

job trends

Second Careers Reach High Tide For Navy Veterans

(NAPSA)—Many veterans who served their country honorably in the Navy or Coast Guard are setting course for a second career at sea. What's anchoring them to success is that the training is free.

The veterans who decide to become mariners are finding a great job market, as the demand for mariners is high and is expected to grow.

Such free training is available at the Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education in Piney Point, Md. Affiliated with the Seafarers International Union (SIU), the center's mission is to provide training needed for a successful career as a United States merchant mariner.

How It Works

There's a 10-week able-bodied seaman course for deck students and an eight-week fireman/oiler course for engine students. When applicants successfully complete the course and get a passing grade on the Coast Guard exam, graduates are guaranteed a first job with a contracted company.

The jobs offer competitive pay, freedom in scheduling, comprehensive medical coverage for the mariners and their families, a pension plan and a contract that spells out safe working conditions and benefits. Mariners work for an SIU-contracted company.

Approximately 2,000 veterans have completed the program in the last 10 years. To sit for the able-bodied seaman's endorsement or the fireman/oiler endorsement, separated and retired personnel must have the necessary deck or engine ratings required by the U.S. Coast Guard. Applicants must have at least two years' sea service in an accepted Naval/Coast Guard rating.

All applicants must be able to present a history of their assign-



Charting a course for a second career at sea? Veterans of the Navy and Coast Guard may receive free training for a competitive job with benefits.

ments while in the military and an honorable discharge.

They must be physically fit as determined by the U.S. Coast Guard standards and eligible to receive a merchant mariner's document. Applicants cannot be on parole or probation and must have a valid driver's license. Other separated Navy/Coast Guard personnel who do not qualify for the veterans' program may still be eligible for the center's apprentice program.

22,000 Graduates

Besides the program for veterans with qualifying sea time in a deck or engine rating, the center also offers a thorough entry-level program that is registered with the U.S. Department of Labor. More than 22,000 people have graduated from the entry program since the school opened in 1967.

The SIU represents unlicensed United States Merchant Marine personnel sailing aboard U.S.-flag vessels in the deep sea, Great Lakes and inland trades. The union also represents licensed U.S. mariners in the Great Lakes and inland sectors.

For more information, visit www.seafarers.org or call toll-free at (877) 235-3275.