



# HOLISTIC WELLNESS CHALLENGE



## STAY STRONG TO SERVE

**CHALLENGE** your Service members and yourself to use at least one of the recommended resources for balancing civilian and military life to stay mission ready.

## CNGB & SEA Corner

*Always Ready, Always There*

Being a Guardsman means balancing civilian, military, and family life with one purpose: service. This duality is what sets you apart. It requires adaptability, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to excellence in both your civilian and military lives.

Balancing your career or school, family obligations, and military readiness is no small feat. The demands on your time, energy, and focus can be intense. Your mental, emotional, and physical health are mission critical.

You are Citizen Warriors. Stay strong, stay sharp, stay ready.

Stronger Together, Stronger Tomorrow.

*Steven S. Nordhaus John T. Raines III*

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## FACTS & FIGURES: DID YOU KNOW?

- 433,000 Soldiers and Airman live and serve in nearly every community across the 54.<sup>1</sup>
- The top two contextual factors for NG suicides within a year were relationship problems and financial difficulties.<sup>2,3</sup>

## EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

As Guardsmen you may be called to serve in an overseas contingency operation or for an emergency response in your community. Your dual role can create unique stressors that can impact your well-being. A few examples include:



**Family.** Marital strain due to abrupt separation, childcare challenges, and disrupted household routines.



**Finances.** Fluctuations in pay during drill or activations. Additional childcare, travel, or home repair expenses can stress your budget.



**Employment.** Employers who are uninformed or non-compliant with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) may result in missed career advancement opportunities, overtime, or bonus pay for Guardsmen.

## RESILIENCE IS READINESS



How you balance your citizen life fuels your readiness to serve. Use these resources to boost and sustain your resilience.

**Someone To Talk To** provides free confidential counseling to give couples a safe space to talk through stressors and strengthen bonds.

**Psychological Health Program** supports Guard members and families to help cope with stress, work, or family issues.

**Office of Financial Readiness (FINRED)** offers free personal financial counseling services.

**Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)** has resources to help you understand your rights under USERRA and assist in resolving conflicts between Service members and their employers.

See the **Resources to Recommend** section for more information on these resources.

## CONTACT US

For more information on balancing civilian and military life or other topics email:  
[nq.ncr.ngb.mbx.integrated-prevention-branch@army.mil](mailto:nq.ncr.ngb.mbx.integrated-prevention-branch@army.mil)

## COMBATTING THE CHALLENGES

### What does it mean?

- Practicing self-care, leveraging Guard resources, and staying connected is critical to readiness.

### Why does it matter?

- Guard members with robust support networks and resilience skills demonstrate greater preparedness in both their civilian and military roles.

### What can you do?

- Protect family time for shared meals, activities, and traditions—such as family game night—to build strong bonds.
- Schedule regular “date nights” with your spouse to stay emotionally connected.
- Build an emergency fund during higher pay periods to manage unexpected expenses and fluctuations in drill and deployment pay.
- Communicate early and often with your employer and co-workers. Raise awareness of circumstances that may require your immediate mobilization, such as hurricanes or civil disturbances.
- Schedule a weekly workout with your battle buddies or wingmen to stay fit and connected to your unit.
- Engage regularly in practices that ground you—faith, meditation, or time in nature.
- Exercise regularly, eat a balanced diet, avoid excessive alcohol use, and prioritize sleep to stay fit and focused.
- Volunteer at your child’s school, coach a little league team, or contribute time to your favorite charity to strengthen civilian ties with your community.

## CREATE A PERSONAL RESILIENCE PLAN

Create a plan with your spouse, trusted friend, or family member to manage childcare, pet care, and bill paying while you are away.



Share your drill/deployment schedule with your employer as early as possible.

Develop a budget to manage variability in income and stick to it.

Bookmark Guard resources and save contact information for easy access to support when needed.



## RESOURCES TO RECOMMEND



**Military One Source's *Reinvigorate Your Relationships*** provides several resources to help you keep the bonds in your life strong. Someone to Talk To, an in-person, online, or phone-based, confidential counseling helps couples address issues and stressors. <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/relationships/married-domestic-partner/military-relationships-support/#~:text=Someone%20To%20Talk%20To,LET'S%20TALK>



**The Psychological Health Program** is designed to address the unique challenges of service to support the psychological fitness of Guard members and their families for operational readiness. <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/resources/millife-guides/psychological-health-program/>



**Office of Financial Readiness (FINRED)** offers free financial counseling services to National Guardsmen and their family members. Locate a Personal Financial Counselor (PFC) in your area: <https://finred.usalearning.gov/pfcMap>.



**Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)** provides a Pre-Mobilization Employer Support Checklist with tips to prepare you and your employer for mobilization: <https://www.esgr.mil/service-members-family/deployment-tips-and-checklist>. The **Customer Service Center** is available to answer questions, or to refer cases for mediation assistance. <https://www.esgr.mil/USERRA/What-is-USERRA>



**Ways to navigate civilian employment and military service** provides insight into how your military experiences affect you, your employer, and your coworkers. <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/resources/millife-guides/national-guard-employment/#navigate-civilian-employment-military-service>



## SPOTLIGHT: CITIZEN WARRIORS BUILD RESILIENCE WITH COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS<sup>4</sup>

- The West Virginia National Guard joined forces with Facing Hunger Foodbank and Fort Gay Food Pantry volunteers to help provide food assistance to families in need in Fort Gay, West Virginia, on November 6, 2025.
- National Guardsmen helped distribute 17 skid loads of food, enough to serve nearly 800 families.
- Local families received fresh produce, meat, eggs, bakery goods, and other essentials to help meet growing community needs.



## REFERENCES:

1. First Session, 119<sup>TH</sup> Congress on the Posture of The National Guard, May 20th, 2025. [www.nationalguard.mil](http://www.nationalguard.mil)
2. Defense Suicide Prevention Office. [https://www.dsps.mil/Portals/113/2024/documents/annual\\_report/ARSM\\_CY23\\_final\\_508c.pdf](https://www.dsps.mil/Portals/113/2024/documents/annual_report/ARSM_CY23_final_508c.pdf)
3. Homeland Defense and Security Information and Analysis Center. <https://hdiac.dtic.mil/technical-inquiries/notable/behavioral-and-mental-health-issues-unique-to-the-national-guard/>
4. West Virginia National Guard. <https://www.facebook.com/WV.NationalGuard/posts/pfbidObpCFXjcJoVehyCygvopZtfYsuHmVogSx4WccqfTepYS73JvwQzqSnVHymJszo5uEI?rldid=Sew950ilHiORH8ky>