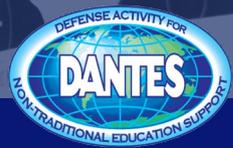




photo by Sgt. Michael Davis



DANTES
DOD VOLED PROGRAMS

Get On Target with Written Communication

In this issue: **Three Ways to Improve Writing Skills with DANTES Programs**

By Erin Roberts, Communications Division, DANTES

>	Writing Tips	2
>	Writing Resources	3
>	Education Spotlight	4
>	Hot News	5
>	Troops To Teachers Mark Brejcha	6
>	Contacts	7

The military requires its members to meet certain qualifications in tasks like weapons training, physical training and on-the-job training. Each of these tasks require repetition to get better and master. Writing is really no different. It's a skill that can be foreign to many in the beginning, one that takes repetition to master, and one that will prove to be extremely beneficial throughout a career.

Military members write all kinds of documents and there's a specific format to each one in every service. If a Noncommissioned

Officer (NCO) doesn't know the fundamentals of good writing and grammar, the likelihood of their memo or recommendation letter being returned for corrections, over and over, is pretty much a sure thing. Letters, talking papers, policies... they all have deadlines and they all require certain handling and format. Having basic writing skills, following a few simple tips, and using some of DANTES no-cost education tools can help military members get started on the path to mastering their writing skills.

Continued on page 2

WRITING TIPS

Writing and procrastination can easily go hand-in-hand, but the longer a member waits to write a document, the more-likely the message will be poorly communicated and the deadline missed. This is why writing skills are so important. Good writing skills will save time, eliminate stress and help meet deadlines.

Five general rules to remember when beginning a writing task:

- Save time and don't reinvent the wheel; find an example to follow, but don't plagiarize
- Write to the point, clear and concise; shorter is usually better
- Never use a big word when a simple one will do; think like the intended reader and write to the reader's level of understanding
- Vary sentence length; a long sentence can usually be split in two for easier reading
- Write the first draft, take a break, edit and edit again if necessary; a second set of eyes is always helpful

ACADEMIC SKILLS TRAINING

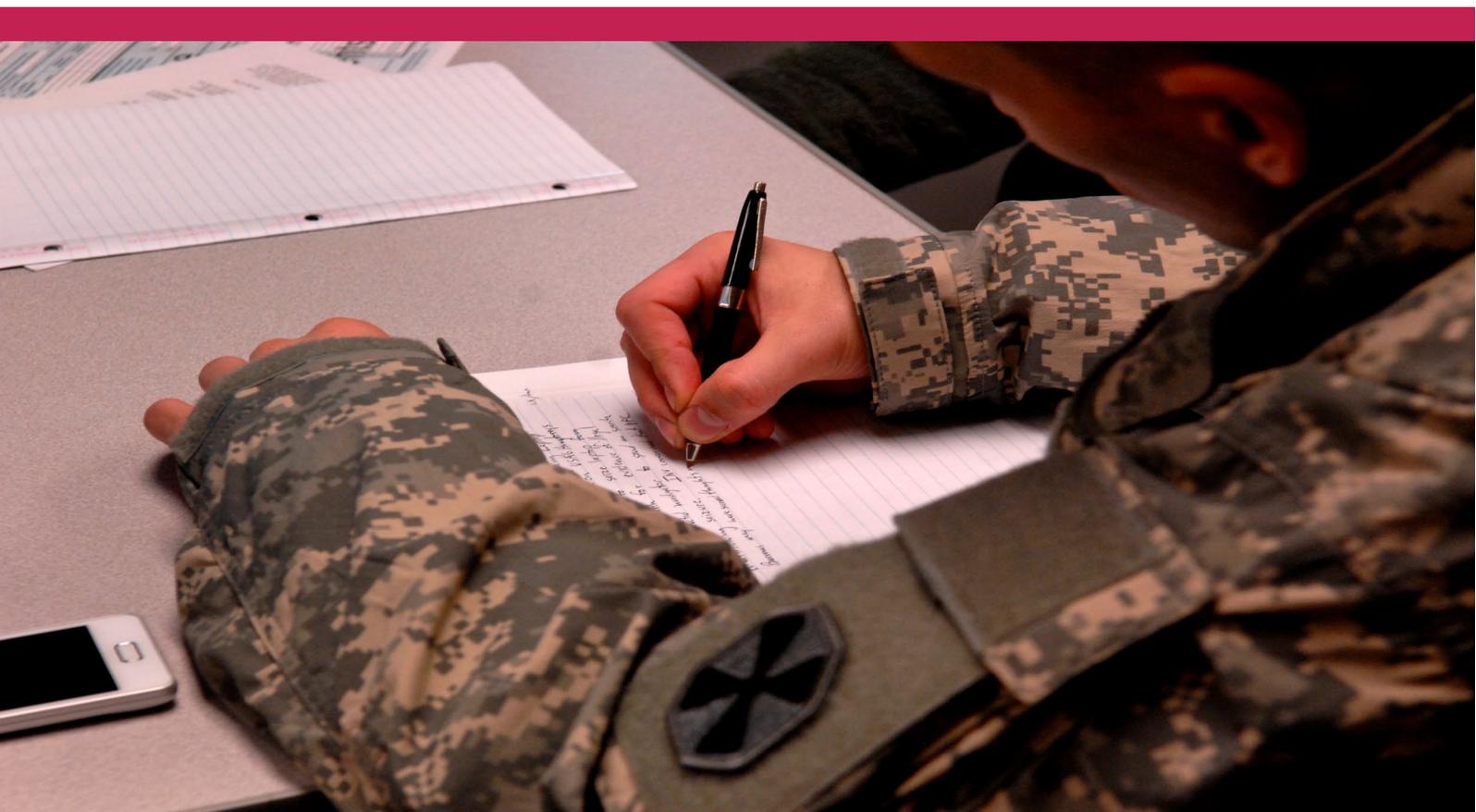
DANTES offers no-cost, online academic training courses, Online Academic Skills Course (OASC) and College Placement Skills Training (CPST), to

