
Defense Report

AUSA



Surveys Show Americans Have Pride in Their Armed Forces

The American people have more confidence in their Armed Forces than in any other public or private institution in the land according to the latest Gallup and Harris polls. For the first time, both of these widely respected opinion surveys have placed the military at the top of their annual measurement of public trust.

In the Gallup Poll, the military has, for nearly a decade, ranked second behind the church or organized religion while leading all other government organizations in which those surveyed indicated a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence. In the most recent survey, the church lost its primacy as the institution in which the American people have the greatest confidence by about six percentage points. The military topped the list with 63 percent, the church came next with 57 percent.

Results of the Harris Survey were strikingly similar—with the military having led other government institutions for nearly 10 years, while usually ranking second or third overall among institutions included in the survey. The 1986 poll reflects a four percent rise in public confidence from the previous year. This time, 36 percent of the people surveyed expressed confidence in the Armed Forces.

Among the government institutions covered by the Harris Survey were the White House, Congress, the Supreme Court and the military. Private institutions included medicine, newspapers, organized religion, higher education and television news. The people were asked in which of these institutions they had a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, some confidence or very little confidence.

The Gallup Poll asks a slightly different question concerning essentially the same institutions. The major disparity in the percentage figures between the surveys is probably attributable to differences in the way the two organizations tally their results.

The high levels of support for our military forces indicated by these opinion surveys is reflective of renewed American pride and patriotism as a result of restored strength of our national defense. More and more bright young Americans are proud to serve in uniform and more and more Americans take pride in those who serve.