

Elite 11 Semi-Finalists Announced for the 2026 Transition Trucking: Driving for Excellence Award

Program marks 11th year honoring veterans who have built careers in professional trucking

KIRKLAND, WA, UNITED STATES, August 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Kenworth](#), Fastport, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's [Hiring Our Heroes](#) initiative today announced 11 semi-finalists, the "Elite 11" for the 2026 "[Transition Trucking: Driving for Excellence](#)" award, marking the program's 11th year. The award honors the achievements of military veterans who have transitioned into careers in the professional trucking industry.



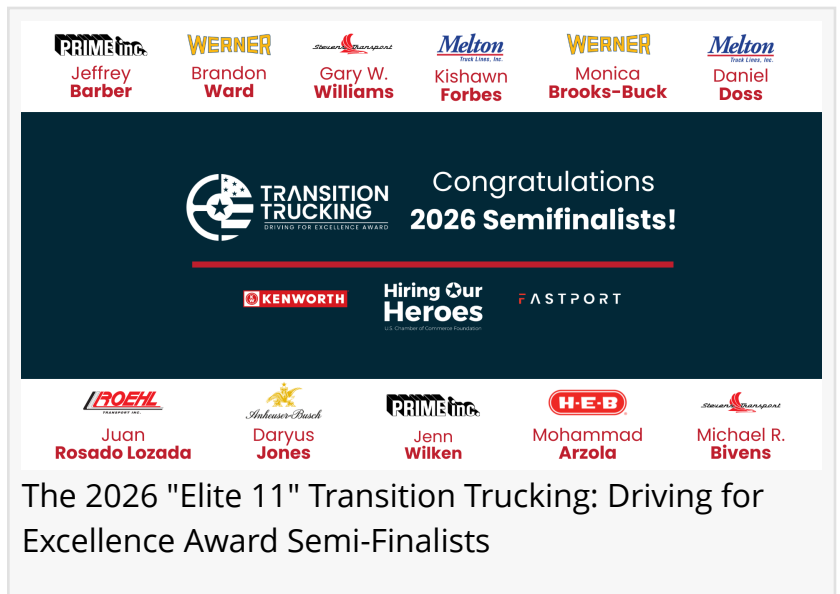
The Kenworth T680 as seen at the Mid America Trucking Show

This year's semi-finalists were selected from nominations submitted by carriers, training schools, a private fleet and individuals across the country, and represent four branches of the U.S. Armed Forces.

For the 11th consecutive year, Kenworth will provide the grand prize for the winning driver: a T680 equipped with a 76-inch sleeper and the PACCAR Powertrain featuring the PACCAR MX-13 engine, PACCAR TX-12 automated transmission and PACCAR DX-40 tandem rear axles. The T680 also includes the latest in driver assistance systems, including Kenworth's DigitalVision Mirrors, Bendix Fusion Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC) Stop and Auto Go, and Lane Keeping Assist with Torque Assisted Steering. The 76-inch sleeper features a Diamond VIT interior in charcoal with high-quality leather driver and passenger seats with titanium accents that are fully heated and cooled. The Kenworth T680 also includes the latest in driver amenities, including a factory-installed refrigerator, a rotating worktable, and space for the everyday conveniences that bring the comforts of home to the road.

Registered Apprenticeship (RA) remains a driving force behind this year's semi-finalists: 60% of the nominations received came from drivers who are completing or have completed a U.S. Department of Labor RA Program, and five of the Elite 11 are apprentices today, demonstrating RA to be a proven on-ramp for veterans entering the trucking industry.

Of the nominations received, the following semi-finalists will continue in the award program:



The 2026 "Elite 11" Transition Trucking: Driving for Excellence Award Semi-Finalists

Jeffrey Barber U.S. Army, Sergeant First Class (E-7)
Prime Inc.
Trained by Prime Inc.

