or potential usefulness and their prior use of the service. Results are presented below for the proportion of soldiers by relational status that considered the service "very useful" and who responded that they had used it. Additional analysis is presented by relational status within gender, race/ethnic, and pay grade.

Usefulness

The findings indicate that, irrespective of relational status, single soldiers found the nine support services a valuable source of support at their current location. From approximately two-fifths to two-thirds of single soldiers across the relational status groups rated each service as "very useful" (see Figure 15).

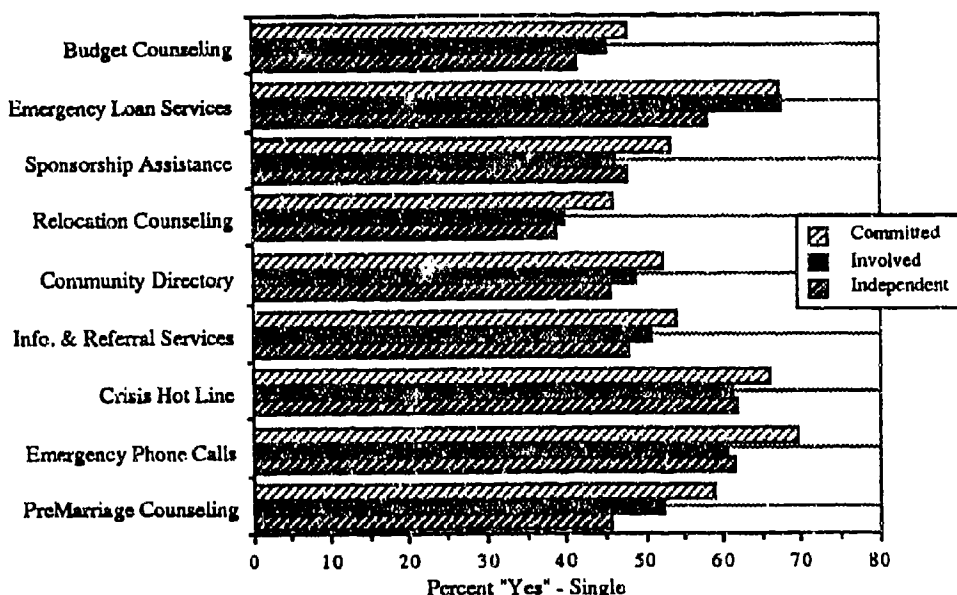


Figure 15. Usefulness of support services among young single soldiers.

In general, a higher proportion of single soldiers in committed relationships found these Army services "very useful" than independent and involved singles. Only for Emergency Loan Services was there a similar proportion of single soldiers in less serious and committed relationships who rated the service as "very useful." Several services appeared particularly attractive to males and females in committed relationships: crisis hot lines (65% and 72%, respectively), emergency loan services (66% and 71%, respectively), and emergency long distance phone calls (69% and 72%, respectively).

It is apparent from the data that single soldiers in committed relationships found these support services as useful as happily married soldiers. In fact, a higher proportion of single committed soldiers than happily married soldiers rated all of the reviewed services as "very useful." Because responses were restricted to activities at the current location, premarriage counseling was not included in this comparison.

The services examined in this analysis were considered somewhat more important to female soldiers than to male soldiers. A higher proportion of female soldiers than male soldiers within each relationship status group reported services as "very useful" at their current location. With the exception of premarriage counseling and emergency loan services, a higher proportion of female soldiers who were in committed relationships rated services as "very useful" than those who were either independent or in less serious relationships. Although such trends were less consistent in the data for males, in general, a lower proportion of males who were independently single than males in other relationship status groups rated support services "very useful."

Overall, there were few discernible trends in the data by relationship status within racial/ethnic and rank breakdowns. However, compared to their Black and White counterparts, a relatively high proportion of Hispanic soldiers who were independent rated the two services associated with emergencies as "very useful" at their current location: crisis hot line (67%) and emergency long distance phone calls (70%). In addition, a higher proportion of Whites in committed relationships (62%) found premarital counseling services "very useful" than Blacks (51%) in these relationships.

