Memorial
A Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen member killed in the line-of-duty breaks the hearts of many of us -- family, friends and co-workers. The death of a fellow member spurs the minds and souls of every BLET member to help prevent another Brother or Sister from a needless death on the rails.

The BLET members below are constant reminders and tragic realities that our union's work may never be finished. Nevertheless, if we do not continually fight to gain rail safety improvements for employees and the public, then these brave individuals will have sacrificed their lives without the full and proper respect that is their due.

We, the 55,000 members, officers and employees of the BLET, hereby salute and forever memorialize these members who gave their lives while faithfully performing their duties on the job. By their deaths and our sincere desire to understand and eliminate the causes, we pray that we may keep other loved ones from being added to this memorial.

The BLET vows never to forget — the BLET vows never to give up the fight.

I will find a way or make one.
— Hannibal, 217 B.C.

MEMORIAL OF ENGINEERS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY SINCE SEPTEMBER 1, 1991

Michael Kempf
Brother Michael Kempf, a member of BLET Division 35 in Jacksonville, Fla., was killed when his Amtrak train collided with a CSX train tied down in a siding near Columbia, S.C., on February 4, 2018. Brother Kempf was 54 years old. Also killed in the crash was 36-year-old conductor Michael Cella. In addition to the two fatalities, 116 people were injured when Amtrak train 91 entered a siding at Cayce, S.C., and struck a stationary CSX train.

Employed by Amtrak, Brother Kempf first joined the BLET on February 1, 2014. He had worked at Amtrak and also at CSX over the years. Prior to his railroad career, Brother Kempf spent 20 years in the U.S. Army serving as a tank commander. He was stationed in Panama and South Korea, among other locations.

In its preliminary investigation, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) reported that the switch leading to the siding was improperly aligned, diverting the Amtrak train from the mainline to the siding.

Brother Kempf is survived by his wife and three children. He enjoyed riding his Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

Larry G. Thomas
Brother Larry G. Thomas, a member of Division 292 in Beach City, Ohio, was killed in a yard switching accident on November 6, 2016. He was 37 years old.
An employee of the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad (WLE), Brother Thomas hired out as a trainman in October of 2012 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer a short time later. He joined the Brotherhood effective February 1, 2013. According to media reports, Brother Thomas was operating a locomotive by remote control at the WLE yard in Brewster, Ohio, at the time of his death.

A veteran of the United States Army, Brother Thomas was an avid motorcycle and car enthusiast. He is survived by his wife Stephanie and three children: Tyler, 9, William, 6, and Alexis, 5. He is also survived by his mother, Darlene; a sister, Tabatha; two nieces; several in-laws; and numerous friends and coworkers in his extended railroad family.

Cody R. Owens and Lara G. Taylor

Three crew members were killed and one injured after two BNSF trains collided head-on near Panhandle, Texas, on June 28, 2016.

Killed were Cody R. Owens, 52, and Lara G. Taylor, 44, both members of BLET Division 299 in Amarillo, Texas, along with K.P. Smith Jr., a member of SMART-TD Local 1313.

A large fireball engulfed the train and portions of the town of Panhandle, Texas, were evacuated. Brother Owens had been a BLET member since December 1, 2005 and Sister Taylor since March 1, 2010.

George A. Lewkuc

Brother George A. Lewkuc of BLET Division 683 (Chicago) died from injuries sustained while walking on bad footing in a Union Pacific yard in Northlake, Ill., known as Proviso Yard. He hit his head on a rail and fractured his neck. Brother Lewkuc was transported to a local hospital but never recovered from his injuries, passing away on May 3, 2016. A Union Pacific locomotive engineer, Brother Lewkuc had been a member of the Brotherhood since December 1, 2010.

Jeffrey A. Harsh

BLET member Jeffrey A. Harsh, a member of BLET Division 882 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was killed in a railroad accident on March 26, 2016. Brother Harsh was 43 years old.

Employed by the Canadian Pacific Railway, Brother Harsh normally worked as an engineer out of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, but had been cut back and was receiving familiarization training in a new area. According to media reports, he was crossing tracks when a train clipped him, knocking him to the ground. He was killed early on March 26 in St. Paul, Minnesota. He joined the Brotherhood effective March 1, 1998, and is a former President of BLET Division 882 in Milwaukee.

He is survived by parents Sandra and Peter Harsh; sisters Laura and Liana; close friends Kevin A. Williams and Jake Weber; and countless other friends, relatives, and co-workers in his close-knit railroad family.

Alexander T. Sassman

Brother Alexander T. Sassman, 51, was killed in an on-duty in an on-duty motor vehicle accident near Fairfield, Calif., on March 16, 2015. He was one of two railroad employees who were in the taxicab being
transported from their train to their off-duty location when the accident occurred. According to media reports, the taxi was a 2006 Ford Crown Victoria that was traveling at an estimated speed of 60 to 65 mph northbound on I-680 just after 1 a.m. on March 16 when the driver lost control. The vehicle went airborne and overturned, rolling off the side of the highway and landing on a road that runs parallel to the freeway. Brother Sassman was pronounced dead at the scene. The cab’s second passenger, a conductor, survived but suffered major injuries. The cab driver also survived. The taxi was transporting the two Union Pacific employees from San Jose to Roseville. Brother Sassman is survived by his wife and three sons. He hired out with the Union Pacific on June 12, 2004, and join BLET BLET Division 692 (Tracy, Calif.) effective February 1, 2006.

