

2006
TOP 50
MILITARY
FRIENDLY
EMPLOYERSSM



HIRING AMERICA'S VETERANS

"It's not what they've already done for their country ...
it's what they can do for your company."

by Jack Gordon

President John F. Kennedy's famous saying "Ask not what your country can do for you ... but what you can do for your country" still resonates with the attitude exhibited by all patriotic Americans.

Kennedy's mantra rings true for employers who hire veterans and subsequently gain the benefit of their military experience. However, it particularly hits home with the nation's veterans who must execute a career and social transition from the military to civilian life.

Now in its fourth year, the 2006 *G.I. Jobs* Military-Friendly EmployersSM list represents the "best of the best." Firms making more than \$1 billion in annual revenues were surveyed to determine which companies put forth the best efforts and produced the best results in hiring America's former service members, and which had the best policies for those who continue to serve in the National Guard and Reserve components.

Military recruiting programs have become so ingrained in Corporate America's never-ending search for quality talent that this year's pool of eligible companies was increased along with the size of the list to acknowledge

which companies that are "making the grade" ... and to encourage others to follow suit.

America is on the leading edge of large-scale baby boomer retirements. That, combined with continuing economic expansion, has caused demand for top talent to skyrocket. If corporate recruiting was a commoditized function before, it certainly isn't now. Companies that have built solid military recruiting programs will enjoy competitive advantages over their peers for decades.

The experience and abilities veterans bring to Corporate America are substantial. Most are educated beyond the norm; many have advanced degrees and/or extensive train-



Barb Schaefer
Union Pacific
Sr. Vice President, Human Resources

* Union Pacific is the *G.I. Jobs* Top Military-Friendly EmployerSM for the second consecutive year for its outstanding efforts and results in recruiting military veterans, and supportive policies for the Guard and Reserve.



UP photos



* U.S. President George W. Bush discusses lithium-ion battery technology during a visit in February with employees at Johnson Controls, a Milwaukee-based manufacturer of automotive systems and a Top Military-Friendly EmployerSM. Johnson Controls photo

ing in specialty focus areas. All possess much more deep and broad knowledge from the training and teamwork dynamics they lived or led throughout their tours of duty.

This is all great news for corporate recruiters who are always seeking the right employees for positions spanning the entire employment spectrum from entry-level positions to senior-level executives.

This year's honorees all share the same collective, requisite themes offered to employers by veterans; like service-proven skill sets and unwavering dedication to duty and mission. Employers know veterans are trustworthy, drug-free, team players and certainly disciplined more so than the average citizen.

A "Military Express" Repeats at No. 1

The "Military Express" of Union Pacific Railroad is *G.I. Jobs'* reigning No. 1 Military-

Friendly EmployerSM, garnering the top spot for the past two years running and for good reason – recruiting from the military pool of transitioning service members has produced great results.

"This is truly an honor. There are a number of great companies being recognized by *G.I. Jobs* as military-friendly that we are proud to be associated with," said Barb Schaefer, senior vice president of human resources. "When *G.I. Jobs* indicated they were adjusting the eligibility criteria this year, we had doubts about our ability to repeat as the Top Military-Friendly EmployerSM. So, to achieve this honor under both sets of criteria has been a great achievement for Union Pacific."

Due to an increase in corporate demand for transitioning military talent, the pool of companies eligible for the list was increased from 500 (minimum of \$4 billion annual revenues) to approximately 2,500 (minimum of \$1 billion annual revenues). As a result, the list was increased from the Top 25 to Top 50.

Union Pacific (www.up.com/employment/military) recognizes the achievement of America's veterans and has gone "above and beyond" to incorporate military recruiting into its core business strategy.

In addition to dedicating two recruiting managers who specialize in military recruiting, UP's team of field recruiting managers attended 42 military career fairs, as well as making an equivalent number of trips to attend informal hiring events at military transition and support centers.

Most of UP's new hires are in the train service, where careers climb from entry as a brakewoman or switchperson and can eventu-

ally culminate in becoming a locomotive engineer – and those jobs are spread out over UP's 23-state geographic footprint. Such a large responsibility takes big shoulders and the railroad willingly places it upon the backs of people who have many times encountered life and death situations during their military service.



* The Home Depot, America's leading home improvement retailer and this year's runner-up, has never finished outside of the *G.I. Jobs* top four Military-Friendly EmployersSM. The Home Depot photo

"The far greater challenges that many military personnel have already experienced provide them experiences with demanding jobs and lifestyles that position them well for competing for our jobs," added Schaefer. "And, our jobs may continue to provide former military personnel some challenges and opportunities to serve their country while working for Union Pacific."

