

# TROOPS TO TEACHERS

September 2010

MISSOURI/IOWA CONSORTIUM

Vol. 4-10



## A NEW AREA OF OPERATIONS

*By Jerry Herndon; master sergeant, U.S. Marines (retired); special education teacher, Waynesville Middle School*

After spending 24 years and my entire adult life serving around the world as a U.S. Marine, I now find myself serving in a new area of operations. Becoming a teacher after retiring from the military turned out to be easy once I obtained the help of the Troops to Teachers program. I have a bachelor's degree in history and had passed the Praxis II test en route to what I thought would be a simple road toward becoming a teacher. Unfortunately, that wasn't the case.

Not one of my college advisers ever mentioned that to be a certified teacher, a student (even a Marine) must take education classes along with the main degree classes. Still determined to become a teacher, I called Chad Schatz, director of the Missouri Troops to Teachers program. He explained that the TTT program could help me get certified and even offered financial aid if needed.

In August 2008, I was hired as a special education history teacher at Waynesville Middle School. Becoming a teacher has turned out to be much more than just me using my worldly experience while explaining history to a group of adolescent boys and girls.

Standing in front of my first class, I felt like I was standing on the yellow footprints back at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in Parris Island, S.C. – nervous and wondering what had I gotten myself into. I figured out that I couldn't teach my students the way I taught my Marines. We had to be on the same level. Getting us there turned out to be a great transition from being a Marine to being a civilian teacher. By "great transition," I mean it was nice to be back at the basic level, getting to know and teaching my troops (for lack of a better word) again.

Another aspect of the transition was learning that I wasn't in charge anymore, which is very hard for any service member after more than two decades in the military. As a senior

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## A New Area of Operations *(Continued)*

Marine, my mindset was: I got orders from above, then I delegated to my trusted Marines and supervised as plans and ideas were drawn up, discussed and put into action.

I couldn't just throw out 24 years of experiences and thinking; I had to find a way to modify the Marine Corps' leadership principles into a lesson plan for me and my students to follow during class. I knew from the start I would have to ensure that every class was informative, different and exciting.

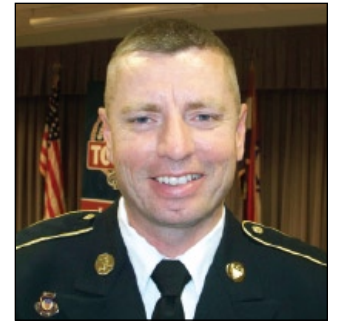
At the end of the 2008-09 school year, I had the honor of being named the Missouri Troops to Teachers Teacher of the Year for middle schools. This award showed me that what I had learned in the military as a leader and a mentor was working for both my students and the school district that employed me.

Finding the TTT program and becoming a teacher have proven to me that there is life after the military. Retirement can be as rewarding and challenging as you want it to be. For me, that challenge happens to be teaching.

## 2010 MISSOURI TTT TEACHERS OF THE YEAR



Marnice Anthony, Urban Schools,  
Stevens Middle School,  
St. Louis School District



Gary Holt, JROTC Co-Teacher  
of the Year, Joplin High School,  
Joplin School District



Celeste Michaud, Female Teacher,  
Rural Schools, Anderson Middle School,  
McDonald Co. School District

### NOT PICTURED

- Harry Cunningham, JROTC Co-Teacher of the Year, Smith-Cotton High School, Sedalia School District
- Marcus Kemerling, Male Teacher, Rural Schools, Rock Port School District
- Dennis Kurtz, Elementary Schools, Seckman Elementary School, Fox School District



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The national **Troops to Teachers Web site** is located at <http://proudtoserveagain.com>.

### Teacher Certification Contact Information

#### Iowa

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In order to qualify for the Troops to Teachers program, a veteran must have at least six years of military service. Most have much more than that.

Often, a TTT veteran is a retiree with at least 20 years of service. This gives the school administrator a dependable teacher for today's challenging school environment.

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# VETERANS EDUCATION & TRAINING SECTION

September 2010

MISSOURI STATE  
APPROVING AGENCY

Vol. 4-10

## Special Points of Interest

- The Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) is a valuable resource for anyone transitioning from a military career to a civilian career.
- Safeguard your Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits before leaving the service.
- The 2010 edition of the VA's Federal Benefits booklet is now available

The **Missouri State Approving Agency Directory** features all schools and colleges approved for the GI Bill. Request a copy by calling **877-530-2765**.

## Benefits of the Army Career and Alumni Program

*By Jan Harris, Fort Leonard Wood*

The Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) provides career counseling, classes and employment resources for service members who are transitioning from the military to a civilian career (as well as their adult family members).

