

National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update



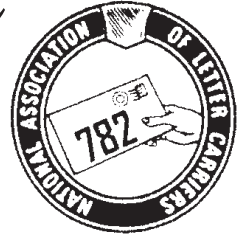
ARVIN
CALIFORNIA CITY
McFARLAND
TAFT

AVENAL
DELANO
MOJAVE
TEHACHAPI

BAKERSFIELD
EDWARDS AFB
RIDGECREST
TRONA

BORON
LAMONT
SHAFTER
WASCO

CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1901



NUMBER 11

WEB VERSION

NOVEMBER 2018

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!!

93203 — ARVIN

No Veterans currently assigned

93204 — AVENAL

No Veterans currently assigned

93215 — DELANO

Arnie Reyes-Rios: USA — 2000 - 2006

93241 — LAMONT

No Veterans currently assigned

93250 — McFARLAND

Robert Campos: USA — 1988 - 1991
Fernando Soto: USMC — 1989 - 1995

93263 — SHAFTER

No Veterans currently assigned

93268 — TAFT

No Veterans currently assigned

93280 — WASCO

No Veterans currently assigned

93301 — DOWNTOWN STATION

Eugene Shebley: USN — 1987 - 1995
Lynn Hunter: USAF — 1977 - 1978
Artie Evans: USMC — 1990 - 1994

93304 — SOUTH STATION

Neil Kramer: USA&R — 1985 - 1997
Mike Meza: USA — 1993 - 1996

93305 — EAST BAKERSFIELD

Cherilyn Morgan: USN — 1983 - 2000
Steve Lubrecht: USAF — 1984 - 1985
& National Guard: 1986 - 1989
George Duarte: USA — 1982 - 1985
& USAR — 1991 - 1992
Robert Guerrero: USAF — 1992 - 1996
Levi Prinz : USA — 2012 - 2015

93306 — HILLCREST

Mark Andersen: USAF — 2009 - 2013
Joe Gutierrez: USA — 1972 - 1974
David Renner: USA — 1990 - 1996
Eric Zuniga: USA — 2013 - 2016
Otto Hernandez: USAF — 21 YEARS

93307 — BRUNDAGE

R. Woommavovah: USA — 2010 - 2016
Jessie Gaudia: USA — 2004 - 2013

93308 — DOLE COURT

Ricardo Obando: USA — 1983 - 2004
Steven Carter: USA — 1988 - 1991
Paul Hernandez: USA — 1990 - 1994
Art Mooney: USN — 1974 - 1979
Daniel Medina: USN — 1983 - 1989
Lee Collaso: USN — XXXX - XXXX
Michael Tucker: XXX — 1998 - 2010
Henry Gasco: USCG — 24+ YEARS

93309 — STOCKDALE

Bobby Cruz: USA — 1972 - 1974
Cindy Flores: USN — 1979 - 1983
Vince Gonzalez: USMC — 1986 - 1990
John Hardin: USN — 1976 - 1980
Joe Lovoie: USA — 1971 - 1972
Randy Courson: USAF — 1972 - 1976

93311/13 — CAMINO MEDIA

David Bridges: USMC — 1979 - 1983
Duane Huse: USAF — 5 YRS 10 months

93501 — MOJAVE

No Veterans currently assigned

93504 — CALIFORNIA CITY

Ray Pasillas: USA — 1983 - 1987
One Veteran declined participation

93516 — BORON

No Veterans currently assigned

93523 — EDWARDS AFB

No Veterans currently assigned

93555 — RIDGECREST

Tina Dill: USA — 1991 - 1993
Nicholas Travers: USAF — 2007 - 2013

93561 — TEHACHAPI

No Veterans currently assigned

93562 — TRONA

No Veterans currently assigned

**We also thank all
Postal employee
Veterans who are not
NALC members!**



Continued on pages 20 - 32

Congratulations, New Retirees Bill Elms (1980) and Brad Smith (1983)!!!
Please see pages 10 through 13 for additional information...

Minutes of the October 2018 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President, Mike Towery, at 7:00 p.m. on the 24th day of September, 2018 at the branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sgt.

at Arms, David Treto. All members of the Executive Board were present. The stewards were present from Avenal, Brundage, Camino Media, Downtown, East Bakersfield, Hillcrest,

Oildale, Shafter, South and Stockdale. Also present was the Newsletter Editor, Basil Zuniga; Photographer, Anita Holderman; Assistant Treasurer, Debbie Guillet; Assistant Recording Secretary, Norma Hamer; OWCP Rep., Rick Gerdes and Paul Greenfield of the Social and Recreation Committee. The Minutes of the September 26, 2018 meeting were read by and accepted with no additions or corrections.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP: Applications were received from Delores Franco, Brundage; Iesha Dumas, Hillcrest and Joe Gomez, Delano.

REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND STANDING COMMITTEES: Teresa Ortega reported that 281 people attended the picnic. Eighty four were branch members, so almost every member attending won a prize. Everything went as planned, so it was great. She reported that she was \$73.02 under budget and that \$2070.00 was raised for MDA. She thanked everyone for their help. Mike Towery thanked Teresa for all her work on the picnic; she and Paul do all the work on her own time. He also thanked Mike Meza for cooking the hot dogs. Basil Zuniga informed the members that next month will be East Bakersfield Station's turn to fold the newsletter. He thanked Anita for all the photos of

the picnic, there are lots more on the web version. He reminded members that it is time for high school seniors to apply for the Saxsenmeier Scholarship which is sponsored by the State Association. We have had three winners for our branch. The applications can be printed from the branch website. He also informed members that there is a national scholarship also. He thanked Kim for "cooking." Norma Hamer reported that \$2070.00 was collected from the sale of tickets for the "Beer for a Year" drawing. Paul Greenfield of the Social and Recreation Committee reported that they are still "up in the air" about giving him time on the clock to take cans from the stations to recycling. He reported that they will have tickets for CALM Holiday Lights. They are working on getting tickets to a special event at the BC Planetarium. He asked if each station had a bulletin board for Social and Recreation announcements. If you don't have one at your station let him know. He also reported that the committee wants to get holiday cookies for each station this year. Kim Gerdes reported that one book was sold this month. There are 600 remaining. Mark Ramirez, HBP Representative, reported that Open Season for Health Benefits is November 12 – December 10. He reported the rates in the newsletter, see him for any questions.

NEW BUSINESS: Teresa Ortega made a motion to have dinner at the December 19th meeting catered, with members to bring dessert, Seconded by Debbie Guillet. The motion passed. Today is Tami Foshee's birthday!

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: Mike Towery reported that the Steward meetings for November will be the 7th and 14th, with the General Meeting on November 21.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: Anita Holderman had nothing to report this month.

TREASURERS REPORT: Molly Biggar reported:

	August	September
Beginning Balance	\$85,532.47	\$77,701.19
Dues and Income	\$13,226.43	\$15,258.55
Total Balance	\$98,758.90	\$92,959.74
Expenses	\$21,057.71	\$17,649.18
Ending Balance	\$77,701.19	\$75,310.56

The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by Darryl Holderman. (22.00/22.00)

The Drawing for \$500.00 would have been won by Donald Ingram if he had been present.

There were 37 members and 3 guests present.

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

KIM GERDES
NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary

Standup which is to be presented at each Bakersfield unit...

Hi, my name is Paul Greenfield. I am a Letter Carrier at Bakersfield's Brundage station. I serve as a member of the Bakersfield post office Social Recreation Committee.



Social-Rec committee members are postal craft employees from the NALC, APWU, Mail Handlers, the Rural Carriers union and members of management.

Our committee is funded by a percentage of total vending machine sales at postal facilities where all of us work. We budget this money to help fund a number of employee activities and benefits. We donate to the annual Bakersfield Post Office Bowling Tournament, and to the annual Softball Tournament.

This year we have purchased discounted Dodger tickets and Disney on Ice tickets and we look forward to having discounted tickets for the lights at the California Area Living Museum (C.A.L.M.) during the coming holiday season.

Another token of appreciation we like to fund are retirement cakes for our colleagues whose postal careers have come to an end. We provide twenty dollars towards a cake purchase. (Please see your Shop Steward for instructions and details.) We also purchased TVs for all of the break rooms at postal facilities that we serve at around town. In the past, we have hosted a Social-Rec sponsored picnic for all of you to attend and we hope to fund this event again in the spring of 2019.

If you have any comments or suggestions concerning how we as a committee can serve our colleagues better, please contact me directly at 661-203-7802.

Thank you, have a safe day!

PAUL GREENFIELD

"OuT tHeRe"



Non-Members June 2018

Downtown Station

Sarah Kirby
Javier Cruz

Lamont
100% UNION!!!

Mojave
100% UNION!!!

Ridgecrest
100% UNION!!!

South Station

Daniel Zuniga
Marty Martinez

Brundage/East Bakersfield
100% UNION!!!

Shafter
Mae D. Voights
Laura M. New

Hillcrest
100% UNION!!!

Taft
K. J. Kaczmarek

Dole Court
100% UNION!!!

Tehachapi
B. C. Den Beeman

Stockdale
James Oh

Trona
100% UNION!!!

Camino Media
100% UNION!!!

Wasco
Eun Chong

Arvin
100% UNION!!!

Avenal
100% UNION!!!

California City
100% UNION!!!

Delano
Cynthia V. Quebral
Daniela Barreto

Edwards AFB
100% UNION!!!

*There are only 12
non-members in all
of the cities we serve...
Only one of
them is a CCA.*

CCA names are in italics

DOHERTY & DONELON SCHOLARSHIPS

Deadline: This form must be returned to NALC Headquarters no later than December 31, 2018.

Eligibility

- Applicant must be the son, daughter or legally adopted child of a letter carrier NALC member in good standing—active, retired or deceased. Stepchildren and grandchildren are eligible if they live with the letter carrier in a regular parent-child relationship.
- Applicant's parent must be a member in good standing of NALC for at least one year prior to making application.
- Applicant must be a high school senior when making application and must submit the form provided at right, signed by the NALC member and an officer of the member's NALC branch. This form must be returned to NALC Headquarters by December 31, 2018.

Requirements

- All applicants must take the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) or the American College Test (ACT) in either their junior or senior year. A copy of the official scores from the administering organization must be received at NALC Headquarters by midnight, March 31, 2019. (Computer-generated printouts of test scores will not be accepted.)
- All biographical questionnaires and secondary school reports must be received at NALC Headquarters by midnight, March 31, 2019.

Regulations

- Scholarship is to be used toward pursuing undergraduate

ate degree at an accredited college of recipient's choice.

- Winners may accept other college scholarship assistance in addition to the NALC award.
- Any change of schools or course of study must be done only with the permission of the NALC Scholarship Committee.
- A transcript of grades must be forwarded to the committee at the end of each school year.
- If winner suffers certified serious illness, scholarship will be held in abeyance for not more than one year.
- If unusual conditions are going to require an interruption in schooling, recipient must state reason(s) in writing to the Scholarship Committee and request that the scholarship be held in abeyance. Request(s) will be reviewed by the Committee and a decision rendered.
- If the NALC member is suspended by his/her local NALC branch or enters supervision, scholarship will be cancelled.

Terms of awards

- The official scholarship judges will award one William C. Doherty Scholarship in each of the five USPS Regions and one John T. Donelon Scholarship. Winners are judged on the basis of secondary school records, personal qualifications and test scores. As in the past, the scholarship judges will consist of experienced persons in the educational field. Decisions of the judges will be final.

- Doherty Scholarship awards will be \$4,000 per year and the Donelon Scholarship award will be \$1,000 per year. Each scholarship is renewable for three consecutive years thereafter providing the winner maintains satisfactory grades. Award money will be deposited annually with the college. It will be credited to the winner's account to be drawn upon under the rules and regulations which the college has established for handling scholarship funds. Award money is to be used for required college fees, including room and board and transportation fees.
- Children of NALC national officers are not eligible.

In honor of NALC's president from 1941 to 1962, the **William C. Doherty Scholarship Fund** will again award five \$4,000 scholarships to children of members in good standing. The **John T. Donelon Scholarship Fund** will award one scholarship in honor of Donelon, longtime NALC assistant to the president. Applicants must be high school seniors and must meet all of the following eligibility criteria to be considered.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Date _____ (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

Please send instructions as to how I can compete for a scholarship award. I am a senior in the 2018-19 school year.

I am the daughter son active
 *stepdaughter *stepson of retired
 *granddaughter *grandson deceased

letter carrier _____

of Branch No. _____ City _____ State _____

My name is _____

My address is _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone No. _____

Signature of branch officer

Signature of NALC parent member
(or spouse if deceased)

Printed name of branch officer

Last 4 digits of Social Security No. _____

Title _____ Date _____

This form must be returned no later than December 31, 2018, to the NALC Scholarship Committee, in care of the National Association of Letter Carriers, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

* Stepchildren and grandchildren are eligible if they live with the letter carrier in a regular parent-child relationship.

