



IN THE MAILBOX

UNITED POSTMASTERS AND MANAGERS OF AMERICA RETIRED

VOLUME 92

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2023

Eva Finley, National Retiree Editor



Submitted by Ricky Scaggs

Wreaths Across America

2023 theme is Remember, Honor, and Teach

REMEMBER the fallen • **HONOR** those who served
TEACH the next generation the value of freedom

Wreaths are placed on grave markers at state and national Veterans cemeteries, as well as at local and communities cemeteries each December for National Wreaths Across America Day. This year, the Wreaths Across America ceremony is December 16th, at 11:00 am. Each wreath is placed in front of the headstone, and the name is said out loud. Last year over 2.7 million wreaths were placed on headstones by volunteers.

It started in 1992, by Morrill Worcester of Maine and has grown every year. It is expected that this year will top 3 million wreaths. Volunteers



pack, load on trucks, ship across the country, unload, and place on the graves.

If you would like to donate a wreath, they are \$17 each. Checks can be sent to: Wreaths Across America, P O Box 249, Columbia Falls ME 04623. You are not limited to one wreath.

Please give generously to the program. It can be done in person, or online.

Thank you for your sponsorship and joining us in our mission to Remember, Honor and Teach!



HONOR FLIGHT 2023

Volunteers escort UPMA Veterans in a "parade" to share in a day of honor for our America's veterans



Pictured left to right are a few of our volunteers:
R. Greg McManus,
Steve Vanderhoof,
and Lt. Col. Joe Plyles





Postmaster Retired Author to Donate Proceeds to UPMA Scholarship

MANDY HESLEP-WHITTEN
UPMA Ret President

I have just returned from the Central Area Officers where I enjoyed meeting and chatting with Postmaster Retired Paul A Joseph, currently serving as the Ohio Chapter Editor. Paul has written a book called THE UNTOLD STORY OF OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM. According to one reviewer on Amazon, "This book is a firsthand account of a company in action from the Mobilization Point through actual time in theater of operations, Iraq. The book looks at the human side of soldiers and discusses several stories that occurred. These stories are all based on fact. The book is a very easy read since you will not want to put it down." Interesting to me that Paul preciously donated all the money he made on the book to the Wounded Soldier Program. At the CAOS, he donated all proceeds to UPMA PAC. I talked to him about

the UPMA Retired publications, UPMA Gold and *In The Mailbox*, and asked if he would be willing to make donations to the UPMA Retired Scholarship Program if members ordered a book from him through either publication. He graciously agreed.

All proceeds are donated back to the cause. Any orders received from the Gold article or from the article on page 3 of this issue of *In The Mailbox* will go to UPMA scholarship fund! You know we always honor our Veterans who have made this country strong. I have just started reading the book myself and it is very interesting.

His address is Paul Joseph 727 Atalan Trail, Lima Ohio 45805. His email is repins@bright.net; his phone is 419 236 0166.

Please mention that you read about the book in *The Gold* or *In The Mailbox*.

Meanwhile, he shared this poem with me, the author is unknown:

It is the **VETERAN**, not the preacher who has given us freedom of religion.

It is the **VETERAN**, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press.

It is the **VETERAN**, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech.

It is the **VETERAN**, not the campus organizer, who has given us freedom to assemble.

It is the **VETERAN**, not the lawyer, who has given us the right to a fair trial.

It is the **VETERAN**, not the politician, who has given us the right to vote.



More articles will appear in the next issue of *In the Mailbox*. Deadline for the next issue is DECEMBER 10. Send your news, photos, or chapter event announcements to inthemailboxeditor@usa.net or text Eva at 512-569-4680.

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pm32347@yahoo.com



Invite Veterans to Join the Million Veteran Program

Dear Michael Silvestri,

Thanks to your participation in the Million Veteran Program (MVP), we are about to make history! We are 25,000 Veterans away from the million milestone. We're asking for your help to reach this goal by Veterans Day.

Because of you, MVP has already made genetic and health discoveries that help provide better care for all Veterans.

