

Cognitive Tests of Veterans Supplement Questions

Christine Rho

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I. Purpose

The Current Population Survey (CPS) is a nationally-representative monthly sample survey of households that provides information on labor force activity in the United States. The CPS is the source of the monthly national unemployment rate, as well as rich demographic details, including age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, educational attainment, marital status and family attributes, foreign-born status, veteran status, and other demographic characteristics.

The Veterans Supplement is conducted every two years and is asked at the end of the CPS. August 2007 was the last time this supplement was fielded. This supplement is sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) at the Department of Labor.

In 2007, the Veterans Supplement was updated to reflect the growing interest in learning about the labor market situation of veterans who are, or were, in the Reserve and National Guard. Of particular interest were those Reserve or National Guard veterans who served in combat during the Gulf War era (August 1990 to present). Five new questions were tested by OSMR and added to the supplement to capture this information.

The next supplement will be conducted in August 2009. The Division of Labor Force Statistics (DLFS) and the VA identified three questions that were potentially problematic and requested that these questions be evaluated by OSMR for the 2009 supplement. These questions were:

- (S4 – Presence of disability) “Has the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or Department of Defense determined that you have a service-connected disability; that is, a health condition or impairment caused, or made worse, by any of your military service?”
- (S10 – Year of separation) “In what year were you last separated from active duty in the Armed Forces?”
- (S11a – Combat) “Did you EVER serve in a combat or war zone?” READ IF NECESSARY: Persons serving in a combat or war zone usually receive combat zone tax exclusion, Imminent Danger Pay, or Hostile Fire Pay.

Several wording changes to the three questions were proposed and tested through two rounds of cognitive interviews with veterans and proxies. The main purpose of the cognitive interviews was to test whether the proposed wording changes obtained the information desired, improved comprehension, and resulted in more accurate responses. The cognitive interviews are summarized in the following sections.

II. Methods

A. Procedure

Two rounds of interviews were conducted by an OSMR researcher with one participant at a time. Each session lasted approximately 15-30 minutes. The interviews in the first round of testing were conducted in-person (N=8), in a private office at the office of Veterans Affairs in Washington, DC. The OSMR researcher administered the interviews and recorded all responses on paper. The sessions were also audio-taped to verify and supplement the notes kept by the researcher. Participants were given an informed consent form. The participants were administered a PAPI version of the CPS Veteran's Supplement Questionnaire, including three questions from the demographics section of the basic CPS questionnaire (i.e., AF1_N, AF2_N, and AF3_N). The participants were instructed to answer each question as if they were being interviewed for the survey. After the survey questions, the participants were asked retrospective probes about question meaning and they were asked to comment about some of the major concepts studied in the survey. Participants were federal employees and did not receive any payment for their participation.

In the second round of testing, the interviews were conducted on the telephone (N=10) and were not audio-taped. They were administered the PAPI version of the CPS Veteran's Supplement questionnaire. One of the primary reasons why the interviews were conducted on the telephone was to allow us to include proxy respondents (i.e., participants who have a household member who is a veteran). Due to budgetary reasons, we were unable to recruit and bring in participants to the lab. Thus, these participants were federal employees who agreed to be interviewed over the telephone. Another reason for the telephone mode was to reduce any potential privacy concerns the veterans had about being interviewed on location at the VA office.

B. Participants

Participants were recruited from the VA office, with special care to recruit Gulf War veterans, female veterans, veterans who have been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, or veterans who have been called up from the Reserve or the National Guard. All participants, including proxies were federal employees (from the VA, BLS and the Federal Reserve). Participants did not receive any compensation.

Eight cognitive interviews were conducted in Round 1 with veterans. 10 interviews were conducted in Round 2: 6 interviews with veterans and 4 interviews with spouses or other household members of veterans (also called proxies). Of the proxy interviews, only one of them reported about a veteran that served during the Gulf War. The remaining proxy interviews reported about the Vietnam war era or earlier time periods.

The characteristics of the participants are shown below in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant Characteristics

	Participant No.	Self or Proxy	Gulf War	Gender ¹
Round 1	1	Self	Yes	Female
	2	Self	Yes	Female
	3	Self	Yes	Male
	4	Self	Yes	Male
	5	Self	Yes	Female
	6	Self	Yes	Female
	7	Self	Yes	Male
	8	Self	Yes	Male
Round 2	1	Self	Yes	Female
	2	Self	Yes	Female
	3	Self	Yes	Male
	4	Self	Yes	Male
	5	Self	Yes	Male
	6	Self	Yes	Male
	7	Proxy	No	Female
	8	Proxy	Yes	Female
	9	Proxy	No	Female
	10	Proxy	No	Female

IV. Findings

Round 1: General Findings

After the participants were administered the Veteran’s Supplement questions, they were asked some general debriefing questions, such as their overall impression of the survey and whether they found any of the questions to be difficult and/or sensitive. Overall, most of the participants thought the survey was fine and did not have any major problems with it. However, a couple issues came up during this debriefing. One reservist found the concept of “active duty” a little confusing because she felt there are different kinds of reserves: active reserve and individual ready-serve reserve. A reservist in the “active reserve” participates in monthly drills and assemblies and does 14 days of active duty for training per year. She felt that the concept of active reserves may be confused with active duty.

