



**For Immediate Release**

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**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ANNOUNCES RECIPIENTS OF THE 2021  
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE EMPLOYER SUPPORT FREEDOM AWARD**

*Fifteen Exceptional Employers Recognized for Top Honor*

**WASHINGTON** – The Department of Defense is pleased to announce the 15 recipients of the 2021 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, the highest U.S. government honor to employers for support of National Guard and Reserve employees.

The recipients include small and large private and public sector employers nominated by a National Guard or Reserve Component employee employed in their organization. Celebrating its 25th year, the Freedom Award began in 1996 under the auspices of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve to recognize exceptional employer support, with 310 honorees to date.

“I am proud to salute the outstanding employers who have earned the distinction of being named Freedom Award recipients as we mark the 25th year of this highly coveted recognition,” said Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III. “The men and women of the National Guard and Reserve make significant contributions to our communities and our national security through their civilian and military careers. We owe a debt of gratitude to these exemplary employers, who by valuing and supporting their employees’ military service, enhance the strength, readiness, and diversity of our National Guard and Reserve forces.”

ESGR received 3,382 nominations for this prestigious award for employers throughout the 50 states, Guam-CNMI, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands and District of Columbia. The recipients distinguished themselves by going far beyond the requirements of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, or USERRA, to support their National Guard and Reserve employees. Many offered enhanced pay and benefit packages; flexible scheduling and generous leave policies; and pre- and post- deployment support. In addition, they implemented robust training to equip human resource professionals and managers to support their organization’s military serving employees; stayed connected to deployed employees by sending care packages; and took care of their employees’ families during deployments by assisting with household repairs, including them in company functions, or providing financial assistance.

The 2021 Freedom Award recipients will be recognized in local ceremonies by Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve State Chairs.

**The 2021 SecDef Employer Support Freedom Award Recipients**

<b>Employer</b>	<b>Employer Headquarters City, State</b>	<b>Nominator's Service, State</b>
Associated Bank	Green Bay, Wisconsin	Army Reserve, Wisconsin
Boyer Commercial Construction, Inc.	Columbia, South Carolina	Marine Corps Reserve, South Carolina
Cameron Glass, Inc.	Broken Arrow, Oklahoma	Army National Guard, Oklahoma
Grand Strand Medical Center – HCA Healthcare	Nashville, Tennessee	Army Reserve, Florida
INNIO Waukesha Gas Engines	Waukesha, Wisconsin	Coast Guard Reserve, Wisconsin
J.B. Hunt Transport, Inc.	Lowell, Arkansas	Air National Guard, Arkansas Army National Guard, Arkansas
Loftin Equipment Company	Phoenix, Arizona	Air National Guard, Arizona
Marcus Construction	Wilmar, Minnesota	Army National Guard, Minnesota
Medtronic	Minneapolis, Minnesota	Army Reserve, Minnesota
Nogales Police Department	Nogales, Arizona	Army National Guard, Arizona
Phillips 66	Houston, Texas	Coast Guard Reserve, Texas
Prudential Financial	Newark, New Jersey	Army Reserve, New Jersey
Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service	College Station, Texas	Army National Guard, Texas
Village of Pewaukee Police Department	Pewaukee, Wisconsin	Army National Guard, Wisconsin
Yankton School District	Yankton, South Dakota	Army National Guard, South Dakota

For more information about the Freedom Award, visit [www.FreedomAward.mil](http://www.FreedomAward.mil). To learn more about ESGR, a program of the Defense Personnel and Family Support Office, visit [www.ESGR.mil](http://www.ESGR.mil).

### **About ESGR**

ESGR is a Department of Defense program that develops and promotes supportive work environments for Service members in the Reserve Components through outreach, recognition, and educational opportunities that increase awareness of applicable laws. It also provides assistance in resolving conflicts between Service members and their employers.

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