Military-Connected Awareness Guide

General information for learning more about the military; including: the branches of the armed forces, customs and ways you can support military-connected people
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MILITARY-CONNECTED 101

This booklet was assembled from researching publications, online materials, and learning modules as part of the roll out the military-identifier program under ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) began in July 2017. It was important to learn the military culture landscape to uphold the best intent for supporting military-connected students in our district. The objective is to provide general information to share knowledge and an overview of the important historical foundation of our military. It is crafted with the utmost respect for our service members and desire to share the unique culture and special way of the armed forces for others that may be learning more about the military.

For more resources regarding military-connected programs please visit our website: https://childservices.dpsk12.org/military-connected/
## Useful Military Terminology

### Branch of Service

- Army
- Air Force
- Navy
- Marine Corps
- Coast Guard

### Active Duty

Full-time - 365 days/year. About 1.4 million active duty service members.

### Reserve

Part-time military.

### National Guard

Two branches of the Armed Services maintain a civilian component. Army and Air National Guard.

### OIF

Operation Iraqi Freedom (2001-present)

### OEF

Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan, October 2001-present)

### OND

Operation New Dawn (Iraq beginning 2010)

### MOS

Military Occupational Specialty

This is the job a person has in the military.

### Mobilization

Mobilization begins when a service member receives notice of orders to active duty and prepares to transition from reserve/guard status to Active Component status.

### Active Duty Status

Active Duty Status begins with travel to the home station and is followed by mobilization to a location either in U.S. or overseas. Deployment follows next.

### Deployment

Sending troops into duty.

### Deployment Cycle

The deployment cycle begins when the service member receives notice of impending deployment and ends between 3 and 6 months following the service members homecoming. This entire cycle is about 18 months long depending on the branch of service.

### Installation

A base, camp, post, station, yard, center, or other activity under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of a Military Department.

### Veteran

is any person, who served honorably on active duty in the armed forces of the United States.

### Veteran Family

Immediate family members related by blood, marriage, or adoption to a veteran of the U.S. armed forces, including one who is deceased.

### Military Family

Immediate family members related by blood, marriage, or adoption to a current member of the U.S. armed forces, including one who is deceased.

### Wounded Warrior

An illness, wound or injury suffered from serving in the armed services. All branches of the military have programs to support wounded warriors.
The color purple significance

- Purple represents all the military branches.
- It is a combination of Army green, Marine red, and Coast Guard, Air Force and Navy blue.
- The Purple Heart is a United States military decoration awarded in the name of the President to those wounded or killed while serving, on or after April 5, 1917.
- The Purple Heart is the oldest military award still given to U.S. military members.
- August 7th is National Purple Heart Day to honor those wounded or killed in the armed forces.
- April is the month of the military child. You can "Purple Up" for military-connected children to honor their bravery and courage.
- May is National Military Appreciation Month.
- November is National Military Family Month.
Nationally

- Over 1.1 million active duty service members stationed in the United States
- 200,000 are deployed overseas in 177 countries on approximately 800 bases
- Over 50% are married
- 41% have children
- 40% of the total force is 25 years old or younger
- 84% are males
- 68% are Caucasian
- 87% stationed in U.S.
- 76% have high school diploma and some college

For Colorado

- Is ranked 10th out of states with active duty military
- Over 35,700 members which is 3.2% of all active duty
- By the numbers: Army: 25,551 Navy: 752 Marine Corp: 221 Air Force: 8,549 Coast Guard: 41

Army

- The United States (U.S.) Army is the main ground force of the United States.
- The main function of Army is protect and defend by way of ground troops, armor tanks, artillery (weapon) and helicopters.
- The Army is the oldest U.S. military service (established in 1775).
- The Army is the largest U.S military service.
- There are approximately 392,000 active duty enlisted members and 95,000 officers which makes up 37% of the armed forces.

