

COVER STORY
HEROISM

FIREHOUSE
HEROISM
& Community Service
Awards



HEROISM

& Community Service Awards



RUELLTON, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, CA, JAN. 12, 2012 – Thirty firefighters and paramedics from eight engine companies from the Santa Barbara County, Santa Barbara City and Lompac fire departments worked for nearly two hours to successfully extricate a family of three trapped inside their auto that hung precariously over the edge of a bridge 100 feet above a river. The car came to rest on the edge of the bridge abutment after being rear-ended by a tractor-trailer truck as the trailer of the big rig swerved into the car and dragged it under the trailer toward the bridge abutment. The tractor-trailer drove off of the bridge and exploded in a fireball, killing the driver on impact. See the May 2012 issue of *Firehouse*® for further coverage. Keith D. Cullom/www.fire-image.com

HEROISM AWARDS

We are pleased to announce the newest honorees in our *Firehouse® Magazine* Heroism & Community Service Awards program and take pride in highlighting the bravery of these outstanding individuals. We recognize the judges: Chief Mark McLees of the Syracuse, NY, Fire Department; Chief Edward “Loy” Senter Jr. of Chesterfield County, VA, Fire and Emergency Medical Services; and Chief (ret.) Bruce Varner of the Santa Rosa, CA, Fire Department. We also thank retired FDNY Rescue 1 Firefighter Paul Hashagen, who administers the program. *For this year's program, we teamed the firefighters together who worked at the same incident. The judges scored each individual firefighter separately. The scores (circled numbers) reflect those the judges picked from the highest degree of difficulty in descending order, in their judgment.* Chief McLees discusses this year's program in the April “*Firehouse® Magazine Insider*” at Firehouse.com/podcasts.

GRAND PRIZE RECIPIENT



Firefighter Kevin J. Hogan



Firefighter Joseph J. Dunn



Captain Robert R. Morris

Firefighter Kevin J. Hogan II Ladder 114
Firefighter Joseph J. Dunn Ladder 114
Captain Robert R. Morris, Special Operations
Command working in Rescue 2, **FDNY**

On March 30, 2011, Ladder 114 responded to a structural fire with numerous reports of people trapped. Rescue 2 responded on the report of multiple phone calls. Upon arrival, fire was showing from the first-, second-, third- and fourth-floor stairwell windows and through the roof. A second alarm was transmitted. Victims were appearing at numerous windows and self evacuated to fire-escape balconies.

Firefighter Joseph J. Dunn positioned the tower ladder to reach as many windows as possible. Firefighter Kevin J. Hogan found two people in a third floor apartment and removed them to a front window. Hogan re-entered the room and under deteriorating conditions located two unconscious toddlers. Hogan went back to the interior bedroom and located an unconscious 27-year-old pregnant woman. He dragged her to the fire escape. He returned again and this time located a 52-year-old man slumped over near a window. He assisted the man, who was about to lose consciousness, to the window and out to the fire escape. Dunn took them all down to the street. When Rescue 2 arrived, a Mayday had been given for a section of the stairway had collapsed between the first and second floors.

Captain Robert R. Morris and Firefighter Tavella placed a 16-foot ladder over the collapsed section. Morris made it to the third floor. Engine 201 was operating in high heat and zero visibility when a section of the stairway from the half landing to the fourth floor collapsed. The nozzleman fell through. Two firefighters were holding him from falling further. Morris grabbed his shoulder straps and pulled him up and out. Another ladder was requested to be put over the collapsed section. Morris made it up to the top floor and searched under high heat and zero visibility with fire rolling overhead.

In a rear bedroom Morris found a 55-year-old unconscious female. He dragged the woman to a front window. Dunn and Hogan proceeded to the top floor. While removing a man perched on a top-floor ledge, the man said three people were still trapped in the apartment. Dunn entered the apartment. Fire was entering the open door to the apartment. As he searched, Dunn closed the door. He located two unconscious children, ages 6 and 11. He removed both and placed them in the bucket. He re-entered the room and found an unconscious 33-year-old woman. Hogan worked to place four unconscious and two conscious victims in the tower ladder basket. The three-alarm fire injured 31 people.

THE TOP 25 *Heroes of 2011*

Captain Terry Dembeck Engine 8
Lieutenant Dave Dryden Truck 8
Fire Specialist William Lutostanski Truck 8
Lieutenant Scott G. Ebbert Engine 16
Baltimore County, MD, FD

On Jan. 19, 2011, units were dispatched to an apartment fire. Captain Terry Dembeck operated a hoseline to cover Lieutenant Dave Dryden and Fire Specialist William Lutostanski, who had searched one apartment and located and were removing an unconscious female victim in a chair from another apartment on the second floor. There was a heavy smoke condition and fire was in the rear of the apartment. The room flashed over on the two firefighters removing the victim. Lutostanski had to shield the victim as the fire raged over their heads. Dembeck heard a Mayday from the third floor as the first victim was being removed via the interior stairs. Dembeck went down the ladder and took another handline up a 35-foot ladder. The second floor was now fully involved and fire was extending to the third-floor balcony.

