

***2012 Higgins & Langley Memorial Awards
in Swiftwater Rescue Announced***

For Immediate Release

For more information: www.higginsandlangley.org
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ASHEVILLE, NC, May 29, 2012—The Higgins & Langley Memorial and Education Fund Awards Committee is proud to announce the 2011 Higgins & Langley Memorial Awards in Swiftwater Rescue, which recognize excellence in the field of flood and swiftwater rescue.

Awards are presented to swiftwater and flood rescue experts in several categories, including the Outstanding Achievement Award, Program Development Award, and Special Commendation Awards.

The awards will be presented on Friday, June 8, 2012, at 7:30 PM, at the annual National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR) conference, Harvey's Lake Tahoe, 18 Highway 50, Lake Tahoe, NV 89449; Phone: 775-588-2411, Toll Free: 800-HARVEYS.

2012 Higgins & Langley Awards

Outstanding Achievement

**Shannon Noel Crofton, Flood Rescue Officer
Sydney Southern Region SES, Australia**

Shannon Crofton has championed flood and swiftwater rescue innovation within the New South Wales State Emergency Services (NSW SES), through research, investigation, networking, training, and sustaining his aquatic rescue skill levels to international standards. He has drawn upon his expertise to ensure that NSW SES practitioners in the field of flood and swiftwater rescue are provided with the world's best practice methods to assist their communities during major flooding emergencies, stressing the forward deployment of swiftwater rescue assets, flood management operations, and flood and swiftwater boat and helicopter training for swiftwater rescues. Shannon Crofton is the first Australian – and only the third individual since the inception of the awards in 1994 – to receive the Higgins & Langley Outstanding Achievement Award in Swiftwater Rescue.

Program Development Awards

**New Jersey Task Force 1 Urban Search & Rescue Team
Swiftwater/Flood Component
Lakehurst, NJ**

NJ-TF1 Task Force Leader Jim Riley
NJ State Police Major Daniel Mitten

In 1999, during Hurricane Floyd, the State of New Jersey recognized the need to develop a statewide flood and swiftwater response capability to support local communities in times of extreme flood emergencies. Under the leadership of NJ-TF1 Task Force Leader Jim Riley and NJ State Police Major Daniel Mitten, NJ-TF1 has steadily built its swiftwater/flood response program according to nationally accepted standards, training more than 100 members in swiftwater rescue and boat operations, including 24 volunteer instructors. NJ-TF1 swiftwater and flood rescue assets have been deployed throughout the intervening years to dozens of floods statewide, as well

as major hurricanes, including Katrina, Gustav, Hannah and Hurricane Irene, safely evacuating and rescuing hundreds of citizens and animals, often in extreme conditions, requiring technical swiftwater rescue capability.

Oriskany Fire Department
Technical Team Emergency Rescue Swimmers (O.T.T.E.R.S.)
Oriskany, NY
Fire Chief Jeffrey Burkhart
Assistant Fire Chief Brett Cassevah

Since 2009, under the leadership of Fire Chief Jeffrey Burkhart and Assistant Fire Chief Brett Cassevah, the Oriskany Fire Department Technical Team Emergency Rescue Swimmers (O.T.T.E.R.S.) have been working tirelessly to build their swiftwater and flood rescue capability, training, improving their equipment cache, and organizing a regional flood response plan with other emergency service agencies. They now meet the standards for a FEMA Type III Swiftwater Team. In 2011, during Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, the team was activated to assist in numerous areas throughout New York State, where they helped rescue more than 80 people, many in extreme conditions requiring technical swiftwater rescue capability.

Special Commendation Awards

Firefighter Joshpae Brian White
CAL FIRE/Butte County Fire Rescue
Oroville, CA

In honor of the June 7, 2011 rescue of a boy who was floating face down in Class IV rapids, following an auto accident that sent the boy, his father and older brother into the Feather River. Although all three victims perished, FF White's quick actions and skill in swiftwater rescue gave the boy he rescued a fighting chance to survive, and prevented his body from being lost – possibly forever – somewhere downstream.

Los Angeles Department of Animal Services
Small Animal Rescue Team (SmART)
Los Angeles, CA

Animal Control Officer Armando J. Navarrete, SmART Team Leader
Animal Control Officer Annette Ramirez
Animal Control Officer Andrew Redfield
Animal Control Officer Ernesto Poblano
Animal Control Officer Yvette Smith
Animal Control Officer Sean McCarthy
Veterinary Technician Jose Ramon Garcia

The six Animal Control Officers and one Registered Veterinary Technician who serve on the Los Angeles Animal Services Small Animal Rescue Team (SmART) are true trailblazers, with extensive experience and training in rescuing small animals in extreme situations, including floods and swift water. From 2004 until 2009 this dedicated team trained and practiced in their spare time, purchasing their own technical rescue equipment, developing standardized guidelines for small animal rescues, both within the urban environment and natural terrain, and building a model program that communities nationwide can replicate. In 2009 SmART was officially recognized by the Los Angeles Department of Animal Services. Since its inception, SmART has performed 275 rescues, saving the lives of 287 small animals, including swiftwater rescues involving several dogs, cats and an injured Blue Heron.

Saranac Vol. Fire Department Technical Rescue Team

Saranac, NY

Fire Chief Donald Uhler

Shawn Emerson, Operations Officer

In honor of the outstanding swiftwater rescue team training and leadership provided by Fire Chief Donald Uhler and Operations Officer Shawn Emerson, which culminated in the rescue of nearly 40 people and more than 100 animals from dangerous floodwaters during Hurricane Irene, August 2011, and Tropical Storm Lee, September 2011.

Sterling Volunteer Rescue Squad, Water Rescue Team

Sterling VA

Assistant Chief Paul O'Brien

Jonathan Morgan Parr, Water Rescue Team Coordinator

Shannon Murray, EMT, Swiftwater Technician

Dave Fawcett, Firefighter/Medic, Boat Operator

In honor of the rescue of six people from unprecedented flash flooding in Accotink Creek, Fairfax County, VA, on September 9, 2011. Fast flowing floodwater completely submerged vehicles, pushing them and their occupants off the road into the tree line. Because no local swiftwater rescue assets were available, the Sterling Water Rescue Squad traveled a great distance, in the midst congested traffic conditions, washed out roads, and heavy downpours induced by Tropical Storm Lee, to perform a series of dangerous, nighttime rescues in extreme conditions.

Background

The Higgins & Langley Memorial Awards were established in 1993 by the National Association for Search and Rescue Swiftwater Rescue Committee 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 a 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.

The Higgins & Langley Memorial Awards are sponsored by CFS Press, CMC Rescue, Inc., ESPRIT Whitewater, Fire and Rescue Concepts, IRIA, Kokotat, K38 Water Safety, Liquid Militia, Mustang Survival, Ozark Rescue Suppliers, Rescue Canada, Rescue 3 International/Rescue Source, Rescue ONE Connector Boats, Sierra Rescue/Rescue 3 West, Whitewater Rescue Institute, and SkyHook Rescue Systems, Inc. Additional support for the awards is provided by the Rudi Schulte Family Foundation, Jon Stephen and Karen Langley Stephen, and the family of John B. and Shirley A. Rigg, as well as contributions from many generous individuals.