The National Guard: What is a Citizen Soldier?

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INTRODUCTION

- The National Guard (NG, also known as the Guard) consists of 54 individual commands at the State, Territorial, and DC level. Each command has an Army and Air component with direct connections to their active duty counterparts.
- Many members of the public lack general knowledge of the Guard and its mission, including mental health specialists and other professionals who serve the Guard.
- Most Guard members have full-time civilian jobs or attend school while serving part-time, regularly switching between roles and routines, leading to unique stressors faced by Guard members and their families.
- The purpose of this poster is to increase knowledge of the Guard's history, structure, culture, and mission to help professionals provide more effective services to this unique population.

NATIONAL GUARD HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

Origins of the National Guard	
NG Foundation, 1636	The Massachusetts colonial legislature directed the colony's militia companies to organize into three regiments for the defense of the colony, laying the foundation for the National Guard.
First Aero Company, 1915	The 1st Aero Company was organized and is the oldest NG aviation unit.
Birth of Air National Guard, 1947	The official birth date of the Air National Guard as a reserve component of the U.S. Air Force, as previously some NG aviation units were part of the U.S. Army Air Force.
Early Days of the Colonial Militias	
King Philip's War, 1675-1676	Considered the first great war in American history, state militias from Massachusetts and Connecticut fought alongside allied Native tribes to defeat the Narragansett Tribe.
The American Revolution, 1775-1783	Militias fought in major battles, such as the Battle of Bunker Hill to the Battle of Yorktown, separately as units and in forming the basis of Washington's Continental Army.
Twentieth Century U.S. Military Conflicts	
World War I, 1917-1918	After the beginning of WWI, Guard soldiers were mobilized into the active duty Army. Eighteen Guard divisions participated in the war, including The Pennsylvania National Guard's 28th Infantry Division who fought in the Second Battle of the Marne.
World War II, 1941-1945	The Guard provided 19 divisions to the Army, with nine divisions sent to European theaters and 10 to Pacific theaters.
Major Events in the Twenty-first Century	
Afghanistan & Iraq, 2001-2021	Guard members were deployed to multiple combat missions in Afghanistan and Iraq.
The COVID-19 Pandemic, 2020-2023	The Guard provided many services to their States including distributing food, delivering medical supplies, collecting samples for testing, and administering vaccinations.
Natural Disasters	Disaster response is a critical NG mission. Guard personnel have provided humanitarian aid in the aftermath of natural disasters such as hurricanes, snow storms, flooding, and wildfires.
Other Domestic Operations	The National Guard is often deployed in support of civil authorities during state and national emergencies such as terrorism, civil unrest, industrial accidents, and public health.

IMPORTANT LEGISLATIVE FOUNDATIONS

The U.S. Constitution	Outlined the authorities of the President and Congress regarding the militia.
Posse Comitatus Act of 1878	Limited the use of the active duty Military as law enforcement unless authorized by law.
The Militia Act of 1903	Created The National Guard Bureau, which today is a joint bureau of the Department of the Army and the Department of the Air Force.
National Defense Act of 1916	Officially named the "National Guard" and established the Guard as the nation's primary defense force, increased the Guard's size, and defined terms of training drills.
National Security Act of 1947	This Act established the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), including the Department of the Air Force and the Air National Guard as separate components within the DoD.

