



NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS FOUNDATION

April 25, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL WEEKEND WILL HONOR AND REMEMBER 140 FIREFIGHTERS *Ten Illinois Fallen Firefighters Among Those Being Honored on May 3-4, 2025*

EMMITSBURG, Md. – The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) will host the **44th National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend** on May 3-4, 2025 in Emmitsburg, Maryland. This year's national tribute will honor 70 firefighters who died in the line of duty in 2024 and 70 firefighters who died in previous years. The honorees will include the following Illinois firefighters:

Firefighter Cristian Sergio Medrano, age 27, of the Aurora Fire Department, died on April 12, 2024, after participating in fire department training.

Pilot Juliana Turchetti, age 45, of Dauntless Air, contracted by the Idaho Department of Lands, died on July 10, 2024, in a single-engine water scooper crash while fighting the Horse Gulch Fire in the Lewis and Clark National Forest.

Firefighter Kenneth Dwight Caldwell, age 63, of the LaCrosse Volunteer Fire Department, died on June 6, 2024, from a heart attack after returning from a call.

Captain James M. Hathaway, age 52, of the City of Muncie Fire Department, died on March 8, 2024, from complications of cancer.

Firefighter Michael E. Kreps Jr., age 54, of the Dunkirk Fire Department, died on October 16, 2021, from complications of COVID-19.

Firefighter Rodrick Shane Lambert, age 52, of Wayne Township Fire Department, died on August 10, 2024, from injuries sustained in an apparatus accident.

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Firefighter Jacob Tyler McClanahan, age 24, of the Ramsey Volunteer Fire Department, died on May 16, 2022, after being shot at the scene of a motor vehicle accident.

Firefighter Ralph F. Meyer, age 72, of the Napoleon Volunteer Fire Company, died on December 4, 2024, from a heart attack after responding to a structure fire.

Engineer Richard C. Potter, age 52, of the Wayne Township Fire Department, died on May 10, 2022, from complications of cancer.

Firefighter/EMT Rick Sanders, age 48, of the Winchester Fire Department, died on December 12, 2024, from a heart attack while operating at a residential structure fire.

Detailed information about each of the 226 firefighters being memorialized can be found on the [2025 Roll of Honor](#).

“This weekend is a powerful reminder of the extraordinary courage and commitment of those who put their lives on the line to protect others,” said Troy Markel, Chair of the NFFF Board of Directors. “We come together not only to remember the fallen, but to stand in solidarity with their families and departments, letting them know their loved ones will never be forgotten.

“Each of these 140 firefighters made the ultimate sacrifice in service to others – a profound sacrifice that defines true heroism,” said Victor Stagnaro, CEO of the NFFF. “Memorial Weekend is a time for our nation to come together to honor their bravery, to stand beside their families, and ensure their legacy lives on in every community they so selflessly served.”

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 3 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 4 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 4. 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 3, 2025

Candlelight Service

Time: 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm ET

Streaming begins at 7:00 pm ET

Sunday, May 4, 2025

Memorial Service

Time: 10:00 am – 12:30 pm ET

Streaming begins at 9:30 am ET

Location

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

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](#) (April 27- May 4) 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 4. The public is also encouraged to lower their American flags that day to recognize the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice.

The NFFF will provide live satellite feeds of both events. Technical support is being provided by VISTA Worldlink, Comcast Beltway, and Peak Uplink. Satellite coordinates can be found at [here](#). Images from the 2024 Memorial Weekend are [here](#).

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 \(firehero.org\)](#).

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 6:30 am on Saturday, May 3 and at 6:30 am on Sunday, May 4.

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: #FireHero2025 #NFFF

Website: weekend.firehero.org

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About the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF)

The United States Congress created the NFFF to lead a nationwide effort to remember America's fallen firefighters. Since 1992, the non-profit foundation has developed and expanded programs to honor fallen fire heroes and assist their families and co-workers. The NFFF also works with our affiliate organization the First Responder Center for Excellence (FRCE) and the fire service to help prevent and reduce line-of-duty deaths and injuries.