Air Force

- The primary primary mission of the Air Force is to defend the U.S. through air and space.
- The Air Force operates fighter aircraft, tanker aircraft, bomber aircraft, transport aircraft and helicopters.
- Is responsible for military satellites and controls strategic nuclear missiles.
- There are approximately 246,000 active duty enlisted members and 61,000 officers which makes up 23% of the armed forces.
Marine Corps

- The Marine Corps is one of the most elite fighting forces in the world.
- Marines are a part of the Department of the Navy and operate in close cooperation with U.S. Naval forces at sea.
- Marines serve on U.S. Navy ships, protect naval bases, guard U.S. embassies, and provide an ever-ready quick strike force to protect U.S. interests anywhere in the world.
- Marines fly planes and helicopters; operate radar equipment; drive armored vehicles; gather intelligence; survey and map territory; maintain and repair radios, computers, jeeps, trucks, tanks, and aircraft.
- There are approximately 163,000 active duty enlisted members and 20,000 officers which makes up 14% of the armed forces.

Navy

- The Navy’s primary mission is to maintain freedom of the seas.
- Navy ships can attack land targets from miles away with heavy guns and cruise missiles.
- Navy submarines are high tech vessels that launch ballistic missiles.
- Navy transports the Marines to areas of conflict.
- There are approximately 269,000 active duty enlisted members and 54,000 officers which makes up 24% of the armed forces.

Coast Guard

- The Coast Guard falls under the Department of Homeland Defense (Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corp fall under Department of Defense (DoD).
- The Coast Guard is considered a military service because during times of war or conflict, the President of the United States can transfer any or all assets of the Coast Guard to the Department of the Navy.
- The primary job is law enforcement, boating safety, and sea rescue.
- Consists of ships, boats, aircraft and shore stations that conduct military missions.
- There are approximately 39,000 active duty enlisted members (it is the smallest military service).
Reserve

- Each branch of the military has a Reserve component and the Reserve are under the command of their respective military branch.
- The purpose of the Reserve is to provide and maintain trained units and qualified persons to be available for active duty in the armed forces when needed.
- This may be in times of war, in a national emergency, or as the need occurs based on threats to national security.
- The primary job of the Reserve is to fill the gaps in stateside service positions when the active duty forces ship overseas.
- Members of the Reserve are required to participate in training drills **one weekend a month and two weeks per year**.
- There are approximately **940,000 active reserve enlisted members and 158,000 officers which totals 1.1 million people serving as reserves.**
- **For Colorado:** 13,899 reservists: Air Force: 3,015, Army: 4,119, Coast Guard: 11, Marine Corp: 404, Navy: 893

National Guard

- The National Guard consists of the Army National Guard and the Air Force’s Air National Guard
- While federally funded, the National Guard is organized and controlled by state.
- However, in times of war, the National Guard can become federalized and deployed
- During local emergencies, National Guard units assist communities endangered by storms, floods, fires, and other disasters
- National Guard companies deployed overseas may see combat, but are more often building schools and hospitals, training local peacekeepers, or teaching local farmers more efficient farming techniques and better ways to use of their land
- The National Guard requires training drills one weekend a month and two weeks per year.
- There are approximately **163,000 active duty enlisted members and 20,000 officers.**
- **For Colorado:** Air National Guard: 1379, Army Guard: 3,878

Deployment

- Persons in the Reserve or National Guard are not full-time active duty military personnel, although they can be deployed at any time.
There are three general categories of rank. The Navy/Coast guard refer to it as rate. They are enlisted personnel, warrant officers and commissioned officers.

Enlisted Personnel

- Enlisted members are trained to perform specialties within the military.
- To be an enlisted member a person needs a minimum of a high school diploma.
- As an enlisted member moves up the ranks, he or she assumes more responsibility and provide more direct supervision (there are nine enlisted ranks).
- Enlisted personnel in certain grades have a special status known as non-commissioned officer status, or NCO.
- In the Army, Air Force and Marine Corps it is titled NCO. In the Navy/Coast Guard it is known as petty officer and in the Marine Corp a NCO begins as a grade of E-4 (Corporal).

