

New study examines wartime experiences and PTSD among female Air Force personnel

August 27 2018



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A study of deployed and non-deployed active duty, female Air Force personnel found that both rates of exposure to wartime experiences and reports of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) increased between 2008 and 2013. Rates of post-deployment PTSD were highest among women who reported wartime experiences during deployment. The likelihood of a positive PTSD screen increased as the number of wartime experiences increased, but it decreased with increases in unit cohesion and self-efficacy, as reported in an article published in *Journal of Women's Health*.

The article entitled, "The Woman's Experience: A Look at Risk and Protective Factors for Deployed Female Air Force Personnel" is coauthored by Nicole C. Breeden, Ph.D. and colleagues from The Pennsylvania State University and Bastyr University (Kenmore, WA). They examined relations among wartime experiences, such as indirect exposure to combat and the perception of being in danger of being killed, reports of self-efficacy, perceptions of unit cohesion, and PTSD symptoms. The researchers indicate that unit cohesion and self-efficacy may reduce the negative impact of wartime [experiences](#) to promote better mental health adjustment for female service members post deployment.

"This important study advances understanding of the impact of risk and protective factors on the development of PTSD symptoms among female military service members," states Susan G. Kornstein, MD, Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Women's Health* and Executive Director of the Virginia Commonwealth University Institute for Women's Health, Richmond, VA. "Additional research is needed to provide further insights regarding specific factors that may contribute to improving post-deployment mental [health](#) outcomes."

More information: Nicole C. Breeden et al, The Women's Experience: A Look at Risk and Protective Factors for Deployed Female

Air Force Personnel, *Journal of Women's Health* (2018). [DOI: 10.1089/jwh.2017.6835](https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2017.6835)

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

Citation: New study examines wartime experiences and PTSD among female Air Force personnel (2018, August 27) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-08-wartime-ptsd-female-air-personnel.html>

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