2019 Carl J. Saxsenmeier

Scholarship Program

The California State Association of Letter Carriers (CSALC) is now accepting applications for the 2019 Carl J. Saxsenmeier Scholarship Program. **All applications must be received by the Scholarship Chair by January 4, 2019.** The Chair will send scholarship packets to all applicants by the end of January 2019. The scholarships are available to the children or grandchildren of members of NALC Branches within the State of California who have not served in a supervisory capacity in the previous two (2) years from the date of 2018 award announcement. Applicant's parent / grandparent must be a member in good standing of the NALC for at least one year prior to applying. Applicant must be a high school senior when applying. Saxsenmeier Scholarship awards are issued in the year of graduation and are not renewable.

Jeff Parr

Saxsenmeier Scholarship Chair

1177 Levine Dr-Santa Rosa, Ca 95401

707-523-1818

Saxsenmeier Scholarship Application

(Please Print)

Student's Name _____

NALC Member's Name _____

Home Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

Home Telephone _____

Cell / Fax _____

Email Address _____

Applicant's Signature _____

NALC Member Signature _____ Relationship to Applicant _____

Local NALC Branch Officer Signature required for verification of member in good standing:

NALC Branch Officer Signature _____ Title _____

Branch Officer Printed Name & Branch
Number _____

On October 8, Postal Employees told Congress, "U.S. Mail is Not For Sale!"

On October 8th the NALC, APWU, the Mailhandler Union and the Rural Letter Carriers joined in solidarity to sponsor "U.S. Mail is Not For Sale!" rallies in Congressional Districts across the nation to inform the public and voice opposition to Administration plans to privatize the USPS. The USPS is the centerpiece of the \$1.4 trillion mailing industry which employs 7.5 million people accounting for 8.6 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product.

Rural, lower-income urban areas, seniors and Veterans would be affected by increased costs and degraded services. Private delivery services have to answer to shareholders who are only concerned with profits as opposed to the USPS stakeholders who

rely on the mandate for universal pricing and delivery to *EVERY address six and sometimes seven days a week!*

In Santa Rosa, the crowd of approximately 40 attendees consisted mostly of NALC members. This was a decent turnout of our members, but short of what it should have been.

Our Union is our members, not some organization in Washington, DC. We have to be able to mobilize our members for events such as these to show our strength and solidarity to fight for our jobs and issues that are important to us.

You may think that postal privatization won't happen, but are you willing to risk your job and your family's financial security?

Those of you with 10 and 20 years before retirement eligibility have much to lose. Join the fight for YOUR future!

JEFF PARR

CSALC District 2 Representative

Article courtesy of the Santa Rosa, California NALC Branch 183 September/October 2018 *UPDATE*

What Good is the Union Anyway?

*"What am I paying all these dues for?"
"What good is the union anyways?"
"I don't get in trouble so I don't need the union."
"Dues seem like a waste of money."*

I could go on and on with the negative things I hear some of our members say about the union.

Maybe now might be a good time to remind us all why our union is so important. Let me start by stating the obvious.

The most visible thing that our union does is negotiate contracts for us that include pay increases and other benefits. I am quite confident the the Postal Service would love to pay us less to do our jobs every day. I sincerely doubt — when the NALC and the USPS sit down to negotiate our latest contract — that any pay increases were the Postal Service's idea.

Now, let's talk dues. ***FIVE MINUTES OR LESS A DAY*** is how long you have to work to pay your dues.

Your dues help provide representation during interviews and discipline, training and support for our members, events, local and national negotiations, assistance in navigating Workman's Comp issues and *so much more!*

That's five minutes well spent!

How about discipline? Everyone thinks that the Union is just there to defend those so-called "dirt bag co-workers" who don't deserve their jobs, right?

Not true.

By Heidi Zelasco
NALC Branch 114

Life happens. Sometimes bad choices get made, but we live and we learn. Everyone deserves a second chance and the union is there to hopefully help get you one.

Everyone thinks, "I'm never going to be the one in trouble. I am a good worker so I don't have anything to worry about."

You would be surprised to find out how many of your fellow Carriers have found themselves in hot water whether it was warranted or not. It could be for attendance because you're taking care of your sick family member or for getting hurt on the job.

No one plans to get in trouble, but it sure is nice to have someone in your corner when you do...

The very definition of a union is "...an organized association of workers formed to protect and further their rights and their interests." That's you! that's me! That's each and every one of us! Or, at least it should be.

Sometimes, I feel like I'm explaining the term "Current Resident" to the customer who keeps throwing a letter back in the box...

THE UNION IS NOT JUST A SMALL GROUP OF VOLUNTEER ACTIVISTS WHO TAKE ON THE ROLE OF BEING SHOP STEWARDS OR NALC BRANCH OFFICERS.

It's all of us working together to make work not suck so bad and to help ensure that we are all treated equitably!

***It's all of us working together...
It's all of us working together...***

This article from Duluth, Minnesota NALC Branch 114 is reprinted from the Cedar Rapids, Iowa November 2018 *Eastern Iowa Reporter*



Rallies were held by all four postal unions (NALC, APWU, NRLCA and NPMHU) throughout the country to communicate a single message.

What path is the United States of America taking?

“Gullible” or “Uninformed” Voters?

“I think gullible is the wrong word. I think there are an unusually high number of disenfranchised really pissed-off people that are seeing that the American Dream that they have been promised for years disappeared from reach.

Once all that you had to do was work hard and you could have a comfortable existence. Now more and more are going backwards in terms of quality of life, however, hard work has not paid off, and more importantly the same is true for their children.

I think the word that should replace gullible is “ANGRY.”

Angry people want to hurt someone, and they are doing that to the establishment. When people are angry, they stop being rational, and politics relies on the rational majority to vote for rational reasonable candidates.”

Tom Foale

“Ain’t it funny how many hundreds of thousands of soldiers we can recruit with nerve; but, we can’t find one politician in a million with backbone”.

Will Rogers

“We have the “Bill of Rights”; What we need is a “Bill of Responsibilities”

Bill Maher

“What our country needs is more unemployed politicians.”

Edward Langley

“In politics stupidity is “NOT” a handicap.”

Napoleon Bonaparte

Politics: where people work hard to get a job and do nothing after they get it.

Anonymous

“There are two impossibilities in life: “Just one drink...” and “an honest politician...”

H. L. Menchen

“You don’t listen to the guy who looks like the kid in “Deliverance” all grown up.”

Lewis Black

“Politicians are always trying to convince you that they can solve the unemployment problem if you will give them a job.”

Alfred E. Neuman
Mad Magazine

“Congress: A body of men brought together to slow down the government.”

Doug Larson

“When I was a boy, I was told that, “Anybody could become president...” Now, I am beginning to believe it.”

Clarence Darrow

MARK RAMIREZ
Retired Letter Carrier

NALC Branch 782 Health Benefit Representative

Does Congress Have Power to Privatize the USPS?

Over 24 years ago I attended a church activity close to San Jose where I ran into someone whom today I equate to a Tea Party/Heritage Foundation/CATO Institute junkie. I grew up with his children, and after exchanging pleasantries I told him I worked for the United States Postal Service as a letter carrier. His immediate response tells the story why I describe him as I did. He said, "The postal service is an entitlement! It should be privatized!" Sound familiar?

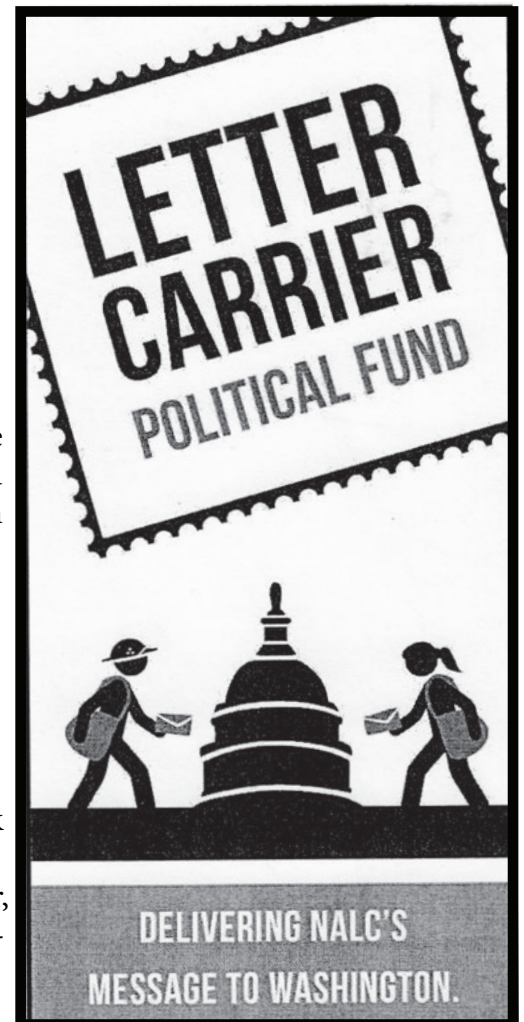
If the Supreme Court Says So, Hell Yes!

I raise this important point. Can Congress and the courts privatize the USPS? Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution gives Congress the power to "establish Post Offices". It also can "erect forts". I started carrying mail at Fort Ord (which at the time was part of the Monterey, CA installation) in 1992. Via legislation, Congress shut down Ft. Ord and other military installations. I personally witnessed soldiers boarding up family housing units on our routes. If Congress can erect a fort, it can tear one down. Same with a post office or processing center or the whole organization for that matter.

Article 43 of the National Agreement states that any part of the contract -or the whole thing, for that matter- can be annulled by Congress or the courts. Imagine this scenario: Congress passes a bill authorizing USPS privatization and the president signs it into law. Our union and other interested parties sue in federal court. The case winds its way to a room with nine men and women in black robes, the deciding vote being Justice Brett "keg is half-full" Kavanaugh. And by a 5-4 vote they decide you don't have a God-given right to deliver mail for a public postal service under a union shop. Can this happen? Sure it can! Why? Because Article 43 says so! Not only that, we all witnessed the 5-4 decision in the Janus case, which converted most government shops from closed to open, meaning that such employees don't have to pay so-called fair representation dues anymore. Note here that the five majority justices supposedly believed in judicial restraint, meaning they don't make law from the bench. Except when it came to unionized government employees under collective bargaining agreements.

Any day now a commission authorized by President Trump will issue a report regarding the future of the USPS. I think we know what the report will say. Postal employees are over-paid, benefits are overly generous compared to the private sector, we don't need 6-day or door delivery. Essentially what the president's pal Darrell Issa's infamous HR 2309 said, and for

(continued on next page)



good measure an unelected board would have authority to do away with collective bargaining agreements. Maybe the problem isn't that we are paid too much. Maybe it's that other delivery employees are paid too little! And why is that? Because they don't belong to a union! Let's cut to the chase. Privatization is about one thing and one thing only-UNION BUSTING!

Does anyone really think privatization will result in cheaper and more reliable service to our customers? If you do, I have beach-front property in Oklahoma to sell you. Will rural and out-of-the way areas get mail six days a week? NO! Why? Because if the idea is to maximize profit, then such places will be lucky to get mail twice a week. And guess what happens when your schedule is cut to less than five days a week? You become a part-time employee. What does that mean? You lose all your benefits. And that's the idea, isn't it?

House Resolution 993, which currently has 237 co-sponsors (183 Democrats, 54 Republicans), expresses the sense of the House that the USPS continue as an independent agency of the federal government. As such, we need as many co-sponsors as possible on the resolution before the report comes out to show the president that our postal service is not for sale. Please look up the legislation online to find out if your congressperson has signed on. If you live in California's Central Valley, Rep. Devin Nunes is the only one who refuses to sign on. If you live in his district, please call or write his office and ask for co-sponsorship of the resolution. If you served in the military, don't be shy about mentioning that.

Remember, President Richard Nixon's Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 and resulting benefits such as collective bargaining and a middle-class lifestyle came about by the stroke of a pen. Such benefits can be taken away by a stroke of a pen. Or by the ruling of an anti-union Supreme Court.

Article courtesy of the November 2018 *Postman's View* published by Fresno, California NALC Branch 231

Statement on election results

November 05, 2018

On Tuesday, voters turned out in record numbers for the mid-term elections to decide the balance of power in Congress and in state legislatures. In Washington, Democrats will take over control of the House of Representatives for the first time since 2010 when the 116th Congress is sworn in January 3, 2019. In the Senate, Republicans increased their majority with a couple of races still not officially resolved. Below is a statement from NALC President Fredric Rolando regarding the midterm election.

"For the last two years, there has been one-party control of the House, Senate and White House. For letter carriers this imbalance has yielded numerous proposals attacking the jobs, benefits and bargaining rights of our members as well as efforts to dismantle and privatize our employer," said NALC President Fredric Rolando. "With Democratic leadership in the House, there will not only be a line of defense to fight back against proposals that could potentially harm Letter Carriers but also a more balanced approach to how decisions regarding our jobs and employer are made."

