

JBSA honors sight-impaired employee

By Mary Nell Sanchez | 502nd Air Base Wing Public Affairs | April 5, 2019

Photos



JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas —

One of the cashiers at the Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland Base Supply Center was named Employee of the Year by the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind.

Born legally blind, Philip Myers is highly regarded by his peers and bosses.

“He doesn’t let his disability get in the way of anything he tries,” said Joann Jones, BSC store manager.

Myers, who hails from a military family, is one of three employees helping the JBSA-Lackland military community find what they need at the BSC. The jobs are made possible through the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind Program and AbilityOne, a non-profit

organization whose mission it is to create jobs and advancement opportunities for people who are blind.

The unemployment rate is 75-80 percent nationwide for the blind, according to the American Federation for the Blind.

“These stores are another opportunity for us to do that and plug directly into the military and be part of their support element,” said retired Chief Master Sgt. Craig Recker, BSC director.

Blind laborers are often employed in manufacturing, call centers and executing service contracts, he adds.

Myers can be found in the deployment section assisting customers, who often ask for him by name.

“The most important thing is helping out the customers,” Myers said.

Myers is color blind, seeing in only black and white, but these challenges don't slow him down. He knows where every item in the store and warehouse is and is ready to outfit a customer who enters the store with a list of items which could include uniforms, boots, hats, goggles, knives, flashlights and backpacks, just to name a few.

Blind cashiers are traditionally at a higher risk for making mistakes, Recker said but adds Myers probably has a lesser return rate than a sighted person because he has the ability to focus and shut out distractions.

There's always demand from JBSA squadrons for soap, toilet paper, paper towels and office supplies, but Myers is ready to wait on any customer that walks through the door.

“He really is an expert,” Recker said.

Myers' expertise may be within the walls of the BSC, his service to his customers plays a role in the success of their overall mission.

“We're supporting people that are defending our country,” Recker said. “We're an extension of that mission and to be able to do both of those things; if you can't walk out of here with a smile on your face, your heart is very hard.”

“I can’t express how much it means to work in a place that you hire visually impaired people and you serve your military,” Jones added.

Myers will travel to Washington, D.C., this month to compete for the national title.

The San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind Program operates at 15 BSC military stores at JBSA-Lackland and JBSA-Randolph, as well as centers in Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico.

◆ [Lighthouse For The Blind](#) ◆ [Philip Myers](#) ◆ [vision impaired](#)