

PenFed Foundation Night of the Heroes Gala - Bob Carter

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As prepared for:

PenFed Foundation Night of the Heroes Gala
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Bob Carter, Executive Vice President, Sales, Toyota Motor North America

Introduction: The Honorable Sam Johnson, U.S. House of Representatives, Texas – Third Congressional District

Thank you, Congressman Johnson, for your generous introduction, and especially for your years of service both in our armed forces, and in representing our new home in Texas' 3rd Congressional District.

We've received such a warm welcome from the community in Texas – it has been truly humbling.

And on behalf of all of us at Toyota, I thank all of you... as we support America's bravest heroes, our veterans.

And I especially want to thank the PenFed Foundation. They help to support our military men and women during their time of service... and as they transition into civilian life.

We are honored to receive this award tonight, and I'm humbled to stand on the same stage as those who have sacrificed so much for the rest of us.

It's great to be back here in our nation's capital. There is something exciting and special about D.C., and it is always a trip I look forward to.

But today, as I flew into the city, with the historic monuments and landmarks in view, all of the stress of my day-to-day work fell away as I realized that this trip to D.C. in particular would be one of the most special and meaningful of my career.

We are all affected in some way by the men and women who serve our country. They are our fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, and the list goes on. But the reason that this trip is so special, is because for me, I am proud to say that my life is better because of a veteran who I call my friend.

Sergeant Dakota Meyer is a veteran of the United States Marine Corps, deployed twice to combat duty; to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom and to Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom. He was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Obama in 2011, for his actions in the Battle of Ganjal on September 8, 2009, where he repeatedly braved enemy fire to find and save fellow members of his training team.

But his service did not end upon his return from deployment. Sergeant Meyer is an active supporter and advocate for the Hiring our Heroes organization, a motivational speaker, bestselling author, entrepreneur, and an inspiration to many.

Most importantly, he is my friend, and I am honored to have him here tonight.

Dakota, will you please stand?

It is imperative for all of us to remember... that as supporters of our men and women of service, our

responsibility does not end when they return home. In fact, for companies like us, their homecoming is where our duty begins.

But as you know, many of our current and veteran members of the military joined the service soon after high school. For some, career development courses and step-by-step instructions on how to write a resume or apply for a job is a new task... and they don't know where to turn for help.

Five years ago, Toyota decided to bridge this gap by partnering with the Hiring-Our-Heroes Organization, founded by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

We developed the Personal Branding Initiative... which includes a free resume building engine that makes the application process seamless; not just for veterans, but for military spouses as well. The website directly translates skills acquired in the military into language understood by potential employers, and provides the platform for veterans to connect with employers and potential jobs.

I mentioned earlier that Sergeant Meyers is an active advocate and supporter of this initiative. Let's take a closer look...

To date, the Hiring-Our-Heroes organization has offered more than 1,000 job fairs, online job postings and mentoring opportunities for veterans and their spouses, resulting in more than 28,000 direct hires.

And companies of all sizes... including over 500 Toyota dealers... have committed to hire over 700-Thousand veterans and military spouses in conjunction with the Hiring-Our-Heroes organization.

So please... visit Hiring-Our-Heroes-Dot-Org soon for more information.

Our company has also found that veterans are some of the most coachable, dedicated and skilled employees available for hire. We know that hiring veterans is not just the right thing to do; it's the smart thing to do. The crucial technical skills veterans obtain through their service directly applies to the work we do at our ten manufacturing sites across the U.S.

Similarly, the resiliency and adaptability of military spouses is unparalleled, as they are able to quickly move from one duty station to another every few years, managing everything from families to household budgets, as well as full-time or part-time employment. They bring a wealth of employment, volunteer, and real-world experience.

In our San Antonio, Texas facility, where we build our Tundra and Tacoma trucks, we produced more than 261-Thousand trucks in 2016. As you can imagine, the machines our team members use to build the trucks need consistent maintenance to ensure that our processes run efficiently. In San Antonio, we trust the skilled hands of veterans to maintain our operations.

Twenty-five percent of our skilled maintenance team at that facility alone are veterans, and we are constantly recruiting veterans throughout other parts of the company.

If you're like me, one of the most difficult transitions I've experienced is adapting to new technology. I had a rolodex for a long time, and I still prefer to call my wife on the phone as opposed to texting her or sending her a... "Snapchat."

But even late adopters can appreciate the amazing things technology has accomplished, especially as it relates to

supporting our veterans.

For instance, our Toyota Research Institute – or TRI – focuses its research and development efforts on moving existing technology indoors... by using personal robotics to provide mobility to the elderly, those with disabilities... and our injured veterans.

As we like to say, we are committed to providing mobility for everyone, whether that means moving people across the country, across town... or across the room.

Through our work at TRI, we met Romy and Gaby Camargo... after Romy's third tour of duty in Afghanistan... where his patrol was ambushed. A sniper's bullet changed their lives forever, as Romy was shot in the back of the neck, and he returned home paralyzed.

But the Camargos took the adversity that life presented them and turned it into an opportunity to help others. They opened a rehabilitation facility that would assist quadriplegics and paraplegics with their physical therapy, creating a community of inspiration and support for patients and their caregivers.

Romy's "never quit" attitude was contagious, and inspired TRI to help his family... using our expertise in advanced technology and robotics.

Take a look....

As you can see, each veteran faces a unique transition to civilian life upon completing their service. And in that moment, we have the opportunity and responsibility to continue to support them as they have supported us.

Thank you again to the men and women in the room who have served, along with your families. Your devotion and sacrifice are unmatched, and inspires us every day.

Have a wonderful evening.