

CORPORATE COMMITMENT TO HIRING VETERANS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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CORPORATE COMMITMENT TO HIRING VETERANS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2006

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS,
Washington, D.C.

The Committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:30 a.m., in Room 334, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Steve Buyer [Chairman of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Buyer, Filner, Michaud, Boozman, Campbell, Udall, Herseth, Snyder, Salazar, Reyes.

THE CHAIRMAN. The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs will come to order, the date is April 26, 2006.

The purpose of this hearing is to provide companies which have succeeded in hiring veterans an opportunity to discuss their successful practices and methods in hiring veterans. Veterans make good employees and that includes veterans who have been severely injured in service. That is why we have invited several companies to show why their programs to hire veterans are industry leaders.

Some of America's finest are now residing at Walter Reed, Bethesda, Brook, and other military and VA hospitals where they are recovering from their injuries and wounds, and they are going to be looking for employment in the future.

To our newest heroes, let me express on behalf of the whole Committee our great admiration for your sacrifice and the courage you show in working through your rehabilitation. I hope that each of you will understand we are committed to ensuring that you have the means to support yourselves when you leave service.

We will hear today from your fellow veterans and industry leaders. Each of you faces a challenge. We will help you conquer that challenge by offering you the opportunity to qualify for a good job, not just because you have a Purple Heart, but because you can do the job.

In a sense your predecessors who will speak today speak on your behalf. They and thousands of others have broken a trail for you and

I encourage you, each of you, to give a maximum effort to follow their footsteps.

The companies represented here today, I wish you a warm welcome and extend my thanks for stepping up to the plate when it comes to hiring America's veterans. You are setting the standard by which to measure the nation's business community.

I also want to acknowledge the staff of the magazine GI Jobs for identifying those companies with superior performance in hiring America's veterans. Publications such as GI Jobs are a tremendous resource in spreading the word that hiring veterans makes good business sense.

Before we proceed with the first panel, I want to extend my expression of personal respect for our Ranking Member Lane Evans. Unfortunately, Lane could not be here with us today, but I feel it is appropriate to say despite his absence, that Lane has announced his retirement, and I believe it is important to recognize him for his 24 years of remarkable service to this nation as a member of the House of Representatives and as a United States Marine.

His work here reflects the principles that have guided him throughout his career. Lane's concern for our military men and women, the environment, and those less fortunate speaks to his character and his commitment to make life better. But it is his unwavering support of the nation's veterans that best describes his time in Congress.

Agent Orange, PTSD, spina bifida, and expanded services for women veterans are just some of the causes for which Lane will be fondly remembered by his colleagues.

I also have served on the Armed Services Committee with Lane and always respected his work there, and I am especially appreciative of his counsel as the Ranking Member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Even if we sometimes do disagree on policy matters, I never doubted his initiatives on veterans' matters are rooted in his service as a United States Marine in the Vietnam era.

Lane is a man of integrity, compassion, and honor, and I will miss him when we convene the 110th Congress. Lane, it has been my privilege to serve with you and I wish you the fair winds and following seas.

I now recognize Mr. Michaud for an opening statement.

MR. MICHAUD. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for having this hearing.

I also want to thank both panels for your time coming out to talk to this Committee as well as for all that you do for our veterans throughout the nation. I really appreciate that. I am looking forward to your testimony.

I also want to reiterate what the Chairman had stated about Ranking Member Lane Evans who has been a strong advocate for veterans

for a number of years. He is a mentor and I know I will definitely miss him in the 110th Congress.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I wish to submit the remainder of my remarks for the record.

THE CHAIRMAN. So ordered.

THE CHAIRMAN. Mr. Michaud, gentlemen, is also the Ranking Member on the Health Subcommittee.

The members of our first panel represent some of the companies who make a commitment to hiring those who wear the uniform in the service of our country. Too often companies get bashed for not being “veteran friendly enough.”

Today we have with us companies that have made an effort to seek out veterans because they know the skills, the attitude, and the character they bring to the workplace. I will call all of you the pace setters.

First, we will hear from Mr. Dennis Donovan. He joined Home Depot in April 2001 as the Executive Vice President of Human Resources. He has served on numerous human resource councils and round-tables.

He was elected as a fellow in the National Academy of Human Resources, an honor considered the most prestigious in the field of human resources. He currently serves on the Academy’s Board of Directors and was also named Human Resources Executive of the Year by the Human Resources Executive Magazine.

We will then hear next from Mr. William J. Behrendt who currently serves as the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources for Union Pacific Railroad. He has been with Union Pacific since 1979 and has worked in all areas of human resources. He has been responsible for hiring since 1999.

We will then hear from Mr. Marc Chini who was named Vice President of Human Resources for General Electric Infrastructure in January 2004. He joined General Electric Medical Systems in April 1984 and moved progressively towards his current role. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration and a Master’s of Science Degree in Industrial Relations from West Virginia University.

Mr. Chini, you are one of the few individuals I have had an opportunity to meet whose name has probably been butchered more than mine. The great thing is you know who knows you and who does not, right? It is harder for them to walk in and think that they can schmooze you, get a job, and say, hey, Chini, you and me, good buddies, remember. Doesn’t work, does it?

Next we will hear from Mr. Daniel Nelson who is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy. After graduation, he served as an Infantry Officer in the United States Marine Corps. After earning a Graduate Degree from George Washington University, he began to

work for Mobil in 1976 in the supply and trading areas.

He was elected as an officer of the Exxon Mobil Corporation on June 1, 2004, and at the time assumed his current position as head of Exxon Mobil's Washington Office which is responsible for the company's federal government relations activities as well as its international public affairs group based in Washington.

We will then hear from Mr. John Shook who is the Regional Director for Human Resources for BNSF Railway Company. He served in the United States Air Force from July 1968 until October 1993, when he retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. He has worked at BNSF since of October of 1994.

We will also, if they are not able to be here, we were to hear today from Mr. Harold Scott who joined Harley-Davidson Motor Company in 2000 as Vice President of Human Resources. He was responsible for all human resources activities including organization development, compensation benefits, employee relations, diversity recruiting, placement training, and labor relations.

If Mr. Scott does not make it, I will have his written testimony submitted for the record.

Let us first begin, Mr. Donovan, you are now recognized.

STATEMENTS OF DENNIS DONOVAN, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, HOME DEPOT; WILLIAM J. BEHRENDT, ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, UNION PACIFIC; MARC CHINI, VICE PRESIDENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, GENERAL ELECTRIC INFRASTRUCTURE; DANIEL NELSON, VICE PRESIDENT, EXXON MOBILE CORPORATION; JOHN SHOOK, REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, BNSF RAILWAY COMPANY

STATEMENT OF DENNIS DONOVAN

MR. DONOVAN. Good morning. My name is Dennis Donovan and I am the Executive Vice President of Human Resources for The Home Depot.

THE CHAIRMAN. Mr. Donovan, do you and all members of this panel have written testimony to submit to the Committee?

MR. DONOVAN. Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN. All have acknowledged in the affirmative. All of your written testimony will be submitted for the record.

Hearing no objection, so ordered.

Mr. Donovan, you are now recognized.

MR. DONOVAN. Thank you. I would like to thank Chairman Steve Buyer and Ranking Member Lane Evans for inviting The Home Depot to participate in this Oversight Hearing on Corporate Commit-

ment to Hiring Veterans.

Home Depot is the world's largest home improvement specialty retailer and the second largest retailer in the United States with fiscal 2005 sales of 81.5 billion. The company employs approximately 355,000 associates and has more than 2,000 stores.

Our commitment to the men and women who serve our country is unquestionably strong and very close to the heart. Since 2002, we have had approximately 1,800 associates called to active duty for the current Iraqi conflict. The Home Depot has implemented an extended and enhanced leave of absence benefit for our deployed associates.

Beyond making sure these associates have a good job when they return home, we equalize pay and extend health benefits to all of our deployed associates and members of their families.

Beyond these practices, the Home Depot has been a long-time proponent of hiring separating military, veterans, and military spouses. In September 2004, we joined forces with U.S. Departments of Defense, Labor, and Veterans' Affairs to launch Operation Career Front. This is an unprecedented program designed to provide career opportunities for veterans, separating active-duty servicemembers, National Guard, Reservists, and military spouses.

In 2003, the Home Depot hired 10,000 veterans and in 2004, the company hired more than 16,000 former military personnel. And I am very proud to tell you that we hired 17,000 veterans in 2005 as well.

The Home Depot has also hired a significant number of former junior military officers into our Store Leadership Program. Since the inception of the program in 2002, the company has enrolled more than 1,200 individuals. Of these, 567 are former junior military officers with 134 of the JMOs being Academy graduates.

The company also is a participant in the Marine Corps National Fellows Program. This is a one-year assignment where an officer from the Marine Corps works closely with the company CEO and senior leadership team.

Lieutenant Colonel Jim Izen who is here with me today is our fourth Marine Corps fellow.

Jim, would you just stand up to be recognized.

The company also collaborates with the military to share best practices. In November of 2005, The Home Depot hosted the Army Strategic Leadership Program for the third consecutive year. More than 25 senior officers and personnel were in Atlanta to meet with our Chairman and CEO, Bob Nardelli, as well as members of the senior leadership team to share ideas around leadership, logistics, information technology, and supply chain management.

Giving back to the community is one of our company's core values. In 2003, we launched Project Home Front, a program designed to help military families with home repairs while their loved ones were

away serving on active duty. The company pledged \$1 million and one million volunteer hours and completed more than 1,000 home repairs.

In July 2004, the company donated a million dollars in tools and materials to support U.S. military efforts in Iraq. And in November 2005, we made a \$250,000 donation to the USO to assist with the refurbishment of ten USO centers.

I would like to close by saying that we view our support for the military as our responsibility to this country. We do not view this as a cost, but rather a valuable investment in our company's future. Again, this is something we take very seriously and we will continue to support those who are defending our rights and protecting our freedoms.

Chairman Buyer and Ranking Member Evans, thank you again for inviting The Home Depot to participate in this Oversight Hearing on Corporate Commitment to Hiring Veterans.

THE CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

[The statement of Dennis Donovan appears on p. 42]

THE CHAIRMAN. Mr. Behrendt, you are now recognized.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM J. BEHRENDT

MR. BEHRENDT. Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is Bill Behrendt. I am an Assistant Vice President of Human Resources for Union Pacific Railroad headquartered in Omaha, Nebraska. I have been with the company since 1979, and my current responsibilities include direction of Union Pacific's hiring efforts on a system-wide basis.

Before talking about our hiring efforts, I thought a little background about our company would be appropriate. Union Pacific Railroad is one of the leading transportation companies in America. The railroad's 32,400 miles of track links together 23 states and the western two-thirds of the United States and serves the fastest-growing U.S. population centers.

Union Pacific's diversified business mix includes agricultural products, automobiles and auto parts, chemicals, energy, industrial products, intermodal traffic, and, yes, military equipment to the tune of over 10,000 shipments of military equipment in the year 2005 alone.

We offer competitive long-haul routes from all major West Coast and Gulf Coast ports to eastern gateways where we connect with the eastern railroads. We also connect with Canada's rail systems and we are the only railroad serving all six major gateways to Mexico, making us North America's premier rail franchise. And that is all said with respect to -- who is also a member of the panel today.

Geographically our company covers a lot of ground and the thing

that makes it work is our 50,000 employees. Working for a railroad takes a special kind of person. We are a 24-hour a day, seven-day a week operation. Our factory is often outdoors, so our people are required to work in all kinds of weather.

The work is strenuous and because we are a 24 by 7 operation, hours on duty may often vary. Our employees have to work with large, heavy machinery and because we want to ensure a safe place to work, safety rules are a very important part of our rail culture.

The operation I just described should sound a lot like our Armed Forces which is why we recruit so heavily from the military for our employees. We actively recruit and hire former military personnel because their skills and lifestyles are a great fit for the railroad.

Many of the railroad's technical jobs, such as diesel locomotive mechanics, electricians, and rail car mechanics, are well suited for military members who have developed similar skills working with large equipment in the Armed Forces.

In addition, lifestyles and working conditions are also similar. Military personnel tend to be flexible when it comes to relocation and they are typically safety conscious and rules oriented. All these attributes make military personnel great hires for Union Pacific.

And we have five recruiters who spend on average 50 percent of their time working on military recruiting. Our recruiters attend military job fairs and transition assistance programs and regularly visit major military installations.

Twelve percent of our company's advertising budget or roughly \$200,000 is spent on advertising in military publications. We continuously advertise in GI Jobs, transition assistance on-line, Military Times, and the Army Career and Alumni Program web site.

In addition, Union Pacific intends to partner with the new Army Partnership for Youth Success Program, also known as Army PAYS.

We are keeping our recruiters very busy these days as we have an aggressive hiring program. Changes to the railroad retirement system that were enacted at the end of 2001 that have allowed employees with 30 years of service to retire at age 60 along with a strong surge in business which started in the year 2003 have caused us to hire roughly 16,000 new employees over the last three years. Depending somewhat on the economy, we are anticipating the need to hire an additional 3,000 to 5,000 employees each year for the next five years.

Once hired, we believe we provide an excellent environment for former military personnel. We have an Operations to Management Training Program that provides an opportunity to do truly meaningful work with an established industry leader while building a career. At Union Pacific, these managers are given real leadership responsibilities along with many opportunities for rapid advancement.

Military applicants with college degrees also have the opportunity

to be hired into this program. Over the last few years, over 280 trainees have been promoted into or hired into our Operating Management Training Program and over 25 percent of them have prior military experiences or are active in the Reserves or National Guard.

We also provide a solid home for those in the military who stay in the Reserve or National Guard after joining us. If called upon for active duty, Union Pacific provides the difference in pay between what the individual receives while on active duty and what they would have received at Union Pacific.

In addition, our medical plan continues to cover the Reservist as well as any dependent family members during their period of active duty.

Union Pacific's history of hiring military personnel dates back to its beginning. At the end of the Civil War, many soldiers were hired by Union Pacific to help build the first transcontinental railroad. We still continue that tradition today and we are very pleased to be named by GI Jobs magazine as the nation's number one military friendly employer for the year 2005.

With that, Mr. Chairman, that concludes my remarks and I would be happy to answer any questions.

THE CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

[The statement of William J. Behrendt appears on p. 46]

THE CHAIRMAN. Mr. Chini, you are now recognized.

STATEMENT OF MARC A. CHINI

MR. CHINI. Mr. Buyer, members of the Committee, my name is Marc Chini. I am the Vice President of Human Resources for the infrastructure businesses within GE.

THE CHAIRMAN. Would you put your mike on, please. Pull it forward. Thank you.

MR. CHINI. You had extended an invitation to Mr. Bill Conaty, our Senior VP of Human Resources. Unfortunately, Mr. Conaty, a veteran himself, was unable to attend this session, but asked that I represent both he and GE today.

Also with me is Susan Kratch who works in Human Resources supporting our military recruiting and development programs and is responsible for much of the success GE has enjoyed in these areas. She has been extremely dedicated to this effort given her own status as a veteran recruit in GE from the U.S. Air Force.

On the military front, we are very proud of the dedication, commitment, and integrity of our Armed Forces personnel and to the military's effort and success to develop these men and women.

The values and skills they attained help them serve our country and at the same time prepare them for civilian life with companies

like GE. Their leadership and technical training allow them to contribute in very positive ways in our company.

Likewise, GE is proud of the programs and processes we have in place to recruit, develop, and promote our military hires and provide benefits for them and their families during times when they are called to activity military, reservist, or guard duty.

Today I would like to highlight some of GE's successes in these areas beginning with recruiting.

We have over 6,000 self-identified veterans in GE. We have recruiting programs and resources dedicated to attend multiple military recruiting fairs to ensure these positive hiring trends continue. And our former military employees are some of our best recruiters. Given their own success in GE, they really enjoy the process.

After joining GE, many of our military hires get additional support from programs such as assigned mentors, again with many former military personnel serving in this capacity. Special development opportunities such as the GE Energy Junior Officer Leadership Program are also available. And through formal and informal networking programs, our veterans continue to develop inside the company.

Our recruits have enjoyed strong achievements in functions like engineering, services, and our supply chain which are the three primary points of entry. But former military personnel enjoy success in nearly all functions including sales, marketing and business development, and they hold positions in all of our GE businesses at some of our highest levels. These leaders come from all branches of the military.

Next I would like to talk about our support mechanisms for veteran hires who remain in the Reserves or employees who are members of the Guard.

Once in GE, we provide excellent benefits to these personnel. In fact, in recognition of our efforts, we received a 2004 Secretary of Defense Employer Freedom Support Award, and we have been ranked as one of the top ten military friendly employers by GI Jobs magazine since the ranking began three years ago.

Our benefits for military leaves of absence include one month salary to assist transition, pay differential for up to three years for mobilization, pay differential for annual training and for emergency duty disaster relief, continuation of benefits and services for employees and their family members, and special programs through our work life connections and individual businesses for those leaving for and returning from military duty called Operation Home Front and Operation Yellow Ribbon.

The combination of these pay benefits and work life programs coupled with time to adjust to reemployment upon their return, mentors in many cases as they come back to their GE roles and strong social networks help ease these transitions.

Last I would like to talk about just two of our veterans called back to active duty and highlight their GE and military triumphs.

First, Colonel Bob Vitolo, 12 years active duty, U.S. Air Force and Reserves. In GE Aviation, Bob was a six sigma quality leader, customer support manager, and then moved into business development.

He was mobilized for Operation Iraqi Freedom as the Deputy Director contracting for aeronautical systems. He negotiated an \$80 million adjustment that helped fund upgrades for the Global Hawk Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Program.

Twelve years military training coupled with strong GE commercial practices knowledge have helped him continue to grow, develop, and drive winds for both GE and the United States Air Force.

