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## **An Analysis of Public Library Services to the Military Community**

Rachel Brown

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An Analysis of Public Library Services to the Military Community

by

Rachel Brown

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Honors College of  
The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of Honors Requirements

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## ABSTRACT

The military community is an underserved population in many public libraries. Historically, military bases have had a dedicated military library on base, but in some cases budget cuts have led to their closure. The closure of military libraries provides an opportunity for public libraries to fill the gap and provide support to the military community. Despite not being equipped to handle many of the unique challenges that Service members and their families encounter, public libraries have been making great strides towards providing support to the military community as a whole. Current research focuses on how military lifestyle impacts psychosocial development, reading as a tool for improving mental health, and gaining a deeper understanding of trauma recovery for military personnel. Public libraries have branched out into the role of being a support center for the military community. As a lifeline for the betterment of service members and their families, public libraries offer programming that helps Veterans process PTSD, services that bring deployed families closer together, and catalog materials that highlight military life.

This study examines the library collections of four libraries in Mississippi using checklists methodology to analyze the comparative coverage of military-affiliated titles in each collection. The results of the catalog analysis showed that public libraries within close distance to military communities are lacking adequate resources to meet their needs. The findings of this small-scale study indicate that further research is needed, especially a larger scale national survey of public libraries on their attitudes towards and acquisition of military-affiliated titles. **Keywords:** Public libraries, Library services, Veteran, Military dependent, Service member, Catalog analysis



## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my loving family, my supportive husband, and my mentor, Lecturer Johnnie Pace. Your unwavering encouragement and guidance have been instrumental in helping me achieve my lifelong dream of becoming a librarian.

I also want to dedicate this thesis to all the brave Service members, Veterans, and their families who serve our country. I want to express my deepest gratitude for your military service and sacrifices. It is an honor to dedicate this thesis to you, and I hope that my work as a librarian will contribute to improving your lives in some small way.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who has supported me in completing this thesis. First and foremost, I would like to thank the military community, particularly the Service members, Veterans, and military dependents, for their sacrifices and dedication to our country. It is through their commitment that we are able to enjoy the freedoms and opportunities we have today.

During my time in the Air Force, I witnessed firsthand the challenges that the military community faces, particularly when it comes to accessing essential resources and support. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside these brave men and women, and it is because of their service that I was inspired to use my knowledge of library and information sciences to examine new ways that the library can support the military community.

I am deeply grateful to my advisors, Dr. Stacy Creel and Lecturer Johnnie Pace, for their guidance and support throughout my academic journey. Mr. Pace's expertise and encouragement have been instrumental in helping me to develop my research skills and to better understand the unique needs of the military community.

I would also like to thank my family and friends for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout my studies. Their love and encouragement have provided me with the motivation and drive to succeed.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to the staff and colleagues of the School of Library and Information Sciences at the University of Southern Mississippi. Through my studies in this program, I have gained a deeper understanding of the crucial role that libraries play in communities, and I am excited to apply this knowledge to serve the



military community. I believe that by creating a library that is tailored to the unique needs of Service members, Veterans, and military dependents, we can help make their lives a little easier and provide them with a greater sense of community and belonging.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported, encouraged, and inspired me throughout my academic journey. Without your help, this thesis would not have been possible.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DoD	Department of Defense
EPLD	Eureka Public Library District
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
ROTC	Reserve Officer Training Corps
SALA	South African Library Association
SAPL	San Antonio Public Library
TMAS	Tell Me a Story
USO	United Service Organizations
VR	Virtual Reality

## **CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW**

Public libraries serve diverse groups of people, including unique populations. The military is one of these unique populations, due to the specific challenges and changes that they face because of their lifestyle (Marry, 2019). In the following pages, scholarly and professional publications from the past 30 years, as well as recent news stories, are examined in light of the role of public libraries as providers of information, services, and programs to the U.S. military community. The literature delves into topics surrounding the impact of the military lifestyle on psychosocial development. It explores the benefits of reading as a tool to enhance mental health. Additionally, it examines the information that can aid the military community in recovering from trauma. The literature in this review is divided into three main sections: Veterans, dependents, and active Service members.

### **Library Services to Veterans**

There is a growing body of literature about Veterans' library use. Although the Veteran population is in decline (from 26.4 million in 2000 to 18.0 million in 2018), the challenges faced by the Veteran community are on the rise (Vespa, 2020). Since the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, the average age of U.S. Veterans has increased to 65, and Veterans now have a 43 percent chance of sustaining a service-related disability (Vespa, 2020). In response to these challenges, libraries have taken proactive steps to collaborate with the Veteran community, offering valuable resources and services to support their transition from military to civilian life.

Libraries have started to partner with the Veteran community and have begun to provide resources to help Veterans transition from military service to civilian life. The

following examples from the professional literature exemplify this. Harvey (2018) discovered that some libraries partner with Veterans Homes to provide military story-time to children and can serve as an outlet for Veterans to interact with people in a social setting. Additional library programs create the opportunity for Veterans to share their personal stories and inspire teenagers. For example, there is “Call of Duty-Amesbury”, a military themed club that allows teens to play strategy games and answer military trivia questions with Veterans (Fesko, 2013). While “Call of Duty-Amesbury” focuses on providing personal connections for Veterans, other programs offer opportunities to increase the connection between libraries and Veteran’s Homes. Libraries can also partner with “Help Heal Veterans” to receive craft kits that Veterans assemble at the library during a craft hour (Antone & Carr, 2017). The program provides an opportunity to build bridges between the library and the Veteran’s Home, which in turn helps to establish strong community ties and increase the social interaction of Veterans (Antone & Carr, 2017). Research on the topic of Veteran and community interaction shows that libraries are largely taking initiative to serve this population group. The aforementioned programs illustrate how public libraries are responding to challenges faced by the Veteran community. Many of these programs embrace the use of technology to help Veterans connect with others as well as overcome trauma.

Public libraries can use virtual reality (VR) to help Veterans decrease post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms and improve mental health. VR uses a headset and audio to immerse people in an alternate reality that they can see and hear, by using “computer-generated simulations of three-dimensional objects or environments” (Dionisio et al., 2013, p. 1). Veterans who experience chronic pain can use VR to remove



their fear of movement through exposure to daily activities (Fowler et al., 2019). Inside of a VR environment, people with chronic pain can repeatedly perform movements such as walking or standing to increase mobility and decrease their fear of performing the movement. The benefit of performing these movements inside of the VR environment is that the Veterans can choose the level of exposure therapy they wish to use, ranging from distraction to exposure to pain. This approach has been studied and shown effective in improving mobility for individuals with chronic pain (Fowler et al., 2019). Libraries can use this knowledge of exposure therapy as justification for providing VR services and programming to assist Veterans.

Through VR programs at the library, Veterans can improve their mental health and create new experiences within a virtual environment. At the Fresno County Public Library, their use of VR in assisting Veterans is notable. Specifically, the library has started a program called “Journey with Veterans”. The library uses VR to allow home-bound Veterans to virtually travel to new locations from the comfort and safety of their homes. The program provides Veteran’s Homes with VR equipment that uses Google Expeditions to allow Veterans to take tours of popular landmarks (Hall, 2020). Not only can VR be used to provide recreational experiences for Veterans, but VR can also be used in rehabilitation programs. Prolonged exposure therapy using VR acts as a tool for people with PTSD to decrease their symptoms by being placed in a calming environment (Jensen et al., 2021). Further, VR can be used to help Veterans identify and reduce their psychophysiological response to traumatic triggers. Veterans who suffer from PTSD may experience memory loss as a result of their trauma. However, extended exposure using VR can assist Veterans in forming new associations, enabling them to recognize that

traumatic memories are not inherently dangerous or unbearable (Gramlich et al., 2021). Libraries can use this information to help guide VR programs towards helping Veterans cope with traumatic triggers inside of a safe environment. Alongside these mental health initiatives, libraries play a crucial role in improving the overall well-being of Veterans residing in care centers.

Additional examples of libraries recognizing the mental health and communication needs of Veterans exist. The following programs provide evidence of libraries taking the initiative in helping the Veteran population. Libraries help improve the community health of Veterans who live in care centers by assessing their informational needs and helping to provide access to resources and programing services in order to decrease mental health disparities (Carnes, 2019). The library at Bedford Veterans Affairs Medical Center conducted an evaluation of library programming and services offered to the Veteran and community and identified gaps in services related to access of health care services (Carnes, 2019). Providing access to these services improves the ability of the library to accurately support the health needs of the Veteran community. Libraries can collaborate with Veterans to analyze the resources and services they desire from the library. This can enhance public library support and better serve the Veteran community. Pionke (2019) conducted a qualitative review of Veteran views of the library, and he discovered that Veterans wish to be involved in more library programs and services. The Veterans that were interviewed in Pionke's study expressed a desire to see more Veteran and military history related titles added to library collections and to have their experiences as a Veteran validated and recognized (Pionke, 2019). One option

for ensuring that Veteran and military history related titles are included in public library collections is to hire librarians who have knowledge of the military community.

