

TraCen Cape May Education Update #415

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Education Center Closure

The Education Center will be ***closed from Friday, 10 May through Friday, 31 May*** while I'm on leave. Please plan accordingly!!

Congratulations!!

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

Name	Work Site	Test
SK2 Carrie Sisel*	TraCen (Purchasing)	SK1
MK2 Joshua Duran*	TraCen (Gym)	E-PME-6
EM3 Brandon Ladson	TraCen (FE)	EM2
HS3 Sarah Cielecki	TraCen (Clinic)	HS2

* First attempt

Also, CWO2 Kim Angel (formerly a CC at TraCen Cape May) just earned her Associate of Arts degree in counter-terrorism studies from American Military University, and is on her way to earning a bachelor's degree in emergency and disaster management.

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 – Can I take the ACT or SAT for free?

Q: I want to take a college entrance test (ACT or SAT) and have heard I can take it for free. Is that true?

A: Generally, that is true. However, before you request an SAT or ACT, make sure that it's actually necessary. If you're applying for a Coast Guard advanced education program, it most likely will be necessary. But if you just want to take college courses, it's almost certainly not.

Check out the SAT-ACT comparison on my web site (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/comparison.asp>) before deciding which test to order.

Military personnel (both Regular and Reserve) may take the SAT Reasoning Test and ACT at DANTEs military test sites throughout the country. There is no charge for the first test, but you must pay for all subsequent tests. Unfortunately, DANTEs military test sites are not allowed to offer either test to anyone but uniformed military personnel.

ESOs who are DANTEs Test Control Officers (TCOs) can obtain and administer the ACT at their units at any time. Be aware, however, that ESOs must order the test at least 30 days before the test date. To make sure your ESO actually has the test before your scheduled test date, request it at least five weeks before the date you want to take it. The SAT Reasoning Test is slightly different. Although your TCO will receive it within about two weeks after ordering it, TCOs may only administer the test from 01 October through 30 June each year.

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.

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 *Becoming a Teacher* (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/teaching.asp>).

Grammar, Vocabulary, & Usage Corner

This week, **waiver** and **waver**. (These definitions are taken from *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* and Merriam-Webster online, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>.)

Waiver is a noun describing the act of intentionally relinquishing or abandoning a known right, claim, or privilege or a legal instrument evidencing such an act. ("The suspect signed a waiver of his right to have a lawyer present during police questioning.")

Waver is a verb most often used in American English to mean vacillating irresolutely between choices, fluctuating in opinion, allegiance, or direction. ("The U.S. government has never wavered in its support for Israel.")

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.

Common Latin Phrases Everyone Should Know

Status quo means "the state in which". It's used today to describe the existing state or condition of things. ("It's in the interest of high-emission power generators to maintain the status quo with regard to lax CO₂ abatement laws.")

From: <http://oedb.org/library/beginning-online-learning/50-common-latin-phrases-every-college-student-should-know>

Tuition Assistance Update

Yes, it's been a few weeks since Congress enacted legislation that requiring the armed forces to again provide tuition assistance. But the fact that the legislation didn't provide any money for TA meant that the services have had to scramble to find ways to pay for it without negatively affecting operations. For that and other reasons, there has been nothing official published by the COMDT telling us when or under what conditions TA will again become available.

TA is currently unavailable and all TA applications will be rejected until official guidance has been published. **Please don't submit any TA applications until the Coast Guard Institute advises ESOs to again accept them.**

Servicewide Exams

If you're expecting to take a servicewide exam (SWE) in May, please be on the lookout for an e-mail from me with all the relevant information (where, when, what to bring, what to wear, etc.). I'll be sending it out as soon as I get the tests. Let me know ASAP if you don't receive that e-mail by 19 April.

In the meantime, you should be wrapping up your SWE studies. Please see the items below on SWE preparation tips and other info.

Education Financial Aid Info

The US Department of Education's web site has loads of information about financial aid for higher education, including a large number of handouts you can download. You can find them at <http://www.studentaid.ed.gov/resources>. Among the titles are:

- Don't Get Scammed on Your Way to College!
- Loan Forgiveness for Public Service Employees
- Be an Informed Consumer... when it comes to federal student aid
- Student Aid and Identity Theft
- Student Loans: Avoiding Deceptive Offers
- Pay As You Earn Repayment Plan

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>.

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 high-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>).

