

ROOFERtoROOFER

by International President Kinsey M. Robinson

Veterans and Unions Work Together to Defend and Build America

In this issue of the magazine you will read about two dynamic programs that are extremely important to our union, its membership and to the millions of veterans who have faithfully served our country. In the following pages you will read about the Union Veterans Council and Helmets to Hardhats and how they play major roles in the lives of union members.

In the United States more than two million veterans are currently union members, many of them union Roofers and Waterproofers. There has been a strong tradition of men and, in recent years, women taking up careers in our craft after serving our country in uniform. In a reversal of that tradition, Roofers and Waterproofers have always been willing to drop their tools and enlist in the service of their choice in times of national emergency or to support the general welfare of the country, such as those brave members currently putting their lives on the line for us in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Union Veterans Council was established by the AFL-CIO in March 2008. The purpose of the Council is to bring together union leaders and union members who are veterans to speak out on veterans' issues and influence public policy to improve the quality of life for veterans. The Roofers Union was one of the first unions to support the Council and I'm truly honored to serve on the Council as your representative.

The two primary areas of focus are access to good jobs and to quality health care for veterans. The Council holds government officials accountable to the needs of military veterans and their families, makes our positions on veterans' issues known to candidates for public office and supports the appointment of labor-friendly veterans to government agencies at all levels. The Council strives to ensure enforcement of Veterans' Preference laws and laws pertaining to employment and training for all veterans, and it supports the upgrading and streamlining of the Post 9/11 GI Bill to provide all veterans equitable benefits. The Council's efforts are of the utmost importance to our members and to millions of other veterans and their families, as well as survivors of deceased veterans.

Helmets to Hardhats is a Washington, DC-based non-profit organization funded through the Department of Defense and partnered with the Roofers Union and

the other twelve unions comprising the Building and Construction Trades Department. Helmets to Hardhats is leading the way in providing assistance to transitioning active duty military personnel, National Guardsmen and Reservists in finding stable and secure careers in the Building Trades. Helmets to Hardhats provides job placement services at no cost to veterans and there are no costs incurred by qualified apprenticeship programs and union contractors who post their training and employment opportunities on the Helmets to Hardhats website (www.helmetstohardhats.org).



Veterans possess the skills that make them a good fit with the unionized roofing industry. They are proven team players, hard-working, disciplined, dependable, ready to work, drug free, have high level security clearances and they perform under pressure. I urge every Local Union and JATC to access and utilize the Helmets to Hardhats website. Our patriotic young veterans have served our country and in many cases risked their lives to do so. It is now our turn to offer them an opportunity to learn a skilled trade and share in the great tradition of becoming a member of the Roofers Union.

As a grateful American and fellow member of the U.S. Armed Forces I want to thank all of our veteran Roofers and Waterproofers for your dedicated service to our country. I especially wish to thank those whom I have been fortunate to have worked with at the International Union: International Vice President Don Cardwell USN (two tours of Vietnam), International President Doug Ziegler USMC, International Vice President Don O'Blenis USA, International Representative Gabbie Perea USA (Vietnam), International President Emeritus John Martini Army National Guard, retired International Vice President Joe Wiederkehr USA (WWII), retired International Vice President Alex Bodnariuk USA (Korea) and retired Assistant to the President Bob Krul USAF.

God Bless America and God Bless our Members