



# NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS FOUNDATION

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## National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service to Honor Three Fallen Florida Firefighters

EMMITSBURG, MD. – The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service will honor two Florida firefighters who died in the line of duty in 2008. They will be among the 98 men and 5 women from 36 states remembered at the official national service held at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg. One Florida firefighter and eighteen firefighters from other states who died in previous years will also be honored.

Fire-Rescue Lieutenant Rafael Vazquez, age 42, of the Palm-Beach Fire-Rescue Department died of a gun-shot wound received while on lunch break from a training class on March 3, 2008.

Firefighter Johnny Bajusz, age 69, of the Layton Volunteer Fire Department died on July 18, 2008 from injuries sustained in a motor vehicle accident in January.

Chief Thomas Santner, age 46, North Bay Fire District collapsed within 24 hours of a false alarm response on January 17, 2005 and later died on February 6, 2005.

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) and the Department of Homeland Security will sponsor the official national tribute on October 4, 2009. This ceremony marks the beginning of National Fire Prevention Week designated by President Obama to focus national attention on the destruction of property and loss of life caused by fire.

As first responders to all natural and manmade emergencies, fire service personnel are in constant danger. During 2008, 103 firefighters died in the line of duty, making firefighting one of the nation's most dangerous occupations.

More than 5,000 people, including Members of Congress, Administration officials and other dignitaries, members of the fire service, and families and friends of the fallen firefighters will attend the event. Families receive flags flown over the U. S. Capitol and the National Memorial. Honor guard units and fire service personnel from across the U.S. will participate in the National Tribute.

Many fire departments across the country will conduct simultaneous services, lower flags to half-staff, sound sirens at noon, and observe a moment of silent tribute.

For further information, visit [weekend.FireHero.org](http://weekend.FireHero.org). The website includes a complete list of this year's honored fallen firefighters, a video introduction to the Memorial weekend, images of previous memorial services, satellite coordinates for broadcast and more.

### **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 nonprofit foundation has developed and expanded programs to honor fallen fire heroes and assist their families and coworkers. For more information on the Foundation and its programs contact us at 301-447-1365 or visit [www.FireHero.org](http://www.FireHero.org).