

ARNG Education News

Excellence Through Education

A Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Communiqué

March 2005

news from EDUCATION

Montgomery GI Bill – It's Not Just For College!

Soldiers who are eligible for the MGIB may be able to receive monthly benefits while working full-time *and* earning wages in registered On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Apprenticeship programs. If you don't plan to attend college, or are delaying going to college, you can still use your MGIB benefits – they apply to OJT and Apprenticeship programs, too. The money received is in addition to your regular salary and is tax-free!

Current MGIB Payment Rates Per Month for Participation in Registered OJT and Apprenticeship Programs

Chapter 1606	
APPRENTICESHIP/	First 6 Months \$216.00
ON-THE-JOB TRAINING	Second 6 Months \$158.40
	Remainder of Program \$100.80
Chapter 30	
APPRENTICESHIP/	First 6 Months \$753.00
ON-THE-JOB TRAINING	Second 6 Months \$552.20
	Remainder of Program \$351.40

To apply for MGIB benefits, you must receive a Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE), DD Form 2384-1 (for soldiers utilizing Chapter 1606 GI Bill benefits) from your State ARNG GI Bill manager or education office. Soldiers who choose to utilize Active Duty GI Bill benefits (such as Chapter 30, 32 VEAP or 34 Vietnam Era) for apprenticeship programs must obtain a copy of their DD Form 214.

They take the NOBE (for Chapter 1606 MGIB benefits) or DD Form 214 (for Active Duty MGIB benefits) to the registered employer they are currently working for or would like to work for as an apprentice.

The employer must contact the State Approving Agency or State Division of Apprentice Training prior to the start of their apprentice program. A compliance officer from the Division will visit the employment location to meet with the soldier and the supervisor and assist with completion of all the necessary state and VA paperwork.

State Approving Agency officials refer to the list of job titles that are considered apprenticeable by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). Over 800 trades are registered with DOL. The length of apprenticeship is determined by the number

of hours shown on this list. Every 2,000 hours = 1 year. Most programs range from 1 year to 5 years. The employer must become a "registered sponsor of apprenticeship" in order for soldiers to participate in this program. Employers who are not registered may call the Division of Apprentice Training or their State Approving Agency to learn more about these programs and registration procedures. When soldiers complete their apprenticeship program, the state awards them a nationally recognized certificate that identifies them as a skilled worker in their specific job or trade.

Visit the websites listed below for further information:

U.S. Department of Labor's Employment & Training
http://www.doleta.gov/atels_bat

State Approving Agency contact information
<http://www.gibill.va.gov/Education/SAA.htm>

Listing of apprenticeship websites by state
http://www.doleta.gov/atels_bat/sainformation.cfm

Contact Information for Office Of Apprenticeship Training, Employer And Labor Services (OATELS), and Bureau Of Apprenticeship And Training (BAT)
http://www.doleta.gov/atels_bat/stateoffices.cfm

Some of the following jobs may be registered in your state:

Air Transport Pilot
Aircraft Electrician
Airframe and Powerplant Mechanic
Airframe Mechanic
Auto Repair Service Estimator
Automotive Mechanic
Blacksmith (Gun Smith)

Continued on page 2

Inside ARNG Education News

- ACE Guide Online 2
- Fairleigh Dickinson University Partners with NGB 2
- Steve Kime Retires as President of Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges 3
- ARNG Implements New Non-Prior Service Enlistment Bonus (NPSEB) 4
- NGB GI Bill Support Team 4
- Building Partnerships – Helping Guard Recruiters Work Smarter with Colleges and Universities 5
- NGB Education Team Welcomes Four New Members 5
- ARNG Education Support Center Update 7
- Army e-Learning (SmartForce) Free to ARNG Soldiers 8
- Microsoft® Certification Exam Program Funded by DANTES 8

