

## 1-133rd GI Bill Benefits Update: Army Error Fixed for All Iowa National Guard Soldiers Impacted

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Washington, Mar 18 - Today, Rep. Bruce Braley (D-Iowa) announced that all 595 members of the Iowa National Guard's 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry affected by an Army error last year that disqualified them from receiving GI Bill education benefits have now had the error fixed and qualify for full GI Bill benefits.

"I'm happy to hear that every 1-133rd member who was initially denied GI Bill education benefits because of the Army error can now draw full benefits," Braley said. "The Pentagon made a mistake, but I'm glad they fixed it.

"I'm even happier to hear that 74 of these vets are using their full benefits to further their education. These Iowans are making the most of a great opportunity."

Last August, nearly 600 members of the 1-133rd returned from a 17 month tour of duty in Iraq—the longest continual deployment of any ground combat unit in Iraq. Many of the troops learned they didn't qualify for GI Bill benefits because an Army error in the wording of their orders left them one to five days short of a 730 day qualification threshold.

After the error came to light and amid pressure from Braley, the Army initiated a process to correct the orders so that affected Guard members could qualify for the benefits they earned.

Now, according to the Iowa National Guard, all 595 veterans originally disqualified by the error have been successfully processed by the Army and currently qualify for GI Bill benefits. Furthermore, 74 of the Iowa vets are currently using their GI Bill benefits to further their education.

Soldiers who qualify for Montgomery GI Bill benefits can receive up to \$894 per month for educational expenses; the benefits can be used for up to 10 years after leaving the service.

If the error was not corrected, the 1-133rd soldiers would've only qualified for less-extensive Reserve Education Assistance Program (REAP) benefits. These total up to \$660 per month, but reserve members no longer qualify if they leave the service.

In October, Braley launched a Congressional investigation into the error; the investigation is ongoing.

**TIMELINE: Congressman Braley: Fighting for Iowa National Guard's 1-133rd**

August 2005            1-133rd is mobilized by the Army for service in Iraq

October 2005           1-133rd leaves Iowa for training and Iraq service

January 2007      1-133rd learns its deployment to Iraq will be extended by an additional 125 days.

August 2007      1-133rd returns from active duty service in Iraq to Waterloo

September 2007      Iowa National Guard learns that the orders of hundreds of 1-133rd members who served in Iraq were written one to five days too short for them to qualify for GI Bill benefits

October 10, 2007      Rep. Braley sends a letter to Army Secretary Peter Geren asking for details on the Army's process to correct the Army error leading to the denial of benefits

October 17, 2007      Braley co-sponsors legislation introduced by Rep. Tim Walz of Minnesota that would eliminate requirement for soldiers to serve 730 days of active duty service for them to qualify for GI bill benefits

October 18, 2007      Braley requests that the House Oversight Committee launch a formal investigation into the Army error leading to the denial of GI Bill benefits to the 1-133rd.

October 24, 2007      Braley and the House Oversight Committee launch formal investigation into Army's denial of benefits to the 1-133rd

October 31, 2007      Braley Investigation requests hundreds of documents from Army and Department of Defense

February 28, 2008      Braley Investigation requests additional documents from Army and Department of Defense