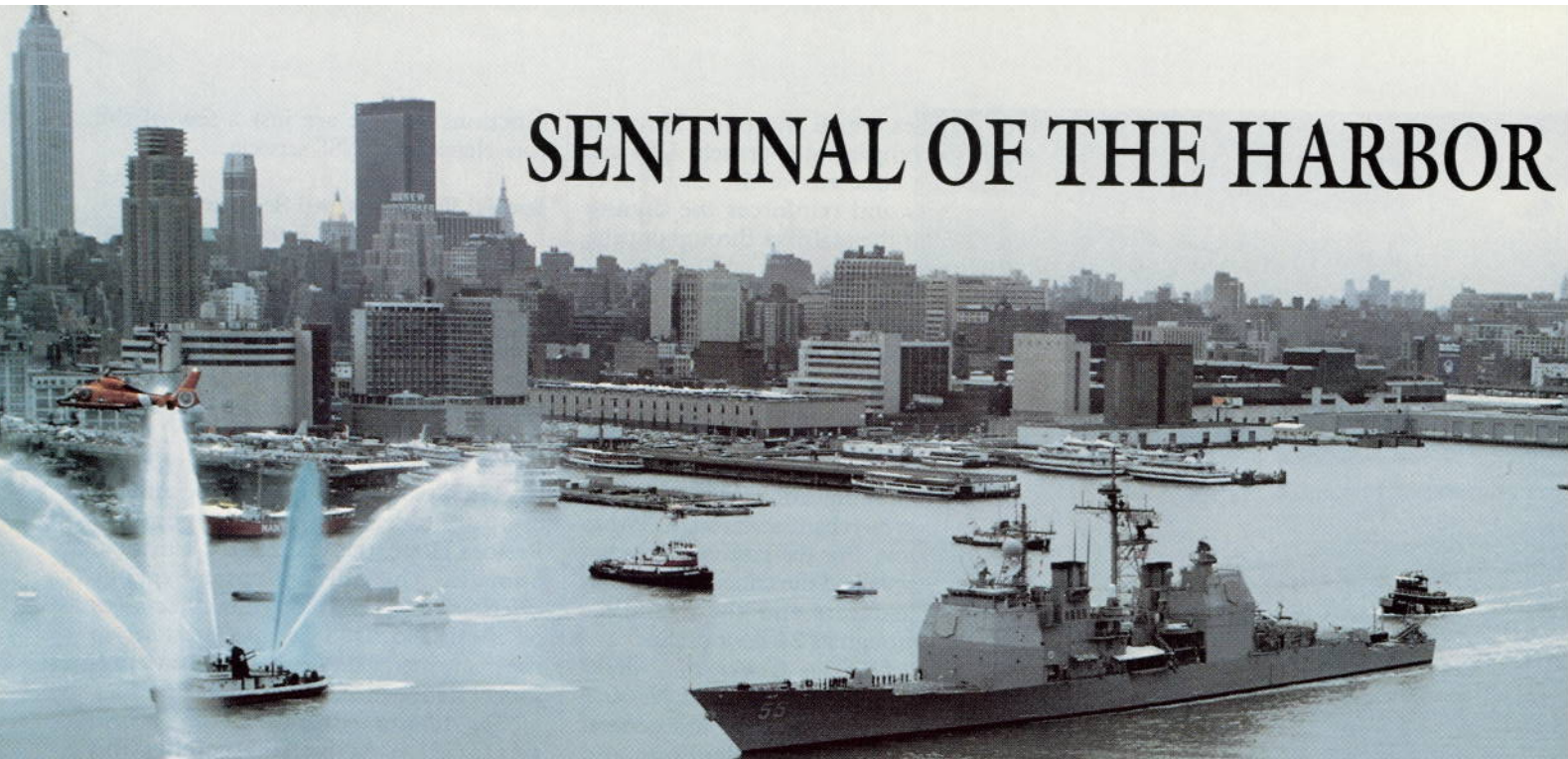


SENTINEL OF THE HARBOR



Marine Division of New York City's Fire Department has a Distinguished History Of Rescue and Emergency Operations in Addition to Fighting Fires And Welcoming Vessels to the Port of New York and New Jersey.

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Cruise passengers and harbor watchers alike revel in the festive water sprays that mark maiden voyages to New York Harbor, but the fireboats that greet new ships with their watery welcomes have other duties, less visible to the casual observer. As members of the Marine Division of New York City's Fire Department, the fireboats fight fires and carry out rescue and emergency operations throughout the harbor and along the waterfront.

The Port of New York-New Jersey's shoreline is dotted with passenger terminals, container ports, national park and recreation areas, heliports, lumber and building supply yards, power plants, bulk oil facilities, ventilation and emergency exits for underwater tunnels. And in the harbor itself are two of the fastest growing industries using the harbor – the commuter ferry services and the dinner and party cruises. Just look at the East and Hudson Rivers in the evenings and see the many dinner cruises.

Amidst this diversity, responsibility for prevention and extinguishment of fire within the port rests with the New York Fire Department. By agreement, such responsibility extends within the city limits and contiguous areas, as far westward on the water as the New Jersey pierhead line. For fires involving waterfront prop-

erty or vessels beyond this designated area, official sanction for response is required by the Fire Commissioner or his designated representative.

Presently there are three marine companies in service with the New York Fire Department.