To provide the best service to Veterans, having librarians with knowledge of the military community is important. Librarians who have prior military service or experience can increase the inclusion of the Veteran community (LeMire, 2017). The Veteran community is insular in nature, and library staff who have previous military experience will be able to make strong connections and provide insight into the unique needs of Veterans (LeMire, 2017). Moreover, hiring librarians who have military experience can also provide an opportunity for libraries to become a resource center for Veterans. Mulvihill (2013) presented information on how to provide a library access point, programming, and references services to Veteran library patrons. Emphasis was placed on the library acting as a connection hub between Veterans and organizations such as the Veterans Association, and on the library being familiar with branches of the military and challenges unique to the military community (Mulvihill, 2013). An example of a library acting as a connection hub for Veterans is seen from the Connecticut State Library (2022). This library acts as a connection hub for Veterans by providing a LibGuide that libraries can use in order to find tools to help with Veteran outreach. The LibGuide also provides information on how to curate military-affiliated items in their collection and connect Veterans with employment services (Connecticut State Library, 2022). While LibGuides provide a good starting point for Veteran resource guides, more detailed information is also needed. One of the most detailed and informational pieces of literature written about library services to the military community is a book called *Serving Those Who Served*, which works as a starting point for all library employees to

understand how Veterans, Service members, and their families differ from civilian patrons, and to identify strategies for serving the military community (LeMire & Mulvihill, 2017). The many examples of professional literature and examples of libraries providing Veteran services is evidence that libraries are taking the initiative to address the mental, physical, and social needs of Veterans. Public libraries are also improving the services that they provide to military dependents.

### **Library Services to Military Dependents**

The diversity of military families and the unique challenges faced by military dependents highlight the crucial role that librarians can play in supporting this population. Military families represent a diverse group, with military dependents coming from various backgrounds and experiences. According to Clever and Segal (2013), the demographics of military dependents are as diverse as the larger society, and understanding these demographics is critical to providing appropriate support for this population. Military dependents may face unique challenges, including frequent relocations, separation from a parent during deployments, and exposure to trauma related to military service. These experiences can impact the recreational, social, academic, and emotional needs of military dependents. In this context, librarians can play a crucial role in supporting military dependents. By understanding the unique experiences and needs of military dependents, librarians can better serve them and provide resources that support their academic and personal growth. In order to support military dependents in these areas it is first important to understand the demographics of military dependents.

Military dependents are usually classified into two groups, children and spouses. According to a 2021 report by the Department of Defense (DoD) almost two-thirds of

total DoD force family members are children (62.7%) and about one-third of family members are spouses (36.9%) (DoD, 2021). There are approximately 2.5 million dependents, which outnumbers Service members at approximately 2.1 million (DoD, 2021). The large number of military dependents means that they are an important subject for libraries to engage when studying how to serve the military community, and emphasis is placed on understanding the impact of deployments.

Deployments are often a stressful time for military dependents, especially the child of the deployed Service member. The effect of deployment on a military child's social, educational, and mental health is a well-researched and discussed topic (Chartrand et al., 2008; Cunitz et al., 2019; Edwards, 2019; Nguyen et al., 2014), and the integration of this research into the library can help librarians develop better ways to serve military children. An examination of the relationships between the deployment of a parent and the cognitive and social-emotional development of young children revealed that children who had experienced the deployment of a parent were more likely to fail social-emotional developmental screening and experience challenges in gross motor and personal-social skills (Nguyen et al., 2014). The increase in social-emotional challenges could be evidence of the higher levels of stress that children face when a parent deploys (Chartrand et al., 2008). The mental health of the child of a deployed parent is also affected (Cunitz et al., 2019), which could lead to amplification of behavioral and educational problems. Libraries can provide programs and services to military children to help them process the deployment of a parent.

By employing bibliotherapy, libraries can significantly contribute to mitigating the behavioral and educational hurdles encountered by military children. Not only can

deployments create behavioral problems for military children, but the military lifestyle also can negatively affect a child's education and learning (Edwards, 2019). Libraries can play a critical role in addressing these challenges by using bibliotherapy, which involves using books and other materials as therapeutic tools to help children work through their emotions and feelings. Bibliotherapy is an effective approach to support military children's emotional and psychological health by providing them with a safe and confidential space to explore and process their experiences (Tubbs et al., 2019). Through bibliotherapy, children can identify with characters in stories who are going through similar situations and learn coping mechanisms to deal with stress and anxiety. By incorporating bibliotherapy into library services, librarians can support military children in developing resilience and overcoming the challenges of the military lifestyle (Conover, 2020). Libraries can focus on curating a collection of books that highlight the military lifestyle so that military children can find comfort in bibliotherapy.

Bibliotherapy is especially helpful with children, because it provides an outlet for them to process their emotions. Children's literature that explores feelings of sadness and anger as a result of a parent's deployment can help a child relate to the character and work through their own coping strategies (Tubbs et al., 2019). Evidence of libraries using bibliotherapy with military children is seen through the use of Tell Me A Story (TMAS). Libraries can host a TMAS program where parents read to their children and then discuss difficult topics. TMAS examined if children's resiliency increased, and problem behaviors decreased as a result of military parents reading to their child and using stories to identify and address issues in a safe way (Conover, 2020). Libraries that prioritize

bibliotherapy for military children not only provide an outlet for emotional processing but also actively work towards creating a diverse collection of materials.

The use of books in bibliotherapy for military dependents requires libraries to have a diverse collection of materials that focus on the military community. By incorporating diverse materials that serve as windows and sliding doors, allowing military children to explore stories from various perspectives (Moser & Bruno, 2019), libraries demonstrate their commitment to connecting with dependents. Moreover, proper collection development, including books authored by military Veterans, further reinforces the library's dedication to engaging with this community (Hoeve, 2021). An example of a library prioritizing the inclusion of military themed titles is seen from a study conducted by Taft and Olney (2014). Research examined how the public library can serve the military community of Fort Bragg and the different programs and resources that the military community needs from the library. Common themes that military parents reported being concerned about are the well-being of children, family events, and access to career and educational information (Taft & Olney, 2014). The library can focus on preparing children for deployment and helping them process separation by providing innovative ways to stay connected, creating an environment to appropriately share emotions, and providing reading material that allows children to identify and match feelings with behaviors (Osofsky & Chartrand, 2013). By creating safe spaces for emotional expression, and offering relevant reading material, libraries contribute to preparing children for deployment and helping them navigate the challenges of military life. Libraries can also employ these same services and ideas in order to serve military spouses.

Military spouses face unique challenges, and libraries can help provide support for these dependents. While literature that is focused on military children explores resiliency and the effects of military life on childhood development, literature focused on military spouses addresses stress and depression (Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness, 2021; Dekel et al., 2005; Donoho et al., 2018). Research on military spouses and depression has revealed that the challenges of military life, such as deployments and frequent relocations, can contribute to the development of major depressive disorder in the spouse (Donoho et al., 2018). Spouses of military members are also at greater risk for experiencing secondary traumatization, also called compassion fatigue. The effects of PTSD are not limited to the Service member, and spouses can also experience adverse effects and struggle to help their spouse during this challenging experience (Dekel et al., 2005). While depression and compassion fatigue are well-known challenges of military spouses, more research is being conducted on additional issues faced by this group of dependents. The Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness (2021) published a report that identified current issues of military spouses and gaps in services. These issues include a lack of employment opportunities, frequent moves, extended time away from family, and unstable education for children. Libraries can utilize information about the challenges faced by military spouses to identify opportunities for providing support and alleviating some of the stress they experience. For example, libraries can provide educational support for military dependents to help reduce some of the uncertainty of military life.

Frequent moves and deployments may wreak havoc on dependent's access to educational resources. One issue that adult dependents face is using educational benefits



at school, and libraries can operate as a resource center for dependents to use as they navigate higher education (LeMire, 2021). Military dependents can utilize the libraries online catalog to find textbooks or access databases for research or use a military themed toolkit to identify online resources and recreational reading materials. For example, the Illinois Library Association (n.d.) has compiled a list of recommended reading for the military community with titles being separated into different age groups. The San Antonio Public Library created a LibGuide that provides military dependents with resources and book recommendations (2022). By offering LibGuides and recommended reading lists, the library can serve as a resource center and create a sense of belonging for dependents during relocations. However, frequent moves and changes in location not only impact dependents but also affect service members.

