



Bringing the Commissary to you

National Guard members will agree that it's hard to take advantage of the benefits of military service when you live miles from the nearest military installation.

So the Defense Commissary Agency started the "Bringing the Benefit to You" campaign last year. Since that time, more than 100 sales have been held across the country inside warehouses, aircraft hangars, armories, tents and parking lots for thousands of Guard members and their families.

Guard members have been granted unlimited shopping on bases since November 2003, but according to DECA, two-thirds of Guard members live too far from a base to make shopping there practical.

Commissaries, which provide customers with an average of 30 percent savings compared to commercial prices, work with Guard units with more than 150 members to schedule a sale.

For example, Andrews Air Force Base's commissary in Maryland recently partnered with the West Virginia National Guard's 167th Airlift Wing in Martinsburg, W.Va., where more than 800 customers took advantage of the sale.

Last year, these sales generated \$4.5 million in sales and served more than 41,000 customers, according to DECA. Next year, the agency hopes to increase the number of sales to 400.

For details, visit www.commissaries.com/guard_reserve_sales.cfm.

Congress may extend GI Bill eligibility

More than 30,000 additional National Guardsmen may become eligible for the Post 9/11 GI Bill with the help of bipartisan legislation introduced Sept. 10.

Rep. Dave Loebsack of Iowa pioneered the National Guard Education Equality Act, to change the GI Bill eligibility rules to include National Guard members called to active duty in support of homeland security.

"Essentially, the New GI Bill of Rights that we passed last year unintentionally left out about 30,000 members of the National Guard," said Loebsack on Radio Iowa. "They are not receiving all of the benefits they have earned."

The current Post 9/11 GI Bill, which began on Aug. 3, only extends benefits to service members serving under Title 10 duty status, but the proposed law would cover those serving under Title 32 in homeland security roles. Both duty statuses are paid with federal dollars, but in Title 32 the state governor maintains control.

"Our National Guard members who participate in disaster response, protection of U.S. airspace, border security and many other critical missions deserve the Post 9/11 GI benefits and the opportunities that come with those benefits," Loebsack told Radio Iowa. "As a former college professor, I know and understand the many doors an education can open. A small technical error will not and should not get in the way of opening those doors."

Commissary Lot Sales for November

- Nov. 1:** Harrison Village, Indianapolis, Ind.
- Nov. 4-7:** Jacksonville NAS, Jacksonville, Fla.
- Nov. 5-7:** Malstrom AFB, Mont.
- Nov. 6-7:** Gulfport NCBC, Miss.
- Nov. 6-8:** Fort Gillem, Forest Park, Ga.
- Nov. 6-8:** Meridan NAS, Miss.
- Nov. 6-8:** Fort Campbell, Ky.
- Nov. 6-8:** Fort Bragg North Commissary, Fort Bragg, N.C.
- Nov. 7-8:** Fort Drum, N.Y.
- Nov. 7-8:** Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio
- Nov. 7-8:** West Point, N.Y.
- Nov. 7-8:** C.E. Kelly SF, Oakdale, Penn.
- Nov. 7-8:** Camp Lejeune MCB, N.C.
- Nov. 8:** Fallon NAS, Nev.
- Nov. 13-15:** Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio
- Nov. 13-15:** Newport NS, R.I.
- Nov. 14:** Grand Forks AFB, N.D.
- Nov. 14-15:** Holloman AFB, N.M.
- Nov. 25:** Fallon NAS, Nev.

Tell the Guard who your civilian boss is

Army and Air National Guard members are encouraged to provide their civilian employment information to the Department of Defense through a mandatory program that has been around since the early 1990s.

The Civilian Employment Information (CEI) program makes it possible for defense officials to know who can be called up for active duty without jeopardizing the civilian forces responsible for safeguarding our country, Air Force Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt, the director of the Air National Guard, wrote in a memorandum to the states.

Reporting by the 450,000-member National Guard has been very good in the past with more than 90 percent providing information in the last five years, said James Lamback, the chief of Employer Support for the National Guard Bureau. But information is required to be updated every year.

