

National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update



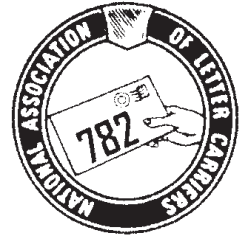
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EDWARDS AFB
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CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1901



SPECIAL EDITION

APRIL 2017

Memoria in
aeterna

John Edward Ross

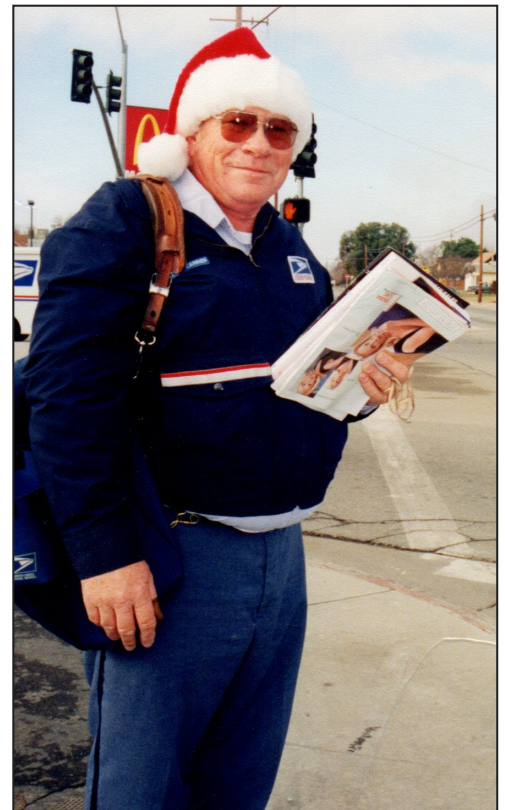
May 23, 1941 – April 11, 2017

It is right – and it is proper – that we remember and honor those who have gone before us.

John (*as we called him*) was an NALC member for some fifty-two years!

This tribute is to help YOU know better how he fit into the history of our NALC Branch 782 and to also share some things that maybe we didn't know about him and the life that he lived.

This tribute to him is also a gift for his great-grandson, Josiah Edward! Maybe, he will see his “Papa” through the eyes and memories of others who knew John and worked with him...



John Edward Ross carrying mail in Shafter, California during Christmas time in the 1980s.

Dear Josiah~

Your “Papa” was a good man!

You are often going to hear people use this phrase when they are talking about someone. Well, you need to understand something: YOUR “Papa” was a REALLY Good Man!!

He was kind. He was strong...and yet, he was gentle. He was a man of principle who lived out his Christian faith. He was a man who knew how to compete and was a true champion both in victory and defeat.

Your “Papa” knew about pain. He was compassionate to those who were suffering and he dealt with his own physical ailments with courage and a sense of resolve.

There are so many things about him that would have brought you to love him as deeply as he loved you from the moment that he first learned that you were “on the way”.

He never got the chance to hold you. He would have loved for you to fall asleep in his arms when you were just a baby! There would have been a twinkle in his eyes as he held your hand helping to take those first tentative steps as you learned to walk.



Josiah, this is when “Papa” and Grandma Mary first learned that you were on the way. The message was: “The best Grandparents get promoted to Great-Grandparents”

Sports were a very important part of life for your “Papa”. It would have thrilled him to see you developing your skills with a bat or ball and – you can bet that he would have been grinning real wide as he told people, “He got *THAT* from his Great-Grandma Mary!” (Like Ed, she was also an athlete!)

Your “Papa” was a Letter Carrier. Some people would have called him a Mailman. Although most family members knew him as “Ed”, the people he worked with always called him “John”. As you go through these pages, you are going to see a lot of pictures. Many of them are family pictures. There are also many pictures of him during the many years he was involved in the U.S. Postal Service and the National Association of Letter Carriers.

He would have loved seeing you grow up. Here’s a look at your “Papa” as a very special man that had a long, productive life and is missed by many.



Ed's school picture in 1953



Mary and Ed at a family gathering in Fresno in 1958



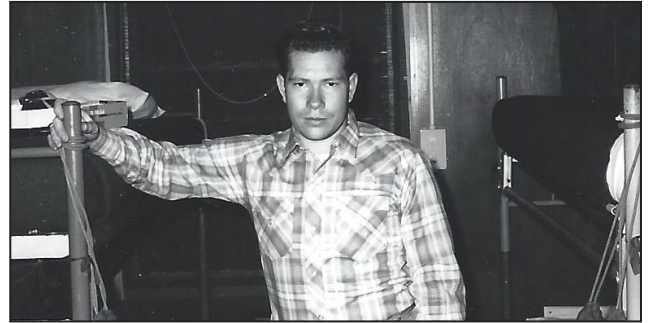
Mary's brother Ron Gross, Sister Shirley, Mary and Ed holding puppies at Mary's grandparents house in Farmersville, CA in 1959



Ed as at about 10 or 11 years old sports that grin that we all grew to love.

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

Proverbs 22:6



Ed, as a teenager, spent his summers at the High Sierra Pack Station with his uncles and cousins.



Ed and Mary at his sister Corcky's home in Clovis, California in 1958



When they were dating in 1958, Ed would come by and pick her up to go on a date.



Ed (#39) was selected to play in the 1959 2nd Annual North-South High School All Stars Game at Bakersfield College. He was a quarterback on the South Team.



Getting ready for inspection while in basic training in 1961 at Lackland Air Force Base.