Taking the New RATs/EOCTs

If you're an SK, OS, FS, MST, AET, AMT, or AST, you may have heard that while taking one of the latest versions of a RAT (Rating Advancement Test) you can use references. This is true. Essentially, it's an open-book test. But the "book" is a series of computer files in PDF format. The references will be references you use on the job: COMDTINSTs, Coast Guard manuals, tech manuals, excerpts from the Code of Federal Regulations, Navy publications, etc.

Keep in mind that these tests are timed and you want to spend your time on thinking about what the answer to a question is, not on figuring out how to find or check the answer to the question. Therefore, if you're not already familiar with the various search features of Adobe Acrobat or Reader, it will behoove you to take a few minutes before your scheduled test date to become familiar with them.

Your ESO is prohibited from giving you access to the RAT references before you take the test, but can help you understand how to efficiently search a PDF document.

New College Info

Periodically, the TraCen Cape May's Education Center receives flyers, brochures, posters, and other information from colleges and universities around the country. This material is available any time during working hours (including lunch time). ***The fact that this information is printed here does not constitute an endorsement of the corresponding schools or programs.***

Atlantic Cape Community College (ACCC) – In addition to the recent addition of an Air Traffic Control and Aviation Studies degree program, Atlantic Cape Community College plans to offer four more new degree programs this fall. The programs are:

- Biomedical Science
- Environmental Science
- Chemistry
- Radiologic Technology.

In addition to information about these programs, the latest edition of ACCC's "CareerFocus" magazine (<http://atlantic.mycareerfocus.org/>) includes articles on short-term career training, the school's cutting-edge culinary arts program, a step-by-step guide to applying for financial aid, how ACCC can prepare you for transferring to a four-year degree program, earning college credit for high school courses, and other topics.

Empire State College (which is part of the State University of New York system) “has launched the Veteran and Military MBA Pathway program”. The program “is designed to help veterans and service members use their professional military education and training to earn an MBA in Management.” You don’t have to take the GMAT or GRE to qualify for this program. For more information, go to <http://choose.esc.edu/lib/docs/pdf/veteran-military-mba-pathway-faqs.pdf>.

Dependent Children Between 21 and 26: Transferring GI Bill Benefits

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

To transfer GI Bill benefits to a dependent child, she must be registered in the DEERS database. That can be done at any time until she reaches her 26th birthday. If she’s older than 21, she must be attending college to be entered into the database. You’ll need to supply proof (in the form of a letter from the school) stating that your child is attending college full-time and has paid all tuition and fees for the current school term. (After you’ve transferred your GI Bill benefit to a child in this situation, it doesn’t matter whether her data remains in the database.)

For your child to be eligible for TriCare benefits, she must also be in DEERS. To ensure she remains eligible for TriCare while in college (at least until she turns 23), every six months you will need to provide your DEERS office with the letter described above. That is, your dependent child will automatically be removed from the DEERS database six months after you provide the letter, unless you provide another letter (until she turns 23) with a current date on it.

When your dependent child turns 26, she will be deleted from the DEERS database and will no longer be able to use any GI Bill benefits that were transferred to her.

The Start of a Trend in Higher Ed?

The University of Akron will soon begin offering a new program “aimed at helping more students earn credit for course material they’ve already mastered”, according to the 3 April issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. The school’s web site describes the Express to Success program as follows: “If you have learned the material taught in a [University of Akron] course, you can refresh your knowledge through a Test Prep Tutorial (TPT), and then earn credits through Credit by Exam (CBE).” The tutorial will cost \$100 per course and the exam will cost \$30/credit. (<http://www.uakron.edu/express/>)

Granted, this is unlikely to affect many (if any) Coast Guard personnel since the University of Akron’s undergraduate tuition is over \$680/credit and since the school doesn’t offer distance learning courses. But as colleges and universities try to expand their markets, more of them are likely to offer similar options. Thomas Edison State College has offered a similar option for years with its TECEP program (<http://www.tesc.edu/degree-completion/Testing.cfm>). The only difference is that there’s no tutorial available before you take the test.

Be on the lookout for programs similar to U of Akron’s at more affordable schools that offer distance learning courses and degree programs.

Officer Program Application Process

In a change from previous practice, all applicants and would-be applicants for the Coast Guard’s various officer programs (enlisted or civilian) are to contact the nearest Coast Guard recruiting office for help in preparing their applications. ESOs receive no training from CGRC concerning officer accession programs; recruiters do.

To quote CGRC’s web site (<http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-career/officer-opportunities/programs/program-forms-and-deadlines>), “6. You should . . . get in touch with your nearest recruiting office as soon as possible, WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE “ESO” or “RO” DEADLINE, whether you are a CG member, a civilian, or a member of another service. Begin the process by filling out some pertinent information that recruiters need to help you.”