Although there was some proportional variation in the perceived usefulness of services within relationship status across ranks, only two trends were noted. First, with few exceptions, privates not involved in relationships were the least likely to consider Army services "very useful." For example, only one out of three of these young soldiers (36%) found relocation counseling "very useful." Second, among privates in committed relationships, a higher proportion than those in the other single relationship groups rated services "very useful," especially services concerned with relocation assistance and help in accessing other community services. Thus, those younger and more junior personnel became much more sensitive to the needs for Army support services as they became more involved in relationships.

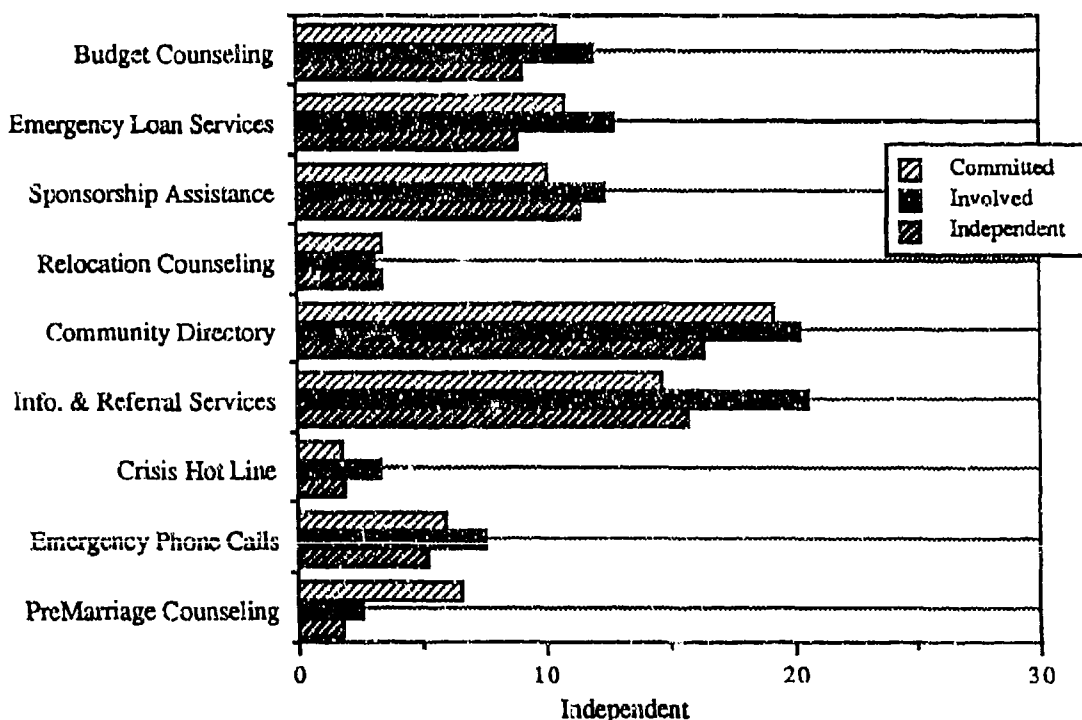


Figure 16. Use of support services among young single soldiers.

Prior Use

Although nearly one-half or more single soldiers felt that the services examined were "very useful," the proportion of these soldiers who had actually used support services was rather low (see Figure 16). In fact, irrespective of relationship status, less than 10 percent of single soldiers had used four of the nine services: relocation counseling, crisis hot line, emergency long distance phone calls, and premarriage counseling. Of the services reviewed, a higher proportion of single soldiers (approximately one out of five) had used community services (i.e., the directory of community services and information and referral services).

With the exception of premarital counseling, degree of involvement with a girl or boyfriend had little association with the proportion of soldiers who had accessed these services. Participation in premarriage counseling was much more likely among single soldiers in committed relationships (7%) than independent singles (2%) or those with less serious relationships (3%). Despite these proportional differences, however, the rather low utilization of this service by soldiers in committed relationships was rather surprising.