"NALC will continue to support those who support us and the 116th will be no different," continued Rolando. "With over 88 new faces coming to Congress from both parties, we are committed to building bridges on both sides of the aisle and finding solutions to the issues that face Letter Carriers and their families."

We congratulate all of the newly elected members on their victories and look forward to working with them."

Source: NALC Website

There is more to Bill Elms' USPS history. January 2, 2004 was just a local seniority date on *our* list...

We work next to others for years. We gauge "where we are" for bidding and the chance to take annual leave based on a date on a seniority list which started the clock running on the day folks were hired.

Often, there is more to the story...

When Bill Elms graduated from Foothill High School in Bakersfield in 1973, he absolutely knew the trajectory that his life would take. Brigham Young University was a certainty. Upcoming participation in his two year mission as a Mormon missionary was an exciting fact. Then, a life spent as a businessman would cap it all.

Well, God has a sense of humor...

Initially, the dominoes fell as they were supposed to. At the end of the Bakersfield College school year in 1975, he travelled to Belgium and France to fulfill his welcome obligation. A short-lived return home was a springboard to moving to Provo, Utah where he enrolled at BYU in 1977 to pursue a Travel and Tourism major with the express purpose of eventually launching a business career.

Two unexpected surprises still make him grin with a certain sense of wonder.

At BYU, a guy who had followed him as a missionary at the same location in Europe was introduced to Bill and exclaimed, "YOU'RE Elder Elms?!!!?" Although somewhat taken aback, Bill wondered what it was about his preaching that had people still talking about him a year later. Then, the truth surfaced...

If you've seen Mormons travelling, you may have noticed that a bicycle is a form of transport that is often used. "I was a pretty good bike rider back then. I used to make it all the way to the church building which was 7 clicks (kilometers) away with no hands on the handlebar."

At BUY, Bill met a girl named Liz...

Short story: At the end of the school year in 1979, the married Bill and Liz returned to Bakersfield with a son, Andrew, who'd been born in June 1979. Bill was one class short of graduation and planned to do it as a correspondence course. But, he knew that he would also have to provide for his family in the interim.

Knowing that Bill needed an income, father-in-law Ruben Gutierrez (who was a USPS supervisor at both the Annex and the GMF) informed Bill that he'd heard about two possible post office job openings. One was in Delano and the other in Wasco. But, there was this Test...

Hired by Postmaster L.J. Hudson, the newest PTF Clerk-Carrier walked in the door at the Wasco post office on "E" Street on October 20, 1980. He joined quite a crew of interesting individuals: Gonzalo Romo, Jim Hill, David Dieter, Dale Duke, Mary Proctor, Larry Reiswig, Carl Summers and Rural Carrier Roque Borjon.

Like countless others before him, Bill was certain that this part-time job in 93280 was only a short, temporary stop before he got back on his real journey.

His newly assigned duties included opening up the office at 0600, unloading mail from the truck and distributing mail to the five City Routes, the auxiliary and to the Rural Route.

With his money situation much improved by the 32 - 36 hours a week that he was working, Bill did whatever was expected.

As a PTF Clerk-Carrier, he would often carry the auxiliary which was south of Poso Drive. The long, long, all-walking streets — with no sidewalks — were pretty dusty. He considered all of this a part of "paying his dues" and learning.

Eventually, over the next three years, he learned all the routes and became the Vacation Relief.

In 1983, Postmaster John Giza (knowing that Bill was commuting every day) mentioned that a position for a Bakersfield Carrier had been mentioned to him in a meeting. Soon after interviewing, Bill was assigned as a 93306 Carrier delivering to the Hillcrest part of town.

There were a lot more routes and another group of interesting co-workers: Forest "Superman" Clark, Mely Villagomez, Ray Pettus, Benny Aguilar, Jim Perkins, Ed Combs, Mike Gonzalez and Fred Acedo.

Since Bill had a few years of carrying experience under his belt, he knew what he was getting into. But? There were hills!! In Bako?? Yup. (Unless you've delivered to this zone, you can't really know what they're like.) He carried the auxiliary around Monterey and Lake pretty often.

Another surprise for him is that he went from working around 35 hours a week to *at least* 60 hours a week; but, he *really* liked the amount in those pay checks!

Again, he just did what he was told and he remembered a time when PTFs from all over the city were sent to Stockdale to help out because they literally had a mountain of letters and flats stacked up by each case. They had been curtailed to save hours. (Pay me now or pay me later.)

Within a year, Bill decided that he wanted to become a 204-B. He had a real desire to succeed. About this, almost everyone who ever had contact with Bill in his supervisory role acknowledges that he was honest and fair in his dealings with them.

(As an aside, Bill shared one event which shaped his willingness to be mindful of how he treated his employees. As a PTF, he never called in unless he had the flu and was really too sick to work. One day, he had the kind of sore throat that hurt to swallow — think a strep throat kind of thing — and he felt terrible. When he made the phone call to supervisor Sal Salazar to inform him, Sal begged him to come in "just to case". When it came time to go home, Sal told him that he couldn't

leave. Although he survived that day, he never respected that particular supervisor again and vowed that he would treat people differently.)

However, as a result of concurrent changes, the re-districting now had Bakesfield attached to the Van Nuys district. That also brought about a change to the culture and

Supervisors came under extreme pressure to come down hard on any and all infractions. The accepted ways of delivering in the Bakersfield area now became transgressions.

One of the four years he spent at E.B. was a long-term opt on Route 501. When he made Regular, he bid back to Hillcrest and (as an Unassigned Regular) discovered that the hills were still there!

Unfortunately, after four years of constantly dealing with the terrain on a daily basis, the wear and tear on his knee led to the need for surgical intervention.

During his recuperation, he considered seeking a location which would be less demanding than the ascents and descents from the steep inclines.

As a result, around 2013, Bill bid a T-6 position at Dole Court (the “nut house” of 93308 and 93312). Initially, his assignments were in “old” Oildale.

Apparently, the idea of being on one set route each day wasn’t appealing to him because during his five years at Dole, he bid THREE different T-6 assignments.

Eventually, he decided that delivering to NDBCUs would be less taxing on those bones of his. His final string consisted of Routes 1209, 1208, 1206, 810 and 829.

Although Bill knew that he was going to retire some day, it was always “a couple of years from now”. When asked by his family or co-workers, it was always the answer that he would give.

Until recently...

The advent of heavy, heavy parcel volume each and every day to all of the routes added a new dimension he came face-to-face with. It was impactful.

Bill had always been *the one* sent out to help Carriers who needed a helping hand. Then, one day in the morning, he put in for 30 minutes help and he still had to call in from the street because it was getting so late. Suddenly, he realized that *that* situation wasn’t going to get much better.

Although it was far less than “a couple of years from now”, retirement day for Bill Elms dawned on November 1, 2018. He knows that his life will be busy in his “new normal” with wife, Liz, in-laws, children and those grand-children, too!



Bill Elms (on the far left) in this picture of the 93306 Hillcrest crew at the old “Hillcrest” on Crestmont before moving to the Annex.

For six years, Bill was on the 204-B merry-go-round and would carry mail for chunks of the year and would supervise when he was needed. When he heard that a job as a USPS Delivery Analyst might be available, he applied and started a new adventure in the early 1990s.

A major part of that job involved many of the before-during-and-after aspects of conducting route checks in units throughout the old San Jose District. (Think of the area north of the Grapevine, including all of the 932 and 933 delivery zones, up past the Fresno area 936 and 937 addresses, and ending up in San Jose 940, 950 and 951 area.)

With USPS plans for incorporating mail automation, Bill (who’d promoted to Level 17) became the management partner in a joint DPS team incorporating NALC involvement. After his first partner, Kim Gerdes, chose to do other things, he joined with Basil Zuniga as DPS was rolled out to many units throughout the District.

When the USPS underwent a downsizing reorganization and the number of districts and regions underwent major reductions, the cascading effects reached Bill Elms. Although he worked in Bakersfield, he was attached to the San Jose District and he was told — that if he he wanted to keep the Delivery Analyst job — he would have to move to San Jose.

He chose to return as a floor supervisor working for 06 manager Allen Connor.

It wasn’t a whole lot of fun...

Roving teams of inspectors would swarm into delivery zones looking for violators. If local supervisors didn’t issue discipline, they were themselves disciplined. A new postmaster named Andy O’Connel seemed perfectly willing to reinforce this policy.

In 2004, Bill decided he would rather return to carrying mail and was assigned to the 93305 East Bakersfield unit. (For those of you who are familiar with that area and the many, many pit bulls and other assorted dangers, Bill understands. He delivered around Water Street, too!)

When asked this personal question, “So... did those old uniforms still fit since you’d been away from carrying so long?” After a pause, Bill grimaced and — with a rueful grin — uttered a quiet, “No.”



Originally published April 2004

We say Congrats! And, Brad Smith says?



Growing up in Mt. Morris, Illinois meant a world shaped by some 3,200 inhabitants. And, Brad Smith really enjoyed the different seasons — even those long winter months of snow and ice.

As a young teen, he spent time working in a family owned print shop. He vividly recalls the smell of the ink and just one of the times he had to spend hours cleaning up gallons of spills with rags. One of the main projects was a large catalog produced for the Alden company and he undertook a variety of duties to ensure that the pallets would be full of a quality product.

After graduating from high school in 1972, he decided that some kind of college education would be a good thing and he dedicated himself to learning about horticulture at Kishwaukee Junior College in Malta, Illinois. While a student there, Brad got an on-campus job as a custodian to earn some extra money. One day, he saw a pretty blonde in a short skirt. (*He learned her name was Peggy. More than a few years down the road, he and she were married; but, to learn about this, you'll have to keep reading...*)

Something important happened along his journey: **He bought a brand new red 1979 Harley-Davidson XLCH Sportster!** (If you know Brad, you'll know he still rides it!!)

When Brad's mother remarried and moved to Oceanside, California. Brad helped in the cross-country move. Putting his horticulture background to work, he spent a number of years on the West Coast doing landscaping for different companies. But, he was "growing up", and realized that a job with some kind of retirement prospects and benefits would be better than what he had.

Newspaper story said USPS was hiring. He took the test...numerous times. Then, for a number of reasons, he decided to move back to Illinois where he took The Test for a job in Oregon. His persistence paid off and he passed, but Postmaster Stan Gifford had to make a choice. Cindy Hongsermeier and Brad both passed but only one could be hired. Amy was six months pregnant...

Brad was hired on June 27, 1983 as a PTF Clerk-Carrier and he could only be guaranteed two hours of work a day but usually got three. He decided to see how *that* was going to work out.

A typical day for Brad started when he opened the unit at 0600 to greet the truck with the incoming mail. His clerk duties involved spreading the mail to six routes — 3 City and 3 Rural. He also became the junior window clerk if he was needed.

Periodically, a sick call would be an occasion for him to be assigned a vacant city route. He soon became proficient working out of Oregon's Chevy Chevette delivery vehicles in the varied weather conditions Illinois residents know about. As a result, there were days when he *did* work more than two hours. Early in his career when the pickings were a little slim, he would drive twenty-five miles to the Rockford mail processing plant and he would work the 2200 - 0300 shift doing whatever he was told to do and then drive those twenty-five miles back home.

More times than he cares to remember, he would arrive home to find a note from the Oregon postmaster directing him to report in time to open up the office. So...in bed by around 0400. Out of bed in time to get to work at 0600. What a life!

In addition to his duties as distribution clerk, Brad became the junior window clerk. Over the course of the next eleven years in Oregon, not only did he make Regular, but he became the Bulk Mail Clerk, changed locks, did audits, closed out the books on Saturdays, performed custodial work, audited tills, and shoveled snow. And, for six months, he was even assigned as the Oregon Officer-in-Charge (OIC).

Another task on his plate was to train new employees. One day, that pretty girl he'd seen at Kishwaukee College showed up for training because she'd been hired as the new window clerk.

Peggy and Brad got along pretty well and they soon developed a relationship as good friends.

A common memory that they both laugh about now (?) came about because Peggy, delayed by the weather, had been unable to open up one morning. When she did show up, another employee, (Walter Busky) advised, "I wouldn't go out there looking for Brad if I was you..."

One of the Winter morning duties for someone opening up was to shovel the snow on the sidewalk. Because Peggy hadn't shown up, Brad had no choice but to be out there in the extreme, bitterly cold snow and lightning storm with the walk-behind snow blower before any customers needed to come into the post office — **and he wasn't particularly happy about it.**

He got over it, and their friendship bloomed into something a little more serious which, for a time, ran into a little speed bump. But, as they say, "Love found a way!"

The USPS reorganized in the 1990s.

A new postmaster came to town. Armed with a list of locations where she might be able to get a new job, Peggy took the opportunity to transfer to Bakersfield as a Regular where her sister and brother-in-law lived. Brad came to visit her. He decided he wouldn't miss the snow or the new postmaster too much; and, he became a Bakersfield PTF Letter Carrier on October 15, 1994.



