



News Advisory

For Immediate Release

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Winter Rescue Nets State Parks With USLA's Highest Lifeguard Heroism Award

EVENT DATE: November 3, 2005 at 9:00 a.m.

EVENT / LOCATION: United States Lifesaving Association National Meeting
Laguna Cliffs Marriott Resort & Spa, Dana Point, California

DANA POINT – The U.S. Lifesaving Association on Thursday will present its Medal of Valor to California State Parks lifeguard Brit Horn for a Sonoma County rescue.

Horn is a 25-year veteran permanent lifeguard. On January 19 at about 5:19 p.m., he responded to a rescue call of a surfer in distress off Salmon Creek State Beach. Despite the growing darkness, battling dangerous six- to ten-foot storm surf in 53-degree water, Horn was able to paddle out to the surfer and stabilize him until the arrival of a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter. He helped the crew hoist the victim to safety – despite the darkness and rough ocean conditions – then paddled back to shore, navigating by emergency vehicle headlights.

Though Horn is being recognized for his heroic actions last January, most recently he is credited with assisting a shark attack victim off the very same beach on October 19. Horn was surfing on his day-off when he witnessed a 20-year-old Santa Rosa woman being pulled under and bitten by what is presumed to be a great white shark. Horn immediately joined other surfers to surround the woman and help her to shore. He then used a wetsuit hood to bandage the deep lacerations that nearly encircled her thigh. The victim was flown by helicopter to Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital, where surgeons treated her wounds.

California State Parks manages 278 California State Park Units and maintains operations at numerous coastal park units as well as major and minor inland bodies of water including lakes, reservoirs, rivers, ponds and swimming pools:

- **308 miles** of California's ocean coastline
- **625 miles** of reservoir/lake shoreline
- Aquatic recreation (all aspects) accounts for two thirds of all visitor activity, attendance and revenue generated in State Parks.
- Approximately 70 permanent lifeguards through the State Park system
- **California State Lifeguards performed over 10,000 water rescues in calendar year 2004.**

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