When compared to happily married soldiers, a lower proportion of single soldiers had used five of the eight services relevant for comparison: emergency loan services, sponsorship assistance, relocation counseling, directory of community services and programs, and information and referral services. The significantly lower use of sponsorship assistance was the most notable difference between the singles and the happily married: approximately twice the proportion of happily married soldiers than soldiers in the single status groups had received sponsorship assistance.

Although there were exceptions, in general, a higher proportion of single females than single males had used services. These proportional differences were most apparent in the use of three particular services, especially among single males and females who were not in a relationship: sponsorship assistance, directory of community services and programs, and information and referral services. In addition, compared to their male counterparts in committed relationships (8%), more than twice the proportion of female soldiers in committed relationships had used emergency loan services (22%).

Few discernable trends in the use of services were apparent in the comparisons of the three single relationship status groups within the context of racial/ethnic group breakdowns. However, nearly one out of five Hispanics in committed relationships (19%) had used emergency long distance phone calls, significantly higher than any other group in the analysis.

Although there were some specific proportional variations within relationship status across rank groups, the most obvious differences were between single officers and enlisted soldiers. In general, a higher proportion of enlisted soldiers than officers had used services within the categories of "financial information and assistance" and "emergency assistance." On the other hand, a higher proportion of officers than enlisted soldiers had used "community services." In addition to these officer and enlisted soldier group differences, compared to other rank groups, a relatively low proportion of privates had used "community services," services that are designed to help soldiers more effectively broker the human service delivery system.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This report is the first major investigation of the impact of boyfriend and girlfriend relationships on the needs, attitudes and behaviors of single military personnel. The research provides a unique picture of single soldiers and the development of interpersonal relationships from independence to marriage. Since this transition is a normal part of relational life, and it occurs during the early years of the military obligation, it is important for Army policy makers, leaders, and service providers to understand these relational patterns and their potential effects on the soldier and his or her personal, social and work related outcomes.

Major Findings

Nearly one out of two single soldiers are involved in partner relationships. It is no longer possible to characterize single soldiers uniformly as independent young men and women without relational attachments. Over a decade ago, it was learned that many soldiers enter the Army single and exit married; now it is important to understand that there is an intermediate process in which close relationships are developed with partners who can have a significant impact on young soldiers.

Racial/ethnic group and gender emerge as significant factors in understanding how relationship status can impact on work, personal, social and community needs and outcomes. The evidence is clear that men and women from different racial/ethnic backgrounds respond differently to being in close relationships. Overall, compared to their male counterparts, single women are somewhat more likely to be in relationships and these relationships are more likely to be with other soldiers. In addition, the attitudes of single women toward the Army and themselves are more likely than those of single men to be adversely affected by these relationships. However, the Army attitudes and behavior of White women and men are less likely to be affected by relational involvements when compared to soldiers from Black or Hispanic backgrounds. The work attitudes, commitments and performance of male Hispanic soldiers are more likely to be negatively influenced when these men are seriously considering marriage.

The relationships of single soldiers can impact their work commitments, performance and attitudes. The data are consistent in denoting differences in work-related variables among single soldiers who are involved in relationships as compared to those who are not. There is an overall trend in which performance, commitments and attitudes are positively impacted by involvement in relationships. This is more true for males than for females, and for White soldiers than for Black and Hispanic, but it is also true that many soldiers experience difficulty in reconciling the demands of the Army with those that emerge from their commitments to their partners.

The personal well-being and social support systems of single soldiers vary according to relationship status. Overall, involvement in a personal relationship tends to have either a minimal or positive effect on the personal and social well-being of male soldiers. Among young female soldiers, relational involvements are more often associated with slightly lower indicators of personal well-being. In general, a higher proportion of both male and female soldiers report high social support when they are involved in a committed relationship.

Irrespective of single relationship status, a higher proportion of female than male soldiers find community support services more useful. Young female soldiers appear to define Army support services as being more helpful during times of need. This is true regardless of single relationship status. Young females appear to be more willing to access support services in times of need.

Compared to independent and less seriously involved singles, soldiers in more serious relationships find community support services more useful. The more that soldiers are considering marriage the more important support services become to them and their partners. They are particularly likely to consider emergency services more useful, and a higher proportion recognize the importance of premarriage counseling.