Air Force Boot Camp graduation picture in 1961

(A Psalm of David.) Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight

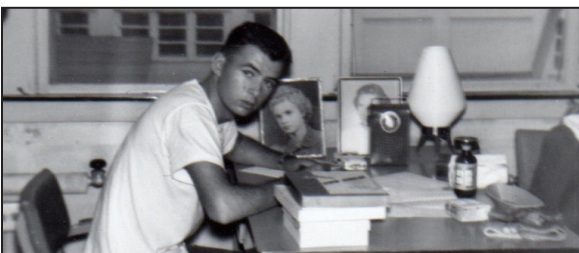
**Psalms
Chapter 144**



Ed with his father, Vernon Ross, at Kessler AFB in 1961



Ed at Lackland AFB in San Antonio, TX going through basic training. Mary sent him her highschool graduation picture at which he is gazing.



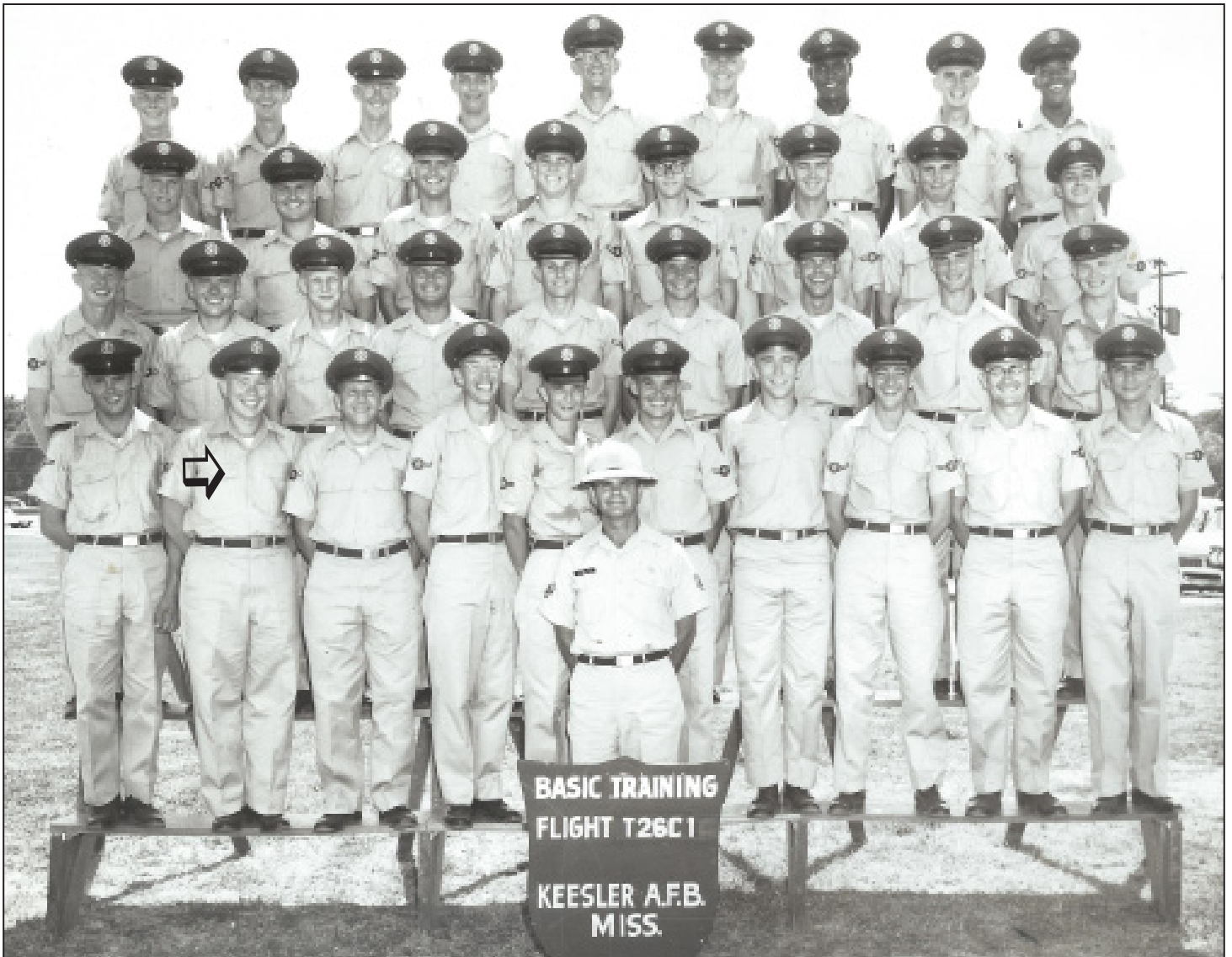
One of Ed's buddies in the barracks in 1961



Ed in his USAF work fatigues in 1961



Ed and his buddy outside the barracks



Picture of his squadron at Kessler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi in 1961 He is in the first row and second from the left.



Ed, when he was stationed as Keesler AFB, in Biloxi, MS as he was going through training right before he and Mary were married in 1961.

“I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God.”



Mary and Ed were married at 3:00 p.m. on a Sunday afternoon on November 5, 1961



Ed helping Mary out of the car as they arrive for their wedding reception with friends and family..



THEY DID IT! They were finally married and walking out at the end of the ceremony!!!



Mary and Ed reading a special card at the reception

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

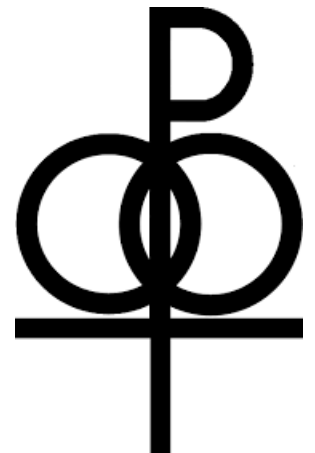
Genesis 2:24



Making “The Toast” at the wedding reception.



Newlyweds Ed and Mary Ross leaving for Biloxi, Mississippi on November 8, 1961.





