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.
Office of the Director
Department of Forestry & Fire Protection
Ruben Grijalva, Chief

Additional information will be forthcoming from CAL FIRE as it develops.

It is with heartfelt sympathy that I send this message -

of flags at half staff at all department facilities in remembrance of Matthew Will.

CAL FIRE Heavy Fire Equipment Operator (HFEO) -

- Authorization is granted for shrouding of all badges for uniform personnel and the continuance

- LODD - BEU San Benito/Monterey unit - Matthew Richard Will, a heavy fire equipment operator

- died this morning as the result of a bulldozer rollover.

- Regional Medical Center for treatment and died this morning from injuries sustained in the rollover.

- Colorado Fire in Monterey County on Monday, October 8, 2007

- Matt was called to a fire in Monterey, CA. When Matt's dozer rolled, he sustained head

- injuries and died the next day. Matt's family is proud that many of his organs were donated. On

- the job, he saved property and lives; later, he gave new life to 5 others. Matt is missed every

- day.

- Edria said. "He just passed," Edria said. "He was very excited."

- Matt had also passed through the officer academy, making him eligible to become a captain,

- and had moved with his family from San Diego to take the job in Hollister and keep alive the

- legacy of his father. He spent 10 years with the department and became part of the CalFire family. His humor was contagious - no

- laughter and heroics.

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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 it to the Memorial page?

Also, 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:
California Memorial LODDs by Wall Order (84 K pdf) -- see page 24

Contributors to this article: SoCal CalFire; FPO, 7/6/2010; 2881; George Haines, Unit Chief (retired), CAL FIRE - BEU; Mellie; RJM
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