



Supporting  
Military Families  
Through Research  
and Outreach

# PUTTING RESEARCH TO WORK FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

## The Impact of Homecoming Reception on the Adaptation of Peacekeepers Following Deployment

Bolton, E.E., Litz, B.T., Glenn, D.M., Orsillo, S. & Roemer, L. (2002). The impact of homecoming reception on the adaptation of peacekeepers following deployment. *Military Psychology*, 14, 241-251.



*1,023 Veterans of the Somalia peacekeeping mission were evaluated over a period of 1.5 years to examine the relationship between perceived homecoming experiences and later posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms. Homecoming reception was positively related to fewer PTSD symptoms.*

### Key Findings:

- More positive homecoming receptions were associated with fewer symptoms of PTSD; however, homecoming reception accounted for less variance in PTSD symptoms than exposure to potentially traumatizing events in Somalia.
- Homecoming reception accounted for a significant amount of variance in post-deployment distress after controlling for exposure to combat and other stressors of peacekeeping.
- Exposure to combat-like experiences and other stressors related to peacekeeping did not moderate the relationship between homecoming reception and distress.
- Participants reported that their homecoming experiences were largely positive.

### Implications for Programs:

- Military family programs could offer classes for Service members about reintegration after a combat deployment, including information about the importance of finding support from others during the transition.
- Programs could help family members and significant others make a welcoming environment for a Service member's homecoming by facilitating welcome events at both a family and community level.

### Implications for Policies:

- Policies could allocate funds for community welcome home events for returning Service members.
- Policies could recommend that Service members be assessed for signs of distress, including PTSD symptoms, related to military deployments, both upon homecoming and over time.

### Avenues for Future Research:

- Future research could develop and implement a psychometrically-sound measure of homecoming reception.
- Additional studies could examine the impact of homecoming across time to see if the effects hold over a longer period of time.

Prepared by the Military REACH Team.

For additional information, please visit [reachmilitaryfamilies.umn.edu](http://reachmilitaryfamilies.umn.edu)

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## Background Information

### Methodology:

- Veterans of the Somalia peacekeeping mission were recruited and completed an initial questionnaire in group sessions approximately 15 weeks after their return to the United States (n=3,461).
- 30% of initial participants completed a questionnaire about 1.5 years later via phone or mail.
- Questionnaires contained demographic items, measures of homecoming reception, combat exposure, other stressors, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- Multiple linear regressions tested the effect of exposure to combat and other stressors on symptoms of PTSD.

### Participants:

- 1,023 Veterans participated (90% male).
- Average age = 26.68 years (SD=6.14 years).
- 52% were married. Average years of education = 12.97 (SD=1.57 years).
- 90% were enlisted Service members. Average number of years in the Armed Forces =6.13 (SD=5.52 years).
- Racial ethnic composition: 72% Caucasian.

### Limitations:

- The study was correlational and causal conclusions are not possible.
- All measures were self-reported which may bias the results.
- The measure of homecoming reception was a 2 item measure that was unvalidated.
- There was no information on the service branches of the participants; results may not generalize to all branches.

## Assessing Research that Works

| Research Design and Sample   |  |  |  |   | Quality Rating: | ★ ★ ★ |
|--|--|--|--|---|-----------------|-------|
|  | Excellent<br>(★ ★ ★)                         | Appropriate<br>(★ ★ ★)                       | Limited<br>(★ ★ ★)                           | Questionable<br>(★ ★ ★)                               |                 |       |
| The design of the study (e.g., research plan, sample, recruitment) used to address the research question was.... | <input type="checkbox"/>                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/>                     | <input type="checkbox"/>                              |                 |       |
| Research Methods   |  |  |  |   | Quality Rating: | ★ ★ ★ |
|  | Excellent<br>(★ ★ ★)                         | Appropriate<br>(★ ★ ★)                       | Limited<br>(★ ★ ★)                           | Questionable<br>(★ ★ ★)                               |                 |       |
| The research methods (e.g., measurement, analysis) used to answer the research question were...                  | <input type="checkbox"/>                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/>                     | <input type="checkbox"/>                              |                 |       |
| Limitations  |  |  |  |   | Quality Rating: | ★ ★ ★ |
|  | Excellent<br>Minor<br>Limitations<br>(★ ★ ★) | Appropriate<br>Few<br>Limitations<br>(★ ★ ★) | Limited<br>Several<br>Limitations<br>(★ ★ ★) | Questionable<br>Many/Severe<br>Limitations<br>(★ ★ ★) |                 |       |
| The limitations of this study are...   | <input type="checkbox"/>                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/>                     | <input type="checkbox"/>                              |                 |       |
| Implications   |  |  |  |   | Quality Rating: | ★ ★ ★ |
|  | Excellent<br>(★ ★ ★)                         | Appropriate<br>(★ ★ ★)                       | Limited<br>(★ ★ ★)                           | Questionable<br>(★ ★ ★)                               |                 |       |
| The implications of this research to programs, policies and the field, stated by the authors, are...             | <input type="checkbox"/>                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/>                     | <input type="checkbox"/>                              |                 |       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable because authors do not discuss implications                              |  |  |  |   |                 |       |
| Overall Quality Rating   |  |  |  |   |                 | ★ ★ ★ |