

SUPPORT OUR RETURNING VETERANS

Assist their job search and networking activities

Our present economic disaster and credit crisis have made competition for jobs tight. The market meltdown will probably have an even wider effect on a grim job market. More than 600,000 jobs have already been lost this year; over 9.4 million people are looking for work.

Veterans returning from tours of duty overseas face a bleak job market not just because of the economy but for nebulous reasons and misconceptions. Some managers today are less likely to have personal connections to the military. They have little appreciation for the experience, responsibility and accountability possessed by veterans. One veteran said that he had to fight a perceived stigma from potential employers who were concerned about post-traumatic stress disorder. On a more positive note, here is what one hiring manager said about returning veterans: "These people hit the street running. Most job candidates stack up equally when it comes to the technical side of the job but the military vets often have the managerial edge. They've managed hundreds of people. They are responsible for tremendous budgets and similar maintenance-type issues that we face in industry."

Senator Jim Webb, a Naval Academy graduate, a USMC combat veteran of Vietnam, a recipient of the Navy Cross, and a former Secretary of the Navy had this to say about military service:

I wish we had more people in the country going through the military because it's the greatest experience in the world in terms of helping you understand the cultural makeup of the country and how you can work together. Whether you're in for three years or for 30, you take that back to your community, and you have a totally different understanding of this country by having served. There's no greater thing a young person can do than to be responsible for other people in the military environment. It helps you to learn who you are, how to make decisions and how to lead.

What can we do for our returning veterans? We can make time for them. We can get educated about resources available to help them. We can help them build networks. We can make referrals for them. We can give them career direction. We can thank them.

The October 08 issue of *DiversityInc* – Page 96 to be exact - states: "More than 2.5 million members of the U.S. military have been deployed in the war in Iraq, and almost half a million have been deployed more than once ... More than 300,000 have been classified as having a disability and at least 1,780 have been treated for serious traumatic brain injuries ... You can help them by making donations and creating jobs at your company for them. For a complete list of veteran organizations, go to: www.DiversityInc.com/veterans."

The Value of a Veteran www.thevalueofaveteran.com is another source of information. This is a woman-owned, veteran-owned consulting service that specializes in educating human resource professionals on the best practices for finding, recruiting, and retaining military service members. Download a military hiring guide with 76 ideas you can begin using to jump-start a military hiring initiative. The Value of a Veteran offer four 90-minute live web seminars:

- ✓ Military Applicant Sourcing Options
- ✓ Hiring Disabled Military Veterans
- ✓ Translating the Military Resume and Interviewing Tips
- ✓ Marketing to Attract the Military Applicant

As the costly Iraqi war wears on we are reminded daily, and many times tragically, of the enormous sacrifices made by our military forces. We make special efforts to let people know how much we appreciate the selflessness of our men and women in uniform. We wear flags on our jackets, post emblems on our cars, and proudly display our flag. We can also take the time to guide them in job campaigning and networking. Danny Thomas, the late entertainer and humanitarian who founded St.

Jude Children's Research Hospital, said, "The world is made up of givers and takers. The takers may sometimes eat better, but the givers always sleep better."

"A man or woman who is good enough to shed his blood for this country is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards. More than that no man or woman is entitled to, and less than that, no man or woman shall have." Theodore Roosevelt.