



TRIDENT
at American InterContinental University

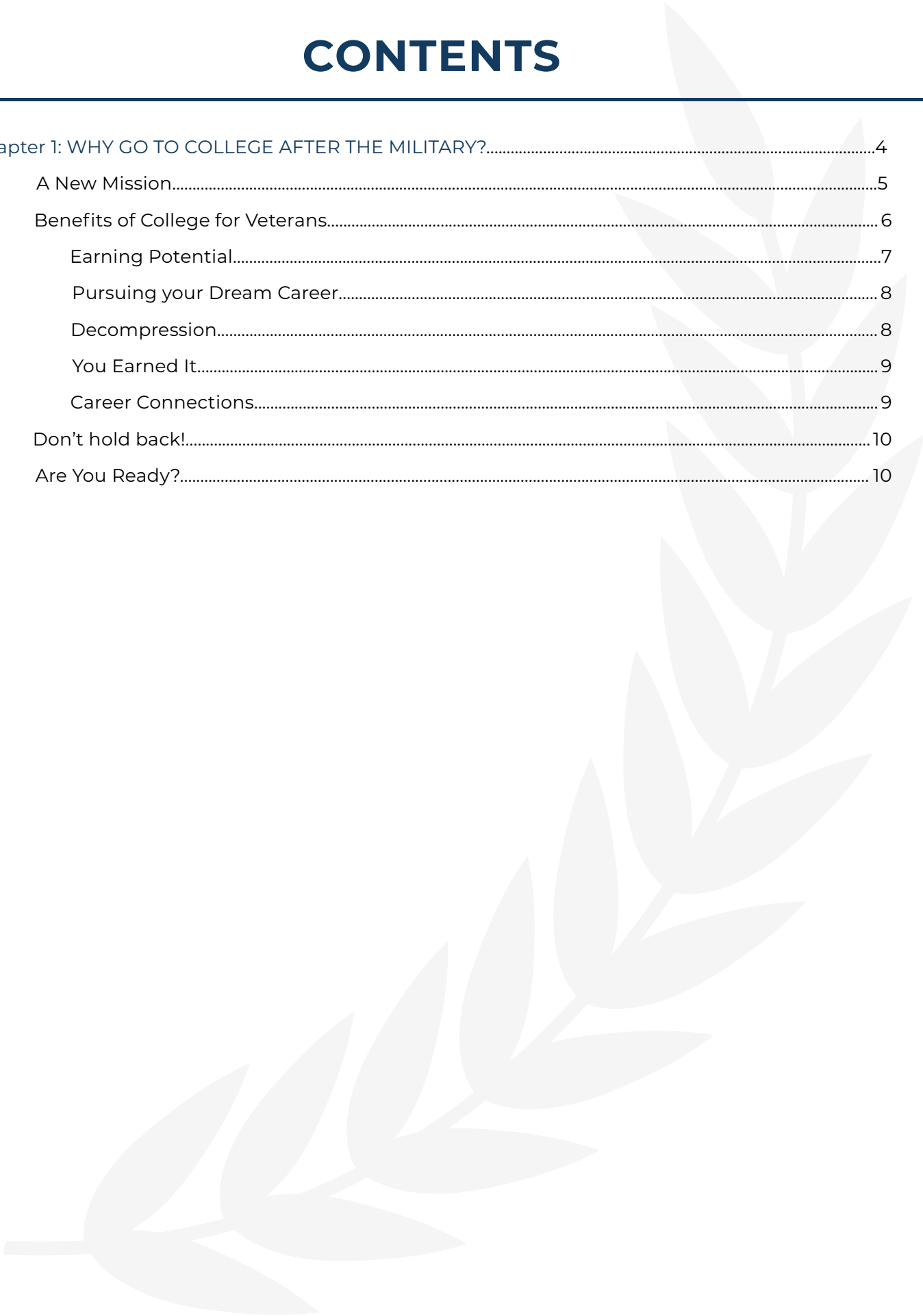
VETERANS E-BOOK

A GUIDE TO COLLEGE



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Chapter 1: Why Go to College After the Military?