Members of the Army become eligible for ACAP services one year prior to the expiration term of service (ETS) or 24 months prior to retirement eligibility. Spouses and adult family members become eligible for all ACAP services at the same time as the service member. They can attend with or without the service member present. For example, a spouse could use ACAP while an eligible service member is deployed. The spouse might prepare a résumé, send it to employers, interview and obtain employment by the time the service member returns.

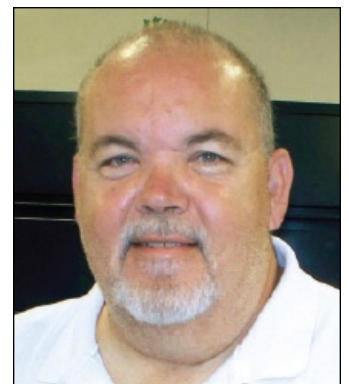
The Department of Defense recommends service members to start using ACAP services as soon as they are eligible, and to attend all of the classes and briefings they can. Preparing for a major career transition takes a lot of time because there is so much to do. The most common statement made by clients is, "I wish I'd started sooner." Research indicates that the more ACAP services someone who is transitioning attends, the higher the rate of employment.

Knowing how to write a targeted résumé, accomplish an effective job search and conduct a successful job interview are skills used on and off throughout our lives. The ACAP program would be valued between \$5,000-\$14,000 in the private sector.

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## Meet Mike Brown, Vet Rep, Columbia

Mike Brown is a veterans employment representative located in Columbia. A retired Navy veteran with 29 years of service, he helps veterans find employment, on-the-job training or apprenticeships by visiting businesses in his five-county area (Boone, Callaway, Cooper, Howard and Audrain). He matches the skills of veterans with what employers are seeking for specific jobs. Brown also assists veterans in finding funding for school and medical needs. "Our veterans have given up their liberty to serve their country, and they deserve the best service we can give them," he said.



Mike Brown

## Benefits of ACAP *(Continued)*

Take advantage of this free training so you are prepared for whenever you need these skills in your life!

### The ACAP Three-Phase Program

1) Attend the pre-separation briefing describing your transition benefits and entitlements as listed on the Pre-Separation Counseling Checklist (DD Form 2648). This briefing is congressionally mandated for transitioning service members.

2) Attend the four-hour Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits briefing covering all of your different VA benefits and the two-hour briefing specifically describing your medical benefits. (You can now file a VA disability claim six months prior to discharge.) Attend the two-and-a-half day Transition Assistance Program (TAP) workshop (taught by the Department of Labor) to identify your skill areas and receive training in job searching, interviewing and résumé-writing skills.

3) Use individualized ACAP counseling to explore career options, help identify career goals, construct a career-action plan, and receive continuous training and personalized assistance.

Missouri's ACAP center is located at Fort Leonard Wood, Building 470, Room 2219. Please bring your CAC card and your AKO user ID and password with you. If you are married, you can sponsor your spouse and adult family members for AKO accounts. For more information or to schedule ACAP services, call 573-596-0175 or 573-581-0175 (DSN). You can also visit <http://www.acap.army.mil> or e-mail [acap.leonardwood@serco-na.com](mailto:acap.leonardwood@serco-na.com).

*(Note: The child development center or school-age services may provide free child care for up to six hours per month for eligible spouses while a service member is deployed. For information on this program, call 573-596-0238.)*

## Important Facts About Education Benefits

*By Kay Calton, Missouri Transition Assistance Advisor*

- The best way to safeguard your Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33) is to complete the transfer before you leave the service. If a service member does not start the transfer process of the Post-9/11 GI Bill and he or she dies, it is a lost benefit.
- A service member can safeguard the Post-9/11 GI Bill by transferring one month of the benefit. By doing so, he or she has started the transfer process.
- Family members are still eligible for Chapter 35, but it does not include the monthly living stipend.
- Public Law 111-32 (the Marine Gunnery Sgt. John David Fry Scholarship) amends the Post-9/11 GI Bill to include the children of service members who die in the line of duty after September 10, 2001. The benefit is effective Aug. 1, 2009, which is the same as the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Eligible children attending school may receive up to the highest public, in-state undergraduate tuition and fees, plus a monthly living stipend and an annual book allowance. Public Law 111-32 only includes the children of service members who perish in the line of duty. The law does not include spouses or if the service member were to die not in the line of duty.

**TO FIND OUT IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VETERANS EDUCATION AND TRAINING BENEFITS,  
OR TO SEE HOW MUCH YOUR ENTITLEMENT IS, CALL 888-442-4551.**