
Defense Report

AUSA



Once a Soldier, Always a Better Citizen

The senior leadership of the Army was somewhat surprised to learn recently that Army veterans value their military service more for the personal growth they think it fostered and for the general work skills they developed than any specific job training they acquired.

The results of the 1985 Army Experience Survey of 2,500 first term veterans who had left the Army within the last three years provides answers on how these men and women rate the worth of their Army service. The large majority (87 percent) of veterans indicated their Army service had been valuable to them and, if given the chance, nearly three quarters of them said they would join the Army all over again.

In general, first term veterans reported the most valuable thing about their Army service was the self-growth that they had experienced as a result of their Army enlistment. They said the Army had a positive impact on such things as: pride in self (87 percent), self-discipline (84 percent), establishing independence (75 percent), and openness to new ideas (72 percent).

Of the 13 percent of the veterans who reported that their service enlistment was not valuable to them, most stated the leading cause for dissatisfaction was the inability to get the job fulfillment training or education they wanted.

These survey results indicated that those who value their Army experience are positive about it on almost all levels but are most positive about the opportunities for self-development and learning general work skills. Those who did not place a high value on their Army experience were disappointed in the lack of specific skill training and job fulfillment opportunities available to them in the Army but not with the opportunities for self-development in other areas.

In the past, Army recruiting advertisements emphasized the job training and experience high school graduates could gain through Army service. This new survey gives Army recruiters a clearer picture of exactly where future recruiting campaigns should be focused. Still the Army recruiting theme, "Be All You Can Be," has obviously offered the right challenge to many bright young American men and women.