Ed, along with a buddy, in Dress Blues taken in Biloxi, MS in our first apartment in December 1961



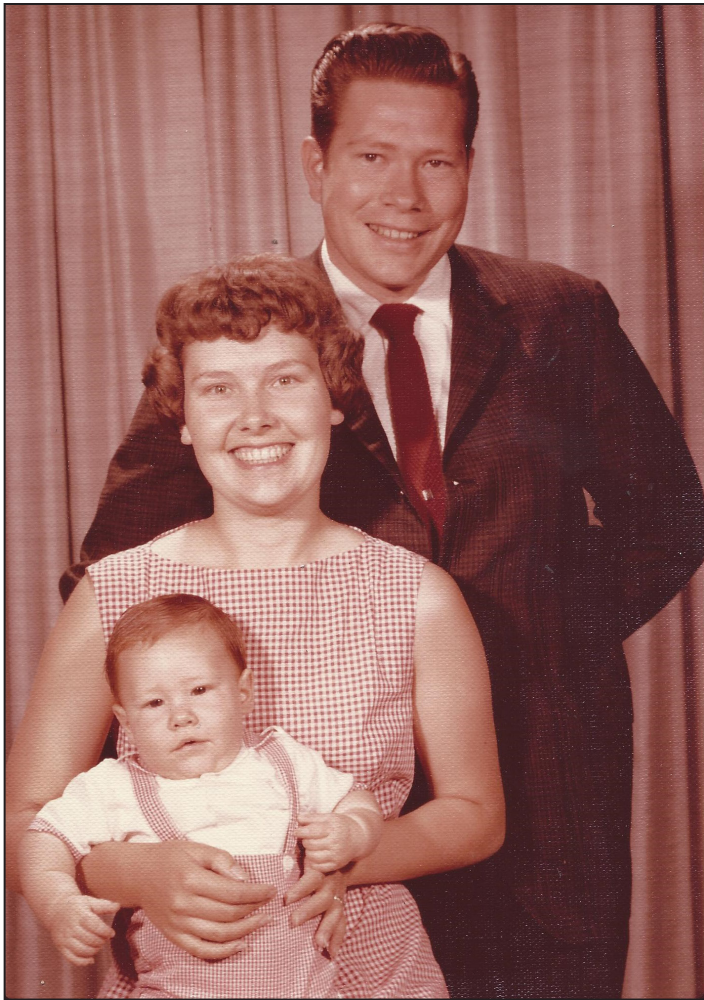
At Mary's parents' house in 1964. They had just found out that they were expecting a baby!



Ed, son Kevin and Mary came home on a weekend visit to Shafter in 1965

“Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.”

Mark 9:37



Ed, Mary and son Kevin in April 1965 right before he got out of the service when we were stationed at March AFB in Riverside.



Todd, Ed, Tammy, and Ty — Ed's sister Nora's kids



Daughter Karen, Ed, Son Kevin taken on a Sunday morning in our home in Shafter in 1978



Ed in his mailman uniform during Christmas time in 1980



Picture of Ed taken in April 1965



Ed's 47th Birthday — 1985

“With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.”

Psalms 91:16



Mary and Ed in Clovis to see his parents in 1986



Mary and Ed visiting Vernon Ross in a Fresno convalescent home. In the wheel chair because of strokes.



Ed and Mary at an NALC Convention in New Orleans in 1990



Mary and Ed at Mary's surprise 50th birthday party in 1993.



Mary, Tiffany and Ed at Christmas at Guy & Jeanette's



Ed was Santa Claus for over fifteen years. This picture was taken in 1995.



Mary with her Santa during an NALC Branch 782 Christmas party

“ She must be well known for her good actions as a woman who has raised children, welcomed strangers, washed the saints’ feet, helped the suffering, and devoted herself to doing good in every way.”

1 Timothy 5:10



Ed and Mary at a church function in 2009



Ed and Mary in a picture taken at Church in 2011



Mary holding friend's baby with Ed and Tiffany at a wedding reception in 2012

For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.



Ed and Mary at a friend's 70th birthday celebration in 2011



Ed and Mary at a bowling alley with family in 2016

Philippians 1:20-24, 27

April 11, 2017 at 1:37pm · Instagram by Tiffany Machado

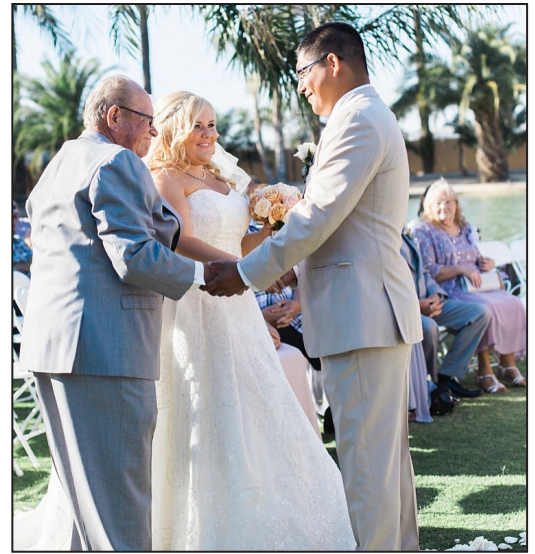
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Matthew 5:4. I miss him already. My grandpa was such a strong, kind-hearted Christian man. He raised me like I was his own and always made me feel special. He made sure I knew he was always so proud of me and supported me in everything I did. He was one of my biggest fans and I will do my best to continue living my life in a way that would make him proud. I'd give anything to play one more game of oh heck with him or to just listen to him sing or laugh. I'm just glad he isn't in pain anymore, and I know he was reunited with his parents and siblings. I can't wait to see him again one day in heaven, but until then, I hope he watches down over us and sees his first great grandson born in July. He was so excited to meet Josiah, and I'm just sad he won't get a chance to hold him. I will do my best to focus on the good memories we have together. I'm beyond grateful he was here to walk me down the aisle and dance with me at my wedding last year. I will FOREVER cherish that memory. It hurts so much....it all seemed so sudden....but I know we'll make it through this. I love you, Papa!



