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News Release

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Department of Defense agency recognizes NMCC with elite Seven Seals Award

Aroostook County - The efforts of Northern Maine Community College and its employees to support the U.S. military, specifically the efforts of national guardsmen and women, were recognized today in a surprise ceremony for employees attending the annual campus holiday gathering.

The elite Seven Seals Award is the only Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) award that bridges both the employer and the ESGR volunteer recognition awards program. The award was presented by ESGR and Maine Army National Guard officials to NMCC President Timothy Crowley before the College's 100 employees and several family members and friends of the College who gathered for the annual Holiday luncheon.

"We work closely with employers across the nation so men and women have good, gainful employment when they come back from training and deployment," said Gregory Small, executive director, Maine committee of ESGR. "NMCC is an excellent example of the best of the best in this regard."

The ESGR, which selects Seven Seals Award recipients, is a branch of the Department of Defense that was originally created to promote cooperation between Reserve and National Guard military members and civilian employers. The Seven Seals Award is the highest award given by the ESGR, and was created to publically recognize American employers who provide outstanding patriotic support and cooperation to employees and families of those that have been called to serve in the armed forces.

Presenting the award to Crowley, along with Small, was Brigadier General Brent Boyles, who serves as assistant adjutant general – Army, Maine National Guard. Boyles, who lives and works in central Aroostook County, spoke about NMCC's strong reputation in the region of being supportive of both the military and local community.

"This college has done fantastic things for us, not just for employees, but for students as well," said Boyles. "Men and women could not volunteer to support their country if employers like NMCC didn't support them. We could not have been able to be at war for a decade with part-time military if it were not for employers like NMCC."

The annual NMCC employee Holiday luncheon was selected as the venue to present the honor because most of the College's faculty and staff were gathered together. After accepting the award, President Crowley asked all Veterans in the room to stand and receive the appreciation of those gathered – a tradition he extends at each NMCC Commencement ceremony.

The College was nominated for the award by one of its own – 37-year veteran faculty member Dave Guerrette, a member of the Maine Army National Guard who most recently served in Iraq. In his citation for why the campus was deserving of the honor, Guerrette cited several factors, including the support all military personnel are extended to fulfill their travel and weekend duties, the assistance provided to deployed employees and students to complete course work and academic programs, and the general support the campus demonstrates on a regular basis for those serving their country.

“Northern Maine Community College, President Tim Crowley and the faculty and staff of this campus truly deserve to be recognized for all they have done for soldiers. The support I received during my deployment, followed by the months of recuperating upon my return, as well as seeing first hand for years the College's assurance that Citizen Soldiers needs were met, led me to make this nomination,” said Guerrette.

Guerrette himself was recognized for his service by Small, who spoke about the master sergeant's exemplary work for the Maine Guard, as well as overseas when he was deployed in Iraq, particularly in the area of safety training.

“Dave's work would not have been possible without the support of the people in this room,” Small told employees of the College.

In addition to remarks by ESGR and Maine National Guard officials, letters of congratulations from U.S. Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins and Congressman Michael Michaud were read by area representatives and presented to Crowley. The award and letters, along with photographs of current NMCC employees who have served in the military, are on display in the lobby of the Christie Building through the end of January.

The event award was presented at was appropriately themed a 1940's era USO show as part of the College's 50th Anniversary celebration to pay tribute to the Presque Isle Army Air Base, which was taken over by the U.S. Army 70 years ago, and quickly became a vital air transport installation during World War II. Red, white and blue banners decorated the room and historic photos of the Presque Isle Army Air Base courtesy of the Presque Isle Historical Society were displayed on a screen and throughout the room, along with artifacts from the heyday of the air base facility.

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Gregory Small, executive director, Maine Committee of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (left), speaks about NMCC's support of the military and the reasons the College was selected to receive the elite Seven Seals Award during a surprise presentation during the annual NMCC Employee Holiday gathering on December 20. The award was presented to NMCC President Timothy Crowley (center) by Brigadier General Brent Boyles (right), who serves as assistant adjutant general – Army, Maine National Guard.