



North Texas Aviation Education Initiative

NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Military Outreach

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North Texas Aviation Education Initiative

NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

MILITARY OUTREACH

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A. GLOSSARY

This section defines acronyms and abbreviations used throughout the document.

Term	Description
AACC	American Association of Community Colleges
AASCU	American Association of State Colleges and Universities
CHEA	Higher Education Accreditation
CLEP	College Level Examination Program
DANTES	Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support
DoD	Department of Defense
DoE	U.S. Department of Education
ECE	Excelsior College Examinations
NAS JRB	Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base, Fort Worth
NCTCOG	North Central Texas Council of Governments
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
REAP	Reserve Education Assistance Program
SOC	Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges
TSTA	Texas State Technical College, Waco
VA	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



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B. INTRODUCTION

Men and women who have served or are serving in the various branches of the military are likely to have received training and unique skills that provide a solid foundation on which they can build if they choose to pursue career opportunities in aviation. In addition, the Texas National Guard (Air Force and Army), U.S. Army Reserves, U.S. Navy Reserves, and U.S. Air Force Reserves provide military experiences to individuals who, if they are aware of aviation education opportunities in North Central Texas, may be interested in two- and four-year degree programs that may be offered here.

As a component of the North Texas Aviation Education Initiative, this report sets out a program that encourages individuals with military experience to explore employment opportunities in the aviation industry and to take advantage of the integrated education system being established through the leadership of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG).



Source: www.gijobs.com



Source: www.afropa.hq.af.mil/images/carswell.jpg

The Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) Fort Worth is the only active military installation in North Central Texas. Located on the site of the former Carswell Air Force Base, it has been a military installation since 1941. NAS JRB was created as part of the 1993 Base Realignment And Closure (BRAC) Commission process by consolidating many U.S. Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps Reserve and Texas Air National Guard units displaced from other closing and realigning bases. The Navy took over as host of the installation on October 1, 1994, from the Air Force.

Major commands currently on base include:

- Navy Reserve: Fleet Logistics Support Wing; Logistics Support Squadrons 59 and 46; Intelligence Command; Operations Support Center
- Air Force Reserve: 10th Air Force; 301st Fighter Wing
- Army Reserve: M Company, 158th Aviation Regiment
- Marine Corps Reserve: Marine Aircraft Group 41; Headquarters, 14th Marines
- Texas Air National Guard; 136th Airlift Wing

According to the *Star-Telegram*, totals for each service are: Navy 4,120; Air Force 2,071; Army 457; Marines 1,644; Texas Air National Guard 913; and 1,780 civilians.



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The Texas Workforce Commission reports that as many as 260,000 veterans return to Texas every year; about 110,000 of those have served in Iraq in Operation Iraq Freedom (OIF) or Afghanistan in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). There are approximately 4,500 OIF/OEF veterans living in Dallas County, 6,000 in Tarrant County, and 6,000 living in the counties surround Dallas and Tarrant counties. It should also be noted that a large number of Reserve and National Guard units come to Texas before these men and women are discharged; some may choose to remain here rather than return to their home states.

C. AVIATION EXPERTS IN THE MILITARY

Most aviation-related military occupations have similar jobs in the private sector, and many aviators leaving military service immediately find civilian employment in aviation. In addition, some aviation responsibilities are being handled currently by private sector contractors whose teams function in aviation-related capacities. For example, the U.S. Air Force is outsourcing its aircraft mechanics in various situations.

The military provides aviation education opportunities both in classrooms and in the form of on-the-job training. In addition to producing exceptionally skilled airline pilots and aircraft mechanics, the military has traditionally provided strong training for aviation operations and support functions. It should be noted that the military benefits greatly by providing these educational resources because it fills its key positions with individuals who are trained to meet every expectation.



Source: www.gijobs.com

D. UNDERSTANDING CIVIL CAREERS

Transitioning out of the military back into civilian life can be bewildering. The military is a very structured way of life, with job advancements being clearly identified and understood. Most men and women who enter military service are not likely to know what private sector careers could be available to them, especially if they were to take their military training and apply it to an education certification or degree program. According to education writer Tom Wolfe on the website www.gijobs.com, this lack of knowledge is one of the largest obstacles in the military-to-civilian employment transition. Simply stated in the article, “how can one answer the question, ‘What do you want to do?’ without knowledge of the choices?”

