



The Army's Continuing Education System

Education plays an important part in the well-being of soldiers and their families. Both active and reserve component soldiers indicate that gaining an education is instrumental in their success both in and out of military service.

(Note: 90 percent of enlisted soldiers and 81 percent of officers indicate—in the Fall 2002 Sample Survey of Military Personnel conducted by the Army Research Institute—that in-service continuing education is extremely, very or moderately important while in the Army. Also, one-third of enlisted soldiers and one-fifth of officers surveyed identify in-service education as a strong positive influence on entering active duty.)

The Army Research Institute recently published a Human Resources Research Organization study entitled "Impact of the Army Continuing Education System (ACES) on Soldier Retention and Performance: Data Analyses." Study results show **"the positive effects of participation in ACES programs on the personnel ingredients of unit readiness.** They further imply that ACES provides the types of self-development programs that can allow the Army to achieve transformation toward the Objective Force, and support the transformed Army in sustaining its effectiveness."

The Army is committed to lifelong learning in support of readiness, Transformation and the well-being of the force. It provides an integrated system of continuing education programs and services to provide soldiers opportunities for self-development and to meet professional and personal education goals. This demonstrates the Army's commitment to invest in its workforce and to grow the leaders needed to meet future missions and fulfill its role in the National Defense Strategy. **Education is a key enabler for soldier development.**

Army Continuing Education System

The Army Continuing Education System (ACES) education programs and services are demand-driven and delivered by 115 Army Education Centers and 139 Multi-Use Learning Facilities worldwide. Services are provided downrange to deployed soldiers in locations such as Bosnia, Kuwait and the Sinai. An on-site support assessment has recently been completed to support providing continuing education support in the future to soldiers in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and possibly in Iraq.

Deployed Around the World—Serving Soldiers



Major Developments

Functional Academic Skills Training. The Army is implementing a new Functional Academic Skills Training program (basic skills) to automate, standardize and deploy basic skills instruction. A standard commercial-off-the-shelf software package is being distributed to 73 education centers this fiscal year, with the goal of Army-wide implementation next fiscal year. The availability of standardized basic skills instruction is important to ensure soldiers with academic skills gaps in reading, writing and mathematics have the support needed to improve job proficiency and prepare for advanced military schooling.

Army Continuing Education System (ACES)



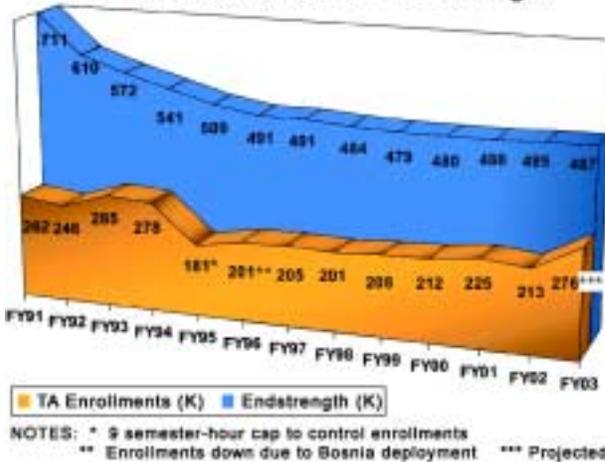
ACES (continued)

Participation in ACES postsecondary programs funded by Army Tuition Assistance is at an all-time high. Soldiers see the value of making personal sacrifices to continue their education to be competitive both while in service and after their transition. A wide range of postsecondary programs, from the associate through graduate degree levels (including technical courses for licensure or certification), is offered on Army installations.



self-development opportunities for soldiers. Both are incorporated into DA Pamphlet 600-25, *Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Guide and NCO Career Models*. Army Career degrees are civilian curriculums matched to the equivalent specialties that maximize credit for military experience and minimize college study. GI-to-Jobs and its Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) website provide civilian equivalent certification options for soldiers who want to receive certification for their military training. Military Occupational Specialties (MOSs) are matched to civilian equivalent certifications which may require several years of work experience and successful completion of certification exam requirements.

Tuition Assistance vs Endstrength



In recent years, the growth of postsecondary distance learning (DL) has been exponential. In FY 2000 Army funded 9,807 soldier DL enrollments; 66,501 are projected in FY 2003. Soldiers need choices in how educational instruction is delivered, so classroom and DL options will continue to be available. eArmyU, Army's new online educational initiative (currently available at 14 installations) is exceeding all enrollment expectations. Soldiers and commanders support the program. (For more information, see AUSA Issue Paper *eArmyU*, August 2003.)

Army Career Degree Program and GI-to-Jobs. The Army Career Degree Program and GI-to-Jobs initiative (see AUSA Issue Paper *GI-to-Jobs*, August 2003) support structured

Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System. Eligible soldiers and veterans have real-time access to their Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System transcripts through Army Knowledge Online (AKO). Official transcripts can be ordered through the Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System website at <http://aarts.army.mil>.

This service provides active and reserve component enlisted soldiers and veterans with documentation of their military training and educational accomplishments. Soon commissioned officers and warrant officers will have access to transcripts. This service has been both endorsed and applauded by colleges and universities across the United States because it expedites the process of recognizing military nontraditional learning experience for college credit. Currently about 150 colleges and universities are receiving electronic delivery of official transcripts.



**The Army's Continuing Education System:
a key element of soldier development**