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FALL 2022

# Education Guide

September 8, 2022

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# Finding homeschool resources for military children

*Courtesy of Stripes Japan*

Homeschooling may appeal to some military families who are concerned that frequent moves and new school systems might disrupt their children's education. If you're thinking about educating your child at home, or have already made the decision, the information here will help guide you to support and resources.

## Installation resources

Homeschooling means that you, as parents, assume responsibility for directing your child's education and use your home as the base for that education instead of a traditional public or independent school. You'll find these resources on your installation:

- School liaison officer. A school liaison officer can fill you in on state and local home-schooling requirements and connect you with nearby home-school groups.
- Child, youth and teen programs. Youth programs offer enrichment classes and may open its facilities during the school day to children who usually receive home education.
- Department of Defense Education Activity. Military children may be able to enroll in enrichment classes, access academic resources and participate in extracurricular activities at your installation's Department of Defense Education Activity school. The Department of Defense Education Activity also offers a fully accredited online high school that grants diplomas.

## Other military resources

Branch-specific and other military resources include:

- The Non-Department of Defense Schools Program. The Non-Department of Defense Schools Program provides support and funding if you're stationed overseas and want to home-school your child.
- Military support services. Each service branch sponsors information and support programs for service members and their families, and can help you regardless of your service affiliation. If you aren't near an installation, look up your closest National Guard Family Assistance Center on the National Guard Family Program website.
- Military OneSource. This service is available at no cost to all active-duty service members, National Guard and reserves (regardless of activation status) and their families. Counselors provide information and make referrals on a wide range of issues, including parenting, education and home-schooling programs. Learn more at Military OneSource or call 800-342-9647.

## Community resources

Check out your local area for more resources and help with homeschooling with a few of these ideas:

- Public libraries. Chat up your local librarian to learn about programs, services and information for home-schoolers, such as reading programs and no-cost museum passes.
- Community centers and YMCAs. Many community centers and YMCAs offer

classes to home-schooled students, including some designed just for them.

- Museums and arts organizations. You may find education programs for children at museums, orchestras, and theater or dance groups. Also check out zoos, wildlife centers and nature preserves for children's programs.
- Community colleges and vocational training programs. Teenagers may be able to take vocational training or courses at a four-year or community college. These may be a good option for older kids who want to explore an area that you don't feel qualified to teach.

## Homeschooling groups

Doing activities with other homeschooled students can give children a strong sense of camaraderie. Ask around and do online searches for the following in your area:

- Umbrella schools. Also called "cover schools," these organizations supervise the education of homeschooled children and build ties among families based on similar interests.
- Homeschooling networks and support groups. Many communities have networks or organizations for homeschooling families. They provide a broad range of support on homeschooling issues and offer opportunities to meet other homeschooling parents.

Homeschooling your child may be a big commitment, but with local and military resources, you and your student will have plenty of support.

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MAX D. LEDERER JR.

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SCOTT FOLEY

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# ADVANCE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

*Courtesy of Military OneSource*

If your child is one of the 185,000 military children changing schools annually due to a PCS move, you may know about bumpy transitions between school systems. **Military families face PCS challenges such as:**

- Transferring records
- Learning the differences in education and graduation requirements for the current versus the new state
- Finding ways around the enrollment barriers in electives, sports and other extracurricular activities
- Ensuring children can get the same individualized education program services at their new school

The Defense Department worked with the National Center for Interstate Compacts to establish the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children. **This compact covers:**

- Common policies for records transfer
- Enrollment
- Placement
- Graduation requirements

While these common policies cover many of the typical concerns of military families, they do not alleviate the challenges. **Because of military-**

**direct moves, children often face issues such as:**

- Limited course availability
- Missed application deadlines

To address these issues and improve access to schools, courses and programs for military children, the Defense-State Liaison Office is working with states to develop policies enabling military parents to pre-enroll their children in a school district before they arrive at their new PCS destination. The initiative, called Advance Enrollment, is now the policy in 34 states.

**Advance enrollment initiative**

States that participate in advance enrollment allow military families to enroll their children in the new school district:

- At the same time as the general student population (spring of the previous school year)
- Without presenting proof of physical residence within the school district before they enroll

The benefits of advance enrollment for military children include:

- The opportunity to participate in random lotteries for charter or magnet schools
- The chance to enroll in specialized academic programs

- The opportunity to begin coordinating IEP and 504 plan requirements
- The chance to register for courses and plan their course of study
- The comfort of knowing which school they will attend before arriving at the new location

Additional details and supporting states

You must provide the following information to take advantage of advance enrollment:

- Documentation of a pending military relocation to the state
- Proof of residency provided to the school district within the required number of days after arrival at the new location

Not every state has approved this policy. States in which it has passed include: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington and Wyoming.

**Get more information**

School liaisons are the main contact

for military families, local school systems and installation command for school-related matters in pre-K through grade 12. School liaisons can help:

- You with your PCS transition as it pertains to education
- You stay up to date on your new state's policy and participation
- Your children get settled into a new school after a PCS
- You transfer your child's credits and register for classes
- You locate after-school activities, extracurricular programs and tutoring resources
- You connect with the Exceptional Family Member Program and your school's special education department
- You navigate your new school district's special education program in coordination with EFMP personnel

If you have additional questions or need any information regarding your child with special needs, contact:

- EFMP family support staff on your installation
- EFMP Resources, Options and Consultations special needs consultants through Military OneSource at 800-342-9647

You can also schedule a live chat with an EFMP ROC special needs consultant or view international calling options.



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# COMMAND MASTER CHIEF SHARES EDUCATION JOURNEY AND ENCOURAGES SAILORS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EDUCATION BENEFITS

By Cheryl Dengler, Naval Education and Training Professional Development Center  
Courtesy of Navy.mil

**Command Master Chief Dustin Rushing began using Tuition Assistance (TA) in 2010 so that he could work on his education goals without using his own money.**

"I took advantage of TA because of the ability to obtain college credits without paying out of pocket and to save my 9/11 GI Bill benefits for my children," said Rushing. "Even though it took me 12 years to achieve a master's degree, between operational sea time and shore duty, I am pleased that the journey was completed with minimal to no out of pocket cost."

Rushing, who has served 21 years in the Navy, believes the process to apply for and use TA is simple.

"The online learning introduction teaches you the whole process," said Rushing. "I would recommend communicating with your college of choice and developing a degree plan before tackling the TA process. This allows you to have a degree plan readily available to upload for the many classes you will be taking, and it provides you the opportunity to plan out how you will accomplish your goals while at your current command."

