

TraCen Cape May Education Update #318

In this Update:

- Congratulations!!!
- Question of the week
- Web page in the spotlight
- Grammar & usage corner
- Coast Guard Foundation scholarships
- Military spouse scholarship
- Scholarships for women in or veterans of the military
- Is renting textbooks really cheaper than buying?
- New GI Bill changes
- LEAD program
- Striker programs update
- Reservists' GI Bill eligibility form
- Don't pay for technology: 25 freebies for students
- Harvard Financial Aid Initiative
- May servicewide exams
- SWE preparation
- Coast Guard Institute transcripts for recent boot camp grads
- Transferring new GI Bill benefits to children?
- Occupational certification & apprenticeship programs
- Success as an on-line student
- College 101
- CollegeWeekLive
- Re-taking ASVAB tests
- TraCen Cape May testing calendar
- Thinking of teaching?
- Leaving the Coast Guard?
- Miscellaneous

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
DCC Jonathan Roy	TraCen (Recruit Trng)	E-PME-8*
MK3 Kevan Nanton	Station Cape May	MK2*

* First attempt

Well done, both of you!

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

Question of the Week

Q: My wife would like to attend using the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The school she wants to go to is the US Career Institute (www.USCareerInstitute.com). It states on the web site that spouses can use the GI Bill but I wanted to verify it prior to signing her up. I already transferred the benefits to her. Any info would be helpful.

A: It's always a good idea to verify info like this. Go to the GI Bill web site (<http://www.gibill.va.gov/>), scroll down a bit, and click on "Find a School". Click on "Search for approved Education & Job Training Programs" to find out if the school's actually approved for GI Bill benefits.

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 **Requesting an Education Assessment** (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/step4.asp>).

Grammar & Usage Corner

This feature will touch on grammar and usage questions as well as confused/misused words. This week, the often-confused words (courtesy of LTJG Dan LiBrando at PSC) are *respectably*, *respectfully*, and *respectively*.

Respectable is an adjective, meaning something to be respected, well thought-of, decent, good, reputable. "The judge was extremely respectable" or "Her grades this term were respectable." The adverbial form is *respectably*, as in "She did respectably well for her age" or "The movie the ends with the thieves living respectably middle-class lives".

Respectful is also an adjective, meaning marked by or showing respect or deference, polite, courteous. "The congregants were respectful of their priest" or "The CO was respectful to the admiral when she visited the ship." The adverbial form is *respectfully*, as in "The CO respectfully greeted the admiral on the quarterdeck."

Respective is yet another adjective, meaning partial, discriminative, particular, separate. "After the fire, everyone returned to their respective homes". It's widely used in its adverbial form (*respectively*), to indicate the order in which items in one group are listed applies to the items in a second group: "Maria, Ramon, and Bob were 20, 22, and 23 respectively."

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.

Coast Guard Foundation Scholarships

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

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

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

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

Military Spouse Scholarship

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

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

Scholarships for Women In or Veterans of the Military

The Women's Memorial Foundation administers the two programs each of which awards scholarships of up to \$5,000 for women working toward bachelor's or master's degrees.

The Foundation also administers another program which awards a \$1,000 scholarship to be used toward an undergraduate nursing degree.

For more information on these, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/diversity/gendernews.asp>.

Is Renting Textbooks Really Cheaper Than Buying?

(from mint.com)

Before you (or your college-bound child) buys textbooks, check out this article: <http://www.mint.com/blog/saving/renting-textbooks-12092010/>

New GI Bill Changes

On Tuesday, 04 January 2011, President Obama signed into law a large number of changes to the new (Post-9/11) GI Bill.

In addition to changing the eligibility rules so all the DoD services and the Coast Guard are treated the same, the new law

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

The Department of Veterans' Affairs's web site has more information about these changes (http://www.gibill.va.gov/post-911/post-911-gi-bill-summary/Post911_changes.html).

LEAD Program

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

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

LEAD Engineering “exists to introduce students of color with outstanding academic performance and demonstrated leadership skills to the field of engineering. The mission of LEAD Engineering is to lay the foundation through an intense curriculum for an increase in the number and quality of diversified students interested in careers in engineering and other technical fields.” It is open to students in their sophomore or junior years of high school with at least an average GPA 3.2 and combined test scores of at least 100 on the PSAT, 1000 on the SAT (critical reading and math combined), or 22 on

the ACT. Applicants must have successfully completed a minimum of two science courses and Algebra II. They must also be US Citizens or permanent residents. For more information, go to <http://www.leadengineeringsite.org/>.

