Refugio team members honor veterans

by Mark A. Hagen
Refugio Shift Supervisor
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In 1999, Congress designated May as National Military Appreciation Month, giving our nation the opportunity to publicly demonstrate their appreciation for the sacrifices and successes made by our service members - past and present. By doing so, reminding Americans of the important role the U.S. Armed Forces have played in the history and development of our Country.

We at Watco are fortunate to have many military veterans on our team. This year some Refugio, Texas, team members took time out to demonstrate their appreciation for those who were willing to commit to the ultimate sacrifice. In South Texas, near the Gulf of Mexico, an organization has created the largest event of its kind in the U.S. for our wounded veterans. A month long schedule of events celebrating the warriors who have paid a very dear price for the freedoms we enjoy every day was kicked off with the Posting of the Flags in the Field of Honor in Victoria, Texas. Victoria is a short 40 minute drive from our terminal facility in Refugio.

This event allows local residents the chance to sponsor a flag to honor veterans, from survivors of the Bataan Death March during WWII to those currently serving in our Armed Forces today. This event culminates with an off-shore fishing tournament where more than 900 seriously wounded warriors are flown in from all over the United States.

Four of our own Watco Veterans and their terminal manager took time to honor their brothers and sisters in arms by posting flags during the ceremony on Saturday, May 2nd.

Roger Blaker, U.S. Air Force and U.S. Army; Mark Hagen, U.S. Air Force retired; Ordie Webster, U.S. Army; and John Solis, U.S. Air Force and John Wiebelhaus, Refugio terminal manager, personally posted over 150 U.S. flags in a little over three hours to honor our veterans.

“I was honored to be asked by John to head up this volunteer effort for our facility” said Chief Master Sergeant (retired) Mark Hagen, “It was an absolute pleasure to honor those who I have served before, beside, and after during this event. It shows the character and values of our company when they allow us to represent the Watco name at an event of this kind.”

Blaker added, “I was so proud and impressed with the turnout for this event - I just could not leave.” Blaker stayed that night until the last flag was posted. His experience at this event has motivated Wiebelhaus to plan to expand the level of participation during next year’s event and involve as many team members as possible.

If you would like more information about the Warrior Weekend project please visit http://www.warriorweekend.org.

Rail industry loses innovative pioneer to cancer

Anyone who knew Paul Jones knew that any conversation with him wasn’t going to be a short one. Paul was a problem solver extraordinaire and could always find a better way to do things, often through paths not normally followed. May 1st marked the day that Paul would no longer provide innovative solutions to those in the rail industry; he was 79 when he lost his battle with cancer.

Though his ideas were frequently regarded as unorthodox, he won the respect of top railroad executives throughout his career with his strong drive and meaningful goals. He provided his expertise to Watco on many occasions.

Paul was an early riser and Watco CEO Rick Webb would often receive early morning calls with an animated Paul Jones on the other end bursting to tell him about a new opportunity. This enthusiasm made Paul seem much younger than his actual years.

Webb said, “Paul was one of the most colorful people I’ve met. He always had an opinion about everything, quite often contrary to the norm but over time what he thought most often proved to be true.”

Kirk Hawley, Watco’s senior vice president of marketing and sales, said, “Paul’s favorite saying was ‘It’s not about the money’. He was more interested in relationships and being the first to come up with a new idea or a new process.”

Paul helped Watco develop a low cost AEI reader (Continued on page 2)
Hassard’s goal is to prevent hazards at Dore Terminal

A hazard is a situation that poses a level of threat to life, health, property, or the environment. However, we’ve found a hazard that is ready to eliminate those hazards and change some minds. Sariah Hassard has been named Dore’s Team Safety and Improvement Committee (TS&IC) Leader. Sariah is a sand operator and NGL loader at the Watco Terminal and Port Services’ North Dakota facility.

Sariah joined the team in September of 2014 and is originally from Fallon, Nevada.

“Sariah quickly assimilated herself with her fellow Team Members and all facets of the Dore operation, culminating with her selection as Dore’s newest TS&IC Leader,” said Gil Rivera, Dore terminal manager.

When asked why she wanted to be Dore’s newest TS&IC Leader Sariah stated, “I want to make a difference in the company. My goal is to get my fellow team members “mentally and physically” involved.”

Sariah’s first tasks as TS&IC Leader include forming her committee, planning and coordinating Dore’s Open House, and assisting with the WTPS North Region Picnic. Moreover, she is looking to reach out to the local community and that begins this weekend as her team will be in the town of Fairview, Montana, cleaning the local park.

