

Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled

Contact: LaWanda York

Public Affairs

Phone: (703) 603-2128

Fax: (703) 603-0655

Email: lyork@jwod.gov

Web: www.abilityone.gov



**Frederick Williams and daughter Myrcle sitting outside TRDI building at Fort Hood, Texas.
(See End of the Article for larger photo)**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Disabled Veteran rejoins workforce through AbilityOne Program

Soldier honored during National Disability Employment Appreciation Month

Washington, DC, October 5, 2007— After serving the Army for 23-years, sustaining injuries in Iraq and completing close to 2-years of physical therapy, a disabled veteran rejoined the workforce through the AbilityOne Program, formerly known as the JWOD Program.

Sergeant First Class, (Ret.) Frederick Williams began working with the AbilityOne Program through the Training Rehabilitation & Development Institute (TRDI) located at Fort Hood, Texas. Williams' position as a Security Monitor entails monitoring the airfields at Fort Hood, Texas, to ensure the security for safe aircraft operations.

The Committee for Purchase From People Who are Blind or Severely Disabled is an independent federal agency which administers the AbilityOne Program. AbilityOne gives back to your community through consumer purchasing power, taxes and lowering state and federal supplement program needs by providing jobs to people who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

Williams' wife, Liz, said she bumped into Ed White by chance while working in the ID card section at Fort Hood, Texas. White said he was looking for recently retired disabled vets to hire at TRDI. "Fred was in a funk, so when I got home that night, I told him I have a job for you," Liz said. Williams applied immediately and began working for TRDI in October 2006.

"I did not know the government had a program that gave people with disabilities a chance to work," Williams said. "Through my job, I have learned that my daughter, Chastity, who was born with cerebral palsy, can also apply for a job through the program."

Because of the AbilityOne Program, nearly 48,000 people are employed in a national network comprised of more than 600 community-based nonprofit agencies. Employment opportunities made possible through the AbilityOne Program have equipped tens of thousands of people who are blind or have other severe disabilities with the job skills and training necessary to earn equitable wages, benefits and greater independence.

"This job has made our world better," Liz said. "His motivation and personality has improved tremendously."

TRDI is a nonprofit agency that works under the AbilityOne Program through NISH. Williams said that the employees at TRDI assist him when his Post Traumatic Syndrome (PTS) arises while on duty. "They can talk me down and this prevents me from having to go to the VA (Veterans Administration)," Williams said, "TRDI's support system here for disabled vets is great."

Williams began his career in the Army in 1983 as an Air Defenseman and Radar Technician. In 2000, Williams served as an Air Defense Liaison for the Army First Cavalry Division. He coordinated deployed troops to protect the White House and Pentagon and was involved in supporting President Bush's trips to his Crawford, Texas, ranch, under operation Noble Eagle.

In 2004, Williams was ordered to serve his country in Iraq. Under Operation Iraqi Freedom in Baghdad, he served on a Convoy Escort team and managed fourteen soldiers with escorting dignitaries throughout the war zone.

On September 18, 2004, Williams' convoy was hit by a roadside bomb, killing two Soldiers and injuring Williams outside of Baghdad, Iraq. Williams sustained traumas to the head and right leg and suffers from PTS.

Employment through the AbilityOne Program has given this Army veteran a new focus in his life and giving him the opportunity to provide for his family once again.

The American Dream is the idea that through hard work, courage and determination one could achieve prosperity. People who are blind or have other severe disabilities working under the AbilityOne Program are joining the rest of the workforce and pursuing their American Dream.

The AbilityOne Program positively impacts the lives of both its employees and their families through the employment opportunities it offers. Family members and AbilityOne employees alike benefit from the independence and economic self-sufficiency it creates.

AbilityOne employees are proud of the work they do to support their country. They provide equipment and supplies to the Warfighters, services and goods to federal agencies, and food and supplies for humanitarian relief such as hurricane Katrina.

Williams will be a guest speaker during the Pentagon's NDEAM event in November.

(see next page for larger pics)

