

ARNG Education News

Excellence Through Education

A Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Communiqué

October 2008

Indiana Army National Guard Soldier Promotes Value of Education in Iraq

CW3 Reginald Barney, of the Indiana Army National Guard (INARNG), has served as Officer in Charge (OIC) in the Blackjack Education Center (EC), at Logistical Support Area (LSA) Anaconda in Balad, Iraq, since March of 2008. While this activity was not new for him, he had performed similar duties at Fort Stewart, Georgia, the intensity of the experience at LSA Anaconda is much greater. Equally intense are the rewards for his service. Chief Barney is convinced he's in a place in which he has made a difference in Soldiers' lives.

Coming from Indianapolis, IN, Chief Barney is nearing the close of his second deployment (he previously mobilized to Afghanistan). During a phone conversation with SOCGuard, he matter-of-factly noted that he works "every day." When asked if "every day" means "Sunday to Sunday," he chuckled and said, "Yes, every day." Moreover, his days rarely end before 9:00 p.m., and he remains "on-call" for Soldiers needing help after normal business hours. As Chief Barney explained, "If they need help, I'll set up opportunities for them to get help." Being the only education counselor at the massive installation, he helps Soldiers on the spot when they ask for it.

During the course of normal business hours, Chief Barney talks with about 15 to 20 Guard and Active Duty Soldiers daily (rarely fewer, sometimes more). His assistance to those entering the EC ranges widely. He explains to Soldiers the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Army Degree (SOCAD) programs and use of the GoArmyEd portal. As OIC, Chief Barney has become very familiar with SOCAD and GoArmyEd, in order to train both Guard and Active Duty Soldiers on these vital resources. Deployed Soldiers must understand SOCAD degrees and the portal while deployed if they intend to use tuition assistance to pursue approved college courses. In addition, he provides briefings on GI Bill benefits, Chapters 30, 1606, 1607, and 33, to prepare Soldiers while they are deployed and for when they return home to retain an education orientation.

Chief Barney also shares with his Soldiers his insights on specific degree programs at individual institutions, notably Central Texas College (CTC), University of Phoenix (Phoenix), and University of Maryland - University College (UMUC). These schools' programs are in high demand via GoArmyEd at Blackjack. He hinted, in fact, that CTC, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, and UMUC plan to offer residential courses at Blackjack in the near-future. For obvious reasons, then, Blackjack EC operates and maintains an impressive computer lab, as well as classes to prepare for General Technical (GT) score improvement, and for Defense

Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) CLEP tests.

In addition to arranging classes for CLEP and GT improvement, Chief Barney helps set up tutoring sessions for Soldiers who request or require it. Tutors come from in-house expertise at LSA Anaconda, among fellow-Soldiers who volunteer their services at Blackjack. To expand the pool of eligible volunteers, the Chief solicits credentials from those serving at Anaconda, especially those with skills in such fields as mathematics and English composition. Without such dedicated volunteers, he noted, his job providing expert tutoring to so many Soldiers would be next to impossible.

Nor does Chief Barney wish to leave anyone with a notion that he maintains Blackjack operations alone. In addition to his strong spiritual faith, he credits all success at the EC with "great NCOs, who do all the work in supporting the effort," and who, he said, "make me look good." Without people such as CW3 Barney, and the committed NCOs and volunteers on whom he relies, it's certain that Blackjack EC would not have enjoyed the success that it has thus far. CW3 Barney speaks with pride of the services he and his NCOs render to Soldiers, as he does of the facility itself, which has received a recent "facelift," possesses a growing library, and provides congenial spaces in which Soldiers can sit, relax, and study. He believes that this atmosphere represents a healthy escape from the stresses of duty and homesickness. This quiet, upbeat environment also lends itself to academic success for those using the facility.

When asked about what gives him most satisfaction in his position as OIC, Chief Barney did not hesitate. Seeing Soldiers use their downtime to keep a positive perspective on their service in Iraq, and hearing grateful responses from Soldiers who successfully complete courses or degrees while deployed is reward enough for him. He can begin and end each day knowing he has made a difference in the lives of those who come into Blackjack EC.

