

Spousal EDUCATION

When momma ain't happy, ain't nobody happy. That isn't exactly what Lawrence J Korb, former Assistant Secretary of Defense said. It was more like: "Solving spousal employment problems has become every bit as important to retention efforts as reenlistment bonuses and future retirement checks." The reality is that if the spouse is having a hard time finding a job when the military member of the family gets transferred, the entire family is unhappy.

By Leslie Rigoulot

A better education means a better chance of finding a job and of finding a job that is fulfilling. Instead of going the traditional route of getting an education and finding a job, military spouses may want to look at what kinds of jobs are available near them and what kinds of skills transfer from one base to another. It can be discouraging to have the kind of career that takes building up a large number of customers only to find you're being transferred to another base. Working your way up in seniority won't matter if you start at the bottom of the ladder



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every three years.

Whether it is being a lawyer or cop, nurse or doctor, higher education opens doors. Evaluate how much time you are willing to put into preparing for the dream job. An undergraduate degree in criminology or criminal justice opens the door to police work. But if being a lawyer is what you really want, any four year degree and a great set of LSAT scores are what you need to get into a three year law school. The demand for nurses is consistently strong training programs can be completed in as little as two years for licensed practical nurses. But if being a doctor is what you feel called to do, it can be done.

All this talk of college can be discouraging if you haven't got your high school diploma. The General Educational Development (GED) is a relatively easy way to test your way to a diploma. Don't believe for an instant that a GED is less than a high school diploma. GED graduates include: actor Christian Slater, Delaware's Governor Ruth Ann Minner, and U.S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell of Colorado. To earn a GED you must complete a set of five tests covering

math, science, reading, writing, and social studies. The American School (www.americanschoolof-corr.com/) started out offering what used to be called correspondence courses but now offers high school diploma and college preparation classes online. Or you can check with your local high school to see what kind of classes and guidance they offer.

One of the most unusual places to find classes is at Barnes and Noble online bookstore. While the classes

(<http://university.barnesandnoble.com>) are not accredited they can be a way of entering the world of online learning without going through the application process. You will quickly learn if online learning is for you.

an author is promoting a non-fiction book and is willing to give a class so you will buy his/her book. But for \$18, it is a great way to 'talk' with other students and with teachers who are learning about a great

of subjects. One of the current offerings is with Linda Gale, author of Discover What You're Best At. This course will help you to identify your strongest skills and then match them with careers that reward these aptitudes. Naturally, you have to buy her book first but having access to her while you are working your way through the book is immensely helpful while you





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are trying to decide what you want to be when you grow up.

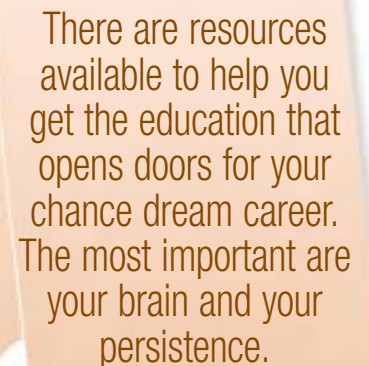
No matter where you are transferred there are always schools and that means a need for teachers. Many states now offer reciprocity for teaching certificates from other states or will allow you to teach while taking a required class in that state's history. The Spouses to Teachers scholarship program is in six states: California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Texas and Virginia.

This military spouse only project is giving scholarships to spouses of active duty military and anyone actively involved in the Reserves who are seeking degrees in teaching or counseling or are trying get certified in another state. While the maximum financial assistance is \$600, they also offer specific information regarding teacher certification requirements, routes to certification, employment potential, financial assistance, and assistance with employment searches. Check out www.spousestoteachers.com for more information.

An internet search will turn up plenty of scholarship opportunities. The American Military Spouse Education Foundation is aptly named. They realized that spouses move frequently and transferring can mean a loss of credit hours so they emphasize online learning. The University of Phoenix is one of the best known online 'campuses' that can be utilized anywhere, any time. You don't have to be in Arizona to be a student anymore than you have to be in Texas to be a student at the University of Texas Telecampus. Depending on availability of funds, AMSEF may cover some or all of your tuition, fees or books expenses up to \$3,000 per year. When looking for online universities check them out through Distance Education and Training Council (DETC.org). Make sure they are accredited.

While the GI Bill gives education opportunities to the military member

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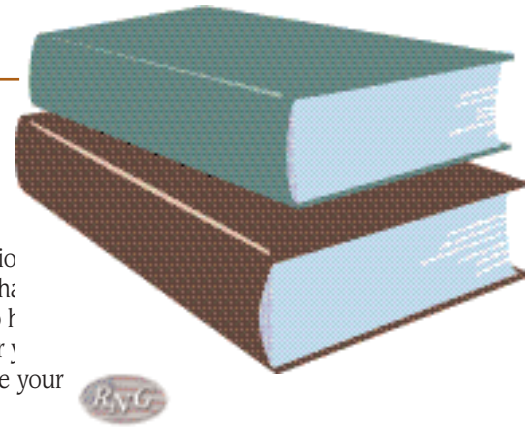
There are resources available to help you get the education that opens doors for your chance dream career. The most important are your brain and your persistence.

there actually is a provision for dependents. Dependents' Educational Assistance provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of certain veterans. The program offers up to 45 months of education benefits. The discouraging part of the program is that is open to survivors who are dependents only. That means something bad has to happen for something good to happen.

Now What? You have your area of

Babies aren't as interested but thankfully, they do nap.

Less than 19% of spouses have undergraduate degrees according to The American Military Spouse Education Foundation but it doesn't have to be that way. There are resources available to help get the education that opens doors for your dream career. The most important are your brain and your persistence.



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study, your college of choice, even a scholarship or two. Finding the time to read, write and attend classes isn't easy. Take a look at those pictures of college campuses and you see students reading in the oddest places. You will want to carry books with you when you go to the dentist, when you are taking the kids to the pediatrician and when in line at the commissary. Organizing a babysitting cooperative is one means of getting a little free time but remember you have to reciprocate with other parents. On the other hand having your children see you study is a valuable lesson for them. Not only do they have to respect mom and dad's quiet time, but they also see how important education is. Let them study with you if you have elementary school age children. Turn the TV off and everyone reads for an hour. Let them read the papers you have written. It keeps the lines of communication open in ways you can't begin to imagine. They know what you are studying and you get their input on what you are doing with your life.

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