ARNG Education News

Continued from page 1

Boilermaker
Bricklayer
Bricklayer & Cement Mason (Comb.)
Building Maintenance Mechanic
Cable Splicer (Splicing Tech. Net Co)
Canvas Worker
Carpenter
Cement Mason
Child Care Development Specialist
Construction Craft Laborer
Cook (Chef)
Correction Officer (2000 Hrs.)
Correction Officer / EMT
Diesel Mechanic
Dispatcher / EMT
Dispatcher / EMT
Dispensing Optician
Electric Motor Repair
Electrician
Electronics Mechanics
Elevator Constructor
EMT / Paramedic
Fire Fighter
Fire Fighter / EMT
Floor Coverer
Gas Fitter
Glazier
Human Resources Assistant
Hvac - Air Condition Mechanic (Tech)
Industrial Maintenance Repairer
Inspector Quality Assurance
Insulation Worker
Iron Worker
Landscape Technician
Law Enforcement Officer
Line Erector
Line Erector (Light & Power)
Line Repairer
Machinist
Manager Trainee
Materials Handler
Millwright
Mobile Equipment Worker
Mold Maker
Optical Instrument Repairer
Painter
Pile Driver Operator
Pipefitter (Steamfitter)
Plumber

Police Officer
Police Officer / EMT
Press (Web)
Purchasing Agent
Refrig / Air Cond. And Oil Burner Mech.
Refrigeration / Air Conditioning Mechanic
Roofer
Roofer & Slater
Sheet Metal Worker
Sheet Metal Worker (Fabr.)
Small Arms Repairer
Sprinkler Fitter
Supply Technician
Teacher Assistant
Telecommunications Technician
Tool & Die Maker (Machine)
Tool Maker (Machine)
Turbine Operator
Vibration Analysis Specialist
Welder

ACE Guide Online

If you evaluate military experience and training for academic credit, your job just became easier! The *Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services* (known as the ACE Guide) is the only online guide for accessing course and occupation evaluations for the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Department of Defense. You can find all Guides from 1954 to the present online at

<http://www.militaryguides.acenet.edu>

Fairleigh Dickinson University Partners With NGB

Since the events of September 11, 2001, experts in emergency management, disaster recovery, and global security have been in high demand. Among those experiencing an increased demand for their expertise are members of the National Guard. These professionals must meet the challenges of managing complex emergencies that result from a wide range of disasters from floods to terrorist attacks. Advancement requires not only experience, but also an increasing level of education. More and more they are finding that receiving additional education and training can be difficult during extended periods of deployment.

Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU), New Jersey's largest private institution of higher learning, in collaboration with

the National Guard Bureau, has developed a graduate curriculum that enables National Guard personnel to pursue a graduate degree while continuing to meet domestic and national security requirements anywhere in the world. The Master of Administrative Science degree (ten courses) or the Graduate Certificate in Emergency Management Administration or Global Security and Terrorism Studies (four courses) are wholly online curricula that can be completed anywhere there is a computer and Internet access. FDU will offer an online certificate in Computer Security and Forensic Administration in September 2005.

Students can select from the following courses:

- Theory and Practice of Administration
- Ethics and Public Values
- Leadership Plus
- Building Strategic Partnerships
- Global Preparedness for Catastrophic Emergencies
- Community Threat Assessment and Risk Analysis
- Disaster Recovery and Organizational Continuity
- Special Topics: Current Issues in Terrorism and Security
- Special Topics: Environmental Response and Reporting
- Emergency Management and Safety Administration
- GIS and Emergency Administration
- Seminar on Strategic Management
- Productivity and Human Performance

The university developed its program to meet the educational needs of the National Guard in response to today's increased threat of disasters and terrorism. The program is designed to meet the career development needs of professionals in the field, whether civilian or military, and to enable them to meet the challenges of managing complex emergencies from response to recovery. Instructors include university faculty, local and state law enforcement experts, legal professionals, and experienced program specialists who are scholar-practitioners able to draw from their professional experience in providing a rich educational experience in an online learning environment.