This Hassard is definitely one you don’t want to avoid.

Watco wants to help you save for retirement!

Did you know that just for being a Watco Team Member, you can receive free money from Watco to help with your retirement? Watco truly values each and every Team Member, and we believe its important to help achieve your retirement goals.

- Starting on your first day of employment, you are eligible to participate in the Watco 401(k) plan!
- After 1 year of service Watco will match $.50 cents for every dollar you invest into 401(k) up to the first 10% of eligible pay.
- You can sign up anytime at www.startright.bokf.com, or by speaking to your HR Manager.

Start saving now and watch your retirement grow!

Mississippi Team celebrates ten years injury-free

The team at the Mississippi Southern Railroad (MSR) hit an amazing milestone on April 5th, they hit their ten year injury-free mark. There have been many people come and go over the last 10 years who have helped to hit this mark and their contribution is greatly appreciated.

Jeff Buck, general manager, said, “I am so proud to be part of such a great group. We are a small railroad but making it 10 years without an injury is an awesome accomplishment and needs celebrated.”

The team members each received a watch commemorating the event as well as dinner at an area favorite, the Lone Star Steakhouse, in Jackson.

“I believe the watch will be a daily reminder of their accomplishment. The success of this accomplishment would have to go the team members looking out for each other. They are a close knit group in a small town and care about each other like family,” stated Buck.

Rail industry loses innovative pioneer to cancer

Paul was also an avid outdoorsman and enjoyed using his analytical skills while fishing and hunting for deer.

Although Paul had been living in the Chicago area for several years he always remembered where he came from and made sure to head back to Virginia every year in order to pick up tins of peanuts, the best peanuts in the world Paul always remembered where he came from and made sure to head back to Virginia every year in order to pick up tins of peanuts, the best peanuts in the world Paul always remembered where he came from and made sure to head back to Virginia every year in order to pick up tins of peanuts, the best peanuts in the world Paul always remembered where he came from and made sure to head back to Virginia every year in order to pick up tins of peanuts, the best peanuts in the world Paul always remembered where he came from and made sure to head back to Virginia every year in order to pick up tins of peanuts, the best peanuts in the world Paul always remembered where he came from and made sure to head back to Virginia every year in order to pick up tins of peanuts, the best peanuts in the world. Paul always enjoyed using his analytical skills while fishing and hunting for deer.
ASLRA President references Watco as model for success on the anniversary of the Staggers Act

On the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Staggers Act, the United States national freight rail system is now called the envy of the world. According to the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association President Linda Darr, Watco is one of the success stories that stemmed from the legislation.

Darr spoke at a Congressional hearing of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on May along with representatives from the American Association of Railroads (AAR), and others on the importance the Staggers Act, which led to the ultimate creation of a thriving short line railroad industry.

It hasn’t always been that way. Prior to 1980, the railroad industry was over-regulated, under-funded, and unable to allow market forces to dictate long term investments. According to the Federal Railroad Association and quoting from the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, “the impacts of over-burdensome regulation were drastic. In the 30 years pre-Staggers, railroads’ market share measured by revenue ton-miles dropped 33 percent. Further, the total revenue of railroads over that time period dropped from 70 percent to 30 percent.” This, among other things, led to a number of railroads across the country to file for bankruptcy. “By the end of the 1970s nearly 22 percent of all rail miles were under bankruptcy protection.”

The Staggers Act is credited with largely deregulating the railroad industry and allowing railroads to respond to market forces by focusing their service on more profitable corridors and shedding lines that did not justify the continued costs to maintain lighter density branch lines. Because Staggers included provisions to allow the ease of sale of lines subject to abandonment, many rail lines were preserved that may otherwise may have been abandoned, creating the short line industry.

Ed Hamberger, president of the AAR said in his written testimony to the Committee “The global superiority of the U.S. freight railroads in no accident. Rather, it is a direct result of a balanced regulatory system, embodied in the Staggers Act, that relies on the marketplace to establish most rate and service standards.”

Darr, speaking about short line railroads during her testimony, said “In many respects the Staggers Act is also the parent of the short line industry as we know it today. The economic freedoms and regulatory flexibility embodied in that Act allowed the railroads to save light density branch lines rather than abandon them.”