Glenn W. Steele

Brother Glenn W. Steele, 62, was working as a locomotive engineer for Metrolink when his train collided with a heavy-duty pickup truck that had been abandoned on the tracks near Oxnard, Calif., on February 24, 2015. He passed away on March 3, 2015. A member of BLET Division 20 (Los Angeles), Brother Steele had been a BLET member for nearly 42 years, first joining the Brotherhood effective October 1, 1973. He is survived by his wife, three children, and one grandchild.

Chance J. Gober

Brother Chance J. Gober, 41, was a member of BLET Division 182 in North Little Rock, Ark. He was one of two train crew members killed when two Union Pacific trains collided head on near the town of Hoxie, Ark., on August 17, 2014.

Dan J. Hall

Brother Dan J. Hall, President of BLET Division 592 (Dalhart, Texas), was killed in the line of duty on June 24, 2012. Hall, 56, was one of three railroaders killed when two Union Pacific trains collided head-on near the town of Goodwell, Okla. The others were BLET Member John S. Hall (not related) and UTU member Brian L. Stone. Brother Hall hired out in 1994 and joined the BLET on January 29, 1999. He is survived by his mother and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

John S. Hall

Brother John S. Hall, a member of BLET Division 592 (Dalhart, Texas), was killed in the line of duty on June 24, 2012. Hall, 49, was one of three railroaders killed when two Union Pacific trains collided head-on near the town of Goodwell, Okla. The others were Dan J. Hall, President of BLET Division 592, and Brian L. Stone, a UTU conductor. The two Halls are not related. Brother Hall hired out in 1995 and joined the BLET on January 29, 1999. He is survived by his wife, Beverly, daughter Breanna, and son Johnathon.

Todd M. Burckhard

BLET member Todd Burckhard, 35, was killed in the line of duty on August 19, 2011 when the crew van he was riding in was involved in a collision near Frazer, Mont.
Brother Burckhard was a BNSF locomotive engineer and member of BLET Division 695 in Minot, N.D. He first joined the Brotherhood on November 1, 2010. He had about seven years of railroad experience.

Also killed in the accident was BNSF conductor Blaine Mack, 56, who had more than 36 years of service with the railroad.

The crew van driver, a contractor, was hospitalized for minor injuries. The crew van was traveling westbound on Highway 2 when it was struck by an eastbound pickup truck operating in the westbound lane of traffic.

Brother Burckhard is survived by his wife, Corrie; children Marty and Mattson; parents David and Peggy Burckhard; grandparents; and several brothers and sisters.

**J.G. Hadden**

BLET member James Gregory Hadden was one of two crew members killed in the line of duty in Mineral Springs, N.C., on May 24, 2011.

A CSX locomotive engineer, Brother Hadden just 35 years old. He was a member of BLET Division 498 in Abbeville, S.C. He joined the Brotherhood on March 1, 2003.

Also killed was conductor Phillip Crawford, 33, a five year employee with CSX. Brother Hadden was a 10-year CSX veteran. The two men were killed when their train rear-ended another, derailing multiple cars and causing a fire that forced the evacuation of several homes.

**Christopher L. Carter**

Veteran BLET member Christopher L. Carter, 57, drowned on his way to work on May 1, 2011, when his car was swept away by swiftly rising floodwaters in Mayflower, Ark.

Brother Carter was a member of BLET Division 858 in Pine Bluff, Ark. A Union Pacific engineer, Brother Carter had been a BLET member for more than 36 years, first joining the Brotherhood on February 1, 1975.

According to Division 858 Local Chairman Jay Callaway, Brother Carter was on his way to work for the Union Pacific Railroad when the accident happened. It is believed his Ford Explorer hydroplaned in rapidly rising flash flood waters, and his vehicle came to rest in a ditch to the side of the road. Due to the torrential rains that came through the area, water levels rose so quickly that when first responders arrived, Carter vehicle was completely submerged.

**Tom Anderson**

Brother Tom Anderson, President of BLET Division 642, was one of two rail workers killed in the line of duty on April 17, 2011, in a rear-end collision involving two BNSF Railway freight trains in McPherson, Iowa.

According to preliminary reports from the NTSB, a BNSF freight train collided with a BNSF maintenance train. Two locomotives and multiple cars derailed as a result of the accident.

Thomas J. Kenny

Brother Thomas J. Kenny of BLET Division 238 (Tacoma, Wash.) was one of three people killed when an off duty crew transport vehicle was struck by a BNSF freight train near Longview, Wash., on March 23, 2011. A fourth crew member was left in critical condition.

Brother Kenny, 58, was a 22-year veteran of BNSF. He first joined the BLET on May 1, 1994.

The three train crew members were taking the transport vehicle to a Vancouver hotel after their tour of duty on Wednesday (March 23). The vehicle was at a private crossing when it was struck by the BNSF freight train. The crossing does not have lighted signals but is equipped with crossing signs and stop signs.

