

TraCen Cape May Education Update #387

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ESO on Leave; Education Center Closed

TraCen Cape May's ESO will be on leave and the Education Center will be closed **from Monday, 23 July through Monday, 30 July** (open again on Tuesday, 31 July). Please make your testing plans and submit your TA requests 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
SNGM Josephine Leugers	TraCen (Armory)	E-PME-4
IT3 Yohann Johnson	ESD Cape May	IT2

Also, OSC Jason Szczurowski (formerly aboard CGC Dependable) just completed a BS in Computer and Information Technology from University of Maryland University College with honors.

Well done, Chief Szczurowski, PO Johnson, and SNGM Leugers!!!

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 get a refund of the \$1,200 I paid for the MGIB if I switch to the new GI Bill?

Q: I was talking with a shipmate a little while ago. He said that if you switch over from the Montgomery GI bill to the 9/11 GI Bill we are supposed to get a refund of the \$1,200 that I paid into the Montgomery GI Bill. I am trying to find out if this is true. And if it is, than how do I go about finding out if I got the refund or how I can get the refund.

A: Yes, what you heard is generally true. But it's not the whole story. Here's the scoop. Keep in mind that there are two conditions which determine whether you may receive a reimbursement and how much it will be:

- You must have had some of your 36-month MGIB-AD entitlement left when you made the switch to new (Post-9/11) GI Bill (i.e., you can't have used all 36 months of benefits under the MGIB-AD) *and*
- You have to exhaust the last month of your 36-month entitlement during a school term during which you're receiving the monthly housing allowance (i.e., you have to be attending school more than half-time).

EXAMPLE 1: If you used all 36 months of MGIB-AD benefits before switching to the new GI Bill you will not be entitled to any reimbursement of the \$1,200 you paid during your first year after boot camp.

EXAMPLE 2: Let's say you used 12 months of MGIB-AD benefits before switching over to the new GI Bill. The amount you get reimbursed is determined by dividing the number of months you *didn't* use under the MGIB-AD (in this case, 24) by the total number of months you were eligible for (36), and multiplying that number by \$1,200. In this example, it would be $24/36$ (or $2/3$) multiplied by \$1,200 = \$800.

EXAMPLE 3: Let's say you used none of your MGIB-AD benefit before switching to the new GI Bill. You will receive a reimbursement of the whole \$1,200.

If, as sometimes happens, the Coast Guard didn't actually deduct some or all the \$1,200 from your pay, but you became eligible for MGIB-AD benefits anyway, the most you can receive back is the amount that was actually deducted from your pay.

Be aware that transferring all or some of your new GI Bill benefit to a dependent will affect whether you can receive any reimbursement and, if you can, how much of a reimbursement you can receive. Call the GI Bill hotline to ask about your specific situation (800-827-1000 or 888-442-4551).

And, finally, if you took advantage of the Buy-up option under the MGIB-AD, unfortunately Congress has not seen fit to offer a way to recoup the contributions (up to \$600) you made.

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 three pages: **Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008** (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/gibill-33.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, **home** and **hone**. (These definitions are from *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*.)

People confuse these two words when they want to use the verb form. **Home**, in this sense, means to return home (as in "homing pigeon") or move toward a particular target (physical or conceptual): "The torpedo homed in on the submarine and destroyed it" or "Science is homing in on the cause of Parkinson's Disease".

Hone, however, means to sharpen or smooth, or to make more accurate, intense, or effective: "The stand-up comedian honed her comic timing to perfection", "The carpenter honed his skills over the course of many years", "Grandpa honed his carving knives before Thanksgiving dinner".

The phrase "hone in on . . ." is both nonsense and incorrect usage.

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.

20 July Deadline: Short-Fuse Scholarship Offer

On Wednesday, 11 July New Jersey First Lady Mary Pat Christie announced the start of the New Jersey Heroes Heart of a Hero Scholarship Program for NJ veterans. Wal-Mart donated \$100,000 to fund ten \$10,000 scholarships that will help New Jersey military service members pursue a post-secondary education, be it college or vocational school. The scholarship is to be used for the 2012-2013 school year.

