Incident Name: Colorado Fire, Palo Colorado Canyon (North of Big Sur) near Monterey
Date: Accident date: 10/08/07; Death date: 10/9/2007 (CA Death Records)
Personnel: Matthew Richard Will
Age: 30
Agency/Organization: CAL FIRE
Position: Heavy Equipment Operator

Summary: Heavy Equipment Operator Will was driving a heavy bulldozer as he and other firefighters fought the Colorado Fire near Monterey on the morning of 10/8/2007. During operations, the bulldozer rolled over and crushed Heavy Equipment Operator Will. He was airlifted to a regional hospital but did not survive his injuries -- he died the next day.
Wildlandfire.com Links:
- Final Report
- BLUE SHEET PRELIMINARY SUMMARY REPORT
- U.S. Fire Administration memorial database
- CAL FIRE Wildland Fire Bulldozer Rollover Fatality
- CAL FIRE Serious Accident Investigation
- Wildlandfire.com: Matt Will Fatality on the Colorado Fire (California)
- 6th Annual Matt Will Memorial Desert Run March 22nd 2014
- Matt Will Fatality on the Colorado Fire (California)

**Message from Cal Fire Office of the Director**
- Authorization is granted for shrouding of all badges for uniform personnel and the continuance of Monterey Unit.
- He started with CAL FIRE, then known as CDF, on May 19, 2003, as a heavy-equipment operator.
- Will, a resident of Hollister, was assigned to Hollister Air Attack Base in the San Benito County.
- With the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), died this morning as the result of a bulldozer rollover.
- It is with heartfelt sympathy that I send this message.

**Firefighter Killed by Caterpillar Rollover – Dangerous Design of Operator Compartment**
- By Michael Van Cassell

**Top of the ridge where the bulldozer began to roll, Colorado Fire in California**

**Obituary:**
- Matt married Diana in 1997. They had two kids, Trysten and Elsie.
- The Will’s immediate survivors include his wife, Diana Will, his son Trysten, 10, and daughter Elsie, 8.

**Memorial Page:**
- Photos, Videos, & Tributes

**Photos by Will**
- CalFire Capt. Steve Norris, who directs air operations and flies for the state’s fire department, met Will when the two began working together at the Hollister Air Attack Base in May 2003.
- Will had moved with his family from San Diego to take the job in Hollister and keep alive the firefighting tradition in his family.

**Photos by CalFire**
- The captain left to refuel before Will’s bulldozer rolled over.
- Norris was there Monday just before Will was injured.
- Will told Norris that the dirt was soft on the Colorado Fire.

**Photos by CalFire**
- Will had also passed through the officer academy, making him eligible to become a captain.
- In addition to driving the bulldozer on the front lines for CalFire, Will also worked in the air base’s shop, keeping equipment maintained from local stations.

**Photos by CalFire**
- CalFire Battalion Chief Mark Edria said as he pulled into work, Will would often be standing near the faded yellow chair with worn wooden armrests which has been reupholstered with Matthew Richard Will’s, and he loved it.

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2007 10/09 CA Matthew Will

- [Image 43x346 to 218x765]
- [Image 43x132 to 204x340]

[Image 43x818]

2007 10/09 CA Matthew Will

- [Image 43x342] 7/6/2010 from FPO: Here is a link to a memorial plaque for CAL FIRE Dozer Operator Matt Will who died in the line of duty in Palo Colorado, Monterey County. Could you please add to the Memorial page Matt Will (I also added it above.)

- The legislature and Gov. recently passed resolution ACR-106, in Matt Will's honor, five miles of Hwy 156, between Hollister / San Juan Bautista to Hwy 101, will be designated as CAL FIRE FIREFIGHTER MATTHEW WILL MEMORIAL HIGHWAY. The signs will be placed by Cal-Trans, but no state funds can be used. Once the signs are up, still months away, we will forward a photo of them to you for the memorial page.

- The Matt Will Memorial was placed at the accident site on Palo Colorado Road on November 22, 2009 and a stretch of Hwy 156 in San Benito County -- near the communities of San Juan Bautista and Hollister -- was dedicated in his honor.

- The sign was destroyed in a vehicle accident in late 2012 or early 2013, but was replaced the end of April, 2013.

- Annual Memorial Desert Runs to fund the local Matt Will Scholarship, SIX so far -- 2008-2014

- California Memorial Firefighter Wall in Sacramento:
  - [Image 43x339] California Memorial LODDs by Wall Order. (84 K pdf) --see page 24

Contributors to this article:
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Please support the Wildland Firefighter Foundation