Warrant Officer

- Warrant officers are highly-trained specialists who have an area of technical expertise.
- Warrant officers are found in each branch in the military except the Air Force.
- Warrant officers remain in their primary specialty to provide specialized knowledge and instruction to enlisted members and commissioned officers.
- To become a warrant officer, one must be an enlisted member with several years of experience, be recommended by their commander, and pass a selection board.
- There are five separate warrant ranks.

Commissioned Officer

- The highest-ranking members of the military are the commissioned officers.
- Their primary function is to provide overall management and leadership in their area of responsibility.
- Commissioned officers need a bachelors degree and some ranks need a master's degree.
- There are ten commissioned officer grades.
- There are two basic types: Line and Non-Line. A Non-Line is a non-combat specialist (like a doctor). A Line officer has general command authority.
# ARMED FORCES RATE AND RANK INsignia

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Example to locate an enlisted personnel military rank

Example to locate a warrant officer military rank

Example to locate a commissioned officer military rank
Organization

- Each of the branches have their own unique organization.

**Army**

**Team:** Usually made up of four soldiers.

**Squad/Section:** Consists of about 10 soldiers. A staff sergeant is in charge.

**Platoon:** Consists of a few squads and up to a few dozen soldiers. Run by a lieutenant.

**Company:** Commanded by a captain and consists of 3-4 platoons. There are anywhere from a few dozen soldiers to nearly 200.

**Battalion:** Consists of 4-6 companies and can include up to about 1,000 soldiers. Commanded by a lieutenant colonel.

**Brigade:** Consists of a few battalions and anywhere from 3,000-5,000 soldiers. A colonel is in command. Some battalions are organized into regiments instead of brigades. The armored cavalry, Rangers and Special Forces are examples of this.

**Division:** Run by a major general, divisions are made up of 3-4 brigades and include between 10,000-15,000 soldiers.

**Corps:** These include 2-5 divisions with anywhere between 20,000-45,000 soldiers. A lieutenant general is in command.

**Field Army:** This consists of two or more corps and is run by a general. There are currently four field armies, each with a different mission. Usually, the number of the field army is spelled out (example – Third Army).

**Army Group:** Consists of 4-5 field armies and between 400,000 and 1 million soldiers. They’re commanded by a general and are considered self-sufficient for indefinite periods. They’re usually responsible for a particular geographic area.

**Army Region:** These are only used in times of large-scale war. They usually consist of three or more field armies.

**Air Force**

**Section:** Formed of two or more airmen (also known as an “element” in basic training).

**Flight:** There are three types of flights: numbered, alpha and functional. They can be made up of individual airmen or sections.

**Squadron:** Consists of two or more flights. It’s the lowest level of command with a headquarters element and is usually identified by number and function. Usually commanded by a lieutenant colonel.

**Group:** Made up of two or more squadrons whose functions are similar to what the group is named (example – Medical Group). They are usually commanded by a colonel and mostly take on the number of the wing to which they’re assigned.

**Wing:** Two or more groups form wings. There are two types — composite and objective — and there’s only one wing assigned to a base. Usually they are commanded by a brigadier general.

**Numbered Air Force:** These are mostly assigned during war time and are usually assigned geographically (example – 7th Air Force).

**Major Command:** This is where wings usually report — to MAJCOM. They’re organized two ways: by mission if it’s in the continental U.S. (example – Global Strike or Space commands) or by region if it’s outside the continental U.S.
**Marine Corps**

Follows the "rule of three"

**Fire team:** Includes three Marines and a team leader, usually a corporal.

**Squad:** Three teams are assigned here.

**Platoon:** Consists of three squads. Commanded by a lieutenant.

**Company/Battery:** Includes three or more platoons. Commanded by a captain.

**Battalion:** Three or more companies. Commanded by a lieutenant colonel. Battalions are the lowest command level to have a headquarters staff element.