Next Lieutenant Colonel Harvey Williams, U.S. Marine Corps retired. Harvey retired over 12 years ago after tours in Beirut in 1983 and 1984.

In January of 2005, he was recalled to active duty in Iraq for U.S. military reconstruction programs with a budget of over \$340 million focused on 230 distinct projects.

Again, we hope his GE experience of managing over 500 of our facilities worldwide coupled with his military training made him even more valuable to our country on his reentry into the military.

In closing, I would like to thank you on GE's behalf for the opportunity to be here today and I hope this gives you some understanding of our drive and commitment to support our veterans and put the tremendous skills and leadership training people receive in the military to continued positive use in the private sector.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

[Statement of Marc A. Chini appears on p. 50]

THE CHAIRMAN. Mr. Nelson, you are now recognized.

STATEMENT OF DANIEL NELSON

MR. NELSON. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee. My name is Dan Nelson. I am a Vice President of Exxon Mobil Corporation and I am the company's senior official here in Washington.

I was a Marine Corps officer for five and a half years, including two years in Southeast Asia, and I am a graduate of the Naval Academy.

Like a lot of people in my company, I have an advanced degree, but I have little or no doubt that the best preparation I had for a career in business was matriculation at the school of hard knocks, the Marine Corps.

And I have welcomed the opportunity to both work for and supervise any number of extraordinary veterans during my 30 years with

the company. I am proud to have the opportunity to testify today about how we recruit and support veterans, including disabled veterans.

Accompanying me here today and testifying in the next panel is Ashley Dozier, a West Pointer, an Iraq veteran, and a recent hire to our company.

And as most of you probably know, Exxon Mobil is the world's largest publicly-traded petroleum and petro chemical company with operations in more than 200 countries and six continents. More than 30,000 of our 82,000 employees are based in the United States.

We actively recruit veterans through military placement firms and career conferences and we recruit the disabled through career opportunities for students with disabilities conferences.

Frankly, one of our most important recruiting tools beyond the careers that we can offer our employees is the reputation we have as an employer of choice for veterans. In the GI Jobs 2004 ranking, we were named as a top 25 military friendly employer because of our ongoing support for our reservists through our military leave policy.

Since September 2001, 89 U.S. based Exxon Mobil employees have been called to active duty in connection with hostilities in Iraq and Afghanistan and in the U.S. Homeland Security Operation. We recognize that military service requires sacrifices that are truly above and beyond by our employees and by their families. That is why Exxon Mobil policy exceeds the minimum requirements established by law.

Our military leave policy, which dates back to the first World War, includes the following basic provisions:

If an employee is inducted or is recalled to full-time active duty with the U.S. Armed Forces, he or she qualifies for payment of the difference between their military pay and their company pay for the period while on active duty.

Further, if an employee is called up in an emergency situation for full-time temporary duty or military training that is not anticipated to exceed two months, the employee receives their full pay, offset only by the military pay received.

Eligibility for and participation in our benefits continues for employees while on active duty based on the benefit plan and status of the employee at the time of their military call-up. Examples of continuing benefits would include service credit for retirement which is fully paid for by the company, make up of any contributions to the savings plan, life insurance plans, medical and dental insurance for both the employee and his or her dependents, and payment for any pending vacation benefits. There is no minimum company service requirement to receive the company pay and benefits while on military leave.

But recounting our practices and policies really does not convey the

story. Let me instead share with you the words of one of our employees who wrote a letter after being recently called up to active duty.

Chris Napier works at our Bay Town, Texas chemical complex and he wrote an e-mail to Exxon Mobil management after standing down from his 2003 military call-up. Here is a brief excerpt.

As a member of the U.S. Army Reserve, I was called to active duty in January of 2003 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The company was there to support me and my family 100 percent every step of the way. I remained active for eight months until September.

During this period, the military leave policy kept our health and dental plans available to my wife and children. I also received a pay differential that kept us from going under financially. It was a tremendous relief to know that my employer was backing me and taking care of our loved ones.

Exxon Mobil is proud of the employees that we have who serve in our Armed Forces. We know we owe them a debt of gratitude and our policies are in place to support them and their families.

I would also like to point out that our support for veterans extends out beyond the programs in our own company. For example, we recently were very pleased to make a significant grant to the Intrepid Fallen Heros Fund which is constructing a rehabilitation center in San Antonio for members of the military who have been seriously injured or disabled.

Again, I would like to thank the Subcommittee for this opportunity to share a brief overview of our company's recruiting and military leave policies, and I would welcome the opportunity to answer any questions.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

[The statement of Daniel Nelson appears on p. 57]

THE CHAIRMAN. Mr. Shook, you are now recognized.

STATEMENT OF JOHN SHOOK

MR. SHOOK. Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I am pleased to be here before the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. My name is John Shook, Regional Director of Human Resources with BNSF Railway.

BNSF is one of America's largest railroads with about 40,000 employees and 32,000 miles of routes serving 28 western states and two Canadian provinces.

I have over 36 years of experience in human resources management, 11 of those with BNSF Railway and another 25 years of honorable service as a career Air Force officer, serving in over 17 assign-

ments in the United States and overseas.

As requested by this Committee, the purpose of my testimony is to provide information about BNSF's corporate commitment to hiring veterans. I will describe some of the specific steps we have taken to become a military friendly employer as well as explain why we go the extra mile to hire veterans. I will conclude by highlighting a few examples of recognition of BNSF efforts.

BNSF has a long-standing record of commitment to America's men and women in uniform as well as its citizen soldiers. BNSF recognizes and values the sacrifice made by employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserves.

About 400 BNSF employees have been called to active duty since September 11, 2001, in support of the War on Terrorism, and 195 of those employees are currently serving on active duty.

BNSF offers enhanced and extended benefits to those employees called to active duty in the War on Terrorism including make whole pay and sustained health care and other benefits. In addition, we offer 15 days of make whole pay for annual training and drill duty.

In February 2006, BNSF renewed its long-standing commitment to those serving in the National Guard and Reserve by becoming the first railroad to sign a five-star statement of support with the National Committee for employer support of the Guard and Reserve.

BNSF was recently nominated by three employees for the Department of Defense's Annual Freedom Award. This prestigious nomination recognizes that BNSF policies and practices including care packages and welcome home celebrations go above and beyond in support of our nation's citizen soldiers. The three nominators are all members of the National Guard who served in combat. They are American heroes.

Aaron Rossiter, Sergeant, Texas Army National Guard was hired as a management trainee. His training was interrupted when he was deployed to Iraq on short notice.

Shawn Crystal, BNSF's Safety Manager and Master Sergeant with the Tennessee Air National Guard served in Afghanistan.

John Fuller, Specialist, California National Guard and a BNSF conductor, is recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center from wounds received in combat on September 3rd, 2005, while serving Endure Iraq.

Those who wear our nation's uniforms are mission focused, highly skilled, motivated, and possess unique experiences and technical knowledge. Military candidates embody the core competencies essential at BNSF, leadership, team work, and the ability to perform safely in a fast-paced, dynamic environment. The way we see it, the military candidate is a great fit for a career at BNSF Railway.

Our goal is to supplement and strengthen our employee talent base by connecting interested job seekers who are in transition from mili-

tary to civilian careers. We believe the steps we have taken to become the employer of the choice in the military community are showing results.

In 2004, we hired 350 veterans with an additional 750 veteran hires in 2005. Year to date in 2006, 20 percent of all hires, over 350, are veterans with over 50 serving as members of the Guard and Reserve. If present trends continue, BNSF is on track to hire more than 1,000 veterans in 2006.

GI Jobs magazine has named BNSF one of America's top 25 most military friendly employers. According to BNSF Chairman, President, and CEO, Matthew K. Rose, and I quote, "We recognize and appreciate the sacrifice and service not only of the citizen soldiers who are members of team BNSF but of all of America's heroes who have answered the call to serve and defend our country since September 11th, 2001."

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to discuss BNSF Railway Company's commitment to its employees serving in the military and to hiring military veterans. BNSF Railway is honored to be present before this Committee.

Thank you, sir.

[The statement of John Shook appears on p. 60]

THE CHAIRMAN. I want to thank each of you for coming and providing your testimony.

I have some quick questions and then I have to excuse myself. We are having a markup in the Energy and Commerce Committee on national video franchise, so I apologize to you and to the second panel.

Mr. Nelson, you had mentioned a special program that you have at Exxon Mobil with regard to hiring disabled veterans.

Do the other witnesses, do you have programs in your companies to assist in the hiring of the disabled?

MR. DONOVAN. Through our Operation Career Front we link with One Stops, the 2,000 One Stops through-out the country, 400 of which, as you know, have disabled veteran specialists as well as working with military transition and family centers and the Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Division of the VA. We have connected that program to make sure we put out our requirements there and our jobs and all of our branding information. So we have a specific connection.

And to those people within those organizations that are responsible for the placement of disabled veterans, we also have made this easy. They can hot link right to The Home Depot hiring web site for military right through any one of those centers.

THE CHAIRMAN. Anyone else?

MR. CHINI. Right. We have programs where we have attended the Disabled Soldiers Support Systems Career Night at Walter Reed

Army Medical Center. We have attended the Hero's Career Fair at Ft. Bragg.

So it is constantly part of our recruiting efforts. And we know we have over 300 people that have self identified veterans with disabilities within the corporation. We think there is many more that just have not identified the fact that they are disabled or been injured in the military.

MR. BEHRENDT. I would just simply say we reach out in many of the very same programs that have been indicated here by my colleagues, and we try to provide accommodation wherever possible to any veteran who has a disability and is interested in applying with Union Pacific.

We have a section of our web site that is dedicated to the military and there we try to emphasize to anyone who would be interested in applying for Union Pacific our strong support in that effort.

MR. SHOOK. Mr. Chairman, similarly to my colleagues here, we do the same thing. We appeal to veterans and disabled veterans through our web site.

We also had several returning employees who have been severely injured in the War on Terrorism in Iraq, and so we have made a lot of accommodations for those people. So we also target that group.

THE CHAIRMAN. The country has a very good focus and an improved attitude with regard to the hiring of our disabled even with regard to DoD and personnel policies. Before we just medically retire them, we send them to the VA. When they get to the VA, they do their voc rehab and we say, okay, go reeducate yourself and get a job. And now there is a much better focus with regard to that and it is much improved.

It is also one of the challenges we have with our Guard and Reserve. They are now 40 years old, even 45 and their kids might be wanting college. It is a little tougher for them to say, okay, go on back and we are going to send you to college.

So we have to be cognizant here in Congress with regard to all of our personnel policies and that was the reason I asked the question.

When you hire your veterans, do you track whether you hire disabled or nondisabled veterans? In human resources, do you break it down or does it matter?

MR. BEHRENDT. As Marc pointed out, the EEO survey has optional disclosure on that and we will track, on the hiring side, we will track it through our web site as they enter in. We have a specific web site for military hires.

So we get a pretty good handle, but it is optional on the disclosure. We have disclosed 1,327 disabled veterans that we know of, but we also know we only have about a 45 percent disclosure rate on that. And it is really up to the individual on whether they want to disclose or not.

THE CHAIRMAN. Now, would it be fair for me to infer that the reason -- well, there are a lot of reasons you guys are in the top ten, but you also do a lot of logistics and the military is pretty good at logistics.

Is that really one of the drivers? You go to our combat service support and that is what is really important to your companies?

MR. CHINI. I think I just reinforce the values, the training that the military provides, and then both from a leadership standpoint and a technical standpoint, I think it matches up very well with the values that we have in the corporation from a General Electric standpoint.

And then again, just being able to come in, hit the ground running. It was mentioned in other testimony, the flexibility to move to different locations, to go to locations that may not be as attractive to some people, smaller towns. So we have found that military for all those reasons has been a good source of recruiting.

THE CHAIRMAN. Now, to Union Pacific, you had mentioned you are going to be hiring -- I want to get this right -- you are going to be hiring up to 3,000 over the next five years?

MR. BEHRENDT. Three to five thousand new employees is our projection each year for the next five years.

THE CHAIRMAN. You are going to hire up to 15,000 --

MR. BEHRENDT. Correct.

THE CHAIRMAN. -- over the next five years?

MR. BEHRENDT. Correct.

THE CHAIRMAN. Then it is going well at Union Pacific.

MR. BEHRENDT. It is a big business. We have hired up to near 15,000 over the last three years up to this point. So we are clearly turning over the major part of our workforce. And, again, a lot of that is attrition based, but, frankly, a lot of it, the good news part of it is it is economy based.

THE CHAIRMAN. The only thing of your testimony, gentlemen, that made me cringe, and I think Dr. Snyder would probably join me in this since he is ranking on personnel, is the hiring of our Academy graduates.

Now, we as a nation invest a lot of money and time in these Academy graduates. Now, if these are graduates and it is timely for them to leave and it is right for them, that is fine. But do not be recruiting them away from active duty.

If Dr. Snyder happens to find out that any of you are sending letters to our ensigns and our first lieutenants out there at the three- and four-year mark, or how about myself? I will not bring Dr. Snyder into this, but I am sure you would not be as happy either. I will let you speak for yourself, Dr. Snyder.

But be careful here. I am just throwing that out to you. I know you want them. These are our nation's brightest. But we have them at the academies for a reason. We also are making the investment for them to be our future generals and admirals.

And if they end up being the CEOs that run corporate America, we also look at that and say it is a good thing, too, especially when we look at some of the corporate debacles and scandals that have occurred out there.

So I understand why you are looking for individuals with good character and honor, but please do not recruit them from active duty. All right?

With that, I yield to Mr. Michaud.

MR. MICHAUD. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Once again, I want to thank the panelists for their testimony. It certainly appears that you are doing a great job as it relates to employment for military personnel in each of your companies. Unfortunately, all corporations do not meet up or measure up to your standards on this particular issue.

What would you recommend to help this Committee assist the private sector in improving its overall record concerning employment and advancement in employment of veterans?

MR. DONOVAN. I will take the first stab at this.

What we learned -- and, again, we hired 17,000 veterans last year, 16,000 the prior year, and 10,000 the first year we kicked off Operation Career Front. I think there are really three things when you think about what Fortune 500 companies can do.

The first is learn the navigation. You have got the VA side, you have got the DoD side, and you have got the DoL side. And, we found, when we marshalled the resources of all three, it helped us connect the dots so we could leverage and get scalability on hiring that number, 17,000 veterans in a year. And we had people that would just bust their hump to help you out.

We dealt with Secretary Chao at DoL and Dr. David Chu at DoD, and at the time, Secretary Principi, but we marshalled and connected, so we learned how to navigate. We actually put process maps up on the wall to learn how we can leverage all of the resources that are currently available.

We connected the dots by pulling VA, DoL, and DoD together, and then we put in the infrastructure to make it easy. We had to make it dependent on our 1,800 stores in the United States to do this independently, so we satellite broadcast to all our stores. We brought in One Stop people to sit with our HR people in the stores. We invited the people from DoL to participate in that. We went on-line.

So if you are in a One Stop center or you are at a TAP Center, you can apply to a Home Depot job on-line. You can test on-line, schedule for your interviews on-line to do that. And we also had all the collateral material.

So I think building the relationships is part of that infrastructure, but you cannot be one dimensional on this. You have really got to knit it all together, connect the dots, and also learn how to navigate

the system.

I think if we can make sure we have demonstrations or best practices so other companies can kind of pick that up, I think you would get more leverage as you go forward.

MR. MICHAUD. Thank you.

MR. SHOOK. I would only add if we had a process where we could have easier access to the veterans, you know, a clearinghouse because if we have a web site, they can come to us, but it would be nice if there was a process where the member could identify him or herself.

And it would be a voluntary thing, of course. And obviously you have some confidentiality issues, but still that would be a real enhancement to being able to get to those folks. Even though we certainly have a very user friendly web site, that would be nice.

MR. BEHRENDT. My comment would simply be that in terms of the recruitment of military veterans and those who have honored their commitment to service, I think you have to make a commitment as a company. I do not think this is a one-shot deal where you say, okay, our hiring is up this year, let us see what we can get and let us attack, if you will, the military opportunities that are out there.

I think you need to make a commitment. I think you need to be there regularly. I think you need to -- and, frankly, I think it is a win-win for everybody if you do it that way. But some companies that I have talked to that have struggled with this, I think commitment is the issue. And my recommendation would be you need to start with that first.

MR. MICHAUD. Thank you all.

I yield back the balance of my time, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BOOZMAN. [Presiding] Thank you very much. I just want to compliment all of you for the tremendous job that you are doing and really leading corporate American in this effort. It really is greatly appreciated.

I guess to start with, and we are kind of alluding to it, what can we do to help you? You mentioned that you are going to be hiring a lot of workers.

Are there any things we need to do to make the process easier for you to come up with to know who can fill what slot, or are you having any success with that at all and you are just trying to figure it out for yourselves? Does anybody --

THE PANELIST. You know, I think frankly general awareness is an issue in our business in virtually all venues, including the military. It is hard to believe sometimes given the stature and number of employees represented by the companies just on this panel, but many times we are still not necessarily recognized as being as actively aggressive in the market of hiring employees, especially military veterans as possible.

So one thing I think is awareness to raise the level and magazines

such as GI Jobs and some of the other resources available do a great job of that. But I would say anything to increase the awareness to help direct, as was indicated earlier, some access to these folks so they have an understanding that we are in the business of looking for and hiring people would be helpful.

MR. BOOZMAN. Very good.

Yes, sir.

MR. DONOVAN. I also suggest that the first rule of getting something is asking. And I think far too many times companies do not ask. I get a lot of companies that will call or want to do benchmarking and I will say, well, have you talked to the One Stops that have representative and specialists for disabled and veterans? The answer is no. Have you gone to DoL to ask for the support? Have you stopped in and talked to DoD? Have you worked with the TAP Centers?

