

MARKET RESEARCH REPORT

***Military-Connected
Community Attitudes
and Experiences With
Gun Ownership in the
U.S.***

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December 2019



PROJECT OVERVIEW

ScoutComms was commissioned by Brady to develop an online survey to help the organization better understand attitudes and experiences about gun ownership within U.S. military-connected communities.

OPERATIONAL QUESTIONS

1. What are the primary attitudes of current and former service members and their family members with regards to gun safety practices in the U.S.?
2. Is there a measurable difference in safe storage practices among self-identifying liberal-leaning veterans and self-identifying conservative-leaning veterans?
3. Are veterans experiencing violence involving the use of a firearm outside of combat?
4. Do current and former service members support applying gun safety measures practiced in the U.S. military as a standard for national gun safety practices in the U.S.?

MARKET RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What kind of firearms are owned by current and former service members and their families?
2. What kind of safe storage measures are practiced by current and former service members and their family members who are gun owners?
3. What are the motivations for gun ownership among the military connected community?

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted in the final quarter of 2019 by the ScoutComms research team. The information is of a proprietary nature and upon final payment becomes the property of the research sponsors. The information contained in this report will not be made available to others without the express permission of the research sponsor.

Sources of information include: One online survey developed by the ScoutInsight research team through collaboration with Brady staff. Survey recruitment consisted of a method of convenience sampling. An anonymous online survey link was distributed by ScoutComms and Brady staff through company and organizational social media channels such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook. The anonymous link was also distributed to internal and external networks of ScoutComms and Brady. The survey was kept open for thirteen days. Total respondents is (n=359).

FINDINGS AND INSIGHTS

Every effort has been made to provide accurate information. The information provided was the best available when data was gathered and analyzed.

SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

The total sample for this survey includes respondents who selected that they are gun owners or live in a home with guns and are current or former service members or immediate family members to a current or former service member (Table 1). These selection criteria were used to screen survey respondents. The total sample for this survey was 359 respondents (n=359) with 344 (n=344) selecting that they are gun owners and 15 (n=15) selecting that they live in a home with guns. When asked about military affiliation, nearly 71% (n=254) identified as veterans of the U.S. military. Nearly 72% (n=159) of the veteran sample selected that they deployed to a designated combat zone while in military service. Over 57% (n=202) of the total sample selected that they live in a suburban area, with over 22% (n=78) selecting that they live in a rural area, and nearly 21% (n=74) selecting they live in an urban area. The majority of the survey sample (81.6% or n=289) selected that they are white or Caucasian, with just under 8% (n=28) identifying as people of color, and just over 5% (n=18) as Hispanic or Latino. When asked about gender identification, 77.2% (n=251) of the sample self-identified as men, 19.7% (n=64) identified as women, and just over 3% chose to self-describe or declined to respond. With regards to political affiliation, nearly 38% (n=122) of the sample identified on the conservative spectrum; 56% (n=182) identified on the liberal spectrum.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Table 2 provides segmentation based on respondents' selections for the type of area they live in (rural, suburban, and urban) and the type of firearms owned. Regardless of where respondents live, handguns, including pistols or revolvers, were selected as the most frequent type of firearm owned by the military-connected community. The second most frequent answer given were rifles, then shotguns. Nearly 81% of respondents selected that they purchased and own one or more of the guns in their household (Table 3). The top six reasons military-connected respondents gave for acquiring a firearm (Figure 2) are: 1) I wanted it for protection of my home from intruders or other dangerous individuals (66.45%); 2) Target shooting, skeet shooting, or other sports shooting activities aside from hunting (66.45%); 3) I wanted it for personal protection when outside my home (42.49%); 4) My

WHY DO YOU NOT LOCK UP YOUR GUNS?

"I CAN'T USE THEM IN [A] HOME INVASION OR RESPOND TO NO KNOCK SEARCHES IF THEY ARE LOCKED UP. WHY HAVE GUNS FOR PROTECTION IF YOU CREATE YOUR OWN HURDLES FOR GRABBING THEM WHEN YOU NEED IT MOST?"

"I CURRENTLY DO NOT NEED TO DO SO. ONCE MY CHILD BECOMES A COUPLE YEARS OLDER, I WILL LOCK THE GUN IN A SAFE, UNLOADED, AND STORE THE AMMUNITION IN A DIFFERENT LOCATION."

family has always owned a gun (37.7%); 5) hunting (36.74%); and 6) to exercise my rights (30.99%).

