

Washington State Patrol Award of Merit Recipients

Trooper Brandon D. Lee – January 9, 2011, for his life-saving actions in alerting a tow truck driver of an out of control vehicle and pulling a victim off of the interstate who had been ejected from the out of control vehicle.

Trooper Stephanie Bjorkman – December 2, 2010, for her quick thinking actions which prevented a wrong way vehicle from colliding with an innocent motorist.

Trooper Jason Valentine – September 29, 2010, for his life-saving actions in stopping a gas leak on a propane truck which had rolled over allowing fire and aid to safely extricate the driver from the vehicle.

Mr. Jeffrey Matthews, Mr. Philip Williams – September 17, 2010, for their life-saving actions in the rescue of a motorist from a burning vehicle shortly before it burst into flames.

Mr. Adam Larson, Mr. Peter Larson – May 2, 2010, for their life-saving actions in the rescue of a motorist from a burning vehicle shortly before it and the utility vehicle which rear-ended it burst into flames.

Trooper Billy Massey – June 28, 2009, for his courageous action while off-duty, in assisting a Yakima County deputy rescue a five-year-old female passenger who had been involved in a plane crash.

Mr. James Dean, Mr. Philip Vermeire – August 13, 2008, for their heroic actions in rescuing a victim from a burning van which had been involved in a two-car collision. Mr. Dean sustained second and third degree burns.

Trooper Brandon Tobol – July 17, 2008, for his heroic actions to save the life of a victim who had suffered serious injuries during an altercation.

Mr. Erik Cornelius – May 10, 2008, in recognition for his efforts in rescuing a man from a car fire while putting himself in great danger.

Chief Rich Heinrich, Trooper Chris Magallon – May 9, 2008, in recognition for their efforts to rescue two people from an overturned boat in the Hood Canal.

Mr. Dick Spink – April 25, 2008, in recognition for his efforts to rescue a woman from a car fire while putting himself in great danger.

Mr. Joey Haro – April 22, 2008, in recognition for his actions to help the WSP capture a wanted felon.

Trooper Christopher P. Wilson, Mr. John Davies, Mr. Ryan Rocquin, and Mr. Matthew Westover – December 13, 2007, for their actions and attempts to save the life of a man trapped in a burning vehicle.

Trooper Buck Pelleberg – December 12, 2007, in recognition for his efforts to rescue a man from a blazing house fire while putting himself in obvious danger.

Trooper Christopher P. Wilson, Mr. John E. Davies, Mr. Ryan A. Rocquin, Mr. Matthew D. Westover – August 17, 2007, in recognition of their actions and attempts to save the life of a man trapped in a burning vehicle.

CVEO 2 Thomas C. Woods – August 16, 2007, in recognition for his efforts to rescue a small child and pets from a mobile home caught on fire.

Sergeant Freddy L. Williams – June 13, 2007, in recognition for his actions that lead to the surrender of an armed, barricaded, suicidal subject.

Mr. Robert D. Stewart – June 13, 2007, in recognition for his actions to rescue a subject from a burning vehicle.

Sergeant Jay Hunziker – June 13, 2007, in recognition for his actions that saved the life of a Grandview motorist.

Trooper Scott Davis – June 13, 2007, in recognition for his efforts to rescue an eight year-old child from a flooded creek.

Sergeant Thomas J. Johnson – November 19, 2006, in recognition of his life-saving efforts, without regard for his own personal safety, to rescue a subject after she had fallen into the water below the West Seattle Freeway.

Trooper Ronald A Cantwell – October 29, 2006, in recognition of his life-saving efforts to prevent a distraught subject from jumping off an 88-foot bridge.

Mr. Adrian Cushman and Mr. Philip White – July 3, 2006, in recognition of their efforts to rescue victims of a head-on collision from a burning vehicle without regard for personal safety.

Trooper Brian F. Luedtke – June 17, 2006, in recognition of your life saving actions, while at great personal risk, to rescue an unconscious driver from his burning vehicle.

