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College Credits and Military Training, Easier Said

As reported by William Lewis, VSC Student Assistant

Look What's Inside...

- Rain, Rain Stay Another Day
- Army Flower Power
- Medal for Heroism for U.S. Navy Sailor
- Air Force Mapping the World
- Military Appreciation Night
- Last Year Reflection, New Declarations!



In an article published last December by TIME magazine's Jon Marcus, problems with transferring credits to college institutions from military experience are still prevalent among veterans and military members seeking higher education. The issue of transferring military experience was highlighted by Marcus when he

explained the personal story of a Navy veteran. This veteran served 14 years as a nuclear reactor operator, but was required by his university to take an introductory physics and basic mathematics class. This particular veteran took strides to ensure that he received more credit for his service and training, but all too often this is a theme shared by veterans all over the country. The method in which data is collected to give credit to veterans for their experience and training is not standardized between all schools across the country.

The Military Education and Training Campus (METC), located in San Antonio, Texas, reports that it is attempting to update its system to make access easier for college institutions to give credit for experience and training. Although the update is a move in the right direction, the process will take time and will still require effort on the part of the schools to see what courses of military training match their established courses. However, a general perception from the METC is that more schools don't extend the effort to call than schools that do. This can be attributed to a variety of reasons. One common reason is budget cuts in the schools, which reduces the available resources to research for such a credit transfer.

When speaking to some of the veterans attending CSUSB, a similar theme appears. Prior to the existence of the Veterans Success Center, one veteran stated that he received only physical education credit for his time in the Marine Corps, but said that now with strong resource and advocacy for veterans located on campus, more members of the military (veterans, active, reserve) can use credit earned in the military to cut down on their required classes by reducing time to a degree. This can make a difference for those using the GI Bill.

A suggestion made by a veterans' advocate is to ensure that college counselors understand how certain military experience and training relates to college courses. When schools are invited to a workshop event on military education, specific questions need to be asked, both by the college representatives and the person in charge of the event.

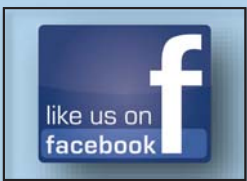
Information retrieved from following sources:

Marcus, Jon. (2016, Dec 26). Veterans Face Uphill Fight Getting College Credit for Military Training. *Time*. Retrieved from

<http://time.com/4608543/veterans-college-credit-military-training-gi-bill/>.

Military Benefits. (2016, Dec 21). College Credit for Military Service & Experience. *Military Benefits*. Retrieved from

<http://militarybenefits.info/college-credit-for-military-service-experience/>



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**CSUSB Veterans
Success Center**

