



NEWS YOU CAN USE

Weekly News for National Guard Families

Index of Articles

Note: Topics below are now bookmarked! Click on the underlined topic below to link to the pages on that topic.

READINESS

Guard Plans Training Site in Bangor; \$28 Million Regional Institute Would Resemble College Campus

DEPLOYMENT

National Guard Military Journalists Head for Kuwait
More Soldiers Heading For Camp Shelby

BENEFITS

States That Pay Life Insurance Premiums for National Guard Troops
Gov. Signs Bills to Improve Veteran Benefits

TRIBUTE TO OUR FALLEN HEROES

Service Honors Guard

GENERAL

Officials to Push For Bill of Rights to Protect Military Families

Websites:

National Guard Family Program Online Communities for families and youth:

<http://www.guardfamily.org/>

<http://www.guardfamilyyouth.org/>

TRICARE website for information on health benefits

<http://www.tricare.osd.mil/>

Civilian Employment Information (CEI) Program Registration for Army and Air National Guard, Air Force, and Coast Guard Reserve

<https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/esgr/index.jsp> (Note to those viewing this page in Word or PDF format: You may have to copy this address and paste it into your browser's address window.)

Cumulative roster of all National Guard and Reserve who are currently on active duty

<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2004/d20040331ngr1.pdf>

Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) contains links and information about schooling, distance education, scholarships, and organizations devoted to the military family

<http://www.militarychild.org/>

Militarystudent.org is a website that helps military children with transition and deployment issues. It has some great features for kids, parents, special needs families, school educators, and more—even safe chat rooms for kids.

<http://www.militarystudent.org>

Disabled Soldiers Initiative (DS3)

This website provides information on the new DS3 program. Through DS3, the Army provides its most severely disabled Soldiers and their families with a system of advocacy and follow-up.

<http://www.armyds3.org>

The **Guard Family Team Building** website provides online training and access to valuable contact information, documents, and links to assist in meeting the challenges of Guard life.

<http://www.gftb.org>

The **Guard Family Action Plan** website provides information on actions to improve Family Programs, benefits, and entitlements for the National Guard Community.

<http://www.gfap.org>

Have an article, announcement, or website that you'd like to share with the National Guard Family Program Community? Send your suggestions in an e-mail to Michelle.Bohlen@ngb.ang.af.mil.

Guard Plans Training Site in Bangor; \$28 Million Regional Institute Would Resemble College Campus

The Bangor Daily News

August 23, 2005

BANGOR - The Maine Army **National Guard** has chosen the city as the site for a new \$28 million regional training institute that is envisioned as a military version of a traditional college campus.

The institute, an upgraded and expanded version of training facilities now housed at Camp Keyes in Augusta, will be on federal land adjacent to the Armed Forces Reserve Center, with access off Outer Hammond Street.

Imagined as a self-contained campus much like Colby College or Bates College, the institute will include classrooms, a student dormitory, cafeteria, athletic facilities and an outdoor running track, Lt. Col. Jeffrey Morton, programming and planning manager for the Guard, told a workshop of city officials Monday.

"It is really going to be cutting-edge for the Army Guard for the next two decades," Morton said.

The Guard hopes to begin construction of the federally funded institute in 2008 and complete the project within two years, he said. Funding for the project is already in place.

Members of the 240th Training Regiment will staff the facility, which will be one of several in New England that work collaboratively, each focusing on specialized training disciplines, Morton said.

Bangor's planned facility will shift away from artillery training toward instruction in engineering, using high-tech digital classrooms, and simulation training that teaches soldiers how to react in high-risk scenarios, he said.

"It will be the latest and greatest," Morton said.

Besides having many of the components of a traditional college campus - in addition to the simulated shooting exercises - the institute also will look like one, Morton said. Construction will emphasize brick facades and traditional door and window treatments, and will live up to the military's requirements for environmentally sensitive design, Morton said.

Employing up to four full-time and 23 traditional Guard soldiers, the institute will bring to the area an annual payroll of more than \$500,000, Morton said. Add to that the salaries of up to 100 Guard and Reserve students, and the Guard facility will attract \$1 million in additional salaries, he said.

Annual utilities are estimated to exceed \$300,000, Morton said.

Because most of the students will be traditional reservists, the residential load will fall primarily on the weekends, Morton said. The facility will be accessible to the Air

National Guard and local law enforcement agencies that want to train on the simulated shooting programs, he said.

