



2016 Mountbatten Medal

On Saturday 30th January 2016, Andrew Pearson, an RLSS award holder and firefighter from Canada, was relaxing with his sister, niece and daughter on Mismaloya Beach in Mexico. At the time, the beach resort was displaying red flags due to rough seas and strong currents, and advised only strong swimmers should enter the water. Andrew had just struck up a conversation with two fellow Canadians (Liz Haley-Armstrong and her son, Bob Haley) when he noticed a young boy in the water, who was in visible distress.

The boy, who appeared to be about 6 years old, was caught in a rip tide and unable to keep himself above water. Andrew ran across the beach, entered the water and managed to swim through the rip tide to reach the boy. At the same time, the father of the boy entered the water to try and reach his son, but was also pulled under the water. Andrew was swimming with the boy towards the shore, when Liz Haley-Armstrong swam up and offered to take the boy to shore. Andrew handed him to Liz in the surf zone and then proceeded to swim back into the rip towards the boy's father. At the same time, the boy's mother had swum to the father to try and help him but she was a weak swimmer and they were both being pulled under the water. When Andrew reached them, they both started grabbing him in panic and pulling him under. He managed to separate them and pushed the mother away so she could start swimming towards the shore, then swam with the father out of the rip and towards the shore. Once Andrew had made it to the surf break he was unable to hold on to the father effectively as he was so tired from his previous efforts. At this point, Bob Haley ran into the surf and carried the father to safety.

If it wasn't for Andrew's swift actions (with the help of his countrymen), it would be unlikely that the local family would have survived that day.