



# LAKELAND FIRE DEPARTMENT

**Media Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **National Award for Lakeland Firefighter**

Lakeland, FL – The Lakeland Fire Department (LFD) is proud to announce that one of its long serving firefighters, Lieutenant Matt Allan Brown, will be recognized on August 31, 2016 in Cincinnati, Ohio as The American Legion's National Firefighter of the Year. This distinguished award will be presented at The American Legion's 98<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention held at Cincinnati's Duke Energy Convention Center.

The award is highly prestigious and is only given to one firefighter in the nation per year. The American Legion explains that "The award recognizes those firefighters who have selflessly distinguished themselves over and above their normal duties predominantly through service activities, professional achievements, and heroic acts".

Lieutenant Brown was selected because of his high level of involvement and service in the Lakeland community outside of his duties as a firefighter, his dedication in service while at the department, and for several heroic actions while off duty. Matt serves the department as a Lieutenant as well as the department's Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team coordinator and SWAT Paramedic team coordinator. He is also highly involved in the community through his work as part of the Lakeland Rotary Club and is a graduate of Leadership Lakeland, Class XXXIII.

One of the heroic incidents that led to this award was when Lieutenant Brown stepped in to provide medical aid while off duty in an incident which involved an officer being shot by a suspect while in pursuit. The second event took place in a local supermarket parking lot, where an elderly patient had a medical episode in a moving vehicle that proceeded to crash into parked vehicles. Lieutenant Brown, once again while off duty, sprang into action to assist the patient and contain the incident.

These heroic actions led to local and state level awards in 2015 for Lieutenant Brown prior to the national award he will accept August 31.

For interview requests and more information please contact Janel Vasallo.

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Gary Ballard, Fire Chief

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