



# Navy Postal Clerk Association

President: Michael Bertalan  
Vice President: Harlan Kirkendall  
Senior Advisor: Abel Quinones  
Secretary: Grover McLaughlin  
Treasurer: Steven Hill

**P**

osted by Gil Hough and Jack Spellman on December 7, 2009  
(Remember Pearl Harbor)

A combined message from your Navy Postal Clerk Association Elected Officers:

Are your dues paid up to date? Go to our NPCA webpage (<http://npcreunion.dreamhost.com>) then look on the left hand side (menu) and click on the following and it will tell you: [Association Members\(current\)](#)  
**(Please review the attached flyer regarding our upcoming reunion attached separately)**

A short feature story about our very first Postal Clerk selected for PCCM in 1962

PCCM Clarence (Red) Lail, USN, Retired  
"A True Sailor & Sea Warrior"

This young (16 year old) high school dropout left his family farm in Taylorsville, North Carolina to join the United States Navy during a time of war in July 1942.

Young Clarence was trained to become a Torpedoman (TM) and was quickly sent off to war and reported aboard the USS Converse DD-509 for duty. He spent most of the war engaged in combat operations in the Pacific Theatre. On Thanksgiving morning 1943, his ship was one of five that participated in the battle of Cape St. George. During this battle his Squadron received credit for destroying three of the five Japanese destroyers that night. The destroyer that sank PT-109 (JFK) got away! During this operation, the USS Converse was hit by a large Japanese torpedo but it failed to explode which spared this young sailor's life and that of his fellow shipmates; luckily his life story is still being written! His Destroyer was assigned to the famous Destroyer Squadron 23 which was under the Command of Commodore Arleigh Burke (later promoted to Admiral who served three consecutive terms as CNO). DESRON 23, known as the "Little Beavers," covered the initial landings in Bougainville in November 1943, and fought in 22 separate engagements during the next four months. During this period, the "Little Beavers," were credited with destroying one Japanese cruiser, nine destroyers, one submarine, several

smaller ships, and approximately 30 aircraft during his tour of duty. DESRON 23 was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for their heroic action and a significant number of Theatre Campaign Medals with Battle Stars.

He reenlisted in the summer of 1946 aboard the USS Hugh Purvis DD-709 and had the opportunity to convert to Mailman (MaM2/c); this conversion opportunity provided him with overnight liberty. He was fortunate enough to find a great lady (Mary Lou) and got married. Red spent several additional tours on sea duty and finally went to COMSERVLANT when they converted former Postal Clerks to the Teleman rating which he describes as a disaster for the future promotion of Postal Clerks. He qualified for promotion to TEC and was assigned to an overseas shore tour at Port Lyautey, Morocco where he was sent to the Post Office to work for his old friend Chief Rudy Averitt. He was later sent to the Fleet Mail Center, Naples by CINCELM to help reorganize it (square it away) and train a Chief Yeoman to take charge of the Mail Center.

The Teleman rating was disestablished in the late 1950's and all remaining TE's had to convert to either Radioman or Yeomen, i.e., TERM or TEYN. They were then forced to pass a Navy Wide examination to become either a Radioman or Yeoman. Many could not and were forced to retire without ever advancing again He passed the examination and was latterly converted from TE(YN)C to YNC after reporting to the office of the Chief of Naval Personnel (BUPERS) in Washington D.C. on or around 1959.

During his tour at BUPERS he was notified of the creation of a new Postal Clerk (PC) rating in 1960. He applied after taking the examination for Senior Chief Yeoman (YNCS). The advancement listing for YNCS and the newly selected Postal Clerk BUPERS notices came about the same time. Red's name appeared on both the YNCS listing and the conversion listing to PCC (original 644): Navy Times Magazine dated October 25, 1960. The Bureau was contacted and moved him from YNC to PCC and then PCCS. Thus, he was our first PCCS. Two years later he was the only eligible Postal Clerk to compete for PCCM, guess what? He was selected as our very first PCCM! He had a subsequent tour at the Fleet Mail Center Naples which was in need of his great experience. He fixed the problems and conducted extensive training to ensure the Postal Clerks assigned were highly qualified. He decided to leave the Navy after he felt the Fleet Mail Center was able to function properly and in a professional manner.

PCCM Red Lail transferred to the Fleet Reserve in 1965. OPNAV Postal Affairs was interested in him and wanted to hire him. Unfortunately they took more time than he had to find a new job. He was ultimately hired by the United States Postal Service and promoted quickly to the Bureau of the Chief Postal Inspector the same year. He was instrumental in several programs that dealt with the development of computer systems dealing with ZIP Codes and the subsequent use of the four digit ZIP Codes.

He finally retired in 1981 and now lives in a retirement home in Springfield, Virginia with his wife of 63 years (Mary Lou). He is now 83 and unable to travel to reunions but can be reached at: [cdredlail@aol.com](mailto:cdredlail@aol.com)

In his post retirement days, Red and Mary Lou set up a fabulous DESRON 23 reunion. Here are the comments from his shipmates:

The men of Destroyer Squadron 23 owe a debt of deep gratitude to Red Lail and Mary Lou for their untiring efforts in making this reunion happen. A TM aboard the USS Converse during World War II had a dream: bringing all the men of our squadron together and to honor our great commander “Admiral Arleigh A. Burke” It was a dream that perhaps every member of the “Little Beavers” had experienced at some point in their lives. They made it all happen for us. We can never repay them for bringing us all together again and giving us so much joy”

**Red** was a dignitary and active participant in both the Launching of the USS Arleigh Burke DDG-51 and the Commissioning of the USS Cape St. George CG-71.

