

# TraCen Cape May Education Update #412

## In this Update:

- Congratulations!!
- Question of the week – How can I get a substitute servicewide exam?
- Web page in the spotlight
- Grammar & usage corner
- Common Latin phrases everyone should know
- Sequestration and TA
- New tool for finding colleges
- “High debt and falling demand trap new veterinarians”
- Military scholarships
- New SK tests
- Got student debt?
- Summer Energy Career Academy: deadline 08 March
- Space Camp & Space Academy scholarships: deadline 10 March
- CG Foundation scholarships: deadline 15 March
- Thinking of teaching?
- E-PME study resources
- ERATS update
- TA, GI Bill benefits, & scholarships/grants
- Before choosing a major or career field . . .
- College scholarships & grants
- Preparing for the SWE (or any other test)?
- GI Bill transfer & service obligation
- College financial aid presentations
- New college & career planning tool
- Looking for a post-CG career with a bright future?
- Resources for starting & running your own business
- Free language software
- Learning another language & foreign language testing
- Thinking about taking college courses?
- Miscellaneous

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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>
SK2 Carrie Sisel	TraCen (Purchasing)	E-PME-6
HS3 Rebecca Kincade	HSWL FO Cape May	HS2
SN Lindsey Hernandez*	TraCen (Purchasing)	SK3
GM2 Andrew Bigwood	TraCen (Armory)	GM1
HS3 Richard Cook	HSWL FO Cape May	HS2
SN Douglas Mead	TraCen (Ceremonial)	DWINTO

\* First attempt

Also, CWO2 Athena Santos (who was a CC here a couple years back) just completed a Master of Public Health degree (with a concentration in emergency management) from American Military University.

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 – How do I find out which GI Bill I'm enrolled in?

**Q:** I submitted the paperwork to switch from the Montgomery GI Bill to the Post-9/11 GI Bill almost 18 months ago, but haven't received anything that tells me it was done. How do I check on my status?

**A:** No more than six months after submitting your application, you should have received a *Certificate of Eligibility* from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) by mail. (The processing period for GI Bill benefit applications varies depending on the DVA's workload, but is currently five to six months.)

However, let's step back for a second. What "paperwork" did you submit 18 months ago? If neither this form (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/VA22-1990.pdf>) nor the DVA's eBenefits web site (<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/>) looks familiar, chances are you didn't do what you think you did. To be sure, though, log in on the eBenefits web site. Then, click on the blue "View All Features" button on the right side of the page. On the "Feature List" page, scroll down to the "Education" section and click on "Post-9/11 GI Bill Enrollment Status".

If you want to know about your status with respect to any other GI Bill education program, you'll need to call the DVA at 888-442-4551 or 800-827-1000.

Once you have the *Certificate of Eligibility*, you have to take it to your school (the person who handles GI Bill benefits). That person will verify your status at the school and submit the necessary information to the DVA to get your GI Bill payments underway. If the school's GI Bill person wants to keep your *Certificate of Eligibility* ask if s/he would make a copy and give you back the original. If someone down the road needs to see your *Certificate of Eligibility* and you don't have it because you gave it to a school official, you'll need to get a replacement copy from the DVA – which could take a long time.

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 three pages: **GI Bill – Overview** (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/gibill-o.asp>).

## Grammar & Usage Corner

A number of people have asked that I expand my weekly "Frequently-Confused/Misused Words" entry to cover grammar and usage questions other than confused/misused words as well. This week, **precede** and **proceed**. (These definitions are taken from Webster's *Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* and Merriam-Webster on-line, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>.)

*Precede* is a verb which, most often in American English, means to be, go, or come ahead or in front of ("Senior personnel always precede those who are junior in rank at official ceremonies") or to be earlier than ("The 'attention' bugle call precedes the national anthem at morning colors").

*Proceed* is also a verb, and has a number of meanings. One is to continue after a pause or interruption ("After the gallery had been cleared of demonstrators, the committee chairperson told the witness to proceed") or to go on in an orderly regulated way ("We

will proceed according to the OPLAN"). Another is to begin and carry on an action, process, or movement ("All problems have been resolved and work can now proceed"). And another is to move along a course, to advance ("The crowd proceeded to the exits").

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).

