

ARNG Education News

Excellence Through Education

A Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Communiqué

June 2006

When Students Come Marching Home

Helping students make a successful transition from the battlefield to the classroom

Over the past few years, the higher education community has been exceptionally responsive to their military students who have been called to active duty. However, with the recent announcement from the Secretary of Defense concerning planned force reduction in Iraq, it's important to remember that returning students may be dealing not only with academic issues, but also financial, emotional and/or physical challenges as they resume their studies. Conservative estimates indicate that 15.6% to 17.1% of returning soldiers from Iraq exhibited signs of anxiety, major depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, or other emotional issues.

Approximately 25% of deployed Guard/Reserve soldiers are students. In anticipation of their return to campus, many colleges and universities are taking proactive steps to help their military students make a successful transition from the combat zone to the classroom by offering a variety of options to facilitate their reintegration into college life. Some recent examples are listed below:

- Offering priority course registration
- Offering scholarship opportunities for severely injured servicemembers and their spouses
- Easing the application process for readmission
- Creation of special Web pages for returning military students
- Extending enrollment deadlines
- Providing an array of academic and other counseling services
- Creation of a re-enrollment checklist designed specifically for servicemembers to help ease their transition back to campus life

At the request of the US Department of Defense, Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) helps students address individual problems resulting from their military mobilization. The SOC Web site (www.soc.aascu.org/) provides a checklist for students facing deployment, sample letters to college administrators, apprenticeship/OJT certifying officials, and financial aid officers, as well as relevant state/federal laws and policy statements. SOC has a toll free number (1-800-368-5622) for students who need additional assistance.

DISCOVER: Helping Soldiers to Make Informed Education and Career Choices

DISCOVER is a comprehensive career planning program available at no cost to ARNG soldiers, their dependents, and ARNG employees. It allows individuals to use personal information to interact with the computer to reach decisions regarding educational and vocational choices. It offers 3 career assessments, suggests occupational families based on client's answers, provides occupation data, school data, job seeking skills, etc. This program can help members of the Guard plan their education while in military service and to plan for their transition to civilian jobs. It measures interests (what you LIKE to do), abilities (those things you CAN do), and values (where you access the things you would PREFER to do). Each inventory is scored and interpreted immediately so your clients can proceed to the next logical step in their planning without any delay. Obtain a free user ID and password (token) from the ARNG ESC (1-866-628-5999) or your ARNG State Education Office.

Packaging Education: 21 Programs for Eligible Guard Soldiers

NGB education programs offer soldiers opportunities to earn a college degree

As a member of the ARNG, you may qualify for any of the federal education benefits unique to the ARNG and/or others. ARNG soldiers, their family members, and employees of the ARNG are eligible for a variety of federal education benefits to assist in their pursuit of higher education objectives.

Federally funded programs are sponsored/financed by the ARNG, National Guard Bureau, US Army, US Department of Defense, or US Department of Veteran Affairs. As part of the US military, ARNG members are eligible to receive many of the same federal education incentives available to their counterparts in the other military services.

The ARNG offers 21 entitlement and incentive programs for ARNG soldiers. ARNG spouses may also take advantage of a limited number of benefits. The programs are:

- Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) - either Active Army TA or ARNG Federal TA
- Reserve GI Bill (Chapter 1606)
- Active Duty GI Bill (Chapter 30)
- Mobilization GI Bill (Chapter 1607)
- ARNG GI Bill Kicker

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- Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP)
- Healthcare Professionals Loan Repayment (HPLR)
- Guaranteed Reserve Forces Duty Scholarships
- Dedicated ARNG ROTC Scholarships
- SOCGuard
- Free Testing, Certification, and Licensing
- Troops to Teachers
- Spouses to Teachers
- Army e-Learning Program (Smart Force)
- eDISCOVER
- Army Academic Training Transcripts (AARTS)
- Student Guide to Success (Free Test-Out Preparation)
- Educational Counseling
- Degree Planning
- Apprenticeship & OJT programs
- ARNG Education Support Center (ESC)

