

# Safety and Heroism



## **KENNETH LEAHY**

Department of  
Public Safety,  
North Carolina  
National Guard

The actions of Major Kenneth Leahy, a state dental officer with the North Carolina National Guard, exemplify the organization's mission to "protect lives and the property of our citizens of North Carolina." This mission inspires Leahy day and night, serving as a guiding principle in his professional and personal life.

While enjoying a day at North Topsail Beach with his family, Major Leahy heard nearby cries for help. A 10-year-old girl was drowning in turbulent water over 200 yards from the shore. Major Leahy instinctively dove into the water and swam against strong rip currents and three-foot, breaking waves to reach the barely conscious girl. Major Leahy relied on his medical knowledge to check her vitals and used a bodyboard from a nearby witness to transport the girl toward shore. Rough waves barreled down on the pair, but Major Leahy refused to let go of the girl as the ocean crashed around them, slamming his body into the sand. Once ashore, Major Leahy continued to monitor the child's condition until emergency personnel arrived and transported her safely to a nearby medical facility.

This was not the first time Major Leahy performed a water rescue. In fact, the child was the fifth person he has saved from drowning in the ocean.

It did not matter to Major Kenneth Leahy that he was not in uniform or on duty when this incident occurred. He selflessly set aside plans for a relaxing day with his family, and risked his life, to save a child in need of help. The State of North Carolina commends Major Leahy for his heroic acts.

