



Soldiers Register For eArmyU

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WASHINGTON, D.C. (Army News Service, Jan. 24, 2001) – Ensuring that they would be among the first in line for the Army's newest distance learning initiative, soldiers camped out overnight in their sleeping bags just outside Army Education Services doors Jan. 15, at Fort Benning, Ga.

More than 663 soldiers enrolled for Army University Access Online (AUAO) during the first week of operations at the three installations, where the program is initially being implemented. Those posts are Fort Benning; Fort Campbell, Ky.; and Fort Hood, Texas.

Staff Sgt. Jeffrey L. Matthews from Fort Campbell, Sgt. Christopher M. Jones from Fort Benning, and Staff Sgt. Keva A. Wallace from Fort Hood pre-registered for the program last December so that they could be part of the contract award announcement.

"I think it is truly remarkable that six months after the initiative was first announced and just over a month after the contractor was selected, Army University Access Online is up and running," said Susie Johnson, online program advisor with the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. "The soldiers who camped outside the Fort Benning Army Education Services building demonstrated first-

hand how much they want to be a part of the program.

"The AUAO staff at Fort Benning that came in at 4 a.m. were amazed literally to see hundreds of soldiers waiting in line to enroll."

Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera first announced the initiative July 10 with the goals of enhancing recruiting, increasing retention, and developing more educated, technology-savvy soldiers. He announced Dec. 14 [2000], the selection of PricewaterhouseCoopers as the Army's implementing partner under a \$453 million, five-year contract.

PricewaterhouseCoopers is leading a consortium of 29 academic institutions in an AUAO Learning Network with more than a dozen supporting technology companies in launching the education initiative. More academic institutions are expected to join the network in coming months, Johnson said.

Participating institutions must be members of the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Army Degree program that guarantees the transferability of credit among other participating institutions.

Registered participants will be able to work on academic certificates or degrees free of charge. The AUOA program covers all costs,

including tuition, books, lab fees, Internet access, technical assistance, tutoring, and mentoring programs.

AUAO is currently being offered to enlisted soldiers at the first three participating installations. Other installations will be phased in to cover the entire Army over the next few years. Eventually, the program will also be offered to the officer corps, the reserve component, and family members, Johnson said.

To register, soldiers at participating installations must first visit an Army Continuing Education System (ACES) counselor to get the necessary paperwork, set education goals, and determine if program eligibility requirements can be met.

Those requirements include:

- A high school diploma or General Education Development certificate.
- At least three years remaining on current enlistment.
- At least six months remaining at the participating installation.
- Meeting the school admissions criteria.
- The approval of company commander.
- A signed AUAO participation agreement.

After an ACES counselor talks to the enrolling soldier, the soldier meets with AUAO

staff. Technical staff issue the soldier a technology package consisting of a laptop computer, printer, Internet service provider account, and e-mail account. An AUAO program mentor assists the soldier in registering for classes via the AUAO portal, eArmyU.com, before leaving the building.

Johnson described the portal as a virtual doorway to diverse courses leading to degrees, certificates, and a full range of student support services. It is used to attend all classes, complete coursework and access educational advisory services, and technical and administrative support.

In return for this opportunity, Johnson said, soldiers are required to complete 12 semester hours in the first two years of enrollment.

“One of the great features of Army University Access Online – and there are many great features – is all the support services available to participants,” Johnson said. “There are mentoring, tutoring, and technical help services available via the portal, 1-800 numbers, and on site at each participating installation. Help is there 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week.”

Editor’s Note: This information is in the public domain at <http://www.dtic.mil/army/link/news> on the Internet.