Mental Health: Identifying new screenings and treatments for conditions such as PTSD, depression, anxiety, suicide, and substance use disorder. Cancer: Developing better ways to predict cancer in different Veteran populations. And more: Read about MVP's research at www.mvp.va.gov, including findings on heart disease, diabetes, Gulf War Illness, kidney disease, hearing and vision diseases, osteoarthritis, and Parkinson's disease.

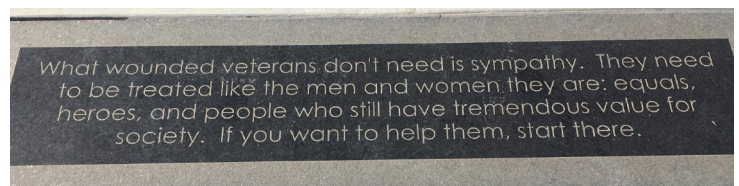
How can you help? Share your MVP story with other Veterans and invite them to join MVP at www.mvp.va.gov or call 866-441-6075 for more information.

Thank you for being part of MVP and making history together.

The MVP Team

Veterans don't need to receive care at VA to participate.

Visit us at www.mvp.va.gov.

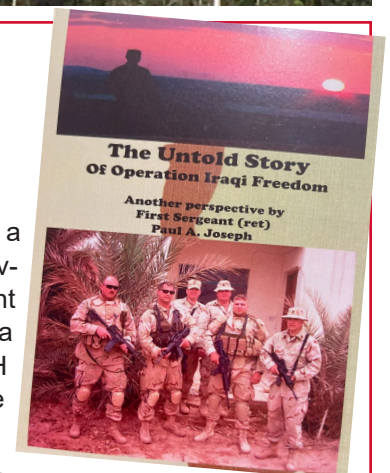


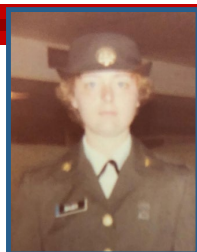
The Untold Story Of Operation Iraqi Freedom

Another perspective by First Sergeant (ret) Paul A. Joseph
Submitted by Eva Finley, Editor

Paul A. Joseph, Postmaster Retired and US Army (ret) has written a book and talked with President Mandy about selling the books and giving part of the proceeds to the Retiree Scholarship Fund. President Mandy agreed, so if you are interested in purchasing one of these books, please send a check or money order in the amount of \$15 to: Paul A. Joseph, 727 Atalan Trail, Lima OH 45805. This price includes shipping and mailing to your address. Please write your name and address including your zip code and he will send you a copy.

"The book is paperback and was not written for profit or notoriety. Rather, it is to ensure that our efforts and the loss of our soldiers were not in vain. It is to inform, educate and enlighten those who truly care about what is important and right about America. And about those who sacrifice to keep it so." - MSG (ret) Paul A Joseph.





Helen Bauer



Rodney Boland



Novice Briggs



Steve Brighton



Roy Brown



Don Brunnell



Bruce Byrn



Roger Callaham



Ted Carrico



Ken Carter



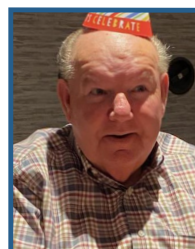
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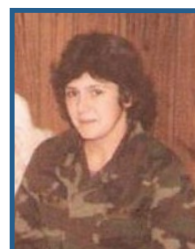
Woodrow Conner



Richard Darymple



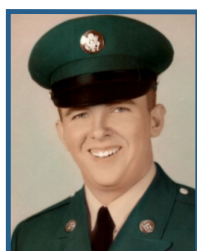
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Jo Dyke



Angelo Fierro



Bob Frakes



Galen Freymiller



Jimmy Fusco



Clarence Gagner



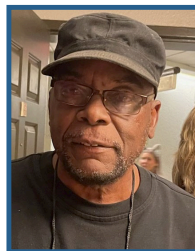
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James Gillispie



Roland Givens



Earl Henry



Donovan Horrigan



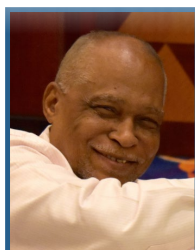
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James Joseph



Paul Joseph



Ron Karrels



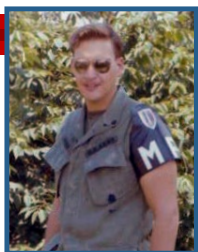
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Robert LeBlanc