help Service members evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in writing, reading comprehension, grammar and vocabulary. The training offers diagnostic tests to assess skill level, lessons customized to targeted areas of improvement, and practice tests to see how much a member has learned.

Test and lesson times vary depending on skill level, but generally take about 20-30 minutes to complete. The reading comprehension and verbal lessons include areas focused on reading and interpreting text, building vocabulary, and understanding the main idea. The lessons include detailed answers, examples and quizzes to help reinforce learning.

Some of the tools used in the lessons include drag-and-drop matching, video game-style multiple choice, and interactive flash cards with audio to help build skills while the member is engaged in the learning process. He/she can also mark what they've learned and print cards for offline reference. And it can all be done easily on a computer, laptop, tablet or other mobile device.

Go to <http://www.nelnetsolutions.com/DantesNet/> for more information. Service members, family members and DoD civilians can sign up at no cost.



TUTOR SERVICE

Once a Service member has a good understanding of the writing process and is ready to begin a first draft, DoD offers help in the form of tutor services at no cost to the member and eligible K-12 family members. You can get help online, 24/7, from English tutors who are pros at writing, editing and proofreading. They can help you with all of your writing questions and you can get help right away - even if you're on a deadline!

Go to <http://military.tutor.com/home> for more. Service members can sign up for free. Some K-12 family members are eligible too, depending on the military service.

CREDIT-BY-EXAMINATION

Some Service members are naturally gifted when it comes to writing. They can sit down and the words just flow onto the paper. This next program will certainly apply to them, as well as many others who practice and use their training to get to a mastered level of writing.

After taking advantage of DoD no-cost assistance and online training, when a member feels good

about their writing, they may be skilled enough to use the Credit-by-Examination program to qualify for college credit. Members can use what they've learned and mastered to take a CLEP or DSST exam in a variety of English, composition or writing subjects. CLEP offers both Composition & Literature and Business sections with a variety of exams to take at <https://clep.collegeboard.org/exam>. DSST offers exams in the Business, Technology, and Humanities sections at <http://getcollegecredit.com/exam-fact-sheets>.

As a Service member plans for promotion, another career or their future after the military, they will learn that many jobs require some type of writing. Good writing skills can set a military member apart from others and are definitely worth the time and effort. Once a member learns the basics, their skills will only get better with practice. Service members should accept and volunteer for writing tasks with a positive attitude and share military stories with service organizations, LinkedIn and on their installation's public affairs web site. A military member's experiences, lessons learned and military tips are valuable to others, especially those who follow in their footsteps. 🎓



Fort Rucker CLEP-A-Thon is a Success!

