Table 2. Age distribution of the female population 18 years and over by veteran status, January-June 1986 averages

Age	Veterans			Non-veterans
	Vietnam-era veterans	Other war veterans	Peacetime veterans	
Total (in thousands)	245	452	330	93,504
Total (in percent)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
18 to 29 years	4.5	—	52.7	26.2
30 to 39 years	69.7	—	22.1	20.7
40 to 49 years	20.0	0.9	16.4	14.1
50 to 59 years	3.3	20.4	5.2	12.2
60 to 69 years	1.2	63.1	1.2	11.5
70 years and over	1.2	15.9	2.4	11.5

groups, the labor force participation rate for "other" war veterans is relatively low, about 30 percent.

The last group identified through the survey was peacetime veterans, generally those who served between World War II and the Korean conflict, between the Korean conflict and Vietnam, and during the post-Vietnam era. In early 1986, there were 330,000 peacetime veterans, 71 percent of whom were labor force participants.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics will make the data on female veterans available upon request. □

——*FOOTNOTES*——

[1] See, for example, *Labor Force and Employment in 1959*, Special Labor Force Report No. 4 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1960), p. A-11.

[2] *Survey of Female Veterans* (Veterans' Administration, September 1985), p. 1.

[3] *Military Women in the Department of Defense* (U.S. Department of Defense, April 1985), p. 47.

[4] Data are from the U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center.

Military and civilian wives: update on the labor force gap

HOWARD V. HAYGHE

In an era when wives' earnings are a major component of family income, many military wives experience labor market difficulties which can have a serious impact on the economic well-being of their families. This, in turn, can affect the ability of today's all-volunteer Armed Forces to retain the highly skilled, experienced personnel that are vital to its mission.

This report updates a 1981 *Monthly Labor Review* article comparing the labor force patterns of military and civilian wives.[1] The recent situation is described first and is followed by a review of trends since 1970.

Status in March 1986

About 846,000 women in the United States were living on or off military posts with husbands who were members of the Armed Forces in March 1986. An additional 50,000 women were separated from their spouses because the men had been assigned to ships, overseas duty, or other posts where the family could not accompany them.[2]

Of the women living with their husbands 52 percent were working or looking for work, compared with 55 percent of civilian wives. However, this similarity is misleading. When the age difference between military and civilian wives is taken into account, military wives are substantially less likely to be in the labor force.

The age distribution of military wives can be estimated from that of their husbands. We know that, in general, women tend to marry men who are about 2 to 3 years older than themselves. In 1986, for example, the median age for married women, husband present, was 42.1 years, compared with a median of 44.8 years for husbands. As shown in the percent distribution below, husbands in military services are a great deal younger than their civilian counterparts.

Age	*Military husbands*	*Civilian husbands*	*All wives*
Total	100	100	100
16 to 19	2	–	–
20 to 24	17	4	7
25 to 34	49	23	26
35 to 44	26	23	23
45 and over	6	50	44

Thus, it can be expected that as a group, military wives are also considerably younger than all civilian wives. Indeed, virtually all are probably under 45 years of age. For the sake of consistency, labor force comparisons for military wives will be made with all wives 16 to 44 years old. (The proportion of military wives is only about 2.9 percent of all married women these ages, so their effect on labor force data pertaining to all 16- to 44-year-old wives is clearly negligible. Thus, all wives in the age group can be considered as the civilian counterparts of military wives.)

Overall, the labor force participation rate of military wives (52 percent) was nearly 15 percentage points lower than that of their civilian counterparts. Moreover, whatever their race or motherhood status, military wives were less likely than the 16- to 44-year-olds to be labor force participants. (See table 1.) For instance, white military wives had a participation rate in 1986 that was 18 percentage points lower than the rate for their civilian counterparts. Among blacks, the difference was about 11 percentage points. The presence of preschool children appeared to limit military wives' labor force activity more sharply than that of the

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Table 1. Population and labor force participation rates of military and civilian wives by race and presence and age of children, March 1986
[Numbers in thousands]

Characteristic	Military wives, 16 years and older	Civilian wives, 16 years and older	All wives, 16 to 44 years old
Population			
Total	846	50,132	29,228
White	669	45,285	25,967
Black	138	3,570	2,213
With no children under age 18	221	26,100	7,079
With children under age 18	625	24,032	22,150
Children ages 6 to 17 only	216	12,499	10,027
Children under age 6	409	11,533	12,123
Labor force participation rate[1]			
Total	52.1	54.6	66.9
White	48.1	53.6	66.1
Black	65.9	64.3	77.1
With no children under age 18	68.3	48.0	82.6
With children under age 18	46.4	61.8	61.8
Children ages 6 to 17 only	66.2	68.5	71.4
Children under age 6	35.7	54.5	53.9

[1] Labor force as a percent of population.