Mr. & Mrs. Brad and Peggy Smith are looking forward to this "retirement thing"!!!



Brad Smith and "Biscuit" (the cat in the satchel found blocks away from home on Los Robles) on December 29, 2007

Assigned to the 93304 South Station, he remembers the unit seeming so much bigger than Oregon and it was filled by characters like Rob Brown, Frank Diaz, Darryl Holderman, Basil Zuniga, John Rugno, Bill Marchand and Shop Steward Margaret Romero. Also, the LLVs he delivered from were so much better to work out of than the Chevettas he was used to!

Four years later, PTF Brad made Regular and bid out of South Station to Route 614 at

Hillcrest because a good guy, John Espinoza, was the supervisor. Twenty years later he would retire on that same assignment.

Along the way, he was the 93306 Shop Steward for a few years; met a lot of fine postal people; was a Branch 782 delegate to a state convention and the Philadelphia national convention; and, was appreciated by many, many customers he delivered mail to.

"Biscuit" was a cat that used to follow Brad in her neighborhood. One day, while delivering about a block away from Biscuit's house, he saw her. When he called out to her, she came to him and he put her in the satchel and she was content to just hang out. When he got to 1812 Los Robles, he rang the doorbell. The customer realized that he was carrying something in addition to the normal mail — *and a picture seemed to be in order!*

And now, effective 10/26/2018, Brad's retired! Cool!! Congrats!!!

The Next Time You're in the Bathroom Stall, Management may want Medical Documentation

By the time anyone reads this (besides Basil), I would have had my 55th birthday. I am no longer a spring chicken. It seems longer and longer everyday to get over the aches and pains.

I'm a Letter Carrier out of 93306 with a walking route and bum knees. I take Lisinopril for my blood pressure and Lovastatin for my cholesterol. If you Google "Lisinopril" you find out that one of the side affects is an increase or decrease in urine or even a stoppage of flow.

This leads into why I'm writing this.

Recently a 3999 street observation was done on my route. I took three comfort stops while I was on the route and was questioned by the Carrier supervisor why so many. My response (maybe the wrong one) was to be honest with the supervisor. I felt it was none of their business when and where I took my comfort stops. I also stated that in May of 2008 the Postmaster had given our station a standup pertaining to our immediate route inspections and adjustments that if we were taking 5 to 6 comfort stops a day we would need some medical documentation.

This led to me being called into the station manager's office. Not knowing what it was about, I met my Shop Steward on the way in who said it was about my attitude.

I'm not going to dwell on what went on inside his office other than to say that Mike Towery had always told me to go in with a level head. This time my emotions got the better of me. I left the meeting with the knowledge that I had to have medical documentation to go pee.

The next day after I had cooled down, I told my Shop Steward that two of my comfort stops were in the line of travel and I felt they were not a hinderence to my delivery of my route. I also told her about the side effects of my blood pressure medicine.

She said she would talk to the station manager. The next day she told me she had. She asked me if I still wanted to go to the doctor. I asked whether it still had to do with the medical documentaion.

OUT THERE



She said she would check. Again, I asked the next day and she said the station manager said the carrier supervisor still insisted that I go. When I asked the carrier supervisor about it, she denied that she said that.

I'll go to the doctor and see what happens. But, whats next? MSP scans on the bathroom stalls. "1" or "2"???? Delivered or attempted???

Beware, fellow Carriers! The next time you're in the bathroom stall, management may want medical documentation to go pee.

BRAD SMITH

Originally published in the NALC Branch 782 E.A. BAKER UNION UPDATE in April 2009, first reprint January 2016...and , now, reprised again!!!

Ruff

"One Tired Dog!!"

(An excerpt from Ruff's journal)



Tuesday October 9, 2018

I knew this would be an especially Ruff day.



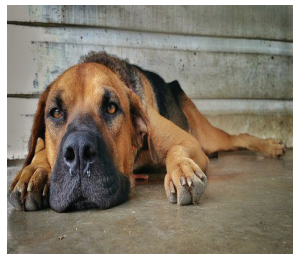
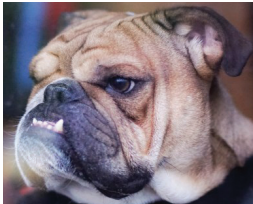
Anytime the Postal Service has a holiday that most others do not have, the next day is bound to be a bear.

Knowing this, I went to bed early last night so I would be well-rested.



It didn't help much! Before I even had a chance to clock in I joined many of my co-workers

Growling about all the DPS mail



My case was just as overwhelming and long before I left for the street it felt like I had been working for days without food



United States Postal Service
Carrier - Auxiliary Control

A. Carrier No.	B. Territory	C. Date
D. Carrier's Name and Photo No.	E. Local Post Office Name	F. Day Type
G. Problem with position of the case when starting mail or other carrier's assistance	H. Mail Delivered? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	I. Mail Received? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
J. Problem for cause of failure	K. Mail	L. Mail
M. Volume	N. Mail	O. Mail
P. Mail Delivered to	Q. Mail Delivered to	R. Mail Delivered to
S. Mail Delivered to	T. Mail Delivered to	U. Mail Delivered to
V. Mail Delivered to	W. Mail Delivered to	X. Mail Delivered to
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And how do you explain FOREVER on your 3996?

I was exhausted before I finished loading my truck and by halfway through the day my ears were dragging as much as my butt!

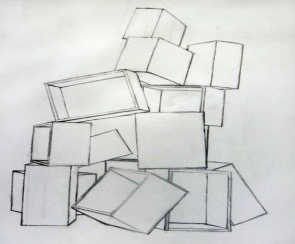


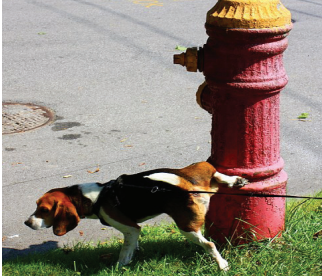
Just when I wondered if I would ever get finished...my truck died (again!)

I called the office, only to be told I was the 6th or 7th breakdown of the day.



While I waited for the tow truck I tried to redeem the time by rearranging my packages neatly and in order, not knowing someone would "help" me load the other truck by tossing them in haphazardly.





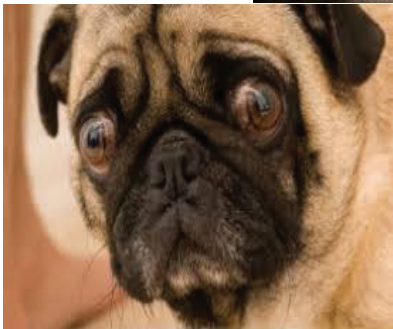
I also used the time to take care of some personal business. But don't tell any body!

By this time I was not only late but very frazzled. The good news is that no one else was around to hear my howling!

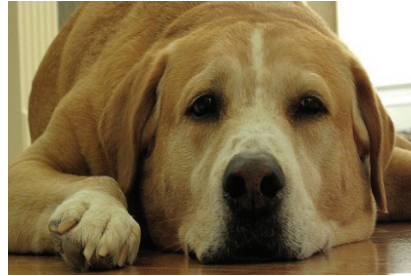


As often happens around sunset, it began to get darker & darker, even as the end of my route

appeared to slip further & further away. Of course, this made it harder & harder to deliver the mail at all, let alone correctly.

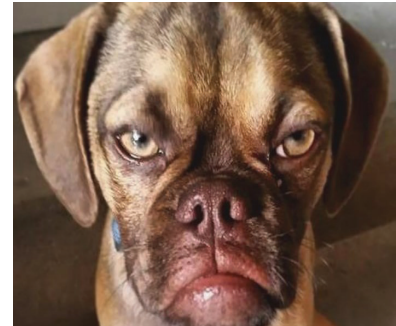


Good thing I'm not prone to anxiety!



It was nearly 8:30 when I finally dragged myself back to the station.

I was hoping for a word of encouragement or maybe a commendation for working so tirelessly in the dark.



Alas, it was not to be!

Point to Ponder:

Fortunately, not every day is as tiring as this day. But as the holiday season approaches, the days get longer & the nights get shorter. The pay is good, but the work is grueling. A word of cheer & encouragement can make a huge difference for someone. And remember, the dragging tail you lift up could be your own!

Blessings,



Ruff

from the
editor-guy

I want to make sure that — on behalf of members of NALC Branch 782 — Canton, Ohio Branch 238 Editor Bob Knapp gets a special Thank You!! During this holiday season, you might also find yourself in a “Ruff” time...

This “illustrated” article from Canton, Ohio NALC Branch 238 is courtesy of the November 2018 *BRANCH REPORTER*. Thanks, Bob!

President's Report

By Brian Bump,
Branch 133

Don't Be Ripped Off!!

There are many insurance vendors and financial planners out there who are giving advice to Letter Carriers. Please be aware that many of these salesmen do not have your best interest in mind.

We have recently heard concerns from employees about the Postal Service allowing insurance vendors or financial planners to address employees while they are working in Postal facilities. The Postal Service has a responsibility to ensure these solicitors are not allowed on Postal premises.

The legal regulations that govern solicitations on Postal Service property are found in the Code of Federal Register, 39 CFR Section 232.1, "CONDUCT ON POSTAL PROPERTY." The code states:(h) Soliciting, electioneering, collecting debts, vending, and advertising. (l) Soliciting alms and contributions, campaigning for election to any public office, collection private debts, soliciting and vending for commercial purposes...are prohibited....

Please contact your Shop Steward or the Branch if these sales people are being allowed in the facility you work at.

I have reprinted below an Article from the May 2017 *Postal Record* by Director of Retired Members Ron Watson that illustrates this issue:

The NALC Retirement Department often receives phone calls from members with questions about various retirement matters. A recent call concerning the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) was disturbing. The member had just retired and had sought information and advice from a financial advisor regarding his very significant TSP account (\$350,000). He reported to me that the financial advisor had cautioned him that he should move his money out of the TSP because, upon his death, any remaining TSP balance would be forfeited

to the federal government instead of going to his spouse.

That financial advisor is likely selling snake oil. His caution is utterly false. If an active employee or a retiree dies with a TSP balance, the balance goes to the person designated by the deceased employee/retiree. If the deceased employee/retiree has not designated a beneficiary, the TSP account balance goes to the widow/ widower. If none, the balance goes to a child/ children. If none, the balance goes to the parents. If none, the balance goes to the executor of the estate. If none, to the next of kin.

You can read the TSP death benefits policy by linking to the TSP bulletin at tsp.gov/PDF/bulletins/14-04.html or read the implementing regulations of the law itself at gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title5-vol3/pdf/CFR-2011-title5-vol3-part1651.pdf.

I asked myself what a financial advisor would have to gain by providing incorrect information about TSP death benefits. Probably sales commissions, if the incorrect information tricked the retiree into thinking the TSP was a bad deal. Consider these two key differences between TSP and for-profit investment funds. First, the managers of TSP funds are required as a matter of law to make investment decisions solely for the financial benefit of the TSP participants. Stockbrokers, financial planners, life insurance purveyors and other securities salesmen are not required by law to make investment decisions in your financial benefit, which means they can make decisions with your money (if you hire them) in their own financial interest.

Second, the cost of administering the TSP funds is a small fraction of the average cost of administering private investment funds. These costs are ultimately paid by the investors in the funds. The average annual cost of administering TSP funds is less than 0.3 percent. The average annual cost of private industry investment funds is 1.5 percent or more. For each \$10,000, the annual cost is less than \$30 (TSP) or \$150 (private investment company).

Given these two significant facts, retirees

should carefully consider any decision to move investment funds out of the TSP. When doing that, beware the snake oil salesmen.

Here is a list of questions you should consider asking any salesperson, financial advisor, etc. who suggests you move money out of your TSP account and invest it with him or her:

- ***What is the average net expense I will pay for every \$1,000 invested?***
- ***What additional annual fees, commissions or charges will I pay for investments?***
- ***What profit do you make if I invest with you?***
- ***Do you have a responsibility (FIDUCIARY OBLIGATION) to put my interest ahead of your own?***
- ***Will your plan protect my retirement funds from creditors' claims?***
- ***When I retire, can I receive a series of scheduled withdrawals without giving up control of my account?***
- ***Can I CHANGE my investments or take withdrawals without being subject to surrender fees or any back-end charges?***

If you would like your TSP account to be distributed upon your death according to the statutory order of precedence, it is not necessary to complete Form TSP-3, Designation of Beneficiary.

If you do not want your TSP account distributed in the order of precedence, you can complete Form TSP-3, Designation of Beneficiary.

You can download the form at tsp.gov/PDF/formspubs/tsp-3.pdf or you can

call the ThriftLine at 877-968-3778 and choose Option 3 to request a copy of the form. Return the completed, original form directly to the TSP address on the form or fax it to the number provided in the instructions.

Do not submit Form TSP-3 to your employing agency or OPM.

Be sure to make a copy of the form for your records.