The Guard's healthy working relationship with the city was one of several factors that led Maj. Gen. John Libby, adjutant general of the Maine Army **National Guard**, to choose Bangor as the institute's home, Morton said.

The city's historical support of the Army Guard and the institute's proximity to Bangor International Airport and existing Army Guard facilities and troops made the city a natural fit, he said.

Mayor Frank Farrington pointed to the Maine Troop Greeters, residents who meet military flights passing through BIA, as an example of the city's support for the military.

Though most of the institute's students will come from Maine, the training facility could attract soldiers from throughout New England and beyond, Morton said.

"You could have students from all over the United States," he said.

DEPLOYMENT

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

National Guard Military Journalists Head for Kuwait

WHAS-TV (Louisville, KY)

August 23, 2005

LOUISVILLE, Ky. -- Twenty soldiers from the Kentucky and Tennessee Army **National Guard** will soon arrive in Kuwait to record the operations and reconstruction efforts in nearby Iraq.

They are military journalists, and they will produce stories, newsletters, news releases and documentaries during their year in the Middle East.

"Each one of my soldiers will carry a rifle, a pistol and a camera. And we've trained on all three pieces," Capt. David Page said of his unit.

It won't be their primary function, but the journalists will be prepared for confrontations with insurgents or other combat activities, Page said.

The unit will spend a few weeks training at Camp Atterbury in Indiana before leaving for Kuwait. But Monday, they gathered for a sendoff ceremony for the 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment at the Louisville Armory.

Pfc. Cassandra Groce, 20, of Glasgow, was pretty sure she wanted to be a military journalist when she signed up for the **National Guard**.

"I really want to get their story out there, and get the good stories," she said. "I've always looked at soldiers as heroes."

Groce's husband is also in the Middle East, working as a **National Guard** combat medic in Iraq, and she could get a chance to see him, although she knows the possibility is slim.

"It's not like they let you go out for joy rides," she said.

Pfc. Michael Pfaff, 22, of Louisville, said he is "a bit nervous, but also excited" about the deployment. "I think the training I received will prepare me for anything that happens," he said.

Pfaff, a former University of Louisville student, said he joined the **National Guard** when his finances got tight, with the intention of becoming a military journalist. Although he had not decided on a major in school, Pfaff likes to write, and he was interested in "capturing the essence of what soldiers go through," he said.

Sgt. 1st Class John Kibler, one of the leaders of the detachment, received emotional goodbyes from his wife, Georgia, their 8-year-old daughter, Mackenzie, and 14-year-old son, Nate.

Kibler, of Harrodsburg, is a forensic videographer for the Kentucky State Police. He has been serving in the Guard for 13 years, and was sent to Bosnia in 1999, his wife said. Georgia Kibler said she knows her husband is experienced and well-trained, but she still expects the coming year to be an anxious time.

"It's pretty scary right now," she said. "Sad. Just a lot of mixed emotions."

More Soldiers Heading For Camp Shelby

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

The LaCrosse Tribune

August 17, 2005

By Kate Schott

Kelly Buckholtz didn't think Iraq would be cold.

But Buckholtz, a sergeant first class with the Army **National Guard**, was told to pack cold-weather gear in his olive-green rucksack, along with Army Combat Uniforms, civilian clothing and Kevlar helmet.

"I heard that standing water freezes at night during winter in Iraq," he said. "I didn't know that."

As he loaded his gear into a truck with his comrades Tuesday, Buckholtz kept in his hand a few photographs, too precious to stick into a duffel.

"These are pictures of my boy," he said, gesturing to a close-up shot of his 23-year-old son, Joshua, who's already been to Iraq with the Air Force. Also in the stack were pictures of his wife, Cindy.

"I'm a little overwhelmed," Buckholtz said. "It's tough."

It's real tough. And I haven't even left town yet and it's tough."

Buckholtz, a longtime Onalaska resident and a 25-year veteran of the Army **National Guard**, was one of 15 soldiers who left the Onalaska **National Guard** Armory on Tuesday morning. They are members of Detachment 1, Bravo Company, 132nd Support Battalion.

They will be joining various companies of the 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry, which is set to be activated today. Buckholtz, for instance, will join the Madison-based headquarters company.

Kenneth Becker, 37, of Sparta, is headed to Company A in Fort Atkinson, Wis. He and fiancée Eileen Tank are waiting until he returns home to marry.

"I'll miss him," Tank said. "I will. I'm proud of him. I just hope the time passes quickly."

