

TraCen Cape May Education Update #377

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Links from this page to non-Coast Guard sites are provided as a customer service and do not represent any implicit or explicit endorsement by the United States Coast Guard of any commercial or private issues, products, or services presented there.

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
BM2 Lyle Mattei	TraCen (Recruit Training)	BM1
SK2 Kristy Harward	HSWL FO Cape May	E-PME-6
HS2 Colleen Walter*	HSWL FO Cape May	E-PME-6

* First attempt

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 get both Montgomery GI Bill and Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits?

Q: I'm just finishing my first enlistment and have decided to leave the regular Coast Guard so I can go to college full-time. After boot camp, \$1,200 was taken out of my pay for the GI Bill. Should I switch over to the Post-9/11 GI Bill?

A: Let me give you some background information before answering your question. Anyone who's eligible for GI Bill education benefits is entitled to 36 months of benefits under any single program. In your case, that means you're currently eligible for 36 months of benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty, also known as Chapter 30, Ch. 30, or MGIB-AD. (To understand what "36 months of benefits" means, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/gibill-o.asp#36>.)

Also, people who are eligible for more than one GI Bill education benefits program are entitled to a maximum of 48 months of benefits under any combination of those programs. So, if you were eligible for Ch. 30 benefits and benefits under the new (Post-9/11) GI Bill program (also called Chapter 33 or Ch. 33), you could use 36 months under one and 12 under the other, or 24 under each, or 15 under one and 21 under the other, etc.

Something else to keep in mind is that to get Ch. 33 benefits, you have to give up benefits under one other program. So, using the example above, if you're eligible for Ch. 30 and Ch. 33 benefits, and no others, to use Ch. 33 benefits you'd have to give up your Ch. 30 benefits.

So, how can you have access to both Ch. 30 and Ch. 33 benefits? By serving five years on active duty in the regular Coast Guard and then enlisting in the Coast Guard Reserve for six years.

To become eligible for Ch. 30 benefits, you have to have served on active duty for two continuous years and paid \$1,200. You've met those requirements. To become eligible for the maximum Ch. 33 benefits, you have to have served on active duty for an aggregate of three years (not counting the years you used to qualify for Ch. 30). And, finally, to become eligible for Montgomery GI Bill – Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606, Ch. 1606, or MGIB-SR) benefits, you have to incur a six-year Selected Reserve obligation, i.e., sign a six-year Reserve contract.

Why would you want MGIB-SR benefits? Because, as I noted above, to use Ch. 33 benefits, you have to give up benefits under one other program. Once you're eligible for MGIB-AD, new GI Bill, and MGIB-SR benefits you can give up the MGIB-SR benefits (the least valuable of the three) which would leave you entitled to 48 months of benefits under the other two programs.

Needless to say, this is only useful to people in your exact situation.

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 **College Course & Credit-by-Exam Study Aids** (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/studymaterials.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, **appraise** and **apprise**. (These definitions are from *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*.)

The word **appraise** is a verb meaning to set a value on or evaluate the worth, significance, or status of something: "The antiques dealer appraised the value of the vase" and "The professor appraised the essay to be a plagiarism."

The word **apprise** is also a verb, but means to give notice: "She apprised me of the fact I had left my lights on" and "The CO told the OOD to keep her apprised of the movements of the ship on the horizon."

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.

ACT at TraCen Cape May

I'll be administering the ACT (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/act.asp>) at TraCen Cape May on **Thursday, 07 June starting at 0730**. Seats will be reserved for you on a first come, first served basis so let me know ASAP if you want to take it.

DANTES Test Control Officers (ESOs who've been specifically designated) may administer these tests only for uniformed personnel. In general, military personnel are authorized to take one ACT **or** one SAT paid for by DANTES. So if you want to take both, one would be free and you'd have to pay for the other. The ACT costs \$34; the SAT costs \$49.

ESOs may administer the ACT at any time of the year, and can administer the SAT during all months except July, August, and September. You can see a comparison of the SAT and ACT at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/comparison.asp>.

Be aware that in almost all cases military personnel don't need to take either the ACT or SAT to take college courses.

You can read/download *Preparing for the ACT* (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/PreparingACT.pdf>) and *Taking the ACT* (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/TakingACT.pdf>) for more information about the test. As for actual preparation materials, check out <http://www.actstudent.org/testprep/index.html> and <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/act.asp#prep>.

Summer & Fall ACCC Course Guides Available

Atlantic Cape Community College's summer and fall course guides are available in the atrium of the exchange, outside the Education Center (Admin/Mission Support Building, Room 113), and in the waiting area across from the lab in the clinic.

NOTE: the tuition for both the summer and fall terms at ACCC has increased. Make sure to check the course guide for the correct amount before filling out your TA request.

Top-Tier University Courses On-Line and Free

(courtesy of CWO3 John Caicedo & full-time ESO at Base Seattle, Troy Blappert)

CWO John Caicedo (F&S3) at the Coast Guard Navigation Center brought a web site to my attention. It's called Coursera (<http://www.coursera.org>) and I'll quote directly from it to let you know what it's all about.

