

Honoring those killed in the line of duty



NALC President Fredric Rolando led a presentation for Atzelia Borges Olivo, a letter carrier killed in Puerto Rico in 2012. Her daughter's family helped add Olivo's name to the memorial plaque at NALC Headquarters that bears the names of those men and women who have been killed while performing their duties.



Their names remind us that letter carriers face many dangers on their routes, and sometimes pay the ultimate price.

Etched on the memorial plaque in the lobby of NALC Headquarters in Washington, DC, are the names of letter carriers killed in the line of duty.

"As a union, our mission is to protect the safety of letter carriers," NALC President Fredric Rolando said, "but sometimes, despite our best efforts, we lose brothers and sisters to workplace fatalities. We honor their legacies on the memorial plaque as a way to recommit ourselves to this mission."

The latest letter carrier death memorialized on the plaque is that of Albuquerque, NM Branch 504 member **Jose "Pepe" Hernandez**. While on his route April 22, Hernandez, an Army veteran and father of four, tried to break up a fight between a teenager and his mother and was shot to death.

The varied circumstances behind each carrier's death remind us of the range of hazards that all letter carriers face while serving their communities.

"These men and women made the supreme sacrifice while serving the public," President Rolando said. "Their deaths were tragic, but the memorial ensures that we will never forget them." The plaque includes the names of the carriers, their branches, the cities they carried mail in and the dates of their deaths. The plaque was unveiled as part of NALC's remembrance of fallen union members on Workers Memorial Day in April 2012.

Because NALC may not be aware of every carrier killed in the line of duty, it's likely that not all are listed, especially the further back in history they go. Headquarters often relies on branch presidents to report the information within the official form posted on the NALC website under "Member Benefits" or at nalc.org/killed-in-line-of-duty.

"Through this somber act of remembrance, we vow to never forget those who lost their lives in the fulfillment of their duties," Rolando said.

Workers Memorial Day, April 28, is a day set aside to remember the thousands of American workers who die on the job each year. The AFL-CIO established the remembrance in 1989, choosing April 28 because it marks the date the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) was established. **PR**