

**Testimony of
John C. Vizner, Facility Manager
Caterpillar Inc.**

**House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity
Hearing on Texas' Innovative Approaches to Jobs and Employment for Veterans**

Introduction

Good morning. Chairman Flores, Ranking Member Takano, and members of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, thank you for holding this important hearing.

My name is John Vizner, and I am the Facility Manager of the Waco, Texas facility of Caterpillar. While we have over 240 employees in our facility, there are approximately 550 Caterpillar employees in Waco and more than 3,000 employees across the state of Texas. Caterpillar is headquartered in Peoria, IL and employs more than 121,000 employees worldwide and distributes products to more than 180 countries.

In my position, I oversee the manufacturing operations for our Caterpillar Work Tool business unit here in Waco, where we produce three product lines – buckets, couplers, and hydraulic hammers – primarily attachments for our excavator equipment.

Personally, I am a proud veteran – I served in the United States Navy for six years, from 1988 to 1994. I completed the Navy's nuclear power program and was stationed on the USS Jefferson City for four years. After leaving the Navy, I attended Kansas State University where I received my bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering.

In 1998, I joined Caterpillar as a design engineer. I have held a variety of leadership roles over the past 15 years in which my military experience provided me the core skills needed for success.

Why Veterans?

At Caterpillar, we recognize the numerous benefits to hiring military veterans and spouses. Veterans are an under-tapped employment resource that has great potential to benefit Caterpillar. Military personnel bring a strong work ethic and values that were honed during their service time. Many of those skills that were learned in the military can translate into positions that we have within Caterpillar.

The skills, leadership and values that veterans parallel the same values found in the Caterpillar culture and we want to bring in as many qualified veterans in to work for our company.

Nationally, Caterpillar supports our active and former military employees through the Caterpillar Armed Forces Support Network (or CAFSN), which launched in May 2007. Through its four principle committees—Troop & Family Support, Partnerships, Participation and Growth—CAFSN promotes and supports personal and career development for Caterpillar military veterans through networking and mentoring programs. CAFSN also is ready to serve those Caterpillar employees and their families during times of re-activation and deployment.

Each of CAFSN's four committees focuses on an important area. The *Growth Committee* explores opportunities to partner with corporate organizations in order to showcase the experience and knowledge of veterans who are seeking employment with Caterpillar. The *Participation Committee* encourages the membership to take part in various aspects of CAFSN activities. The *Partnership Committee* establishes military and community support networks that are able to partner in support of the Armed Forces to meet the critical success factors of the CAFSN. Finally, the *Troop & Family Support Committee* provides support for Caterpillar Employees called to active duty and their families.

CAFSN's other role is to assist with recruiting and career development of veterans throughout the enterprise and Cat dealers. CAFSN believes that the talents and "can-do" philosophy developed in the military can tremendously benefit Caterpillar worldwide.

National Recruiting Initiatives

In June, Caterpillar created a new position that would be solely dedicated to creating and launching a strategy that would standardize our approach to hiring veterans. A corporate approach would allow us to share successful recruiting practices across division lines and give increased visibility to the issues that are important to our veterans. We have successfully launched a series of initiatives to identify and recruit exceptional military talent. With the creation of a comprehensive military recruiting strategy, our company will be able to focus on the vital few national initiatives, such as the White House Joining Forces Initiative, Hiring Our Heroes, American Corporate Partners and 100,000 Jobs Mission, to attract and develop our nation's military heroes. At this time, I will elaborate on a few of the nationally-focus veteran programs that we currently support, with plans to continue that support throughout 2014.

Hiring Our Heroes

Hiring Our Heroes, which is a program sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, was launched in March 2011 as a nationwide initiative to help veterans and military spouses find meaningful employment. Working with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's vast network of state and local chambers and other strategic partners from the public, private, and non-profit sectors, our goal is to create a movement across America in hundreds of communities where veterans and military families return every day. As an active member of this program, Caterpillar has access to a larger military talent pool through more than 530 hiring fairs in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia.