The soldiers were escorted from the armory to Hwy. 35 by the Onalaska police and fire departments, with the high school band leading the way. Pockets of people lined their route, holding flags or simply waving as the soldiers went by.

The soldiers will leave Volk Field on Saturday for training at Camp Shelby, Miss.

BENEFITS

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

States That Pay Life Insurance Premiums For National Guard Troops

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

August 18, 2005

Eight states this year have begun to subsidize Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance premiums for National Guard troops. Pennsylvania is among 21 other states with pending reimbursement legislation.

The states that have already acted:

- Georgia (income tax credit)
- Illinois
- Kansas
- Montana
- New Mexico
- New York
- Oklahoma

- Washington

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Gov. Signs Bills To Improve Veteran Benefits

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

The Daily Illini

August 24, 2005

By Mary Rickard

Gov. Rod Blagojevich and Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn signed several bills on Aug. 14 at the Illinois State Fair, expanding the educational and health benefits for veterans across the state, including those currently enrolled at the University.

Thirty-five University students who are members of the **National Guard** or Reserves have been deployed or called to active duty in Iraq, said Robert Woods, veterans' program administrator for the University. A significant number have served more than one deployment, he said.

House Bill 815, which is effective immediately, increases Illinois Veteran Grant's education benefits. Students, who have served one year of active duty, or who have served less than a year if they served in a foreign country during wartime, would receive grants covering tuition plus all mandatory fees.

The bill also expanded education benefits to **National Guard** officers previously excluded from the program, said Lori Reimers, director of state relations for the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. The Illinois General Assembly voted unanimously in favor of the bill, which was co-sponsored by military veterans, Sen. William Haine (D-Alton) and Rep. Jim Watson (R-Jacksonville).

"Illinois has a long history of providing one of the most generous education benefit programs for veterans in the nation," Watson said.

However, Illinois is the last state in the nation to provide disability pay for post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental disabilities. Men and women who have served in combat frequently experience post-traumatic stress disorder, yet private insurers had not been required to provide treatment.

House Bill 2190 would require private insurance companies to cover the disorder for veterans diagnosed by their own psychiatrist or psychologist.

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a chronic mental health problem resulting from experiencing life-threatening events, including terrorist incidents, violent personal assaults and natural disasters. During Vietnam, the condition was referred to as "shell shock." The symptoms can include depression, nightmares, flashbacks and memory problems.

Between 27 and 33 percent of veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq have been

diagnosed with the disorder, said Eric Schuller, senior policy advisor for Quinn. During the Vietnam War, soldiers were usually given a month's leave in a safe zone every 35 to 50 days. Soldiers serving in Iraq get only one or two days at a time in a non-combat zone. Schuller said the soldiers are under stress 24 hours a day.

"Post-traumatic stress disorder will hit hard on the reserves," Schuller said.

Because reserves are sent home quickly, they do not have any time to adjust to being back in the United States. Active duty personnel remain with the same comrades for two to four weeks, allowing them to wind down.

The first 90 days back in the United States are critical in prevention, Schuller said.

"Post-traumatic stress disorder is one of the leading causes of homelessness, alcoholism, domestic violence and imprisonment - all state issues," Schuller said.

The disorder can seriously impair an individual's ability to function in social and family life.

Approximately 87,000 veterans receive treatment for the disorder, and more than 1,600 veterans have been treated at the Danville Veterans Administration Hospital since 1996.

"Many of those on the frontlines in the Global War on Terror have suffered invisible, as well as visible, scars," Quinn said. "It's our duty to help those afflicted with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder upon their return home."

David Sayers, veteran services officer for the University Veterans Services Office, said he has yet to see any cases of the disorder at the University.

"We have a tight-knit group of people who help each other out," Sayers said. "Most are happy just to get back to school."

Blagojevich and Quinn also signed a third bill, House Bill 3472, which would create a scratch-off lottery game to increase funds available for the new Illinois Veterans' Assistance Fund. The proceeds would be used by the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs to make grants, fund additional services and conduct research on veterans' issues. The lottery tickets are scheduled to go on sale Jan. 1, 2006.

TRIBUTE TO OUR FALLEN HEROES

[*Back to Table of Contents*](#)

Service Honors Guard

Topeka Capital-Journal

August 29, 2005

Following battles of wars past, the sight of a rifle stuck in the ground with a soldier's helmet and dog tags placed on top was common.

"This marked the spot where the soldier fell," said state Command Sgt. Maj. Steve Rodina.