Trooper David J. Huibregtse – May 1, 2006, in recognition of your actions, while at great personal risk, to protect two Kitsap County deputies and yourself from gunfire from a barricaded subject and affect the arrest of a dangerous felon.

Trooper Robert R. Morris – August 27, 2005, in recognition of his response and actions, without regard for personal safety, to rescue a distraught subject from the top of an overpass.

Trooper Tony P. Brock – August 9, 2005, in recognition of his courageous actions, despite sustaining a broken back, to rescue a subject from his burning patrol vehicle after another vehicle crashed into it.

Trooper Trent E. Clasen – April 29, 2005, in recognition of his off-duty response, without regard for his own safety, to rescue a local store owner who was getting beaten and robbed and successfully restrain and arrest the assailant.

Mr. Brandon Roe – March 16, 2005, in recognition of his life-saving actions to remove a crash victim from a burning vehicle.

Mr. Travis A Jackson, and Mr. Dennis B. Kinsey – January 18, 2005, in recognition of their actions without regard for their own safety to rescue a collision victim from a burning vehicle.

Sergeant Ken H. Hitchings – March 2, 2004, in recognition of his life-saving actions, without regard for his own safety and while off-duty, to rescue a woman from a burning house.

Trooper Thomas G. Arnold – September 4, 2003, for his efforts, without regard for his own safety, to rescue another trooper from his burning patrol vehicle.

Detective David G. Bangart, Trooper Curt G. Boyle, Sergeant David J. Browne, Sergeant Chris T. Gundermann, Trooper Joi J. Haner, Trooper Roger D. Hansberry, Trooper Russell J. Hanson, Detective Jeffrey R. Kershaw, Detective George R. Mars, Trooper Darrell R. Noyes, Trooper Steven E. Reeves, Trooper Craig L. Sahlinger, Detective Jason T. Watson, and Detective Orest D. Wilson – June 26, 2004, for actions and exemplary performance during the service of a search warrant at a suspected illegal wrecking yard in King County. Although gunfire was exchanged with the suspect, the incident resulted in the arrest of the suspect with no injuries to the suspect, law enforcement officers, or residents of the community.

Trooper Tyler M. Drake – May 12, 2003, for actions during a traffic stop in which a female subject was found bound about the neck and feet, who likely would have been killed by the driver of the vehicle had he not intervened.

Trooper Tod K. Surdam, Ms. Joanne Garner, Mr. Nicholas Hoagland, Ms. Loretta Onstead, Mr. Glenn Thompson, and Mr. Glen Webb – January 31, 2003, for efforts, at the risk of their own safety, to rescue two persons from a partially submerged vehicle.

Trooper Michael A. Walcker and Mr. Kurt Gillard – October 8, 2002, for efforts to locate the occupant in a smoked-filled mobile home.

Trooper Jeffrey A. Meldrum, Deputy Brad Holmes (Skagit Co.), Mr. Darrel Allen, and Mr. Howard Stafford – September 14, 2002, for efforts to rescue two persons from the Skagit River.

Trooper Ronald W. Spahman – May 1, 2002, for life saving efforts, without regard for his own safety, to rescue a female subject who was walking down the middle of the freeway.

Officer Timothy Griffith, Tacoma Police Department – February 11, 2002, for actions, while off duty, to assist a motorist who had been involved in a collision on I-5 near Olympia. While stopped, another vehicle struck Officer Griffith's vehicle, pinning him between the two vehicles and seriously injuring his lower leg.

Officer Tim Wolph, Tacoma Police Department – February 7, 2002, for efforts, while off-duty, to come to the aid of Trooper John McMullen, who was struggling with a subject attempting to overpower him at a traffic stop.

Trooper G. Ken Bancroft, Washington State Wildlife Officer Jim Nelson and Ms. Kimberly Heimgartner – January 16, 2002, for their efforts in the successful recovery of a 12-year-old kidnap victim.

Mr. France Canady – July 26, 2001, for life-saving and heroic actions when pulling a driver out of a burning vehicle.

