



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**THREE ARIZONA EMPLOYERS RECOGNIZED AS FINALISTS
FOR DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE'S TOP EMPLOYER AWARD**

30 Top Employers Recognized Among 2,960 Nominations Nationwide

WASHINGTON – Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a Department of Defense (DoD) office, announced Christ's Church of the Valley in Peoria, the City of Glendale and Snell & Wilmer of Phoenix, as 2015 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award finalists. The award is the DoD's highest recognition given to employers for exceptional support of National Guard and Reserve employees. The top 30 employers were selected from a pool of 2,960 nominations submitted earlier this year by National Guard and Reserve service members.

A board including Senior DoD and other officials and representatives of prior recipient organizations will now select up to 15 Freedom Award recipients to be honored at the 20th annual Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award ceremony here in late summer.

"Among thousands of employers across this great nation, these 30 employers have gone far above and beyond what is required to provide exemplary support to our military men and women as well as their families," said Acting Director, Family and Employer Programs and Policy, M. Alex Baird. "We are proud to formally recognize these outstanding employers as finalists for the prestigious 2015 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award."

Christ's Church of the Valley was nominated by Air National Guardsman Staff Sergeant Michael Gunderson, who is assigned to the 161st Air Refueling Wing in Phoenix.

The City of Glendale was nominated by Navy Reservist Petty Officer Second Class Patrick Valenzuela, who is assigned to Naval Security Forces, Guam.

Snell & Wilmer was nominated by Marine Corps Reservist Lt. Col. Richard Erickson.

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