

## TraCen Cape May Education Update #320

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### Congratulations!!

The following personnel in the Cape May area passed Coast Guard Institute end-of-course, AQEs, and other tests since the last update:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Work Site</b>	<b>Test</b>
FSC Eugene Moran	TraCen (Galley)	E-PME-8
FN Karla Santiago	TraCen (Chapel)	E-PME-4*
ET2 Joseph Fitzgerald	ESD Cape May	ET1
GM3 Andrew Bigwood	TraCen (Armory)	GM2*
HS3 Myles Adams	HSWL FO Cape May	HS2*
YN2 Olivia Nichols	TraCen (SPO)	E-PME-6
GM3 Burton Rementer	TraCen (Armory)	GM2
HS3 Adam Romano	HSWL FO Cape May	HS2*

\* First attempt

Well done, all of you!

And if you've just finished a degree program or have any other noteworthy academic achievement to brag about, please let me know so I can recognize you for it.

### Question of the Week

**Q:** With the latest changes to the new (Post-9/11) GI Bill, why would anyone would pay the \$1,200 for the MGIB-AD? And why are recruits still being automatically signed up for the MGIB-AD?

**A:** These are questions I've heard a lot lately. The answer to the second is easy: because the laws governing the MGIB-AD are still on the books, and one of those laws automatically enrolls all regular-component military personnel in the MGIB-AD, then allows them to make "an election not to receive" MGIB-AD benefits or pay \$1,200. Until Congress changes this provision, all recruits in the regular Coast Guard will be automatically enrolled and will then be allowed to opt out of it if they choose.

The first question is more difficult to answer. In fact, I've been unable to come up with any reasons why a recruit in the regular Coast Guard would not prefer to decline the MGIB-AD. I'd be interested to know of any reasons you may have thought of.

On the other hand, Reservists – depending on their education plans, their civilian career plans, and how much time they want to spend on active duty – might find the MGIB-AD very appealing as a way to supplement benefits under the new GI Bill.

If you have a question you'd like answered as a Question of the Week, e-mail it to me at [andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil](mailto:andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil).

## Web Page in the Spotlight

There's a lot of stuff on the TraCen Cape May web site you might not check out if you didn't know it was there. So this week, I'm spotlighting **Tests for College Credit** (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/tests.asp>).

## Grammar & Usage Corner

This feature will touch on grammar and usage questions as well as confused/misused words. This week, the often-confused words are *can* and *may*.

**Can** is used to indicate a person's ability to do something: "She can dead lift three times her body weight" or "I'll be I can hit the bulls-eye on the first try".

**May** is used (among other things) to indicate that one has permission to do something: "Mom told me I may go to the party" or "Although we just buffed it, you may walk across the floor".

If there are any word usage, grammar, or similar issues you've encountered, please e-mail them to me at [andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil](mailto:andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil).

## Continuing Education Courses

Cape May County Technical School District, at the Technical Center for Continuing Education (TCCE, exit 11 on the Garden State Parkway), offers dozens of courses in topics as varied as:

- NJ licensing (e.g., Black Seal, dental radiology, wastewater, cosmetology, etc.)
- General interest technical (e.g., auto repair, cabinetmaking, woodturning, etc.)
- Job/business technical (e.g., HVAC, art metal work, electrical house wiring, masonry, upholstery, welding, etc.)
- Ballroom dancing
- Special training (e.g., defensive driving, digital photography, dog obedience, genealogy, financial education, etc.)
- Computer applications
- Cooking/baking
- Languages
- Health and fitness
- Office, business, and careers

These courses are all extremely reasonably priced, with classes generally meeting in the evenings.

In addition, the TCCE has on-going **free** GED preparation courses and testing, adult basic education courses, ESL courses, citizenship courses, and computer literacy courses running continuously throughout the year.

For more information, drop by the Education Center for a course booklet or go to Cape May Tech's web site at <http://www.capemaytech.com/2011winterspringbrochure.pdf>.

## Striker Programs Update

ALCOAST 591/10 announced that the BM, DC, MK, and SK striker programs have been reinstated indefinitely. However, the EM3 and YN3 striker programs have been terminated because most EPQs for those ratings can't be completed outside of "A" school or the YN3 distance learning program.

## New Amounts for Coast Guard Foundation Grants

The Coast Guard Foundation announced earlier this month that it has increased the maximum grant available from \$350 to \$500 per calendar year. At the same time, the Vander Putten grant has been reduced from \$500 to \$250 per calendar year, available if you have received the maximum available under the Foundation grant.