### **Library Services to Active Service Members**

Sudden deployments or moves to remote locations can pose significant challenges for military members seeking access to libraries and educational support. However, libraries can provide valuable assistance by adapting their services to meet the needs of Service members during these difficult times. By offering innovative methods of delivering materials and resources, libraries can help ensure that Service members downrange receive the support they need to continue their educational pursuits and access information relevant to their work (Murphy, 2009). Given the unique challenges faced by deployed medical personnel in accessing up-to-date medical journals and manuals, libraries play a crucial role. They are essential in providing resources remotely, ensuring that deployed Service members receive the necessary support to continue their educational pursuits and access relevant information. Libraries can leverage electronic

databases, email support, and CD-ROMs to deliver these medical and educational resources to Service members in remote locations (Lynch, 2008). This not only ensures that medical personnel have access to the latest medical research but also enables them to provide the best possible service to those in their care. The library can also adapt their services to provide for Service members who are pursuing higher education.

Many Service members take advantage of the tuition assistance they receive while serving in the military and libraries can help provide educational assistance to this unique population group. Academic libraries can assist Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) by providing library orientations and research assistance. ROTC students have a set of requirements that encompass military studies, physical training, and field expedition exercises. To better serve ROTC students, libraries can prioritize understanding military culture and the various components of the military science curriculum (Rod-Welch et al., 2017). By familiarizing themselves with these aspects, libraries can provide tailored resources and support to help ROTC students excel in their academic and military endeavors. By offering education assistance and supporting the unique needs of Service members, libraries not only provide resources to ROTC students but also serve as a valuable communication tool during times of separation.

Libraries can serve as a valuable resource for Service members and their families by facilitating communication during times of separation. As early as the 1990s, libraries recognized the importance of maintaining connections between Service members and their loved ones and began leveraging technology to support this goal. For example, the Liverpool Public Library partnered with a telecommunications network in 1991 to scan letters and have them printed out in deployed locations for Service members to read,

bridging the physical distance between families and their deployed loved ones (Quinn & Rogers, 1991). Today, libraries continue to innovate and expand their offerings, providing webcams and video call services to military dependents to enable them to connect with Service members stationed far away. By reserving webcams at the library during specific times, libraries enable families to communicate with their deployed loved ones in real-time, promoting a sense of closeness and support during periods of separation (Ries-Taggart, 2008). By offering these communication services the library is helping to support the military community and the unique challenges that they face.

### **Conclusion**

Literature on the military community is vast, with most research being focused on helping people cope with stress, increase resiliency, and handle the effects of military life. However, more detailed research on the connection between libraries and the military community is limited, and generally focuses on serving Veterans and dependents through programs and resources. The library is a wonderful place for the military community to experience connection and to grow as individuals, and research on this topic is still being conducted.

## **CHAPTER II: LIBRARIES AND THE MILITARY COMMUNITY**

Public libraries have a responsibility to serve the communities around them, including military personnel, their families, and Veterans. The military community is an important, and underserved, community in many public libraries (Marry, 2019). Whether the military community lives on base, within nearby towns, or overseas they constitute a major population group. Many military bases used to have military libraries located within the installation, and these specialized libraries were able to meet the unique needs of the military community (Welch et al., 2006). However, budget cuts and lack of use have contributed to the closure of some military libraries around the world (Hanselmann, 2016). This has caused the military community to turn to their local public library for support. Public libraries that are located in areas where there is a large military population can better support the military community by hosting programming that benefits the military community and by adding military-related titles to their catalog.

### **Services and Programing Offered to the Military Community**

Libraries can serve the military community by providing specific programming that meets their unique needs. In the past, libraries located on military bases provided a perfect place for military book clubs, study groups, and outreach services, but their closure has removed a lot of these tools from the lives of the military community (Military Libraries, 2007). Public libraries can step up and fill in the gap that the closure of base libraries has caused. Military families or Service members can turn to their public library for a new sense of community and inclusion. Because of the vast experiences and differences in the needs of the military community, programming can be broken down into events geared towards Veterans and services toward military families.

Some public libraries have increased the programs offered for Veterans and they are focusing on reaching this underserved population and helping them feel valued. For example, the Alachua County Library District started a “Heal vets craft program” that allows Veterans to participate in therapeutic crafts while sharing their personal experiences and connecting with other Service members (Antone & Carr, 2017). This programming strengthened the bond between the library and Veteran community in Alachua County, with sixty-five Veterans attending the four-week programming event, and twenty-five home-bound Veterans receiving take-home kits. Building on these efforts, libraries can take further steps to assist Veterans in sharing their stories, such as hosting programming that allows patrons to interview real-life heroes.

A library in Massachusetts hosted a programming event where teens “enlisted” in the service, played strategy board games like Battleship and Stratego, completed scavenger hunt challenges, and heard a life story from a Veteran. “The Veterans speak about what they saw on a daily basis, what type of equipment they used, and what they wore” (Fesko, 2013, p. 45). The Veterans bond with the teens by sharing the events through which they lived. While the activities of the event were often noisy and boisterous, the teens fell completely silent while listening to Veterans telling their stories, and they often engaged with the speaker by asking thoughtful questions. For Veterans who are struggling to find a sense of community and importance after returning to civilian life, programming like this can help them feel connected to the public library in a very special and meaningful way. If the Veteran feels uncomfortable talking about their time in the military, there are different programming options that focus on helping them heal from past trauma.

VR programming provides a wonderful opportunity to help Veterans experience the world from the comfort and safety of the public library. For those who are struggling with homelessness or who are living in a Veteran assistance home, exploring the world through VR offers a chance for them to find a new way to connect. The Fresno County Public Library decided to use grant money to purchase a Google Expeditions kit and start a “Journey with Veterans” program (Hall, 2020). The library took this experience one step further and brought it to the Veterans, instead of requiring them to come to the library for this programming. Meeting the community where they are is an important part of reaching underserved populations, and the Fresno Library made it a priority to help connect with Veterans. For Veterans who were struggling with memory loss, this program was especially helpful as it allowed them to revisit places they had been while serving in the military and reminisce about their experiences (Hall, 2020). As seen from this program, partnering with local Veterans’ homes or services is a helpful way for libraries to reach the Veteran community. Libraries can also reach the Veteran community and connect with them where they are by partnering with local Veteran’s Homes.

The Eureka Public Library District (EPLD) wanted to create a summer service project by partnering with a local Veteran’s Home to provide them with programming and supplies. Over the summer, the Veteran’s Home wanted to host a story-time hour but did not have the funds to purchase children’s books relating to military life. Through donations and gifts, the library was able to permanently donate nine books to the Veteran Home for current and future use in story-time with military families and children. The library was also able to donate more than just books. They collected approximately 360

items and \$1,020 to help support the Veterans in their community (Harvey, 2018). Public libraries are a major factor in community support and integration of the populations it serves. Through community-based programming, the EPLD was able to support the goals of the Veteran's Home and increase their quality of living. Public libraries have started taking steps toward meeting the needs of the Veteran community and providing programming for military families and Service members.

Libraries have partnered with people in the community to send books, video games, and letters to Service members. This provides Service members in remote locations with access to reading materials and helps to bolster their spirits. During World War II the South African Library Association (SALA) initiated a Books for Troops program that ran from 1939-1945 (Dick, 2005). Programs like Books for Troops are still in operation today. Organizations like Operation Paperback allow people to volunteer to send books and write thank you letters, and troops can register to receive a book. The height of the program was in 2010 and 2011. Over 300,000 books were distributed during that time. This number has fallen slightly in recent years; in 2018 they distributed approximately 100,500 books (Operation Paperback, n.d.). Operation Paperback is a beneficial partnership between libraries and Service members because as the library needs to dispose of materials and update its collection, the older items can be donated to the troops. Service members who do not read recreationally can still benefit from library partnerships through programs like Stack-Up and Operation Gratitude (James, 2016). Stack-up receives donations of lightly used video games, consoles, and gaming accessories and sends them to soldiers for use in video game therapy, and Service members can connect with friends and family using online gaming platforms. Stack-up

will also provide all-expenses paid trips to gaming conventions and geek culture events (Stack-up, n.d.). Operation Gratitude follows a more traditional approach by sending letters and care packages to Service members, and it helps libraries take letters from writing groups or teen literacy programs and distribute them around the world (Operation Gratitude, 2023). These services and programming provided by the public library are evidence that the military community is an important service group, and libraries can continue to develop new ways to meet the unique needs of the military community.

### **Recommended Services and Programing**

Military families often face significant challenges as they navigate the unique demands of military life, including frequent moves and uprooting of their lives. In order to build resiliency and a strong sense of community, these families need access to resources and support networks that can help ease the transition. Public libraries play an important role in meeting these needs by creating a sense of community and belonging (Jacobson, 2016). For example, libraries can provide information on local schools, community events, and other resources that can help families acclimate to their new surroundings. In addition to providing practical support, libraries can also serve as a gathering place for military families to connect with one another and form strong bonds of support.