The ten-week courses start in January, April, and September. To apply, you must be a graduate of an accredited college or university. No GRE is required for admission. For more information call toll-free: 866-FDU-6221 or email: guard@fdu.edu.

news from
SOC



Steve Kime Retires as President of Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges

Dr. Kathryn Snead Appointed New President

After 16 years at the helm, Steve Kime has retired as President of Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC). During his tenure, Dr. Kime oversaw an explosion of growth in membership, programs, and services offered by SOC, keeping pace both with the changes in higher education, technology, and the military services. We wish Dr. Kime best of luck in his retirement.

Dr. Kathryn Snead, a long-time administrator with SOC, succeeded Dr. Kime as President of SOC effective March 7, 2005. Dr. Snead is well known in military education circles, having served as the Project Director for the SOCMAR program, and most recently as the Project Director for the SOCAD program.

Prior to joining SOC in 1995, Dr. Snead held administrative positions at several higher education institutions including Syracuse University, Tarleton State University, Central Texas (formerly the University of Central Texas), Georgia Southern University, and Leeward Community College. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and Anthropology at Wake Forest University, her Master of Education degree in College Student Personnel in Higher Education at the University of Georgia, and her Doctorate in Education in Higher Education Administration with a major in Counseling and College Student Personnel at Syracuse University.

To learn more about ARNG education
go to:

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

news from
**NATIONAL
GUARD
BUREAU**



ARNG Implements New Non-Prior Service Enlistment Bonus (NPSEB)

Effective 22 April 2005 and extending through 30 September 2005, the Army National Guard is implementing a new policy governing Non-Prior Service (NPS) enlistment bonuses. The guidance applies to NPS enlistees who enlist in the ARNG for one of the following options:

- 3X5 [3 years in the SR of the ARNG and 5 years in the Inactive Ready Reserve (IRR)].
- 6X2 (6 years in the SR of the ARNG and 2 years in the IRR).
- 8X0 (8 years in the SR of the ARNG and 0 years in the IRR).

The ARNG will offer a NPSEB of \$10,000 to new enlistees who agree to serve in the ARNG of the Selected Reserves for a minimum of 3 years and in the IRR for the remaining years of their contract period and who meet all of the following criteria:

- Not be enlisting for the purpose of qualifying for a military technician or AGR position.
- Enlist for one of the three above mentioned options.
- Qualify as a Category I-IIIIB enlistment.
- Agree to serve for a minimum of 3 years in an active drilling status in the ARNG in one of the **30 approved state critical skill MOSs**.

The ARNG will offer a NPSEB of \$6,000 to new enlistees who agree to serve in the ARNG of the Selected Reserves for a minimum of 3 years and in the IRR for the remaining years of their contract period and who meet all of the following criteria:

- Not be enlisting for the purpose of qualifying for a military technician or AGR position.
- Enlist for one of the three above-mentioned options from paragraph 1.
- Qualify as a Category I-IIIIB enlistment.

- Not be in one of the 30 approved state critical skills.
- Agree to either ship to training within the prescribed "Off-Peak" time frame from 1 October through 31 May *or* agree to ship to training within 60 days of enlistment *or* adjust their ship date (upon request from the ARNG) in order to assist the ARNG in management of training seats.

The ARNG will offer a NPSEB of \$3,000 to new enlistees who agree to serve in the ARNG of the Selected Reserves for a minimum of 3 years and in the IRR for the remaining years of their contract period and who meet all of the following criteria:

- Not be enlisting for the purpose of qualifying for a military technician or AGR position.
- Enlist for one of the three above-mentioned options from paragraph 1.
- Qualify as a Category I-IIIIB enlistment.
- Not be in one of the 30 approved critical skills.

The total amount of any combination of bonuses may not exceed \$10,000.

Those enlistees who choose the 6X2 or 8X0 enlistment options will also become eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill Chapter 1606 benefit as well as the ARNG Kicker upon completion of Initial Active Duty Training (provided they meet all the eligibility requirements). Enlistees who choose the 3X5 enlistment option **are not** eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill or the ARNG Kicker for this enlistment contract period.

All enlistees will be eligible for the Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP), however, enlistees who choose the 3X5 option will only be eligible for a prorated portion of the \$20,000 due to their shortened enlistment option.