Persons often base their knowledge of the business world on their experiences as consumers. Wolf writes that people know about companies which “brand” their products; i.e. Ford, Xerox, AT&T, etc. They may, or may not, be aware of the plethora of aviation-related jobs, especially if they do not really understand job categories. In other sections of the Aviation Education initiative, aviation employers and job categories are discussed in detail.



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E. EDUCATION RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN THE REGION

For the purposes of this study, an extensive canvass was conducted among Texas military installations, reserve organizations, veterans support organizations and educational institutions. This informal survey produced comments of interest in and enthusiasm for programs which support persons with military experience who are interested in pursuing career opportunities in aviation. However, few outreach activities are underway that stimulate persons to consider the myriad of aviation jobs that are available in the region.

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (<http://worldwide.erau.edu/campuses-online/fort-worth.html>) has a facility physically located at NAS JRB and provides on-line classes. The university offers degrees at the associate, baccalaureate and master levels in such areas as aeronautical science, business administration, management, project management and technical management. The base's Transition Training Office currently received only a few calls a month from active duty personnel who are asking about education opportunities outside of the military. This communication usually occurs within weeks of a person's discharge, and persons are referred to the Education Office.



Source: www.erau.edu

The Education Office functions under the Commander, Navy Installations Command (<http://www.cnmc.navy.mil/Fortworth/index.htm>). Only Embry-Riddle has a presence on the base and no other aviation education entity would be approved because of the competitive situation it would create.

Contacts that were made with local units and offices of the Texas National Guard and veterans service organizations showed that efforts to encourage persons to pursue additional education are little—or non-existent in the case of aviation. Information, available to persons who ask, is general in nature and focuses on the GI-Bill.

The Department of Defense (DoD) has transition responsibility for military personnel, but each installation command has the ability to structure this area to suit the needs of their particular units. On the nation level, DoD has contracted with the YMCA to support the military in many ways. The program is described at its website at http://www.ymca.net/about_the_ymca/military_outreach_initiative.html. While it addresses mostly family concerns, it refers generally to the GI-Bill. There are at least two clearinghouses that are easily found on the internet. One of these is Military.com (<http://www.military.com/>) and the second is GI Jobs (<http://www.gijobs.com/education.aspx>). Both have search features to identify higher education opportunities in various areas as well as fields of interest. In addition, both sites offer well-developed transition information and some specific aviation-related articles and guidance.



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Two organizations were identified that are actively involved in connecting transitioning military with civilian jobs, though there is no particular emphasis or details on aviation. One is www.recruitmilitary.com. This service that is supported by major employers produces free career fairs in which attendees can have one-on-one interviews with corporate representatives. According to its website, in 2009, 68 job fairs were held in 36 cities, including Dallas, Texas.



Source: www.recruitmilitary.com

In Oklahoma City, home of Tinker Air Force Base, the economic development corporation of an area chamber of commerce provides a strong program that benefits military (and civilian) personnel who are leaving base employment and area employers as well. Career fairs and informational activities are offered. See <http://www.aftercareers.com>.

Two educational institutions have fine-tuned their recruitment of persons with military experience. One is the University of Oklahoma, which continues to expand on its strong four-year aviation baccalaureate program with a flight component. Its website is attractive, informative and easy to use. The specific link to aviation is (<http://www.aviation.ou.edu/>). The second school building upon its aviation education foundation to create a \$13 million aerospace center of excellence is Texas State Technical College, Waco (TSTA) under the leadership of retired Air Force officer Jeff Beene, Director of Aviation (<http://www.waco.tstc.edu/ta/>). In September, 2009, the school secured a \$1.5 million federal Economic Development Administration grant, and the Texas Department of Transportation has provided \$350,000 in funding for the project. Programs currently offered are pilot training, aviation maintenance and avionics. New programs will include air dispatch and traffic control, airport management, the manufacture of planes from composite materials and space commercialization. TSTA has an alliance with Baylor University and Texas A & M Central Texas at Stephenville, where students with degrees from TSTA's aircraft pilot training program can earn a bachelor's degree in aviation science.