Paul Luna



Paul Mader



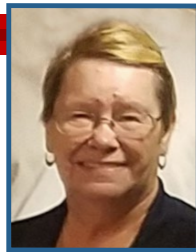
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Sam McCullar



David McKee



Mary McKendrick



Keith Miner



Bruce Nelson



Bruce Peters



Charley Peters



Norm Peters



Wayne Pierce



Jim Price



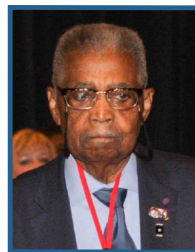
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Jessie Shanks



Mike Silvestri



Bill Simpson



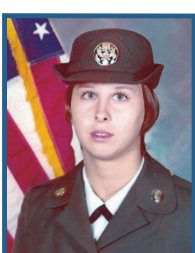
Demo Sofronas



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Ted Stirling



Dee Sturm



Marcus Stinson



Robert Umland



Lou Urso



Steve Vanderhoof



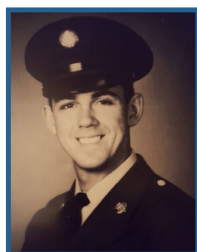
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Larry Weineke



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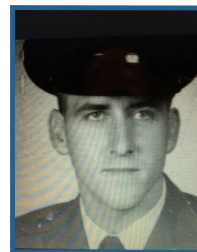
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Michael Winters



Ron Wood



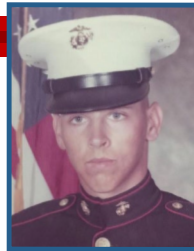
Deane Young



Butch Belanger



Robert Christian



John DeWitt



Joe Driggers



Lawade Ferguson



Steve Gonzales



Doug Gray



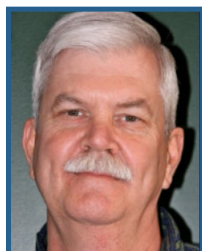
Alva Lil



John Lindsay



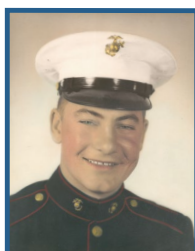
Judge Meadows



Roy Shaffer



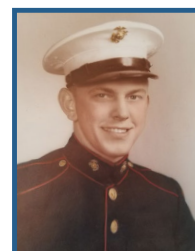
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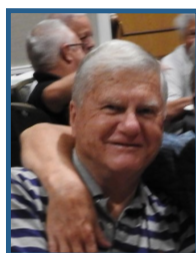
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Tony L. Williams



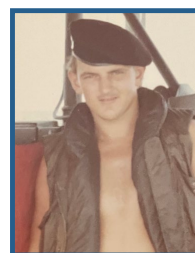
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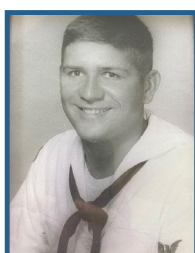
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Alfred Huffner



Larry Kunkle



Don Rayta



Celeste Rubanik



Woody Saylors



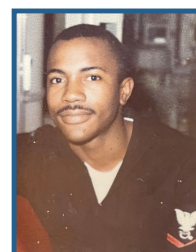
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Steven Schneider



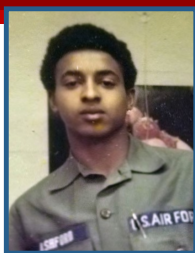
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Dawn Tisdale



Rufus Wallace



Randy Ashford



Calvin Bagley



John Ball



Richard Barnett



Jessie Berkebile



Ken Bryan



Paul Edd Butler



David Disharoon



Dave Ellis



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John Hamm



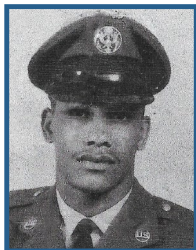
Pat Harkin



Ron Hentz



Phillip Hess



Le Roy Henry



Ben Johnson



Don Kelchner



John Olsen



Frank Parker



David Seal



Dallas Sharpe



Charles Stokke



Bill Thomas



Beverly Stubblefield



Charlie Wells

If you are a veteran and would like to be recognized in *In The Mailbox*, please send a photo along with your name and branch of service to inthemailboxeditor@usa.net or mail it to:
Eva Finley
National Retiree Editor
P O Box 500
Graford TX 76449-0500



