

# JROTC & CTE:

## A Conversation with Lieutenant Commander Alex C. Baker

### What is JROTC?

The Navy JROTC was established by Public Law in 1964 and is conducted at 587 accredited secondary schools throughout the nation by retired Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard officers and enlisted personnel. The NJROTC curriculum emphasizes citizenship and leadership development as well as our maritime heritage and Naval Science related courses. Classroom instruction is augmented throughout the year by community service, drill competitions, orienteering meets, marksmanship and other military training.

### What is CTE?

Career and technical education (CTE) is a dynamic, skills based instructional model that prepares students for careers in a diverse number of high-demand fields ranging from technology to culinary arts.

### How does JROTC relate to CTE?

At its core, JROTC is a citizenship and leadership development program. Cadets are taught from day one the employability skills in demand in all business and industrial settings. The program continually challenges cadets with increasing levels of responsibility and accountability in various areas, ranging from inventory management to personnel administration. Through numerous inspections and competitions, cadets are trained to deal with scenarios ranging from everyday tasks to stressful conditions with confidence and maturity.

### What should CTE educators know about JROTC?

Only a small percentage of JROTC cadets go on to a career in the military, but for those who do, they are rewarded with advanced rank and a tremendous head start in their initial military training. Although the JROTC is not a program designed to recruit students, the lessons and skills they acquire are just as valuable to the military as the skills students in other CTE areas bring to their career fields. However, for the majority of cadets, JROTC is a place where they learn the values of teamwork, responsibility, followership and leadership while maturing into confident young adults. These invaluable life skills will allow them to be successful in any career field they chose.

### As a JROTC adviser, what should someone know about CTE?

The common wisdom in today's America is that every student must "go to college" to be successful. For many who want to pursue professional careers that require specific, multiple degrees to work in an advance field, college is the obvious choice. However, for the majority of students whose path is not clear, CTE provides numerous options at the middle and high school level that lead to in-demand, high wage jobs in any number of career fields. When students combine the leadership and other invaluable soft-skills learned as part of the JROTC program with the training in another career technical education field, they will have a tremendous advantage in not only applying for the job but for advancement in the field as well.

### Example of Success: Career Readiness through JROTC

The examples of success stories in JROTC are legion. The number of JROTC cadets who have earned service academy appointments, ROTC scholarships and who are having very successful careers in the military represent a small portion of the tens of thousands of cadets nationally who go onto productive careers in every industry and business.

In the State of Georgia, that success has been greatly enhanced by the decision to place JROTC under the CTAE Division of the Georgia Department of Education (DOE).

Working closely with the Georgia ACTE, JROTC Division, the Georgia DOE has adopted a statewide set of standards for recognizing the distinguished leadership accomplishments of JROTC cadet leaders through the addition of Career Ready Diploma Seals. Further, through the collaborative efforts of Georgia ACTE, the Georgia CTAE Resource Network and the Georgia DOE, the first state-wide JROTC instructor workshop was presented to over 200 of Georgia's JROTC instructors in January 2019. The tremendous success of this workshop has led to the second JROTC instructor workshop in January 2020 and a JROTC Instructor focused, STEM based training opportunity for the SeaPerch Underwater Robotics ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicle) Program. This program, sponsored in part by the U.S. Navy's Office of Naval Research; already popular in many areas of the country, will give Georgia JROTC Instructors another way to interest the cadets in STEM and CTE related areas of study.



**Q&A with Lieutenant Commander Alex C. Baker, U.S. Navy (Retired)**

After serving 20 years as a Surface Warfare Officer aboard four U.S. Navy ships and numerous ashore assignments, LCDR Baker retired from the Navy in 2010 and immediately took over the Cairo Navy JROTC program as the Senior Naval Science Instructor in Cairo, Georgia. LCDR Baker served as the President of the JROTC Division of the Georgia ACTE from 2017 to 2019 and was elected as President-elect of the Georgia ACTE in July 2019.