

# IUPAT Member is Hero in Austin Plane Crash

**O**n the morning of February 18, 2010, Robin De Haven, an IUPAT glazier and second-year apprentice in Local Union 1778/District Council 88 (Texas), was on his way to a job in Austin when events far beyond his control thrust him into the national spotlight.

Austin resident Andrew Joseph Stack III, enraged by his troubles with the IRS, piloted his private plane directly into a nearby office building that housed a local office of the tax agency. From the highway, De Haven saw the plane make its suicidal descent and hit the building. He instantly went into action.

De Haven pulled off the highway and made his way to the burning building. Bystanders were already gathered in the parking lot when he arrived and called him over to help them evacuate a group of office workers trapped by smoke on the second floor of the building. He removed the ladder from his truck, braced it against a secure second-floor ledge, and carefully made his way up to help bring the stranded employees down from the smoke-filled floor. Their descent was delayed a bit as De Haven and one of the employees had to smash out an adjacent window and reset the ladder on more secure ground for the climb down. De Haven and all six employees from that area made it down to the ground safely.

De Haven served six years with two tours in Iraq, and credits his time in the Army for being able to work so well under dangerous conditions.

By the time he helped the six employees down from the building, rescue workers were on the scene. De Haven stowed his ladder on the truck and set out for his job site. "I called my boss and told him I was going to be late getting to the job," recalled De Haven. "By then, they had heard about what happened and told me to come back to the shop. I had the rest of the day off." Since then, De

Haven has been talking to members of local and national media almost non-stop.

"Robin's actions were nothing short of heroic and we're honored to have him in our ranks," said IUPAT General President James Williams. "The IUPAT was fortunate to bring him aboard through the Helmets to Hardhats program. Robin's courage and character are a shining inspiration in these hard times. I hope his actions remind us all of what is most dear in our lives, and how important it is to take care of each other. Robin De Haven is a prime example of what a good union man is made of."

"Robin's an exceptional apprentice and union member," said Jeff Dobernecki, business manager/secretary-treasurer of District Council 88. "He's always showing initiative and it's no surprise he did what did to help those people. We're proud of him here in DC 88!"

The city of Austin is proud of him, as well. On February 25, the mayor and city leaders held a ceremony to honor De Haven and the other first responders to the crash. He received three "Challenge Coins" from the Austin police, fire and EMS departments.

Join the rest of the International in thanking Robin for his service to the union and for inspiring us with his heroic rescue.



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**Jeff Dobernecki**  
**District Council 88**  
**Business Manager/ Secretary-Treasurer**