The Navy College Program website offers Sailors a 5-step Voluntary Education (VOLED) Process which can assist with planning educational and career paths. The automated Chatbot helps Sailors navigate the website to find the answers that they need to start using TA or Navy College Program for Afloat College Education (NCPACE). To apply for TA, Sailors must meet certain eligibility requirements, outlined in NAVADMIN 214/21, and they are required to get command approval prior to starting classes. Eligible Sailors are allocated up to 18 credit hours each fiscal year to pursue off-duty education.

For Rushing, taking college courses and serving full-time as an active-duty Sailor was challenging, but his goals were achievable because he listened to others that had been down the path already, had a solid plan and communicated his plans clearly.

"Communication with the chain of command is key in achieving your college goals," said Rushing. "I had many mentors along the way that presented courses of action

that I did not think about. You will be surprised at the people that want you to succeed."

In addition to good communication, Rushing offers advice to Sailors in tackling both their education goals and doing their very best to be a standout Sailor.

"The best advice I can give is to know your limitations," said Rushing. "Sailors have a demanding job and if it were easy, everyone would do it."

Rushing recommends Sailors focus on their duties first, but at the same time, he encourages them to push hard towards their education goals.

"Be a team player," said Rushing. "Attack qualifications to support the watch bill, complete maintenance qualifications and work on your respective warfare insignia. Be a productive Sailor and then attack that personal college goal."

"Your command will appreciate the fact you are supporting the crew by executing your daily duties and responsibilities," said Rushing. "And when other Sailors witness your success accomplishing your professional and personal goals at the same time, they will emulate your actions." Rushing cautions Sailors about putting themselves under too much pressure and accomplishing goals too quickly.

"Do not get tunnel vision and stress out about achieving a college degree," said Rushing. "The time will come; I am evidence of that."

Rushing says accomplishing his education goals has been good for his career in the Navy, and he's optimistic about his future outside of the Navy once he retires.

"Having a bachelor's degree in organizational leadership and a master's degree in strategic leadership provides me with a different perspective when reviewing the command's mission and vision," said Rushing. "I think critically how the crew can buy into the command goals using the many resources obtained during my college journey."

"Additionally, my education,



Rushing

combined with naval leadership experience, sets me up to take on a challenging civilian job opportunity," said Rushing. Though it took Rushing many years to accomplish his goal of a master's degree, it was worth the years of hard work and effort.

"I think one of my proudest

moments was when my teenage daughter watched me walk across that stage and get that degree," said Rushing. "That was a terrific moment for me because I felt like I was setting the example for her. On top of that, I was able to transfer 36 months of my GI Bill to her."

For eligible Sailors interested

in beginning their education journey, there are many ways to get started. Sailors can call the NCVEC via the MyNavy Career Center toll free at 1-833-330-MNCC, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Eastern time. To speak directly with a Navy College counselor when calling, select option 3 "Education & Training", then option 1 "Navy College TA & Counseling."

Sailors can also go to the Navy College Assistance Center via the Navy College website, <https://www.navycollege.navy.mil>, and click "Chat Now" to chat online with a Navy College education counselor.

Another option for Sailors is to log into MyNavy Education and submit an inquiry through the Issue Tracker feature in the top right corner.

As part of the MyNavy HR Force Development team, the Naval Education and Training Professional Development Center (NETPDC) provides products and services that enable and enhance education, training, career development and personnel advancement throughout the Navy. Primary elements of the command include the Voluntary Education Department, the Navy Advancement Center and the Resources Management Department.

Additional information about NETPDC can be found at [www.netc.navy.mil/NETPDC](http://www.netc.navy.mil/NETPDC).

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# 5 WAYS TO PAY FOR COLLEGE

Courtesy of USAA

Have you heard the rumor that college tuition gets more expensive each year? Have you ever wondered if it's true? The answer is yes, according to Josh Andrews, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ at USAA. "In 1990, the average tuition and fees was \$3,800. Adjusted for inflation, in 2020 it has moved to an average of \$10,560 for a public four-year university. Costs do indeed continue to rise," Andrews said, citing a recent college board report.

"The good news is that even though college costs are expensive, there are five ways you can help pay for college," Andrews said. Here are five options to consider as you plan for college tuition.

- **529 Education Savings Plan**

**Account:** A 529 plan allows your money to grow tax-deferred, and withdrawals are tax-free if used for qualified expenses. The funds can be used at any accredited institution across the country, and you can change beneficiaries so that eligible family members, including you, can use the funds toward college costs. "Some 529 plans may even have rewards programs like Upromise, a free, online cash-back rewards account for college savings," Andrews said.

- **529 Prepaid Plan:** With this plan,

you prepay some or all in-state college tuition, locking in future education costs in today's dollars. However, keep in mind that, while your state's plan may be transferable to a private or out-of-state university, the dollar value likely won't go as far as it would at an in-state institution.

- **Scholarships:** Thousands of scholarships are available if you take the time to apply. Even the small \$100 or \$200 scholarships that many people overlook due to their low dollar amount can add up. Consider all scholarship sources, including federal, state, employer, civic organizations, athletic and college-specific scholarships.
- **Post-9/11 GI Bill:** Transferring some or all of your unused education

benefit to an eligible spouse or dependent children is one of the best ways to pay for college. Children using the benefit are eligible for a housing stipend if they are attending greater than half time. The bill currently pays all in-state tuition and fees for a public school while a private or foreign school will have dollar limitations placed upon it. These amounts can be found at the VA benefits website.

- **Financial Aid and College Loans:** Unless your child gets a full-ride scholarship, is using the Post-9/11 GI Bill, or is attending a service academy, you will probably need some type of loan to supplement scholarships, grants and your 529 plans. You can get a private loan through a bank, credit union or Sallie Mae, or you can acquire

a federal loan. Federal loans generally have lower interest rates than private loans. Your college graduate can even pay off the federal student loan through certain types of public service. However, the amount you can borrow is usually less with a federal loan than a private loan. All this begins with completing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on behalf of your student to start the aid process. It's important to submit a FAFSA as early as possible so your student has the necessary financial resources.

As you keep all these options in mind, remember your own financial priorities. Your student can get a loan for college; no one will give you a loan for retirement.