Rain, Rain Stay Another Day, or Month

by William Lewis

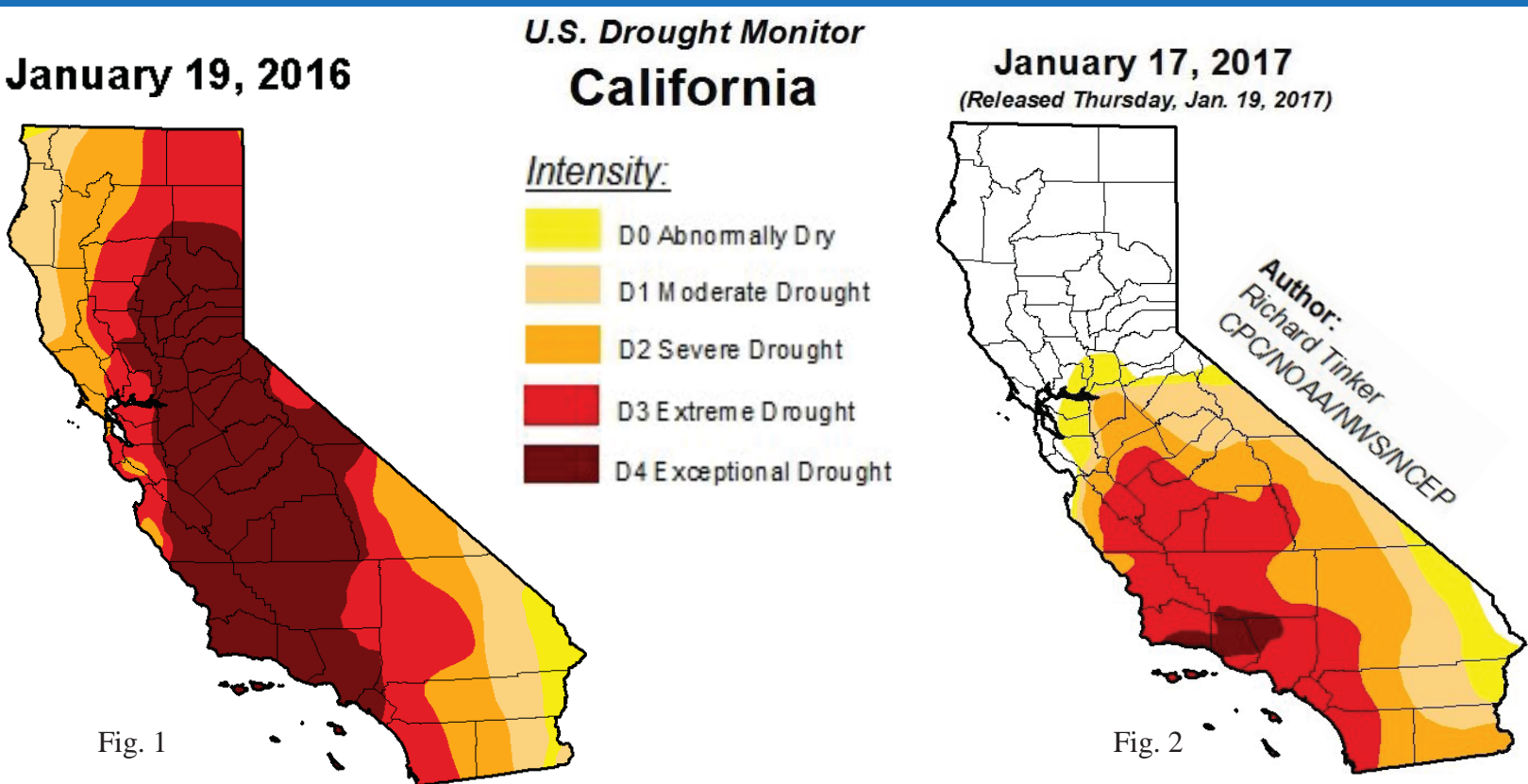
It's good news that California has been getting some much needed rain for the short-term record books. With all of the rain that the state has been getting this past month alone, many people are wondering if we are out of the drought. The answer unfortunately, is no. California is however, significantly closer than it was just one year ago when exceptional drought conditions were recorded in a large number of counties in central California. Right now, much of northern California has received enough rain to put it on the fast-track to recovery from drought conditions. The southern half of California has also seen a dramatic reduction in its drought conditions. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, California has seen dramatic conditions regarding the drought as recently as last year, as seen on Figure 1. Those reported conditions, as of late, have been reduced to much less dangerous levels.

This does not mean that we are free and clear of all negative drought effects. Information is still being reviewed, and officials are still wary of the long term effects that the drought has had on California. A major environmental concern is with ground water aquifers, which have been over-drafted (more taken out than is sustainable for long periods of time, or more taken out than can be refilled within a short period of time). Officials state that these aquifers "in many parts of the state remain severely overdrafted and will take far longer to recover." There are additional concerns over the sheer number of trees lost to bark beetle infestation and wildfires that burned 147,373 acres just in 2016, according to CA.gov. The implications for which mean that Californians will need to continue mindful water usage for the foreseeable future. This means watering your lawn on an infrequent basis, keeping shower time to a minimum, turning off the faucet while brushing your teeth or shaving, letting your car stay dirty on the outside for longer than usual, and remaining water conscious in all of your activities in general.

For more information on the status of the drought, or steps that you can take to reduce water usage and maintain a low level of water consumption, be sure to visit the following websites:

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS): <https://ca.water.usgs.gov/data/drought/>

Save Our Water: <http://saveourwater.com/>



Army Flower Power



(*Image reprinted form the Department of Defense)

The U.S. Army is going green, well greener than usual that is. Recently the Army Small Business Innovation Research program has called for contractors to create ammo that is biodegradable, which would be used during training. This idea comes from the Department of Defense (DoD) making a conscious effort to reduce waste and decrease the environmental impact on the ground that is used for training exercises, specifically, the contamination of groundwater and

the potential effects that it can have on the nearby wildlife. Since there isn't a practical and efficient method to gather all of the spent shells or ammunition, the result is that much is left to decompose in the ground. The issues of this are that the components of ammunition take a very long time to breakdown and can have environmentally unsafe byproducts such as lead.