100,000 Jobs Mission

The next veteran-focused program that our company supports at a corporate level is the 100,000 Jobs Mission. A number of leading U.S. companies launched the 100,000 Jobs Mission in March 2011 with a goal of collectively hiring 100,000 transitioning service-members and military veterans by 2020. As member companies of the coalition, we are committed to helping transitioning service-members and other veterans lead successful lives after their military service. As a collective group, we conduct career and hiring events, as well as provide resources to our transitioning military members to make them more competitive in the private sector and expose them to more job opportunities. As of September 30, the 122 companies comprising the 100,000 Jobs Mission have hired 92,869 veterans and we look forward to seeing that number grow.

American Corporate Partners

The American Corporate Partner's (ACP) Veteran Mentoring Program connects Veteran Protégés with Corporate Mentors for a yearlong mentorship. Caterpillar has recently become a supporter of this non-profit organization and will pair members of our Executive Office, including our Chairman and CEO, and members of our organizational leadership teams with military members who are currently serving or have served our country. Over the course of the year, all Caterpillar mentors and their paired protégé will have at least 12 significant discussions, ranging from résumé building and interview skills to networking and small business development.

U.S. Army PaYS Program

The Partnership for Youth Success (PaYS) Program is a strategic partnership between the U.S. Army and a cross section of companies, and public sector agencies. This unique program is part of the Army's effort to partner with and strengthen relationships America's business community and those who have served in the U.S. Army. Caterpillar uses this program to source talented military personnel that learned skills in the Army that could be used for positions within our company. Most recently, we have used the Army PaYS Program to recruit machinists and welders in the Waco facility, and we will continue to use this program to increase awareness amongst military members that Caterpillar is a military-friendly company that recognizes the value they can bring to our company.

Local Recruiting Initiatives

I wanted to take a few minutes to discuss what we are doing locally, here in Waco. As I mentioned, we are utilizing the Army PaYS program to attract military talent into our welding and machining positions. We also participate in the "Hiring Red, White and You" annual job fair for veterans here in Waco, which will take place next week. Our facilities are targeting

significant growth over the next several months and would like to leverage the talents of the many veterans that are becoming available.

We also recently launched our local chapter of the Caterpillar Armed Forces Support Network in Waco 3 months ago. This veteran's support group is gaining traction quickly as more of our employees are learning about the benefits this group provides.

Further, we have been engaged with General Don Jones (U.S. Army retired) and Crystal Dyer (U.S. Army veteran) in their efforts with the Warriors to the Workforce initiative. Their focus is to improve the connection between veterans, local colleges and universities, and potential employers. Though this program is in its infancy, the vision of this program will have a positive effect on connecting veterans to future careers.

Conclusion

As you can see, Caterpillar recognizes that there are numerous benefits to hiring military veterans and spouses. Their strong work ethic, core values and leadership skills, and values parallel the same values found in the Caterpillar culture and we want to bring in as many qualified veterans in to work for our company as possible. Caterpillar is committed to hiring our veterans and helping with their transition from military to civilian life.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify in today's hearing on this important subject and I look forward to answering your questions. Thank you.

John C. Vizner

Biography

Caterpillar Inc: 1998 – Present

2010 – Present	Facility Manager: Waco, TX
2006 – 2010	Manufacturing Engineering Manager: Wamego, KS
2005 – 2006	Scheduling Supervisor: Wamego, KS
2000 – 2005	Manufacturing Engineer: Wamego, KS (Lean Manufacturing Coordinator, 6 Sigma Black Belt)
1998 – 2000	Design Engineer, Wamego KS

Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS: 1994 – 1998
BS in Mechanical Engineering with Minor in Economics

U.S. Navy: 1988 – 1994
Machinist Mate: Nuclear Power Program

Current community involvement

- Board of Directors: Waco Chamber of Commerce
- Business Advisory Board: TSTC – Waco, TX (Weld Dept. and MET Dept.)
- National Visiting Committee: National Center for Welding Education & Training
- Business Advisory Board (President): Greater Waco Advanced Manufacturing Academy