

TraCen Cape May Education Update #416

In this Update:

- Education Center closure
- Question of the week – Is TA available again?
- Web page in the spotlight
- Grammar, vocabulary, & usage corner
- Common Latin phrases everyone should know
- Servicewide Exams
- Preparing for the SWE or any other test?
- E-PME study resources
- FY14 tuition assistance
- Thinking about taking college courses?
- College reality check
- Another tool for finding colleges
- New college info
- GI Bill: dependent activation
- Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessel courses
- Free downloadable books, audiobooks, music, and videos
- Need help with writing?
- Professional development courses from DoD services
- Attention parents of college-bound children!
- College & career planning tools
- Is on-line learning for you?
- Before choosing a major or career field . . .
- Preparing to re-take an ASVAB test?
- Taking the new RATs/EOCTs
- Dependent children between 21 and 26: transferring GI Bill benefits
- Officer program application process
- Free on-line test prep tools
- Coast Guard Institute transcripts
- Alternatives to TA for education funding
- More education funding resources
- Limitations on CGMA Supplemental Education Grants
- GI Bill transfer & service obligation
- Thinking of teaching?
- Miscellaneous

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Education Center Closure

The Education Center will be **closed from Friday, 10 May through Friday, 31 May** while I'm on leave. Please plan accordingly!!

Question of the Week – Is TA available again?

Q: I heard there's a message just went out that makes TA available again. Is that true?

A: Yes, but with conditions. ALCOAST 175/13 (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST175-13.pdf>) made TA available again and provided new eligibility criteria for those who want to use it. You can find those criteria at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/ta.asp#eligibility>.

For the rest of this fiscal year, at least, all eligible TraCen Cape May personnel who want to use TA will need to have the CO's or XO's verification that they meet all the eligibility criteria before submitting a TA application (eTA request). For this purpose, we'll be using a new TraCen Cape May digital form (http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/TA_eligibility_form.pdf) – don't print it out. **Make sure you read all the conditions laid out on the form.** Once you've completed the form (including your digital signature), forward it by e-mail to your Division Officer.

After the CO/XO has approved the form, I'll let you know you can submit your on-line TA application (see <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/ta-a.asp#applying>). In the meantime, you can fill it out and save it. Then, when you get word that you can submit it, you can just open it up, click on "SUBMIT", and it'll come to me for my review and I'll then send it to the Institute for final review and authorization.

There is no Coast Guard-wide procedure by which COs are to verify TA applicants' eligibility, so don't be surprised if you transfer and find that your new unit does things differently than the procedure described here.

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 **Self-Paced/Independent Study Programs** (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/schools.asp#self-paced>).

Grammar, Vocabulary, & Usage Corner

This week, *alacrity*. (These definitions are taken from *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* and Merriam-Webster on-line, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>.)

Alacrity is a noun meaning promptness in response, cheerful readiness. ("The SN responded to her chief's order with alacrity.")

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.

Common Latin Phrases Everyone Should Know

Ad hoc, literally translated, means "to this" or "for this". In today's usage, it refers to something that is formed or done quickly to meet the needs of a particular problem or issue without regard to a more general application and generally lacking advance planning. ("The ForceCom commander created an ad hoc group to review and report back on Coast Guard tuition assistance and voluntary education policies.")

From: <http://oedb.org/library/beginning-online-learning/50-common-latin-phrases-every-college-student-should-know>

Servicewide Exams

If you're expecting to take a servicewide exam (SWE) in May at TraCen Cape May, please let me know if you **have not** received my e-mail with all the relevant information (where, when, what to bring, what to wear, etc.).

If you have received e-mails about it, and haven't yet clicked on the green "Accept" check mark or the red "Decline" X, please do so ASAP. I need to know how many people are coming to ensure I have the right number of seats and right amount of supplies available.

Preparing for the SWE or Any Other Test?

Check out the tips on effective studying and test-taking skills at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/studying.asp>.

