

CELEBRATING LYAL HANSON'S SERVICE TO THE POSTAL SERVICE

by
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Lyal W. Hanson is the Alaska District's most senior mail delivery person. He started with the Postal Service on March 20, 1964 as a Mail Processing Clerk. He had worked as a Clerk for one year before transferring to the Carrier craft in 1965. He has been working with the Postal Service for a total of forty-four years. A large part of his continuing service, he says, "Has been seeing the smiles on his customers face when he delivers the mail to them."

I asked Lyal several questions about his career with the Postal Service. First, I asked him, what methods or practices does he use for preventing an accident? He responded with, "I use a technique called "The Circle of Safety." He went on to say, "When using the Circle of Safety, I'm aware of four points around my vehicle, the front, the back, and both sides." He continued with, "I try not to let myself get blocked in on all four sides of my vehicle; I keep away out of trouble. When driving on the road, I look about 7 to 10 seconds ahead of traffic; this gives me time to react to a bad situation in the event of a potential accident or incident." Lyal added, "You know, backing is the number one cause of accidents in the Postal Service. With that being said, I only back when absolutely necessary."

I asked Lyal to recall a story or memory that stands out in his mind as a Postal Service employee. He reflected back to when he was working additional hours on the swing shift at the General Mail Facility (GMF). He went on to tell me this story: That evening, the largest earthquake in North America hit Anchorage, Alaska. The earthquake happened on Good Friday, March 27, 1964 at 5:36pm Alaska Standard Time. The great earthquake had a magnitude of 9.2 and it happened on the southern coast of Alaska. The shock waves of this earthquake were felt over an area of 500,000 square miles. Lyal called to mind that he was sorting mail when he heard this rumble. At first, he thought it was a few jets taking off but the rumble got louder and louder to the point of the whole building starting to quiver and rattle, as a giant invisible hand was viciously shaking it. All of a sudden

someone said, "Get the heck out of here, it's an earthquake." After that, he says, "All electrical power went out and equipment that wasn't bolted to the floor started to thrash about and fell over. The lighting fixtures from the ceiling vibrated about and then crashed to the floor. Promptly, everyone followed the earthquake evacuation plan and headed for the designated Marshaling Area for safety. After taking a head count, the tally sheet revealed that everyone had arrived at the Marshaling Area safely. All employees were present and accounted for and there were no serious injuries." Lyal said, "He was thankful for going through that ordeal with only minor scrapes and scratches to himself."

Mr. Hanson is originally from Central, Wisconsin and served four years in the U.S. Air Force from October 9, 1958 to October 19, 1962. He and his wife Shirley have been married for 41 years. They have five children, 11 grandkids, and 2 great-grandkids. Additionally, he is an advisor and mentor to his fellow craftsmen and has served on the Vehicle Accident Committee for 25 years.

Sometimes in our efforts to increase our safety record, we neglect to recognize those that work safely day in and day out. I'd like to thank Lyal for illustrating excellent driving skills, and we tip our caps to him for his longevity of service and continuance to lead the way by setting an example of safe driving for his fellow letter carriers.

- Skip Gibson