

ARNG Education News

Excellence Through Education

A Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Communiqué

September 2005

news from
**NATIONAL
GUARD
BUREAU**



Montgomery GI Bill Support Team Installed at Education Support Center

The next time you visit the Education Support Center at PEC, you'll see some new faces. The offices of the ESC have been reconfigured to accommodate the ARNG GI Bill Support Team. Gerry Devore is the Primary along with staff members Doug Boyd, Shanea Copeland, and Mark Maxim.

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This support function was conceived to provide assistance to the states on GI Bill issues, expedite and streamline the process for qualifying ARNG soldiers for Montgomery GI Bill benefits and executing NOBES. Team members are available to assist state MGIB Managers with their GI Bill functions. They are currently processing the more than 1,500 GI Bill recommendations entered in iMARC.

Under the leadership of Tina Stalboerger at NGB, this team is tasked with a variety of responsibilities including:

- Policy and approval authority for all GI Bill programs
- Training GI Bill Managers
- State Visits, Conferences, Workshops, Training
- VA Customer Service (i.e. eligibility verification)
- Customer Services to States, Units
- Quality control on CH 1606, CH 1607, and the Kicker
- Assist states with suspensions/terminations as needed for Ch 1606, 1607 and the Kicker
- Initiate recoup process/inquires/data on 1606, 1607 and Kicker

In the coming months, the team will also be responsible for in-processing all AGR and mobilized soldiers for Chapter 30 benefits.

You may reach the support team at ESC at 1-866-628-5999.

Education Benefits Available for Civilian Employees of the ARNG

Did you know that some ARNG benefits are available to ARNG employees? The ARNG offers its employees a variety of opportunities to enhance their education by taking advantage of ARNG education benefits. There are four types of ARNG employees who are not necessarily ARNG soldiers. They are Federal Technician (MilTech), Federal DA Civilian, State Employee, and Contractor. Each is an employee of (or at) the ARNG and is eligible for a variety of education benefits to pursue academic goals that may enhance his/her ability to assist recruiting and retention for the ARNG.

The following explains the benefits and who is eligible to receive them.

Benefits available to Federal Technician (MilTech) (ARNG non-dual status) and Federal DA Civilians

State Funded Education programs offer varying degrees of financial assistance for education for dependents 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 dependents. Visit www.virtualarmory.com ("education tab") or contact your State ARNG Education Office for specific eligibility requirements.

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 these materials. With free testing also being pro-

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vided 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 Center website at 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 <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.

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.

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Benefits available to Contractors include:

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To learn more about ARNG education go to:

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

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Employer Benefits Package available through the employee's contracting agency.

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

and following the Education link to State Benefits. From the menu under State Benefits, click on State Funded Programs.

Dedicated Army National Guard Scholarships

Fund Your College Education and Serve Exclusively in the Guard

Are you interested in becoming a Commissioned Officer and serving exclusively in the Army National Guard while receiving enough money to cover the majority of the cost of your tuition and books? If you answered yes to this question, you may want to consider the Dedicated Army National Guard Scholarship Program.

This program offers numerous two-year ROTC scholarships annually. These scholarships provide financial assistance toward college tuition and educational fees of up to \$17,000 annually. If the school's annual tuition and educational fees are less than \$17,000, the difference cannot be applied toward room and board. Additionally, a flat rate of \$600 per year is provided to purchase textbooks, classroom supplies and equipment. It does not pay for aviation flight fees. You will also earn drill pay for participating in a National Guard unit. As a contracted Dedicated ARNG Scholarship Cadet you will remain non-deployable until you either receive your commission and complete the Officer Basic Course, or you are disenrolled from the program.

Upon graduation and commissioning as a Second Lieutenant in the Army National Guard, scholarship recipients must contract to complete an eight-year military service obligation in an active drilling capacity (one weekend a month and a two-week annual training period each year).

Chapter 1606 Selected Reserve Montgomery GI Bill benefits may not be used in addition to Dedicated ARNG Scholarships. Students receiving Montgomery GI Bill Chapter 30

benefits, however, may use their benefits with the Dedicated ARNG scholarship. Dedicated ARNG scholarship recipients may not request to serve on active duty.

Dedicated Army National Guard Scholarship Cadets, in addition to their normal college degree requirements, take military science courses, participate in scheduled leadership laboratories, attend the 5-week ROTC National Advanced Leadership Camp, and are members of an ARNG unit.