We offer high quality courses from the top universities, for free to everyone. We currently host courses from Princeton University, Stanford University, University of California, Berkeley, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, and University of Pennsylvania. We are changing the face of education globally, and we invite you to join us.

Classes offered on Coursera are designed to help you master the material. When you take one of our classes, you will watch lectures taught by world-class professors, learn at your own pace, test your knowledge, and reinforce concepts through interactive exercises. When you join one of our classes, you'll also join a global community of thousands of students learning alongside you. We know that your life is busy, and that you have many commitments on your time. Thus, our courses are designed based on sound pedagogical foundations, to help you master new concepts quickly and effectively. Key ideas include mastery learning, to make sure that you have multiple attempts to demonstrate your new knowledge; using interactivity, to ensure student engagement and to assist long-term retention; and providing frequent feedback, so that you can monitor your own progress, and know when you've really mastered the material.

We offer courses in a wide range of topics, spanning the Humanities, Medicine, Biology, Social Sciences, Mathematics, Business, Computer Science, and many others. Whether you're looking to improve your resume,

advance your career, or just learn more and expand your knowledge, we hope there will be multiple courses that you find interesting.

And, in addition to seconding Coursera, Troy Blappert (at Base Seattle) suggested two other sites. To paraphrase him, if you're interested in learning something new but don't necessarily want to take a for-credit course, check these out:

- Udemy (<http://www.udemy.com/>) has many free and a few low cost university and other courses. Whether you want to master an academic subject or want to start your own business or learn about graphic design, this site can help you.
- MITx (<http://mitx.mit.edu/>) offers free courses from the MIT faculty.

And you can find many other sources of free or nearly free courses on thousands of subjects via the links on my web site at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/studymaterials.asp>.

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 offers many career training programs (<http://www.atlantic.edu/conted/CareerTraining.htm>) as well as academic degrees. Its new Aviation Studies degree "is designed to provide pathways for students seeking careers in aviation and will include tracks in air traffic control, commercial pilot, and airport management." ACCC "will continue to offer an AAS degree in Air Traffic Control Terminal for those who are interested in taking the FAA's Air Traffic Selection and Training (AT-SAT) exam." Check out ACCC's complete offerings at <http://www.atlantic.edu/program/degrees/degreePrograms.htm>.

Colorado State University "offers one of the only AACSB accredited online Master's Degree in Computer Information Systems in the world", along with certificate programs in Computer Information Systems, Business Intelligence, and Advanced Project Management. For more information, go to <http://biz.colostate.edu/cisMaster/pages/default.aspx> and <http://biz.colostate.edu/degreesCertificates/pages/default.aspx>.

Western Governors University, unlike almost all other regionally-accredited colleges and universities in the U.S., uses a competency-based (rather than a credit-accumulation) approach to earning a degree. This is best explained in the article, "The College For-Profits Should Fear" in the September/October 2011 issue of *The Washington Monthly* (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/choosing004.pdf>). WGU's web site fills in the details (http://www.wgu.edu/about_WGU/overview).

On-line Professional Development Courses

Excelsior College's Center for Professional Development recently sent out its 2012 Online Program Catalog. It describes more than a hundred non-credit courses in business, education, health care, investigative science, skilled trades, sustainable and green energy, technology & design.

Because you will not earn college credit for these courses, tuition assistance won't pay for them. But the courses are approved for GI Bill education benefits. And, if a course is related to your job, your unit may decide it's worth using training funds to pay for it.

For more information about these courses, go to <http://www.excelsior.edu/cpd> and <http://www.excelsior.edu/cpddemo>.

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>.

Coast Guard Chief Warrant and Warrant Officers Association

Applications are now being accepted for the Art and Eleanor Colona Scholarship Grant, sponsored by the Coast Guard Chief Warrant and Warrant Officers Associations (CWOA). Children of regular Coast Guard personnel, Reservists on active duty, and retirees may apply for the \$4,000 scholarship (to be paid in four installments of \$1,000 per year). The application deadline is **01 June 2012**. For more information, go to see ALCOAST 136/12 at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST136-12.pdf>.

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 JAN 2012 – 30 APR 2012
 01 FEB 2012 – 31 MAR 2012
 01 APR 2012 – 03 MAY 2012
 01 JUN 2012 – 31 JUL 2012
 01 AUG 2012 – 30 SEP 2012
 01 OCT 2012 – 30 NOV 2012

Scholarship Award Dates

May 2012 (residential)
 April 2012 (on-line)
 June 2012 (on-line)
 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.

Spouse Education Grant

From **01 April until 01 June 2012**, the Coast Guard Foundation will accept applications for a needs-based education grant for spouses of Coast Guard enlisted personnel in pay grades E-3 through E-6. The grant (\$500) is intended to help the spouses of personnel on active duty in the regular Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Reserve.

Applicants need only show enrollment in an education program or proof of a course completion (i.e., they can apply for the grant even before a course begins). Types of courses for which reimbursement is available include those offered by vocational and certification programs, as well as those offered at colleges and universities. Download the application form: http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/cgi/forms/CG_Form_1570.pdf.