While deployed, Chief Barney can be reached via e-mail, at reginald.barney@iraq.centcom.mil.

NGB's Commitment to Education Reflected in New Education, Incentives, and Employment Division

It was a watershed day, July 15, 2008, as the National Guard Bureau's (NGB's) education team in Arlington, VA, and Camp Robinson, AR, emerged with an expansion in its mission, responsibilities, and personnel. As of July 15, what was formerly the Education and Incentives Branch of NGB-ARM became the Education, Incentives, and Employment

(EDU) Division. NGB-EDU is headed by LTC Diana Craun, with LTC Ronald Schwickerath serving as Deputy, MAJ John Gregory as Division XO, and SGM Arthur Stewart as Division Sergeant Major.

The new division comprises five branches: Education Oversight Branch, headed by Ms. Ela Karczewska (Acting); Incentives Oversight Branch, headed by MAJ Kathryn Poynton; Employment and Education Outreach Branch, headed by MAJ Steven Kirkbride (Acting); Operations Branch, headed by MAJ Troy Gipps (Acting), located in Arkansas; and Patriot Academy Branch, headed by CPT Paul Douglas (Acting).

Currently, NGB-EDU is in the process of re-defining the scope and depth of its expanded mission and fine-tuning the responsibilities of its new teams. The mission includes developing and coordinating programs that directly affect the National Guard, administering federal functions, and facilitating communication between the Army and the fifty states, three territories, and the District of Columbia. Every member of the NGB-EDU staff will contribute to this process, with the goal of providing the best possible support to state education offices and, ultimately, to Army National Guard Servicemembers.

The new branch chiefs, program managers, and other staff members will be introduced over the course of the next few months as they join the Division. In the meantime, the following new personnel have joined the NGB-EDU staff as of 30 September 2008:

LTC Diana Craun, Division Chief, is a native of San Luis Obispo, CA. LTC Craun received a BS degree from California Polytechnic State University and is completing the requirements for a MS degree in Secondary Education. She is a former California high school teacher and ROTC instructor. In addition, LTC Craun has served in multiple command and leadership positions during her career. She has served as the Deputy G1 for the ARNG, as well as Deputy for ARNG Recruiting and Retention. Moreover, she has served multiple tours as a Branch Chief in both the Finance and Resource Management functional areas. LTC Craun commanded the 217th Finance Detachment in the California ARNG, and served as a Finance and Accounting Officer in the California and Georgia ARNG. As part of GA ARNG's Counterdrug Program, she also served as an Intelligence Analyst for the US Customs Service.

LTC Ronald Schwickerath, Division Deputy, hails from Arizona, where "once upon a time" he taught mathematics and geography at a public secondary school. While in Arizona, he was also a business owner and city commissioner. LTC Schwick worked as the National Education Director at NGB between 2003 and 2006 and spent the next two years as

an Aide-de-Camp for the Assistant Secretary of the Army at the Pentagon before recently rejoining NGB as a Deputy to the new Education Division. LTC Schwick's military achievements include a command as well as mobilizations.

MAJ John Gregory, Division XO, joined the Virginia ARNG after serving on active duty. Previous assignments include working for NGB J3 Counterdrug Division and 11 years of working as a police officer. MAJ Gregory received his BA Degree in History and Political Science from the Virginia Military Institute and his MS Degree in Criminal Justice from Virginia Commonwealth University. He plans to complete course requirements for a PhD from Virginia Commonwealth University in Public Policy with a concentration in Justice in May 2009.

Ela Karczewska joined the NGB-EDU staff from US Army Garrison Benelux, where she was a hub ESO for the Army Education Centers in Belgium and the Netherlands. Ela has a Master's degree in Psychology and a Bachelor's degree in Business Management. As a military spouse, Ela followed her husband around the world and worked for Army education centers in Japan, Germany, the US, and, most recently, in Belgium. In the course of her career, Ela also deployed to Bosnia as an Education Services Specialist, and at NGB-EDU, she will serve as Acting Chief, Education Oversight Branch.

