

From: March, Joseph H.
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Attachments:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

American Legion commends DHS for vets employment initiative

WASHINGTON, DC (July 15, 2009) -- The leader of the nation's largest veterans service organization says he is buoyed by news of an upcoming veterans job fair being hosted by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

"When we talked this spring, Secretary Janet Napolitano promised to initiate an assertive campaign to recruit military veterans to her ranks," said National Commander David K. Rehbein of The American Legion. "The first-ever DHS job fair for vets, set for this Friday, is a welcome signal of a promise kept."

Commander Rehbein and Secretary Napolitano met face-to-face in late April after the Legion reacted strongly to a DHS-authored report characterizing so-called "disgruntled veterans" as being ripe for harvesting by right-wing extremist groups. At the time, Secretary Napolitano offered an apology to Rehbein for the report's wording and an explanation that the document had been released prematurely without proper internal review.

The two then discussed ways of working together to assist military veterans returning from the Southwest Asian war zones of Iraq and Afghanistan. Secretary Napolitano and Commander Rehbein agreed that veterans would be ideal candidates for employment by the Department of Homeland Security.

The widely advertised DHS Veterans Job Fair invites veterans to "Continue Your Service to America" by applying for DHS jobs in the areas of "law enforcement, immigration and travel security, prevention and response and mission support...."

The job fair is set for Friday, July 17th from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. in the Grand Hyatt Washington Hotel, Washington, DC. It is open to all active duty, retired, former service, Reserve/National Guard service members and their spouses.

"Most especially in these challenging economic times, it is heartening to see that employment opportunities not only exist for veterans," concluded Commander Rehbein, "but that at least one government agency is actively recruiting our most deserving citizens."

With a current membership of 2.5 million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, Americanism, and the mentoring of youth. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through more than 14,000 posts across the nation.

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Media contacts: Craig Roberts, (202) 263-2982, Cell (202) 406-0887 or Joe March, (317) 630-1253; Cell (317) 748-1926. A high resolution photo of Nat. Cmdr. Rehbein is available at www.legion.org.