NOTE: Because of rounding, sums of individual cells may not equal totals.

other group of wives with children that age, but the difference narrowed for those with school-age children. However, even when there were no children in the family, the military wives' participation rate was lower.

Unemployment rates were higher across the board for military wives than for the other wives—10.7 versus 6.0 percent. This is partly a function of the black-white mix as well as greater family mobility; black wives constituted 16 percent of the total, versus 8 percent of all civilian wives.

When employed, military wives are more concentrated in sales and service occupations than civilian wives. About 35 percent of military wives held such jobs in March 1986, compared with 27 percent of civilian wives. At the same time, military wives were less likely to be in professional specialty jobs—12 versus 16 percent. Service and sales jobs frequently offer the flexibility of part-time employment, do not necessarily require specialized training, and are often typified by high employee turnover. Hence, even though they are characterized by low earnings,[3] they are probably easier for military wives to obtain than other jobs, for which longer-term commitments are often expected.

Trends

The relatively low labor force participation rates of military wives are not a new development. In 1970, shortly after the Bureau of Labor Statistics first tabulated data for this group, 31 percent of military wives were working or looking for work. In contrast, 44 percent of their civilian counterparts were in the labor force. Since then, the rates for both groups have increased by a little more than 20 percentage points. Thus, by 1986, the rates were 52 percent for military wives and 67 percent for the other wives—practically the same difference as in 1970.

While the participation rates for civilian wives advanced steadily over the period, the trend for military wives was erratic. In addition to the demographic, economic, and social factors that influence the labor force activity of both civilian and military wives,[4] the rates for military wives are also likely to be affected by changes in the flows of enlistments, transfers, and discharges of their husbands. This may also partly account for the erratic movements in military wives' unemployment rates.

Table 2. Labor force and unemployment rates of military and civilian wives, March 1970 to March 1986

Year	Labor force participation rate[1]			Unemployment rate[2]		
	Military wives, 16 years and older	Civilian wives, 16 years and older	All wives, 16 to 44 years old	Military wives, 16 years and older	Civilian wives, 16 years and older	All wives, 16 to 44 years old
1970	30.5	41.2	43.7	13.0	4.5	5.7
1971	27.2	41.1	44.0	10.4	5.7	7.3
1972	26.8	41.9	45.3	10.0	5.2	6.4
1973	33.3	42.5	47.5	13.1	4.4	5.3
1974	36.3	43.3	48.9	12.4	4.5	5.8
1975	39.3	44.6	51.1	16.3	8.3	10.0
1976	38.0	45.3	52.1	12.7	7.0	8.4
1977	38.2	46.8	54.7	18.0	6.6	7.8
1978	46.6	47.7	56.3	16.5	4.9	6.2
1979	50.2	49.4	58.7	11.8	4.9	5.9
1980	50.6	50.2	60.3	10.9	5.1	6.2
1981	50.7	51.1	61.6	8.0	5.6	6.8
1982	51.9	51.3	62.4	13.5	6.9	8.1
1983	47.6	51.9	63.4	17.2	6.9	8.2
1984	50.6	53.0	64.5	16.9	5.4	6.7
1985	52.1	54.4	66.3	17.8	5.5	6.3
1986	52.1	54.6	66.9	10.7	5.2	6.0

[1] Labor force as percent of population.

[2] Unemployed as percent of labor force.