E-PME Study Resources

(courtesy of OSI Melissa Mathis, TraCen Cape May)

If you're looking for more ways to study for an E-PME AQE or for the May servicewide exam (SWE), you might want to check out these current high-tech resources. According to PO Mathis, "There is an app called EPME Mobile which has quizzes for the E-PME Apprentice, Journeyman, and Master materials. With the app, you can search the E-PME manuals and itemize the knowledge and performance requirements. You can also communicate with the developer about edits and updates. It's available for your tablet or smartphone." PO Mathis also pointed to "PDF Notes, an app that allows you to highlight, bookmark and take notes in any manual published in PDF format. It's for a tablet."

Also, some enterprising petty officers have created sets of electronic E-PME flashcards available at Quizlet.com. You can use them (<http://quizlet.com/subject/uscg-epme/>) or create your own, and import them to your smartphone. Two others you can use to create flashcards are Flashcards++ and StudyBlue (the latter of which is also for your computer at <http://www.studyblue.com/switch/cpt.html>).

FY14 Tuition Assistance

The COMDT has published nothing concrete about tuition assistance in FY14. However, the "2013 Coast Guard Posture Statement and FY 2014 Budget-in-Brief" (<http://www.uscg.mil/posturestatement/>) cited in ALCOAST 168/13 ("Fiscal Year 2014 Budget") provides one hint that eligibility rules similar to those set out in ALCOAST 175/13 (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST175-13.pdf>) may be continued next year. The fourth bullet under the heading "Programmatic Reductions" (pages 35 and 36) states, among other things: "Educational benefits will be focused on enlisted personnel who are pursuing an initial undergraduate degree."

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.

College Reality Check

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* has a new tool to use to help you choose a college, aimed at students and their parents. Under the heading "Your Education. Your Investment. Your degree should work as hard as you do", its purpose is to answer three questions:

- How much will I actually pay for my degree?
- Will I graduate on time?
- Will I make enough to repay my debt?

To check it out, go to <http://collegerealitycheck.com/>.

Another Tool for Finding Colleges

For years, ESOs have wished there were a way to find all colleges and universities in the country that offer degrees in a given major. A Google search yields lots of results, but most of them are web sites schools have to pay to get on – which eliminates schools that don't have big advertising budgets.

The answer to ESOs' wishes (at least the first version) was born, recently: it's Department of Education's College Scorecard (<http://collegecost.ed.gov/scorecard/index.aspx>). It will help you find schools that offer the major you're looking for. Although it's a work in progress – the database is not yet complete – it's much better than existing alternatives.

After choosing your search criteria, click on "+ Add Criteria". You'll then see all your search criteria appear in the left margin. Click on the "Search Institution" button and you'll be given a list of all the schools that meet your criteria. To see the largest number of schools, use the fewest possible search criteria (probably just your desired major or majors). If you can't figure out how to use it, drop by the Education Center and I'll walk you through it.

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.***

Maysville Community & Technical College – This small school in Kentucky has a new Associate of Applied Sciences degree program in business administration with either a management or accounting option. You can take all required courses on-line and the school will accept up to 20 credits from military training, as well as some credit transferred from other colleges (http://maysville.kctcs.edu/Admissions/Admissions_Policies/Previous_College_Work.aspx). The tuition rate is a extremely reasonable (currently \$140 per semester credit). For more information, go to http://maysville.kctcs.edu/Academics/Programs_of_Study/BS_Business_Administration.aspx and <http://www.dantescatalogs.com/DEDCCDetails.aspx?DEDCCID=2294>.

Atlantic Cape Community College (ACCC) – In addition to the recent addition of an Air Traffic Control and Aviation Studies degree program, Atlantic Cape Community College plans to offer four more new degree programs this fall. The programs are:

- Biomedical Science
- Environmental Science
- Chemistry
- Radiologic Technology.

In addition to information about these programs, the latest edition of ACCC's "CareerFocus" magazine (<http://atlantic.mycareerfocus.org/>) includes articles on short-term career training, the school's cutting-edge culinary arts program, a step-by-step guide to applying for financial aid, how ACCC can prepare you for transferring to a four-year degree program, earning college credit for high school courses, and other topics.

