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Army recruiting partnership program recognizes 300th partner

FORT KNOX, Ky. – The U.S. Army celebrated a milestone in its partnership with America’s business community by recognizing its 300th partner, Kraft Foods Global Inc., during the U.S. Army All-American Bowl pre-game festivities this month in San Antonio.

The Army Recruiting Command started the Partnership for Youth Success Program, or PaYS, in 2000 as a tool to attract quality recruits and provide them – at the time of enlistment – a pathway to civilian success once they complete their service.

“In less than a decade, this initiative has shown tremendous results,” said Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army.

Though initially an active duty enlistment option, the program has since expanded to the Army Reserve and the U.S. Army Cadet Command Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC). More than 76,000 Army and Army Reserve recruits have enlisted with the PaYS option, many who’ve already transitioned to jobs with their selected partner companies.

The newest facet of PaYS, offering ROTC students contracting into the Guaranteed Reserve Forces Duty program the opportunity for preferred placement with a PaYS partner, should have a positive impact on Army Reserve unit retention, according to Bob Qualls, the Army’s PaYS program manager.

The challenge of manning the Army is not a challenge for the Army alone; it’s a challenge for the nation, according to Maj. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick, commanding general of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command.

“The PaYS program is successful because it helps both the Army and our partner companies recruit good people who are motivated, capable, hardworking and reliable,” Chiarelli said. “People are our most valuable asset and by helping them gain the skills and experience to succeed in the military, in business and in life, we make America strong.”

The Army has signed partnerships with a cross-section of public sector agencies and corporations across the nation, including 46 Fortune 500, seven Fortune 1000, and four Global 500 companies.

They offer Soldiers future career opportunities in a wide variety of fields: state government, tourism, law enforcement, health care, retail management, transportation, insurance, airlines, and construction. Partners have made available more than 1 million jobs to Soldiers enlisting today.

This partnership “is the very least we can do for America’s greatest heroes,” said Patrick Milligan, regional vice president Kraft Foods Global Inc., the Army’s 300th PaYS partner. He said that Kraft appreciates the opportunity “to capitalize on the training, skill sets, leadership, decision-making ability and the initiative of our fine Soldiers.”

For employers, Chiarelli said the PaYS program provides a great resource for attracting quality employees with valuable Army skills training and experience.

“From the Army perspective, the PaYS program has been an effective recruiting tool. For young people, the idea that they can get a good job with a leading employer by gaining valuable experience and skills in the Army is an appealing one, particularly during these difficult economic times,” he said.