Libraries can be used as a gathering space for the military community. One way to do this is by providing a military-themed story time hour (Marry, 2019). Special consideration should be given to scheduling this program outside of normal work hours to afford parents in the military the best opportunity to attend with their children. For parents who are often away on long deployments and missions, a story-time hour



provides a wonderful bonding experience. Parents who read to their children and discuss the stories with them are likely to see a positive psychological implication. This can help to improve the resiliency of the child (Tubbs et al., 2019). Children who have higher resiliency are more likely to stop internalizing behaviors and instead express themselves and their feelings in a healthy way (Tubbs et al., 2019). Suggestions of titles to include for this programming are *Daddy, You're My Hero*, *Mommy, You're My Hero*, and *My Mommy Wears Combat Boots* [Appendix A]. These stories can help act as a catalyst for discussions between the parent and child about military life and how they feel in specific situations. Marry (2019) found that presenting story times for military children can be challenging because it's important to be sensitive to concerns about war and weapons. Instead, story times can focus on military children's issues such as moving or missing an absent parent and using supporting songs or actions such as well-known marching tunes (Marry, 2019). For children who are struggling with the deployment of a parent a themed story time can be a helpful tool.

Deployment story time provides an opportunity to connect with the military community in a very intimate way. Those who are going through a deployment are often under a lot of stress and relying on a monthly story time about deployment can help them to regulate their schedule and emotions. A recommended way to increase resiliency in children is for parents who are scheduled to deploy to record themselves reading stories (Tubbs et al., 2019), such as *The Hero in My Pocket*, *The Invisible String*, *Over There*, and *I'm Here for You Now* [Appendix A]. After the parent has left on deployment, the child can come to the library, take the book that their parent read, and listen to the recording while flipping through the book. The United Service Organizations (USO) also

offers deployed parents around the world the option to record themselves reading a story then ship the recording home (USO Reading Program, n.d.). The USO also offers programming for Spouses dealing with deployment. Reading Programs for military spouses of deployed Service members provide the opportunity to connect with other families and grow their support group (USO Reading Program, n.d.). Building on the idea of connecting through literature, libraries can provide a safe space for military spouses to come together, share their experiences, and support one another during this challenging time.

Spouses who are left to care for the home and family during a loved one's deployment are under an immense amount of stress and pressure. They must learn how to be a single parent, balance their work-life schedules, and deal with the separation from their partner. Libraries can help to relieve some of this stress by offering support group programming. Once a month, spouses of deployed Service members can meet at the library to discuss how they are handling the deployment and to read books used in bibliotherapy for military spouses (Byers, 2013). *The Five Love Languages: Military Edition* [Appendix A] is a great resource to help military couples figure out how to show love, and it includes tips specific to showing your partner love and attention during a deployment. The members could also participate in a deployment journal where they document their thoughts and feelings. In addition to support group programming, libraries can offer valuable resources like journaling to help military spouses cope with the challenges of deployment.

Journaling during deployments provides a valuable outlet for military spouses, helping them express emotions, maintain connections, and enhance resiliency. Writing in

a journal can allow military spouses to document their day-to-day feelings and process and share them with the deployed Service member after their return (Cafferky & Shi, 2015). Keeping a daily journal can also help military spouses to cope with feelings of disconnection (Merolla, 2010) and make deployments easier to process. Programming at the library that helps to keep deployed spouses connected helps to strengthen the military community and increase their resiliency. Public libraries can also provide more services than journaling and story times; they can use their technological resources to connect families with their loved ones.

Military families may not have access to high-speed internet, iPads, long-distance phones, or email at home to reach their deployed loved one. The public library is uniquely positioned to offer these services for free. For example, a library in Michigan partnered with a telephone, internet, and satellite provider to offer voice and video calls to deployed soldiers in Iraq, and the library accommodates the different time zone challenges with calling overseas by offering to open the library any time, even overnight, to help connect these families (Call your soldier, 2007). A second library in New York partnered with a telecommunications network to send electronic “Letters from home”, email sent to soldiers in Saudi Arabia (Quinn & Rogers, 1991). With paper mail, these letters would normally take four to six weeks to arrive to loved ones, but with this service offered by the library, the letters could be delivered within 48 hours. Libraries can also schedule webcam meetings between families and deployed members.

Public libraries can play an important role in communication services for deployed families. Specifically, libraries in Utah Valley have created a unique and valuable resource for military families. By offering webcams for free use to patrons with

deployed loved ones, libraries have become a valuable connection point for families who are separated by distance and time. For example, Jennie Taylor states that “the greatest thing to happen to military families... is coming to libraries throughout Utah Valley, specifically for the use of families of deployed soldiers” (Ries-Taggart, 2008, p. 14). Taylor's assertion that libraries are the "greatest thing" for military families is a testament to the vital services that libraries provide. By providing a safe and secure environment for military families to connect with their loved ones, libraries are fulfilling an important and much-needed role in the lives of Service members and their families. This is just one example of the ways in which libraries can support the military community, and it underscores the importance of understanding the unique needs and challenges faced by this population.

### **CHAPTER III: MILITARY-AFFILIATED CATALOG TITLES**

Materials in the catalog that cater to the military community are extremely important. Those who struggle with separation anxiety, stress related to military moves, or changes to their environment can find comfort in books and materials that discuss their situation. Public libraries are in a unique position to support families and Veterans by providing them with community resources to assist in times of need and by sharing reading material and developing programs that will resonate with their experiences. Just as a library collection should reflect the community it serves, public libraries located in areas with a large military population should try to include catalog items that relate to military experience and helping Veterans transition from military service to civilian life.

Public libraries can provide valuable support to Veterans transitioning back into civilian life by offering bibliotherapy as a coping method to address the challenges they face. Transitioning back into civilian life from the military can be challenging for Veterans and often leads to high levels of stress and feelings of alienation (LeMire, 2017). In addition, some Veterans may also be struggling with the effects of PTSD. To support the Veteran community during this difficult period, public libraries can offer bibliotherapy as a coping method (Glavin & Montgomery, 2017). Bibliotherapy involves using literature as a rehabilitation or coping tool to help individuals suffering from anxiety, depression, or PTSD. Reading stories that reflect their own experiences in combat or being separated from loved ones in past service can help Veterans open up and share their own experiences, breaking down isolation barriers. Another way to break down isolation barriers between the library and the Veteran community is to include military-affiliated guides and materials.

Public libraries can help make the transition between military and civilian life easier for Veterans by including materials in their collections that relates to military life. One way to do this is by creating a LibGuide specifically for Veterans, which can include information on local Veteran Affairs centers, links to military websites (LeMire & Mulvihill, 2017), and a list of 10-15 books aimed at the military experience. Additionally, public libraries can compile book toolkits for children of military families to help them better understand and cope with the unique challenges of military life and to break down the isolation barriers experienced by these families.

The unique challenges and emotional burdens faced by children with parents in the military necessitate support and resources tailored to their experiences. Children who have a parent or both parents serving in the military are more likely to experience increased levels of stress, depression, emotional issues, and fear than other children their age (Chartrand et al., 2008; Cunitz et al., 2019; Edwards, 2019; Nguyen et al., 2014; Osofsky & Chartrand, 2013). The military child is expected to cope with frequent moves, deployment of a parent, changing schools and making new friends. All these challenges force the child to be uprooted from their comfort zone and transition to new environments constantly. More than any other group of children the military child is at risk of exhibiting internal and external behaviors related to their experiences. External behaviors can include outbursts of anger, refusal to talk, or bullying other children, while internal behaviors are feelings of sadness and closing in on themselves (Cunitz et al., 2019; Nguyen et al., 2014). The public library provides a safe and familiar place for the children to turn to when they need a sense of belonging, and it can help the child find healthy ways to process the behaviors that they are experiencing. By curating a collection

that includes books geared toward the military child, public libraries not only provide a safe haven for these children to find a sense of belonging but also offer valuable resources that reflect their experiences and foster diversity and inclusion within the library.

The inclusion of books written by Veterans in the library collection enhances diversity, provides unique insights into the military community, and fosters a sense of connection between Veterans and military children. The library collection acts as windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors to its readers, offering a reflection of themselves that they can see in stories and adding diversity and inclusion to the library collection (Moser & Bruno, 2019). Helping to bring the world of Veterans and military children together, libraries can include diversity in books and diversity in authors by adding books written by Veterans to the collection (Hoeve, 2021). Books written by Veterans for children offer a unique insight into the military community because they are based on the experiences of the Veteran and include information that they think would be beneficial to children of parents who are currently in the military. Recently, there has also been a push towards creating specific booklists related to the life of military children.

Booklists that are curated to reflect the life of a military child are a great tool for families to use during times of transition. When choosing which books to include in the collection it is important to identify themes that you want to include and lessons that you want to address. Some examples of themes related to children's military books are the military family, staying connected, returning home, recovery of heroes, and loss and sadness (Tubbs et al., 2019). Out of these themes, the books that deal with staying connected and loss and sadness will most likely have the best reception, as military

children need help understanding why their parents would leave them for a deployment or mission. Utilizing resources such as the San Antonio Public Library (SAPL) Military Resources (2022) page and the Illinois Library Association Military Families & Children Toolkit (n.d.) can provide valuable guidance in curating a collection that effectively serves the military community and addresses the themes of connectedness and military life.