If you do not remember whether you have submitted a Form TSP-3, you can find out by calling the ThriftLine at 877-968-3778 and choosing Option 3 to speak with a participant service representative.

Don't let snake oil salesmen scare you away from the TSP with incorrect information.

Be safe at work and with your money!

Courtesy of October 2018 Sacramento, CA NALC Branch 133 Swing Room Gazette

It is YOUR money...

NALC CCA Retirement Savings Plan

This is a retirement income plan designed for City Carrier Assistants (CCA's) to supplement your pension. You make small payments to the plan while you're young, so you can receive a lifetime of monthly payments after you retire — **even if you live to be 200!**

Under the NALC CCA Retirement Savings Plan, you can also request a guaranteed number of monthly payments.

City Carrier Assistants who participate in the plan may transfer their Traditional IRA funds to the Thrift Savings Plan once they become Carrier Letter Carriers. The Surrender Charge will be waived in this instance only. **Note:** *The Thrift Savings Plan is not set up to receive Roth IRA transfers at this time.*

You choose the amount you want to contribute to your NALC CCA Retirement Savings Plan. It can be as little as \$15 per pay period (the minimum amount allowed). You may also select your method of payment: MBA can deduct payments automatically from your paycheck, or bill you monthly or annually.*



With as little as a one-time \$15.00 payment, you can start your NALC CCA Retirement Savings Plan and never have to make any additional deposits in order to maintain your policy in force. You may also make a lump sum deposit into the NALC CCA Retirement Savings Plan at any time to help build your plan's value.

As your NALC CCA Retirement Savings Plan grows, you can expect to earn competitive interest rates. The plan is tax-deferred, which means you do not pay taxes on any of your interest until you draw on it, further improving your yield.

When you're ready to retire, MBA offers a choice of four ways to collect monthly benefits:

LIFE ANNUITY WITH PERIOD CERTAIN.

Receive a lifetime of monthly payments. You're guaranteed this income for as long as you live. If you die during a specified period (5, 10, 15 or 20 years), payments go to your beneficiary until the end of the period.

LIFE ANNUITY. Receive monthly payments through your lifetime. No further benefits will be paid after your death.

JOINT LIFE ANNUITY. You or your beneficiary receive monthly payments as long as either of you live.

FULL CASH REFUND. Receive monthly payments as long as you are alive. When you die, the MBA will pay any money in your account to your beneficiary.

**Retirees may choose to pay premiums monthly or annually. Sorry, retirees are not eligible to use payroll deductions.*

Source: <https://www.nalc.org/member-benefits/mutual-benefit-association/mba-brochures-applications-and-forms/cca-retirement-savings-plan>

OPEN SEASON FOR YEAR 2019 BENEFIT SELECTION FOR NALC HEALTH PLANS WILL BE NOVEMBER 12th THROUGH DECEMBER 10th 2018

2019 premiums listed are bi-weekly for Active Duty with Retirees/Annuitant premiums paid on a monthly basis

Type of Enrollment	Enrollment Code	Active Duty (Bi-weekly)	Annuitant (Monthly)
High Option Self Only	321	\$81.43	\$183.37
High Option Self Plus One	323	\$193.86	\$434.85
High Option Self and Family	322	\$174.31	\$393.49
CDHB Self Only	324	\$52.45	\$118.38
CDHB Self Plus One	326	\$114.57	\$258.59
CDHP Self and Family	325	\$118.26	\$266.92
Value Option Self Only	KM1	\$43.05	\$97.16
Value Option Self Plus One	KM3	\$94.03	\$212.21
Value Option Self and Family	KM2	\$97.10	\$219.16

To enroll during the OPEN SEASON PERIOD, use the **POSTAL BLUE WEBSITE**, or call **SHARED SERVICES 1-877-477-3273** and use the corresponding code for your choice of NALC HEALTH PLAN.

Retirees can also use **POSTAL BLUE** or the **OPM RETIREMENT INFORMATION CENTER** by calling **1-888-767-6738**; or, by going to **OPM information at retireefhb.opm.gov** or, you can call **Open Season Express at 1-800-332-9798**

Letter Carriers have choices during OPEN SEASON. Remember! NALC Health Plans are **NOT FOR PROFIT!!** We can help keep our Union Strong by enrolling and supporting the NALC.

AS IN PAST YEARS, THE PREMIUM FOR “SELF & ONE” IS MORE EXPENSIVE THAN “SELF AND FAMILY”.

MARK RAMIREZ
Retired Letter Carrier & NALC HBP Representative
The Golden Empire Branch 782

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is my medical provider in-network? You can use the Cigna HealthCare OAP Online Provider Directory — or for the most up to date information — contact the CareAllies Provider Locator at 1-877-220-6252.

Where can I get basic benefit information for 2018? <https://www.nalchbp.org/news/2018-benefits>

What are my basic benefits when Medicare is my primary insurance? <https://www.nalchbp.org/news/body/2018-Medicare-at-a-Glance.pdf>

How do I get a physical copy of your Brochure? Just make a quick phone call to our top-rated customer service department at 1-888-636-NALC (6252) to request a paper copy of the brochure or CD-ROM.

How do I get a physical copy of the Provider Directory? Just make a quick phone call to our top-rated customer service department at 1-888-636-NALC (6252) to request a paper copy of your states' CIGNA provider directory or a CD-ROM copy of the nationwide CIGNA provider directory.

2018 NALC HBP Info

At a glance...



NALC Health Benefit Plan 1-888-636-6252
 *Hospital Pre-Certification 1-877-220-6252
 Mental & Substance Precertification 1-877-468-1016
 Prescription Drug Program 1-800-933-6252
 CVS/Caremark Specialty Pharmacy 1-800-237-2767
 Durable Medical Equipment 1-855-511-1893
"24/7 Nurse Hotline" 1-877-220-6252
 CVS/CareMark Pharmacist 1-888-636-6252
 Solutions for Caregivers (24/7) 1-877-468-1016
 CIGNA PPO Locator Line 1-877-220-6252
 CIGNA Organ Transplant Approval 1-800-668-9682
 Quit for Life (Tobacco Cessation) 1-866-784-8454
 CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts) 1-800-558-9443
CIGNA Plus (Dental Discount) 1-877-521-0244
 Disease Management Program 1-800-227-3728
 OPM Retirement Info Center 1-888-767-6738
 Federal Information Center 1-800-333-4636
 Social Security Administration Info 1-800-772-1213
 PostalEase Human Resources USPS 1-877-477-3273
 Quest Lab Services (Bakersfield) (661) 631-8520
 LabCorp Lab Services Bakersfield (661) 631-9258
 Shared Services Option 5 live person 1-877-477-3273

NALC Health Benefit Plan
 20547 Waverly Court
 Ashburn, Virginia 20149

NALC Prescription Mail Order Drug Program
 P.O. Box 94467
 Palatine, Illinois 60094-4467

NALC Drug Prescription "Claims" Filing
 P.O. Box 521926
 Phoenix, Arizona 85072-2192

OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions
 P.O. Box 30755
 Salt Lake City, Utah 84130-0755
 Questions: 1-877-468-1016

NALC Consumer Driven Health Plan and Value Option*
 P.O. Box 18223
 Chattanooga, TN 37422-7223
 Phone: 1-855-511-1893

* Call for approvals Organ Transplants, DME Surgeries
 InPatient

"Out tHeRe"



The NALC Consumer Driven HP and the Value Option HP can utilize this CIGNA PPO/OAP NETWORK or by calling 1-855-511-1893.

OPTUMHEALTH BEHAVIORIAL SOLUTIONS is also available to the Consumer Driven/Value Option. You must pre-certify. Call 1-877-468-1016.

We DO have a Dental Discount Program!
 Call Mark Ramirez for details...

Preferred Provider (PPO)
 Cost: \$20.00 Co-pay per office visit

PPO Deductible: Per Calendar Year
 \$300 "Individual"
 \$600 "Self & Family" or "Self Plus One"

Many immunizations are Free (Adult/Child) when administered at a PPO pharmacy/facility. Some will require a prescription from the Doctor.

URGENT CARE

Sendas Urgent Care: 9450 Ming Ave., Bakersfield (661) 587-2500
 M-S 8 a.m. - 9 p.m. Saturday/Sunday 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
ASK FOR OTHER LOCATIONS

Accelerated Urgent Care: 9710 Brimhall, (661) 829-6747
 9500 Stockdale Hwy, (661) 735-3943 8 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. daily
ASK FOR OTHER LOCATIONS

Our PPO doctors and facilities—through (OAP Network) CIGNA—save us and the Plan thousands of dollars and it is top notch care at a discount rate. You don't lose anything! You are saving money for the best care!!!

MARK RAMIREZ
 NALC Branch 782 Health Benefit Plan Representative

(661) 398-6075

THIS VETERANS' DAY NOVEMBER 11, 2018 WE HONORED ALL WHO SERVED OUR COUNTRY

Every single person who served in the military has a story...and is also a part of a continuing story of the generations of Americans who live out their willingness to become part of a bigger team.



Bakersfield National Cemetery

Michael "Fig" Newton, USN Veteran NALC Branch 782 Retiree

Michael graduated from Bakersfield High School in 1964 on a Friday. The following Monday, he was working for the Santa Fe Railroad as a two-month seasonal worker. By July, he had accumulated muscles he hadn't known existed because he had been moving heavy steel and loads of freight every single hour of some very, very long days! When the "season" was over, he was asked if he still wanted a job and he hired on.

In November 1965, he received greetings from the President of the United States of America informing him that he had been drafted into the United States Army.

(THIS is an interesting side story: Michael's father had somehow joined the USN in 1916 as a sixteen year old. His enlistment ended in 1921.) He didn't want Michael to become a "dogface soldier"; and — because he knew the Navy recruiter — things were worked out so that, in December, Michael found himself signing up for a delayed enlistment USN Star Program.



AN MICHAEL NEWTON holds the plaque he received from Capt. Blattmann for being named Plane Captain of the Month for VT-25.

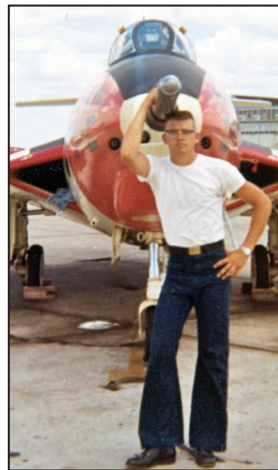
Newton, who received the award at VT-25's personnel inspection, was praised for his meticulous work.

March 1966 found Michael at the Navy Great Lakes Recruit Training Command in Illinois and he graduated in June. Following a short leave in Bakersfield, he reported to his first duty station at Naval Airstation (Chase Field) Beeville, Texas where he was assigned to the Squadron VT 25 Cougars.

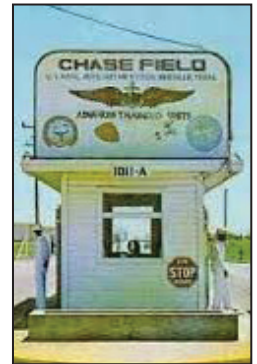


He still has a vivid memory of getting off the air-conditioned bus when he got to the unit and stepping out into the humidity of the northwestern Corpus Christi locale!

As an almost twenty year old, there was an education about life which was punctuated by seeing blinding night time explosions as aircraft disintegrated. Much



of what went on was the training of naval and marine aviators and ground crews and he witnessed things like the flameout of an old F-9 which, coupled with no glide path and low altitude, resulted in the death of the trainee who hadn't bailed out.



And, of course, there were also those water moccasins at the end of the runway to deal with, too...

In time, Michael became skilled in the post-flight routine of ensuring that there was no residual fuel which might lead to a fire. And, his skills were recognized!



After promotion to Airman, E-3, Michael was reassigned to specialty "A School" training in Memphis, Tennessee.



on P-2s and P-3s as they carried out submarine searches and did other recon and observation missions.



Squadron deployments rotated to airfields at Subic Bay in the Philippines, Andersen Air Force Base in the Guam, Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan and even short stints in Okinawa and Midway.

Continued on next page...



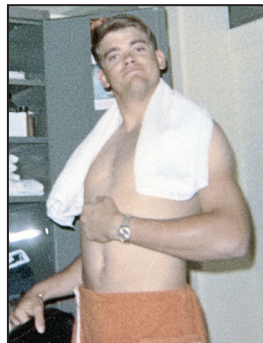
New orders took him to Moffett Field, California where he underwent P-3 Orion Aircraft Familiarization Training for 30 days until he was assigned to VT 28 Patrol Squadron which, in August, was deployed to Adak, Alaska (out in the Aleutian Islands). He worked a ground support assignment as part of a team checking aircraft for structural and functional issues.



In November, VT 28 returned to the squadron's main base at Barber's Point, Hawaii. "Fig" got to go on ride-alongs



"Fig" at Nimitz Beach



Michael, in 1969, spent time at the Cam Ranh Bay logistics facility built by the United States.

It was the major military seaport used by the United States for the offloading of supplies, military equipment and as a major Naval base. Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force units all had compounds and units assigned there.



