
CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



CONTACT: Daniel Berlant
Information Officer
(916) 651-FIRE (3473)

RELEASE
DATE: December 5, 2007

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

Sacramento – Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger yesterday awarded the Governor's Medal of Valor to six CAL FIRE 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 31 state employees.

“These professionals come from different departments and agencies within our state government, but what they all have in common is their incredible bravery,” said Governor Schwarzenegger. “The men and women we are honoring today are true heroes in every sense of the word.”

David Shew of Napa

On April 27, 2007, CAL FIRE Battalion Chief Shew risked his own personal safety by rescuing an intoxicated suicidal victim from jumping off a bridge. Chief Shew was waiting for a traffic signal when he noticed a man getting ready to jump off an over crossing. Chief Shew was able to grab the man's hand and talk him back over the rail saving his life and avoiding a potential traffic disaster.

Richard (Rick) Moore of Clovis

On July 3, 2006, CAL FIRE Battalion Chief Moore successfully assisted three people to safety during a wildfire in Fresno, California. Chief Moore approached a home threatened by an oncoming wildfire and safely evacuated a family from harms way. A fourth woman outside the home was unable to get out of the fires path in time and the fire overran her. Chief Moore helped her to the ground, covering her with his body as the flames passed over them both.

William Smith, of Yorba Linda, Jacklyn Bowes, of Victorville, and Kelley DeGifford, of Temple City

On August 29, 2006, CAL FIRE Fire Apparatus Engineer Smith, Firefighter I Bowes, and Firefighter I DeGifford rescued a mother and son who were trapped in a burning building. As an approaching wildfire cut off the escape route for the residents, the engine company instructed the pair to take refuge inside the home, while the crew sheltered them with water from their hoses until the fire passed. The extreme heat and flames caught the home on fire, so the crew entered the house and evacuated the occupants from the burning home and brought them to safety.

Ignacio Otero, Jr. of Indio

On May 9, 2007, CAL FIRE Firefighter II Otero risked his personal safety by protecting and saving the life of another firefighter during a structure fire. Firefighter Otero was part of an engine company that responded to a fire at a strip mall in the City of Indio. While firefighters were aggressively attacking the fire, the facade and portions of the building cracked and broke away. Without hesitation firefighter Otero moved another firefighter to safety and placed himself between the falling debris and the firefighter, saving the other firefighter's life.

The Medal of Valor, which started in 1959, is the highest honor that California bestows on its public servants and is awarded to California state employees who have 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.

###

Editors Note: Photos of the ceremony are available by contacting Daniel Berlant at Daniel.Berlant@fire.ca.gov