Libraries can benefit from the SAPL Military Resources (2022) page and the Military Families & Children Toolkit (n.d.), which offer a wealth of resources for public libraries to better serve their military community, including a variety of book lists and other materials. The SAPL Military Resources (2022) page acts as a LibGuide for public libraries looking for better ways to serve their military community. It includes a section on resources for military families, such as job opportunities, health management, and PTSD information. Two other sections include a non-fiction eBook and audiobooks list, and a section of print books relating to all things military. The Military Families & Children Toolkit provides a list of books for military life related subjects, and breaks them down into different age groups, from age zero to adult (Illinois Library Association, n.d.). These resources provide a great starting point for libraries that are just starting to increase their inclusion of military-related materials in their collection.



## **CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS OF MILITARY-AFFILIATED ITEMS IN LIBRARY CATALOGS**

This study examines the coverage of military-affiliated items in four libraries in Mississippi. The libraries were chosen because of their proximity to military bases, all four are located within 20 miles of a military installation, making them the most accessible public library for the military community in that location. Hattiesburg Public Library (Library A) is located approximately 15 miles away from Camp Shelby. Meridian-Lauderdale County Public Library (Library B) is located approximately 20 miles away from Naval Air Station Meridian. Columbus-Lowndes Public Library (Library C) is located approximately 10 miles from Columbus Air Force Base. Biloxi Public Library (Library D) is located approximately four miles away from Keesler Air Force Base. The libraries were purposely selected to vary in size, socio-economic status, and geographic location within Mississippi.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were the guide for this study:

R1: Using the checklist, what are the holdings for military-affiliated works in the selected libraries?

R2: What are the similarities between print collections of the selected libraries?

R3: Do the selected library collections include 50% of the military-affiliated titles from the recommended booklists?

## **Assumptions**

Using the catalogs of the public libraries in this study, it is assumed that the holdings are indexed correctly and completely, and that the catalogs are accurately representative of the libraries' current holdings.

## **Importance of Study**

This study adds to the body of library and information science literature and may be useful for collection development librarians. Others who may be interested in this study include people interested in the military community, writers of children's stories, and service providers to the Veteran community. Librarians can use this analysis as a guide for analyzing their own collection to determine if it has an adequate number of military-affiliated titles and to guide collection development.

## **Methodology**

This study examined the library collections of four libraries in Mississippi using checklists methodology to analyze the comparative coverage of military-affiliated titles in each collection.

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

The Selected Titles [Appendix A] were compiled from current online guides for military-affiliated books. The inclusion of titles in Appendix A was based on the books' military-affiliated relevancy and if they were able to be categorized into one of the four subsections chosen for this study: Children's Titles, Service members' Titles, Spouse's Titles, and Veteran's Titles. The following information resources were used to create the checklist for the study:

- 10 Books Every Military Spouse Should Read (Lucas, 2022)—100%,

- Best books for New Military Spouses (Engel, 2015)—100%,
- Connecticut State Library (2022) Toolkit—100%,
- Illinois Library Association Toolkit (n.d.)—100%,
- Military Deployment in a Family (Tubbs et al., 2019)—100%,
- Best New Books for Military Families and Veteran Families from 2022 (Koeman, 2023) —88%,
- 11 Must Have Books for Military Children (2016) —72%,
- Books for Military Kids with a Deployed Parent, Father (Koeman, 2021) —28%,
- Children's Books to Help with a PCS Move (Flory, 2022) —21%, and
- The Best PCS Books for Military Kids (2017)—11%

The list of Selected Titles by category is found in Appendix A.

Over a one-month period, each of the selected libraries online catalogs were searched to determine how many of the titles from the list [Appendix A] were in each collection. The catalogs were searched using title and author keywords, then filtered by location. Results of the catalog searches were then collected in an Excel file, compiled, and analyzed to address each research question.

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

This study includes ownership of Selected Titles curated from 10 lists in four publicly funded libraries within the state of Mississippi and is not generalizable. Ownership of other military titles was not investigated. The study only included print books in the libraries' collections; ebooks and other media were excluded. Materials available within the libraries' systems were included only if they were at the identified

library location within the 20-mile radius. The study presents a snapshot of collection ownership at a specific moment in time and does not account for new materials. The study is limited by the accuracy of the online library catalogs' indexing. Materials that may have been owned but have been lost, deleted, damaged, etc. so that they were removed from the system or are no longer showing as available at the location are not accounted for in the study.

## **Results**

### ***R1: Using the checklist, what are the holdings for military-affiliated works in the selected libraries?***

Of the 147 Selected Titles in Appendix A, each library had fewer than 20 items in their collection. The library with the most titles from the list was Library A, which had 18 of the Selected Titles. The library with the least number of titles was Library C, which had six of the Selected Titles. The average ownership of the Selected Titles for the four libraries was 11.3 percent. The Selected Titles list is composed of four subsections: Children's Titles (76), Service members' Titles (22), Spouse's Titles (18), and Veteran's Titles (31). The most-owned subsection was children's, with 26 titles. The least-owned group was spouse's subsection with three titles. The next most owned subsection was Service members' Titles (9), followed by Veteran's Titles (7). Of the Selected Titles, Library A owned 13.2 percent of Children's Titles, 18.2 percent of Service members' Titles, 5.6 percent of Spouse's Titles, and 9.7 percent of Veteran's Titles. Library B owned 7.9 percent of Children's Titles, 13.6 percent of Service members' Titles, 0 percent of Spouse's Titles, and 6.5 percent of Veteran's Titles. Library C owned 6.6 percent of Children's Titles, 0 percent of Service members' Titles and of Spouse's Titles,

and 3.2 percent of Veteran’s Titles. Library D owned 6.6 percent of Children’s Titles, 9.1 percent of Service members’ Titles, 11.1 percent of Spouse’s Titles, and 3.2 percent of Veteran’s Titles.

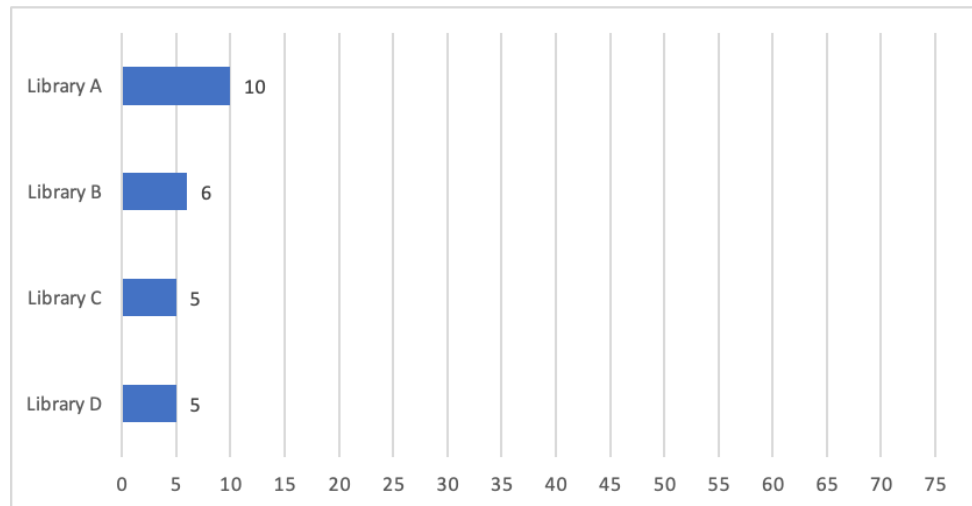
**Table 1: Library Ownership of 147 Selected Titles**

Subsection	Library A	Library B	Library C	Library D	Total by Subsection
Children’s Titles (76)	10	6	5	5	26
Service Members’ Titles (22)	4	3	0	2	9
Spouse’s Titles (18)	1	0	0	2	3
Veteran’s Titles (31)	3	2	1	1	7
Total Titles	18	11	6	10	
Total % of Titles from recommended book lists	12.2%	7.5%	4%	6.8%	

