

## A POSTCARD FROM IRAQ

### Getting Educated During Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF III) – My Experience and Perspective

By 1LT Annabelle Andrade

April 2004 brought news to the 79<sup>th</sup> Personnel Services Detachment out of Sacramento California of a future deployment. The date was uncertain, but we were officially on alert. For many of my Soldiers, the alert was a big wrench thrown into their short-term and long-term personal goals. Preparation for deployment meant notifying employers, making arrangements with loved ones, power of attorneys, certifying living wills, etc. For my students, the notice of deployment also meant pleading with instructors to withdraw from courses or negotiating an incomplete status with hopes of an opportunity to complete the courses upon return. Some had to plead to simply be allowed to drop a course with no penalty charges. The effects of the deployment were evident by the look of discouragement on everyone's face.

We arrived in December 2004. A small element was tasked out to Camp As Sayliyah, Qatar. The main element, to include myself, was to call Camp Victory Kuwait our new home for the remainder of the deployment. I was quite pleased to see that the Camp in Qatar had an active Education Center on-site that my soldiers could use to their benefit. Camp Victory was another story. We were pleasantly surprised to see that our mission would definitely allow those wanting to pursue education goals to do so via computer and internet services available on the camp. However, I quickly realized that the Education Services in theater were minimal. The combination of the geographical locations of the camps throughout Kuwait; plus the security level restrictions; plus the lack of resources made it virtually impossible for soldiers to continue their education. The dilemma of the lack of education services was inevitable. There is an old saying in the Mexican culture, "Si la montaña no viene hacia ti, tu ve hacia la montaña." My loose translation of this saying is; "If the mountain doesn't come to you, you go to the mountain." I was on a mission to find the Education Center, the ESO, or any other avenue I could think of for my soldiers.

I soon found out that there are two Education Centers here in Kuwait located in the larger southern camps: Camp Doha and Camp Arifjan. So I threw on my flak vest, strapped on my 9mm rifle and grabbed two magazines (just in case), and headed out to Camp Doha. I introduced myself to the

lone ranger, Mary Wagner, Education Services Officer for Kuwait and Iraq. When I met her she was sitting in a tiny office behind a desk cluttered with stacks and stacks of tuition assistance forms, study guides, and appointment notes all around her. Mrs. Wagner was obviously overwhelmed, but quick to give me her undivided attention. I quickly sympathized with her. Let me explain. Before this deployment my role in the military was that of the Education Services Officer for the California Army National Guard (16,000 plus strong). I thoroughly understand what it means to run an Education Services Office with minimum staff and large quantities of customers. The visit was looking grim.

Education is near and dear to me and I am passionate about "Education" truly being the key to recruitment and retention of our military force. The problem is convincing everyone else of its significance. Mary Wagner shares in my frustrations. I explained my visit to her and, luckily, was able to leave that day with a date for a camp visit and an education brief for Camp Victory and Camp Virginia. My soldiers and I were excited. Mary Wagner worked her magic and was able to make numerous camp visits and brought instructors to the various camps in Kuwait!

A few of my soldiers took advantage of English courses that the University of Maryland brought to Camp Victory. Others took advantage of distance learning courses their home campuses offered. Noteworthy of mention is Mrs. Lisa Kochevar of Columbia College of Missouri who immediately gave my soldiers special attention. I had previously worked with Mrs. Kochevar, Director of the Coast Guard Island site in California. I emailed her asking for help once. She provided excellent service to my soldiers going above

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## ARNG Education News

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and beyond, giving each individual her undivided attention and assistance as needed.

By May 2005, ten soldiers from the 79<sup>th</sup> PSD in Camp Victory had successfully completed their first term while deployed in Kuwait. One young soldier just out of high school is currently taking an online real estate certification program! My Qatar soldiers did not stay behind. A few have completed their term and are well on their way into the next term.