## Common Latin Phrases Everyone Should Know

*In situ* describes where something is or occurs and translates into English as *on site* ("The university president pompously told the board the conference would be held *in situ*").

It is also used to describe something that exists in its normal habitat or in its original or natural state ("The white rhino was found *in situ* in Africa" or "The scrolls were found in pottery jars *in situ* near the Dead Sea").

From: <http://oedb.org/library/beginning-online-learning/50-common-latin-phrases-every-college-student-should-know> and <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/in%2Bsitu>

## Sequestration and Tuition Assistance

The Commandant's e-mail yesterday concerning the effects of sequestration on the Coast Guard said little, specifically, about whether it would affect tuition assistance (TA). The only direct reference to TA was in one of the latter paragraphs:

"By direction of the President, military personnel accounts (including pay, housing, medical, and PCS transfer) are exempt from sequestration. Within the civilian workforce, the Coast Guard's current sequestration plans focus on reductions to certain discretionary programs (PCS transfer, discretionary overtime, temporary summer hires, tuition assistance, and awards). We will do everything we can to mitigate impacts to our workforce and will continue to stay in touch if any further personnel actions need to be taken."

Although we can only guess at exactly what this will mean, the implication is that TA for civilians is likely to be reduced, if not eliminated altogether. At the moment, there is no way to know whether TA for military personnel will be affected. And even for civilians, specifics have not yet been published. Keep a lookout for an ALCOAST that will almost certainly lay out any policy changes.

## New Tool for Finding Colleges

For years, ESOs have wished there were a way to find all colleges and universities in the country that offer degrees in a given major. A Google search yields lots of results, but most of them are web sites schools have to pay to get on – which eliminates schools that don't have big advertising budgets.

The answer to ESOs' wishes (at least the first version) is now here; it's Department of Education's new College Scorecard (<http://collegecost.ed.gov/scorecard/index.aspx>). It will help you find schools that offer the major you're looking for. Although it's a work in progress – the database is not yet complete – it's much better than existing alternatives.

After choosing your search criteria, click on "+ Add Criteria". You'll then see all your search criteria appear in the left margin. Click on the "Search Institution" button and you'll be given a list of all the schools that meet your criteria. To see the largest number of schools, use the fewest possible search criteria (probably just your desired major or majors).

If you can't figure out how to use it, drop by the Education Center and I'll walk you through it.

## “High Debt and Falling Demand Trap New Veterinarians”

(courtesy of Mr. Brion Newman, full-time ESO at Base Seattle)

If you're considering a career in veterinary medicine, you should read this article from the 23 February issue of *The New York Times*: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/24/business/high-debt-and-falling-demand-trap-new-veterinarians.html>.

## Military Scholarships

(courtesy of Ms. Sueann Walter, full-time ESO at the Coast Guard Academy)

If you're looking for scholarships aimed solely at military personnel (and, in some cases, their dependents), check out the spreadsheet Ms. Walter at the Coast Guard Academy prepared (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ScholarshipList.xls>).

And don't limit yourself to these! The easier scholarships are to find and apply for (and the more money they hand out), the more people apply for them and the stiffer the competition is. In addition, look for the obscure and small-amount scholarships that few people find or bother to apply for. Remember: all money from scholarships is free money – not requiring pay-back. And it all adds up. If it takes you or your dependent an hour to complete the application for a \$100 scholarship, the return is \$100/hour. Not bad.

Check out <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/scholarships.asp>, and (especially) <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/scholarships.asp#strategy>.

## New SK Tests

Replacement Rating Advancement Tests (RATs, formerly called EOCTs) for SKs have just arrived. They are, essentially, open-book tests (examinees will be able to use only a CD with authorized references on it) and they're timed (you'll have 100 minutes in which to finish).

E-mail me if you'd like to take one of these tests with the test you want to take and the date you want to take it. I administer RATs every weekday morning at 0745 in the Education Center.

## Got Student Debt?

A recent issue of *The Washington Monthly* contained a short guide to different types of student loan repayment plans. You can find it at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/finance005.doc>.

Also, check out the info at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/loans.asp#repayment>.