Recommendations for Service Providers

Relationship support programs should be expanded to single soldiers in committed relationships. Many of these soldiers are in the process of making the transition from single to married status. Programs that provide support for families should also consider selected parallel activities that can assist single soldiers and their partners in adjustments they must also make to separations, relocations and job-related stresses.

Provide single soldiers with opportunities to develop support groups around relationship issues. These can be offered in the barracks or through other community support agencies on post. Clearly, many of these relationships are developing without the kind of kin and community support that many of these young men and women would otherwise have outside the Army. Opportunities for exchanging information and learning appropriate ways for relationships to adapt to military demands would be particularly helpful.

Improve publicity and expand pre-marital counseling. Interest and awareness in pre-marital counseling is quite low despite the need. All too often, this counseling is provided only at the very last minute, usually when many couples have already made commitments and overlooked major areas of concern in their lives. Counseling assistance should be offered earlier in relationship development so that these commitments are based on effective preparation for joint obligations and understanding.

Provide post-level educational programs to prepare single soldiers to integrate relationship and career demands. At the present time, there is very little information offered to young soldiers on relationship development outside of their work environment. This lack of preparation, coupled with the personal isolation that comes from being separated from family and community of origin, can result in premature commitments that adversely affect the soldier's ability to cope with the demands of military life. Local education programs on relationships in the Army can be very helpful in preparing soldiers for balancing relational and career demands.

Offer programs and expand the recreational activities that are offered to young unmarried couples. All too often, recreational activities are oriented either to single soldiers or to families. It is important to recognize that young unmarried couples also need opportunities to spend time together in wholesome, joint activities that can strengthen their understanding of one another. When this is offered within an Army environment, it provides a connection between the military lifestyle, personal needs for recreation, and relational needs for togetherness.

Recommendations for Education and Training

Include in basic training a curriculum on integrating personal relationships into the Army work environment. A thorough orientation into the Army should include recognition that soldiers develop relationships with boyfriends and girlfriends that often mature into marriage. These relationships occur in the early years of the Army obligation, often at a time when they are also learning how to become effective soldiers. Without preparation, they are unlikely to be prepared for integrating relationships into the Army and unable to recognize that some of these relationships may threaten their ability to perform their Army jobs.

Include in basic leader courses a curriculum on the effects of personal involvements on Army outcomes such as retention, readiness and morale. Leaders should be prepared to recognize that personal relationships among young soldiers are a normal part of development. They need to learn how they can positively influence these young soldiers to make these relationships constructive while still maintaining their commitments to and performance in the Army.

Include in command and NCO training a component on relationships among young soldiers. Persons who direct soldiers should be aware of the effect that personal relationships have on the needs, attitudes and behaviors of young men and women. Personal relationships among singles as well as relationships among the married should be considered in this training.

Provide training on singles and relationships in schools for service providers, including chaplains, Army community service providers, social workers, MWR personnel, and other relevant providers. Again, these persons should be professionally prepared to assist young soldiers who are attempting to reconcile their personal- and work-related responsibilities and obligations. A better understanding of these relationships among singles will also assist these providers in better meeting the needs of young families.

Recommendations for Commanders and Supervisors

Provide opportunities for partners of soldiers to be included in unit sponsored events and support groups. A growing number of unit activities include family members but do not include the partners of single soldiers. Opportunities for them to be involved and receive support from the unit can increase the support that they in turn provide to the soldier, thereby increasing soldier commitment and enhancing the connection between the couple and the Army.

Encourage young single soldiers to remain in contact with partners during extended TDYs and deployments. Separation can threaten relationships of single soldiers and weaken the ability of couples to adapt to Army demands, especially among those couples who are already considering marriage. Supervisors need to help these young soldiers anticipate difficulties that separation may impose on relationships, and help them develop strategies for combating these potential difficulties.

Prepare partners for reunion issues and problems following deployment. Much attention is given to the reunion of families after deployment but some attention should also be given to the reunion of single soldiers with their loved ones as well. Reestablishing relationships is both exciting and potentially stressful. The impacts of stress on soldier performance and commitment can be reduced if the partner is provided information on reunion issues and demands on the soldier at that time.

