

TraCen Cape May Education Update #388

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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
DC2 Jamie Kosakowski	TraCen (Firehouse)	E-PME-6
HS3 Timothy Knapp	HSWL FO Cape May	HS2*

* First attempt

Well done, POs Kosakowski and Knapp!!!

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 – If I transfer my GI Bill benefits to my spouse, do we get the housing allowance?

Q: If a servicemember has the Post-9/11 GI Bill and is married, can she transfer it to her spouse and still receive E-5 pay the whole time? What if the spouse is in the Reserve? Also, once the servicemember transfers her GI Bill, can it be transferred back?

A: You've obviously heard a lot of incorrect or partially correct information about the new (Post-9/11) GI Bill. My guess is that when you mentioned "E-5 pay" you were referring to the monthly housing allowance (MHA) which is the equivalent of E-5 with-dependents BAH for the ZIP code in which the student's school is located. No one who is on active duty (or the spouse of someone who is on active duty) is eligible for the MHA.

The spouse's service status (Reserve or regular) is irrelevant. If the Reservist-spouse were eligible for new GI Bill benefits himself, he would be eligible for the MHA. But transferred benefits carry with them the status of the person who transferred them.

Finally, new GI Bill benefits "belong" to the servicemember, even after she's transferred them to someone else. That means she can revoke the transfer or redistribute transferred benefits after making the initial transfer.

For answers to questions more specific than these, call the GI Bill hotline to ask about your specific situation (800-827-1000 or 888-442-4551).

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, **compliment** and **complement**. (These definitions are from *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*.)

The word **compliment** can be a noun or a verb, depending on how it’s used. As a noun, it’s an expression of esteem, respect, affection, or admiration; a flattering remark. As a verb, it means to express esteem, respect, affection, or admiration. “Putting the invention to use was the highest compliment someone could pay the inventor” and “The CO complimented the fireman on her uniform at the personnel inspection.”

The word **complement** is a noun, in ordinary usage, meaning something that fills up, completes, or makes perfect OR two angles whose sum is 90 degrees. It can also mean the whole body or number of personnel assigned to a ship. Examples: “The husband thought of his wife as his complement”; “The corporation’s last purchase was the Ajax Company, which it considered the complement to all its other acquisitions”; “Angles of 35 degrees and 65 degrees are complements, in that they add up to 90 degrees”; “The aircraft carrier’s complement was 5,285 sailors and officers, not counting its air wing.”

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.

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.**

26 July Career Fair in Philadelphia

The military-to-civilian recruiting company, RecruitMilitary, is holding a career fair for military veterans (and soon-to-be veterans) at Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia from 1100 to 1500 on Thursday, 26 July 2012. For more information, go to <https://events.recruitmilitary.com/events/philadelphia-veteran-job-fair-july-26-2012>.

FY13 Officer Program Submission Deadlines

Tentative dates for submitting applications for officer programs have been posted on the Coast Guard Recruiting Command's (CGRC's) web site (<http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-career/officer-opportunities/programs/program-forms-and-deadlines>). Below is a tabular version of what's on CGRC's web site.

	Officer Program	Recruiting Office Deadline	CGRC Deadline	Selection Board Meeting Date
01-13	DCA, WIFI, DCL, MARGRAD	09 OCT 2012	05 NOV 2012	03 DEC 2012
02-13	OCS-T	14 NOV 2012	05 DEC 2012	14 JAN 2013
03-13	SRDC, PA	29 OCT 2012	10 DEC 2012	04 FEB 2013
04-13	CSPI	14 JAN 2013	19 FEB 2013	18 MAR 2013
05-13	DCE, DCIO, DCL, DCSS, MARGRAD, DCPA	25 FEB 2013	25 MAR 2013	15 APR 2013
06-13	OCS-R	04 MAR 2013	01 APR 2013	13 MAY 2013

I didn't list an "ESO Deadline" for each program because there's no need for applicants to be under additional time pressure. I don't care when you get your application to me as long as I can get it to the Recruiting Office by its deadline. Plan accordingly.