She continued, “Together [short line railroads] represent a diverse, dynamic and entrepreneurial collection of small businesses that have moved well beyond the traditional short lines of America’s railroad lore. They are aggressive and agile companies that make wise use of the resources available to them. They employ a skilled, productive workforce, offering them a good quality of life and they place considerable emphasis on training that workforce to be as safe as possible. Above all, they are aggressive marketers that fight as hard for single carload business as they do for unit trains. And that fight for business helps keep transportation costs as competitive as possible which is good for our customers and ultimately for the nation’s consumers.”

Darr finished her testimony with a simple anecdote: “In 1983, three years after the Staggers Act passed, Dick Webb, the father of the current CEO of Watco was a unionized car repairman at the Kansas City Southern. He took out a $25,000 bank loan to begin a rail switching operation in DeRidder, Louisiana, which began Watco Companies. Today Watco operates 4,600 miles of short line track, employs 3,600 people and moves over a million carloads annually across railroad track that was surely headed for abandonment. Hundreds of short lines across the country can repeat some version of that same story. It is a great American success story and it was made possible in no small measure by the Staggers Act.”

Observant Alabama Southern Railroad Conductor discovers broken rail

It pays to pay attention, just ask Alabama Southern Railroad Conductor Darvis Hicks. Darvis saved his railroad both time and money when his quick thinking prevented a probable derailment. On May 1st, Darvis was walking to a switch in the Tuscaloosa Yard when he noticed a gap in the rail at a joint.

He immediately notified Job 141 not to make their move out of the track because there was a broken rail ahead of them. Darvis then notified the MOW department and the general manager, Anwar Aiken. The MOW repaired the broken rail and Job 141 was able to continue to work.

Aiken said, “This kind of attention to detail and rapid response is what makes Watco team members the best in the business.”

The Dore Terminal Team bid a sad farewell to Robert Seifried, or “Uncle Bob” as he was known to fellow team member Vick Twa. Bob was adopted as Uncle by the entire team but he is leaving to move back to Wyoming to be near his children.

While at the Dore location Bob served as a sand operator, NGL loader, and a Chillympiad Champion. Team members did request that he leave his famous recipe behind when he headed out.

Bob’s fellow crewmembers held a barbecue in his honor to thank him for his dedication and friendship.

Robert Seifried aka “Uncle Bob” has retired from the Dore, North Dakota, Terminal to be closer to his family.
EIRR holds dual celebration

The Eastern Idaho Railroad Team recently had reason to hold a dual celebration. On May 22, a barbecue was held to celebrate reaching the team’s 180-day injury-free goal. They were also celebrating the retirement of team member Thomas (Tommy) Thompson. Tommy has been a team member at the Eastern Idaho for 20 years. He started on May 8, 1995, as an engineer and has remained an engineer for most of that time.

The team had cake and gifts for Tommy and they presented him with a plaque inscribed with:

Best of Luck on Your Retirement
Tommy Thompson
In Appreciation and Recognition
For 20 Years of Loyal Service and Friendship
To the Eastern Idaho Railroad

Tommy plans to travel and spend time with his children and grandchildren.

The celebration was attended by the Rupert area locomotive, car repair, and track departments, the train crews, and the regional directors.

Left: Eastern Idaho Railroad retiree Tommy Thompson and Garrett Bolyard, Eastern Idaho general manager. Right: Tommy with a crystal Watco train he received as a retirement gift.

Watco-team members celebrate State Championship win

The Watco offices in Pittsburg, Kansas, might have been a little bit quieter than normal on May 28th and 29th. Five Watco team members were at the 2-1A State Baseball games in Great Bend, Kansas. Pat Cedeno, Teri Kinyon, Tom Hayes, Rob Smith, and Tracie VanBecelaere were cheering for their boys and the St. Mary’s Colgan baseball team as they battled for their third consecutive State Championship.

Although, rain was a constant threat, they were able to get all the games completed on day two of the tournament. The Panthers won their first game against Inman 19-6 on Thursday. Then, on a soggy field, St. Mary’s beat Salina-Sacred Heart 8-0, moving them to the Championship game. The Panthers played the number two seed, Medicine Lodge, in the Championship game and run-ruled the team 15-0 in three innings.

Teri Kinyon commented, “As a parent of a senior baseball player (Ryan Kinyon), it was both exciting and sad as the outcome to the State Baseball Championship would be the legacy the three senior players would leave for teams to come. As the senior boys played their final Championship, they played with their hearts and had fun doing it, while providing great leadership to the other players. The seniors should be proud of their accomplishments as they have won at the State level the last three years, once as a 3A team and twice at the 2-1A level.”

