

The Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP)

The Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) offer the SMP to qualified full time college students who are members of the Army National Guard or willing to join. SMP is a two-year program whereby cadets serve in the Army National Guard and attend ROTC classes "simultaneously". SMP begins in the fall semester of a full time student's junior year in college or the first year of graduate school or a combination of both undergraduate and graduate level programs. Cadets receive a commission as a 2nd lieutenant in the United States Army after completion of a bachelor's degree or graduate degree and the ROTC advanced course. Newly commissioned officers then serve in the Army National Guard or on active duty.

Great Benefits

Because cadets participate in both Guard training and ROTC at the same time, the benefits of the SMP are twofold. First, SMP cadets **receive the** excellent management and leadership training that ROTC offers. Then, during the monthly training weekends, SMP cadets apply their classroom training in a "real world" military unit in the Army National Guard – an opportunity unavailable to traditional ROTC scholarship cadets. Second, SMP cadets qualify for tuition assistance programs offered by both organizations "simultaneously."

Qualified West Virginia Army National Guard SMP cadets can receive the following financial benefits:

- The WV Army National Guard 100% Tuition Assistance (based on the tuition of WVU)
- The Montgomery G.I. Bill (\$282 per month)
- The Montgomery G.I. Bill Kicker (\$350 per month)
- Drill pay at the E-5 level prior to commissioning (about \$210 per month)
- ROTC stipend (subsistence allowance):
 - College Juniors - \$350 per month (for 12 months)
 - College Seniors - \$400 per month (for 9-10 months)
- Pay for attending the National Advanced Leadership Camp (about \$660)

The two programs combined can offer qualified SMP Cadets close to \$30,000 in pay and benefits during their last two years of college.

Experience

Because of their military training and experience, Guard soldiers are exempt from ROTC Basic Course (freshman and sophomores courses, Military Science I and II). Instead, Guard soldiers enroll directly into Advanced ROTC (Military Science II and IV, junior and senior courses). During the school week, SMP cadets participate in all ROTC classes, labs and field training exercises. On training weekends, they work with their assigned National Guard units. During these weekends, SMP cadets function as assistant lieutenants. SMP cadets wear their ROTC ranks and carry out all the duties of a new second lieutenant in a supervised, on-the-job-training environment.

Basic Branches Available in the WVARNG		Specialized Branches
Armor	Military Intelligence	Army Nurse Corps
Aviation	Military Police	Chaplain Corps
Chemical Corps	Ordnance	Dental Corps
Engineer	Quartermaster	Judge Advocate General
Field Artillery	Signal Corps	Medical Service Corps
	Transportation Corps	Medical Corps
		Special Forces

How SMP works

First and foremost, to qualify for the SMP you must be a member of the Army National Guard and have attended at least Army Basic Combat Training (BCT). Ideally, you will have attended both BCT and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) before signing an SMP Contract. AIT is the phase of active duty training all Guard soldiers must go through to learn their Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). Completing AIT is important as it qualifies you for the Montgomery G.I. Bill benefits.

The next step is to be accepted to, and attend a college or university offering ROTC courses. Before you begin your junior year of college, you must complete an SMP Agreement contact (NGB Form 594-1) with the commander of your unit. Take your SMP contract to your school's Army ROTC Enrollment Officer and ensure you begin processing with the ROTC department. Once contracting is complete, you begin attending ROTC classes. The course takes about seven hours per week (a two-hour class, a two-hour lab and three hours of physical fitness).

After the completion of Military Science (MS) III (junior year), you will attend the six week ROTC Advanced Camp at Fort Lewis, WA instead of their regular Guard Annual Training. After Advanced Camp, you return for your senior year, and enroll in MSIV. After graduation, you will receive your commission as a second lieutenant in the Army National Guard.

Officer Basic Course

Training is not over after graduation. Commissioned ROTC graduates must attend Officer Basic Course (OBC), within one year of their commissioning date. During this period of active duty training, officers learn skills needed to operate in their Branch specialty. OBC averages 12-16 weeks in length. Cadets are assigned a branch usually during the fall semester of the last year of college. Typically, SMP cadets are branched in the unit they are assigned to at the time of accession.

Guaranteed Reserve Forces Duty

Prior to contracting with ROTC and SMP status, a soldier can apply for a Guaranteed Reserve Forces Duty (GRFD) contract through the ROTC department. GRFD status is mandatory for cadet with an Army National Guard scholarship. These cadets are required to serve in the National Guard or Reserve after graduation and commissioning.

The \$350 G.I. Bill Kicker

The National Guard needs young officers. Therefore, as an incentive, the Army National Guard offers a special Montgomery G.I. Bill Kicker of \$350 a month. Only cadets eligible to receive the Montgomery G.I. Bill can apply for this special kicker. The GRFD Kicker pays \$350 a month in addition to the Montgomery G.I. Bill benefits, worth \$282 a month.

ROTC Basic Course

Traditionally, ROTC is a four-year program consisting of two phases: Basic Course and Advanced Course. Basic Course refers to the freshman and sophomore level ROTC classes, MSI and MSII. These classes cover subjects like military history, traditions and organizations, and national defense. There is a strong emphasis on leadership development during these first two years. This offers a unique opportunity for students to gain hands-on leadership skills while in college.

Advanced Course

The Advanced Course is the final two years of the ROTC program, MSIII and MSIV. The curriculum is more intense and prepares you for the challenges of military leadership.

During MSIII, you will trained in small unit tactics and learn the duties and responsibilities of a squad and platoon leader. This phase of training is combined with classroom instruction on land navigation, military tactics, and how to prepare and present operation orders.