The vehicle landed at the bottom of a 25-foot embankment, more than 50 feet from the crossing.

Stanley L. Watts

Stanley L. Watts, Secretary-Treasurer of BLET Division 354 (Kankakee, Ill.), was killed in the line of duty on February 8, 2011, following a switching accident at a Norfolk Southern yard in Kankakee, Ill.

Brother Watts, 43, has been a member of the BLET since February 1, 2006. He was a Norfolk Southern locomotive engineer who was set back working as a conductor at the time of the accident. He is survived by his wife Sara and sons Zachary and Andrew.

He was working as part of a conventional switching crew consisting of an engineer, conductor and conductor-in-training, and had gone on duty at 6:00 a.m.

Brother Watts was born Jan. 1, 1968, in Chicago. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army, serving from 1986-1990. He coached youth football and was active with his sons’ sports. He enjoyed camping and was an avid Bears fan. He loved spending time with his family.

Darrell Amerson

Darrell Amerson, a member of BLET Division 230, was killed in the line of duty on July 2, 2010, following an accident in a Norfolk Southern yard in Meridian, Miss. Brother Amerson, 42, joined the BLET on June 1, 2008.

According to Division 230 Local Chairman Brian Glebe, the accident occurred around 10:30 p.m. in the Meridian rail yard. Brother Amerson suffered severe trauma to his leg and passed away at Rush Foundation Hospital around 1:30 a.m. on July 2 due to complications from his injury.

Brother Amerson had worked for Norfolk Southern for three and a half year. He is survived by his wife, Angela.

Gregory G. Kastner

Brother Gregory G. Kastner, a veteran NJ Transit hostler, had just finished fueling his engine and was walking back to another locomotive when he was struck around 3:30 a.m. on May 31, 2010 at NJ Transit’s½ Meadows Maintenance Complex in Kearny, N.J.

Tragically, Brother Kastner, 63, was just 20 days from retirement when the fatality occurred. According to his friend and Brother Fred Mattison of Division 373, Brother Kastner chose not to retire as soon as he
was eligible. Instead, the devoted father and husband decided to continue working a few extra years to provide for his family. He and his wife, Grace, were looking forward to retirement and had just purchased a retirement home in Florida.

Brother Kastner was a member of BLET Division 272 in Dover, N.J., and he joined the Brotherhood on April 2, 2004.

He is survived by his wife, Grace (Moran) Kastner, his three children, Cristin Farney and her husband, Steven, Kimberly McCloskey and her husband, William, and Ryan Kastner, as well as his granddaughter, Micaela Kastner.

Andrew Monheim

BLET member Andrew Monheim was killed in the line of duty on March 16, 2010, following the collision of two Union Railroad freight trains near Pittsburgh, Pa.

Monheim, 54, was a member of BLET Division 700 located in Braddock, Pa. He is survived by his wife and 12 year-old-son. Brother Monheim, 54, was a member of the Brotherhood for 31 years, having joined on August 1, 1978. He worked for the Union Railroad for 35 years.

According to preliminary reports, Brother Monheim was operating a train of empties when it collided with a train carrying iron ore pellets to U.S. Steel's Edgar Thompson Plant in North Braddock, Pa.

The trains were operated by Union Railroad, part of Transtar Inc., a transportation subsidiary of U.S. Steel. The Edgar Thomson plant is part of U.S. Steel's Mon Valley Works and produces steel slabs.

Andrew R. Reed and Josh Osborn

Two BLET members working for the Iowa, Chicago & Eastern (IC&E) Railroad were killed near Bettendorf, Ill., on July 14, 2009. According to preliminary reports from the National Transportation Safety Board, the accident happened after their train hit a misaligned switch.

Andrew R. Reed, 27, was working as a conductor at the time of the fatality. Joshua M. Osborn, 27 was working as the locomotive engineer.

Reed began working for the railroad in August of 2004 and first joined the Brotherhood on December 1, 2004. He is survived by his fiancee, Jamie Diercks, their daughter, Brynn, and her daughter, Delaney Holmes.

Brother Osborn, a Marine sergeant who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, had just joined the Brotherhood. He is survived by his fiancée Jennifer Schreiner; one daughter, Kaliann Schreiner and Jennifer's daughter Bailey Baker.
Brothers Reed and Osborn were both members of BLET Division 266 in Savanna, Ill.

Robert M. Sanchez

Locomotive Engineer Eddie Robert M. Sanchez, 47, was one of 30 people killed when his Metrolink commuter train collided head-on with a Union Pacific freight train in Chatsworth, Calif., on September 12, 2008.

More than 130 others were hurt in the crash, which was called one of the worst train accidents in the history of California. He was a member of BLET Division 20 in Los Angeles, and had been a BLET member for 10 years at the time of the accident.

This accident let the pass of Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Emergency Order 26, which banned the use of cellular phones and other electronic devices in the locomotive cab.

Philip T. Myers

Brother Myers, a member of BLET Division 204 (Linton, Ind.), was killed in the line of duty on September 10, 2008. An employee of the Indiana Rail Road, Brother Myers was working on the ground as part of a two-person train crew when a tanker derailed at low speeds while servicing the Tangent Rail Products facility in Terre Haute, Ind.