Medical Assistant Careers

Are you interested in working as a medical assistant, either as a long-term career or as a stepping stone to other medical fields? If so, check out <http://emedicalassistants.com/> for a description of what the career entails, where you can find training programs, and much other information.

Before diving into a particular program, though, make sure you do your homework. There are *many* for-profit programs that cost much more than do programs at public community colleges. Here's a Google search that provides links to a number of community college medical assistant degree and certificate programs, some of which are provided completely on-line:

http://www.google.com/search?q=%22medical+assistant%22+AND+%22distance+learning%22+OR+online+AND+%22community+college%22&rls=com.microsoft:*&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&startIndex=&startPage=1.

Articles of Interest

Check out these education- and career-transition-related articles:

- Top Ten Things Employers Look for in New College Graduates (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/edmisc033.pdf>)
- The Truth About a Liberal Arts Education (http://www.christendom.edu/images/pdfs/truth_liberalarts.pdf)
- 5 Ways to Look Relaxed During a Job Interview (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/interview038.pdf>)
- Bad Job Interview? 4 Good Ways to Learn From It (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/follow004.pdf>)
- Grass Isn't Always Greener When You Leave Military (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/change014.pdf>)
- Mastering the Phone Interview (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/interview040.pdf>)
- Tips to Boost Your Job Interview Confidence (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/interview041.pdf>)
- Top 8 Reasons You Weren't Hired (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/jobmisc051.pdf>)
- 5 Things to Tweak on Every Resume You Send (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/resume030.pdf>)
- 10 Top Mistakes People Make in Job Interviews (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/interview039.pdf>)
- Networking Your Way into a Civilian Career (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/network013.pdf>)
- Does Your Career Need a Second Act? (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/change013.pdf>)

These are just a few you can find at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/articles.asp> and <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/articles2.asp>.

College & Career Planning Tools

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.

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/oooh/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.

Preparing to Re-Take an ASVAB Test?

If you're preparing to re-take the AR, MK, PC, or WK ASVAB/AFCT tests, you'll do yourself a favor if you start the process by first going to <http://www.petersonsdodlibrary.com/> and accessing the free On-line Academic Skills Course (OASC). The course is geared to helping you improve your English (usage and vocabulary) and math skills. The lessons (approximately 20 minutes long) and tests are tailored to your current skills, so you don't have to sit through stuff you're already proficient in. As you progress through the course, periodic quizzes allow you to see whether and how much you've improved.

This is a great tool, it's free, and it's accessible from any computer that has Internet connectivity.

Free On-line Test Prep Tools

Looking for help in studying for a test? Peterson's DoD MWR Libraries has on-line study materials and practice tests for dozens of tests of all types: CLEP (all subjects), DSST (all subjects), ASVAB/AFCT, ASTB, PSAT, SAT, ACT, GRE, GMAT, LSAT.

From this site, you'll also have access to the Online Academic Skills Course (OASC) which you can use to improve your math and verbal skills, with pre-tests, lessons tailored to your needs, and more tests to see how you progressed.

These can all be used to help study for the tests listed above and for high school or college tests in the various subjects covered by the CLEP and DSST tests (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/tests.asp>). Check this all out at <http://www.petersonsdodlibrary.com>.

Coast Guard Institute Transcripts

The American Council on Education (ACE) evaluates "A" and "C" school curricula to determine how many credits you would have earned in college if you had covered there the same material you covered in an "A" or "C" school.

You can get a transcript of these credits from the Coast Guard Institute by downloading and submitting a form (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/CGI1561.pdf>) through your ESO. Make sure you read the instructions for each section of the form before filling out that section; only fill out the sections that you have to fill out. In section I you'll see a number of options for telling Institute staff what you want.

If this is the first time you've submitted a transcript request, check the "Assessment" box. If you've submitted an assessment request before, and want to update it, check the "Update to Assessment" box. Either way, you'll receive an unofficial transcript by e-mail from the Institute.

If you want an official transcript (which will be sent to a college, university, or your ESO but not to you), check the "Official Transcript" box.

Unofficial transcripts differ from official transcripts only in that they're not printed on paper (you'll receive a PDF file). Official transcripts are printed on special, watermarked paper that makes tampering obvious and they have the Coast Guard Institute's seal on them. To see if credits earned through military service will count toward a degree, you have to have an official transcript sent to the school you want to get the degree from.

