



AT A GLANCE

- The National Guard Bureau is comprised of over 450,000 members. Of these, 52% are married and 56% of single Warriors will marry.
- The number one deterrent to Warrior readiness is a poor family bond.
- A Warrior worried about a family-related issue is distracted from the mission, which can put his or her life at greater risk, as well as the lives of fellow service members.
- Effective communication saves marriages and lives on the battlefield.
- In 1997, in recognition of the extraordinary stress placed on service members' relationships, the Army introduced family programs that have evolved into today's Strong Bonds, a relationship-building program.
- Long, frequent separations and the high-risk, high-stakes nature of military life put extraordinary stress on military families.
- The divorce rate for military families is slightly higher than the civilian population. However, preliminary studies in 2009 showed a significant decrease in the divorce rate for couples who completed Strong Bonds training.
- Guard members are on call everyday in the event of a domestic disaster, and, since 9-11, Guard deployments have increased markedly.
- Guard members do not live on bases and as such, do not always have ready access to the support of other Guard families.
- Over 2,300 training events have been held since the program began.
- Strong Bonds was funded at \$8 million annually in 2008.
- Starting in 2010, nearly \$30 million dollars have been budgeted for Strong Bonds throughout the Total Army.
- 8,000 troops and their families attended Strong Bonds events in 2008.
- In 2009, 3,000 events were scheduled.
- Strong Bonds is Chaplain-led and fully funded.
- Strong Bonds includes programs for singles, couples, and families, as well as events that focus on the transitions surrounding deployment.
- Strong Bonds Pre- and Re-deployment events are scheduled in conjunction with the Yellow Ribbon program to coincide with the Army Force Generation Cycle so that skills can be practiced prior to separation. Furthermore, events occur 30 days before, during, and up to 90 days after deployment.
- Strong Bonds events include a free retreat weekend getaway with relationship-building activities that provide communication skills, as well as fun activities and optional recreation opportunities.
- Strong Bonds events give National Guard members the opportunity to meet other families and form support networks.
- Information available at www.strongbondsnbg.org.