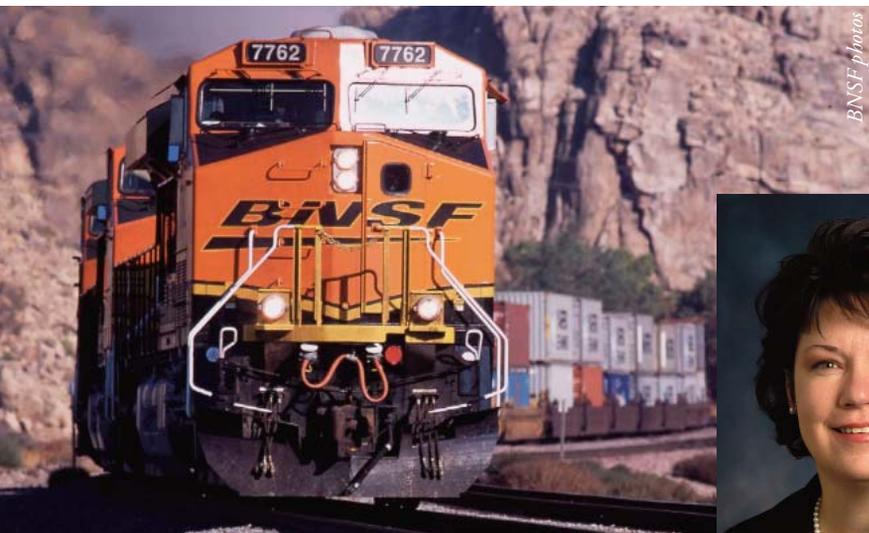
Building Careers for America's Veterans

The Home Depot (www.careers.homedepot.com) has long occupied a place in the lives of millions of Americans who are restoring or renovating their homes. The company also occupies a lofty perch in military recruiting. The Home Depot has entered the lives of so many of America's veterans by extending employment offers in an environment where a veteran's service is recognized ... and prized.

The Home Depot's military recruiting program is well established and recognized as an industry leader. For the fourth consecutive year, the Atlanta-based home improvement retailer has finished among the top four "military friendlies." The retailer seeks a com-



* Sears Holdings is one of America's largest retailers and a staunch proponent of military hiring practices. Sears Holdings photo



BNSF photos

* BNSF Railways vaulted from No. 23 in 2005 to No. 4 on this year's list.



* Connie McLendon
BNSF Railways
Manager, Military Staffing

Supporting Citizen-Soldiers

modity that can't be bought and sold in the marketplace, like the thousands of products, support and services it company offers – leadership. Leadership can't be bought, but it can – and is – taught, in every branch of America's Armed Forces.

The Home Depot joined forces with the U.S. Departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs in September 2004 to provide career opportunities for current and former leaders of America's military community. It works with the departments to link members of the military community with rewarding and challenging career opportunities in its stores and distribution centers across the nation. This effort, known as Operation Career Front, is intended to support America's military job seekers.

The Home Depot recognizes that the U.S. military community is highly-skilled and provides an ideal pipeline for new associates. Its collaborative efforts with the federal agencies are an opportunity to attract, motivate and retain qualified and skilled candidates to work as associates in its stores and offices.

The efforts are obviously paying off as The Home Depot hired more than 16,000 veterans in 2004 and an additional 17,000 in 2005! The company has been particularly impacted with ongoing operations during the global war on terror the past five years with more than 1,800 associates called to serve in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Because of its extended and enhanced leave of absence benefits, The Home Depot earned the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Association 2003 Homefront Award.

ESGR provides supportive services through the Department of Labor's Veterans Employment Training Service (www.hirevets-first.org) to ensure members of the National Guard and Reserve are not discriminated against in the workplace because of their military responsibilities. The organization also recognizes the contributions of companies that actively recruit members of the Reserve components. BNSF is one such company.

In February 2006, BNSF renewed its longstanding commitment to those serving in the National Guard and Reserve by becoming

ing 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 (www.bnsf.com/careers/military) is also a 2006 Department of Defense Freedom Award recipient. 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 company recognizes that citizen-soldiers bring to the job all of the same military training and experience that their active duty counterparts do and often more, according to Connie McLendon, manager of military staffing and a Navy veteran herself.

"BNSF employees with military experience are mission focused, highly-skilled, motivated, and possesses unique experiences and technical knowledge," she said. From her recruiting perspective, the military candidate embodies the core competencies essential at BNSF: leadership, teamwork and the ability to perform safely in a fast-paced, dynamic environment."