F. GENERAL FUNDING FOR EDUCATION

Historically the United States (U.S.) has supported its military veterans by providing benefits ranging from education support in the form of the GI Bill to low interest real estate loans to healthcare to insurance pensions to other benefits.

GI Bill: The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides educational benefits under several programs. The bill provides active duty and veterans over \$47,000 (tax free) to be used for tuition, books, fees, and living expenses while degrees or certifications are being earned. The GI Bill is generally eligible to members who have served at least two years on active duty.



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Post 9/11 GI Bill: The VA has expanded its education benefits through the Post 9/11 GI Bill. This legislation benefits persons who have served at least 90 consecutive days on active duty since September 11, 2001, went into effect on August 1, 2009. Its provisions are more comprehensive than the original GI Bill, offering up to 36 months of full tuition and fees, a monthly housing stipend, and up to \$1,000 a year for books and supplies. To receive full benefits under this program, the individual must serve three years of active duty service from the bill's start date.



Source: www.gibill.va.gov

Reserve Education Assistance Program (REAP): This program is established to support educational aspirations of reservists and National Guard personnel who have been called or ordered to active service in response to a war or national emergency.

G. EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES IN A FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

Institutions of higher learning, over the decades, have seen their student profiles include men and women who have military backgrounds. As colleges and universities have become more competitive in their recruitment efforts, military personnel, reservists and veterans make up a core group of potential students. To be successful in these endeavors, the schools are involved in marketing to this population to varying degrees.

Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC): This is a consortium of 1,800 member colleges and universities dedicated to helping service members and their families get college degrees. Military students can take courses in their off-duty hours at or near military installations in the United States, overseas, and on Navy ships. The SOC helps ensure that degrees can be achieved amidst the schedules, distant and remote locations and reassignments associated with military service.

Created in 1972, SOC is cosponsored by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), in cooperation with 13 other educational associations, the Military Services, the National Guard, and the Coast Guard. Funding is by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) through a contract with AASCU.

Within each curriculum or degree network, member colleges agree to accept each other's credits by transfer. Some of the education is provided on military bases by colleges with contracts or "memorandums of understanding" between branches of the military or individual bases. "Distance learning" methods such as internet, correspondence, computer, and video are also teaching methods increasingly being offered, with as much as 75 percent of instruction in 2007, offered to soldiers and Marines in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as Navy personnel aboard ships around the world. Service members who want "training assistance" funds, as military education aid is called, most often work through the education officers in their units in choosing the providers, but they can also enroll directly in (and be marketed to by) individual colleges.



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The only two SOC members with an aviation program are Paris Junior College and University of North Texas.

Marketing Builds Awareness

With the large numbers of veterans returning home from overseas, universities and colleges are more aware than ever before of this increasing audience of potential students who respond well to the descriptive term, “military friendly.” Publishing companies are responding to what appears to be an information void, and they are creating “military friendly” designations, certifications and promotions that support both public and private schools in their recruitment efforts. Thus, the term “military friendly” is proving to be a catalyst for potential students to learn more about how education opportunities and an appropriate description for which schools should strive.

Texas A&M’s “Military Friendly” Designation

Texas A&M University, a major contributor to the military since it was founded more than 130 years ago, provides an exemplary coupling of programs, scholarships and support for veterans and their families. Already recognized by SCO, A&M received the “military friendly” designation from GI Jobs in 2009, based, in part, on its participation in the new GI Bill. Approximately 600 veterans are enrolled each year, and scores of active-duty military personnel study for undergraduate and graduate degrees.



