
How an Associate of Arts Degree Helped my Personal Career Goals

Abstract

In 2002, the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy said over 70% of enlisted personnel who are promoted to the rank of Chief Petty Officer (E7), Senior Chief Petty Officer (E8), or Master Chief Petty Officer (E9) in today's Naval Service have a college degree. It is my firm belief that an Associate of Art's Degree will assist me in being promoted to my next higher pay grade, provide my children with a father who is more confident assisting with their school work, and help me obtain a better paying position in the civilian community after my Naval career.

How an Associate of Art's Degree Contributes to My Career Goals

When I joined the Navy in 1981, having a degree was not as important as it is today. During recent years, however, having a degree of higher education is very important for promotion in all branches of the military, especially the Navy. In today's Navy, sailors are enlisting with associate and bachelor degrees. If smarter sailors are entering the military, so the leaders of today's Navy have to be smarter as well. In order to keep up with the personnel joining the military today, I need to have a college degree. An associate of art's degree will help me keep up with my junior personnel. It will also assist me in promotion, and will allow me to articulate my thoughts more clearly, concisely, and effectively with other educated people.

Approximately 70% of all personnel promoted from the enlisted ranks of the Navy have some form of higher education or a degree. If I did not obtain the same level of education as my subordinates, I would not be as effective a leader. If I fail selection to the next higher pay grade, an associate degree will afford me the opportunity to enhance my career and will better prepare me when entering the work force after retirement.

As a Command Senior Enlisted Advisor, it is my daunting responsibility to correlate, edit, and assemble large volumes of paperwork submitted by the enlisted staff and medical professionals. I have to interpret documents written in "physician's chicken-scratch" from my doctors to nurses using what I call their "unofficial all-their-own language" that is private and often encrypted, with words even I have trouble pronouncing. Obtaining a degree will allow me to better understand the intent of what the medical professionals are saying and therefore allow me to pass on information in simpler terms to the staff. On the other hand, it will allow me to take what the staff are saying and pass it on to the physicians and nurses.

As a Leading Chief Petty Officer, it is my responsibility to recognize the outstanding efforts and/or achievements of my enlisted staff. Whether composing Commanding General's Certificates of Commendation or submitting nominations for impact awards, such as the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, proper preparation and a strong grasp of the English language are required to properly convey in writing a sailor's performance. Taking care of my sailors in order to ensure they get the recognition they deserve is one of the most important jobs that I can do as a Chief Petty Officer. It is therefore extremely important that I master this course

and further my education.

My children are another factor pushing me to obtain an associate of art's degree. My daughter is a freshman in high school and my son is in junior high. Obtaining my degree will enable me to better understand and help them with their homework. Hopefully, I will no longer look at some of their school assignments and think to myself "Oh God, this looks like Greek to me" or "How can I help you when I don't understand it myself?" I will be more confident in my abilities and be able to assist them with their homework and guide them in preparation for exams.

Once retired from the military and in pursuit of a career in the private sector, I will have an advantage in the job market. Numerous studies have shown that personnel with a college degree earn, on average, \$20,000 more than a person with a high school education alone. In fact, according to an online article by Romy Ribitzky (2002), college graduates can expect to earn approximately \$2 million over the course of a lifetime, while high school graduates earn only about half this amount. This alone is a major reason for me to obtain my associate of art's degree.

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