Brother Myers, 42, joined the BLET on January 1, 1998, and had hired out with the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1992. He began working for the Indiana Rail Road in 2006. Survivors include his son, Kevin Myers and wife Misty; daughter Whitney Myers; granddaughter, Peyton Myers; his father, Gary Myers; grandmother, Frances Martin; sister, Shannon Myers; two brothers, Joe Myers and Grady Myers; the mother of his children, April Counterman; and several nieces and nephews and other extended family.

Richard D. "Ricky" Pendarvis

Brother Pendarvis, a member of BLET Division 523 in Chickasha, Okla., was killed in the line of duty on August 29, 2008, when his Union Pacific locomotive collided with a propane tanker truck near Medford, Okla.

The collision triggered a massive explosion and also caused the death of conductor Larry B. Williams, a member of the United Transportation Union, and truck driver Dennis Wayne Etherton.

Brother Pendarvis, 52, joined the BLET on April 1, 2004. He is survived by his son, Travis and his mother Julie Lonewolf; two step-children Shamieka and Donte; one step-grandson Kobe; his childhood sweetheart Kym; his parents Jean and James Guesby; father William Marvin Craine Sr. and a host of aunts, nieces, nephews, cousins, friends and co-workers.
The accident occurred at 9:20 a.m. on August 29, about three miles south of Medford, Okla., in Grant County. The truck driver had just filled his tanker with propane at the Conoco-Phillips LP underground storage facility south of Medford before the accident. The truck was on the train tracks when the 76-car train struck it.

The locomotive event recorder indicated Brother Pendarvis sounded the horn and was trying to stop the train just prior to impact. Mike Honigsberg, emergency management director for neighboring Garfield County, said Brother Pendarvis and Conductor Williams were heroes for their last-second attempts to halt the train.

"In my opinion, that was a heroic effort because if they didn't, there was nothing to stop that train between here and Enid," he said. "They probably prevented another major catastrophe." Enid is about 35 miles south of Medford.

John T. Wright II
Winslow, Ariz., June 9, 2008, BLET member suffers serious heart attack on duty

BLET member John T. Wright II, a member of BLET Division 383 in Winslow, Ariz., died after suffering a serious heart attack while completing a setout of a locomotive in Winslow, Ariz. He was a BNSF locomotive engineer for 31 years and was 59 years old at the time of his passing. He is survived by his wife, Sandra; sons John Wright III, Sam Owens and Clayton Lutz; daughters Dianna Wright, Samantha Deanda, Candice Lutz and Nicole Lutz.

Frederick C. Phelps
Sheboygan County, Wisc., March 5, 2008, BLET member killed in switching movement making a delivery

Brother Frederick C. Phelps, 55, was killed in the line of duty on March 5, 2008, as he was crushed between two railroad cars while making a delivery.

He was working as a Wisconsin & Southern Railroad employee when died about 9:20 p.m. on March 5 at Lakeside Foods Co. He belonged to BLET Division 184 in Schiller Park, Wisc. Prior to working at the Wisconsin & Southern, Brother Phelps was a conductor for the CN/Wisconsin Central. Brother Phelps entered into the United States Navy in 1972 and was honorably discharged in 1976. He worked on his family farm for many years until he entered into the Peace Corps where he taught agriculture in Honduras from 1984 until 1989. He married Sara E. Puerto Flores on March 1, 1996 in Honduras.

He is survived by his wife Sara; two sons Jeffrey J. Phelps and F. Quincy Phelps of Whiting, Ind.; three daughters Millicent C. Phelps and Jennifer M. Phelps both of Whiting, Ind. and Crescant V. Harris of
Jacksonville, Fla.; his mother Alice H. Phelps and her companion Donald Backus of Gouverneur, N.Y.; two sisters Melinda K. Virnig and her companion Thomas Ritchie of Harrisville, N.Y. and Teresa Y. and Maurice Gutierrez of Alamogordo, N.M.; two grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

J.D. Artino and J.P. Walker
Bertram Calif., November 10, 2007, Two BLET members killed in rear-end collision on UP's Yuma Subdivision

Brothers Artino and Walker were both members of BLET Division 660 in Los Angeles. Brother Artino joined the BLET on July 1, 2004, and had worked for the railroad since June of 1998. Brother Walker joined the BLET on October 1, 2006, and began railroading in March of 2004.

Eddie Sanchez
Winslow, Ariz., June 19, 2006, BLET Local Chairman killed traveling to National Division Convention in Las Vegas

Brother Eddie Sanchez, Local Chairman of BLET Division 134 in Winslow, Ariz., was killed in an automobile accident while driving to represent his division as a Delegate to the BLET's First Quadrennial Convention in Las Vegas. He was 54 years old and is survived by his wife, Donna, four children and two grandchildren.

Delegates voted unanimously to establish an "Eddie Sanchez Memorial Fund" and collected more than $33,000 to donate to the Sanchez family. He was a locomotive engineer on the former Santa Fe lines for the past 33 years and joined the BLET on June 1, 1975.