In addition to cheering on the boys, VanBecelaere also spent time driving to Pratt where her daughter Gabby was playing at State on the St. Mary’s Colgan softball team. The girls played well but unfortunately, lost in the first round of play.

Watco’s Terminal in Ghent, Kentucky, recently helped a great Customer celebrate 25 years in business. Founded in 1990, North American Stainless (NAS) has undertaken several phases of expansion to become the largest, fully integrated stainless steel producer in the United States. On May 5th, Watco accepted an invitation to attend their 25th Anniversary celebration at the Ghent mill. Government officials, raw material suppliers, vendors, and customers were hosted at a luncheon and open house.

Watco assumed operations at the NAS facility on February 10th and provides material handling services, including dock operations and in-plant services.

“It’s great to celebrate an event such as this with one of our Customers,” said Nick Coomes, vice president of Watco bulk terminals and operations. “This is what building long-term relationships is all about.”

Pictured at the North American Stainless event are (l-r): Dan Smith, Watco chief operating officer; Nick Coomes, vice president of Watco bulk terminals and operations; Mary Jean Riley, North American Stainless, vice president, finance; Tim Bass, terminal manager; Joe Brown, director of operations; and Mike Wastchak, marketing manager.
Congratulations to the following team members celebrating their anniversaries!

1 Year: Suliana Aguilar Gutierrez, Christian Alvarez, Joseph Bell, Nicholas Bingham, Douglas Bondley, Meagen Brown, Jason Bushman, Jamal Campbell, Kelly Clouse, Edward Curry, Nicholas Darnell, Stacey Dawson, Deron Deter, Marc Dietrich, Jordan Edwards, Jerod Gofourth, Luis Graca, Janet Graham, Daylen Griffin, William Griffin, Daniel Gross, Johannes Hanselmann, Cris Hatcher, Jeffrey Joseph, Ryan Kirschenman, Zachary Leingang, Jason Longfellow, Stephen Martin, Stephanie McCabe, Brandon McElwain, Brent Morrison, Yan Naing, Penelope Pasillas, Javier Pertuz, Thomas Pierce, Nicholas Pritchard, Steven Ramirez, Rawlf Rawlins, Jose Rios, John Rodriguez, Jose Rodriguez, Dion Roth, Joseph Rowan, Aaron Schumann, Mitchell Shoemaker, Jason Suniga, Dustin Virtue, Jason Wetta, Dusty White, Shari Wilson, Eric Wolfe


3 Years: Matthew Andrade, Sean Benzmiller, Thomas Bolton, Susan Buffett, Tara Carpenter, Sean Cox, James Degano, Adolphus Dibia, David Elizalde, Ty Gatlin, Curtiss Hemby, Carol Kefauver, Jeff Kelly, Kristen Quiros, Steven Renn, Angela Schaefer, Amanda Shanholzer, Matthew Staudinger, Derrick Thomas, Mashaela Thrall, Christopher Vano, Duff Wagnon, Ordia Webster, Dana Wilkerson, Brandon Williams, Scott Winther, Jeremy Worm, Lloyd Young

4 Years: James Ballard, Logan Falletti, Felicia Fearmonti, Jeremy Hund, Cynthia Johnson, Jeremy Jones, Taylor Jones, Nathan Kime, Benjamin May, Alfred Pope, James Stallings, Michael Stotts, Paul Watland, Michael Yanish

5 Years: Richard Antill, William Ascanio, Robert Betts, Paul Goins, Brian Kraus, Melissa Pennington, Tom Scheidemantel, Kenneth Smith, Douglas Steed, Brady Whipple

6 Years: Sean Crowe, Daniel Garrett, Brent Marsh, Bruce Neet, Elijah Nick, Derek Witsman

7 Years: Darrious Colley, Derrick DeFoor, Richard Smith, Randall Thompson, Matt Troth

8 Years: Tony Cox, Michelle Hubbard, Charles Stephens, Curtis Testerman

9 Years: Randall Chaney, Ivan Etherton, Phillip Forrest, Timothy Ragsdale, Pete Taverano

10 Years: David Gonzales, Nicolas Hanson, Jeremy Hollis, Cameron Lundy, Randall McIntyre, Martin Phillips, Angelina Pridemore