Applicants will not need to provide receipts for expenses, but they will need to itemize expenses. They will also need to list some basic financial information. Transportation and child care expenses can be listed as legitimate expenses for the grant. Also part of the application process is an essay (no longer than 500 words) which addresses what it means to the

applicant to be a Coast Guard spouse and describing the difference education has made to the applicant's life and the lives of the applicant's family members.

In June, a selection committee will convene to select grantees. The Coast Guard Institute expects as many as 40 spouses will receive assistance. This grant will be a somewhat different from the other grants administered by the Coast Guard Institute in that the Institute will handle the paperwork and selection processes while the Coast Guard Foundation will actually write the checks.

Looking for a Post-CG Career with a Future?

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

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

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

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

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

- Electric power
- Electric transmission systems
- Energy management
- Instrumentation & control
- Mechanical maintenance technology
- Nuclear power technology
- Petroleum production
- Power plant technology
- Processing plant technology
- Renewable generation
- Water & waste water.

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

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

Give-Aways

In the hallway just outside the TraCen Education Center are sample copies of publications I got from DANTEs. Please stop by and take one or more of the following if they interest you:

- *The A's & B's of Academic Scholarships: 100,000 Scholarships for Top Students*
- *Do-It Write: How to Prepare a Great College Application*
- *Campus Pursuit: Making the Most of Your Visit and Interview*
- *Behind the Scenes: An Inside Look at the Selective College Admission Process*

In addition to these one-of-a-kind pubs, there are also many copies of others, both outside and inside the Ed Center – free for the taking.

DSSTs May Be Your Ticket to College Credit

In addition to CLEP (the College Level Examination Program) tests, which most people have heard about, there are also DSSTs. Like CLEP tests, DSSTs are essentially final exams for college courses. They earn you 3 credits, which means that unlike the five most popular CLEP tests (which earn you 6 credits each), there's less material covered in each of DSST.

And, unlike CLEP tests, you can take DSSTs through many ESOs since they're still available in a paper-and-pencil format.

For a complete list of DSSTs that are available, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/dsst.asp>. A number of these cover subjects you've mastered during your Coast Guard service, either on-the-job or in training you've received. These are tests you may be able to pass with very little preparation, depending on your rate. These include:

- Introduction to Computing
- Principles of Finance
- Principles of Financial Accounting
- Management Information Systems
- Organizational Behavior
- Personal Finance
- Human Resource Management
- Principles of Supervision
- Ethics in America
- Fundamentals of Counseling
- Drug & Alcohol Abuse
- Here's to Your Health
- Principles of Public Speaking
- Technical Writing
- Criminal Justice
- Introduction to Law Enforcement

Keep in mind, though, that these are tests – not courses. The links to each exam you'll find at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/dsst.asp> take you to that exam's very short fact sheet which outlines the topics covered on the test, provides suggested references to study to prepare for the test, and a number of sample questions. But, on the whole, you have to find study materials that will work for you and study without a curriculum or instructor.

CLEP Test & DSST Prep Resource

(courtesy of full-time ESO Joe Bloomquist, St. Louis)

If you're looking for a way to prepare for a DSST or CLEP test, check out <http://www.passyourclass.com/index.html>. Although the company seems not to know that DANTEs has had nothing to do with DSSTs for about 20 years, its study guides may be just what you need to pass one of these tests and save the time and expense of taking specific college courses. And, the company has a money-back guarantee: if you use one of its study guides and don't pass the corresponding test, you'll get a 100% refund.

You can also find links to many other prep resources at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/studymaterials.asp>.

Expand Your Vocabulary & Mind

If you're preparing for a college or professional school entrance exam (ACT, SAT, GRE, GMAT, LSAT) or to re-take the WK part of the AFCT (ASVAB), or if you just want to improve your vocabulary, check out Knoword (<http://www.knoword.org/home.php>).

The site describes it as "a game of quick thinking, smart decisions and great words. It focuses on teaching and advocating proper spelling habits, as well as good observational, analytical and typing skills. What makes Knoword different from all the other fun word games out there is that it's actually fun! With its fast-paced, addictive gameplay and a competitive and comprehensive player ranking system, Knoword pushes the limits on contemporary puzzle games and provides its players with a truly rewarding experience."

College Success Tips for Adult Learners

If you're taking college courses or thinking about doing so, please stop by the Education Center (Mission Support/Admin Building, Room 113) to get a copy of *College Success Tips for Adult Learners*. Here are a few chapter titles:

- Top 10 Reasons to Continue Your Education
- Selecting the Right Distance Learning Program
- Credit by Examination
- Choosing Classes
- Study Tactics
- How to Manage Time Well
- Writing a Research Paper

Even if you've been taking college courses for awhile, I think you'll find something useful in it.

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.

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 Calendar

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

Tuesdays (0730): EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs*

Wednesdays (0800): Defense Language Proficiency Tests

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

* If operations or your work schedule make it impossible for you to take an EOCT, RAT, 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 Mondays and 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 Wednesdays, 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 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.