



Indiana National Guard COL David Wood, left, re-enlists SFC Jorge Camara-Falu Oct. 5, 2009, at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Re-Enlisting Abroad

SOLDIERS CONTINUE SERVICE IN GUARD

Story and photo by SSG Jeff Lowry, Task Force 38 Public Affairs | JOINT BASE BALAD, IRAQ

PATRIOTISM PAYS

Active Duty Soldiers serving outside the continental U.S. can re-enlist for six years and receive an extension bonus of \$5,000. And for Soldiers serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait, you can receive your bonus as a lump-sum payment.

MANY SOLDIERS' ENLISTMENT TIME comes to an end while deployed. Some choose to continue their military career. With stimulating economic programs in place and the chance to make lasting memories, several Task Force 38 Soldiers recently re-enlisted.

"There's a bonus available to traditional National Guard Soldiers in Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait," said Indiana National Guard Staff Sergeant Lee Ann Hiser, Task Force 38 retention noncommissioned officer.

The National Guard bonus was a lump sum, tax-free payment of \$5,000 if a Soldier signed a six-year contract. Hiser also noted other benefits.

"They get to stay in the Guard—that's their bonus," she said. "That's the biggest thing."

According to Hiser, there are many other benefits to being a National Guard Soldier, including college tuition payments, student loan repayments, dental insurance, life insurance and medical insurance.

"Just having those benefits right now, those are a lot of pluses," Hiser said. "I don't see why you'd get out at a time like this, when people don't have jobs."

Indiana National Guard Staff Sergeant John Brattain, LaPorte, IN, and a Company D, 1st

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>> SSG John Brattain, Indiana Army National Guard

Battalion, 137th Aviation Regiment technical inspector, re-enlisted for future benefits and possible advancement. He has served more than 20 years in the military.

"I wanted to have longevity," said Brattain, who plans to submit his packet for warrant officer candidate school when he returns from his deployment.

His re-enlistment ceremony took place atop an aircraft shelter here, and he said he has fond memories of that event.

"It made it feel like I was really here, in Iraq, and part of something special," said Brattain, who was given the oath by his friend and fellow Soldier, Chief Warrant Officer Bill Leonard, Task Force 38's material manager.

"You could see the whole base up there—it's surreal," Brattain said.

Whether memorable moments or monetary gain, Soldiers had something to take home with them after their deployment. **GX**