He remembers the sand and the lack of clean water — which led to the necessity of drinking the much more hygienically pure Schlitz/“Oly” beers. He was just like any of the approximately 2,700,000 young American service personnel who set foot in Vietnam during that prolonged conflict *and he even smoked cigarettes at that time.* It seemed like smoking those Kools or un-filtered Camels helped him stay awake during those extremely long, couldn’t-see-in-the-dark hours when he had to be on duty.

(To those of you who know Mike today, you need to remember that it was a different era and a different world he found himself in.)

He reflects on one particular memory. As a sentry, he’d been issued an M-1 Garand rifle...**WITH ONE ROUND.**

Although he’d had training with some weapons, it had all been in boot camp. Some higher-up must have figured that — *in the event he did have to shoot* — his one bullet would be enough to alert someone that trouble was coming.

Looking back, to this day he wonders just what he might have done if he had needed to defend himself!



One night, he was asleep in his rack and was startled awake by the sound of a .50 caliber machine gun in action. He jumped out of his rack and, out the bunker entrance, saw the flare of rockets in the sky. As he ran outside, he remembers a shower of brass cartridges flying through the air hitting the ground all around him.



Over the course of his three years and seven months as a U.S. Navy Airdale, “Fig” Newton travelled extensively and performed his duties in such a way as to be promoted to E-5. He received awards and accolades in recognition of his attention to detail and was selected as Outstanding Plane Captain numerous times in his naval tour of duty.





What follows is an excerpt of the language in a letter dated 16JUL69 which awarded AMS2 NEWTON the honor of "Warrior of the Month". It serves as an example of the fact that Michael always gave his best in whatever he was doing.

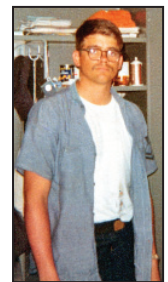
The letter, in part, reads as follows: "...Throughout the Squadron's present deployment at Naha, Okinawa, your performance has been outstanding. You have continually exhibited a high degree of professionalism. Further, your motivation and interest is keenly felt in many of the extra tasks for which you have so graciously volunteered, always performing with great pride and skill. The respect and admiration allotted to you from both seniors and peers is truly a credit to you as an individual..."

Due to a period of national military cutbacks, Michael mustered out of the Navy in September 1969 and returned to Bakersfield where he, once again, started working for the Santa Fe Railroad. Married while in the military, he was concerned that staffing cuts being implemented by that company would impact his family.

No longer "Fig", Mike took a variety of tests for city, county, and state jobs and even — *as did each and every single one of you* — took one for the USPS.

The first organization to contact him let him start a Letter Carrier career which lasted from January 26, 1970 until September 1, 2009 when he retired from Bakersfield's Stockdale Station.

FIFTY YEARS LATER, MANY NAMES HAVE BEEN LOST TO THE FOG OF MEMORY...BUT, THE SENSE OF I WAS THERE IS STILL ALIVE!



"19MAR69 was the day I got back from Guam. Was I ever tired!"

**David Bridges, USMC Veteran
NALC Branch 782 Member**

Let's break it down, Barney-style. Dave Bridges is currently a Letter Carrier who works at Bakersfield's Camino Media Station. He was a United States Marine for four years. It was an experience that has had a positive life-long impact on his life.

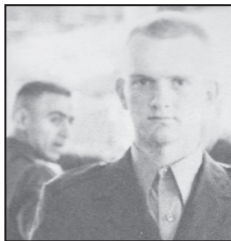
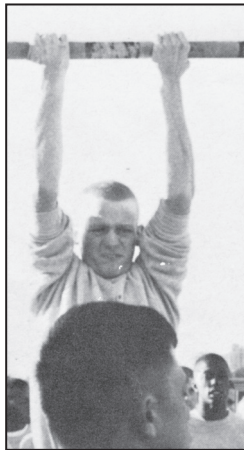


After graduating from Bakersfield's Foothill High School in June 1979, Dave had a vision for his life. Following a successful journey to the Armed Forces Entrance Examination Station (AFES) in Fresno, he enlisted in the USMC on October 7, 1979 — his birthday. His orders to report to Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) San Diego on November 1 were the bow on his gift to himself.



Even Parris Island Marines might get wistful as they see these pictures and read this account of the memories that David shared.

On November 26, with a group of other anxious young men headed to “boot camp”, Dave boarded an MCRD bus



B&W pix of PVT BRIDGES becoming a Marine...

at the San Diego airport. At around 2100, they found that the anxiety had been well founded because, upon arrival, they were greeted by a really big Marine who started shouting at them to get off the bus. The loud screaming didn't end even after they had all managed to scramble out and stand on the painted foot-prints.



Actually, someone screaming at them all day long was pretty much a constant throughout the entire recruit experience!

They were then marched without any kind of cadence and in a ragged fashion to a building where, over the course of the next long hours, they were issued a duffel bag and inventoried a dizzying amount of items they would be required to keep track of: boots, trousers, jacket, underwear, etc. They also bagged and labeled



any and all of the civilian items they'd brought with them to be stored for safekeeping. They also learned about contraband.

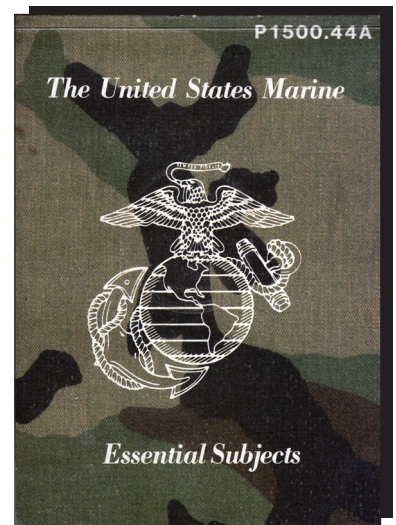
They were lined up again to go through that famous military ritual: the boot camp haircut! Dave remembers seeing a lot of funny looking head tans. Told to focus on nothing but what was in front of him, he vividly recalls directly standing behind a guy who showed signs of some kind of possible lice infestation.

When the night's induction process ended somewhere around 0200, they finally got to fall into their racks. Sleep didn't come easily. Most were in some kind of a state of shock. In that forced dark and quiet room, afraid to even whisper, Dave heard bristle on heads being tentatively explored by recruits (who'd walked in with a head full of hair) until he was finally able to fall asleep.

The sound of a trashcan hitting the deck was the alarm clock and set the pace for days filled with more yelling and examinations by doctors and dentists; inoculations and being marched to the chow hall.

(Note: The three month training program was extended by two weeks because the first group of thirty newbies in the platoon were waiting to receive enough trainees to bring the group up to the full complement of 60.)

Finally, at full strength, four Drill Instructors (D.I.s) introduced themselves in the proper USMC fashion and began the process of making Marines out of the group (e.g. how to break down and clean an M-16 A-1 “Charlie” when blindfolded, first aid, the 12 General Orders and Marine Corps history). Dave still has his copy of the 200 page paperback *P1500.44A — Essential Subjects*.



He learned about a staple of the Corps as he stood “Fire Watch” with another recruit in the middle of the night.

There was a steady diet of pushups, “bends and thrusts” and side-saddle hops and heaven help you if somebody screwed up! The “Thrashings” continued unabated until the platoon began to be more cohesive and got squared away.



At meals, recruits would slide step-by-step, holding their trays rigidly in front of them, and call out each entree as it was slapped down. They would then stand by their seat until the entire platoon had been served. At the command of the D.I., they could begin to eat. Even then, they learned to sit “at attention”.





The MCRD San Diego Third Battalion Platoon 3109 graduation was attended on 15FEB80 by his Dad, Mom, Step-Mother, three Brothers and Sister Debbie Wiles (a Branch 782 Retiree).

It was followed by two weeks leave before he flew via a commercial flight to his assigned unit in Hawaii via Camp Pendleton.

After landing in uniform on Oahu in Honolulu, Dave was asked where he was headed. He was directed to a military bus which was making stops at a number of bases and even to his destination at Marine Air Group (MAG) 24 at Kaneohe Bay on the opposite side of the island from Pearl Harbor. On the drive there, Dave realized that he "wasn't in Kansas anymore" and was wide-eyed at the absolutely post-card beautiful scenery highlighted by the greenery, sheer cliffs, tunnels and views of the ocean!



The bus deposited him at the hangar where Marine Air Base Squadron (MABS) 24 was headquartered. After settling in, he began four months of training and familiarization in his Military Occupation Specialty (MOS 3531) as a heavy equip-

ment operator. He would drive jeeps, a deuce (1 ton), a deuce-and-a-half (1 1/2 ton), a five ton tractor trailer and would later be trained and licensed to operate refuel tankers for aircraft support. In this capacity, he would also constantly transport a variety of items and personnel to, from, and around Kaneohe Bay.



Initially, Dave was housed in a squad bay which had been cubed off with partitions. He then moved to a three-man dorm style accommodation where daily inspections and "field days" ensured that their beds were made and living quarters were always clean.

On 26SEP80, he was deployed as an "Airwinger" with VMFA-235 to the Iwakuni USMC Air Station to Japan. He immediately experienced the extremely cold Japanese winter which was even more shocking to him since he'd acclimated to the mild, temperate conditions on the island of Oahu.



Issued a warm field jacket before the deployment, he couldn't wear it with his civilian clothing and had to stay on base until he was able to purchase clothing more suited to the frigid temperatures.

When he eventually was able to "go into town", he followed an honorable time memorialized USMC custom of touching base at local bars outside the base and he recalls that he frequented "The Question Mark" at 13-12 Kurumacho 1Chome, Iwakuni City.



Moreover, Dave *did* do more than go bar hopping! He and friends even walked twelve miles (since no one had a privately owned vehicle) to see the Kintai Castle pagoda in the mountains. It was reached by way of a bridge with four wooden arches over a river. It was beautiful!



Thousands of miles away from friends and family in Bakersfield, Dave developed close friendships with other Marines (Mark Posten, brothers Matt and David Shelton, Kevin Berger, Mark Stwally and Jim Lohanas) as they worked for their boss, LT Nancy Hatfield.

Atop a hangar observing the USAF Blue Angels, Dave (4th from left) and other Marines flew their own bird salutes!

Continued on next page...

MARINE FIGHTER ATTACK SQUADRON TWO THREE FIVE
VMFA-235 The Death Angels
Ride Home



McDD F-4J "Phantom II"

The six month trip to Japan was marked by a series of mini-deployments to Subic Bay in the Philippines and Okinawa for a variety of flight-ops support missions.

On April, 1981, at the end of his part in WESTPAC 80-81, Dave returned "home" to MABS-24 in "K Bay".

When LCPL BRIDGES was urged to re-enlist, he remembers with a great amount of clarity that he responded by uttering these words, "I respectfully and adamantly decline this invitation. I am ready to go back to being a civilian!"



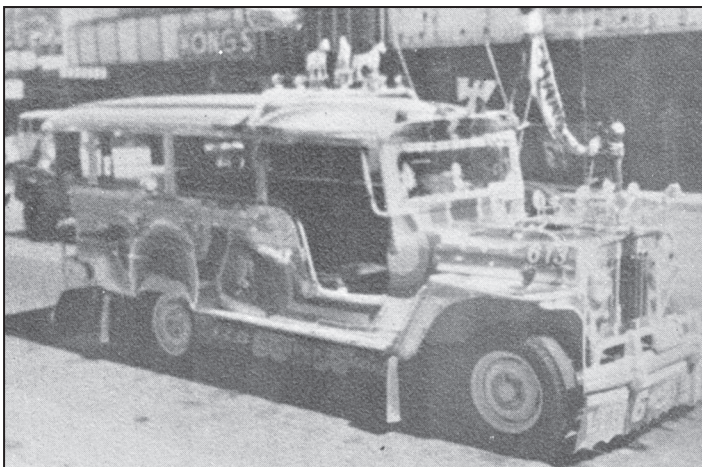
STEVE
 LCPL Martone

Alex
 LCPL Claudio

DAVE
 LCPL Bridges

Due to an unfortunate demotion, he was honorably separated from the Marine Corps in September 1983 as a Private First Class. (Years later, he received a letter of apology because he'd been treated unfairly with respect to charges of insubordination and failure to comply with a direct order — but he was also informed that he had no recourse to appeal the action.)

Back home in Bakersfield, he had no real plans other than to find a job. He soon did and for the next three years — brimming with USMC can do training and experience operating heavy machinery — Dave drove a tractor trailer in oilfields in Kern County and even became proficient with 8 ton hydro-cranes and learned to operate a massive 20 ton all-terrain fork lift.



In October 1986, David Bridges became a USPS Letter Carrier and a member of NALC Branch 782. But, *that's* a whole different story, eh?