Please direct inquiries to your local ARNG recruiter.

NGB GI Bill Support Team

In the upcoming months, NGB will have a support team working with the Education Support Center at Camp Robinson, Little Rock, Arkansas. The Support Team functions will include training and briefing of all GI Bill Programs; AGR Chapter 30 in-processing; suspension and termination of all selected reserve GI Bill programs; and assisting the state in cleaning up the records of current and past GI Bill - Selected Reserve eligibility for these programs.

Interested personnel can contact the GI Bill Program team below:

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

MSG John DeChane (703) 607-9754
Email: john.dechane@ngb.army.mil

Building Partnerships - Helping Guard Recruiters Work Smarter with Colleges and Universities

USA Today and numerous other periodicals have reported heavily on the recruiting shortages currently experienced by most branches of the military service, in particular the Army National Guard. Guard and Reserve troops currently comprise between 30% and 40% of the soldiers deployed in Iraq. Overall recruiting shortfalls may make it more difficult for the Pentagon to deploy enough troops to serve in ongoing wars. Minimum 18-month Guard and Reserve Active Duty tours have yielded some unanticipated results, primary among them, a scarcity of referrals for recruiters.

In order to compensate for this falloff, and to boost their enlistments, military recruiters are finding ways to work harder and smarter with colleges and universities. By developing partnerships with institutions of higher learning, they work closely with administrators whose goals are to recruit and retain students. As they build their relationships, recruiters can gain leads to potential enlistees who need money to pay for college or to pay off student loans. ARNG education benefits will help to keep those students in school and in the ARNG.

How do you, as a recruiter, lay the foundation for a productive partnership? One place to start is SOCGuard. We've developed a tool kit to help you work with college administrators and students. The kit includes a Powerpoint presentation, Need \$ For College; Strength Maintenance Handbook; Education Calculator, an Excel spreadsheet that performs a calculation of college costs; Guide to ARNG Education Benefits; individual state College Cost Guide. These tools contain helpful information to get you started.

Strap on a backpack and spend some time on the college campuses! Learn about issues affecting the school; find out where students gather; take a course; work with athletic teams. Read the catalog – familiarize yourself with academic programs that may match up with some of the career man-

agement fields in your state. Then, try to schedule an appointment with a faculty member in those departments to explore the opportunity to work together to attract students to their program. Nursing or other medical fields, criminal justice, human resources, and intelligence are but a few examples of military occupational specialties whose skills can be equivalent to the competencies of related academic programs.

To make a true partnership work, you also have to be prepared to give something to the colleges. The ARNG's most prominent incentives emphasize education. Over 75% of people who enlist in the Guard do so for the education benefits. You can become indispensable to a college seeking to recruit in a military market whose students have the money to pay for their education without the risk of dropping out. Over 1,800 institutional members of SOC are predisposed to working with recruiters and servicemembers. This is your opportunity to encourage recruits to enroll at these schools and use their education benefits to earn a degree.

The rewards of a collaborative partnership with colleges and universities can never be understated. However, as with all relationships, it won't happen overnight. Be patient. You can make it happen!

NGB Education Team Welcomes Four New Members

The NGB Team continues to grow. Please welcome the most recent members who are working to provide the best in education support for our soldiers.

Two new members of the NGB Education and Incentives team are providing Budgeting and Contracting Support. Joe Beck is a Department of the Army civilian (DAC), GS-12. He is originally from New York City, briefly served on active duty with the Army, and most recently was a Brigade Unit Administrator as a Lieutenant Colonel in the USAR. Erich Hohensee, from Virginia, retired after a 25-year career as a Navy submariner and joins the team as a civilian contractor.

Tina Stalboerger comes to Education and Incentives from Minnesota, where she was the education counselor and MGIB Manager for the MNARNG for over 6 years. Tina joins NGB as a contractor overseeing GI Bill programs' operations.

Mr. Johnnie King is also a new member of the NGB team

tasked to help with automation programs such as iMARC, DMDC, SIDPERS, virtual armory, and related activities.

