

The Certification Outlook

Connecting you to credentialing resources



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Army Lieutenant Colonel uses certification to pursue and support his cybersecurity passion

Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Marty discusses the motivation behind and benefits of his ten certifications and their impact on his current role and future career goals.

Joe Marty took an early “obsession” for cybersecurity and turned it into a career in the United States Army, blending multiple degree programs and industry-recognized certifications in pursuit of lifelong learning and cybersecurity excellence.



Lieutenant Colonel Joe Marty,
United States Army

Please share a bit about your personal and professional background.

I first got interested in computers around the age of 11 or 12 when my friend’s family got America Online, and my mom also purchased a computer. A few years later, I read *2600: The Hacker Quarterly*, and cybersecurity and hacking have been a hobby and interest of mine since then.

I attained my undergraduate degree in computer science from North Georgia College & State University, now called University of North Georgia. When I joined the Army in 2004, I was a field artillery officer, and it was my Master of Science in cyberspace operations at the Air Force Institute of Technology that really set me up for my current path. I began my military cyberspace operations track out of the Army Cyber Protection Brigade and now I’m working at US Cyber Command at the strategic headquarters, while getting multiple certifications and continuously learning. Each day has multiple opportunities to teach colleagues how to apply different real world techniques and methodologies for both defensive and offensive cybersecurity that I’ve learned through both of my degrees and all of my certification courses.

What made you want to get certified?

I wasn’t aware of the importance of technical certifications until one of the senior NCOs at the time encouraged me to get a Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) certification from (ISC)². Fortunately for me, the cyberspace operations master’s degree curriculum at the Air Force Institute of Technology is almost perfectly aligned with the CISSP domains, so I just went and passed the exam without additional training. After getting the CISSP, I learned that the Cyber Protection Brigade had training funds allocated to SANS courses and I signed up for all the ones that they would allow me to do, one after another, because I saw the value that the certifications would have outside the Army.

Over time, I’ve learned that there are key benefits of having the certifications while you’re operating in uniform, too, because when you’re working with external organizations and mission partners that support the DoD, they recognize the credibility that certification carries. When they see your credentials, then they trust your abilities.

Certification Spotlight

Describe some of the unique challenges you faced while attempting to get certified while on active duty.

The main challenge is simply setting aside the time to commit to earning a certification. They don't always limit how many courses you can take, so people need to be aware of how much work is involved in taking them. The courses are usually one week long and live (whether in-person or remote) and it's like drinking from a firehose. They immerse you in knowledge, so it's important to ask questions and take advantage of the instructor time while you have it. Some of the courses utilize remote learning at your own pace with a window of time to complete the course material. For that format, I have to commit my own personal time outside of work to do it because I'm too busy at work. Trying to balance multiple courses is definitely a challenge, which is why I don't start courses at the same time if I'm taking more than one.

Can you describe your study process?

I go back through all the course material to take scrupulous notes. I try to frame the notes by putting myself in the exam developers' shoes. "If I wanted to test somebody's knowledge base, what kind of questions would I ask?" The other tip I have is to take any practice exams that are available to you.

There's an old phrase that I've kept with me since college, which is "practice makes permanent," or as they say in the military, "train as you fight." When I take a practice exam, I try and set up my workstation exactly the way it will be during the test. Then, after I finish the practice test, I go back and review all the questions again to make sure that I've actually understood what I missed and why.

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– Joe Marty

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What recommendations do you have for Service members who are just starting their certification process? Are there particular study and preparation tools and techniques that you recommend?

Figure out what you're interested in or obsessed with. Identify what your road map is in order to achieve that expertise, and then jump on it, especially if you are not paying for it. You might surprise yourself with how much you like the certification process and, if nothing else, at least you'll learn something. The reason I got as many different certifications as I did is that GIAC certifications are designed around a whole core pathway, starting with one particular course and building towards expert-level certifications. There's always more to learn and pursue, even if you reach the end of a particular pathway, because the end of the documentation doesn't mean the end of the knowledge.

Certifications earned to date by Lieutenant Colonel Joe Marty:

- Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH)
- (ISC)² Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)
- GIAC Penetration Tester (GPEN)
- GIAC Global Industry Cyber Security Professional (GICSP)
- GIAC Python Coder (GPYC)
- GIAC Response and Industrial Defense (GRID)
- GIAC Certified Windows Security Administrator (GCWN)
- GIAC Certified UNIX Security Administrator (GCUX)
- GIAC Certified Intrusion Analyst (GCIA)
- GIAC Certified Incident Handler (GCIH)

Certification program updates

The following certification programs are now available CONUS and OCONUS at Pearson VUE test centers located in your US military base education building.