***R2: What are the similarities between the print collections of the selected libraries?***

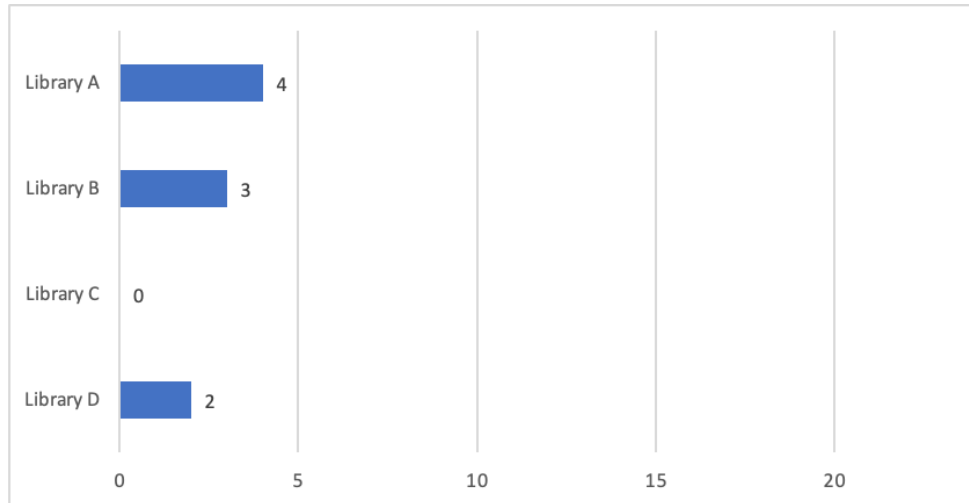
*Children’s Titles.* Libraries consistently had more items from the selected Children’s Titles. Children’s Titles also made up the largest portion of the Selected Titles list, containing 51.7% of the titles. Of the 76 selected Children’s Titles only one of them was found in all four libraries: *Are You My Mother?* by P. D. Eastman. The next two titles with the most holdings in the children’s subsection were *Hero Dad* by Melinda Hardin and *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn, with three of the four libraries possessing them [Appendix A]. Libraries A and C held both of the above titles with Library B holding *Hero Dad* and Library D holding *The Kissing Hand*. Library C and Library D had the fewest selected Children’s Titles, and Library C had the fewest titles overall

[Table 1]. Library A had the greatest number of selected Children’s Titles (10), followed by Library B (6), Library C (5), and Library D (5) [Figure 1].



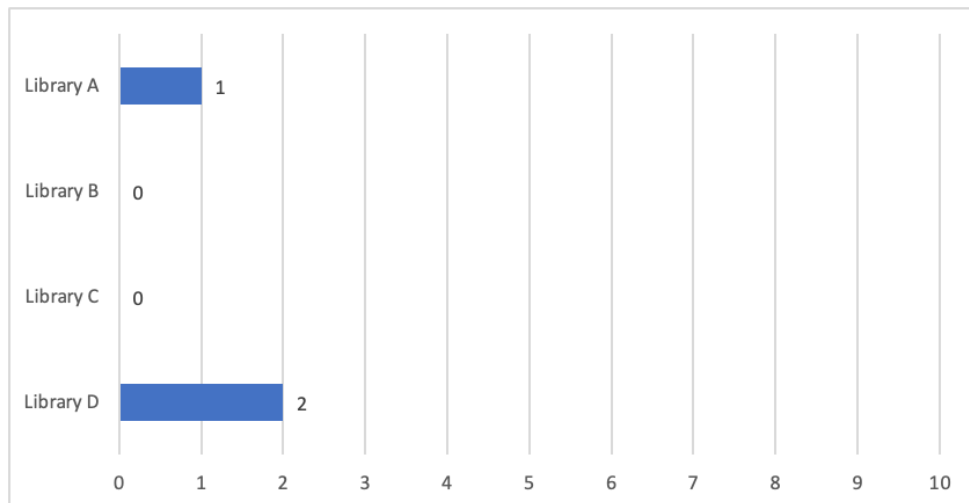
*Figure 1: Ownership of Children’s Titles by Location*

*Service Members’ Titles.* The subsection with the second largest number of holdings (9) was the Service member Titles. Out of the four libraries, Library C was the only location that did not have any of the Selected Titles for Service members [Table 1]. A total of 22 titles was selected for Service members; three of those titles were held by at least two of the four selected libraries. The three titles were *Missionaries* by Phil Klay, *Craig and Fred* by Craig Grossi, and *Tough as They Come* by Travis Mills [Appendix A]. Library A had the greatest number of selected Service members’ Titles (4), followed by Library B (3), Library D (2), and Library C (0) [Figure 2].



*Figure 2: Ownership of Service Members' Titles by Location*

*Spouse's Titles.* The spouse subsection was the one with the least number of titles. There were a total of 18 Selected Titles from the recommended book lists [Appendix A]. Library D had the greatest number of the selected Spouse's Titles (2), followed by Library A (1), Library B (0), and Library C (0) [Figure 3]. The smaller number of Selected Titles in the Spouse's Titles subsection means there was a smaller possibility of the titles being included in the selected library catalogs.



*Figure 3: Ownership of Spouse's Titles by Location*

*Veteran's Titles.* Veteran's Titles were the second largest subsection, with 31 Selected Titles, but contained the second smallest ownership of titles by the selected libraries (7) [Table 1]. Library A had the greatest number of the selected Veteran's Titles (3), followed by Library B (2), Library C (1), and Library D (1) [Figure 4]. Only two titles were held by multiple libraries; *The Greatest Beer Run Ever* by Andrew & Adam Marr, was held by Libraries A and B, and *The Things a Brother Knows* by Dana Reinhardt was held by Libraries B and D [Appendix A].

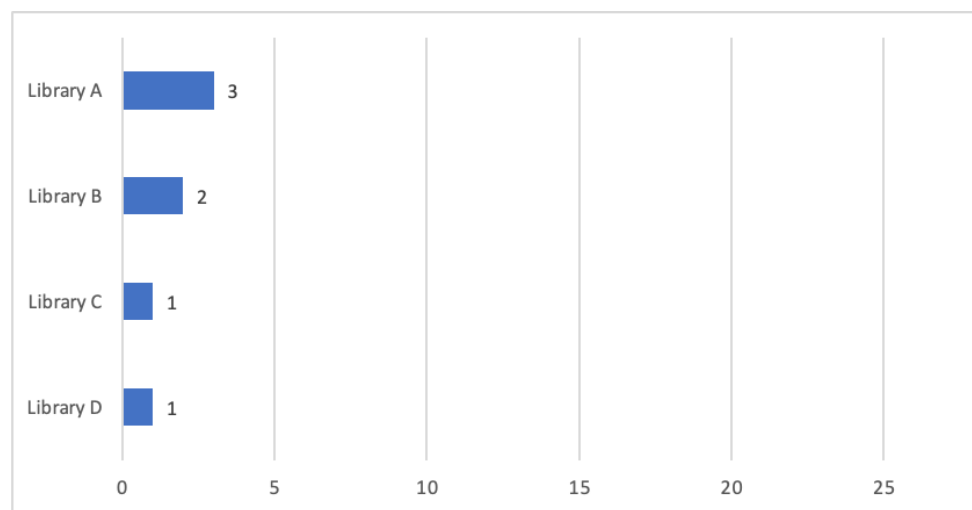


Figure 4: Ownership of Veteran's Titles by Location

***R3: Do the selected library collections include 50% of the military-affiliated titles from the Selected Titles list?***

The results of the catalog analysis show that public libraries within close distance to military communities did not meet the threshold from the titles on the curated list. None of the selected library collections owned 50% of the military-affiliated titles from the Selected Titles list. The library that held the greatest percent was Library A with 12.2%, followed by Library B (7.4%), Library D (6.8%) and Library C (4%) [Table 1].



## Discussion

While direct links and conclusions cannot be made, it appears that the libraries in the study may not have considered this specialized population in their collection development or may not be aware of the lists available for curating materials for this population. It is important to note that the largest subset of the Selected Titles was the Children's Titles at 51.7 percent. Subsequently, it was also the largest subset represented in the libraries' collections. This aligns with the Pew Research Center findings that report that "half of parents of children under age 12 (50%) read to their child every day and an additional 26% do so a few times a week" (Rainie, 2013). Additionally, this reflects current demographics where children are the largest group of the military community at 62.7 percent (DoD, 2021). It is important to note that the one title that was owned by all four libraries was a children's title that has both general population appeal as well as benefits to the military community. Owning titles from the recommended book lists is especially important for the Hattiesburg Public Library (Library A), which is located approximately 15 miles away from Camp Shelby and the Biloxi Public Library (Library D), which is located approximately four miles away from Keesler Air Force Base since neither of these bases have an "on base" library (Military One Source, 2022). Despite the expectation that libraries close to military installations would have 50 percent of the Selected Titles, they were well below the half-ownership mark. Hattiesburg Public Library did have the most materials from the Selected Titles list, but Biloxi Public Library was second from the bottom. Even with Hattiesburg Public Library being the top in ownership of the materials, it was just over 12 percent for the only library for these Service members and their families. Biloxi is part of the Harrison County Library System

with a service population of 208,080 and a print book collection of 293,689 and Hattiesburg is part of the Hattiesburg Petal Forrest County Library System with a service population of 74,897 and a print collection of 131,765 (IMLS, 2023). With the significant size of these collections, it was expected that there would have been more ownership of the materials on the lists. Ownership of recommended military-affiliated titles is required in order to provide library programming and services that benefit the military community.