Note that these amounts are maximums and that there are no guarantees that you will receive a grant just because you applied for one. Although the Coast Guard Institute is now accepting applications for Coast Guard Foundation and Vander Putten grants, be aware that there is currently no funding for these grants. The Institute estimates that funding will be available in March, but there is no guarantee this will be the case.

Remember: funding for these grants comes from individuals (civilian and military) who contribute money when they can

For more information (including a link to the current application form), go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/grants.asp#cgf>.

## 31 January Deadline for Military Spouse Scholarship

Scholarships in the name of Joanne Holbrook Patton are awarded to spouses of military personnel in the regular and Reserve components, the National Guard, military retirees, and survivors of military personnel killed in the line of duty. Scholarship funds may be used for tuition, fees, and college/university room and board for students pursuing a GED, ESL courses, vocational training, professional certification, undergraduate or graduate courses. Students may be pursuing these either in-class or via distance learning, full-time or part-time.

For more information about these scholarships, go to <http://www.militaryfamily.org/our-programs/military-spouse-scholarships/>. The application deadline is 31 January 2011.

## National Graduate School

(from LT Boyle at CGAS Atlantic City)

A representative from the National Graduate School will be at Air Station Atlantic City on Wednesday, 26 January 2011 at 1000 in the Modular Unit Training room. There will be a presentation of the program after which the representative will answer questions from anyone who's interested. Military personnel, civilian employees, and dependents are all welcome.

For more information, contact LT Erin Boyle ([erin.m.boyle@uscg.mil](mailto:erin.m.boyle@uscg.mil)), LT Darby Brown ([darby.m.brown@uscg.mil](mailto:darby.m.brown@uscg.mil)), or LT Jim Kenshalo ([james.r.kenshalo@uscg.mil](mailto:james.r.kenshalo@uscg.mil)).

## Learning a Second Language

There are a number of software applications that help you learn a foreign language. "Tell Me More" ([http://us.tellemore.com/free\\_demo](http://us.tellemore.com/free_demo)) and "Rosetta Stone" (<http://www.rosettastone.com/>), which everyone's seen on TV) are but two of these.

But don't go out and buy one just because everyone's talking about it. Before you order the software, do some research.

- **Check the price.** The only direct Coast Guard-related funding available to reimburse you language software you buy on your own is the Coast Guard Foundation grant – which is only available to regular Coast Guard enlisted personnel and Reserve enlistees on active duty (i.e., not drilling Reservists or officers).
- **Ask around; see if you can find others who have it.** Find out if it helped them learn what they need to know to talk about Coast Guard-related matters (e.g., law enforcement) in the target language. Unless you just want to learn another language for fun, if the software doesn't help you learn what you need to learn it's probably not worth buying.
- **Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP).** If you want to earn FLPP as one of your unit's designated interpreters, it's highly unlikely a commercially-available language course will give you the proficiency needed to get the necessary rating on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT, see <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/dlpt.asp>). And keep in mind that even if it does, your unit has to have designated interpreter billets *and* you have to be formally assigned to one of those billets. (Most operational units have only two or three interpreter billets.)

If you really need to know a second language for work, the Coast Guard will probably pay for you to learn it. But a method other than software may be more effective. That is, if all you can do after months of using a computer program is make small talk that helps you locate a good restaurant, it's probably not worthwhile for Coast Guard purposes.

Check around to see if there are any intensive language training courses available in your area through a college/university, a commercial language school, or a government agency. For example, now that the Coast Guard and the Customs and Border Protection agency work for the same cabinet secretary, you may find that you can get into a CBP language training program that either the Department or Coast Guard will pay for.

And, of course, you can always take college courses in the target language. Tuition assistance will pay for them and you'll also earn college credit from them.

You can also find loads of (mostly) free resources for learning foreign languages at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/languages.asp>.

## Student Loan Repayment

In 1985, Congress enacted legislation authorizing the DoD armed forces to repay student loans of certain active-duty uniformed personnel as a way to recruit or retain highly qualified personnel. (Title 10 of the U.S. Code §§2171-2174)

In 1990 for the same reason, Congress enacted similar legislation authorizing certain federal agencies to repay student loans of federal civilian employees. Since then, the statute (5 U.S. Code §5379) has been amended many times and now covers most of the federal government.

In 1994, also for the same reason, Congress enacted legislation authorizing the DoD armed forces to repay student loans of certain Reserve personnel. (10 U.S. Code §§16301-16303)

And in 2004, Congress enacted legislation authorizing the Coast Guard to repay student loans of uniformed enlisted personnel. (14 U.S. Code §472)

The Army (for obvious reasons) has used this authority for a number of years. Various components of some of the other services have also used it. And student loan repayment is also available to some federal civilian employees. **However**, the Coast Guard has opted not to exercise this authority for either military or civilian personnel.

