

LASD Heroes

by Duane Preimsberger

At a Firestone Station, Old Timers luncheon, retired Undersheriff Ted von Minden made mention of a fellow 1949 Academy Class graduate and friend who had spent his entire career at what was then Wayside Honor Ranch. Ted's friend liked working there so much that he never sought a transfer or filed for a promotional examination. He was satisfied performing the jobs available to Deputy Sheriffs at that facility and wanted nothing else.

As I drove home that afternoon, I mulled over the conversation and our shared belief that folks, mostly deputies and Sergeants, who stay in jobs for decades are often the real heroes in the day to day operations of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. The Custody or Court Services Deputy with 30+ years, a Patrol Watch Deputy with more than 3 decades of experience, or a Bomb Squad Sergeant with years and years of handling cases in a very dangerous specialty, these folks and others all develop an incredibly valuable degree of knowledge and skills.

These men and women are a band of little recognized heroes. They made sacrifices that come from not expanding their careers by seeking out promotions and transfers. They had the courage to face the questioning attitudes of some co-workers and supervisors about their desire to simply stay in one place. They cared very much about the unit to which they were assigned and they knew and appreciated the work done there.

These great people end their careers as wise and honorable folks. Their commitment, caring and courage is the stuff out of which come true heroes. Often, until their retirement, little notice was paid to the contributions that they made daily to their workplace and the greater organization.

They retire quietly, often quickly forgotten by those who they carefully schooled and mentored in days gone by. They become the old, balding or gray-haired folks who slow down the line at the post office as they count out coins with trembling hands in order to mail a package to a son or daughter far away. Reading the Star News or the LASD Retiree Web Site can bring a sad moment as they view an "In Memoriam," that lists the name of a former co-worker and they are saddened by that news. They still care, often years and years later.

For decades, they wore our uniform and our Badge of Honor with pride they were a part of our family and we need to acknowledge their efforts and their contributions!

To all of you who were career unit employees, and some of the real heroes in the proud history of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department; may we take a moment to recognize your diligence, your commitment, your loyalty and your caring.

Thank you for your service; you made a difference and you are truly an LASD hero!