

Launches Dedicated in Memory of Detectives Rafferty & Parker



On June 17, 2013, the NYPD Harbor Unit dedicated two new launches: Launch #453, The Patrick H. Rafferty; and Launch #452, The Robert L. Parker. The ships were named after the NYPD Detectives who were shot and killed in the line of duty in Brooklyn on September 10, 2004 while handling a domestic violence incident between a mother and her son.

The public boat christening ceremony and dedication took place at the Harbor Unit Stationhouse at the Brooklyn Army Terminal, 58th Street and Second Avenue in Brooklyn. The Ceremony began at 11:00 hours with a benediction by Monsignor Robert Romano and was followed by remarks from Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly and the Commanding Officer of the Harbor Unit Inspector David Driscoll. The families of the deceased christened each Launch with a traditional magnum of champagne, and after the ceremony, the families and guests, including members of Rafferty's and Parker's command, the 67 Detective Squad, were treated to a luncheon in their fallen colleagues' honor.

The Launches join the fleet of one of the oldest specialty units in the New York Police Department. (The Harbor Unit actually predates the Detective Bureau by almost a quarter century.) Founded in 1858 as a response to the criminal activity that took place along New York's seedy waterfront, including massive theft from the merchant ships anchored in the City's harbors, the Unit's first launches were wooden rowboats. Eventually the Unit upgraded to steam powered vessels, then gas powered boats, and finally, modern diesel fuel powered launches.

In 1965, the Harbor Unit formed its first Scuba Team, and as an integral part of Special Operations, the Unit is on call 24 hours per day. The Unit performs first responder search and rescue missions, Maritime law enforcement, daily counter-terrorism duties and initiatives, and with the NYPD's Aviation Unit, forms the largest and best-equipped Air-Sea rescue operation in the tri-state area.

Photos Courtesy of Todd Maisel, New York Daily News