In most fields of endeavor, a shorthand lexicon develops to promote the transfer of the most information in the shortest amount of time. The military lexicon is no exception. What is different is the amount of information that must be transmitted in a short amount of time due to “operational considerations”. Whether American WWI “doughboys”, “dogfaces” of WWII or warriors in any other conflicts there will ALWAYS be a need to pass a message in a way which is understood. Despite the passage of time and the changing of eras, essential details can still be understood if “you’ve been there”:

WHISKEY - TANGO - FOXTROT: MRES, HAM AND MO-FO’S WHETHER PLAYING IN THE TALL GRASS OR THE SANDBOX, A CHUVILLE OR SITTING BY A FITTY WITH A P-38 IN YOUR POCKET...

“IRAQI WAR SLANG AND AFGHANISTAN GRUNT LINGO” ❄️

AOR: Area Of Responsibility. The assigned area to any given unit.

APC: Armored Personnel Carrier. Primary mode of transportation for mechanized infantry units. AMTRAC used by Marines, and Bradley, Stryker used by Army.

BIAP: Baghdad International Airport.

Big Voice: On military bases, loudspeakers broadcast urgent messages. When incoming rocket or mortar fire is detected by radar systems, the Big Voice automatically broadcasts a siren and instructions to take cover. The Big Voice will also warn of scheduled explosions, usually to destroy captured weapons.

Bird: Helicopter. “Chopper” is rarely used, except in movies, where it is always used. A chopper is a kind of motorcycle, *not* an aircraft.

Bombaconda: Nickname for LSA Anaconda, a major base near Balad, reflecting the frequent mortar attacks

‘Black’ on ammo, fuel, water, etc: As in almost out.

Blowed up: Hit by an IED. Example: “I been blowed up six times this year.”

CHU: (pronounced choo) Containerized Housing Unit. These small, climate-controlled trailers usually sleep between two and eight soldiers and is the primary unit of housing on larger bases. A CHU Farm is a large number of CHUs together. A Wet CHU is a CHU that has its own bathroom.

CHUville: A base consisting of a large number of CHUs.

CP: Check Point. Usually numbered.

CSH: Combat Surgical Hospital. Pronounced “cash”

COP: Combat Outpost which usually houses between 40 and 150 soldiers, often in a particularly hostile area. Life at a COP is often austere and demanding, with every soldier doing guard duty and patrolling.

Death Blossom: The tendency of Iraqi security forces, in response to receiving a little fire from the enemy, to either run away or do the “death blossom” spraying fire indiscriminately in all directions.

DFAC: (pronounced dee-fack) Soldiers eat in a Dining Facility. Old soldiers show their age when they call it a “chow hall,” and if you say “mess hall” it also dates you. DFACs are modern looking cafeterias; some are decorated with sports memorabilia, movie posters, and televisions with channels like ESPN.

Dustoff: Medical evacuation by helicopter. For example, “Dustoff inbound” means that a MEDEVAC helicopter is on the way.

FAN: Feet, Ass and Nuts. Used to describe a smell common to military tents and barracks.

Fitty: The M2 .50 caliber machine gun.

FOB: Forward Operating Base.

FOB Taxi: Any vehicle that never leaves the FOB.

Fobbitt: Service member who never goes outside the wire off the forward operating base.

Frankenstein: A Marine Corps monster truck, bulging and rippling with spot-welded seams of add-on armor. “We scrounge around for what we need and ‘Frankenstein’ it together.”

Green Bean: A civilian-run coffee shop common on larger bases in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Green Zone: In Iraq, the heavily fortified area of central Baghdad where most government facilities are located. As opposed to the Brown Zone, which refers to the more barren mountains.

Gun: A mortar tube or artillery piece. Never used to refer to a rifle or pistol. Military-issued pistols are usually called 9-mils.

Haji Mart: Any small store operated by Iraqis to sell small items to Americans.

IBA/OTV: “Outer Tactical Vest/Individual Body Armor”. Body armor. Usually consists of a Kevlar vest and ceramic plates. Combined, rated to a threat level IV, meaning it can stop a 7.62mm round.

IED: Improvised Explosive Device. The signature weapon of the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan, IEDs are low-cost bombs that can be modified to exploit specific vulnerabilities of an enemy. They range in size from a soda can to a tractor trailer and are initiated by anything from a pressure sensor to a suicidal attacker.

IDF: Indirect Fire, or simply Indirect. Mortars, rockets and artillery. Term generally used to describe enemy action.

Inside/Outside the Wire: Describes whether you are on or off a base.

ITGA: Interim Transitional Government of Afghanistan.

KAF: That stands for Kandahar Air Field. That is the main base of operations for the Southern part of Afghanistan. The main post is big and has lots of people, it is a main transportation hub -- both Helo and Fixed Wing -- also Convoys of Humvees going in and out.

KBR: Kellogg, Brown & Root -- The biggest contractor serving the Coalition Forces.

MRE: Meals Ready to Eat. Alternately known as “Meals Refused by Everyone”, Mysteries, and the three lies: they *AREN’T* meals, they *AREN’T* ready, and they certainly *AREN’T* edible.

PPE: Personal Protective Equipment

SAPI: Small Arms Protective Insert, usually pronounced as “sappy.” Ceramic plates inserted into the front and back of the IBA/OTV.

* This is a very appreciated glossary shared as a means to link those who went before with the current crop of warriors.

Editor-guy note: This info was culled from a variety of sources in a web search for the specific intent of honoring all Military Vets.

**Robert Mitchell, USN Veteran
attached to USMC
NALC Branch 782 Retiree**

Bob grew up in the city of Dearborn, Michigan where his father — who was a real craftsman — owned a business producing dental prosthetics. An interested son, Bob, helped out in the shop and began to learn a lot about how bridges, crowns and other products were made.

In Bob's senior year of high school, his father relocated his business and his family to California. It wasn't such a great thing for Bob. As "the new guy in school", he knew no one. After graduating from Chula Vista High in June 1963, he enrolled at Southwestern Junior College and received an AS degree in 1965.

With a possible induction into the U.S. Army via the draft, Bob sought an alternative. The Navy offered him a deal: Enlist, and based on his dental skills and college education, they would immediately make him an E-3 and he wouldn't have to travel far from home.

December 1966 found him at boot camp was at NTC San Diego. After graduation, he moved to a different part of the base where he completed the USN Dental Tech "A" School which was soon followed by the "C" school where he learned the Navy way of producing prosthetics.

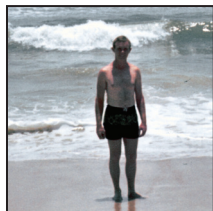
He always assumed that he would be stationed aboard a ship or at a large USN base with a large dental clinic. The Navy had other ideas...

Bob received orders to undergo Field Medical School at Camp Pendleton for cross training as a Corpsman attached to the Marine Corp. The thirty day program took him from "blue side to green side" and gave him a basic knowledge of what his duties would entail if he went out "into the field" and had to deal with massive trauma (sucking chest wounds, gun shots, burns, explosions, knife attacks, etc). Training scenarios found Bob out in the boonies dealing with simulated battlefield conditions.

As indicated in a USMC training manual: "The Marine Corps has an expectation of handling more responsibility from its junior personnel, especially their corpsmen." He also learned that this raised the real possibility that he might be going wherever "The Corps" might need him.

On Memorial Day 1968 (May 30), DT3 Bob Mitchell got boots down at the USAF Base in DaNang Vietnam. He was in a war zone! A corpsman, who was rotating back to the world, rolled up in a jeep to pick up Bob and his gear at the airport and informed him that they were going to the beach... China Beach.

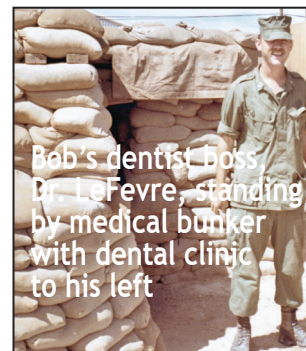
He remembers marvelling, "This is a WAR ZONE. How can we just be going to the beach? Does somebody just declare a 'time out' so we can do this?"



A beach party at China Beach in 1968 with a shot of Bob enjoying the waves.

The next morning, he was flown to a small airfield chopped out of the jungle at his new home: Phu Bai Combat

Base. He explored the small barracks, PX, the EM and Officers Clubs and the dental clinic which was attached to the sick bay. He remembers that it was a little jarring to see sandbags stacked up to offer protection from incoming mortar rounds or rockets.



Bob's dentist boss, Dr. Lefevre, standing by medical bunker with dental clinic to his left

And, before long, the pace of work and the surroundings became familiar.

Like other Vietnam Vets, Bob soon learned about "military pay certificates" and the humidity and sights and sounds of being in a foreign country. Although there was no concertina wire around the perimeter at Phu Bai, there were some tanks and some M50 ONTOS (which had six 105 mm recoilless rifles with three on each side of the vehicle).

After a time, Bob was transferred to the 1st Marine HQ Hospital in Da Nang dental tech duties. Although this may seem boring, there were times (in a rotation with others) that he would be required to go to Graves Registration where he attempted to identify remains with dental records. He never would have anticipated he would be doing this as a twenty-two year old.

An in-country R&R facility was located in Da Nang. There was a restaurant and bowling alley and Bob relayed a memory about a night he spent at the on-base movie theatre.

He was watching a movie and the Seabees started blowing up rock to make gravel for their projects. It was loud and it was close. Somebody yelled, "Incoming!" Bob always felt that he would be really "calm and collected" in the event of an emergency. He found himself running out just as panicked as anyone else.



Bob shared a hooch where he had his rack. His days were spent working and — often — feeling bored. When he had the duty, he carried an M-16 with lots of ammo.

There were also some pretty good times at Choco Beach or when he got to go be a tourist around the outskirts of Hue and other locations.



From the back of a truck on the way to beach we saw some helicopters which had landed by the side of the road.

He saw sampans on brown water highways, a lot of small villages, rice paddies, water buffalo, Vietnamese riding bikes or fishing, ARVN troops and even mini-skirted girls singing at the EM Club. AND, Bob even

buffalo, Vietnamese riding bikes or fishing, ARVN troops and even mini-skirted girls singing at the EM Club. AND, Bob even got an opportunity to ask a movie star and model, Ann Margaret, for her autograph!



Phu Bai dental clinic was in the gray trailer with the wheels and tires. Attached to it is the waiting room where the doctor would sleep. Sandbags to the left protect the base medical bunker.



This was pretty much his routine until he rotated back to the States after his one-year tour of duty. Following a 30 day leave period at home in San Diego, he reported to his new home at Camp Pendleton. He worked there until his enlistment ended (after three years and nine months) in September 1970.

Bob started as a part-time employee at Builders' Emporium in Chula Vista at the end of 1970. He worked there until 1979 when his father sold his business moved to Bakersfield and asked him if he would consider transferring to a store in Kern County. One day, Bob heard about a possible postal worker job...

He worked as a USPS Letter Carrier from 1980 until his retirement in 2004.



Kern County Honor Flight #36 October 27-29, 2018

Fifty years after serving in Vietnam, Bob Mitchell travelled to the capital of our country in Washington D.C. as part of a contingent of various service veterans from Kern County.

Bob had heard of the Honor Flight organization through television news reports and talk among military veterans that he knew. But, he didn't think about going himself until he was at a Memorial Day event at the Riverwalk in 2017. There, surrounded by the crosses which dotted the landscape, he found a booth with folks handing out brochures. He took one, filled in the spaces for the information they requested and then he mailed it in.



He was then contacted and asked if he could meet someone to fill out a more extensive form which would serve as an application and to provide information about his military background.

During that meeting he learned that there is a real push to render this honor to any surviving WWII vets as well as those who served during the Korean or Vietnam War. Next on the list of priority placements are those members of the military who were in later conflicts or eras.

In September, he received a phone call and he was asked if he was still interested in participating. When he responded in the affirmative, he was informed that he was eligible and that he could join others on Flight #36. He was also told that he would receive a packet of information to give him an idea of what he was getting into.

And, he discovered, it was going to be a slam, bam, thank you, ma'am kind of a trip!! They weren't lying!!! (The following times are in military 2400 hour clock.)

Saturday, October 27, officially began at 0300 starting out at the check-in tables on the floor of the Garces High School gym. Bob received "orders" to board an assigned bus which departed around 0330 for the Burbank Airport.

After arriving at 0550, the entire group began at approximately 0615 to proceed through the TSA checkpoint. They left for McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas at 0750 with wheels down at 0855.

At 1010, the now-tired travellers left for the Baltimore-Washington International Airport where they arrived at 1740. With scant time for catching their breath, the vets boarded a bus which took them to an 1800 meal at Mision BBQ in Glenburnie, Maryland; and, at meal's end, they were back on the bus at 1930 to FINALLY arrive at their hotel at 2130 for a good night's rest in their hotel!

Sunday morning began with a hearty, free buffet breakfast...at 0600. West Coast bodies thought it was 0300, and — what was worse — a few folks forgot to reset their timepieces and they missed out on the meal.

To maintain the schedule for activities, they departed at 0700, returned at 1700, had dinner at 1800 and were in their racks/bunks by 2000.