For further information, or to apply for an ARNG Dedicated Scholarship, consult your state Education Services Officer. The school sends applications from Army National Guard applicants to Headquarters, Cadet Command which then forwards them to the appropriate State Adjutant General (AG).

news from **EDUCATION**

A College Education in the Midst of Combat: Using the PDA As An Instructional Delivery Tool

Deployments Not an Obstacle to Soldiers' Education
Servicemembers all over the world are earning degrees online. On the desert warfront, computers and stable Internet connections are few and far between, making access to online coursework more difficult. "While online education has greatly improved access to education," said Boris Vilic, director of technology in Duquesne University's School of Leadership and Professional Advancement (SLPA), "we continue to seek ways to provide even greater access, especially for those who have limited Internet connectivity. Our adult students indicated they were seeking ways to complete coursework while offline, including on their lunch hour, while commuting and especially while deployed."

In the fall of 2004, Duquesne's SLPA launched Learning-on-the-Go® PDA, which allows students to use handheld computer personal digital assistants (PDAs) to support their online coursework. SLPA opted for a pilot phase prior to a full launch to discover and remedy any technical issues related to the coursework. Roughly 50 servicemembers, including several National Guard members, participated in the pilot while located in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kosovo.

According to Mary Jane Snyder, Director of Military Education, "The PDAs are great for servicemembers because

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they are lightweight, portable, fitting in a soldier's pants pocket, and course materials can be uploaded and downloaded easily, which is quite convenient when they only have a few minutes to access the Internet." The PDAs feature instant access to course materials, discussions, formative feedback, quizzes, flash cards, and other learning resources. The PDA courses are not independent studies. Students interact with an instructor and other students, but in a more limited fashion than in Duquesne's traditional online courses.

"I had a lot of complaints before that (those in) the military were losing valuable time in their life by being deployed and missing school," said Janet Hooper, a guidance counselor for the Pennsylvania Army National Guard at Fort Indiantown Gap, Lebanon County. She said the PDAs allow soldiers to continue their education and to make a smoother transition to civilian life as well as help the soldiers' morale.

"This is a very positive endeavor to focus on in a combat environment," said CPT John Stakeley, USAR. "I find this helps to reduce the stress and helps me stay focused. This appears to be a better option when you are in a remote location or have a poor Internet connection. There are several challenges. It is critical that you manage your time and activities well. Overall though, it can be accomplished. I find the coursework thoroughly engaging. Challenging, thought provoking, and very applicable to both civilian business and Army leadership."

SLPA's pilot has concluded and the PDA program is rolling out and expanding. "We're adding laptops to the program so servicemembers can go back and forth between a PDA and laptop, depending on their access and situation," said Vilic. "One thing we learned quickly during the pilot phase was that sand in Iraq gets in everything. The soldiers themselves provided a solution for protecting the PDA. Plastic bags with seals, the kind you put a sandwich in, work perfectly," said Vilic.

Duquesne offers an online Bachelor of Science degree with concentrations in Computer Technology, Organizational Leadership, Professional Communication, Organizational Behavior, and Criminal Justice and Forensic Science. Their online Master of Science degrees have concentrations in Leadership and Business Ethics, Leadership and Information Technology, Community Leadership, Leadership and Liberal Studies, and Sports Leadership. The Learning-on-the-Go® PDA program is offered for all online degree programs and is available to servicemembers with limited Internet access. For more information, please visit

<http://www.leadership.duq.edu/mil>

or contact Mary Jane Snyder at 1.800.283.3853 or email snyder1@duq.edu.

Puerto Rico ARNG Conducts First Education Fair During Annual Training

Fair Receives High Praise from Participants and Staff

At the end of June, SOCGuard staff participated in the first annual Puerto Rico Army National Guard (PRARNG) Education Fair at Camp Santiago in Salinas, Puerto Rico. What made the event especially noteworthy was the involvement of all the elements that contribute to a successful education services program: senior leadership support; effective Education Services Officer (ESO) execution; soldier presence; local college participation; and support from National Guard Bureau, the Education Support Center (ESC) and Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC). This event's popularity was reinforced by the soldiers who had an opportunity to receive information on academic programs and discuss their education goals with college and ESC counselors.

The education fair was conducted in an outdoor theatre and kicked off the first week of annual training. The Adjutant General of Puerto Rico, Brigadier General Francisco A. Marquez, and the Brigade Commander, Brigadier General Antonio Vicens, launched the event with an energetic discussion highlighting their commitment to ensuring that the 1,700 soldiers assembled are aware of their education benefits. They strongly encouraged the soldiers to take advantage of their benefits and seek the assistance of the education staff in Puerto Rico. It was clear that these leaders recognize education as a contributor to a quality force and to a quality community. With that leadership support as a catapult, the ESO, LTC Edgardo Peña and his staff described in detail the education benefits available to ARNG soldiers and their family members. Questions were encouraged and addressed as they arose.

