

# San Diego Lifeguard History Project

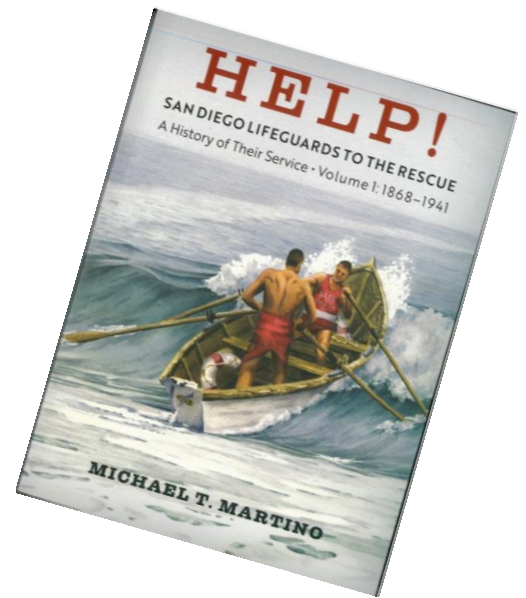
San Diego Lifesaving Association

P.O. Box 99025 San Diego CA 92169

**MEDIA RELEASE**                      May 10, 2018

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## **SAN DIEGO CITY LIFEGUARD HISTORY BOOK RELEASED MAY 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 AS 100 YEAR OCEAN BEACH DROWNING VICTIMS REMEMBERED**



(Ocean Beach) After 10 years of research and writing, the San Diego City Lifeguard History Book Volume 1 (1868-1941) will be released at 5:00 pm on May 23, 2018 at a public ceremony at the Ocean Beach Lifeguard Station, foot of Santa Monica at Abbott Street. The first volumes will be presented to San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer and Councilmember Lorie Zapf who represents Ocean Beach.

The book, ***“HELP! SAN DIEGO LIFEGUARDS TO THE RESCUE”*** was authored by Michael T. Martino who served as a lifeguard and Aquatic Specialist (Chief Lifeguard) of California State Park System. Award winning Sunbelt Publications Inc., based in El Cajon is the book’s publisher.

***“HELP is the most comprehensive history of any lifeguard service in the world and needs two volumes.”*** Martino said. The final Volume 2 of the history (1941-present) will be released in 2019. The book retails for \$19.95.

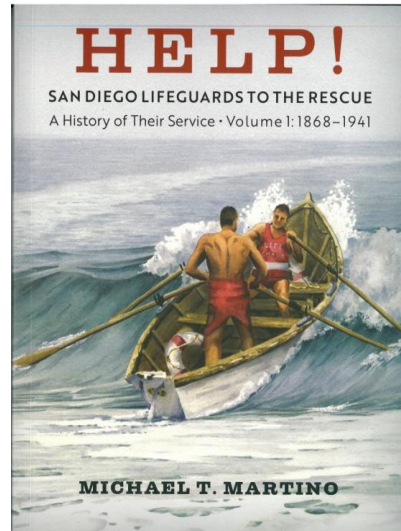
The history project was chaired by former Councilmember Byron Wear who served as a San Diego Lifeguard Lieutenant in the 70’s. Former Lifeguard Capt. Nick Lerma (ret) began the history project which is currently coordinated by Sgt. Rick Strobel. ***“This effort was made possible by hundreds of generous donors who provided over \$40,000 in project seed funds. In addition, over \$55,000 was raised by the committee and community to construct the Ocean Beach Lifeguard Bronze Statue and monument created by Artist Richard Arnold in 2013, which has become a landmark in the Ocean Beach community.”*** said Wear.

The May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 Book Release will memorialize the 13 people who drowned on May 5, 1918 at Ocean Beach including 11 WWI soldiers and sailors from Camp Kearny and Pt Loma due to a mass rip current. 60 people were rescued. The program will feature selected musical tributes, a lifeguard paddle out near the drowning location and historical reflections.