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# 4 Smart Degrees Veterans Should Consider

By Rachel Hubbard, Courtesy of Military OneSource

**About 200,000 servicemembers transition to civilian life each year, and many service members are choosing to use their Post 9/11 GI Bill to enter college and pursue higher education. The Post 9/11 GI bill includes payment of tuition and fees, a monthly housing allowance, and a stipend for textbooks and supplies for up to 36 months, depending on your level of eligibility. Propelled by this incredible benefit, 773,000 veterans and their family members enter college or trade school each year.**

A college degree is a smart choice for veterans because it furthers opportunities in the workplace and increases earning potential. A recent study by Smart Asset using the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data shows that workers who hold a bachelor's degree make, on average, \$24,000 more than their counterparts with a high school diploma. Over the course of a career, this gap only widens. After a forty-year span, workers with degrees generally earn 66% more than those who don't.

Of course, the area you choose to study has a significant impact on your potential earnings as well. If you're one of the two million veterans eligible for free college education, choosing your major is an important decision. Fortunately, many universities have staff dedicated to making the process of going back to school as painless as possible.

These experts, often veterans themselves, can help you think about your strengths and interests, as well as which degree program can help you accomplish your life and career goals. In a perfect world, your path of study will meet all these criteria. There are, however, some careers that may be a natural fit for veterans given their training and experience.

Here are four degrees to consider.

## 1. Computer Technology

In recent years, the military has become more technically advanced with many service members working in fields of computer networking, cybersecurity, and web development. Add that to the increased demand for IT professionals, and you may conclude a degree in computer science or information technology is the right choice for you.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the demand for software developers will grow by 17% by 2024. Currently, there's a shortage of qualified IT professionals, which helps keep salaries and company perks competitive. Because technology permeates all aspects of life, you can choose to work for a company in an industry you are passionate about.

If you enjoy varied opportunities for learning, working with new tools, and developing innovative solutions for better business and the future, consider a tech career. Some schools like Western Governors University offer IT degrees that include certification prep and exams in the coursework, saving you money and time.

## 2. Business

Why are veterans so well-suited for careers in business? The answer, simply put, is military culture. Every veteran has received leadership

training, and most have had these skills tested. All have learned how to work under leadership, both good and bad. The leadership qualities taught and esteemed in the military (clear communication, goal development, plan execution, evaluation of successes and losses) are the same as those exemplified in influential business leaders.

Perhaps the one thing veterans miss the most in the civilian world is the teamwork taught in the military. In the Army, soldiers are trained to serve and protect, working toward a common goal regardless of background or role. They know that every member of the team is essential and crucial to the success of the group. These teambuilding skills translate very well into business careers.

Marines are taught to "adapt and overcome," recognizing that in battle, one must be able to improvise to overcome obstacles to succeed. They call it "the fighting spirit" that drives them to accept nothing less than victory. Such tenacity is well-suited for the business world, as business leaders must be prepared to tackle challenges and make tough decisions to ensure success.

Persevering in the face of adversity, veterans understand the importance of teamwork, adaptability, and tenacity to succeed. If combining your military skills with some course work in finance, marketing, and business principles sounds interesting to you, consider a business degree.

## 3. Nursing

Those who have served their country often have a desire to pursue a civilian career that is meaningful and contributes to the greater good. With the nursing shortage expected to reach over 260,000 by 2025, those who have a background in the military's medical corps may well discover that pursuing a career in nursing is a wise decision.

A nursing career can offer the potential for career growth. By expanding their education and pursuing an advanced degree, nurses can become educators, managers, and practitioners, leading to more lucrative salaries. Speaking of money, nurses get paid well, with LPNs averaging about \$45,000 and registered nurses earning a median pay of \$70,000.

Few jobs have the flexibility that nursing offers. Because nurses are essential, you can pretty much work when you want and where you want. Do you want to work full-time or part-time? Do you want to take a year off and return to work? With a career in nursing, all these options are possible.

Career satisfaction is high too. About 83% of nurses feel satisfied with their choice of nursing as a career, according to AMN Healthcare. Additionally, two-thirds of those surveyed said they would

encourage others to pursue a career in nursing. For those who like variety, nursing offers the opportunity to choose a specialty such as pediatrics, geriatrics, labor and delivery, and end-of-life care.

Nursing degrees can vary from two-year to four-year programs, but most lead to state boards and certifications as a registered nurse. Those who have a bachelor's degree have many additional opportunities in case management, hospice, and infection prevention.

## 4. Teaching

Leadership, integrity, and commitment. Recognize a theme here? America's best teachers and American veterans have these character qualities in common. For those who want to serve their country again in a second career, the classroom may offer a rewarding experience.

By becoming a teacher, you can make a difference in the lives of those you teach. Most of us can recall a teacher who left an indelible impression on our minds by showing us they truly cared about us and had a genuine love for their subject. They inspired us to learn, to try harder, to go further.

Some veterans crave a challenge, and a career teaching young people will certainly provide it. When you work with young people, no two days are alike. "After 15 years of teaching, I have experienced everything—elation, frustration, fury, terror, amusement, astonishment—but never boredom. The job is never the same from day to day, from hour to hour," says Dr. David Nurenberg, Associate Professor of Middle School and High School Programs in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

There will always be a demand for teachers. While some careers have been replaced by technology, instructors will still be necessary. By pursuing a degree in education and distinguishing yourself as an exemplary teacher, you can secure yourself a lifetime of employment. Interested in an upward career trajectory? Additional coursework can lead you to become an administrator, counselor, or county supervisor.

Teaching is a highly transferable skill. With the proper certification, you can work almost anywhere in the world. If you're looking for an adventure and an opportunity to change the future, consider a career in education.

## A Final Thought

Whatever major you choose, your military service has equipped you with discipline, organizational skills, management ability, and attentiveness to detail. These abilities will serve you well and give you an edge as you face the social and academic challenges of college life.

It is no secret that becoming a lawyer is difficult; long hours devoted to studying, the bar exam, demanding clients, changing laws and deadlines. The list goes on. While many individuals would rather choose the path of least resistance, lawyers often choose their profession because they like a challenge. Then, there are the exceptional few who seek an even greater challenge and decide to become U.S. Marine Corps lawyers.

“One of the major incentives as I see it is that you get to be a Marine Corps officer,” said Capt. Ross Milligan. “You get the pride, the honor and knowing that you have overcome an immense challenge that very few people can do. That you have competed for a spot for your place to be recognized as a leader of Marines.”

Capt. Ross Milligan currently serves as the Officer Selection Officer (OSO) with Recruiting Station Tampa. However, Milligan is a Marine Corps lawyer by trade, making him a valuable resource for those considering the Marine Corps Judge Advocate General program.