Most of the issues identified centered on the service-connected disability questions (section S4-S7). One participant thought that the question about receiving a monthly check for a service-connected disability (question S6) may be confusing for retired veterans with 20 years of service or more, because these veterans also receive retirement checks, which could be confused with the disability benefits checks.

One participant thought question S7 (“Did your service-connected disability ever prevent you from getting or holding a job in the past?”) was not clear. He thought it could be interpreted in

¹ Gender refers to the participant who was interviewed.

two ways: 1) having to do with the ability to work, or 2) having to do with the ability to obtain work.

Two out of eight participants thought that the questions about disability were sensitive and private and had issues with being asked about their disability. One participant refused to provide a service-connected disability rating (question S5) and only answered that it was above a certain percent. One of the issues that these participants had with the disability questions was that they worried about how the information might be used and what impact it might have on their disability benefits. They noted that it is especially sensitive because the VA is the survey's sponsor and they are also the agency that gives the veterans the disability payments. On the other hand, a different participant specifically noted that the disability questions are not sensitive at all, because he felt that veterans answer questions about their disability ratings all the time.

These are issues that warrant further evaluation in future studies. They were not specifically the focus of this set of evaluations, but they are noted here for future research.

Round 1: Specific Findings for Revised Questions

The focus of this round of cognitive interviews was to test the wording changes for questions S4 (Presence of disability), S10 (Year of separation) and S11a (Combat). These questions are discussed separately below. Since two rounds of testing will be discussed, recommended question wording will be presented in the following section.

S4 (Presence of disability): **“Has the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or Department of Defense determined that you have a service-connected disability; that is, a health condition or impairment caused or made worse by any of your military service?”**

This question immediately follows the set of questions about service in the Reserves or the National Guard. Given this context, the survey sponsors were concerned that respondents may not realize that the question refers to all of their military service and not just their time in the reserves. In order to remind respondents that this question refers to all military service, a phrase was added to the beginning of the question, as follows (new phrase is highlighted):

“Thinking about all of your military service, has the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or Department of Defense determined that you have a service-connected disability; that is, a health condition or impairment caused, or made worse, by any of your military service?”

This new wording change was tested in Round 1 and participants were probed about it retrospectively. In general, the participants did not have any difficulty with this question. They were able to paraphrase the question sufficiently (showing that they comprehended the question well). They also tended to think of all of their active duty service and also considered their time in the reserves (if applicable) when answering this question. However, one participant noted that the reserve time does not count towards a service-connected disability. In conclusion, this new wording tested well.

Another interesting finding was that one participant mentioned that the VA does not have a formal definition of a combat or war zone and that the VA does not recognize imminent pay. He also noted that he liked how it was defined in the survey because it made it very clear.

However, one caveat is that most of the participants (7 out of 8) had one continuous service period in the armed forces and thus, it is easier for them to consider all of their military service, since they had no breaks in service. Only one participant had a break in service, but he also did not have any difficulty with this question.

(S10 – Year of separation) **“In what year were you last separated from active duty in the Armed Forces?”**

One of the problems that this question encountered in the field was that the respondents did not seem to be giving their last year. Specifically, the year that the veterans provided as their last year did not correspond to their most recent reported period of service, so there was reason to suspect that they were not understanding this question correctly. For example, in August 2007, there were 465,000 veterans who reported serving in “other service periods” only and who were discharged between 1990 and 1999. The Gulf War Era began in August 1990; thus, most of these veterans should have been classified in the Gulf War era. The current question may not be as clear as possible, as the key words “last” and “separated” are buried in the middle of the question. In order to address this issue, two revised versions of this question were tested. They were as follows:

Version 1: **“What was your LAST year on active duty in the Armed Forces?”**

Version 2: **“In what year were you separated from active duty in the Armed Forces for the LAST time?”**

From the cognitive interviews, it seemed that the participants’ comprehension of this question was fine. For example, the year that they provided as their last year in active duty corresponded to their responses to question AF2_N (“When did you serve on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces?”), which was asked earlier (as part of the CPS demographics question set).

When asked specifically which version of the question wording they preferred (i.e., thought was more clear), the results were mixed. Half of the participants (4 out of 8) preferred Version 1 because they thought it was shorter and more concise. Three out of 8 participants preferred Version 2, because they thought that “separated” was a good, explicit term. One participant also noted that Version 2 (with the word separated) might work better for veterans who had “spurts” or breaks in service. However, they also noted that this version sounded grammatically awkward. Given the mixed findings, the recommendation was made to revise the question to include the word “separated” but to make the question short with fewer clauses in the question’s syntax. New wordings were proposed for the second round of testing. This will be discussed in more detail in the “Round 2: Findings” section of the report.

