

## Proud to Serve

Proud to Serve is a semi-regular compilation of heroic stories about letter carriers in their communities. If you know about a hero in your branch, contact us as soon as possible at 202-756-7403 or at [postalrecord@nalc.org](mailto:postalrecord@nalc.org). We'll follow up with you to obtain news clippings, photos or other information.

# Honoring heroic carriers

**H**eroism, like the mail, comes in many packages—think of police officers or firefighters. But for some citizens in need of assistance, their heroes come in the form of concerned letter carriers.

Letter carriers are members of nearly every community in this nation and know when something is wrong. Spotting fires and injuries, they often are the first to respond. The following stories document their heroism. For them, delivering for America is all in a day's work.

## Carrier to the rescue for runaway vehicle

While on her route one day last June, Royal Oak, MI Branch 3216 member **Sherri Yorkey** was casing mail at the cluster boxes in a subdivision. "I thought I heard someone calling for help, but I had a radio going," she said.

When the carrier heard it again, she became concerned and checked it out. "There was a lady in the street hollering about her car," she said. The vehicle was coming straight toward the carrier.

Yorkey discovered that a customer had driven by and had wanted to talk to her, but put her car in reverse instead of park. The woman realized what was happening and tried to grab the brake, but the car continued backward and knocked her down, rolling over her foot and ankle, and kept going.

"My adrenalin kicked in," Yorkey said. "I just ran after the car and managed to jump in it. I didn't know I could run that fast."

Yorkey put the car into park, then went back to the woman. She helped the customer up and offered to call 911. The woman declined, instead calling her husband to pick her up. The carrier stayed to comfort her.

"I was a volunteer for the auxiliary

police department, so I know that helped me remain calm," Yorkey told a local newspaper.

The customer went to the hospital, and was found to have sustained two torn ligaments when the car rolled over her foot. "She was very lucky," the carrier said.

The woman later contacted the local postmaster. "Sherri was a godsend to me," she said, "a very kind and alert and helpful person."

The 32-year postal veteran brushed off any accolades, though. "The world is a better place when we help each other," Yorkey said. "I think anyone would have done it."

## All in a day's work

While approaching a house on her route on Sept. 12, 2015, Canton, OH Branch 238 city carrier assistant **Michelle Everhart** said, "I heard beeping, but didn't think anything of it at first."

As she got closer, the carrier noticed the sound was getting louder and she could also smell smoke. "When I approached the door, I was like, 'Whoa, that's fire,' " she said.

Everhart knew her patron was elderly, so she was concerned about her. "I started pounding on the door," she said. When nobody answered, she quickly went to a neighbor's house, but they did not answer either, so she went back to the house to see if there was any activity. There wasn't.

"I walked about 500 feet down the road, and the neighbors there were out," Everhart said. She filled them in and asked them to call 911.

Firefighters quickly responded, entering the building through an open window. It was determined that the customer had left home and forgot about a boiling pan of eggs on the



Royal Oak, MI Branch 3216 member Sherri Yorkey was praised for her role in stopping a runaway vehicle and tending to its injured driver.

stove. The fire was contained to the kitchen.

Fire department officials credited Everhart with saving the customer's house from severe smoke damage. "It meant everything to her," the carrier said of her customer.

Still, the second-year letter carrier doesn't think she qualifies as a hero. "It's just part of being a carrier," Everhart said. "We notice things like that. If it would have been any of us, we would have done the same thing."

## Carrier's skills save the day

Chicago Branch 11 member **Kareem Armstead** was delivering mail one day in August 2015 when he saw a distraught woman run out of a house. "I just heard her scream," the carrier said.

The woman had something in her

hands. "I thought it was a puppy," Armstead said.

When he heard her shout for help, "I didn't hesitate—I just ran," he said. It turns out that it was her seven-month-old baby in her arms, and he had stopped breathing. The woman ran to the house next door, where an elderly couple lived, and set the baby on the couch.

The carrier went inside and assessed the infant, and his fatherly instincts kicked in. "He was turning blue and I was panicking," Armstead said. As people came streaming in, including police, the carrier performed CPR on the child.

When he didn't get a response, Armstead decided to blow into the baby's mouth like a balloon. "The baby bit my lip," he said, and that's when paramedics arrived to take over and take the young boy to a hospital.

### Kareem Armstead



After finishing his route, Armstead headed to the hospital to check on the family, where he was praised by doctors. The boy recovered and headed home soon after.