And more times than not, the employer will say I have not done it. And it goes back to the comment about learning to navigate, connecting the dots, and putting in some infrastructure to make it happen. So whatever you can do to make it easier to navigate in this thing in terms of this cooperative effort between VA, DoD, and DoL will make it easier for people to ask.

MR. BOOZMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Salazar? Okay.

Mr. Reyes is gone. Mr. Udall, do you have any questions or --

MR. UDALL. No.

MR. BOOZMAN. Okay. Mr. Filner.

MR. FILNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for holding this hearing.

I appreciate the testimony that shows that people do understand that providing servicemembers, veterans, and military families the opportunity to compete in the workforce is a very important one, and you are helping us do that.

We have to do more to promote and market the value of employing individuals with military experience, as well as to educate the public about servicemembers' employment and re-employment rights laws. We have to help convince employers that hiring veterans, including veterans with disabilities, is sound human resource and business policy.

So I thank you for having this hearing. I think it is a good step in the right direction.

I just want to point out, Mr. Chairman, that one cannot discuss veterans' employment matters without discussing veterans' education, vocational rehabilitation, and job training programs -- the Montgomery GI Bill, the VA's Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Program, and Department of Labor's Veteran Employment and Training Service.

I am concerned that, due to fiscal constraints, these key programs

may not receive the funding they should to maintain their effectiveness and respond to the request for better facilitation of their efforts.

I know we all want to work together to enhance and modernize programs that assist this effort. I thank you on this panel and those who are testifying next for their efforts.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BOOZMAN. Thank you, Mr. Filner.

Does anybody else have any comments?

Thank you all very much for being with us and we really do appreciate your efforts. I know that the entire Committee really does appreciate the efforts that you have made. You have gone above and beyond the call of duty.

And we are going to follow-up and hopefully use some of the suggestions to do a better job of making people aware that there are the various centers. And we are really trying to do that. But like I say, we are going to do our very best to do an even better job.

So thank you again for being here.

Is Mr. Scott in the audience, Harold Scott?

Our second panel is comprised of veterans who have gone through the process of returning to the workforce.

We have with us Mr. Corey McGee who joined the U.S. Infantry in April of 2001. During his year in Iraq, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal of Valor for his composure under fire, ability to return precision fire against the enemy, and ability to continue covering his platoon with suppressive fire while being critically wounded.

He was wounded after taking shrapnel to his throat and continued to provide suppressive fire for his platoon members before driving five fellow platoon members to a secure location where he was medically assessed and subsequently evacuated to the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington for treatment.

Corey was attached to the Medical Hold Company at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in April of 2004. He was one of the first participants of the Vet IT Pilot Program and has continued his work experience through coming home to work. Because of the length of his MEB, PEB, and his early participation in Vet IT, Corey is not yet in the VR&E Service System.

He is in the process of obtaining a memorandum from his commander stating that he is within six months of discharge so that he can apply for VA benefits and begin working with a vocational rehab counselor as soon as possible. He is currently gaining work experience as a research assistant for VA Public Affairs under the guidance of Diane Hartman and Bill MacLamore.

Ms. Ashley Dozier is a graduate from the United States Military Academy at West Point. After graduation in 2000, she was assigned to the 94th Engineer Battalion based out of Vilsik, Germany, and

was later deployed to Bosnia, Herzegovina, and to Iraq twice, holding positions in construction, project management, and force protection.

This past January, Ms. Dozier departed the Army at the rank of captain and started working as a planning and controls project advisor in the Project Management and Controls Department of the Exxon Mobil Development Company in February.

Peter Lohman is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point. Mr. Lohman served as a tank and scout platoon leader, executive officer, and assistance operations officer assigned to the 1st Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry in Schweinfurt, Germany.

In February 2004, he was deployed with the 1st cav to North Central Iraq as part of Task Force Danger. On December 19, 2004, he was shot in the right shoulder while on foot patrol. He was evacuated to the combat support hospital in Bilad where he underwent surgery.

Mr. Lohman was medically retired from the military in December 2005 and joined Systems Planning and Analysis, Inc. as a national security consultant.

We want to welcome you and certainly thank you for your service to your country. Let us bring our testimony with Mr. McGee.

STATEMENTS OF COREY MCGEE, ACTIVE DUTY ARMY, VOLUNTEER, SPECIAL EVENTS AND NATIONAL PROGRAMS AT VETERANS' AFFAIRS; ASHLEY DOZIER, OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM, PLANNING AND CONTROLS ADVISOR FOR EXXON MOBIL CORPORATION; PETER LOHMAN, MEDICALLY RETIRED FROM THE ARMY IN DECEMBER 2005, SYSTEMS PLANNING AND ANALYSIS, INC.

STATEMENT OF COREY MCGEE

MR. MCGEE. On April 10, 2004, I was injured by enemy fire in Fallujah, Iraq while my platoon was responding as battalion quick reaction force to a Marine unit that had come under heavy fire. We were ambushed by an insurgent force of 15 to 20 personnel and a well-coordinated and well-executed two-sided ambush.

I was hit with an improvised exploding device in the very beginning of the ambush and received shrapnel to my neck. Rocket propelled grenades and small arms were also used by the enemy combatants.

Immediately I began to lay down suppressive fire and then was wounded a second time when a bullet deflected off my weapon and sent shards of metal into my right shoulder.

I continued to return fire until I ran out of ammo. I grabbed an M249 squad automatic weapon from one of my wounded comrades while pulling him to a protected position. I returned to my squad's Humvee while continuing to lay down suppressive fire to cover the

movement of the maneuvering elements of my platoon.

By this time, my platoon had seven wounded in the ambush. So in order to remove my squad out of the ambush, I commandeered the squad Humvee and drove four fellow platoon members to a secure location out of the kill zone to assess casualties and redistribute munitions.

Due to loss of blood, I became fatigued from my wounds, but continued to drive the vehicle to another secure location in order to establish a helicopter landing zone to extract the wounded.

The last thing I remember before losing consciousness from loss of blood was the medic who stabilized my condition and placed me on the evacuated helicopter with my fellow injured.

After reaching the casualty collection point, I was assessed as an urgent surgical patient. The loss of blood and the severity of my wounds to my neck, shoulder, and lungs caused me to enter shock.

I was evacuated to Germany for further medical care. When I woke up in Germany, I was without feeling from my head to my toes.

A week later, I further medically evacuated to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. I arrived in Washington, D.C. with little feeling in my upper body and paralyzing injuries from my waist down.

Within a month, I achieved full control of my upper body with the help of the physical and occupational therapy. I was still unable to feel or move anything below my waist.

During this month at Walter Reed, I was awarded two Purple Hearts, an Army Commendation Metal for Valor, and was nominated for a Bronze Star for Valor.

Several months later, I met a woman by the name of Genia Lehowicz at Walter Reed Medical Hospital. Ms. Lehowicz works as a vocational rehabilitation counselor for the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Upon our meeting, she asked me if I was not planning to stay in the military, would I like to rejoin the workforce. At this point, all my hopes of staying in the military were slim to none. As a father of two, I needed to start to think about my future career options.

Originally my goal was to stay in the military for the next 20 years and hopefully retire as sergeant major. So it was with reluctance that I came to the conclusion that it was time to take a new direction with my life.

By the time I started with Coming Home to Work Program at Veterans' Affairs a year after my injury, I was walking again with the assistance of a walker followed by crutches and finally a cane which I still use to this day for long walks.

The program Coming Home to Work arranged for me to receive two business suits to help me feel comfortable in my new office position. I met with a couple of different departments to see where I could be a

good fit for the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

With this direction and working with Veterans' Affairs, I was able to do something that was near and dear to my heart and knew that I could not only make a difference for veterans across the United States but also for the soldiers that will be new to becoming a veteran. I give them the information they need to be successful in their transition to becoming a civilian again in hopes that they will be successful as I will.

I was able to work in a comfortable work environment that would provide all the adjustments to my disability without bringing too much attention to them. With this program's help, I am now able to work in the civilian world with the utmost confidence and skills to become successful in my new career goals in the government.

As I conclude, just thank you for your time and hearing my story. And that is all I have.

MR. BOOZMAN. Thank you very much.

[The statement of Corey McGee appears on p. 65]

MR. BOOZMAN. Ms. Dozier.

STATEMENT OF ASHLEY DOZIER

MS. DOZIER. Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. My name is Ashley Dozier. I am a Planning and Controls Project Advisor with the Exxon Mobil Development Company based in Houston, Texas. I joined Exxon Mobil this February after nearly six years of service in the Army.

I would like to start off by telling you a little bit about myself. I grew up in the small town of Montgomery, Texas -- it is an hour northwest of Houston -- under the mentorship of very involved and loving parents. My dad was in law enforcement and my mom was a grade school teacher. I have one sister who is 18 months younger and despite being enemies growing up, we have become quite close in adulthood.

My childhood was very stable. In fact, my parents after 31 years of marriage still live in the same house in which my sister and I were brought up.

Since the age of 13, I was on a mission to attend a U.S. Military Academy. I was a very serious and determined young woman and did everything within my power to reach that goal. I became involved in almost every school club, ran cross country and track, and was a straight A student.

After graduating from Montgomery High School as the Class Valedictorian on May 25th, 1996, I was on my way to Beast Barracks which is West Point's version of basic training.

And, of course, I would like to thank Congressman Jack Fields for

my nomination.

On May 26, 2000, after a very demanding four years, I graduated from the United States Military Academy with a BS in Civil Engineering and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers.

After the Engineer Officer Basic Course, I was assigned to the 94th Engineer Battalion based out Vilsik, Germany from December 1999 to August 2003, then to the 18th Airborne Corps based out of Ft. Bragg, North Carolina from August 2003 to January 2006. I was deployed to Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Iraq twice, holding positions in construction, project management, and force protection.

After deciding to transition out of the military, I found the job market very receptive to junior military officers. I was personally contacted by over five military placement firms with numerous employment opportunities.

In addition to placement firms, I attended the Joint Service Academy Career Conference and I posted my profile on the Service Academy Business Resource Directory and several public job search engines. With the assistance of placement firms, I interviewed with and I was offered positions with four different companies.

After interviewing with Exxon Mobil in 2005, in December, I knew I had found my future career track. Exxon Mobil was the right fit for me for many reasons. First of all, Exxon Mobil held my experience in the military in high regard and counted it towards my employment status allowing me to sign on as an experienced hire. It felt great knowing that Exxon Mobil appreciated my hard work and years of service in the military.

Secondly, my background and passion is in project management. Exxon Mobil offers endless opportunities to become involved in diverse and interesting projects worldwide. I also find the culture here very similar to that in the military. Exxon Mobil is formal and a very process-oriented corporation with strong ethics-based standards of business conduct. It made it a very comfortable transition for me.

In addition, Exxon Mobil hires with a career-focused mindset and immediately starts career development. Location was another deciding factor in my job search and being a largely Houston-based corporation, I am able to build a home base much closer to my family.

Finally, the compensation is unmatched. They offered me a very competitive base salary with benefits including a relocation allowance, pension plan, 401k with matching stock option, and solid medical benefits.

After nearly three months with Exxon Mobil, I am extremely pleased with my decision to become a part of this team. In a short time, I have already worked on two extremely large and unique projects, attended two week-long training courses, and learned more than I could have imagined.

I thrive in a challenging environment in which I am constantly learning and Exxon Mobil provides that for me. I look forward to a long and productive career with this company.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify to you today.

MR. BOOZMAN. Thank you very much.

[The statement of Ashley Dozier appears on p. 68]

MR. BOOZMAN. Mr. Lohman.

STATEMENT OF PETER LOHMAN

MR. LOHMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, and thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about my experiences as a wounded soldier transitioning into civilian life. I hope through telling my story and sharing some insights that I am able to improve the way our wounded veterans join the civilian workforce.

To start with, it is important to provide some background on my experiences. I served a scout platoon leader in North Central Iraq from February to December 2004 as part of the 1st Squadron, 4th U.S. Calvary, 1st Infantry Division.

On 19 December 2004, I was wounded while on patrol receiving a gunshot wound to my right shoulder. I was evacuated back to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center and then on to Walter Reed.

Around June of 2005 while undergoing physical and occupational therapy at Walter Reed, I decided I would transition to civilian life. One of the things that concerned me when making this decision was whether I would enjoy the challenges and opportunities in the civilian world.

Having graduated from West Point and then spent four and a half years in the Army, I did not have tremendous familiarity with civilian jobs. However, I was lucky enough to meet two or three people that got to know me, understood my interests, and linked me up with employers and others who helped me gain understanding of opportunities.

My first introduction was to the Department of Defense's Military Severely Injured Center. This center passed my name on to several different people who all offered both support and contacts as I decided what to do next.

One of those people who deserves mentioning today was Bill Offut of the Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service. Bill personally invited me to several events in the area and introduced me to prospective employers. Through Bill and others, I was able to talk to a variety of people and get an idea for different types of jobs as well as listen to people's experiences which I found incredibly valuable in making my decision.

These contacts were also valuable by providing me with job interviews which turned into job offers. My range of opportunities increased and I considered things that I would not have thought of without these introductions.

Another help to me were the Veterans' Affairs' personnel at Walter Reed. These men and women provided me with information about not only VA benefits, but also about job opportunities in the area, resume advice, career counseling, and a vocational rehabilitation program.

My transition ended in December of 2005 when I was medically retired from the Army and I accepted a position with Systems Planning and Analysis in Alexandria, Virginia.

Looking back on my experience, I can certainly make comments for improving the process. The first comment I would make is concerning outreach. I believe each transitioning wounded veteran should be exposed to the same opportunities I had and at the earliest moment.

I was fortunate to have been introduced to people who helped me along the way. I am not sure all the wounded servicemembers at Walter Reed are as fortunate. I know outreach has increased since I left and there are now frequent job fairs. But the time to teach our wounded veterans about opportunities in the civilian world is as they begin their transition. The more time they have to make a decision, the better.

Second, one of the most valuable parts of meeting so many people was gaining the advice they offered and learning from their experiences. In many ways, these people served as my mentors as I transitioned to civilian life. As most of us know, having a mentor can mean the difference between making a good decision and a bad one.

I had people I could call or e-mail to ask questions or raise issues as they came up. They offered me their honest opinions based on their broad experience. I took advantage of this resource and it has served me well throughout the process.

I realize this is ambitious, but providing each transitioning wounded servicemember with a mentor who is also a veteran, someone with a similar background and experience in areas in which the soldier is interested in would be a great benefit.

Third, there are several programs up and running both within Walter Reed and with private organizations that allow soldiers to intern or shadow employees in fields that interest them. One such program that I am aware of is Operation War Fighter where wounded Walter Reed servicemembers intern with the federal government here in Washington, D.C.

There are also programs such as the Recovery and Employment Assistance Life Lines or Real Life Lines that provide wounded servicemembers with career counseling and reemployment services. These programs are invaluable. Wounded servicemembers have spare time between appointments and medical care, especially as they begin to

transition out. This time would best be spent learning about opportunities in the civilian world.

I wish I had had the opportunity to intern or shadow someone even for a day to learn about what life is like at certain jobs from the inside. These programs also give veterans the opportunity to make contacts and to meet people who can serve as mentors.

To conclude, the key component of my transition process was the two or three people who introduced me to the civilian world. They did this by learning about my interests and experiences and introducing me to people who could help. There are such a large number of Americans who want to help. The key is linking them up with our wounded veterans.

That concludes my statement.

MR. BOOZMAN. Thank you very much.

[The statement of Peter Lohman appears on p. 70]

MR. BOOZMAN. We are also joined by Mr. Harold Scott. Harold is with Harley-Davidson Motor Company, another great company that is doing a tremendous job of hiring veterans and taking a very special interest. He joined the company in 2000 as Vice President of Human Resources.

He has overall responsibilities for all human resource activities including organization development, compensation, and benefits, employee relations, diversity, recruiting, placement, training, and labor relations.

And go ahead, Mr. Scott. It is good to have you with us.

STATEMENT OF HAROLD SCOTT; VICE PRESIDENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, HARLEY-DAVIDSON MOTOR COMPANY

MR. SCOTT. Thank you.

First of all, I want to thank Chairman Buyer, Ranking Member Lane, and other members of the Committee of Veterans' Affairs for the privilege to appear today. I am particularly honored to be with this panel of distinguished veterans.

My name is Harold Scott. I am the Vice President of Human Resources at Harley-Davidson Motor Company. And I appreciate the opportunity to talk about the visibility we give to the issues surrounding veterans.

At Harley-Davidson, we benefit from the positive contributions of military veterans every day. From the leadership positions throughout every level of the company, military veterans have brought a work ethic reflecting the training and experience they have acquired.

It is now estimated that 14 percent of Harley-Davidson employees

are military veterans. And ten percent of our leadership and thirty percent of our customers have all served in the military.

During our long history of making great motorcycles, our company has undertaken initiative to support our employee veterans of the United States military. Throughout major conflicts, the company has given assurances to the U.S. Department of War and Navy that we would agree to rehire all of our employees who left to defend our country.

Our support is continued and predates the initiation of laws associated with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Acts. Our commitment continues today.

In 2003, we joined other companies and signed an agreement to partner with the United States Army, Partnership for Youth Success Program known as PAYS. The PAYS Program is the new initiative that offers youth the ability to serve our nation while preparing them for the necessary skills to be effective employees in our company.

The partnership between Harley-Davidson and the U.S. Army benefits everyone by providing quality, mature, and disciplined young adults with an opportunity to secure our country and for future employment.

We also have developed initiatives for both our current employees and customers designed to honor their military involvement and provide support as they are serving our country.