What can we gain from one small Detachment's experience regarding Education during OIF III? Perhaps the realization that the days of going into combat where amenities such as computer access and telephone services were nothing more than a young soldier's dream is over. The wars fought today are unlike anything seen in the past. The advances in technology bring opportunities unheard of in the history of combat! Ask any veteran if they would ever have imagined that soldiers would one day be able to go on a convoy and return to finish an English essay for a course they are taking from a college located across the country.

Our predecessors have made these opportunities available. I sincerely thank all of my predecessors for the hard labor put forth during OIF I and OIF II into building the area of operations in theater so that future operations could reap benefits of air-conditioned tents, trailers, dining facilities, post exchanges, USO services, MWR services AND Education Services. A soldier's education does not have to take a back seat any longer. Those willing, find ways to juggle classes with their daily duties. Luckily for me as a Commander, having education opportunities during deployment also means that I have a perfect tool to keep my soldiers busy during their off duty hours!

*1LT Andrade is the CAARNG Education Services Officer. She deployed in December 2004 and is stationed in Kuwait.*

To learn more about ARNG education  
go to:

<http://www.virtualarmy.com/>  
and follow the "Education" link.

news from  
SOC



### New Project Director for SOCGuard

Mack Brooks assumed the position as SOCGuard Project Director effective June 6. Mack served in the Army for 23 years, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1995. He brings to SOCGuard extensive military and civilian higher education experience, with over 20 years in administration, policy development, and program management (Director of Administration at the National War College, Deputy Director of Administration for NATO, West Point Admissions Officer). Most recently he was employed at George Washington University in the area of academic advising.

Welcome aboard, Mack!

news from  
DANTES

### Kuder<sup>®</sup> System Provides Complete Education and Career Planning Package

*By Sheila Nyjordet*

Provide comprehensive assessment instruments and career planning with the *Kuder Career Planning System*, published by National Career Assessment Services, Inc. (NCASI). The Internet-based *Kuder* system offers an interface that is simple and intuitive for counselors and system users alike, making it ideal for use with groups or self-directed exploration by individuals.

The *Kuder Career Planning System* combines valid, research-based interest, skills, and work values assessments with an online career portfolio including resume builder and comprehensive educational and occupational exploration resources. Getting started with the online system is quick and easy: In just 45 minutes, individuals can register, begin a personal career portfolio, take at least one assessment, and receive the report for that assessment. Perhaps best of all for our clients, the online system is completely portable and users have lifelong access. Because the system is Internet-based, users can access the system to review their assess-

ment results, research their education and occupation options, and update their portfolios at any time or from anywhere that Internet access is available.

Also, the *Kuder* system serves our clients at all stages of their career with the armed forces, from the time they first consider a career with the military to when they are ready to make the transition from military to civilian life. The *Kuder* career exploration database contains the most current Department of Defense crosswalk linking military occupations with O\*net classifications. System users can work from their assessment results to find military careers that fit their interests and skills, and they can also find civilian occupations that correspond to their military experience and expertise.

In situations where Internet access is limited or unavailable, the *Kuder* interest inventory, *Kuder Career Search with Person Match*, is available separately in alternate formats: mail back form, fax back form, and PC-based (provided on a CD). All materials, including access codes for the full *Kuder Career Planning System*, are available through DANTES, Code 10J. If you have questions about the *Kuder* system or its alternate components, e-mail [counseling@voled.doded.mil](mailto:counseling@voled.doded.mil), the email address for DANTES' Counselor Support Program Manager or contact customer support for the *Kuder* system by calling 877-999-6227 or e-mailing [support@ncasi.com](mailto:support@ncasi.com).