(S11a – Combat) **“Did you EVER serve in a combat or war zone?” READ IF NECESSARY: Persons serving in a combat or war zone usually receive combat zone tax exclusion, Imminent Danger Pay, or Hostile Fire Pay.**

The survey sponsor (VA) requested that this question be revised because they had concerns that there were many false negatives to this question. In other words, they were concerned that veterans who had, in fact, served in a combat zone would answer “no” to this question because they did not engage in combat, per se. In particular, they were concerned that female veterans would give more false negatives because they are prohibited by law from combat duty, even though they can serve in a combat or war zone (and meet the definition of this question). To address these concerns, the definition was included in the question, instead of being a “READ IF NECESSARY.” Two versions of this question were proposed and tested in Round 1. They were as follows:

Version 1: **“Did you EVER serve in a combat or war zone; that is, did you ever receive combat zone tax exclusion, Imminent Danger Pay, or Hostile Fire Pay?”**

Version 2: **“Did you EVER serve in a combat or war zone? Persons serving in a combat or war zone usually receive combat zone tax exclusion, Imminent Danger Pay, or Hostile Fire Pay.”**

Both versions tested well, but there was a stronger preference for Version 2 (5 out of 8 participants preferred it). They thought that this version flowed better and it also provided context for what is meant by combat or war zone, without limiting it to that definition explicitly. This distinction may be important for older veterans (e.g., Vietnam era or earlier), since tax exclusion, imminent danger pay or hostile fire pay may not have existed back then (or these terms may not have existed or been used).

We were particularly interested in the responses of female veterans. Of the four female veterans, only one of them had served in a combat or war zone. However, they indicated that they understood this question pertained to combat zone and not combat fighting. They also noted that the definition helped to clarify this concept. Following these results, the recommendation was made to implement Version 2 of this question.

Round 2: Findings

The main purpose of Round 2 interviews was to test the revisions to question S10 (Year of separation), which had mixed results from Round 1 interviews. Another goal of Round 2 was to re-test the wording selections for questions S4 (Presence of disability) and S11a (Combat) to see if they continued to test well. Findings for question S10 will be discussed first.

S10 (Year of separation):

Three versions of this question were tested: the current wording that is used in the survey and two proposed alternate wordings, which follow:

Version 1 (current wording): **“In what year were you last separated from active duty in the Armed Forces?”**

Version 2 (new): **“In what year were you LAST separated from active duty?”**

Version 3 (wording from Round 1): **“What was your LAST year on active duty in the Armed Forces?”**

Although the phrase “separated from active duty” was familiar to veterans, we were concerned that proxies may not be as familiar with it, since it could be viewed as military jargon. Thus, we conducted interviews with proxies to see if they shared the same familiarity and preference for it. The proxies in our test said that they were familiar with this language. One participant said, “That’s very familiar to me – that’s all I’ve heard for the last 20 years.” Three out of the four proxies said that they preferred the versions that had the language “separated” in the question. They said it was more clear and precise. One proxy preferred Version 3, which did not have that language, because she felt that the wording in Version 3 put better emphasis on the fact that a year was sought in the response.

Similar to the proxies and the veterans in the Round 1 test, the veterans in this round of testing also preferred the versions that included the word “separated” in the question. One veteran said that it was better especially for veterans who had served multiple times on active duty. We also found that the clause “in the Armed Forces” was not necessary for question comprehension. In summary, it is recommended that Version 2 be implemented in the Supplement for 2009. It uses the language that is familiar to veterans and their spouses, but it is more concise than the current wording.

S4 (Presence of disability): **“Thinking about all of your military service, has the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or Department of Defense determined that you have a service-connected disability; that is a health condition or impairment caused, or made worse, by any of your military service?”**

This wording was re-tested in Round 2. No problems were observed with this question wording. Both the proxies and the veterans reported that they understood the question as referring to both their time on active duty as well as their time in the reserves. It was recommended (memo from December 19, 2008) to use this wording for the 2009 supplement. However, this wording change may constitute a break in series, which would require significant justification for making any changes. While the inclusion of the introductory phrase aided the comprehension of the question (i.e., that the question refers to all of their military service), the researcher was unable to find compelling evidence that the omission of the phrase would be detrimental to comprehension. Files from 2007 cognitive interviews were reviewed and the researcher did not find any major problems with the question, even without the introductory phrase. In addition, Esposito (2003) reported no major problems with this question (with the current wording). However, Esposito’s (2003) evaluation occurred before the series of questions about the reserves were added and thus, this question did not have the same context as it currently does.

S11a (Combat): “Did you ever serve in a combat or war zone? Persons serving in a combat or war zone usually receive combat zone tax exclusion, Imminent Danger Pay, or Hostile Fire Pay.”

This wording was re-tested in Round 2. The results from the interviews with veterans were very similar to those from Round 1. The veterans did not have any difficulty with this question. Similar to Round 1, one veteran commented that the inclusion of the different types of special pay was important for clarification. He explained that veterans could have served in combat or war zones that were not necessarily areas designated as a “contingency area.” For example, veterans could have served in Bosnia and received combat pay, but Bosnia is not a declared war or an official area of contingency.