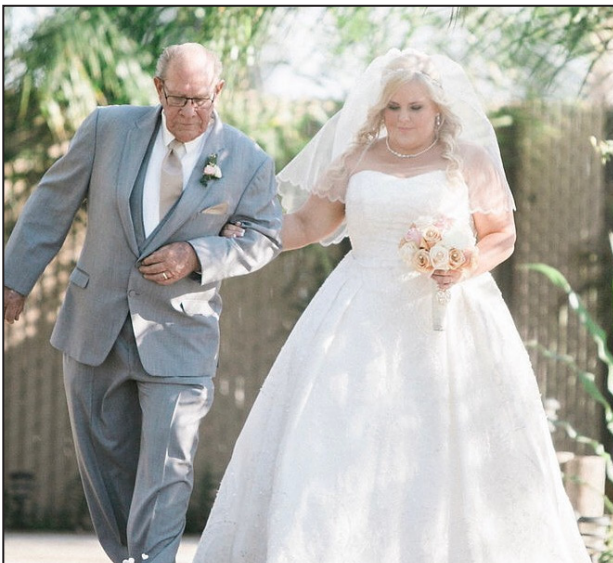
Ed offering a prayer at Joshua and Tiffany's wedding on May 21, 2016.



"Papa" Ed congratulates Tiffany during a special dance celebrating her marriage.



Ed giving Tiffany to Joshua was a special moment for a proud "Papa"



Ed walked Tiffany in *without* having to use his cane!!!



Tiffany receives Ed's blessing as she embarks on her adventure with Joshua!

April 22, 2017 Eulogy for John Edward Ross

John Edward Ross departed this world for heaven on April 11, 2017, at the age of 75. He was preceded by his father, Vernon Ross; his mother, Lura "Edna" Ross; his infant brother, baby Ross; and his sisters, Alice Elaine Maddbx and Nora Lee Gustafson.



Pastor Ray Tumey
Family Christian Fellowship Church

John is survived by his wife, Mary Louise Ross; his sister, Cordiella "Corky" Williamson, his son and daughter in law, Kevin Allen Ross and Lynn

Ann Ross; his daughter, Karen Ann Tinder; his granddaughters: Tiffany Marie Machado, Shelby Ann Cloyd, and Savannah Joy Cloyd; his



grandsons: Wolfgang Lopez and Michael Allen Ross;

his grandson in law, Joshua Machado, his brother and sister in laws: Eddie and Shirley Lempinen, Ron and Martha Gross, and George Maddox; and numerous nieces and nephews and cousins, whom he loved very much.

In his early years, John lived in Clovis, California, where at the age of 7 he accepted Christ as his lord and savior. His family moved to Shafter, California at the start of his 8th grade year. During high school, he worked in his mom and dad's variety store, and excelled in Football and Baseball. He graduated from Shafter High School in 1959. John was honored by being chosen to play in the 1959 "North-South 2th Annual All Star Game" for the South team as Quarterback, at BC Stadium.

John attended Biola Bible College for one year, because he wanted to study the bible. He then came back to Shafter to attend Bakersfield College while helping in his family's store.

He joined the U.S. Air Force and served from 1961-1965. He served in Taiwan in the 6987th Radio Squadron as a Morse Interceptor Operator, and then served at the Air Force base in Riverside, California.

In 1961, John married his high school sweetheart, Mary Gross. He lived the rest of his life with Mary and the love they had for each other was admirable to anyone who knew them. They really were true teammates in life.



In May of 1965 John worked with the Roscoe Company setting up new stores and managing them in California and Washington states. He then went on to work for the U.S. Post office as a letter carrier for 30 years. After retirement he worked for the Kern River Golf Course as a Cart Mechanic for 15 years.

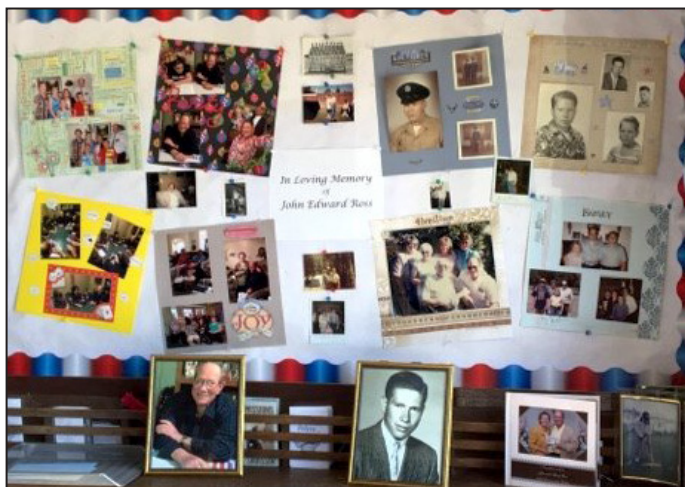
John worked with the Awana program, sang in the choir, and taught bible study in Shafter. He then moved to Bakersfield in 1988, where he found a new church home at Family Christian Fellowship. John continued serving God by singing on the praise team, teaching adult bible study, serving as a Deacon on the board and the Sunday School Superintendent, and occasionally filling the pulpit with a message.

John had many interests. He was a fisherman, an avid golfer, a bowler, and an umpire. He loved playing around on the computer, doing puzzles, and playing cards and games with family. His favorite pastime was to study his bible, and write up bible lessons and messages. He was a true "Man of God" and he will be greatly missed by all those who had the pleasure of knowing him.



