

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA

DEPARTMENT OF FIRE
JOHN H. ALDERSON
CHIEF ENGINEER

217 SOUTH HILL STREET
LOS ANGELES 12
MUTUAL 6161



NORRIS POULSON
MAYOR

POSTHUMOUS AWARD OF MEDAL OF VALOR

JAMES L. CATLOW

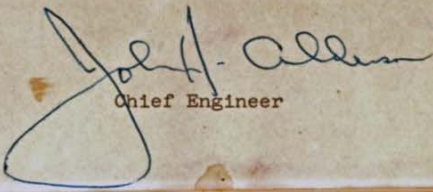
AUTO FIREMAN

Upon the recommendation of a Board of Merit, a Medal of Valor is herewith awarded posthumously for James L. Catlow, Auto Fireman, who gave his life in the performance of his duty.

On November 6, 1955, at about 2:00 p.m., Auto Fireman Catlow, Engine 39, "B" Platoon, responded with his company to Underhill and Verdugo Fire Road in an attempt to stop the developing brush fire, later described as the La Tuna Canyon fire. Personnel of Engine 39 was deployed with hand lines along a ridge at the face of the fire. Wind, draft and brush conditions indicated that a stop was likely.

Eye witnesses describe the advance of the fire during the next few minutes as a holocaust of flame driven by a tremendous up-draft from the canyon below. Retreat was impossible. The safety of all personnel became dependent upon the water supply furnished by the apparatus of Engine 39. Auto Fireman Catlow, without hesitation and with full realization of his peril, voluntarily proceeded to the controls of his apparatus and insured the continuance of operations and the safety of all personnel. Though repeatedly enveloped in flame and smoke, he held his post until the crisis passed.

James L. Catlow succumbed to the effects of third degree burns on November 12, 1955. His performance was a heroic act far beyond the requirements of duty in the highest tradition of the service and is thus commemorated.


Chief Engineer