## Summer Energy Career Academy

The National Energy Center of Excellence at Bismarck State University in North Dakota is soliciting 14- to 16-year-old participants in its second Summer Energy Career Academy. The three-day program (25-27 June) is “designed to provide participants an opportunity to engage in various energy-related lab experiments, visit energy companies and learn about the amazing career opportunities”. Dorm rooms and food will be provided at no cost to the participants; transportation to and from the Academy is participants' responsibility, however.

**The applications deadline is Friday, 08 March 2013.** For more information (including the complete agenda and the on-line application), go to <http://energy.bismarckstate.edu/nece/academy/>.

## Space Camp & Space Academy Scholarships

The Military Child Education Coalition funds up to 15 scholarships every year for children enrolled in grades 6 through 9 to attend a six-day Space Camp or Space Academy program in Huntsville, AL. Its purpose is to show young men and women firsthand what it takes to be an astronaut. Activities include simulated Space Shuttle missions, training simulators, rocket building and launches, scientific experiments, and lectures of the past, present, and future of space exploration. The program takes a unique, fun, and hands-on approach to learning outside the classroom. Students leave with a greater appreciation for school and their studies.

For more information about the scholarship and a link to the application form, go to <http://www.militarychild.org/parents-and-students/programs/bernard-curtis-brown-ii-memorial-space-camp-scholarship>. And to check out the programs themselves, go to <http://www.spacecamp.com/>. **The application deadline is Sunday, 10 March 2013.**

## Coast Guard Foundation Scholarships

ALCOAST 037/13 announced five 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 **15 March 2013**.

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 2013**.

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

For more information about these scholarships, see ALCOAST 037/13 at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST037-13.pdf>.

## Thinking of Teaching?

If you're interested in becoming a teacher after leaving the Coast Guard, check out the resources at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/teaching.asp>. Also, consider the Troops to Teachers (TTT) program (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/t2t.asp>). The program

- provides mature, motivated, experienced, and dedicated personnel for the nation's classrooms;
- assists military personnel in making successful transitions to second careers in teaching; and
- helps relieve teacher shortages, especially in math, science, special education, career and technical subjects, and foreign languages.

The FY2013 defense authorization act made the following changes to the program (as described in *MilitaryTimesEDGE* magazine):

- reduces the minimum required time in service from six to four years;
- adds foreign language skills as one of the sought-after specialties;
- restores the program to the DoD's control;
- shortens the time to apply for the program from four years to three after leaving the military.

And even if you're not interested in the Troops to Teachers program, Ms. Melissa Fantozzi (Regional Director of the NJ, DE, MD, and DC Troops to Teachers office at 800-680-0884 or [ttnj@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:ttnj@doe.state.nj.us)) is happy to help you navigate the maze of teacher certification requirements not only her assigned region but throughout the country. You can also find links to web pages describing requirements for the states in her region at <http://www.nj.gov/education/ttnj/>.

## E-PME Study Resources

(courtesy of OSI Melissa Mathis, TraCen Cape May)

If you're looking for more ways to study for an E-PME AQE or for the May servicewide exam (SWE), you might want to check out these current tech resources. According to PO Mathis, "There is an app called EPME Mobile which has quizzes for the E-PME Apprentice, Journeyman, and Master materials. With the app, you can search the E-PME manuals and itemize the knowledge and performance requirements. You can also communicate with the developer about edits and updates. It's available for your tablet or smartphone." PO Mathis also pointed to "PDF Notes, an app that allows you to highlight, bookmark and take notes in any manual published in PDF format. It's for a tablet."

Also, some enterprising petty officers have created sets of electronic E-PME flashcards available at Quizlet.com. You can use them (<http://quizlet.com/subject/uscg-epme/>) or create your own, and import them to your smartphone. Two others you can use to create flashcards are Flashcards++ and StudyBlue (the latter of which is also for your computer at <http://www.studyblue.com/switch/cpt.html>).

## ERATS Update

Last week, ALCOAST 049/13 (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST049-13.pdf>) was published updating the timeline for the transition to the new Enlisted Rating Advancement Training System (ERATS). Courses and EPQs for two more ratings (FS and SK) became obsolete on 01 February 2013, replaced by Rating Performance Qualifications (RPQs). You can download RPQs from the Learning Management System on the CGPortal (<https://elearning.uscg.mil>). This means that seven ratings have now made the transition to ERATS: AET, AMT, AST, FS, MST, OS, and SK.

