

**News**[Blog](#)[Data](#)[Events](#)[Fact Sheets](#)[Homeland Security
LIVE](#)[In Focus](#)[Media Contacts](#)[Multimedia](#)[National Terrorism
Advisory System](#)[Press Releases](#)[Comunicados de
Prensa](#)[Publications Library](#)[Social Media](#)[Speeches](#)[Testimony](#)

Secretary Johnson Presents Awards for Valor

Release Date: May 13, 2016

For Immediate Release
 DHS Press Office
 Contact: 202-282-8010

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh C. Johnson today presented the 2016 Department of Homeland Security Secretary's Award for Valor to 13 outstanding individuals who have displayed exceptional valor while serving the Department, or while off-duty acting only as a concerned citizen willing to help those in need.

"On a routine basis, I've been consistently impressed with the repeated acts of valor committed by our DHS people, across our components, whether on or off duty," said Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh C. Johnson. "I want everyone who is receiving this award, which is the highest award I can give for an act of valor, to know how proud we all are of you for how you represent us in the Department of Homeland Security."

Joined by Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas and DHS senior leadership, Secretary Johnson recognized 13 DHS employees for their courage and selfless actions that protected individuals from harm, saved another's life, or safeguarded infrastructure in support of national security.

The following individuals, listed by component order, received the 2016 Secretary's Award for Valor, the highest recognition from the Department for extraordinary acts of valor:

Gloria Betts, Transportation Security Officer, Transportation Security Administration, Jacksonville, Fla.

On June 14, 2015, Transportation Security Officer Gloria Betts stopped for gas while returning from a vacation in Key West, Florida. At the gas station, a Florida Highway Patrol trooper was talking to the occupants of a pick-up truck when one of the passengers opened fire on the trooper. TSO Betts immediately moved to keep other patrons away from the live fire, and then ran to assist the injured trooper, remaining with him until help arrived. The Sheriff's office reported that TSO Betts was "an asset during the incident and a consummate professional during the initial investigation."

Kevin J. Carmen and John J. Chiartas, III, Office of Law Enforcement/Federal Air Marshal Service, Transportation Security Administration, Philadelphia, Pa.

On January 12, 2016, John Chiartas and Kevin Carmen acted quickly to provide medical assistance to an unresponsive passenger needing resuscitation. During a potentially dangerous emergency landing, the recipients remained with the ill passenger and provided medical assistance until the aircraft arrived at the gate and medical personnel could respond.

Justin Sawhill, Transportation Security Officer, Transportation Security Administration, Coraopolis, Pa.

While returning home one morning, Transportation Security Officer Justin Sawhill observed a glow coming from a nearby house and went to investigate. He discovered a burning vehicle in the driveway and called 911. As the fire began to spread to the garage, TSO Sawhill ran to the front door and knocked until a woman answered. She asked TSO Sawhill to help her get her four young children safely out of the house. TSO Sawhill carried one child while guiding another by the hand. The fire had overtaken the front of the residence, blocking their primary exit. So they retreated to the rear of the house, where he assisted the woman through a window and then passed the four children to her before exiting himself.

Matthew Silverman, Office of Law Enforcement/Federal Air Marshal Service, Transportation Security Administration, Chelsea, Mass.

On February 18, 2016, Matthew Silverman was on his way to work when he witnessed a Revere, Massachusetts police cruiser involved in a high speed pursuit suddenly crash into two utility poles. Electrical sparks flew and gasoline began pooling underneath the cruiser. Mr.

Silverman pulled the officer to safety just before the vehicle erupted in flames. He provided initial first aid treatment for shock and lacerations, and directed other citizens to keep the scene safe until first responders arrived. The officer was transported to the hospital for his injuries and is recovering.

Jennifer X. Tran, Jackie E. Hisey, Operations Support Specialists, California Service Center, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Laguna Niguel, Calif.

Operations Support Specialists Jackie Hisey and Jennifer Tran volunteered to locate a colleague who missed an appointment at a local Department of Veterans Affairs clinic. After checking all emergency contacts, Ms. Hisey and Ms. Tran sought permission to make a trip to their colleague's personal residence accompanied by local police. After determining that their colleague had made an attempt on his own life, first responders transported him to the VA hospital for much needed care and counseling. Ms. Hisey and Ms. Tran's commitment to a colleague in need exemplifies devotion to duty.

Benjamin E. Jacober, Operations Specialist Third Class, Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane, U.S. Coast Guard, Portsmouth, Va.

On July 6, 2015, Operations Specialist Third Class Benjamin Jacober was off-duty with his shipmates from Cutter Harriet Lane near Bocas del Toro, Panama. As the group was walking, Petty Officer Jacober saw two women in the water frantically waving for help. Petty Officer Jacober sprinted down the beach and entered the water. Using his training as a Cutter Rescue Swimmer, he reached one of the fatigued women and kept her head above water. Petty Officer Jacober towed her back through rough waves to shore, and his fellow crewmembers assisted them onto the beach. A lifeguard was able to rescue the second victim.

Joseph G. Perkins, Seaman, Telecommunication and Information Systems Command, U.S. Coast Guard, Alexandria, Va.

On February 24, 2016, while traveling with soldiers from the U.S. Army "Old Guard" to a ceremony, Seaman Joseph Perkins witnessed a car lose control, collide into two other vehicles, and ram into a guardrail. He and three soldiers called 911 and provided assistance. There was an unconscious woman inside the car, which had caught fire and was continuing to accelerate into the guardrail. Together, using a flashlight, a tire iron, and their own fists, they broke the driver's side window and pulled the unconscious woman from the vehicle and carried her more than 100 feet to safety. Seaman Perkins and a soldier rendered first aid and were able to stabilize the woman until medical professionals arrived.

George D. Sullivan, Assistant Field Office Director, William G. Adamson, Technical Enforcement Officer, Enforcement and Removal Operations; and Brendan Lundt, Special Agent, Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Boston, Mass.

On January 10, 2016, while off duty, Assistant Field Office Director George Sullivan, Technical Enforcement Officer William Adamson, and Special Agent Brendan Lundt were awakened by smoke in their hotel rooms and soon discovered a structure fire. After evacuating their loved ones, the three raced to help other guests. Mr. Sullivan climbed up three floors, using only the railings of the balconies, to get to the trapped people. Special Agent Lundt assisted from the ground while Officer Adamson assisted local fire fighters. Mr. Sullivan made the climb three times, rescuing four people. Remarkably, no one was injured during the entire incident.

Jeffrey E. Ellis, Deputy Attaché, Homeland Security Investigations, International Operations Division, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Dakar, Senegal

On March 13, 2016, Deputy Attaché Jeffrey Ellis was at a seaside restaurant in Grand Bassam, Cote d'Ivoire while on temporary duty assignment. Attaché Ellis heard gun shots and helped his U.S. embassy colleagues and two other bystanders evade the assailants. Their escape was impeded by a seven-foot stone wall. Attaché Ellis helped everyone scale the wall and take shelter in a local residence. Attaché Ellis contacted the Marines at the U.S. Embassy in Abidjan and provided situational reports. Over the next two hours, Attaché Ellis monitored the perimeter security, and once rescued by security forces, provided an eyewitness account of the terrorist attack. The next day, he continued with his assignment in Abidjan to provide counterterrorism training.



Secretary Johnson Presents the Department of Homeland Security Secretary's Award for Valor to 13 DHS Employees

###

Review Date: May 13, 2016