Weep not for me

*Weep not for me though I am gone
Into the gentle night.
Grieve if you will, but not for long
Upon my soul's sweet flight.
There is no need for tears.
I am at peace, my soul is at rest.
There is no pain, I suffer not.
For with your love I was so blessed.
I am in a place of comfort,
The fear is now gone.
Put those things out of your thoughts,
In your memory I live on.
Remember not my fight for breath.
Remember not the strife.
Please do not dwell upon my death,
But celebrate my life.*



John Ross was a True Friend!

While I was standing in line trying to figure out what to do on my very first day, a man came in and punched his time card. As I was introduced to each of the seven Carriers at Shafter, I was told that the man's name was John. I called him John because that is what everybody else at the post office called him.

I didn't find out until much later that he was known as "Ed" to his family and friends who were not in the post office.

It saddens me to tell you that, last month, Branch 782 lost John Edward Ross. He was a mentor to me and to many other members.

Thinking about John, I remember something about that first day staring at the case trying to figure out where each letter was supposed to go: *The Aroma of Pipe Tobacco*.

John's case was close by and he was a pipe smoker. In fact, the routine every morning that we clocked on and checked

our vehicles (jeeps) would include John lighting his pipe. (If you've been around long enough, you may even remember that there used to be little metal ashtrays that Carriers would clip on to the cases so that they could smoke while they cased.)

Also, as in every office in the country where there are Letter Carriers, each morning in Shafter usually started out with talk about the baseball/football/basketball games from the night before or what had been on television. They were good days.

And, John could talk sports!

During baseball season, John was an umpire and, sometimes, he would take some annual leave to be able to work games. (As a sub, that was pretty cool because I got to work. And, John always made sure that he set the mail up so that it would be easy to deliver and that his customers would get the best service!)

One good thing about a small office is that we all covered each other when things happened.

the Shafter Shop Steward. He explained that he wanted to become more active on the Branch 782 Executive Board and that he would be attending more meetings in Bakersfield.

Because I didn't know anything since I'd only been on the job for three months, I told John that I probably shouldn't. He responded with, "Don't worry. I'll help you every step of the way and if you ever need me, I'll be there."

One day, he took me to a union meeting in Bakersfield and introduced me to Branch 782 President Paul Alexander. While there, he signed me up as a union member and began his work as my mentor.

Because John was so much a part of the work that the Letter Carriers did for the Muscular Dystrophy Association and the MDA Telethon, I found myself becoming very involved with that, too.

I have other memories of John as the Santa Claus at many of the family Christmas parties that the Branch used to sponsor. He used to sit there, patiently listening to all of the kids up on his lap as they told him which presents they were hoping to receive. I'm sure that there are probably pictures of him with some of the kids. He always had a big smile on his face as he did his "Santa duty"!

I soon discovered that John was the Shop Steward at our office. He knew the Contract and he always dealt with management with a fair hand.

When I made it through my 90 day probation, John came to me asked if I would consider being

As the Shafter Shop Steward, I would occasionally have problems with management and I would tell John what they were asking for. He explained to me that — during meetings — I was on equal footing with management. I didn't have to agree to whatever they wanted just because they were "the boss".

Management caught on to the fact that John was coaching me on my Steward Rights. So, they told me that I couldn't talk to him on the workroom floor.

Well, John had some tricks up his sleeves. He "suggested" that I tell management, "Give me a day or two and I'll get back to you on this."

John would then have all of the Carriers meet at Spencers to talk about the situation and come up with the best way to get all of



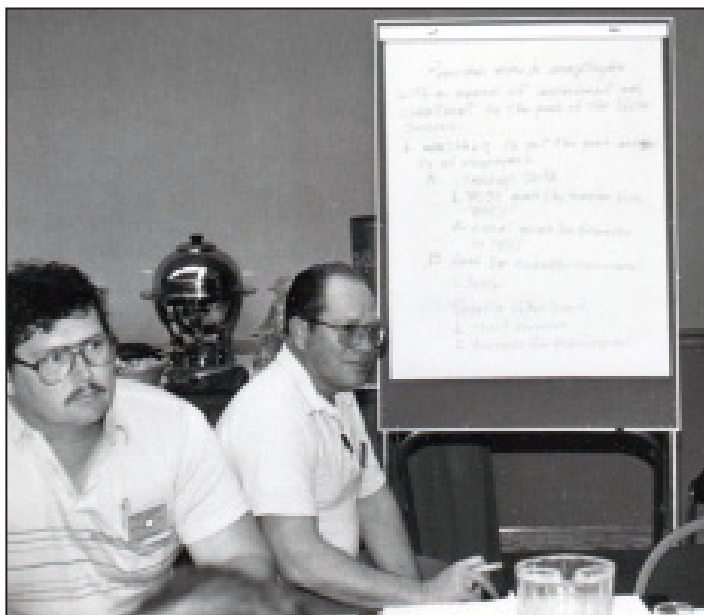
So, who were the "Shafter Gang" in the early 1980s?

(l-r) front row — Hermie Encina, John Ross, Tanya Woods; second row — Elden Eckels, Mandi Bird, George White, George Vallavazo; back row — Les Armstrong, Jerry Patterson, Kino Gonzalez, Peter Cobb and Larry Dimas

the Carriers a solution that would uphold the Contract. By doing this, he showed me that the best defense that we have is when all the Carriers work together as a group!

He also showed me that it was important for me to learn how to stand my ground. Through the years, what he taught me was put to use many times. Some managers were easy to work with and others seemed to want to fight about everything.

In the late 1980s, John took on a new role for the Branch. He was assigned as the Union EI/QWL Facilitator.