An amplifying e-mail from the Coast Guard Institute states, however, that the pre-01FEB requirements will apply to SK strikers until the November SWE eligibility cut-off date (01 August 2013). That is, until 01 August 2013 they may complete either the RPQs dated March 2009 or the new ones, dated November 2013 and they may take the existing SK3 EOCT until 01 August 2013.

## Tuition Assistance, GI Bill Benefits, and Scholarships/Grants

There seems to be a belief that you can't use other forms of financial aid along with tuition assistance (TA) or GI Bill education benefits. **This is false.**

When it comes to GI Bill education benefits, the general rule is that you can also use any other forms of financial aid except TA. (See <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/gibill-o.asp#ta>) With respect to TA, you can also use other forms of financial aid except GI Bill benefits (see <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/gibill-o.asp#ta>), but when figuring out how much TA to request, you first have to deduct the other forms of financial aid you're receiving. (See the *Performance, Training and Education Manual*, COMDTINST M1500.10C, 11.H.2.e.(11)a.)

Here's a simple example. Let's say you're taking 15 semester credits and the total cost of your tuition and fees is \$4,000. Further assume you're receiving scholarships, grants, or other non-GI Bill forms of financial aid totaling \$2,500. You'd subtract the amount of that financial aid from the total cost, which would leave \$1,500 to be covered by TA. You'd then divide that amount by the number of credits you're taking ( $\$1,500 \div 15$ ) – \$100/credit. You'd list \$100/credit on your TA request under "Cost per Credit (\$)". You'd then use the non-TA money to pay for fees and apply whatever was left toward your tuition, then use TA to pay for the remaining tuition cost.

## Before Choosing a Major or Career Field . . .

If you're considering a particular college major or career field, you should first check out the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/home.htm>). Not only does it tell you what type of education and/or training you need to enter and advance in a specific career field, but it also tells you things like what the pay is likely to be and what the hiring prospects are in the future.

## College Scholarships & Grants

**The scholarships described here are just a few of thousands you or your dependents may be eligible for.** They're the low-hanging fruit, the ones most often publicized and (as a result) the ones that have the most applicants. If you really want some serious money from scholarships, you'll apply to all you're eligible for – especially those not widely known. For more about scholarships (including how to find and apply for them in a systematic manner), go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/scholarships.asp>.

### Doodle 4 Google

Google holds an annual contest for K-12 students in the U.S. to redesign the Google logo. This year, the theme is “My Best Day Ever....” One winner will earn a \$30,000 college scholarship, as well as a \$50,000 technology grant for their school. Templates are available online. The application **deadline is Friday, March 22, 2013**. For complete information, go to <http://www.google.com/doodle4google/>.

### ScholarshipAmerica

Among other things, the web site ScholarshipAmerica ([http://scholarshipamerica.org/open\\_scholarships.php](http://scholarshipamerica.org/open_scholarships.php)) has descriptions of and links to not-so-widely-known scholarships. (The less well-known they are, the more likely you are to be successful in getting them.) The descriptions include opening and closing dates.

## Preparing for the SWE or Any Other Test?

Check out the tips on effective studying and test-taking skills at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/studying.asp>.

## GI Bill Transfer & Service Obligation

Despite ESOs' best efforts since August 2009 to ensure everyone knows about the additional service requirement you incur when you transfer new (Post-9/11) GI Bill education benefit, some people are telling us they're about to retire and weren't aware of it.

**The general rule is that you must serve for four years after the date you transfer any or all of your benefit. For those who became eligible for retirement between 01 August 2009 and 01 August 2012, different service obligation periods apply (see <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/gibill-33b.asp#obligation>).**

If you've transferred any or all of your benefit and leave the Coast Guard voluntarily during the service obligation period, you “must go back into the Portal and revoke [your] transfer (return transfer months to zero),” according to Mr. Reidus Stokes, the GI Bill person at PSC. You'll also need to “visit the PSD (FS) website (<http://www.uscg.mil/psc/psd/fs/GI%20Bill.asp>), print the “Revocation of Post 9/11 Transfer Benefits”, sign it, date it, and e-mail or fax” it to him. “If any benefits were used, [you] will be placed in an overpayment status by the Department of Veteran Affairs” and the DVA will follow its procedures to recover the money it paid out for your dependent's education, housing allowance, etc.