In order to accomplish the goal of reduced contamination, the DoD is soliciting companies to create ammunition rounds that can accomplish just that task. In partnership with the Army Corp of Engineers, the Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory (CRREL) has already created and test-implemented a seed that can survive the impact of being fired as a projectile. As well as, have a delayed germination phase, giving it enough time to embed in the ground before taking root. The contractor chosen will be used to create biodegradable materials for 40mm - 120mm training rounds, that will encompass the munition and seed. For reference the 40mm round is essentially a grenade while 120mm rounds are more commonly used in tanks. The initial program is split into three phases each with the goal of making this system as effective as possible.



(Photo by Gunnery Sgt. Mark Oliva - From the official U.S. Marine Corps website)

Medal for Heroism Recognition



Midshipman 3rd Class Jonathan Dennler, a member of the Naval Academy's 20th Company, has received the Navy and Marine Medal for Heroism for his acts while participating in a camping event with his Boy Scout Troop.

During July of 2016, Midshipman Dennler was camping in Quetico Provincial Park located in Ontario, Canada. The Boy Scout Troop became entrapped by a severe weather storm with 80 mph wind gusts and lightning strikes. The campsite had two trees fall into its perimeter killing two people, and causing severe injuries to others at the campsite. Midshipman Dennler attempted to reach help via radio but was unable to contact anyone, likely due to the severe weather system, at which point Midshipman Dennler determined he must go for help in person in order to protect the rest of the people at the campsite. Midshipman Dennler took a canoe and made his way 1.5 miles along the waterway, facing 60 mph winds, at night in order to reach a ranger station and return with help and medical supplies.

The award was presented to Midshipman Dennler on January 9, 2017, by the Navy Vice Administrator Ted Carter during a ceremony at Alumni Halls in Annapolis, Maryland. Dennler's class gave him a standing ovation in recognition of his act, although he displayed humble gratitude considering it part of his profession.

The Navy and Marine Corps Medal is ranked as being over the Bronze Star but beneath the Distinguished Flying Cross. To earn this award, there must be evidence of an act of heroism involving very specific life-threatening risk to the awardee. Midshipman Dennler looks forward to graduating in 2019 and serving in the U. S. Marine Corps afterwards.

Story and image retrieved from:

Face of Defense. (2017, January 11). <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1046946/face-of-defense-midshipman-awarded-navy-and-marine-corps-medal-for-heroism>



Air Force Mapping the World



The Air Force is currently producing a series of stories titled “Through Airmen’s Eyes”, which have a concentration on telling stories through the individual Airmen that lived them. One story is about Bob Cunningham, a former radar operator in 1956. Mr. Cunningham was placed on a small island in the Spratly Islands group that was approximately 2,000 feet long and 850 feet wide, with only a six-man radio relay team and his group of four for human interaction. Their mission was to take part of an aerial electronic geodetic survey, which would be computed into highly accurate grid coordinates, that would go on to be a part of ICBM development. This surveying would be similar to what land surveyors do when measuring out the geographical landscape of an area.

Cunningham explained that being an Airman 2nd Class, with only a year of service under his belt, he didn’t quite have the maturity that would be demanded of him to have strong coping strategies for isolation. Cunningham tells about how it was the leadership of the sergeants that kept him and the rest of the Airmen from going stir-crazy by using their creativity and ingenuity to keep the Airmen entertained. They created hand-made furniture, comical signs that would improve moral and even a wind-powered water pump.

Visitors were rare on this small island, with air drops and resupplies only happening every 4-6 weeks to keep up supplies. Cunningham tells about how the team had a brief stand-off with a Chinese gun boat that had 3-inch cannons, machine-guns, and were even sending a landing party to investigate the Airmen’s little island. The standoff ended with a simple message of U-S-A-F spelled out with palm fronds. For recreation, Cunningham would take photos of the myriad of birds that visit the island and go swimming along the safer parts of the island.