We support our employees who serve in the Guard and Reserve through pay and benefits. Harley-Davidson also as well as the International Association of Machinists, the IAM, the United States Steel Workers International Union have committed a policy to meet the financial needs of military reservists and National Guard members who have been called to active duty by Presidential Order during a military crisis.

We do this by compensating an employee called to duty with the difference between their military pay and their normal pay or average hourly straight time rate during their absence. We also continue their benefits including their 401k benefits.

We have also established a program called Operation Mission Accomplished. The program extends warranty coverage on Harley-Davidson and Buell motorcycles belonging to military personnel recently deployed in support of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. This program assures that Harley-Davidson provides a level playing field for those who serve our country.

We also make available our products to servicemembers and Department of Defense civilians serving overseas through the Overseas Military Sales Corporation. We continue to develop initiatives which honor these people who have served our country.

At Harley-Davidson, we present an annual Genuine Hero Award to a veteran for dedication and service to our country. All veterans

are eligible to apply. Veterans, families, and friends of veterans are asked to nominate persons of such characteristics as patriotism, citizenship, wartime heroism, and community service.

In addition, we recently featured a salute to veterans section in our company web site, the harleydavidson.com. We also recently donated \$100,000 to the USO. We have also honored those who have made the ultimate commitment by contributing \$500,000 to the World War I and Vietnam Memorial funds.

I feel privileged to speak to the Committee today on behalf of the leadership and employees at Harley-Davidson. As I expressed to you, our respect for what veterans have done to preserve our freedom and protect our country, we believe it is our duty as a company to help veterans assimilate back into the workforce when their service to our country is complete. And we are honored to do so.

We know from experience that the better Harley-Davidson employee population reflects our customer base, the more successful we will be as a company. Having a common bond of military service strengthens our employees' ability to relate to customers and meet their needs. In short, support of veterans makes good business sense for Harley-Davidson.

Mr. Chairman and Committee members, we believe it is important to consider the challenges faced by military personnel after completion of their service. It is my hope and the hope of Harley-Davidson's leadership that all U.S. employers as well as policy makers will treat this situation as a serious responsibility.

Together we need to take aggressive action to secure opportunities for veterans. You can be assured Harley-Davidson will continue to do everything in its power to continue these efforts.

Thank you.

MR. BOOZMAN. Thank you, Mr. Scott. Thank you for being here and telling such a great story. We appreciate your leadership in hiring veterans and not only hiring veterans, but taking care of veterans. So thank you very much.

[The statement of Harold Scott appears on p. 72]

MR. BOOZMAN. I also want to congratulate our three young veterans on the tremendous job you did. It is not an easy thing to come and testify in front of Congress, but you did a tremendous job.

Without objection, members will have five days to enter written statements into the record.

Mr. Filner.

MR. FILNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just again want to echo your thanks to our panel.

I am tempted to ask Ms. Dozier to lower the gas prices, but I will refrain from that.

I want to throw out a two-part question. I think they are related.

You told some very good stories. We hear some not so good stories about problems that veterans have had, probably older veterans than you represent.

Mr. Lohman outlined some of the things he thought we could do better. I appreciate that very much. I am just wondering if the other two panelists had anything to add in terms of what we could do better.

And why do you think there are these other stories? What are we missing here or is it just individual initiative or is there something we can do better?

MR. MCGEE. I would think that transitioning from the military and going into a civilian workforce is not something you think about at first. So if somebody were to actually come around and to invite you to, you know, check out different programs and have that as a way of a setup just like the VA is on how they tell you about your benefits.

Now, if there was somebody that came around and told you, well, beside your benefits, what about career options. This is something you should be thinking about now if you are not planning on staying in the military. That would be my suggestion.

MR. FILNER. Thank you.

MS. DOZIER. Well, when out-processing in the military, they have you go through an out-process where they have career pamphlets and they tell you about the veterans' benefits.

And as an officer, I think there -- I think it may be more difficult for an enlisted transitioning out of the military than as an officer because, of course, the military placement firms are keen on officers getting out of the military. And like you mentioned earlier, they go after you with one, two years in. You get letters already coming straight to your battalion or your unit saying, hey, when you decide to get out of the military, we have these job opportunities for you.

So I do not know how it is as an enlisted getting out of the military, but that is where I think more focus needs to be.

MR. FILNER. Did all three of you have contact with the TAP Program, Transition Assistant Program?

MS. DOZIER. Right. All of it. It is mandatory when you are out-processing the military.

MR. FILNER. So you all went through it or --

MS. DOZIER. Yes.

MR. FILNER. -- got oriented?

MR. MCGEE. Well, I am still actually active duty right now, so I have not gone through that quite yet. I have not reached that plateau yet. I have a couple more weeks in the military. I just finally finished my PEB and MEB, so I am still transitioning and volunteering for the VA.

MR. LOHMAN. One thing I would add to my testimony, and it is something I was just talking about a couple minutes ago with a friend,

that there is no shortage of people and groups that want to help, especially wounded veterans. That was my experience at Walter Reed. And I am sure Corey could talk to that too.

The one problem, and it is probably a good problem to have, is that there are just so many different groups that it can almost be overwhelming for a servicemember getting out deciding which group to go to for benefits because many of them are redundant.

And I know there is an effort underway to coordinate those groups and make sure that they provide not just the best services they can, but not necessarily so redundant services. And I think that is something that should be continued.

MR. FILNER. I think, Mr. Chairman, that we, as a Congress, ought to undertake maybe in a systematic way the suggestion about shadowing that Mr. Lohman had.

I have had good success myself in hiring veterans. When we look at resumes, I think we have all had the same experience when you see the background and the leadership training that you have had. It is very impressive and is useful in any job.

I have asked to have constituents shadow me. And it is really interesting to them all. As a career thing, I think we all should try to do that more.

Thank you. I appreciate all the testimony today.

MR. BOOZMAN. Mr. Michaud.

MR. MICHAUD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I, too, want to thank all of you for your service to this great nation of ours. Appreciate it. I just want to follow-up on the TAP question.

For those of you who went through the program, do you have any recommended changes on how we can improve the TAP or DTAP Programs or do you think it is sufficient as is?

MR. LOHMAN. I think having gone through it, it is a very good program. I went through the TAP's Program at Walter Reed and it gave me a good overview of the programs that are out there to help veterans and also resume writing tips and just general transitioning tips.

I would again just hit on the job shadowing. I think hearing someone describe the types of opportunities that are out there is one thing, but going out there and seeing for yourself and experiencing that job for a day, even a couple hours really gives you a better idea of what it is like. And I think if you can do that before you actually accept a job, that would be beneficial.

I think when you get out of the military, you really -- at least I did not know what I wanted to do. It ranged from very extremes of what I thought I wanted to do. And I eventually was able to narrow it down just through talking to people and hearing about experiences and experiencing some jobs myself. But I think if other veterans can do those type of job shadowing programs, it would be beneficial.

MS. DOZIER. I think the TAP's Program is great, especially for en-

listed. With the officers, we are pretty much, as I mentioned earlier, gone after right before we get out. And TAP's, I think, maybe should be longer or brought in sooner in their transition to getting out of the military so they see what is out there and what they can go after and what educational benefits or what career track they want to choose when they leave the military.

MR. MICHAUD. Great. Once again, I would like to thank you all for your service to the country.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

MR. FILNER. Would you leave your resumes here. All of us here are going to double your salaries if you decide to work for us.

MR. BOOZMAN. Mr. Scott, Harley Davidson does such a good job. You visit with your other human resources buddies in other companies, so why have you all been able to do such a good job compared to maybe another company that --

MR. SCOTT. I would say it goes to something I heard earlier. Our CEO is a Vietnam era vet. And as a result, I think there is a level of commitment at Harley that you may not see at other places.

The second thing that I think is an advantage that Harley-Davidson may have vis-a-vis other companies has to do with the fact that we have such a large customer base that rides Harley-Davidson motorcycles.

And in my comments about, you know, hiring vets makes good business sense, people have to look into the business and the business has to reflect the customer base. So I think that is an advantage that we may have just based on our product that other companies might not have.

The second thing is, or the third thing, I should say, is I think we have made it fairly easy to recruit veterans. Again, something was mentioned earlier and I do not know the specific details of my business, but it is indeed one-stop shopping if you want to hire a veteran in Harley-Davidson.

But the bottom line is when you have a third of your customer base that are military folks, that drives it a long way.

MR. BOOZMAN. Mike Brinck next to me is an old aviator and he was wondering when you are going to introduce your vet's model of Harley-Davidson.

MR. SCOTT. Well, as a SEC reportable person, I probably should not answer that.

MR. BOOZMAN. Very good.

MR. SCOTT. Stay tuned.

MR. BOOZMAN. Some of the panel mentioned the job shadowing. Is that something that is practical for a company like yours? I know you have a variety of jobs. Is that something that a company would be --

MR. SCOTT. Yeah. I think there are some logistical issues that I would see in a manufacturing environment. And there are some

complications to a Collective Bargaining Agreement.

But beyond that, I think it is a great idea because one of the things that -- it seems to me that when folks do come out of the military, they have a set of experiences and a set of skills that they actually have acquired as a result of their service. But when they enter the workforce, they may want to change. They may want to do something different.

So I think that is a good thing to have, a good type of program to have. Logistically in a manufacturing environment, though, it might be a little difficult, but some of the office environments and salary opportunities, it would work quite fine.

MR. BOOZMAN. Thank you.

Bob, you got any other things?

MR. FILNER. I was told -- I am not sure of the facts here -- that the TAP Program is not mandatory. So what drove you to go to it and are your colleagues getting some of the benefits of TAP or not?

MS. DOZIER. I suppose it would be your chain of command that makes it mandatory or not. And my chain of command said it was definitely mandatory. And I think it should be mandatory, especially for individuals that are not sure what to do when they get out of the military. And one-on-one counseling is what they offer. They have a room with a bunch of resources that have jobs offering.

And I pretty much already had a job lined up before I went to the TAP's Program, so I did not pay as much attention as others that would utilize the program. So I wish I could give you more information on the program.

MR. FILNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you again.

MR. BOOZMAN. Thank you. Mr. Filner, I know that is something, I know that Geoffrey Collver, Mike Brinck, and Devon Seibert, have really been looking into. Our little Subcommittee has jurisdiction over that. And I feel very strongly that it should be mandatory.

And I think even for the people that are going to retire, it is really a good tool to periodically go through so that as you start thinking about retirement, and you can start doing the educational opportunities that are available in the service to prepare you for careers when you get out.

And we happened to be there on a day actually looking at the program going through it and it was one of those days when they were talking about benefits that you had. And many of the people that were there had never heard about those benefits since they had gotten recruited. And some were surprised, you know, at all the different things that were out there.

So I agree with you totally.

But thank you all again. We appreciate your coming and telling your stories and then again to our corporations represented offering jobs to our veterans. Companies do not hire veterans or disabled vet-

erans out of a sense of charity, but they do it because a sound investment is there in the human capital.

Veterans in turn have proven time and time again that they are worth that investment. Today's veterans want no more than the veterans coming home from service in the Continental Army, a good job and a chance to succeed in life. The veterans here today are doing that and the companies represented here are certainly giving them that opportunity.

So, again, thank you very much to the American companies that are doing this. And certainly our commitment is that we always want to hire a veteran.

The hearing stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:15 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Honorable Steve Buyer
House Committee on Veterans Affairs
Veterans Employment Programs
April 26, 2006

Good morning. The Committee will come to order.

Veterans make good employees and that includes veterans who have been severely injured in service. That is why we have invited several companies to show why their company's programs to hire veterans are industry leaders.

Some of America's finest are now residing at Walter Reed, Bethesda, Brooke, Madigan and other military and VA hospitals where they are recovering from their wounds and these men and women are going to be looking for employment in the future.

To you, our newest heroes, let me express on behalf of the whole committee, our great admiration for your sacrifices and the courage you show in working through your rehabilitation.

I hope that each of you understands we are committed to ensuring that you have the means to support yourselves when you leave the service. There may be times when you feel there is no light at the end of the tunnel and I hope you will take heart from what we will hear today from your fellow veterans and industry leaders.

Each of you faces a challenge. We will help you conquer that challenge by offering you the opportunity to qualify for a job, not just because you have a Purple Heart, but because you can do the job.

In a sense, your predecessors who will speak today, speak on your behalf. They, and thousands of others have broken a trail for you and I encourage each of you to give a maximum effort to follow in their footsteps.

To the companies represented here today, I wish you a warm welcome and extend my thanks for stepping up to the plate when it comes to hiring veterans. You are setting the standard by which to measure the nation's business community.

I also want to acknowledge the staff of the magazine *GI Jobs* for identifying those companies with superior performance in hiring veterans. Publications such as *GI Jobs* are a tremendous resource in spreading the word that hiring veterans makes good business sense. That's spelled "s-e-n-s-e and c-e-n-t-s".

Before we proceed with the first panel, I want to expression my personal respect for our Ranking Member, Lane Evans. Unfortunately, Lane could not be here today but I feel it is appropriate to say this despite his absence. Lane has announced his retirement and I believe it is important to recognize him for his 24 years of remarkable service to this nation as a member of the House of

Representatives and as a United States Marine. His work here reflects the principles that have guided him throughout his career.

Lane's concern for our military men and women, the environment, and those less fortunate speaks to his character and his commitment to make life better. But it is his unwavering support for the nation's veterans that best describes his time in Congress. Agent Orange, PTSD, Spina Bifida, and expanded services for women veterans are just some of the causes for which Lane will be fondly remembered by his colleagues.

I have also served on the Armed Services Committee with Lane and always respected his work there and I especially appreciate his counsel as the Ranking Member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee. Even when we disagreed on policy matters, I never doubted that his initiatives on veterans matters are rooted in his service as a United States Marine during the Vietnam Era.

Lane is a man of integrity, compassion, and honor and I will miss him when we convene the 110th Congress. Lane, it has been my privilege to serve with you and I wish you, "Fair winds and following seas."

I now recognize the Ranking Member of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, Stephanie Herseth for any opening remarks she may have. Stephanie.

The members of our first panel represent some of the companies who make a commitment to hiring those who served America. Too often, companies get bashed for not being veteran-friendly enough. Today, we have with us companies that have made an effort to seek out veterans because they know the skills and attitudes veterans bring to the workplace. We have with us on panel 1,

Mr. Dennis Donovan, Executive Vice President of Human Resources, Home Depot

Mr. William J. Behrendt, Assistant Vice President of Human Resources, Union Pacific

Mr. Mark Chini, Vice President of Human Resources, General Electric Infrastructure

Mr. Harold Scott, Vice President of Human Resources, Harley-Davidson Motor Company

Mr. Dan Nelson, Vice President, Exxon Mobile Corporation

Ms. Amy Hawkins, Vice President of Government Affairs, BNSF Railway Company

Our second panel is comprised of veterans who have gone through the process of returning to the workforce. We have with us today,

Corey McGee, a Marine Corp veteran, wounded in the battle for Fallujah and works in the VA Special Events program.

Ms. Ashley Dozier, a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom and works for Exxon Mobile Corporation

Peter Lohman, an Army veteran who was wounded while serving with the Big Red One in northern Iraq and now works for Systems Planning and Analysis, Inc.

Welcome to the House of Representatives and let's begin with Ms. Dozier.

Thanks to each of you for coming here today. Appearing before a Congressional committee and telling your story is not easy and I congratulate each of you for the fine job you have done. If you don't mind, I'd like to ask a couple questions.

I again thank our witnesses for coming here to tell their stories of seeking employment and offering jobs to our veterans. Companies don't hire veterans or disabled veterans out of a sense of charity. They do it because it is a sound investment in their human capital. Veterans, in turn, have proven time and again that they are worth that investment.

Today's veteran wants no more than the veterans coming home from service in the Continental Army: a good job and a chance to succeed in life. The veterans here today are doing that and the companies represented here are giving them that opportunity.

In closing I want to say to America's companies, Always Hire A Veteran.

The hearing stands adjourned.

Statement of Hon. Tom Udall (NM-03)
HVAC Oversight Hearing on Corporate Commitment to Hiring Veterans
April 26, 2006

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for holding today's hearing and thank you to the witnesses for their testimony. In today's world of economic globalization and high-tech industries, veterans offer U.S. corporations a highly-trained workforce of individuals. Service in the military leaves these men and women with the leadership skills, discipline, and strong work ethic that area so valuable to many. The corporate executives testifying today represent companies that have recognized the positive potential of hiring veterans.

In my district, thousands of veterans are in the workforce in nearly every industry. They are CEOs and teachers, machinists and engineers, salesmen, attorneys, public officials, and more. I strongly believe that veterans offer employers with many, if not all, of the skills they desire in an employee.

In addition to promoting the recruitment of veterans, we should also be assisting veterans with starting their own small businesses. For this reason, I am planning on reintroducing the "Seeds for Soldiers Act" during this Congress. This bill would create a specialized loan program for veterans through the Small Business Administration and establish a specifically designed vocational rehabilitation program to assist veterans with transitioning from the military to becoming entrepreneurs. It will provide veterans with the tools to move from the workplace to the marketplace. I believe this legislation would go far in advancing the goal of promoting veteran-owned businesses.

Today, I hope to hear from the witnesses of the successes they have had in recruiting and hiring veterans. I would also like to learn about the barriers they have encountered, how they believe efforts can be improved, and whether they believe efforts should be more strongly coordinated with either the Department of Defense or Department of Veterans Affairs. Veterans' seamless transition from service to civilian life must include assistance in finding meaningful employment, and today's witness can be helpful in that regard.

