

Valero goes ‘Above and Beyond’ for deployed employees (2007)

With several employees involved in the National Guard and military reserves, Valero is earning statewide praise in Texas for supporting its own overseas.

Based on a nomination submitted by San Antonio employee Gloria Hofilena, the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) in May bestowed its “Above and Beyond” award to Valero and recognized the company during a special awards luncheon at the former Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio.

The Above and Beyond award is presented to employers of military reservists who have gone above and beyond the requirements of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). The federal law defines the rights and responsibilities employers have to protect their Guard and Reserve employees.

During the luncheon, ESGR Central Region Director Findley Brewster noted Valero’s unceasing support of employees like Hofilena, a five-year veteran of the company and member of the U.S. Air Force Reserve. The Associate Marine Program Coordinator served an eight-month tour in Afghanistan in 2005.

“Not once did I have to worry about my financial well-being or my job security,” Hofilena wrote in her nomination. “It was great to have peace of mind while I was out ... trying to keep the peace in another country.”

In 2005, over half of all troops serving in Iraq were either Guard or Reserve. Col. John Nichols of the Air National Guard greeted employers during the awards luncheon and offered his take on the value of Guard employees. “The return you get is the discipline and experience they bring back to you. The return I get is the experience they bring back to me. I salute you for the support.”

Valero Vice President and Controller Clay Killinger, whose son currently serves in the Army, accepted the award on behalf of the company and stressed Valero’s commitment to its veterans and military members.

“We are so honored to be recognized and remain committed to our men and women who devote time every year to preparing and defending our great nation,” Killinger said. “Our employees are very special people.”

As a special tribute to her employer, Hofilena also presented Killinger with a U.S. flag that had flown on a combat mission in an AH-64D Apache Helicopter in Afghanistan while she was deployed. The flag and its certificate will be displayed at corporate headquarters as a visible sign of Valero’s support of its Guard and Reserve employees.

Valero is a past recipient of state-level awards from the Texas ESGR, including the state’s highest honor, the “Pro Patria” award. Because recognition begins with an employee’s personal nomination, the awards hold special significance, said Caryl Hill, Employer Outreach Chairman for the Texas Committee ESGR.

“It gives the employee an opportunity to step outside of the company to say ‘thank you’ for the support they receive while serving that role as twice the citizen,” Hill said. “The ESGR is pleased to provide the vehicle for them to do that. The award says ‘my boss cares about me.’ And that gets to be terribly important, whether they’re in harm’s way or just doing their training.”



Valero Energy Senior Vice President & Controller Clay Killinger accepts the ESGR “Above and Beyond” Award from Valero employee and Guard member Gloria Hofilena in June 2007.