



# Department of Justice

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## **VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN AND ATTORNEY GENERAL HOLDER HONOR 18 PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS WITH MEDAL OF VALOR**

WASHINGTON – Vice President Joe Biden and Attorney General Eric Holder today awarded the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor to 18 public safety officers who exhibited exceptional courage in saving and protecting others and whose heroic actions were above and beyond the call of duty.

“This year’s Medal of Valor recipients have fearlessly responded to desperate cries for help – courageously risking their own lives to secure innocent victims, protect fellow officers, and end deadly assaults,” said Attorney General Eric Holder. “These extraordinary public servants have distinguished themselves by going above and beyond the call of duty. And today, I am honored to join Vice President Biden in bestowing one of our nation’s most prestigious decorations on each of these heroes.”

The Medal of Valor, authorized by the Public Safety Medal of Valor Act of 2001, is awarded by the President of the United States to public safety officers cited by the Attorney General. Public safety officers are nominated by the chiefs or directors of their employing agencies and recommended by the Medal of Valor Review Board. The Attorney General has designated the department’s Office of Justice Programs (OJP) to serve as the federal point of contact for the Medal of Valor initiative. OJP’s Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), led by Director Denise E. O’Donnell, administers the Medal of Valor initiative.

“We recognize 18 extraordinary individuals for their quick thinking, selflessness and exceptional courage,” said Office of Justice Program Acting Assistant Attorney General Mary Lou Leary. “They are law enforcement, corrections officers, and firefighters who went beyond the call of duty to risk – and in some cases, to give – their lives for their fellow citizens and colleagues.”

Today’s 18 recipients of the Medal of Valor are: Officer Julie Olson, Maplewood Police Department, Minn.; Officer Reeshemah Taylor, Osceola County Corrections Department, Fla.; Wildlife Officer Michael Neal, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission; Officer Sean Haller and Officer Rafael Rivera, California Highway Patrol; Trooper Robert Lombardo and fallen Trooper Joshua Miller, Pennsylvania State Police; Firefighter Peter Demontreux, New York City Fire Department; Firefighter Hope Scott and Captain William Reynolds, Virginia Beach Fire Department, Va.; Deputy Sheriff Krista McDonald, Kitsap County Sheriff’s Office, Wash.; Officers Timothy McClintick, Max McDonald, Douglas Weaver, Sergeant Karl Lounge Jr. and

fallen Sergeant Thomas Baitinger, St. Petersburg Police Department, Fla.; and fallen Deputies William Stiltner and Cameron Justus, Buchanan County Sheriff's Office, Va.

“The Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor is the highest national award for valor awarded to a public safety officer,” said Bureau of Justice Assistance Director, Denise E. O’Donnell. “BJA is proud to administer a program which serves to recognize the exceptionally brave actions of individuals who have given selflessly in order to protect citizens and communities throughout our nation.”

Including today’s awardees, a total of 78 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 is on the OJP website at: [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/medalofvalor](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/medalofvalor).

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