Three battalions form a **Regiment**.

Three regiments make up a **Marine Division**.

Four Marine divisions make up the **Marine Corps**.

The Marine Corps' leader, the commandant, reports directly to the Secretary of the Navy.

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**Navy**

- **Has a somewhat complicated organizational structure**
- There are **two chains of command** in the Navy:
  - **Operational**, which carries out specific missions such as operations and exercises; and **Administrative**, which takes care of personnel, education and training, repairs, and supply chains.
- The two chains sometimes overlap, and depending on where you're assigned, you might be part of both.
- **Operational:** There are currently **four component commands**: *Pacific Fleet, Naval Forces Europe, Naval Forces Central Command and Fleet Forces Command*. The component commanders have operational control over one or more of the numbered fleets
- There are **six active fleets** in the Navy. The fleets can be divided into **task forces**, then **task groups**, then smaller **task units** and, if needed, **task elements**
- When it comes to **individual vessels**, their operations are divided into **departments**, which can be broken into **divisions**. Sometimes smaller **work centers** are then formed.
- If you're in an **aviation unit**, you're part of a **squadron** that's part of an **air wing that's attached to a ship**
- **Naval Construction Battalions** (aka- SeaBees). They're like the construction crew of the Navy and very similar to engineers in the Army.
- **Administrative:** Contains commands for the Navy. The **three commands** are: **Shore, Systems, Type**.
Customs, courtesies, and traditions

The U.S. Military is comprised of five organizations that instill pride in their members because of history, mission, capabilities, and respect that has been earned in the service of the nation. A reflection of that pride is visible in the customs, courtesies, and traditions of military service.

**Customs**

A custom is an established practice. A custom is a social convention stemming from tradition and enforced as an unwritten law.

**Courtesies**

A courtesy is a kind, polite, considerate behavior often linked to a custom. A military courtesy is such behavior extended to a person or thing that honors them in some way.

- Most military customs and courtesies evolve from long-standing practices or have some historical significance.
- For example, the U.S. flag is folded in a triangular shape to represent the tri-corner hat of early American patriots. The lowering of the flag to half-staff comes from the naval custom of lowering sails upon the death of a crewmember to indicate that things were not "ship-shape."

Some customs and courtesies include: saluting, sir/sergeant, respecting the flag, pledge of allegiance, at attention, and drill movements.
The Hand Salute

45°

GOOD MORNING, SIR!
Saluting

History of the military hand salute

- Men of arms have used some form of the military salute as an exchange of greeting since the earliest times.
- It has been preserved and its use continued in all modern armies.
- It is a unique form of greeting between military professionals.

Cadre and Cadet

- **A cadre** is the key group of officers and enlisted personnel necessary to establish and train a new military unit.
- **A cadet** is a student in training for service as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army, Air Force, or Coast Guard.

When to use the military hand salute

- **Salutes are required between those officers junior and those senior in rank.** If individuals are equal in rank, salutes may be exchanged. There are no set rules regarding how close or how far away a junior must be in order to render a salute.
- **At all bases, military members (as pedestrians) are required to salute staff cars when there's an occupant inside the car.**
- **When on campus and in uniform, cadets will salute all officers of all services.**
- It is appropriate to **accompany the salute with a word of greeting** such as good morning, Sir/Ma'am.
- **When in uniform and the flag is being raised or lowered a salute is performed.**
- **When in uniform, a cadet would come to attention once permission to enter officers office then salute and state his/her name.**
- **When an officer approaches a uniformed group outside, the first cadet to recognize officer will call Attention and all officers will remain in salute and attention until given "at ease", "rest", or "carry on" or until officer passes.**
- **If cadets are performing a work detail only the person in charge would come to attention and salute.**
- **When in formation and an officer approaches, the person in charge calls for the formation to attention and salute.**

When the military hand salute is not used

- **Indoors, salutes are not exchanged except when reporting to a senior officer**
- When actively engaged in sports or the middle of training
- When operating a vehicle
- You're not expected to initiate or to return a salute if it's impractical or dangerous to do so.

