

Illinois State Fire Marshal Honors Collinsville Firefighters

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COLLINSVILLE – Collinsville Firefighter Colin Fuhrmann was awarded the Medal of Valor by the Illinois State Fire Marshal for his actions taken on January 4, 2021. Facing mortal danger Firefighter Fuhrmann demonstrated courage and dedication despite the risk presented to him in order to take lifesaving actions for the resident of the home.

Also recognized for their excellence and professionalism in service during the same fire was Firefighters Lieutenant Frank Arnold, Lieutenant Chris Castens, Firefighter David

Badgett, Firefighter John Canull, Firefighter Eric Freeman, Firefighter Daniel Gullledge, Firefighter Justin Verner, and Firefighter Jim Wilderman, of the Collinsville Fire Department, who received the Firefighter Excellence Unit Citation Award.

The recognition came as a result of the heroic action of a group of Collinsville Firefighters on January 4, 2021. At 11:57 p.m. the department received a call of a fire in an apartment. The shift on duty responded quickly to the call and upon arrival was informed by dispatch that a Collinsville Police Officer on the scene believed there was an individual still in the building.

Given this information Firefighter Fuhrmann headed up to the second floor with Acting Lieutenant Gullledge behind him with a hose. While heading to the second floor the hose got tangled and knowing there was a person still on the second-floor Firefighter Fuhrmann continued without the hose risking his own safety.

Since there was a search and rescue happening Lt. Castens and Firefighter Wilderman went up the back stairs to a second-floor landing to assist with removing the victim if needed. Entering the room, Firefighter Fuhrman following his training began searching the room. He found a contents fire in the bedroom upon entering and soon after found the resident on the floor in a closet and called that he had a victim.

The Firefighter Excellence Award is given for an act of service in the line of duty, demonstrating excellence, teamwork, and professionalism in service to the citizens of Illinois.

Around the same time, Acting Lt. Gullledge had untangled the hose and made his way to the door of the apartment. Firefighter Fuhrmann and Acting Lt. Gullledge worked to extricate the victim and were met in a common area on the second floor by other responding units.

Outside of the structure pump operator Firefighter Canull provided a charged line and with the help of Firefighter Verner were able to connect a hose to a nearby fire hydrant to the fire truck to ensure adequate water was available to fight the blaze.

Upon getting the victim out of the structure lifesaving treatment began and once in the ambulance three firefighter/paramedics were able to provide lifesaving treatment while en route to the hospital.

With the search complete and no other victims found, the fire was extinguished. It only took them 7 minutes and 42 seconds from the time the call went out to the victim being transported to the hospital.

“I’m super proud of my guys. The work they do every day is just amazing. I congratulate the members of A-shift for their effort and the teamwork that night. Colin for going above and putting his life at risk to save another and being one of only six recipients across the state in 2021 winning the Medal of Valor Award and the rest of the guys winning the Unit Citation,” Collinsville Fire Chief John Bailot said. “It speaks volumes to the caliber of firefighters we have and to the department as a whole. The residents of Collinsville should sleep very comfortably knowing they have excellent firefighters on duty that are going to be there to help them in their time of need.”

The Medal of Valor is presented by the Illinois State Fire Marshal to a firefighter for an act of heroism and bravery that demonstrated courage and dedication despite danger in the line of duty.