



2011 Governor's State Employee Medal of Valor Awards State Merit Award Program

Who's who in Management Services?

Department of Personnel Administration



Ray Gallagher,
Senior Mechanical Engineer

“What is a hero? Heroes are just regular people doing extraordinary deeds.”

These words are from 12-year-old Anton Holm’s winning essay read at the 2010 Governor’s State Employee Medal of Valor award ceremony. Established in 1959, the Medal of Valor is the highest honor the State can bestow upon its employees for performing heroic acts of courage to save the life of another person. To date, 545 medals have been awarded to State employees.

Medal of Valor Awards

There are two types of awards:

The Special Act (Gold Medal) is given for an extraordinary act of heroism by a State employee extending far above and beyond the normal call of duty or service, performed at great risk to his or her own life in an effort to save human life.

The Special Service (Silver Medal) is given for an act of heroism by a State employee extending above and beyond the normal call of duty or service, performed at personal risk to his or her safety to save a human life or State property.

In 2010, 38 State employees were awarded Medals of Valor by the Governor for acts of heroism such as:

- Stopping a man from beating a young man at a Department of Motor Vehicle office.
- Saving a woman who had been ejected from her car onto a Southern California freeway.
- Saving an 84-year-old woman from a fire in Southern California.
- Rescuing a driver from a burning vehicle.
- Rescuing a Boy Scout whose leg became trapped by a boulder.

- Searching for a missing resident during a major fire.
- Maneuvering through live electrical wires to save a young boy.
- Rescuing a woman whose car went over an embankment.
- Extracting a downed officer from the line of fire.
- Descending a treacherous slope to save an accident victim.
- Rescuing victims and containing a fire after a traffic accident.

Nomination Process

Nominating a hero is simple. The process is as follows:

- Each nomination is completed on a [DPA-012 Nomination Form](#) and submitted to the CAL FIRE Executive Office.

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Connecting with Bill Holmes

Tony Favro, Program Accountability

Northern Region Chief Bill Holmes, on the job since January, still considers himself a rookie and says that he is learning more about his new job every day. One thing he learned very quickly is that he has a lot of ground to cover—literally. “I have offices in Sacramento, Redding, and Santa Rosa that I seldom see,” says Bill. “I seem to be on the road, at events, or in meetings throughout the Region most of the time.”

Responsible for all CAL FIRE activities, personnel, facilities, equipment, and budgets for twelve units and one contract county in an area that stretches from Santa Cruz County on the west and Alpine County on the east all the way north to the Oregon border, Bill realizes that he is no longer directly performing the hands-on work of the Department. His role now, he says, is more one of support. “I’m responsible to make sure the field has the people, equipment, and tools to meet the Department’s mission,” he says. “I’m either fixing issues that have floated up or thinking and working out ahead of issues to be sure things run smoothly at the field level. In short, I make sure the field can do their job, no one gets hurt, and we stay in budget.”

Staying informed and connected are also big parts of Bill’s job, as are building and developing relationships, both inside and outside the Department. “Work gets accomplished through knowing people and having good trust-based relationships with them,” says Bill. “It took me a long time to realize this in my career.” He explains that in his earlier days, he focused more on being a technical expert and thought that was all that was necessary to be successful: “I found out later that you have to be technically good at what you do, and you have to get along well with others.”

After graduating from C.K. McClatchy High School in Sacramento in 1969, Bill attended Sacramento Community College and then Butte Community College (where he earned his Associate of Science degree in Fire Science) while simultaneously launching a career that sees him entering his forty-third fire season this year. He began as a seasonal firefighter in what was then the Placer Unit (before it combined with the Nevada-Yuba Unit), and in 1974 he was appointed as a Fire Apparatus Engineer in the Butte Unit, where he spent the next thirty years, working his way up to an Assistant Chief in the fire protection program.

Along the way, Bill has done a fair amount of teaching for CAL FIRE, other fire departments (Los Angeles City, Los Angeles County, and Marin County) and other countries in the areas of incident command and supervision. He says that he may hold

the distinction of being the CAL FIRE employee who has traveled the furthest for work when he went to New Delhi, India, to teach S-400 Incident Commander, to the Indian government officials through a special program sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service.

In 2003, Bill became the Unit Chief in the Amador-El Dorado Unit (AEU), a job that he really enjoyed and found very difficult to leave. “The people in AEU are absolutely fantastic to work with, very positive and professional,” he says. “I thought it was my last stop.”

As it turns out, Bill had at least one more stop, and it is one in which he relishes the opportunity to affect change and to have influence on issues that he cares about. “It’s a chance to see if I can build on the successes of my predecessors,” he says, “and to continue to improve CAL FIRE. We’re good, but there is always room for improvement.”

