The Impact of Homecoming Reception on the Adaption of Peacekeepers Following Deployment


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
Developed in collaboration with the Department of Defense’s Office of Family Policy, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture under The University of Minnesota Award No. 2013-48710-21515.
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.

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.

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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Design and Sample</th>
<th>Quality Rating:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The design of the study (e.g., research plan, sample, recruitment) used to address the research question was...</td>
<td>[ ] Excellent (★★★) [ ] Appropriate (★★) [ ] Limited (★) [ ] Questionable (☆)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Methods</th>
<th>Quality Rating:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The research methods (e.g., measurement, analysis) used to answer the research question were...</td>
<td>[ ] Excellent (★★★) [ ] Appropriate (★★) [ ] Limited (★) [ ] Questionable (☆)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limitations</th>
<th>Quality Rating:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The limitations of this study are...</td>
<td>[ ] Excellent Minor Limitations (★★★) [ ] Appropriate Few Limitations (★★) [ ] Limited Several Limitations (★) [ ] Questionable Many/Severe Limitations (☆)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implications</th>
<th>Quality Rating:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The implications of this research to programs, policies and the field, stated by the authors, are...</td>
<td>[ ] Excellent (★★★) [ ] Appropriate (★★) [ ] Limited (★) [ ] Questionable (☆)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

☑ Not applicable because authors do not discuss implications

Overall Quality Rating

★★★☆☆