



THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT *of* JUSTICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 2019

ATTORNEY GENERAL WILLIAM P. BARR JOINS PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP IN AWARDING THE MEDAL OF VALOR TO 14 PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS

WASHINGTON – President Donald J. Trump and Attorney General William P. Barr today awarded the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor to 14 recipients – two posthumously – who exhibited exceptional courage in saving and protecting others and whose heroic actions went above and beyond the call of duty. The Medal of Valor, authorized by the Public Safety Medal of Valor Act of 2001, is awarded by the President to public safety officers nominated by the directors of their employing agencies and recommended by the Medal of Valor Review Board. The Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance oversees the Medal of Valor.

“The work that first responders do every day is heroic, and each one of them deserves our gratitude,” said Attorney General William P. Barr. “Even among these selfless public servants, some have distinguished themselves through exceptional acts of valor. Today, the men and women of the Department of Justice are proud to join with President Trump in honoring 14 first responders who did just that, including two who gave their lives in the line of duty. These brave Americans exemplify what serving as a first responder is all about: selflessness, poise, and sacrifice.”

Today’s recipients of the Medal of Valor include the following officers:

- Fallen Officer Sergeant **Verdell Smith Sr.**, City of Memphis Police Department, Tennessee, for giving his own life to save the lives of civilians in the path of a driver speeding recklessly through a crowd
- Fallen Officer **Brent Thompson**, Dallas Area Rapid Transit Police Department, Texas, for giving his life while engaging a mass shooter at a protest march and saving the lives of countless civilians and fellow officers
- Lieutenant **Xavier Torres**, Retired; Sergeant **Seth Chapman**; Sergeant **Terry Smith Jr.**, Retired; Sergeant **Thomas Avila III**; and Sergeant **Rocky Wenrick**; Corporal **Andrew Rodriguez Jr.**, Retired; and Senior Officer **Carlos Plascencia**, Azusa Police Department, California; and Detective **Manuel Campos**, Irwindale Police Department, California, for placing themselves in mortal danger and saving the lives of civilians and fellow officers during a mass shooting incident on Election Day, 2016

- University Law Enforcement Officer **Alan Horujko**, Ohio State University Police Division, for risking his life to save the lives of several civilians from a driver who sped through a crowd and then emerged from his car to attack pedestrians with a knife
- Senior Trooper **Nicholas Cederberg**, Oregon State Police, for placing himself in the line of fire and suffering life-threatening injuries in order to bring a murderer to justice
- Fire Captain **Dustin Moore** and Firefighter Paramedic **Andrew Freisner**, Lenexa Fire Department, Kansas, for risking their lives to rescue a family from a burning apartment building

se 14 recipients represent a proud tradition of service, one that has been ennobled
eir valiant actions,” said Office of Justice Programs Principal Deputy Assistant
ney General Matt M. Dummermuth, whose office oversees BJA. “We stand in awe
ese extraordinary public servants and are inspired by their courageous example.”

“Public safety officers report to work each day knowing full well the risks inherent
in the jobs they undertake, yet they do not shrink from their duty,” said BJA
Director Jon Adler. “By standing tall in the face of danger, these brave men and
women have done their communities an immeasurable service and they have
done their profession tremendous credit.”

Including today’s awardees, a total of 139 medals have been presented since the
first recipients were honored in 2003. More information about the award and
today’s recipients, the Medal of Valor Review Board members and the nomination
process can be found here: www.ojp.gov/medalofvalor.

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