Bibliotherapy using book collections that highlight military life is an important tool within the library to help the military community. Research has shown that books are helpful in increasing resiliency, decreasing problem behaviors, and helping Veterans cope with PTSD (Byers, 2013; Conover, 2020; Glavin & Montgomery, 2017; Tubbs et al., 2019). Moser & Bruno (2019) established that a diverse collection of materials allows readers to see themselves reflected on stories and helps to provide new insights. It is important to note that in the results there was only one title held across all four of the libraries, *Are You My Mother?* by P. D. Eastman, which is recommended for use in addressing separation from parents during deployments with young children. Even the second most common holdings found only in Libraries A and C, *Hero Dad* and *The Kissing Hand*, have a role to play in bibliotherapy with separation anxiety, new starts from frequent moves, and deployment. However, as evidenced by the results of the catalog analysis, the selected libraries do not contain an adequate number of military-affiliated titles.

Lack of military-affiliated titles from recommended book lists means that the military community is unable to turn to their library as a resource center or a community space in which they can gather and build connections. Recommended programming, such

as a military-themed story-time (Marry, 2019) or military spouse journaling groups (Cafferky & Shi, 2015), are unable to occur in a library that does not contain the required materials for the programs. The lack of military-affiliated titles in the selected libraries means that the military community are unable to receive the support and services that can help to reduce the unique challenges that they face.

### **Recommendations**

To help address the unique challenges faced by the military community, it is recommended that librarians conduct a community and catalog analysis. This analysis will determine if their collections contain enough holdings to accurately assist Veterans, active Service members, and military spouses and children. Libraries should examine their military-affiliated catalog items to determine if ownership includes at least 50% of recommended titles. Libraries that do not have a diverse catalog will be unable to act as a community resource for military-affiliated people and their quality of life could suffer as a result. LeMire and Mulvihill (2017) have provided a critical tool for librarians to use when researching how to serve the military community. *Serving Those Who Served* (LeMire & Mulvihill, 2017) should be used as a resource and training tool for libraries within proximity to a military installation in order to provide the best services and programming for the military community. In order to build a diverse collection that highlights military life it is also recommended that libraries include books authored by Veterans in their collections (Hoeve, 2021). Libraries located close to military bases should utilize resources such as the SAPL Military Resources (2022) page and the Illinois Library Association Military Families & Children Toolkit (n.d.) as guides for how to create online tools curated to assist the military community. In addition to generally

reviewed books and professional articles on this topic, an emphasis should be placed on acquiring materials from recommended book lists for the military community.

### **Future Research**

The findings of this study indicate that further research is needed, especially a larger scale national survey of public libraries on their attitudes towards acquisition of military-affiliated titles. Since military-affiliated titles are less frequently owned, research into titles with general population appeal that are also applicable and beneficial to the military community should be identified. As evidenced earlier, the literature is somewhat deficient in research that incorporates the needs, desires, and expectations of the military community in relation to public libraries. Emphasis can also be placed on new research involving the library and Service members, as this was the subject that had the least amount of literature written. While existing research primarily focuses on library support for Veterans and military children, there is ample opportunity to expand knowledge in this area and enhance the services provided by public libraries to the military community.

### **Conclusion**

Public libraries are a vital resource for serving the military community. Families who lack resources are less likely to be resilient, and they can suffer from increased anxiety and depression compared to those who can utilize resources like the public library which offer connection and coping tools. Because of the closure of some military libraries many people from the military community may need to rely on public libraries for a sense of community and support. Even though public libraries are not traditionally equipped to handle the unique challenges of the military community, many libraries have been making great strides toward serving this specific population. By offering story times

geared towards Veterans and children, programming that helps provide Veterans with a sense of belonging and increased quality of life, and services that bring deployed families closer together, public libraries have branched out into the role of being a support center for the military community. Public libraries that are located close to a military base should look for ways to actively engage with the military community and look for innovative ways to serve them. Only by understanding the challenges that the military community faces can a public library be truly prepared to support them on their journey.

## APPENDIX A: SELECTED TITLES

Subsection	Title	Author	Library A	Library B	Library C	Library D
Children's Title	<i>A Paper Hug</i>	Stephanie Skolmaski	N	N	Y	N
Children's Title	<i>A Year Without Dad</i>	Jodi Cramer Brunson	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>A Yellow Ribbon for Daddy</i>	Anissa Mersiowsky	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>American Road Trip</i>	Patrick Flores-Scott	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Are You My Mother?</i>	P. D. Eastman	Y	Y	Y	Y
Children's Title	<i>Big Boss Brain: Learning About Traumatic Brain Injury</i>	Shannon Maxwell	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Boo Boo Bear's Mission: The True Story of a Teddy Bear's Adventures in Iraq</i>	Mary Linda Sather	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Brave Like Me</i>	Barbera Kerley	Y	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>But...What If?</i>	Sandra Miller Linhart	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Daddy is a Soldier</i>	Kirsten Hallowell	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Daddy, You're My Hero</i>	Michelle Ferguson-Cohen	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Daddy's Boots</i>	Sandra Miller Linhart	N	N	N	N

Children's Title	<i>Daddy's Deployed</i>	Bridget Platt	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Daddy's Deployment</i>	Lorin Sanchez Neslony	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Daddy's on a Chip: Deployment through a Child's Eyes</i>	Jessica Silva	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Dear Military Teen, Moving, Deployments, and Winning the Game of High School</i>	Shanon Hyde	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Don't Forget, God Bless Our Troops</i>	Jill Biden	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Eleven and Holding</i>	Mary Penney	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Flexible Wings</i>	Veda Stamps	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Great Falls</i>	Steve Watkins	N	Y	N	N
Children's Title	<i>H Is for Honor: A Military Family Alphabet</i>	Devin Scillian	Y	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Hero Dad</i>	Melinda Hardin	Y	Y	Y	N
Children's Title	<i>Heroes Don't Run: A Novel of the Pacific War</i>	Harry Mazer	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Home Again</i>	Dorinda Silver Williams	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Home is Where the Army Sends You</i>	Melissa Davis	N	N	N	N

Children's Title	<i>Honor Flight: Honoring Our Heroes</i>	Michele Johnson	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>I Miss You: A Military Kid's Book About Deployment</i>	Beth Andrews	Y	N	N	Y
Children's Title	<i>I Move a Lot and That's Okay</i>	Shermaine Perry-Knights	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>I Need Dad and Dad Needs Me- A Loving Lesson about PTSD for Families</i>	Connee Gorman	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>I Wish Daddy Was Here</i>	Katherine DeMille	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>I'm a Dandelion</i>	Brooke Mahaffey	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>I'm a Hero Too</i>	Jenny Sokol	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>I'm Here for You Now</i>	Janice Im, Rebecca Parlakian, Claire Lerner, & Linda Eggbeer	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>It's PCS Season, Again: Ryan Dances with the Possibilities of Change</i>	Zandra Moten	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>It's Time to Say Goodbye</i>	Ryan and Kim Pease	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Lily Hates Goodbyes</i>	Jerilyn Marler	N	N	N	N



Children's Title	<i>Love Spots</i>	Karen Panier	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Love, Lizzie</i>	Lisa Tucker McElroy	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Mommy, You're My Hero</i>	Michelle Ferguson-Cohen	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>My Big Brother</i>	Miriam Cohen & Ronald Himler	N	Y	N	N
Children's Title	<i>My Dad Is Going Away but He Will Be Back One Day</i>	James Thomas	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>My Dad's a Hero</i>	Rebecca Christiansen & Jewel Armstrong	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>My Daddy is a Hero</i>	Isabel Otter	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>My Daddy Is a Soldier</i>	Kirk & Sharon Hilbrecht	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>My Mommy is a Guardsman</i>	Kirk & Sharon Hillbrecht	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>My Mommy is a Soldier</i>	Kirk & Sharon Hilbrecht	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>My Mommy Wears Combat Boots</i>	Sharon McBride	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>My Red Balloon</i>	Eve Bunting	N	N	N	N

Children's Title	<i>My Story: Blogs by Four Military Teens</i>	Michelle Sherman	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Ned and the General</i>	Ron Madison	Y	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Night Catch</i>	Brenda Ehrmantraut	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Ollie and His Family: A Story for Military Families</i>	Bonnie Rufty Emerson	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Over There</i>	Dorinda Silver Williams	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Owl Babies</i>	Martin Waddell & Patrick Benson	N	Y	N	Y
Children's Title	<i>Patrol</i>	Walter Dean Myers	Y	N	N	Y
Children's Title	<i>PCS Penny</i>	Joanna Gosser	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Star's Purpose: An Air Force Mission</i>	Krista Betcher	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Switchboard Soldiers: A Novel</i>	Jennifer Chiaverini	Y	Y	N	N
Children's Title	<i>The ABC's of PCSing</i>	Joanna Gosser	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>The Adventures of a Few Good Littles</i>	Loretta Velez	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>The Day Has Come</i>	Yasmin Abud Castro	N	N	N	N