SSG France has left the NGB education team to take on an AGR position

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:

Section Chief, Education & Incentives

MAJ Ronald Schwickerath (703) 607-9766
Email: ronald.schwickerath@ngb.army.mil

ARNG Federal Tuition Assistance

Policy, execution, automation services, DANTES TA reports, 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

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

MSG John DeChane (703) 607-9754
Email: john.dechane@ngb.army.mil

Testing/Certification/Licensing Programs

ARNG testing (DANTES certified testing/licensing/certification 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

SFC Donald Gay (703) 607-7738
Email: donald.gay@ngb.army.mil

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, DISCOVER, 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 programs. 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 online at www.virtualarmory.com under the "education" tab. esc@ngpec.org

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

Mr. Sam Huff (501) 212-4931 DSN 962-4931
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 aid with getting ARNG recruiters on college campuses.

Ms. Marcy Shapiro 1-800-368-5622 or local 202-667-0079
Email: shapiro@aacscu.org

Mr. Dan Kapraun 1-800-368-5622 or local 202-667-0079
Email: kapraune@aacscu.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 Help line) 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

ARNG Education Support Center Update

The Army National Guard Education Support Center (ESC) has been updating the number of institutions and degree programs offered to ARNG soldiers, spouses and civilian Guard employees. Fifty-two partnership institutions now work with the ARNG staff in Little Rock, Arkansas (PEC) to meet their educational needs. The ESC has been in operation, at PEC, since October 2002 and has serviced over 8,600 records continuously to accommodate the ever-growing distant education learner.

The ESC can provide distant degree plans from the Associates through the Doctoral level of education as well as certificates at the undergraduate and the graduate level. All partner institutions are regionally accredited and a member of the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) consortium. The following colleges are now in use at the ESC:

Anne Arundel Community College – Associate degrees
Auburn University – Master and PhD degrees
Baker College – Associate, Bachelors and Master degrees
Barton County Community College – Undergraduate Certificates and Associate degrees
Bellevue University – Bachelor and Master degrees
Capella University – Undergraduate/Graduate Certificates, Bachelor, Master, and PhD degrees

Central Texas College – Associate degrees
Charter Oak State College – Bachelor degrees
Coastline Community College – Associate degrees
Columbia College – Associate and Bachelor degrees
Eastern Oregon University – Bachelor degrees
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University – Undergraduate/Graduate Certificates, Associate, Bachelor, and Master degrees
Excelsior College - Associate, Bachelors and Master degrees
Florida Community College in Jacksonville – Associate degrees
Fort Hays State University - Bachelor and Master degrees
Franklin University - Associate, Bachelors and Master degrees
Governor State University – Bachelor degrees
Indiana University at Bloomington – High School Diploma (Certified by Indiana), Master degrees
Liberty University – Associate and Bachelor degrees
Limestone College – Associate and Bachelor degrees
Mount Wachusett Community College – Associate degrees
Mountain State University – Associate, Bachelor and Master degrees
North Dakota State college of Science – Undergraduate Certificates and Associate degrees
Northcentral University – Bachelor, Master, Education Doctorate and PhD degrees
NOVA Southeastern University – Master, Education Doctorate and PhD degrees
Ohio Dominican University – Undergraduate Certificate and Bachelor degrees
Old Dominion University – Bachelor and Master degrees
Park University – Undergraduate/Graduate Certificates, Bachelor and Master degrees
Pennsylvania University – we will have Undergraduate/Graduate Certificates, and Bachelor degree plans soon – we do have Master degree plans now
Pensacola Junior College – Associate degrees
Pikes Peak Community College – Associate degrees
Regent University – Master and PhD degrees
Regis University – Master and PhD degrees
Rio Salado College – Undergraduate Certificates and Associate degrees
Roger Williams University – Bachelor degrees
Saint Joseph's College of Maine – Undergraduate/Graduate Certificates, Associate, Bachelor and Master degrees
Saint Leo University – Associate, Bachelor and Master degrees
Southern Christian University – Bachelor, Master and PhD degrees
State University of New York (Empire State) – Associate and Bachelor degrees
Thomas Edison State College - Associate, Bachelor and Master degrees
Troy State University (Florida) – Associate, Bachelor and Master degrees
University of Alabama – Master degrees
University of Alaska (Fairbanks) – Undergraduate Certificates, Associate, and Master degrees
University of Alaska (Southeast) - Master degrees
University of Maryland - Associate, Bachelor and Master degrees
University of Northwestern Ohio - Associate and Bachelor degrees
University of Oklahoma - High School Diploma (Certified by Oklahoma), Bachelor and Master degrees