A state representative presented a detailed description of Puerto Rico's unique state-funded benefits for ARNG soldiers. The net effect was that soldiers were able to see both federal and state education benefits as part of a combined incentive package to encourage them to stay in the Guard and earn a college degree. SOCGuard rounded out the program with a presentation on the role that SOCGuard and the Education Support Center play in support of ESOs and soldiers.

During the break soldiers had an opportunity to meet with representatives from local colleges, receive DANTES and

SOC-related information, and converse with representatives from NGB. Education Support Center staff participating in the education fair encouraged the soldiers to submit an application to ESC for an assessment of their academic progress and to receive academic counseling.

This education fair was successful in bringing together soldiers, colleges and universities, and education personnel from other supporting agencies to maximize education opportunities for members of the Puerto Rico Army National Guard.

news from
**EDUCATION
SUPPORT
CENTER**



Education Support Center Staff Conducts Recruiter Training at the Professional Education Center

Following a beta program in May during which five recruiter classes received a block of instruction on how to market the Guard on college campuses, the three-hour program has been incorporated into the program of instruction at the Schoolhouse on Camp Robinson.

This instruction for new recruiters covers for assess the college campus, who to contact at the schools to maximize marketing the Guard, and includes creative recommendations for recruiters to interact with students. Instructors also conduct a 30-minute case scenario exercise in conjunction with the program. This program is the culmination of a variety of efforts to incorporate a recruiter "Tool Kit" into the training course to introduce new recruiters to the resources available to help them succeed in their job.

SOCGuard staff began the initiative to include this block of instruction in the 79T curriculum in 2000. At the time, the course included a brief presentation ("How to Penetrate the College Market") conducted by schoolhouse instructors. Over several years, SOCGuard staff updated the presentation, based on information received from ESOs and recruiters, detailing a variety of techniques to market the Guard on college campuses. Additional materials were developed to create a "Tool Kit" for recruiters.

In November of 2004, SOCGuard staff demonstrated the complete Tool Kit, including presentations and publications for recruiters to use as they market the Guard on college campuses, to the Director of the strength maintenance training program. Originally created as a four-hour block of instruction, it was scheduled for May 2005 as a test program for a class of 238 new recruiters. The instruction included the PowerPoint presentation; a complete review of the recruiter tools; and role-playing scenarios.

SOCGuard staff trained four members of the ESC including the Director, Military Outreach Manager, and Degree Planning Specialist to deliver the presentation and demonstrate the use of the tools. Three other Degree Planning Specialists at ESC would be trained at a later date to conduct subsequent recruiter classes. The four staff members from ESC and a member of the SOCGuard staff presented the program on 17 May 2005. Strength maintenance training instructors monitoring each class to review and critique the material provided excellent and constructive feedback.

The second group of three classes was conducted as a two-hour block of instruction on 9 June 2005 by ESC staff. Three ESC Degree Planning Specialists monitored the classes in preparation to teach future classes. It became obvious after this second iteration that two hours was not enough to effectively present the material to the recruiters and respond to questions during the class. ESC instructors also fielded numerous questions during their classes, which they deferred to the ESC briefing that has traditionally been given later in the course.

On 15 June 2005, ESC's Director and Collegiate and Quality Manager met with the Strength Maintenance training program directors to discuss improvements to the course. The directors advised them to bring the instruction in line with TRADOC standards and incorporate the course into the prescribed Program Of Instruction (POI). They asked requested ESC to develop test questions on the material as part of the POI. They also agreed to restore the program to three hours and to incorporate the ESC Education Brief into the same block of instruction in order to address student questions about ESC without delay. The PowerPoint slides were reformatted into the prescribed Strength Maintenance template and other changes brought them in line with the standards taught at the schoolhouse.

"Penetrating Colleges Markets" has now become an integral part of the 79T course delivered at the schoolhouse. Instructors will teach approximately eight classes annually. The Education Support Center and SOCGuard are proud to

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play a role in helping new recruiters get a running start toward their success in the Army National Guard!

ARNG Education Support Center Expands Its Reach

The Education Support Center (ESC), located in Little Rock, is taking on more responsibility in the education area. ESC continues to provide quality degree planning and counseling services, but its staff will now also be a “one-stop-shop” at the national level for all ARNG education questions or programs. State education staff will continue to be the primary point of contact for ARNG soldiers; ESC will serve in that capacity on the national level. Soldiers, units, sister services, Department of Veteran Affairs, the general public, and other interested parties will no longer need to contact DANTES, SOCGuard or NGB for answers. ESC will initially field all inquiries, then route them to the appropriate organization or individual. As part of NGB, the ARNG Education Support Center is the first line of defense!