Of course, it was what occurred between the hours of 0700 and 1700 that really made the trip special! As indicated in the Flight #36 Itinerary: "These are a few of the places we *may* visiting during our stay in Washington, DC in **no particular order**

or day - Memorials: WWII, Korean, Vietnam, Lincoln, Women's, Air Force, Navy, Marines, FDR, a visit to Arlington National Cemetery to see the Changing of the Guard, and our Nation's Capital..."

So few words. So much movement!!

And, through it all, some of the memorials had more of an impact on Bob.



Bob Mitchell outside the USN Memorial Plaza on Pennsylvania Avenue

Wherever Flight #36 attendees went, they travelled as a group. Each veteran (blue jacket) had a companion "guardian", in red jacket, who ensured that each leg of the trip would be as safe as possible.

Honor Flight Kern County (HFKC) is one of 136 hubs from around the country that is part of the Honor Flight Network. HFKC is an all volunteer non-profit created to honor veterans of Kern County and surrounding areas and veterans as far away as the San Fernando Valley. There are approximately 46,000 veterans in Kern County with over 8,000 of them World War II and Korean Veterans. Our mission is to honor and send America's veterans to Washington D.C. to see the memorials built in THEIR honor for their service to our country - at no cost to the veteran. Top priority is given to our most senior veterans - World War II veterans — and those from any conflict that are terminally ill — followed by Korean and Vietnam veterans. Every veteran accepted by HFKC for this honor travels at no cost to him/her due to the generosity of tax deductible donations from our community. The trips include all air and ground transportation, meals, overnight accommodations, and guided tours.

An interesting component brought back memories to many of the vets: Box lunches. Although they were served meals on the bus, most testified that the food provided by Arbys was much better than they remembered getting when they were in uniform!



This picture of Bob shows the sheer scale and size of this iconic USMC monument.

Monday, October 29, shared a similar frenetic schedule with reville early enough to ensure being able to have breakfast at 0600 and a 0645 departure for the day's activities. Again, there were a series of stops made at various historic points of interest in the Capital. 1030 marked the departure on a bus for the return flights through Baltimore, San Jose and Burbank with a planned arrival at 2100 at Garces High School.

The end of the journey was marked by an enthusiastic group of friends and family members who welcomed each and every Veteran home to Kern County.

Looking back at the experience, Bob didn't hold back as he offered his heartfelt message to other Veterans, ***"I would advise any Vet to do this!! Why wouldn't you do it? Being with other Vets makes this so special! The camaraderie with other Vets is very, very amazing!!"***



"I would advise any Vet to do this!! Why wouldn't you do it? Being with other Vets makes this so special! The camaraderie with other Vets is very, very amazing!!"

Robert Mitchell, USN Veteran and NALC Branch 782 Re-



Pictures above courtesy of the Kern County Honor Flight website. To see more, check out: https://www.facebook.com/pg/HonorFlightKernCounty/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1832033103512156

There is no way that an event like this could take place without the active participation of many people in Kern County. Countless hours of planning and preparation went into making this such a great and safe success.

Bob wants to make sure that he publicly thanks each and every person who does anything to provide this celebration to honor any Veteran who lives anywhere in the United States. He only hopes that more Vets will live to experience this.

On Behalf of a Grateful Nation...



Photo by Manchester, New Hampshire Branch 44 Photographer "Caz" Drozd, November 2018



*When America had an urgent need,
These brave ones raised a hand;
No hesitation held them back;
They were proud to take a stand.*

*They left their friends and family;
They gave up normal life;
To serve their country and their God,
They plowed into the strife.*

*They fought for freedom and for peace
On strange and foreign shores;
Some lost new friends; some lost their lives
In long and brutal wars.*

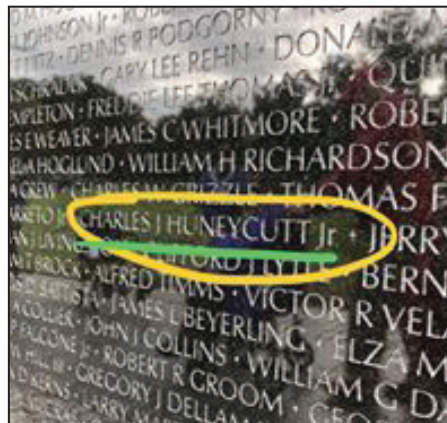
*Other veterans answered a call
To support the ones who fought;
Their country had requirements for
The essential skills they brought.*

*We salute every one of them,
The noble and the brave,
The ones still with us here today,
And those who rest in a grave.*

*So here's to our country's heroes;
They're a cut above the rest;
Let's give the honor that is due
To our country's very best.*

Joanna Fuchs

Poem courtesy of Tewksbury, Massachusetts
NALC Branch 25 November 2018 *WAKE UP!*



Web site photos courtesy of Kern County Honor Flight #36, October 27-29, 2018



THE PITFALLS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Do you ever find yourself going to social media for answers to your questions? Thinking it might be wise to post photos taken inside of the Post Office or your postal vehicle on Facebook? Maybe want to record yourself in a rant about your job, because they pushed you to the edge for the 5th time that week for 7th damn week straight and you can NOT take it anymore, and then post that little gem on Facebook? Well, ladies and gentlemen the answer is, "please don't!!!!"

It seems quite typical these days, that if someone has a question about their job, they open up their Facebook and post the question there. Don't get me wrong, you will get many, many responses but here is what most likely is going to happen. You will get some partial answers, followed by some sarcastic answers, to be met with a couple of arguments over the sarcastic answers, then you get someone's input on how they were wronged by the Union, and then my favorite the pointless meme. This is getting you no closer to the answer you are looking for, so now you get frustrated: maybe you give up, maybe you start arguing back, maybe you get distracted by the recipe for Boozy Caramel Apples (it is a real thing, look it up). At the end, you are no closer to the truth that when you first asked your question.

Posting photo or videos from inside the Post office, in your vehicle or while walking your route. These are some of my favorites!! While most are quite comical or something oh, so

OUT THERE



Re-printed from a Great NALC Branch 3 newsletter, "The Buzz" out of Western New York. Thank you for an Awesome article!!!!

important as to how many parcels your buddy has stacked at his case waiting for him the next day, you still should not be posting these things to social media. Is that comically moment really worth potential discipline? Is raging against the Post Office and posting it on Facebook worth explaining to your family why you might possibly lose your job?

363 Social Media - 363.1 Policy:

For the purpose of this policy, "social media" is defined as any form of online publishing or discussion, including but not limited to: Blogs, Wikis, YouTube, Podcasts, Social Networking - Social sites (such as Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn), Twitter/Microblogs, and Web 2.0.

Whether Postal Service employees choose to participate in social media on their own time is their decision. However, when using social media in a personal capacity, employees may not speak for or act on behalf of the Postal Service.

All uses of social media related to the conduct of official postal business require management consent.

667.21 Prohibition

During the course of activities related to postal employment, postal employees may not record, monitor, or otherwise intercept the oral or wire communications of any other person through the use of any electronic, mechanical, or other device, nor listen in on a telephone conversation, nor direct another to do so, unless all parties involved in the communication are made aware of and consent to such interception.

Hatch Act

Federal employees may express their opinions about a partisan group or candidate in a partisan race (e.g., post, "like," "share," "tweet," "retweet"), but there are a few limitations. Specifically, the Hatch Act prohibits employees from: • engaging in any political activity via Facebook or Twitter while on duty or in the workplace; • referring to their official titles or positions while engaged in political activity at any time (note that inclusion of an employee's official title or position on one's social media profile, without more, is not an improper use of official authority); and • suggesting or asking anyone to make political contributions at any time. Thus, they should neither provide links to the political contribution page of any partisan group or candidate in a partisan race nor "like," "share," or "retweet" a solicitation from one of those entities, including an invitation to a political fundraising event. An employee, however, may accept an invitation to a political fundraising event from such entities via Facebook or Twitter.

When you have a question about your job, call the Union hall or go to the inside cover of this Buzz and call one of the officers or stewards. Come to a union meeting, the time and place are on the back cover of this Buzz. The NALC also has an app for your phone available to all members. On this app you can search out the answers to your questions, view legislative updates and receive push notification to keep yourself better informed on YOUR union. Take the time to learn about your job, the more you know, is the more you know.

This reprint of a reprint is courtesy of the November 2018 Manchester, New Hampshire NALC Branch 44 44 *Magnum*

from the editor-guy

A member shared something with me which, I believe, originated with a post on some Facebook page. The decision to share this message with me may well have been because the member knew that one of my sons is a law enforcement officer. In my view, what it conveys deserves a reprise for a specific purpose in this Letter Carrier newsletter. Why?

I know that we Letter Carriers often have valid reasons to utter complaints about so many of the things that we deal with as we do our jobs; but — perhaps — a little perspective about those burdens that we carry might be in order...

I have pulled dead, mangled bodies from cars. I have lied to people as they were dying — as I've said, "You are going to be fine." And, I held their hand and watched the life fade out.

I have held dying babies. Bought lunch for people who were mentally ill and haven't eaten in a while.

I have had people try to stab me. Fought with men trying to shoot me. I've been attacked by women while I was arresting their husband who had just severely beat them.

I have held towels on bullet wounds. Done CPR when I knew it wouldn't help just to make family members feel better.

I have torn down doors, fought in drug houses and chased fugitives through the woods. I have been in high-speed car pursuits and foot chases across an interstate during rush hour traffic.

I have been in crashes.

Been squeezing the trigger about to kill a man when they came to their senses and stopped.

Waded through large angry crowds by myself.

Drove like a madman to help a fellow officer. Let little kids who don't have much sit in my patrol car and pretend they are a cop for their birthday.

I have taken a lot of people to jail. Given many breaks. Prayed for people I don't even know. Yes — at times — I have been "violent" when I had to be. I have been kind when I could.

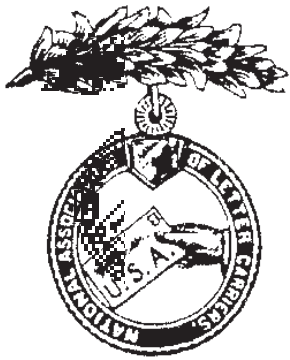
I admit I have driven to some dark place and cried by myself when I was overwhelmed.

I have missed Christmas and other holidays more than I wanted to.

Every cop I know has done all these things — and more — for lousy pay, exhausting hours, and a short life expectancy.

***We don't want your pity. I don't care for your respect.
Just let us do our jobs without killing... Please.***

Signed: The Police Officers of America



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E.A. BAKER UNION UPDATE is published monthly by Merged Branch 782 of the National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writer and are not necessarily those of the publication staff or of the Officers of the Branch.

The information contained in this publication is true and complete to our best knowledge. All recommendations, on equipment and procedures are made without guarantees on the part of the authors or of the organization. Because the quality of equipment, services and methods are beyond our control, the organization and its publication authors disclaim all liability incurred in connection with use of this information.

Information in this publication may not be used for illegal purposes.

We invite all members to contribute articles for publication. Copy, if possible, should be double-spaced (but doesn't have to be) but **MUST** be signed by the contributor. E-mails are preferred...

The Editor retains the right to edit, delete, or reject the article for the good of the Branch (and even this is subject to persuasion).

In the hope that material contained herein may be of benefit to the goals of the National Association of Letter Carriers, permission is hereby granted to other NALC Branches to copy or use material and/or cartoons promulgated in this publication with our best wishes...**but remember to cite/give us some credit.**

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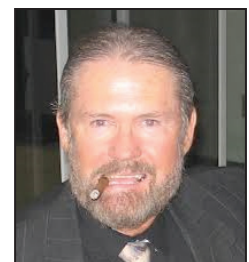
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Non-Profit Organization
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Bakersfield, California
 Permit Number 32

General Meeting

Wednesday

November 21, 2018

7:00 p.m.

Branch 782 Office
 2628 "F" Street
 Bakersfield, California

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

Each and EVERY month, Branch 782 sponsors a drawing at the General Meeting to encourage *YOU* to come to our monthly Meeting* **EACH OF THESE MEMBERS COULD HAVE WON...**

October 2018	Donald Ingram	\$500
September 2018	Jessie Subia	\$500
August 2018	Robert Guerrero	\$500
July 2018	Paul Zabala	\$500
June 2018	Kerrie Howard	\$500
May 2018	Jennifer Shumway	\$500
April 2018	Ray Pettus	\$500
March 2018	Laura Gordon	\$500
February 2018	Nathan Barnett	\$500
January 2018	Janice Valdez	\$500

This month YOU could win \$500!

**THE FINE PRINT: To win the money YOU have to be present when YOUR name is drawn...*

Please Note:

November General Meeting will be on the **THIRD** Wednesday of the month.

"OuT tHeRe"



"OuT tHeRe"



"OuT tHeRe"



"OuT tHeRe"



Print version had 24 pages. This web version has 36 pages. More info. More pix. More Schtuff!!!