There are several different programs that the Marine Corps uses to select Marine lawyers, but the majority of candidates commission as Marine Corps officers through the Platoon Leaders Course (PLC)-Law. This program is for individuals who have been selected as officer candidates, but have not yet graduated from law school. The other major program is the Officer Candidate Class (OCC)-Law. This program is for those who have already graduated law school and have passed the bar exam.

The OSOs will regularly visit with colleges to educate students about the opportunity to serve as a Marine Corps officer. 1st Lt. Mary Berney, a native of Las Vegas, Nevada, was a law school student at Florida International University College of Law when she was first introduced to the Marine Judge Advocate General program. Berney then went on to graduate law school in May 2019 and pass the Florida bar exam.

“While I was in law school, employers came to do on-campus interviews,” said Berney. “I decided to meet with every branch of service because I had not really been exposed to the different branches and was not familiar with what made them special. When I met the Marine OSO,



Photo by Sgt. Erin Morejon

## PURSUE JUSTICE AND SERVE YOUR NATION AS A MARINE CORPS JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL

By Sgt. Erin Morejon, 6th Marine Corps District - Courtesy of Marines.mil

I was blown away and loved the idea that lawyers got to do the same training as all of the other officers.”

Berney went to Officer Candidate School (OCS) in September of 2020 and was commissioned in November of 2020. She is currently serving as a Marine lawyer on the trial counsel at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton in Oceanside, California.

“I wanted to serve, but I didn’t want to be just a lawyer in uniform,” said Berney.

The Marine Corps provided Berney with an opportunity that the other branches of service could not. The Marine Corps is the only branch that requires all officers to attend the same entry level training as candidates serving in other military occupational specialties.

“These programs are very competitive,” said Milligan. “When it comes to selecting Marine Corps officers, less than half that make it to

the board are selected to attend Officer Candidate School. The attrition rate for OCS is near 30% for those that were selected. There is simply no entry level school that is more difficult in the [Department of Defense].”

An individual who seeks to become a Marine lawyer needs to be both physically and mentally fit. In order to ensure that only the most qualified candidates are selected, OSOs look for specific character traits.

“I look for someone who wants a challenge,” said Milligan. “Someone who is dedicated to the core values. As long as a person is committed, they can make it through the program. Even if they are physically not there yet, we can get them there if they are dedicated. What’s more difficult to do is to find someone that has that right mental attitude that is going to persevere through the pain and hardship.”

Leading up to OCS, the

OSOs hold training events to prepare candidates both mentally and physically for what lies ahead.

“The weekly physical training sessions were huge — it was great to check in with other candidates to see where you are in comparison,” said Berney. “The group PTs were where we could push ourselves even harder.”

If a candidate is able to make it through the selection process and OCS, they will return back to school to complete their law degree or continue onto The Basic School and the Naval Justice School, depending on whether they are using the PLC or OCC program. Once all schooling and training is complete, the individual will then receive orders to serve in the Marine Corps as a Marine lawyer.

“The job of a Judge Advocate varies,” said Milligan. “The first station I served at was Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, and I served in

several different roles to include legal assistance, a defense, and a Deputy Staff Judge Advocate.”

Practicing law as a Marine Corps officer is a unique opportunity for those who seek a challenge to grow as a leader in the field of law and as a Marine.

“One of the big differences between being a Marine Judge Advocate and being a Judge Advocate in the civilian sector is that you are a Marine first, so you are still required to do your yearly physical fitness test, combat fitness test, rifle qualification and pistol qualification,” said Berney. “Another difference is that as a Marine Judge Advocate, you are getting opportunities to litigate in a courtroom faster than many get the opportunity in the civilian sector.”

In the Marine law program, new attorneys are given immediate trial experience; leadership development and experience; and the ability to expand their practice into specialized areas of law such as operational law, international law, cyber law, or criminal justice.

“New Marine Corps Judge Advocates, as of now, either go to a military justice billet or a legal assistance billet,” said Berney. “Each of these billets provide skills applicable to the civilian world of practicing law.”

Serving as the OSO for Recruiting Station Tampa, Milligan now serves the Marine Corps in a different capacity. Milligan screens and processes qualified individuals to serve our nation as Marine Corps officers.

“Finding qualified young men and women in the Marine Corps and making those officers is incredibly rewarding,” said Milligan. “Knowing that I am finding them and molding them into the next generation of Marine officers.”

To get in contact with your local Officer Selection Team or to learn more about the Marine Judge Advocate General program, visit <https://rmi.marines.com/6mcd>.

“You don’t want to wish for an easy life, you want to wish that you can overcome the challenges put in your path,” said Milligan. “Achievements are a reflection of obstacles overcome.”

**—“One of the big differences between being a Marine Judge Advocate and being a Judge Advocate in the civilian sector is that you are a Marine first...”**

1st Lt. Mary Berney, Marine Judge Advocate





# HOW SCHOOL LIAISONS HELP STUDENTS REALIZE EDUCATION GOALS AND MORE

Parents have many questions about their children's education, and military life can create even more. If you're looking for answers to your education questions, your installation school liaison can connect you with the support you need.

*Courtesy of Military OneSource*

The School Liaison Program offers an array of services and resources to support children, parents, installation leadership, schools and the surrounding community. By working together with these stakeholders, the School Liaison Program builds a support network to provide the best possible education experience for military-connected students worldwide.

School liaisons are located at each installation and are the main contact for military families, local school systems and installation leadership for school-related matters pre-K through 12th grade. School liaisons are experienced professionals who support, advise and build partnerships with the civilian and military community to help address common education challenges of military families. School liaison support is available at no cost and open to all Defense Department identification card holders, educators who serve military students and community partners involved with pre-K-12 education.

