

A matter of pride



**Philip
Dine**

NALC has many things to be proud of—and veterans are high on the list, both in terms of how many of our members (about 60,000) are wearing their second uniform in service to the country, and the respect they receive within our union.

For these reasons, we have taken a leadership role within the labor movement with the formation of NALC's Veterans Group in 2015 and its subsequent expansion in numbers and activities.

Our cover story this month details the work of our Veterans Group, now 12,300-plus strong with both active and retired carriers. The article also discusses the ongoing contributions to NALC and to the broader commu-

nity made by our veterans.

As we know, Veterans Day is Nov. 11, making this coverage timely—but we don't need a holiday to recognize our veterans for their past and current efforts and sacrifices. Every day, we observe your competence and discipline and selflessness, and the situational awareness you bring when unexpected events occur on the route and you leap into action to help others.

A few days ago, we held our annual National Heroes ceremony in Washington, DC, and it is no coincidence that over the years, carriers wearing their second uniform (sometimes their third or fourth after serving in multiple service branches) often are disproportionately represented.

NALC's Veterans Group, unique among unions, was established because President Rolando saw an unfilled need. It is flourishing because, to help get it off the ground, he tapped Paul Barner, an Army veteran who now is NALC's assistant secretary-treasurer and who possesses an extraordinary commitment to his fellow vets.

On a personal level, the presence of so many vets in our ranks is among the factors that make my job here so rewarding. As a reporter, I covered my share of presidential and congressional politics, but I preferred my two specialty beats: labor and the military. From daily Pentagon coverage (including on 9/11) to reporting on those engaged in formulating or carrying out the global war on terror to covering U.S. combat operations in the Middle East and Afghanistan and Kosovo, I acquired a profound respect for the dedication, skills and courage displayed by our military men and women.

Sometimes, the three beats—politics, labor and defense—joined forces to help me on a story, as when a U.S. senator or another politician wanted to tell me something sensitive off the record but hesitated, wondering whether he could trust

me to keep his name out of it.

My stock reply: "Senator, I cover two kinds of people—Teamsters and Marines. I try to keep my word." It always worked.

To our veterans: We know the pride you feel in your service. Please know that all of us are every bit as proud to have you in our midst, every bit as grateful for your contributions, past and present. It is an honor to serve with you.



My dad, Joe Dine, was a World War II veteran.

EDITORIAL STAFF:
Director of Communications and Media Relations Philip Dine
Designer/Web Editor Mike Shea
Writer/Editor Rick Hodges
Writer/Editor Jenessa Wagner
Editorial Assistant Clare Foley

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