

Military marriages stay strong despite challenges: study

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Los Angeles, CA (May 10, 2012) Despite the fact that military service means working long hours with unpredictable schedules, frequent relocations, and separations from loved ones due to deployment, a new study published in the *Journal of Family Issues* (a SAGE journal) finds that marriages of military members are not more vulnerable than civilian marriages.

According to the authors, members of the [military](#) are significantly more likely to be married, but are not more likely to be divorced than civilians with matched characteristic. Additionally, the risk of divorce among military marriages has not seen a real increase since the current military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq began, though they have led to lengthy deployments overseas.

Researchers Benjamin R. Karney, David S. Loughran, and Michael S. Pollard analyzed records from 1998 to 2005 from the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, which collects data about the entire male population of active military members, and compared them to the Current Populations Surveys from the same years, which documents statistics about civilians. The researchers sought out to compare the marital and divorce status of [military personnel](#) and civilians in the years immediately before and after the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Despite the fact that more service members began to be deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, between the years of 2002 and 2005, the divorce rates

for military remained constant, and did not exceed the divorce rates of civilian couples.

The researchers took measures to control for differences in age, race, [education level](#), and employment. They found that not only were servicemen either equally or less likely to be divorced than comparable [civilians](#), but that this [disparity](#) increased with older or retired servicemen.

The researchers explained, "A possible explanation for this pattern is that time spent in [military service](#) enhances the stability of military marriages."

The researchers discussed the reasons for their findings, citing the extensive benefits provided to married military members such as housing supplements, cost of living bonuses, the ability to live off-base with their families, and full spousal health care coverage.

More information: The article "Comparing Marital Status and Divorce Status in Civilian and Military Populations" in *Journal of Family Issues*, is available free for a limited time at jfi.sagepub.com/content/early/.../439690.full.pdf+html

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