



**LINE UP!** Students at Pearl High School participate in the Guard Fit Challenge program.

Web site has more than 30 exercise technique videos in which Guard athletes—including Outstanding Athlete Program participants—guide visitors through basic and advanced workouts based on the FM 21-20.

The exercise videos can be downloaded onto a video iPod or another compatible device, and there are also exercise technique handouts to download and take to the gym. In addition to fitness information, the Web site also focuses on nutrition, including healthy recipes submitted by Guard athletes and other Soldiers.

At an educator's request, a Guard recruiter presents Guard Fit Challenge during class or a team practice. Guard Fit Challenge can be presented to up to 40 students at a time.

There are minimal equipment requirements, and the program can be done indoors or outdoors (weather permitting). There are 45-minute and 90-minute versions of the lessons, depending on how much time is available.

After introducing students to the APFT, the recruiter can return to present a cardio workout and a full-body workout that exercises the core, upper body and lower body. During the follow-on lessons, the recruiter measures the students' progress on the APFT.

While developing Guard Fit Challenge, the ARNG presented the program at Pearl High School in Pearl, MS. Students, teachers and coaches all participated, while a video crew filmed Mississippi National Guard recruiters giving the APFT presentation for a promotional video.

At the end of the day, both students and educators had positive things to say about the experience.

"Guard Fit Challenge benefits not only the sports teams, but our entire student body," said Mark Monaghan, baseball coach and advanced fitness instructor. "Participating in the program can make our students healthier and give them more energy."

And it wasn't only the athletic department that saw the benefits of this new program.

"Being physically fit makes students more confident and helps them focus in my class and throughout the day," said Mickie West, an English teacher. "Guard Fit Challenge establishes an attitude about fitness that will carry on throughout our students' lives." **GX**

# Taking the Challenge

## SCHOOL FITNESS PROGRAM SCORES BIG *By SFC Lloyd J. Bowers*

WITH CHILDHOOD OBESITY ON THE RISE and budget cuts eliminating physical education from schools, it has never been more important to motivate young adults to lead healthy lives. Guard Fit Challenge is a great opportunity for schools around the country to receive a valuable public service that can enhance their physical fitness curriculum. The program can also help bring health and exercise awareness to a school whose physical education budget has been cut.

Launching at the beginning of the 2009–2010 school year, Guard Fit Challenge is a new way for physical education teachers, athletic directors and coaches to get high school students excited about fitness. Whether students want to get in shape, stay in shape or improve their current workout routine, Guard Fit Challenge can help them achieve their goals. The program offers the resources students need to challenge themselves to improve fitness routines and start seeing results.

Members of the Army National Guard must be ready to respond to any challenge at a moment's notice, so they have to stay in top shape. To make sure they are physically fit for duty, Guard members are required to pass the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT). As all Guard members know, the APFT includes push-ups, sit-ups and a 2-mile run.

The Guard Fit Challenge program invites high school students to find out if they're Guard Fit by teaching them the proper form for the three APFT events and scoring them on their

APFT performance. For students interested in improving their scores and tracking their progress, there are many online fitness tools and resources to assist and motivate them.

The Guard has developed a desktop widget and a mobile application for tracking APFT scores, as well as body composition and APFT score calculators on the program's Web site. The

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**PUSH 'EM OUT!** Students get down and dirty as they push their mental and physical strength to the limits.

To learn more about the Guard Fit Challenge program, visit [GuardFitChallenge.com](http://GuardFitChallenge.com).