University of Phoenix – Associate degrees

Upper Iowa University - Undergraduate Certificates, Associate, Bachelor and Master degrees

Vincennes University - Undergraduate Certificates and Associate degrees

Webster University – Master degrees and a Web Site Development Certificate

Western Illinois University – Bachelor degrees

The ESC is a unique education facility. The process from evaluation of all military documents to degree planning takes 30 days and provides our students with a comprehensive evaluation of all ACE recommended credits. Three kinds of degree plans are offered to the student. They include a fast track option, which maximizes the use of all prior college credit and ACE credit recommendations; a degree plan that integrates a soldier's military occupational specialty (MOS); and an option for a miscellaneous degree plan requested by the applicant. If you want more information about the ESC, email us at esc@NGPEC.ORG.

Army e-Learning (SmartForce) Free to ARNG Soldiers

Army e-Learning, formerly named SmartForce, is an interactive, flexible training program that is available free to ARNG soldiers. The e-Learning program offers 1,500 Information Technology, Business, Leadership and Interpersonal Skills courses to all Army National Guard, Army Reserves, Active Army and DA Civilians. This new e-learning environment provides the student with an entire range of effective learning in state-of-the-art courses, on-line subject matter experts and mentors, chat rooms with other students, a vast technical library of articles, and recorded seminars conducted by the industry's leading experts.

The Army Training Requirements and Resources System (ATRRS) verifies your eligibility for the program and also posts successfully completed courses to your official ATRRS training record (transcript). Some courses are approved for college credit; courses are approved for promotion points and available 24/7. See your state for further guidance.

All you have to do to use Army eLearning is get an Army Knowledge Online account (AKO), complete your registration through ATRRS for your Army eLearning username and password. To register, log onto:

<http://usarmyskillport.com>

Click on "Register." Follow the prompts. Once the system accepts your registration you will receive two emails in your AKO email account. One email has your e-Learning logon id (AKO User Name) and the address you will use to log

onto the e-Learning Program; the second email will contain your password.

The "User Guide" takes about 15 minutes to read; the information is informative and can help navigate the site. Browse the Army Learning Course Catalog to see the courses available to you. ARNG soldiers starting this program are asked to call their ESO and let them know. The State ESO POCs are listed at www.virtualarmory.com. Under the "Education" tab select "ARNG Point of Contacts", then click on your state. It's a great program, give it a try today.



Microsoft® Certification Exam Program Funded by DANTES

As of 1 November 2004 DANTES offers approved Active Duty and Reserve Component personnel the opportunity to take a funded Microsoft® Certification test on a first-come, first-served basis. Individuals who have valid United States Armed Forces ID card are eligible to take the exams. Participants in the program sign a waiver for their results to be forwarded to DANTES for statistical purposes.

Certification testing is an excellent way for you to document your professional achievement in a defined occupation; achieve national recognition of your qualifications to perform specific technological tasks; enhance job opportunities and validate your military training to meet national occupational standards. ARNG soldiers may already have the experience and knowledge required to earn certification in their MOS.

Frequently asked questions, application with instructions, and how to schedule an exam are available on the DANTES website at <http://www.dantes.doded.mil>. Follow the Certification Programs link to "Funded Pilots" for the information on Microsoft® Certification tests.

Please direct all questions to certprog@voled.doded.mil, or call DSN 922-1360 or (850) 452-1360.