

U.S. Army Recruiting Command

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Special Recruiter Assistance Program brings Soldiers back to hometowns to share deployment experiences

FORT KNOX, Ky. – The Army has a great opportunity for Soldiers who want to share their Operations Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom deployment experiences with friends, family and community members in their hometown, as well as to help recruit the next generation of heroes.

Through the Special Recruiter Assistance Program (SRAP), eligible Soldiers can serve on temporary duty up to 14 days at the recruiting station nearest their hometown. During that time, Soldiers will work for the recruiting station by assisting with recruiting activities, speaking at college and community events, and participating in interviews with local media.

Sgt. Kevin Turnblom of the 108th Air Defense Artillery Brigade at Fort Bliss applied for the program so he could return home to his alma mater, Weber State University in Ogden, Utah, to share firsthand his deployment experiences in Kuwait and Iraq.

“It’s a great opportunity. ... I talk [to students] about my experiences; they are interested in what I have to say,” said Spc. Andrew Petrucelli, an infantry Soldier from Fort Bragg, N.C., who last month assisted recruiters in the Newton, N.Y., area.

During SRAP activities in and around her hometown of Green Cove Springs, Fla., Spc. Lauren Snell recalled her experiences in Baghdad as both perilous and gratifying.

“When I saw the differences in the way people were living it made me proud to be an American and that I was doing something to make a positive change in Iraq,” said the administrative specialist from the Third Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Ga.

SRAP participants are free to share their stories in their own words so that the American public can see and hear firsthand what it truly means to be a Soldier, as well as the pride each Soldier takes in his or her mission.

Hundreds of students visited with 101st Airborne Division infantryman Spc. Jeremy Peterson during his SRAP duty with the Rochester, Minn., Recruiting Station.

Clad in his no-longer-dusty desert camouflage uniform, Peterson talked with students about his deployment to Iraq and what it takes to be a Soldier. He also appreciated the extra time to spend with his parents, according to his recruiter, Sgt. Mark Yunker.

In addition to claiming reimbursement for travel expenses and per diem allowance for the 14-day temporary duty, approved SRAP Soldiers may combine the SRAP TDY with their ordinary leave, essentially extending their stay in their hometown.

“It’s always a challenge to find the right tool to grab the attention of busy students on their way to and from classes, but the offer to ... speak with a Soldier just back from Iraq proved highly successful,” Yunker said. “We’d love to try this again in more of our schools.”

The program is open to enlisted Soldiers age 25 or younger in stateside units who have served overseas in support of Operations Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom. Soldiers currently serving overseas in support of OEF/OIF are asked to wait until their units return stateside to apply for the program.

Interested Soldiers must apply online at the U.S. Army Recruiting Command’s Web site: www.usarec.army.mil. All applications will be screened to ensure Soldiers meet all requirements.

Approved Soldiers will receive notification via e-mail. After receiving the approval notice, Soldiers must have their requests (DA Form 4187) approved by the first lieutenant colonel in their chain of command. The signed 4187 should be faxed to (502) 626-0943, and a DD Form 1610 will be created and e-mailed to the Soldier and his/her unit’s personnel section (as provided on the DA 4187). Soldiers must have the DD 1610 with them when they report for duty at their designated recruited stations.

For more information, visit www.usarec.army.mil or call (502) 626-0448/1582.