When the American forces serving abroad begin to return home, they will be entering the workforce. They will bring with them invaluable experience and incalculable training, and we must be certain the opportunities available to them are being made clear. I will be continuing to work in my district on ensuring that this happens, and I believe today's hearing will help all of us in that regard.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JMTK', located in the upper right quadrant of the page.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The need for our workplace to accommodate those returning from fighting for our country is abundantly clear. Because of veterans, those at home can work knowing that our country, and the businesses with it, are safe and our capitalist economy is secure. Veterans put their lives on the line in a very unique line of work, and therefore it is imperative that we provide them every opportunity to assimilate back into a civilian workforce.

This committee has put “seamless transition” for those returning from active duty at the front of its priorities, and in many cases things are getting close to seamless. There is still plenty of room for improvement. I look forward to today’s testimony illustrating situations where

our veterans have joined the workforce at home with a relative degree of success. I also look forward to suggestions for improvement for those who will be returning home in the future.

Statement for the Record
Congressman John Campbell (CA-48)
Full Committee Hearing on Corporate Commitment to Hiring Veterans
April 26, 2006

As a member of the Committee on Veterans Affairs, I welcome all of you wholeheartedly and thank you for your generous participation in this important hearing. Voluntary alliances between the business community and our national government are an indispensable way to accomplish America's highest purposes. Certainly one of those purposes is to secure our national defense and security by enhancing the lives of our military personnel both during and after their time of service.

Corporations and companies of all sizes are the backbone of our economy and of our national culture, and many of these are the natural first-responders in times of crises that confront us such as Hurricane Katrina and 9/11. By reaching out to our veterans and creatively finding ways to offer the dignity of work to everyone, the business community is finding that its acts of altruism are redounding to them many times over, and Ben Franklin's maxim of "doing well by doing good" is proved once again.

Our nation's veterans have honored us with their service, and it is a privilege to participate in today's hearing. I am glad we are looking into the ways many businesses are utilizing the talents and skills our nation's veterans have to offer in their post military career. It is encouraging to see business proactively seeking out veterans for employment and provide them with avenues for their talents which will benefit them and our communities; avenues which are an expression of our national character. I hope others in the private sector will take a close look at today's hearing to consider how best to implement similar policies.

All of you are to be thanked and congratulated for being in action to make America better.



Dennis Donovan
Executive Vice President, Human Resources
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Good morning. My name is Dennis Donovan, and I am the Executive Vice President of Human Resources for The Home Depot, Inc.

I would like to thank Chairman Steve Buyer and Ranking Member Lane Evans for inviting The Home Depot to participate in this oversight hearing on Corporate Commitment to Hiring Veterans.

Founded in 1978, The Home Depot is the world's largest home improvement specialty retailer and the second largest retailer in the United States, with fiscal 2005 sales of \$81.5 billion. The company employs approximately 355,000 associates and has more than 2,050 stores in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, 10 Canadian provinces and Mexico.

At The Home Depot, we feel that our support of the military helps set the standard for corporate America. It is our belief that we must honor our military heroes where it matters most, not only in our thoughts and prayers, but also in our business practices, human resource policies, corporate giving and volunteer efforts.

It is in our value proposition to take care of the people who are defending our country. We do not view our military support as a cost, but rather as an investment. It is not a burden. It is our responsibility, and one that we live up to proudly each and every day.

The Home Depot's commitment to the men and women who serve our country is unquestionably strong and very close to the heart. Since 2002, The Home Depot has had approximately 1,800 associates called to active duty for the current Iraqi conflict.

The Home Depot has implemented an extended and enhanced leave of absence benefit for our deployed associates.

Beyond making sure these associates have a good job when they return home, The Home Depot equalizes pay between their military salary and what they would have made at The Home Depot as well as extends health benefits to all of our deployed associates and members of their families.

We feel it is important to take care of our associates while they are away protecting our freedoms, so the company has extended these benefits to our associates for the duration of the Iraqi conflict.

It is extremely important to us that these men and women are given the opportunity to continue receiving their benefits and have their pay equalized if their military position pays them less than what they would be earning if they were not a reservist or guardsman.

These individuals should not have to forgo benefits or income because of their decision to defend our nation.

Our company's support of the U.S. military and the men and women serving our country goes far beyond what we offer our own deployed associates. The Home Depot has been a long-time proponent of hiring separating military, veterans and military spouses.

On September 21, 2004, The Home Depot joined forces with the U.S. Departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs to launch Operation Career Front, an unprecedented program designed to provide career opportunities for America's military personnel who are interested in transferring their unique skills, knowledge and abilities into a successful second career.

I was in Washington, D.C. with Bob Nardelli, our Chairman, President and CEO; Elaine L. Chao, the Secretary of Labor; Dr. David S.C. Chu, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness of U.S. Department of Defense; and Anthony J. Principi, the former Secretary of Veterans Affairs to launch this tremendous initiative.

In addition to providing employment opportunities for reserves, National Guard or veterans, The Home Depot also has a program for military spouses and dependents. With our network of stores throughout the country, The Home Depot works with its military associates to provide transfers in the cases of reassignment of duty stations, retirement or separation.

Operation Career Front is a program that enhances the company's hiring efforts within the military community. In 2003, The Home Depot hired 10,000 veterans, and in 2004 the company hired more than 16,000 former military personnel. I could not be more proud to tell you that we hired 17,000 veterans in 2005, as well.

Our effort, Operation Career Front, supports America's military job seekers, including veterans, separating active duty service members, national guard members, reservists and military spouses.

To support the initiative, the U.S. Department of Defense provides a link on its Web site to enable military members and their families to apply for employment with The Home Depot, and it lists The Home Depot as a prospective employer on its job search Web site.

The U.S. Department of Defense also makes information available to interested military personnel and their families outlining the process to apply for careers with The Home Depot through their Military Transition Assistance and Family Centers.

The U.S. Department of Labor makes Operation Career Front information available to more than 2,000 One-Stop Career Centers throughout the nation. The U.S. Department of Labor also supports the initiative utilizing the Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) as

well as Disabled Veteran Opportunity Program (DVOP) specialists located at One-Stops and Transition Assistance Centers across the nation.

The U.S. Veterans Affairs Department's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VA VR&E) division makes Operation Career Front information available to veterans with service-connected disabilities through its representatives located in state offices across the nation.

The Home Depot has also hired a significant number of former military into our Store Leadership Program. The Store Leadership Program provides individuals who are dynamic and driven with a strong foundation of strategic and technical skills, placing them on the fast track to store manager positions.

Since the inception of the program in 2002, the company has enrolled 1,202 individuals. Of those enrolled, 567 of them are former junior military officers, with 134 of the JMO's being Academy graduates.

The Home Depot is always looking for the best, brightest talent available, and we have found that the former junior military officers that have joined our company possess tremendous leadership characteristics that have made them invaluable hires.

We have found that these men and women have transferable experience because they have been put in a position where they have had to deliver results, and where they must act strategically as well as tactically.

In addition, our experience shows us that junior military officers have the ability to drive excellence and lead through inspiration. Also, they have the self-confidence and the know-how to engage customers.

The company also is a participant in the Marine Corps National Fellows Program. For the past several years, an officer from the U.S. Marine Corps has been assigned to The Home Depot for a one-year rotation working closely with the company's senior leadership team. The company benefits from the military leader's experience, and the officer is able to transfer his or her learnings at The Home Depot back to the Marines. We are proud to say we have our fourth Marine Corp Fellow, Lt. Col. Jim Izen, currently at The Home Depot.

The company also collaborates with the military to share best business practices. On November 16, 2005, The Home Depot hosted the Army Strategic Leadership Program for the third time. More than 25 senior officers and personnel were in Atlanta to meet with Chairman, President and CEO Bob Nardelli as well as members of The Home Depot's Senior Leadership Team to discuss and share ideas around leadership, logistics, information technology and supply chain management. On November 18, Carl Liebert, our Executive Vice President of Home Depot Stores, met with officers and personnel from the Air Force to share best practices.

Taking care of our communities through corporate philanthropy and volunteerism is one of the company's core values. Our commitment to the military community is no exception.

In 2003, we launched Project Homefront, a program designed to help military families with home repairs while their loved ones were away serving on active duty. The company pledged \$1 million and one million volunteer hours from our associates to complete these home repairs during 2003 and 2004.

In July 2004, The Home Depot donated \$1 million in tools and materials to support U.S. military efforts in Iraq. Nearly 100,000 tools and materials, including shovels, table saws, concrete mixers, safety scaffolding, power generators, light bulbs, jackhammers, and thousands of letters from associates at The Home Depot to troops were loaded on nine tractor trailers in San Diego and taken by the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps transportation to U.S. military installations in Iraq.

In November 2005, The Home Depot made a \$250,000 donation to the USO. The funds have been designated for assisting with the refurbishment of 10 USO centers throughout the United States.

The Home Depot's support of the military has not gone unnoticed as the company has received numerous awards and recognition for our efforts and initiatives.

The company received the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve's Freedom Award in 2004 and The Home Depot was the recipient of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve's Homefront Award in 2003.

In addition, The Home Depot received the No. 1 Ranking in the "Top 10 Employers for Military Personnel" by *G.I. Jobs* magazine in November 2004.

In June 2005, Bob Nardelli received the Most Distinguished American Award from the Marine Corps Law Enforcement Foundation.

Recently, the company received the 2005 Veterans of Foreign Wars James R. Van Zandt Citizenship Award, a commendation from The American Legion, the USO (United Service Organizations) Patriot Award, the PSC Private Sector Leadership Award for the Partnership for Public Service, and the Military Officers Association of America's Distinguished Service Award. And, in February of this year, the company was received the President's National Hire Veterans Committee Chairman's Award.

I would like to close by saying we view our support of the military as our responsibility to our country and as a valuable investment in our company's future. It is something we take very seriously at The Home Depot, and we will continue to support those who are defending our rights and protecting our freedoms.

Chairman Buyer and Ranking Member Evans, thank you again for inviting The Home Depot to participate in this oversight hearing on Corporate Commitment to Hiring Veterans.

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Testimony**Of****William J. Behrendt
Assistant Vice President – Human Resources
Union Pacific Railroad****April 26, 2006****Before the****House of Representative
Committee on Veterans' Affairs**

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Bill Behrendt, and I am an Assistant Vice President for Human Resources at Union Pacific Railroad. I have been with the company since 1979, and my current responsibilities include direction of Union Pacific's hiring efforts on a system-wide basis.

However, before I talk about our hiring efforts, I thought a little background about my company would be appropriate. Union Pacific Railroad is one of the leading transportation companies in America. The railroad's 32,400 miles of track links together 23 states in the western two-thirds of the country and serves the fastest growing U.S. population centers. Union Pacific's diversified business mix includes agriculture products, automobiles and auto parts, chemicals, energy, industrial products, and intermodal traffic. We offer competitive long-haul routes from all major West Coast and Gulf Coast ports to eastern gateways where we connect with the eastern railroads. We also connect with Canada's rail systems, and we are the only railroad serving all six major gateways to Mexico, making us North America's premier rail franchise.

Geographically, our company covers a lot of ground, and the thing that makes it all work is our 50,000 employees. Working for a railroad takes a special kind of person. We are a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week operation. Our factory is often outdoors so our people are required to work in all kinds of weather. The work is strenuous, and because we are a 24 by 7 operation, hours on duty may often vary. Our employees have to work

with large, heavy machinery, and because we want to ensure a safe place to work, safety rules are a very important part of our culture. The operation I just described should sound a lot like our Armed Forces, which is also why we recruit so heavily from the military for our employees.

We actively recruit and hire former military people because their skills and lifestyles are a great fit for the railroad. Many of the railroad's technical jobs – such as diesel locomotive mechanics, electricians, and railcar mechanics – are well suited for military members who have developed similar skills working with large equipment in the Armed Forces. In addition, lifestyles and working conditions are also similar, military personnel tend to be flexible when it comes to relocation, and are typically safety conscious and rules oriented.

All these attributes make military personnel great hires for the railroad, and we have five recruiters who spend about 50 percent of their time on military recruiting. Our recruiters attend military job fairs and transitional assistance programs, and regularly visit major military installations. Twelve percent of our company's advertising budget is spent on advertising in military publications. We continuously advertise in GI Jobs, TAONLINE, Military Times, and the Army Career and Alumni Program web site. In addition, Union Pacific fully intends to partner with the new "Army Partnership for Youth Success" – the Army PAYS program¹.

We are keeping our recruiters very busy these days as we have an aggressive hiring program. Changes to the Railroad Retirement System that were enacted at the end of 2001 that allow people with 30 years of service to retire at age 60, along with a strong surge in business that started in 2003, have caused us to hire roughly 16,000 people over the last three years. Depending on the economy, we are anticipating the need to hire an additional 3,000 to 5,000 new employees each year for the next five years.

Once hired, we believe we provide an excellent environment for former military personnel. We have an Operations Management Training Program that provides an opportunity to do truly meaningful work with an established industry leader while building a career. At Union Pacific, these managers are given real leadership responsibilities along with many opportunities for rapid advancement. Military applicants with college degrees also have the opportunity to be hired directly into this program.

We also provide a solid home for those in the military who stay in the Reserve or National Guard. If called upon for active duty, Union Pacific provides the difference in pay between what the employee receives while serving and what they would have received at Union Pacific. In addition, our medical plan continues to cover the reservist as well as any dependent family members during their period of active duty.

Union Pacific's history of hiring military personnel dates back to its very beginning. At the end of the Civil War, many soldiers were hired by Union Pacific to help build the first transcontinental railroad. We still continue that tradition today, and we are very pleased to be named by G.I Jobs magazine as the nation's top Military Friendly Employer for 2005.

To the best of my knowledge Union Pacific does not receive any Federal grant or contract related to our efforts in recruiting military personnel for employment at Union Pacific Railroad.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my remarks and I would be please to answer any questions.

¹ The Army PAYS program allows the recruit to select a career and join the military and receive technical training required by that career. Upon completion of their military duty, that person would then be encouraged to interview with the industry selected during the recruiting process.

William J. Behrendt

Mr. Behrendt currently serves as Assistant Vice President – Human Resources for Union Pacific Railroad. He has been with Union Pacific since 1979 and has worked in all areas of human resources. Bill has been responsible for hiring since 1999.

Mr. Behrendt was born on September 13, 1952. He received a degree in psychology from Creighton University in 1974. Bill is married with three children.

**Testimony of Marc A. Chini,
Vice President, Human Resources,
GE Infrastructure
before the
Committee on Veterans Affairs,
United States House of Representatives
April 26, 2006**

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, first I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to address the committee today regarding GE's commitment to hiring veterans. At GE, we are proud of all the men and women who serve our great country in the armed forces and we respect and honor their personal dedication and sacrifice. We also realize that it is just that dedication, commitment, integrity and the myriad of skills these men and women develop in the armed forces that form a strong foundation for leadership and make veterans outstanding candidates for employment with GE.

Today, almost 6,000 GE employees have self-identified as veterans throughout our company including our Senior Vice President of Corporate Human Resources Mr. Bill Conaty. Unfortunately Mr. Conaty could not be here today and so he has allowed me the honor of telling you about this group of employees we are most proud of at GE.

GE's Commitment to Hiring Veterans

We are certainly proud of the contributions veterans make to GE across the board and we are also proud of the recognition we have received for our commitment to hiring veterans. We appreciate the recognition of being invited to this hearing today. We also take pride in our consistent ranking as one of the "Top Ten Military-Friendly Employers" in the United States by G.I. Jobs, a magazine dedicated to helping military personnel transition from active duty to corporate environments. That recognition reflects our dedication of significant recruiting resources to hiring transitioning military personnel, our success in hiring from the military, and our commitment to supporting our employees that choose to remain active in the Guard and Reserve. We have found that making long term commitments to recruit from the military, actively promoting deserving veterans, maintaining generous Guard and Reserve policies, and working to ease the transition to civilian/corporate life have long term positive effects for GE. Even more, we understand that hiring from the military is an economic benefit for our company.

Our success with veterans is strengthened through a number of special programs designed specifically to support those employees' unique needs. We realize that these men and women bring exceptionally important characteristics to GE: integrity, leadership, dedication, commitment, accountability, teamwork and a myriad of technical skills. Many times what they lack when they first arrive is just the ability to speak and understand the language of business and of GE. So we make sure

they have a mentor who can help them through this transition from military life to business.

This mentorship can be as simple as one-on-one relationships with peers or leaders or support through strong internal military networks within our various businesses where we link our new veterans with other employees who have also served in the armed forces. Our focus on finding veterans who are a good fit for GE does not rely on traditional placement firms or “headhunters.” Instead, in programs such as GE Energy’s Junior Officer Leadership Program, our method uses a structured team approach consisting of former officers from all branches of the military who work closely together to recruit, screen and select the best qualified candidates. It has proved to be a winning combination. With former military doing the recruiting and screening and emphasizing leadership experience and values, we are able to select those candidates who have the best potential for a successful career with GE. Being former military themselves, our recruiters, screeners and interviewers know how to drill down and determine the best matches for our company.

GE’s Support of the Guard & Reserve

Included in the ranks of those veterans joining GE each year are those members who continue to serve in both the Guard and Reserve. As a recipient of the 2004 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, GE is especially proud of our employees who choose to continue their military service after leaving active duty. For those employees, GE provides enhanced Military Leave of Absence provisions. When they are “called up,” our employees receive one month’s salary plus differential pay for up to three years while they are on active duty. They also continue to receive all benefits and support services for themselves and their families during those deployments. Additionally, GE provides differential pay for both annual training and emergency duty for disaster relief to offset the difference between their military pay and their GE pay.