Empire State College (which is part of the State University of New York system) "has launched the Veteran and Military MBA Pathway program". The program "is designed to help veterans and service members use their professional military education and training to earn an MBA in Management." You don't have to take the GMAT or GRE to qualify for this program. For more information, go to <http://choose.esc.edu/lib/docs/pdf/veteran-military-mba-pathway-faqs.pdf>.

GI Bill: Dependent Activation

If you have a dependent to whom you transferred GI Bill benefits, be aware that transferring all or part of your 36-month entitlement to him doesn't end complete the process. Your dependent will also have to submit an application to the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) to actually begin using them. This process is commonly called "activating" the benefit.

To do this, she must submit form 22-1990E to the DVA. This can be done using either the PDF/paper version (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/VA22-1990E.pdf>) or on-line version (<http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>). There are pros and cons to using either version. For the PDF/paper version, the main plus is that it's easy to fill out. On the negative side, you will never know if the paper form gets lost in the shuffle of thousands of others.

The main benefit of using the on-line version is security: the information you enter on-line is put directly into a database which the people at the DVA will access as needed and use to generate the Certificate of Eligibility at the end of the process. On the other hand, because the process is not as user-friendly as it could be and because the DoD and DVA are constantly tweaking it, the on-line process can be quite frustrating to use. (E.g., don't be surprised if you think you've done everything you were supposed to do and get put back on a page you've been at before.)

Contrary to information the DVA provided when the new (Post-9/11) GI Bill first became available, a dependent child can submit this application before she turns 18 or graduates from high school. The Coast Guard's GI Bill person, Mr. Reidus Stokes, suggests high school students who will be using a parent's benefit "apply well in advance" of the beginning of their first college term.

When doing so, make sure to leave **completely blank** the field asking "Did you receive a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate?" (That's item 8B on the PDF/paper form and the analogous field in the on-line form.)

As for the rest of the form, there are many items/fields you can leave completely blank. On the PDF/paper form, these are: 9B, 9C, 10A, 10B, and 10C. For Part IV on the PDF/paper form, check "No" for item 11A and leave 11B blank (unless the dependent is a US government employee). This also applies to the corresponding fields on the on-line application.

Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessel Courses

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

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

Mr. Monty Mathis, full-time ESO at Sector St. Petersburg, has identified what seems to be the only college which offers distance learning courses to prepare you to take the 100-ton captain's license exam. And, because you can earn college credit for them (through Northeast Wisconsin Technical College), they're covered by TA. For more information, go to http://www.nwtc.edu/academics/degrees/publicsafety/criminaljustice/Documents/8657GSPS%20Public%20Safety%20Maritime%20Course_brochure.pdf.

Free Downloadable Books, Audiobooks, Music, and Videos

You can download thousands of free entertainment files (over 100,000 items to choose from) via the Navy General Library Program (<http://navy.lib.overdrive.com/>). To use it, you'll first need to register as a new user at Navy Knowledge Online (<https://www.nko.navy.mil/>). This service is available to all uniformed personnel, retirees, and their dependants.

Don't limit yourself to just the Navy General Library Program, however. Navy Knowledge Online contains

- reference materials of all kinds (e.g., *Navy Times*, national magazines, academic and professional journals, and more),
- Petersons Lifelong Learning resources (e.g., CLEP & DSST prep; prep resources for various military tests; ACT, SAT, PSAT prep; career & certification test prep);

- academic, military, and career e-books;
- search engines for finding colleges and scholarships;
- personal development resources (physical and mental health, fitness, financial management, safety); and
- leadership resources.

All these are free.

Need Help with Writing?