When asked about the level of knowledge respondents had on how to operate the firearms in their home, nearly 58% (n=195) of the 338 (n=338) who answered the question selected that they were “extremely knowledgeable,” and nearly 29% (n=98) selected “very knowledgeable.” The top selection (41%, or n=239) for the kinds of safe storage practices utilized by respondents was that they “store firearms in a locked box, gun cabinet, or gun safe — unloaded”. The second most common selection was “Firearms are stored in a separate place from ammunition” (refer to Table 3). Just over 9% of respondent selections included “My guns are never kept in a locked storage unit.” If a person made this selection, they were directed to a follow-up open-ended question asking them to elaborate on why they don’t believe in storing their guns in a locked storage unit. Open-ended answers for not storing firearms in a locked storage unit were grouped into two overarching themes, including wanting quick access to the firearm for home defense and not living in a home where children are present.

When asked about what safe gun handling measures are used in a gun owner’s personal practice, overall answers ranked in the following order (Figure 4): 1) Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction; 2) Be sure of your target and what’s beyond it; 3) Use correct ammunition; 4) Learn the mechanics and handling characteristics of the firearm you are using; 5) Be sure the barrel is clear of obstruction before using; 6) If your gun fails to fire when the trigger is pulled, handle with care; 7) Always wear eye and ear protection when shooting; 8) Don’t rely on your gun’s “safety”; 9) Firearms should be unloaded when not actually in use; and 10) Don’t alter or modify your gun and have guns serviced regularly.

Current and former service members were asked if they feel that the gun safety measures practiced by the U.S. military should be made a standard for national gun safety practices in the U.S.. Participants responded largely in support of making gun safety measures in the U.S. military a standard of practice nationwide with over 81% (n=203) answering “yes” to this question out of a total of 249 (n=249) reporting (Figure 5). Nearly 19% (n=46) answered “no” to this question and were provided the opportunity to answer an open-ended follow-up question to explain. Open-ended responses primarily fell into two overarching themes, including respondents who felt that gun safety measures practiced in the military are too restrictive and will infringe on the rights of U.S. citizens, and those who felt gun safety practices on U.S. bases are NOT safe enough.

Survey results revealed that nearly 46% (n=151) of current and former service member respondents out of 329 (n=329) have been impacted by some form of firearm violence outside of combat situations (Figure 6). Out of respondents who selected “yes,”



HAVE YOU PERSONALLY BEEN IMPACTED BY GUN VIOLENCE OUTSIDE OF COMBAT?

“SUICIDE OF A FAMILY MEMBER”

“MY BROTHER COMMITTED SUICIDE BY FIREARM”

“NIECE WAS INTENTIONALLY SHOT AND KILLED BY HER HUSBAND”

“I HAD TO HELP CLEAN UP AFTER A NEIGHBOR SHOT HIMSELF IN HIS CARPORT”

76% identified as combat veterans. Overall, 54.5% of the identified combat veterans who answered this question selected “yes” to being impacted by violence by firearm outside of combat (Table 5). Of service members who did not have a history of combat deployment, 41.4% selected “yes.” Respondents who selected “yes” were directed to a follow-up question asking for additional information about their experiences. 71% of the qualitative responses were coded for “suicide of a friend or family member.”

LIMITATIONS

The collected data was self-reported, meaning that a respondent’s military-connected identity was not verified prior to survey participation. Additionally, sampling bias can occur with convenience sampling. It is likely that the people who completed the questionnaire commonly participate in online surveys. It is recommended that further measures be taken to minimize sampling bias and ensure validation of a representative sample if data is to be used for additional insight beyond the scope of this initial report.

