



## Press Release

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USS New York Commissioning, a remembrance

**7-8 November 2009, New York:** The USS New York was commissioned on November 7th, the final step in becoming a ship of war for the US Navy. This rite de passage culminates the years long path, from the naval architects' drawing board to naming the vessel and finally the commission of this, the latest of Navy's LPD's. For those who don't know, an LPD stands for Landing Ship Transport, Dock.

The LPD was first conceived during the Korean War, a conflict of yesteryear that seems so much more distant than our current conflicts in both tenor and locale. None the less, the USS New York is the twenty-first in the line of LPD's. Thanks to former New York Governor George Pataki, this latest edition of the LPD was named in honor not only of New York State, but New York City and the men and women who lost their lives on September 11th, 2001.

I watched on TV as the World Trade Centers were both hit by the terrorist's hijacked planes, and as they crumbled. My fellow employees watched in terror as both towers crumbled from our office; I wasn't in the office that day. Later I learned that someone I knew through a friend, and had met on many occasions was one of the casualties. Captain Kathy Mazza of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department died while creating an egress from the North Tower of the World Trade Center for those who were trapped with her. She succeeded in saving countless lives, but lost her own in performing her duties.

Captain Mazza responded to the World Trade Center, buildings owned and operated by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ). They were protected by the PANYNJ's own police department (PAPD). Captain Mazza responded after the first plane crashed into North Tower.

The USS New York has 7.5 tons of steel from both collapsed World Trade Centers in her bow. As you walk the ship, especially on the foc'sle or the forward part of the ship, you wouldn't realize that those two giant edifices that defined the New York City skyline for so many years was part and parcel of this fine ship.

Every foot that the USS New York will transverse on our oceans is a testament to the men and women that not only worked in the World Trade Center but responded to the World Trade Center to protect and serve. As Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton stated in her speech during the Commissioning Ceremonies, "she carries the spine of New York".

The men and women of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department, the New York City Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Service, as well as other emergency services personnel from federal, state and city agencies that responded that day are part of that spine of New York. And for those who lost their lives are now an integral part of the bow of the USS New York.

“...Preserve us from the dangers of the sea, and from the violence of the enemy; that we may be a safeguard unto the United States of America, and a security for such as pass on the seas upon their lawful occasions; that the inhabitants of our land may in peace and quietness serve thee our God; and that we may return in safety to enjoy the blessings of the land, with the fruits of our labour; and, with a thankful remembrance of thy mercies...” From the 1789 Book of Common Prayer.

I was honored to get a tour of our newest LPD on Sunday, November 8th, 2009. Like her sister ships, she is well founded for her Naval mission; she's ship-shape and in Bristol fashion, all terms that means she's well equipped and ready for sea. She is a ship of the line and an ambassador of humanitarian aid. I know Captain Mazza would agree, as she was both a police officer and a nurse.

So what has the commission of the USS New York have to do with the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary you say?

Everything! Because those who died in trying to save the victims of the terrorist onslaught at the World Trade Center and on the planes that perished here in New York, or in Pennsylvania or at the Pentagon are the American true heroes. Too often our media and cultural bias have brought forth to the forefront individuals either singularly or in groups who are neither heroes or to be revered. They are paid employees of money making enterprises. The men of women who were first responders gave the ultimate sacrifice in trying to save the lives of Americans.

The USS New York also has meaning to the Coast Guard and the Auxiliary because several members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and the Coast Guard Reserve perished that day at the World Trade Center,

because they either worked in the buildings or responded as members of the emergency services of New York.

This ship means everything to the Auxiliary, in that eight years after that fateful day, Americans from all walks of life can volunteer their time, their energies, their backgrounds and diversity to help other Americans, by assisting them in times of peril, and protecting them through mitigation by providing educational courses to prevent accident and injury while enjoying recreational boating. Our members keep a daily vigilance on our enormous and generally unprotected Achilles heel, our coast line, looking for that which may pose a threat and reporting it to our law enforcement community.

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed volunteer component of the United States Coast Guard. Last year over 30,000 men and women donated in excess of 3 million hours of their time, energy and patriotism to protecting America from both its enemies and itself.

For the last seven years, members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary have taken their time, their vacations, and have taught over 170 police officers of the PAPD seamanship. These police officers man the boats of their marine bureau in order to respond to the possible downed airliner (such as US Airways Flight 1549). Both La Guardia and John F. Kennedy Airports; two of the busiest airports in the nation; border large expanses of water. Without the USCG Auxiliary, the Port Authority could not have trained the number of police officers as they have in these past years.

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary wishes the men and women of the USS New York calm seas, a safe voyage and should they enter harms way, good hunting.

Consider joining the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary today.

[http:// join.cgaux.org](http://join.cgaux.org)

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