
CDF NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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Governor Presents Medal of Valor to 14 Firefighters Awards are California's Highest Public Servant Honor

Sacramento – Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger today awarded the Governor's Medal of Valor to 14 CDF employees who demonstrated extraordinary bravery and heroism in saving a life. The firefighters received the Medal of Valor, the highest honor that California bestows upon its public servants, as part of a ceremony recognizing 42 state employees.

"These brave men and women come from different departments and agencies within our state government, but what they all have in common is their incredible bravery," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "Some of those being honored are not trained for the sort of heroics they performed. But they rose to the challenge and stood tall to make split-second decisions, facing incredibly dangerous circumstances. And in doing so, they saved lives."

Timothy Main, of Visalia, and James Rajskup, of Hanford: On April 30, 2003, CDF Captain Main and CDF Apparatus Engineer-Paramedic Rajskup rescued an elderly woman from a burning home under extreme, dangerous fire conditions.

Robert F. Green, of Riverside: On October 22, 2003, this CDF Unit Chief restrained an unruly male passenger aboard a commercial flight who had made threats that he had a bomb.

William (Bill) F. Mason, of Victorville, and James Rissmiller, of Highland: On October 26, 2003, these CDF Battalion Chiefs drove through a fire burning across a roadway to rescue four members of a CDF engine crew and two members of the news media.

William R. Clayton, of Carlsbad: On October 26, 2003 while fighting the Cedar Fire, this CDF Division Chief took part in rescuing a man, driving through a series of fire fronts and downed power lines. He also conducted a scene evaluation at the Valley View Casino and directed arriving engines to attack positions, then coordinated with casino staff to maintain and shelter panicked patrons.

Kevin O'Leary, of Ramona: On October 26, 2003, this CDF Battalion Chief entered a home under extreme, dangerous fire conditions to rescue an elderly occupant.

Patti K. West, of Riverside: On July 19, 2004, this CDF Fire Apparatus Engineer led seven firefighters to safety during a sudden flare up of a wildland fire.

David W. Junette, of Susanville, and Pilot Thomas McConnel, of Palo Cedro: On July 26, 2004, CDF Captain Junette and CDF Pilot McConnel successfully evacuated three individuals from a downed Jet Ranger helicopter during the Straylor Fire in Butte County.

Joseph W. Waterman, of Chester, Tena G. Anderson, of Napa County, and Fredrick Westrip of Shasta County: On July 26, 2004, CDF Battalion Chief Waterman, Fire Captain Anderson and Heavy Fire Equipment Operator Westrip aided the successful rescue of three individuals from a downed Jet Ranger helicopter during the Straylor Fire in Butte County.

Raymond Chaney, of Alpine: On October 26, 2004, this CDF Battalion Chief drove through a series of fire fronts to warn the Barona Ranch Canyon Casino of the imminent danger posed by a fast-approaching fire and helped coordinate a massive rescue of 600 to 800 people.

Since the Medal of Valor program began in 1959, a total of 388 medals have been awarded to California state employees who performed an extraordinary act of heroism above and beyond the normal call of duty at great risk to their own personal safety or life to save the life of another. Award nominations are made by the employee's department.