

ARNG Patriot Academy

What is it?

The Patriot Academy, based at the Muscatatuck Urban Training and Testing Complex (MUTTC), is the nation's first accredited military academy that awards a high school diploma. The Patriot Academy enrolls qualified initial entry Soldiers who have not completed their high school education and provides them with the opportunity to earn a high school diploma. Soldiers receive full-time military pay and benefits as they receive education and military training.

While at the Patriot Academy, students work in a web-based environment to complete high school degree requirements. Soldiers use the federal tuition assistance program for enrollment into the degree program. Soldiers conduct military training to include instruction on military operations in urban terrain, traffic control points, and other skill areas. Enlistees attend Army Basic Combat Training (BCT) and then arrive at the Patriot Academy to begin their studies. Upon graduation from the Patriot Academy, the Soldier attends advanced individual training (AIT). After completion of AIT, the Soldier returns back to his state or territory.

What has the ARNG Done?

The Patriot Academy stood up operations in June 2009, with an initial enrollment of 47 Soldiers/students and staff/cadre strength of 38. The staff/cadre has grown to 69 strong and in December 2011, 143 students representing 39 states were enrolled. As of 12 January 2012, 334 soldiers have graduated from Patriot Academy representing 40 of the 54 states, territories, and District of Columbia. Of these:

- 26 are now SPC/E4
- 3 graduated Airborne
- 2 earned the Aviation Basic Badge
- 7 earned Army Achievement Medals (AAMs)
- 1 Army Commendation Medal (ARCOM) and AAM awarded at unit
- 1 earned a State Emergency Deployment Award
- 1 received US citizenship
- 2 are now in Regular Army (serving in Germany and Hawaii)

In the six months preceding December 2011 students have earned a total of 1,515 college credits in addition to earning their high school diplomas.

What continued efforts does the ARNG have planned for the future?

The Patriot Academy is designed to graduate up to 500 Soldiers/students per year. Currently the recruiting results have been within the throughput capacity. The program investment is more cost-effective (less expensive) than the opportunity cost of ignoring a plentiful resource; the program is ready to expand along with demand.

Why is this important to the Army National Guard?

Research shows that the lifetime cost of dropping out of high school is approximately \$260,000. A study in Illinois and Ohio indicated that the potential cost to a state government for a dropout is over \$200,000. Extending this loss out, a Texas study indicated that the dropouts from just a single year will cost the state about \$19 billion over 50 years. A similar study in California estimated the lifetime loss to the state of one year of dropouts is over \$46 billion. An Indiana article noted that about half of the adults on welfare lack a high school diploma and about three out of four unemployed adults have literacy problems. An article in *Principal Leadership* points out that the plight of the high school dropout has worsened in recent years as low skilled factory jobs, once available to dropouts, have been outsourced to companies

The high school diploma is also an indicator of success in the military – more valuable than the General Equivalency Diploma (GED). Focusing on potential loss, however, is not the bottom line. Tapping this 3-million strong pool of talent with a program that promises an education and a jumpstart on a career is a powerful formula. Demonstrating literacy improvements along with performance achievements are bottom-line goals for the Patriot Academy program.