CONCLUSIONS

One insight gleaned from the results is that the veterans surveyed are experiencing gun violence outside of combat situations at alarming rates, with over 46% answering “yes” when asked if they have experienced gun violence outside of combat. Regardless of political affiliation or area where they live, those surveyed largely support that gun safety measures practiced in the U.S. military should also be a standard of practice across the U.S. It is recommended that additional analysis be pursued to minimize bias and ensure that the sample is representative of the military-connected community



TABLE 1: SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

MILITARY AFFILIATION	PERCENT	COUNT
I am now on active duty in the U.S. military	5.29%	19
I am now in the Reserves or National Guard in the U.S.	6.41%	23
I served on active duty, in the Reserves, or in the National Guard for the U.S. military but not now	70.75%	254
I never served in the U.S. military (on active duty, in the Reserves, or in the National Guard) but a member of my immediate family served	17.55%	63
None of the above	0.00%	0
TOTAL	100%	359
SERVICE ERA	PERCENT	COUNT
September 2001 or later	43.58%	156
August 1990 - August 2001 (includes Persian Gulf War)	32.96%	118
May 1975 - July 1990	18.16%	65
Vietnam era (August 1964 - April 1975)	5.31	19
TOTAL	100%	358
DID YOU DEPLOY TO A DESIGNATED COMBAT ZONE WHILE IN SERVICE?	PERCENT	COUNT
Yes	71.62%	159
No	23.38%	63
TOTAL	100%	222
HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE AREA IN WHICH YOU LIVE?	PERCENT	COUNT
Rural	22.03%	78
Suburban	57.06%	202
Urban	20.90%	74
TOTAL	100%	354
DO YOU LIVE WITH ADOLESCENTS 17 YEARS OF AGE OR YOUNGER?	PERCENT	COUNT
Yes	40.11%	142
No	59.89%	212
TOTAL	100%	354

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY YOUR RACE/ETHNICITY?	PERCENT	COUNT
Black, African American	1.98%	7
Asian (Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean etc.)	3.11%	11
White, Caucasian	81.64%	289
Hispanic or Latino	5.08%	18
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.28%	1
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2.54%	9
Unknown	0.56%	2
Other, please specify	1.13%	4
Decline to respond	3.67%	13
TOTAL	100%	354
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	PERCENT	COUNT
No high school diploma	0.31%	1
Regular high school diploma	1.54%	5
GED or alternative credential	0.31%	1
Some college or vocational school after high school	13.85%	45
Associate degree	9.23%	30
Bachelor degree, Master's degree, or further degree(s)	73.54%	239
Decline to respond	1.23%	4
TOTAL	100%	325
GENDER IDENTIFICATION	PERCENT	COUNT
Man	71.62%	251
Woman	23.38%	64
Prefer to self-describe	1.54%	5
Decline to answer	1.54%	5
TOTAL	100%	325

TABLE 1: SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS CONTINUED --▶

POLITICAL AFFILIATION	PERCENT	COUNT
Lean conservative	14.81%	48
Moderately conservative	17.90%	58
Very conservative	4.94%	16
Very liberal	15.12%	49
Moderately liberal	26.23%	85
Lean liberal	14.81%	48
Decline to answer	6.17%	20
TOTAL	100%	354

TABLE 2: TYPES OF GUNS							
WHAT TYPE OF GUNS DO YOU OWN OR WHAT TYPE OF GUNS ARE IN YOUR HOME? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.	RURAL (%)		SUBURBAN (%)		URBAN (%)		TOTAL
Handgun(s), including pistols or revolvers	21.99%	64	56.36%	164	21.65%	63	291
Rifles	24.40%	61	58%	145	17.60%	44	250
Shotguns	24.19%	52	60%	129	15.81%	34	215
Antique guns for decoration or display only	24.05%	19	55.70%	44	20.25%	16	79

