



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

**A Message for the Recipients of the 2013
Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award**

On behalf of the Department of Defense, I congratulate this year's Freedom Award recipients. Thank you for everything you have done and will continue to do for our National Guard members, our Reservists, and their families.

under The willingness of patriotic citizens to leave their homes, jobs, and families when called upon to help provide for the common defense has been a defining quality of our Nation throughout its history. National Guard and Reserve Service members continue to uphold this American tradition, but they wouldn't be able to do so without supportive, helpful, and encouraging employers and communities back home.

Tonight we recognize the efforts of 15 employers from around the country that have gone above and beyond to support their Guard and Reserve employees. Some have helped transitioning Service members develop skills to succeed and advance in the workplace, while others have helped ease the strains of deployment, not only for Guardsmen and Reservists, but for their families as well. All have demonstrated the highest levels of dedication to supporting our Nation's citizen warriors.

By doing more than is expected, these organizations serve as models for employers and communities nationwide. Their accomplishments are an important reminder that supporting citizen warriors and their families is a responsibility all Americans share.

Carol HAGER