You may have heard of or found forms by which an individual would apply for loan repayment ([http://www.uscg.mil/forms/cg/CG\\_12500.pdf](http://www.uscg.mil/forms/cg/CG_12500.pdf), [http://www.uscg.mil/forms/cg/CG\\_12500A.pdf](http://www.uscg.mil/forms/cg/CG_12500A.pdf), [http://www.uscg.mil/forms/cg/CG\\_12500B.pdf](http://www.uscg.mil/forms/cg/CG_12500B.pdf)). The fact that these forms exist does **not** mean you can use them to apply for student loan repayment. If the Coast Guard decides to implement a student loan repayment program, you can bet it will be widely publicized.

The bottom line is that for the time being, there is no program that enables Coast Guard military personnel or civilians to get any part of existing student loans paid off by the Coast Guard.

## Scholarship for Cape May-area Residents

The Wildwood chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is offering a \$500 scholarship for seniors at Wildwood High School or Wildwood Catholic High School.

For more information, contact Mr. John Burgin (TraCen Cape May Facilities Engineering) at 609-898-6948 or 609-536-2754.

## New GI Bill Changes Take Effect in March

On 05 March 2011, the first of many changes to the new (Post-9/11) GI Bill will take effect. These changes will apply only to active duty military personnel. On that date, the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) will no longer automatically pay the whole cost of college courses. Instead, the amount active duty personnel receive will depend on how long they've served on active duty. See the table at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/gibill-33.asp#payments>.

For example, let's say you've served for 32 months on active duty and have been taking two courses per term at State U. where the total cost of tuition and fees for those courses is \$6,800. The DVA will no longer pay the full \$6,800. Instead, it will pay only 90% of \$6,800. This is because, according to the table, those who've served between 30 and 36 months on active duty are entitled to payments at the 90% rate. Once you reach your third anniversary of active duty service, you'll be entitled to the 100% rate.

## Other New GI Bill Changes

On 01 August and 01 October 2011 other changes to the new GI Bill will take effect. The recent amendments to the new GI Bill

- make those pursuing programs other than those leading to a degree (e.g., vocational courses, flight training, apprenticeships, etc.) eligible for funding,
- allow reimbursement for licensing, certification, and admission tests,
- make students working toward a degree via distance learning courses eligible for a housing allowance,
- extend the book stipend to active duty personnel,
- extend the transferability provision to personnel in the NOAA and PHS commissioned corps,
- limits payments to private and foreign colleges/universities to \$17,500 per year (but retains the Yellow Ribbon program),
- eliminate the state payment-rate tables for publicly-funded colleges/universities and extends the rules applicable to undergraduate programs to graduate programs (i.e., the new GI Bill will now pay in-state tuition and fees for publicly-funded schools for both undergraduate and graduate courses).

I'm working on a comprehensive before-and-after comparison so you can see what's changed and how the changes will affect you. In the meantime, you can find a summary of these changes on the Department of Veterans' Affairs's web site ([http://www.gibill.va.gov/post-911/post-911-gi-bill-summary/Post911\\_changes.html](http://www.gibill.va.gov/post-911/post-911-gi-bill-summary/Post911_changes.html)).

## Office of Work-Life Scholarships

Work-Life's scholarship programs provide information and resources on financial assistance to all members of Team Coast Guard: regular and Reserve military, their dependents, and civilian employees (civil service, CGES, and MWR). For more information, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/worklife/scholarship.asp>.

Also, check out the scholarship info and resources at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/scholarships.asp>.

## CollegeWeekLive

If you're the parent of a college-bound student or are otherwise interested in getting good information about college, check out CollegeWeekLive (CWL). CWL is an ongoing on-line college fair to help prospective students in their college planning by connecting them with colleges in a live, interactive environment. You'll be able to find information from dozens of

colleges and universities on things like admissions, financing, admission test preparation, college visits, and finding the college which best fits your son, daughter, or yourself.

In addition, practically every day a different college has a virtual open house. These are particularly useful to dependent children trying to decide on a college to attend. And while they're aimed mainly at students, parents and counselors are also welcome. For a complete listing of these open houses and other events, go to [http://www.collegeweeklive.com/en\\_CA/guest/college\\_events/refcode=NWSLTR\\_12\\_6](http://www.collegeweeklive.com/en_CA/guest/college_events/refcode=NWSLTR_12_6).

This is really a fantastic tool. You can do everything you can do at a physical college fair except physically pick up brochures and shake people's hands. You can ask questions of speakers and school representatives, you can download information, you can even chat with current students at various colleges.