FIGURE 1: TYPES OF GUNS OWNED BY RESPONDENTS

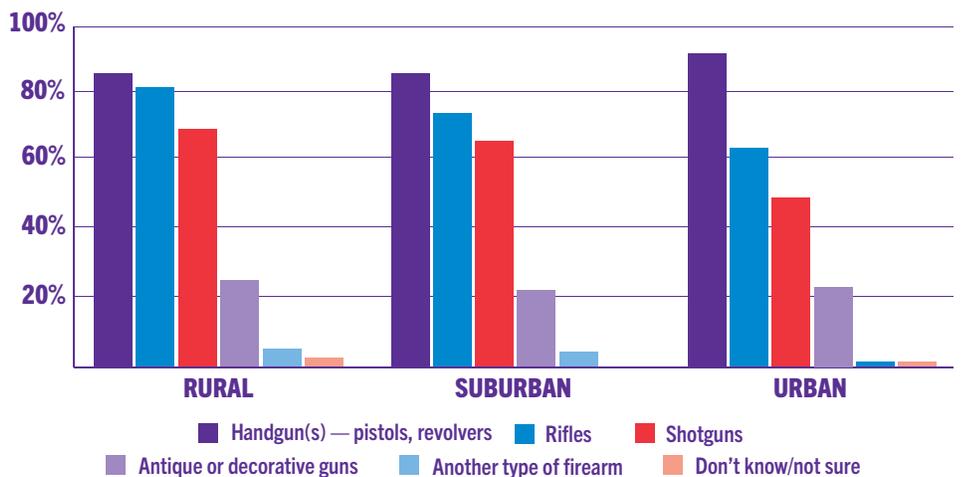
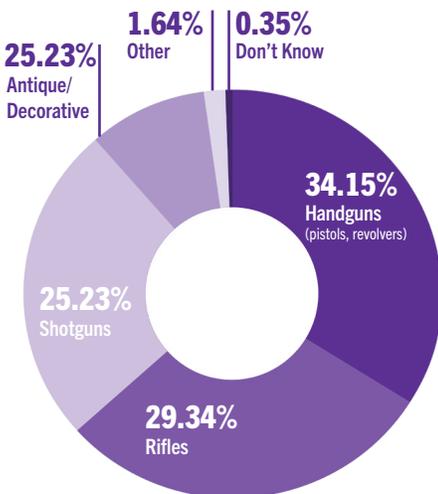


TABLE 3: PURCHASE OF GUNS

	PERCENT	COUNT
I purchased and own one or more of the guns in my household	80.86%	283
I didn't purchase the guns but one or more belong to me	10.57%	37
I didn't purchase the guns in my household; someone else in my household purchased and owns them	8.57%	30
TOTAL	100%	350

