



HELPING TO BRIDGE THE RECRUITMENT GAP



Ed Abbott
Helmets to Hardhats
Advisory Board

We're confident that everyone realizes trying to recruit employees right now is a challenge, to say the least, let alone finding quality employees!

What do we mean by "quality," you ask? Someone who gets to work every day, getting there on time, and is willing to give the extra effort to get the job done right the first time. It seems like every business everywhere is faced with this monumental challenge. This is not the first time you've heard us say this, but there's an organization that can help us all find these quality employees; it's called Helmets to Hardhats (H to H).

Let's talk about another H to H success story — his name is Michael Rumpel, a third-year apprentice and member of Local Union 172 in Columbus, Ohio.

Brother Rumpel spent 18.5 years serving as a member of the United States Marines. When discharged, his last rank was a staff sergeant. Upon leaving the Marines, Rumpel attended the welding school at Eastland-Fairfield Career Center in Groveport, Ohio. He told us the first time he heard about H to H was during a routine visit at



the VA hospital. It was there that Brother Jeremy Gilpin, the apprentice coordinator from Local 172, got a chance to speak with him and talk about some opportunities.

We asked Rumpel why he chose the building trades as a career. “I just couldn’t see myself sitting in an office after being in the infantry for such a long time. I am a hands-on learner and love being outside,” he said. Young men and women like Rumpel bring some things with them needed by our local unions and those that employ us.

Learning discipline through the military, being punctual, having flexibility and honor are traits Rumpel believes his military experience taught him. “I took great pride in everything I did in the service and I brought that with me to being an ironworker,” he said. Rumpel added he learned to work together as a team and to be part of a cohesive unit. “Every day, we have each other’s lives in our hands in the military and in ironwork,” he added. “I have my brothers’ and sisters’ backs and I know that they have mine.”

Rumpel was asked to share his thoughts on the benefits of joining the Iron Workers. He responded, “Representation by my union, I rest easy at night knowing that my local union leaders have my back fighting for a good living wage and safe working conditions. It also provides some stability allowing me to provide for my family.”



We asked him if he would choose the same pathway and he said, “It was a great honor to serve my country and now building my country is a dream come true.” Brother Rumpel wanted to say thank you to his sons Brandon and Brodie for keeping him going. He also wanted to thank the leadership at Local 172 and his apprentice coordinator for their leadership.

We just don’t think you can find someone with better qualities or a more positive attitude than a guy like Michael Rumpel. Recruiting new members, increasing our market share and replacing retirees are the challenges each local union faces. After all, those that we hire and train today are the future of our great union. Helmets to Hardhats is not a “fix-all,” but it’s a pipeline. We encourage each training program and local union to get involved with H to H; learn more at helmetstohardhats.org. If you need help or have any questions, please contact General Organizer Ed Abbott at eabbott@iwintl.org.