Although City of San Diego hired Lifeguards in 1914, they lacked adequate staff and equipment to prevent the tragedy. The disaster prompted the City Council to expand lifeguard staffing and equipment. The City of San Diego Lifeguard Service has grown to over 100 full time and 200 seasonal lifeguards who rescue nearly 6,000 people annually with a budget of \$20 Million. The San Diego City Lifeguard Service, a division of the Fire Rescue Department is known throughout the world as a leading marine safety agency. In addition to beach lifeguarding, the agency is involved in effecting cliff rescues, swift water rescues, boat rescues and marine firefighting.

***“I am proud to represent some of the best trained, most prepared first responders to protect our coastline. I am confident we’ll continue to keep San Diegan’s and visitors safe. This book captures the importance of ocean lifeguard history.”*** said James Gartland, Interim San Diego City Lifeguard Chief.

# # #



## **PUBLIC CEREMONY**

# **San Diego City Lifeguard History Book Release and Memorial Tribute to the 13 Victims of the 1918 Drowning**

**Wednesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018**

**5:00 pm sharp**

**Ocean Beach Lifeguard Station (foot of Santa Monica at Abbott St)**

**Musical tributes   Lifeguard paddle out   Historical reflections**

After 10 years of research and writing, the San Diego City Lifeguard History Book Vol 1 (1868-1941) will be released at 5:00 pm on May 23, 2018. The public event will memorialize the 13 people who drowned on May 5, 1918 at Ocean Beach including 11 WWI soldiers and sailors from Camp Kearny and Pt Loma due to a mass rip current. 60 people were rescued.

Wonderland Ocean Pub restaurant will host a reception following across the street at 5083 Santa Monica Avenue.

**Suggestion: Arrive early, carpool, Uber, bike or take public transit as parking will be limited.  
(Ocean Beach Farmer's Market Day)**

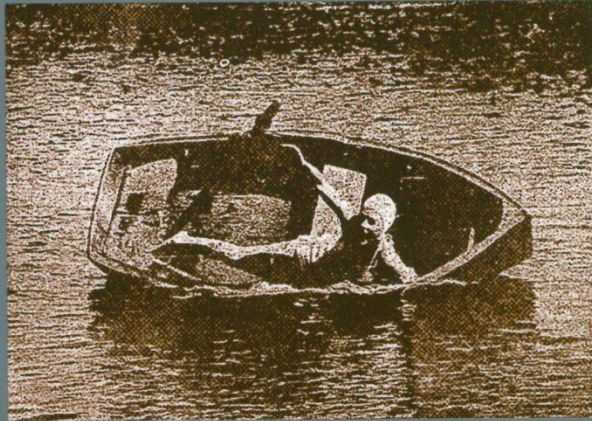
History/San Diego/Sports

\$19.95

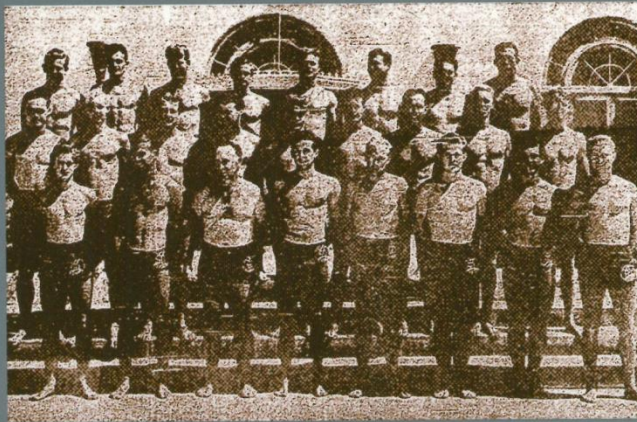
# HELP!

## SAN DIEGO LIFEGUARDS TO THE RESCUE

This compelling, comprehensive, and very readable history of lifeguards along the San Diego Coast follows the evolution and acceptance of the need for public safety and the development of agencies to provide that service. The book chronicles the early pre-lifeguard years where citizens provided the aquatic rescues in bay and ocean. The narrative follows the implemen-



tation of private lifeguards at bathhouses along the coast, and finally the creation of the City's lifeguard service. From the ashes of tragic incidents has grown a dedicated professional service that sees its greatest gift being the ability to save another person's life.



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