Do you sometimes feel unable to put your thoughts on paper – whether for a school assignment or at work? If so, a technique called *freewriting* may be for you. According to the short article “5 Freewriting Secrets for Being a ‘Genius’” in *Psychology Today*, “At its most basic, it’s about forcing your internal editor to stay away while you splash your most raw and unusual thoughts onto the page.” Check it out at <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/creating-in-flow/201011/5-freewriting-secrets-being-genius>. **Everyone who’s applying for an officer program, and writing his/her narrative memo, should try this technique.**

Professional Development Courses from DoD Services

Many Coast Guard personnel are unaware that they can take courses from the other services for professional development purposes. And, like Coast Guard courses, you can earn college credit by passing many of them. The firehouse personnel, for example, take a number of Air Force courses (and the corresponding end-of-course tests).

For many of you, this is a great way to get a slightly different perspective on the tasks you perform in your rating and add to your knowledge base. Doing this shows initiative, dedication to your rating, and can look good on your marks. There are also many courses unrelated to your specific jobs in the Coast Guard, but which give you a broader perspective. For example, the Marine Corps has a Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (<http://www.tecom.usmc.mil/caocl/>), to help its personnel deploying to Iraq better understand the culture and, from that, to have more productive interactions with the Iraqi people.

For more info on what’s available from the various services, here are their web sites:

- **Army:** Army Correspondence Course Program (<http://www.atsc.army.mil/accp/aipdnew.asp>)
- **Navy:** Navy Advancement Center (<https://www.courses.netc.navy.mil/>) and the Naval War College’s College of Distance Education (<http://www.usnwc.edu/Academics/College-of-Distance-Education.aspx>)
- **Marine Corps:** Marine Corps Institute (<http://www.tecom.usmc.mil/>)
- **Air Force:** Air University (<http://www.au.af.mil/au/afiad/>)

Attention, Parents of College-Bound Children!

- The U.S. Department of Education has produced a really excellent booklet (*College Preparation Checklist*) people at all stages in life. The first section (“Money for College”) covers student aid; the second section (“Your ‘To Do’ List”) provides check-off lists for elementary, junior high/middle, high school students and their parents and for adult students. You can stop by the Education Center to pick up a copy, or download this pub from http://studentaid.ed.gov/students/attachments/siteresources/College_Prep_Checklist.pdf. The DoEd’s web site has loads of other information about financial aid for higher education, including a large number of other handouts you can download. You can find them at <http://www.studentaid.ed.gov/resources>. Among the titles are: *Don’t Get Scammed on Your Way to College!*, *Loan Forgiveness for Public Service Employees*, *Be an Informed Consumer*, *Student Aid and Identity Theft*, *Student Loans: Avoiding Deceptive Offers*, and *Pay As You Earn Repayment Plan*.
- So you’ve decided you want to take college courses, but you’re not sure which school’s right for you. Or you’ve already decided on college but made your choice more by gut feeling or based on others’ recommendations than through deliberate process. In either case, check out the Department of Education’s College Matching Wizard. There are two versions. One is for people who already have an idea what kind of college they would like to attend. The other asks more questions so as to provide you with a more tailored college fit. You can find them both at <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>.

- If you're looking for a financial aid (including scholarship) search engine that won't try to steer you toward specific loans or scholarships, check out the Department of Education's various wizards: <http://studentaid.ed.gov/types/grants-scholarships>.
- The Scholarship and Financial Aid Explorer (SFEX) was developed by the Marine Corps to make it easier for military personnel to find scholarships directly relevant to them and their dependents. SFEX provides a listing of over 600 scholarships and is open to all servicemembers at no cost. You can check it out at <http://www.mcsfex.net/Default.aspx>.

College & Career Planning Tools

Military personnel now have access to another tool to help them plan for college or a career after the Coast Guard. Kuder, a "provider of Internet-based tools and resources that help students and adults achieve their educational and career planning goals", has an Internet-based program designed specifically for military personnel. It's called Journey, and you can find out more about it and how to access it from a flyer you'll find at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/Journey.pdf>.

Journey and other similar tools (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/sitestest.asp>) are powerful tools in helping you decide your future career path and what to major in, if you decide to pursue a college degree.

Is On-Line Learning for You?