*Sheila Nyjordet is the Manager of Counselor Support Programs at DANTES.*

### Spouses to Teachers Update

Spouses to Teachers (STT) is a pilot project in 6 states (California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Texas and Virginia,) designed to assess the needs of military spouses interested in becoming a teacher. Under the authority of the Colorado Spouses to Teachers office, the following states are also included: Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah. The program provides support to spouses of active duty military and Selected Reserves in their pursuit of K-12 teaching positions in the U.S. The various areas of support are: specific information relative to becoming a teacher, counseling and guidance to eligible spouses regarding teacher certification requirements, routes to certification, employment potential, financial assistance, and assistance with employment searches. Limited funding will be provided to eligible spouses to reimburse the cost of tests required for state teacher licensure/certification. Maximum available financial assistance is \$600.00 per person. Additional certifi-

cation exam funding may be approved on a case by case basis. For details visit the STT website at <http://www.spousestoteachers.com/>.

news from  
**EDUCATION  
SUPPORT  
CENTER**



### Partnerships Flourish at ESC

The ARNG Education Support Center (ESC), located at Camp Robinson in Little Rock, AR has operational agreements with 52 partner institutions for both graduate and undergraduate programs. ESC partners understand the unique needs of the military, recognize the value of education to servicemembers, recruit heavily in military markets, and are accommodating to their military students during a time of national emergency. They agree to issue SOC Student Agreements to National Guard soldiers attending their institution, offering them the protection of a contract for degree. In addition, some institutions offer additional incentives such as tuition discounts, academic programs specifically designed to maximize credit for military experience and training, and cohort programs. Pikes Peak Community College has recently executed a Memorandum of Agreement with the ARNG. We continue to recruit new partners to the ESC. If you are interested in exploring a partnership with an institution in your state, contact Marcy Shapiro, SOC-Guard, at 1-800-368-5622.

The current ESC partners are:

Anne Arundel Community College  
Auburn University  
Baker College  
Barton County CC  
Bellevue University  
Capella U  
Central Texas College  
Charter Oak State University  
Coastline Community College  
Columbia College  
Eastern Oregon University  
Embry Riddle  
Empire State C  
Excelsior College  
Florida Community College – Jax  
Fort Hays State University

## ARNG Education News

Franklin University  
Governors State  
Lakeland College – Graduate Only  
Liberty University  
Limestone College  
Mount Wachusett CC  
Mountain State U  
North Dakota State College of Science  
Northcentral University  
NOVA Southeastern – Graduate Only  
Ohio Dominican University  
Old Dominion University  
Park University  
Penn State University-World Campus  
Pensacola Junior College  
Pikes Peak Community College  
Regent University – Graduate Only  
Regis University – Graduate only  
Rio Salado College  
Roger Williams University  
Southern Christian University  
St. Joseph's College of Maine  
St. Leo University  
Thomas Edison State University  
Troy State University-Florida  
University of Alabama – Graduate Only  
University of Alaska Fairbanks  
University of Alaska Southeast – Graduate Only  
University of Maryland University College  
University of Northwestern Ohio  
University of Oklahoma  
University of Phoenix  
Upper Iowa University  
Vincennes University  
Webster University  
Western Illinois University

news from  
**EDUCATION**

### CCME Scholarship Awards Nominations

The Council of College and Military Educators (CCME) is pleased to offer scholarships each year to service members working towards the completion of higher education degrees. All service members working on associates, bachelors or masters degrees are eligible to apply. Each award is in the amount of \$500 and may be used for tuition, fees, books and other expenses encountered by the student pursuing educational goals.

All applicants must submit the CCME Scholarship Application (found at [www.ccmeonline.org](http://www.ccmeonline.org)), and an essay on the following topic: **What has your experience been pursuing a degree while serving in the military, and how will the \$500 scholarship be used to enable you to meet your educational goals?** Essays will be judged on written content and writing skills, and should be typed, double-spaced, and between two and three pages in length.

Applications must be received no later than September 30, 2005. Recipients will be announced at the annual CCME Symposium in February 2006 in Reno, NV. All awarded and non-awarded applicants will be notified prior to that date.