U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Jennifer Neve from the 308th Civil Affairs Battalion meets with the Director General of Education at Numaniyah, Iraq, on Sept. 15, 2009. The team visited to inspect the construction of the new Information Technology Education Center. Source: Staff Sgt. Brien Vorhees, U.S. Army. (Released, www.defenselink.mil)

The university’s Veterans Services Office actively provides support. Through the Honored Service Scholarship Program about 25 scholarships are designated for veterans. Funding sources include the M.C. James Ursano Scholarship Fund and the Faye Leeth Memorial Endowment Fund.

Entrepreneurship Boot Camp for Veterans with Disabilities is offered through a consortium made up of A&M, Syracuse University, UCLA and Florida State University. At A&M, the Mays Business School offers training in small business start-up and management to persons injured in the line of duty since 2001.



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H. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A “MILITARY FRIENDLY” INSTITUTION

Though there are no nationally publicized standards for “military friendly” colleges and universities, the following are recommendations based on a review of the philosophies and programs offered by institutions which have been recognized in this way.

Posture the college/university to meet accreditation standards and regulations set out by federal agencies.

- Be listed in the Council for Higher Education Accreditation’s (CHEA), Database of Programs Accredited by Recognized U.S. Accrediting Organizations.
- Be accredited by an institutional accrediting agency recognized by CHEA or the U.S. Department of Education (DoE).
- Meet appropriate provisions of DoD Directive 1322.8 and DoD Instruction 1322.25, and appropriate service regulations when providing services on a military installation.
- Be approved for education benefits by the state approving agency for veterans’ benefits.

Offer educational programs that are flexible in terms of scheduling, academic residency, course transfer, and acceptance of non-traditional credit.

- Offer reasonable transfers of credit to minimize loss of previously earned credits and avoid coursework duplication.
- Reduce academic residency requirements. Eliminate final year or semester requirements.
- Provide credit for military training and experience including military service schools.
- Offer online degree programs. Provide the ability to transfer these credits between programs.
- Offer credit for nationally-recognized testing programs.
- Award credit for at least one nationally-recognized testing program such as the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES, formerly known as DANTES Subject Standardized Tests, DSST), Excelsior College Examinations (ECE).



Source: www.waco.tstc.edu/ta/

Establish policies and protocols that offer flexibility. These should include:

- Fair treatment of veterans by faculty and college administrators.
- Policies that help service members pursue education opportunities and complete degrees.
- Procedural and policy accommodations as appropriate for students who withdraw for a call to active military duty.
- Policies that encourage re-enrollment and aid transition back to the classroom for service members and veterans.



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- Priority registration for students who are veterans or reservists.
- Simplified/expedited application process for readmission.
- Extended/flexible enrollment deadlines.
- Course schedules adapted for transitioning active-duty service members.
- Academic and counseling services.
- Special web pages.
- Veterans support groups.
- Veteran centers and lounges.
- Scholarship opportunities.
- Deferred tuition payment plans to accommodate military paperwork lags.

Be flexible.

- Students and professors alike overestimate the ability of students to complete coursework while deployed. Flexibility in course completion should be structured. Students may not be able to commit to long term arrangements.

Be mindful of the spouse and their needs – both educational and otherwise.

- The spouse also has needs for both education and quality of life issues. The “military friendly” institution should support spouses and family members.

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REACHING OUT TO PERSONS WITH MILITARY BACKGROUNDS

Easily-accessible information is the key to recruiting men and women with military backgrounds into the aviation industry workforce. Currently, the U.S. faces many challenges as it assimilates veterans returning from overseas during this challenging era of economic woes and unemployment for America and the entire world. As stated above, several internet based programs are making efforts to communicate with veterans and to help them locate college programs that will provide them with stronger resumes for landing well-paying and fulfilling jobs. The recommendations in this report are made, specifically, to create the pathways for Texans to attain aviation educations and, subsequently, find employment in the dynamic aviation sector in North Central Texas.

NCTCOG should serve as the facilitator of a specific purpose task force that guides the military outreach component of the Aviation Education Initiative’s implementation and development.

Industry leaders should serve on a North Central Texas Aviation Workforce Development Task Force. By becoming active in the military community, this group would heighten the awareness of the employment opportunities in the aviation industry throughout the region, thus helping to guide men and women who are searching for pathways to fulfilling jobs. This synergism would create excitement as well as a degree of stability as these individuals leave the secure military environment.



