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Heroes MAKE America Graduates Inaugural Class *Manufacturing Institute Announces Expansion of Veterans Training Program*

Washington, D.C. – The Manufacturing Institute’s veterans training program, Heroes MAKE America, graduated its inaugural class at Fort Riley, Kansas, and announced plans to expand the program to additional military installations beginning with Fort Hood.

Heroes MAKE America is a full-time career skills program launched in partnership with the U.S. Army Soldier for Life – Transition Assistance Program and the USO Pathfinder Program aimed at closing the manufacturing skills gap by training our veterans with critical skills and placing them on a path toward a rewarding manufacturing career. The program arms transitioning service members with in-demand qualifications and industry-specific certifications needed for today’s manufacturing workforce. Manufacturers highly value the core elements of military training that allow America’s soldiers to be the best in the world. The teamwork, commitment to mission, communication and critical thinking skills that are essential to mission success are also essential to manufacturing.



Photo Credit: Dave Bohrer, National Association of Manufacturers

“Manufacturers in America will have 3.5 million jobs to fill by 2025, and the NAM’s Manufacturing Institute is moving forward aggressively to build a talent pipeline for the industry and our country. Today’s graduation is an important milestone toward meeting this challenge and seizing an opportunity to recruit and prepare veterans to make their—and our—future in modern manufacturing,” **said National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) President and CEO Jay Timmons.** “Helping our veterans find new career paths is not just the right thing to do but it is also critical to advancing manufacturing in the United States. Congratulations to all our Heroes and to The Manufacturing Institute, along with our partners at Fort Riley, for their ongoing work to launch such a meaningful and impactful initiative—and make a success of it.”

Today, more than 80 percent of manufacturers report a talent shortage in the industry, with nearly 427,000 open jobs. Meanwhile, nearly 200,000 service members exit the military and return to civilian life and the civilian workforce each year. Military veterans have the leadership training manufacturers need in their workforce, and Heroes MAKE America helps them attain the necessary skills to build successful careers in the industry.

“Every year, 200,000 of our nation’s best and brightest exit the military with exactly the type of skills and qualities needed to make meaningful and successful careers in the manufacturing industry, which currently has 364,000 open jobs but without qualified workers to fill them. Yet, many veterans lack the certifications or training necessary to land those well-paying jobs, if they even know they exist. That’s where the Heroes program comes in,” **said Manufacturing Institute Executive Director Carolyn Lee.** “Our mission is to match heroes in uniform with the kind of manufacturing opportunities that will allow them to best and most meaningfully utilize their unique and in-demand skill sets; then our training programs prepare them to not just succeed in those careers but excel. I couldn’t be prouder of today’s initial graduating class of Heroes, and I wish each of them the best in their new journeys from here.”

In just the past 10 weeks, program participants have earned 14 college credits and nine industry certifications, as well as career training in topics ranging from résumé writing to social media management and personal finance. As a result, the 13 soldiers of the graduating class have already landed more than 50 job interviews and netted nearly a dozen job offers.

“This program, first in the Department of Defense, prepares and places Soldiers for Life in manufacturing jobs nationally where they can demonstrate their skills and talents translated from military service,” **said Fort Riley Command Sergeant Major Andrew Bristow II.** “By translating Army skills, training and experience into rewarding careers, these graduates will be living billboards promoting the Army as a great place to start.”

Amid the success of the inaugural class, a second class of another 13 soldiers has already begun at Fort Riley. Moreover, The Manufacturing Institute plans to expand Heroes MAKE America to Fort Hood in Texas this summer, with a goal of graduating a total of 200 students by the end of 2018 and upward of 400 students by the end of 2019.

The Heroes MAKE America program is made possible thanks to the generous contributions of world-class companies like Walmart, Cooper Standard, Parker Hannifin Corporation and the Arconic Foundation.

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The Manufacturing Institute (the Institute) is the 501(c)(3) affiliate of the National Association of Manufacturers. As a non-partisan organization, the Institute is committed to delivering leading-edge information and services to the nation’s manufacturers. The Institute is the authority on the attraction, qualification and development of world-class manufacturing talent. For more information, please visit www.themanufacturinginstitute.org.

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