



Research Snippet

Canadian Military Service of Federal Male Offenders

KEY WORDS: *military service, federal offenders, Computerized Assessment of Substance Abuse (CASA).*

Impetus

The Research Branch was asked by the Office of the Veterans Ombudsman (<http://www.ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca>) about the number of federally incarcerated offenders who had served in the Canadian military. Correctional Service of Canada does not routinely collect this type of information through our automated data systems, so an alternative approach was needed.

Identifying offenders who have served in the Canadian military could be important for ensuring they receive the benefits to which they are entitled and to examine the impact that military service might have on offending behaviour.

What we did

To respond to the inquiry, the Research Branch added three questions to the Computerized Assessment of Substance Abuse (CASA) in February 2009. The CASA is an assessment tool that explores the nature and extent of an offender's substance abuse problems. It is completed by most male offenders upon admission to a federal penitentiary. Data were collected in the Atlantic, Ontario and Pacific regions.

The questions were:

- 1.) Did you ever serve in the Canadian military?
- 2.) Did you serve in the Canadian Military more than one year?
- 3.) Did you serve in the Canadian Military more than five years?

What we found

In total, 1,053 offenders responded to the military service questions between February and September 2009. Table 1 indicates the regional distribution of responses for the question relating to whether or not the offender had served in the military.

Table 1: Regional distribution of responses to the question concerning prior military service.

Region	Did you ever serve in the Canadian military?		
	No % (N)	Yes % (N)	Unknown % (N)
Atlantic	95.3 (244)	4.3 (11)	0.4 (1)
Ontario	96.7 (648)	2.7 (18)	0.6 (4)
Pacific	97.6 (124)	1.6 (2)	0.8 (1)
Total	96.5 (1,016)	2.9 (31)	0.6 (6)

Among the 31 offenders who indicated prior military service, 36% served less than one year, 42% served between one and five years and 20% served more than five years (3.2% did not know the duration of their service).

What it means

About 3% percent of male offenders entering Canadian penitentiaries report having served in the Canadian military. We will continue to monitor the numbers for another year to obtain a more reliable estimate. At the same time, discussions are underway to determine if a more permanent method of collecting and using this type of information is beneficial for those with military service and the Correctional Service of Canada.

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For more information

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