Maintain concern for the relational needs of all soldiers, both singles and marrieds.

Commanders and supervisors need to recognize that the relational needs of single soldiers are as important to them as those of married soldiers in their units, especially among those who are seriously considering marriage. Expressing concern to all such soldiers, referring those experiencing unusual difficulties to other agencies and offering information on counseling when needed can help maintain the preparedness of the soldier and the supportiveness of the partner during the time that the soldier is in the unit and the Army.

Recommendations for Manpower Personnel

Target information about the military lifestyle to the partners of single soldiers.

These people also need realistic and honest information about the services, benefits and demands of the military environment. The better and more realistically prepared they are for this lifestyle, the more likely they are to be able to make good decisions regarding their partner and the Army as a way of life. Realistic information can cause some couples to delay premature marriage commitments that might later become troublesome, both for themselves and for the Army.

Recognize that it is normal for single soldiers to form significant relationships in their first few years of military service. It is no longer sufficient to think of all soldiers as being either independently single or married. While single soldiers might not have "dependents," they are often emotionally bonded in ways that can significantly influence their performance and commitments and attitudes. Manpower planning should acknowledge that these relationships are important to soldiers and that their partners deserve some recognition of their concerns and needs as well.

Take into account in retention and readiness planning the contributions of single soldiers' partners. The data from this report indicate that soldier performance and readiness can be influenced by their involvement in relationships. Likewise, decisions to stay or leave the Army are influenced by non-marital partners just as strongly as marital ones. This information should be taken into account in readiness and retention planning and anticipated problems and needs for support and information should become part of the Army system.

Include questions in surveys about the nature and impacts of relationships among single soldiers. Much more information is needed in order to understand the role that single soldiers and their partners have in the Army and the military overall. This research has only begun to address many of the questions that military service providers, policy makers and planners need to ask in order to prepare for the mission of the Army and prepare soldiers to perform at their best in support of that mission. Questions about relationships among singles should continue to be asked in major Army surveys and special investigations of these relationships should continued to be supported. The absence of information can make leaders complacent about the needs of this very large group of young soldiers. Hopefully, this report is a step in the right direction.

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APPENDIX A

Methods

Sample

The sample strategy used by the Army Family Research Program (AFRP) for this study included a multi-stage cluster sampling technique with 3 sampling stages: geographic locations, units, and soldiers. This first sampling level included 34 geographic locations representing 43 Army installations world-wide. Within these installations a second stratum, that of units, was selected; 528 such units participated. Of the 20,033 soldiers who were randomly chosen from the units to participate in the study, 11,035 soldiers completed the Army Soldier and Family Survey.

Subjects

The subjects used for the analysis of the Single Soldier Report include 2,242 single, never married, soldiers and a comparison group of 1,017 married soldiers who reported they were happily married. These soldiers were restricted to those who were under 30 years old, had no children, and who were privates, corporals/specialists, sergeants, lieutenants, or captains. The single soldier sample included 1,971 males and 271 females. Of the married soldiers, 846 were male and 171 were female.

The responses from these groups of soldiers were weighted to better represent the Army as a whole. The weighting was performed using SUDAAN software which allows for weighting of multi-stage cluster sampling. Thus, approximately 344,352 soldiers were represented through this analysis. Table A1 includes the weighted demographic profile of the analysis sample by relationship status.

Instruments

The data for this report came from two instrument sources, the Army Soldier and Family Survey and the Individual Readiness Ratings. The Army Soldier and Family Survey contained 449 items on Army attitudes and values, attitudes toward the use of Army support programs and services, retention and career plans, and personal and family relationships. The Individual Readiness Ratings (IRR) consisted of 12 ratings by first- and second-line supervisors of individual soldier readiness and performance ratings.