The selection committee is looking for applicants who demonstrate a commitment to volunteerism and community contribution. All applications must be submitted by **Friday, 20 July 2012**. Selectees will be announced in August.

Applicants may apply directly via <http://newjerseyheroes.org/index/heart-of-a-hero-scholarship-application-form/> or by downloading, printing out, and mailing the PDF form on the application page.

01 August Deadline: Regular E-5 & E-6 Servicewide Exam

E-4s and E-5s in the regular Coast Guard have until 01 August to complete all advancement requirements if they want to take the November servicewide exam. Requirements include completing all EPQs/RPQs, passing an EOCT or RAT, required competencies (if any) and, for those seeking advancement to E-6 or E-8, an E-PME Advancement Qualification Exam (AQE).

Remember: to take an EOCT you have to have completed your EPQs, and to take an AQE you have to have completed the relevant E-PME Performance Requirements.

OS3s and OS2s, please make sure you understand **all** aspects of this process and get **everything** done ASAP. You may have to go to Sector Delaware Bay or the Sector Field Office in Mays Landing to complete some of the RPQs and core competencies. **NOTE: I'll be on leave from 23 through 30 July and completion of your RPQs and core competencies must be recorded in TMT by 01 August. I'm the only person aboard TraCen Cape May who can do this for you, so don't wait until the last minute.**

Enlisted Reserve Scholarship

The Coast Guard Foundation is now accepting applications for 2012-2013 academic year Enlisted Reserve Scholarships. The program is open to Reservists and dependents registered in DEERS. **The application deadline is 18 July 2012.**

For complete information, see ALCOAST 301/12 (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST301-12.pdf>).

Other Scholarships

Below are descriptions of a number of scholarships open to military personnel, their dependents, or both. **Be aware, however, that these are just a few of thousands of scholarships 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>.

Waldorf College

(courtesy of Mr. Marc Fagenbaum, full-time ESO at Base Miami)

To recognize the sacrifices made by the family members of military servicemembers and public safety personnel (firefighters, law enforcement officers, EMTs & dispatchers) Waldorf College in Iowa will award eight scholarships for on-line students and two for residential students in 2012 through the Hero Behind the Hero Scholarship Program.

Two scholarships (one for the military spouse or dependent and one for the firefighters/law enforcement officer spouse or dependent) will be presented on the award dates listed. Applicants not selected may continue to apply for a maximum of five scholarship award dates.

Scholarship Application Periods

01 JUN 2012 – 31 JUL 2012
01 AUG 2012 – 30 SEP 2012
01 OCT 2012 – 30 NOV 2012

Scholarship Award Dates

August 2012 (on-line)
October 2012 (on-line)
December 2012 (on-line)

Go to <http://www.waldorf.edu/Online/Tuition---Financing/Scholarships/Hero-Behind-the-Hero> for more information and a link to an on-line application. Or you can e-mail hero@waldorf.edu or call 877-267-2157.

Marketing Yourself for a Second Career

Between 0900 and 1130 on **Wednesday, 08 August 2012**, a lecture/Q&A session on making the transition from the Coast Guard to the civilian work force will be held in the Constantine classroom of the MCPOCG building. If you plan to leave the Coast Guard in the next five years, you and your spouse are strongly encouraged to attend. Topics covered will include:

- Competition in the job hunt
- Civilian employers' perceptions about military personnel
- Planning your job search
- Résumés, cover letters, broadcast letters, etc.
- How employers read your résumé
- Networking & the hidden job market
- Preparing for and conducting a successful interview
- Salary negotiations and benefits

To sign up, contact Mr. Gary Adams at ronald.g.adams@uscg.mil or 202-372-4089.