As part of this program, the DoD must give consideration to civilian workers, including emergency responders such as police officers, firefighters and medical personnel; ensure more members with critical civilian jobs and skills are not retained in the Guard longer than necessary to respond to emergencies; and



Photo by Brandon Quester, Wyoming National Guard

Celina Billiot, 10, plays on a giant map of Asia within the Wyoming National Guard Joint Force Headquarters in Cheyenne, Wyo. The 41-foot by 31-foot map is traveling travel throughout the state of Wyoming as an educational tool for students from kindergarten through 12th grade. The Wyoming Guard is sponsoring the map in coordination with the Wyoming Geographic Alliance.

inform civilian employers of their rights and responsibilities under the 1994 Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act.

Employment data can be entered on the Defense Manpower Data Center Web site.

Deposit checks using an iPhone

USAA today launched the first mobile deposit capability for the iPhone, meaning qualifying banking members can now use their iPhones to deposit a check from anywhere else they can get a wireless signal.

The new USAA Deposit@Mobile feature, available on the company's popular USAA Mobile App for the iPhone is secure and simple to use. Eligible members can snap a photo of both sides of a signed check with their iPhone's built-in camera, and then transmit the image to USAA through the phone. USAA systems immediately verify the deposit information and signature to complete the transaction.

The new capability builds on USAA's Deposit@Home® service, introduced in 2006, which lets qualifying members scan and deposit checks using their home computer and scanner. In most cases, deposits are immediately available for use.

"Nearly 50 percent of our 1 million mobile users are active-duty military, who may be deployed anywhere," said Wayne Peacock, USAA's executive vice president of Enterprise Business Operations. "The convenience of mobile access is essential to delivering the highest possible level of customer service."

USAA Deposit@Mobile is the latest enhancement to the USAA Mobile App for the iPhone, launched in May, which enables qualifying USAA members to manage insurance, investment and bank accounts on a single, safe and secure platform.

Guard helps Texas Rangers patrol border

Texas National Guard members have been asked by Gov. Rick Perry to support a special group of Texas Rangers called "Ranger Recon Teams" at high-traffic and high-crime areas along the border, state Guard officials confirmed today.

"The role of the Texas Joint Counter Drug Task Force Team is to support those operations," said Army Col. William Meehan, a public affairs officer with the



Photo by Lance Cpl. Jeremy Harris, U.S. Marine Corps

U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Benjamin Lascelles teaches an Afghan man English words in the Nawa district of the Helmand province, Afghanistan, on Sept. 12, 2009. Lascelles is assigned to Headquarters and Service Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment and is deployed with Regimental Combat Team 3 to conduct counterinsurgency operations in partnership with the Afghan National Security Forces in southern Afghanistan.

Texas National Guard. "But then, this is something that we have been doing well for nearly 20 years with our counterdrug operations."

The only difference in this mission from their normal counterdrug operation is that they are supporting the Texas Rangers, who launched this particular reconnaissance initiative to reinforce law enforcement along the Texas-Mexico border, Meehan said.

The Joint Counter Drug Task Force, which is made up of about 200 Guard Soldiers and Airmen, may provide aviation, communications, security, medical, logistics, observation and planning support to the Rangers.

The Guard members as well as the Texas Rangers and Ranger Recon Teams will be supported by the Operation Border Star Unified Command, which includes Texas Sheriffs, Highway Patrol strike teams and Department of Public Safety Aviation resources, according to a release from the governor's office.

The effort was launched in early August to address the increase in burglaries of rural homes, ranches and hunting camps in remote areas along the border, said state officials.

Perry said the state's proven border security strategy is based on putting boots on the ground and equipping those personnel with technology, training and

funding to stem the flow of contraband across the border.

"Deploying Ranger Recon Teams to high-traffic, high-crime areas along the border will enhance our efforts," Perry said.

Army adds orders for Polaris vehicles

Polaris Industries Inc. received orders from the U.S. Army to provide additional vehicles, parts and accessories of the company's militarized ATV (All-Terrain Vehicle), the MV700, for operations in Afghanistan.

Values of these orders exceed \$6 million and deliveries are planned for later this year.

"Polaris is very proud to continue its role in providing the U.S. Army and its allies with world-class machines that can be relied on to perform under the toughest conditions," said Bennett Morgan, president and chief operating officer of Polaris.

For the last five years, Polaris Defense has been supplying a family of vehicles to the U.S. Department of Defense as well as other government agencies and US Allies. Their mission is to provide the U.S. Armed Forces and its allies with the world's toughest, militarized ATVs and Side-by-Side Vehicles. Details: www.polarisdefense.com

DoD To Implement Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay

The Defense Department reported the services' implementation plans to provide retroactive stop loss special pay. Active, reserve and former service members who had their enlistment extended or retirement suspended due to stop loss are eligible for this special pay, if they served on active duty between Sept. 11, 2001 and Sept. 30, 2009.

