Empirical Article

Daily uplifts, daily hassles, and coping in military veterans' post-deployment reintegration

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Our first aim was to explore the relationship between daily uplifts, daily hassles, and coping styles the first year after returning from international military missions and post-deployment work, family, and private reintegration in military veterans. Our second aim was to identify individual patterns regarding daily uplifts, daily hassles, and coping styles and to explore how they relate to the above-mentioned aspects of post-deployment reintegration. Questionnaire responses were received from 446 Swedish military veterans. Regression analyses showed that daily hassles and an escape-avoidance coping style made significant contributions in the predicted, negative direction to the amount of explained variance on reintegration indicator scales. A high level of perceived threat during the last mission also contributed to more negative integration. Using a person-centered approach, three unique profiles of response patterns were identified using a cluster analysis based on the uplift, hassles, and coping style scores. One profile was labeled "resilient and well-functioning"; its members showed favorable reintegration scores. A second profile was called "ambitious and struggling." These individuals scored medium-high on the reintegration scales. The third profile consistently indicated the least favorable reintegration scores and was labeled "worried and avoidant." The results confirm and deepen our existing knowledge.

Key words: Daily uplifts, daily hassles, coping, post-deployment reintegration, veterans, individual profiles.

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Research on the health and well-being of military veterans is extensive. Most studies on psychological and psychiatric aspects regarding veterans' mental health have focused on severe reactions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, drug problems, and suicide (Michel, 2014). Studies on the wider concept of post-deployment reintegration represent a different approach and point to the importance of a broader perspective of military veterans' post-deployment life (Blais *et al*., 2009; Elnitsky *et al*., 2017). Regarding post-deployment work-related reintegration, a number of challenges have been reported. Examples include experiences of increased bureaucracy and lack of motivating incentives at work (Johnson *et al*., 1997), organizational disruptions, and being posted in a unit where other members did not deploy, which may lead to a lack of peer support (Thopmson & Gignac, 2002; Yerkes & Holloway, 1996).

In addition to work-related reintegration, Blais *et al*. (2009) also highlight family reintegration and the integration of personal experiences into an overarching view of the world. Regarding post-deployment family reintegration, several studies indicate that the most stressful part of the deployment cycle is the post-deployment phase in which the individual must find his/her role back in the family system (Lester & Flake, 2013). Challenges at this stage include integrating the returning spouse into home routines, determining child responsibilities, concern about future deployments, and spouses getting to know each other again after a prolonged absence (Chandra *et al*., 2009).

The inner, personal post-deployment reintegration includes a need to decompress and put the events of the tour into perspective (Blais *et al*., 2009). Feeling psychologically isolated during the first months of returning home has been shown to be a significant

predictor of subsequent PTSD (Wilson & Krauss, 1985). Other problems related to insufficient personal post-deployment reintegration include feelings of helplessness and powerlessness, somatic problems, antisocial behavior, hostility, alcohol and drug dependence, risky behavior, suicides, and accidents (Aldwin *et al*., 1994; Bartone *et al*., 1998; Orsillo *et al*., 1998). Reintegration in these different domains can be more or less positive or negative. The Army Post-Deployment Reintegration Scale was developed as an instrument for assessment purposes (Blais *et al*., 2009).

Returning to the field of veterans' mental health, a different approach, compared with the traditional research focus on trauma-oriented studies, was attempted in studies on Swedish and Norwegian military veterans focusing on everyday minor events in the veterans' lives post-deployment and how the veterans coped with them (Larsson *et al*., 2017, 2020; Tomteberget & Larsson, 2020). An underlying idea behind these studies was that accumulated everyday stress can contribute to severe long-term health effects. The studies drew on the writings on the importance of daily hassles, daily uplifts, and more or less functional ways of coping with the hassles (Lazarus, 1984; Stefanek *et al*., 2012).

The main result of the above-mentioned studies was that a high frequency of perceived daily hassles, combined with much use of coping styles generally found to be dysfunctional in operational professions, such as escape-avoidance, covaried significantly with self-reported physical, cognitive, and emotional stress symptoms. A high frequency of daily uplifts and much use of coping styles generally found to be functional in these kinds of groups, such as planful problem-solving, showed the reverse pattern. However, an aspect lacking in this research on daily hassles, uplifts, and

coping styles concerns how these aspects relate to the various fields of post-deployment reintegration (Blais *et al.*, 2009).