An incredible amount of heat and thick black smoke banked down on the third floor. Dembeck spotted Firefighter Mark Falkenhan crawling through the smoke. Dembeck jumped off the ladder onto the balcony and, without the protection of a handline, he went inside after Falkenhan. Fire was in possession in at least two apartments on the third floor. Dembeck found Falkenhan lying face down and unconscious. He rolled him over onto his back when Dembeck's SCBA alarm went off. He pulled Falkenhan's shoulder straps toward the balcony. As they reached the threshold of the balcony, the apartment flashed over. Dembeck's mask ran out of air. Dembeck and Falkenhan were trapped, with fire blowing over their bodies and no handline. Falkenhan took his last breath and laid his arms over Dembeck. Lieutenant Scott G. Ebbert got a handline up the ladder to knock the fire back off them so they could be rescued from the balcony. Several firefighters assisted in packaging the injured firefighter so he could be removed from the balcony. Falkenhan was transported to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead.



Captain Terry Dembeck



Lieutenant Dave Dryden



Fire Spec. William Lutostanski



Lieutenant Scott G. Ebbert

HEROISM AWARDS

Firefighter **Christopher A. Pratt** Odin, IL, Fire District

On Dec. 21, 2011, Firefighter Christopher A. Pratt was on his way to work. At an intersection he noticed a glow, then got closer and saw a car on its side and on fire. As he exited his truck, he heard the screams of a child coming from the car. Pratt grabbed a club from his truck, ran to the car and smashed the rear window. He entered the rear of the car, which was now 80% involved in fire, and saw the child in a car seat. Clothing was burning on the child's arms and legs. Pratt patted out the flames with his hands. He reached for the seatbelt mechanism, but it was partially melted. He used a pocket knife to cut the restraints. Pratt grabbed the child, placed him in his coat and exited the car. A woman took the child to the nearest house. Pratt had to go to a ditch to throw water on his jacket, which had caught fire during the removal.



Firefighter Christopher A. Pratt

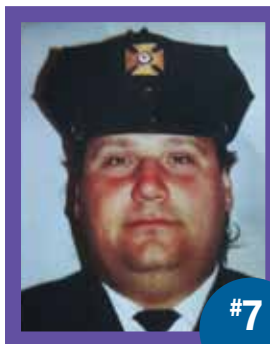
Firefighter **Brian Carroll** Rescue 1 Firefighter **Jon Davies** Rescue 1 Lieutenant **Mark Chestna** Engine 12 Worcester, MA, FD

On Dec. 8, 2011, an alarm was received for a working structure fire in a three-family wood-frame three-decker. Heavy fire consumed the rear, extended to the roof and the attic and was self venting. The exposures were being protected. An occupant was reported inside the building. Two handlines were advanced so Rescue 1 could make a search. The roof of the porches collapsed and all members were ordered to evacuate. The civilian was insistent that his roommate was still in the building. With conditions improving, a second search was started. A structural collapse occurred. The rear half of the building collapsed into the basement. Two members of Rescue 1 were on the edge of the collapse area. Lieutenant Mark Chestna placed himself in a dangerous position when he grabbed the turnout coats of the members of Rescue 1 beginning to fall, not knowing whether his weight or those of the two members could have caused them all to fall into the collapse area. Chestna lifted them to safety. Chestna's quick action saved the two firefighters from possible death or injury.

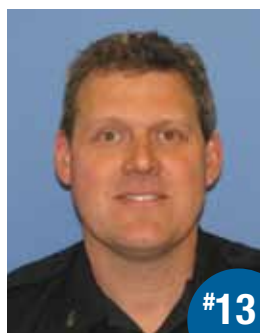
Firefighters Brian Carroll and Jon Davies of Rescue 1 entered the second floor, searching for a reported occupant. There was a moderate to heavy smoke condition as the fire progressed to the rear of the building. Carroll had a thermal imaging camera to assist in their search. Within moments of entering the area, the entire rear half of the structure collapsed without warning. Carroll rode the second floor into the basement. Davies was dropped to the first floor, where the contents of the second and third floor collapsed on top of him. Davies died as a result of the trauma sustained in the collapse. It took 45 minutes to extricate Carroll.



