

Being a specialist in the Army is like being a part of a big family in parts. You aren't a NCO but you are entrusted with NCO duties. You are a member of the lower enlisted but looked up to by PFC's and below. I am SPC Zachery, Brandan J., a member of the California National Guard, and a proud soldier. I might not have the awards or the stripes on my chest yet, but I know what it takes to be a part of the ever-changing force. Switching my military occupation from wheeled vehicle repairer to human resources specialist, I learned the difference between the hard labor of turning wrenches and that of getting a memorandum done correctly.

As a member of the Guard, I have been granted access to the club of being able to serve our country and work a normal nine to five job. Following my passions outside the military and being able to come in and give my all is a very important factor of military life as a guard member. My family stands by my side knowing that the love I have for military service and my passion for following my career are both fulfilled. I see the accomplishments we make each and every drill, and I see the look on each soldier's face as they reach new heights in their career.

My family and myself are ready for the day my number is called to deploy, and my employer is aware that my number may be called. They encourage me to push my military career as far as possible, and they respect my love for both.

The uniqueness of the National Guard's dual mission helps show the readiness of our personnel at any given moment. The stress here is no different than active duty stress. I ask you to task the Guard and the active duty with the same tasks, and watch the guard overcome every obstacle in the way and surpass the active component with a job well done. I am only one of many guard members who feel the guard has made them better in many ways.

I thank you for taking the time to listen to me and hope for the best.