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Time Running out to Nominate Employers for 2013 Freedom Award
January 21 deadline for Department of Defense's highest award
for Guard and Reserve employers

ARLINGTON, Va. – Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a Department of Defense agency, is encouraging Guardsmen and Reservists to nominate their civilian employers for the 2013 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award before the January 21 deadline. The Freedom Award is the nation's highest recognition for employers supporting Guard and Reserve members. Employers of every size and industry are eligible to receive the honor. Guard and Reserve members, or a family member acting on their behalf, may nominate their employers at www.FreedomAward.mil.

"With today's evolving missions of the Reserve Component, as we adapt to the current national security policy, America's employers continue to provide steadfast support to the more than one million men and women serving in the National Guard and Reserve at home and abroad. The Freedom Award is your opportunity to honor your employer for their critical support," said James Rebholz, ESGR National Chair. "As a member of the Guard or Reserve who has received outstanding support from your civilian employer, take the time to nominate them for the 2013 Freedom Award."

Any civilian employer who has not previously received the award is eligible. Service members who have previously nominated their employers are encouraged to do so again. The Department of Defense will recognize nominees, semi-finalists and finalists. The 2013 recipients will be announced in early summer and honored in Washington, D.C. during a ceremony in the fall. Past recipients have met with the President of the United States, Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

About ESGR and the Freedom Award:

The Freedom Award was instituted in 1996 under the auspices of ESGR to recognize exceptional support from the employer community. In the years since, 175 employers have been honored with the award. Established as a DoD agency 40 years ago, ESGR 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.

For questions or interviews regarding the Freedom Award, please contact Beth Sherman, ESGR Public Affairs, at 571-372-0705 or by email at ESGR-PA@osd.mil.