Sir/Sergeant

- **All cadre and cadet officers are addressed as Sir/Ma'am**
- Sir/Ma'am is used in speaking officially or socially.
- **The word is repeated with each complete statement.**
- "Yes" and "No" should always be accompanied with Sir/Ma'am.
- All NCO’s (non-commissioned officers) should be addressed as Sergeant. The exception is First Sergeant and Sergeant Major. They are addressed by their title.
The Seniors place of honor

You should always **walk or sit to the left of your seniors.**

**Attention**

- When an officer enters a room occupied by personnel or cadets, **the room is called to attention.**
- At attention, or standing at attention, **is a military posture which involves the following general postures:**
  - Standing upright with an assertive and correct posture: famously "chin up, chest out, shoulders back, stomach in".
  - Arms fixed at the side, thumb or middle finger parallel to trouser or skirt seam, depending on military drill specifics.
  - "Eyes front" and head and eyes locked in a fixed forward posture. Ideally eyes unmoving and fixated on a distant object. Blank facial expression.
  - Keeping the heels together, with the toes apart.
  - No speech, facial or bodily movements except when as required by military drill.

[Image of a person in military uniform at attention]

**At Attention**
The Flag

- The flag of the United States shall be thirteen horizontal stripes, alternate red and white; and the union of the flag shall be fifty stars representing the fifty states, white in a blue field.
- It is the universal custom to display the flag only from sunrise to sunset on buildings and on stationary flagstaffs in the open. However, the flag may be displayed twenty-four hours a day if properly illuminated during the hours of darkness.
- The flag should be hoisted briskly and lowered ceremoniously.
- The flag should not be displayed on days when the weather is inclement, except when an all-weather flag is displayed.
- The flag should be displayed daily on or near the main administration building of every public institution.
- The flag should be displayed in or near every polling place on election days.
- The flag should be displayed during school days in or near every school.
- The flag, when carried in a procession with another flag or flags, should be either on the marching right; that is, the flag's own right, or, if there is a line of other flags, in front of the center of that line.

Respect for The Flag

- Military personnel don't salute the national flag during indoor ceremonies when in uniform. When the National Anthem or "To The Colors" is played, personnel in civilian or military attire will stand at attention facing the flag (or the source of music if the flag isn't visible). When in civilian attire, come to attention, and place your right hand over your heart.
- No disrespect should be shown to the flag of the United States of America; the flag should not be dipped to any person or thing. Regimental colors, State flags, and organization or institutional flags are to be dipped as a mark of honor.
- During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the flag or when the flag is passing in a parade or in review, all persons present in uniform should render the military salute.
- Members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute.
- All other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart.
- All such conduct toward the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes.

The Pledge of Allegiance

- The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag: "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.", should be rendered by standing at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart.
- When not in uniform men should remove any non-religious headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart.
Drill Movements: Basic Drill Commands

- **STEP**: The distance from heel to heel between the feet of a marching person. The half step and back step are 15 inches (30 total). The right and left steps are 12 inches. **Members of any formation must respond in unison to the commands given.**

- **PARADE REST**: The commands Parade REST are given only when the formation is at attention; the movement is executed in one count. On the command REST, move your left foot smartly 12 inches to the left. At the same time, join your hands behind your back with your right hand inside the left, holding the left thumb. Keep your fingers straight while resting your hands in the small of your back. Stand with both legs straight allowing your weight to rest equally on each foot. Do not move and do not talk. Direct your head and eyes as you would in the position of attention.

