

# DNR's Col. Wright is honored by Flotilla 12-3

By Ollie T. Moye

Editor In Chief

Col. Alvin Wright, DNR's deputy director of law enforcement, told the Lake Murray Coast Guard Auxiliary last week at its regular monthly meeting that "when you're towing someone, that allows us to do other things, and we really appreciate that."

Col. Wright's remarks followed his acceptance of a special certificate from the Auxiliary showing the organization's appreciation to members of DNR for their efforts in promoting safety on Lake Murray.

Cpl. Robbie Rabon of the Lake Murray Marine Patrol also was presented a similar certificate, and Col. Wright was given several other certificates to distribute to members of his staff who patrol Lake Murray.

It was the second consecutive month in which Flotilla 12-3 has issued certificates to law enforcement officers showing its appreciation for their presence on the lake. At their August meeting, held in early September due to hurricane Floyd, the Auxiliary held a cook-out and extended an invitation to law enforcement to attend. Several were presented certificates of appreciation at that time. Others, who couldn't attend the cook-out, were invited to the regular September meeting last week.

Vice Commander Joe Richbourg, who made the presentations, noted that members of the Marine Patrol, DNR Officers and Sheriff's Deputies "have thanked the Coast Guard Auxiliary many times for our assistance with boaters in distress on the lake. They have been very supportive of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and with this special certificate, we extend our thanks to them."

Richbourg recalled that after the fireworks show on July 3rd of this year, "we all worked together until the early morning hours helping many boaters get home. As one of our boats was returning to the Lake Murray Marina around midnight, DNR Sgt. J. B. Barker was there at the dock to personally thank our crew for their efforts."



Joe Richbourg (left), vice commander of the Lake Murray Coast Auxiliary, presents certificates of appreciation to Col. Alvin Wright, DNR's deputy director of law enforcement; and Cpl. Robbie Rabon of the Lake Murray Marine Patrol. —Photo by Ollie T. Moye

Observing that "all our members are volunteers who donate their time and use their own boats to help others on the lake," Richbourg said that "knowing that we helped someone else, and to receive a 'thank you,' means a lot to us. Now it is our turn to thank the members of DNR and the Marine Patrol for the great job

you do every day to help make Lake Murray a safer place for us all."

The reference to veteran DNR officer Barker prompted Col. Wright to observe that "if you have passed the test of being accepted by J. B. Barker, you have been successful."

Wright said he once supervised Barker. "His heart and soul is in this lake," he said. "He's been here 25 years and sometimes we have to tell him it's not his lake. But I guess if you've been patrolling this lake 25 years you can almost call it yours."

The DNR commander recalled that Barker had come to him recently and told him that "you know I don't like people getting in my way trying to help me, but I was wrong about the Coast Guard Auxiliary in the beginning. I thought they'd be in my way, but they've been a great help to me."

Also during the awards presentations, a special certificate was given to Col. Wright to present to Barker.

"Sometimes we have a special award and we have one for J. B. Barker," Richbourg told Wright. "I wish J. B. were here tonight. I'd give it to him personally."

Setting the stage for the award, Richbourg recalled that "back in the spring, when the U.S. Coast Guard from Charleston started coming to Lake Murray, a lady called Station Charleston informing them that she rode a ski boat and wanted to know what she needed to do in the way of equipment because she didn't want to be stopped. Well, the chief petty officer with whom she talked to just happened to have come to Lake Murray the week before and met some of the DNR officers, including J. B. He told the lady: 'I don't care what you've got on your jet ski, they've got an officer on Lake Murray that's going to stop you.'"

Then Richbourg handed Wright the special humorous award which had been prepared for Barker.

"Give this special certificate to J. B.," said Richbourg. "It's good for one ride on my ski, signed by Flotilla Commander Albert Morgan."