Trooper Linda A. Allen – July 18, 2001, for efforts without regard for her own safety, which resulted in the rescue of a tow truck operator who was being electrocuted.

Mr. Patrick E. Mohney – April 21, 2001, for efforts to rescue Ms. Terrie Nordman and her three-year-old daughter, Alexis, from an attack by two large dogs.

Ms. Cheryl L. Mooring – January 8, 2001, for life-saving efforts and ensuring the personal safety of 22 students by removing them from a burning school bus.

Troopers Jeffrey G. Beazzio and Brent L. Hanger – November 27, 2000, for their quick actions which resulted in saving the life of an individual who had attempted suicide.

Mr. Brian Hanson – September 2000, for assistance to a WSP officer without regard for his own personal safety, helping to restrain a DUI who not only was wanted for armed robbery, but was also a convicted murderer.

Mr. James Fletcher, Edward Sandstrom and Mr. Garabed Torosian – August 15, 2000, for efforts without regard for his own safety, which resulted in the rescue of two teenage boys from a burning truck after a head-on collision with a semi tractor on SR 97.

Trooper Jimmie M. Foster – March 15, 2000, for exemplary work performance while apprehending an armed robbery suspect.

Mr. Daniel Sommerfield – November 8, 1999, for heroic actions and risk to personal safety to come to the aid of a fellow truck driver whose truck had plunged into a lake.

Trooper David W. Sherman – October 25, 1999, for heroic actions at the scene of a fatal car collision and fire.

Sergeant Gerry L. Devenpeck and Deputy Bill Cassio (Pierce Co.) – December 14, 1998, for actions and risk to personal safety while rendering aid to a distraught individual who climbed to the top of the Narrows Bridge.

Sergeant Randall F. Drake – November 11, 1998, for life-saving actions and risk to personal safety while rendering aid to an individual trapped in a burning house.

Troopers Curtis G. Boyle and Jason T. Watson – September 12, 1998, for actions and risk to personal safety while attempting to save a passenger trapped in a submerged vehicle.

Mr. David W. Groth – June 4, 1998, for heroic actions and risk to personal safety in rescuing a trapped driver from a vehicle fire.

Mr. Grant VanDyk and Ms. Susan VanDyk – May 26, 1998, for actions and risk to personal safety while aiding Trooper Javan James during an altercation with a combative suspect.

Trooper Orest D. Wilson – April 18, 1998, for heroic actions and risk to personal safety in efforts to free a driver trapped in a burning vehicle.

Trooper James P. VanDiest – April 6, 1998, for quick actions that freed a kidnapping victim from her captor and apprehension of a dangerous suspect.

Mr. Marc Dilley and Mrs. Margareta Dilley – March 14, 1998, for the courageous life-saving rescue and rendering of aid at an accident scene.

Sergeant Robert B. Schilling, Detective Sgt. Kenneth J. Prygocki, Troopers Thomas A. Anderson and Kenneth E. Ahrens – February 28, 1998, for professional actions that contributed to the safety of innocent bystanders and the safe apprehension of an armed suspect during a highly volatile situation.

Lieutenant James A. Chromey, Sergeants David J. Browne, Gary D. Gasseling, and Wesley H. Rethwill; Detectives David G. Bangart, Kevin L. Forrester, Mark J. Liburdi, Richard L. Smith, and Paul M. Stanek; Troopers Cory D. Ditmer, Jeffrey R. Kershaw, and Robert C. Orth – February 28, 1998, for apprehending an armed suspect during a highly volatile crisis situation, with extreme risk to personal safety.

Mr. Richard Winterton – February 18, 1998, for heroic efforts and risk to personal safety in saving the life of a collision victim from a burning vehicle.

Mr. John Pool and Mr. Gary Trople – December 1997, for the rescue of a driver from a burning truck.

Ms. Sharon Ferrier and Ms. Sandra Albertson – October 1997, for the rescue of a trapped motorist from a burning vehicle.

Mr. Ramiro Rodriguez – March 22, 1997, for protecting and preserving a crucial piece of evidence used in a homicide, while placing personal safety at risk.