## **Student and family support**

School liaisons provide a wide variety of services for students and families, including:

- **Transition support:** for PCS moves, as well as general education transitions
  - Information on campus-specific programs and courses of study, school districts and boundaries
  - Assistance with transferring credits and registering for classes
  - Help with locating after-school and extracurricular programs

- Tutoring referrals
- Youth sponsorship referrals
- Support for transitions to elementary, middle and high school, and beyond
- Compliance help for Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission, or MIC3
- **Alternative schooling support:** including information about private, parochial, charter and homeschool options
- **Special education support and referrals:** including referral to the Exceptional Family Member Program, your school's special education department and other local resources
- **Deployment support:** including parental absence coping strategies, educator awareness of phases and impact of different deployment cycles (including pre-deployment, deployment, and reunion and reintegration), accommodation compliance and non-medical counseling referrals to minimize the negative academic, social and emotional impact
- **College, career and military readiness:**
  - Test preparation and scheduling
  - Scholarship and financial aid information



- Postsecondary opportunities
- College, vocational and career fairs
- **Parent workshops on topics such as:**
  - Smooth transitions
  - Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission, or MIC3, compliance
  - Special education
  - College and career preparation

School liaisons know that transitions are more than just permanent changes of station. Children move to new schools, and they also move within schools. In addition, military children transition from parent(s) being home to being deployed. Rest assured that whatever transition your military-connected children are navigating, school liaisons are available to help improve their academic experience, promote social and life skills, offer vocational guidance and build education partnerships to help them thrive.

## **Education community support**

In addition to working with students and families, school liaisons work with local education community partners and installation leadership to meet military-connected children's education needs. School liaisons also offer information workshops and professional development opportunities.

## **Topics include:**

- Social and emotional effects of military transition
- Reducing test anxiety in youth
- Grant resources for school systems (such as Federal Impact Aid and DOD grant opportunities)

- Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission compliance support
- Military culture
- Installation tours

## **Partners in education**

On the program level, school liaisons collaborate with national educational and local community organizations to promote the best education for military children.

## **Some educational partners include:**

- Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission
- National Military Family Association
- Military Child Education Coalition
- DOD STARBASE
- DOD STEM
- Department of Defense Education Activity, or DODEA
- Service branch adopt-a-school partnerships
- National Association of Federally Impacted Schools

The partnerships, resources and services that school liaisons develop and coordinate play a key role in creating a collaborative relationship between the military community and school systems worldwide to support the educational needs of military children and families.

School Liaison Program support is open to all DOD ID card holders, educators who serve military students and community partners involved with pre-K-12 education. For more information, contact your local installation school liaison office.



# MILGEARS 101

*Courtesy of DoD Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL)*

**MilGears is a customized career-building tool developed to assist military members while serving, through transitioning, and beyond. Whether you are committed to completing a single enlistment term/obligation or plan to build a career within the military, understanding the pathways towards reaching your personal and professional goals can be daunting. MilGears exists to help you plan and achieve your goals by highlighting career possibilities and helping you visualize how to reach those goals.**

## Key Features

MilGears analyzes your unique history—your military duties and training, civilian education and credentialing, and apprenticeships—to provide customized results. Key features include:

- Auto-fill based on your uploaded service history document such as your Joint Service Transcript (JST) or Verification of Military Experience and Training (VMET).
- Ability to return to where you left off at any time. By downloading a session file your progress is saved, but your personal identifying information is not stored on our servers.
- Easy-to-read summary of your military history that you can keep as a reference.
- Customized output that includes:
  - Civilian occupations that may be attainable or nearly attainable.
  - Mariner Tool which calculates sea time and displays credentials that may be attainable or nearly attainable.
  - Apprenticeships, certifications, and education that can help you fill training gaps or that could make you more competitive in the job market.
  - “How You Stack Up”- a detailed view of how your credentials compare to those typically required for civilian occupations.
  - “Next Steps”- recommendations to fill gaps to enter an occupational field.

## Engage My Career (EMC)

The process is straightforward. EMC looks at what you’ve done to date in the military by guiding you through a series of questions that collect information such as: your military occupation, pay grade, duty station history, training, qualifications (applicable to Mariner careers), and civilian

education or credentials. EMC then takes this information and helps you determine your best path forward by showing you the possible occupation options for which you may be eligible based on your current experience.

## Mil-2-Mariner (M2M)

M2M analyzes your entries and uploaded service records for creditable sea service, training, and assessments that you completed during your military service and compares your results against the standard for an original or upgraded Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC). The results section details which credentials you may be able to pursue based on your specific military experience.

## Cyberspace IT/Cybersecurity Workforce (CSWF)

CSWF guides you through a series of questions that allow you to view how closely your qualifications align with the requirements for specific CSWF work roles within the Military, highlighting any gaps that need to be filled to become qualified for a role. Additionally, it lets you view related civilian occupations so you can plan for post-service employment that will use the skills you have honed during your time in service.

CSWF is based on the qualification matrices found on Navy COOL, which were developed to ensure that Sailors working in Cyber IT and Cybersecurity meet defined qualification requirements to serve in those roles. The DON model is consistent with the DOD Cyber Workforce Framework (DCWF); both are based on cybersecurity work roles outlined in the National Institute of Standard and Technology (NIST) National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE) framework. The NICE framework is a result of a partnership

between government, academic institutions, and the private sector working to develop a common language to describe cybersecurity work regardless of where the work is performed

Requirements for Cybersecurity Workforce roles may vary by Services and federal agencies. These requirements will be incorporated into the MilGears Cyber IT/CSWF tool as they become available.

## Quick Explorer

Use the Quick Explorer to investigate career pathways based on a specific credential, career goal, or military occupation, or take a brief interest inventory to research careers that align to your interests.

- Military Occupational Classification Explorer - View “best-fit” pathways based on your military occupation. Pathways include academic, industry, apprenticeship, Navy cross-rate opportunities, and post-service employment opportunities.
- Credential Explorer - Explore career pathways for selected credentials including academic and certifications, United Services Military Apprenticeship Programs (USMAP), as well as federal licenses.
- Career Goals Explorer - View civilian occupations based on job family, industry, or cluster in addition to military and federal occupations.
- Interest Profiler - Complete a brief Interest Profiler to view occupational options based on your likes and dislikes.
- Cyber IT/Cybersecurity Workforce (CSWF) - Research Cyberspace IT/CSWF work roles in which you are interested and find out the qualification requirements for DOD Cyber Workforce Framework (DCWF) roles.

**READY TO GROW?**



clinical environment for RNs with less than one year of experience.

The comprehensive 12-month curriculum explores the clinical, leadership and professional dimensions of nursing at VA. Post-graduate RNs perform the typical roles, duties, patient care activities and procedures that are carried out by nurses on our team.

Availability varies by location, so contact the nurse educator or nurse recruiter at a facility near you for more information.

**Financial aid**

VA offers eligible employees and students nursing scholarships to advance their education and skills training through the following programs:

- The National Nursing Education Initiative (NNEI), a component of the Employee Incentive Scholarship Program, funds the pursuit of bachelor's and advanced degrees for VA RNs.
- The VA National Education for Employees Program (VANEEP) is offered to employees in a clinical program pursuing first-

time licensure in a clinical occupation. Participants can earn their degree faster by attending school full time, with VA covering not only some education costs but also replacement salary while they are enrolled.

