

The Coast Guard Personnel Command is the Coast Guard's point of contact in issues pertaining to the eligibility of Coast Guard active duty personnel, Coast Guard reserve personnel, and Coast Guard veterans for various educational assistance programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Coast Guard's interpretations on enrollment in the various programs is virtually non-existent given that eligibility for these programs is provided for in the Law. Matters' regarding the development and/or revision of the Coast Guard's limited policy regarding these programs is the responsibility of the Coast Guard's Program Manager, the Policy and Standards Division (CG-1221) in the Office of Military Personnel at Coast Guard Headquarters.

A summary of various educational assistance programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs is provided below:

Montgomery G.I. Bill (MGIB) - Active Duty Education Assistance Program (Ref: COMDTINST 1760.9A)

In accordance with Chapter 30, Title 38, U. S. Code, the MGIB was implemented for those members entering active duty on or after July 1, 1985. A member must make an irrevocable decision to participate or not in the MGIB within the first two weeks of active duty. Those members participating have their monthly base pay reduced \$100 for the first 12 months of active duty, totaling \$1,200. Unlike VEAP (outlined below), this \$1,200 is not refundable nor can the period of participation be suspended or stopped.

- Chapter 30, Title 38, U. S. Code (MGIB) does provide an opportunity for certain members being involuntarily separated from active duty, to participate in the MGIB program who were otherwise not eligible. Those members who are involuntarily separated must qualify for "Transition Benefits", outlined in COMDTINST 1900.2A, in order to participate in the MGIB prior to separation. (Ref: COMDTINST 1900.2A)
- The Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-419) authorized eligible MGIB participants to increase the monthly rate of educational benefits received by making an additional contribution at any time while on active duty, over and above the initial pay reduction of \$1200. Eligible members for participation in this increase is defined as only those members that elected to participate in the MGIB upon entering on active duty after June 30, 1985. Those individuals who were VEAP participants and subsequently were offered the opportunity to participate in the MGIB and those participating in the MGIB as a result of being authorized "transition benefits" are not eligible for the increase of benefits. In addition, the Department of Veterans Affairs has also ruled that those individuals who had remaining entitlements to Chapter 34 (Vietnam-era (prior to 1 Jan 77)) and meet the criteria for conversion to Chapter 30 - MGIB, are not eligible to participate in the increase. (Ref: ALCOAST 176-01)

Montgomery G.I. Bill - Selected Reserve Educational Assistance Program (Ref: COMDTINST 1001.30E)

In accordance with Chapter 1606, Title 10, U. S. Code, the MGIB Selected Reserve Educational Assistance Program was originally established for a 3-year trial period by Public Law 98-525, the "Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 1984." Public Law 100-48, "The New GI Bill Continuation Act", subsequently made the program permanent. In October of 1990, Public Law 101-189 expanded benefits to include all programs available to active duty veterans except postgraduate study. On November 30, 1993, Public Law 103-160 authorized educational assistance for programs beyond the baccalaureate level for post-baccalaureate training received after November 30, 1993, only. Members of the Selected Reserve (SELRES), who meet the criteria as outlined in COMDTINST 1001.30E are eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) Selected Reserve Educational Assistance Program and must be issued a Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE) and Statement of Understand (SOU).

Post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)

In accordance with Chapter 32, Title 38, U. S. Code, VEAP participation was available to members who initially entered active duty between January 1, 1977 and June 30, 1985. Service members were required to contribute by allotment between \$25 and \$100 per month up to a maximum contribution of \$2,700. The total benefit a member received equaled their total contribution plus matching funds equaling twice the member's total contribution. VEAP benefits total \$8,100 at \$300 (max) per month for 27 months for full-time schooling. In addition, those members desiring their contribution to VEAP refunded still maintain their eligibility for VEAP benefits as long as they redeposit money in VEAP prior to their separation from active duty. However, no new enrollments are possible in VEAP.

- The Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 1996, signed into law by the President on October 9, 1996, contained provisions for certain VEAP participants to enroll in the MGIB. Those VEAP participants, as defined by the Department of Veterans Affairs, who elected to participate in the MGIB during the enrollment period October 9, 1996, to October 8, 1997, agreed to have their pay reduced \$100 a month for 12 months, equaling \$1200, or they could have it collected in a lump sum. The Department of Veterans Affairs defined "VEAP participant" as only those service members who had VEAP contributions in their VEAP accounts on October 9, 1996. Therefore, those VEAP eligible members who withdrew their contributions from VEAP and had not redeposited money back into VEAP prior to October 9, 1996, would not be eligible for this MGIB enrollment opportunity. (Ref: ALDIST 001-97)
- The Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-419) opened the door for additional participants of the Post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) to participate in the MGIB. These VEAP participants could become eligible for the MGIB providing they were

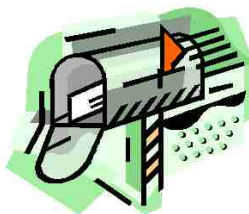
VEAP participants on or before October 9, 1996, continuously served on active duty from October 9, 1996 through April 1, 2000, make an irrevocable election to participate in the MGIB during the enrollment period November 1, 2000, to October 31, 2001, and make a non-refundable payroll reduction or lump sum payment of \$2700 within 18 months after making the election to participate in the MGIB. (Ref: ALCOAST 047-01)

Vietnam Era G.I. Bill Educational Assistance Program

In accordance with Chapter 34, Title 38, U. S. Code, the Vietnam Era G.I. Bill was implemented for those members serving on active for a period of more than 180 days, any part of which occurred after January 31, 1955, and before January 1, 1977, and were discharged or released there from under conditions other than dishonorable. Unlike the subsequent Educational Assistance Programs, this program required no monetary payment by the member to be eligible. This program however did expire on December 31, 1989 and no additional payment of benefits was made after this date.

- Chapter 30, Title 38, U. S. Code (MGIB) did provide for certain members who had remaining entitlement under Chapter 34 on December 31, 1989 to convert to Chapter 30 benefits. Chapter 30 stipulates that these members must have been on active duty any time between October 19, 1984 and June 30, 1985. In addition, they must have remained on continuous active duty for a period of three years after June 30, 1985 or on continuous active duty for 30 months after June 30, 1985 and be separated for Convenience of the Government.

For those members who feel they were not given the opportunity to participate in the appropriate education program as outlined in the law, they can submit a letter request, *Subject: Request for a Department of Veterans Affairs Education Program Eligibility Determination*, to:



**Commander (CGPC-epm-1)
Coast Guard Personnel Command
4200 Wilson Blvd, Suite 1100
Arlington, VA 22203-1804
ATTN: MGIB**

This request should provide all the information regarding their Coast Guard service, both active and reserve. Copies of any documentation regarding prior service in the Coast Guard or in any of the armed forces, if applicable, should be included with this request. Once the request, along with the appropriate documentation, is received an official inquiry with the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the CG Personnel Service Center (PSC) will be opened to determine what program, if any, the requester is eligible for.

For additional information regarding eligibility requirements for the various programs, you can contact the Personnel Command at (202) 493-1242.

Requests regarding the Montgomery G.I. Bill - Selected Reserve Educational Assistance Program should be sent to:



Commander (CGPC-rpm-2)
Coast Guard Personnel Command
4200 Wilson Blvd, Suite 1100
Arlington, VA 22203-1804
ATTN: MGIB

For additional information regarding eligibility requirements for the reserve program, you can contact the Personnel Command at (202) 493-1770/1772.

For information regarding the various programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, check their [Education Web Page](#) or contact them by calling 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551).