

Grand Canyon National Park Employees receive Valor Award

National Park Service employees Mike Flynn and Sean Cox, of Grand Canyon National Park, will travel to Washington DC in September to receive the Interior Department's most distinguished honor, the Valor Award. Flynn and Cox were instrumental in saving a pilot's life after his Bell 407 helicopter crashed on November 12, 2001. Both men were part of a four-person Helitack crew assigned to the Great Gulf Fire on the Daniel Boone National Forest in Kentucky, where the incident occurred.

The crew witnessed the crash of Helicopter N11HX and immediately responded. Flynn and Cox, both Emergency Medical Technicians, assisted the pilot who suffered multiple life-threatening injuries from the impact. They quickly cut the pilot's seatbelt, repositioned him, and established an open airway. Other crewmembers provided safety lookouts and monitored the stability of the aircraft, which was positioned on a steep slope with its skids broken off, liable to roll. Leaking fuel and extremely hot exhaust components also created potential for an explosion. The pilot was safely evacuated from the wreckage and transported to a local hospital where he immediately began recuperating.

These men put themselves at great risk to respond to the accident. They demonstrated acute skills, critical thinking and selfless bravery. The National Park Service and Grand Canyon National Park proudly congratulate Michael Flynn and Sean Cox as they receive the Valor Award for their heroic efforts.