One area we have found that means just as much to those employees is the special programs we provide for their families while they are mobilized. Through our Operation Homefront and Operation Yellow Ribbon programs we provide special recognition and support for our employees and their families before and during deployments and when the employee returns to service at GE:

- Operation Homefront assists GE employees and their families to prepare for upcoming military deployments. Through GE’s Work/Life Connections program, we provide the employee and his or her family with a Deployment Preparation Information Packet. Throughout the employee’s (or employee’s spouse’s) time away, we continue to make resources, information, and referrals available to help the family cope with the particular stresses and day-to-day changes associated with this period of their lives.
- Operation Yellow Ribbon provides a welcome home package of benefits for our military heroes returning from extended periods of active duty. During the

first two weeks back on the job, returning military employees are allowed a flexible work schedule in order to re-acclimate to GE and get their personal life back in order. Before they are even back on the job, the returning employee is assigned a "Buddy" who has a detailed checklist to help get our returning employee fully up to speed on changes and developments within the company during his or her absence.

While our employees are mobilized to support our country, they are always in our thoughts and they know they can count on us to help take care of their families. We view all of the benefits and support programs described here as an important part of demonstrating GE's on-going commitment to our military employees, and we continue to explore opportunities to make them even more lucrative and appealing.

GE's Military Veterans

I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to highlight just a few of those very employees and the tremendous contributions they make everyday to both GE and this great country.

- First, I'd like to tell the Committee a story of longevity. Recently, Sergeant First Class Pam Randle from GE Appliances completed her 33rd year with GE and her 23rd year as a Personnel Specialist in the United States Army Reserve. Mobilized for both Operation Desert Storm in 1991 and Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004, Pam has served her country and GE well. As an Administration Leader for Service Contracts she is responsible for warranty management of some of GE's most popular products. She uses many of the same skills as a Personnel Specialist in the Army Reserve where she maintains records of our soldiers.
- Colonel Bob Vitolo served 12 years on active duty as an Acquisition Officer before transitioning to the Air Force Reserve and then joining GE as a contract manager. His strong career path has included roles as a Six Sigma Black Belt, Customer Support Manager, and today as a Director of Business Development in GE Aviation. In April of 2003, when recalled to active duty to support Operation Iraqi Freedom, Colonel Vitolo eventually served as the Deputy Director of Contracting for the Aeronautical Systems Center where he used his skills learned in the Air Force and honed at GE to support the Global Hawk Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Program. Among other things, one of Bob's specific accomplishments was negotiating an \$80 million adjustment to the production contract. That savings subsequently funded the first upgrade to the weapon system for its use in Iraq. Bob brought 12 years of active duty leadership experience and training to GE and 17 years of industry experience and commercial practices to the USAF when he was called up as a Reservist.
- Twelve years ago, after Operation Desert Storm, Harv Williams retired from the United States Marine Corps, never expecting to wake up in a combat zone again. After a distinguished career in the Marines, including two tours in Beirut, Lebanon in 1983 and 1984, he says he thought his days of helmets, flak

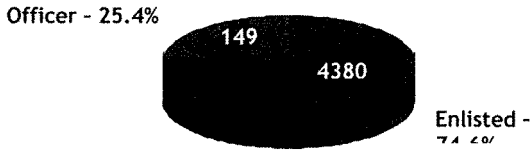
jackets and side arms were a thing of the past. In January 2005 that all changed when the Marine Corps recalled Lieutenant Colonel Williams from retirement to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. During an almost yearlong mobilization, Harv combined the skills he refined as a Program Manager for GE with his previous military experience to get the mission done. At GE, Harv was managing over 500 rooftops around the globe, which prepared him perfectly for his role as the US military's Reconstruction Program Manager for the Al-Anbar Province of Iraq, a \$340 million program that includes 230 distinct projects.

- Lieutenant Colonel Williams' combination of GE and military experience in Iraq was just one example of the synergy created by hiring military veterans. Closer to home, that complimentary relationship became particularly evident during GE's response to Hurricane Katrina last year. As Katrina made landfall on the Gulf Coast, GE's Crisis Management Response Team, led by retired Air Force Brigadier General Frank Taylor, was fully engaged. When the company identified the need to establish a base camp in New Orleans to facilitate our humanitarian relief efforts and to support the restoration of business, GE turned to a multi-service group of military veterans. We tapped this internal strategic resource to execute a very non-traditional business endeavor. Using the skills they honed in the military, Marine Corps Reserve Colonel John Ahern, a GE Energy Plant Security Team Leader, and former Air Force Captain Tal Ziv, a member of our Junior Officer Leadership Program, established and led the company's main base of operations in the disaster area. (Today, Colonel Ahern is mobilized and preparing for his second deployment to Iraq in three years.) Additional leadership at GE's Camp Comfort in Louisiana was provided by GE Healthcare employees including Army Reserve Major Joel Hagy, a Service Manager, and Indiana National Guard Captain Rob Noll, an Account Manager. The skills these veterans brought to GE were instrumental in our ability to respond quickly to customer needs and humanitarian causes alike.
- Like Tal Ziv, New York Air National Guard Major George Alston is a member of our Junior Officer Leadership Program. While on rotation as a Project Manager with our Corporate Citizenship operation, George supported GE's "troops in the field" and handled headquarters coordination tasks of GE's cross-business response to Hurricane Katrina. Additionally, the knowledge he gained of international logistics through his years as an airlift pilot in the Air Force was of particular importance in managing GE's donation of relief supplies to earthquake ravaged Pakistan and coordinating that donation with the Pakistani military representatives overseeing the relief response.
- Another Air Force veteran, Kathy Pfeifer joined GE when she separated from active duty in 1998. Now a Quality Black Belt at GE Appliances, Kathy has made good use of the leadership skills, technical training and experience she gained on active duty. After a short break from military service, Kathy joined the Kentucky Air National Guard in 2000 with the full support of her Manager and the company. In 2003, when she volunteered to deploy to Iraq, Major

Pfeifer found the cross-functional skills she honed at GE built on her military expertise and helped her fulfill her assignment as an Operations Officer responsible for sustaining operations at the Baghdad International Airport and its supporting camps.

GE's Veterans Hiring Trends

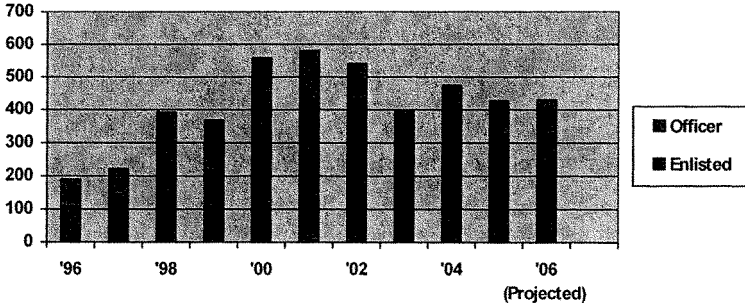
These stories of GE employees represent just a few of the roughly 6,000 veterans who have self-identified within GE. Of our veterans, just over 25% come from the officer corps while almost 75% are prior enlisted. With opportunities from manufacturing to engineering to financial services to marketing in industries from healthcare to power generation to entertainment, GE offers a multitude of opportunities for veterans of all ranks from all services.



**GE Employment of Veterans by Military Rank
(Based on employee self-identification; total 5,875 employees)**

One way GE has been able to grow our veteran population is our increasing participation in hiring conferences that specifically focus on veterans groups. Every year GE is a leading participant in numerous veteran-focused hiring conferences around the country including the Service Academy Career Conferences. We bring up to 25-30 of our military recruiters, representing virtually all of the GE businesses, specifically to recruit veterans.

We have seen great success from this focused effort. Just in the past ten years, GE has hired over 4,000 veterans. We are proud that during the past decade we have increased our average hiring to over 400 new veterans each year. In 2006, GE continues a positive hiring trend as we project going above that average for the sixth time in the past seven years.



GE Hiring of Military Veterans (1996 - 2006)

Our focus on finding veterans who are a good fit for GE does not rely on traditional placement firms. Instead, in programs such as GE Energy's Junior Officer Leadership Program, our method uses a structured team approach consisting of former officers from all branches of the military who work closely together to recruit, screen and select the best qualified candidates. It has proved to be a winning combination. With former military doing the recruiting and screening and emphasizing leadership experience and values, we are able to select those candidates who have the best potential for a successful career with GE. Being former military themselves, our recruiters, screeners and interviewers know how to drill down and determine the best matches for our company.

Veterans Find a Good Fit in GE

One of the great strengths of GE from an employee standpoint is the ability to work in a variety of different industries while remaining an employee of one company. We have found this to be a draw for many veterans. Further, we have found that military personnel, who have served all over the world, are a great asset as GE grows globally. As with all our employees, we continually strive to provide opportunities for our veterans to maximize their personal potential through continuing professional development. From the very beginning of their employment during the transition phase from military life to business, as many veterans are just learning the language of business and of GE, we continually focus our employees on career development and career broadening opportunities.

The diversified portfolio of GE products and services also leads to our requirement to fill virtually every function found in business today. Because of the vast variety of functions within GE, we have had great success in placing veterans where their particular strengths and interests lie. Our heavy focus on engineering and manufacturing certainly draws many veterans with strong technical skills but we have also had great success with placements in a wide variety of functions beyond these

technical areas. Our veterans have proven to be particularly important to our services and sales force as well as a diverse variety of other functions.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, it is an honor and a privilege to speak with you today about GE's commitment to military veterans. I think as I close, there is no better way to do so than to quote Lieutenant Colonel Harv Williams, the GE Program Manager and United States Marine I spoke of earlier. While recalled to active duty and serving in Iraq, Lieutenant Colonel Williams closed a letter to his wife writing, "Freedom really isn't free and without reservation. God bless America!" At GE we understand this sentiment and appreciate the contributions of our military veterans. We support our veterans, leverage their skills and abilities, and benefit from their contributions. Veterans are important employees who continue to make GE a good as well as a great company.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share GE's commitment to supporting military veterans.

**TESTIMONY OF
DANIEL NELSON
VICE PRESIDENT, WASHINGTON OFFICE, EXXON MOBIL CORPORATION
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
APRIL 26, 2006**

Good morning, Chairman Buyer, Ranking Member Evans and Members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

My name is Dan Nelson. I am a Vice President of Exxon Mobil Corporation and the company's senior official here in Washington. I was a Marine Corps infantry officer for five and half years, including almost two years in Southeast Asia, and I am a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy.

Like many in my company I have an advanced degree -- but, while I am sure that has been useful to me, I have always thought that the best preparation for my business career was matriculation at the School of Hard Knocks, the Marines. And, I've welcomed to opportunity to both work for and supervise any number of extraordinary veterans during my 30 years with ExxonMobil. I'm proud to have the opportunity to testify today about my company's efforts to recruit and support veterans, including disabled veterans.

Accompanying me here today is Ashley Dozier, a West Pointer, a veteran and a recent hire of ExxonMobil. Ashley will testify about her own experiences shortly.

ExxonMobil is the world's largest publicly traded petroleum and petrochemical company with operations in nearly 200 countries and territories on six continents. More than 30,000 of our 82,000 employees are based in the United States.

We actively recruit veterans through military placement firms and Service Academy Career Conferences, and the disabled through Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities Conferences. Frankly, one of our most important recruiting tools - beyond the challenging and exciting careers we offer - is the reputation we have as an employer of choice for veterans. In the *GI Jobs* 2005 ranking, we were named as one of the Top 25 Military Friendly Employers because of our ongoing support of our reservists through our military leave policy.

Since September 2001, 89 U.S.-based ExxonMobil employees have been called to active duty in connection with the hostilities in Iraq and Afghanistan and in the U.S. Homeland Security operation. We recognize that military service requires sacrifices that are "above and beyond" by our employees and their families. That is why ExxonMobil policy exceeds the minimum requirements established by law.

Our military leave policy, which dates back to the First World War, includes the following basic provisions:

If an employee is inducted into or is recalled to full-time active duty with the United States Armed Forces, he or she qualifies for payment of the difference between their military pay and their Company pay for the period while on active duty.

Further, if an employee is called up in emergency situations for full-time temporary duty or military training that is not anticipated to exceed two months, employees receive full pay, offset by any military pay received.

Eligibility for and participation in ExxonMobil benefits continues for employees while on active duty based on the benefit plan status of the employee immediately prior to the military call-up. Examples of continued benefits include: 1) service credit for our retirement plan, which is fully paid for by the Company, 2) make-up of Company contributions to the savings plan upon employee return, 3) life insurance plans, 4) medical and dental insurance for both the employee and his/her dependents, and 4) payment for pending vacation credits.

There is no minimum Company service requirement to receive Company pay and benefits while on military leave.

But recounting our practices and policies doesn't really convey the story. Let me instead share with you the words of one of our employees recently called up to active duty.

Chris Napier, who works at our Baytown, Texas chemical complex, wrote an email to ExxonMobil management after standing down from his military call-up in 2003. Here's a brief excerpt:

"As a member of the U.S. Army Reserve, I was called to active duty on January 27th, 2003 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. ExxonMobil was there to support me and my family 100% every step of the way. I remained activated for eight months until September 15. During this period, the military leave policy kept our health and dental plans available to my wife and children. I also received a pay differential that kept us from going under financially. This was a tremendous relief to know that my employer was backing me and taking care of my loved ones."

ExxonMobil is proud of our employees who serve in the armed forces, and our policies are in place to support them and their families.

I'd also like to point out that our support for veterans extends outside our own company. For example, we recently were very pleased to make a significant grant to the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund, which is constructing a rehabilitation center in San Antonio for members of the military who have been seriously injured and disabled.

Again, I wish to thank the Subcommittee for this opportunity to share a brief overview of our company's recruiting and military leave policies.

Statement of

John Shook

**Regional Director, Human Resources
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corporation**



Before the
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Veterans Affairs

April 26, 2006

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I am pleased and honored to be here before the Committee on Veterans Affairs. My name is John Shook, Regional Director Human Resources, with BNSF Railway.

BNSF is one of America's largest railroads, with about 40,000 employees and 32,000 miles of routes serving 28 western states and two Canadian provinces.

I have over 36 years experience in human resources management, 11 of those with BNSF Railway, and another 25 years of honorable service as a career Air Force officer, serving in over 17 assignments in the United States and overseas.

As requested by this Committee, the purpose of my testimony is to provide information about BNSF's corporate commitment to hiring veterans. I will describe some of the specific steps we have taken to become a military friendly employer as well as explain why we go the extra mile to hire veterans. I will conclude by highlighting a few examples of recognition of BNSF's efforts.

BNSF has a longstanding record of commitment to America's men and women in uniform as well as its citizen soldiers. BNSF recognizes and values the sacrifice made by employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve. About 400 BNSF employees have been called to active duty since September 11, 2001, in support of the War on Terrorism, and 195 of those employees are currently serving on active duty.

BNSF offers enhanced and extended benefits for those employees called to active duty in the War on Terrorism, including make-whole pay and sustained health-care and other benefits. In addition, we offer fifteen days of make-whole pay for annual training and drill duty.

In February 2006, BNSF renewed its longstanding commitment to those serving in the National Guard and Reserve by becoming the first railroad to sign a Five-

Star Statement of Support with the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR).

BNSF was recently nominated by three employees for the Department of Defense's annual Freedom Award. This prestigious nomination recognizes that BNSF policies and practices, including care packages and welcome-home celebrations, go "above and beyond" in support of our nation's citizen soldiers.

The three nominators are all members of the National Guard who served in combat – they are American heroes.

- Aaron Rossiter, Sergeant, Texas Army National Guard, was hired as a Management Trainee. His training was interrupted when he was deployed to Iraq on short notice.
- Shawn Crystal, BNSF Safety Manager and Master Sergeant with the Tennessee Air National Guard, served in Afghanistan.
- John Fuller, Specialist, California National Guard and a BNSF conductor, is recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center from wounds received in combat on September 3, 2005, while serving in Dora, Iraq.

Those who wear our nation's uniforms are mission-focused, highly skilled, motivated, and possess unique experiences and technical knowledge. Military candidates embody the core competencies essential at BNSF: leadership, teamwork and the ability to perform safely in a fast-paced, dynamic environment. The way we see it, the military candidate is a great fit for a career at BNSF Railway.

Our goal is to supplement and strengthen our employee talent base by connecting interested job seekers who are in transition from military to civilian careers. (See Appendix A for details.)

We believe the steps we have taken to become the employer of choice in the military community are showing results:

- In 2004 we hired 350 veterans with an additional 750 veteran hires in 2005.
- Year to date 2006, 20 percent of all hires – over 350 – are veterans with over fifty serving as members of the Guard and Reserve.
- If present trends continue, BNSF is on track to hire more than 1,000 veterans in 2006.
- GI Jobs Magazine has named BNSF one of America's Top 25 Most Military Friendly Employers.

According to BNSF Chairman, President and CEO Matthew K. Rose, "We recognize and appreciate the sacrifice and service not only of the citizen-soldiers who are members of Team BNSF, but of all of America's heroes who have answered the call to serve and defend our country since September 11, 2001."

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to discuss BNSF Railway Company's commitment to its employees serving in the military, and to hiring military veterans. BNSF Railway is honored to be present before this committee.

Appendix A

BNSF Strategies and Activities for Recruiting Veterans

BNSF Railway Company deploys a number of strategies in an effort to attract military candidates, from posting jobs to online niche job boards such as vetjobs.com, ACAP Online, and Marine for Life to print advertising in best-in-class publications such as *GI Jobs*, *Military Times / Decision Times* and the *Corporate Gray Series*.

Our most valuable resource lies in the positive relationships we have with the individual base Transition Assistance Program (TAP) professionals. We work collaboratively with Army Career Alumni Program (ACAP), Marine for Life Home Town Links and the Family Support Centers to facilitate a positive transition experience for military job seekers. Our efforts include:

- military job fairs
- employer day events and job search skills and strategies seminars
- BNSF Career Kit shipments
- weekly HOT JOBS distributions
- individual career counseling sessions

Interested members of the military can learn more about BNSF Railway and apply online at www.bnsf.com/careers/military, our dedicated career web page for military candidates. This web page provides links to Frequently Asked Candidate Questions, upcoming military job fairs and much more.