## Wanna Finish Your Degree?

A number of people have asked me if I knew anything about the option of leaving the Coast Guard for a time to complete a degree program, then coming back in. The policy that allows you to do this is called Temporary Separation, and is laid out in article 12.F. of the *Personnel Manual*.

This policy offers the Coast Guard equivalent of a sabbatical, allowing "Coast Guard members to temporarily separate and pursue growth or other opportunities outside the service, while providing a mechanism for their return to active duty. . . . Under this policy, career oriented officers and enlisted members are allowed a onetime separation from Active Duty for up to two years to either discharge parental responsibilities to care for newborn children (CNC), or allow members to pursue personal interests that are restricted by continuing on active duty, e.g., education."

This is a great opportunity if you'd like to go to school full-time to finish a degree (whether for personal or professional reasons). Since you wouldn't be considered to be on active duty while temporarily separated, you could use the GI Bill for your education. For the full story, see article 12.F. of the *Personnel Manual* and your SPO.

## Coast Guard Foundation Scholarships

ALCOAST 007/11 was published last Friday, announcing six different scholarships open to dependent children of active duty, retired, or deceased Coast Guard enlisted personnel, and dependent children of enlisted personnel in the Coast Guard Reserve currently on active duty. The application deadline for these is **01 April 2011**.

The Coast Guard Foundation also has two other scholarships. One is open to employees of the Aviation Logistics Center in Elizabeth City, NC (active duty officers and enlisted personnel, federal civil service employees, and their dependents). The deadline for this scholarship is **15 March 2011**.

The other program is open to dependent children of Coast Guard personnel who lost a parent in Coast Guard operations. Applications for this program are accepted at any time.

For more information about these scholarships, see ALCOAST 007/11 at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST007-11.pdf>.

## LEAD Program

Although it's too late this year (applications have to be submitted by 25 January), middle school and high school students should seriously consider getting ready to apply for any of the three programs sponsored by an organization called LEAD – Leadership Education and Development. These programs provide fantastic opportunities to motivated middle school and high school students.

**LEAD Business** "is a national partnership of top U.S. corporations and graduate business schools that encourages talented students from diverse backgrounds to pursue careers in business." It is open to high school juniors with a "B" average or better, combined test scores of at least 100 on the PSAT, 1000 on the SAT (critical reading and math combined), or 22 on the ACT. Applicants must also demonstrate leadership ability and active involvement in their schools and communities. However, applicants need not have previous experience in or knowledge of the field of business. For more information, go to <http://www.leadbusinesssite.org/HOME.html>.

**LEAD Engineering** “exists to introduce students of color with outstanding academic performance and demonstrated leadership skills to the field of engineering. The mission of LEAD Engineering is to lay the foundation through an intense curriculum for an increase in the number and quality of diversified students interested in careers in engineering and other technical fields.” It is open to students in their sophomore or junior years of high school with at least an average GPA 3.2 and combined test scores of at least 100 on the PSAT, 1000 on the SAT (critical reading and math combined), or 22 on the ACT. Applicants must have successfully completed a minimum of two science courses and Algebra II. They must also be US Citizens or permanent residents. For more information, go to <http://www.leadengineering.org/>.

**LEAD Global** “exists to expose American students of color to global career opportunities alongside peers from different countries in one program so that all participants might make better informed decisions when choosing a college or profession.” Applicants must currently be in the ninth or tenth grade and have at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA. They must be mature, stable, adaptable, and self-disciplines in new environments and they must have a valid passport. For more information, go to <http://www.leadglobalsite.org/HOME.html>.

## Occupational Certification & Apprenticeship Programs

A number of occupational certification programs are available through your ESO. The United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP - <https://usmap.cnet.navy.mil/usmapss/static/usmap.jsp>) is a program that allows active duty servicemembers to earn apprenticeship certification in 125 skills learned through work experience and related technical instruction. All you have to do is document the experience you gain while performing your regular military duties; no after-hours work is required.

You can also get certified in dozens of different occupational fields (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/cert.asp>) through a large number of nationally-recognized certification organizations. You can get certified as a broadcast engineer, crane operator, automotive service professional, dental assistant, contract manager, medical technologist, administrative professional, personal trainer, industrial security professional, safety professional, or any of many other specialties. And if you're eligible for GI Bill benefits, you can likely get reimbursed up to \$2,000 for the cost of each certification exam.

## Re-taking ASVAB Tests

Are you interested in going to “A” school for a particular rate, but realize your ASVAB scores aren't high enough? You may be unaware that at any time you can re-take one or more of the tests which comprise the AFCT (Armed Forces Classification Test) – the version of the ASVAB available only to military personnel.

