

Postal Record

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Letter from the Editor

Millions of Americans saw a compelling TV ad that ran nationwide last month in the days leading up to Veterans Day and on the holiday itself, an ad that linked the themes of courage, patriotism, public service, letter carriers, families and small businesses.

But they almost didn't have that opportunity.

On Monday morning of the week in which the ad had to be shipped to CNN and MSNBC, not only had it not yet been produced, the raw materials weren't even in place.

The production company in Seattle had exactly three sets of usable photos—meaning a letter carrier in his or her military and carrier uniforms. The dearth of photos was understandable, since we'd been able to put out the word only the preceding Friday afternoon.

Understandable, but daunting; all the more so, because we needed lots of photos—to assure a choice of the best quality pictures; representation of the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps; and the diversity of gender, geography and ethnicity that would reflect our membership and provide for a more compelling presentation.

The scope of the challenge was reflected in early e-mails from our regional officials. "We will do our best." "...Going to be difficult." "I am not too hopeful."

Then again, these are letter carriers, and they don't shrink from a challenge. They meet it.

And did they ever.

By Tuesday, the production firm was startled. We had more than a hundred sets of photos—and more were coming in constantly. I couldn't respond with thanks or questions to an e-mail with photos attached before a couple of new sets of photos would arrive. Others were sent by overnight mail directly to Seattle.

The dedication, the selflessness, the sense of mission, the discipline that define the one-quarter of our members who are veterans, and in fact letter carriers as a whole, was in full display in this latest effort to get our message out—as evidenced by the notes accompanying the photos we received

in the Communications and Media Relations Department.


A note from a Marine combat veteran who served in the Middle East and now delivers mail in New Jersey exemplified this well: "I am greatly honored that you and my union would request of me to help in this great cause of ours...I feel that under Mr. Rolando's leadership, we will prevail...Thanks for everything. *Semper Fi.*"

By the way, some messages were flat-out intriguing, as reflected in these cryptic words from an Illinois letter carrier who served aboard a U.S. Navy submarine: "I did strategic deterrent patrols during the first Gulf War...I can't discuss where we were or what we did."

Like every other positive development in terms of getting our message out these past few months, this worked because of you—in this instance, our military veterans, the local officers and activists who notified them, and the NBAs around the country and the union officials here in Washington who so quickly and effectively put out the word.

As a result of what you did, people in all parts of America viewed a message that wove together, in compelling visual and verbal fashion, the military service provided by soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines with the public service delivered to the American people by letter carriers.

The ad's theme was built around the closing words: "Their service never ended. Neither should yours." Those words—simple, eloquent and powerful—were the idea of President Rolando.

Let's be clear. This fight we're in has not become any easier in recent weeks. Nor will it anytime soon. But that old adage about a foxhole fits well here. There is no better team, no more spirited force, and certainly no more cohesive union, anywhere in America than the 280,000 members of the NALC. If we stay united, if we stay on track, if we keep the politicians and the media honest and continue to provide the public with the truth, we will make progress in preserving the universal postal service this country has relied on for 200 years. 



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