

OPEN DOORS TO A FULLFILLING CAREER AT DMU

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COLLEGE SPOTLIGHT

It's no news that earning a master's degree can open more doors and new windows in your career. It may be more years of school and it may be more expensive than the four-year undergrad degree. But in today's competitive market, it can be the difference between a promotion and falling behind.



“On day one of basic training one of our drill sergeants said ‘If you want to advance in the Army, there are three things you can do: first, show up at the place, at the right time, wearing the right uniform every day; second, score really well on your physical training test; and third get education under your belt.’”— Staff Sgt. Garrett Boyer

For our veterans and service members in the military, a master's degree rounds them out as some of the most desired prospects for hiring managers. Many of our service members develop great skill sets that are heavily valued and in high demand in both the armed forces and the private sectors.

Military officials are also encouraging recruits to pursue higher degrees to help complement those soft skills, and most colleges and universities have scholarship and financial aid resources specifically for veterans and military students. Most branches of the military also offer service members tuition assistance toward their undergrad degrees while on active duty. In doing so, military members are able to preserve more benefits through the GI Bill, which they can then put toward a graduate degree.

“My supervisor in the Coast Guard really encouraged it,” said Noelle Kitenko, a lieutenant in the Coast Guard Reserves in Portsmouth, VA.

Ltn. Kitenko earned her bachelor's degree through the Coast Guard Academy and graduated from Divine Mercy University's (DMU) Master's in Psychology online program this past December. “I was already interested in psychology and behavior,” she said, “but Divine Mercy University's Catholic

philosophy and worldview on psychology made it especially attractive and, for me, the GI Bill was able to cover tuition and costs.”

“A master’s in any concentration is great,” she continued, “and it’s definitely helpful putting you in a position for promotion. It shows that you have an aptitude for learning and finding ways to improve. With the Coast Guard, the master’s degree helps put me in position to be promoted to Lt. Commander.”



Staff Sgt. Garrett Boyer

“Continued learning doesn’t only keep us abreast in the fields of work or study,” said Staff Sgt. William Johnston, a first-year student in DMU’s APA-Accredited Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) in Clinical Psychology program. Johnston served in the Army for over 10 years, with deployments in Iraq and Kuwait, and had attained the rank of Staff Sergeant before leaving the force.

“It also aids in personal and professional growth,” he continued. “I decided to continue my education after separating from the Army, in part due to my long-held desire to serve others. I feel called to serve others by providing therapy to those most in need; therefore, I must gain the necessary education and license to become a psychologist. However, perhaps even more importantly, continued education often has a secondary effect of fostering development in topics such as diversity, morality, and ethics, which is beneficial as a citizen and diplomat while serving in the military abroad.”

For Staff Sgt. Garrett Boyer, another student in DMU’s Psy.D. program, education was high on the list of things he needed to do in order to rise in the military.

“On day one of basic training,” he said, “one of our drill sergeants said ‘If you want to advance in the Army, there are three things you can do: first, show up at the place, at the right time, wearing the right uniform every day; second, score really well on your physical training test; and third get education under your belt.’”

Boyer earned his bachelor’s from North Dakota State University and his master’s from Mount St. Mary’s in Emmitsburg, Maryland, before enrolling in DMU’s Psy.D. program in 2014. The Psy.D. Program is composed of five years of education and training in clinical psychology—usually a full time, four-year curriculum in residence at DMU followed by a year of full time internship. Just three years later, he joined the Army at age 30.

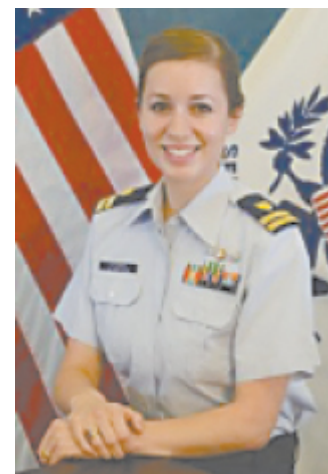
Despite initial apprehensions as an older enlistee, he understood that the military was going to be a great fit for his future.

An E-6 Staff Sgt. in the National Guard, Boyer is completing his final year of academic studies while also preparing for his upcoming transition to active duty. He was also in Officer Candidate School with the National Guard, but with the Psy.D. degree, Boyer is set to advance farther than his colleagues in Officer Candidate School.

“When I transition to the officer side,” he explained, “because I’ve already completed the master’s program and I’m going to complete my doctoral studies, I’ll go in as an O-3 — a Captain. For my colleagues in Officer Candidate School, they will be commissioned as O-1 Second Lieutenants in August, which is the lower officer rate. For some of them, they won’t become O-3 Captains for probably five or six years. So, I’m already jumping two whole ranks because I’ve had this wonderful education opportunity under my belt.”

In addition to the jump in military rank, Boyer was matched to go to Fort Bragg in North Carolina for his postdoctoral internship, where he will predominantly do assessment work and individual therapy with soldiers transitioning from basic training into military life and specialized training, as well as those soldiers returning from deployment.

“That’s in large part because of my degree in psychology,” he said. “I’m going in as a medical service officer, specifically to help soldiers and their families as a psychologist.”



Lt. Noelle Kitenko, M.S.

Whether you’re a veteran looking to change careers, on active duty planning your future or working in the private sector, earning a master’s degree or higher will not only help make the transition easier, but will also open doors to new possibilities and opportunities to lead a more fulfilling career.

For these service members, Divine Mercy University opened the right doors for their future. DMU is a nonprofit graduate university that offers online master’s degrees in Psychology and Clinical Mental Health Counseling, as well as a Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) in Clinical Psychology on campus. The university supports all military veterans and service members and does everything within its power to

help continue their education and accelerate their future, including offering a 10 percent scholarship discount to all active military and veteran applicants. All degrees are approved for Veteran Educational Benefits and benefits through the GI Bill and the Yellow Ribbon Education Enhancement Program.

You can find more information about DMU by visiting their website at <https://enroll.divinemersey.edu/>.