- The VA Learning Opportunities Residency (VALOR) program provides an opportunity for outstanding college nursing students to develop clinical competencies at an approved VA Medical Center. VALOR is designed to increase participants' clinical skills, clinical judgment and critical thinking while caring for our nation's Veterans. This program provides opportunities for learning with a qualified RN preceptor. Students must have completed their junior year in an accredited baccalaureate nursing program. VALOR students are offered up to 800 hours of salary dollars.

**Work at VA**

Are you ready to help us heal and care for Veterans so they can thrive in life after military service? For more information visit [VACareers.va.gov](http://VACareers.va.gov)

**VA offers nursing opportunities for education and training**

*Courtesy of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*

With all that nurses do for our patients, it is only fitting that we do just as much for them, supporting nurses as they grow in their VA career.

Whether at the bedside of a Veteran or working in an outpatient clinic, our nurses deliver quality care and lead the way in innovating how we provide nursing care. Nurses also develop patient safety initiatives, conduct research to improve care delivery, and help guide the next generation of nurses.

**Academic partnerships**

VA and schools of nursing

around the country offer academic affiliations. These collaborative efforts between VA facilities and the country's finest nursing schools provide students with clinical experiences that specifically address the unique needs of the Veteran population and prepare them to excel in careers at VA.

These partnerships offer nursing students a comprehensive and intensive four-year clinical training. The programs create a stronger, mutually beneficial relationship between nursing schools and VA facilities

by giving students the opportunity to engage with faculty and ultimately provide better patient care as they put classroom concepts into practice.

By the end of the program, graduates are fully accustomed to the culture and mission at VA and ready to care for our Veterans.

**Transition to practice**

For over a decade, VA has promoted Registered Nurse Transition-to-Practice (RNTP) residency programs to provide a transition from school to the more complex

**STUDY IN PARIS WITH A VETERANS SCHOLARSHIP**



The American University of Paris proudly supports veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families. As a member of the Yellow Ribbon Program, we accept the Post 9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33) and the Survivors and Dependents Ed Assistance Program (Chapter 35). Students who qualify may be eligible for assistance for tuition, fees, books, and housing.

**Yellow Ribbon Program funding, in combination with the University's own Veterans Scholarship (an additional €2,500 per semester or €5,000 annually), results in financial aid that covers almost all of the cost of AUP's full tuition fee.**



**AUP.EDU/US-VETERANS**



**The American University of Paris**



Representatives from Navy College Program for Afloat College Education, or NCPACE, Olympic College, Coast Line Community College and Vincennes University speak to Sailors about educational opportunities during an NCPACE sign-up event in the hangar bay aboard the aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) in Bremerton, Washington. – Courtesy of U.S. Navy

and more. The military could pay off a portion or all your loans in exchange for a service commitment. This offer is not always available and is contingent on several factors such as your military job and your loan amount. Keep in mind that not every service branch offers this program. A local recruiter can provide specific details.

**Tuition assistance:** As an active-duty service member, you may be able to attend school part time. Each service branch offers tuition assistance of up to \$250 per semester hour for academic classes. Tuition assistance can be used for undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as several other programs. Tuition assistance may not cover the full cost of college, but the Top-Up Program allows you to use GI bill funding to cover the rest. Talk to your education counselor for more information.

**GI Bills:** The Department of Veterans Affairs offers several programs to help veterans and active-duty service members pay for education. The GI bills are two of the most well-known programs. See the next section for details on the GI bills.

**National Guard/reserves:** Joining the National Guard or reserves allows you to serve in the military part time and receive education benefits.

**Credential program:** Earning credentials can help you develop as a service member and prepare you for civilian employment after separation or retirement. The Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) program can help pay for education or training that leads to certification or license. It may also cover the exam fees of a credential.

### Education options after military service

**Post-9/11 GI Bill:** This is available to those who serve at least 90 days of active-duty service after Sept. 10, 2001 and receive an honorable discharge. The benefit covers up to 100% of tuition and fees, a yearly stipend for books and a monthly housing allowance. As a bonus, if you're a veteran at the 100% benefit level, you may also be eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program. This program, available at military-friendly institutions, pays any tuition or fees not covered by the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

**Montgomery GI Bill:** This education benefit requires you to have served at least two years on active duty and have a high school diploma or GED. Unlike the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the Montgomery GI Bill covers tuition and fees only, and you have up to 10 years after discharge to use the benefit.

If you're already serving or recently transitioned within 365 days, Military OneSource offers a free specialty consultation to help you reach your education goals, whatever they may be. Call 800-342-9647 for 24/7 help.

The cost of higher education and the thought of taking on student debt can be overwhelming at times. Perhaps you don't think college is right for you now and want to wait. Whatever the case may be, the military has options to make college affordable, whenever you choose to attend.

## HIGHER EDUCATION IS COSTLY

### MILITARY SERVICE CAN KEEP IT AFFORDABLE

**T**he cost of higher education and the thought of taking on student debt can be overwhelming. Perhaps you don't think college is right for you now and want to wait. The military has options to make education affordable — whenever you choose to attend. In addition to the unique training and skills you gain as a service member, the military offers several ways to ease the cost of college. Learn more about tuition assistance, credentialing assistance, scholarships and other education benefits.

*Courtesy of Military OneSource*



### Committing to military service while in school: ROTC and military institutions

**ROTC scholarships:** Each service branch offers Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs at various universities and academic institutions across the nation. Through ROTC, you will learn leadership and special skills while participating in the military and academic experiences. The ROTC program has several options, whether you're straight out of high school, already attending a school or prior enlisted. There is a service commitment after graduation.

**Military Service Academies:** Each branch of the military has a four-year university that offers full scholarships to its students. While in a service academy, you will be held to high academic and physical fitness standards. The application process is lengthy and extremely competitive.

Applicants must be between 17 and 22 years old and unmarried with no children. After graduation, cadets and midshipmen serve as commissioned officers in the military.

### Tuition assistance and other education options while serving

**College Loan Repayment Program:** Various benefits are available to those who join the military after graduating from college. Qualified candidates could fast-track to officer training and apply for the College Loan Repayment Program

Tuition assistance can be used for undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as several other programs.

# Free MilLife courses available on demand

Courtesy of Military OneSource

Learning from military life experts through award-winning courses whenever it fits into your schedule may sound expensive, but it's free through MilLife Learning. This web-based training site offers resources to assist service members and their families, survivors and those who support them.