The following are a few examples of how an ARNG soldier may combine benefits:

- The soldier comes off Active Duty with the Active Duty GI Bill and enlists in the ARNG. As a member of the Guard the soldier may also qualify for the ARNG “Kicker”, Federal TA, ARNG Student Loan Repayment, state-funded education program, and enlistment bonus(es). The soldier receives additional income in the form of drill pay.
- Reserve Component soldiers may receive Federal TA plus Active or Reserve GI Bill and student loan benefits simultaneously, exceeding 100% of the cost of tuition and fees.
- Only ARNG soldiers may receive state-funded benefits in addition to Federal TA, GI Bill, and student loan programs.

Soldiers and spouses who take advantage of the free college level testing programs offered by the ARNG have an opportunity to greatly reduce their college costs and time in the classroom. Each successfully passed exam is worth approximately 3 academic credits, most of which are accepted by SOC institutions.

For a description of each of these programs visit:

<http://www.virtualarmory.com>

Click on “Education” then on “Federal Benefits” and finally on “Federal Benefits Summary.”

Education Support Center Assists Junior Officers Without Degrees (OWD)

Are You Tracking? The OWD initiative was established by the ARNG and affects all Officers who do not possess a Bachelor’s degree. The target market includes Officer Candidates / Graduates, 2LTs, 1LTs, and Captains (passed over). Through this program the Army National Guard Education Support Center (ESC) will identify, evaluate, contact, and track all junior officers without a degree from their current academic status through completion of their Bachelor’s degree. ESC counselors are prepared to assist officers in pursuit of an already devised degree program or to assist the officer in identifying a degree program; to monitor officers’ progress towards plan; and to report status to the National Guard Bureau (NGB) Education Office quarterly.

During Phase I, ESC counselors will require that the OWD fill out an application/questionnaire for this service. The application consists of a questionnaire section, and a section to request an evaluation and degree plans, and gives the counselor information on college credits, degree plan, and total hours the officer has towards this plan. If the officer has no plan, ESC counselors will suggest they conduct an evaluation and create a degree plan, especially when promotion boards are imminent.

During Phase II, ESC counselors will contact passed-over 1LTs and Captains, through their last known contact information, to inform them of the reappointment/waiver processes implemented by National Guard Bureau in June 2005. ESC will send mailers or e-mails to notify them. Mailers will include the letter from NGB explaining the reappointment process, a point of contact for their state, and information on the “Are you Tracking?” Initiative.

Officers who do not currently have a Bachelor’s degree may request an application for this service by contacting the ESC at 1-866-628-5999 or email at esc@pec.ngb.army.mil.

To learn more about ARNG education
go to:

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

Dedicated Army National Guard Scholarships: Become an Officer and Stay in the Guard

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- and four-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 education 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 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 that then forwards them to the appropriate State Adjutant General (AG).

American Council on Education (ACE) CenterPoint Web Site Displays Scholarships

Have you checked out ACE's CenterPoint page lately? This is an online quarterly e-magazine for lifelong learning professionals. The summer 2006 issue highlights scholarships available for severely injured servicemembers and their family members in its Springboard section. Colleges such as Ohio State and Sacramento City College are adding programs and services for members of the military returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Other institutions such as Metropolitan College of Boston University have established scholarships in the name of fallen servicemembers. For more information visit:

<http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Springboard>

Additional information is available on the DANTES web site for colleges offering scholarships for severely injured servicemembers. For a list of participating institutions and their programs visit:

<http://www.dantes.doded.mil/sfd/participantSearch.asp?param=school>

NGB Welcomes New Team Members

Please welcome LTC Steve Beller who has assumed the position of Branch Chief for ARNG Education and Incentives. He replaces LTC Steven Lund who has moved on to a position at Northcom in Colorado. Also joining the staff as an Education Services Specialist is Ms. Beverly Harris, who is becoming fully immersed in ARNG education. Glad to have you with us!