

TraCen Cape May Education Update #301

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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:

Name	Work Site	Test
HS3 Jesus Hernandez	HSWL FO Cape May	HS2*

* First attempt

Well done, PO Hernandez!!

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: I'm a PHS doctor and want to transfer my education benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill to my children. How do I do that?

A: I'm sorry to tell you that at the moment, you can't.

The statutes which authorize the new GI Bill include a provision which allows certain personnel to transfer unused benefits to dependents (38 U.S. Code §3319). This statute defines eligible individuals as "any member of the Armed Forces" who meets certain criteria. Title 38 of the U.S. Code (pertaining to veterans' benefits) includes a section

which defines terms used throughout the title. That section (38 U.S. Code §101) states that "The term 'Armed Forces' means the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard, including the reserve components thereof."

Because the Public Health Service is not included in the definition of "Armed Forces" for purposes of Title 38, you may not transfer unused benefits under the new GI Bill to dependents.

However, relief may be on the horizon. On 21 July, the Senate Veterans' Affairs committee held a hearing on proposed changes to the new GI Bill. One of those who testified was the head of the USPHS Commissioned Officers' Association, who is seeking to extend the transferability provision to commissioned PHS personnel.

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.

Plan Ahead!!!

I'm going to be on TAD for the annual ESO symposium from 23 through 27 August, and on leave from 9 through 27 September. The Education Center will be closed during both periods.

Please plan ahead, especially with respect to tests and tuition assistance applications.

29 Reasons Not to Go To Law School

Would the person who borrowed *29 Reasons Not to Go to Law School* from the ESO please return it?

Thanks!

Web Page in the Spotlight

There's lots of stuff on the TraCen Cape May web site that I've forgotten about and you might not check out if you didn't know it was there. So this week, I'm spotlighting **Residency Requirements for In-State Tuition** (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/tuition.asp>).

Frequently-Confused/Misused Words

The English language is a marvel of versatility and precision. But because it has absorbed words from so many sources, many sound or are spelled similarly but mean completely different things. This results in hundreds of words which leave people unsure as to which they should use in a given situation. This week the words in focus are: **lay** and **lie**.

First, note that what follows is only about the present tense of both words. For the past tense and more on the present tense, go to <http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/lay-versus-lie.aspx>.

Lay is a verb meaning to put or set down. It's also what's called a transitive verb, which means it requires a direct object. Huh? This simply means there's got to be something that the word "lay" applies to. You lay a book on the desk or, to use the memory device my grandmother taught me, "Only hens lay." If you're not physically setting or putting something down, you shouldn't use *lay*.

Lie (the verb, not the untruth) is transitive, there's nothing being acted on. The word means to recline, to be or stay at rest in a horizontal position: "Lie down and rest", not "Lay down and rest".

If there are any words you often mix up, please e-mail them to me at andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil.

Clarification on New YN2 Course and Tests

For a number of reasons, ESOs have been given unofficial word to disregard ALCOAST 378/10, concerning a new YN2 course.

Stand by for another ALCOAST which should clarify what's going on with the YN2 course and tests.

Clarification on New ET1 and ET2 Courses

ALCOAST 0359/10 announced new course books for the ET1 (0122-3) and ET2 (0222-3) courses. You can order these courses via your ESO from the Coast Guard Institute starting on 01 August 2010. Also starting on that date you'll be able to download the courses from the Coast Guard Learning Portal (<https://learning.uscg.mil>). The latest EPQ form is also available from the Coast Guard Learning Portal.

ETs must complete the most current EPQs before they will be eligible to take any version of the relevant end-of-course test (EOCT).

The last date you may take the current ET1 or ET2 EOCT is 01 August 2010, which is the last date for completing all SWE requirements. To compete in any of the 2011 SWEs, you must have passed the EOCT that goes on-line on 02 August 2010.

That is, if you passed the EOCT before 01AUG, you'll be able to compete in the SWEs still to be administered this year. But even if you passed the YN2 test available before 01AUG, you'll have to have passed the test that goes into effect on 02 AUG if you want to compete in any of the SWEs in 2011.

GI Bill & Certification/Licensing Tests

Did you know that your GI Bill education benefit program will reimburse you for the cost of license and certification exams (up to \$2,000 per exam) – and that there will be no charge to your 36-month entitlement? It's true!

If you're eligible for benefits under the MGIB-AD, MGIB-SR, or REAP (or if you gave up one of these to get benefits under the new GI Bill), you can take an unlimited number of license and certification tests as long as you're eligible for GI Bill benefits.

If you're eligible for new GI Bill benefits and didn't give up one of the others, you can take only one test during your lifetime.

What kinds of tests fall under this benefit? Here are a few:

- Lawyer license (aka bar exam)
- C++ certification
- HVAC journeyman
- Cosmetology license
- Safety professional certification
- Dental assistant
- Residential mechanical inspector certification

To find out if the test you want to take is one of those which qualifies for reimbursement, go "Search for Approved License and Certification Programs" on the Department of Veterans' Affairs's web site (http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/search_programs.htm).