Bill says that one of his biggest personal challenges is keeping up with the pace and never letting a ball drop. “My biggest fear is letting the field down,” he explains, “and I mean that sincerely. I understand the level of responsibility this job holds and know that if I don’t do my job the field and public can suffer.”

As we close out one fiscal year and start another, Bill’s focus, not surprisingly, is the budget and whether the Department can maintain the funding necessary to continue to perform its very necessary mission. “It takes four things for us to meet our mission,” he explains, “The first is well trained and experienced people. We also need dependable and safe equipment (ground and air) that gets those people to the job and delivers the service, as well as facilities to work out of in the vast geographic expanse of the state. And finally, and this is a very important component, we need support staff for those people and machines delivering the service.”

One additional challenge that Bill notes is the Department’s ability to adapt and change to stay competitive. “Government agencies do not often think about being competitive, but they need to,” he says. “It’s easy to sit back and say, well, we’re government and our hands are tied.” And it’s not enough, he maintains, to say that we have always done it this way: “We need to deliver our service better than anyone else can for the best value. The public and state and community leaders have to want us and no one else.”



*Bill Holmes,
Northern Region Chief*

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Featured Benefit: Dental Insurance

Terri Larson, Transactions Unit, Labor and Human Resource Management

"The secret to happiness is freedom. The secret of freedom is courage."

-Thucydides

Dates to Remember

**Qualification
Appraisal Interview
Date(s):**

Communications
Operator
July/August 2011

Battalion Chief
(Nonsupervisory)
October/Nov. 2011

Fire Apparatus
Engineer
(Parad medic)
Nov./Dec. 2011

Dental insurance is available to State employees (and their eligible dependents) who have an appointment that is on a permanent basis with a time base of half-time or more; limited term appointments with a time base of at least half-time and a length of six months or more; and to permanent intermittent employees who complete and maintain at least 480 hours in a control period. Depending on the type of dental plan the employee selects, the State will pay for all or part of the plan premium based on the number of enrolled dependents.

There are three types of dental plans available, prepaid, preferred provider organization (PPO), and indemnity:

- With a prepaid plan most basic services are covered at no cost. The monthly premium is fully paid by the State and there is no premium deducted from the employee's monthly pay warrant. [If an employee is receiving Consolidated Benefits (CoBen), he/she would pay the monthly premium.] The prepaid dentists are located in California and are paid a flat fee for each member assigned to their offices. As of January 1, 2011, there are four prepaid plans which are Safeguard, DeltaCare USA, Premier Access, and Western Dental.
- The PPO plan is the State-sponsored Delta Dental Preferred Option which provides services through its network of participating dentists. Employees can also see a dentist of their choice world-wide and still be covered. If employees receive services outside of the PPO network, dentist's fees will be substantially higher. The costs of service are based on a fee-for-service agreement between Delta and the PPO provider. A monthly premium copayment is deducted from the employee's monthly pay warrant. The monthly premium copayment amount will vary depending on the number of enrolled dependents. This plan also sets the limits that will pay for each specific type of dental treatment. Employees are responsible for paying any remaining balance due based on the type of dental treatment they receive.

- The Indemnity plan does not use a provider network and enrollees are allowed to select a dentist of their choice throughout the United States and worldwide. The plan sets the limits that it will pay for each specific type of dental treatment. Employees are responsible for paying any remaining balance that might be due based on the type of dental treatment they received. A monthly premium copayment will be deducted from the employee's monthly pay warrant. The monthly premium copayment will vary depending on the number of enrolled dependents.

Starting January 1, 2011, children are eligible for dependent coverage with dental up to the age of 26. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, as amended by the Health Care and Education Affordability Reconciliation Act of 2010, extends dependent coverage from age 23 to age 26.

A dependent child, who is eligible for a State-sponsored dental plan in his or her own right as a State employee, may now enroll (or remain enrolled) under his or her parent's State sponsored dental plan (up to the age of 26). They are also now eligible to enroll in the FlexElect Cash Option or CoBen Cash Option while covered under their parent's dental plan.

Eligible employees new to State service have 60 days from the appointment date to enroll in dental benefits. If an employee does not have a qualifying event to enroll in coverage he/she must wait for the annual open enrollment to gain membership into this benefit. For information regarding individual eligibility, available plans, and/or enrollment forms, please contact your unit, region, or headquarters personnel office.

For more general information, you may visit the Department of Personnel Administration's dental benefits page at <http://www.dpa.ca.gov/benefits/dental/main.htm>.