However, we observed some problems with the proxy interviews. One proxy respondent had difficulty with this question. While she reported that her husband served in Vietnam and was in a hostile area (during time of combat) and was hospitalized as a result, she was unsure of how to answer this question because she did not know whether he received any special pay. Another proxy respondent was able to answer this question (i.e., yes, the veteran served in a combat or war zone (at Pearl Harbor after the attack) but also showed some confusion about the special pay. She knew that the veteran had served 47 months of combat service, but went back and forth on how to answer because she did not know about his pay.

The other two proxy respondents had no difficulties with this question. In fact, one proxy said that the definition about the pay status made it clear for her what was being asked.

The main difference between the proxy respondents who had difficulty and those who did not was whether the respondent knew the veteran during his/her time in the Armed Forces. In other words, the wives who were married to the veterans during their time in the Armed Forces understood this question without any difficulty and also knew about the type of pay the veterans received. However, the proxy respondents who did not know the veterans during their time in the Armed Forces, had difficulty with this question because they had no knowledge of the type of pay the veterans received. Further research is recommended for this question. In particular, we should evaluate ways to screen out proxies who did not know the veteran during his/her time in the Armed Forces. Such proxies may not be able to provide accurate responses. Another possibility is to revise the interviewer instructions so that they can provide appropriate prompts if respondents have difficulty answering about special combat pay.

For the 2009 supplement, it is recommended that the wording of S11a be revised so that there is less emphasis on the special pay portion of the question.

V. Recommended Wording for 2009 Veteran’s Supplement

- S4 (Presence of disability): Keep the current version.
“Has the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or Department of Defense determined that you have a service-connected disability; that is a health condition or impairment caused or made worse by any of your military service?”
- S10 (Year of separation): Revise to –
“In what year were you LAST separated from active duty?”

- S11a (Combat): Revise to -
“Did you ever serve in a combat or war zone? Persons serving in a combat or war zone often² receive combat zone tax exclusion, Imminent Danger Pay, or Hostile Fire Pay.”

VI. Recommendations for Future Study

- Check for redundancy. Several of the respondents who were veterans commented that the questions seemed redundant. For example, the veterans are asked about when they served on active duty (AF2_N), what year they last served (S10) and their duration of service in active duty (S11). For example, one veteran said when he was asked S11 that this question is “redundant because you asked for the span and total time and last service. You should be able to figure out the years from that.” Although these questions get at different aspects of time in active duty, for veterans who had one continuous service in active duty in the Armed Forces, these three questions can seem redundant.
- Check for sequence or flow. Several of the respondents commented that the questions seemed to “jump” from topic to topic. This is of particular concern for the presence of the disability question which directly follows the set of questions about service in the reserves without any transition. Also, respondents also commented that the set of questions did not seem cohesive and that they could not tell what the main purpose of these questions were.
- Sensitivity and privacy concerns about the disability questions. There was a small minority of participants, in both Round 1 and 2 of testing, who felt that the questions about disability were sensitive and at least one respondent voiced concerns about this information affecting his disability benefits. One suggestion is to include a statement about confidentiality in the lead-in or to include a “READ IF NECESSARY” instruction for the interviewers.

² Initially, the phrase “can receive” was recommended to replace “usually receive.” After discussion with DLFS, the word “often” was substituted for “can.” We felt it struck the best balance between making the pay definition helpful for veterans, and also de-emphasizing it for proxies, who may not know about the veteran’s pay status.

**CPS DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS FROM “BASIC”
QUESTIONNAIRE**

If person is 17 years or older, ask AF1.

AF1_N Did (you/veteran's name) ever serve on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces?

- <1> Yes (Skip to AF2_N)
- <2> No (Skip to EDUCA1_N)
- <D> Don't know (Skip to AF3_N)
- <R> Refused (Skip to AF3_N)

AF2_N IF NECESSARY: Previously I was told that (you/veteran's name) served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces.

When did (you/he/she) serve on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces?

MARK ALL THAT APPLY.

- <1> Gulf War era 2 (Sept '01--present) (Skip to AF3_N)
- <2> Gulf War era 1 (Aug '90--Aug '01) (Skip to AF3_N)
- <3> May '75--July '90 (Skip depends on age)
- <4> Vietnam Era (Aug. '64 – Apr. '75) (Skip depends on age)
- <5> Feb '55--July '64 (Skip depends on age)
- <6> Korean War (July '50–Jan. '55) (Skip depends on age)
- <7> Jan. '47--June '50
- <8> World War II (Dec '41–Dec '46)
- <9> November '41 or earlier
- <D> Don't know
- <R> Refused

AF3_N [(Are you) (Is he/she)] (still/now) in the Armed Forces?

