

# Women in military less likely to drink than civilian women

July 31 2014

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While it is known that members of the U.S. military overall are more likely to use alcohol, a new study finds that female enlistees and female veterans are actually less likely to drink than their civilian counterparts. This study was published today in *Armed Forces & Society*, a SAGE journal published on behalf of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society.

Researchers Jay Teachman, Carter Anderson, and Lucky Tedrow studied surveys of nearly 9,000 men and women who were currently members of the U.S. military or who were military veterans. Respondents were asked about their [alcohol consumption](#) in the previous 30 days.

"Women react differently to their experience in the military than do men," the researchers wrote. "We suspect that part of the reason for the negative link between military service and alcohol use for women is the threat of sexual harassment and assault that is common in the military. Alcohol use is tightly linked to sexual assault, both within and outside the military, and women who serve may become particularly aware of this linkage. It may also be the case that in order to justify their place in the military that women abstain from using alcohol, especially to the extent that their participation in particular military occupation specialties based on use of alcohol is subject to critical review based on their gender."

Teachman also found that for both men and women, the longer someone serves, the more likely they are to use alcohol. Additionally, regardless

of gender, enlistees who have served in a combat zone are the most likely to use alcohol.

"Our models, while not perfect, provide evidence that [military service](#) leads to more alcohol consumption among service members that would have been the case if they had not served," the authors concluded. "This finding should provide for increased emphasis on efforts to reduce the culture of [alcohol](#) consumption in the military."

Provided by SAGE Publications

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