Children's Title	<i>The Hero in My Pocket</i>	Marlene Lee	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>The Invisible String</i>	Patrice Karst	Y	N	Y	N
Children's Title	<i>The Kissing Hand</i>	Audrey Penn, Ruth Harper, & Nancy Leak	Y	N	Y	Y
Children's Title	<i>The Moving Book</i>	Gabriel Davis	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>The Wishing Tree</i>	Mary Redman	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>War Dogs: Tales of Canine Heroism, History, and Love</i>	Rebecca Frankel	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>What Will I Play While You Are Away?</i>	James R. Thomas	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>When Your Daddy's a Soldier</i>	Gretchen Brandenburg McLellan	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>While Dad's Away</i>	Lisa Joy Stevens	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>While You Are Away</i>	Eileen Spinelli	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>While You Were Away: 101 Tips for Military Families with Teens</i>	Megan Graham & Jane Egerton	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Why Do We Have to Move? A Book for Military Kids</i>	Tara Scott	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Why Is Dad So Mad?</i>	Seth Kastle	N	N	N	N

Children's Title	<i>Why My Dad? A Story About Military Deployment</i>	Lisa Bottorff	N	N	N	N
Children's Title	<i>Wounded</i>	Eric Walters	N	N	N	N
Service members' Titles	<i>A Dog Called Hope</i>	Jason Morgan; Damien Lewis	N	N	N	N
Service members' Titles	<i>A Girl's Guide to Military Service: Selecting Your Specialty, Preparing for Success, Thriving in Military Life</i>	Amanda Huffman	N	N	N	N
Service members' Titles	<i>As You Were: A How-To Guide for Military Women Returning to Real Life</i>	Dixie Thompson	N	N	N	N
Service members' Titles	<i>Ashley's War</i>	Gayle Tzemach Lemmon	Y	N	N	N
Service members' Titles	<i>Charlie Mike</i>	Joe Klein	N	N	N	N
Service members' Titles	<i>Craig and Fred</i>	Craig Grossi	Y	Y	N	N
Service members' Titles	<i>God Is Not Here</i>	Bill Russell Edmonds	N	N	N	N
Service members' Titles	<i>I'm Still Standing</i>	Shoshana Johnson	N	N	N	Y

Service members' Titles	<i>Mel's Story</i>	G. B. Trudeau	N	N	N	N
Service members' Titles	<i>Mission Transition: Navigating the Opportunities and Obstacles to Your Post-Military Career</i>	Janet I. Farley	N	N	N	N
Service members' Titles	<i>Missionaries</i>	Phil Klay	Y	Y	N	N
Service members' Titles	<i>One Base at a Time</i>	David R. Mellor	N	N	N	N
Service members' Titles	<i>Places and Names</i>	Elliot Ackerman	Y	N	N	N
Service members' Titles	<i>Requiem: By the Photographers Who Died in Vietnam and Indochina</i>	Horst Faas & Tim Page	N	N	N	N
Service members' Titles	<i>Soldier Girls</i>	Helen Thorpe	N	N	N	N
Service members' Titles	<i>The Complex PTSD Workbook</i>	Arielle Schwartz	N	N	N	N
Service members' Titles	<i>The Dictionary of Military Terms</i>	DoD	N	N	N	N
Service members' Titles	<i>The Things They Cannot Say</i>	Kevin Sites	N	N	N	N

Service members' Titles	<i>Tough As They Come</i>	Travis Mills & Marcus Brotherton	N	Y	N	Y
Service members' Titles	<i>Treating PTSD in Military Personnel</i>	Bret Moore	N	N	N	N
Service members' Titles	<i>When Janey Comes Marching Home</i>	Laura Browder	N	N	N	N
Service members' Titles	<i>You Are Worth It</i>	Kyle Carpenter & Don Yaeger	N	N	N	N
Spouse's Title	<i>15 Years of War</i>	Kristine Schellhaas	N	N	N	N
Spouse's Title	<i>Behind the Blue Star Banner</i>	Michelle Cuthrell	N	N	N	N
Spouse's Title	<i>Chicken Soup for the Military Wife's Soul</i>	Jack Canfield, Mark Hansen & Charles Preston	N	N	N	N
Spouse's Title	<i>Confessions of a Military Wife</i>	Mollie Gross	N	N	N	N
Spouse's Title	<i>Dinner with the Smileys</i>	Sarah Smiley	N	N	N	N
Spouse's Title	<i>Fight For Us: Win Back the Marriage God Intends for You</i>	Chad Robichaux & Adam Davis	N	N	N	N
Spouse's Title	<i>Journey Through Deployment: Stepping Forward with Confidence During Military Separations</i>	Kathryn Sneed	N	N	N	N
Spouse's Title	<i>Legal Guide for Military Families</i>	American Bar Association	N	N	N	N

Spouse's Title	<i>Married to the Military: A Survival Guide for Military Wives, Girlfriends and Women in Uniform</i>	Meredith Leyva	N	N	N	Y
Spouse's Title	<i>Modern Military Spouse: The Ultimate Military Life Guide for New Spouses and Significant Others</i>	Lauren Tamm	N	N	N	N
Spouse's Title	<i>No Man's War: Irreverent Confessions of an Infantry Wife</i>		N	N	N	N
Spouse's Title	<i>Remote Work for Military Spouses: Find and Grow Your Meaningful Mobile Career</i>	Laura Briggs	N	N	N	N
Spouse's Title	<i>Stories Around the Table</i>	Multiple Authors	N	N	N	N
Spouse's Title	<i>Surviving Deployment: A Guide for Military Families</i>	Karen Pavlicin	N	N	N	N
Spouse's Title	<i>The 5 Love Languages Military Edition</i>	Gary Chapman	N	N	N	N
Spouse's Title	<i>The Complete Idiot's Guide to Life as a Military Spouse</i>	Lissa McGrath	N	N	N	N
Spouse's Title	<i>The First Deployment: Interviews and</i>	Anna Luiken	N	N	N	N

	<i>Inspiration for Those Who Support the Military</i>					
Spouse's Title	<i>You Know When the Men are Gone</i>	Siobahn Fallon	Y	N	N	Y
Veteran's Title	<i>A Dog's Gift</i>	Bob Drury	Y	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Among the Walking Wounded</i>	John Conrad	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>An American Town and the Vietnam War: Stories of Service from Stamford, Connecticut</i>	Tony Pavia & Matt Pavia	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Birds of a Feather: A True Story of Hope and the Healing Power of Animals</i>	Lorin Lindner	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Business Networking for Veterans</i>	Andrea Nierenberg	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Complexities of Working with Combat Veterans and Their Families</i>	Stephen Williams	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents, and Survivors</i>	The US Department of Veterans Affairs	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Fields of Combat</i>	Erin P. Finley	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Finding Meaning after the Military</i>	Byron Rodgers	N	N	N	N



Veteran's Title	<i>Helping People Win at Work</i>	Garry Ridge, Ken Blanchard	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Invisible Veterans: What Happens When Military Women Become Civilians Again</i>	Kate Hendricks Thomas	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>It Shouldn't Be This Hard to Serve Your Country</i>	David Shulkin	N	N	Y	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Job Won! for America's Veterans</i>	Phil Blair	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Leave No One Behind: Daily Meditations for Military Service Members and Veterans in Recovery</i>	Hazelden Publishing	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Letters to The Wall: Memorial Day Events 2015 &amp; 2016</i>	Veterans for Peace	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Life after the Military</i>	Janelle Moore	Y	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Making the Most of Your Veterans Affairs (VA) Home</i>	David Nelson	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Moving Past PTSD</i>	Jaime B. Parent	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Navy Nurse: Memoir of a</i>	Helen Barry Siragusa	N	N	N	N

	<i>World War II Veteran</i>					
Veteran's Title	<i>Out of Uniform</i>	Tom Wolfe	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Soul Survivors: Stories of Wounded Women Warriors and the Battles They Fight Long After They've Left the War Zone</i>	Kirsten Holmstedt	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Straight Talk for Veterans</i>	David Vacchi	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Tales from the Blast Factory</i>	Andrew Marr & Adam Marr	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>The Greatest Beer Run Ever</i>	John Donohue & J. T. Molloy	Y	Y	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>The Things a Brother Knows</i>	Dana Reinhardt	N	Y	N	Y
Veteran's Title	<i>The Wounded Warrior Handbook</i>	Janelle Moore, Cheryl Lawhorne-Scott & Don Philpott	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Through Veterans' Eyes</i>	Larry Minear	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Vets and Pets</i>	Dava Guerin & Kevin Ferris	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>We the People: Portraits of Veterans in America</i>	Mary Whyte	N	N	N	N

Veteran's Title	<i>Where War Ends</i>	Tom Voss & Rebecca Anne Nguyen	N	N	N	N
Veteran's Title	<i>Wounds of War</i>	Suzanne Gordon	N	N	N	N

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