NOTE: Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Clearly, military wives have made considerable progress in the labor market. But a number of articles and studies indicate that frequent transfers of their husbands place many military wives at a labor market disadvantage. It has long been known that high mobility means frequent breaks in the wife's employment or education and training.[5] One result is that her opportunities to develop a marketable career are disrupted; another is that she must search for jobs in unfamiliar geographic areas. Moreover, the concomitant lack of experience, training, and seniority may result in lower earnings for military wives.[6] They may also experience some job discrimination because of the likelihood that they will not remain with an employer for very long.[7] But, whatever the cause, or causes, of military wives' labor market problems, these problems continue to be a source of concern not only to the families themselves, but also to the Armed Services as a whole. □

——*FOOTNOTES*——

[1] See Allyson Sherman Grossman, "The employment situation for military wives," *Monthly Labor Review*, February 1981, pp. 60–64.

[2] The information in this research summary is based on data collected in the Current Population Survey in March 1986 and in March of prior years. The Current Population Survey is a monthly survey with a sample that presently includes about 59,500 households in the 50 States and the District of Columbia. The survey is conducted for the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the Bureau of the Census and provides comprehensive data on the labor force by a wide variety of demographic characteristics, including family status. For further information, see BLS *Handbook of Methods, Volume I*, Bulletin 2134–1, pp. 3–12.

[3] See, for example, "Weekly Earnings of Wage and Salary Workers: Third Quarter," BLS News Release, Oct. 1985, table 3.

[4] See Hilda Kahne and Andrew Kohen, "Economic Perspectives on the Roles of Women in the American Economy," *Journal of Economic Literature*, December 1975, pp. 1249–92.

[5] See Ruth Chaskel, "Effect of Mobility on Family Life," *Social Work*, vol. 9, October 1964, pp. 83–91; Elizabeth Finlayson, "A Study of the Wife of the Army Officer: Her Academic and Career Preparation, Her Current Employment and Volunteer Services," in McCubbin and others, eds., *Families in the Military* (Beverly Hills, CA, Sage Publications, 1976), ch. 1.; Judy Pearson, *Testimony on Transferability of GI Bill* (Arlington, VA, Military Wives Association, October 1981).

[6] See "Relative Spouse Earnings," *Pay Adequacy Study* (Department of Defense, 1979), appendix C.

[7] See Helga M. Parks, "Survey of Job Discrimination Against Military Wives," unpublished manuscript (Springfield, VA, Military Family Resource Center, February 1983).

Occupational pay in textile dyeing and finishing plants

Production and related workers in the textile dyeing and finishing industry averaged $6.67 an hour in June 1985, according to a study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.[1] Regionally, average hourly earnings were highest in New England ($7.67) and lowest in the Southeast ($6.42), where three-fourths of the 36,300 production workers were employed. The Middle Atlantic States, employing one-tenth of the workers, recorded $7.27 an hour. (See table 1.)

Wages in mills processing textiles for their own account averaged virtually the same as mills processing materials for customers on a commission basis (textiles owned by others), $6.67 and $6.68, respectively. Employment was equally divided between these two types of finishers.

Pay in mills primarily processing manmade textiles—seven-tenths of the work force—averaged $6.83 an hour, 6 percent more than the $6.42 recorded among cotton textile processors. Within both of these groups, pay nearly always averaged more per hour in fabric mills than in yarn or thread mills.

Pay levels also were compared by type of area, size of establishment, and labor-management contract coverage. Average hourly earnings were 11 percent higher in metropolitan areas[2] than in nonmetropolitan areas ($7.10 versus $6.39). Pay in plants with at least 500 employees averaged $6.84 an hour, the same as in plants with 250 to 499 employees, but was higher than in plants with 50–249 employees ($6.45 an hour). In establishments where a majority of the workers were covered by labor-management agreements, pay averaged $7.57 an hour, 19 percent more than the $6.35 in nonunion establishments. Regionally, the pay advantage for production workers in union establishments was 5 percent in the Southeast, 15 percent in New England, and 48 percent in the Middle Atlantic region.

Forty occupations, accounting for nearly three-fifths of the production workers, were selected to represent the industry's wage structure, workers' skills and manufacturing operations. Pay levels among these jobs ranged from $5.63 and hour for janitors, porters, and cleaners, to $9.71 for machine printers. Tenders of cloth-dyeing machines, numerically the largest job studied separately, averaged $6.92 an hour. Occupational pay levels varied by pay determining characteristics such as region, type of textile processed, size of establishment, and union contract status; the interrelationships among these factors, however, were not taken into account when tabulating the data.

Virtually all production workers were in establishments providing paid holidays, paid vacations, and at least part of the cost of various health and insurance plans. Seven to 10 holidays annually were typical, as were 1 to 4 weeks of vacation pay, depending on years of service.

