

Resale's Long Tradition of Military Spouse Hiring Growing Stronger

• WASHINGTON

Against the backdrop of recent high-profile Department of Defense (DoD) initiatives to foster career opportunities for military spouses, exchanges and commissaries still continue to be the employment resource of choice for a large segment of military family members and retirees, especially those seeking transferability when active-duty family members deploy.

On June 29, DoD introduced the Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP), a jobs program that connects military spouses to employers through targeted employment and recruiting programs.

Military resale already has a long tradition of employing military family members, and its own slate of jobs programs. However, some leaders within the resale community believe it needs to do a better job of communicating its accomplishments in this regard.

Cindy Whitman Lacy, Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) deputy director of business operations and Chief Operating Officer of the Marine Corps Exchange (MCX), discussed this issue during a presentation she gave on "Cause Marketing" at two important military resale events this year.

Speaking at the Exchange Roundtable at the American Logistics Association's (ALA) 64th annual convention, and again at a Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) conference in May, Whitman Lacy said she is concerned that retailers outside the gate have somehow managed to garner much more of the spotlight for their military support programs — even within the government and defense community — than have the resale organizations that are the defacto leaders in this area.

Whitman Lacy has said that military resale has allowed other organizations to position themselves "in the hearts and mind of our community creating the perception that perhaps they do more or care more."

While civilian companies have recently developed programs to assist active duty members, veterans and their families, those initiatives are already embedded in the military resale system, Whitman Lacy said. "We do not call it marketing, we call it supporting our military community."

MILITARY FAMILY EMPLOYMENT

DeCA has been actively involved in spouse employment programs and was a charter member of the Army Spouse Employment Program, which recently expanded to the MSEP. "MSEP has high White House interest as it directly addresses the spouse employment pillar of the First Lady's "Joining Forces" initiative and is specifically cited in the President's Strengthening Our Military Families (PSD-9) report, signed in January 2011," said a DeCA spokesman, referring to the program advanced by Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden.

DeCA offers an employment source for family members relocating with service members. The agency is geographically dispersed and parallels military duty assignments.

According to DeCA's 2010 annual report, 62.5



Whitman Lacy

percent of DeCA U.S. employees are military related. Military spouses account for 28 percent of that number, followed by other family members 13 percent, retirees 10.5 percent, guard and reserve 1.5 percent and other veterans 9.5 percent.

AAFES

With more than 31 percent of approximately 43,000 AAFES associates identifying themselves as military family members, and veterans accounting for another 12 percent of the workforce, the exchange service is

focusing on active-duty, veteran, retired, National Guard and reserve families' career aspirations.

"Their values of loyalty, professionalism and commitment are exactly what we look for when hiring," said James Moore, the exchange service's former senior vice president (SVP) of Human Resources (HR), who recently retired. "We know it's difficult to start over with each transfer, which is why we developed special programs with spouses in mind."

Military spouse Katelyn Jaber fills out a work application at a recent job fair held at Fort Rucker, Ala. The job fair was open to those currently serving in the military, their families and retirees. (PHOTO: EMILY BRAINARD, WWW.ARMY.MIL)



The Exchange's spouse continuity and employment preference programs allow wives and husbands to build careers alongside their sponsor with each relocation. In 2010, almost 900 military spouses received promotions through this effort.

Servicemember spouses are one of the many military-related groups the Exchange helps to find or keep employment. The Exchange has partnerships with several organizations dedicated to offering career assistance and creating opportunities for those who have served, including the Army Spouse Employment Partnership (ASEP), Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) and Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2).

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Clayton Named NEXCOM Human Resources SVP

• VIRGINIA BEACH

In early August, the Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM) appointed Robert (Bob) J. Clayton as Senior Vice President (SVP) of Human Resources (HR). Clayton will oversee human resources functions under NEXCOM's aegis, including its Navy Exchange network of stores, Navy Lodges, the Ships Store Program and the Uniform Program Management Office (UPMO).

"We are pleased to have someone with Bob's commercial Human Resources experience within the retail and services arena in this position," said NEXCOM Chief Operating Officer (COO) Michael P. Good. "His 30 plus years of working within the retail, food and hospitality arena will be an asset to this Command as we deliver a benefit to all our military patrons." NEXCOM's HR SVP position had remained vacant since 2010, following the retirement of David C. Richards Jr.

Clayton has an extensive HR background with major corporations and companies outside the gate, including most recently as SVP of HR with the Davidson Hotel Company, Memphis, Tenn. His retail experience includes VP of HR with OfficeMax, and VP HR, The Home Depot.

In the foodservice arena, he has served as senior HR officer and a partner of a start-up Krispy Kreme Doughnuts development in the Midwest; VP HR, Domino's Pizza; and Corporate Director of Denny's Restaurants. Clayton also held HR positions at The Wendy's Company, Computervision and Aramark.

Clayton is an alumnus of Wayne State University, Detroit, where he was awarded his Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Master of Business Administration (MBA).



Clayton

“Hiring our military, their families and veterans is one small way we can support those who have sacrificed for us,” Moore said.

NEXCOM

The Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM) has 4,450 associates, with about 27 percent being military family members.

NEXCOM’s Continuity of Employment Program is designed to help ease this stress, making sure associates do not need to find a new job when they move from their present location. “Our associates are very important to us, and we want to do all we can to ensure that if an associate wants a job, we will have one for them,” said Peggy Vitola, NEXCOM director of benefits, labor and employee relations.

Since the program’s inception in 1998, NEXCOM reported it has placed more than 1,300 associates in exchange service positions at the associate’s new duty station.

MCX

The Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) has 1,101 military family members who are employees, which makes up 32 percent of the MCX work force.

To enhance career opportunities of spouses of Active Duty Service members, MCCS said it has embraced the DoD’s Military Spouse Preference Program, in which transferring spouses are given special preference at the NF-3 grade level and below. Moreover, MCCS provides ‘relocation’ assistance to transferring spouses by providing letters of introduction for the transferring spouse to present at the new duty location.