While some people experience lots of hassles and few uplifts, and other people the opposite, research also shows that some more emotionally restrained people experience few hassles as well as few uplifts, while other more emotionally expressive persons can experience high frequencies of both (Schmidt *et al.*, 2017). Various combinations of more or less functional and dysfunctional situational and dispositional coping are also common. However, the empirical findings regarding associations with different outcome measures are mixed. This can be due to the fact that one coping strategy may be functional in one situation and dysfunctional in another. There are obviously also differences regarding coping functionality related to different cultures, populations, subgroups, etc. (Carver, 1997; Carver *et al.*, 1989; Haren & Mitchell, 2003; Karimzade & Ali Besharat, 2011; Solberg *et al.*, 2021). Thus, there is a need to identify different individual patterns among military veterans regarding uplifts, hassles, and coping styles and how they relate to individual and contextual antecedent conditions and various outcome measures, including post-deployment reintegration. One way to handle this is to use a person-centered analytical approach, which focuses on the heterogeneity among subgroups of individuals, instead of using a more traditional variable-centered approach that focuses on relationships between variables. A person-centered approach makes use of such differences and allows the study of groups, or profiles, of individuals exhibiting similar variation in some key dimensions (Howard & Hoffman, 2017; Morin *et al.*, 2018).

In addition to the core variables of the present study – daily hassles, daily uplifts, and coping styles – and their relationship to post-deployment reintegration, we also wanted to include the following individual and contextual antecedent variables that have repeatedly been shown to be associated with post-deployment health and adaptation: the personality dimension neuroticism (the more, the higher the risk; James *et al.*, 2013), total number of international military missions (the higher, the higher the risk; Reger *et al.*, 2009), perceived threat during the mission (the higher, the higher the risk; Mott *et al.*, 2012; Xue *et al.*, 2015), and perceived leader support after the mission (the stronger, the lower the risk; Welsh *et al.*, 2015).

Following from this, the aim of the present study was twofold. First, to examine the relationship between the study's core variables post-deployment daily uplifts, daily hassles, and coping styles during the first year after the mission on the one hand, and post-deployment work, family, and private reintegration on the other. When analyzing these relationships, we also aimed to control for the impact of the personality dimension neuroticism, the total number of international military missions, perceived level of threat due to stress exposure during the last mission, and perceived leader support during the first year after the mission. Regarding the first aim, the following prediction was made based on previous studies: (1) A higher frequency of daily uplifts will covary with more favorable work, family, and private reintegration, and (2) a higher frequency of daily hassles will show the reverse pattern. Due to the mixed previous findings regarding the functionality of different coping styles, no specific prediction was made in this study of military veterans. Lower scores on neuroticism, fewer total international military missions, and lower

perceived threat due to stress exposure during the last mission, as well as higher scores on perceived leader support during the first year after the mission, were assumed to be associated with more favorable scores on the three kinds of reintegration and vice versa.

The second aim was to identify individual patterns regarding post-deployment daily uplifts, daily hassles, and coping styles and to explore how they relate to work, family, and private reintegration, as well as to neuroticism, total number of international military missions, perceived threat due to stress exposure during the last mission, and perceived leader support during the first year after the mission. Regarding the second aim, the study was purely explorative as there was no basis in the extant research for a specific prediction.

METHOD

Participants and procedure

The study population consisted of men and women who had served on an international military operation one or more times with the Swedish Armed Forces in the period from 2017 to 2020, here labeled as "veterans." In this population, 1,500 individuals were randomly selected with assistance from the Swedish Armed Forces' Veteran Center, who posted a questionnaire to their home addresses. It included an information letter from the head of the Swedish Armed Forces' Veteran Center, as well as a letter from the research group and a prepaid reply envelope. An internet link was also provided for digital responses. Three weeks later, a reminder was posted again to all 1,500 (the questionnaire was filled in anonymously, so we did not know who had responded). Responses were received from 446 people. This yielded a response rate of 34%. General background data about the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that the response group was heavily dominated by men. Most had a university education and were married or cohabitating. The majority had completed two or more international missions. The dominant military ranks were officer with major's rank or lower, non-commissioned

Table 1. *Demographics and military background (N = 446)*

Gender	
Men	396 (89%)
Women	50 (11%)
Education	
High school	172 (39%)
University	274 (61%)
Current marital status	
Married/cohabiting	360 (81%)
Single	83 (19%)
International missions	
1	196 (44%)
2	88 (20%)
3–4	112 (25%)
5 or more	48 (11%)
Rank in last mission	
Soldier	76 (18%)
Group commander	13 (3%)
NCO	158 (36%)
Major or lower	163 (38%)
Higher than major	24 (5%)
Current employment situation	
Full-time military empl. in the SAF	265 (60%)
Part-time military empl. in the SAF	87 (19%)
Civilian employment in the SAF	23 (5%)
Other	69 (16%)

Note: SAF = Swedish Armed Forces.

officer (NCO), and soldier. About 60% were still employed full-time in the Swedish Armed Forces.

Measures

Neuroticism. Neuroticism (Emotional stability reversed) was measured using the negatively worded item from the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (Gosling *et al*., 2003): "I get nervous easily." A seven-point response scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) was used.