**MAIL TO:** Douglas Barr  
Associate Regional Dean  
Military Base Programs  
National University  
11355 North Torrey Pines Road  
La Jolla, CA 92037-8000

**EMAIL:** [dbarr@nu.edu](mailto:dbarr@nu.edu)

**FAX TO:** (619) 563-2592

news from  
**NATIONAL  
GUARD  
BUREAU**



### Education Benefits Available to ARNG Spouses and Dependents

Did you know that some ARNG benefits are available to soldiers' spouses and dependents? The ARNG offers spouses and dependents a variety of opportunities to enhance their education by taking advantage of ARNG education benefits. See the descriptions below.

#### Benefits Available to Spouses

**GI Bill Chapter 35** provides education and training opportunities to eligible spouses of veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition, or who died while on active duty or as a result of a service related condition. The program offers up to 45 months of education benefits. These benefits may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training. Visit [www.GIBill.va.gov](http://www.GIBill.va.gov) for details.

**State Funded Education programs** offer varying degrees of financial assistance for education for spouses of ARNG soldiers. State funded education programs are based on available funding and have specific eligibility requirements that vary in each state and territory. Consult your Education Service Office (ESO) for details on education benefits offered to spouses. Visit [www.virtualarmory.com](http://www.virtualarmory.com) (“education tab”) or contact your State ARNG Education Office for specific eligibility requirements.

**College Level Examination Programs (CLEP)** measure knowledge of basic concepts, principles, relationships, and applications involved in various subject areas. CLEP exams are free to all military personnel and their spouses upon the soldier’s enlistment in the Guard and prior to attending Basic Training. CLEP can help you bypass introductory classes in subject areas you already know. Most colleges and universities accept some CLEP exams for academic credit and you can reduce your cost and time in the classroom with each successfully passed exam. Preparation materials are free. Consult your State ARNG Education Office for materials to schedule a test date. Always ensure that the college you are attending will accept credit and inform you of acceptable passing scores for the test(s) you plan to take.

**DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST)** are available to Army National Guard soldiers and spouses upon the soldier’s enlistment in the Guard and prior to attending Basic Training. DSST is an extensive series of examinations in college level and technical subjects comparable to the final or end-of-course exam in specific undergraduate courses. DSST can help you bypass introductory classes in subject areas you already know. You can reduce your cost and time in the classroom with each successfully passed exam. Always ensure that the college you are attending will accept credit and inform you of acceptable passing scores for the test(s) you plan to take.

**Student Guide to Success** is a library of multi-media courses in many common subject areas such as humanities, psychology, natural sciences, and history. It is designed to enhance the ability of the student to pass college credit examinations by the use of multimedia courses and associated textbooks in the same or similar subjects. The Student Guide to Success program is free to the student; the Army National Guard provides the materials. With free testing also being provided for soldiers and spouses, this program provides the ARNG community a way to earn college level credit with little or no cost out of pocket. More information on the Student Guide to Success is available at the Education Support Cen-

ter website at [www.virtualarmory.com](http://www.virtualarmory.com) under the “Education” link.

**Army National Guard Education Support Center (ESC)** serves as a centralized education support activity for all 54 states and territories by providing Army National Guard soldiers and their spouses direct assistance in achieving their education goals. The ESC is located at the Professional Education Center (PEC) on Camp Robinson in Little Rock, AR. ESC services include over 500 degree plans, educational counseling, and professional guidance for soldiers and spouses interested in earning a college degree from an Associate to a Masters or Ph.D. Access to eDiscover, assessment of your previous experience both military and corporate training, and the Student Guide to Success are additional services available to spouses from the ESC. Applications are available online at [www.virtualarmory.com](http://www.virtualarmory.com). Follow the “education tab.” Hours of operation are 7am to 7pm CST. The toll free number is 1-866-628-5999.

**Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC)** is a consortium of over 1,800 institutions of higher education, 15 national higher education associations, the Department of Defense, and the military services, dedicated to supporting, expanding, and improving the voluntary postsecondary education needs of servicemembers and their families worldwide. Degree programs offered by SOC network institutions include services such as student agreements (contracts for degree) and guaranteed two-way transferability of credit between schools participating in degree networks. These are convenient services for dependents of ARNG soldiers who are away from their home state and want to lock in a home school or program of study. SOCGuard is the ARNG program within SOC and works with the ESC to offer a cadre of partner institutions that meet the unique education needs of ARNG soldiers. For more information visit SOCGuard’s web site at <http://www.soc.aascu.org/> or call to speak with a SOCGuard representative toll free at 1-800-368-5622.

**eDiscover** is a web-based system that provides guidance and information to help you make important career and educational decisions. Through research-based assessments and a developmental guidance process, eDiscover matches students’ interests, abilities, and job values to help them explore career and educational options. All members of the ARNG and their dependents are eligible. Obtain a free user ID and password (token) from the ARNG ESC or your State Education Office.

## ARNG Education News

**Spouse to Teacher** is a Department of Defense pilot project designed to assist ARNG spouses to become public school teachers. The program is currently available to ARNG spouses in 11 pilot states: CA, CO, FL, GA, TX, VA, KS, NE, NM, NV, and UT. Funding and support services are provided to enable spouses in the selected states to obtain teacher license. For more information visit [www.spousestoteachers.org](http://www.spousestoteachers.org).

### Benefits available to dependents include:

**GI Bill Chapter 35** provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition, or who died while on active duty or as a result of a service related condition. The program offers up to 45 months of education benefits. These benefits may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training. Visit [www.GIBill.va.gov](http://www.GIBill.va.gov) for details.

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diers who are away from their home state and want to lock in a home school or program of study. SOCGuard is the ARNG program within SOC and works with the ESC to offer a cadre of partner institutions that meet the unique education needs of ARNG soldiers. For more information visit SOCGuard's web site at <http://www.soc.aascu.org/> or call to speak with a SOCGuard representative toll free at 1-800-368-5622.

As with all ARNG education benefits, your State ARNG Education Office is the primary point of contact. You can locate the Education Office in your state by visiting [www.virtualarmory.com](http://www.virtualarmory.com) and following the Education link to State Benefits. From the menu under State Benefits, click on State Funded Programs.

### \$250,000 FTA Funding Remaining from FY04 Available from NGB

NGB has approximately \$250,000 remaining in FY04 ARNG Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) funding to cover valid FY04 TA applications that were not funded. As this equates to an "after-the-fact funding and is essentially an "exception to policy," in order to ensure validity of expenses the State FTA Manager should ensure that the applicant's invoice and grades have been received. POC for funding is MAJ Schwick. **First come, first served!**

### NGB Education Team Update

If you don't know where to go for information on your education benefits, what college to attend, what kind of civilian career is right for you, look no further than your own backyard! These are the organizations and people who provide the support that keeps education afloat in the Army National Guard. Below is a complete listing of NGB Education and Incentives personnel and support staff, including contact information:

**Branch Chief, Education & Incentives**  
**LTC Steven Lund** (703) 607-9543  
Email: [Steven.lund@ngb.army.mil](mailto:Steven.lund@ngb.army.mil)

**Section Chief, Education**  
**MAJ Ronald Schwickerath** (703) 607-9766  
Email: [ronald.schwickerath@ngb.army.mil](mailto:ronald.schwickerath@ngb.army.mil)

**ARNG Federal Tuition Assistance**  
Policy, execution, automation TA services, iMARC TA tab POC, virtual armory TA portal.

**Primary: Mr. Ruddle Cooper** (703) 607-7405  
Email: ruddle.cooper@ngb.army.mil

**Mr. Charles H. Martin** (703) 607-9712  
Email: charles.martin@ngb.army.mil (retiring Fall 2005)

### GI Bill Programs

Policy, execution, automation services (Reserve, Active, Kicker and CH1607). DMDC Online site security manager. DOD Reserve Component Workgroups.