- <1> Yes (Skip to EDUCA1_N)
- <2> No (Skip to EDUCA1_N)
- <D> Don't know (Skip to EDUCA1_N)
- <R> Refused (Skip to EDUCA1_N)

VETERANS SUPPLEMENT QUESTIONS

- SCK1**
- If person is 17 years of age or older: *Go to SCK2.*
 - All others: *END QUESTIONS.*

- SCK2** Note: Logic being added for multiple periods of service.
- <1> Gulf War era 2 (Sept '01-- present) (Skip to S1b)
 - <2> Gulf War era 1 (Aug '90--Aug '01) (Skip to CK-S1a)
 - <3> May '75--July '90 (Skip to S1a)
 - <4> Vietnam Era (Aug '64 – Apr '75) (Skip to S4)
 - <5> Feb '55--July '64 (Skip to S4)
 - <6> Korean War (July '50--Jan '55) (Skip to S4)
 - <7> Jan '47--June '50
 - <8> World War II (Dec '41--Dec '46)
 - <9> November '41 or earlier
 - <D> Don't know
 - <R> Refused

Lead In “This month we are asking some additional questions concerning service in the Armed Forces.”

- S1** (Were you) (Was he/she) on active duty in Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia; in the waters in or around these countries; or did you fly missions over these areas at any time between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975?

- <1> Yes (Skip to S4)
- <2> No (Skip to S4)
- <D> Don't know (Skip to S4)
- <R> Refused (Skip to S4)

- CK—S1a**
- If person is-62 years of age or older: *Ask S1a..*
 - All others: *Go to S4.*

- S1a** (Were you) (Was he/she) on active duty in Vietnam, Cambodia, or Laos; in the waters in or around these countries; or did you fly missions over these areas at any time between February 28, 1961 and August 4, 1964?

- <1> Yes (Skip to S4)
- <2> No (Skip to S4)
- <D> Don't know (Skip to S4)
- <R> Refused (Skip to S4)

S1b Earlier it was reported that you served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces. Was any of your active service the result of a call-up from the Reserve or National Guard?

- <1> YES (Ask S1d)
- <2> NO (Ask S1c)
- <D> Don't know
- <R> Refused

S1c Have/has (you/name) ever been a member of the Reserve or National Guard?

- <1> YES (Ask S1d)
- <2> NO (Ask S4)
- <D> Don't know
- <R> Refused

S1d Are you currently a member of the Reserve or National Guard?

- <1> YES
- <2> NO
- <D> Don't know
- <R> Refused

CK—S2 [Deleted]

S2 [Deleted]

S3 [Deleted]

S4 Has the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or Department of Defense determined that [(you have) (veteran's name has)] a service-connected disability; that is, a health condition or impairment caused or made worse by any of your military service?

- <1> YES (Skip to S5)
- <2> NO (Skip to S10)
- <D> Don't know (Skip to S10)
- <R> Refused (Skip to S10)

S5 What is (your/her/his) current service-connected disability rating?

- <0> 0 percent (Skip to S6)
- <1> 10 percent (Skip to S6)
- <2> 20 percent (Skip to S6)
- <3> 30 percent (Skip to S6)
- <4> 40 percent (Skip to S6)
- <5> 50 percent (Skip to S6)
- <6> 60 percent (Skip to S6)
- <7> 70 percent (Skip to S6)
- <8> 80 percent (Skip to S6)
- <9> 90 percent (Skip to S6)
- <10> 100 percent (Skip to S6)
- <D> Don't know (Skip to S6)
- <R> Refused

S6 Do you currently receive a monthly check for a service-connected disability from either the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or a branch of the military service?

- <1> YES
- <2> NO
- <D> Don't know
- <R> Refused

S7 Did (your/his/her) service-connected disability ever prevent (you/him/her) from getting or holding a job in the past?

- <1> YES (Skip to CK—S8)
- <2> NO (Skip to CK—S8)
- <D> Don't know (Skip to CK—S8)
- <R> Refused (Skip to CK—S8)

CK—S8

- If PUMLR = 1 or 2 (employed): *Skip to S10.*
- All others: *Ask S8.*

S8 Does this disability currently keep (you/him/her) from getting or holding a job?

- <1> YES (Skip to S9)
- <2> NO (Skip to S10)
- <D> Don't know (Skip to S9)
- <R> Refused (Skip to S9)

S9 What is the last year during which (you/he/she) worked at a job or business?

ENTER YEAR → _ _ _ _

[ENTER 'X' for 'NEVER WORKED']

<D> Don't know

<R> Refused

S10 In what year [(were you) (was he/she)] LAST separated from active duty?

(FILL: IF S1b or S1c is YES, add "DO NOT INCLUDE TIME SPENT TRAINING IN THE RESERVE OR NATIONAL GUARD.")

ENTER YEAR → _ _ _ _

<D> Don't know

<R> Refused

S10a From which branch of the Armed Forces was/were (you/name) last released from active duty? {FILL: IF S1b or S1c is YES, add "DO NOT INCLUDE SERVICE IN THE RESERVE OR NATIONAL GUARD UNLESS YOU WERE ON ACTIVE DUTY."}

<1> AIR FORCE

<2> ARMY

<3> COAST GUARD

<4> MARINE

<5> NAVY

<6> OTHER (Specify) _____

<D> Don't know

<R> Refused

CK-10 • If S1b = 2 (NO): *Skip to S11.*

• All others: *Ask S10b.*

S10b Was your LAST period on active duty a result of a call-up from the Reserve or National Guard?

