



NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS FOUNDATION

April 24, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: NFFF Media Line at 202-938-6260
or Bill Delaney at bdelaney@firehero.org

NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL WEEKEND WILL HONOR AND REMEMBER 226 FIREFIGHTERS *Sixteen California Fallen Firefighters Among Those Being Honored on May 4-5, 2024*

EMMITSBURG, Md. – The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) will host the **43rd National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend** (Memorial Weekend) on May 4-5, 2024 in Emmitsburg, Maryland. This year's national tribute will honor 89 firefighters who died in the line of duty in 2023 and 137 firefighters who died in previous years. The honorees will include the following California firefighters:

Assistant Chief Joshua Bischof, age 46, of the CAL FIRE – California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, was killed on 8/6/2023 when two firefighting helicopters collided in Cabazon, CA. They were fighting the Broadway Wildland Fire, a vegetation fire sparked by a nearby structure fire. One helicopter was able to land safely, and the Bell 407 crashed. Captain Timothy Rodriguez and Contract Pilot Tony Sousa were also killed in the crash.

Firefighter Specialist Robert Brantley, age 50, of the Los Angeles County Fire Department, died on 1/5/2018, due to complications of cancer, deemed by the State of California to be a line-of-duty death.

Firefighter Russell Fagan, age 56, of the Los Angeles County Fire Department, died on 11/24/2018, due to complications of cancer, deemed by the State of California to be a line-of-duty death.

Captain Brian Falk, age 47, of the Kern County Fire Department, died on 07/14/2022 due to a heart attack while working an overtime shift at Station 23 in Fellows, CA. He responded to a residential structure fire during the morning of 07/13/2022.

Firefighter II Jacob "Jake" Flores, age 45, of the CAL FIRE – California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, died on 1/14/2022 due to complications of COVID-19.

EMMITSBURG

16825 South Seton Avenue | PO Drawer 498 | Emmitsburg, MD 21727
301-447-1365 ★ **301-447-1645** (FAX)

CROFTON

2130 Priest Bridge Drive | Suite 6 | Crofton, MD 21114
410-721-6212 ★ **410-721-6213** (FAX)

WWW.FIREHERO.ORG ★ **FIREHERO@FIREHERO.ORG**

Firefighter Joseph Gandara, age 63, of the Los Angeles County Fire Department, died on 11/3/2023 due to complications of cancer, to be deemed by the State of California to be a line of duty death.

Firefighter II Daniel Geary, age 38, of the CAL FIRE – California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, died on 7/5/2018, due to complications of cancer, deemed by the State of California to be a line-of-duty death.

Fire Captain Scott Gomes, age 53, of the CAL FIRE - California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, died on 11/17/2022, due to complications of liver and throat cancer, deemed the State of California to be a line-of-duty death.

Captain William Lee Knott, age 65, of the Los Angeles County Fire Department, died on 11/29/2019, due to complications of cancer deemed by the State of California to be a line-of-duty death.

Firefighter Specialist Samuel Neubauer, age 47, of the Los Angeles County Fire Department, died on 3/2/2020, due to complications of cancer, deemed by the State of California to be a line-of-duty death.

Captain Manuel Ramos, age 62, died on 9/8/2019, due to complications of cancer, deemed by the State of California to be a line-of-duty death.

Captain Kenneth Renz, age 58, of the Los Angeles County Fire Department, died on 4/29/2023, due to complications of cancer, to be deemed by the State of California to be a line of duty death.

Captain Timothy Rodriguez, age 44, of the CAL FIRE – California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, was killed on 8/6/2023 when two firefighting helicopters collided in Cabazon, CA. They were fighting the Broadway Wildland Fire, a vegetation fire sparked by a nearby structure fire. One helicopter was able to land safely, and the Bell 407 crashed. Assistant Chief Josh Bischof and Contract Pilot Tony Sousa were also killed in the crash.

Contract Pilot Tony Sousa, age 55, of Air Shasta Rotor & Wing Inc., was killed on 8/6/2023 when two firefighting helicopters collided in Cabazon, CA. They were fighting the Broadway Wildland Fire, a vegetation fire sparked by a nearby structure fire. One helicopter was able to land safely, and the Bell 407 crashed. Assistant Chief Josh Bischof and Captain Timothy Rodriguez were also killed in the crash.