Mission-related scales. Participants were asked to report the total number of international missions they had taken part in. They also reported their military rank during the last mission. "Perceived level of threat due to stress exposure during the last mission" was assessed with the following three-point self-rating scale: "*low*," "*moderate*," or "*high*." "Perceived leader support during the first year after returning home" (from the last mission) was assessed with five positively worded items using a five-point response scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.94). Example: "My boss listened when I talked about my family." These two mission-related scales had been previously used in a study of military conscripts (Larsson *et al*., 2022).

Daily uplifts during the first year after returning home. This was measured using 11 items (α = 0.86). This included a mix of five items from the Stress Profile (Setterlind & Larsson, 1995) and six newly constructed items based on interview responses obtained in two Scandinavian qualitative studies of veterans (Larsson *et al*., 2017, 2020; Tomteberget & Larsson, 2020). The new items were written by the principal author and then discussed with the co-authors. After this, they were tested on a research colleague who is also a military veteran. Following this, some final adjustments were made. Examples: "Joy about relaxation and recreation (for example literature, music, walks, sport)" and "Joy from stimulating work (work first year after last mission)." All items had five-point response scales ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*).

Daily hassles during the first year after returning home. This was measured using 16 items (α = 0.90) with the same mixture of sources reported above on daily uplifts (five items from the Stress Profile and 11 newly constructed items). Examples: "Worry about practical things such as economy, housing, garden, car" and "Irritation from being interrupted and not being able to complete things." All items had five-point response scales ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*).

Coping styles during the first year after returning home. A mix of items from the Ways of Coping Checklist (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and newly constructed items derived from the above-mentioned qualitative studies of veterans was used (a total of 45 items). First, two items were dropped because of poor discriminability (mean scores below 2.0, on a response scale ranging from 1 to 5, see below). Following this, a factor analysis (principal axis factoring with oblique rotation) was performed on the remaining 43 items. Oblique rotation was chosen because we expected interrelationships between emerging latent factors. Items with a factor loading of 0.40 or higher in a given factor, and having factor loadings of 0.29 or lower in the other factors, were accepted in the factor. An analysis calling for five factors yielded a result considered meaningful. Using these criteria, 22 of the 43 remaining items were dropped because of low or mixed factor loadings. The following four factors (41.1% explained variance) were retained: (1) Information seeking and action planning (eight items, α = 0.84). Example: "I talked to someone to get a clearer view of the situation"; (2) Acceptance and emotional control (six items, α = 0.76). Example: "I tried to control my emotions, didn't let them affect other things too much"; (3) Physical exercise (two items, α = 0.73). Example: "I did physical exercise because it made me feel good," and (4) Escape-Avoidance (five items, α = 0.74). Example: "I wished that the situation would go away or somehow be over with." All items had five-point response scales ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*).

Post-deployment reintegration during the first year after returning home. The six scales from the Army Post-Deployment Reintegration Scale (Blais *et al*., 2009) were used: "Work negative" (six items,

α = 0.82). Example. "I found the military bureaucracy more frustrating." "Work positive" (six items, α = 0.67). Example: "I was applying job-related skills I learned during my employment." "Family negative" (six items, α = 0.89). Example: "There were tensions in my family relationships." "Family positive" (six items, α = 0.86). Example: "I became more responsive to my family's needs." "Private negative" (six items, α = 0.81). Example: "Putting the events of the tour behind me was tough." "Private positive" (six items, α = 0.83). Example: "I realized how well off we are in Sweden." All items had a six-point response scale ranging from 1 (*do not agree at all*) to 6 (*fully agree*).

Statistics

SPSS Statistics version 25 was used in the statistical analyses. Summary indices were calculated for all the instruments mentioned, except the single item neuroticism scale. This was done by adding the raw scores of the items belonging to a scale and dividing this sum by the number of items. Skewness and kurtosis tests were performed to check the response distribution on all above-mentioned scales. The outcome was evaluated as indicating approximate normality (due to the large sample size, no significance tests were performed). Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations (Pearson) were calculated and subgroup comparisons were performed using chi-square tests, and one-way analysis of variance followed by a Scheffé test. A cluster analysis (K-means) based on nearest centroid sorting (Anderberg, 1973) of the theoretical key variables daily uplifts, daily hassles, and the four coping styles was used to identify profiles of response patterns.

Hierarchical regression analyses were performed with each of the six post-deployment reintegration scales as dependent variable. Age and neuroticism were regarded as individual-related antecedent variables and were entered in Step 1. The military mission–related scales "total number of international missions," "perceived level of threat due to stress exposure during the last mission," and "perceived leader support during the first year after returning home" were entered in Step 2. The daily uplifts, daily hassles, and four coping style scales were entered in Step 3.

List-wise deletion of missing responses was used in the cluster, correlation, and regression analyses. Due to missing values, these analyses are based on somewhat fewer cases than 446 (see each table in the Results section). Statistical significance was assumed at $p < 0.05$.

Ethics

The project was approved by the Swedish Research Ethical Review Authority (2020). All participants provided written informed consent.