Houston, Texas - September 15 - Local Chairman killed in head-on collision

Brother G.Y. Bailey, Local Chairman of BLET Division 62 in Houston, was killed on September 15 when his train collided head-on with a southbound chemical train in dark territory about 60 miles northeast of Houston. Both Union Pacific trains derailed, causing a hazmat spill. Along with serving as his Division's local chairman, he was actively involved in the organization as a primary member of the BLET Safety Task Force and the National Mobilization Team. He also served as Chairman of the Southwestern Convention Meeting in 2004. Brother Bailey, 51, began working for Union Pacific in 1978 and joined the BLE in 1992.

Anding, Miss. -- July 10, 2005 -- Two BLET members killed in head-on collision

BLET Division 203 (Jackson, Miss.) members Mark Cain and Arthur "Buddy" Irby were killed on July 10, 2005, when their CN/IC locomotives collided head-on in Anding, Miss. Two other crew members were also killed in the collision. Conductors Shannon Purvis, 21, of Puckett, Miss., and Samuel Jones Sr., 58, of Jackson, Miss. were both members of the United Transportation Union. Brother Cain, 51, joined the BLE on November 1, 1986. Brother Irby, 58, joined the BLET on October 1, 1973.
Graniteville, S.C. -- January 6, 2005 -- BLET member killed in Norfolk Southern derailment

Brother Christopher G. Seeling, Secretary-Treasurer of BLET Division 85 (Columbia, S.C.), was killed on January 6 when his Norfolk Southern train collided with another train that was stopped in a siding. He was one of eight people to die in the accident. Brother Seeling, 28, joined the BLET on March 1, 2001.

Niland, Calif. -- December 10, 2004 -- BLET member killed in collision of two Union Pacific trains

Brother Kenneth Leonard of BLET Division 5 (Los Angeles, Calif.) was killed in a head-on collision between two Union Pacific freight trains on December 10. Brother Leonard joined the BLE on November 1, 1992. He was 44 years old. Four other crew members were taken for medical treatment as a precaution for what were considered minor injuries. Five locomotives and seven rail cars were derailed.

Clovis, N.M. -- September 2, 2004 -- BLET members killed in remote control switching accident

Glen A. "Skip" York, II, a member of Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Division 811, was killed in a remote control switching accident in the Burlington Northern Santa Fe yard in Clovis, N.M., on September 2. Brother York, 26, joined BLET Division 811 in Clovis on April 1, 2004, following in the footsteps of his father, Glen A. York, who also belongs to Division 811.

San Antonio, Texas -- June 28, 2004 -- BLET member dies as a result of chlorine gas leak following collision

Brother Heath Pape, a member of BLET Division 197 in San Antonio, Texas, was killed in the collision between a Union Pacific train and a BNSF train on Monday, June 28. Brother Pape had just joined the BLET. He was 23 years old. The train derailed around Southwest Loop 1604 and Nelson Road, near the town of Macdona. A total of 23 cars from the two trains derailed, according to fire officials.

New Orleans -- June 25, 2004 -- BLET member dies in collision with gasoline tanker truck

BLET Division 230 (Meridian, Miss.) member Dennis Vinson was killed in a collision between his Norfolk Southern train and a gasoline tanker truck on June 25. He was 58 years old. Brother Vinson joined the BLET on June 1, 1990. The train had a three-man crew. The train's conductor, Anthony J. "Tony" Mills, 58, was also killed in the accident, and the brakeman, Charles LaBella, 58, jumped off the rear of the train and suffered minor injuries. The driver of the truck, Henry Blount, also died.

Gunter, Texas -- May 19, 2004 -- BLET member killed in head on collision

E.M. "Mike" Rogers, a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, was killed in a head-on train crash near Gunter, Texas, on May 19. Brother Rogers, 49, was a member of BLET Division 172 in Fort Worth, Texas. He first joined the Brotherhood on April 1, 1998.

Elwood, Ind. -- May 18 -- BLET member killed in a yard switching accident
Jeff C. York, a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, was killed in a yard switching accident on May 18. Brother York, 35, worked for Norfolk Southern and first joined BLET Division 106 in Muncie, Ind., on December 6, 2000. He was working as a conductor and standing on a ladder on back of a train's last box car when the accident happened. As the train backed up, he became pinned between the train and the left front fender of a semi that was making a delivery of vinegar to the Red Gold tomato processing plant in Elwood, Ind.

Carrizozo, N.M. -- February 21, 2004 -- Two BLET members killed in collision of two UP trains

Engineer Anthony C. Rodella, 57, and conductor Jeffrey S. Bohler, 32, were killed in the collision of two Union Pacific freight trains in Carrizozo, N.M., on February 21, 2004. Rodella and Bohler were both members of BLET Division 192 in El Paso, Texas. Brother Rodella joined the BLET in 1974 and Brother Bohler became a member in 2003.

McBride, B.C. -- May 14, 2003 -- BLET member killed in collapse of trestle

BLE member Art P. McKay of BLET Division 843 (Prince George, B.C.) and conductor Ken LeQuesne were killed in the line of duty on May 14, 2003, as a railroad trestle collapsed under their Canadian National freight train. Two locomotives and six cars plunged into a ravine and caught fire. Brother McKay joined the BLE on May 1, 1981.

