

# AFCEA EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

## Veterans Scholarships Prove To Be Worthwhile Investments

Isaac Detrinidad represents the spirit of every AFCEA War Veterans Scholarship recipient and demonstrates a great return on scholarship investments in veterans. Not only is Detrinidad the AFCEA Educational Foundation's unprecedented fourth-time scholarship winner, his academic journey to achieve his dream of becoming an aerospace engineer has been remarkable.

Co-sponsored by the AFCEA Northern Virginia Chapter and the AFCEA Educational Foundation, the War Veterans Scholarships were established in 2006. They support active-duty and honorably discharged U.S. military veterans, including reservists and National Guard personnel, who are entering school after their service in operations Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) and Iraqi Freedom. The scholarships have been endowed by a generous contribution by the chapter, which continues to make donations to this endowment fund so additional scholarships can be awarded. To date, AFCEA has presented 23 War Veterans Scholarships. For information regarding application eligibility and deadlines, visit [www.afcea.org/education/scholarships/undergraduate/veteran.asp](http://www.afcea.org/education/scholarships/undergraduate/veteran.asp).

Detrinidad, a retired Marine Corps staff sergeant, received his first scholarship award in spring 2006 while still on active duty as an aviation supply operations supervisor and aircraft mechanic. At that time, he was a single father raising two teenage sons while also attending San Diego Mesa College as a part-time student. The AFCEA San Diego Chapter recognized his accomplishments at a chapter luncheon, and members of the college's engineering faculty also honored Detrinidad's achievements.

He transferred to Cuyamaca College in 2007 and applied again for a scholarship. After nine semesters at the community college level maintaining a 3.85 overall grade point average (GPA), the judging panel unanimously selected Detrinidad for a second consecutive



**Three AFCEA chapters played key roles in awarding Isaac Detrinidad an unprecedented four AFCEA War Veterans Scholarships. The Northern Virginia Chapter co-sponsors these scholarships with the AFCEA Educational Foundation. The San Diego Chapter presented Detrinidad with his first scholarship in spring 2006. The Huntsville Chapter honored Detrinidad at its June luncheon, also attended by Randy Gostowski, director, Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC) Engineering Directorate, and Adrienne Accaroi, MSFC operations manager, NASA Propulsion Academy. Detrinidad is shown here in a space shuttle orbiter preparing for takeoff on a simulated space mission.**

scholarship. On his application, Detrinidad wrote, "Due to operational commitments as a Marine, I have only been able to enroll in classes as a part-time student, which is why I have only been placed on the San Diego Community College District Dean's List four times and why it is taking so long to achieve my degree." He earned an associates of science degree in physics from San Diego Mesa College. Detrinidad's journey continued when he applied to and was accepted by Purdue University, one of the most prestigious engineering schools in the nation.

In spring 2008, Detrinidad retired from the Marines after more than 20 years and became a full-time student. The financial demands of pursuing his degree were becoming an increasingly

difficult burden. Nevertheless, in Detrinidad's third application for a scholarship he stated, "I have tutored 35 students in mathematics and engineering courses at Purdue University from May 2007 to March 2008; I have been a leader in the Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineering Student Advisory Council at Purdue University since January 2008; I have been an active member of the National Aerospace Engineering Honorary Society since November 2007, where I participate in various community service projects on a monthly basis...." His involvement extended to a weekly reading/mentorship program for underrepresented children at a local preschool. Detrinidad won a third War Veterans Scholarship, presented to him by members of the engineering faculty at Purdue.

Detrinidad received an unprecedented fourth AFCEA scholarship in spring 2009. The associate head of the Purdue School of Aeronautics and Astronautics wrote in his recommendation letter, "If your scholarship committee is seeking superior candidates with a record of achievement, Isaac Detrinidad is an exceptional choice." The selection committee unanimously voted him its number one applicant. While maintaining a 3.7 GPA, he earned the ATK Thiokol Propulsion Space Award (first place) from his aerospace engineering design course. Detrinidad then secured a 10-week summer internship as one of only 20 college students selected from a pool of thousands who applied from around the country at the highly competitive NASA Propulsion Academy in Huntsville, Alabama.

Members of the AFCEA Huntsville Chapter honored Detrinidad at their luncheon in June, which included his academy adviser and operations manager. Detrinidad told attendees, "It has truly been an incredible experience and an honor to win the War Veterans Scholarship for the fourth consecutive year.... I assure you I will prove to be a worthwhile investment."