Before you pick up the phone to call your ESO to schedule a test, however, keep in mind two things. First, whatever score you get on the re-test (higher, lower, or the same) it becomes your new official score. Second, if you're unsatisfied with the score you get on a re-test, you must wait six months to take that test again.

## Other Considerations

- The VE score represents a scaled composite of the scores on two separate tests: PC and WK. You can't take a single test to improve your VE score.
- The WK test is a vocabulary test and, as such, is virtually impossible to prepare for. If you've become an avid reader since you took the ASVAB at a MEP Station or have memorized a dictionary, you may improve your WK score greatly. But if not, you should think twice about re-taking it – especially if your existing score is relatively high.
- You can qualify for five ratings' “A” schools (AET, AMT, AST, ET, IT) either by getting the required composite score or by getting an AFQT score of at least 65. (Your AFQT score is equal to AR + MK + (2 x VE).) To qualify for these schools via the AFQT score, you do *not* have to have a minimum AR score of 52.

For more information about the AFCT/ASVAB, each of its tests, and how to prepare for them, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/asvab.asp>.

## TraCen Cape May Testing Calendar

Tests at TraCen Cape May are administered by appointment according to the following schedule:

Mondays (0800): Defense Language Proficiency Tests

Tuesdays (0800): EOCTs and AQEs\*

Thursdays (0745): college tests, CLEP tests, DSSTs, SATs, ACTs

\* If operations or your work schedule make it impossible for you to take an EOCT or AQE on a Tuesday morning, you can take it on a Thursday morning.

This schedule leaves most of the day on Tuesdays, as well as all day on Wednesdays, Fridays available for other occasional tests, counseling, and other face-to-face interactions with you. When no one is taking a language test, the doors to the Education Center are open on Mondays, as well.

If you call and I don't answer the phone, I'm usually administering a test (and, because of the noise, can't talk on the phone) or otherwise busy with someone in the office. E-mail is the best way to get in touch with me.

## Thinking of Teaching?

Are you interested in teaching after you leave the Coast Guard? Troops to Teachers also provides counseling and referral services to military personnel interested in beginning a second career in public education as a teacher. And the DANTES Troops to Teachers office will help you identify teacher certification requirements, programs leading to certification, and employment opportunities. The main web site ([http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes\\_web/troopstoteachers/index.asp](http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/index.asp)) has all kinds of information about the program. Including a new on-line way to determine if you're eligible to participate in Troops to Teachers: [http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes\\_web/troopstoteachers/eligibility.asp](http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/eligibility.asp).

## Leaving the Coast Guard?

If you're leaving the Coast Guard within the next twelve months (whether through retirement, resignation, or expiration of your enlistment), you should be making plans for what you'll be doing after you take off your uniform for the last time. Check out the information on my web site related to career transition (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/careertrans.asp>).

You should also request an education assessment from the Coast Guard Institute (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/collegefaq.asp>) to get a transcript of college credit you've acquired through your service in the Coast Guard. If you don't request an assessment before you leave active duty, you can't get one later. If you're not planning to go to school right away, you'll probably need to find work. Here are two excellent resources for finding a job – or even a second career. Also, Military.com has a very good series of web pages devoted to veterans (<http://www.military.com/Careers/Home/0,13373,,00.htm>).

And don't discount the idea of working in the public sector. Not only are there thousands of jobs in the federal government, identical to private-sector jobs in which you can put your skills, knowledge, and experience to use while maintaining job security unavailable in the private sector (<http://www.fedjobs.gov/>), governmental entities at all levels – state, county, municipality, school district, port district, etc. – provide similar benefits.

## ACCC's Library Open for Studying

One more thing: the new campus's classrooms, labs, and library are all state-of-the-art. Even if you're not ready to register for classes right away, you should take the opportunity to visit the campus and look around. The Director of Academic and Student Services has extended a personal invitation to anyone who'd like to use the library to study, for research, or for pleasure reading. It's very quiet, well-lit, and has very comfortable furniture.

## **Quick Reference Study Guides**

The TraCen Education Center also has a binder full of SparkCharts Quick Reference Guides on almost 40 subjects. You're welcome to use these in the Education Center or make copies to take with you. You can check out the subjects available at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/books.asp#spark>.

## **Education Center Library**

In addition to SparkCharts, the Education Center also has a library of books on leadership, management, Coast Guard history, and other topics. Also in the library are the latest Professional Qualification Guides (PQGs) for each rating.

The Education Center also has dozens of brochures and books on college, financial aid, the officer program application process, and other things. If there are multiple copies, you're welcome to take one.