OSHPros Corner: Hot Weather Health Emergencies

Mike Gugino, Health and Fitness Unit, Labor and Human Resource Management

Even short periods of high temperatures can cause serious health problems. During hot weather health emergencies, keep informed by listening to local weather and news channels or contact local health departments for health and safety updates. Too much activity on a hot day, spending too much time in the sun, or staying too long in an overheated place can cause heat-related illnesses. Know the symptoms of heat disorders and overexposure to the sun, and be ready to give first aid treatment.

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke occurs when the body is unable to regulate its temperature. The body's temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down. Body temperature may rise to 106°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

Recognizing Heat Stroke

Warning signs of heat stroke vary but may include an extremely high body temperature.

If this occurs, take the following measures:

- Get the victim to a shady area.
- Cool the victim rapidly using whatever methods you can. For example, immerse the victim in a tub of cool water; place the person in a cool shower; spray the victim with cool water from a garden hose; sponge the person with cool water; or if the humidity is low, wrap the victim in a cool, wet sheet and fan him or her vigorously.
- Monitor body temperature, and continue cooling efforts until the body temperature drops to 101-102°F.
- If emergency medical personnel are delayed, call the hospital emergency room for further instructions.
- Do not give the victim fluids to drink.
- Get medical assistance as soon as possible.

Sometimes a victim's muscles will begin to twitch uncontrollably as a result of heat stroke. If this happens, keep the victim from injuring him or herself, but do not place any object in the mouth and do not give fluids. If there is vomiting, make

sure the airway remains open by turning the victim on his or her side.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids. It is the body's response to an excessive loss of the water and salt contained in sweat. Those most prone to heat exhaustion are elderly people, people with high blood pressure, and people working or exercising in a hot environment.

Recognizing Heat Exhaustion

Warning signs of heat exhaustion include the following:

- Heavy sweating
- Paleness
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting

The skin may be cool and moist. The victim's pulse rate will be fast and weak, and breathing will be fast and shallow. If heat exhaustion is untreated, it may progress to heat stroke. Seek medical attention immediately if any of the following occurs:

- Symptoms are severe.
- The victim has heart problems or high blood pressure.

Otherwise, help the victim to cool off, and seek medical attention if symptoms worsen or last longer than one hour.

What to do?

Cooling measures that may be effective include the following:

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Policy:

No updates for July.

Copier Scan to Email Policy

Tim Khosrovi, Information Technology Services

CAL FIRE has recently implemented the following new policy:

0950.4 - COPIER SCAN TO EMAIL IS NOT PERMITTED

CAL FIRE staff wishing to deploy "Standard Procurement List" select copiers with network and scanning capability must configure those copiers to send scanned documents to designated workstation folders and not directly to the CAL FIRE email system. This configuration will greatly reduce the risk of unintentionally inundating the email system with large files.

The purpose of this policy is somewhat explained as written, but we would like to elaborate further so you will have a better understanding of why this policy is so important.

On the surface, scanning a document to email seems harmless, but if this method is allowed to become common practice, severe Wide Area Network (WAN) slowdowns will occur. In most instances, users want to scan documents in high resolution. However, scanning documents in high

Our current network architecture provides good bandwidth, but there is not much spare capacity. Unusual traffic, such as scans to email, can slow the network down when competing with other traffic such as CAD, ROSS, the internet, and a host of other CAL FIRE applications. During fire season, WAN traffic is especially high, and scanning to email could boost network traffic enough to hamper mission critical operations when they are most needed. We need to work as efficiently as possible to avoid that situation. Instead of scanning to email, there are other configurations we can employ that will not overload our WAN.

If your group has the need to scan documents on a regular basis, we advise you to contact your local IT Coordinator, who can help you design a suitable document scanning solution.

New Milage Reimbursement Rate

Jack Kitay, Departmental Accounting Office

Effective July 1, 2011, CAL FIRE employees may claim mileage reimbursement at the rate of 55.5 cents per mile when using their personal vehicle for authorized State business. In addition, new-hire CAL FIRE employees and current CAL FIRE employees who incur mileage expenses associated with a State-approved relocation, will now be reimbursed at 23.5 cents per mile.

These rates mirror those of the Internal Revenue Services' (IRS) published mileage reimbursement rates. **Future increases/decreases to the State reimbursement rates will be directly tied to any subsequent changes to the rates published by the IRS.** The Department of Personnel Administration will notify departments as federal rates are revised.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Jack Kitay in the Departmental Accounting Office at (916) 653-7764 or via email at jack.kitay@fire.ca.gov.

resolution to email creates extremely large files that will needlessly traverse the WAN because our email servers are centralized in Sacramento. For example, if a user in Siskiyou emails a colleague sitting at an adjoining desk, that email first travels to Sacramento and then back out to Siskiyou. If many CAL FIRE users are scanning multiple large documents to email at the same time, they will greatly increase network traffic.