In accordance with the 2009 Supplemental Appropriations Act, all applications must be submitted to the respective services no later than Oct. 21, 2010. Eligible personnel will receive a payment of \$500 per month for each month (or any portion of a month) that a member was retained on active duty due to stop loss.

Service members must provide documented proof they were stop loss with their claim. Family members of deceased service members should contact the appropriate military service for assistance in filing their claim.

Information on how to contact each of the services is listed below:

Army: www.stoplosspay.army.mil or email RetroStopLossPay@CONUS.Army.Mil

Navy: Email NXAG_N132C@navy.mil

Marine Corps: www.manpower.usmc.mil/stoploss or email stoploss@usmc.mil

Air Force: www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/stoploss/

Chief says Guard cannot go back to strategic reserve

The National Guard cannot go back to the days of the strategic reserve, the chief of the National Guard Bureau said.

"We must maintain the level of efficiency and effectiveness that has been achieved today," said Gen. Craig R. McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau, who spoke at the 38th annual conference of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS).

"We can't be relegated to obsolete and incompatible equipment like we were during the Cold War," he said. "We have proven that that old way of doing business does not work in today's environment."

McKinley added that the Guard cannot return to a model of one weekend a

month and two weeks a year.

"In an era of persistent conflict, we need a predictable rotational model and we must maintain proficiency and interoperability with the rest of the force," he said. "We must modernize at a proportional rate to the active component."

This period in history is exactly what the Guard and reserve were built for, McKinley said. "We are shock absorbers in an all-volunteer force that allows us to go to this level of tempo."

How long can the Guard remain an operational force? McKinley said he asks the same question: "If resourced with the personnel and equipment to maintain readiness, can we maintain this optempo indefinitely, including floods, fires and hurricanes that we support for our governors? So far, I am hearing the answer is, 'Yes.'"

McKinley said the Guard proves this by enlisting high-quality recruits.

He said the better question is: What do we want to be when the war stops? "Even though the Guard, properly resourced could sustain the optempo, our nation cannot afford to do so," he said.

Even during steady state, the Guard will continue to have persistent requirements, McKinley said. For example, the Air National Guard flies the vast majority of air sovereignty alert missions, and "we are going to be challenged here in the near future as we retire our aging fleet."



Air Force Gen. Craig R. McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau, speaks at the 38th annual conference of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States held in Rochester, Minn.

The Chief said persistent conflict and constrained resources will be with us for the foreseeable future.

"While I recognize this to be true, I fear our leaders may eventually become worn down in the fight for resources and lower our expectations for our Airmen and Soldiers," McKinley said. "I fully expect you to continue to push enlisted issues up, so they are prioritized appropriately."

About 85 percent of the Guard force is enlisted, and "central to the way I approach every issue as the chief of the National Guard Bureau, is how decisions we make affect you, the backbone of our services," McKinley said.

ReserveNet changes to ARCNet

ReserveNet has a new name and a new mission. After a year of coordination between Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard officials, ARCNet was established Sept. 1 to provide ReserveNet capabilities to Air Guard members.

Until now, only reservists had access to these resources used to train, communicate and prepare for executing their missions. The new name, ARCNet, was chosen to reflect users across the Air Reserve Component spectrum.

"ARCNet will provide a standard ancillary training program for the Air National Guard," said Chief Master Sgt. Leo Kreifels of the Nebraska Air National Guard. "Prior to ARCNet, each wing created its own way of monitoring ancillary training requirements. The introduction of ARCNet will streamline the process across the Air National Guard."

The Air Guard community currently is interested in using part of the ARCNet capability: ancillary training, management inspection and volunteer opportunity systems. Air Force reservists will continue to have access to the all of the previous ReserveNet capabilities, including reserve duty planning and participation and status management.

Six Air National Guard units initially will have access to ARCNet. The National Guard Bureau plans to bring the remaining Air Guard units on board in 2010.

"The Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard face similar challenges in maintaining a fighting force of primarily part-time workers," said Lisa Woodson ARCNet program manager here. "Partnering together to address these challenges provides value for both sides."