Firefighter Brian Carroll



Firefighter Jon Davies



Lieutenant Mark Chestna

Lieutenant **Michael P. Lampasso** FDNY Ladder 124



Lieutenant Michael P. Lampasso

On Feb. 28, 2011, Ladder 124 responded second due to a fire in a two-story, wood-frame dwelling with multiple reports of people trapped. Upon arrival, a child was being carried down a portable ladder by a member of the first-due ladder. With zero visibility, high heat and no hoseline, members searched the top floor. Lieutenant Michael P. Lampasso located an unconscious female. He dragged her 10 feet and gave her to the other members of the inside team. After crawling 30 feet back into the apartment, he located a second victim. He dragged this victim 15 feet when he was again met by his inside team.

Firefighter **Larry McCormack** Chicago FD Squad 5



Firefighter Larry McCormack

On Aug. 25, 2011, Squad 5 responded to a still and box alarm. Firefighter Larry McCormack had assisted in searching the second-floor rear when the order to evacuate was given. Conditions in the attic changed dramatically. A captain and a firefighter remained on the line so other firefighters could evacuate the attic. Fire broke out in a knee wall behind the captain. They were 10 feet from the stairway. The firefighter left the protection of the hoseline and became disoriented. He lost his helmet and his facepiece became dislodged. The captain was unable to locate him and fell down the stairs. He alerted others that the other firefighter was still upstairs. McCormack made a rapid ascent to the attic, where he encountered intense heat, smoke and fire to find the missing firefighter. Through searing heat and without the protection of a hoseline, McCormack keyed in on the PASS device of the missing firefighter. McCormack located and dragged the firefighter 10 feet to the stairwell, where others assisted in the removal. The injured firefighter is still recovering.

Captain **Rich Halligan** Firefighter **Donald Blaine Porter** Coeur d' Alene, ID, FD Engine 323



Captain Rich Halligan



Firefighter Donald Porter

On Aug. 28, 2011, a call was received for a vehicle that had rolled off an embankment and into a lake with possible people trapped. Upon arrival, two children were trapped in the car. After firefighters descended a vertical, 10-foot embankment, the car was located. Using tag lines and personal flotation devices, the car was found to be on its roof in six feet of water. The water was murky and an entry point could not be located. Suddenly, the car slid down the underwater bank.

The two men donned their SCBA; the car was now on all four tires, but in danger of shifting. The rear door was located, but was locked. Firefighter Donald Blaine Porter unlocked the door and accessed the back seat where the children were buckled. Porter used EMS shears to free the 5 year old. Holding the child, he started to ascend when Captain Rich Halligan took the child and surfaced. Porter re-entered the car and located the 1 year old. He pulled the car seat and again met Halligan. They took the car seat to the surface, swam ashore, brought the child up the embankment and started resuscitation.

Firefighter **Paul Stoops** Chambersburg, PA, FD Franklin Fire Co. No. 4



Firefighter Paul Stoops

On March 19, 2011, units were dispatched to a reported brushfire that actually was a fire in a ranch-style dwelling with smoke showing. A neighbor reported someone possibly trapped. An assistant chief became separated from his crew. Numerous renovations and highly flammable building materials caused rapid fire spread and ignited the front porch. Engine 43 was forced out of the building. The assistant chief transmitted a Mayday. The chief was attempting to self evacuate, but was receiving excessive heat and burns. Hearing the Mayday, Firefighter Paul Stoops made entry. Under heavy fire conditions and without protection of a hoseline, Stoops located the chief and performed a rescue drag, pulling him to safety. Two members of the engine received second-degree burns. The chief suffered burns to 70% of his body, 30% third degree, and spent 33 days in the burn center.

Firefighter **Michael Giroux** Yonkers, NY, FD Tower Ladder 71



Firefighter Michael Giroux

On March 4, 2011, units responded to reports of a scaffolding collapse. Two workers were suspended at the 13th floor of a 28-story senior center. It was impossible to reach them by aerial ladder or from a window. It was decided to lower a firefighter from the roof and perform two separate line transfers and then descend with each victim to a one-story sidewalk bridge. Firefighter Michael Giroux and a backup were placed in harnesses and Giroux was lowered to the lowest victim and attached to his harness. He disentangled him from the scaffolding safety lines and they were lowered to the ground. Giroux went back to the roof as the safety and main lines were brought back up and the system reset. The scenario was then repeated.

HEROISM AWARDS



Christopher Pillarella

Firefighter Christopher Pillarella FDNY Ladder Company 83

On Dec. 4, 2011, Firefighter Christopher Pillarella responded first due to a house fire. Fire was venting out the front window. After forcing entry, a search was made due to reports of an occupant trapped. Realizing little time was available, Pillarella entered the building without a hoseline in place. Fire was free burning and rolling across the ceiling, creating high heat and heavy smoke. Pillarella crawled 25 feet inside, passing the fire, and began his search. He came upon an unconscious, non-breathing victim. He dragged the 220-pound, 62-year-old man back through the house. Under deteriorating conditions with fire rolling overhead, Pillarella used his body to shield the victim. As he exited the front door, fire was venting from the top of the door. The victim was transported to the burn unit.