By Erin Roberts, DANTES Public Affairs, and Randy McNally, SESS/TCO, Fort Rucker Army Education Center

“Successful” would be the word to describe the latest education event hosted by the Fort Rucker Education Center. It’s first CLEP-A-Thon was held September 21st - 23rd to promote the Credit-by-Examination program, a quick way for Soldiers to earn college credit by using knowledge and experience they already have. According to Randy McNally, supervisory education service specialist for Fort Rucker, they had a great turn out, and Myra Apontes, a Troy University representative, really supported the event.

McNally said the center administered 36 CLEP tests, with 22 tests scoring over 50; a 62 percent pass rate. He also said that they had 7 DSST tests taken. Test takers passed 6 of the 7 tests; delivering an 86 percent pass rate.

McNally provided some calculations to show just how much the event saved the Army in tuition assistance dollars:

CLEP

Twenty two passed CLEP tests broken out by semester hours (SH), earned 72 SHs of college credit. If you calculate \$250 per SH and multiply this by 72 SHs, the total amount is \$18,000 worth of college credit.

The total cost of the CLEP tests taken (with proctor fees included) was \$3,600 total. Again, if we do the math, \$18,000 minus \$3,600 equals \$14,400. Therefore, the CLEP tests saved the Army \$14,400 in tuition assistance (TA) during the event and Soldiers

achieved 72 hours of college credit in three days.

DSST

The passed DSST tests totaled 18 SH of college credit at a total cost of \$700 to the Army. Eighteen SHs multiplied by \$250 per SH equals \$4,500. Again, we see a savings for the Army. The math shows \$4,500 minus \$700.00 equals a total savings of \$3,800 of Army TA money.

ARMY TA SAVINGS

“The total event achieved 90 semester hours of college credit at a savings of \$18,200 of Army tuition assistance money. I think that stipulates a success,” said McNally.

What happens when an event proves successful? Another CLEP-A-Thon is scheduled for Fort Rucker Soldiers at the beginning of November, in support of American Education Week. Education center personnel have been putting together a string of events to stimulate competition between units on post. The goal is to get more soldiers and their commanders to participate. In November, Troy University will announce the unit with the most Soldiers who take and pass CLEP tests during American Education Week. According to McNally, “The education center will also present the unit commander with a certificate in recognition of the educational support that the commander has shown his/her Soldiers. This recognition promotes the testing program and the need for commanders to support it.” 🎓



We want to share your success stories.
Email dantes_outreach@navy.mil for details.



Hot News

ACT Test Booklets Expire Oct. 31

Before placing an order for ACT test materials, look in your safe. The 2015-2016 ACT test booklets expire on Oct. 31 and cannot be used after that date. Obsolete test booklets must also be postmarked for return to the testing agency prior to Oct. 31.

TCOs are reminded to ensure obsolete and unused answer folders are destroyed properly per service destruction guidelines, according to the DANTES Examination Program Handbook (DEPH) Part II, ACT Chapter. The following also apply:

ACT exams are:

- Not automatically distributed each year
- Not distributed until all previous years materials are received and cleared at ACT
- Reusable only at stocking DANTES test sites
- Ordered using the ACT DANTES Order Form

DANTES stocking test sites will amend their inventory to reflect the return of testing materials. New test materials will not be sent until ACT reconciles your inventory. Follow ACT's ordering procedures when placing an order for 2016-2017 ACT materials. If you have questions, refer to "Ordering the ACT" section in the DEPH PART II, ACT Chapter.

Email exams@navy.mil for further information

SOC Degree Network System Call For New Programs

The Department of Defense (DoD) Voluntary Education is pleased to announce a second call for new degree program applications to become part of the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) Degree Network System (DNS).

Program submissions will be accepted from Oct. 15 to Nov. 30, in the following networks:

- Homeland Security (4-Year)
- Health Services Management (4-year)
- Applied Science and Technology (2-year)
- Psychology (2-year)

The DNS is being revamped to ensure it best serves our Service members by making the DNS reflective of high-demand occupations and workforce trends.