If you're trying to decide between taking courses in a classroom or via distance learning (aka distance education), you owe it to yourself to use one or more of the on-line assessment tools available from DANTES and various colleges (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/distance.asp#01>). Spending some time with these tools could save you time and a lot of aggravation down the road.

Before Choosing a Major or Career Field . . .

If you're considering a particular college major or career field, you should first check out the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/home.htm>). Not only does it tell you what type of education and/or training you need to enter and advance in a specific career field, but it also tells you things like what the pay is likely to be and what the hiring prospects are in the future.

Preparing to Re-Take an ASVAB Test?

If you're preparing to re-take the AR, MK, PC, or WK ASVAB/AFCT tests, you'll do yourself a favor if you start the process by first going to <http://www.petersonsdodlibrary.com/> and accessing the free On-line Academic Skills Course (OASC). The course is geared to helping you improve your English (usage and vocabulary) and math skills. The lessons (approximately 20 minutes long) and tests are tailored to your current skills, so you don't have to sit through stuff you're already proficient in. As you progress through the course, periodic quizzes allow you to see whether and how much you've improved.

This is a great tool, it's free, and it's accessible from any computer that has Internet connectivity.

Taking the New RATs/EOCTs

If you're an SK, OS, FS, MST, AET, AMT, or AST, you may have heard that while taking one of the latest versions of a RAT (Rating Advancement Test) you can use references. This is true. Essentially, it's an open-book test. But the "book" is a series of computer files in PDF format. The references will be references you use on the job: COMDTINSTs, Coast Guard manuals, tech manuals, excerpts from the Code of Federal Regulations, Navy publications, etc.

Keep in mind that these tests are timed and you want to spend your time on thinking about what the answer to a question is, not on figuring out how to find or check the answer to the question. Therefore, if you're not already familiar with the various search features of Adobe Acrobat or Reader, it will behoove you to take a few minutes before your scheduled test date to become familiar with them.

Your ESO is prohibited from giving you access to the RAT references before you take the test, but can help you understand how to efficiently search a PDF document.

Dependent Children Between 21 and 26: Transferring GI Bill Benefits

(courtesy of Brion Newman, full-time ESO at Base Seattle)

To transfer GI Bill benefits to a dependent child, she must be registered in the DEERS database. That can be done at any time until she reaches her 26th birthday. If she's older than 21, she must be attending college to be entered into the database. You'll need to supply proof (in the form of a letter from the school) stating that your child is attending college full-time and has paid all tuition and fees for the current school term. (After you've transferred your GI Bill benefit to a child in this situation, it doesn't matter whether her data remains in the database.)

For your child to be eligible for TriCare benefits, she must also be in DEERS. To ensure she remains eligible for TriCare while in college (at least until she turns 23), every six months you will need to provide your DEERS office with the letter described above. That is, your dependent child will automatically be removed from the DEERS database six months after you provide the letter, unless you provide another letter (until she turns 23) with a current date on it.

When your dependent child turns 26, she will be deleted from the DEERS database and will no longer be able to use any GI Bill benefits that were transferred to her.

Officer Program Application Process

In a change from previous practice, all applicants and would-be applicants for the Coast Guard's various officer programs (enlisted or civilian) are to contact the nearest Coast Guard recruiting office for help in preparing their applications. ESOs receive no training from CGRC concerning officer accession programs; recruiters do.

To quote CGRC's web site (<http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-career/officer-opportunities/programs/program-forms-and-deadlines>), "6. You should . . . get in touch with your nearest recruiting office as soon as possible, WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE "ESO" or "RO" DEADLINE, whether you are a CG member, a civilian, or a member of another service. Begin the process by filling out some pertinent information that recruiters need to help you."

Free On-line Test Prep Tools

Looking for help in studying for a test? Peterson's DoD MWR Libraries has on-line study materials and practice tests for dozens of tests of all types: CLEP (all subjects), DSST (all subjects), ASYAB/AFCT, ASTB, PSAT, SAT, ACT, GRE, GMAT, LSAT.

From this site, you'll also have access to the Online Academic Skills Course (OASC) which you can use to improve your math and verbal skills, with pre-tests, lessons tailored to your needs, and more tests to see how you progressed.