Steven Craig



Paul LeFleur



Richard Skaggs



Hal Weinger

OPEN SEASON Info for OPM.org

The 2023 Open Season is from November 13, 2023, through December 11, 2023. Annuitants may change health plans or options, cancel or suspend their FEHB enrollment, and request plan brochures and information by:

- Using OPM's Open Season Online system
- Using Open Season Express by calling 1-800-332-9798.
- Sending regular mail (Postmarked no later than final date of Open Season) to: Office of Personnel Management
Open Season Processing Center, PO Box 5000, Lawrence, KS 66046-0500.

When using the mail option, clearly state your Open Season request. If you are making an enrollment change, be sure to include the plan you want, the type of coverage (Self Only, Self plus one, or Self and Family), and the enrollment code. Add your Annuity Claim Number and Social Security Claim Number on your request. If you are choosing Self Plus One or Self and Family coverage, you will need to include your eligible family member's information and other insurance information as specified in the instructions mailed to you at the beginning of Open Season.

New Postal Service Health Benefits:

If you are happy with your current plan, DO NOTHING THIS YEAR. You may continue to participate in your current plan through December 31, 2024. Your first opportunity to select a plan under the new Postal Service health Benefits (PSHB) Program will be during Open Season in 2024. Coverage under the PSHB Program will begin January 1, 2025.

Are You A New Medicare Part B Participant?

If you have recently become eligible and enrolled in Medicare Part B, you are encouraged to take a look at the lower option in your current Plan. In most cases, your insurance representative will advise you to switch to the lower option with lower premiums, as Medicare becomes your primary insurance provider. All insurance carriers provide different benefits, and most provide a financial reimbursement to help offset the cost of Medicare Part B. Most plans cover all remaining expenses, including co-pays, after Medicare Part B pays the first and majority of expenses.



SOC 2023 Fun



Rest in Peace

Robert Heslin

From Roberta Hoag

Robert Heslin, PM Ret., passed away on October 14. He honorably served in the US Army and was a member of the Wharton American Post for 56 years. Bob retired as PM of the Wharton Post Office in 1995 after serving the USPS for 38 years. He will be remembered for the Postal Service Television Show, "Everywhere, Every Day," viewed throughout New York and New Jersey. After retirement he was a consultant for the USPS from many years and was a Distinguished Member of the Postmaster General's Speakers Bureau. Cards may be sent to the family at 39 Kitchell Avenue, Wharton NJ 07885-2525.

William Paul "Bill" Reynolds

From Sharon Reynolds/Eva Finley

Bill Reynolds passed away on October 3 at the age of 75. He began his career as Temporary Indefinite Substitute Mail Handler in Topeka, KS and continued in many positions within the postal ranks including hiring of all the personnel for the new bulk mail center in KCK. He was later appointed PM of Lawrence, KS. He was active in Kansas NAPUS and held every position including State President. Condolences can be sent to his wife, Sharon Reynolds, at 827 N 1710 Road, Lawrence KS 66049-9015.

Stanley Skamarcz

From Mandy Whitten

It is with great sadness that I share the passing of Stanley Skamarycz, known by friends as "Stan the Man," PM Ret. Massachusetts at the age of 95. During his Postal Career, he was active in NAPUS, serving as Chapter Secretary/Treasurer and State President. He was also the PAC Chairman, raising thousands of dollars to support elected officials who supported Postal and Postmaster Legislation. Prior to his career, he served in the US Army and shortly after the Korean War began, he was called to active duty and served in the Second Infantry Division in Korea in 1951. His military decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, the European Occupation Medal, the World War II Victory Medal, The United National Medal, the Presidential Unit Citation, and the American Defense Medal. Condolences may be mailed to the Skamarycz Family at PO Box 1, Westminster, MA 01473-0001.

Ollie Boston

From Katherine Horton

The Michigan Chapter of UPMA mourns the passing of Ollie Boston, PM Ret. of St. Ignace, MI. Ollie was an active chapter member and enjoyed attending the Legislative Conferences to support UPMA issues. Condolences can be sent to PO Box 312, St. Ignace MI, 49781.