If your academic institution is interested in submitting an application, go to: <http://www.soc.aascu.org/degree-network-system/soc-dns-membership>

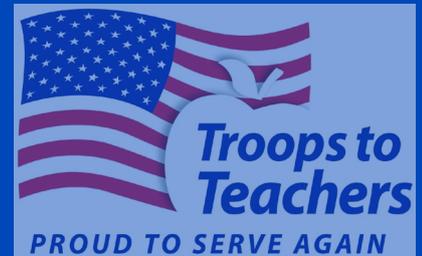
- Only submit degree programs aligned with the proposed networks during the submission period assigned
- Include the following items in your submission:
- Degree program requirements
 - » Curriculum
 - » Course descriptions for all major and major-related courses
 - » Provide a specific point of contact (POC) for these programs

Submit information to socdnscirc@aascu.org 



What is TTT?

Troops to Teachers (TTT) is a DANTES-managed Department of Defense program that helps Service members and Veterans begin a second career as a teacher, in K-12 public, charter or Bureau of Indian Affairs schools



www.proudtoserveagain.com

Mark Brejcha, Air Force Retired Command Chief

By Edwardeen Jones, MI State Director, and Mark Brejcha, TTT participant and teacher

“Your attitude will determine your altitude”

We’ve heard this phrase so many times in our military careers and it certainly rings true in just about every area of our lives. But when they come from USAF Retired Colonel Gail Halvorsen, the famed Candy Bomber and hero of the Berlin Airlift, they mean something more.

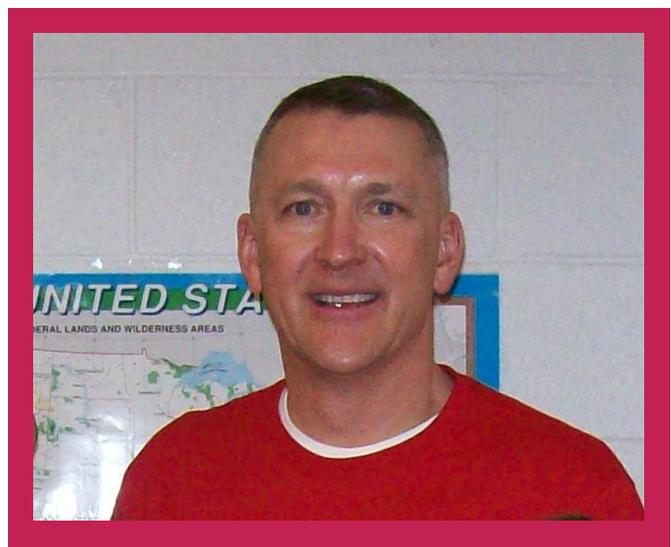
In December 2015, the front office patched a phone call into my classroom. It was 95 year old Colonel Halvorsen calling to say “thanks” to my 6th grade social studies class for reenacting a live “candy drop” at our local high school football field...pilot, plane, parachutes, and candy.

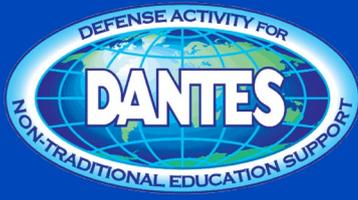
The call was prompted by our students sending the Colonel a Big Rapids Cardinal care package to include personalized mini-parachutes from the students. For my students to hear the voice of arguably one of our military’s most celebrated Airman, inspired my students beyond anything a text book or YouTube ever could.

My education journey began with Troops to Teachers and continues still. The personal connections, the world experiences, and most of all the leadership training I received as a military member all fit in the classroom. Many of the same challenges I

encountered in the military are also found in the public school classroom and I’m fully qualified to handle them. Being an educator is stimulating and rewarding beyond description. Love Them, Notice Them, Inspire Them is my motto. As an educator, I have no problem wondering if my life after the military is still making a difference in this world.

For information on teaching at K-12, public, charter and Indian Affairs schools in Michigan and at Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools stateside or overseas, contact Eddy Jones, Michigan Troops to Teachers office at ejones@troopstoteachers.net 🎓





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DOD VOLED PROGRAMS

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✉ usarmy.badenwur.usareur.mbx.dantes-euro@mail.mil

W www.DANTES.DoDed.mil

B DANTESpulse.DoDlive.mil



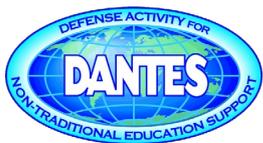
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DANTES INFORMATION BULLETIN

Jeff Allen, Director
Michelle Alexander, Editor

DANTES Information Bulletin

The DANTES Information Bulletin is published monthly to inform education personnel about DANTES programs and to help promote more efficient customer service to Service members.

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