RESULTS

Correlation and regression analysis

Means and standard deviations and are presented in Table 2. For parsimonious reasons, only a summary of all 153 bivariate correlations (17 scales correlated with each other) is given in the table. Each of the 18 scales was correlated with the other 16 scales. Table 2 shows how many of these 16 correlations reached the level of statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). Due to the high number of respondents, comparatively low correlation levels were needed to reach significance. Therefore, effect sizes are also reported. The number of effect sizes with a power of 0.95, indicating an estimated population correlation coefficient of 0.20, are also presented for each of the 17 scales.

Perusal of Table 2 shows that the mean scores on the positive reintegration scales are considerably higher than the mean scores on the negative reintegration scales. The neuroticism scale also shows a low mean value. A high number of the correlations are statistically significant.

Table 2. *Means, standard deviations, and summary of bivariate correlations (n = 395)*

Scale	M	SD	Number of significant correlations[e]	Number of correlations with an effect size power of 0.95 or higher[e]
Age	3.93	11.5	9	8
Neuroticism[a]	1.91	0.91	9	6
Total missions	2.03	1.06	5	3
Threat level[b]	2.01	0.65	4	2
Leader support[c]	3.42	1.14	8	3
Uplifts[c]	3.79	0.58	14	8
Hassles[c]	2.09	0.63	14	10
Information seeking and action planning[c]	2.65	0.74	9	5
Acceptance and emotional control[c]	2.81	0.74	9	7
Physical exercise[c]	3.69	0.95	7	1
Escape-avoidance[c]	2.20	0.81	12	11
Work negative[d]	2.67	1.04	13	10
Work positive[d]	3.93	0.67	9	6
Family negative[d]	2.47	1.08	11	8
Family positive[d]	3.44	0.85	11	8
Private negative[d]	1.88	0.79	12	10
Private positive[d]	3.83	0.82	9	6

[a]Scores could range between 1 and 7.
[b]Scores could range between 1 and 3.
[c]Scores could range between 1 and 5.
[d]Scores could range between 1 and 6.
[e]Each variable was correlated with each of the 16 others.

As can be seen in Table 2, daily uplifts, hassles, and negative work reintegration showed a high number of significant correlations with high effect sizes. The military mission scales perceived level of threat, total number of missions, and leader support showed the fewest significant associations. The general pattern was that age, daily uplifts, information seeking and action planning, and the positive reintegration scales were positively correlated. Neuroticism, daily hassles, escape-avoidance coping behaviors, and the negative reintegration scales showed strong positive correlations.

The relationships between the six key study variables and each of the six post-deployment reintegration scales were also analyzed using hierarchical regression analyses. First, collinearity tests were performed (variation inflation factor – VIF) on all scales entered in each of the six regression analyses. The average VIF values were just slightly higher than 1, which indicates acceptable results (Field, 2013). The results of the analysis with each of the six post-deployment reintegration scales as dependent variable are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that moderate to fairly high adjusted R^2 values were obtained on the negative reintegration scales and low to moderate values on the positive reintegration scales.

Beginning with the antecedent variables, lower age was associated with higher scores on the negative work and family reintegration scales. The personality scale neuroticism did not show any significant associations with the dependent variables. Continuing with the military mission scales, high levels of perceived threat were significantly related to all three negative

Table 3. *Regression analysis – predictors of post-deployment reintegration, final models (N = 395)*