Claris International: The Claris FileMaker Developer certification verifies that an individual has the essential levels of knowledge, experience, and skills necessary for creating digital solutions with Claris FileMaker. Visit PearsonVUE.com/ClarisInternational for more information or to register for an exam.



Connecticut Insurance: Connecticut Insurance licensure exams are available at select base-sponsored Pearson VUE test centers, both within and outside the state of Connecticut. Visit PearsonVUE.com/CT/Insurance for more information or to register for an exam.



Defense Acquisition University: The Defense Acquisition University (DAU) offers entry-level, intermediate, and advanced certifications, each available across 14 acquisition career fields. DAU certifications are only available to DoD employees, military, and APF civilians assigned to an acquisition-coded position, as well as select military officers whose career development will include assignment to acquisition-coded positions. Visit PearsonVUE.com/DAU for more information or to register for an exam.



Nevada State Board of Cosmetology: Nevada State Board of Cosmetology licensure exams are available at select base-sponsored Pearson VUE test centers, both within and outside the state of Nevada. Visit PearsonVUE.com/NV/Cosmetology for more information or to register for an exam.



New York State Police: New York State Police exams are available at select base-sponsored Pearson VUE test centers, both within and outside the state of New York. Candidates must complete an application for the New York State Police and receive an Authorization to Test email from Pearson VUE prior to scheduling their exam. Visit PearsonVUE.com/NYSP for more information or to register for an exam.



Snowflake: The SnowPro Core Certification demonstrates an individual's knowledge to apply core expertise implementing and migrating to Snowflake. Visit PearsonVUE.com/Snowflake for more information or to register for an exam.



Tableau: Tableau offers multiple certifications designed to measure specific proficiencies and expertise using Tableau's interactive data visualization software. Visit PearsonVUE.com/Tableau for more information or to register for an exam.

For a full list of available certifications, visit PearsonVUE.com/Military/Exams.

85%

of survey respondents said certification increased their drive and determination to succeed in their careers.



Get to know us: Gordon Kirksey, Channel Sales Manager - Pearson VUE

How long have you worked at Pearson VUE and what are your responsibilities?

I've been with Pearson VUE for 16 years, starting in the call center as a Program Coordinator Assistant. I moved to my current role as a Channel Sales Manager in 2008, recruiting and assisting the military with opening Pearson VUE test centers stateside and abroad on US military bases. I'm currently responsible for recruiting and assisting not only military bases, but also colleges, K-12 schools, and commercial businesses with their test center needs.



What is your favorite thing about your job?

I enjoy working with the military most of all. Helping military contacts through the Pearson VUE test center process is so gratifying. These Service members have so much responsibility protecting our country both at home and abroad. When they contact me and feel like they have been handed this huge responsibility of setting up a Pearson VUE test center, I enjoy helping to simplify the process. I want to ease any confusion so when they walk away from our conversation, they say, "this is so much easier than I thought." So customer service is what I enjoy most about my job.

What do you enjoy doing when you're not at work?

Coaching youth sports is what I enjoy most, especially kids that have not really been in sports yet. I've been coaching youth sports for over 20 years, and I love teaching them the right way it should be done: with respect for teammates and officials. I guess it goes with my passion of simplifying processes and teaching. I still stay in contact with players that I've coached over the years. To see them be successful, in college and in their adult lives, makes me proud.

68%

of survey respondents said they purchased their exam and training together.



2021 Pearson VUE Value of Certification Federal Supplement.

Don't forget

COOL: Service members in all branches can find information on training, credentials, and licenses related to their military and civilian careers. Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) and the Army's Credentialing Assistance program help identify training gaps and define the paths needed to earn civilian and federal positions. Additionally, each COOL website features key information about funding, accreditations, and in-demand credentials. Visit PearsonVUE.com/military/funding to learn more about how COOL works in your branch.

Government Store: Service members and government employees can shop for competitively priced certification vouchers and learning materials for leading certifications at Pearson VUE's Government Store. GovStore.PearsonVUE.com offers multi-modal training and testing solutions featuring eLearning, study guides, practice tests, and certification vouchers to help students take the next step in their certification pathway. Visit GovStore.PearsonVUE.com to see our full product suite of learning, testing, and procurement options.

Help your military community succeed:

If you are interested in opening a Pearson VUE test center on your base, contact DoD@Pearson.com.

www.linkedin.com/showcase/Pearson-VUE-Military

www.facebook.com/Pearson4USMilitary

