

Unique strengths of Guard and Reserve Veterans

Interviewee1: I'm in the North Carolina Army National Guard, been in about 13 years.

Interviewee2: I was a member of the Minnesota National Guard and I have done two deployments to Iraq.

Interviewee3: It's a whole different world if you've never been in the Reserves. Its tough going from being a civilian 28 days out of the month and then going back to Army life for two days, you know, an everyday Soldier to a weekend warrior. The transition was the hardest part.

Interviewee1: Well as a National Guardsman you initially get the warning order which means that sometime in the future you're probably going to deploy. And we don't really know anything else up until very close to the deployment time.

Interviewee4: Most National Guard families really don't realize and don't think that their Soldiers are going to actually get called up. On the weekends we do carry our weapons and there's a reason we do that.

Interviewee5: As soon as Katrina came in I was about to get deployed and I had to tell my employer about that. It didn't go well. It did not go well at all.

Interviewee6: You were in such a completely different environment, forget about the threat and what can happen to you. They are two different worlds.

Interviewee7: It was tough when you get home and everyone goes their separate ways it's kind of like, "Okay, now what?" So that was definitely tough.

Interviewee8: At that time, I was transitioning out of the Reserves. That's when a lot of the separation hit. I started to isolate myself because the built-in Military community wasn't there.

Interviewee1: It's hard to get that job back. When I came home they said, "Here's your part-time job back," and there really wasn't a whole lot you could do about it.

Interviewee9: I came back to my restaurant job, but that restaurant didn't exist anymore, out of business. So I had no job, so I went on unemployment. I thought I had a relationship, that fizzled out fast.

Interviewee6: I sought out a civilian counselor and worked through some of these issues.

Interviewee10: I was in that therapy for about a year and it helped me with a lot of the coping skills, and it helped smooth a lot of that out.

Interviewee11: And I guess as a result of being able to handle things better, good things started happening and then therefore it gave me a little bit more confidence to continue to do what I was doing.



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Interviewee12: Actually, being home and being comfortable where you are and who you are and what you are doing is an amazing feeling. Some of us need help to get there.

Interviewee3: Whether it's physical help or mental help, financial help, if you're not happy, there's somebody there to help you.



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