<1> YES (Continue to S10c)

<2> NO (Skip to S11)

<D> Don't know (Skip to S11)

<R> Refused (Skip to S11)

S10c Was that the Reserve or National Guard?

<1> Reserve

<2> National Guard

<D> Don't know

S11 ALTOGETHER, how long did (you/he/she) serve on active duty in the

Armed Forces?

(FILL: IF S1b or S1c is YES, add “DO NOT INCLUDE TIME SPENT IN THE RESERVE OR NATIONAL GUARD UNLESS YOU WERE ON ACTIVE DUTY.”)

- <1> 6 months or less
- <2> More than 6 months,
 - less than 2 years (All go to S11a)
- <3> 2 to 3 years
- <4> 4 to 5 years
- <5> 6 to 9 years
- <6> 10 to 14 years
- <7> 15 to 19 years
- <8> 20 years and over
- <D> Don't know
- <R> Refused

S11a Did (you/NAME) EVER serve in a combat or war zone? Persons serving in a combat or war zone often receive combat zone tax exclusion, Imminent Danger Pay, or Hostile Fire Pay.

- <1> YES
- <2> NO
- <D> Don't know
- <R> Refused

- CK-S12**
- If S10 is 1991 through current year: *Read transition statement TR—S12 and then ask S12.*
 - All others: *Skip to CK—S13-S17.*

TR—S12 “The next questions ask about formal programs designed to help servicemen and women make the transition from military service back to civilian life.”

S12 Did (veteran's name/you) attend any of the Transition Assistance Program workshops, known as TAP or A-CAP?

[**READ IF NECESSARY:** These workshops provide information about finding civilian jobs, obtaining training, securing veterans benefits, and obtaining other services available to veterans.]

- <1> YES (Skip to S12a)
- <2> NO (Skip to S12f)
- <D> Don't know (Skip to CK—S13-S17)
- <R> Refused (Skip to CK—S13-S17)

S12a Was information provided during this workshop useful to (you/veteran's name) in finding a job or obtaining job-related training after (you/he/she) left the service?

- <1> YES (Skip to S12b)
 <2> NO (Skip to S12b)
 <3> Other [Specify: _____.] (Skip to S12b)
 <D> Don't know (Skip to CK—S13-S17)
 <R> Refused

S12b Did (you/veteran's name) find the transition program useful in providing information on topics OTHER THAN employment and job-training, topics such as VA educational, medical or housing benefits?

- <1> YES (Skip to S12c)
 <2> NO (Skip to S12c)
 <3> Other [Specify: _____.] (Skip to S12c)
 <D> Don't know (Skip to CK—S13-S17)
 <R> Refused

S12c Thinking back, what advice or information provided during the transition workshop proved to be most useful to (you/him/her) after leaving military service?

[CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

DO NOT READ LIST OF RESPONSE OPTIONS

- <1> advice on JOB-SEARCH behavior and strategies—for example, NETWORKING
 <2> advice on ways to improve JOB INTERVIEWING SKILLS
 <3> advice on RESUME WRITING
 <4> information on VETERANS BENEFITS (e.g., medical, education, housing)
 <5> information on availability of UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS
 <6> importance of copying SERVICE and MEDICAL RECORDS
 <7> importance of developing a CIVILIAN MIND-SET
 <8> NOTHING: did not find any advice or information to be useful
 <9> Other [Specify: _____.]
 <D> Don't know
 <R> Refused

Note: All entries skip to S12d.

S12d How might the transition workshop be improved to make it more useful to veterans?

[CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

DO NOT READ LIST OF RESPONSE OPTIONS

- <1> Make workshop MANDATORY
- <2> LENGTHEN WORKSHOP by a day or two
- <3> Offer workshop SIX MONTHS (OR MORE) PRIOR to discharge
- <4> Provide participants with SYLLABUS prior to attending TAP
- <5> LIMIT ATTENDANCE at workshop (e.g., no more than fifty attendees)
- <6> UPDATE/IMPROVE the TAP MANUAL periodically
- <7> Improve the INTERVIEW-SKILL or JOB-INTERVIEW SIMULATIONS
- <8> Improve quality of workshop INSTRUCTORS and/or workshop PRESENTATIONS
- <9> Include presentations by EMPLOYERS and HUMAN RESOURCE professionals
- <10> Include presentations by FORMER TAP ATTENDEES who are now working in the
civilian labor force
- <11> Develop a TAP WEBSITE and/or TAP VIDEOS/CDs for use after discharge
- <12> Increase COMMAND SUPPORT for TAP workshop
- <13> Involve/include SPOUSES at workshops
- <14> NO SUGGESTIONS to improve
- <15> Other [Specify: _____]
- <D> Don't know
- <R> Refused

Note: All entries skip to CK—S13-S17.