MAJ Steven Kirkbride was a member of the District of Columbia ARNG. MAJ Kirkbride holds a BA in Political Science from the University of Richmond (VA). He deployed with DCARNG to Iraq in 2005, and worked at NGB as a Program Manager in Recruiting from 2006 to 2008. MAJ Kirkbride's other experience includes several years in government contracting and resource management.

MAJ Jerome "Scott" Loring joins NGB-EDU as the Tuition Assistance Program Manager at NGB's Arlington Hall site. He was formerly a state Education Services Officer (ESO NHARNG), has worked within the MILPO community at the state-level, and has served on several national-level committees related to education programs.

MAJ Christine Langin-Faris is a 20-year member of the Massachusetts Army National Guard (MAARNG). She holds an Urban Planning baccalaureate with advanced studies in both City/Regional Planning and Business concentrations. During her Guard service, she worked for 13 years in educational publishing as a writer, researcher, editor, proofreader, and production artist on English and foreign language grade school, high school, and college texts, as well as trade publications. Her military technician assignments in the logistics community have ranged from unit- to State-level positions, as a State Officer Strength Manager, NGB-?ASM-O Program

Manager, and NGB-ASM-O Team Leader.

CPT Jeremy Serafin joins NGB-EDU as the GI Bill Programs Manager, also at the Arlington Hall site. In addition to serving as Virginia ARNG's ESO, CPT Serafin was formerly part of NGB-ASM, focusing on officer recruiting. He will join Ms. Kelly Zimmerman, who also works GI Bill programs. They will be the "customer service center" of NGB-EDU's Arlington site and will provide NGB GI Bill program oversight for the GI Bill Support Team at PEC.

CW2 Jeff Haycraft will serve NGB-EDU as the lead for the new Tuition Assistance Support Team, which is currently under formulation, and which will become an "operational" part of the "revised" ARNG Education Support Center (ESC) at NGB's Professional Education Center (PEC) site in North Little Rock.

1LT Michelle Grant, 1LT Melissa Shipman, Ms. Elizabeth Martin, and Ms. Patsi Richards all join NGB-EDU's new Testing Support Team, a team under formulation, which will also become an "operational" part of the "revised" ESC at PEC.

Mr. Michael Grober, a contractor, joins the NGB-EDU Operations Branch at PEC with the GED plus team, and Ms. Benita Bosier-Ingram, a contractor, joins the NGB-EDU Operations Branch at PEC as a budget analyst.

MSG Larry Esposito will serve NGB-EDU's Incentives Section after over 10 years as a recruiter in Maryland. MSG Esposito also brings with him to his new position experience as a guidance counselor with Baltimore Military Entrance Processing Center, as well as assignments with the NGB-ASM Request Operations Center IADT Training Seat Management, Waivers Section, and NGB-ASM-RE for a six-month deployment to Iraq. He is finishing his bachelor's degree with Touro University International.

SGT Joseph Herbst arrives at NGB-EDU as Operations NCO for the Patriot Academy Team, after two tours in Germany with Active Army, and two years in the Reserves at Fort Carson, CO. SGT Herbst later joined California ARNG, deploying to Iraq in 2004 for one year, and was assigned to NGB as Marketing and Advertising NCO for the ASM Division prior to his new assignment with EDU.

SPC Jennifer Alondra Rosario comes to NGB-EDU's Employment and Education Outreach Branch after serving NGB since 2006 at ASM as Administrative NCO, assisting the Candidate Manager Officer and State Cadets with initial and branch officer qualifications courses. A member of New Jersey ARNG, SPC Rosario deployed with the 10th Mountain Division in Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan before joining NGB. She is pursuing a psychology degree from Thomas Edison

State College in New Jersey.

Welcome to all of the new staff members of NGB-EDU!

NGB also bids farewell to **Mr. Jerome Carter**, a contractor with AT&T Government Solutions, who worked as on-site Information Systems Support at Arlington Hall, and MSG Keith Wheeler, who worked the GED Plus program at PEC for some time and has transitioned to become PEC First Sergeant. Best wishes to Mr. Carter and MSG Wheeler.

