

# Life-saving award honors heroes at Hanford

At a time when homespun heroism is defining the American spirit, Hanford workers don't have far to look for inspiration. Hanford employees have saved lives at work and at play, at home and on the roads.

These Hanford heroes receive recognition for their life-saving acts through the Presidents' Life Saving Award from the Fluor Hanford Presidents' Zero Accident Council, known as PZAC.

The FH PZAC includes the presidents of Fluor Hanford and the Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council, the vice presidents of all FH projects, bargaining-unit leaders and the chairs of all the project Employee Zero Accident Councils. Also in attendance at monthly meetings are representatives of Hanford's two Department of Energy offices, other site prime contractors and other organized labor councils.

The PZAC Life Saving Award is designed to recognize and honor employees whose life-saving actions exemplify the true meaning of caring and courage. Nominations are presented to the PZAC for a vote, and awards are presented at a later PZAC meeting.

"We at Fluor Hanford are proud of the heroism demonstrated by our employees," said Becky Austin, Fluor Hanford vice president of Environment, Safety and Health. "It is through their acts of bravery and intervention that we truly demonstrate our value for safety. Since Sept. 11, it is more important than ever for us to look out for one another and offer a hand to those in need. Our employees continue to demonstrate the value of safety and protection of life through these selfless acts of kindness."

Here are the stories of eight Hanford heroes honored with this special award since the new century dawned.

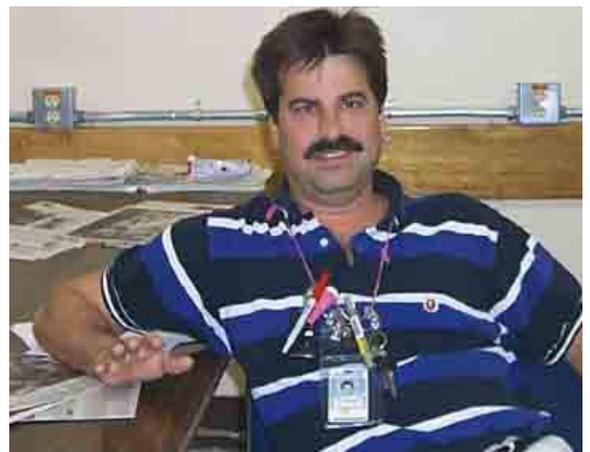
*May 18, 2000:*

## Life saved in the lunchroom

It was lunchtime on a late spring day in building 105-KE, a facility at the northwest part of the Hanford Site, that is most distant from town. An employee began to choke. Food had become lodged in his throat. He couldn't breathe. Two nearby co-workers, Steven Myers and Edward Champagne, noticed the difficulty, suspected its cause and administered the Heimlich maneuver. The maneuver successfully dislodged the food and enabled the individual to breathe again.

Myers and Champagne were credited with saving a life by applying their knowledge and training in a potentially lethal situation. They were honored with the Presidents' Life Saving Award at the July 2000 PZAC meeting. Both are radiological control technicians in the Spent Nuclear Fuels Project Radiological Controls organization.

Mike Ferry, who nominated the pair for the award, is the HAMTC safety representative for the Spent Nuclear Fuel Project.



Champagne

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## Life-saving award honors heroes at Hanford, cont.

*Jan. 2, 2001:*

### Breathing again after seven tries

A pretzel became lodged in an employee's windpipe one afternoon at the Solid Waste Treatment Project. He couldn't breathe. Ben Hovley was in the vicinity and noticed. He immediately began the Heimlich maneuver. It took seven tries before the obstruction was expelled, allowing the victim to draw breath after two minutes without air. He was taken to the first aid facility, evaluated and transported to the hospital emergency room.

Ben Hovley received the Presidents' Life Saving Award during the February 2001 PZAC meeting. Hovley, of Fluor Hanford, works for Treatment Operations on the Waste Management Project. His nominator was Bobby Baker, Solid Waste Treatment safety representative, and his manager is Scott Elliott, the Facility Operations manager.

