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# **Online College Classes Allow Armed Forces Personnel The Chance To Learn Wherever They Are**

Soldiers have the commitment and self-discipline that's needed to experience success with online college courses. For members of the military, online college programs offer flexibility that can provide stability: Studies can be conducted anywhere and without transfers and deployments interrupting them. In the military, online college classes, like their more conventional counterparts, are taken while soldiers are off-duty. Continuing education in the military is voluntary, often free, and experts cite several positives associated with it as a bit of [accredited degree](#) research will evidence.

Lori Popp, an Education Technician with the Lifelong Learning section of Marine and Family Services aboard Camp Lejeune, in July 2009 told the Jacksonville Daily News that voluntary education programs help improve mission performance, prepare for greater responsibility and enhance personal and professional potential.

U.S. Congress in 1944 passed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act. Also known as the GI Bill, the law provided anyone who served in uniform the opportunity to obtain a college scholarship. By 1947, nearly 50 percent of all college students in America were veterans, according to a Time Magazine article. A Post 9/11 GI Bill has since made as much as full tuition money for graduate and undergraduate degrees and vocational or technical training as well as book and housing stipends available to service members on active duty after Sept. 10, 2001.

Members of the military can get academic credit for military training and experience, and the U.S. Army reportedly has more than 1,900 community college and university partners that accept these credits from soldiers during or after service. Local, accredited universities are said to make continuing education convenient for soldiers by offering satellite campuses on many bases, and online college courses and programs allow for greater mobility. Technological advances in [distance learning course](#) opportunities make it easier for deployed service members to continue their education, Lori Popp told the Jacksonville Daily News.

Online classes involve obtaining 80 to 100 percent of a course's content online, according to the Sloan Consortium, and distance education typically attract students who otherwise might not be able to attend classes at a traditional campus. Lori Popp told the Jacksonville Daily News that technological advances in distance education now make it easier for deployed service members to continue their education. The consortium, comprised of organizations and institutions committed to quality online education, recently released the results of a study entitled "Learning on Demand: Online Education in the United States." Between the falls of 2007 and 2008, the study noted, the number of online students increased by 17 percent, to 4.6 million.

Taking advantage of tuition assistance these days are more than 1,000 deployed marines and sailors, Popp said. Online courses, according to an October article in The Chronicle of Higher Education, are a "boon for soldiers who want to participate in college despite geographic displacement." The Chronicle article told the story of a professor and National Guardsman whose deployment to Iraq didn't interfere with her ability to teach online classes in economics. Soldiers between the chaos keep busy by working, reading, exercising, playing video games and watching movies, the article noted. Many also enroll in online college classes while they're deployed, according to The Chronicle.

U.S. Marines Corporal Dakota Berg is among the latter, according to the Jacksonville Daily News. He joined the military after his 2006 high school graduation as a means of paying for his education and pursued an online degree in accounting, the News article stated. The military's tuition assistance program relieved a lot of financial and mental stress, Berg told the Daily News--and, through online classes, he reportedly continued his education after being deployed from Parris Island, S.C., to Iraq.

Preparation is a big part of being in the service and what our service men and women are doing with [distance learning course](#) education is preparing for their future. Be it in the service or in the civilian sector, the time spent participating in [colleges online](#) is time well spent on their future career path.

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