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## **US&R GENERAL MEMORANDUM – 2016-067**

August 24, 2016

**FOR:** National Urban Search & Rescue Response System  
Task Force Representatives

**FROM:** Dean Scott, Chief  
Operations Section  
Urban Search and Rescue Branch

**SUBJECT:** US&R General Memorandum 2016-067 – Benjamin Franklin Award for Valor by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and Motorola Solutions

On Thursday August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016, members from Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department's Urban Search and Rescue Team, Virginia Task Force One (operating as USA-1), and Los Angeles County Fire and Rescue Department's Urban Search and Rescue Team, California Task Force Two (operating as USA-2), were presented with the Benjamin Franklin Award for Valor by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and Motorola Solutions.

The Benjamin Franklin Award for Valor is the IAFC's most prestigious award and recognizes the spirit of service, courage and heroism that is the tradition among the world's fire-service professionals. The award recognizes firefighters for their expert training, professional service and dedication to duty displayed in saving a human life.

When a devastating earthquake struck Nepal in May 2015, task force team members were called to action as a part of our nation's Disaster Assistance Response Teams under the authority of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). The following members were recognized for their heroic actions in saving the life of a Nepalese woman trapped inside a collapsed building:

- USA-1, Fairfax County (VA) Fire and Rescue Department Urban Search and Rescue. Team members Lieutenant Robert Garza, Lieutenant Lawrence Mullin and Technician Ryland Chapman.
- USA-2, Los Angeles County (CA) Fire and Rescue Department's Urban Search and Rescue. Team members are Captain Gerald Gonzales, Firefighter Daniel McKeen and Firefighter-Paramedic Matthew Prasch.

FEMA congratulates the award winners! For additional information about the rescue, please visit the articles at the following links: [IAFC](#); [Fairfax Fire & Rescue](#); and [LA County Fire](#).

cc:

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