Marine Company 1, formerly located at Pier A, North River, is now berthed at Little West 12th Street and the Hudson River. It presently is using the fireboat *John J. Harvey*. Built in 1931 by Todd Shipyards in Brooklyn, she has a capacity of 16,000 gallons per minute. While she originally was built with five Sterling-Viking gasoline engines, in 1957 she was converted to diesel electric by the installation of five Fairbanks Morse 600 H.P. engines. She is 130 feet long.

On February 11, 1930, a fire occurred aboard the North German liner *Munchen* at Pier 42, Morton Street, North River. As the fireboat *Thomas Willet* operated alongside, a number of explosions tore through the hull of the *Munchen*. Large sections of steel were hurled into the *Willet*, wrecking the fireboat's pilot house and sweeping men overboard. The pilot was killed instantly and carried over the side by a piece of steel. It was later announced that the new fireboat would be named in his memory – *John J. Harvey*. This was the first time a

boat had been named for a member of the department. An interesting note is that this boat is still operated as a "bell boat." Her engine room operated upon signals from the pilot and is believed to be the last boat so operated in active service in New York Harbor.

Marine 1's first line fireboat is the *John D. McKean*, built in 1954. She has a pumping capacity of 19,000 gallons per minute. After drydocking late last year she will be returned to her berth at Little West 12th Street to become Marine 1's primary fireboat. It is anticipated that the *John J. Harvey* will then be drydocked and returned to service as a spare vessel. The on-duty crew of Marine 1 consists of one officer, two firefighters, two marine engineers, one pilot, and one marine wiper. It can be augmented with a land firefighting company when additional manpower is needed.

Marine Company 6 is located in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Marine 6's primary vessel is a 105-foot diesel fireboat with controllable pitch propeller. The *Alfred E. Smith*, built in 1961, has a pumping capacity of 8,000 gallons per minute. There are two 500 horsepower pumping engines and two 500 horsepower propulsion engines.

In addition to the *Smith*, Marine 6 operates the newest boat to be placed in



Above: The most famous fireboat of all, Fire Fighter. Middle: Photo is of the Marine Division's newest boat, Kevin C. Kane. Bottom: The NYFD Marine Division rescued 30 immigrants from the waters off of Rockaway, when the Golden Venture ran aground in Long Island Sound.

service by the New York Fire Department, the *Kevin C. Kane*, built in 1992 by Gladding Hearn Shipbuilding.

Kane is a 52-foot aluminum hull boat with 5,000 gallons per minute pumping capacity. She has a top speed of close to 30 knots. Marine 6 uses this vessel where



shallow draft and/or rapid response capabilities are required, such as persons in the water, vessels in distress, vehicles in the water, or Harlem River responses where large boats would have to wait for the bridges to be opened.

When manning the 105-foot *Smith*, the crew is manned with the same complement as would man Marine 1. When operating the *Kevin Kane*, the crew consists of one officer, one pilot, one engineer, and two firefighters. The remainder of the crew remains aboard the large boat for security and maintenance.

The *Kevin Kane*, although only in service a short time, has proven her versatility and is an asset to our fleet.

Marine 9 is berthing at the St. George ferry slip on Staten Island. Marine 9 operates probably the most famous fireboat of all, the *Fire Fighter*. Built in

1938, she has a capacity of 20,000 gallons per minute. She has been called the Rolls-Royce of fireboats.

The *Fire Eghter* was the first fireboat with "pilot house controls," whereby propulsion is controlled from the pilot house.

The *Fire Fighter* and her crew were awarded the Gallant Ship Award for meritorious service at the *Sea-Witch / Esso Brussels* collision and fire which occurred in the Narrows, under the Verrazano Bridge. They rescued 18 crew members from

the burning *Sea-Witch*.

All boats carry a supply of foam on board, and where large quantities are needed, procedures are in place to provide the *McKean* and *Fire Fighter* with a supply of 1,000 gallons of additional concentrate each, allowing each boat to operate with foam for close to one hour.

The Marine Repair Shops is located at new facilities in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. We perform routine maintenance and most repairs to the ves-

sels in our fleet. The *Tender Smoke II* is also located there. This is a 52-foot boat with a pumping capacity of 2,000 gallons per minute. She is used as a tender for fireboats operating at long duration fires and emergencies and as a command vessel for chief officers at incidents in the harbor. She also carries additional foam supplies for resupplying of the other vessels if the need arises. There are two chiefs assigned to the Marine Division, and they are on twenty-four-hour call to respond to incidents in the harbor.

The spare boat *Harry M. Archer* is also located at the Navy Yard, but it is anticipated that this boat will be removed from service in the coming year. She is also a 105-foot-class and is capable of pumping 8,000 gallons per minute.

In addition, we anticipate placing into service two new high speed, surface effect ship, fireboats in the near future. These vessels will replace two of the older vessels in the fleet. They are 70 feet long and can pump 7,000 gallons per minute each. They are equipped with underpier nozzles, the first boats to be so equipped in the NYFD. They have a top speed of 30 knots and will greatly reduce our response times and increase our rescue capabilities throughout New York Harbor.

In 1983, in-water firefighting teams were formed. They are used to fight fires involving the substructure of piers that are inaccessible to land and marine units. Members operate from in the water to fight these stubborn fires. They are available 24 hours a day and also perform dive rescue functions.

The most recent example that the NYFD Marine Division is not "just for fighting fires" was the rescue and emergency operations at the *Golden Venture* incident last year. Marine 6 and Marine 9 launched their small boats in the Atlantic and are credited with the successful rescue of 30 immigrants from the waters off of Rockaway. ■