John Ross — in the center of this picture — really believed in the potential of EI/QWL to solve problems in the USPS and to give Letter Carriers a voice in being part of “The Solution” for our mutual benefit!

(At that time, the NALC and the USPS established Employee Involvement/Quality of Work Life to resolve problems which each unit might have. A USPS management person and an NALC person worked as a team and facilitated local meetings which were held on the clock.) Because of this, he was no longer a full-time Shafter Carrier. He and his partner would travel all over what was then called a Management Sectional Center to cities and units in the 932 and 933 zip codes.)

I don’t remember if John ever came back to Shafter as a Carrier. But, he was definitely missed. In fact, I think that John probably retired as an E.I. facilitator.

As the years have gone by, Carriers have asked, “Do you still see John?”

I would explain that I didn’t see him very often but that I’d heard that he was working at a golf course. (If you knew John, you knew that golf is something that he really, really enjoyed!)

When I was delivering, I would sometimes see his wife, Mary, and ask how he was. She would tell me that he was doing good and that he was busy with the grandkids.

Eventually, I saw John at a Branch 782 Retiree Dinner and found out that he’d had a total hip replacement and was using a cane to get around. And? ***I found out that he’d stopped smoking that pipe!***

I was shocked when Kino Gonzales called me and asked, “Did you read the paper? Is Edward John Ross ‘the John Ross’ who worked with us?”

John was a man who lived out his faith. He was a friend who would help you do anything that it was in his power to help you out with.

People who knew him are going to miss his smile and his firm handshake as he greeted you. John’s word was his bond, and he was a true friend who will not be forgotten.

JERRY PATTERSON
Retired Shafter Letter Carrier



Recently we lost two retired Letter Carriers: Jesse Avalos and John Ed Ross. Both Jesse and John were very involved with the Letter Carrier Union, specifically, our local Branch 782. When I first became involved, Jesse and John were Branch Officers. I remember Jesse being very involved in our Branch Picnic in both cooking and serving. Eventually, Jesse went on to transfer to work in building construction and repair. I believe he even got his contractors license.

John Ross (I always knew him as John) was also always involved in the Union. He was the Vice President when I first became President, but he gave up his position to become our first Employee Involvement (E.I.) Facilitator. Being a Facilitator was a position that John was a natural for. His ability to help management and Carriers work through problems made him a perfect fit! You can still see a legacy of his accomplishments with the vehicle screens at our Station “A” or mats that Carriers use at their cases.

John was such a giving person and really loved the members’ children. I fondly remember him at our Branch Christmas parties when he played Santa Claus. John was a personal friend and mentor and will be gravely missed!

FRANK THOMASY
Former NALC Branch 782 President



John Ross makes an announcement that Santa Claus has been spotted nearby...



“Captured” here in this old black-and-white picture taken in the late 1970s is a group of the Branch 782 members who were active at the time: Leo Walker (Branch 782 President); Tony Chavez, Vice-President; Paul Alexander, Chief Steward; John Ross, Recording Secretary; and Mely Villagomez, Treasurer. [Although there were color photographs available, they cost a little more to process. No, we didn’t use stone tablets. But, this scene *was* a long time ago...]

For years, John Ross was involved with everything that represented Carriers and the Union. He always had a positive approach and input in all of my dealings with him. And, no matter how serious the conversation was, John always had a smile on his face.

My memories of John go way back to the MDA Telethons that we were so involved with as a Union. He and I were joined by our wives (Mary and Peggy) and other Branch 782 officers like Tony Chavez and his wife, Bertha. Together with other Branch 782 members like Mark Ramirez, Margaret Romero, Bill Curtis, Basil Zuniga and many others, we answered MDA phones, worked the MDA “mailroom” and did many, many other things for “Jerry’s Kids”.

Through the years, we were delegates to state and national NALC conventions. We also attended seminars and other meetings

in different locations all over the country. It’s interesting how remembering things about John also give me a chance to remember others who also used to be a part of the life of our union. I remember Leo Walker, John Wonderly, Oscar Maclin, Mely Villagomez and others. Many of them are gone now, but they were an important part of what we all did.



Another black-and-white picture, records Branch 782’s involvement in another MDA Telethon in the 1980s. (l-r) Robin Mangrin (television personality), Basil Zuniga, Paul Alexander, Cathy Thompson and John Ross as we made a donation to help out Jerry’s Kids.

Basil asked me to try to remember any specific things that make me smile. Here are a couple of memories.

One year, delegates were at the San Francisco airport waiting for our plane to travel to Portland, Oregon for a national conven-

tion. John and Mary Ross and my wife, Peggy, and I were sitting together. Mary looked up and said, “Oh, my, *that’s* Pat Boone!” I — of course — didn’t think that it was and I said, “If that’s Pat Boone, I’ll buy dinner for everybody tonight.”

Well, Mary got Pat Boone’s autograph and she also had dinner on me!



John Ross and I during a trip to Atlantic City, New Jersey to attend an NALC Health Benefits Training Seminar. And, yes, it is another of those old black-and-white pictures...

I remember one other occasion. We were at an NALC Health Benefits Seminar in Las Vegas and John and Mary Ross and Peggy were all singing the words to music of the 50’s and 60’s that we were listening to. (We all knew the words to the oldies before they became the oldies. But, because they knew me and had heard my musical abilities, they didn’t ask me to sing.)

If I took more time to remember things, I might. But, as I’ve aged, my memory isn’t what it used to be. So this is it for now.

PAUL ALEXANDER
NALC Branch 782 Past President

John's "#\$% PIPE!!"

I am saddened to hear of the passing of John Ross.

I have been involved with the Letter Carriers Union for over thirty-nine years. When I started as a PTF Carrier in Lamont, John was Shop Steward in Shafter.