Dependent variable and predictors	adj. R^2	B	Beta	F	p
Work negative	0.41				
Age		−0.02	−0.20	10.49	**0.001**
Neuroticism		0.02	0.02	0.10	0.754
Total missions		−0.11	−0.12	3.82	0.052
Threat level		0.18	0.12	4.57	**0.034**
Leader support		−0.18	−0.20	12.71	**0.000**
Uplifts		0.09	0.06	0.87	0.353
Hassles		0.46	0.31	15.01	**0.000**
Information seeking and action planning		−0.16	−0.12	3.79	0.053
Acceptance and emotional control		0.04	0.03	0.28	0.596
Physical exercise		0.12	0.12	4.70	**0.031**
Escape avoidance		0.19	0.16	4.27	**0.040**
Work positive	0.29				
Age		−0.00	−0.07	1.01	0.316
Neuroticism		0.01	0.01	0.05	0.823
Total missions		−0.05	−0.08	1.30	0.257
Threat level		0.06	0.06	0.88	0.351
Leader support		0.04	0.07	1.43	0.233
Uplifts		0.57	0.51	61.23	**0.000**
Hassles		0.09	0.09	1.03	0.311
Information seeking and action planning		−0.05	−0.05	0.67	0.416
Acceptance and emotional control		0.07	0.08	1.40	0.237
Physical exercise		0.15	0.22	12.57	**0.000**
Escape avoidance		−0.03	−0.04	0.23	0.629
Family negative	0.37				
Age		−0.03	−0.03	15.30	**0.000**
Neuroticism		−0.13	−0.11	3.35	0.069
Total missions		−0.01	−0.01	0.02	0.881
Threat level		0.21	0.13	4.48	**0.036**
Leader support		0.01	0.01	0.05	0.832
Uplifts		−0.21	−0.12	3.21	0.075
Hassles		0.26	0.17	3.71	0.056
Information seeking and action planning		−0.13	−0.09	1.67	0.197
Acceptance and emotional control		0.26	0.17	6.88	**0.009**
Physical exercise		0.02	0.02	0.09	0.763
Escape avoidance		0.35	0.27	10.74	**0.001**
Family positive	0.16				
Age		−0.00	−0.04	0.31	0.579
Neuroticism		0.07	0.07	1.04	0.310
Total missions		0.04	0.05	0.43	0.511
Threat level		−0.04	−0.03	0.15	0.697
Leader support		0.04	0.06	0.61	0.436
Uplifts		0.39	0.29	13.92	**0.000**
Hassles		0.08	0.07	0.42	0.520
Information seeking and action planning		0.14	0.13	2.69	0.103
Acceptance and emotional control		−0.11	−0.09	1.48	0.226
Physical exercise		0.05	0.06	0.66	0.419
Escape avoidance		−0.24	−0.24	6.53	**0.011**
Private negative	0.34				
Age		−0.00	−0.05	0.65	0.422
Neuroticism		0.07	0.08	1.90	0.169
Total missions		−0.06	−0.08	1.53	0.218
Threat level		0.19	0.15	7.39	**0.007**

Table 3. (continued)

Dependent variable and predictors	adj. R^2	B	Beta	F	p
Leader support		−0.07	−0.10	2.56	0.111
Uplifts		0.06	0.05	0.62	0.431
Hassles		0.45	0.38	21.20	**0.000**
Information seeking and action planning		−0.20	−0.18	8.13	**0.005**
Acceptance and emotional control		0.02	0.02	0.06	**0.804**
Physical exercise		0.11	0.14	5.73	**0.018**
Escape avoidance		0.13	0.14	3.09	0.080
Private positive	0.11				
Age		0.01	0.10	1.81	0.180
Neuroticism		0.06	0.07	0.94	0.334
Total missions		−0.07	−0.09	1.60	0.208
Threat level		0.17	0.13	4.06	**0.045**
Leader support		0.01	0.02	0.04	0.834
Uplifts		0.46	0.35	22.58	**0.000**
Hassles		0.14	0.12	1.43	0.233
Information seeking and action planning		−0.05	−0.04	0.30	0.583
Acceptance and emotional control		0.09	0.08	1.21	0.273
Physical exercise		0.05	0.06	0.71	0.399
Escape avoidance		−0.11	−0.11	1.42	0.235

Bold values indicate statistically significance.

reintegration scales, but also to the positive private reintegration scale. Turning to the study key variables, a high frequency of daily uplifts was associated with high scores on all the positive reintegration scales. A high frequency of daily hassles made significant contributions to the negative work and personal reintegration scales. The four coping style scales showed a mixed pattern. The escape-avoidance scale contributed significantly to the negative work and family reintegration scales. A low frequency of escape-avoidance coping behaviors also contributed to high scores on the positive family reintegration scale. A low frequency of physical exercise activity was associated with high scores on the negative work reintegration scale and high scores on the positive work reintegration scale. A high frequency of physical exercise also contributed to high scores on the negative private reintegration scale. The coping style scales information seeking and action planning and acceptance and emotional control, respectively, contributed significantly only one time each.

Comparison of veterans with different profiles on the theoretical key variables

The participants' scores on the key study variables daily uplifts, daily hassles, and the four coping style scales were entered into a cluster analysis (K-means). Three unique profiles regarded as meaningful were identified, which are shown in Table 4. A one-way analysis of variance for each of the six variables was run and significant F values ($p < 0.001$) were obtained ($p = 0.001$ on the daily uplifts scale). This indicates that the means of the profiles differ significantly on all six key variables. The individuals in the respective profiles were compared, and the result is presented in Table 5.

Table 4. *Profiles of participants – mean scores on the everyday stress key variables*

	Profiles		
	1. Medium uplifts	2. Medium uplifts	3. Medium uplifts
	Low hassles	Medium hassles	High hassles
	Low action planning	High action planning	Medium action planning
	Low emotional control	Medium emotional control	High emotional control
	Medium exercise	High exercise	Low exercise
	Low escape	Medium escape	High escape
Everyday stress key variables[a]	($n = 119$)	($n = 164$)	($n = 112$)
Uplifts	3.87	3.84	3.62
Hassles	1.63	2.15	2.53
Information seeking and action planning	2.15	2.97	2.70
Acceptance and emotional control	2.02	2.42	3.10
Physical exercise	3.69	4.34	2.69
Escape-avoidance	1.45	2.42	2.67

[a]Scores could range between 1 and 5 on all variables.