If you believe you were not properly notified of the opportunity to transfer your new GI Bill benefit to dependents while you were in uniform, you can request a correction of military records to allow for transferability. To do this, submit an “Application for Correction of Military Record Under the Provisions of Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 1552” (<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd0149.pdf>) to the Coast Guard Board for Correction of Military Records.

Be aware, however, that (to quote the instructions on the form) you must “show to the satisfaction of the Board by the evidence that you supply, or it must otherwise satisfactorily appear in the record, that the alleged entry or omission in the record was in error or unjust. Evidence, in addition to documents, may include affidavits or signed testimony of witnesses, executed under oath, and a brief of arguments supporting the application. All evidence not already included in your record must be submitted by you. The responsibility of securing evidence rests with you.”

## College Financial Aid Presentations

Last week, CollegeWeekLive (<http://www.collegeweeklive.com/>) sponsored Financial Aid Week for college students and their families. You can watch the recorded presentations on its web site by logging in (it's free), and then clicking on the "Paying for College Videos" button. Among the topics are "Building a Career to Pay for College", "Are You Scholarship Ready?", "Career Information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics", "The 1-2-3 Step Approach to Paying for College", and many others.

## New College & Career Planning Tool

Military personnel now have access to another tool to help them plan for college or a career after the Coast Guard. Kuder, a "provider of Internet-based tools and resources that help students and adults achieve their educational and career planning goals", has an Internet-based program designed specifically for military personnel. It's called Journey, and you can find out more about it and how to access it from a flyer you'll find at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/Journey.pdf>.

Journey and other similar tools (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/sitest.asp>) are powerful tools in helping you decide your future career path and what to major in, if you decide to pursue a college degree.

## Looking for a Post-CG Career with a Bright Future?

If you're looking for a recession-proof career, you might consider companies that generate and distribute energy. Nearly 40% of current workers in utility companies are expected to retire or leave within the next five years. Openings include security officer positions, which you might be hired for without specialized training (depending on your current rate), engineers, line workers, plant operators, pipe fitters, welders, and others.

The Center for Energy Workforce Development is a non-profit consortium of electrical, natural gas, and nuclear utilities and their associations formed to help utilities develop solutions to the coming workforce shortage in the utility industry. Check out its Troops to Energy Jobs initiative at the bottom of this page (<http://www.cewd.org/index.asp>) and <http://military.getintoenergy.com/index.php>.

And once you've read a bit about the types of work that's likely to become available, check out the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (<http://www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm>) to find out more about

- the nature of the work,
- required training,
- other qualifications,
- advancement opportunities,
- current and future employment prospects,
- projected earnings,
- related occupations,
- sources of additional information.

Thomas Edison State University here in New Jersey also has an on-line Bachelor of Science in Applied Science and Technology degree in Energy Utility Technology (<http://www.tesc.edu/ast/bsast/Energy-Utility.cfm>). The tuition is \$250/credit – the maximum tuition assistance will pay.

Bismarck State College in North Dakota (<http://energy.bismarckstate.edu/programs/>) can get you ready for these careers via its on-line certification, associate's and bachelor's degree, and non-degree programs in almost a dozen energy-related fields.

If you follow the news, you know that these industries are crying for people with training in these areas.

The maximum per-credit tuition is currently \$227 (depending on which program you're pursuing) with fees totaling approximately \$22/credit – less than the maximum tuition assistance will pay. For more information, go to <http://energy.bismarckstate.edu/programs/>.

## Resources for Starting and Running Your Own Business

If you're thinking about starting your own business, either while you're still in uniform or after you leave the Coast Guard, be aware you don't have to have a degree in business. In fact, there are few courses in a business major that will help you create and operate a small business. See the courses typical associate's (<http://www.tesc.edu/business/asba/index.cfm>) and bachelor's (<http://www.amu.apus.edu/academic/programs/degree/15/bachelor-of-business-administration>) business administration majors have to take. These all take large amounts of time and cost money.

On the other hand, you can find a huge number of resources on the Internet for entrepreneurs. A large sampling is at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/smallbiz.asp>. While these still take time to study and absorb, there are no assignments or tests, as in college courses, and they're free.