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This year's Transition Trucking: Driving for Excellence Elite 11 semi-finalists exemplify the dedication, leadership, and commitment to service that military veterans bring to the trucking industry”

*Kyle Kimball, Kenworth
Director of Marketing*

Brandon Ward U.S. Navy, Senior Chief Petty Officer (E-8)
Werner Enterprises
Trained by Roadmaster Drivers School, Orlando
US DOL Registered Apprenticeship

Mohammad Arzola U.S. Marine Corps, Sergeant Major (E-9)
HEB
Trained by California Career Schools

Juan Rosado Lozada U.S. Marine Corps, Lance Corporal (E-3)

Roehl Transport, Inc.
Trained by Troops Into Transportation, Fort Benning

Kishawn Forbes U.S. Navy, Senior Chief Petty Officer (E-8)
Melton Truck Lines
Trained by Florida State College at Jacksonville

Gary W. Williams U.S. Army, Command Sergeant Major (E-9)
Stevens Transport
Trained by Southern Careers Institute

Monica Brooks-Buck U.S. Army, Sergeant First Class (E-7)
Werner Enterprises
Trained by Truck Driver Institute, Saucier
US DOL Registered Apprenticeship

Jenn Wilken U.S. Army, Staff Sergeant (E-6)
Prime Inc.
Trained by Prime Inc.

Daryus Jones U.S. Army, Private First Class (E-3)
Anheuser-Busch
Trained by Tulsa Technology
US DOL Registered Apprenticeship

Daniel Doss U.S. Air Force, Staff Sergeant (E-5)
Melton Truck Lines
Trained by Troops Into Transportation, Fort Benning
US DOL Registered Apprenticeship

Michael R. Bivens U.S. Marine Corps, Staff Sergeant (E-6)
Stevens Transport
Trained by Tennessee Truck Driving School
US DOL Registered Apprenticeship

"This year's 'Transition Trucking: Driving for Excellence' Elite 11 semi-finalists exemplify the dedication, leadership, and commitment to service that military veterans bring to the trucking industry," said Kyle Kimball, Kenworth director of marketing. "Kenworth is honored to celebrate 11 years of partnership with Fastport and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes initiative, and we look forward to recognizing this exceptional class of semi-finalists."

"The Transition Trucking award campaign continues to spotlight the extraordinary contributions veterans are making in the transportation industry while introducing a new generation of service members to the real economic opportunities a trucking career can offer," said Eric Eversole, president of Hiring Our Heroes and a vice president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. "As we celebrate the program's 11th year, we're proud to honor this remarkable Elite 11 and the decade of veteran success they represent."

Semi-finalists will be honored September 22nd and 23rd, with a recognition dinner at the National Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus, Ohio, followed by a tour of the Kenworth Chillicothe manufacturing plant, where finalists will be announced.

Public voting will open November 1st and run through Veterans Day, November 11th. Voting is

an important factor in the Selection Committee's final deliberations, which determine the finalists and the ultimate award winner. Our Elite 11 and overall winner will receive prize packs from Road Dog Care Co., OOIDA, Circle K Pro and Truck Parking Club.

The 2026 Transition Trucking: Driving for Excellence Award winner will be announced December 14th at the Veteran Ready Summit at the United States Military Academy at West Point. For more information, visit the Transition Trucking website <https://transitiontrucking.org/>

About Fastport

Fastport Inc. solves America's toughest recruiting challenges through research, technology, and people. Fastport is also a U.S. Department of Labor Industry Intermediary to support Registered Apprenticeship development and sustainability. For more information, visit www.fastport.com or www.nationalapprenticeship.org.

About Kenworth

Kenworth Truck Company, founded in 1923, specializes in the design and manufacture of The World's Best® heavy- and medium-duty trucks. As a leader in the development of advanced diesel powertrains, zero-emissions vehicles, connected truck technologies and advanced driver assistance systems, Kenworth is creating transportation solutions to drive a better world. Kenworth's Internet home page is at www.kenworth.com. Kenworth is a PACCAR company.

About Hiring Our Heroes

Since 2011, Hiring Our Heroes (HOH) has worked to create meaningful employment opportunities for transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses. Leveraging a broad array of private and public sector partners, as well as our extensive network of businesses, we provide our nation's heroes with the right tools, resources, and connections to get the job done. Through world-class hiring events, digital programs, upskilling opportunities, and fellowships, we have developed and cultivated a rich pipeline of military-connected talent. For more information about Hiring Our Heroes and its programs, visit HiringOurHeroes.org.

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