How to Become a SuperStar Student

TraCen Cape May just acquired the DVD course, "How to Become a SuperStar Student". The course includes 18 half-hour lectures. Here's a bit about it the course.

"The number one problem facing many high-school students: They haven't been taught how to learn. Because our current educational system focuses on test results, on making sure students memorize the facts and material needed to pass standardized tests, few students are deliberately taught about learning — about developing the particular mind-set and using the specific skills that can help them graduate with exemplary grades and an exemplary mind.

"In fact, learning is a skill that your student can easily make a part of his or her everyday life and use as a powerful tool for success, both inside and outside the classroom. All it takes is a mastery of research-proven strategies, including

- recognizing one's learning style, and tapping into its specific strengths;
- taking notes effectively to avoid missing out on what's being covered in class;
- knowing how to organize and prioritize homework and class projects;
- solving problems with creativity and critical thinking; and
- approaching tests with focus, thorough preparation, and confidence.

"Professor Michael Geisen, the 2008 National Teacher of the Year, has spent his teaching career showing thousands of students these and other skills. And with "How to Become a SuperStar Student" he can give you the same vital skills that will carry you through high school, college, and well into the challenges of adult life. This highly engaging 18-lecture course is a commonsense guide to learning, one that addresses the areas that students have the most difficulty with—and that parents show the most concern about. Packed with advice, tips, tricks, and resources, this masterfully updated version of our highly popular study guide course has the power to transform your student's education into a world-class learning experience."

To see if this course might be for you, check out http://www.thegreatcourses.com/tgc/courses/course_detail.aspx?cid=1050. If you decide it is, individuals and groups are welcome to use it in the Education Center.

The Secrets of Mental Math

TraCen Cape May also acquired the DVD course, “The Secrets of Mental Math” to help you prepare to re-take the AR or MK parts of the ASVAB or to learn short-cuts that will help you in college courses or in everyday life. The course includes 12 half-hour lectures. Here’s a bit about it the course.

“One key to improving and expanding your math potential lies in the powerful ability to perform mental math calculations. Solving basic math problems in your head is a gateway to success in understanding and mastering higher mathematical fields such as algebra, statistics, and calculus. It’s a skill that offers other lifelong benefits, including

- giving you a competitive edge in school or at work;
- keeping your mind active and sharp at any age;
- improving your performance on standardized tests; and
- learning to solve problems by using a variety of methods.

“Mental mathematics also is valuable when you’re shopping for groceries or figuring out how much to tip at a restaurant. Believe it or not, learning how to do mental math can be fun. “The Secrets of Mental Math” is Professor Arthur T. Benjamin’s exciting 12-lecture course which guides you through all the essential skills, tips, and tricks for improving and enhancing your ability to solve a range of mathematical problems right in your head.”

Read more on this course at http://www.thegreatcourses.com/tgc/courses/course_detail.aspx?cid=1406. If you decide it’s up your alley, individuals and groups are welcome to use it in the Education Center.

Continuing Education Courses

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

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

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

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

For more information, drop by the Education Center for the latest course booklet or go to Cape May Tech's web site at <http://www.capemaytech.com/adult-education/evening-continuing-education.html>.

Don't Postpone College Because Your at an Operational Unit

Have you thought about taking a college course, but rejected the idea because you're concerned ops may get in the way of completing it? If so, check out self-paced college courses (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/schools.asp#self-paced>).

They have the benefit of being quicker to complete than semester- or quarter-based college courses (most schools allow you to complete them in as few as six weeks) while they're structured so you learn the material in digestible chunks rather than being left completely on your own.

These courses have the added benefit of not being tied to a traditional term: you can start at any time. They also give you a huge amount of flexibility: you can take almost as long as you want to complete the course (up to 12 months in most cases) and there are no set dates for lessons or tests. And some schools offer whole degree programs this way.

Check out some of the many reputable schools which offer self-paced (or independent study) courses at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/schools.asp#self-paced>.