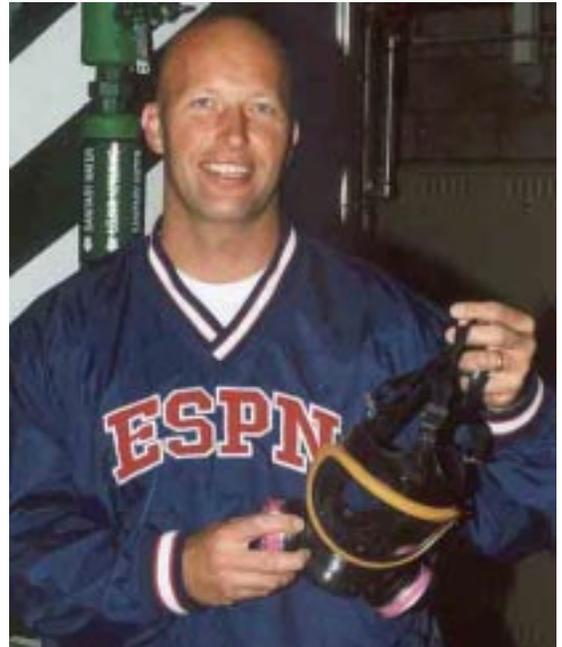
"I knew my co-worker was in big trouble and I had to help," Hovley said. "I was fortunate enough to have had the first aid training supplied on site."

Was he concerned he might not remember the details of the training? "I was worried," Hovley responded, "but adrenaline takes over when you see a co-worker in dire straits. I was getting worried that I was doing the Heimlich maneuver wrong. After four or five thrusts, he looked back and tried to tell me it wasn't working, so I just tried harder and focused on doing it right. I was very relieved when the pretzel came out."

The rest of the day, Hovley described himself as "a mess," worried he'd damaged his friend's ribs or internal organs.

An experience several years ago influenced Hovley. He was at a 10-kilometer "fun run" when an elderly man suffered a heart attack. While others assisted, Hovley found himself frozen up. "I felt terrible about how I responded and prayed that if the situation ever happened again, I would be up to the task," he recalled.

Life is back to normal. Hovley and the choking victim see each other at work every day. They play basketball together at lunch, as always, and Hovley said the event didn't change his life much. His family seemed proud of his action. "I'm just thankful I was able to help," he said.



Hovley

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## Life-saving award honors heroes at Hanford, cont.

*Feb. 16, 2001:*

### **First aid training applied at Chinese dance troupe wreck**

Rod Powell and his wife were traveling an icy Highway 395 when they came upon a van overturned in the median. They stopped to see what assistance they could provide. The situation was complicated by a language barrier. The victims were members of a Chinese dance troupe and could not speak English.

One young woman was screaming because her leg was crushed under the van roof. A group of bystanders lifted the van enough to get her out. Rod kept her warm by placing jackets and blankets around her. He then asked another bystander to stay with her so he could render aid to others.

Calling on the first aid training he received at Hanford, Rod proceeded to check other victims. Someone offered to act as an interpreter, enabling Powell to encourage the injured to stay as still as possible. He checked for internal bleeding and tried to protect the victims from shock. He attempted to warm those who were able to move and locate them out of the way of passing traffic.

Injuries ranged from minor to fatal at this accident scene. Victims were at risk from shock, cold, wind and highway traffic. Many stopped to assist, but Powell had the advantage of on-the-job first aid training received less than six months earlier. It is estimated that more injuries and deaths would have resulted without his life-saving actions.

Rod Powell received a standing ovation at the May 3 PZAC meeting during the Hanford Health and Safety Expo. In accepting the award, Powell credited his Hanford first aid class and advocated first aid training for all Hanford employees.

Powell now works for CH2M HILL Hanford Group, but the event happened while he worked for Analytical Services in the Radiological Control department. Powell was nominated by his then-manager Brad Brannan and by Tom Brown, Facility Operations manager.

"It is a moral duty for us to come to the aid of our fellow human beings," Brannan wrote on the nomination form. "Rod had the training to do what he did, and he used that training to help when and where needed."

Powell said he is self-conscious about all of the attention. He said the reason he told his supervisor about it in the first place was to make a point about first aid training.

"I was not supposed to get first aid training," Powell said. "It had been decided that in order to cut costs, the facility I worked at wasn't going to give first aid training to all employees. I was scheduled by pure accident. It is because of *this* accident that I was able to aid in the auto accident."