Table 4 shows three different individual patterns across the six key study variables. Profile 1 is characterized by high scores on daily uplifts and low scores on daily hassles. These individuals also score low on all coping style scales except for physical exercise, for which they have a medium-high mean score.

Those who fit the second profile score high on daily uplifts and have a medium-high score on daily hassles. They also score high on information seeking and action planning and physical exercise, and medium-high on acceptance and emotional control and escape-avoidance, respectively. The third profile shows high scores on all scales except for physical exercise, for which these individuals score low.

According to Table 5, there are statistically significant mean score differences between the three profiles on all scales except for the three military mission–oriented scales and the positive family and private reintegration scales. Post hoc tests also reveal a number of pair-wise differences. The Profile 1 members are the oldest, and they are significantly older than the Profile 3 members. On the neuroticism scale, Profile 1 members score lowest followed by those in Profiles 2 and 3. No pair-wise differences were found between the three profiles on the military mission–related scales. Profile 1 reports the most favorable results on all negative reintegration scales, followed by Profile 2. The least favorable results are shown by Profile 3. Although there were overall significant mean score differences between the three profiles on the positive reintegration scales, no pair-wise differences were significant. The three profiles were also

Table 5. *Comparisons of profiles on scale scores based on uplifts, hassles, functional coping, and dysfunctional coping ratings (one-way analysis of variance)*

Scale	1. High uplifts / Low hassles / Low action plan / Low emot. control / Medium exercise / Low escape (n = 119)		2. High uplifts / Medium hassles / High action plan / Medium emot. control / High exercise / Medium escape (n = 164)		3. High uplifts / High hassles / High action plan / High emot. control / Low exercise / High escape (n = 112)		F	p	Scheffé[e]
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Age	42.1	11.8	39.0	11.4	37.6	10.9	4.77	**0.009**	B
Neuroticism[a]	1.64	0.85	1.95	0.83	2.17	1.03	10.08	**0.000**	A, B
Total missions	2.10	1.04	2.09	1.03	1.81	1.07	2.95	0.053	
Threat level[b]	1.96	0.67	2.02	0.65	2.04	0.64	0.50	0.605	
Leadership support[c]	3.60	1.19	3.35	1.12	3.40	1.12	0.55	0.578	
Work negative[d]	2.23	0.99	2.75	0.94	3.05	1.02	18.38	**0.000**	A
Work positive[d]	3.86	0.69	4.04	0.65	3.83	0.64	3.69	**0.026**	
Family negative[d]	1.96	0.87	2.60	1.08	2.83	1.11	16.69	**0.000**	A, B
Family positive[d]	3.54	0.83	3.46	0.85	3.30	0.82	1.87	0.156	
Private negative[d]	1.56	0.58	2.01	0.77	1.99	0.91	12.77	**0.000**	A, B
Private positive[d]	3.81	0.83	3.88	0.81	3.74	0.85	0.92	0.394	

[a]Scores could range between 1 and 7.
Bold values indicate statistically significance.
[b]Scores could range between 1 and 3.
[c]Scores could range between 1 and 5.
[d]Scores could range between 1 and 6.
[e]A = Significant difference between clusters 1 and 2. B = Significant difference between clusters 1 and 3. C = Significant difference between clusters 2 and 3.

compared on background variables shown in Table 1 (chi-square tests). Profile 3 deviates from the others by having more persons living single ($\chi^2[6] = 14.41$, $p = 0.025$).

DISCUSSION

The main finding in the regression-based analysis was that daily uplifts, daily hassles, and functional and dysfunctional coping styles made significant contributions in the predicted directions to the amount of explained variance on reintegration indicator scales. The main finding in the person-centered analysis approach was the identification of three unique profiles of response patterns. One profile was labeled "resilient and well-functioning," and its members showed favorable reintegration scores. A second profile was called "ambitious and struggling." These individuals scored medium-high on the reintegration scales. The third profile, finally, consistently indicated the least favorable reintegration scores and was labeled "worried and avoidant." The results confirm and deepen our existing knowledge. In the following, the variable-oriented approach will be discussed first, followed by comments on the person-oriented profile approach. Finally, methodological aspects and practical implications will be addressed.

Variable-oriented regression approach

Higher frequency of daily uplifts was predicted to covary with more favorable scores on work, family, and private post-deployment reintegration. This prediction was fully confirmed on the positive reintegration scales in the regression analyses. Contrary to the prediction, more daily uplifts did not contribute to lower scores on the negative reintegration scales. A higher frequency of daily hassles was assumed to be related to less favorable scores on all three kinds of post-deployment reintegration. This prediction was almost fully confirmed in the regression analyses ($p = 0.056$ on negative family reintegration). Contrary to the prediction, fewer daily hassles did not contribute to higher scores on the positive reintegration scales. One possible explanation is that this reflects a methodological artifact. Uplifts and positive reintegration aspects may be interpreted as "closer" and more similar than uplifts and lack of negative reintegration aspects. A parallel argument could be used on the pattern shown by the daily hassles scale. However, turning to the bivariate correlations, the uplifts scale was significantly negatively correlated with all three negative reintegration indices, and the hassles scale was negatively correlated with the three positive reintegration scales (although not significantly so regarding family reintegration; not shown in the tables). Still, the prediction was

not fully confirmed, and the results call for a careful interpretation of the findings.