What Education Benefits are Available to My dependents?

While there are few monetary benefits available to spouses of military personnel through the Coast Guard, many other educational services are available. You can find info about services, programs, and benefits and links to more info at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/dependents.asp>.

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.

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 regular Coast Guard members to earn apprenticeship certification in any of 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 a credential (certification or license) in dozens of different occupational fields (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/cert.asp>) through a large number of nationally-recognized certification organizations. Here's a small sampling of the fields in which you can get certified:

- automotive service professional
- dental assistant
- contract manager
- medical technologist
- personal trainer
- human resources specialist
- computer networking professional
- project management
- facilities management.

And if you're eligible for GI Bill benefits, you can likely get reimbursed up to \$2,000 for the cost of each certification or licensing exam.

New IS1 EOCT

Both IS2 and IS1 end-of-course tests are now available. Contact your ESO to schedule a test.

New YN1 EOCT

ALCOAST 287/12 (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST287-12.pdf>) announced that to be eligible for the May and October 2013 SWEs, YN2s must have passed the latest YN1 EOCT before 01 February 2013. This is true even if you passed the previous YN1 EOCT.

New MK2 Course

ALCOAST 305/12 (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST305-12.pdf>) announced that a new MK2 course (course number 0232, edition 6) is now available. You can order a hard copy from the Coast Guard Institute (via your ESO) or download it from the CGPortal (<https://elearning.uscg.mil>), where you'll also find the current MK EPQs. You must complete the latest EPQs before you can take the MK2 EOCT.

The previous version of the course (0232/5) will become obsolete and the tests for that course will not be scored after 01AUG2012. Until then, passing either 0232/5 or 0232/6 EOCT will qualify you for the November 2012 SWE.

Aviation Ratings ERATS Implementation Update

According to ALCOAST 262/12 (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST262-12.pdf>), transition of the aviation ratings from the current enlisted professional development system to ERATS (Enlisted Rating Advancement Training System) is ahead of schedule.

Originally, these ratings weren't scheduled to fall under ERATS until May 2013. But as of 02 August 2012 AET, AMT and AST Enlisted Performance Qualifications (EPQs), Performance Qualification Guides (PQGs), and end-of-course tests will be replaced by Rating Performance Qualifications (RPQs) and Rating Advancement Tests (RATs).

For complete information on what ERATS is and how it works, ALCOAST 577/11 (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST577-11.pdf>).

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.

What Happens After I Submit a TA Request?

Many first-time users of tuition assistance (TA) don't know what to do after they've submitted a request for TA. First, after receiving notification that your request has been approved, download it and review it carefully to make sure there are no errors.

If there aren't you provide the authorization to your school (the cashier, bursar, or whomever the official is who takes your money) after putting your SSN on it and signing it.

After you finish the course, you have to provide a grade report to your ESO for every course listed on the authorization. Do this as soon as your grade report becomes available.

For more detailed information about what to expect after submitting your TA request and about your responsibilities while taking a TA-funded course and afterward, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/ta-b.asp>.

Career & Education Planning Tools

Many people in the Coast Guard – military and civilians alike – are unsure of what career fields best match their personal interests and abilities. While you might be extremely competent at what you’re doing in the Coast Guard, you might have skills you’d rather put to use in some other field. ESOs throughout the Coast Guard (including TraCen Cape May’s) have access to many different tools you can use to assess your interests and possible ways to earn a living while pursuing those interests.

For more information, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/discover.asp> and <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/sitestest.asp>.

TraCen Cape May Testing Schedule

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

Mondays (0745): EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs

Tuesdays (0745): EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs

Wednesdays (0800): Defense Language Proficiency Tests

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

Fridays (0745): 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 usually administering a test (and, because of the noise, 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. Also in the library are the latest Professional Qualification Guides (PQGs) and Enlisted Performance Qualifications (EPQs) 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.