Welcome! We're glad you downloaded this e-book. Whether you're a new veteran who is excited to pursue a college degree, an uncertain veteran researching your approach to the transition from military to civilian life, or an active duty service member who is considering pursuing a civilian career with a college degree, this book can help.

We encourage you to read through this book with an open mind. There are quite a few benefits and opportunities available for military members and student veterans. The possibilities are certainly exciting and, perhaps, a bit overwhelming. However, if you choose the right path for you, earning a college education can be much simpler than you might expect.



A New Mission

Let's face it: transitioning from military to civilian life is usually not an easy task. In the military, your purpose and goals are clearly defined on any given day. You know what you have to do and there is little opportunity to stray from or question the tasks at hand. Often, the environment you've grown accustomed to is one of urgency and danger. Perhaps, the most significant change is that, in the military, you are working on a daily basis to advance highly important objectives designed to protect peoples' lives or the nation's most honored values.

Shifting from this type of culture and mindset to a more relaxed, less clear-cut civilian lifestyle can be an intense challenge. The lack of a pressing mission and complete clarity of purpose can be a strange feeling to a new veteran and your new life might take some adjustments.

As you approach this transition, though, you should remember that you've already shown a tremendous capacity to give of yourself, the determination to keep going under unusually arduous circumstances, and the heart to make a difference. Try to think of college as a worthwhile mission for the good of yourself and your family.

You are an important American with the skills and dedication to make a significant impact on the future of our nation. Any investment in bettering yourself and furthering your education is an investment in yourself.

You are among the best and the brightest – and your country needs you, whether as a member of the military or the civilian workforce. You owe it to yourself to be the best you can be. By investing in your education, you can unlock your potential and prepare yourself to make the strong impact you're capable of in your field of choice.



Benefits of College for Veterans

Before we get in-depth with the many topics related to veterans going back to college, first let's stop to think about why a college degree is even a good idea for a veteran in the first place.

You can examine the funding opportunities, pour over degree options, brush up on study skills, and learn all about military experience-based college credits, but if you aren't clear on why you're doing it, it could be difficult to achieve the level of focus the task requires.

So let's jump right into it. Why should veterans go to college?

Our students give lots of highly personalized responses to the question, "why did you decide to go to college after the military?" We've heard about parents wanting to give their families the lives they deserve. We've heard about first-generation college students that feel they owe it to themselves to be the first members of their families to earn a higher education degree. One student wanted to be a teacher since kindergarten. One wanted to research cures for the cancer that killed her father. One wanted to improve certain types of scenarios he witnessed in the military.

The more than 22,000 military and veteran alumni that have graduated from Trident will give you over 22,000 very different stories about why they chose to better themselves and their futures by pursuing a college career. There are, however, some common denominators.

Below are some of the popular reasons veterans go back to college:

1. Earning Potential

Personal growth, pursuing a career that matches your interests and passions, and expanding your knowledge base and horizons are all serious reasons to go to college. However, one reason people choose to earn a degree is to invest in themselves.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the more education an individual has, the greater their earning potential and the lower their likelihood of becoming unemployed.

2014 Earnings & Unemployment of Americans Over 25 with Varying Education Levels

	Average Earnings	Unemployment Rate
Less than a high school diploma	\$969	5.4%
High school diploma, no college	\$746	3.7%
Some college but no degree	\$833	3.3%
Associate degree	\$887	2.7%
Bachelor's degree	\$1,248	2.2%
Master's degree	\$1,497	2.0%
Doctoral degree	\$1,883	1.1%
Professional degree	\$1,861	1.6%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Unemployment rates and earnings by educational attainment

<https://www.bls.gov/emp/chart-unemployment-earnings-education.htm> visited 05/27/2020.

Conditions in your area may vary.

These statistics clearly display the advantage that a college degree can provide.

2. Pursuing your Dream Career

Whether you've been out of the military for a while, are currently transitioning, or are preparing for a potential transition, if you're in a place where you're considering going back to school, now is the time to assess what you really want out of your career – and life in general!

Some people are happy doing a wide variety of jobs, as long as their position is meaningful, they are compensated well for it, and the company culture allows them to enjoy their job. Others have a specific passion they wish to pursue.