Turning to the coping style scales, the findings are mixed. The escape-avoidance scale showed the clearest results and contributed significantly to the variance on the negative work and family reintegration scales and almost so ($p = 0.08$) on the negative private reintegration scale. Similar findings have been reported by Reddy *et al*. (2011). The scale information seeking and action planning was negatively associated with the negative private reintegration scale, which seems logical. The scale acceptance and emotional control made only one significant contribution to the explained variance – a positive association (higher scores) was found on the negative family reintegration scale. This may not seem logical but could reflect the doubleness of emotion-focused coping strategies: In one situation they are functional and in the next dysfunctional. Another possible explanation is that attempts to control negative emotions, rather than gain acceptance and understanding of them, can lead to problems in emotion regulation and to negative reappraisals of the family situation (see, e.g., Gross & Thompson, 2007; Hayes *et al*., 1999). The results of the physical exercise scale are also mixed. This coping style contributed positively to the positive work reintegration score, which seems logical. On the other hand, it also contributed positively (higher scores) to the negative work and private reintegration scales. As it seems unlikely that physical exercise *causes* these reintegration problems, a possible explanation is that physical exercise fills a short-term escape-avoidance coping function in troublesome work and private life situations, although it does not address reintegration problems in an imbalance relating to work and private life.

Higher age covaried with more favorable scores on the positive family and private reintegration scales. This could be due to a richer experience and a higher proneness to see the bright aspects. Neuroticism was unrelated to all reintegration scales. A possible explanation is methodological. It was measured with only one item, which had a very low mean score. Thus, a so-called floor effect may have biased this variable's relationship with the other. Although neuroticism may be an explanatory factor, there are potentially other variables that may have contributed to reduced coping abilities, such as adverse childhood experiences, and social support or lack thereof could have provided a more nuanced result (Brewin *et al*., 2000; Ozer *et al*., 2003).

Among the military mission–related scales, the index perceived level of threat due to stress exposure during the last mission showed clear results. It contributed significantly to all negative reintegration scales (but low levels of perceived threat did not contribute to more favorable scores on the positive reintegration scales). Poor perceived leader support during the first year after coming home contributed negatively to the negative work reintegration score, which seems logical. The total number of international missions was unrelated to the reintegration scales.

In summary, a high frequency of daily hassles, frequent use of the coping style escape-avoidance, and high perceived threat due to stress exposure during the last mission clearly contributed to more problematic work, family, and private post-mission reintegration. Being older and experiencing a high frequency of daily uplifts covaried with positive reintegration. The remaining results from the variable-oriented approach are less clear-cut. Still,

we conclude that the results provide new knowledge regarding daily functioning and reintegration experiences, in addition to the majority of studies on veteran health that are focused on more severe conditions such as PTSD, depression, and suicidality.

Compared with the values reported by Blais *et al*. (2009) among US veterans, it should be noticed that the Swedish veterans in the present study reported considerably more favorable scores on all three positive reintegration scales and more unfavorable mean scores on the work and private life negative scales. The US sample scored more unfavorably on the work negative reintegration scale. These differences could be caused by different selection systems, different levels of severe stress exposure during the missions, or other things. Thus, further cross-national studies are needed.

Finally, the findings also highlight the importance of a holistic view on post-deployment reintegration as suggested by Blais *et al*. (2009). It not only is about coming back to the ordinary work environment but also involves returning as a "newcomer" to one's family and processing one's own tour experiences (Blais *et al*., 2009; Lester & Flake, 2013).

Person-centered profile approach

A cluster analysis resulted in three distinct profiles. All three profiles scored medium-high on daily uplifts (the profile means were close to the mean of the whole sample). Considerable differences were found on the other study key variables. Individuals grouped in Profile 1 reported low scores on the remaining scales except for physical exercise, for which they scored medium-high. The individuals in this profile also reported the most favorable scores on all reintegration scales. Tentatively, they could be labeled "resilient and well-functioning."

Individuals grouped in Profile 2 scored medium-high on daily hassles, acceptance and emotional control, and escape-avoidance. They scored high on information seeking and action planning and on physical exercise. These individuals scored in the middle on the reintegration scales. We call them "ambitious and struggling."