During MSIV, you will be in various cadet leadership positions that will challenge your leadership abilities and prepare you to become a second lieutenant. You will also be responsible for the training and evaluation of cadets in the MSI – MSIII classes.

National Advanced Leadership Camp

Advanced Camp is the single most important block of training in the career of the ROTC cadet. This is the first exposure to the Active Army for many cadets. This segment of the cadet's education provides one third of the evaluation for accession and branch selection at commissioning. Advanced Camp's mission is to train cadets to Army standards, refine leadership skills, and evaluate officer potential.

This phase of ROTC is intentionally tough and stressful. The days are long with considerable night training, and no days off. Throughout Camp, cadets encounter physical and mental obstacles challenging them as a person, soldier, and leader. The camp cadre use small unit tactical training as the primary method for evaluating cadet potential to serve as a Commissioned Officer. Training is sequenced in a logical, building-block manner. The training covers the basic military skills necessary for leading soldiers in tactical exercises at individual, squad, and platoon levels. Cadets serve in positions of leadership from squad to company level where they are evaluated on their leadership, organization, and teamwork skills. Evaluation is constant and begins shortly after the cadet arrives. The camp cadre of Tactical Officers and NCO's advise, coach, and ultimately render an official evaluation of the cadet's potential to serve as an officer.

Information Paper for the Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP)

1. **Purpose:** Explain basic facts regarding Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (SROTC) SMP.

2. **References:**

- a. AR 601-210, chap 10, dated 28 Feb 95
- b. AR 145-1, chap 1.16 and 3.17, dated 23 Jul 96
- c. AR 140-1, chap 2, dated 1 Sep 94
- d. NGR 600-100, chap 13, dated 15 Apr 94

3. **Discussion Points:**

a. **Definition.** The SMP is a program in which SROTC (contracted) advanced course cadets (Military Science (MS) III/IV) simultaneously serve as members of the WVARNG.

b. **Eligibility/Requirements.** A soldier desiring to be an officer in the WVARNG must be recommended by his/her company commander and be of good moral character, a U.S. citizen, between the age of 17 and 31 at the time of appointment, meet medical fitness standards, minimum GPA of 2.0 (>2.8 is preferred), and be accepted for enrollment into the Senior ROTC program at the university.

(1) Only SROTC cadets who contract in the advanced course (MSIII/IV) may participate in the SMP. Basic course cadets may not participate in the SMP.

(2) SROTC cadets who contract in the advanced course under guaranteed reserve forces duty (GRFD) must participate in the SMP. This includes all Reserve Forces Duty (RFD) and Dedicated Army National Guard (Ded ARNG) scholarship recipients. WV has 7 each year.

(3) IAW AR 601-210, SROTC cadets who receive SROTC scholarships (other than RFD scholarships) may not participate in SMP.

(4) SROTC cadets who contract in the advanced course as non-scholarship, non-GRFD, may participate in SMP.

c. **Benefits.** SMP cadets serve in the WVARNG in the rank of "cadet" and receive drill pay in pay grade E5 or higher (equivalent to enlisted rank prior to contracting). Cadets will be addressed as Cadet_____/Mr. or Ms. as appropriate.

(1) SMP cadets receive longevity credit (for period of satisfactory participation in SMP) toward reserve retirement.

(2) Commissioned officers receive time in service credit for base pay calculation for time served as an SMP member.

(3) SMP cadets receive extra opportunities to learn and practice leadership under supervision of commissioned and non-commissioned officers. Cadets must be mentored and counseled as officers in training, and a Cadet Evaluation Report must be completed and submitted to the Army ROTC Professor of Military Science NLT 1 August of each year.

(4) Cadets should be assigned duties commensurate with the duties of a 2LT.

d. Unit Information. The total number of SMP participants will be limited by the commander to the number which can be effectively supervised and trained properly.

(1) SMP cadets may be assigned to one unit and attached to another.

(2) SMP cadets count as part of the enlisted strength of a unit, although they are considered over-strength and non-deployable assets.

(3) Contracted SMP cadets may not be mobilized and deployed.

(4) Enlisted members of ARNG who are also taking the SROTC basic course (but are not contracted, advanced course members) may not participate in SMP. These soldiers are eligible for mobilization/deployment.

(5) SMP members who do not perform satisfactorily may be removed from the SROTC program and the SMP. These enlisted soldiers will revert to their enlisted contract requirements and may be mobilized/deployed with their units.

4. Necessary Forms for SMP in the WVARNG.

a. Soldiers who contract and become SMP participants must complete selected Cadet Command Forms/contracts as well as WVARNG forms. In addition to the forms necessary for contracting, the following forms are necessary for SMP participation:

 NGB Form 594-1 (SMP agreement between Cadet Command and ARNG unit)
 Commander's letter of acceptance
 DA Form 597 (Cadet Nonscholarship Contract) with annex
 DD Form 4 (Enlistment Document)
 PAR for movement to Platoon Leader's position (SIDPERS MOS Code 09R2O)
 PAR for advancement to SGT (E5) (SIDPERS Excess Code 999G)
 Kicker contract (if applicable)

b. To ensure service in the ARNG upon commissioning, the SMP cadet must obtain a guaranteed reserve forces duty (GRFD) control # from Cadet Command (through their ROTC battalion).

c. A soldier who otherwise qualifies for a Montgomery G I Bill (Ch 1606), may also qualify for a kicker incentive of an additional \$350/month for enrollment in a commissioning program such as Army ROTC. Submit NGB Form 5435-1-R (Supplemental) and request a kicker control number from the state education officer at the time of completing the other required documents.