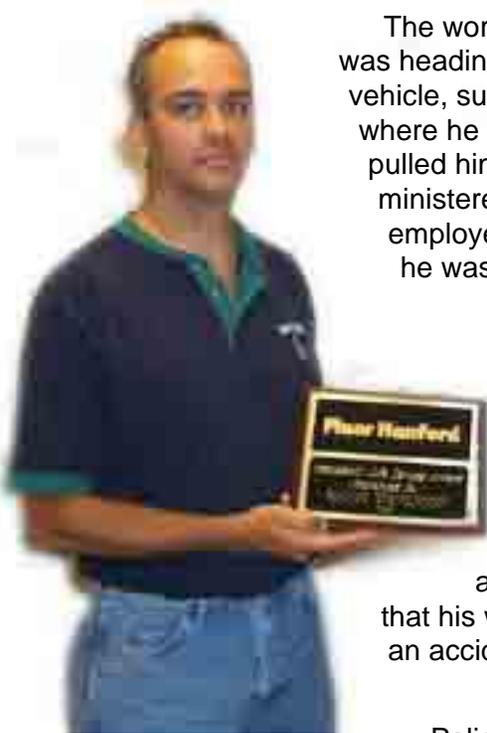
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## Life-saving award honors heroes at Hanford, cont.

*March 5, 2001:*

### Hanford patrolman helps employee on highway

Hanford Patrolman Randy Stevenson received the Presidents' Life Saving Award June 28 for taking charge when another Hanford employee experienced a medical emergency on the road.



Stevenson

The workday was over and a Nuclear Material Stabilization Project employee was heading home to Yakima. He pulled off the highway, feeling ill. He got out of his vehicle, suffered a minor seizure and lost consciousness, falling onto the road, where he was in danger of being run over. Several farm workers stopped and pulled him off the asphalt as Stevenson happened onto the scene. Stevenson administered first aid and coordinated the efforts of others who stopped to help. The employee regained consciousness and was taken to a Yakima hospital, where he was treated.

“There can be no higher call than to aid a fellow employee in need,” said Rich Redekopp, the man’s manager and Stevenson’s award nominator. “I am sure my employee appreciated all the help everyone provided — especially that provided by Randy.”

Stevenson said he’s always been the type of person who will stop and render aid. He encourages people to be trained in first aid and noted that his wife and friends know when they travel with him that if they come upon an accident scene, he will stop to render aid.

Police work provides opportunities to assist at accidents and in first aid situations, so this event hasn’t changed his life. He said he got his “wake-up call” at an accident involving a badly injured woman who lost a leg as a result of her injuries. “I figure it can’t get any worse than that,” he said.

In this case, Stevenson said he noticed people dragging what he assumed to be a deer carcass off the road. “If there are any heroes, it was the farm workers who got him off of the highway,” Stevenson said.

The laborers appeared frightened and soon left the scene, but other people stopped, including several homeward-bound Hanford workers. Stevenson organized them to make 911 calls, find blankets and perform other tasks. He noticed the passersby exhibited a sense of relief in having someone willing to take charge. The victim also seemed better able to relax after personally recognizing Stevenson.

“I suppose the bottom line is, you hope if something ever happened to you, someone would stop and help,” Stevenson said. “It’s the idea that what goes around comes around.”

*Heroes continued on page 15.*

## Life-saving award honors heroes at Hanford, cont.

*March 31, 2001:*

### **Stranded skiers survive night on mountain**

Scouting advisor Dave Sandoz, another advisor and four Tri-City teens were instrumental in the rescue of two skiers stranded on Mount St. Helens after one fell, breaking a leg. The Tri-City group is from Venture Crew 190, an extension of the Boy Scouts of America. Sandoz is a Fluor Hanford employee on the River Corridor Project's 324 Building deactivation.

The group came upon the skiers about 2:30 p.m. on a blustery day. Sandoz immediately used a cellular phone to reach the 911 operator. The rugged terrain required several attempts from various locations before he made the contact necessary to activate rescue teams.

The Venture Crew 190 team prepared the stranded skiers to endure a cold and stormy wait for the rescue crew. For protection from the biting wind, they built a snow wall. Their sitting pads were used to insulate the injured skier from the freezing snow floor. They wrapped him in an emergency blanket. They boiled water and prepared noodles to sustain and internally warm the two skiers.