Captain Mike Lippincott Firefighter Christine Tonetta Firefighter Tyler Van Leer Millville, NJ, FD



Captain Mike Lippincott



Firefighter Christine Tonetta



Firefighter Tyler Van Leer

On July 6, 2011, the Millville Fire Department was dispatched to a house fire with five people reported trapped. Heavy fire consumed the front of the house. A deck gun was used to knock down the fire in the front and a crew forced entry to the side door. Fire was visible in the room, burning through the wall and in the stairway leading upstairs. After twice hearing a moan, firefighters located a victim in a hospital bed. Without the protection of a hoseline, Firefighters Christine Tonetta and Tyler Van Leer dragged the elderly male victim through the burning room to the door and safety. The victim was removed to the burn center in critical condition, suffering second- and third-degree burns.

Firefighter Brian J. Appleholm FDNY Ladder 48



Firefighter Brian J. Appleholm

On March 9, 2011, Ladder 48 found heavy fire blowing out the second floor of a six-story occupied multiple dwelling. A woman appeared out a fourth-floor window directly above the fire. Firefighter Brian J. Appleholm ascended the fire escape. Fire was in possession of the apartment, but the windows had not vented. Firefighter Blake used the aerial ladder to remove the woman who said a man was inside. Appleholm entered the room and under high heat and heavy, wind-driven smoke, he located a 73-year-old paraplegic man. He called for assistance. As conditions deteriorated, Firefighter Frey and Appleholm had to make several attempts to remove the man from the room over the window sill and onto the fire escape. Once on the fire escape, the man was carried away from the fire as it blew out all the windows under them.

Firefighter Thomas O'Connell Chicago FD Truck 41



Firefighter Thomas O'Connell

On March 23, 2011, Truck 41 responded to a still and box alarm. Numerous calls were being received for heavy fire in a one-story frame house with a child trapped. Engine 116 was stretching the initial attack line as family members pointed to the basement where they thought the child was trapped. Braving intense heat and smoke, Firefighter Thomas O'Connell began his primary search. The fire had not been located. O'Connell found an unconscious child and made his way to a small basement window. He vented the window and passed the child to a battalion chief. EMS and fire personnel started CPR.



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HEROISM AWARDS



Firefighter
Edward W. Verbitski

Firefighter Edward W. Verbitski **Philadelphia, PA, FD Squad 47**

On Nov. 10, 2010, units responded to a fire on the second floor of a two-story dwelling. When Firefighter Edward W. Verbitski arrived, he could see heavy smoke from the rear of the dwelling. He witnessed civilians placing a ground ladder to the second floor in an attempt to rescue a woman in the window. Verbitski ascended the unstable ladder, removed one adult woman from the rear of the dwelling and helped her down. He donned his SCBA and ascended the ladder a second time, making entry to the second-floor rear bedroom. As he entered, Verbitski faced extreme heat and a rapidly growing fire that was extending to his location. He initiated a search without the benefit of a hoseline. He located and then removed an 8-month-old infant who was suffering smoke inhalation. The infant was passed to waiting firefighters. Verbitski continued his search because of reports of other children trapped.

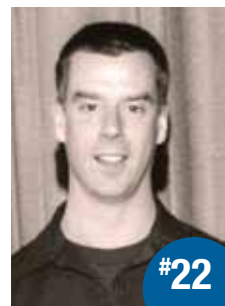
Ex-Chief Andrew Kolesar **West Haverstraw, NY, FD Hose Company**



Ex-Chief Andrew Kolesar

On Jan. 14, 2011, a firefighter driving by discovered a fire in a 2½-story private dwelling. Unknown to firefighters, the fire building had been converted into single-room occupancies. One searching firefighter could not locate an exit from the second floor because of the heavy smoke. His mask eventually ran out and he called a Mayday. Ex-Chief Andrew Kolesar found the doorway to the room, which was filled with thick, acrid smoke, and used his thermal imaging camera to locate the downed firefighter, who was not wearing his mask. As Kolesar approached him, the firefighter fell unconscious. Kolesar grabbed the firefighter's SCBA straps and pulled backwards with all of his strength. He pulled him out of the room to the stairs and both of them slid down the stairs. Two firefighters then grabbed his limp body and brought him outside where he was transported with high carbon monoxide readings.

Firefighter Stephen Curley **Chicago FD Truck 26**



On March 12, 2011, units were overhauling at a still-alarm fire. A firefighter exited the second-floor kitchen onto the rear porch when it suddenly and unexpectedly collapsed, causing the firefighter to be thrown off his feet and finding himself hanging from the third-floor door jamb from the kitchen he had just exited. Firefighter Stephen Curley, seeing the porch collapse and without concern for his own safety, leaped across the floor and secured the firefighter's arm.

