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Department of Justice

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ATTORNEY GENERAL HONORS MEDAL OF VALOR RECIPIENTS

WASHINGTON – Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey today honored the nation's Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor recipients during a special ceremony at the Department of Justice. Earlier today, President George W. Bush presented the Medals of Valor during a White House ceremony in the Oval Office.

The Medal of Valor is the highest national award for valor by a public safety officer. It recognizes heroic action performed above and beyond the call of duty. The Attorney General honored five recipients from the nation's federal and local law enforcement agencies.

"These men faced life-threatening situations with composure and extraordinary courage, and in one case a Department employee gave his life," said Attorney General Mukasey. "They all put their lives on the line to protect their communities, and for that we owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude."

The recipients of the 2006-2007 Medal of Valor are Cmdr. Miguel G. Galvez, Opa-Locka Police Department, Fla.; Officer David C. Goitia, Glendale Police Department, Ariz.; Detective Raymond Robertson, Miami-Dade Police Department; Special Agent William Sentner, III (Deceased), U.S. Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General, Investigations Division, Miami Field Office, Fla.; and Lieutenant Carlos J. Thompson, Mobile County Sheriff's Office, Ala. Also in attendance was firefighter Brian D. Rothell from the Chesterfield Fire and Emergency Medical Services in Chesterfield, Va. Rothell is a recipient of the 2005-2006 Medal of Valor, but was not able to attend the ceremony last year.

The Medal of Valor, authorized by the Public Safety Medal of Valor Act of 2001, is awarded by the President of the United States to public safety officers cited by the Attorney General. Public safety officers are nominated by the chiefs or directors of their employing agencies and recommended by the Medal of Valor Review Board.

Additional information about the award, the design and image of the Medal of Valor, the board members, and the nomination process can be found on the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) Web site at <https://ojp.gov/medalofvalor>. Descriptions of this year's winners are also attached.

PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER MEDAL OF VALOR SYNOPSIS OF ACTS OF VALOR

Commander Miguel G. Galvez and Detective Raymond Robertson: On Friday, Oct. 13, 2006, Detective Miguel Galvez of the Opa-Locka, Fla., Police Department and Detective Raymond Robertson of the Miami-Dade, Fla., Police Department were engaged in surveillance activities for a narcotics operation. Having received information that large quantities of narcotics and firearms were being stored in an abandoned apartment in the area, they drove to the apartment complex's parking lot. A subject approached their vehicle holding a firearm. Robertson attempted to back out of the lot, but another vehicle blocked their route of escape by intentionally rear-ending their vehicle. The initial subject then opened the driver's side door and began firing his weapon. During the subsequent exchange of gunfire, the subject was hit once in the abdomen and fell to the ground a short distance from the driver's side door of the detectives' vehicle. While lying on the ground, the subject continued to fire shots in the direction of the detectives' vehicle. At this point, two additional subjects began shooting at the detectives. Still trapped inside their vehicle, the detectives were now being fired at by three subjects simultaneously.

During this exchange of gunshots, Robertson was shot multiple times. He was first shot in the right forearm, forcing him to switch his gun to his non-dominant hand, then in his left forearm. Even though he was losing strength in both of his hands, he managed to exchange magazines and continue firing. Another shot grazed his right ear, and he was shot three times in the chest area, which was protected by a bulletproof vest. In an effort to take cover outside of the vehicle, Galvez began to exit the passenger side but was struck in the leg when the subject vehicle rammed the passenger door, causing him to drop his firearm. Despite his injuries, Robertson covered Galvez as Galvez escaped through a hole in the fence. Detective Robertson also made a run to safety. They raced about 100 yards to a convenience store, with the subjects in pursuit. Robertson, who was losing consciousness, relinquished his firearm to Galvez, who kept the subjects at bay and called for back-up.

The initial subject attempted to run from the scene and was found dead in the rear of the parking lot. After an investigation, the two additional subjects were identified and arrested, and were awaiting trial at the time of the nomination. Both subjects had extensive criminal pasts.

Officer David C. Goitia: On Monday, February 19, 2007, Officer David Goitia of the Glendale, Ariz., Police Department, and his partner Officer Anthony Holly, stopped a car, had fictitious license plates and was occupied by three subjects. A male passenger, who had falsely identified himself, was being extracted from the car for further

investigation when the subject suddenly produced a gun and fired at Holly, fatally striking him in the head. A gun battle then raged along the street for more than 50 feet, during which time the assailant, a wanted felon, fired multiple shots at Goitia, who returned fire and struck the suspect in the leg. Still armed, the assailant crawled away while continuing to fire at Goitia. Goitia, with little regard for his own safety and at great risk, abandoned the cover of a nearby car to return to Officer Holly's side to render aid. Knowing that Officer Holly was critically injured, Goitia dragged his wounded partner for more than 50 feet out of the line of fire and to a position of cover. He then directed emergency services to evacuate Holly to a nearby fire department unit. Efforts to save Holly were not successful as he had died instantly. The assailant was subsequently taken into custody.

Lieutenant Carlos J. Thompson: On Friday, Jan. 26, 2007, Lt. Carlos Thompson of the Mobile County, Ala. Sheriff's Office attempted to perform a traffic stop on a vehicle matching the description of a suspect vehicle involved in an armed robbery. The driver subsequently fled the scene at a high rate of speed. At an intersection, the driver ran through the stop sign, made a 180-degree turn and stopped his vehicle, facing Thompson. The suspect began firing an assault rifle, striking Thompson and seriously wounding him in his lower leg and hip, rendering him unable to exit his patrol car. While returning fire, Thompson was struck in the right elbow by gunfire, which forced him to reload his weapon with his weak hand to continue to return fire. As the suspect approached on foot, Thompson, using his weak hand, was able to fatally wound the suspect. Though seriously injured, Thompson was able to direct his fellow deputies arriving on the scene, ensuring that the area was secure and any evidence was protected.

Special Agent William Sentner, III (deceased): On Wednesday, June 21, 2006, Special Agent William Sentner of the Miami Field Office, Investigations Division, Office of Inspector General (OIG) was working with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in an investigation involving corrupt prison guards in a federal prison facility in Tallahassee, Fla. As a result of the investigation, six prison guards were indicted for sexually abusing female inmates, smuggling contraband into the institution and threatening the inmates with retaliation if they exposed the criminal acts. Sentner was part of the joint OIG/FBI team that went to the prison to arrest the six guards. At the prison, as one of the guards was being arrested, he produced a gun from his bag and began firing. The guard shot a prison lieutenant in the stomach and then shot Sentner. Before the guard was able to fire at other personnel, Sentner returned fire, fatally wounding him. Sentner subsequently succumbed to his gunshot wound. In his last act, Sentner saved the lives of several other law enforcement officers while sacrificing his own.

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