Deciding whether or not to follow these passionate career urges is a very personal process that will require you to weigh the options and benefits of many different paths.

Starting from scratch can seem daunting, but we assure you many others like yourself have done it before. As a veteran, you probably already possess many qualities that employers desire such as experience, discipline, trustworthiness, good communication skills, and a healthy lifestyle, among many others. A college degree is a great addition to all your other qualities.

3. Decompression

As previously discussed, leaving the military can be a challenging transition. Military life is intense. It is important that you take good care of yourself as you go through this time of immense change. Many veterans find that enrolling in college allows them the decompression time they need to adjust to civilian life and process their experiences in the military. Since the college experience tends to come with less pressure than a new job, pursuing a degree can be a good way to ease back into the civilian job market. Plus, some veterans are not yet ready to make a decision about the career direction they wish to take and school allows them to delay those decisions for a while, without creating an unexplainable gap in their resume.

Students who choose a military friendly college and struggle with common issues like Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can reach out to military assistance departments within their college to be directed toward resources that can help. Accessing appropriate services can be an imperative component to new veterans' well-being and in helping them to adjust and move forward as healthily as possible.

Another helpful aspect of enrolling in a military friendly college is the opportunity to meet other student veterans. If you choose a school with a large population of veterans, you can meet others in situations similar to your own, whether they are in-person or online classes. These connections can be invaluable as you shift your focus from military missions to educational pursuits. Having someone you can talk to who understands your position can be a great comfort as you transition from the military.

4. You Earned It

As a veteran, you have many advantages as a student. These will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, but a few of them are listed below:

- **G.I. Bill® and other education benefits.** Depending on the amount of time you served and where you choose to go to school, these may pay for a large portion of the costs associated with earning your degree.
- **Reduced tuition.** Many military-friendly colleges offer reduced tuition rates for veterans and active-duty service members.
- **Accelerated degree path.** College credits are often granted to veterans based on their training and experience during service.

During your time in the military you may have earned many tuition assistance benefits and college credits that could accelerate your journey toward your degree, reducing your out-of-pocket costs even further.

5. Career Connections

College affords every student a unique opportunity to make connections, but those connections may be even more meaningful for student veterans – especially if you choose a military friendly college with a large population of student veterans.

After you graduate, you'll be a part of an extensive alumni network spread across the country. For instance, as of 2019, Trident had more than 22,000 alumni with military affiliation. As you search for opportunities, you will be able to reach out to fellow veteran Trident alumni to ask questions, gain insight, and perhaps even open some doors to a new career.

GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government Web site at www.benefits.va.gov/gibill.

Don't hold back!

If you're considering going back to college, but are worried about taking on the coursework in addition to other responsibilities, fear not. Many other student veterans are in the same boat and manage to do well in school. While student veterans do tend to have more responsibilities than traditional students, this does not impact their success rates.

According to the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA), many student veterans are:

- **Parents.** 47% of student veterans have kids.
- **Married.** 47.3% are married.
- **First-generation college students.** 62% are among the first members of their family to go to college.
- **Older than traditional students.** Just 15% of student veterans are traditional age students. Most are between 24- and 40-years-old.
- **Successful.** 51.7% of student veterans finish their degree within 4-5 years of starting college. This rate is comparable to that of other non-veteran college students.

http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/studentveteran/docs/ed_todaysStudentVets.html

As you can see, student veterans tend to be non-traditional students. Many have jobs, families, and spouses. By choosing a military friendly college, you can be sure that the staff will understand your unique situation and needs. While other colleges may treat all students as if they are 18-year-olds with no other responsibilities, the staff at a military friendly college with a large population of military and adult learners will be familiar with your challenges and will be ready with the services and resources to support you along the way.

Are You Ready?

We hope this chapter has convinced you that pursuing higher education is a worthwhile mission that will allow you to pursue a career path, decompress, and take advantage of valuable benefits and credit you may already have earned while serving your country.

If you're still on the fence, we hope you'll read on to clarify some aspects of the processes involved in enrolling in school and earning your degree. That way they will seem less overwhelming as you make your choices and you will be able to make the most informed decision possible.



REMAINING CONTENT UNDER REVIEW



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