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GLENDALE EARNS 2015 SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FREEDOM AWARD *City Awarded Nation's Highest Honor for Supporting Guard and Reserve Employees*

GLENDALE, Ariz. – On Thursday, June 25, the City of Glendale was awarded the 2015 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, the Nation's highest honor given to employers for exceptional support of Guard and Reserve employees.

The city was nominated for the prestigious award by three officers who are active military. They nominated the police department and the City of Glendale because of the support given to them and their families during their military service. Glendale employs more than 70 Guard members, Reservists and veterans just in the police department alone. The city also has a strong reintegration program for returning service members to help them ease back into their civilian roles. The City of Glendale and the police department was one of 15 employers from across the nation selected to receive the prestigious award.

"These outstanding employers have not only earned this award, they have earned this Nation's gratitude," said Defense Secretary Ash Carter. "I am truly honored to recognize these 15 organizations for their unwavering support of our military men and women and their families. Their accomplishments are a vital piece of our National defense and a high standard toward which all employers of Guard and Reserve members should strive."

"The Glendale Police Department is dedicated to all our members who serve or have served in the military; our support of their service and sacrifice is unwavering. We are incredibly proud to be honored by the Secretary of Defense Freedom Award." said Glendale Police Chief Debora Black.

The city has instituted a hiring program for veterans specifically for its police and fire departments. Both departments created a Military Support Unit, which provides mentoring to military members preparing

for the extensive interview process for public safety jobs.

“Glendale affords deployed military employees the opportunity to be interviewed or tested for promotion opportunities while overseas, utilizing video teleconference technology,” explains Glendale’s Human Resources Director, James Brown.

“Additionally, the city recently changed its paid leave policy to better meet the needs of our military employees,” Brown said.

Glendale has previously been recognized by Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), an office of the Department of Defense (DOD), with five Patriot Awards for supervisors’ efforts to support citizen warriors through a wide range of measures. The city also has been awarded two Above and Beyond Awards, for going above and beyond the legal requirements of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act by providing its Guard and Reserve employees with additional, non-mandated benefits.

"It is truly an honor to receive this award from the Department of Defense. We are incredibly fortunate here in Glendale because these valued service men and women graciously bring their military experience home and apply it in their work each and every day to better our city,” Mayor Jerry Weiers said.

The Freedom Award was instituted in 1996. In 2015, the DOD received more than 2,960 nominations for this award. This national award promotes cooperation between military reservists and their civilian employers. For more information about the Freedom Award and this year’s recipients, visit www.FreedomAward.mil. For more information about these programs or to learn more about Glendale Police Department visit www.glendaleaz.com/police/.

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