Sadly, the infant died at home just five days later of sudden infant death syndrome. The family wrote to Armstead to thank him for stepping in to help. They told him because of his actions, the entire family was able to come and say goodbye to the child.

The 19-year postal veteran doesn't want any accolades for his actions, however. "I hate the word 'hero,'" Armstead said.

Still, "It's something I'll never forget," he added.

## Fire and rescue



Long Island Merged, NY Branch 6000 member **Anthony Massaro Jr.** was delivering mail to a house on July 19, 2016 when he saw something out of the ordinary. "I saw smoke coming from an air-conditioning unit

on the side of the building." When the carrier went closer, he looked through a window and saw that thick, black smoke was quickly filling the home. He also saw flames coming from a small table. After calling 911, Massaro began banging on the door. A passerby saw what he was doing and came to help beat on the front, back and side doors of the house. "No one was home, thankfully," the carrier said. The fire department was just down the street, so firefighters arrived quickly to put out the fire, which was determined to have been started by an electrical appliance on the table. The homeowner had been on vacation. "There was very minimal damage to

the house," Massaro said. "I put the mail in the box when it was safe to do so and I continued on my route." Despite praise, the six-year postal veteran denies any heroics. "I did what I feel any person would have done," Massaro said.

Member **Joel Wiersma** was delivering mail one day last summer when he looked up at the house on the corner. "I could see smoke coming out of the window," he said. He went up to the window panes and felt them—they were hot, and the smoke was traveling up the window frame, so he called 911. The carrier knew that the residents normally

were not home at that time of day, but he wanted to be sure, so he started knocking on the door and a neighbor came by to help. Firefighters soon came to put out the blaze. They discovered that it had been started by a heat lamp falling and catching fire. Wiersma said the family came up to him later to thank him. The carrier admitted that a fire on the route is an unusual occurrence. "You don't encounter it every day, and I don't want to encounter it every day," Wiersma said with a laugh. Still, the 18-year postal veteran brushed off any accolades for his actions. "Anyone in their right mind would have done it," he said. **PR**



Tommy Heuer

### Caring in the community

Sioux Falls, SD Branch 491 member **Tommy Heuer** was going about his route on April 14, 2016, when he saw an unusual sight on the street. “I see a guy covered in blood limping his way toward me,” he said.

The carrier stopped to ask if the man was OK and see what he could do to help. “He kind of ignored me,” the carrier said. Not wanting to leave the man, Heuer pressed further. “He said he got jumped,” he said, and he

learned that he had been stabbed and was trying to walk to a hospital that was a few blocks away.

“He just had a lot of blood on him,” he said. The carrier stayed with the victim until he saw an ambulance pass nearby. Heuer waved it down and they picked the man up.

The stabbing had reportedly been drug-related, local radio station KELO reported. Police said that four men were in a car arranging a pot buy. The buyers intended to rip off the sellers, while the sellers intended to rip off the

buyers. After they realized what was happening, a melee broke out. One of the men was stabbed and another was hit in the head with a rock.

Once the man was loaded onto the ambulance bound for the hospital, Heuer continued his rounds.

The third-year letter carrier and National Guard veteran doesn’t think of himself as a hero, though. “Honestly, I just stopped and talked to the guy,” Heuer said. “I feel like any other carrier would have acted in the same way on their route.” **PR**

### Neighborhood watch

Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 member **Alex Dailey** was driving his LLV one day last February when he saw a bad situation. “I saw a dog loose and running over to where a UPS truck was parked,” he said. “I had



Alex Dailey

a weird feeling something was not right; I knew that there was a dog in that area that was bad news.” The carrier drove over to the UPS truck and saw that the worker was trapped by the dog between a house and

his truck. “I started yelling at the dog until it ran back to its owner,” Dailey said. The dog left. “I turned around and asked the guy if he was OK, and he said yes,” the carrier said. So, they both got back in their vehicles to continue their rounds. The UPS carrier flagged down another carrier, Jim Porzio, the next day and asked him to convey his gratitude to Dailey. But the first-year letter carrier doesn’t think he should be called a hero. “I was just in right place at the right time,” Dailey said. “I am always happy to watch out for other people, no matter what. I hope if it was the other way around, someone would do the same for me one day.”