These can all be used to help study for the tests listed above and for high school or college tests in the various subjects covered by the CLEP and DSST tests (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/tests.asp>). Check this all out at <http://www.petersonsdodlibrary.com>.

Coast Guard Institute Transcripts

The American Council on Education (ACE) evaluates "A" and "C" school curricula to determine how many credits you would have earned in college if you had covered there the same material you covered in an "A" or "C" school.

You can get a transcript of these credits from the Coast Guard Institute by downloading and submitting a form (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/CGI1561.pdf>) through your ESO. Make sure you read the instructions for each section of the form before filling out that section; only fill out the sections that you have to fill out. In section I you'll see a number of options for telling Institute staff what you want.

If this is the first time you've submitted a transcript request, check the "Assessment" box. If you've submitted an assessment request before, and want to update it, check the "Update to Assessment" box. Either way, you'll receive an unofficial transcript by e-mail from the Institute.

If you want an official transcript (which will be sent to a college, university, or your ESO but not to you), check the "Official Transcript" box.

Unofficial transcripts differ from official transcripts only in that they're not printed on paper (you'll receive a PDF file). Official transcripts are printed on special, watermarked paper that makes tampering obvious and they have the Coast Guard Institute's seal on them. To see if credits earned through military service will count toward a degree, you have to have an official transcript sent to the school you want to get the degree from.

If you're just curious about how many credits you've accumulated in which subjects and don't feel you need an assessment, you can go to ACE's web site (<http://www.militaryguides.acenet.edu/>).

Bear in mind that every college and university in the U.S. has its own criteria for deciding whether to accept credits earned anywhere else. So credits that show up on your Coast Guard transcript may or may not be accepted toward majors and degrees at your preferred school.

Alternatives to TA for Education Funding

Even though TA can't currently be used to pay for college courses, there are many options available other than TA (as there have always been). These are:

- scholarships and grants
- loans
- GI Bill benefits.

Scholarships (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/scholarships.asp>) and grants (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/grants.asp>) provide money you don't have to repay.

Loans (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/loans.asp>) must be repaid and should be used only as a last resort. Some loans (like the CGMA Education Loan) are interest-free.

There are currently six different GI Bill education benefits (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/gibill-o.asp>, VEAP, and one for survivors of deceased servicemembers). Many people are unaware that applying for GI Bill benefits (colloquially known as activating your benefit) has no negative effects. You can apply for benefits while on active duty or after you leave the service, but whenever you do so, you will have fixed amount of time in which to use up your benefit after your last day on active duty. Each of the programs has a different length of time to use them up. **The amount of time you have to use your benefit is completely unrelated to the number of months in your entitlement (which is normally 36).**

DANTES has also "produced a new Web page highlighting a number of TA Alternatives to help Service members weather this fiscal storm. While budget cuts and the impact swirl in the news, Service members want help finding alternative funding sources, alternate sources of college credit, who to talk to, and answers to the question "What can I do to keep my education goals on track?" That help is available at the DANTES Web site at <http://www.dantes.doded.mil>."

More Education Funding Resources

The US Department of Education's web site has dozens of resources to help you find funding for higher education (yours or your dependents') – <http://www.studentaid.ed.gov/resources>. There are downloadable one-page flyers, brochures, pamphlets, and booklets, as well as links to more resources.

Limitations on CGMA Supplemental Education Grants

Coast Guard Mutual Assistance will reimburse their first associate's or bachelor's degree may request reimbursement of various college-related expenses. For more information, see <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/grants.asp#seg>. However, to quote from the CGMA Manual, "Assistance is not authorized for costs associated with preparatory courses, licenses (maritime, real estate, AC&R, etc.), or certification courses (computer, maritime, law, medical, etc)."

GI Bill Transfer & Service Obligation

Despite ESOs' best efforts since August 2009 to ensure everyone knows about the additional service requirement you incur when you transfer new (Post-9/11) GI Bill education benefit, some people are telling us they're about to retire and weren't aware of it.