Thinking of Starting 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, check out a sampling of resources for entrepreneurs at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/smallbiz.asp>. There

you'll find general resources 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 the popular notion, 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. There's also a section with links to labor market information.

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.

Career Assessment & Planning Tools

TraCen Cape May has a number of career assessment and planning tools available at no charge. These include:

- Dr. John Holland's *Self-Directed Search (SDS)*,
- the *Strong Interest Inventory*,
- the *Kuder Career Planning System*, and
- *DISCOVER*.

The SDS and Strong Interest Inventory are paper-based instruments; the Kuder and DISCOVER systems are computer-based. For info on how to use them, contact me by e-mail to set up an appointment.

Tuition Assistance & Grade Reports

After you've completed a course paid for with tuition assistance (TA), remember that to avoid a nastygram from the Navy, you must submit a grade report for that course to your ESO at most 42 days after the end date listed on your authorization. It's your responsibility – not your school's – to provide this grade report.

If at all possible, please send your grade report, rather than your transcript. We're interested in seeing only the grades you earned for the courses listed on your authorization, not all grades earned at a particular college or university.

The grade report you send to your ESO must include your employee ID number or SSN, either on the grade report itself or in the text of the e-mail you use to send it to your ESO.

BM Strikers

If you're striking for BM3, you've already got the BM3 course, which includes charts, dividers, and other useful stuff. But consider also getting the Basic Radar User (BARAD) and Maneuvering Boards (MANBD) courses which are also available from the Coast Guard Institute through your ESO.

The BARAD courses "provides training in basic radar operation of the AN/SPS-64 and 66 radars, scope interpretation, and plotting" while the MANBD course "provides training in the uses of maneuvering boards in solving problems which involve relative motion; speed; CPAs; collision avoidance; station taking; contact interception; true, relative, and desired wind; and direct plotting procedures."

Each of these courses has been evaluated by ACE and the credit associated with them may be applicable to a college degree. The fact that you took the initiative to take these courses and pass the associated tests also looks good on your EER.

Wondering What to Major In?

Are you interested in getting a college degree, but unsure about what to major in? Drop by the Education Center and pick up a copy of *College Majors that Work*. This book has an excellent, easy-to-follow system for determining what major best matches your interests.

You should also check out chapters 3 ("Career Exploration Information") and 5 ("Researching Employer and Labor Market Information") of the book *Best Career and Education Web Sites*. Before you dive into a major, with the intention of going into a particular career field, read these chapters. They can help you figure out if there's actually a future in your chosen field. The last thing you want is to invest a lot of time and money in getting a particular degree only to find when you're done that there aren't many jobs available in the field you prepared for or that advancement in that field is slow or frozen.

Interested in College, but Unsure How to Get Started?

If you're a total novice when it comes to college, check out these sites:

- <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/basics.asp>
- College 101 (on the Learning Portal, <https://learning.uscg.mil>). Once you've logged in, follow this path: Course Catalog > Education > College 101

If you're interested in getting a degree related to your Coast Guard rate, check out the Coast Guard Institute's web site (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cgi/ve/roadmaps.asp>) for sample degree plans.

If you're unsure what to do next, check out the step-by-step plan for getting started taking college courses, at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/starting.asp>.

Are On-line College Courses for You?

The University of Georgia has come up with an on-line assessment tool you can use to determine if computer-based distance learning is for you. It's called SORT (Student Online Readiness Tool, <http://www.alt.usg.edu/sort/html/sortlau1.html>) and is based on research that says there are "six main topics closely related to a student's success in the online learning environment". These are, Experience with Technology, Access to Technology, Study Habits, Lifestyle, Goals and Purposes, and Learning Preferences. "Each section of SORT has a brief description followed by a questionnaire. Based on your responses to questions, feedback is provided on your personal readiness profile, along with suggested strategies for success and links to more information."

Online Academic Skills Course (OASC)

Peterson's (the owner of OASC) will be performing a data center move starting on Friday, 30 July. The DANTES OASC website will not be available between 1900 on Friday, 30 July and approximately 0800 on Monday, 02 August (all times Eastern).

If you're about ready to start taking college courses or want to improve one or more ASVAB scores, OASC is for you. It's designed to help you build your math and verbal skills, which will help you score well on exams and excel in your career – in or out of the Coast Guard. Except for the period noted above, it's available free 24/7 to you and your family on the Internet.

How does it work? You first take an initial test to measure your strengths and weaknesses. Then you'll receive a personalized set of lessons based on your test results. Those lessons will engage you with interactive activities, flash cards, quizzes, and practice tests. Once you've completed all the lessons, you'll take another test to evaluate your progress.