Table A1
Demographic Profile By Relationship Status

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Involved</u>	<u>Committed</u>	<u>Happily Married</u>
Gender				
Male	90.9	85.6	82.8	83.2
Female	9.1	14.4	17.2	16.8
Race				
White	68.5	65.0	64.9	69.7
Black	23.5	26.6	28.4	21.3
Hispanic	8.0	8.4	6.7	9.0
Rank				
PVT-PFC	29.3	25.0	26.6	15.9
CPL	47.2	52.1	49.0	44.9
SGT	11.9	11.4	12.2	13.4
2LT-1LT	11.7	11.5	12.2	25.8
Age				
18	1.1	1.4	1.9	0.0
19	9.0	9.0	8.4	4.3
20	18.8	16.8	17.5	7.9
21	13.1	14.6	13.9	11.3
22	10.3	11.7	8.1	9.8
23	9.3	8.5	12.9	10.9
24	11.6	10.6	11.0	13.3
25	8.6	10.7	7.7	11.2
26	5.6	4.2	6.7	9.2
27	4.9	5.9	4.8	8.6
28	4.3	2.1	3.8	8.4
29	3.4	3.4	3.4	5.1
Location of Partner				
Within 2 Hours	NA	41.6	51.0	NA
Beyond 2 Hours	NA	58.4	49.0	NA

Data Analysis and Measures

Only soldier-related data were used in the analyses, including responses of soldiers to survey questionnaires and supervisor ratings of performances. Comparisons were made between four relationship status groups: independent singles (no relationships), singles in less serious relationships (involved), singles in committed relationships (committed), and, for comparison purposes, married soldiers who described their relationships as happy (happily married). Crosstabulations were used to compare relationship status with a number of variables that are described below. Analysis of variance techniques were used to crosscheck the findings from the crosstabulations.

The first section of this report, Job Performance and Relationships, used items from the Army Soldier and Family Survey as well as a Readiness Scale derived from the 1st and 2nd line supervisors from the IRR. This scale is further described in the "Analysis of Army Family Research Program Measures of Individual Readiness" (Sadacca & DiFazio, 1991). The remaining items included the level of perceived preparation to perform wartime tasks, the receipt of letters and certificates of appreciation, commendation or achievement the soldier received in the past 2 years, and the soldier's perceived success at dealing with current work responsibilities. Soldier's perceived level of preparation for wartime tasks was measured on a 5 point scale from "Very poorly prepared" to "Very well prepared." The number of letters or certificates of appreciation, commendation, or achievement the soldier received within the past two years came from combining responses for the number of letters received with the number of certificates received in each of the listed areas. The soldier's perceived success at dealing with work responsibilities was measured on a 7 point scale from "Not at all successful" to "Extremely Successful."

Retention and Relationships, the second section of the report, included items from the Army Soldier and Family Survey dealing with the soldier's perception of who is getting the better deal, the Army or the soldier, how the soldier feels about staying in the Army at the end of the current obligation, how likely it is that the soldier will stay in the Army at the end of the current obligation, and the soldier's perception of leaving the Army at the end of the current obligation. The item measuring the soldier's perception of who is getting the better deal, the Army or soldier is measured by a 7 point item. This item ranged from "I am getting a much better deal than the Army" to "The Army is getting a much better deal than I." How the soldier feels about staying in the Army at the end of the current obligation was measured in a 7 point item ranging from "Extremely bad" to "Extremely good." The likelihood of the soldier staying in the Army at the end of the current obligation was measured by a 10 point item ranging from "No chance" to "Certain." How the soldier would feel upon leaving the Army at the end of the current obligation was measured on a 7 point scale from "Extremely bad" to "Extremely good". Two scales were also used in the data analysis for this section. The Army-Civilian Job Comparison Scale is a ten item scale ranging from 10 to 50 with a mean of 27.07, a standard deviation of 6.05 and an alpha coefficient of 0.83. The Army Commitment Scale is a 7 item scale ranging from 7 to 35 with a mean of 23.03, a standard deviation of 5.99 and an alpha coefficient of 0.86. Further details on these and subsequent scales can be found in Appendix D of the AFRP Analysis Plan (Orthner & Blankinship, 1990).