If you're just curious about how many credits you've accumulated in which subjects and don't feel you need an assessment, you can go to ACE's web site (<http://www.militaryguides.acenet.edu/>).

Bear in mind that every college and university in the U.S. has its own criteria for deciding whether to accept credits earned anywhere else. So credits that show up on your Coast Guard transcript may or may not be accepted toward majors and degrees at your preferred school.

Alternatives to TA for Education Funding

Even though TA can't currently be used to pay for college courses, there are many options available other than TA (as there have always been). These are:

- scholarships and grants
- loans
- GI Bill benefits.

Scholarships (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/scholarships.asp>) and grants (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/grants.asp>) provide money you don't have to repay.

Loans (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/loans.asp>) must be repaid and should be used only as a last resort. Some loans (like the CGMA Education Loan) are interest-free.

There are currently six different GI Bill education benefits (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/gibill-o.asp>, VEAP, and one for survivors of deceased servicemembers). Many people are unaware that applying for GI Bill benefits (colloquially known as activating your benefit) has no negative effects. You can apply for benefits while on active duty or after you leave the service, but whenever you do so, you will have fixed amount of time in which to use up your benefit after your last day on active duty. Each of the programs has a different length of time to use them up. **The amount of time you have to use your benefit is completely unrelated to the number of months in your entitlement (which is normally 36).**

DANTES has also "produced a new Web page highlighting a number of TA Alternatives to help Service members weather this fiscal storm. While budget cuts and the impact swirl in the news, Service members want help finding alternative funding sources, alternate sources of college credit, who to talk to, and answers to the question "What can I do to keep my education goals on track?" That help is available at the DANTES Web site at <http://www.dantes.doded.mil>."

More Education Funding Resources

The US Department of Education's web site has dozens of resources to help you find funding for higher education (yours or your dependents') – <http://www.studentaid.ed.gov/resources>. There are downloadable one-page flyers, brochures, pamphlets, and booklets, as well as links to more resources.

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>.

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."

One more thing, Mr. Stokes also advises that the obligated service period begins on the date of your first transfer of benefits (TEB) to any dependent(s). If you transfer all benefits to your spouse today, you would have to serve four years from today or face the consequences described above. If you and your spouse have a baby next year and decide to re-allocate your transferred benefits (18 months to your spouse, 18 months to the baby), you incur no additional service obligation. **It pays to transfer your benefits as soon as you make the decision to do so, and definitely before you begin the 16th year of your career.**

Check Out a Career in the Health Information Technology Field

Estimates from government agencies and independent studies indicate a need for 50,000 to 80,000 more health IT workers so health care facilities can implement and maintain electronic health records (EHRs) and meet meaningful use requirements.

Included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 were grants to community colleges to be used to train "health information technology professionals": people qualified to support information exchange among health care providers and public health authorities and to redesign of workflows within the health care settings to gain the quality and efficiency benefits of EHRs.

If you're interested in finding out more about opportunities these grants create, information on colleges providing this training, their admission criteria, their tuition structures, etc. check out the fact sheet from Region D at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/HIT.pdf>. (The info on this fact sheet applies to all five regions.) And to find a community college in the region nearest you that's offering courses as part of the health IT program, go to http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit_hhs_gov_community_college_program/1804.

MOOCs?

MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) have lately become all the rage. These are courses taught by faculty members at top-flight universities that are offered on-line for free to anyone who wants to sign up. MOOCs can be great for certain people in certain circumstances. But don't sign up for a MOOC thinking you'll be able to get a degree by taking the right just the right ones. At the moment, these are not-for-credit courses – at least right now. That is, at the moment you can't take and pass one of these courses and then expect that fact to count toward a degree.

MOOCs can be fantastic tools, however, to use to prepare for a credit-by-exam test (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/tests.asp>), to supplement other resources you're using to study for a college course you've paid for, or to learn about a subject you've always been interested in but didn't want to pay for. For a long list of sites where you can check out MOOCs, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/studymaterials.asp>.

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) was born, recently: it's Department of Education's 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.

Limitations on CGMA Supplemental Education Grants

Coast Guard Mutual Assistance will reimburse their first associate's or bachelor's degree may request reimbursement of various college-related expenses. For more information, see <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/grants.asp#seg>. However, to quote from the CGMA Manual, "Assistance is not authorized for costs associated with preparatory courses, licenses (maritime, real estate, AC&R, etc.), or certification courses (computer, maritime, law, medical, etc)."

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) 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/>.

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.

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.