John served our Branch in many different capacities: Shop Steward, Branch Secretary, and Branch Vice-President. He was an inspiration in how we should become involved with the rest of the NALC in helping "Jerry's Kids" through supporting the Muscular Dystrophy Association



John Ross, Frank Thomasy and I were privileged to carry the wheel chair of the National MDA Poster Child off the dais following his appearance before the NALC National Convention.

John Ross was the Branch 782 NALC Health Benefit Representative before I was. He set the bar pretty high for how I felt I should serve our members in that capacity!

I will always remember John and his "Pipe"! *Like American Express....he never left home without it.*

Actually, that brings to mind a specific memory about one occasion which involved John's "#\$% Pipe" when Basil Zuniga,

John Ross, myself, and a few other union members traveled to Palm Springs for a union conference.

"Night Owl" Basil Zuniga, John Ross and I (Mark Ramirez) shared a room. *WOW, WHAT AN EXPERIENCE!*

John woke me up two times with his snoring!! Basil woke me up typing on the Branch Mac computer at 2:30 am!! And? The rattling refrigerator in the room woke me up at 4 AM. Despite that, John and I were up at 5 AM to play golf at 6:30 AM. It had to have been 33 degrees outside!!!

John was alone in his golf cart and I was a passenger in the other cart which was driven by a not-to-be-named Branch 782 member. **NONE OF THE CARTS HAD WINDSHIELDS...AND IT WAS VERY, VERY COLD!!!** (With the wind chill, it must have been 30 degrees.)

As the passenger, I had my hands in my pockets to keep them warm as we headed for the green. I remember John shouting, "I lost my pipe!" as he turned his cart around. Without a warning of any kind, the driver of my cart made a sharp left turn to follow John and — without any seat belt — I flew out of the golf cart, hands stuck in my pockets, and I went cartwheeling end-over-end down the hill!

After what felt like a slow-motion, almost cartoon-like tumble — I laid there on my back, hands still in my pockets, spitting grass out of my mouth as John drives up with "The Pipe" that he'd found and asks if I was alright.

Since it was Palm Springs, it did eventually warm up to 80 degrees. But, the front 9 holes were freezing!

I think I was glad John found his "#\$%& "PIPE".

"REST IN PEACE UNION BROTHER JOHN!"

MARK RAMIREZ
Retired Letter Carrier
Branch 782 NALC Health Benefit Representative



(l-r) Bonnie Smith, Mark Ramirez, John Ross, Peggy Alexander (who did not want to get her picture taken), Paul Alexander and Mary Ross in a picture taken during the 1986 MDA Telethon at the Kern County Fairgrounds. Some of you may notice in the pictures on this page that Mark used to have hair. Believe it or not — whether you believe it or not — you may find yourself in a similar situation in years to come when you look back through old pictures and see that time has also brought about some changes in the way that you look, too. Really? Yes, Really.

I first met John Edward Ross when I was a supervisor in Stockdale station. John was the E. I. representative for the NALC (the Letter Carrier union). He would come to the station with his management counterpart for meetings and would greet the Carriers. Everyone seemed to know and like him.

John and his management partner had the job of trying to get management and employees to trust one another by working on different projects for the station. This was hard on management because they had goals to meet; and, Carriers had routes to carry.

Sometimes John and his partner were successful. Sometimes not. But, John never gave up. He got along well with both sides.

When Art Ornelas became Postmaster of Bakersfield, he assigned me as John's new E.I. management "partner". I then got to know him better. He knew all the ins-and-outs of the job. I learned a lot from him! I also got to know more Letter Carriers, supervisors, postmasters and many more people. It seemed that John knew *everybody* around the MSC from Visalia to Taft or Wasco to Arvin.

Every day we traveled to different towns, trying to help each place with their problems. Sometimes we

went to help cool down some hot spots between employees and management. John was always calm, reasonable and willing to work toward a solution that would meet the needs of everyone.



John Ross knew where the good places were to each in each town we travelled to. Yes he did.

John was also knowledgeable about agriculture. Everywhere we went, he could tell what plants were in the fields .

He also knew where the good places were to eat in each town. Yup, I had a good time with John.

I hope to see him again, God willing.

HOMER RUIZ, JR.
USPS Retiree



John Ross, President Frank Thomasy and VP Mike Towery



In the above picture, (l-r) Bill Curtis, Mark Ramirez, Mike Towery, Frank Thomasy, John Ross and Tony Chavez are shown presiding at an NALC Branch 782 general meeting.



In the picture to the left, (l-r) Ralphie Ochoa, Steve "Fuzzy" Munoz, Tony Chavez, Bill Curtis, Ernie Gutierrez, NBA Tom Young, Paul Hernandez and John Ross taking their oaths of office as Tom Young inducts them as the Officers of NALC Branch 782.

Editor-guy note: These pictures were taken in the 1980s before Branch 782 purchased the building where we now have our general meetings. We used to convene at the Veterans' Hall on Mount Vernon Avenue and only had a small 70 square foot office.



(l-r) Jesse Avalos, John Ross, John Wonderly, Randy Sparks, Tony Chavez and George White (& maybe Debbie Gaona's head?) during an Executive Board meeting. For context: Branch 782 "moved up" and rented another small (600 square feet) office in the St. Clair Building on Chester Avenue in the 1980s. This was followed by a succession of larger and larger work areas until Branch President Mike Towery coordinated the purchase of our own building at 2628 F Street in the 1990's. **These** folks were the foundation of that move.

