

REPORT OF MERITORIOUS ACT

John Rizzo  
Name of Member  
3/21/2007  
Date of Act

8. NAME(S) OF TWO MEMBERS WHO ACUALLY WITNESSED ACT(IF AVAILABLE)

RANK	NAME	UNIT
Lt.	Michael Finer	M-1
F.F.	Timothy Moynihan	M-1
F.F.	John Cashman	M-1

9. NAME(S) OF TWO CIVILIANS WHO ACUALLY WITNESSED ACT(IF AVAILABLE)

NAME	ADDRESS
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10. WAS VICTIM REMOVED FROM: Immediate fire area  Directly above fire

Other area (specify in detail):

Removed from the icy Hudson River waters at night stuck under a pier with only inches of clearance between the water and the underside of the pier. Current was pushing the victim further under the pier at 2 knots.

11. DESCRIPTION OF ACT:

At almost midnight on March 21, 2007 at 23:39 Marine Company One received a teleprinter alarm for a person in the water, Hudson River at West Houston Street, in the Borough of Manhattan. When the members started Marine One's 27' foot Safeboat the officer heard over the NYPD SOD radio on the Safeboat, that it was confirmed a man jump into the river while evading police. This validated that a person was in the water and the officer of Marine One also knew beside the danger of a water rescue, there now was added danger of a possible dangerous person having to be removed from the water.

Marine Company One operates two vessels, a 130-foot fireboat the John D McKean and a rapid response Safeboat for water rescues. The normal crew for the small rapid response boat is the officer and two firefighters, on this night we had a much need third firefighter for this type of rescue. The crew proceeded south on the river to the box location, the pilot of the boat was F.F. John Cashman monitoring the radar and in total darkness trying to locate where the rescue was taking place. In the rear of the boat was F.F. Timothy Moynihan assisting F.F. John Rizzo into the Mustang cold water suit, also tying the necessary knots for tethering when we put a firefighter into the water. F.F. Cashman spotted activity at the end of Pier 40 and skillfully maneuvered the boat with the current avoiding any submerged pilings and holding this position throughout the rescue.

Lt. Finer after acknowledging the arrival at the box proceeded to the front of the boat to communicate with the police on the pier that there was indeed an individual in the water. The police on the pier had a life ring with a line in the water and they were under the mistaken notion that the individual was on it, the tide was high leaving only twelve inches between the bottom of the pier and the top of the water. When Lt. Finer shined his light under the pier he could see the empty life ring but no person was in sight, the Lt. called out for the person under the pier a few times and received no response. At this time fearing for the individuals life knowing that he was in the water for twenty minutes and that the water temperature was 38 degrees the decision was made to put F.F. Rizzo into the water.

This operation was not taken as a routine water rescue due to numerous factors involved. Swift current of the water 2 knots, temperature of the water 38 degrees, height of the tide only leaving inches between the pier and water line. The loss of sight of F.F. Rizzo having to go under the pier alone 25 feet, the possibility of getting snagged with the pilings under the pier with the current. Also the unknown fact of why the police chased the victim, might he be dangerous and cause harm to F.F. Rizzo alone without assistance. Knowing all these factors and with great personal risk F.F. Rizzo plunged from the boat into the icy river. When F.F. Rizzo reached the victim he was just barely hanging on to a pileing with what little strength was left. Coming up from behind F.F. Rizzo grabbed him in a bear hug called out to the tether man to retrieve both himself and the victim. Carefully maintaining a steady pull on the tether line F.F. Moynihan guided both the victim and F.F. Rizzo back to the boat making sure the line did not get hung up on and

pileing and the underside of the pier, once clear from under the pier both victim and rescuer were brought along side the boat while the tight position was held by the pilot of the boat. The victim was pulled into the boat first by the officer and F.F. Moynihan then the rescuer was pulled into the boat. F.F. Cashman then swiftly maneuvered the boat into a un-familiar dock at the southside base of pier 40, where we stabilized the victim and placed him on a backboard for removal by EMS. The fast actions of F.F. Rizzo jumping into the dark icy waters and putting himself at great personal risk by going into a confined space under the pier in the conditions mentioned above saved a life and deserve recognition.