(General Information for our members)

Abel Quinones and Gil Hough are available to assist you with information regarding VA Service Connected Disabilities. Please let us know if we can be of assistance to you. [abelisable@comcast.net](mailto:abelisable@comcast.net) or [hough@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:hough@hawaii.rr.com)

#### *Vietnam Ship Port Calls Clarification*

As most Vietnam-era veterans know presumption for Agent Orange related health conditions are based upon the member having actually had “boots on the ground” for at least one day. Those serving aboard ships have been divided into two groups. In the Blue Water groups are those individuals who were considered not to have been in country and among the Brown Water group are those who worked primarily on the rivers and are already considered to qualify.

A question by a veteran’s organization representative, at a previous quarterly meeting, has led the VA to slightly change the rule. Now if a service member can prove that he was aboard a ship that actually tied up to a pier in Vietnam and that can be proved, the member will be considered as being in country and the presumptive conditions can apply.

If you or someone you know meets these qualifications and has previously been turned down for Agent Orange related conditions, now is the time to re-open your case with the VA.

*Source: National Association for Uniformed Services weekly news update on 29 May, 2009.*

We were able to track down PCC Harold Nida who now lives in West Virginia. He has some health issues but seems upbeat. He would like to hear from his fellow shipmates and can be reached at: 41 Boice Hill Rd, Creston, West Virginia. His phone number is: (304) 275-3943.

A note from PC1 Mike Hogan regarding his wife (Katie): Gil, thanks for the short note. Unfortunately we will not be able to attend the reunion. Last November my wife had a stroke which affected her right side. She's coming along real good and learning how to do things left handed. Also this past May she was diagnosed with leukemia on top of everything else. Her outlook on life hasn't soured any, but we'll be staying close to home for a while. Tell one and all we said "HI". Mike.

### **3 NEW MEMBERS**

A note from PC1 Ron Stevens who was stationed in Hong Kong and left the week after I arrived in April 72: Attended Syracuse University (forestry school). Every day I drove past the reserve center there and got a little melancholy about the navy so I reenlisted. I got picked up by the cb's and 20 years later, a wife and three kids I retired. Oh yeah, I completed 32 years in the post office as well. I was board eligible for CPO 7 years in a row but because of the draw down and the Bush #1 peace dividend there were no open billets. At least I got my pension and a little cookie as high year tenure kicked in. In addition I sure learned a lot about the marines being in the CB's. ie; Camp Lejeune, Quantico, Camp Pendleton, etc.....Collateral work included but not limited to PN, SK, DK, and of course PC. After retiring from the reserves in 94 we still meet and maintain family picnics every year HU-RAH.!

He joined the NPCA and can be reached at: 5427 Williams St. Lancaster, NY 14086 (716) 681-8216; email: [mstevens60@yahoo.com](mailto:mstevens60@yahoo.com)

PC2 Dean Hoe from Hawaii recently joined NPCA. He served in Hong Kong and Subic and had a tour on a carrier. He is a GS-12 serving in Honolulu with the Small Business Administration. He can be reached by email at: [dean.hoe@sba.gov](mailto:dean.hoe@sba.gov)

Received this from PCC Russ Goodwin: I'm a retired Postal Clerk and have recently reconnected with a lot of my old buddies via Facebook and have just learned of the NPCA and would like to join. One of my friends, John Lilja, also told me about a PC reunion in May '10. Please send me details on how to join the Association and on the Reunion. I would like to reconnect with my friends who are planning on attending in Vegas. My years of service were from Jan 77 to Jan 97. I retired as PCC from the USS Independence CV-62 in Yokosuka.; he is now a member of NPCA. He can be reached at: [rgood120954@gmail.com](mailto:rgood120954@gmail.com)

The 2010 NPCA Reunion is approaching and our President has included a flyer with this newsletter. Please be prepared for the general meeting and consider those who may be considered for nomination to one of our elected positions. We want nominations from those willing to be nominated and serve. A lot of work is required.

One other item to be considered is how we can further our membership considering the Postal Clerk Rating was eliminated in October 2009. Perhaps we should have a theme of every member get a member. A possible reward would be one free year of membership for every new member you recruit or one of our prized NPCA Challenge Coins.

We hope to see you there and have a great time together remembering yesteryear!

**NPCA CHALLENGE COIN DEVELOPED BY OUR NPCA SENIOR ADVISOR  
PCCM ABEL QUINONES**



**Price of the coin is \$8.00 or two for \$15.00  
Plastic cases are available too for \$1.00**

The NPCA Challenge Coin will be available at our Reunion in Las Vegas or can be purchased by sending a check or money order to NPCA C/O PCC Grover McLaughlin 13079

Feather Ride Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78233 or call (210) 654-8556  
e-mail; [g.mclaughlin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:g.mclaughlin@sbcglobal.net)

=====

**HAVE YOU REGISTERED YET FOR THE NPCA REUNION AT THE  
PALACE STATION CASINO, LAS VEGAS IN MAY 2010?**





# Navy Postal Clerk Association Reunion May 3rd to May 7th, 2010

