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Ten Burleson firefighters who were instrumental in the rescue of a worker from a tower in August were honored Sept. 19 with a Medal of Life Saving Award from Fire Chief Gary Wisdom. Mayor Ken Shetter presented the three firefighters who climbed the tower and the lieutenant over operations with a Mayoral Commendation.

The honorees include the incident commander, Battalion Fire Chief Tom Foster; operations commander, Lt. Jeremiah Lozier; rescue climbers - Firefighters Dallas Fowler, Bill Buchanan and Matt Moseley; the ground crew, Lieutenants Claude Scally and Steve Burchette and Firefighter Jules Knight; and the support team, Fire Marshal Stacy Singleton and Fire Investigator David Butler. Also assisting in the rescue was Crowley Firefighter Gary Sansing.



Burleson firefighters rescued a 25-year-old worker who was trapped on a cell phone tower, more than 700 feet in the air. The rescue lasted approximately seven hours.

The call began at 7:47 p.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 3, as a mutual aid response by Burleson and Crowley to the Mid-North Fire Department. The tower is located in the 3700 block of CR 919 in Johnson County. The temperature Aug. 3 was 105 degrees and winds on the tower - which is higher than the Statue of Liberty, the Space Needle and Reunion Tower - were blowing 35-40 miles per hour.

The man was reportedly unconscious when the call for help was made. Burleson responded with its technical rescue team. The first Burleson firefighter, Fowler, started the climb shortly after 8:17 p.m. with an oxygen bottle and IV fluids in tow. Fowler reached the patient at 9:33 p.m. It was already dark. The patient, named Mike, had climbed further up to approximately 760 feet, taken his harness off, and climbed out on to a platform that was 6 feet away from the center of the tower. The patient, who was more than 6-feet-5-inches tall, laid down on what was the equivalent of a coffee table. He was not tethered to anything and he was dehydrated and suffering from heat exhaustion.

Fowler was able to get the patient to drink the IV fluid as they waited for Buchanan and Moseley to make it to the top. Buchanan and Moseley made the climb with the rescue equipment. It took them approximately two hours to get to the victim as the two shifted the weight of 1,200 feet of rope during the climb. Sansing was staged below to assist in bringing the worker down from the tower.

The three firefighters were able to talk the worker back in to his safety harness and hooked him to a pulley system that they had to set up 10 feet above him. The patient was secured by 1:11 a.m. on Aug. 4. The patient and rescuers touched down on solid ground at 2:29 a.m.

The firefighters were treated at the scene and released for the remainder of the shift. The worker was transported to Huguley Memorial Medical Center where he was treated.

The Burleson Fire Department has 33 career firefighters who man three fire stations. All firefighters are certified in basic operations. Eight are certified rescue technicians and 22 are certified in rescue operations.