



HIGGINS & LANGLEY MEMORIAL AND EDUCATION FUND

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2008 NATIONAL HIGGINS & LANGLEY MEMORIAL AWARDS IN SWIFTWATER RESCUE ANNOUNCED

LOS ANGELES - MAY 9, 2008 -- The Higgins & Langley Memorial and Education Fund Nominations Committee has announced the recipients of the 2008 Higgins & Langley Memorial Awards in Swiftwater Rescue, recognizing top swiftwater rescuers around the globe. The awards will be presented on Friday, May 30, 2008, at 6:30 p.m., at the annual National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR) conference at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Awardees include:

**HIGGINS & LANGLEY MEMORIAL AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT
IN THE FIELD OF SWIFTWATER RESCUE:**
Keeseville Volunteer Fire Department, New York

Fire Chief Leonard Martin and the Keeseville Volunteer Fire Department (KVFD) are receiving the 2008 Higgins & Langley Memorial Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Swiftwater Rescue in recognition of their visionary determination to develop a pioneering swiftwater rescue program to serve their rural community in upstate New York, which features two fast moving rivers, the AuSable Chasm, and Lake Champlain.

According to Thomas Dragoon, whose 24-year old son, Mark, lost his life in the AuSable River in Keeseville on June 5, 2006, Chief Martin and the KVFD Swiftwater Rescue Team had been working since 2004 to build their swiftwater rescue program. Hampered by a lack of funding and mandates to provide this critical technical rescue capability, their single rescue boat was transported to emergencies on a

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snowmobile trailer and the agency only owned four sets of swiftwater rescue gear. When tragedy struck the Dragoon family, KVFD mobilized 45 federal, state, and local agencies and 310 volunteers over an intense, 10-day search to recover Mark's physical remains.

"Their never-wavering devotion to duty and honor speaks volumes of the volunteer spirit that is America," Dragoon says of Martin and his team of 45 rescuers, 10 of whom are trained to the technician level in swiftwater rescue and 20 of whom have received swiftwater rescue awareness level training. In gratitude, Dragoon nominated KVFD for the "Firedog across America Award" in 2006, raising more than \$60,000 to build the agency's swiftwater rescue program.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD:

**Fire Captain Lawrence Roy Collins, Los Angeles County Fire Department
Los Angeles, California**

In recognition of the groundbreaking contributions that have been made by Fire Captain Lawrence Roy Collins to the field of swiftwater and flood rescue throughout his 28-year career with the Los Angeles County Fire Department. As a visionary leader, rescue technician, trainer, and author, Captain Collins helped redefine the world fire service's mission to include swiftwater and flood rescue response capability.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AWARDS:

**Chief Fire Officers Association, Management of Major Flood Event Research Project
Chief Fire Officer Paul Hayden, Team Leader, United Kingdom**

In recognition of the pioneering and visionary Chief Fire Officers Association Major Flood Event Research Project, under the leadership of Chief Fire Officer Paul Hayden, resulting in the development of a comprehensive flood and swiftwater rescue emergency response plan for the United Kingdom.

**San Diego Regional Aquatic Lifesaving Emergency Taskforce (SDR ALERT)
San Diego, CA**

SDR ALERT has developed a model program for the regional coordination of and response to aquatic emergencies in San Diego County, California, including swiftwater and flood rescue operations. Member agency criteria includes standardized training, operational guidelines and response plans, pre-identified aquatic first responders, solutions for interoperability communications and agency response agreements, intensive training exercises, and promotion of public education and public awareness.

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INCIDENT AWARDS:

Sergeant Kathy Curtice

Fresno County Sheriff's Office, California

In honor of the heroic rescue of two unconscious and unresponsive victims, a mother and her six-year-old daughter, who were being swept downstream in the powerful, cold current of the Kings River in Fresno County, California, on June, 16, 2007. Exceptional skill and experience in swiftwater rescue allowed Sergeant Curtice to take a measured risk to perform these rescues in treacherous conditions, with only the aid of bystanders.