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NCTCOG, as an independent metropolitan planning and service organization, should develop and maintain a dynamic aviation education website.

Aviation education information should be available on NCTCOG's website and a new stand-alone website that is owned and managed by NCTCOG. This website should be promoted on all outreach materials that are produced as the Aviation Education Initiative is developed and implemented. The robust nature of the website's design and information will allow it to become one of the region's most significant resources in aviation workforce development and retention. At least one page of this website should be "military friendly".

NAS JRB should become actively engaged in creating an environment in which men and women who are transitioning out of the military, or who are in the reserves, have career and education information readily available.

By working with the Commander's Office, the North Central Texas Aviation Workforce Development Task Force should strongly encourage open dialogue among employers, educators and the service personnel. Printed materials about the aviation industry and the area's aviation education programs in general should be available at public spaces on base as well as in the base Education Office. Representatives of the Speakers Bureau for the Aviation Education Initiative should present informational programs on base as often as opportunities present themselves. Information about area career fairs should be distributed as often as they are being held. Posters and signs giving web addresses for various aviation education programs should remain posted. Discussions should occur resulting with Embrey-Riddle not being the only aviation program for which there is information available on base.

Mustering locations for the Texas National Guard and various branches of the reserves should be repositories for information about aviation employment and education opportunities in North Central Texas.

These should include printed materials, posters and signs giving general information and emphasizing the website. Information about career fairs should also be distributed at these places.

Veterans service organizations should be made aware of the myriad of career and education opportunities are available in the region, especially in aviation.

NCTCOG should host a veterans' information conference to which representatives of all of the veterans service organizations, as well as the veterans organizations, in the region are invited to learn more about North Central Texas' preeminent aviation industry and how they can reach out



Eriona hugs her father Petty Officer 2nd Class Erik Underwood after the hospital ship USNS Mercy returned from providing disaster relief to Southeast Asia. Source: Petty Officer 2nd Class Scott Taylor, U.S. Navy. (Released, www.defenselink.mil)



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to their members and their families to encourage them to become involved. Colleges and universities should play a significant role in the program.

The universities and colleges offering aviation education programs should implement information and outreach activities, both internally and externally, to encourage enrollment and retention.

Branding and marketing are essential for successful student recruitment. While persons with a military background are likely to have training and skills that can be the prerequisites for an aviation degree program, it is very likely that these potential students must be informed of job opportunities and be convinced that pursuing an education is important at this time in their lives. A strong web presence, and participation in outreach activities coordinated by NCTCOG, must be constant.

A public awareness campaign should be created and implemented in North Central Texas to promote aviation education “right here at home.”

Under the auspices and leadership of NCTCOG, a public awareness campaign should be rolled out in the near future that (1) announces the education initiative; (2) publicizes the career opportunities in the region; and (3) promotes the pathways to success in aviation fields. (This campaign is discussed in greater detail throughout the study.) A billboard near the main entrance of NAS JRB should promote education as an important transition tool for military personnel going back into civilian life.

The military YMCA should be encouraged to place more information about transitioning to civilian life, for the service representative and his or her family, into its informational materials.

Emphasis should be placed on helping persons know how to use their skills and training as a bridge to civilian jobs, and in doing so, take advantage of education programs through the GI Bill and other funding vehicles.

J. CONCLUSION

Opportunities abound for North Central Texas as a region to support aviation workforce development by strengthening special programs and offerings to persons with military experience whether they have separated from the services or are on active-duty. As many as 16,000 veterans who are living in this area could qualify for GI Bill funds as well as training and re-training programs. About 260,000 veterans return to Texas each year, and about 110,000 of those have served in the military conflicts of the past decade. Many of these veterans have unique training and skills that are strong foundations on which they can build so that they qualify for well-compensated and personally-satisfying careers in aviation. Through the implementation of the North Texas Aviation Education Initiative, North Central Texas will be able to build an integrated education system that ultimately supplies the increasing workforce demands of the area's robust aviation industry. This implementation should include following through with the recommendations listed above.