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**ESGR NOW ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS FOR  
2014 SECRETARY OF DEFENSE EMPLOYER SUPPORT FREEDOM AWARD**  
*National Guard and Reserve Members Encouraged  
to Nominate Supportive Employers for Nation's Top Honor*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a Department of Defense office, is now accepting nominations for the 2014 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. The Freedom Award is the Department of Defense's highest honor presented to civilian employers for exceptional support of their National Guard and Reserve employees. ESGR encourages Guardsmen and Reservists, or family members acting on their behalf, to submit nominations at [www.FreedomAward.mil](http://www.FreedomAward.mil) by January 20, 2014.

Guard and Reserve members comprise nearly one-half of the nation's military force, providing essential services to national security and humanitarian efforts at home and abroad. Supportive employers, with their enduring commitment, have helped keep our military strong and our Nation secure.

"Across the Nation, employers have shown noteworthy support to their service member employees and families," said Paul Mock, ESGR National Chair. "Whether on routine duty, responding to natural disasters or serving in a deployed location, employers who encourage military service make it easier to serve. By submitting a Freedom Award nomination, a member of the National Guard or Reserve can acknowledge and thank their employer for the critical role they play in our Nation's defense."

Each year, up to 15 deserving employers are selected as Freedom Award recipients and honored in Washington, D.C. Examples of past recipient support include continued benefits and healthcare for deployed service members, home maintenance and childcare support and veteran hiring initiatives. Service members who have received exemplary employer support should submit their nominations for the Freedom Award today.

**About ESGR and the Freedom Award:**

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Department of Defense office established in 1972, develops and maintains employer support for Guard and Reserve service. ESGR advocates relevant initiatives, recognizes outstanding support, increases awareness of applicable laws, and resolves conflict between service members and employers. Paramount to ESGR's mission is encouraging employment of Guardsmen and Reservists who bring integrity, global perspective and proven leadership to the civilian workforce. On behalf of the Secretary of Defense, ESGR runs the annual Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award program. Created in 1996, the Freedom Award has been presented to 190 employers.

For questions or information on the Freedom Award, please contact Butch Wise at 602-629-4031 (Phoenix & Northern Area) or Bruce Hamilton at 520-750-5891 (Tucson)