Corey McGee

On April 10th, 2004 I was injured by enemy fire in Fallujah, Iraq. While my platoon was responding as the battalion quick reaction to reinforce a Marine unit that had come under heavy attack, we were ambushed by an insurgent force of 15 to 20 personnel in a well-coordinated and well executed two-sided ambush. I was hit with an Improvised Exploding Device in the very beginning of the ambush and received shrapnel to my neck. Rocket Propelled Grenade's and small arms were also used by the enemy combatants. Immediately, I began to lay down suppressive fire and then was wounded a second time when a bullet deflected off my weapon and sent shards of metal into my right shoulder. I continued to return fire until I ran out of ammo. I grabbed a M249 squad automatic weapon from one of my wounded comrades while pulling him to a protected position. I returned to my squad's humvee while continuing to lay down suppressive fire to cover the movement of the maneuvering elements of my platoon.

By this time, my platoon had seven wounded in the ambush, so in order to remove my squad out of the ambush, I commandeered the squad humvee and drove four fellow platoon members to a secure location out of the kill zone to access casualties and redistribute munitions. Due to loss of blood, I became fatigued from my wounds, but continued to drive the vehicle to another secure location in order to establish a helicopter-landing zone to extract the wounded. The last thing I remember before losing consciousness from loss of blood was the medic who stabilized my condition and placed me on the evacuated helicopter with my fellow injured soldiers.

After reaching the casualty collection point, I was assessed as an urgent surgical patient. The loss of blood and the severity of the wounds to my neck, shoulder and lungs caused me to enter in to shock. I was then evacuated to Germany for further medical care. When I woke up in Germany, I was without feeling from my head to my toes. A week later, I was further medically

evacuated to Walter Reed Army Medical center in Washington, DC.

I arrived in Washington, DC with little feeling in my upper body and paralyzing injuries from my waist down. Within a month, I achieved full control of my upper body with the help of physical and occupational therapy. I was still unable to feel or move anything below my waist. During this month at Walter Reed, I was awarded two Purple Hearts, an Army Commendation medal for Valor and was nominated for a Bronze Star for valor.

Several months later, I met a woman by the name of Genie Lehowicz at Walter Reed Medical Hospital. Mrs. Lehowicz works as a Vocational Rehabilitation Councilor for the Department of Veterans Affairs. Upon our meeting, she asked me if I was not planning to stay in the military, would I like to rejoin the workforce. At this point, all my hopes of staying in military were slim to none. As a father of two, I needed to start to think about my future career options.

Originally, my goal was to stay in the military for the next 20 years and to hopefully retire as Sergeant Major. So it was with reluctance that I came to the conclusion that it was time to take a new direction with my life. By the time I started with the Coming Home to work program at the Veterans Affairs, a year after my injury, I was walking again with the assistance of a walker followed by crutches and finally a cane which I still use to this day for long walks. The program called "Coming Home to Work" arranged for me to receive two new business suits to help me feel comfortable in my new office position. I met with a couple of different departments to see where I could be a good fit for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

With this new direction in working with Veterans Affairs, I was able to do something that was near and dear to my heart and knew that I could not only make a difference for Veterans across the United States, but also for the soldiers that will be new to becoming a Veteran. I give them the information they need to be successful in their transition to becoming a civilian again in hopes that will be as successful as I will.

I was able to work in a comfortable work environment that would provide all the adjustments to my disability without bringing to much attention to them. With this programs help I am now able to work in the civilian world with the utmost confidence and skills to become successful in my new career goals in the government.

**TESTIMONY OF
ASHLEY DOZIER
PROJECT ADVISOR, EXXONMOBIL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
APRIL 26, 2006**

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

My name is Ashley Dozier. I am a Planning and Controls Project Advisor with the ExxonMobil Development Company based in Houston, TX. I joined ExxonMobil this February after nearly six years of service in the Army.

I would like to start off by telling you a little about my childhood. I grew up in the small town of Montgomery, TX (one hour Northwest of Houston) under the mentorship of very involved and loving parents. My Dad was in Law Enforcement and my Mom was a grade school teacher. I have one sister who is 18 months younger and, despite being enemies as kids, we have grown quite close in adulthood. My childhood was very stable. In fact, my parents, after 31 years of marriage, still live in the same house in which my sister and I were brought up.

Since the age of 13, I was on a mission to attend a US Military Academy. I was a very serious and determined young woman and did everything within my power to reach that goal. I became involved in almost every school club, ran cross country and track and was a straight A student. After graduating from Montgomery High School as the Class Valedictorian on 25 May 1996, I was on my way to Beast Barracks (West Point's Basic Training). On 26 May 2000, after a very demanding four years, I graduated from the United States Military Academy with a BS in Civil Engineering and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers.

After the Engineer Officer Basic Course, I was assigned to the 94th Engineer Battalion based out of Vilseck, Germany from December 1999 to August 2003 then to the XVIII Airborne Corps based out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina from August 2003 to January 2006. I was deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina and to Iraq twice, holding positions in construction, project management, and force protection.

After deciding to transition out of the military, I found the job market very receptive to junior military officers. I was personally contacted by over five military placement firms with numerous employment opportunities. In addition to placement firms, I attended a Joint Service Academy Career Conference and posted my profile on the Service Academy Business Resource Directory and several public job search engines. With the assistance of placement firms, I interviewed with and was offered positions at four different companies. After interviewing with ExxonMobil in December 2005, I knew I had found my future career track.

ExxonMobil was the right fit for me for many reasons. First of all, ExxonMobil held my experience in the military in high regard and counted it towards my employment status, allowing me to sign on as an experienced hire. It felt great knowing that ExxonMobil appreciated my hard work and years of service in the military.

Secondly, my background and passion is in project management. ExxonMobil offers endless opportunities to become involved in extremely diverse and interesting projects worldwide.

I also find the culture here very similar to that in the military. ExxonMobil is formal and very process oriented with strong, ethics-based standards of business conduct, making it a comfortable transition for me.

In addition, ExxonMobil hires with a career-focused mindset and immediately starts career development. Location was another deciding factor in my job search, and by being a largely Houston-Based Corporation I am able to build a home-base much closer to my family. Finally, the compensation is unmatched. They offered me a very competitive base salary with benefits including a relocation allowance, pension plan, 401K with matching stock option, and solid medical benefits.

After nearly three months with ExxonMobil, I am extremely pleased with my decision to become a part of this team. In a short time, I have already worked on two extremely large and unique projects, attended two, week-long training courses and learned more than I could have imagined. I thrive in a challenging environment in which I am constantly learning. ExxonMobil provides that for me, and I look forward to a long and productive career with this company.

Statement of CPT (ret.) Peter C. Lohman
Before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
United States House of Representatives
On
Corporate Commitment to Hiring Veterans
26 April 2006

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today concerning my experiences as a wounded soldier transitioning into civilian life. I hope, through telling my story and sharing some insights, that I am able to improve the way our wounded veterans join the civilian workforce.

To start with, it is important to provide some background on my experiences. I served as a scout platoon leader in North-Central Iraq from February to December 2004 as part of the 1st Squadron, 4th US Cavalry, 1st Infantry Division. On 19 December 2004, I was wounded while on patrol; I received a gunshot wound to my right shoulder. I was evacuated back to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center and then on to Walter Reed.

Around June of 2005, while undergoing physical and occupational therapy at Walter Reed, I decided I would transition to civilian life. One of the things that concerned me when making this decision was whether I would enjoy the challenges and opportunities in the civilian world. Having graduated from West Point and then spent four-and-a-half years in the Army, I did not have tremendous familiarity with civilian jobs. However, I was lucky enough to meet two or three people that got to know me, understood my interests, and linked me up with employers and others who helped me gain an understanding of opportunities in the civilian world.

My first introduction was to the Department of Defense's Military Severely Injured Center. This Center passed my name on to several different people who all offered both support and contacts as I decided what to do next. One of those people was Bill Offutt of the Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service. Bill personally invited me to several events in the area and introduced me to prospective employers. Through Bill and others, I was able to talk to a variety of people and get an idea for different types of jobs as well as listen to people's experiences, which I found incredibly valuable when making my decision.

These contacts were also valuable by providing me with job interviews, which turned into job offers. My range of opportunities increased and I considered things that I would not have thought of without these introductions.

Another help to me were the Veterans' Affairs personnel at Walter Reed. These men and women provided me with information about not only VA benefits, but also job

opportunities in the area, resume advice, career counseling, and the vocational rehabilitation program.

Looking back on my experience, I can certainly make comments for improving the process.

The first comment I would make is concerning outreach. I believe each transitioning wounded veteran should be exposed to the same opportunities I had and at the earliest moment. I was fortunate to have been introduced to people who helped me along the way. I'm not sure all of the wounded service members at Walter Reed are as fortunate. I know outreach has increased since I left and there are now frequent job fairs. The time to teach wounded veterans about opportunities in the civilian world is as they begin their transition. The more time they have to make a decision, the better.

Second, one of the most valuable parts of meeting so many people was gaining the advice they offered and learning from their experiences. In many ways, these people served as my mentors as I transitioned to civilian life. As most of us know, having a mentor can mean the difference between making a good decision and a bad decision. I had people I could call or email to ask questions or raise issues as they came up. They offered me their honest opinions, based on their broad experience. I took advantage of this resource and it served me well throughout the process. I realize this is ambitious, but providing each transitioning wounded soldier with a mentor who is also a veteran, someone with a similar background and experience in areas in which the soldier is interested, would be a great benefit.

Third, there are several programs up and running, both within Walter Reed and with private organizations that allow soldiers to intern or shadow employees in fields that interest them. One such program that I'm aware of is Operation Warfighter where wounded Walter Reed soldiers intern with the federal government here in DC. There are also programs, such as Recovery and Employment Assistance Lifelines, or REAL Lifelines, that provide wounded soldiers with career counseling and reemployment services. These programs are invaluable. Wounded soldiers have spare time between appointments and medical care, especially as they begin to transition out. This time would best be spent learning about opportunities in the civilian world. I wish I had the opportunity to intern or shadow someone, even for a day, to learn about what life is like at certain jobs, from the inside. These programs also give veterans the opportunity to make contacts and to meet people who can serve as mentors.

To conclude, the key component in my transition process was the two or three people who introduced me to the civilian world. They did this by learning about my interests and experiences and introducing me to people who could help. There are such a large number of Americans who want to help; the key is linking them up with our wounded veterans.

That concludes my statement and I would be happy to take your questions.

Remarks by Harold Scott

Harley-Davidson Vice President of Human Resources

To the U.S House of Representatives Committee on Veterans' Affairs

April 26, 2006

Thank you, Chairman Buyer, Ranking Member Lane and other members of the committee on Veterans' Affairs for the privilege to appear today. My name is Harold Scott. I am the Vice President, Human Resources for Harley-Davidson, Inc.

I appreciate the opportunity to tell you about our effort to bring visibility to issues surrounding veterans employment initiatives.

At Harley-Davidson we benefit from the positive contributions of military veterans every day. From leadership positions throughout every level of the company, military veterans have brought a work ethic reflective of the training and experiences they've acquired. It is now estimated that about 14% of Harley-Davidson's U.S. employees, 10% of our executive leadership and 30% of our customers have served in the military.

During Harley-Davidson's history of making great motorcycles, our company has undertaken initiatives to support our employee veterans of the United States Military. Throughout major conflicts, the company has given assurances to the U.S. Department of War and Navy that we would agree to rehire all of our employees who left to defend our country. Our support has continued for most of the past decade and predates the initiation of laws associated with the Uniformed

Service Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) of 1994. Our commitment continues to today.

In 2003, we signed an agreement to partner with the United States Army's Partnership for Youth Success Program (PaYS). The Army PaYS program is a new initiative that offers Wisconsin youth the ability to serve our nation while preparing them with the necessary skills to be effective employees in our company. This partnership between Harley-Davidson and the U.S. Army benefits everyone by providing quality, mature and disciplined young adults with an opportunity to secure our country and for future employment.

Harley-Davidson has developed initiatives for both our current employees and customers designed to honor their military involvement and provide support as they are serving our country.

We support our employees serving the Guard and Reserve through pay and benefits. Harley-Davidson Motor Company, as well as the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) and United Steelworkers International Union, have committed to a policy to meet the financial needs of Military Reservists and National Guard members who are called to active duty by presidential order during a military crisis. We do this by compensating an employee called to duty for the difference between his or her military pay and his or her normal salary or straight time hourly rate of pay during their absence. Likewise, the families of employees called to duty continue to receive health insurance and 401(k) benefits.

For our customers we established a program called “Operation Mission Accomplished.” This program extends the warranty coverage on Harley-Davidson and Buell motorcycles belonging to military personnel recently deployed in support of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. This program insures that Harley-Davidson provides a level playing field for those who serve our country.

Harley-Davidson also makes available our products to service members and Department of Defense civilians serving overseas through the Overseas Military Sales Corporation (OMSC).

Harley-Davidson continues to develop initiatives which honor those people who have served our country. Harley-Davidson presents our annual “Genuine Hero” Award to a veteran for dedication and service to our country. All veterans are eligible to apply for this award. Veterans, or family and friends of veterans are asked to nominate persons on such characteristics as patriotism, citizenship, and wartime heroism or community service.

In addition, we currently feature a salute to veterans section on our company website harley-davidson.com, we recently donated \$100,000 to the United Service Organizations (USO) and we honor those who’ve made the ultimate sacrifice by contributing \$500,000 to the World War II and Vietnam Memorial Funds.

I feel privileged to speak to the committee today on behalf of the leadership and employees of Harley-Davidson as I express to you our respect for what veterans have done to preserve our freedom and protect our country. We believe it’s our

duty as a company to help veterans assimilate back into the workforce when their service to our country is complete. And we are honored to do so.

We know from experience that the better Harley-Davidson's employee population reflects our customer base, the more successful we will be as a company. Having a common bond of military service strengthens our employee's ability to relate to customers and meet their needs.

In short, support of veterans makes good business sense for Harley-Davidson.

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members, Harley-Davidson believes that it is important to consider the challenges faced by military personnel after completion of their service. It is my hope and the hope of Harley-Davidson's leadership that all U.S. employers -- as well as policy makers -- will treat this situation as a serious responsibility. Together, we need to take aggressive actions to secure work opportunities for our veterans. You can be assured Harley-Davidson will do everything in its power to continue our efforts. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF
CHARLES CICCOLELLA
ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR
VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
SUBMITTED TO THE
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

April 26, 2006

Chairman Buyer, Ranking Member Evans and members of the Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony for the record on the Department of Labor's views on, "Corporate Commitment to Hiring Veterans."

I believe that corporate America's commitment to hiring veterans is on the rise. I also believe that this is in no small part due to the efforts of this Administration and to the efforts of the Congress and this Committee in crafting solid legislation in 2002.

Today's veterans' skills have changed, just like industry has changed. Our service men and women are high-tech, skilled and experienced in many of the same systems industry uses today. They are trained in state-of-the-art equipment, be it in medicine, computers, transportation or logistics, just to name a few. Yet the core values veterans offer today, the soft skills such as teamwork, leadership, triumph over adversity and integrity, are difficult to present on a resume or in an interview. Therefore, we have a dual challenge:

1. To educate employers about the totality of veterans' skills, abilities and potential;
and,
2. To ensure that every separating service member attends the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) employment workshop.

Educating America's Employers

In Public Law 107-288, the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002, Congress established the President's National Hire Veterans Committee (PNHVC) and established as its mission a campaign to make employers and businesses more aware of the positive work attributes our veterans bring to the civilian labor market. The Department of Labor, and more specifically, the Veterans' Employment & Training Service (VETS), have overseen the establishment of that committee, and the integration of that mission with all Department of Labor veteran employment and reemployment programs with special attention to those services provided through the public workforce investment system.

The nationwide network of One-Stop Career Centers is the common denominator between our Nation's employers and veterans who are seeking meaningful career employment. To emphasize this connection, the PNHVC launched a nationwide campaign and established a Web site, www.HireVetsFirst.gov, as the cornerstone of their marketing efforts. Any employer using this Web site will be able to locate and connect to employment specialists at the One-Stop Career Centers closest to their hiring locations.

To guide parties to the Web site, and ultimately to qualified veteran candidates in the workforce system, the Committee relied upon the talent and personal testimony of its Committee members and other outstanding corporate executives. These leaders include Robert Lutz, Vice Chairman of the Board, General Motors; Jackson Moore, President - CEO of Regions Financial Corporation; Bob Nardelli, CEO of the Home Depot; Marty Evans, former CEO of the American Red Cross; and John Potter, CEO of the United States Postal Service. Positive testimonials from these corporate leaders were used in print and Web publications, and they, along with their fellow committee members, have been influencing their peers through aggressive personal support for the mission and message of the campaign: hiring veterans is not good will, it is good business.

The members of the committee have been a catalyst for local, statewide and national initiatives for the campaign. This past winter many members traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet over two dozen trade associations to enlist their support for hiring veterans. The polled members of the National Association of Automobile Dealers reported hiring over 15,000 veterans in 2004 and 2005, but still have a need for more veterans. The International Dairy Foods Association carried the HireVetsFirst message to its CEO board members. The National Retail Federation which employs one of every five workers in the United States had its *STORES* magazine write a story about one of the PNHVC members, his journey from the military to human resource senior vice president for one of the largest coffee retailers in the world and why his company will be hiring more veterans as they continue to expand.

At earlier regional meetings of the PNHVC, Ford Motors, Daimler Chrysler, CALPINES, Lockheed Martin, UPS, USAA, General Electric and several government agencies, among others, reaffirmed their commitment to hiring veterans.

