



United States Army Criminal Investigation Command

Media contact: CID Public Affairs Office
703-806-0372
By Jeffrey Castro

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Army Special Agent receives Soldier's Medal for saving family from fire

FORT BELVOIR, VA February 4, 2008 - Kicking in the front door of someone's house isn't the best way to make an entrance, however for one lucky family it was just another example of how a CID Special Agent is willing to go above and beyond CID's motto, "do what has to be done."

Special Agent Thomas Broadbent, of CID's Protective Services Battalion, was recently awarded the Soldier's Medal for saving the lives of eight people, when he pulled them from their burning house.

"I just did what I thought was the right thing to do," said Broadbent, 36, from Los Angeles. "It's nice to be recognized, but I didn't do anything anyone else wouldn't have done. There were no emergency vehicles there and I knew there were people inside and I had to get them out."

In the early morning hours of March 9, 2007, Broadbent was off post and on his way back to the Fort Hood CID Office after working a rape investigation. While driving, he noticed flames shooting out from behind a building off the side of the highway. As he got closer, he realized that a house was on fire. There were no emergency vehicles in the area so he immediately called 911. Getting out of his vehicle, he saw multiple cars in the driveway, so he knew someone had to be inside. He ran to the front of the house, banged on the door and tried to rouse the residents. With the fire creeping up the side of the house and still no answer at the front door, he knew he only had a few minutes before the whole house would be engulfed in flames, so he made the decision to go in.

With two or three good kicks the door swung open and a thick wall of smoke hit him in the face, as it cleared he could see the kitchen at the back of the house completely engulfed in flames. Undeterred, he continued inside. He felt his way from room to room through the house, searching for anyone inside, yelling for everyone to get up and get out. Suddenly, a boy, maybe 9-10 years old comes out from one of the bedrooms, Broadbent tells him to run outside. He keeps searching and yelling, then finds two sleeping adults, unaware of the disaster around them, he tells them that the house is on fire and leads them through the smoke and gets them outside. Besides the confusion of the smoke and flames, the family didn't speak English, which added to the already frightening and confusing situation.

From the time he entered the house until all eight family members were safely outside took less than three minutes.

Once outside, Broadbent scanned them for injuries and made sure all were accounted for. As they stood outside, emergency personnel arrived to douse the flames. Broadbent explained what happened to the authorities and without any fanfare, he slipped back into his car and drove off to continue with his rape investigation.

Reflecting on his actions during the fire, Broadbent said he only had one thought.

"I have to get these people out of this fire," he said. "I have to get them out now."

Special Agent Kyle Wells, who was the Assistant Special Agent-in-Charge of the Fort Hood Office at the time, said Broadbent's actions were typical of his coworker.

"His actions didn't surprise me," said Wells. "His previous experience as an infantryman was so amazing that this seems par for the course for Tom ... he is one of the best Soldiers I have served with in my 20 years and one of the nicest, most mellow guys I have ever met."

Brigadier General Rodney Johnson, Provost Marshal General of the Army and CID Commanding General, called Broadbent's actions heroic and the awarding of this rarely awarded medal, well-deserved.

"Only 41 Soldier's Medals were awarded in 2007," said BG Johnson. "So it's a rare opportunity ... when you read the citation and justification you can tell why."

"I personally thank you for being who you are and for living way beyond the motto of CID, I'm glad you are on our team.

According to the local fire marshal's report, the fire started in an attached garage that contained a warming lamp that shorted out. The family had removed the batteries from their smoke detectors because the batteries had run low and the sound of the low battery indicator had become annoying.

The fire marshal's report also clearly states that had it not been for Broadbent's quick, intuitive and complete disregard for his own safety, the family would "have undoubtedly been consumed by fire or smoke inhalation."

The estimated damages to the house and property were more than \$170,000.

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SIDEBAR

1. The Soldier's Medal is awarded to any person of the Armed Forces of the United States or of a friendly foreign nation who, while serving in any capacity with the Army of the United States, including Reserve Component Soldiers not serving in a duty status, as defined in 10 USC 101(d), at the time of the heroic act, who distinguished himself or herself by heroism not involving actual conflict with an enemy. The same degree of heroism is required as that of the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross (The performance of the act of heroism must be evidenced by voluntary action above and beyond the call of duty. The extraordinary achievement must have resulted in an accomplishment so exceptional and outstanding as to clearly set the individual apart from his or her comrades or from other persons in similar circumstances) The performance must have involved personal hazard or danger and the voluntary risk of life under conditions not involving conflict with an armed enemy. Awards will not be made solely on the basis of having saved a life.

2. The approval authority for the Soldier's Medal is BG Reuben Jones, the Adjutant General. That said, the Certificate is signed by both the Adjutant General and the Secretary of the Army.

3. There were 41 Soldier's Medals approved in 2007.

PHOTOS



BG Rodney Johnson (left), Provost Marshal General of the Army and CID Commanding General, awards Special Agent Thomas Broadbent of the U.S. Army Protective Services Battalion, the Soldier's Medal during a ceremony February 1, 2008, at the Wood Theater on Fort Belvoir. Photo by Jeffrey Castro.



BG Rodney Johnson (left), Provost Marshal General of the Army and CID Commanding General, congratulates Special Agent Thomas Broadbent of the U.S. Army Protective Services Battalion, after awarding him the Soldier's Medal during a ceremony February 1, 2008, at the Wood Theater on Fort Belvoir. Photo by Jeffrey Castro.