Thank

THE FAMILY OF Joe Gondola

From Dorothy Gondola

It gave me such comfort to receive the Very Large number of Sympathy cards from across the country mentioning Joe's leadership, kindness and listening qualities. He was the same with our Family. Joe had a soft step but apparently a large footprint. I appreciate all who sent cards and stamps from the bottom of my heart. God Bless You All. Dorothy's address is: 68 Windsor Road, Clifton NJ 07012-2191.

FROM Kathy Frame

I would like to seriously thank you all for the confidence you have in me to be elected as your next UPMA National Vice President Retired. I am excited and honored, I will not disappoint any of you and I promise to serve you to the best of my ability. You have my contact information on our UPMA website, reach out to me any time. Again thank you so much.

FROM Jack D. Wilkins

I sincerely appreciate your vote of confidence in electing me to the Board of Directors for Signature Federal Credit Union. I am excited for the opportunity to serve our members. Thank You.





QUESTIONS?

Barbara Whidden
BARBARA.WHIDDEN@AOL.COM
 call 352 408 4578

or

Rodney Boland
PM32347@yahoo.com
 or call 850-544-3672

FRIDAY, JANUARY 26 - PICNIC / BBQ

A few changes to this year's events....Friday's events will be held at **Hickory Point Recreation Park**, 27341 SR 19, Tavares, FL. The park is located on beautiful Little Lake Harris, on lake county's chain of lakes so, bring your boat, if you want. There are lots of ramps in the park. Hickory Point has a huge fishing pier for those that might be interested in "wetting a hook". Their website is www.LCWA.org for those who want an advance picture of the pavilion and grounds

We will OPEN at 10 am for those who want to fish, just sit around and visit, etc. **Please bring a folding chair if you can**, but there are a number of picnic tables and a few shelters. We rented the whole bottom floor of the pavilion so WE can escape in to there if needed. **BBQ BUFFET WILL BE SERVED ABOUT 2 PM** so you will have time to eat and get back to your "home for the evening".

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27 - STEAKOUT

We will be at the **Eustis Community Center on Lake Eustis** in downtown Eustis as before. We will open at 10 AM for coffee and visiting. The usual filet mignon dinner will be served at **NOON**. A few menu changes this year will be: instead of cole slaw we will have ceasar salad, baked potatoes (white and sweet), all the trimmings too, plus dessert and iced tea. We are hoping to also have grilled shrimp on skewers to make up for not having the seafood boil on Friday evening.

HOTELS

Quality Inn & Suites
 16630 US Hwy 441 West
 Mt. Dora, FL 32757
 phone: 352-383-3400

Hampton Inn
 19700 US Hwy 441
 Mt. Dora, FL 32757
 phone: 352-383-4267

Comfort Inn & Suites
 1380 E. Burleigh (Hwy 441)
 Mt. Dora, FL 32757
 phone: 352-253-2378

PLEASE MAKE YOUR OWN RESERVATIONS, but call/email Barbara Whidden if you have trouble.
 If possible don't wait until last week or so as hotels do fill up quickly in the Winter.
 These are just 3 of the hotels in the area. There are many others, plus B&Bs and rental houses.

NAME: _____

STATE of MEMBERSHIP: _____ ☐ children under 12 \$10 each _____

FRIDAY: @ \$30/EACH (number attending) _____ TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

SATURDAY: @ \$30/EACH (number attending) _____ TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

REGISTRATION:
Please mail to:
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Altoona, FL
32702-9307

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Editor Eva Finley: 512-569-4680

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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
TO EVA AT:

inthemailboxeditor@usa.net

Dear Mandy and UPMA Retired Board:
Thank you so much for the gorgeous
Waterford glasses presented to me in Denver.
They will be treasured and I will think of
all of you often as they are used in our
home. It is bittersweet to leave UPMA after
so many years and having made such
wonderful friends. I look forward to seeing
all of you at the Legislative Summit in
March. Love always, Gerri

**You will be
missed
Gerri Swarm!
Best Wishes
on your
future
adventures!!**

