



Public Awareness & Outreach Committee Ralph Salvucci Online Bridge Awards

Who Was Ralph Salvucci?

Not a day goes by I don't think about Ralph. I remember the first time I met him. It was the summer between my Junior and Senior years of college and I was working at Barnes & Jarnis. I remember just watching him inspect wondering what he was staring at for so long: why doesn't he just write down that it's rusty and we'll call it a day? Never. We packed up way before the sun, got breakfast (The Day and Night, The Miss Florence, The Agawam, The Four Sisters – ahhhh...) and hit the first bridge with the first golden rays. Ralph wouldn't just explain what he saw, he'd tell you why the bridge was having these problems, how it could have been avoided, and what should be done about it. Ralph, once a marine (isn't it obvious from his shapely figure?), had a dedication level towards his work to be envied. He loved going to the bridges: every one he dove into like he'd never seen a bridge before. And always with that Ralph sense of humor. He could have me laughing my gut out all day long. Well, hang around him for a while and you become like him, discussing the condition of a deck joint so deep you cruise right past exit 2 on the pike west (not a good thing, believe me). Inspect all day, write all night. And when you found a real problem with a bridge there was no rest to be found anywhere, and even more, we didn't want to rest. Ralph taught me to love what I do. It's never just a job.

Well, Ralph isn't with us anymore. He died on an inspection along I-93 in Charlestown a little while back. I may not be able to pick up the phone and hear him ask me "Hey, how's you face?" but he is not gone. He lives in all of us that he helped make better people, and in every bridge in this fine Commonwealth, in our thoughts, and in this contest.

Poompaloon.

- Reed Brockman