\$100 HEROISM AWARDS



Brandon Ambrose
Anderson City, SC, FD
In severe heat and smoke conditions, ahead of the hoseline, entered structure in search of victim. Assisted in removing victim through second-story window.



Charles Benson
Naval District of Washington, DC, FD
While off duty and with no gear or PPE, rescued five people from MVA into a utility pole. With power lines down and the engine on fire, carried small child and infant to safety.



Frank Buck
Wichita, KS, FD
While off duty at a gym, encountered a collapsed victim. Administered AED shocks and helped with CPR. Assisted first-arriving engine with inserting breathing tube.



Tim Barrowman
Joliet, IL, FD
Ascended a ladder to help rescue three people trapped by a third-floor window, with smoke all around them. Returned to help extinguish the fire.



Benji Black
Anderson City, SC, FD
In severe heat and smoke conditions, ahead of the hoseline, entered structure in search of victim. Assisted in removing victim through second-story window.



Jerrod Byrne
Wichita, KS, FD
While off duty, responded to neighbor's cry for help. Found 4 year old trapped under garage door. Lifted and secured door. Administered CPR until EMS arrived.

\$100 HEROISM AWARDS



Keith Cerzullo
Fairfax County, VA, FD
While off duty, encountered serious multi-vehicle accident. Called for Medevac while attending to critically injured motorcyclist. Helped triage and package others.



Kenneth Coffelt
Fairfax County, VA, FD
While off duty at the beach, swam out into ocean to assist mother, father and son caught in rip current. Used their boogie boards to guide them to safety.



Robert Conigliaro
FDNY
Entered burning townhouse in advance of hoseline, in heavy-smoke, high-heat conditions. Crawled up to second floor, found semi-conscious victim and helped drag to safety.



Michael Conway Jr.
Prince George's County, MD, Fire/EMS
Entered home in zero visibility. Found four victims trapped in second-floor bedroom. Led them to balcony, where three escaped via ladder. Gave fourth victim SCBA and led down stairwell.



John Daves
Prince George's County, MD, Fire/EMS
While off duty, witnessed MVA. Called 911, then with no water, gear or PPE, tried valiantly to rescue two children trapped inside fiery vehicle.



Jeremy Duncan
Anderson City, SC, FD
In severe heat and smoke, ahead of the hoseline, entered structure in search of victim. Assisted in removing victim through second-story window.



Nate Dunmoyer
Columbus, OH, FD
Using scuba gear, and despite suffering a dislocated shoulder, entered 17-foot-deep Scioto River in zero visibility and pulled victim ashore.



Kevin Farrell
FDNY
Crawled through an apartment with rapidly accelerating fire and heat conditions, ahead of the line, to search for trapped victim. Dragged victim more than 100 feet to safety.



Edwin Flores
Fairfax County, VA, FD
While off duty, encountered MVA. While trying to extricate driver, truck caught fire. Used extinguisher to put out fire. Driver was eventually rescued.



Josh Forbes
Wichita, KS, FD
Entered bedroom window through billowing smoke in zero visibility to search for trapped toddler. Helped remove child through the window.



Stephen Gallagher
Prince George's County, MD, Fire/EMS
Entered home in zero visibility and ahead of hoseline. Helped mobility-challenged person trapped on second floor down stairway to safety.



Edward Galloza
Chicago, IL, FD
Responding to a reported house fire with shots heard, raised a 20-foot ladder to second-floor window upon cries for help. Rescued one-legged victim.



Preston Gonsalves
Wichita, KS, FD
While off duty, noticed a rollover with a victim still seatbelted in and called for help. Noticed the victim stopped breathing. Re-positioned airway and breathing was restored.



Michael Grace
Columbus, OH, FD
While off duty, became involved in a multi-vehicle MVA. After noticing one of the cars was on fire, rushed without gear to extricate an unconscious victim.



James Hay
FDNY
Entered ahead of hoseline, passed the main body of fire, located the victim in the bathroom and transmitted a 10-45.



Samuel Hittle
Wichita, KS, FD
Entered bedroom window through billowing smoke to search for trapped toddler. Found child and crawled to open window. Used SCBA to vent child until EMS arrived.



Benjamin J. Huyett
Kansas City, KS, FD
Conducted search in heavy fire, thick smoke conditions. Located and helped rescue victim on second floor. Re-entered and located and helped rescue another victim.



James Letcher
Kansas City, KS, FD
Scaled six-foot fence on bridge, grabbed dangling attempted suicide victim with one hand and held on until ladder was in place for rescue.



John Marsden
Chicago, IL, FD
Witnessed civilian car hit by falling ice. Rescued driver and shut down traffic in the danger zone. Received 10-inch gash on head from falling ice.