ME Reserve Servicewide Exam Eligibility

Paragraph 5.C. of ALCOAST 243/11 states that Reserve MEs "competing for advancement during the OCT 2012 RSWE and beyond must not only complete ME EPQs and PQG, including EOCT, for the next higher pay grade, but also all lower paygrades." An oversight with respect to enforcing this policy caused 156 PDEs to be made available on 5 July showing a status of "eligible" when in fact these 156 members were "not eligible" because they had not completed the lower grade courses.

If you're a Reserve ME who expects to take the SWE in October, be sure to check your PDE again to see if you actually are eligible.

Mountain State University Accreditation

Last week the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (a regional accreditor) notified Mountain State University (MSU), in West Virginia, that its accreditation will be withdrawn as of 27 August 2012. The school has notified NCACS that it will appeal this decision.

MSU has announced that it will not be admitting any new students for the fall 2012 term and that any new students already registered will be withdrawn from classes. Pending the outcome of the appeal, the school remains accredited and credits earned by students before the final decision remain accredited, and should be transferable as if accreditation was not an issue. However, if you are currently enrolled at MSU, or were planning to take courses from or attend MSU this fall, please investigate other options.

If you'd like to read the accreditor's findings and other information about this action, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/MSU-accreditation.pdf>.

New Grad School Search Engine

PhDs.org (<http://graduate-school.phds.org/>) is a new web site which allows you to use specific criteria to search for graduate programs (master's and doctoral) in dozens of fields. It also provides information about individual programs (including costs), rankings, and resources related to getting into and succeeding in grad school, life as a graduate student, finding work after receiving your graduate degree, a Scientists' Career Guide, and dozens of other resources listed under the heading "The Big Picture". Check it out!

New Education Financial Aid Reference Book

The Education Center just received the latest edition of *Financial Aid for Veterans, Military Personnel, and Their Families*. The book contains information on scholarships, fellowships, and grants-in-aid available only to military personnel, veterans, and their families. Drop by to look it over, or (if you want it) you can have the edition this one replaces.

Caveat: Please don't limit your search for these types of aid to only those listed in this book. You and your dependents are also eligible for awards open to the population at large. And keep in mind that when a book like this is published, most military people gravitate toward its listings, which makes competition for those awards heavier.

Low value and obscure awards are more likely to be overlooked by most people which makes competition for them lighter. The bottom line is: don't limit yourself in your search for scholarships – check out (and apply for) *any* you're eligible for. For more info on scholarships in general, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/scholarships.asp>.

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.

Are You a Tuition Assistance User?

Have you used TA in the last year or two – even for only one course? If so, don't forget you **must** provide a grade report for every course TA pays for, within 60 days of the end of the school term. If you don't, the Navy will eventually come after you for the TA money authorized for the course.

Also be aware that if your TA request is approved and later decide not to take the course, you **must** cancel the resulting TA authorization ASAP. If you don't, the Navy will assume you took the course and failed it, in which case it will come after you for the TA money authorized for the course.

If you withdraw from the course before your school's full-refund deadline, and then cancel the authorization, it will be as if TA was never authorized (assuming your school didn't bill the Navy for the amount shown on the authorization).

If you withdraw after the full-refund deadline, your school will refund a portion of the TA that was authorized and you will have to repay the Navy for the rest.

Avoid hassles you don't even want to think about (including deductions from your pay) by either canceling your TA authorization or providing your grade report within 60 days of the end of your school term.

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>.

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**Scholarship Award Dates**

01 JUN 2012 – 31 JUL 2012

August 2012 (on-line)

01 AUG 2012 – 30 SEP 2012

October 2012 (on-line)

01 OCT 2012 – 30 NOV 2012

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.

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 You're 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.

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.

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.