S12e

[Deleted]

S12f Why didn't (you/veteran's name) attend one of these transition workshops?
[CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

DO NOT READ LIST OF RESPONSE OPTIONS

- <1> Already HAD JOB WAITING after discharge
- <2> DID NOT KNOW DATE OR TIME of workshop or FOUND OUT TOO LATE
- <3> Thought workshop would be a WASTE OF TIME
- <4> COULD NOT ATTEND workshop when offered or CONFLICT with mission
- <5> TAP workshop was NOT OFFERED at base
- <6> Had plans to attend COLLEGE or JOB-TRAINING PROGRAM
- <7> Commanding officer WOULD NOT AUTHORIZE attendance or DID NOT SUPPORT transition workshop
- <8> NEVER HEARD OF transition workshops/DID NOT KNOW THEY EXISTED
- <9> Other [Specify: _____.]
- <D> Don't know
- <R> Refused

Note: All entries skip to CK—S13-S17.

- CK—S13-S17**
- If person is 65 years of age or older: END QUESTIONS
 - All others: Go to TR—S13.

TR—S13 “The next questions request information about FORMAL job training. During such training, which is structured and planned in advance, individuals are taught job skills or given information that helps them learn how to do specific jobs better. Schooling or course work taken to improve job prospects or performance DOES COUNT as formal job training.”
[Go to CK—S13.]

- CK—S13**
- If entry in S10 is 2006 or later: *Read fill information in first bracket in S13.*
 - If entry in S10 is 2005 or earlier, or if entry is D or R: *Read fill information in second bracket in S13.*

S13 [Since leaving active duty in the armed forces] [At any time in the past four years,] (have you) (has veteran's name) tried to obtain formal job training or job-related schooling?

[Note to Interviewers: Any high-school, college- or graduate-level course work taken to improve job prospects, knowledge, or skills DOES COUNT as formal job training.]

- <1> YES (Skip to 13a)
- <2> NO (Skip to TR—S14)
- <D> Don't know (Skip to TR—S14)
- <R> Refused (Skip to TR—S14)

S13a (Were you) (Was veteran's name) able to obtain the training or schooling (you were) (she/he was) seeking?

- <1> YES (Skip to TR—S14)
- <2> NO (Skip to S13b)
- <3> Training or schooling in progress (Skip to TR—S14)
- <4> Other [Specify: _____.] (Skip to TR—S14)
- <D> Don't know (Skip to TR—S14)
- <R> Refused

S13b For what reason (were you) (was veteran's name) unable to obtain the training or schooling that (you were) (she/he was) seeking? [CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

DO NOT READ LIST OF RESPONSE OPTIONS

- <1> CONFLICT with job responsibilities
- <2> EMPLOYER would not support training/schooling (e.g., no funding; no time off)
- <3> FAMILY OBLIGATIONS
- <4> Veteran did not meet ENTRY REQUIREMENTS for training/schooling
- <5> Veteran could NOT AFFORD cost of training/schooling
- <6> Location or timing of training/schooling INCONVENIENT for veteran
- <7> Type of training/schooling NOT COVERED by VA benefit programs
- <8> Type of training/schooling desired by veteran was NOT AVAILABLE
- <9> Information on training/schooling provided by employment specialists was INACCURATE
- <10> Other [Specify: _____.]
- <D> Don't know
- <R> Refused

Note: All entries skip to S13c.

S13c What specific type of training or schooling (were you) (was veteran's name) unable to obtain and still need? [CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

DO NOT READ LIST OF RESPONSE OPTIONS

- <1> COMPUTER procedures, programming or software training
- <2> CLERICAL or ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT skills training
- <3> MANAGEMENT training
- <4> PROFESSIONAL (law, medicine) or TECHNICAL SKILLS training
- <5> PRODUCTION or CONSTRUCTION related training
- <6> SALES or CUSTOMER RELATIONS training
- <7> SERVICE-INDUSTRY-related training
- <8> COMMUNICATIONS, EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT, OR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT training
- <9> OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY training
- <10> BASIC SKILLS training (e.g., writing, reading, arithmetic, or language training)
- <11> Other [Specify: _____.]
- <D> Don't know
- <R> Refused

Note: All entries skip to TR—14.

TR—S14 “The following questions request information on any assistance (you/veteran's name) may have sought in finding a job or obtaining job-related training from specialists at a STATE WORKFORCE OR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE agency. In various states, these employment service agencies are also sometimes known as ‘job service,’ ‘unemployment offices,’ or ‘one-stop service centers.’” [Go to CK—S14.]

- CK—S14**
- If entry in S10 is 2006 or later: *Read fill information in first bracket of S14.*
 - If entry in S10 is 2005 or earlier, or if entry is D or R: *Read fill information in second bracket of S14.*

S14 [Since leaving active duty in the armed forces] [At any time in the past four years,] (have you) (has veteran's name) made face-to-face or telephone contact with a state workforce or employment-service specialist for assistance in finding a job or obtaining job-related training?