For more information, to register, and to get started, go to <http://www.petersons.com/dantes>.

Turn Your ICS/IS Courses Into College Credit

Frederick Community College (FCC) in Frederick, MD will award college credit for many FEMA courses (including ICS-100, 200, 700, and 800) taken through its Emergency Management Institute (<http://training.fema.gov/IS/>). These credits are applicable to FCC's Associate of Applied Sciences degree in Emergency Management or may be transferred to other schools.

For more information, go to http://www.frederick.edu/courses_and_programs/degree_emergency_management.aspx.

Avoid Student Loans!

There's very little reason to take out student loans when so much money is available from scholarships and other (free) sources of financial assistance for college. In addition to tuition assistance for Coast Guard employees (military and civilian) and the various versions of the GI Bill (for current military personnel, veterans, and in some cases dependents), there are scholarships, fellowships/grants, grants-in-aid, and awards of many types.

You don't have to be a brainiac or jock to qualify for scholarships.

TraCen's Education Center has a few copies of a hardback book – *Financial Aid for Veterans, Military Personnel, and Their Dependents* – which lists dozens, if not hundreds, of these for you or your dependents. There are only a couple more of these books available, first come, first served.

When using this book, remember: there are thousands of scholarships that aren't listed in it which you or your son/daughter may qualify for. Leave no stone unturned when looking for scholarships and check out <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/scholarships.asp>.

The Education Center also has a number of other references you can use to find scholarships and grants.

Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessel Course

A lot of people want to know if they can use tuition assistance (TA) or the GI Bill to pay for a vessel captain's license course. The general rule for TA is that the course has to be offered by a nationally- or regionally-accredited institution AND must yield transferable credit (i.e., credit you can apply at another accredited school toward a degree program).

As to the GI Bill, it all depends on whether the state in which the course is offered has approved the course for GI Bill funding. For more info about whether a particular course is covered by the GI Bill, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/gibill-o.asp#saa>.

Mr. Monty Mathis, full-time ESO at Sector St. Petersburg, has identified what seems to be the only college which offers distance learning courses to prepare you to take the 100-ton captain's license (Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessel or OUPV) exam. According to Sarah Soukup at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (which offers these courses), "The OUPV courses are setup at Associate Degree college credit level. They will appear on an official transcript with the college after successful completion and can be applied to other college programs as they fit within the curriculum of each particular program." This being the case, you can use TA to pay for them.

For more information, go to <http://www.nwtc.edu/academics/certificates/Pages/Charter-Boat-Operators.aspx> and <http://www.nwtc.edu/academics/ProgTeamSites/publicsafety/specializedtraining/Documents/OPUV.pdf>.

Foreign Language Software & CG Foundation Grants

Before dropping a few hundred dollars for software to help you learn a foreign language (such as Tell Me More <http://www.tellmemore.com/>, Rosetta Stone <http://www.rosettastone.com/>, and others), make sure it suits your needs and your budget. If you're interested in being able to use the target language in social situations, this software may be what

you're looking for. On the other hand, if you want to develop fluency so you can put it to work in Coast Guard-specific situations, you should definitely check it out before you buy it.

Also, although the Coast Guard Foundation has added the cost of foreign language software to its list of reimbursable items, be aware that funding for these grants is not guaranteed and is sporadic. The money for these grants comes from private donors who may or may not make regular contributions in amounts which may vary greatly from person to person and month to month. As a result, you shouldn't expect to receive a grant just because you request it.

The bottom line is that if you can't afford to be out the cost of the software for a long time (maybe forever), don't buy it.

For information on CG Foundation grants and the application process, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/grants.asp#cgf>.

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) 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.

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.

Microsoft Software Home Use Program

If you're on the Coast Guard's payroll (i.e., not a contractor), you're eligible to participate in Microsoft's Software Assurance Home Use Program. The program enables you to get a licensed copy of most Microsoft® Office desktop PC applications to install and use on your home computer. You're also eligible for discounts on other Microsoft software via the Employee Purchase Program.

For more information, go to <https://cgportal.uscg.mil/lotus/mypoc/?uri=wcm%3a5b18ff004d89b9a6ae7fbe259abd3cf4>.

Free College Reference Books

The following books are available in limited quantities in the Education Center:

- *Financial Aid for Veterans, Military Personnel, and Their Dependents (2008-2010)*
- *Guide to Online Learning*
- *College Majors That Work*

Also available, are the following:

- *Need a Liff?* (this is the American Legion's guide to educational opportunities, scholarships, grants, student loans, careers, and employment)
- *DANTES College Career Workbook*
- *College Success Tips for Adult Learners*
- *College.edu – Online resources for the cyber-savvy student*
- *Don't Miss Out – the ambitious student's guide to financial aid*
- *Best Career and Education Web sites: A Quick Guide to Online Job Search*

If any or all of these interest you, drop by and pick one up – first come, first served.

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.