11 Years: Nolan Darthard, Steven Hebel, Billy Mott, Larry Shavers, David Young

12 Years: Clint Chestnut, Donnie Creed, Ron Isaacs, James Waite

13 Years: Matthew Diestler, Mark St Aubin

15 Years: Anthony Allender, Jennifer Bauen, Barbara Crawford, Jesse Gage, Nancy Newbery

17 Years: Robert Eneke, Christopher Jacobson, Randy Jacobson, Jason Rossman, Thomas Rutt, Daniel Tank

18 Years: Matthew Meekma

22 Years: Willis Iverson

24 Years: Gary Lundy

26 Years: Jesse Green, Gary Harville, Michael Pollard

29 Years: Jason Ford

32 Years: Debbie Moody

JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

Karoline Sabrina Sexton
Aaron and Katie Sexton are proud to announce the birth of a baby girl, Karoline Sabrina. Karoline was born on April 28th and weighed 8 lbs. and was 21 inches long.

Aaron is a conductor on the Blue Ridge Southern Railroad.

Jayde Marilyn Bumgarner
Jacob Bumgarner and Quiana Welborn are proud to announce the birth of a daughter, Jayde Marilyn. Jayde was born on May 11th and weighed 6 lbs., 5 oz., and was 19 inches long.

Jacob is a locomotive mechanic for the Eastern Idaho Railroad in Rupert, Idaho.

Celia Mae Hasheider
Robert & Brenda Hasheider are proud to announce the birth of their daughter Celia Mae.

Celia was born on March 14th, and weighed 8 lbs., 7 oz. and was 20 inches long.

Robert is a locomotive engineer for the Wisconsin and Southern Railroad out of Madison, Wisconsin and has been with the company for 16 years.

Wedding

Roberto and Suzette Sanchez
Roberto Sanchez and Suzette Wusche were united in marriage on May 2, 2015, at the Paradisus Resort in Cancun, Mexico.

The couple were joined by seventy-five of their close friends and family. They plan to spend their honeymoon in Brazil this September. Roberto is a performance assurance engineer for Watco Supply Chain Services and Suzette manages a Marshall’s store in Houston.
**Blue Ridge Southern Railroad’s Engineer Carlton Moody, noticed there was something odd about the track that was next to his train while at the Waynesville, North Carolina, location. That something odd turned out to be a piece of broken rail.**

“\text{I got off the engine and discovered the rail was broken under the ball for about 10 inches,}” said Moody. “\text{I called the break in immediately so that the MOW Team could get out and repair it.}”

**In addition to the break that Moody found, the MOW Department discovered that it was broken in another spot just three feet away from where Moody found the original break.**

Daryl Farris, Blue Ridge general manager, said, “\text{Because of Moody’s attention to detail and quick thinking, accidents were prevented and the track was repaired the next day. An outstanding job from one of our team members!}”

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**Railroad vet retires from the SKOL**

The South Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad (SKOL) lost 14 years of experience when Larry Lever retired the first of May. The team presented Larry with cash to use in his endeavors as a fisherman and motorcycle rider, both of which he plans to do plenty of during his retirement years.

Larry started his Watco career at the Cornell Mechanical Shop near Pittsburg, Kansas, and then transferred to the SKOL. He has served primarily as a car repairman.

**Team member’s son breaks school high jump record**

During most track meets held at the end of May, the biggest concern is if you brought enough sunscreen. This year, Cindy Davied, Administrative Assistant with the Risk Management Department in Pittsburg, Kansas, was more worried about whether she brought enough warm clothes. Cindy and her husband, Dennis, braved the cold to watch their son participate in the 4A Kansas State Track Meet, held at Cessna Stadium in Wichita, Kansas. The meet is the largest high school sporting event in the Nation, as classes 1A through 6A compete in the same arena.

Davied’s son, Drew, a junior, cleared 6’8” to take second in the state meet. He jumped 6’10” at the Regional meet the week before which qualified him for the state meet. His 6’10” jump also broke the Girard High School record of 6’8”, which was set back in 1971. Drew had tied that record his freshman year.

He also holds the record for Girard Middle School with his jump of 6’5” as an eighth grader.

“Even though he didn’t reach his goal this year to win his third state high jump title,” said his mom, “Drew is also a stand-out player on Girard’s basketball team on which he has been a varsity starter all three years of his high school career. He will continue his basketball and track career as a senior this coming year.”

Team member’s son breaks school high jump record

Drew Davied of Girard, Kansas, clears 6’10” at the Regional meet in Prairie View-Lacygne.