For the full story by Josh Turner, be sure to see the U.S. Air Force website at:

<http://www.af.mil/News/ArticleDisplay/tabid/223/Article/1047675/castaway-airman-helped-map-the-world.aspx>

Military Appreciation Night 2017

On January 21st the Veterans Success Center (VSC), in a joint effort with Athletics Department and the Student Veterans Organization (SVO) held the campus’ annual Military Appreciation Night tailgate during the Coyotes men’s and women’s basketball game. The event was established as a night that honors military veterans, active duty, reservists, and retired service members while enjoying the camaraderie of sportsmanship and the sharing of food. Veterans who are categorized as disabled or wounded in action received a secondary recognition in by having a VIP area reserved for them.



In addition to the game, there were performances by the CSUSB Air Force and Army ROTC cadets through a presentation of the colors. Future soldiers of the U.S. Army took the oath of enlistment during the game under the direction of Capt. Kitaguchi and Sgt. Jaramillo. A blessing was given by Chaplain Maj. Sarmiento who works out of March Air Reserve Base, wishing both teams a good game and to embody the spirit of sportsmanship. The local JROTC units that participated in the unfurling of the giant American flag included: Arroyo Valley High school, Beaumont High School, Yucaipa H.S., San Bernardino H.S., Kaiser H.S., Chaffey H.S., Redlands H.S., and Rialto H.S. The members of the JROTC groups also had a series of structured dance performances which showcased the lighter side of the military.



The SVO also held an opportunity drawing to raise funds for the Veteran Success Scholarship fund. Big ticket items were a Chargers LaDainian Tomlinson commemorative football, and a baseball signed by Los Angeles Angels’ Mike Scioscia. This fund is used to enhance the opportunity military affiliated students have to complete their college education and start contributing to their fields of study.

Past Year Review, & New Year Declarations!

Josh B. Rector, Army Dependent

Major: Biology



(Josh with his girlfriend at a pumpkin patch last Thanksgiving.)

Last year I started attending college at CSUSB as a bio pre-med major. I turned 18, and was able to vote for the first time. Overall it was great because I started my adult life! This year I want to excel in all of my classes, and meet new friends. I've already started with making friends right here at the Veterans Success Center. I like the VSC because it

allows dependents of military members to use the services such as printing and free Scantrons. It's a nice place to relax and eat lunch.

Being new to CSUSB I wouldn't know what to improve around here. Many of my classes remind me of coursework I completed in high school. I like to think of it as refining my skills.

Angel Flores, Army National Guard

Major: Biology



Last year was dreadful, but that's because it was extremely challenging as a biology major. The classes are in series and failing or missing one class means waiting until the next year to take it again. Having finally managed to pass my classes without failing, I can now concentrate on taking my upper division classes. The upper division classes have a reputation for being tough, and balancing work along with school is always a challenge, but I'm staying focused on graduating soon. I know my classes will ultimately play a part in advancing me further in a career.

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Ivan Monroy, U.S. Army

Major: Business



Last year was fun for me, I was glad to get back to school and put myself on track to completing my degree; I'm looking forward to graduating this upcoming December! The VSC is awesome, I love being able to hang-out with other veterans, heat up my lunch, and when I'm in a rush, print out homework that is due. If I had to improve something around the school I would try and obtain a study room for the VSC. I believe a designated quiet area would be good.

Classes this quarter are hard no doubt. I'm learning new things though, which is awesome! I'm taking hydrology, conservation of natural resources, and geology. Environmental studies is certainly a challenging major but it is rather rewarding.

Victoria Padua, Army Veteran

Major: Sociology



The year 2016 was filled with accomplishments and struggles that drove me to strive for the best. In 2017, I would like to accomplish my goal of trying to remember the time that we have now is time we'll never get back; to strive to not long for "the good old days", because the days that we are in now are still good. In the time that I have been enrolled at CSUSB, the VSC has been very welcoming and has always provided me with great information about pretty much anything regarding the university or the veterans services from the get-go.

There is always room for improvement, but at CSUSB I would like to see something that VSC actually already provides, but for all students and in a much larger area - more places where you can hangout, sit down, or study. Every class has its own challenges, whether they're so-called easy or not, but all I can do is strive for the best and keep 2017 focused on my faith in Jesus Christ; filling it with fun, adventure, learning and ultimately just keep on moving forward.