



U.S. Department of Justice

2005-2006 Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor Recipients



From left to right are **Kirk Van Orsdel** of the California Highway Patrol; **Todd M. Myers** of the West Hartford Police Department, Hartford, Connecticut; **Attorney General Mukasey**; **David M. Loving** of the Richmond Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Richmond, Virginia; and **Kevin M. Howland** of the Sacramento Police Department, Sacramento, California.

Not pictured is Medal of Valor recipient **Brian D. Rothell** of Chesterfield Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Chesterfield, Virginia.

Officer Kevin M. Howland **Sacramento Police Department, Sacramento, California**

On May 22, 2006, Officer Kevin M. Howland of the Sacramento Police Department in California was on duty and conducting a search for the vehicle of an armed robbery suspect in the City of Sacramento. Officer Howland observed a vehicle that appeared to be similar to the style and color of the suspect vehicle. As a result, he stopped to determine if this was the particular vehicle for which he was searching. After interviewing the four individuals in the car, Officer Howland became suspicious and requested back-up. Suddenly, the driver accelerated in reverse, striking the leg of Officer Howland, who backed up and drew his service weapon. The suspect vehicle then accelerated directly toward Officer Howland, pinning the



officer between the suspect vehicle and his own patrol car. The suspects continued to accelerate through the parking lot with Officer Howland clinging to the hood and firing into the suspect vehicle to stop the suspects' escape and to prevent innocent bystanders from being injured. The suspect vehicle turned, rolling Officer Howland off the hood. Officer Howland continued to pursue the suspects on foot, despite his injuries. Suffering from fatal gunshot wounds, the driver crashed the vehicle. Subsequently, Officer Howland was able to coordinate the arrest of the remaining suspects. It is with his continued diligence—even with injuries—that afforded safety for those around him and led to the suspects' apprehension.

Firefighter David M. Loving **Richmond Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Richmond, Virginia**

On August 6, 2005, Firefighter David M. Loving of the Richmond Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services in Virginia was off-duty when he came upon the scene of a horrific traffic accident on Interstate 95. A motor home traveling at a high rate of speed had rear-ended an 18-wheeler parked on the right shoulder of the highway. As Firefighter Loving stopped to offer assistance, he was advised there were two people trapped inside the motor home. Unable to enter the motor home via the door, Firefighter Loving began to tear apart the vehicle by hand. Despite the motor home filling with smoke and Firefighter Loving not having any safety gear, he climbed inside the vehicle and made his way to the conscious victim. Fighting smoke, he was able to untangle the victim from debris and pull him to safety, and within minutes the motor home was totally engulfed in flames. Witnesses stated that the victim would have died prior to the arrival of the first responding emergency unit without Firefighter Loving's assistance.



Officer Todd M. Myers **West Hartford Police Department, Hartford, Connecticut**

On July 29, 2005, Officer Todd M. Myers of the West Hartford Police Department in Connecticut was off-duty and on his way to work when he witnessed a dump truck lose control, speed downhill, and veer into oncoming traffic. The truck overturned and slid on its side, destroying many vehicles, before it burst into flames. Officer Myers, 100 yards away in his personal vehicle, ran toward the scene as gas tanks from cars around him began to explode. At risk to his own personal safety, he was able to cut a trapped female driver from one of the burning vehicles. He suffered first and second degree burns on his right arm as he dragged her to safety. Officer Myers then returned to direct responding units, pulling other victims from their vehicles, and assisted in the care of other victims until paramedics could arrive. Overall, this 20-vehicle traffic crash, which caused four fatalities and many injuries, would have been much worse if not for the heroic actions of Officer Todd Myers.



Firefighter Brian D. Rothell **Chesterfield Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Chesterfield, Virginia**

On March 25, 2006, Firefighter Brian D. Rothell of the Chesterfield Fire and Emergency Medical Services in Virginia was riding his bike off-duty by the James River. Firefighter Rothell's attention was drawn to a man climbing up on the railing of the bridge over the river. To ensure the individual's safety, Firefighter Rothell decided to monitor the individual. Shortly after, the individual flung himself over the rail of the bridge. Firefighter Rothell grabbed the man by the sweatshirt and tried securing him, but the man was too heavy and continued slipping toward the river. Firefighter Rothell held the man with one hand as he reached through the railing of the bridge to try to secure his grip. While the individual struggled, Firefighter Rothell felt the cloth tear in his hands. As other individuals came onto the scene, they held the man while Firefighter Rothell climbed over the railing and created a leg lock between the bridge and the drainage pipe under the bridge. Dangling from one arm and leg, Firefighter Rothell pulled the man up to the others waiting above, whom then pulled the man to safety. Firefighter Rothell showed bravery and swiftness of action in reaching out—and hanging on—to save the life of another.

Sergeant Kirk Van Orsdel **California Highway Patrol**

On July 21, 2005, Sergeant Kirk Van Orsdel of the California Highway Patrol in California observed a vehicle that may have been involved in a freeway violence confrontation. Sergeant Van Orsdel's contact with the vehicle resulted in the suspect firing upon the officer with a fully automatic AK-47 assault rifle and then entering onto the freeway with Sergeant Van Orsdel in pursuit. The suspect stopped on the freeway, and the suspect and Sergeant Van Orsdel engaged in a second exchange of gunfire. The suspect traveled the wrong way on the freeway using all of the freeway lanes, and Sergeant Van Orsdel followed the suspect in reverse, using the right shoulder. The suspect attempted to initiate a shootout at a gas station, but was thwarted by the arrival of Sergeant Van Orsdel. The suspect then hid behind a cement rail to have a third exchange of gunfire with Sergeant Van Orsdel before the pursuit began again. In the final gun battle, the suspect used his vehicle as a shield, allowing his car to roll in neutral while firing at Sergeant Van Orsdel, who returned fire with his rifle, incapacitating the suspect. Sergeant Van Orsdel showed exceptional courage in facing, not one but, three separate gun battles with a suspect whose firepower outmatched his own.