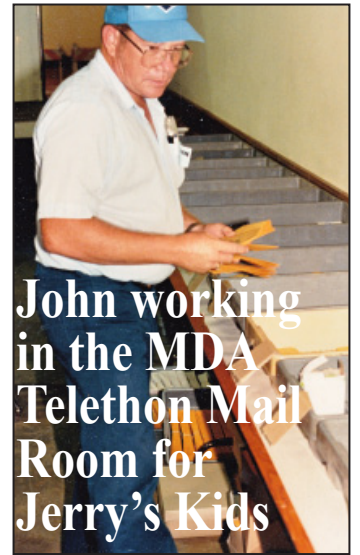
John Ross was passionate about helping Jerry's Kids!



(l-r) Mary Ross, Dicie Wilder, Tony Chavez, John Ross, Paul Alexander and Cathy Thompson in the 1980s.



(l-r) Taking phone pledges during a 1980s MDA Telethon at the Fair Grounds were — Front row: Basil Zuniga, John Ross, Paul Alexander, Cathy Thompson. Row 2: Mario Muniz, Danny Blair, Ron Gross, Connie Crimmins, Mark Ramirez. Row 3: Paul McCarthy, Gail Benner, Paul Hernandez, Debbie Gaona and Silver Farr.



John working in the MDA Telethon Mail Room for Jerry's Kids

Perhaps unbeknownst to folks in his church family, John was a staunch Union Activist!



John addressing delegates at a California State Association Convention.



John pickets in support of striking Union members during a National Convention.



In the picture to the left are: (r-l) John Ross, Mark Ramirez, NALC President Vincent Sombrotto, Basil Zuniga, and Margaret Romero at the NALC Centennial National Convention in 1989.



John Ross & Frank Thomasy hope to be "bailed out" by donations at another MDA Telethon.



Although it wasn't the reason they were there, Ralphie Ochoa, John Ross and Paul Alexander are pictured enjoying the food that was provided to all of the volunteers who showed up to help out at MDA Telethons!



(l-r) Tony Chavez, Peggy Alexander, Mary Ross, John Ross, Margaret Romero & pledge cards.



John Ross waiting for his turn at an MDA Bowl-a-Thon.

John Ross was one of the guys in the front of the room when we had Branch meetings. He was there when I joined the union in 1980.

Not until after I became a Branch 782 officer — and I was one of the guys in the front of the room — did I understand some of the time consuming work that he and the other Executive Board members & Shop Stewards did on their own time, after work, because they were all Letter Carriers, just like us. The difference is, all of the time & work that John & the others did behind the scenes. He was always there, at meetings & Branch functions like the rest of

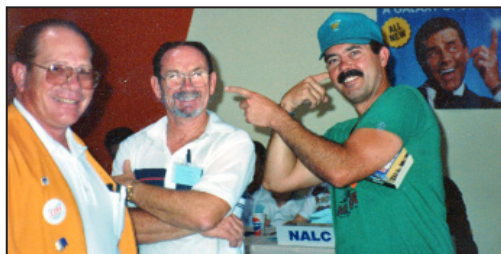
the union officials.

Our Branch used to sponsor family

Christmas parties. I don't know why we don't do them anymore. They were a lot of fun and all of the kids and their parents had a great time. Every year, Santa showed up to make sure that each of the kids got to tell him what they wanted for Christmas. I have a picture which was taken in 1992. That picture shows my then-young daughters, Tanya and Shanon, sitting on Santa's lap while one of his "reindeers" looks on.



(l-r) Gilbert Chavez, Richard Suniga, Frank Thomasy, NBA Tom Young, President Paul Alexander, John Ross and Tony Chavez at a Branch 782 General Meeting in the early 1980s General Meeting at the Mt. Vernon Veterans Hall.



John Ross, Paul Alexander and serious Bill Curtis

Oh. The Santa? John Ross! And he did this for years!

I did not get to know him that well, but I do remember... he was *always* there when we needed him.

BILL CURTIS
Retired Carrier

a little more from the editor-guy

There is a line attributed to St. Francis that he may or may not have said. However, I think that John Ross would have understood it well... ***“Preach the Gospel. When all else fails, use words.”***

In the postal world, discussions of religion are pretty much taboo. And, in the setting of the work world this is as it should be. However — to me — it seems that John lived out this St. Francis maxim pretty effectively.

To the best of my recollection, John never uttered an unkind word about anyone. He may have had disagreements or disputes with managers or supervisors; and, he was always an advocate for the Letter Carriers he served, but he was invariably gentlemanly, level-headed and honest in all that he said and all that he did.

As an NALC member, John lived out a life of service. Over the course of many years of involvement, he served as a Re-

cording Secretary, Vice-President, Health Benefits Representative and Shop Steward. And, he accomplished his duties with distinction, dedication and with honor.

Moreover, John could always be counted on to immerse himself in whatever activities were directed at supporting MDA (the Muscular Dystrophy Association). Whether it was hours spent in the NALC “mailroom” at the MDA Telethon, or as a bowler in MDA Bowl-a-Thons, John was *always* there!

John served as a delegate to many State and National NALC conventions where he was a part of a democratic process in determining the direction that the NALC would take in contract negotiations, the allocation of resources or in voting for national representatives.

Ultimately, I cherish the fact that I could rely upon his friendship and wisdom.

One of my fondest memories of John is best demonstrated in this picture which was taken at one of the Branch 782 MDA Bowl-a-Thons. My three year old daughter,

Bethany, always seemed to be drawn to his “grandfatherly” ways and John could unflinchingly be counted on to offer her a welcome place to be. (She is now a mother of three, with another on the way, and she remembers John fondly).

My mother is present in the picture. She didn't smile all that often. But, she did as she saw what I did... Thank you, John!

BASIL ZUNIGA



Psalm 18:2 ● 2 Samuel 22:3 ● Psalm 25:5 ● Exodus 15:13 ● Deuteronomy 6:4-6 ● 1 Chronicles 16:11