- **AT EASE**: On the command AT EASE, you can relax and shift about, but keep your right foot in place. **Do not talk.**

- **REST**: On the command REST, follow the same movement restrictions as you would when at ease, but **you may talk.**

- **RIGHT FACE**: Right face is a two-count movement. On the command **FACE**; (1) Raise your left heel and right toe slightly and turn 90 degrees to the right. Keep your left leg straight but not stiff. (2) Bring your left heel smartly alongside the right heel and stand at attention. **EYES RIGHT**: When given the commands Eyes, RIGHT, smartly turn your head 45 degrees to the right on the command RIGHT. The commands to turn your head back to the position of attention are Ready, FRONT. On the command FRONT, snap your head to the front. Remain in that position as the officer continues down the line.

- **ABOUT FACE**: About face is a two-count movement performed on the command. On the command **ABOUT**, shift your weight to your left leg without noticeable movement. On the command **FACE**, (1) place your right toe about 6 inches behind and slightly to the left of your left heel; (2) on the ball of the right foot and the heel of the left foot, turn smartly to the right until you are facing the rear. Your feet will be in the position of attention when the turn is completed.

- **FALL IN**: On the command FALL IN, the squad forms in line on the left of the right flank member (squad leader). Each member of the squad, except the left flank member, raises the left arm shoulder high in line with the body. Fingers are straight and touching each other, palm down. Each member, except the right flank member, turns the head and looks to the right. As soon as you are in line with the person to your right and the person on your left has obtained normal interval, return smartly and quickly to the position of attention.
March Step

Parade rest
At ease

At rest
Fall in
Ways to get involved

Support:

- Visit a wounded veteran at the hospital.
- Offer your home repair skills to a veteran or military family.
- Volunteer your financial, legal, or career expertise via MilServe.
- Deliver a meal or care packages to veterans or sign up to send care packages overseas to active duty members.
- Help a veteran tell their story through a project such as the Veteran's History Project.
- Volunteer with an organization, such as Canine Companions for Independence, that provide therapy dogs to veterans.
- Offer a vet a ride by volunteering with the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) organization, which provides free transportation to men and women unable to travel to VA medical facilities on their own.
- Say “Thank You” through letters, in-person or during holidays
- Help a new military family to the area by sharing community resources, offer to babysit, mow their lawn, help with errands, etc.
- Remember that April is the Military Child month and do something special for military children.

Learning:

Check in with local veterans service organizations. and contact the base’s Family Resource Center. (All branches of military can be served at an installation)
The closest base (installation) is: Buckley Air Force Base (http://www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil/MOS/i?p=M1:ENTRY:0) and National Guard is in Centennial (http://congfamilyreadiness.net/connect/location/)
Educate yourself about military culture and the different branches of service.
Watch "A Walk in my Shoes" : Military Life (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqvHKJvEWtU)
Watch "Staying Strong" (http://www.stayingstrong.org/educators/)

Websites:

Check out these programs to see how you can best contribute your time and talent

American Legion – www.legion.org
With nearly 3 million members in close to 15,000 American Legion posts around the world, the American Legion’s local posts assist veterans and their family members to file benefits claims and represent veterans denied benefits to which they feel they are entitled. They also offer career services, scholarship assistance, a family support network, and more.

American Red Cross – www.redcross.org
The nation’s premier emergency response organization aids victims of devastating natural disasters and aims to prevent and relieve suffering. They also support and comfort military members and their families; collect, process and distribute lifesaving blood and blood products; and have a deep history in helping military members and their families. Click on "volunteer" under the Giving and Getting Involved tab.

America Supports You (Department of Defense - DoD) – www.ourmilitary.mil/
This DoD site provides a directory of organizations specifically devoted to helping veterans.
Army Family Readiness Groups – www.armyfrg.org
Offers information and resources to assist soldiers and their families during deployment. The Virtual Family Readiness Group (vFRG) provides the functionality of a FRG in an online setting to offer timely unit news, up-to-date information on military and community resources, quick access to unit and FRG leadership, and more.

