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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Honors Employees Who Served in Armed Forces

See Photos of Veterans Appreciation Ceremony

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is honoring employees who have served in the United States Armed Forces, for their dedicated service and sacrifice as both veterans and public transportation professionals serving the New York metropolitan region. Two exceptional MTA employees were honored in a ceremony at a New York City Transit facility in downtown Brooklyn today, and a contingent of MTA employees who are veterans will be marching tomorrow in a Veterans Day parade in Manhattan modified for safe social distancing.

Tuesday's Veterans Appreciation Ceremony was conducted by the New York City Transit Veterans Employee Resource Group, which helps conduct outreach to veterans working at the MTA and those wishing to be hired. In the past six years, more than 1,400 service members were hired at MTA agencies, in roles ranging from entry level to senior leadership. Many of these employees were actively recruited by a team led by one of the Ceremony's honorees.

The two awards at today's small, safely distanced ceremony were given to:

- **Aleyda Meyers**, MTA Director of All Agency Veteran Recruitment and Staffing Initiatives, who collaborates with all agencies in the recruitment of veterans. Meyers has worked at the MTA for 26 years, including playing an integral role in the MTA recruiting and hiring approximately 1,440 servicemembers over the past six years. She volunteered at Fort Hamilton to assist servicemembers and veterans after 9/11, and is a resident of Brooklyn.
- **Ricky Semple**, a manager in the MTA Construction & Development Signals & Train Control Department, who recently retired as a colonel after serving 42 years in the U.S. Army. In the Army, Colonel Semple served tours of duty in places as varied as Afghanistan, Germany, the Netherlands and the United States. His entire immediate family of five have all served in the military, including a son and daughter still in uniform. He has worked at the MTA for 35 years and lives in Queens.

The ceremony included remarks by MTA Chief Safety and Security Officer Patrick Warren, who served for 31 years in the U.S. Army as an Armor and Cavalry officer, retired in the rank of colonel and served as Senior Military Advisor to Supreme Allied Commander, NATO. Also speaking were James Hendon, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Veterans' Services, and Kevin Hertell, a NYC Transit car inspector who is a national advocate for raising awareness about veteran suicide. The event concluded by marking the 245th birthday of the Marine Corps which is today.

"As a veteran who served 31 years in the United States Army, it's a special honor to recognize and thank our servicemembers including those who continue to serve the public through the MTA," **Warren said**. "Colonel Semple and Ms. Meyers are shining examples of how the excellence that brings someone to serve in the military and care for veterans can be applied to help all New Yorkers through public transportation."

"Veterans Day gives me a chance to reflect and honor all of the servicemembers across the United States Armed Forces and those right here at the MTA," **said NYC Transit Veterans Employee Resource Group Chairperson, Manolin Tirado**. "As a veteran, it's important we continue working with our veteran colleagues and take any chance we can to thank them for all they do."

On Veterans Day, MTA officials including the New York City Transit Veterans Employee Resource Group will participate in the NYC Veterans Day Parade on Fifth Avenue, which is being modified this year for safe social distancing with the use of motorcades and a livestream at <https://parade.uwvc.org/>.

The MTA has made 50,000 commemorative MetroCards featuring a Veterans Day image available for customers at MetroCard vending machines at high ridership stations in Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan and the Bronx. A select number of cards are also available at MetroCard vending machines at the St. George Ferry Terminal in Staten Island. The cards are also being distributed by the MTA's Veterans Employee Resource Group at veteran-focused events such as Tuesday's ceremony.

The MTA conducts robust training programs for servicemember employees as well as participating in monthly outreach events. The MTA has a network of several hundred government and non-profit groups in which it regularly emails information about examination and employee opportunities for veterans. Later this month, the MTA and the NYC Transit Veterans Employee Resource Group are co-hosting a virtual LinkedIn and resume workshop for veterans and veteran spouses.