University System of Ohio Steps Forward for Veterans

On July 8, 2008, Ohio Governor Ted Strickland signed an executive order establishing "The Ohio GI Promise," which changes Ohio's residence requirements to allow all veterans of the U.S. Armed Services, their spouses, and dependents who choose to attend Ohio colleges and universities to do so at in-state tuition rates. Ohio would be the first state to establish such a wide-reaching plan.

As quoted in a news release on the Ohio state government Web site, Gov. Strickland said, "This is a great benefit for veterans, as well as for Ohio." He continued, "It delivers real support to veterans while helping strengthen Ohio's strategic plan for higher education, which calls for attracting and keeping talent in the state. Who better to have as part of Ohio's colleges and universities, workforce and communities than the veterans who have served, led, and protected our country?"

By participating in a community service or internship program and upon moving to Ohio, GI Bill-eligible veterans and their families will be treated as in-state residents with regard to tuition and state educational subsidies. To participate, a veteran must be certified as eligible to receive GI Bill benefits, enroll in a state-supported institution, and have completed or pledge to complete a minimum of 10 hours in a community service position in any of the following approved programs:

- A university or college sanctioned partnership program;
- A university or college sanctioned community service engagement program;
- A national community service program;
- A veterans' administration or services campus-based outreach program; or
- A service learning course at an institution.

Other stipulations set forth in the executive order include establishing an Ohio GI Promise Council. The Council will

ensure that Ohio's colleges and universities have optimum educational opportunities and student support services for veterans. An arm of the Council will help raise funds to market Ohio's opportunities nationally.

In addition, the executive order would create a University System of Ohio conference on veterans' services. The conference, sponsored by the Ohio Department of Veterans' Services and the Board of Regents, will bring together every Ohio higher education institution's office of veterans' services to examine best practices and recommend implementing these at every institution. Representatives at this conference will come from the U.S. Military Services, including the National Guard, the American Council on Education, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other local and regional veterans' services organizations. Working with the Ohio GI Promise Council, the conference will pursue goals connected with coordinating services on campuses to accommodate implementation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill on August 1, 2009.

Other achievements addressed under the executive order include the expanded use of Ohio National Guard Scholarships. This stipulation pertains to legislation that would allow OHARNG scholarship recipients to use funds for graduate study, housing, books and supplies, and transportation. Currently, scholarship recipients can only use funds for tuition and fees.

Finally, the Ohio GI Promise aims to make all Ohio colleges and universities members of Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC). Administrators seek to coordinate this effort with the American Council on Education (ACE), to certify all Ohio colleges and universities as SOC member institutions. By achieving state-wide SOC membership, Ohio GI Promise aims to ensure that all college credit received during military service that is approved for transfer credit under the *ACE Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services* would transfer to every University System of Ohio institution.

Servicemembers and veterans who wish to learn more about Ohio GI Promise can visit its Web site (<http://universitysystem.ohio.gov>), or call the "Veterans hotline," at 1-877-VETS-OH-1.

Ashford University Offers Military Assistance Program

Ashford University, in Clinton, IA, has introduced several incentives through its Military Relations Program that are designed to assist degree-seeking Servicemembers and veterans. According to K.C. Haight, Ashford's Director of Military Relations, who is also a former Servicemember, the program reflects the university's appreciation for those who

have served in the military. The incentives are geared toward making degrees more affordable and easier to complete.

Under the program, Active Duty Servicemembers, National Guard members, reservists, military spouses, Department of Defense employees, veterans, as well as retirees who use Montgomery GI Bill, can use the program's benefits. The benefits include waivers of over \$1,000 in technology and application fees, and access to a special team of advisors, who can assist participating students with enrollment, academic and financial aid issues. The university also offers a military "leave-of-absence" from studies for deployed students.

Ashford University's Military Relations staff work closely with Army National Guard's Education Support Center in Little Rock, AR, ensuring maximum transfer of credit for military training and experience. In addition, the program assists students in securing college transcripts and accessing academic tutoring, where needed.

For additional information, call 1-800-877-1192, or visit <http://www.ashford.edu> or <http://www.ashfordmilitary.edu>.

To learn more about ARNG education
go to:

<http://www.virtualarmy.com/>
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