FIGURE 2: REASONS FOR ACQUIRING A FIREARM

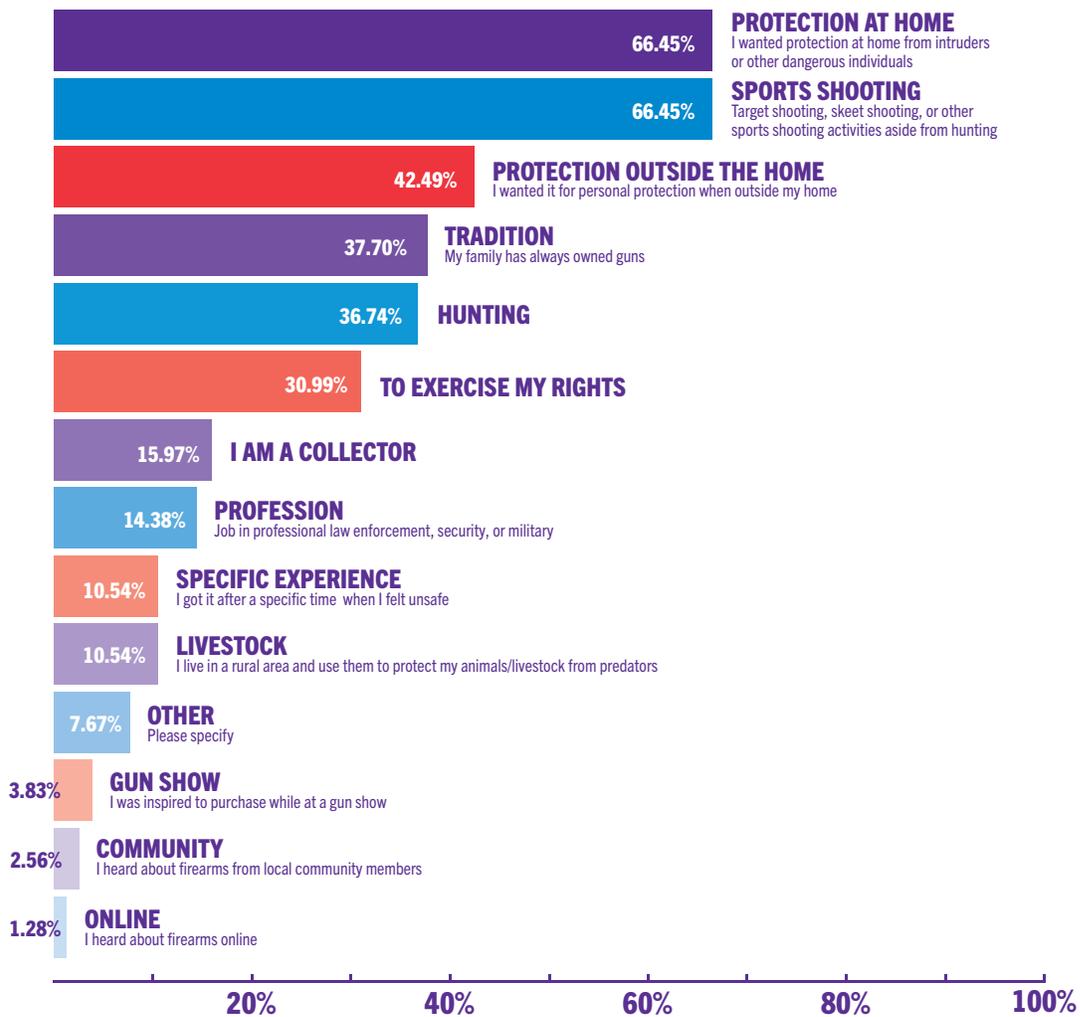


FIGURE 3: SAFE STORAGE PRACTICES UTILIZED BY ALL PARTICIPANTS

Respondents could select all

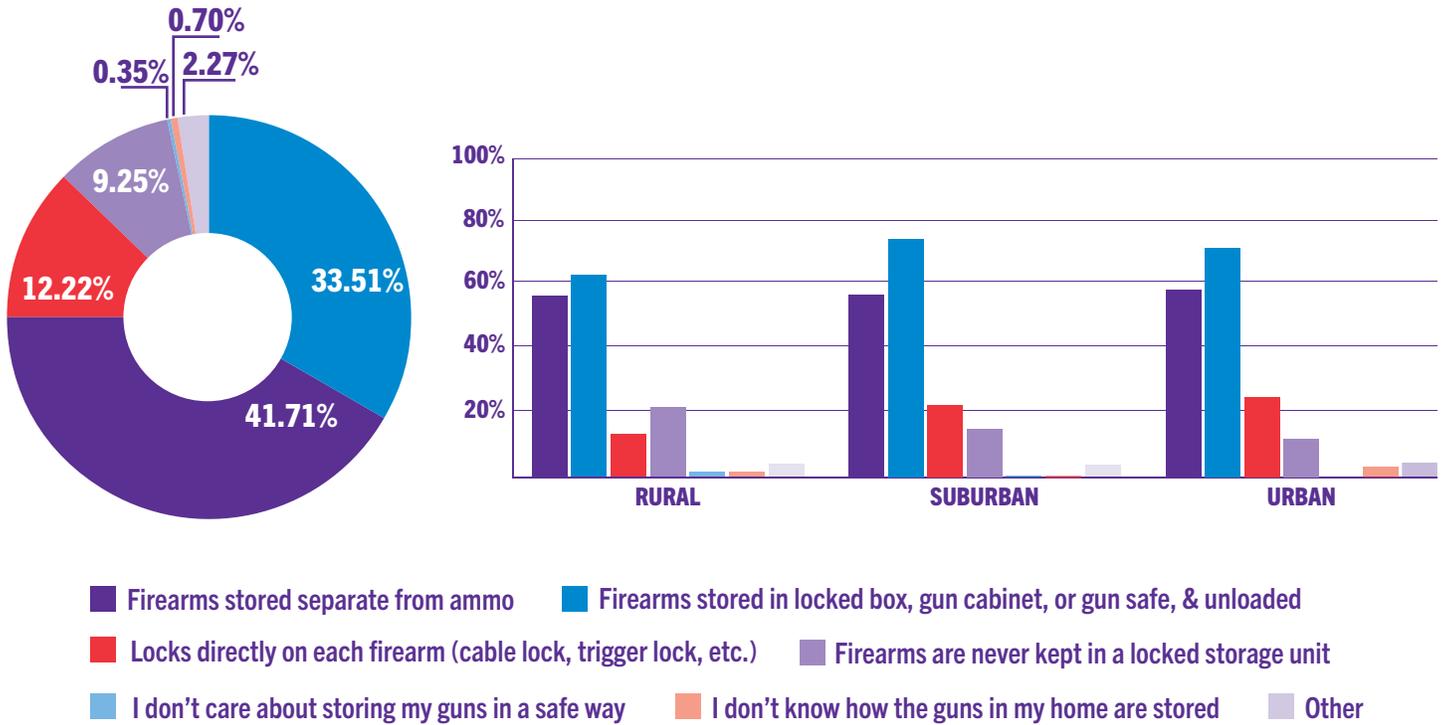


FIGURE 4: SAFE GUN HANDLING PRACTICES

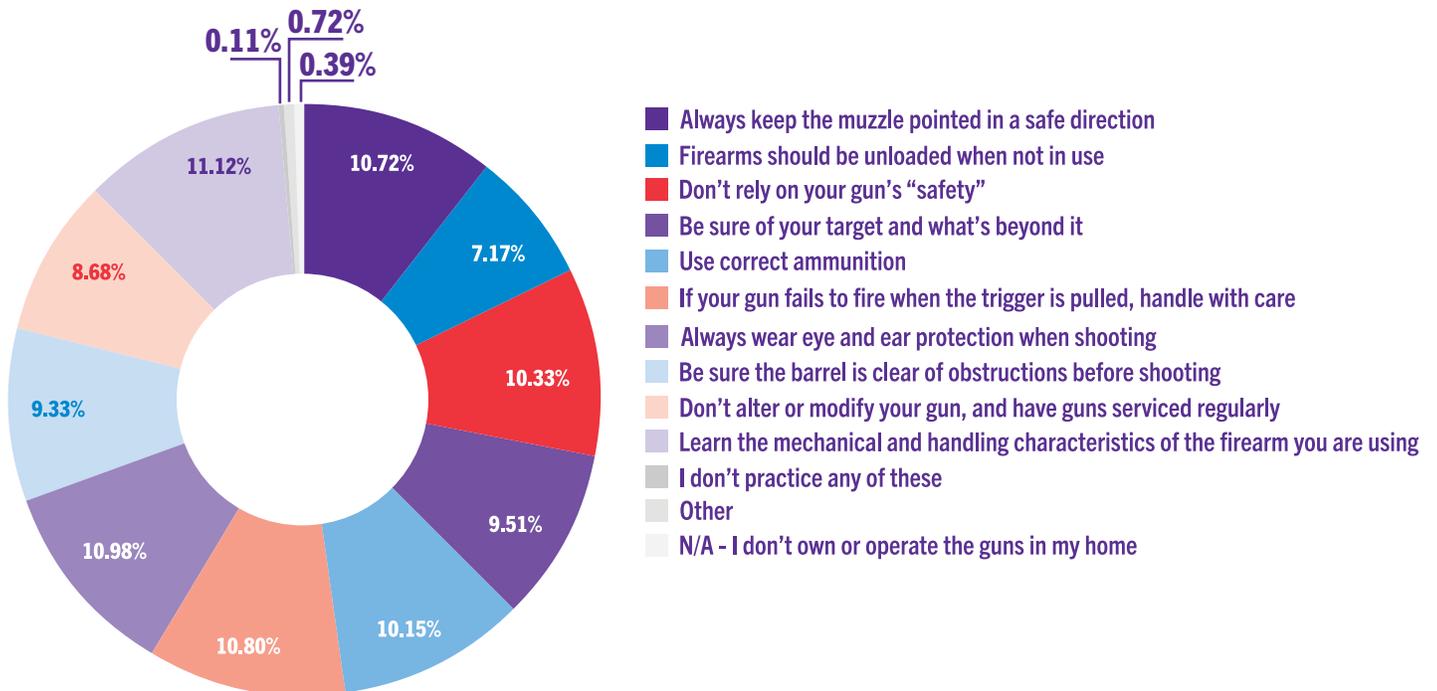


FIGURE 5: SUPPORT FOR GUN SAFETY MEASURES PRACTICED IN THE U.S. MILITARY AS A NATIONAL STANDARD OF PRACTICE

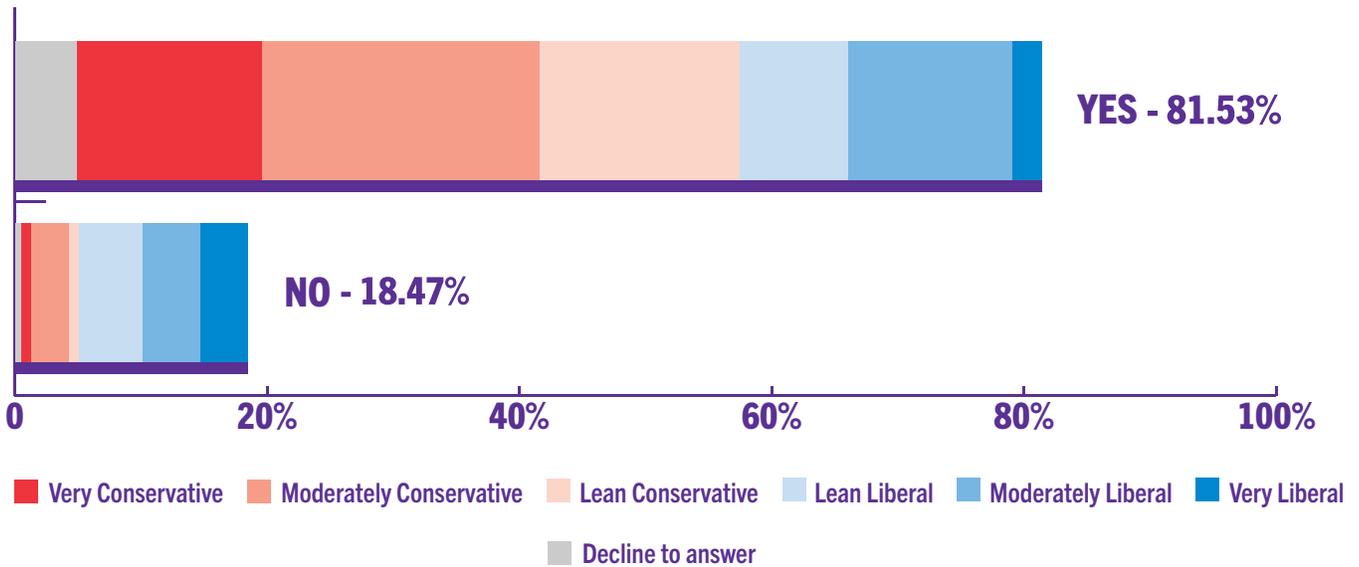


