



## Johnson County Fire Protection District

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### NEWS RELEASE – Sunday, May 3, 2026

#### Fallen JCFPD Captain Vernon Collett Remembered at National Memorial in Maryland

WARRENSBURG, MO – Captain Vernon Collett of the Johnson County Fire Protection District was honored this weekend during the 45th National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend, held May 2-3, 2026, in Emmitsburg, Maryland, where his name was formally added to the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial.

The memorial, located on the campus of the National Emergency Training Center, is the nation's official tribute to firefighters who have died in the line of duty. This year, 204 firefighters from across the country were honored during the annual weekend of remembrance hosted by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

Battalion Chief Larry Eggen attended the ceremonies in Emmitsburg on behalf of the District and the Collett family.

"The loss of these firefighters is felt most deeply by the families and loved ones left behind. They were parents, partners, colleagues and friends who will forever be remembered for their bravery and their devotion to duty," said National Fallen Firefighters Foundation CEO Victor Stagnaro in the Foundation's official release.

Captain Collett died in the line of duty on March 8, 2025, while battling a natural cover fire. He served the Johnson County Fire Protection District for 29 years and was assigned to the District's Station 6 near Valley City, where he served as Captain since 2011. He was the first line of duty death in the District's history.

"Captain Collett's name being added to the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial is a solemn and permanent recognition of his service and sacrifice," said Fire Chief Larry Jennings. "He was devoted to protecting this community, and his legacy will continue to be felt in every corner of this District."

The National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend included a candlelight service on Saturday evening and a memorial service on Sunday morning, bringing together families, fire service members, and supporters from across the nation to honor the fallen.

Captain Collett's name now joins hundreds of others etched into the National Memorial as part of a permanent record of firefighters who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to others.

Full videos of the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend ceremonies are available at: <https://weekend.firehero.org/events/memorial-weekend/memorial-weekend-coverage/>.

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