Daniel McDonagh
Chicago, IL, FD
Bypassed heavy fire and smoke on the second floor, ahead of the hoseline, to rescue semi-conscious victim trapped on third floor.



Brian McNulty
Milwaukee, WI, FD
In escalating fire, heat and smoke conditions, and without the protection of a hoseline, made his way into a basement fire to help successfully evacuate two companies.



Thomas Mezziere
Chicago, IL, FD
Rushed through deteriorating conditions, ahead of the hoseline, to third floor to locate, calm and rescue two adults and two children.



Gilbert Montalvo
FDNY
Entered burning townhouse in advance of hoseline, in heavy smoke and high heat. Crawled up to second floor, found semi-conscious victim and helped drag to safety.



Travis Murdoch
Prince George's County, MD, Fire/EMS
Entered home in zero visibility and ahead of hose-line. Helped three victims trapped in second-floor bedroom escape via ladder.

\$100 HEROISM AWARDS



Alexander Myers
Prince George's
County, MD, Fire/EMS
Ascended to second-floor
window to assist physically
challenged trapped victim
in heavy smoke and fire
situation. With no line and
SCBA removed to aid victim,
helped complete rescue.



Steve Nienhaus
St. Louis, MO, FD
While off duty, witnessed a
car drive into a canal. With
no gear, jumped into the
water, freed the victim and
pulled the victim ashore.



Patrick Peet
Glen Cove, NY, FD
While off duty, forced entry
to neighbor's burning house
in search of trapped victim.
With no gear and in heavy
fire and smoke conditions,
found unconscious victim
and helped rescue.



Mike Persha
Joliet, IL, FD
Ascended a ladder to help
rescue three people trapped
by a third-floor window,
with smoke all around them.
Returned to help extinguish
the fire.



Russell Poe
Prince George's
County, MD, Fire/EMS
Took command of a working
fire, conducting 360 survey,
until chief officer arrived.
Proceeded to battle fire and
then provide ALS to victim.



Andre Raiford
Chicago, IL, FD
Searched ahead of the line in
heavy smoke, high-heat con-
ditions, located unconscious
victim on second floor. With
flames engulfing the hallway,
carried victim to safety.



David Ritchie
FDNY
Crawled past main fire in
high heat and zero visibility
in Collyer Mansion condi-
tions. Located unconscious
victim and carried to safety.



Nick Sansom
Mogadore, OH, FD
Stretched a line in burning
building and pushed fire into
the rear to allow partner to
enter basement to rescue
victims.



Alexander Shakel
Glen Cove, NY, FD
Entered burning building
through window and, in heavy
fire and smoke conditions,
assisted in removing uncon-
scious victim.



David Smith
Mumford, NY, FD
Entered shallow creek in cold,
snowy weather to rescue vic-
tim trapped in rollover. Wedged
door open to allow access to
victim. Helped remove victim
from car.



Adon Snyder
Prince George's County,
MD, Fire/EMS
Ascended to second-floor
window to assist physically
challenged trapped victim in
heavy smoke and fire situation.
Helped guide victim down lad-
der and administered first aid.



Benjamin Stasik
Mogadore, OH, FD
Advanced past fire, without
a line, in zero visibility to
find trapped victim. Survived
ceiling collapse to remove
victim. Re-entered with TI and
rescued second victim from
basement.



Todd Taylor
Chicago, IL, FD
Rushed through deteriorating
conditions, ahead of the hose-
line, to third floor to locate,
calm and rescue two adults
and two children.



Chris Trewer
Mumford, NY, FD
Entered shallow creek in cold,
snowy weather to rescue
victim trapped in rollover. Held
victim's head above water until
successful rescue could be
completed.



Justin Valeo
Glen Cove, NY, FD
While off duty, rushed to fire
at neighbor's house. Grabbed
extra gear and, in heavy fire
and smoke conditions, helped
rescue unconscious victim.



Robert Venera
Issaquah, WA,
Eastside Fire & Rescue
While off duty, spotted a multi-
family structure fire. Without
gear, deployed hoseline from
first-arriving company and
knocked down fire. Provided
CPR to victim.



Michael Vibert
Farmington, CT, FD
While off duty, forcibly entered
burning building with no gear
and no hoseline, responding to
cries for help. Located victim
on second floor. Helped remove
victim from the building.



Patrick Vibert
Farmington, CT, FD
While off duty, entered burning
building with no gear and no
hoseline to assist in removal
of victim in heavy smoke
conditions.



Joshua Wagner
Kansas City, KS, FD
Conducted search in heavy
fire, thick smoke conditions.
Helped rescue victim on
second floor. Re-entered and
helped rescue another victim.



Clint Wheeler,
Fort Scott, KS, FD
With entrance blocked and
ahead of the hoseline, entered
house fire in heavy smoke
conditions. Located victim
and assisted in removing her
through the window.

