

APPENDIX B: U.S. Coast Guard & Army Reserve Work

Together

*You will either step forward into growth,
or you will step backward into safety.*

Abraham Maslow

Innovation in Learning Communities, a Collaboration of U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Army Reserve Education Programs and Services,

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**U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Army Reserve Education Programs and Services,
Honolulu, Hawaii**

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Personal Data: Donna lives in *Ewa* Beach on the island of Oahu with her 5 dogs: Thor, Tyco, Teddybear, Titan, and Pookiebear, 3 of which are giant bull mastiffs. When not focusing on her Coast Guard Education Services Officer duties, Donna, a retired military officer who is both Airborne and Air Assault qualified, spends time volunteering in her community. While she no longer jumps out of perfectly good airplanes, she does enjoy teeing it up on the golf course.

Update: Dr. Duellberg has assumed the position for the past several years as the **Education Director for the U.S. Coast Guard**, worldwide, in Washington, DC.

Dr. Marsha D. Wellein, Army Reserve Regional Director, Pacific & Asia for Anchorage and

Fairbanks, Alaska, the state of Hawaii, U.S. Territory of Guam, Commonwealth of the Marianas Islands, American Samoa, Japan, and Korea.

Personal Data: Marsha lives in Mililani, on the island of Oahu with her husband, Dan, and hound dog Jesse. When not focusing on her Army Reserve Education Services Officer duties, Marsha spends time with her 3 children and 4 grandchildren, ages 11-26 and is an avid reader, world traveler, and cinema enthusiast. Marsha has lived in Egypt, Guam, Honduras, Japan, Korea, Kuwait, Panama, Puerto Rico, Saudi Arabia, and has visited at least 35 countries and most of the United States.

Update: Dr. Wellein is presently a substitute **teacher for the Dept. of Education, Hawaii.**

Introduction:

Coast Guard (CG) and Army Reserve (AR) service members stationed on Guam or Saipan or in other remote locations are arguably disadvantaged when it comes to educational opportunities. This is due in part, to the unavailability of multiple colleges physically located on islands such as American Samoa, Maui, the Big Island of Hawaii, Guam, and Saipan. And despite the large number of military personnel assigned to Guam, just three American colleges are allowed to operate on Guam military bases under the provisions of a Department of Defense (DOD) contract. Not only do these three contracted schools focus mainly on U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force population needs, these three schools are even restricted as to the students that each can serve; each school targets only a segment of that population depending upon which degree level is being sought - associate, bachelor, or graduate degrees. The lack of access to choose is further compounded when one expands the investigation to include sites; other islands do not have military bases or have only one except for the Big Island of Hawaii (Wellein, 2010). The irony of restricted choice in education today does not escape us.

The limited availability of schools Guam forces our CG and AR students to select college majors which they would not normally pursue or enroll in distance programs, which may not be the best suited learning strategy for many of our members. This geographic isolation coupled with other

variables serve as significant barriers to education. Comments from soldiers point to their overwhelming feelings that such geographic isolation remains a huge factor in their lack of postsecondary pursuit; although geographic location was not reported as a statistically significant variable in some research (Wellein, 2010).

Research has shown that military personnel who work 35 or more hours a week, or those saddled with numerous family concerns and responsibilities, as well as those who lack easy access to computer workstations, internet services/printers generally do not pursue postsecondary educational opportunities in comparison to those individuals who do not work full-time, have few family responsibilities, and have quick, regular access to a computer/internet services and printers (Wellein, 2010).

To serve service members in isolated communities, such as on Guam and Saipan, **Education Services Officers (ESO)** must make available a variety of blended and distance learning options. Our most innovative approaches to outreach this past year included several events, which we would like to share so that these initiatives may be replicated elsewhere to engage military personnel and their family members in education programs and services.