TABLE 4: SUPPORT FOR GUN SAFETY MEASURES PRACTICED IN THE U.S. MILITARY AS A NATIONAL STANDARD OF PRACTICE

	VERY CONSERVATIVE		MODERATELY CONSERVATIVE		LEAN CONSERVATIVE		LEAN LIBERAL		MODERATELY LIBERAL		VERY LIBERAL		DECLINE TO ANSWER		TOTAL
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	
YES	3.00%	6	16.00%	132	10.50%	21	19.50%	39	27.00%	54	18.00%	36	6.00%	12	200
NO	20.45%	9	25.00%	11	27.27%	12	4.55%	2	15.91%	7	4.55%	2	2.27%	1	44

FIGURE 6: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH VIOLENCE BY FIREARM OUTSIDE OF COMBAT

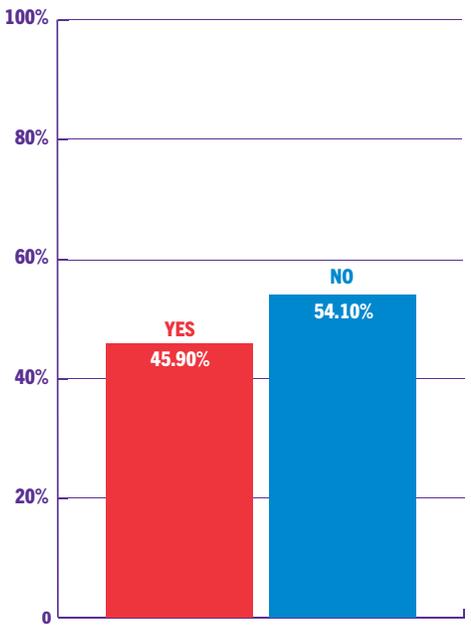


TABLE 5: EXPERIENCE WITH GUN VIOLENCE

HAVE YOU PERSONALLY BEEN IMPACTED BY GUN VIOLENCE OUTSIDE OF COMBAT?	DID YOU DEPLOY?			
	NO	COUNT	YES	COUNT
YES	41.40%	24	54.50%	79
NO	58.60%	34	45.50%	66
TOTAL	100.0%	58	100%	145



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