Continue to Serve

For many veterans, transitioning to one of the Top 50 Military-Friendly EmployersSM offers them the opportunity to continue to serve – either through a corporate culture that closely resembles military organization or by providing services directly to America's service members, veterans and their families. USAA (www.usaa.com) is a company that meets both criteria.

Ken Huxley, a retired Air Force colonel, now serves as the company's military program recruiting manager where he actively seeks to populate the ranks of the company with veterans and military spouses because they understand the sense of mission. This is a common understanding among all of the top military recruiting programs.

"I have a great job because I'm responsible for building and executing a program strategy that will result in the hiring of military veterans and military spouses," said Huxley. "Military veterans and military spouses are key components of our work force. Like most companies, we value the strong work ethic, and 'world experiences' military veterans bring to the table. At USAA, however, it goes far deeper than that."

"Military veterans—and military spouses—



USAA photo

* Ken Huxley
USAA
Military Recruiting Programs Manager



* BellSouth technicians receive updated work orders via the TechNet computer system installed in BellSouth vans. BellSouth photo

es—are desirable in that they know what our members need better than most. Military veterans in our workforce continue to play a tremendous part in our success. They have the ability to instantly connect with our members, with sincere appreciation for the unique challenges and sacrifices made for our nation by military men and women and their families. They also have wonderful leadership skills and a strong work ethic,” Huxley said.

Approximately 11 percent of USAA’s 21,000-plus employees are military veterans, including CEO Bob Davis and five other top executives. Davis “knows what it means to serve” as the company’s slogan says, by leading 685 combat flight missions in Vietnam from 1969 to 1970 (see CEO Profile on Bob Davis on page 126).

Accomplish the Mission

BellSouth (www.bellsouth.com/employment/Military/MilitaryRelations.htm) is another Top 10 company that focuses on the concept of mission through the employment of veterans.

“Our mission at BellSouth Military Relations is to provide easy access to information, resources, and opportunities related to employment within BellSouth to military personnel in transition, spouses of active military personnel, veterans as well as members of the Guard and Reserve,” said David Sierra, BellSouth’s military hiring program manager

Featuring what is perhaps the most military-friendly Web site focused on veterans and current service members of America’s Armed Forces, their families and spouses, BellSouth also extends support to those now deployed around the world.

The online community has helped add to the pervasiveness of military recruiting where veterans can reach out and touch a wide variety of opportunities few simple keystrokes.

Word of mouth also helps push the cause for veteran employment. As military transitioners continue to filter into the ranks of Corporate America, word about where are the hottest spot for a soft landing travels fast. General Electric (www.gecareers.com) is often on the tip of the tongue and the top of the list, particularly for junior military officers and degreed noncommissioned officers.

Find Yourself a Soft Landing

“Veterans will be in an environment that provides the tools necessary for them to succeed and the support network to help them transition smoothly. The bottom line is that a veteran should choose GE because GE is a good fit for the values most veterans possess,” said Susan Kratch, GE’s program manager for Military, Sales and Marketing Leadership Programs. She is a pioneer in the subject of military recruiting and one of its early adopters.

“We are looking for leaders who can create an external focus that defines success in market terms,” Kratch said, who is an Air Force veteran herself. “We want clear thinkers



* Susan Kratch
General Electric
Military Leadership Programs Manager



* ITT Corporation provides a variety of jobs across the world. The company is a major supplier of sophisticated military defense systems such as this telecommunications system in Kuwait. ITT Photo

who can simplify strategy into specific actions, make decisions and communicate priorities. We look for employees who can energize teams through inclusiveness and connection with people, building both loyalty and commitment.”

Of course, at the core of all of these traits there must be a foundation of unyielding integrity, said Kratch.

Integrity, loyalty, commitment, teamwork, leadership – the never-ending list of adjectives used to positively describe the attributes of what makes military hires so integral in today’s workforce goes on ... and on ... and on.

Congratulations are in order for all of the 2006 *G.I. Jobs* Top 50 Military-Friendly EmployersSM and for the rest of Corporate America who have made the realization that veterans can augment their business at every level to improve the bottom line. Now, just ask them ... what can they do for you? They already know what you’ve done for America! ☆

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- Archives of past Cover Stories.
- Download G.I. Jobs Top 50 Military-Friendly EmployersSM list at www.gijobs.net/top50.
- Link to transcripts and audio files from the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs Testimony on Military Hiring.