IS JOINING THE NATIONAL GUARD A GOOD WAY TO PAY FOR COLLEGE?

After a period of basic training, getting a monthly salary for National Guard training one weekend a month and two weeks in the summer, plus getting tuition paid, certainly has worked well in the past for some students who have joined the National Guard.

Here is a caution light however, because of recent changes to the National Guard. Now National Guard units are “twinned” with an Active Duty Army unit so that they all have the same level of training for the time they are deployed together to combat or some other overseas commitment. Active Duty Army units do have some time at home, but are periodically deployed overseas. As a member of the National Guard or any branch of the military, you must deploy with your unit. Where you are with your educational schedule makes no difference.

Recently National Guard recruiters phoned many students at the University of Oregon and Lane Community College with great sounding deals to join the National Guard and get tuition paid. Recruiters did not tell students about the new changes, which mean that at any time over the 8 years of their commitment to the National Guard, they could and likely would be called to active duty for some period of time.

So enlisting in the National Guard may still be a student’s choice, but heed this warning about likely disruptions to one’s education schedule. The National Guard is no longer just a group of people, wanting to help in local or regional emergencies. They are a branch of the military.

Before enlisting, check out other alternatives to achieve your goals….