

Montana Army National Guard

Recruiting the Best and the Brightest

Courtesy of MTNG PA Office

While some military branches are struggling to increase their recruiting numbers with quality members, this is not the case for the Montana Army National Guard.

The Montana Army National Guard recently achieved a historic 12-year high for enlistees in the Montana Army National Guard, surpassing enlistment goals. In addition, the Montana Army National Guard is 5th in the nation for new recruits having earned a high school diploma.

The significance of achieving these goals is that the MTARNG Recruiting and Retention Command has done it without lowering enlistment standards for potential recruits in the Montana Army National Guard. "Our Recruiting and Retention Non-Commissioned Officer's recruit with the utmost integrity. The reality is that the potential soldier they enlist could very well be sitting next to him or her in a combat zone," explained MTARNG R&R Commander, Major Barry Gilman. "The question they ask themselves: 'Would I trust this person with my life or one of my soldiers?' this is a determining factor as to whether the Montana National Guard has a place for them amongst our ranks. We seek out and recruit the best and the brightest that Montana has to offer and we've been very successful."

Every person that makes the decision to join the Montana Guard has to give authorization to do an extensive background investigation. Police record checks are completed as well as running their fingerprints electronically through the Entrance National Agency Check. Within five working days, a report will come back to the Montana Army National Guard listing any offenses the applicant may have had.

Those who have had prior felony convictions can receive a waiver, however the waiver process is not easy and it takes time, according to Gilman. The applicant must write a request for a waiver stating his or her offense and why the Army National Guard should accept them. This is accompanied by all the court records and three reference letters ranging from their current employer to community leaders. "We realize that everyone makes mistakes. We look for what the applicant learned and how they adjusted their life because of that mistake," said Gilman.

The Montana National Guard's Adjutant General's office looks at each case extremely close before deciding whether or not they think the applicant deserves a chance to serve. However, the State Adjutant General's office is not the final approving authority to approve the action. Their recommendation will go to the Chief of National Guard Bureau located in Washington DC. There the waiver process will continue resulting in either an approval or disapproval.

Currently in fiscal year 2008, (beginning 01 Oct 2007) the MTARNG R&R Command has not processed any felony conviction waivers. From 2005, the Montana Guard processed a total of three felony waivers ranging from failure to pay child support to juvenile theft on federal property.

"We are the best that Montana has to offer because we recruit the best that Montana has to offer. The people of this state and nation demand that its National Guard maintain the highest in moral and ethical standards. We are able to do that because we recruit young men and women that have those traits. We will not accept anything less," said Gilman. **R&NG**