United States Coast Guard Station Tillamook Bay

Garibaldi, Oregon

In honor of the rescue of 47 citizens and a dozen domestic animals from extremely treacherous, rising floodwaters in the communities of Tillamook, Bay City, and Garibaldi, Oregon, by the United States Coast Guard, Station Tillamook Bay, on November 6-7, 2006. Crew members include: Boatswains Mate 1st Class Thomas P. Molloy, Boatswains Mate 1st Class Corbin J. Ross, Boatswains Mate 1st Class Brian C. Trotter, Electricians Mate 1st Class Marcus L. Benally, Machinery Technician 1st Class Joe W. Majewski, Boatswains Mate 2nd Class Jon A. Beam, Boatswain Mate 2nd Class Conor A. Bennett, Machinery Technician 2nd Class Timothy P. Hurd and Seaman Catherine M. Hogan.

United States Coast Guard Air Station Humboldt Bay

McKinleyville, CA

In honor of the April 17, 2007, rescue by the crew of United States Coast Guard HH-65C Helicopter 6583, Group/Air Station Humboldt Bay, California, of an elderly gentleman whose vehicle plunged off of a 30-foot embankment and was lodged in the midst of treacherous rapids in the Smith River. Crew members include: Lieutenant Commander Daniel D. Unruh, Lieutenant Stephen T. Baxter, Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class Mark Samaniego and Aviation Survival Technician 2nd Class Shawn M. Lesko.

SPECIAL COMMENDATION AWARDS:

United States Border Patrol, El Paso Sector

Swift Water Rescue Team

In honor of an exemplary swiftwater rescue team that is responsible for the training of U.S. Border Patrol Agents assigned to the El Paso Sector, resulting in the documented rescues in 2007-08 of

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182 people from the Rio Grande River, irrigation canals and flash floods in the El Paso, Texas, and Southern New Mexico area. Since its inception in 1997, in an effort to promote safety and reduce the death toll in the waterways throughout the region, team members have provided swiftwater rescue training to other local, state, and federal agencies, as well as emergency service agencies in Cd. Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. Team members include: Frederick W. Webb, Team Commander, Instructor; Paul Klauss, Instructor; Isidro Trevino, Instructor; Albert Herrera, Instructor; Nicholas J. Veliz, Instructor; Gustavo Renteria, Tech I; Jose Padilla, Tech I; Julio Mendez, Tech I, and William Jackson, Tech I.

Driver\Engineer Edward W. Miller
Colorado Springs Fire Department

In recognition of D/E Miller's exceptional leadership in swiftwater rescue and recovery operations. As an instructor and mentor, Edward Miller has overseen the training of more than 700 swiftwater rescue technicians and 337 dive-recovery specialists. He is also credited for his direct involvement for saving the lives of ten people in swift water conditions.

The Higgins & Langley Memorial Awards are sponsored by CFS Press, CMC Rescue, Inc., K38 Water Safety, Liquid Militia, Rescue 3, International, Rescue Source, Rescue 3 Virginia, Rescue ONE Connector Boats, Rig Systems, San Marcos, Texas Fire Rescue, SkyHook Rescue Systems, Inc., and Zodiac Maritime Training Academy. Additional support for the Awards is provided by the family of Adam Bischoff, the Rudi Schulte Family Foundation, Jon Stephen and Karen Langley Stephen, and Shirley A. Rigg, as well as contributions from other generous individuals.

The Higgins & Langley Memorial Awards were established in 1993 by the National Association for Search and Rescue in honor of Earl Higgins, a writer and filmmaker, who lost his life in 1980 while rescuing a child who was swept down the Los Angeles River, and Los Angeles County Firefighter Paramedic Jeffrey Langley, a pioneer in swiftwater rescue who lost his life in helicopter incident in 1993.

The Awards have increased awareness about the need for specialized swiftwater and flood rescue training and preparedness. Today, worldwide training certifications have increased and agencies have been inspired to develop viable water rescue programs to protect the public and rescuers alike.

For more information, visit www.higginsandlangley.org.