

▶ be on another time zone or struggling with issues related to combat," adds [Jeffrey D. Murrah](#), licensed marriage and family therapist.

Wilson and other researchers compared the divorce and separation rates of military personnel who had faced combat duty with those who had not in hopes of shedding some light on the specific causes of the increase in divorces following deployments and to call for additional research and increased knowledge for government officials.

"The impact of war and military service on families of veterans is relatively understudied. A portion of these costs fall not just upon the men and women who serve, but upon those who stay home," Wilson said. "Do members of the military and their spouses need special counseling? Does the military need to more closely monitor what's going on in families? What kinds of support do veterans and their spouses need after their service ends? These are some issues that need to be added to the equation. We just don't know that much about them."

Wilson and his team used a statistical method called duration analysis to control for other social variables in studying the information collected on more than 13,000 individuals conducted in the early 1990s from the National Survey of Families and Households to find the relationship between military service and a man's first marriage.

"After controlling for things like combat, age and religion, the effect of serving in Korea was more than twice as high as it was in World War II. There was a real sea change between World War II and Korea," Wilson said.

Of the three wars studied, researchers found that those who served in Korea were most likely to see an end to their first marriage as a result of the service. Combat veterans in Korea saw a 45 percent increase in their likelihood to divorce over the subsequent 10 years than non-veterans in their era. Where veterans of Vietnam saw only a 28 percent jump over those men who stayed at home during that war. World War II came in a very distant third.

"There is a notion that Korea was much like World War II, but that Vietnam really messed people up," Wilson said. "We find quite the opposite. It's true that Vietnam vets were getting divorced at high rates, but so was everyone else at the time. We suspect that people often ignore general social trends when thinking about the effects of the Vietnam War."

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