Hinesville, Ga. -- May 7, 2003 -- BLET member killed when Amtrak train hits log truck

L.W. "Wayne" Edenfield died on May 7, 2003, from injuries sustained in an Amtrak collision with a log truck near Hinesville, Ga. Brother Edenfield was a member of BLET Division 35 (Jacksonville, Fla.), having served a term as its Secretary-Treasurer in the late 1990s. He first joined the BLET on April 1, 1983. Brother Edenfield, 53, was the locomotive engineer of Amtrak's Silver Star (Train No. 91) when a log truck pulled into his path at 7:25 a.m. in Liberty County, east of Hinesville, Ga. The locomotive and all 10 cars derailed, but they remained upright.

Clarendon, Texas - May 28, 2002 "Member G.D. Shelby killed in fiery head-on collision"

BLE member G.D. Shelby was killed and three other train crew members were injured in a fiery head-on collision between two Burlington Northern Santa Fe trains near Clarendon, Texas, on May 28, 2002.

Brother G.D. Shelby, 61, was killed when the westbound freight train on which he was the engineer collided with an eastbound coal train about two miles west of Clarendon. Brother Shelby joined BLE Division 871 in Slaton, Texas, on September 1, 1989.

Wilmington, Del. -- March 21, 2002 "Local Chairman killed by Amtrak train"

Brother Charles B. "Charlie" Smith, 35, was struck and killed by an Amtrak train as he boarded his Norfolk Southern freight train just north of the Edgemore freight yard near Delaware. It is believed he either fell or was "sucked in" by the wind of the fast moving passenger train.
Brother Smith was 22 years old when he first joined the BLE on Aug. 17, 1989. He was Local Chairman of BLE Division 484 (Delmar, Del.) at the time of his death. He is survived by a wife and two children.

"He was a very conscientious union representative and a good man," said Division 484 Secretary-Treasurer Everette M. Masten Jr.

Arminto, Wyo. -- December 7, 2001 "Engineer killed in BNSF siding collision"

Brother Mike W. Hoover, 48 years old, lost his life when his Burlington Northern Santa Fe train unexpectedly encountered a mainline switch lined for a siding. The train was traveling at approximately 46 mph when it collided head-on with several locomotives attached to an unoccupied train, which had been previously parked in the siding for several days.

Brother Hoover joined BLE Division 207 (Casper, Wyo.) on Aug. 1, 1977. "Losing Mike is very much like losing a close family friend," said Division 207 Local Chairman Eric Kriegh.

Springfield Township, Mich. -- November 15, 2001 "Engineer killed in CN head-on collision"

Brother T.O. "Tom" Landris, a 27-year member of BLE Division 650 (Durand, Mich.), was killed in a head-on collision just outside of Detroit, Mich. Also killed was UTU Member Gary Chase. Their train, #243, was traveling from Flat Rock, Mich., to Flint, Mich., when it collided head-on with train #533, in a siding near Springfield Township. A fiery blaze ensured, forcing the evacuation of 100 homes in the area. The cause of the crash is still under investigation.

Brother Landris was 49 years old at the time of his death. Following this tragedy, BLE International President Don M. Hahs instituted a new policy requiring that the BLE flag atop the International Division headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio, be flown at half staff following the death of a BLE member in the line of duty.

Lake Charles, La. -- March 21, 2001 "BLE engineer killed in deadheading collision"

BLE engineer Ray J. Ste. Marie, 48 years old at the time of his death, was killed while deadheading from Houston to the Union Pacific terminal in Alexandria, La.

As the van he was traveling in slowed down for a highway construction zone on Interstate 10, just east of Lake Charles, La., it was rear-ended by an 18-wheeler. The van was shoved into the rear of another 18-wheeler, killing Brother Ste. Marie, the van driver, and a conductor, M. Deramus, 48.

Brother Ste. Marie was a Union Pacific locomotive engineer and a member of BLE Division 366 in Houston, Texas. He joined the BLE on Sept. 1, 1980, as an engineer for the old Southern Pacific. He was Chaplain of Division 366 from 1997-2000.
South Fork, Pa. -- January 11, 2001: "BLE engineer killed inspecting locomotive"

Brother D.E. Nichols Jr. of BLE Division 255 (Steubenville, Ohio) was killed the morning of January 11, 2001, near South Fork, Pa.

It is believed that the Brother Nichols had stopped to inspect for flat spots and was hit by a train on an adjacent track while traveling between Conway and Harrisburg, Pa.

Nichols, 52, joined BLE Division 255 in 1971 and was a resident of Richmond, Ohio. He leaves behind a son and his father.

East Feliciana Parish, La. - June 26, 2000 "Engineer Killed as a loaded log truck hits CN-IC train at a grade crossing"

Brother Wayne Connor, 56, was elected chairman of the BLE's Louisiana State Legislative Board just before his death. He also served as president of Division 914 (Baton Rouge, La.). The fatal collision happened exactly one week after Brother Connor's 56th birthday. He first joined the BLE on Jan. 1, 1979.

Mont-St.-Hilaire, Quebec - December 30, 1999 "BLE Engineer killed as two CN freight trains collide 50 kilometers east of Montreal"

A fiery crash of two Canadian National freight trains on December 30, 1999, in Mont-St.-Hilaire, Quebec, led to the tragic death of two railroad workers, including BLE member Yvan Theriault. Also killed was Conductor Paul Davis.