Battalion Chief Mark Tolbert, age 60, of the Los Angeles County Fire Department, died on 5/19/2019, due to complications of cancer, deemed by the State of California to be a line-of-duty death.

Firefighter/Paramedic Andrew "Andy" Valenta, age 33, of the Vista Fire Department, died on 4/25/2021 due to complications of metastatic melanoma.

Detailed information about each of the 226 firefighters being memorialized can be found on the [2024 Roll of Honor](#).

“National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend is a time for our nation to pause and reflect on the heroic efforts and selfless service of the fallen firefighters we are paying tribute to this year,”

said NFFF CEO Victor Stagnaro. “We will always remember the bravery, commitment, and sacrifices of each of these 226 heroes—and their families.”

There are **two events open to the public** at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Park on the grounds of the National Emergency Training Center (NETC) during Memorial Weekend.

- The **National Fallen Firefighters Candlelight Service** is on May 4 at 7:30 pm ET and will be hosted by Fire Captain Garon Mosby of the St. Louis Fire Department.
- The **National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service** is on May 5 at 10:00 am ET and will be hosted by actor Jeremy Holm.

Fire service and government leaders are scheduled to address the thousands of attendees at the Memorial Service on Sunday, May 5. The NFFF will live stream both events on the NFFF’s [website \(firehero.org\)](http://www.firehero.org), [YouTube channel](#), and [Facebook page](#).

There are additional events during Memorial Weekend provided exclusively for the families and fire departments of honored firefighters. These include small group sessions and other activities throughout Friday and Saturday; they are open to the families and coworkers of newly honored and previously honored firefighters.

Schedule

Saturday, May 4, 2024

Candlelight Service

Time: 7:30 pm – 9:00 pm ET

Streaming begins at 7:00 pm ET

Sunday, May 5, 2024

Memorial Service

Time: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm ET

Streaming begins at 9:30 am ET

The NFFF will provide live satellite feeds of both events. Technical support is being provided by VISTA Worldlink, Comcast Beltway, and INTELSAT. Satellite coordinates can be found at live.firehero.org. Images from the 2023 Memorial Weekend are [here](#).

Location

National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Park
National Emergency Training Center (NETC)
16835 S. Seton Avenue
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

Media Information

Members of the media who plan to attend Memorial Weekend are asked to **RSVP in advance** to gain access to the NETC.

Obtain credentials here: [For the Media - National Fallen Firefighters Foundation \(firehero.org\)](http://www.firehero.org).

How Communities Can Participate

Those not attending Memorial Weekend in person can also **pay tribute to this year's honored firefighters**. All can participate in [Light the Night for Fallen Firefighters](#) (May 1 – 5) by lighting their homes, businesses, landmarks, or fire departments with red lights. Other ways to remember include [Bells Across America](#), [Sound the Sirens](#), and by signing a virtual [Remembrance Banner](#).

In addition, the **American flag will be lowered to half-staff on all Federal buildings on Sunday, May 5**. The public is also encouraged to lower their American flags that day to recognize the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Public Access And Parking

Public parking for Memorial Weekend is at [Liberty Mountain Resort \(78 Country Club Trail, Fairfield, PA\)](#). Shuttles from Liberty Mountain Resort will begin at 3:30 pm on Saturday, May 4 for the Candlelight Service and at 7:30 am on Sunday, May 5 for the Memorial Service.

Memorial Weekend is supported by individual and corporate donors, a grant from the **Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance**, and in partnership with the **U.S. Fire Administration**, a component of the **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**.

Social Media: #FireHero2024 #NFFF

Website: weekend.firehero.org

LOCATION if inclement weather

PNC Stadium (ARCC)
Mount Saint Mary University
16300 Old Emmitsburg Rd
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

Media contact:

- NFFF Media Line: 202-938-6260 or Bill Delaney, bdelaney@firehero.org

ABOUT THE NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS FOUNDATION (NFFF)

The United States Congress created the NFFF to lead a nationwide effort to honor America's fallen firefighters. The mission is to honor America's fallen fire heroes; support their families, colleagues, and organizations; and work to reduce preventable firefighter death and injury. The National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Park includes the National Fallen Firefighters Monument, the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Chapel, a brick Walk of Honor, a September 11th memorial sculpture, and the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Bell of Remembrance. Information about the NFFF and the Memorial Park can be found [here](#).

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