Blue Star Families – www.bluestarfam.org/
Blue Star Families aims to raise awareness among civilians of the challenges of military life. The organization was formed in December of 2008 by a group of military spouses and now includes spouses and families from all services, veterans and civilians.

Coast Guard Ombudsman – www.uscg.mil
Serves as a link between a Coast Guard command and the families of the command. An Ombudsman can assist families to locate resources, communicate information from the command to the families, and take concerns of families back to the command.

Give an Hour – www.giveanhour.org
This national nonprofit organization provides free mental health services to members of the military, veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, their families and their communities. Currently, there are approximately 6,500 licensed mental health professionals volunteering their time on the Give an Hour network.

Joining Forces – www.whitehouse.gov/joiningforces/
Joining Forces is a national initiative to get all Americans to support troops and their families.

The United States Junior Chamber (Jaycees) – www.usjaycees.org
This organization helps young people build the bridges of success for themselves. They sponsor the Support Our Troops program that sends care packages to the troops and promotes a license plate program that raises funds that publicly support the troops.

Make the Connection – www.MakeTheConnection.net
This website connects Veterans and their friends and family members by providing information, resources, and solutions to issues that affect Veterans’ health and everyday lives. In addition to support, Make The Connection allows for shared experiences in the words of Veterans.

National Guard Family Programs – www.jointservicessupport.org
Offers a staff directory for each state, as well as a list of upcoming events and trainings. The site’s mission is to enhance the quality of life for National Guard members, their families, and their communities.

A leading advocate for improvements in the quality of military family life. Educates military families about their rights, benefits and available services. Provides information about the issues that affect their lives and promotes and protects their interests by influencing the development and implementation of legislation and policies.

Websites continued:

Armed Services YMCA – www.asymca.org
Provides support services to military service members – with particular focus on junior enlisted men and women and their families. Services include childcare, hospital assistance, spouse support services, food services, holiday meals, and more.

Arm Family Readiness Groups – www.armyfrg.org
Offers information and resources to assist soldiers and their families during deployment. The Virtual Family Readiness Group (vFRG) provides the functionality of a FRG in an online setting to offer timely unit news, up-to-date information on military and community resources, quick access to unit and FRG leadership, and more.

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Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society – www.nmcrs.org
This Society partners with the Navy and Marine Corps to provide financial, educational, and other assistance to Service members and their eligible family members and survivors, when in need. Eligible recipients receive interest-free loans for emergencies or educational purposes and needs-based scholarships. They also offer budget counseling services, thrift shops, and visiting nurse services.

Operation Homefront – www.operationhomefront.net
Provides emergency assistance and morale to our troops, to the families they leave behind, and to wounded warriors when they return home. Operates a variety of programs – vehicle donation, furniture, holiday, as well as assistance services, including food, financial, moving, housing, hurricane relief and scholarship programs.

Serve.gov believes that all Americans have a role to play in supporting troops and their families. The site locates volunteer opportunities by zip code and also has links to resources (www.serve.gov/vets_resources.asp) that help military families and veterans.

United States Department of Veterans Affairs – www.va.gov
The VA’s goal is to provide excellence in patient care, veterans’ benefits, and customer satisfaction. They offer a wide variety of services, including disability compensation, health programs, housing services, and has more than 1500 facilities across the nation. Complete a volunteer form at www.volunteer.va.gov and a local VA representative will contact you.

USO – www.uso.org
Provides morale, welfare and recreation-type services to uniformed military personnel and their families.

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) – www.vfw.org
The VFW, with its Auxiliaries, includes 2.2 million members in approximately 8,100 posts worldwide. Their mission is to “honor the dead by helping the living” through veterans’ service, community service, national security and a strong national defense. They helped to establish the VA; created a GI bill for the 20th century, and developed the national cemetery system, and also fought to improve VA medical center services for women veterans.