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# San Francisco Police Medal of Valor Awards Ceremony 18-147

Image



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On Wednesday, November 14, 2018 at 6 PM, the San Francisco Police Department will present awards and certificates to 30 officers at the Medal of Valor Awards Ceremony at Scottish Rite Masonic Center in San Francisco (2850 19 th Avenue).

The Medal of Valor is bestowed on officers for exceptional bravery in the line of duty. Six officers will receive the Gold Medal of Valor, 14 will receive the Silver Medal of Valor and 10 will receive the Bronze Medal of Valor.

“Each day, our officers place themselves in harm’s way to protect the public,” said San Francisco Police Chief William Scott. “Their sacrifice comes at great cost to themselves and their families. It is important that we recognize and reflect upon what we demand of our officers while celebrating their acts of valor and commitment to the safety of the public.”

### **Gold Medal of Valor**

On September 26, 2017 Officer Reynaldo Serrano responded to a call of a suspicious person walking in traffic at the San Francisco International Airport. Officer Serrano made contact with the suspect but the suspect refused to answer any questions. The suspect then pushed a luggage cart into the officer. The suspect walked away from Serrano once again. The suspect turned around suddenly, yelling “You’re going to die!” The suspect then attacked and stabbed Serrano with a dagger. For his heroic actions and the injuries sustained, Officer Serrano is being awarded the Gold Medal of Valor and the Purple Heart.

On October 14, 2016 Officer Paul Dominguez, Officer Nathan Chew, and Officer James Trail responded to the Taraval District to a call of an officer being shot. These officers were part of a large perimeter in an attempt to take the suspect into custody. The suspect emerged from a backyard, running at the officers with firearm in his hand. The suspect ignored commands to drop the firearm and fired at the officers. An exchange of gunfire occurred and the suspect was struck. The suspect succumbed to his injuries. For these heroic actions Officers Dominguez, Chew, and Trail are being awarded the Gold Medal of Valor.

On October 15, 2015 Sergeant Joseph McCloskey and Sergeant Michael Koniaris were flagged down by a citizen in need of assistance. The citizen advised the sergeants that a man was throwing bottles near a construction site and was going to hit a vehicle or hurt someone. As soon as the sergeants approached the suspect, the suspect attacked Sergeant McCloskey while attempting to remove the sergeant’s firearm from his holster. Sergeant McCloskey warned Sergeant Koniaris that the suspect had taken McCloskey’s gun. Sergeant Koniaris discharged his firearm at the suspect, who succumbed to his injuries. For these heroic actions Sergeant McCloskey and Sergeant Koniaris are being awarded the Gold Medal of Valor. Sergeant McCloskey is also being awarded the Purple Heart for the injuries he sustained during this incident.

### **Silver Medal of Valor**

On September 25, 2014 Sergeant Fischer, Sergeant Obrochta, Officer Alvarenga, Officer Cotter, Officer Johnson, Officer Kellogg, Officer Macaulay, Officer McEachern, and Officer Wong were working when a carjacking suspect led outside agencies on a vehicle pursuit into San Francisco and through numerous district station boundaries. Dispatch broadcast that a vehicle matching the suspect’s vehicle had crashed. The suspect fired upon Good Samaritans attempting to aid the driver of the crashed vehicle.

Officers responded to the crash scene and gave commands to the suspect, who refused to comply. The suspect raised and pointed the firearm at the officers. Officers Alvarenga, Macaulay, Johnson, McEachern, Wong, and Cotter discharged their firearms to stop the threat, striking the suspect. The suspect succumbed to his injuries on scene. For these heroic actions Sergeant Fischer, Sergeant Obrochta, Officer Alvarenga, Officer Cotter, Officer Johnson, Officer Kellogg, Officer Macaulay, Officer McEachern, and Officer Wong are being awarded the Silver Medal of Valor.

On November 11, 2014 Officer Ochoa along with other officers observed a narcotics transaction and decided to investigate. The officers split up with Officer Ochoa taking the high ground to approach the suspect. Officer Ochoa identified himself and told the suspect to show his hands. At this point, the suspect reached into his front waistband and produced a firearm. Officer Ochoa, fearing for his life and that of his fellow officers, fired at the suspect, striking him. The suspect was taken into custody and transported to the hospital. For his heroic action,

Officer Ochoa is being awarded the Silver Medal of Valor.