The section on Job Attitudes and Relationships included items from the Army Soldier and Family Survey measuring satisfaction with the Army as a way of life and the level of work demands. How satisfied the soldier was with the Army as a way of life is a 5 point item ranging from "Very dissatisfied" to "Very satisfied". The soldier's perceptions of work demands was measured by a 7 point item ranging from "Extremely demanding" to "Not at all demanding." Three Scales were also used in this section: the Work Satisfaction Scales, the Work Stress Scale and the Soldiering Scale. The Work Satisfaction is a ten item scale ranging from 10 to 50 with a mean of 35.22, a standard deviation of 6.3, and an alpha coefficient of 0.77. The Work Stress Scale is a three item scale ranging from 3 to 18 with a mean of 10.76, a standard deviation of 3.48 and an alpha coefficient of 0.68. The Soldiering Scale is a four item scale ranging from 4 to 16 with a mean of 13.8, a standard deviation of 2.28 and an alpha coefficient of 0.85.

The fourth section of this report, Personal Well-Being and Relationships used three scales from the Army Soldier and Family Survey: Alienation, Locus of Control and Self Esteem. Alienation is a 3 item scale ranging from 3 to 18 with a mean of 13.31, a standard deviation of 3.0 and an alpha coefficient of 0.71. Locus of Control is a five item scale ranging from 5 to 25 with a mean of 17.41, a standard deviation of 3.36, and an alpha coefficient of 0.69. Self Esteem is a three item scale ranging from 3 to 18, with a mean of 12.7, a standard deviation of 2.83, and an alpha coefficient of 0.62.

The Social and Community Support section included three scales also from the Army Soldier and Family Survey: Social Support Availability, Community Support Network and Community Satisfaction. The Social Support Availability Scale is a six item scale ranging from 6 to 18 with a mean of 13.37, a standard deviation of 3.39 and a alpha coefficient of 0.89. The Community Support Network Scale is a six item scale ranging from 6 to 30 with a mean of 20.09, a standard deviation of 4.67 and an alpha coefficient of 0.74. The Community Satisfaction Scale is a five item scale ranging from 5 to 25 with a mean of 16.82, a standard deviation of 3.39 and an alpha coefficient of 0.77.

Interpreting Sample Statistics

Table A2 includes the unweighted sample group totals by relationship status, including higher-order breakdowns within gender, racial/ethnic group, and rank. As will be discussed below, small sample sizes (less than 30) within some subgroups limit confidence in comparisons involving those subgroups. Consequently, no subgroups comparisons are drawn in the analysis involving either Hispanic females or female officers. In addition, special caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions from comparisons involving Hispanic males in committed relationships.

Table A3 contains both standard error estimates for interpreting proportions from single sample groups of different sizes and standard error estimates of the difference between proportions involving two independent groups of given sample sizes (Bowen, 1991). Both estimates assume a "worst case" scenario of maximum variability ($p = .5$; $q = .5$). In addition, formulas for calculating standard error estimates are adjusted for design effects from the multi-level sampling design to be more conservative (Design Effect = 1.25).

Table A2**Unweighted Sample Size Profile**

	Independent	Involved	Committed	Happily Married
Total	1200	624	418	1017
Gender				
Male	1091	534	346	846
Female	109	90	72	171
Race\Ethnic Group				
White	810	401	270	704
Black	278	164	118	215
Hispanic	94	52	28	91
Rank\Pay Grade				
PVT & PFC	351	156	111	162
CPL	566	325	205	457
SGT	143	71	51	136
2LT, 1LT, CPT	140	72	51	262
Race X Gender				
White Males	753	343	230	549
White Females	57	53	40	110
Black Males	233	134	90	169
Black Females	45	30	28	46
Hispanic Males	87	47	24	76
Hispanic Females	7	5	4	15

