

Veterans Group

For more information, go to nalc.org/veterans.

November Veterans Group issue

Only members of the NALC Veterans Group will be listed in the November Veterans Group issue, so join now to be included.

Join the NALC Veterans Group today

Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces comprise almost a quarter of the membership of the National Association of Letter Carriers—active NALC members as well as retired members. As of right now, we have more than 18,273 members in the Veterans Group; however, there are thousands of members who are veterans and have not signed up.

These veterans traded their military uniforms for letter carrier uniforms, and they continue to serve their communities and this great nation.

The creation of the NALC Veterans Group is intended to be something tangible and useful.

The NALC Veterans Group is designed to provide NALC members who are military veterans access to the information and tools specific to veterans' rights and benefits within the U.S. Postal Service. It also is intended to give veterans a sense of family and more brotherhood/sisterhood. It seeks to provide all NALC members who are also military vet-

erans—active full-time and part-time letter carriers, as well as retired letter carriers—resources, rights information and a sense of camaraderie.

NALC has made it easier for all veterans to sign up for the group. You can fill out the form on the website and mail it in, or you can fill out the form shown below and mail it in.

And you can go to nalc.org/join-veterans, which will generate an email. You then will need to enter the information requested—name, address, branch number, military branch and any affiliated veterans groups. Once the fields are completed, press “send.” You will then be entered in our NALC Veterans Group and you will be sent an NALC Veteran pin.

Don't forget about the Veterans Group memorabilia that is available to purchase if you are a member of



The screenshot shows the NALC website's 'MEMBER BENEFITS' section. It features the NALC logo at the top, navigation links (About NALC, News & Research, Government Affairs, Workplace Issues, Union Administration), and a 'Join the NALC Veterans Group' link. Below this is a circular emblem with an American flag and the text 'ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS NATIONAL VETERAN'. At the bottom, there is a form titled 'To join the NALC Veterans group, click here to send an email. Please provide:' with fields for Name, Address, Branch number, Military branch and, and Any affiliated veterans groups.

Joining the Veterans Group online is easy. Simply go to nalc.org/join-veterans, click the link to generate an email and send your information to NALC Headquarters.

the Veterans Group. These items would make a great gift from a branch to its veterans; check out nalcstore.org to order. All proceeds go toward future Veterans Group projects.

Veteran profile: Tammy Dawson

Tammy Dawson, a Madison, WI Branch 507 member, was a leader from a young age. Growing up on the family farm 30 minutes north of Madison, she had a rocky relationship with her mother. So, being the eldest daughter, she took care of the household and looked after her siblings, including doing laundry beginning at the age of 7. This strong sense of leadership and duty to others eventually drove her to join the military and later the Postal Service and NALC.

Dawson remembers clearly the moment she decided she would be in the

Army. She was in her seventh grade English classroom when she saw a magazine advertisement to sign up.

“It just clicked, like, that is what I’m going to do,” she said. “I just knew I was gonna do it. I decided right then, and I told everybody.”

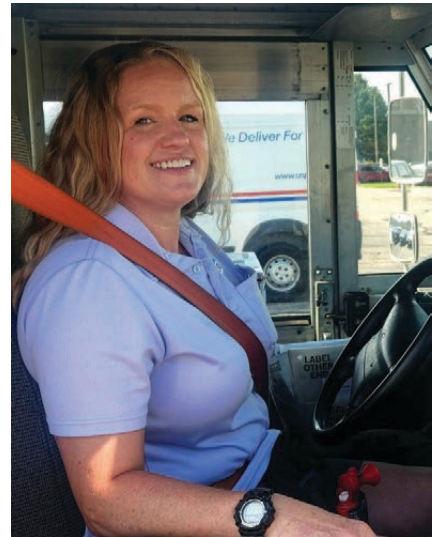
She wanted to get out of her house and felt inspired by the opportunities to lead that the Army offered, so she thought it would be the perfect choice for her.

When she was 18 years old and in high school, she went to a Military Entrance Processing Station and enlisted in the service. Only two weeks



Dawson joined the Army in 1994.

Dawson is a member of Madison, WI Branch 507.



after graduating from high school in 1994 she was on her way to basic training, where she thrived.

During her time in the Army, she was stationed in Bamberg, Germany, in the First and Third Infantry Divisions. There she worked as a wire systems installer and as a signal support systems specialist.

Also, as part of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Stabilisation Force, which was a NATO-led multinational peace-keeping force that was deployed after the Bosnian War, she went to Bosnia and Herzegovina in July of 1996. There, she changed out Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio System (SINCGARS) radios and drove a multiple rocket launcher. Her work as a driver earned her an Army Achievement Award.

Her military experience brought her close friendships that have endured long past her service.

“Being in the military, it bonds you for life,” Dawson said. “Those friendships will last until I die.”

During her service in Germany, she met Joe Dawson, who became her husband. Due to his subsequent service in the Persian Gulf War, he was diagnosed with Gulf War Syndrome—a chronic illness with varying symptoms including fatigue, headaches, muscle and joint pain, gastrointestinal issues, respiratory problems, sleep disturbances and cognitive difficulties. Gulf War Syndrome affected about 250,000 of the 697,000 U.S. veterans who served in the 1991 Gulf War. The syndrome is thought to have been caused by exposure to chemical agents, pesticides and smoke from oil well fires. Due to her husband’s illness, Dawson decided not to reenlist after her four years were up in 1998.

She worked as a security guard in

the Madison area before starting her postal career. Her husband had suggested applying to USPS because he knew it would allow her to continue to receive federal benefits. Once hired in 2000, she didn’t begin as a letter carrier but rather as a postal clerk.

While working as a clerk, she completed her associate’s degree, with the help of the GI Bill. She planned to work toward her bachelor’s degree but stopped when her husband’s illness became more severe, leading to his death in 2004.

The Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act went into effect in 2006, restructuring the Postal Service and causing job displacement and loss for the clerk craft. This motivated her to become involved in her local of the American Postal Workers Union, becoming a shop steward and from 2009 to 2012 serving as president of the local.

Many postal clerks ended up quitting their jobs due to the restructuring of the Postal Service, which made her notice the resilience of her fellow military veterans who worked at the Postal Service.

“When things got really hard, the only people left were veterans,” she said.

To protect the job of a fellow clerk who had less seniority and was at risk of being excessed to a new station far from her home, Dawson chose to switch crafts. “You know what,” she thought, “I’m just going to be a carrier.”

Since 2012, Dawson has worked as a letter carrier. She’s involved in NALC, regularly attending Capitol City Merged Branch 507’s meetings.

When it comes to being a letter carrier, she enjoys the “freedom of working outside,” along with the space

to be “a super independent person” that the craft provides. But, Dawson says, her favorite thing about her job is “helping people.”

To that end, as a letter carrier, she has shown the same dedication as in her previous positions, especially when it comes to her customers. For example, in a single week last year, she performed two heroic acts. Dawson found a toddler wandering around her route and helped bring him back to his home right before the child was about to wander into the road. Another day that week, she talked to a customer who was having a mental health crisis and called 911 so that he could get the help he needed.

In her words, she “went above and beyond [in all her positions following the Army] and I think that goes back to my foundation, which is the military.”

Join the NALC Veterans Group

The NALC Veterans Group is designed to provide NALC members—both active and retired letter carriers—who are also military veterans the ability to connect with fellow NALC veterans and stay informed on issues of importance to letter carrier veterans. It is free to join.

Members receive a pin as a symbol of gratitude for their military service and membership in NALC.

If you are interested in joining the group, complete the sign-up card at nalc.org/veterans.