The site hosts 17 different categories of courses, including:

- Exceptional Family Member Program
- Military Family 101
- Relocation 101
- Resilience
- Finance
- Personnel Accountability
- LinkedIn
- Morale, Welfare and Recreation
- Casualty Affairs
- Suicide Prevention

Some courses are now available in Word document format for users with a slow internet connection, including:

- Car Buying Basics
- Consumer Credit
- Developing Your Spending Plan
- eSponsorship Application & Training
- Investing in Your Future
- LinkedIn Basics for Military Spouses
- Money and the Move

MilLife Learning's dynamic and engaging courses are:

- Secure
- Available to you 24/7/365

- Accessible from anywhere you have an internet connection
- Easy to use

Course content is diverse and serves a variety of learning styles. You'll find trainings to help you advance your career, build new skills and grow as a person. These courses serve audiences including:

- Military spouses
- Service members
- People new to the military
- Military leaders
- Service providers
- Survivors

MilLife Learning also helps support your military needs by complementing and supplementing other training.

View the MilLife Learning Course Catalog to find courses that fit your individual needs or circumstances. Return to MilLife Learning when your needs change, or when you want to learn new skills or boost your career goals. Keep your My Training section of the site filled with courses you are taking or want to take. You'll see personal and professional growth just by coming back to the site and taking more courses.

MilLife Learning provides on-demand training that you can pause, save and return to later. This custom-made training is designed for military life. Create a MilLife Learning account so you can start forging a new you today.

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GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government Web site at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>.



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# GI BILL



## FEDERAL TOOLS TO HELP MAXIMIZE YOUR GI BILL EDUCATION BENEFITS

By Charmain Bogue, Patrick Brick, Brian Fu, and Kate Mullan – Courtesy of Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Like any military mission, transitioning to civilian life takes research, planning, and the right tools. One of the most powerful tools you have is the GI Bill. Since the Post-9/11 GI Bill was implemented in 2009, more than \$111 billion in educational benefits have been provided to 2.2 million veterans and their family members.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Department of Education (ED), and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) are highlighting some of the federal tools available to help service members, veterans, and military families pick the right program and make a sound plan to pay for it.

It's important that you do your own research before using your GI Bill benefits as some schools have defrauded veterans by falsely promoting educational benefits and using deceptive marketing tactics to target servicemembers, veterans, and military families. In addition, though many schools offer similar majors, some may have better reputations that make their graduates more desirable in the job market. To maximize the career and financial payoff from your education benefits, you should find answers to questions like:

- Which schools offer the best programs for my career track?
- Where does my desired company or industry recruit from?
- What if my GI Bill doesn't cover my whole tuition?
- How do I spot deceptive or fraudulent schools?
- Where do I start?

If you are asking these questions, then you are on the right track. Check out these featured tools to get the process started.

### **Step 1: Before you apply, use the GI Bill Comparison Tool**

The VA's GI Bill Comparison Tool provides key information for calculating your benefits. It provides a breakdown of tuition and fees, housing allowance, and book stipend. This will be critical in your planning process for your family, finances, and work-life balance.

It lists other important factors to consider such as school accreditation, Yellow Ribbon availability (a program that helps you pay for higher out-of-state, private school, or graduate school tuition that the Post-9/11 GI Bill doesn't cover), and even the number of students that received VA

education benefits in the last calendar year.

This tool also offers insights on potentially cautionary information from student feedback about the school submitted to the VA through the GI Bill Feedback system.

### **Step 2: Considering a state university, private college, or community college? Get more info from College Scorecard**

The U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard website helps prospective students make informed postsecondary education choices. There are plenty of options to consider but finding the school that fits your goals and aspirations is critical to your success. Make your own college wish list and compare your options with College Scorecard's comprehensive data on colleges and universities, including costs, outcomes, and more.

Key data elements featured on College Scorecard include:

- **Cost:** Average annual cost for federal financial aid recipients, which is the tuition, living costs, books, and fees minus the average grants and scholarships, as well as average cost by family income
- **Completion and retention:** Graduation rate and the proportion of students who return after their first year
- **Debt:** Typical cumulative federal debt of graduating borrowers by field of study and typical monthly payment
- **Earnings:** Typical annual earnings of former students one year after graduation by field of study

### **Step 3. GI Bill • College applications • Now how do I navigate financial aid and make a plan to pay for school?**

The only way to find out how much a school will cost you is to apply, get accepted, and receive a financial aid offer. (For that reason, we recommend applying to multiple schools.) Once you have your offers, you can evaluate them with the CFPB's webtool Grad Path. Grad Path guides you through information that will help you answer questions like "Can I afford the loans I'll need to finish my program?" and "Is this school worth it for me?"

Here are a few ways Grad Path can help you navigate paying for college:

Break down the financial aid offer. Grad Path explains jargon in plain language. For each type of funding, it points out money saving strategies as well as potential pitfalls. As you examine each funding source (including the GI Bill, Military Tuition Assistance, and other programs like Yellow Ribbon), you will see your running total of uncovered costs.

Look at the whole picture. Students often overlook expenses, miss funding options, and forget to consider the total cost of a multiyear program. Grad Path provides detailed guidance about costs and resources, plus projections about total debt and earnings at graduation, to help you determine whether you can afford a particular program, now and in the long run.

Decide whether the school is financially right for you. Understanding how a school fits into your academic goals and future job opportunities is just as important as planning how to finance your education. This tool provides key statistics to consider when determining whether a program is likely to pay off on the investment of your time, work, and money, including your service member education benefits.

# AN EXPLANATION OF EDUCATION ADVANCEMENT EXAMS

You've been tested before and have the determination it takes to study hard and be prepared. Doing so on education advancement exams, which assess your skills, can help you earn your degree faster. Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support, or DANTES, offers free or discounted tests for military members. By learning which tests to tackle and how best to prepare, you'll be ready to master exam time and be one step closer to your higher education goals.

*Courtesy of Military OneSource*

## Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support exams

Completing particular DANTES-sponsored exams allows you to earn credits toward a college degree so you may be able to get your degree faster. Here are the basics on these tests.

