

US Airways  
Weehawken, NJ  
January 15, 2009  
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**National Transportation Safety Board**  
Washington, D.C.

**Attachment 4**

New York Police Department Harbor Unit  
Report and Response Timeline

7 Pages

**POLICE DEPARTMENT  
CITY OF NEW YORK**

January 27, 2009

From: Commanding Officer, Harbor Unit  
To: Chief of Patrol  
Subject: **US AIR FLIGHT 1549 DISCUSSION ITEMS**

1. Flight 1549 discussion items as per your request:

• Your unit's initial response:

Assessment of the situation: Primary concerns upon arrival, were rescue and removal of aids from the water and retrieval of any rescue personnel in the water. Secure and control aircraft which was floating unguided rapidly down current. Harbor Unit had the 55' SCUBA boat on scene within 21 minutes, and two boats on scene within 26 minutes, and 5 boats within 41 minutes. Ultimately ten Harbor Unit boats were fielded to the scene. Initial actions included the recovery of a United States Coast Guard member from the wing of the aircraft, retrieval of Air Sea rescue divers, and rigging of aircraft to largest rescue boat on scene, fireboat McKean, a 129' fire boat.

Describe the resources requested and why: Additional launches for thorough search and rescue operations, collection of evidence, and perimeter control. 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Sea Rescue established to maintain citywide coverage. Landside SCUBA truck to provide relief divers and citywide response. Request Launch Repair personnel provide coverage for George post.

Describe the directions given: Units were advised to search for victims, aid FDNY in securing aircraft, mark locations of any submersions, call USCG Station New York to close river to all vessel traffic. Detailed Harbor Unit Lieutenant to the fire boat McKean to which the plane was secured in order to coordinate plans to guide the aircraft to safe waters. Directed personnel to put on flotation devices. Coordinated transport boats for responding personnel. Directed one boat to forward deploy at the Verrazano Bridge. Detailed Harbor Unit Lieutenant to landside mobilization point. Directed Launch Repair Shop to cover George post to maintain normal citywide coverage. Harbor Unit requested that the World Financial Center ferry dock be closed to ferry traffic. Directed all assets near the World Financial Center ferry dock landing area; that is ferry boats, FDNY boats, USCG boats, and small commercial workboats to pull back 750 yards so the Army Corps could respond and pull into the World Financial Center ferry dock. At 1740 hours, a 500 yard security perimeter was enacted by the USCG at the Harbor Unit request. A boat was detailed to ensure the security zone was established. Directed the Army Corps of Engineer boat to the ferry dock next to the aircraft for conferral with FDNY personnel and the Army Corps salvage experts.

- Evacuation of passengers: Air Sea Rescue divers assisted two people in the water and swam them to ferry boats for removal from the water. They then searched the interior of the aircraft for additional victims with negative results.

- Evidence collection:

Describe the steps taken to preserve and collect evidence: Due to the fast moving tide and possibility of debris sinking, all responding launches were directed to collect floating debris. Additional launches were directed to respond south of the scene to search for debris. Aviation was requested to help locate and direct launches to collect any visible evidence. One launch was dedicated to collect debris and property from the other launches. The Harbor Unit safeguarded all evidence collected at scene.

- Communication issues:

Was the I/O Channel activated: N/A Did not use I/O channel.

Was there a designated frequency for your unit: yes, VHF marine band channel 17. Additionally, the Harbor Unit utilized TAC-G, VHF 13, 16, and SOD frequencies.

Did the use of multiple frequency within the department help or hinder rescue efforts: Multiple frequencies helped the Harbor Unit. We were able to communicate through VHF with our launches as well as other marine assets on scene. TAC-G point to point communication for divers. Communications were established with the USCG through the Vessel Traffic Services Command Center via cell phone.

- Command and control Issues: (CIMS) Once the plane was secured on the seawall, command and control was established in front of 22 Riverside Terrace. The Harbor Unit C.O. was detailed as the Operations Officer and returned everyday through all operational periods in that capacity until the aircraft was loaded onto a barge on Saturday night. Incident objectives were to secure lines onto the aircraft and stabilize aircraft on the seawall, assess and mitigate any ignition threat, assess and mitigate any environmental concerns, boom off any local water intakes, liaison with unified command partners to provide for support equipment, salvage operations, perimeter and access control, provide back up safety divers for salvage operators, assess structural concerns of promenade walkway, establish safety controls. Commencement of side scan sonar operations after conducting multi agency meeting to create a sonar search plan. Conduct a remote operating vehicle analysis of any sonar targets of interest. Dive to confirm location of engine, secure location, coordinate with NTSB and salvage operator to recover engine.

