

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 202-662-2489 or at postalrecord@nalc.org. We'll follow up with you to obtain news clippings, photos or other information.

Honoring heroic carriers

Heroism, 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 helps victim when car crashes into office

Randy Fields was in the Valmont Post Office in Boulder, CO, on a July morning when disaster struck.

"I heard a big crash and saw glass exploding into the post office," he said. A car had crashed into the building. He ran toward it and watched as the driver tried to back out, then move forward, then back out again. As other co-workers tried to stop the woman from moving the car, Fields heard someone moaning in pain.

"I turned the corner and saw a man on all fours," the Boulder Branch 642 member said. "Blood was pulsating from a wound on his left arm." The car had struck him and pinned him to a counter. The man, he later learned, was a postal customer named William Coffin.

Fields, who has carried the mail since 2005, took off his belt and used it as a tourniquet with the help of a postal customer. They managed to stop the bleeding, but Coffin had lost a large amount of blood already and was slipping in and out of consciousness, so they talked to him to try to keep him awake.



"I was scared he was going to die," Fields said.

Coffin was seriously injured and when EMTs arrived, they took him to the hospital. Fields and his co-workers managed to go out on their routes that day. Police said charges are pending against the driver.

Coffin survived and eventually returned home from the hospital. "Mr. Coffin sustained a whole list of injuries," Field added, including "a lacerated artery in his left arm, 16 broken ribs, fractured tibia separated from his knee, both ACLs and MCLs torn in both knees, a shattered pelvis, collapsed lung and dislocated shoulder." Coffin will have to undergo more surgeries and rehabilitation before he is fully recovered.

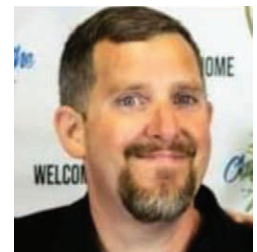
To thank Fields for helping to save his life, Coffin had him over for dinner. "The emotions were incredible," Fields said, "as we relived every moment for a solid two hours."

As for being called heroic, Fields said, "It took me a long while to realize that I am a hero. I initially just thought

it was something that everyone would do for another human being."

Protecting a woman threatened with a gun

In February, 15-year carrier **Matthew Rose** had finished his route and was ready to drive back to the post office when a distraught woman approached his truck. She told him a man she lived with was drunk and had a gun and was threatening her.



Matthew Rose

The Chillicothe, OH Branch 452 member and Air Force veteran called 911 and told the woman she could hide in his truck until police arrived. "I let her sit in the back where she couldn't be seen," he said. While they waited for officers to respond, Rose talked to the woman to calm her.

When police arrived and he knew the woman was safe, he drove back to the station.

“I don’t feel like I did much,” Rose said. “I’m glad I could help her out.”

He helped her to breathe again

Delivering to Frederick Soups and Comfort Foods in Frederick, MD, in July, **Troy Harris** went inside the business and found the owner and another person dealing with a medical emergency.

“There was a lady passed out on the floor,” Harris said. The Rockville Branch 2835 member immediately tried to help. The woman, Ellen Baker, was not breathing.

“I looked in her mouth and saw that her tongue was rolled back,” blocking her airway, he said. Harris reached into her mouth and pulled her tongue free,

and she began breathing again and woke up with Harris by her side.

The restaurant owner had called 911, and when paramedics arrived, “I was gone like Batman,” Harris said. “I had to get back to my route.” He didn’t tell anyone at his station about the incident, but word got out when Baker contacted the post office to thank him. It turned out that Baker’s husband, Jim, is a retired postmaster for a nearby town. Harris later met Baker again at the restaurant, where she thanked him for his actions.

“I now have had a second chance at living life on my terms,” she told the *Frederick News-Post*. “I really don’t think I ever took it for granted before, but I really don’t take it for granted now.”

Harris was just glad he was there. “God placed me at the right place and the right time,” he said. “I felt like it was the right thing to do.” **PR**



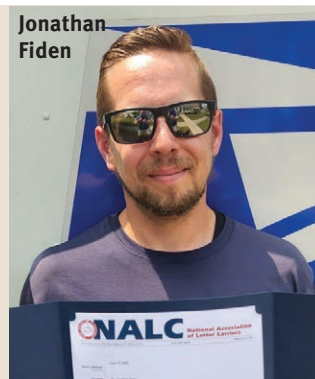
Tony Harris with Ellen Baker

Help on the way

Lakhwinder Gill was delivering on his route in Fremont, CA, on a winter day early this year when he heard a car horn honking. He found the source of the noise in an apartment parking lot—a woman he knew from his route was struggling with a medical emergency. “I saw the lady honking in the car,” Gill, a member of Greater East Bay Branch 1111, said. “She couldn’t get out of the car. She was very sick.” Gill, who has carried the mail for 35 years, helped her into her home and continued on his route. But he was still

concerned about her, so he stopped by again on his way back to the office and checked on her. Seeing that she wasn’t improving, he alerted the apartment leasing office and called 911. After checking each day for a few weeks, he found the woman back home from a hospital stay, safe and sound. She had been hospitalized for congestive heart failure. “I am alive and well today because my mailman cared,” the woman wrote to Gill’s postmaster to thank him. “It’s our responsibility to take care of our customers,” Gill said.

Delivering mail on a busy street in May, Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 member **Jonathan Fiden** spotted a man in trouble. “I came out of a business and happened to see a gentleman seizing in the street,” Fiden, a carrier since 2015, said. A woman who identified herself as a nurse stopped her car to help. Fiden and the nurse pulled the man into a parking lot to keep him from being hit by cars. Fiden called 911 and waited with the nurse. They turned him onto his side to help keep him from choking. “I just stabilized him as



best I could,” he said. EMTs arrived and took the man to a hospital. Though he was unable to learn the man’s identity or the outcome of the emergency, Fiden knows he made an effort to help. “Honestly, I really didn’t do much,” Fiden said, “but I did what I could do.” **PR**