Trooper David J. Standish – March 21, 1997, for life-saving actions in the rescue of a suicidal woman from an I-90 overpass railing.

Mr. Jason A. Swendt and Mr. Chris A. Partlow – February 1997, for the rescue of an accident victim trapped in a burning vehicle.

Trooper James R. Hill and Deputy Eric Epperson – February 1997, for the rescue of residents and leading a convoy to safety from a fire in the west plains area of Spokane.

Sergeant Richard A. Wiley – for actions taken to secure the safety of a citizen, whose vehicle had been shot at. Wiley was subsequently shot at and his patrol vehicle was struck by a round of gunfire.

Trooper Oscar P. Springsteen – February 1, 1997, for caring and life-saving actions involving an armed suicidal subject.

Trooper Kenneth F. DePreto – January 7, 1997, for resolving a potentially deadly situation with an armed suicidal subject.

Trooper James R. Hill – August 11, 1996, for heroic actions in the evacuation of 15 residents to safety from their fire-threatened homes.

Sergeant Wesley H. Rethwill and Detective James F. Dunn (Thurston Co.) – July 14, 1996, for assisting in the rescue of a 9 year-old boy from the Deschutes River.

Mr. Daniel W. Broussard – January 24, 1996, for heroic actions taken, without regard for his own safety, in an attempt to rescue two men trapped in a submerged vehicle.

Coastguardsman SS3 Michael E. Early – November 26, 1995, for the rescue a young boy from the Columbia River.

Trooper Wayne E. Turner – September 28, 1995, for responding to a shooting incident and dragging a wounded victim to safety from a burning house.

Mr. John Epperson, Ms. Pamela Harris, Deputy William Lonon (Jefferson Co.) and Mr. Christian Ziebarth – June 21, 1995, for their immediate and courageous actions in rescuing an accident victim from a burning vehicle.

CVEO 1 Sergio M. Martinez – June 22, 1994, for heroic actions to save his daughter from drowning and ultimately losing his own life.

Trooper James Miller – March 1994, for his immediate and courageous actions in rescuing a motorist from the path of an oncoming vehicle.

Mr. Bill Waldron – September 5, 1993, for heroic actions in the rescue of an accident victim from a burning vehicle.

Trooper James Sammons, retired – May 30, 1993, for heroic actions in the rescue of an accident victim from a burning vehicle while placing his own life in danger.

Sergeant Lowell Porter – May 19, 1993, for his professional response and courageous actions to prevent a person from jumping off the Tacoma Narrows Bridge.

Ms. Joanna Mead – April 28, 1993, for her quick actions to rescue a six year-old child from a vehicle that had rolled out of a driveway.

Trooper David Yergen and Chief Donal Lane, Wilbur PD – March 1993, for professional response and actions, preventing a person from taking his own life.

Detective Don Morrison and Mr. Duane Morrison – February 1993, for placing his personal safety at risk when pulling a subject from a burning vehicle.

Trooper Dave Peterson – November 1992, for his actions in rescuing a child from a fire that occurred after a 15-car pileup.

Mr. Richard Cordova, Mr. David Geesey, and Mr. David Krause – November 1992, for their disregard of personal safety while attempting to rescue a man from a burning vehicle.

Mr. Daniel Berry, Mr. Allen Bowman, Mr. Leonard Black, Mr. Robert Conyers, Mr. Gary Helton, Mr. Erick Paulsen, Mr. Brookes Spencer, Ms. Heather Tombari, Ms. Sommer Tombari, and Mr. Ernie Vela – October 1992, for their efforts to save the lives of children in a submerged vehicle that had crashed into a canal.

Ms. Ruth Murray – October 1992, for her quick action in pulling the emergency brake on a runaway vehicle after the driver suffered from cardiac arrest.

Mr. Fred Dills and Mr. Michael Douglas – June 1992, for their quick actions in extracting the victim of an accident from his burning vehicle.

Mr. Geoffrey Hottowe, Mr. William Simons, Mr. Michael Warren – June 1992, for their rescue of the driver of a burning vehicle involved in a traffic collision.