**Primary: Ms. Tina Stalboerger** (703) 607-7230  
Email: tina.stalboerger@ngb.army.mil

**Mr. John DeChane** (703) 607-9754  
Email: john.dechane@ngb.army.mil  
Education NCO (Vacant E-8)

### Testing/Certification/Licensing Programs

ARNG testing (DANTES certified testing sites), Army Personnel Testing (APT) programs.

**Primary: Ms. Laura Greenfield** (703) 607-9757  
Email: laura.greenfield@ngb.army.mil

**2LT Mikhaela Campo** (703) 607-9740  
Email: mikhaela.campo@ngb.army.mil

**Loan Repayment Programs & Bonuses (Incentives)**  
Policy, execution, and automation services (SLRP, HPLR, SRIP). Budgeting for incentive programs-MDEP PNBE.

**Primary: MAJ Ron Lee** (703) 607-9756  
Email: ron.lee@ngb.army.mil

**Mr. Donald Gay** (703) 607-7738 / (703) 506-5926  
Email: donald.gay@ngb.army.mil or donaldgay@att.com  
Bonus NCO (Vacant E-8)

### Budgeting & Contracting Support

POM, PBG, PBDs, \$\$ MDEPs programs VACE (Ed Admin funding), VATA (TA funding), TRRS (ROTC scholarship funding), and VOPR (Army Personnel Testing funding).

**Mr. Erich Hohensee** (703) 607-7026  
Email: Erich.Hohensee@ngb.army.mil

**Education contracts manager (COR) and Statements of Work, invoicing,** liaison with support agencies; i.e. DANTES, SOCGuard, ESC, AARTS, eDiscover, AT&T, RCI (SERCO), MPSC. IMPAC Card holder.

**Mr. Joseph Beck** (703) 607-9781  
Email: Joseph.Beck@ngb.army.mil

### Automation programs

iMARC, DMDC, virtual armory, SIDPERS, TAPDB-G, and other program interfaces. iMARC access and enhancements.

**Mr. Johnnie King** (703) 607-9749  
Email: Johnnie.King@ngb.army.mil  
Plus several other AT&T Government Solutions contractors who work for NGB (iMARC – offsite)

**ARNG Education Support Center (ESC)** \*\*\* Contractors working for NGB offsite  
Counseling on all ARNG education programs, Maximizing college credit from military and other sources, degree planning, eDiscover counseling and financial aid POC, Student Guide to Success (Prep for testing out of college courses).  
Call toll free 1-866-628-5999, or visit online at www.virtualarmory.com. Follow the “education” tab to the Education Support Center.

**Ms. Sherri Sims** (501) 212-4930 DSN 962-4930  
Email: Sherri.Sims@pec.ngb.army.mil

**Mr. Sam Huff** (501) 212-4931 DSN 962  
Email: Sam.Huff@pec.ngb.army.mil  
Plus 12 other contractors and subcontractors

**Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOCGuard)** \*\*\*Contractors working for NGB offsite  
Accreditation questions, education related mobilization issues, SOC student/school agreements. ARNG’s lead agent in working with colleges & universities for MOUs/MOAs, school partnerships with ARNG, workshops/conferences, and assistance for ARNG recruiters marketing on college campuses.

**Mr. Mack Brooks (Project Director)** 1-800-368-5622  
Email: brooksm@aascu.org

**Ms. Marcy Shapiro** 1-800-368-5622  
Email: shapirom@aascu.org

**Mr. Dan Kapraun** 1-800-368-5622  
Email: kapraune@aascu.org

**DANTES** \*\*\* Contractors working for NGB offsite  
Team of contractors working for NGB finalizing previous FY01 through FY04 centralized TA pilot project (working to make payments and closeout pilot project) (850) 452-1085 or DSN 922-1085 (TA Helpline) Email: tahelp@voled.doded.mil

**Mr. Bob VanHoose** - Project lead  
Email: vanhoose@voled.doded.mil

**Kristie Krouse**  
Email: KKrouse@voled.doded.mil

**Janet Stark**  
Email: JStark@voled.doded.mil  
Plus several other contact help folks