- **ACT.** The ACT is designed to assess general educational development and measure performance of intellectual tasks required of a college student. The ACT is composed of four academic tests that measure academic development in english, mathematics, reading and science. Funding eligibility for service members varies based on type of testing location.
- **College-Level Examination Program.** The CLEP exam allows you to test out of 33 test titles in subjects where you may have gained knowledge such as from work, education or military experience. Administration and examination fees are DANTES-funded for eligible service members for the first attempt on all titles only.
- **DSST, formerly known as the DANTES Subject Standardized**

**Tests.** Prometric's DSST test is a form of prior-learning assessment offered via 38 college-subject exams. This nationally recognized credit-by-exam program grants college credit for learning outside of the classroom like on-the-job training, military experience or independent study. DANTES funds fees for the first attempt on all DSST titles only, for eligible service members.

- **General Education Development Tests.** The GED test consists of four content areas designed to measure the high school level of adult learners who are not high school graduates. The content areas are math, science, social studies and language arts. DANTES reimburses the test fee one time for eligible service members.
- **Graduate Management Admission Test.** The GMAT is available through some college and university test centers. This computer-adaptive test includes verbal, quantitative and analytical writing questions. The GMAT is reimbursable (one time) for eligible service members.
- **Graduate Record Examinations.**

The GRE is a computer-based test available through select college and university test centers. DANTES will pay for one GRE General and one GRE Subject exam per lifetime for eligible service members.

- **PRAXIS I and II.** The PRAXIS I is a Pre-Professional Skills Test, or PPST, with three separate subject-area tests in reading, math and writing. Some states require students to pass the PPST before starting a teacher education program, or as a teacher-licensing exam. The PRAXIS II is a timed subject assessment focused on principles of learning and teaching. The exam offers more than 100 test subjects. Some states require you to pass this exam before teaching certain subject areas. Both PRAXIS exams are reimbursable one time for eligible service members.
- **SAT.** The SAT is an entrance exam used by most colleges and universities to make admissions decisions. The SAT assesses critical thinking skills needed for success in college and future career success. The test is based on knowledge developed through

coursework in the following areas: reading, writing, language and math. Funding eligibility for service members varies based on type of testing location.

## **Test prep scams**

Protect yourself as you prepare and sign up for these exams. Be careful to avoid scams that could potentially waste your time and money. Keep an eye out for any test prep program that attempts to:

- Pressure you to buy test prep materials for exams you don't plan to take
- Give you purchasing credit with a third-party vendor
- Contact you at home with direct sales
- Promise college credit without enrolling in a college or university
- Include dictionaries or encyclopedias on book lists.

Before you spend your hard-earned money on any test prep materials, contact your education services specialist. Save a little of both by taking advantage of the available DANTES-sponsored exams. Get more information on these exams at [www.dantes.doded.mil](http://www.dantes.doded.mil).

## EARN AN AMERICAN DEGREE IN MADRID, *Spain*

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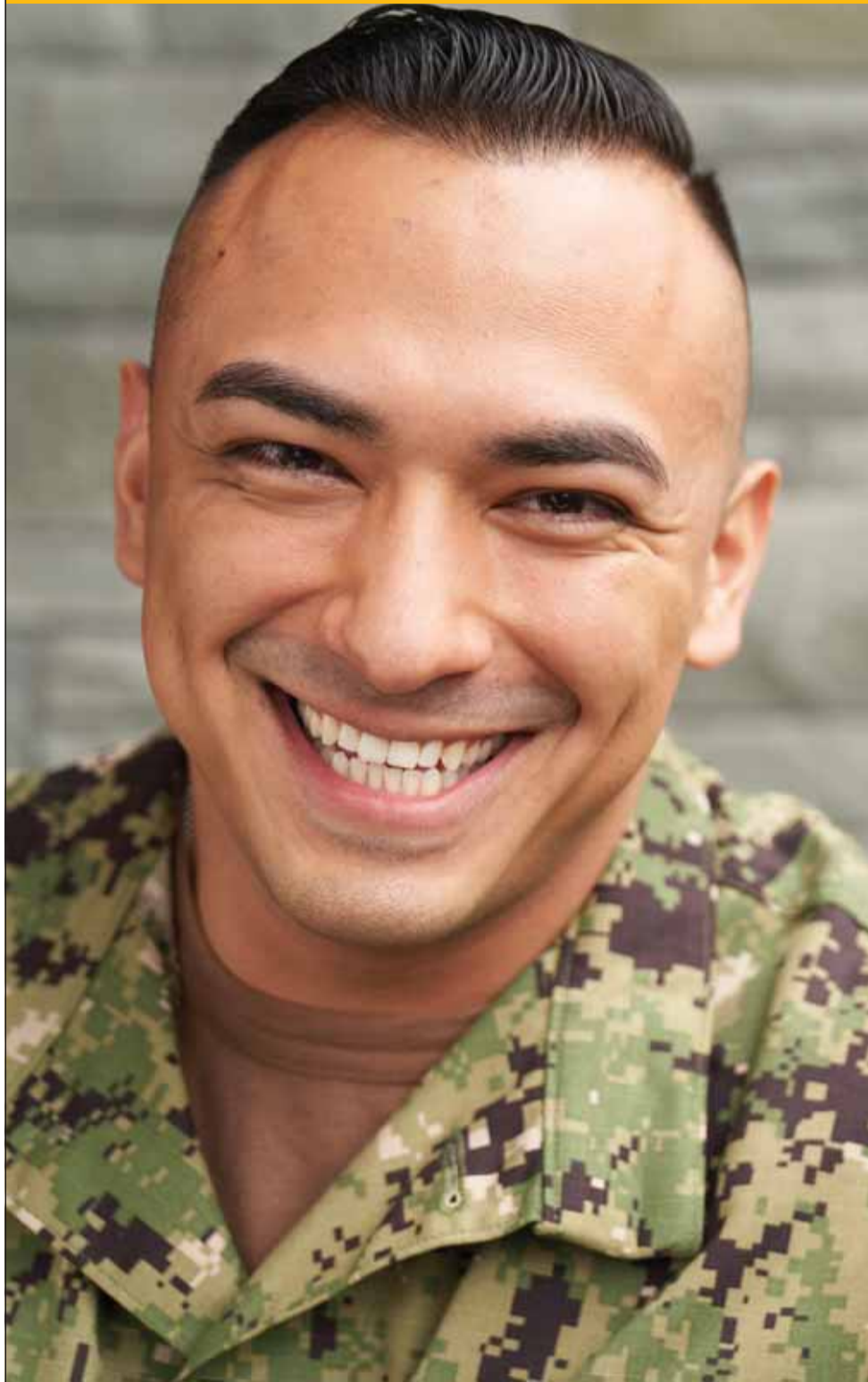


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