

America's Heroes

Soldiers Looking Out For Their Neighbors

(NAPSA)—The Guard is a component of the Army that is composed of men and women who serve their country, state and community on a part-time basis. These Citizen-Soldiers—sons, daughters, students, neighbors—tend to hold civilian jobs or attend college when not serving and training.

Serving Many Roles

The Army National Guard has been used in a variety of fashions since its origin as a Colonial militia force.

Over time, it has evolved from being a “strategic reserve” that was never meant to see combat except in the most dire of circumstances, to a unit in regular use overseas and at home.

In fact, in most situations where there is an emergency here on U.S. soil, the Army National Guard is the military’s first responder.

A Local Resource

Each state, most territories and the District of Columbia have National Guard units, as provided for by the Constitution of the United States. Each unit is a resource that is under the direction of a state’s governor and, as such, serves the needs of its state. This gives governors broad authority in using their Guard units, from helping to protect lives and property during a natural disaster to maintaining peace during civil emergencies.

Often, the presence of Army National Guard units will benefit local communities in indirect ways. For example, nearly all Army National Guard military construction projects are built by local citizens and small businesses. This means adding new jobs to a local economy.

A National Mission

When Guard Soldiers, under the order of the president, are placed under the control of the nation’s military, they serve equally alongside their active-duty counterparts.

Whether it’s to fight in times of war, participate in military exer-



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cises with allied forces, man missile defense batteries in Alaska, support Customs and Border Protection, or conduct security patrols at the Super Bowl, Guard Soldiers perform the same jobs, in the same way, as active-duty soldiers.

Currently, the Army National Guard has just under 360,000 Citizen-Soldiers who are ready to protect and serve their local community, state and country at a moment’s notice.

Rewards For Serving

A Guard Soldier is paid for his or her service and that pay level is determined by the rank, job and education level he or she has attained. The higher one goes, the more he or she can expect to make. And the more time they serve, the more they earn.

The Guard offers a wide range of valuable education benefits, which provides an allowance for books and supplies. They are also eligible for Federal Tuition Assistance and state-specific benefits. In addition, Guard members are eligible for health insurance, and life insurance and Veterans Affairs (VA) home loans with minimum or no down payment.

To learn more about National Guard programs, opportunities and benefits, visit the site at www.nationalguard.com.

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