



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo presents Liberty Medals to Rome Police officers, firefighter

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ROME – New York State Senate Deputy Minority Leader Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, today presented New York State Senate Liberty Medals to Rome Police Officers

Matthew Hall and Ryan Crever and Rome Firefighter Joseph Hojnacki in recognition of their efforts in rescuing an individual from a burning building in Rome.

The Liberty Medal is one of the highest civilian honors a New Yorker can receive. The award is given to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts and achievements on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers.

On Thursday, Feb. 28, Crever and Hall were beginning their early morning shift at the Rome police station when they noticed a city fire truck pull up to Peterson's Exotic Pets next door after a second-floor resident of the building had called 911 to report a fire in the building shortly after 4 a.m.

The two officers went outside, and, along with Hojnacki, ran to the pet shop and quickly rushed upstairs to help a man who was trapped in an apartment. Crever, Hall and Hojnacki entered the smoky apartment and quickly ascertained the fire was burning on the first floor. They then found the wheelchair-bound resident, who informed them that his dog also was in the apartment.

Hojnacki carried the dog to Crever, who rushed the pet outside to safety. Hojnacki and Hall then helped the victim out of his wheelchair and helped him slide down very steep and slippery stairs to safety. Hojnacki then crawled through the thick, black smoke to retrieve the man's bag of medication.

Once they were at the bottom of the stairs, the man was taken to the police station to stay warm and was then taken by ambulance to receive medical attention.

Following the rescue, the three first responders went right back to work. Hojnacki joined his fellow firefighters in battling the hours-long blaze, while Crever and Hall directed traffic away from the scene of the fire.

"First responders in my district proudly serve their communities and help others without a second thought," Deputy Minority Leader Griffo said. "Officers Crever and Hall and Firefighter Hojnacki, without hesitation, immediately jumped into action and helped to rescue an individual and his dog. It is my honor to present each of them with a Liberty Medal in recognition of their remarkable actions."

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