

# Supporting the Troops – The Patriotic Employer

## An Interview with Sara Alford & Brandon Foote – Newmans Valve

*Newmans Valve is dedicated to supporting the United States, not only through their business practices, but also through their support of U.S. Army veterans and active military personnel. Valve World Americas spoke with Sara Alford, General Manager at Newmans, and Brandon Foote, Inside Sales and active member of the U.S. Army, about the importance of exercising flexibility for both active duty military personnel and veterans.*

■ **By Brittani Schroeder and Sarah Bradley**

Brandon Foote has been in the military for almost 14 years, in which time he has been deployed on three separate occasions. He also works for Newmans Valve, a master distributor based out of Stafford, Texas. “Each military deployment lasts about a year, and my current contract for service ends in 2025,” said Foote. “During my last deployment, in 2018, I was an employee at Newmans and was grateful for the flexibility they had in granting me the time I needed off for my military service.”

The U.S. Army deployed Foote overseas for most of 2018; while he was away, Sara Alford kept in contact with him to ensure he had everything he needed, offering additional help to his family as well. Foote continued, “I am quite limited in what I can do while I am away, so Sara was a great help.” When Foote was deployed in 2018, his wife had recently had a baby, and he had to leave when the baby was only two weeks old. “Having Sara to check in on my wife and kids meant the world to me. She went above and beyond to support me through that time.”

Foote’s role in the U.S. Army had him focused on chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear applications. Although he does not typically see a lot of crossover from his work in the valve industry to his military duties, Foote has been asked to work on some valve applications in the past. “I use my life experiences from being a civilian while I am deployed, and if that means I have to swap out a valve here and there, I am more than happy to help,” he said.

### Being Flexible

For Alford, providing support to U.S. veterans is of the utmost importance. “Brandon is on active duty, and we have two other veterans working at Newmans as well. Being able to hold jobs for active duty members is something we are always committed to doing,” she said. “Even though it is mandated that all companies hold jobs for people who go into service, there are a lot of companies out there who will find a loophole in order to be able to layoff the employee. We think of ourselves as a family at Newmans, and we could not imagine



doing that to Brandon or any employee who went to serve their country.”

Before Foote found his place at Newmans, a previous employer had laid him off during one of his first deployments. “It is not something you want to experience. It also taints your outlook going forward—you are always thinking, ‘Will this be the time I am let go again because of my military service?’ Luckily, Newmans has always supported my service and, even as I am heading off for another deployment quite soon, I know I will have a job to come back to here.” In Foote’s experience, he has seen companies hire veterans outright after their service, and will provide the proper training to ensure success in their role. He has also found that some companies will not put as much effort into providing a veteran with a successful and supportive workplace.

### A Patriotic Employer

When Foote returned to the U.S. after his 2018 deployment, he nominated Alford for the Patriotic Employer Award. “The whole thing was a big surprise to me,” Alford stated. “Apparently the whole company knew he was nominating me! The military came in and did a special presentation and awarding ceremony. It was an honor to be nominated and to receive such an award.”

Newmans Valve held Foote’s job while he served his country in the past, and they will do it again now. Upon his return, they will welcome him back to the Newmans family with open arms. The company is proud to honor both those who serve and those on the home front who are supporting the troops and hope to inspire other companies to do the same.