HONORABLE MENTION

Robert Bartos
Bayonne, NJ, FD
Ascended to 6th floor
of apartment house
fire. Entered room
ahead of line and
used TI to locate vic-
tim. Removed victim
to safety.

Jerome Gardner
Grand Junction,
CO, FD
Helped search for,
locate and rescue
crew member who
had fallen through
the floor in heavy
fire, smoke and heat
conditions.

John Leahy
Bayonne, NJ, FD
Ascended to 6th floor
of apartment house
fire. Hooked line to
standpipe. Helped
remove victim before
returning to fight
the fire.

Clark Thompson
Grand Junction,
CO, FD
Called Mayday and
helped search for,
locate and rescue
crew member who
had fallen through
the floor in heavy
fire, smoke and heat
conditions.

UNIT CITATIONS

Paterson, NJ, FD, Rescue 1

Captain Scott Parkin
Firefighter Thomas Dyk
Firefighter Steven Higgins
Firefighter Erik Diaz

Rescue 2:

Captain Frank Liscio
Firefighter Chris Tiritilli
Firefighter Arthur Woods
Firefighter Robert Santore

Marine 3:

Captain Howard Anderson
Firefighter Adrian Evans
Firefighter Joseph Garret

On Aug. 30, 2011, during flooding of the Passaic River, crews responded to reports of a man clinging to the side of a bridge. Upon arrival, they witnessed him get washed over the bridge. They notified dispatch and proceeded downstream for the search, where they found the man clinging to a tree in swiftwater currents. Numerous failed attempts were made with a rigging system; live power lines overhead and thick trees hampered efforts by helicopter. The decision was made to build a lowering and hauling system and guide the rapid deployment craft (RDC) through the rapids to pull him to safety. Captain Liscio hung by a tree limb to guide the RDC to the victim, pull the victim to it and signal the team to pull the RDC back to a safe area for rescue. The crews then formed a human chain and, at great personal risk, reached Captain Liscio and pulled him to safety.

Green Ridge Volunteer Fire Co. No. 1

Deputy Chief Michael W. Evans
Captain Dave Durbano
Assistant Chief Ken Dawson Jr.
Captain Brian Harris Jr.
Lieutenant Chris Repine
Firefighter/EMT Andrew Plotts
Firefighter/EMT Dave Evans Jr.
Firefighter/EMT JJ. Evans
Firefighter/EMT Robert Repine Jr.

On Aug. 11, 2011, the rescue response was dispatched for an industrial rescue, upgraded to a confined space rescue involving hazardous materials with a trapped subject. Members of the local sewer authority were performing routine maintenance when they were overcome by H₂S gas in a sewer pumping station belowground. Crew members worked under hazardous conditions to locate, package, decontaminate and attempt life-saving medical care.

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Swiftwater Rescues After Storm

On Sept. 8, 2011, numerous rescue incidents took place during a severe weather event that brought multiple calls for water-related rescues throughout the state of Virginia. The following nominees are honored for their teamwork which led to successful outcomes at these emergency situations, including rescues of fellow comrades, police and citizens.

Chesterfield County, VA
(responding as a SCUBA team
to Westmoreland County):
Captain Gerald Pruden
Lieutenant Joel Britt

Firefighter Bryce Ford
Firefighter Gene Ledlie

Fairfax County, VA:
Engine 414/Rescue 414
Engine 408/Truck 410

Truck 424
Engine 439
Rescue 439
Rescue 418
Swiftwater Boat 421
Rescue 421

Worcester, MA, FD, Engine 13

Lieutenant Mark Cady
Firefighter Shamus Shanley
Firefighter Robert Atchue

Engine 6:

Captain Shawn Wyse
Firefighter Robert LaRose Jr.
Firefighter Lincoln Boisseau

Rescue 1:

Lieutenant Joseph Gaffney
Firefighter Kenneth Dion
Firefighter David Sachs
Firefighter David Ryan

Car 3:

Acting District Chief/Captain
Dennis Dolan

On Dec. 8, 2011, each member played a significant role in the extrication and rescue attempt of Firefighter Jon Davies, at great risk to themselves from secondary collapse and ongoing fire conditions on the first-floor of a three-story structure. They were able to locate their fallen comrade, assess him, use extrication equipment to remove debris and shore up dangerous overhangs and extricate the firefighter. Simultaneous extrication efforts were taking place in the basement for Firefighter Brian Carroll, directly below that of Davies, having a secondary effect on the activities.