Mac Tools, one of the largest distributor of automotive repair tools, became a HireVetsFirst employer, a designation available through the HireVetsFirst Web site. In fact Mac Tools announced a program to award a \$13,000 full mechanic tool kit to a veteran each quarter. The first award was made to a severely wounded soldier from Iraq, less than 60 days after he was discharged as a disabled veteran, at a job secured for him through the public workforce system before he left Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

The PNHVC has been very active in highlighting the skills of veterans and is working closely on the needs of disabled veterans. In 2004, the Committee started a liaison with the then-newly established program that the Department of Labor initiated in the fall of 2004, called Recovery and Employment Assistance Lifelines (REALifelines). REALifelines is a Department of Labor initiative in which the Veterans' Employment and Training Service and the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and Employment and Training Administration (ETA) address the needs of transitioning wounded and injured service members who have been fighting the Global War on Terror.

Committee members have been insistent in their strategic recommendations and personal testimonies that a patriotic message alone is lost on managers increasingly pressed to

compete in a global economy. Additionally, there are fewer key leaders and hiring decision-makers that are veterans or people who know what it means to have served and the value of that experience. Our campaign strategy, therefore, has focused on the needs of employers for a skilled and productive workforce, which veterans are.

As the PNHVC prepares to sunset this year, the members of the PNHVC have asked to continue their outreach efforts in their individual capacities. It is my desire to continue working with them to maintain our communications with their contacts among America's employers. I hope they will carry on their good work as ambassadors for veterans' employment.

Transition Assistance Program

In addition to the positive work of the HireVetsFirst Committee, the Federal government continues to improve and expand its efforts, through the Transition Assistance Program, to ensure that all of our service members have the tools they need to find meaningful civilian employment. The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is a joint effort operated by the Departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs, which administer the four components of TAP: Pre-separation Counseling (DoD), the Employment Assistance Workshop (DOL), VA Benefits Briefing (VA), and the Disabled Transition Assistance Program (VA). The Department of Labor's responsibility lies in the provision of training over a two-and-a-half day period that introduces the service member to the tools and steps involved in a successful job search within the framework of lifelong career planning.

In response to the increased mobilizations of non-traditional TAP participants, primarily National Guard and Reserve, the Department of Labor has modified the workshop structure, developed new modules, and improved curriculum to meet the requirements of rapid redeployment and demobilization cycles. We have strengthened efforts with DoD to assure increased participation and access rates not only to traditional participants, but service members returning from combat operations, and service members who are exiting from sites overseas or aboard ships. Service members who attend TAP are now more likely to connect with One-Stop Career Centers, which is the operational center for employer-candidate networking and referral. To assure priority of service, and to facilitate service member connection with their local One-Stop Career Center, we partnered with the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) to launch the Key to Career Success campaign in November 2005. This campaign augments our agencies' efforts among employers by assuring awareness within the entire workforce system of the priority and value we place on our veterans.

Maximizing the HireVetsFirst Campaign

These broad national efforts are strongly linked to considerable grass-roots efforts taking place at the state and local level. To maximize exposure of the campaign within the public workforce system and to ensure coordinated service delivery, a joint letter from VETS and ETA, plus a supplemental fact sheet, were sent electronically to over 4,500 regional, state, and local officials of the public workforce system, the national leaders of veterans service organizations, and directors of state agencies involved in assisting

veterans. The letter and fact sheet articulated the goals for the HireVetsFirst and Key to Career Success campaigns and emphasized the implementation of a coordinated service delivery strategy between One-Stop Career Center business services staff, job counselors, Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialists (DVOPs).

VETS' State Directors and many state partners, spearheaded by the PNHVC members, have encouraged the issuance of proclamations by individual state governors for a HireVetsFirst month to reflect state support of the campaign. To date, 46 governors have signed Hire a Veteran Month declarations.

In addition to the efforts of the PNHVC, VETS' staff has actively pursued industry and direct corporate relationships to promote veteran hiring strategies through the workforce system. VETS' ongoing partnership with CISCO Systems Inc. is a recent example of direct outreach to provide recently wounded and injured veterans pathways to high-growth careers and identify specific opportunities for qualified veterans with disabilities to meet Cisco's workforce needs. VETS has worked closely with several trucking associations including the American Trucking Association, the Truck Renting and Leasing Association and the Truck Load Carriers Association to identify recruitment strategies to hire veterans as drivers and mechanics.

Other industry outreach efforts have focused on the American Bakers Association; The Financial Services Roundtable; the United States Business Leadership Network; the National Business and Disability Council; and the Therapeutic Communities of America.

There are 40 premier employers working with DOL's REALifelines program and the Department of Defense's Military Severely Injured Center to establish direct hiring pathways for severely injured service members and their primary caregivers.

Last year we developed a program to co-brand large regional, veteran only, job fairs with private sector organizations. Using the resources of the state workforce systems combined with reaching the regional Transition Assistance Program employment workshops and advertising widely, I can report that our veterans' community was well served.

This past November, the Department of Labor, through our HireVetsFirst campaign, collaborated with the *New York Times Co.* at the Javits Center in New York City to host a job fair for veterans. Over 80 companies signed up and nearly 5,000 veterans participated. The *Times* reports that over 700 veterans found employment that day including two recent veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom who were hired as satellite uplink technicians by ESPN. This past February in Jacksonville, Florida, we staged a similar job fair with RecruitMilitary, LLC where over 1,000 veterans and transitioning service members interviewed with 32 employers. While we are still collecting results, Boeing reported 5 immediate hires and Wackenhut executives stated that they found 50

qualified candidates, which was four times greater than the number of qualified candidates found in non-veteran job fairs.

The goal of the Department of Labor, and by extension the HireVetsFirst campaign, is to make sure that every veteran who wants a job will be able to find it with America's employers. To achieve this goal, we must seek greater recognition of the training and skills veterans acquire while serving our country. This is most ambitious but is attainable, because today more and more Americans in positions to create jobs or hire new employees are impacted by the courage and determination of our young men and women actively engaged in winning the Global War on Terror. The faces employers see today can be tomorrow's leaders for their businesses.

In closing, I thank this Committee for your interest in making an accurate assessment of the "Corporate Commitment to Hiring Veterans." The Department of Labor believes that corporate commitment is strong, and can be even stronger. Therefore, we pledge our support and cooperation to continue our outreach and partnership efforts to continue to connect employers to qualified veteran candidates. We look forward to a strong partnership with the House Veterans Affairs Committee and the Congress in its pursuit of creating more job opportunities for our veterans. We seek to reach all employers, large and small, old and new, with the good news that "hiring a veteran is not goodwill, but good business." Working together we will bring a better tomorrow for the many who have served and those who wish to serve their country by wearing its uniform.



Dennis Donovan
Executive Vice President, Human Resources
The Home Depot

Question from the Honorable Lane Evans:

Currently, companies with federal contracts over \$100,000 are required to file annually with the U.S. Department of Labor a disabled veterans affirmative action plan (or DVAAP) – to highlight the companies hiring and advancement plans with respect to veterans. Is your corporation engaged in any such federal contracts and if so, are you aware of the DVAAP filing requirement? If so, are there any improvements you can suggest with regard to the compliance requirements?

The Home Depot is engaged in such federal contracts; we are aware of and meet the requirements. I believe that this current system works well and there are not any improvements I would suggest at this time.

Question from the Honorable Vic Synder:

What are your companies doing to help veteran-owned small businesses obtain contracts and sub-contracts from your organizations? Do your companies have any program in place that identify veteran-owned small businesses with which to contract?

Our outreach to attract veteran-owned small businesses falls within our comprehensive Supplier Diversity program. In 2004, we formalized our supplier diversity strategy and have experienced success, which includes regional and national recognition of our accomplishments. Our mission is to form mutually beneficial partnerships with diverse businesses that allow us to deliver superior products and services and superb customer service, which ultimately increases shareholder value. One of the critical elements of our success has been the state-of-the-art system we developed in order to attract diverse suppliers. All of the program information, guidelines and supplier applications are housed on our supplier diversity Web site. This site also houses information on what we purchase along with a continually updated list of sourcing opportunities.

June 7, 2006

Committee on Veterans' Affairs
335 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear

I am responding to a letter dated May 4, 2006 from the Honorable Lane Evans regarding additional questions relative to my testimony to the Full Committee oversight hearing on Corporate Commitment to Hiring Veterans on April 26, 2006. My responses to the two questions forwarded to me are provided on the attachment in the format requested.

If you have any questions about my response or have any need to contact me further, I can be reached at

Sincerely,

William J. Behrendt
AVP- Human Resources
Union Pacific Railroad
1400 Douglas Street
Mail Stop 0340
Omaha, Nebraska 68179

Question from the honorable Lane Evans: Currently, companies with federal contracts over \$100,000 are required to file annually with the U.S. Department of Labor a disabled veterans affirmative action plan (or DVAAP)- to highlight the Company's hiring and advancement plans with respect to Veterans. Is your corporation engaged in any such federal contracts and, if so, are you aware of the DVAAP requirement? If so, are there any improvements you can suggest with regard to the compliance requirements?

Answer: Union Pacific Railroad has federal contracts in excess of \$100,000. As part of our Company's Affirmative Action Plan, we do have a plan for Individuals with Disabilities and Covered Veteran's. Disabled Veterans are one of the employee definitions addressed in our Affirmative Action Plan which is prepared annually.

However, to the best of my knowledge, we do not file any of our AA plans with the Department of Labor. Rather, we provide a copy to the OFCCP upon request. We do file a VETS- 100 report each year.

With regard to suggestions.... While not directly related to the above topic, I do believe that America's Job Bank serves a critical need for both employers and veterans, and should remain funded if at all possible. Posting vacancies with each and every state job service will be problematic for employers and will make locating opportunities for Veterans more difficult.

Question from the honorable Vic Snyder: What are your companies doing to help veteran- owned small businesses obtain contracts and sub- contracts from your organization? Do your companies have any programs in place to identify veteran- owned small businesses with which to contract?

Answer: Union Pacific Railroad does not currently have any special purchasing initiatives that include veteran owned businesses. We do have supplier initiatives for minority and woman owned companies.

Questions from the Honorable Lane Evans to Mr. Marc Chini

Is your corporation engaged in any such federal contracts and if so, are you aware of the DVAAP filing requirement? We are a federal contractor, and we produce AAPs for all required sites which include veteran and disabled veteran specific reports.

- **Are there any improvements you can suggest with regard to the compliance requirements?** In today's times, simplification is always a positive, but the current requests are not considered a burden by our businesses. Our sites understand the filing requirements, and have good processes established to ensure completion. One area that has raised questions deals with the America's Job Bank (AJB) which is scheduled to be phased out by June 30, 2007. GE, along with other major contractors, has been using the AJB to meet the federal requirement to list open positions with agencies that provide employment services to veterans. If AJB is not replaced, it has been estimated that we would have to list open positions with approximately 1500 separate state and local employment agencies. This would add a significant barrier to compliance with the listing requirement and could possibly result in veterans receiving less information about employment opportunities.

Questions from the Honorable Vic Snyder to Mr. Marc Chini

What are your companies doing to help veteran-owned small businesses obtain contracts and sub contracts from your organization? As an example, in our Aviation business we outline goals annually with the DCMA and report on our progress twice per year. The categories reported on include veteran-owned and disabled veteran-owned information. We also attend various trade shows, such as the SBA Workshop and Small Business Week, that support small business contractors. Within this population of attendees, you will often find representatives of veteran-owned businesses.

Do your companies have any programs in place to identify veteran-owned small businesses with which to contract? Again using Aviation as the example, we have worked with the DCMA small business specialists to identify veteran-owned businesses, attend trade shows as noted above, maintain a web-site where any small business owners can contact us, and utilize the Air Force Small Business website for suppliers to make contact.

Marc Chini
GE Infrastructure
Vice President, Human Resources

T 202 372 2276 ext

Daniel Nelson
Vice President
Washington Office

July 27, 2006

The Honorable Lane Evans
United States House of Representatives
2211 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-1317

The Honorable Vic Snyder
United States House of Representatives
1330 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0402

Dear Representatives Evans and Snyder,

I am writing in response to the questions from the Full Committee oversight hearing on Corporate Commitment to Hiring Veterans held on June 9, 2006.

Question from the Honorable Lane Evans:

Currently, companies with federal contracts over \$100,000 are required to file annually with the U.S. Department of Labor a disabled veterans affirmative action plan (or DVAAP) - to highlight the companies hiring and advancement plans with respect to veterans. Is your corporation engaged in any such federal contracts and if so, are you aware of the DVAAP filing requirement? If so, are there any improvements you can suggest with regard to the compliance requirements?

Response:

ExxonMobil has a few federal contracts which are valued above \$100,000 and we comply with the requirement to annually prepare Affirmative Action Programs for Qualified Individuals with Disabilities, Special Disabled Veterans, Veterans of the Vietnam Era, and Other Protected Veterans. In 2006, ExxonMobil has 60 AAPs in place.

Improvements Suggested:

There are two improvements that ExxonMobil would suggest with regard to compliance requirements:

1. America's Job Bank ("AJB") operated by the Department of Labor will cease to exist June 30, 2007. Since the launch of AJB in 1995, the number of private-sector Internet-based job boards (e.g. Career Builder, Monster and Hot Jobs) has proliferated, causing the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to call into question the need for the AJB Federal job board.

July 27, 2006

Representative Lane Evans and Representative Vic Snyder

Currently, the DOL Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs requires federal contractors to list all employment openings at an appropriate local employment service office of the state employment security agency and/or contractors may list their jobs with the U.S. Department of Labor's America's Job Bank. Recent legislation and pending regulations remove the option to satisfy the requirement by listing jobs with the America's Job Bank. We recommend that Congress modify the law so that listings with private or governmental national job boards satisfy the requirement. If companies have no national job listing alternative, we will be forced to either notify 50 state employment agencies for each national opening or to limit our job postings only to the states where the jobs will be located, with the result that fewer potential job openings will be communicated to Veterans. We believe that our time is better spent on outreach, recruiting and development activities targeted to Veterans, rather than complying with 50 different state employment agency posting requirements.

2. In addition to developing Affirmative Action Programs, ExxonMobil annually submits Federal Contractor Veterans' Employment Reports (VETS-100) for all U.S. locations. ExxonMobil spends approximately 3 work weeks per year preparing these VETS-100 reports. We believe there is very limited, if any, meaningful analysis of the VETS-100 report data by the government. It is our opinion, that time spent on the VETS-100 reports by industry could be better spent on outreach, recruiting and development activities targeted to Veterans.

Question from the Honorable Vic Snyder:

What are your companies doing to help veteran-owned small businesses obtain contracts and subcontracts from your organizations? Do your companies have any programs in place that identify veteran-owned small business with which to contract?

Response:

While ExxonMobil has a strong Supplier Diversity program, as outlined below, we do not specifically seek out, nor track expenditures, with Veteran-owned businesses. If approached by a veteran owned business, we do add them to our "potential diverse supplier" database in an "other" type category. We have recently added the vendor classification field of "Veteran owned and/or Disabled Veteran owned" to our Contacts Database, but this is so recent that useful spend information will not be available for at least 12 months.

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ExxonMobil has a 33 year history in support of supplier diversity. Both Exxon and Mobil had well established supplier diversity practices and inclusion opportunities. ExxonMobil is a contractor to the federal government but only carries a few contracts, less than 5 annually. For those contracts, we believe ExxonMobil is fully compliant with the required subcontracting plans. Because the amount of business with the federal government is only a part of Exxon Mobil Corporation's overall business, our supplier diversity efforts are more voluntary in nature. Our program focuses on minority and women owned business inclusion. ExxonMobil actively supports the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) and several of their 39 affiliates throughout the U.S. Specifically we support the councils in Houston and Dallas Texas, Virginia, Louisiana, NY/NJ, MD/DC, Chicago, Southern California. We support these organizations through membership, financial sponsorships, employee involvement on committees and networking opportunities. ExxonMobil supports scholarships for advanced studies for the minority business owners.

Similarly, ExxonMobil supports the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) and their 14 affiliate organizations throughout the U.S. ExxonMobil supports this organization in similar geographic regions and comparable financial, educational and interactive support as we do the minority councils.

If soliciting/tracking Veteran Owned businesses, as a specific target group, is being considered, then we would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the objectives and the methodology involved.

If you would like additional information, please call or email Jeanne Mitchell, 202.862.0225/jeanne.o.mitchell@exxonmobil.com.

Sincerely,



Daniel Nelson

**Questions from the Honorable Lane Evans
to Mr. Harold Scott
Vice President of Human Resources
Harley-Davidson Motor Company**

Currently, companies with federal contracts over \$100,000 are required to file annually with the U.S. Department of Labor a disabled veterans affirmative action plan (or DVAAP) – to highlight the companies hiring and advancement plans with respect to veterans. Is your corporation engaged in any such federal contracts and if so, are you aware of the DVAAP filing requirement? If so, are there any improvements you can suggest with regard to the compliance requirements?

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Harley-Davidson is not engaged in any federal contracts at this time.

**Question from the Honorable Vic Snyder
to Mr. Harold Scott
Vice President of Human Resources
Harley-Davidson Motor Company**

What are your companies doing to help veteran-owned small businesses obtain contracts and sub-contracts from your organizations? Do your companies have any programs in place that identify veteran-owned small businesses with which to contract?

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Harley-Davidson does not have an explicit policy for recruiting suppliers with Disabled Veteran status. Our supply management strategy focus on the development of long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with suppliers that can meet our Quality, Cost, Delivery and Technology requirements and who have demonstrated the commitment and ability to continuously improve on these four critical business dimensions. We do actively seek diversity within our supply base and seek to work with disadvantaged groups wherever possible.