Table A3

Standard Error Guidelines

<u>Group 1</u> N Value	<u>Group 2</u> (SE p(1))	N Value	(SE p(2))	SE (p(1)-p(2))	Minimal Proportional Difference
1000	0.0141	1000	0.0141	0.0200	.04
		500	0.0200	0.0245	.05
		250	0.0283	0.0316	.06
		125	0.0400	0.0424	.08
		1000	0.0447	0.0469	.09
		75	0.0516	0.0535	.11
		50	0.0632	0.0648	.13
		30	0.0816	0.0829	.17
500	0.0200	500	0.0200	0.0283	.06
		250	0.0283	0.0346	.07
		125	0.0400	0.0447	.09
		100	0.0447	0.0490	.10
		75	0.0516	0.0554	.11
		50	0.0632	0.0663	.13
		30	0.0816	0.0841	.17
250	0.0283	250	0.0283	0.0400	.08
		125	0.0400	0.0490	.10
		100	0.0447	0.0529	.11
		75	0.0516	0.0589	.12
		50	0.0632	0.0693	.14
		30	0.0816	0.0864	.17
125	0.0400	125	0.0400	0.0566	.11
		100	0.0447	0.0600	.12
		75	0.0516	0.0653	.13
		50	0.0632	0.0748	.15
		30	0.0816	0.0909	.18
100	0.0447	100	0.0447	0.0632	.13
		75	0.0516	0.0683	.14
		50	0.0632	0.0775	.16
		30	0.0816	0.0931	.19
75	0.0516	75	0.0516	0.0730	.15
		50	0.0632	0.0816	.16
		30	0.0816	0.0966	.19
50	0.0632	50	0.0632	0.0894	.18
		30	0.0816	0.1033	.21
30	0.0816	30	0.0816	0.1155	.23

Table A3 provides helpful guidelines for making inferences to the population from the results of the analysis. For example, if 47 percent of males in committed relationships ($n = 346$) are given high supervisor ratings of performance, using Table 2, it can be noted that the standard error estimate for a sample of 250 respondents, assuming maximum variability, is .0283. A 95% confidence interval for the population proportion would be constructed symmetrically around the sample proportion by using the approximate critical value (2 for a 95% confidence interval) and the estimated standard error from Table 2: $CI_{95} = 47\% \pm (2) (.0283)$. Thus, it can be concluded with 95 percent confidence that the true population proportion lies in the interval from approximately 41 percent to 53 percent.

If, for example, 55 percent of males who are independently single ($n = 1091$) are given high supervisor ratings, and a comparative analysis is planned, a confidence interval around this eight percent proportional difference between males in committed relationships and males who are independently single can be undertaken. Using Table 12, it can be seen that the standard error of the difference between independent proportions from sample groups of 1000 and 250 is .0316. A 95% confidence interval for the proportional difference between the two population groups would be constructed symmetrically around the estimated proportional difference by using the approximate critical value (2 for a 95% confidence interval) and the estimated standard error of the difference from Table 12: $CI_{95} = 8\% \pm (2) (.0316)$. Thus, it can be concluded with 95% confidence that the true difference in the proportion of males in committed relationships who are given high ratings and the proportion of males who are independently single who are given high ratings lies in the interval from approximately 2 percent to 14 percent.

To determine if a difference of 8 percent is significant enough to reject the null hypothesis that the difference between the proportion estimates from the two populations is equal to zero, it is necessary to compute a test statistic, z . The test statistic is calculated by computing the difference between the two proportions and dividing the result (.08) by the estimated standard error of the difference (.0316). Since the calculated value of the test statistic ($z = 2.53$) exceeds the critical value ($Z_{cv} = 1.96$), it is concluded that there is a significant difference between the proportion of males in committed relationships and the proportion of males who are independently single who are given high supervisor ratings of performance.

As a general rule, inferences of proportional differences between population subgroups on variables of interest that are based on observed discrepancies between sample proportions of less than 10 percent should be made with caution, especially in subgroup comparisons where one or both subgroups have unweighted sample group totals of less than 50. The reader should consult Table 12 for the minimal proportional difference between two sample subgroup of given sizes ($p_1 - p_2$) to reject the null hypothesis that the difference between the two proportions is zero ($H_0: P_1 = P_2$). It should be remembered that the figures in Table 2 reflect a "worst case" scenario; some flexibility in interpretation is warranted.

References

- Bowen, G. L. (1991). Standard error of the sample proportion and standard error of the difference between independent proportions: Guidelines for drawing inferences from sample subgroup proportions and differences in sample subgroups proportions in analysis using the AFRP dataset (Research Note). Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina.
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