The general rule is that you must serve for four years after the date you transfer any or all of your benefit. For those who became eligible for retirement between 01 August 2009 and 01 August 2012, different service obligation periods apply (see <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/gibill-33b.asp#obligation>).

If you've transferred any or all of your benefit and leave the Coast Guard voluntarily during the service obligation period, you "must go back into the Portal and revoke [your] transfer (return transfer months to zero)," according to Mr. Reidus Stokes, the GI Bill person at PSC. You'll also need to "visit the PSD (FS) website (<http://www.uscg.mil/psc/psd/fs/GI%20Bill.asp>), print the "Revocation of Post 9/11 Transfer Benefits", sign it, date it, and e-mail or fax" it to him. "If any benefits were used, [you] will be placed in an overpayment status by the Department of Veteran Affairs" and the DVA will follow its procedures to recover the money it paid out for your dependent's education, housing allowance, etc.

If you believe you were not properly notified of the opportunity to transfer your new GI Bill benefit to dependents while you were in uniform, you can request a correction of military records to allow for transferability. To do this, submit an "Application for Correction of Military Record Under the Provisions of Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 1552" (<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd0149.pdf>) to the Coast Guard Board for Correction of Military Records.

Be aware, however, that (to quote the instructions on the form) you must "show to the satisfaction of the Board by the evidence that you supply, or it must otherwise satisfactorily appear in the record, that the alleged entry or omission in the record was in error or unjust. Evidence, in addition to documents, may include affidavits or signed testimony of witnesses, executed under oath, and a brief of arguments supporting the application. All evidence not already included in your record must be submitted by you. The responsibility of securing evidence rests with you."

One more thing, Mr. Stokes also advises that the obligated service period begins on the date of your first transfer of benefits (TEB) to any dependent(s). If you transfer all benefits to your spouse today, you would have to serve four years from today or face the consequences described above. If you and your spouse have a baby next year and decide to re-allocate your transferred benefits (18 months to your spouse, 18 months to the baby), you incur no additional service obligation. **It pays to transfer your benefits as soon as you make the decision to do so, and definitely before you begin the 16th year of your career.**

Thinking of Teaching?

If you're interested in becoming a teacher after leaving the Coast Guard, check out the resources at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/teaching.asp>. Also, consider the Troops to Teachers (TTT) program (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/t2t.asp>). The program

- provides mature, motivated, experienced, and dedicated personnel for the nation's classrooms;
- assists military personnel in making successful transitions to second careers in teaching; and

- helps relieve teacher shortages, especially in math, science, special education, career and technical subjects, and foreign languages.

The FY2013 defense authorization act made the following changes to the program (as described in *MilitaryTimesEDGE* magazine):

- reduces the minimum required time in service from six to four years;
- adds foreign language skills as one of the sought-after specialties;
- restores the program to the DoD's control;
- shortens the time to apply for the program from four years to three after leaving the military.

And even if you're not interested in the Troops to Teachers program, Ms. Melissa Fantozzi (Regional Director of the NJ, DE, MD, and DC Troops to Teachers office at 800-680-0884 or tttnj@doe.state.nj.us) is happy to help you navigate the maze of teacher certification requirements not only her assigned region but throughout the country. You can also find links to web pages describing requirements for the states in her region at <http://www.nj.gov/education/tttnj/>.

TraCen Cape May Testing Schedule

As of next Monday (28 January 2013), tests at TraCen Cape May will be administered by appointment according to the following schedule.

Mondays (0745): EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs

Tuesdays (0745): EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs

Wednesdays (0745): EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs* or Defense Language Proficiency Tests (DLPT)

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

Alternating Fridays (0745): EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs

* If someone has made an appointment to take a DLPT (a 6-hour test), there will be no 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 probably administering a test (and, because I don't want to disturb examinees I 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 which you're welcome to check out. Also in the library are the latest Professional Qualification Guides (PQGs) and Rating Performance Qualifications (RPQs) for each rate.

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.