On Feb. 3, 2016, Corpus Christi, TX Branch 1259 member **Dennis Poer** had delivered a large package to a house and noticed that there was also a medium-sized UPS-delivered package

on the porch. As the carrier went about his route, he saw a man who, along with a friend, had about 10 minutes prior asked the carrier for some spare change for food. “He came by with the package I had just dropped off,” he said. Poer called the non-emergency police number to report what he had seen. “I was standing there. I don’t know why he didn’t see me,” Poer said. The man went two blocks down and the carrier lost sight of him. Soon after, he saw the man and a friend walk down the other side but without the package. “They had to have stashed the package somewhere,” Poer said. The carrier then saw the man go back to the same house and walk off carrying what looked to be the smaller package. A neighbor yelled out to the thieves, who then tossed the package back into the yard. The two suspects turned around to walk back toward a vacant lot just as the police ar-



Dennis Poer

rived and apprehended them. Poer gave them a statement and walked them to where he had seen the suspects go. There, they found the first package hidden in tall grass. Both were returned to the customer. The 23-year postal veteran brushed off any heroics, though. “All I did was dial a number and watch him,” Poer said. “That’s it.” **PR**





## Help on the way



Craig Hall II

On Sept. 14, 2015, Houston Branch 283 member **Craig Hall II** was delivering mail when he heard a woman crying for help. The carrier tried to open her front door, but was unsuccessful, so he walked around to the back to try that door. Unsuccessful there as well, he called the police and huddled by the front door to wait until they arrived. “I was assuring her help was on the way,” Hall said. “Police had to break through the front door.” Responding officers found that the customer had apparently had a stroke and had been on the floor for two days. The woman received medical assistance and has since returned home. “She’s doing fine now,” Hall said. The 12-year letter carrier and Marine Corps veteran was commended for his role in helping his customer, but he said he felt like anyone would have done it. Being called a hero “is a stretch for me,” Hall said.

On June 1, 2016, New Hampshire Merged Branch 44 member **Tim Sullivan** was doing a relay

on his route. A man and his son had just gotten home. The son walked inside, and the carrier went up to the dad. “I handed him the mail, told him, ‘Have a good day,’ and walked away,” he said. The carrier then heard a thud. Sullivan turned back around and saw that the customer had crashed three feet to the ground, head-first off the porch. The

man’s head was bleeding excessively. The customer’s son called 911, and Sullivan wasted no time, providing first aid and helping to stabilize the man as they waited for EMTs to arrive. “He was lying on his back,” the carrier said. “I just held his head in place. He kind of gasped and came to.” The man apparently was dehydrated and had passed out. An ambulance soon arrived to take the customer to the hospital, where he remained overnight. When Sullivan saw that the situation was in good hands, he headed back to the post

office, changed his bloody shirt and then went back out to finish his route. “Tim is the kind of letter carrier who stops at nothing to do the right thing,” Branch 44 President Dan Yianakopolos wrote to *The Postal Record*. “His actions are that of a true hero.” But the 15-year postal veteran disagreed with the hero appellation. “I don’t see it that way,” he said humbly.

On the evening of April 5, 2016, Dayton, OH Branch 182 city carrier assistant **Donte Cotton** was standing in the back of the post office talking with a supervisor when they heard a loud bang. When they looked in the direction of the sound, they saw a transformer pole shake and sparks shot out of the transformer. They walked through the gate of the post office to see what was going on. “We could see a car had flipped to its roof,” Cotton said. The driver got out of the car and told them her child was inside. When the carrier looked, “I saw a baby’s body

moving around,” he said. “My main concern was the little kid. My fatherly instincts kicked in.” The supervisor called 911 as Cotton got on his back and crawled



Donte Cotton

through the broken glass into the driver’s side window. “I pulled the girl out of the broken window,” he said. He then handed her to her mother as medics arrived on the scene. The youngster and her mother were taken to the hospital and treated for non-life-threatening injuries. Cotton doesn’t think his actions were a big deal. “I was just doing a good deed,” the second-year letter carrier said. “I wouldn’t call myself a hero.”

On Aug. 8, 2016, Evansville, IN Branch 377 member **Barrett Wright** was about to deliver mail to a doctor’s office on his route. “I had just pulled up in my mail truck,” he said. It was an empty parking lot, save for one van. When he looked over at the vehicle, “there was a woman lying face-down on the concrete,” the carrier said. “I was kind of freaked out.” Wright ran over to help, and the woman said she had tripped out of her van and was complaining of pain in her hip. She had been lying awkwardly, partly under the vehicle. The carrier called 911, applied first aid, and calmed the woman until she was taken to the hospital. But the second-year letter carrier doesn’t think his actions are a big deal. “It was nothing too crazy,” Wright said. “I feel like anybody would do the same thing.” **PR**



New Hampshire Merged Branch 44 member **Tim Sullivan** was congratulated by his family and colleagues for aiding a man on his route.