On April 16, 2017 Officer Gassen, Officer Kuchac, Officer Laokwansathitaya, and Officer Turner responded to a call regarding a possibly suicidal individual. They encountered the subject in a third floor hallway. The subject was immediately confrontational and attempted to leave, disobeying the officers' orders to stop. A physical altercation ensued in which the subject placed a hold around an officer's neck, rendering the officer unconscious. The altercation continued and the subject tried to throw himself over a hallway railing, which would have resulted in a twenty foot fall. The subject then fell onto an officer and attempted to remove the officer's firearm from his holster. The officers were able to gain control of the subject and take him into custody. For these heroic actions, Officer Gassen, Officer Kuchac, Officer Laokwansathitaya, and Officer Turner are being awarded the Silver Medal of Valor. Officer Turner is also being awarded the Purple Heart award for injuries sustained during this incident.

### **Bronze Medal of Valor**

On December 12, 2017 Officer Thomas Anderson and Officer Ryan Champlin responded to a call for service regarding a female attempting to hang herself. The officers made contact with the woman on the third floor fire escape. She had wrapped vehicle jumper cables around her neck and tied the other end to a fire escape railing. When she saw the officers approaching, she attempted to jump over the railing in an attempt to kill herself. The officers grabbed the subject preventing her from jumping. The woman resisted the officers rescue attempts, nearly pulling the officers over the railing. The officers were successful in pulling her back onto the fire escape. For these heroic actions Officer Anderson and Champlin are being awarded the Bronze Medal of Valor.

On March 17, 2015 Sergeant Maguire, Officer Tursi, and Officer Peterson received a phone call advising them of a crime in progress involving a stolen car. The officers located the car which then fled, followed by the officers on foot. The driver of the stolen car collided with numerous other vehicles. As the stolen car continued to hit more vehicles, the officers recognized the risk to the public. Sergeant Maguire and Officer Tursi fired their duty weapon at the suspect. The suspect was struck, incapacitated, and ultimately taken into custody. The suspect would succumb to her gunshot wounds at the scene. For these heroic actions Sergeant Maguire, Officer Tursi, and Officer Peterson are being awarded the Bronze Medal of Valor.

On July 30, 2017 Officer Alvaro, Officer Cummings, and Officer Keating responded to a call of shots fired. The officers recognized the address from previous contacts where numerous guns and ammunition were seized. They were also aware that the subject had prior military experience and was a person who suffers from mental illness and paranoia. Sergeant Pasquinzo made contact with the suspect, who was barricaded inside his residence and who advised the sergeant that he had shot his mother. Sergeant Pasquinzo convinced the suspect to bring his mother to the front door. The suspect dragged his injured mother to the front door and left her at the top of the stairs. Officers Alvaro, Cummings, and Keating picked up the gunshot victim and carried her a lover half a city-block to safety. These officers had no shields, only their uniforms. For these heroic actions Officer Alvaro, Officer Cummings, and Officer Keating are being awarded The Bronze Medal of Valor.

On September 14, 2017 Officer Custodio and Officer Urbano were inside a building when they heard gunshots and people scattering from the area. They crossed the street where they contacted a suspect holding a firearm. The engaged the suspect and ordered him to drop the firearm. The suspect, upon seeing the officers, dropped the firearm and began to flee. Officer Custodio gave chase while Officer Urbano secured the firearm. For these heroic actions Officers Custodio and Urbano are being awarded the Bronze Medal of Valor.

### **GOLD MEDAL OF VALOR**

- Sergeant Joseph McCloskey

- Sergeant Michael Koniaris
- Officer Reynaldo Serrano
- Officer Paul Dominguez
- Officer James Trai
- Officer Nathan Chew

## **SILVER MEDAL OF VALOR**

- Sergeant Joseph Fischer
- Officer Christopher Cotter
- Officer James Johnson
- Officer Gordon Wong
- Officer Robert Kellogg
- Officer Tracy Turner
- Officer Ronald Kuchac
- Sergeant Mark Obrochta
- Officer Ryan McEachern
- Officer Omar Alvarenga
- Officer Kurt Macaulay
- Officer Eduard Ochoa
- Officer Carolyn Gassen
- Officer Kwanjai Laokwansathitaya

## **BRONZE MEDAL OF VALOR**

- Sergeant Thomas Maguire
- Officer Thomas Anderson
- Officer Donn Peterson
- Officer Ryan Champlin
- Officer Michael Tursi
- Officer Kamakana Alvaro
- Officer Victor Custodio
- Officer Jeremy Cummings
- Officer Cornelius Keating
- Officer Nicholas Urbano (\*Also awarded the Purple Heart Award)

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