Retirement pension plans (in addition to Social Security) covered approximately three-fourths of the work force, while retirement severance plans applied to nearly one-tenth. Employers typically paid the entire cost of these retirement plans.

One-fourth of the workers were employed in establishments having collective bargaining agreements covering a majority of the production workers. Regionally, the proportions were one-tenth in the Southeast, seven-tenths in the

Table 1. Average hourly earnings[1] in textile dyeing and finishing plants, United States and selected regions,[2] June 1985

Characteristic	United States[3]	New England	Middle Atlantic	Southeast
All production workers	$6.67	$7.67	$7.27	$ 6.42
Type of finisher:				
Commission mill	6.68	7.58	7.54	6.00
For own account	6.67	8.03	5.31	6.65
Type of textile:				
Cotton[3]	6.42	7.71	6.35	6.18
Broadwoven	6.44	7.37	6.86	6.19
Yarn or thread	6.11	–	–	6.11
Manmade[3]	6.83	7.66	7.85	6.56
Broadwoven	6.92	7.66	8.10	6.62
Yarn or thread	5.51	–	–	5.47
Type of area:				
Metropolitan areas[4]	7.10	7.67	7.40	6.55
Nonmetropolitan areas	6.39	–	–	6.39
Size of establishment:				
50–249 workers	6.45	7.55	7.26	5.69
250–499 workers	6.84	7.95	–	6.65
500 workers or more	6.84	–	–	6.84
Labor-management contracts:				
Establishments with—				
Majority of workers covered	7.57	7.87	8.06	6.74
None or minority of workers covered	6.35	6.87	5.43	6.39
Selected production occupations:				
Color mixers	7.12	7.79	8.44	6.74
Dyeing-machine tenders, cloth	6.92	7.40	7.85	6.32
Finishing-range operators	6.61	7.70	6.32	6.31
Inspectors, cloth, machine	6.44	6.71	7.89	6.29
Janitors, porters, and cleaners	5.63	6.71	7.75	5.26
Mechanics (machinery), maintenance	8.32	8.39	9.73	8.25
Power-truck operators	6.07	7.09	–	5.97
Printers, machine	9.71	–	7.37	10.50
Tenter-frame tenders	6.88	6.90	7.76	6.27
Winders, yarn	5.66	–	5.12	5.73

[1] Excludes premium pay for overtime and for work on weekends, holidays, and late shifts. Incentive payments, such as those resulting from piecework or production bonus systems, and cost-of-living pay increases (but not bonuses) were included as part of the workers' regular pay. Excluded are performance bonuses and lump-sum payments of the type negotiated in the auto and aerospace industries, as well as profit-sharing payments, attendance bonuses, Christmas or yearend bonuses, and other nonproduction bonuses.

[2] The regions used in this study include: *New England*—Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont; *Middle Atlantic*—New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania; and *Southeast*—Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

[3] Includes data for subclassifications in addition to those shown separately.

[4] Metropolitan Statistical Areas as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget through June 1983.

NOTE: Dashes indicate no data were reported or that data did not meet publication criteria.

Middle Atlantic, and four-fifths in New England. The major union in the industry was the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (AFL-CIO).

A comprehensive bulletin on the study, *Industry Wage Survey: Textile Dyeing and Finishing, June 1985*, BLS Bulletin 2260, may be purchased from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Publication Sales Center, P.O. Box 2145, Chicago, IL 60690, or the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The bulletin provides additional information on occupational pay and on the incidence of employee benefits. The study covered 223 establishments primarily engaged in dyeing and finishing nonwool yarn, thread, cloth, or other textile products and employing 50 workers or more. □

FOOTNOTES

[1] Wage data are straight-time earnings which exclude premium pay for overtime and for work on weekends, holidays, and late shifts. Incentive payments, such as those resulting from piecework or production bonus systems, and cost-of-living pay increases (but not bonuses) were included as part of the workers' regular pay. Excluded are performance bonuses and lump-sum payments of the type negotiated in the auto and aerospace industries, as well as profit-sharing payments, attendance bonuses, Christmas or yearend bonuses, and other nonproduction bonuses.

[2] Metropolitan Statistical Areas as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget through June 1983.