These resources are applicable to all types of small businesses on many different subjects (e.g., drafting a business plan, finding funding, etc.). There are also sections aimed at those interested in starting not-for-profit businesses and those interested in social entrepreneurship. (Contrary to popular belief, not-for-profit doesn't mean "no profit" or that you can't earn a substantial salary. It just means most of the profit has to be put toward specific things, usually plowed back into the business.)

Finally, drop by the Education Center to pick up a copy of the book *Best Career and Education Web Sites*. Chapters 7 ("Self-Employment and Small Business") and 8 ("Temporary Work, Contract Employment, Freelancing, Teleworking, and Volunteering") have many great leads.

## Free Language Software

Mango Languages on-line now available to District 5 personnel, courtesy of Ms. Monica Bailey (full-time ESO at Base Portsmouth). Its features include:

- 50+ basic courses (35 foreign languages and 15 ESL Courses)
- 45 complete courses (32 foreign languages and 13 ESL Courses)
- Ability to download and use mobile versions (for iPhone and Android App)
- Unlimited remote access to all online course material.

You can get more information from Mango's web site at [www.mangolanguages.com](http://www.mangolanguages.com). If you're interested in using the program, contact Ms. Bailey at [monica.r.bailey@uscg.mil](mailto:monica.r.bailey@uscg.mil).

## Learning Another Language & Foreign Language Testing

There are a number of software applications that help you learn a foreign language. "Tell Me More" ([http://us.tellmemore.com/free\\_demo](http://us.tellmemore.com/free_demo)), Mango ([www.mangolanguages.com](http://www.mangolanguages.com)), and "Rosetta Stone" (<http://www.rosettastone.com/>), which everyone's seen on TV) are but a few 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, including <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/LanguageLearning.pdf>.

- **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 and/or practicing foreign languages at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/languages.asp>.

## Thinking About Taking College Courses?

If you're interested in taking college courses, but are unsure where to start or what to do first, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/starting.asp>. The seven steps provided there will help you

- understand terminology and how you progress toward a degree,
- figure out whether you need a degree to enter the field you want to work in,
- if a degree will be helpful, determine what you want to major in,
- find colleges/universities which offer degrees in your desired major,
- request degree plans from your chosen school(s),
- submit a request to the Coast Guard Institute for an education assessment and to have official transcripts of your assessment sent to colleges you've identified, and
- pick your first course.

This is the hardest part of the process. Once you've done this, it's just a matter of deciding which type of funding to use (tuition assistance, GI Bill, scholarships, loans, or a combination of these) and applying for it. Tuition assistance (TA) and GI Bill funding is easy to use and readily available. You've got to plan ahead if you want to get scholarships because applications are usually due at specific times of the year that might not coincide with dates your courses begin. And loans, while they're readily available, should be your last recourse.

## Is On-Line Learning for You?

If you're trying to decide between taking courses in a classroom or via distance learning (aka distance education), you owe it to yourself to use one or more of the on-line assessment tools available from DANTES and various colleges (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/distance.asp#01>). Spending some time with these tools could save you time and a lot of aggravation down the road.

## TraCen Cape May Testing Schedule

As of next Monday (28 January 2013), tests at TraCen Cape May will be administered by appointment according to the following schedule.

Mondays (0745): EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs

Tuesdays (0745): EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs

Wednesdays (0745): EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs\* or Defense Language Proficiency Tests (DLPT)

Thursdays (0745): EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs; college tests, DSSTs, SATs, ACTs

Alternating Fridays (0745): EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs

\* If someone has made an appointment to take a DLPT (a 6-hour test), there will be no EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs.

College placement, AFCT, and all other tests will be scheduled on a case-by-case basis.

If you call and I don't answer the phone, I'm probably administering a test (and, because I don't want to disturb examinees I can't talk on the phone) or I'm otherwise busy with someone in the office. E-mail is the best way to get in touch with me at [andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil](mailto:andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil).

## Education Center Library

The TraCen Education Center 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>.

In addition to SparkCharts, the Education Center also has a library of books on leadership, management, Coast Guard history, and other topics which you're welcome to check out. Also in the library are the latest Professional Qualification Guides (PQGs) and Rating Performance Qualifications (RPQs) for each rate.

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.