Those showing Profile 3, finally, scored high on daily hassles, acceptance and emotional control, and escape-avoidance. They report a medium-high score on information seeking and action planning and a low score on physical exercise. They consistently reported the least favorable mean scores on all reintegration scales, although the pair-wise differences are significant only when compared with Profiles 1 and 2 on the three negative reintegration scales. This group could be called "worried and avoidant." Given their more unfavorable scores on the reintegration scales, their profile on the six key variables should be regarded as a risk indicator.

The Profile 1 members are older than the others and score lowest on the neuroticism scale. More experience and a higher emotional stability (neuroticism reversed) are quite likely part-explanations of their more favorable reintegration scores. No significant differences were found between the profiles on the military mission–related scales. One significant difference was noted on the background variables – Profile 3 had a higher proportion of its members living as single. This could be due to their younger mean age.

In summary, by using a person-centered profile approach, it was possible to identify three subgroups of veterans with distinct

patterns of combinations of the six study key variables. The obtained differences between the profiles on the post-deployment reintegration scales, and on the individual and contextual measures of antecedent conditions, represent a deepened understanding of the available knowledge based on a variable-oriented approach, including the findings reported above in the present study.

Methodological aspects

The methodological strengths of the study include the comparatively large sample size and the selection of measurement scales. The latter were either established instruments or scales constructed from codes and categories developed in two grounded theory studies of other military veterans (Larsson *et al.*, 2017; Tomteberget & Larsson, 2020). The latter scales had high or acceptable reliability and could be assumed to be valid given that they are based on results from similar kinds of military veterans. However, a pre-study assessment of the psychometric properties of the newly constructed items and scales would have been desirable. A further methodological strength includes the use of a person-centered profile approach (Mäkingas *et al.*, 2018; Oberski, 2016). We suggest that the findings can be generalized to military veterans, at least in Western cultures. Given the present sample of mainly male soldiers and lower and medium ranked officers, there is obviously a need for replication studies, preferably longitudinal, in various organizational and non-organizational contexts. In addition, future studies may include resilient personality factors that may further explain differences between those that reintegrate more and less smoothly. Examples of such factors are self-efficacy, optimism, and altruistic personality traits (Southwick & Charney, 2018).

One weakness in the study is the low response rate (34%). Two potential reasons behind the dropout rate are that the questionnaire was perceived as being too extensive and that many veterans may experience "survey fatigue." We tried to prevent this by adding an information letter from the head of the Swedish Armed Forces' Veteran Center and by giving the respondents an opportunity to respond either on paper or digitally. However, given the large responding sample size, the obtained response rate could be assumed to provide a fairly confident estimate (Fosnacht *et al.*, 2017; Wu *et al.*, 2022).

Another shortcoming is that the study is based on self-ratings, collected at one point in time. Subsequently, there is a risk of artificially inflated relationships among variables, so-called common method variance (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2012). In particular, there is a risk of responses being affected by general mood level in the present study. The personality scale neuroticism can be regarded as a proxy for general mood level (Clark & Watson, 2008). The significant contributions of hassles, uplifts, and coping style in the multiple regression analyses, and the lack of contribution of the neuroticism scale, can be seen as an indicator of a limited impact of common method variance.

Another methodological weakness is the period between the military mission and the data collection. This could vary from 1 to 4 years. This may cause the memory to fade. However, central detail information is better retained, whereas peripheral detail information from emotionally loaded events is less well retained than their neutral counterparts (Christiansson, 1992). We assume

that this also holds true in this retrospective approach to military missions and their aftermath.

A final methodological weakness is that it would have been desirable to include more antecedent variables such as adverse childhood experiences, lacking social support, and parallel stressors such as problems in partner relations (Brewin *et al.*, 2000; Felitti *et al.*, 1998; Ozer *et al.*, 2003).

Practical implications

Practical implications include education focusing on an increased awareness of the key variables daily uplifts, daily hassles, and coping styles. Particular attention should be paid to interventions aimed to reduce the likelihood of experiencing daily hassles and reduce the frequency of the coping style escape-avoidance. Previous research supports this. Good leadership covaries with fewer daily hassles and bad leadership with more (Larsson *et al.*, 2020). From the perspective of the military organization, we suggest that the noted associations between the key variables and negative work-related post-deployment reintegration can assist when planning and conducting interventions aimed at helping veterans to a healthy life inside or outside the military.

CONCLUSION

Two main conclusions can be drawn based on this study. First, the importance of post-deployment daily uplifts, daily hassles, and coping styles to a holistic view on post-deployment reintegration was to a fairly high degree confirmed. Second, a more nuanced picture emerged on how different intra-individual profiles on these key variables are related to post-deployment reintegration. Our main suggestion for future research is to continue to explore, refine, and validate the identified profiles in different contexts.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

GL all aspects, SN and AO data collection and assistance regarding conceptualization, analyses, and writing.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

We have no known conflict of interest to disclose.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The full questionnaire (in Swedish) and the data file (SPSS) can be obtained from the corresponding author.

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