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

Striker Programs Update

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

Reservists' GI Bill Eligibility Form

The Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE, form DD-2384-1) is the form which lays out the criteria which members of the Coast Guard Reserve must meet to be eligible for benefits under the Selected Reserve Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB-SR). It also briefly describes the Reservists' benefits. Most important, though, the NOBE states the date the Reservist first became eligible for MGIB-SR benefits.

The NOBE is a controlled form. In the Coast Guard, the **only** authorized issuers of NOBEs are TraCen Cape May's Recruit SPO and "A" School SPOs. Reservists should **not** ask their ESOs for, and ESOs should **not** provide Reservists with, NOBEs.

If you're a Reservist who never received or who has lost his/her NOBE, or who has questions about MGIB-SR eligibility, send an e-mail to the Reserve Education Program Manager at reserveVAeducation@uscg.mil. Include your name and either the word “NOBE” or “MGIB-SR” (depending on the subject of your question) in the subject line.

Don't Pay for Technology: 25 Freebies for Students

(from Education-Portal.com)

“In today's economic climate, paying for technology isn't prudent, and for some students, it isn't even an option. Fortunately, there are plenty of freebies on the web that can help with document creation, research, writing, storage, collaboration, studying and more. Here are 25 free web apps and software programs that may be useful to students.” http://education-portal.com/articles/Dont_Pay_for_Technology_25_Freebies_for_Students.html

Harvard Financial Aid Initiative (HFAI)

“Since 2006, students from families with incomes less than \$60,000 who are accepted to Harvard under our regular admissions policies have no expected parent contribution for their education. Additionally, families with incomes between \$60,000 and \$80,000 have seen their expected parent contributions significantly reduced. Financial aid is available to all students based on assessed need. Families with incomes up to \$180,000 have an average expected parent contribution of 10 percent or less of their income and, as we continue to take individual circumstances into consideration in our assessment of financial need, many families in even higher income brackets also receive substantive financial aid.”

For more information, go to http://www.admissions.college.harvard.edu/financial_aid/hfai/index.html

May Servicewide Exams

As a reminder, the deadline for completing all eligibility requirements for the May servicewide exam (SWE) is 01 February 2011.

For those who've never taken a SWE before (or those who may have forgotten), if you've met all the qualifications (as laid out on your Personal Data Extract or PDE) by 01 February 2011, PSC will automatically send a SWE for you to the ESO at the examination board listed on the PDE. **You do not have to request a SWE.**

When your PDE is made available (on DirectAccess in early February, in hard-copy format a few weeks later via your SPO), make sure you check **everything** on it carefully – including your examination board name and OPFAC.

- Are you going to be on leave or TAD on the date of your SWE?
- Will you be in-transit due to a PCS move on the date of your SWE?
- Are you going to be away from the unit listed on your PDE for any other reason on the date of your SWE?

If so, do the following:

- find a unit you know you'll be geographically near on your SWE date,
- contact the ESO at that unit and ask if it's OK to take your SWE there,
- assuming the ESO says "yes", ask for the unit's OPFAC,
- let your SPO know what the name and OPFAC of that unit so PSC knows to change your PDE.

PSC will automatically send your exam to the unit list as your exam board on your PDE.

Substitute exams are not authorized except in emergencies over which you have no control. Regular leave (even if you scheduled a Caribbean cruise six months ago) is not an emergency. A wedding – even your own – is not an emergency. For more information on just which circumstances justify requesting a substitute exam, see Article 5.D.3. of the *Personnel Manual*.

If you revise the PDE info concerning your exam site and later find out you won't be able to take your exam there after all or at the scheduled date and time, let your ESO know ASAP.

SWE Preparation

Yes, the SWE isn't until May. Yes, that's four months away. But now's the time to set out a plan for studying for the SWE and set it in motion.

When devising your SWE preparation plan, consider creating a study group with one or more others who are studying for the same test. You might even want to have two study groups: one for the rate-related material, one for the E-PME material.

Too many people look at taking a test the same way they approach the blackjack table in Atlantic City, as if chance alone governs how they perform on the test. Even if they study for a test, though, most people seem to have a hit-or-miss attitude. They read through the material hoping it'll sink in and that they'll remember arcane bits of info they think test writers use to trip them up. Then they read through it again, and again.

Of course, this is one way to do it. But if you want improve the likelihood that you'll do well on the test, consider the tips and techniques described on my web site (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/studying.asp>).