By 7 p.m., the skiers were stabilized and the Venture Crew 190 party headed back down the mountain, marking the trail as they went, to direct rescuers. They reached their base camp about 10:30 p.m. The following morning, the injured skier was taken off the mountain by sled and transported to Southwestern Medical Center in Vancouver, where he was treated and kept overnight for observation. It is estimated that the skiers might not have survived the night without the Venture Crew 190 emergency response efforts.

Mal Wright, the project director for the 324 Building deactivation, made the nomination. Sandoz, the other advisor and the four teens were guests of the PZAC June 28 and received their awards.



**Sandoz**

*Heroes continued on page 16.*

## Life-saving award honors heroes at Hanford, cont.

*Aug. 20, 2001:*

### Patrolman assists stranger in need

It was nearly 10 p.m. on a late summer night when Hanford Patrolman Jim Brittain noticed someone lying in the gutter of a dimly lit area of Terminal Drive. Brittain called for medical assistance while rendering aid to the unconscious victim. Brittain ensured that no further injury or harm came to the individual, who could have easily been run over by a car. When the emergency medical technicians arrived, Brittain assisted in stabilizing the victim for transport to the hospital. He is credited with taking immediate and appropriate action in accordance with his Hanford Patrol medical emergency response training.



Brittain

Brittain is familiar to many Hanford workers as one of the patrolmen often on duty at the security barricades. He displayed a modesty common among rescuers by having no additional comments about the incident.

His manager and award nominator Bill Warwick of Day & Zimmermann Protection Technology Hanford, said, "Jim Brittain's display of professionalism is a credit to the Hanford Patrol. Although he wouldn't say it, Jim's actions during this incident do not surprise me. In the almost 20 years I've known him, Jim has always upheld Patrol's tradition of providing a professional security service to the Hanford Site, and in this case the surrounding community."

Brittain's award was presented during the Oct. 18 PZAC meeting.

*Sept. 30, 2001:*

### Patrolman saves fellow officer

The most recent life-saving award nomination is for actions by Hanford Patrolman Kevin Paxton. He was nominated by his manager Monty Giulio, and the nomination was approved at the October PZAC meeting. The award will be presented soon.

A patrolman at the Wye Barricade began choking on food that early autumn afternoon. Fellow Patrolman Paxton administered the Heimlich maneuver, clearing the airway. The choking victim was transported by a manager to the 400 Area Hanford Fire Station for a medical check. He was able to return to work in good health.

Paxton was credited with saving his co-worker's life by taking the correct immediate action.

"Patrolman Paxton's immediate actions are a tribute to the Hanford Patrol life-saving training he has received and the ability to place that training into action without hesitation," said Giulio of Day & Zimmermann Protection Technology Hanford. "His display of professionalism and service are a credit to the Hanford Patrol." ♦

*Heroes continued on page 17.*

## Life-saving award honors heroes at Hanford, cont.

**Want to be prepared to save a life?**

The Red Cross teaches lifesaving knowledge in our area.

## Red Cross offers first aid classes

Individuals who don't receive first aid training as part of their jobs but want to take it on their own can sign up for community classes offered by the American Red Cross. Tri-Cities residents are served by the Benton-Franklin Chapter of the American Red Cross. It regularly offers first aid training at its facility at 7202 W. Deschutes in Kennewick.

According to staff member Scott Behrends, courses include American Red Cross First Aid, American Red Cross Adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation and American Red Cross Infant and Child CPR. Prices are \$35 to \$45 per person, depending on the course work. Training takes eight hours with a lunch break. Special classes can be set up for groups of at least eight. Those who have received the training in the past and want to challenge the course in order to update their certifications can do so in challenge classes.

American Red Cross First Aid provides the knowledge and skills necessary to recognize and provide basic first aid care for injuries and sudden illnesses until advanced medical personnel arrive and take over. This course does not include training for breathing or cardiac emergencies.

American Red Cross Adult CPR covers knowledge and skills needed to recognize and provide basic care for breathing and cardiac emergencies until advanced medical personnel take over. It includes response to assist a choking victim. American Red Cross Infant and Child CPR focuses on breathing and cardiac emergencies in children and infants.

The Benton-Franklin Chapter of the Red Cross is always looking for first aid and CPR instructors, according to Behrends. Becoming an instructor requires completion of the regular class and another two-day course. Certification is maintained by teaching at least one class per year. ♦