



NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS FOUNDATION

April 25, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL WEEKEND WILL HONOR AND REMEMBER 226 FIREFIGHTERS *Fifteen Virginia 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 Virginia firefighters:

Chief Ernest Cash, age 72, of the Monelison Volunteer Fire Department, died on 4/5/22, due to complications of esophageal cancer, deemed by the Commonwealth of Virginia to be a line of duty death.

Captain Matthew "Chevy" Chiaverotti, age 44, of the Virginia Beach Fire Department, died on 4/17/2023 due to complications of cancer.

Firefighter Cameron Craig, age 20, of the Abingdon Fire Department, was responding to a call on 10/19/23, for an automatic fire alarm as a passenger in a fire department engine when the engine was involved in a crash. He was fatally injured in the crash and died at the scene.

Firefighter/EMT Mia Ethridge, age 20, of the Louisa County Department of Fire and EMS, was responding to a residential structure fire on 7/9/2023 when the fire apparatus she was driving ran off the road in the rain and hit a tree. She was transported to the hospital where she remained until she died on 9/2/2023.

Firefighter James Foster, age 46, of the Rice Volunteer Fire Department, died on 1/29/23, as a result of throat cancer, deemed by the Commonwealth of Virginia to be a line-of-duty death.

EMMITSBURG

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Deputy Chief Brian Hricik, age 51, of the Alexandria Fire Department, died on 2/23/23, due to complications of cancer, deemed by the Commonwealth of Virginia to be a line-of-duty death.

Deputy Chief John Laronda, age 28, of the Altavista Fire Company, died on 6/6/2017 due to complications of a stroke that occurred on 5/7/2017.

Captain Chester Lauck, age 66, of the Frederick County Fire and Rescue Department, responded to a large wildland fire on 4/21/2023 where he operated the Ultra-Terrain Vehicle (UTV) and performed firefighting operations. He began to feel ill within 2 hours of returning home. He was transported to the hospital where he was treated and experienced multiple heart attacks. He was placed on life support and died on 4/23/2023.

Deputy Chief Mark McCowan, age 50, of the Clinchco Volunteer Fire Department, died on 10/3/2022 from complications of brain cancer, deemed by the Commonwealth of Virginia to be a line-of-duty death.

Firefighter Eric Newman, age 59, of the Franklin County Public Safety, suffered a stroke while on duty on 7/14/2021. He did not return home after his shift and his wife discovered him collapsed at the station. He was transported to the hospital where he remained until he died on 8/4/2021 due to a stroke.

Firefighter/Paramedic Ian Strickler, age 35, of the Frederick County Fire and Rescue Department, was part of the Frederick County Fire and Rescue Department Recruit Class #14 that started on 7/3/2023. On 7/5/2023, while attending physical fitness training, he suffered a medical emergency. He was immediately transported to the Winchester Medical Center where he died due to hypertensive cardiovascular disease, according to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner of Virginia.

Recruit Firefighter John Tucker, age 53, of the Altavista Fire Company, died on 4/8/23, from complications of colon cancer, deemed by the Commonwealth of Virginia to be a line-of-duty death.

Fire Chief Michael Webb, age 53, of the Callaway Volunteer Fire Department, died on 11/13/2021 due to complications of COVID-19.

Firefighter Stephen Whitson, age 57, of Henrico County Division of Fire, participated in Firefighter Mayday Training during a scheduled duty day on 4/4/2023 and then continued with his shift, which ended at 7:00 am on 4/5/2023. Later that day, he reported not feeling well due to chest pain and fatigue. He died in his sleep due to a heart attack and was pronounced deceased on the morning of 4/6/2023.

Firefighter Rocky Wood, age 53, of the Virginia Department of Forestry, responded to a 15-acre wildfire in Buchanan County, VA on 3/9/2023. He was scouting the area to determine where to create a containment line around the perimeter of the fire when the ATV he was driving overturned. He died as a result of the injuries he sustained in the accident. He was also the Fire Chief of the Haysi Volunteer Fire Department in Virginia.

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 \(firehero.org\)](#), [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 \(firehero.org\)](https://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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