San Francisco, CA, FD

Captain Michael Rolovick
Firefighter William A. Mulkeen (ret.)
Firefighter Daniel J. Molloy

On Jan. 1, 2011 at 1:28 A.M., in the midst of a severe winter storm, the crew members responded on a first-alarm assignment to a working fire in a three-story multi-residential building. Without the ability to use their aerial ladder, they were resourceful in utilizing a 24-foot wooden ladder and rope to anchor it to

an exposure building. They successfully rescued two combative elderly residents by carrying them over the ladder to the exposure building to safety.

Prince George's County, MD,

Fire/EMS

Hyattsville VFD – Truck 801:

Firefighter Matthew Lauria
Firefighter Daniel Leyden
Firefighter Henry Sullivan

College Park VFD – Truck 812:

Firefighter Troy Dannenfels
Sergeant Matthew McSherry
Sergeant Timothy Curran
Lieutenant Ben Ross
Firefighter Chris Hagen
Firefighter/Medic Lieutenant
Russell Poe, III

On Nov. 27, 2011, the crew encountered a working fire with three possible victims trapped in a single-family dwelling. Working in high heat and limited visibility and without the protection of a hoseline, they were able to locate, remove and treat all three unconscious victims, including a child.

Joliet, IL, FD,
Company 7

On Nov. 27, 2011, Company 7, consisting of Engine 7 and Ambulance 7, arrived at a three-story, 12-unit apartment building with heavy smoke and fire showing. The crew was divided into two teams to perform simultaneous operations during difficult conditions. Two children were reportedly trapped, so personnel began search operations while the second crew rescued three residents via a third-floor front window. Command then radioed that the children had been removed by an adult. They worked to contain and extinguish the kitchen fire.

FIREHOUSE[®]

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The Firehouse Heroism & Community Service Awards recognize each year's most outstanding demonstrations of valor; nominated by their peers and voted on by the leaders within the firefighting community. Since 1983, over 5,600 firefighters have been honored for their selfless spirit and commitment to serve through this program, the largest of its kind in the nation.

For more information or to become a sponsor, contact Liz Neroulas
lizfn@cygnuspub.com
(631) 963-6230

UNIT CITATIONS

Wichita, KS, FD

Engine 10:

Captain Richard A. Bahr,
Benjamin S. Kersting,
Firefighter Ryan J. Gadbury

Squad 10:

Lieutenant Michael P. North,
Firefighter Jeremiah J. Toothaker

Squad 5:

Lieutenant Troy A. Gerken,
Firefighter Matthew D. White

On April 17, 2011, crews arrived to fire in an apartment complex with people

trapped at third-floor windows. They stretched hoselines and laddered the building to remove civilians. With numerous operations occurring, heavy fire was attacked and additional victims were located and removed. In all, 17 people were able to either self evacuate or received assistance from Wichita Fire.

Honorable Mention

Wichita, KS, FD
Truck 4, Fire Medical Officer
Engine 9, Truck 3

COMMUNITY SERVICE



Firefighter/Paramedic
Joseph Quade
Prince George's County
Fire/EMS

In response to an overwhelming amount of calls by a wheelchair bound and obese resident for help getting her into her home, Quade decided to help by gathering resources and donating time to build a ramp and deck at the residence. He spent more than 100 hours on the project and secured funding from various sources. Calls to the home were dramatically reduced, thereby benefiting the department, and customer service to the family was above and beyond.



Jeffery Williams
Shreveport, LA, FD

Over the past several years, Williams has operated the department's "Operation Santa Claus" program, securing donations of toys to fulfill hundreds of children's holiday wishes for their struggling parents. Beyond the "Operation Santa Claus" program, Williams has demonstrated a commitment to the community by raising money, delivering food and making home repairs with his personal time.

Ken David Ainsworth
San Francisco, CA, FD

As a dedicated member of the department, Ainsworth spearheaded a multi-agency group including the SFFD, Department of Public Health, City College of San Francisco and the San Fran-

cisco Paramedic Association, to make CPR training more accessible to the public. There is no budget and instructors are volunteers; over 400 people have been trained.

Honorable Mention

Amelia D'Agostino
Cameron Carlson
Emily Myers
Bristol, VA

While returning to campus after a meal, these Virginia Intermont College students came upon a house fire, called authorities and knocked on doors to help a mother and her three small children escape. One gave her coat to warm a child; another gave her shoes to the mother. All three students stayed with the family until the American Red Cross arrived. The bravery, empathy and humility shown by these young women led the Bristol, VA, Fire Department to nominate them.

Tuscaloosa, AL, Fire & Rescue Service

Despite devastation to the area after an EF4 tornado, including destruction of a fire station, a police precinct, the county EOC office and American Red Cross and Salvation Army buildings, the Tuscaloosa Fire & Rescue Service provided critical service to the community rapidly and efficiently. Proficiency in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) was regarded as the main reason they were able to overcome challenges, such as loss of radio communications, to reduce loss of life and property. They performed their duties above and beyond, even while some battled their own personal losses from the storm. ■