NATIONAL GUARD OVERVIEW

- **The National Guard has over 430,000 service members, organized into 2,000 Army National Guard (ARNG) units and 89 Air National Guard (ANG) units across the 50 States, 3 Territories, and DC.**
- **"Always Ready, Always There:"** The National Guard's motto reflects the Guard's level of readiness, speed in deployment, and range of missions.
- **The Missions of the National Guard:** The National Guard responds to a wide variety of both Federal and State missions, including natural disasters, counterdrug interdiction, and civil unrest, in addition to being the primary military reserve for the active-duty Army and Air Force.
- **The Guard's Demographics:**
  - The average age of enlisted members in the ARNG is 28.6 years and is 33.4 years in the ANG.
  - 24.3% of ARNG and 20.8% of ANG enlisted members identify as a racial minority.
  - The ARNG had a slightly higher percentage of males than the ANG (80.7% and 78.2%, respectively).
- **The Guard's Structure:** The Guard serves both the Governor and the President.
  - The State, Territory, and DC-level commands recruit, train, and equip Guard members for a wide variety of missions. These readiness efforts are funded by the Federal government.
  - When ordered to active duty, the cost is paid by the Federal government. When ordered to State Active Duty (SAD), costs are covered by the State.
- **On active duty orders**, Guard members are commanded by active component military personnel and are generally assigned duties identical to their active duty counterparts.
- **Terms of National Guard Service:** Initial NG service term is typically eight years.

Types of National Guard Service	
Inactive Duty Training (IDT)	Sometimes referred to as "weekend drill status," IDT periods are typically two or three days, generally scheduled one weekend a month, and focused on individual and unit training.
Active-Duty Training (ADT)	ADT is a temporary period of full-time military training and is typically conducted annually as a two-week period. However, training can last from a few days to several months.
Active Guard Reserve Status (AGR)	As a full-time status under U.S.C. Title 32, AGR positions primarily focus on tasks necessary to maintain Guard operations. Tasks include facility management, payroll, communications, supply, and logistics.
State Active Duty (SAD)	A limited period of full-time status ordered by the governor, generally, in response to a local emergency and conducted entirely at State cost.
Federally Reimbursed Active Service Under U.S.C. Title 32	The status commonly occurs during responses to declared federal emergencies. Although partially or fully funded by the federal government during these emergencies, Guard members serving in this status remain under the control of the Governor.
Federal Active Service Under U.S.C. Title 10	When mobilized for federal service, Guard members serve in Title 10 status supporting active duty component missions. This service can range from short tours in the U.S. to lengthy overseas missions.

MILITARY & GUARD CULTURE

- As a part of the U.S. Military, the ARNG and the ANG share cultural characteristics with the other components.
  - U.S. Military cultural values include sense of duty, mission accomplishment, self-sacrifice, merit, and hierarchy.
- The Guard uniquely has two missions, federal and State, requiring adaptation to the culture of each.
- **Guard members balance family, civilian, and military roles.**
- Subcultures also exist within the ARNG and the ANG. Subcultures are heavily influenced by service members' career field and rank.

GUARD LIFECYCLE

- **Life in the Guard includes many transitions.**
- **Early Career Transitions include:**
  - Initial entry and career field-training
  - Separation from family and friends
  - Discipline and authority
  - Environment, long hours, physically taxing work
- **Middle Career Transitions include:**
  - Military leadership training and higher education
  - Promotions and demotions
  - Relocation and frequent moves
- **Late Career Transitions include:**
  - Mentoring younger service members and higher level responsibilities
  - Planning For retirement
  - Separation from the Military
- **Other Transitions include:**
  - Marital and family changes
  - Injury and illness
  - Changes in location, occupations, finances, and relationships

EXTRAORDINARY NG PROGRAMS

- **The State Partnership Program (SPP):** A joint program between the DoW, the U.S. State Department, and Guard organizations. The program matches States, Territories, and the DC National Guard with 116 partner countries (as of 2025), to build cooperative relationships and advance peace and security.
- **National Guard Youth Challenge Program:** With over 200,000 graduates since its establishment in 1993, this program intervenes in the lives of 16 to 18 year olds who have dropped out of high school, producing program graduates with the values, life skills, education, and self-discipline necessary to succeed as productive citizens.
- **The National Guard CBRN Response Enterprise (NGCRE):** Maintains specialized nationwide forces that provide the equipment and capabilities to support civil authorities and federal partners in domestic incidents and specified threats. The NGCRE has over 10,000 ARNG and ANG personnel distributed across all 50 States, 3 Territories, and DC.

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