Mr. Edward Brooks, Mr. Rodney Ewing, and Mr. Mark Morgan – June 1992, for their disregard for their personal safety and their attempt to rescue an elderly man from a submerged vehicle.

Mr. Jack S. Bailey – June 1992, for apprehending a fleeing felon while at the same time saving the suspect's life.

Mr. Joe Durham, Mr. Donald Nilsson, Ms. Darlene Bessonette, Mr. Lance Graham, Ms. Carol Leighton, Mr. Elbert McWilliams – June 1992, for their quick reaction and heroism in saving the occupants of a burning pickup truck.

Trooper G. R. Wilds – August 1991, for placing his personal safety at risk when pulling a subject from a burning vehicle.

Mr. James C. Kent, Mr. Mark A. Moritz and Mr. Jerry Chamberlain – August 1991, for coming to the aid of a trooper and being a crucial link in the apprehension of a fleeing suspect and recovery of evidence.

Trooper R. V. Aucutt – June 1991, for attempting to save a life at the risk of danger to his own.

Troopers D. P. Retzlaff and W. R. Clark, and Mr. Scott Teel – June 1991, for outstanding acts of valor.

Trooper Scott Cushaw – June 1991, for an act of outstanding valor in saving the life of Ms. Kathy E. Hurley.

Trooper Patty Reed, Mr. Michael Berry and Mr. Ty Boyer – November 1990, for their outstanding efforts in the rescue of two victims trapped in a burning vehicle.

Sergeant Roy Glass and family, and Mr. Bo Moeller – September 1990, for their efforts in saving a number of children and an adult from drowning at great risk to their personal safety.

Mr. Dennis Johnson and Mr. Mark Prunier – August 1989, for their valor while removing the occupants of a vehicle submerged in Tunnel Creek.

Mr. Steve Gordon and Mr. Michael Gardiner – October 1988, for his heroic actions in the rescue of accident victims from a burning vehicle.

Sergeant Bruce A. Clark, Troopers Donald C. Bruya, Thomas P. Cline, Richard L. Kellogg, Grant A. Sherman and Craig E. Storey, and Sgt. Robert M. Holt and Officer William P. Ross (both of Kent PD) – July 3, 1988, for their actions in saving a young child during a shooting incident in McCleary.

Mr. Christopher Holiday and Mr. Jeffrey Russel – June 1988, for their heroic actions in the rescue of accident victims from a burning vehicle.

Mr. Daniel L. Gosser, Mr. William H. Carroll and Mr. Jeff Snell – June 1988, for their heroic actions in the rescue of accident victims from a burning vehicle.

Trooper R. J. Peterson – May 17, 1988, for the prevention of an armed suicide attempt.

Mr. Charles Codette and Mr. Wayne Martin – February 1988, for life-saving actions in the rescue of an accident victim from a burning vehicle.

Mr. Robert N. Stotler – October 1986, for life-saving actions in removing an individual from a burning vehicle.

Mr. Fred Daven and Mr. Daniel Deutmeyer – October 1986, for their courageous efforts and repeated attempts to save another person's life.

Trooper Gary L. Hughes – June 4, 1986, for the arrest of an armed rape-kidnap suspect.

Mr. Russel Johnson, Mr. James Tosti, Mr. Jeffrey Schiermeister and Mr. James Arnold – July 1986, for life-saving action in removing an accident victim from a burning vehicle.

Mr. Ernest Krueger, Mr. Charles McCracken, Mr. Nicholas Provost and Mr. Richard Spillman – October 26, 1985, at the scene of a burning wreck, Krueger and Provost rescued a two year old child and McCracken and Spillman rescued a woman and her two daughters, moments before the vehicle exploded.

Trooper James G. Arnold, Jr. – January 4, 1985, for pulling a person from the path of a vehicle.

Trooper Gilbert D. Wheeler – May 5, 1984, for rescuing a drowning person.

Trooper Allan B. Little, Jr. and Mr. Elmer Potter – January 28, 1984, for rescuing a woman from a rock cliff.