Theriault, 47, was a member of BLE Division 558 (Charny, Quebec). He joined the BLE on September 1, 1977. He left behind a wife, Diane Tremblay, a son, Frederic, and a daughter, Caroline.

Two trains were traveling in opposite directions on different tracks when they collided in Mont-St.-Hilaire, about 50 kilometers east of Montreal. CN officials speculate one of the trains derailed and tipped over onto the other. The accident caused a fire ball that sent flames shooting 50 metres into the air, lighting up the night sky.

Hardin County, Iowa - November 6, 1999 "Engineer killed as Union Pacific freight train struck a tractor-trailer that ignored grade crossing signal"

R. A. Oertwig, 48 years old at the time of death, a member of BLE Division 778 in Des Moines, Iowa. Had been a BLE member for 19 years.

Clinton, Iowa - August 11, 1999 "I&M Rail Link Engineers die as their Union Pacific freight train hits cars left on track"
Engineer Carl Finzel, 60 years old at the time of death, a member of BLE Division 119 in Dubuque, Iowa. Had been a member for 30 years. Conductor Arnold Roth, also a member of BLE Division 119. Had been a member for 2 years.

Thamesville, Ontario - April 23, 1999 "Many fatalities averted because of two heroic VIA Rail engineers who died in derailment"
Engineer Don Blain, 45 years old at the time of death, a member of BLE Division 747, Mimico, Ontario. Had been a member for 15 years. Engineer Kevin Lihou, 34 years old at the time of death, also a member of BLE Division 747. Was a new BLE member.

Toledo, Ohio - January 17, 1999 "Engineer killed as three Conrail trains collide in heavy fog"
Engineer Roger H. Bell, 56 years old at the time of death, a member of BLE Division 457, Toledo, Ohio. Had been a BLE member for 26 years.

Hawthorne, IL - October 26, 1998 "Engineer killed when struck in yard"
Debbie Dickerson, 42 years old at the time of her death, was a member of BLE Division 114 (Waterloo, Iowa). She joined the BLE on April 1, 1989, and was employed by the Illinois Central Railroad.

Small, Texas - May 13, 1998 "Union Pacific Engineer and Conductor killed off duty when taxi is hit by train"
Engineer David Butler, 51 years old at the time of death, a member of BLE Division 192, El Paso, Texas. Had been a BLE member for 24 years.

Topeka, Kansas - December 11, 1997 "Engineer Hit by Passing Train After Dismounting to Inspect Locomotive Consist"
Engineer J.L. (Joe) King, 46 years old at the time of death, a member of BLE Division 81 at Kansas City, Kansas, for 19 years. Had been an employee of Union Pacific Railroad for 23 years.
Fort Worth, Texas - August 21, 1997 "Runaway Locomotive Consist collides head-on with Freight Train"
Engineer Roy W. Adams, 54 years old at time of death, member BLE Division 568, Dennison, Texas for 22 years. Had been employed by Union Pacific for 25 years.

Rossville, KS-July 2, 1997 "Side Collision of Two Union Pacific Freight Trains and Chemical Spill"
Engineer Michael E. Brown, 46 years old at the time of death, member of BLE Division 81 for over 6 years. Had been employed by Union Pacific for 19 years and was promoted to locomotive engineer in January of 1991.

Scary, WV - June 7, 1997 "Rear-end collision and chemical spill between two CSX trains"
Engineer Kelvin N. Winters, 30 years old at time of death, member of BLE Division 190, Huntington, WV. BLE Member 2 years.

Conrad, B.C. - 3/26/97 "CN Train Hits Washed Out Track and Derails"
Locomotive Engineer Terrance (Terry) Allen Gallis, 39 years old at time of death, employed by Canadian National and a member of Division 855, Kamloops, B.C. Brother Gallis died as a result of his train hitting a track wash out.

Waycross, GA - 9/24/96 "Collision between CSX Freight Train and a Log Truck at a Grade Crossing"
Engineer, William B. Smith, Jr., 57 yrs. old at time of death, employed with CSX Transportation Eastern Lines. Promoted to engineer April 9, 1962. Member of Division 803.

Smithfield, WV - 8/20/96 "Head on Collision between two CSXT Freight Trains"
Engineer, Tom L. Shay, 42 yrs. old at time of death, employed with CSX Transportation Northern Lines. Promoted to engineer January 1995. Member of Division 284.

Edson, Alberta - 08/13/96 "Head on Collision of Canadian National Freight Train and Runaway Cars near Edson, Alberta"
Locomotive Engineer Jake Elder, 45 year old at the time of his death, was employed with Canadian National Railway at Edmonton, Alberta, and a member of Division 864. Hired on Canadian National Railway at Edmonton in 1974 and qualified as a locomotive engineer in 1979. Brother Elder served on the Audit Committee of Division 864

2/21/96 "Derailment and Chemical Spill of Leadville, CO - SouthernPacific Freight Train"
Engineer, J.M. Roybal, 44 yrs. old at time of death, employed with Denver & Rio Grande Western Railway. Promoted to engineer February 1, 1977. Member of Division 29. Student Engineer, C.W. Reagan, 34 yrs. old at time of death, employed with Denver & Rio Grande Western Railway. Student Engineer since January 1, 1996. Member of Division 29.
Silver Springs, MD - 2/16/96 "Side Collision of Amtrak Passenger Train and Marc Commuter Train"
Engineer, Ricky M. Orr, 43 yrs. old at time of death, employed with CSXT RR. since 1970. Promoted to engineer 7/1/74. Member of Division 97.

