



Division Chief Rankin to receive Medal of Honor

Seaside, Ore. – April 6, 2020 – The Oregon Fire Chiefs Association (OFCA) notified Seaside Fire Chief Joey Daniels and Division Chief David Rankin earlier this week that Rankin has been selected to receive a Medal of Honor from the OFCA for his contributions to Oregon Fire Service at a special ceremony later this year.



Division Chief David Rankin

Rankin, a full-time firefighter and the Division Chief of Operations with Seaside Fire & Rescue since October 2012, will be recognized and honored specifically for his heroic water rescue on the afternoon of December 30, 2019. At approximately 4:24 p.m. that day, Seaside Fire was dispatched to a report of a person pulled out into the ocean from the Necanicum Estuary and beach area.

Prepping for a late Christmas dinner with his family due to other work obligations for his wife on Christmas Day, Rankin heard the call from home and dispatched immediately to assist with the rescue. Upon arrival on scene he consulted with the incident commander as they searched the ocean for the victim. Seeing the individual several times in the breaking surf and realizing there wasn't time to wait for the Coast Guard to arrive Rankin donned his wetsuit, PFD and other water gear, armed himself with a rescue can and swam out to the approximate location of the victim - estimated to be approximately 300 yards through rough extremely rough waters from the river current and the tide.

The heavy surf initially made it difficult to locate the victim, but Rankin was able to spot the individual near what was later described as a sandbar. Typically, the situation would have called for Rankin to get the rescue can to the victim so that the victim could be stabilized and simply hold on until the U.S. Coast Guard (already in route to the scene) or a jet ski could aid in the rescue. However, recognizing that the victim was beginning to look hypothermic and likely unable to hold onto the rescue can for much longer, Rankin realized he didn't have much time. He instead instructed the victim to hold onto the rescue can while Rankin swam towards shore, paddling against a heavy rip current and breaking waves. Swimming to the Gearhart side of the estuary (the estuary separates the Cities of Seaside and Gearhart), Gearhart Fire was there to meet Rankin and the victim so that paramedics could transport the victim.

Speaking to Rankin's fitness and ability in the water, he opted to swim back to the Seaside side rather than be transported himself following the successful rescue.

As leader of the special operations teams – which includes water, ropes, trench and confined space rescue – and Seasonal Lifeguard program for Seaside Fire, Rankin holds many certifications and has also served as a helicopter rescue swimmer in the U.S. Navy during his career. Rankin is married with two young boys.

end of release