- <1> YES (Skip to 14a)
 <2> NO (Skip to CK—S15)
 <3> Other [Specify: (Skip to CK—S15)
 _____.] (Skip to CK—S15)
 <D> Don't know (Skip to CK—S15)
 <R> Refused

S14a Was the personal assistance provided by the employment specialist helpful in identifying employment opportunities, applying for jobs, getting a job, or obtaining the job-related training (you were) (she/he was) seeking?

- <1> YES (Skip to CK—S15)
 <2> NO (Skip to CK—S15)
 <3> Other [Specify: (Skip to CK—S15)
 _____.] (Skip to CK—S15)
 <D> Don't know (Skip to CK—S15)
 <R> Refused

- CK—S15**
- If entry in S10 is 2006 or later: *Read fill information in first bracket.*
 - If entry in S10 is 2005 or earlier, or if entry is D or R: *Read fill information in second bracket.*

S15 [Since leaving active duty in the armed forces] [At any time in the past four years,] (have you) (has veteran's name) VISITED a state workforce or employment-service office or logged onto one of THEIR internet websites to review reference materials on job openings, training opportunities, or higher-education options?

- <1> YES (Skip to S15a)
 <2> NO (Skip to CK—S16)
 <3> Other [Specify: (Skip to CK—S16)
 _____.] (Skip to CK—S16)
 <D> Don't know (Skip to CK—S16)
 <R> Refused

S15a Was the information available at the employment service office or website useful in identifying employment or job training opportunities, in applying for jobs, or in getting the job or the training (you were) (she/he was) seeking?

- <1> YES (Skip to CK—S16)
 <2> NO (Skip to CK—S16)
 <3> Other [Specify: (Skip to CK—S16)
 _____.] (Skip to CK—S16)
 <D> Don't know (Skip to CK—S16)
 <R> Refused

- CK—S16**
- If entry in S10 is 2006 or later: *Read fill information in first bracket.*
 - If entry in S10 is 2005 or earlier, or if entry is D or R: *Read fill information in second bracket.*

S16 [Since leaving active duty in the armed forces] [At any time in the past four years,] (have you) (has veteran's name) used any other strategies for finding a job or obtaining job-related training, such as networking, checking the internet, responding to newspaper ads, contacting a private employment service, or seeking employment through a temporary-staffing agency?

- <1> YES (Skip to S16a)
 <2> NO (Skip to CK1—S17)
 <3> Other [Specify: (Skip to CK1—S17)
 _____.] (Skip to CK1—S17)
 <D> Don't know (Skip to CK1—S17)
 <R> Refused

S16a Were any of these strategies useful in identifying employment opportunities, applying for jobs, getting a job, or obtaining the job-related training (you were) (she/he was) seeking?

- <1> YES (Skip to CK1—S17)
 <2> NO (Skip to CK1—S17)
 <3> Other [Specify: (Skip to CK1—S17)
 _____.] (Skip to CK1—S17)
 <D> Don't know (Skip to CK1—S17)
 <R> Refused

- CK1—**
- If PUMLR = 1 or 2 (employed): END QUESTIONS.

- S17** • All others: *Go to CK2—S17.*
- CK2—**
S17 • If S14 equals ‘yes’ <1>, ‘other’ <3>, <D> or <R>: END QUESTIONS.
• If S14 equals ‘no’ <2>: *Go to CK3—S17 and then ask S17.*
- CK3—**
S17 • If entry in S10 is-2006 or later: *Read fill information in first bracket in S17.*
• If entry in S10 is 2005 or earlier, or if entry is D or R: *Read fill information in second bracket in S17.*

S17 Earlier you mentioned that (you/veteran’s name) did not make face-to-face or telephone contact with a state-employment-service specialist for assistance in finding a job or obtaining job-related training [since leaving active duty in the armed forces.] [at any time in the past four years.] Why did (you/he/she) choose NOT to do so?
[CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

DO NOT READ LIST OF RESPONSE OPTIONS

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| <1> Already have JOB lined up | (End Questions) |
| <2> Was <i>not</i> looking for JOB or WORK; did <i>not</i> want to work | (End Questions) |
| <3> Have FAMILY OBLIGATIONS | (End Questions) |
| <4> DISABLED or UNABLE to work | (End Questions) |
| <5> Did not think specialist could help (NO FAITH in system) | (End Questions) |
| <6> Contacted VA or other government office for help | (End Questions) |
| <7> PRIDE or STIGMA associated with going to “unemployment office” | (End Questions) |
| <8> COULD <i>NOT</i> FIND employment service office | (End Questions) |
| <9> Specialists do <i>not</i> have information on GOOD JOBS | (End Questions) |
| <10> Was UNAWARE OF SERVICES provided employment offices and their specialists | (End Questions) |
| <11> Too OLD to re-train, go back to school, or switch occupations | (End Questions) |
| <12> Prefer or had access to INTERNET or job WEBSITES | (End Questions) |
| <13> Other [Specify:
_____.] | (End Questions) |
| <D> Don’t know | (End Questions) |
| <R> Refused | (End Questions) |