Trooper Raymond L. Hawn – January 9, 1984, was assaulted while apprehending a felon.

Trooper Anthony J. McElroy – November 1, 1983, for an armed confrontation while under fire.

Trooper Glenn M. Cramer – June 10, 1983, for an armed confrontation while under fire.

Trooper Larry K. Raedel – June 1, 1983, was assaulted while apprehending a felon.

The Boesel Family – April 27, 1983, for responding to a vehicle collision and, through their actions, saving several persons from a burning vehicle.

Trooper Richard I. Krook – October 6, 1978, for actions taken in Pierce County during the pursuit of armed bank robbery suspects. During the pursuit, Trooper Krook was fired upon during the chase and later ambushed by the suspects. A Pierce County Sheriff's Deputy arrived to assist Krook and the deputy was mortally wounded during an exchange of fire with the suspects. Trooper Krook gave first aid to his fellow officer until more assistance and medical aid arrived.

Trooper Dale W. Kruse – August 30, 1978, while serving with the Sequim Fire Department as a volunteer firefighter, Trooper Kruse was killed after pushing a fellow firefighter from the path of a fire truck that was rolling backward. Kruse was unable to get clear of the truck and was killed instantly when the moving vehicle ran over him.

Trooper Willie G. Hernandez – October 31, 1977, for efforts to arrest a suspect, during which he received a collapsed lung and several broken ribs when he was shot by the suspect. Despite his injuries, Trooper Hernandez managed to return fire and radio for assistance.

Trooper Lance A. Fry – September 8, 1976, for the rescue of a driver from a burning passenger car that had been struck by a gasoline tanker truck on I-5 in King County. After two or three tries, Trooper Fry was able to pull the injured driver to safety through the driver's door window.

Trooper R. J. Wildes – August 1, 1976, for averting a potential accident by using his patrol vehicle to stop a Cadillac that had lost its brakes. Trooper Wildes pulled his vehicle in front of the other vehicle and used his brakes to safely stop the Cadillac.

Sergeant Del R. Wilson – July 17, 1976, while off duty, for rescuing, with the assistance of an unidentified man, three crash victims from a burning truck. Sgt. Wilson had to pry the driver out because a cast on the driver's foot was caught on the control pedals. Sgt. Wilson received second degree burns on his hands and fingers.

Trooper Donald A. Lee – August 27, 1974, for extinguishing a house fire with a garden hose and repeatedly entering the smoke-filled home, searching on his hands and knees. Luckily, nobody was in the home. Trooper Lee was treated for smoke inhalation.

Sergeant Mike A. Daviduke – April 13, 1974, for averting a suicide attempt at the Columbia River bridge in Wenatchee.

Patrol Cadet Michael A. O'Brien – September 7, 1973, for actions taken, along with his wife, to rescue a family whose boat had overturned on Lake Goodwin.

Trooper Fred T. Evans – December 17, 1973, for apprehending a suspect who had broken into his neighbor's apartment and assaulted her with a wooden club. The woman may have bled to death were it not for Evans. Trooper Evans was recovering from a cardiac condition and his involvement in the incident definitely placed his life in jeopardy.

Captain Elmer C. Armstrong – June 30, 1973, for rescuing six persons whose boat had swamped in Deer Lake, including a small child who had disappeared beneath the surface.

Trooper J. C. Gleason – December 8, 1972, for entering a burning home several times to search for and finally rescue a 9 year old girl.

Trooper Kenneth M. Cassetto – June 10, 1972, for rescuing two bedridden patients from a rest home fire. He was forced to escape through a window and was later treated for smoke inhalation.

Trooper James W. Teel – July 19, 1972, for his actions during a gun battle in which he was wounded while executing an arrest warrant.

Trooper Roger W. Bruett – July 6, 1972, for his valiant attempt to rescue of a motorist who drove into the Snohomish River.

Trooper Lloyd G. Abrams – 1972, for his humanitarian effort on behalf of the deaf and blind, and in combating alcoholism and drug addiction beyond the call of duty.