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American Logistics Association Member Companies Celebrated for Exceeding Veteran and Military Family Hiring Target

WASHINGTON, D.C. (July 7, 2014) —American Logistics Association’s (ALA) member companies were cited by the White House and Congress during a Capitol Hill ceremony for reaching and exceeding a goal of hiring 25,000 Veterans and family members set in October 2011.

At the ceremony, Colonel Steve Parker, Executive Director for the First Lady’s Joining Forces office thanked and congratulated the ALA and its member companies for hiring more than 25,000 veterans and military spouses. “In October 2011, ALA was one of the first private-sector associations to answer the President’s call to hire more than 100,000 veterans,” said Col. Parker both at the ceremony and on the White House Joining Forces website. “ALA is one of many groups that have made significant commitments and contributions to hiring veterans and military spouses. Their member companies have seen that hiring these veterans and spouses is not only the right thing to do, but it is also good for their bottom line,” he stated.

Congressman Sanford Bishop, Co-Chairman of the Military Family Caucus said, “Over the years, I have watched how military exchanges, commissaries, and support organizations like ALA and Joining Forces recognize the merit of hiring a returning veteran. Service in the United States military not only instills a level of integrity, discipline, selflessness, and dedication any organization would appreciate, but also teaches individuals specific skills and a craft that they can use throughout their lives.” Congressman Bishop went on to say, “Employing over 30,000 family members within the military community, PX and commissary programs added nearly \$900 million to military household income in 2012. Additionally, industry partners employed nearly 20,000 more family members, adding another \$600 million to military households. I imagine these numbers are even higher today.” “Over the years I have watched how military exchanges, commissaries, and support organizations like ALA and Joining Forces recognize the merit of hiring a returning veteran.”

The American Legion, Jewish War Veterans of America, Military Officers Association of America, National Military Family Association, and Veterans of Foreign Wars attended the ceremony.

“Gainful employment is the cornerstone to sustainable financial independence and quality of life, both of which our nation’s veterans and their families have earned and deserve,” said Denise Rohan, Chairman, National Veterans Employment & Education Commission, The American Legion. “Veterans and their spouses are perfect candidates for companies to hire and retain. The American Legion is grateful that the American Logistics Association’s member companies realize the benefit of hiring veterans and their spouses and applaud ALA’s efforts through the Joining Forces hiring initiative,” added Rohan.

“Military spouses want careers in which they can grow professionally and move with them as they follow their service member from one assignment to another,” said Joyce Raezer, Executive Director, National Military Family Association. “We appreciate that the Defense Commissary Agency, the military exchanges, and their industry partners have long recognized that military spouses are motivated, highly-skilled, and loyal to employers who understand their talents and the challenges they face. Through the American Logistics Association’s partnership with the Joining Forces Initiative, military families, communities, and employers benefit,” said Raezer.

During the ceremony, Veteran Dwayne Brooks shared his hiring experience with MDV-SpartanNash, an ALA company where his military experience was a critical factor in getting hired. Dwayne said he told his interviewer of his military experience and interviewer said ‘Stop right there’: you are hired as long as you pass the background and driving test. “Every day I take pride in my military service and that day made it even more special.”

“There are many roadblocks and challenges that military spouses face when trying to find a job,” said Jennifer Shoffitt, an active duty military spouse who spoke at the ceremony and was hired by Unilever Corporation. “The most obvious is the frequent moves. Employers see your resume and think you’re a job hopper.” “Unilever believed that I would be able to provide insights into military consumers,” said Shoffitt. “This was the first time the fact that I was a military spouse worked in my favor.”

In establishing the goal in October 2011, First Lady Michelle Obama said that the effort represented “a major commitment by an industry that knows first-hand the benefits of hiring these talented military folks, folks who have the knowledge and skills needed to work in supply chain and logistics areas.”

A letter from ALA President Patrick Nixon praised Mrs. Obama for “elevating the consciousness of the American people...to the needs and talent of Veterans and family members.” And pointed out that commissaries, exchanges and the supporting industry are the largest employer of Veterans and military families long before Mrs. Obama “made it cool for the rest of America to do so.” “With this achievement, these programs continue to lead the way for America to reciprocate for the service and sacrifice of our military folks,” Nixon said.

Robbie Rich, Executive Director of ALA’s Joining Forces Initiative, explained that jobs in the exchanges, commissaries, and supporting industry are “well-suited for military families because most are transferable from base to base, a key factor for this demographic that is forced to make frequent moves.” Jobs in this sector “are also perfect for Veterans because it allows them to be connected to a familiar environment, one that values and respects their military skills and abilities,” Rich added.