Initiatives:

First, education fairs were held in Guam and Saipan in mid – 2010. We partnered to bring education fairs to Guam and Saipan, two sites which are very geographically isolated from Hawaii. We extended an invitation to over 22 local colleges and universities to accompany us and eight schools took us up on the offer to visit Guam, (four of which followed us to Saipan). We think that these education fairs were very successful – combined we had over 300 visitors. We discovered that our education fair in Saipan was that island’s first education fair and it was only the third time an education fair was held in Guam. Both Fairs were well received and we felt our efforts were very much appreciated.

Secondly, the education fair on the U.S. Territory of Guam was supplemented with an activity that we call, “**Try College for a Day**”, which normally occurs on the day following the actual

education fair. This is an opportunity for participants to sign up for several classes offered by different schools to see which distance learning platform and method of study is preferred. Some schools offer hybrid instruction in non-synchronous forums, while others may use synchronous chat and extended sessions, and yet still other institutions use various learning strategies that are totally different from these. All these options can serve as powerful medians for andragogy (adult education) to occur. As an added bonus, the flexibility in scheduling most distance education classes allows a diverse range of students to attend class simultaneously since students living in different time zones may be enrolled in the same course. Students exposed to multicultural classrooms are more likely to develop an appreciation for how our independent actions impact on the global community's footprint.

In addition to the standard distance learning format such as **eCollege or blackboard, video-teleconferencing (VTC)** is also a viable option. Thus, the use of the VTC is **our third initiative** that we will discuss. Video-Teleconferencing (VTC) partnerships were established at multiple remote sites and across the different Armed services. The use of VTC has proven to be one of our more popular initiatives to deliver hybrid classroom instruction. Not only can we reach people in remote locations, but VTC has allowed classes with low enrollment, that would normally be cancelled, proceed as scheduled. We have partnered with the Marines, the National Guard, schools in the mainland United States, and other U.S. Coast Guard sites to conduct classes. The use of VTC technology has resulted in our Coast Guard Education Center in Hawaii winning the prestigious national Council of College and Military Education's Barry Cobb Government Organization award in 2010.

Because our CG members are located in very remote locations, we partnered with Baker College in South Dakota to establish a virtual learning center on Baker's Island in Second Life. Second Life is a virtual world where visitors can create avatars and navigate through unique places. Here our members can visit our avatars or bots, to inquire about educational opportunities. Because this virtual world is accessible 24/7, and available to anyone with internet capability, it has great outreach potential. **This fourth innovation** was one of the initiatives our learning center featured at the United States Innovation Expo in Tampa, Florida this past November.

Many of our soldiers in the Army Reserve need prerequisite training before college is a viable option, which leads us to the **fifth innovation** in our discussion. We have established a **Basic Skills** program, which is in part funded by the Department of Education, Adult and Continuing Education, State of Hawaii, to bridge this education gap. Each of the 11 courses offered yearly runs 7.5 weeks for 60 hours of instruction, meeting twice a week in the evening from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m.; subjects are reading and mathematics. A \$10 processing fee is required with all funds going to the Department of Education but that agency pays for the instructor costs. The course is open to all active-duty military, reservists, civilians, family members – indeed all those who wish to participate in this adult education review course. Some military members use it in preparation of them attending military courses while many civilians use it to prepare for the entrance examination to enter military service.

Another equally popular initiative, the **sixth in our discussion**, is our CG “**Professor on Board**” program, where professors accompany the crew aboard cutters while they are underway on patrols around the world. Specifically, when our larger Coast Guard cutters go out on patrol for several months, we have placed professors onboard from both Wayland Baptist University and Chaminade University. In the past we have even managed an underway professor exchange, where one professor left Honolulu with a cutter to teach history and when the cutter landed in South America, he flew back while another professor flew out to take his place to teach Spanish for the remainder of the patrol. This program is similar to the Navy’s PACE program, where U.S. Navy carriers and other ships also take instructors on board in a concerted effort to offer courses to their military personnel while deployed.