It also helped ensure that no one was left behind when crews came through to collect the

bodies later.

A similar sight with World War II era equipment was on display at the Museum of the Kansas National Guard for a special memorial service Sunday.

"It symbolizes all our fallen comrades from all of our wars," Rodina said of the rifle display.

The display also featured a memorial wreath made of native Kansas wildflowers.

"We're here today to remember those men and women who have paid the ultimate sacrifice," said Col. Gregg Riley, a chaplain with the Guard, to begin the ceremony.

Kansas Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting spoke of the continual need to protect freedom and the willingness of Kansas guardsmen to answer the call. He also noted that the soldiers aren't alone in struggling with the demands of war.

"Since the very beginning, those that stay behind have sacrificed, too." he said. "Even in today's world of instant communication, there are no substitutes for a father's touch."

Bunting also noted the three Guardsmen who have died in the current conflict in Iraq. Sgt. 1st Class Clint Wisdom, of Atchison, and Sgt. Don Clary, of Troy, were members of the 2nd Battalion 130th Field Artillery who died Nov. 8, 2004. Sgt. Derrick Lutters, who grew up in Goodland, was part of the 891st Engineers Battalion and died May 1, 2005.

"We miss them," Bunting said. "We will always miss them."

During the roll call portion of the ceremony, officers expressed regret at not being able to identify fallen guardsman individually. Records prior to the Civil War don't exist, and records after that point are complicated and hard to decipher.

"We don't know the names of all of them, but God does," Riley said.

The ceremony concluded with a single trumpet playing taps behind the fallen soldier display and away from the tent where guests were seated.

The service concluded weekend celebrations for the Guard's 150th anniversary. The actual anniversary is Tuesday.

A deployment ceremony for the 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry of the Kansas Army National Guard took place Sunday afternoon at Bramlage Coliseum in Manhattan. The 500 soldiers are headquartered in Kansas City, Kan., and are being deployed to Iraq. The Army National Guard has large groups of soldiers deployed in Iraq and Kosovo. Smaller groups from both the Army and Air National Guard are deployed at various locations around the world.

Officials To Push For Bill of Rights To Protect Military Families

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

August 18, 2005

By Bruce Schreiner, Associated Press Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. – A group of state and federal officials gathered in front of a war monument Wednesday to promote a so-called "Military Families' Bill of Rights" to ensure that soldiers and their families don't suffer for their contributions to country.

The initiative calls for a "safety net" to protect military families from poverty.

"It's about doing what's right, it's about doing what's fair and it's about doing what's moral," said state Treasurer Jonathan Miller, a leading proponent of the initiative, some of which would require passage of state or federal legislation.

Miller, a Democrat, was joined by two Democratic members of Congress - Rep. Ben Chandler, who represents Kentucky's 6th District, and Sen. Evan Bayh of Indiana, as well as state Rep. Scott Brinkman, a Louisville Republican. Serving as a backdrop to the announcement was a veterans memorial next to the Jefferson County Courthouse in downtown Louisville.

Chandler said that how military families and veterans are treated will play a role in the country's ability to field a strong military in the future. Brinkman predicted that the provisions requiring state legislation would draw bipartisan support in the 2006 General Assembly, which convenes in January. "Support for our men and women in uniform ... should be always above party politics," he said.

Bayh touted his proposals that would compensate Guard and Reserve members who suffered pay cuts as a result of deployments, and to protect military families from foreclosures.

"No American should be forced to choose between doing right by our country and doing right by their families," said Bayh, a possible presidential candidate in 2008.

Among other things, the initiative calls for:

- Access to counseling for military families when a loved one is activated, deployed or killed or disabled in action.
- "Adequate" death benefits for all veterans and members and retirees of the Reserve and **National Guard**.
- The right to supplemental income for every Guard member or reservist called to active duty, through tax incentives to private employers and state tax deductions for active service.

Job preferences for veterans, partly through tax incentives to private employers.

"Reasonable" leave for spouses of service members who have been deployed.

Also, Miller's office will provide financial education and "money mentoring" to military families through private-public partnerships.

Supporters are looking at ways to generate money to create a state fund to help support military families in need, Miller said. The options include creating an income tax checkoff and a special license plate that proclaims support for the military, he said.

The initiative drew support from James Mutter, a retired Marine colonel and past president of the National Military Family Association. Mutter said that military members on duty can be at greater risk when their minds are on hardships at home.

End

[Back to Table of Contents](#)