Taking a test – especially a multiple-choice test – is not a matter of chance or luck. What matter are knowing the material and weeding out plausible, but incorrect responses in a systematic, calm, and unhurried manner.

Coast Guard Institute Transcripts for Recent Boot Camp Grads

If you graduated from Coast Guard recruit training since 01 June 2009, you should hold off on requesting an education assessment from the Coast Guard Institute.

As you probably know, you would have earned college credit for various things you learned in boot camp if you'd taken college courses covering those things. The organization which certifies that this is the case is the American Council on Education or ACE. In January 2011, ACE will be re-evaluating the curriculum that's been in place at TraCen Cape May since 01 June 2009. Until that evaluation has been completed and its report published, any transcript you receive as a

result of an assessment request will show "Pending Review" rather than course names and credits for topics covered in boot camp.

In the meantime, you can see how many credits in which subjects correlate with previous versions of the Coast Guard recruit training curriculum at ACE's web site (<http://www.militaryguides.acenet.edu>).

Transferring New GI Bill Benefits to Children?

Once you've transferred new GI Bill benefits to a dependent child (as described at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/gibill-33c.asp#procedure>), fill out the VA 22-1990E form (or the VONAPP equivalent) **only** if your child is already 18 or has graduated from high school.

If the child to whom you've transferred the benefit hasn't yet graduate from high school or is younger than 18, the Department of Veterans' Affairs will reject the application.

Occupational Certification & Apprenticeship Programs

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

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

Success as an On-line Student

The following list, from the Illinois On-line Network, describes what qualities a student should possess to be successful in on-line learning programs:

- Be open-minded about sharing life, work, and educational experiences as part of the learning process.
- Be able to communicate through writing.
- Be self-motivated and self-disciplined.
- Be willing to "speak up" if problems arise.
- Be willing and able to commit to 4 to 15 hours per week per course.
- Be able to meet the minimum requirements for the program.
- Accept critical thinking and decision making as part of the learning process.
- Have access to a computer and an Internet connection (preferably high-speed).
- Be able to think ideas through before responding.
- Feel that high quality learning can take place without going to a traditional classroom.

ION's web site (<http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/tutorials/pedagogy/StudentProfile.asp>) expands on each of these points and provides other pointers for would-be distance-learning students.

Going one step farther, 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 READI (**R**eadiness for **E**ducation **A**t a **D**istance **I**ndicator, <http://goml.readi.info/>). "Upon completion of READI-SmarterMeasure, you will receive a score report which will not only help you understand your strengths and opportunities for improvement, but will also provide you with resources to help you succeed."

College 101

Are you thinking about college, but don't understand the terminology, how you figure out which and how many courses to take, the types of courses required for degrees, etc.? If so, check out College 101 on the Coast Guard Portal (<https://elearning.uscg.mil>). College 101 provides you with all the basic knowledge you need before you start taking college courses. It's in the form of an on-line 45-minute course and is completely voluntary.

To find it, just click on "Course Catalog" after logging in, then the "Education" button in the menu at the left of the screen.

CollegeWeekLive

If you're the parent of a college-bound student or are otherwise interested in getting good information about college, check out CollegeWeekLive (CWL). CWL is an ongoing on-line college fair to help prospective students in their college planning by connecting them with colleges in a live, interactive environment. You'll be able to find information from dozens of colleges and universities on things like admissions, financing, admission test preparation, college visits, and finding the college which best fits your son, daughter, or yourself. In addition, practically every day a different college has a virtual open house. Click on "Events" to see which colleges are available when.

And while it's aimed mainly at students, parents and counselors are also welcome. And you can register for free (as well as check out the speakers, their topics, the schedule, and many other things) at <http://www.collegeweeklive.com/>.

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

Re-taking ASVAB Tests

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

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

Other Considerations

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

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

TraCen Cape May Testing Calendar

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

Mondays (0800): Defense Language Proficiency Tests

Tuesdays (0800): EOCTs and AQEs*

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

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

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

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

Thinking of Teaching?

Are you interested in teaching after you leave the Coast Guard? Troops to Teachers also provides counseling and referral services to military personnel interested in beginning a second career in public education as a teacher. And the DANTES Troops to Teachers office will help you identify teacher certification requirements, programs leading to certification, and employment opportunities. The main web site (http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/index.asp) 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.

ACCC's Library Open for Studying

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

Quick Reference Study Guides

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

Education Center Library

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

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