Secaucus, NJ - 2/9/96 "Side Collision and Derailment of New Jersey Transit Trains 1254 & 1107"
Engineer, Alfonso S. De Bonis, 47 yrs. old at time of death, employed with New Jersey Transit RR. Promoted to engineer 1/1/91. Member of Division 171. Engineer, John DeCurtis, 59 yrs. old at time of death, employed with the railroad for 40 years. Member of the United Transportation Union.

Laramie, WY - 11/18/95 "Rear-End Collision and Derailment of two Union Pacific Freight Trains"
Engineer, Dale W. Gibson, 45 yrs. old at time of death, employed with Union Pacific RR-Central Region since April 1, 1978. Member of Division 103.

Zana, FL - 9/21/95 "Head-on-Collision with a Sludge Truck"
Assistant Engineer, Randall L. Moses, 43 yrs. old at time of death, employed with Amtrak since August 1, 1980. Member of Division 35.

Procter, B.C. - 1/20/95 "CP Rail Train Hits Rock Slide and Derails"
Locomotive Engineer Peter Whitehead, 39 years old at time of death, employed by CP Rail. Member of Division 563, Cranbrook, B.C. Brother Whitehead died as a result of his train hitting a rock slide and derailing into Kootenay Lake. Also killed in the wreck was Shawn Trevor Hogg, age 31, a fellow member of Division 563.

Marathon, TX - 7/25/94 "Head-on-Collision between two Southern Pacific Trains"
Engineers, F.H. "Rick" Bonnell, 56 yrs. old at time of death, employed with Southern Pacific-Eastern Lines since April 1, 1963. Member of Division 566. Milby E.Winn, 59 yrs. old at time of death, employed with Southern Pacific-Eastern Lines since May 1, 1974. Member of Division 566.

Thedford, NE - 6/8/94 "Collision and Derailment involving three Burlington Northern Freight Trains"
Engineer, Tim V. Anderson, 34 yrs. old at time of death, employed with Burlington Northern since July 1, 1980. Member of Division 622.

Selma, NC - 5/16/94 "Derailment of The Silver Meteor Amtrak Train 87 following Collision with Intermodal Trailer from CSXT Train 176"
Assistant Engineer, Robert Brooks Woodward, Sr., 41 yrs. old at time of death, employed with Amtrak since May 1, 1986. Member of Division 14.
Flora, MS - 2/26/94 "Head-on-Collision of Illinois Central Railroad Trains BRME-25 and MenL-26"
Engineer, J.L. Plunk, 55 yrs. old at time of death, employed with Illinois Central RR since October 1, 1992. Member of Division 23.

Kelso, WA - 11/11/93 "Head-on-Collision and Derailment of Burlington Northern Freight with Union Pacific Freight Train"
Engineer of train 09, Mark A. Poler, 41 yrs. old at time of death, employed with Union Pacific RR-Western Lines since December 1980. Promoted to engineer November 1, 1990. Member of Division 892. He was married. Engineer of train 111, Wayne R. Kronberger, 40 yrs. old at time of death, employed with Burlington Northern RR since March 1979. Promoted to engineer July 1980. Member of Division 518.

Saraland, AL - 9/22/93 "Derailment of Amtrak Train No. 2 on the CSXT Big Bayou Canot Bridge"
Engineers, Billy R. Hall, 47 yrs. old at time of death, employed with Amtrak RR since June 1, 1980. Ernest L. Russ, 43 yrs. old at time of death, employed with Amtrak RR since January 1, 1974. Mike D. Vinet, 39 yrs. old at time of death, employed with Amtrak RR since July 1, 1979. All three engineers were members of Division 18 in New Orleans.

Knox, IN - 9/17/91 "Norfolk Southern Head-On-Collision and Derailment"
Engineer of train 277, Richard A. Marks, 40 yrs. old at time of death, employed with Norfolk Southern since August 1, 1972. He was a delegate in the 1991 Convention and Chairman of the Credentials Committee. At his time of departure, he was also Local Chairman of Division 537 in Fort Wayne, IN. He was married, and the father of two (2) children. His son, C.W. Marks is currently an engineer with Norfolk Southern Railroad and a member of Division 537.

Rochester, NY - 05/19/89 "Shifted Load of Lumber Striking Locomotive Cab of Amtrak Train No. 49"
Locomotive Engineer Peter L. Sylvester, 59 years old at the time of his death, was employed with Amtrak and a member of Division 752 in Albany, NY. Shortly after Westbound Amtrak Train 49 departed Rochester, NY with Engineer Sylvester at the throttle, an eastbound Conrail freight passed Train 49 in a series of curves. A shifted load of lumber struck the engineer's side of the cab killing Engineer Sylvester instantly. Division 752 donated the engineers to operate a Turbo Train at no cost to Amtrak so that Amtrak employees could attend the funeral service.