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Military service brought soldiers, sailors and Marines to duty bases in Virginia, but the availability of defense-related jobs--along with everything else the Old Dominion has to offer--may have kept them here.

Those may be some of the reasons Virginia has the highest number of veterans per 100 residents, according to a recent study. The report, "2014's Best & Worst States for Military Retirees," said that 1 in every 10 people in Virginia served in the armed forces.

The survey was done by Wallet Hub, an online personal finance resource. It incorporated data from federal agencies, websites and news sources to compile its rankings. Wallet Hub reported that Virginia has 10.37 veterans per 100 residents, slightly more than Alaska, which has 10.33 veterans per 100 people.

Their numbers jibe with the U.S. Census, which reported Virginia had 822,000 veterans in 2012 and 8.2 million residents. Nationwide, there are 21.2 million military veterans, according to the Census.

The study's results didn't surprise Jason Greenwood, a Spotsylvania County man who served almost 13 years in the Marine Corps.

"I bump into former service members everywhere, personally and socially," said the 42-year-old lawyer. Like others interviewed, Greenwood credited the job market in the metropolitan Washington area for keeping veterans and military retirees in this region.

With Navy bases in Virginia Beach, Norfolk and Hampton Roads, the state is a

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“We came down here to get out of the metropolitan area and the hectic traffic,” he said, “but I don't think we moved quite far enough.”

If it weren't for highway congestion, Virginia probably would have even more veterans, said Dan Choike, former commander of the Quantico Marine Corps Base.

“At times, the traffic situation keeps me wondering as to why we chose to stay,” said Choike, 55.

Traffic wasn't one of the key metrics in Wallet Hub's study, but the report did rank three overall categories—economic environment, quality of life and health care—for the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Virginia fared well in most, but was at the bottom in one category. Overall, it ranked 15th as one of the best places for military retirees. Wyoming ranked first; California was last. Not only does Virginia have the highest percentage of veterans, but it also had the lowest percentage of homeless ones.

It ranked third for the most job opportunities—behind the District of Columbia and Maryland—sixth in quality of life and eighth in economic environment. Virginia was last in availability of Veterans Affairs health facilities. It has 0.3 clinics or hospitals per 10,000 veterans, according to the Wallet Hub report. Wyoming had the most, with 3 facilities per 10,000 veterans.

Virginia's low ranking in health care facilities comes in the wake of national reports about poor patient care, long waits and other problems at VA facilities.

Earlier this month, U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., got an earful from veterans in Culpeper about the same issues. Some surveys make it sound like VA facilities are the only place where veterans can get care, “which is not the case,” said Joe Grzeika, a

member of the King George Board of Supervisors. He also serves on several military-

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to stay in the Guard for 20 years. When he returned to his home base of Hampton Roads in 2009 after his third deployment to Iraq, he realized he needed to get out of the hustle and bustle.

“I wanted to see less people and more trees, and you don't get that down in Hampton,” he said.

Brinkley and his wife moved to Caroline County and bought their first home. He works as a veteran peer specialist with the Rappahannock Area Community Services Board and the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program. He enjoys the community around him.

“I'm a big history buff, a lot of vets are,” he said. “And the seasons are awesome here. The area just gives you a broad assortment, everything from city life to countryside.” The discounts for veterans aren't bad either, he said.

Choike, the former Quantico commander, grew up in Michigan and moved 23 times during his 30-year career. He likes Virginia's shopping and sightseeing, recreation, cultural diversity and historical interests.

Greenwood, who served as a Marine prosecutor before he started a law firm in Fredericksburg, cited “amazing variety geographically,” from the mountains to the beaches. He likes the demographics, too. “It is still a place where it is OK and readily acceptable to be conservative when it comes to political, economic and social issues,” Greenwood said.

George also said the conservative nature appealed to him, but he sees changes coming. For several reasons, he and his wife plan to move, probably to the Southwest, as soon as their two children are out of college.

Despite Virginia's amenities, he said it doesn't offer some benefits he believes are

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I'm curious to see where that will go in 10 years," George said, "if veterans stay in the state if it continues down the less-conservative path it seems to be heading."

U.S. Rep. Rob Wittman, R-1st District, acknowledged that "a number of factors make Virginia an attractive place to live," but, like George, said improvements can be made. Wittman said they include fixing the problems with VA centers and easing the transition for those returning to civilian life.

McManis, of North Stafford, appreciates efforts that have already been made to keep Virginia attractive to military retirees. "It's a good place to be to know that your values and benefits are being protected," he said.

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