A seventh innovation that Donna and I each support is **hosting college and university counselors/representatives at our military base facilities**. There are some 22 schools represented on island and we have extended an invitation to all of them to share a quiet space in our education offices where they are free to meet with prospective students on set days and times weekly. College representatives have reported an increased interest in their programs of study while military personnel have let us know that they appreciate being able to meet directly with their school reps. As simple as this sounds, some of our counterparts permit some schools at their education centers, but not others. It remains a source of controversy – whether ESOs should filter

schools...on one side, restricted options can be meant to protect the service member, but on the other side, to filter schools is to filter choice.

We believe that most adults want to make their own choices. And as our service members are the front-line protectors of our constitution, this makes good sense to us.

Our latest initiative - number eight, is something that we are particularly proud of creating. In Hawaii we have university classes made available to every household through **cable instruction**. Since the CG cutters all have closed circuit televisions, we have asked Honolulu Community College to repackage several college classes so that they can be viewed while cutters are underway on patrol. What has transpired to date is the repackaging of 20 such cable courses, which taken together make it possible for CG personnel to obtain an Associate degree while underway. It is an extremely exciting possibility that is right on the brink of expansion...the pilot began this past month (March) aboard the U.S. Coast Guard Cutters Jarvis and Kiska.

In addition to the eight initiatives discussed already, we regularly provide **educational materials** to our military members located across the Pacific and Asia (to include Fairbanks and Anchorage, Alaska, Maui, the Big Island, Oahu, Saipan, Guam, American Samoa, Japan, Singapore, Beijing, and Korea) and additionally, we provide **education talks** to large groups of soldiers and guardsmen. These education briefings (an integral part of the outreach plan) also provide the opportunity for power point presentations with self-made materials, as well as professionally created slides from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, DOD, and other agencies. We encourage questions and answers sessions and provide individual academic counseling as well in this **ninth initiative**.

Family members are invited to most of these meetings, so the opportunity to provide a tremendous amount of current information expands to enrich the local community. Almost all our military members may gain access to the Government Issue Bill funded by the U.S. Congress, paying for at least 36 months of schooling, which in many cases save the individual tens of thousands of dollars; additionally, most of the service branches pay up to \$4,500 a year for their service personnel's school tuition and fees. This dollar limit while individuals pursue

degrees and certificates is for each year individuals want to attend school.

A final, tenth initiative to address the issue of having **military members gain regular access to the Internet** is that the 9th Mission Support Command (MSC) Army Reserve has purchased for all Pacific and Asia Army Reserve Centers computers, printers, and scanners for soldiers and family members to pursue Distance Learning courses, research for classes, and surf the web.

Additionally, this equipment provides a valuable link to loved ones when U.S. military members are deployed to other non-hostile locales, or to the war in the Middle East. Internet service costs for these Army Reserve Centers of approximately \$10,000 annually are paid for by the 9 MSC education office. Many local island Internet services are extremely limited, sometimes involving over an hour's drive to get to an Internet café if open, and then charge more than \$5.00 for 15 – 30 minutes in locales where the minimum wage is approximately \$3.15 - \$5.25 an hour. Monthly Internet service charges and individual purchases of such computer equipment are also prohibitively expensive in these same locations, where unemployment rates are well above 10 – 15% (Wellein, 2010).

Conclusion:

Adult education, distance learning, and direct instruction (or any combination) are important steps to pursue life changing certificates and degrees, regardless of location or individual access to the Internet. We have not yet solved the problems of some military personnel who work more than 35 hours a week or are confronted with too many family responsibilities and concerns, acknowledging that these factors hinder postsecondary education pursuits. We wanted however, **to offer you information about ten viable initiatives we collaborated on**, and which are reality-based and working.

These include offering education fairs on Guam and Saipan, “Try College for a Day”, VTC partnerships, establishing a virtual learning center, offering Basic Skills review courses, instituting a “Professor on Board” program, hosting college counselors/representatives at our education offices, repacking of 20 cable courses for an associate degree, providing education materials and briefings to units located across Pacific and Asia, and finally ensure that

computers, printers, scanners, and Internet access are available to our service members and their families. Our military populations of the CG and AR, together with their family members need exposure to our education programs and services, and we hope that our educational initiatives allow them important information, to proceed in their life – choices.

References

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