"The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion."

-Albert Camus

S.A.F.E. Sneak Peek: Top Ten Cyber Security Tips

Tony Favro, Program Accountability

Cyber security tips, if performed consistently, may dramatically reduce the chance that information on your computer will be lost or corrupted.

For more details on ten top cyber security tips, please visit the CAL FIRE Information Security Office's Security Awareness For Employees (S.A.F.E.) On-Line newsletter at <http://cdfweb/informationsecurity/isonewsletters.shtml>.

Additionally, if you have any burning issues regarding information security, please email Tony Favro at tony.favro@fire.ca.gov.

Remember, there is no SEC_RITY without U!

Holmes (Cont'd.)

For Bill, working for CAL FIRE has been fantastic, and he is still having fun. "The great thing about this job is you never know what you'll be doing the next minute," he says. And though he says that he has often thought of working for CAL FIRE as a study in sleep deprivation, he has loved every minute of it. "Many things have changed about CAL FIRE over the years," he explains, "but some things remain constant. CAL FIRE is still filled with extremely hard working professionals who are focused on the mission of the Department and serving the public."

In addition, Bill says that he has always admired the camaraderie among the people in the Department: "CAL FIRE is not just a job, it's a way of life, and hard-working, mission-oriented people are attracted to it. Many state employees float around from department to department, promoting as they go. CAL FIRE employees generally stay within the Department because it is such a closely knit family organization."

Outside of work, family is just as important to Bill, along with western history, and hiking. He and his wife, Calder, a wilderness manager for the Inyo National Forest, do a lot of hiking together and try to scale at least one peak together every year on their birthdays. Most recently they went up Mt. Whitney and White Mountain, both over 14,000 feet.

Bill and Calder have one son who lives and works in Long Beach, as well as their yellow lab Remy, an old Maine coon cat named Spanky who terrorizes the dog, and a couple of young cats named Kit and Carson.

Bill also speaks with fondness about his dad, who he calls his hero and about whom he says he could spend a lot of time writing, and his brother, with whom he shares a fifty-year old family cabin that his parents built in the El Dorado National Forest. His mother-in-law lives in Elk Grove and three sister-in-laws on Calder's side of the family are spread out between Sacramento, Gazelle in Siskiyou County, and Madrid, Spain.

As the names of his cats indicate, Bill loves western U.S. history and outdoor activities, especially hiking. He is a member of the Oregon California Trails Association (OCTA), and, he says, "I generally bore the heck out of my family and friends with history stuff." He has tried to mix the two loves by hiking or traveling along old trails that lead from the east to the west, including much of the route of Lewis and Clark, as well as most of the 1843/44 route of John C. Fremont and Kit Carson from Bridgeport to Sacramento. Most recently he has been hiking and doing restoration work on the Pony Express trail from above Pollock Pines to Lake Tahoe.

Valor (Cont'd.)

- The nomination package is reviewed for completeness by the Executive Office and submitted to the Director for signature and approval.
- Once approved by the Director, the nomination is forwarded to the Department of Personnel Administration (DPA) Merit Award Program by the Executive Office.
- All nominations are reviewed by DPA's Merit Award Board and Director on behalf of the Governor.
- CAL FIRE is notified when the nomination is approved or denied.
- While Medal of Valor nominations are accepted throughout the year, the deadline to be included in the next ceremony is **August 1, 2011**.

Additional Information

The complete nomination package containing information and samples may be accessed at: <http://www.dpa.ca.gov/publications/medal-of-valor/nominationpackage.pdf>.

For more information on these awards, contact the Executive Office or visit the Medal of Valor website: <http://www.dpa.ca.gov/benefits/awards/medal-of-valor.htm>.

Information on past awardees may be accessed online at: www.medalofvalor.ca.gov.

Weather (Cont'd.)

- Cool, nonalcoholic beverages.
- Rest.
- Cool shower, bath, or sponge bath
- An air-conditioned environment
- Lightweight clothing

"To know how to free oneself is nothing; the arduous thing is to know what to do with ones freedom."

-Andre Gide

*Provided by
Management Services*

*Janet Barentson,
Deputy Director for
Management Services*

*Editor
Tony Favro
Tel: (916) 327-3989
tony.favro@fire.ca.gov*

*Connecting with...
Tony Favro*

*Asst. Editor/Designer
Windy C. Bouldin
windy.bouldin@fire.ca.gov*

*Layout Assistant
Lev Karshtedt*

*Photographer
Sherry Mark*

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