- Were there any operational issues that hindered or complicated the execution of the objectives: Ferries boarded by non essential personnel. Non essential personnel boarding Harbor Unit launches from ferries without prior notice, authorization or benefit of proper safety equipment (PFD's).

- Comment on inter-agency coordination: Excellent communication with FDNY Marine. NYPD Harbor Lieutenant onboard fire boat McKean to plan and coordinate movement of aircraft to safe waters. Some challenges raising Coast Guard cutter Riddley (on scene Coast guard patrol command boat) however, the use of cell phones remedied the situation. Harbor Unit C.O. liaison by phone with the Vessel Traffic Center on Staten Island. As aircraft was being nudged into seawall, the Harbor Unit C.O. requested that the Coast Guard direct all ferries, commercial vessels and Coast Guard vessels 500 yards off the sea wall in order to secure the perimeter and allow the Army corps boat to maneuver into position. During extended operations in the ensuing days coordination with Army Corps, Coast Guard, NOAA, NTSB, OEM, FDNY, NJSP, and salvage operators was excellent.

- Comment on coordination with civilian supporting agencies Ferry operators: Ferry operators were successful in rescuing the majority of the aided from the aircraft. They also served as an immediate rescue platforms for ESU divers. They stood by as forward staging platforms for the first responders. After the initial rescue their standoff presence was not an issue as they did not interfere with any maneuvering of the aircraft. Their pilots are professional commercial operators who are skilled and quite responsive to direction. Their presence also provided additional firefighting capacity if needed as the larger ferries are equipped with large capacity fire pumps and nozzles.
- Perimeter issues water: maintaining a perimeter was challenging in a fast moving current. Maintained a 55' launch close to the FDNY boat holding the aircraft to be in a position to help control and contain the pathway of the aircraft and help nudge toward seawall if needed. The USCG was requested to close the Hudson River, which it did, the Harbor Unit stopped any North and South bound vessel traffic. The Hudson River was closed to all but emergency traffic at approximately 1535 hours and did reopen on a controlled, limited basis at 1927 hours. At 1740 a Notice to Mariners was broadcast noting the 500 yard perimeter around the Waterways dock at the World Financial Center. That zone was reduced to 200 yards at 1852 hours.
- Traffic /crowd control: Harbor Unit requested Emergency Service and landside patrol units to clear the seawall of civilians as the aircraft maneuvered into the seawall.
- Equipment: Equipment was suitable with no notable failures. 55' Harbor Unit launches responding to the scene, against the current, maintaining a full power speed of 18 to 20 knots.
- Were there any Harbor issues that impaired the response and /or management of this incident: Recommendations: Non essential personnel aboard launches during active marine operations posed a potential safety issue for the crew and the additional personnel. These non essential personnel were untrained and not equipped with flotation and/or safety equipment. Non essential personnel hindered the movement of the crews around the launches, necessitated the use of reserve PFDs, and utilized space that may have been potentially needed had there been multiple victims in the water. Large Harbor Unit boats are not capable of maintaining speeds in excess of 20 knots against the current. Pending acquisitions of new large Harbor boats will mitigate this condition and significantly reduce response times.

2. For you INFORMATION.

DTD;jns

David Driscoll  
DEPUTY INSPECTOR

**POLICE DEPARTMENT  
CITY OF NEW YORK**

January 27, 2009

From: Commanding Officer, Harbor Unit  
To: Chief of Patrol  
Subject: **HARBOR UNIT FLIGHT 1549 RESPONSE TIMELINE**

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1. As requested, timeline of Harbor Unit assets that responded to flight 1549. During the Harbor Units response to flight 1549 the Harbor Unit maintained citywide coverage, did ensure 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Sea Rescue which was forward deployed and did provide landside support with backup divers via SCUBA Truck #3512. Necessary off duty members of the Harbor Unit were directed back to the Harbor Unit Station House for deployment.

**Thursday January 15, 2009**

*All times are approximate.*

- 1531 hours: SCUBA 55' launch responded from the vicinity of Governor Island and Harbor Charlie 55' launch responded from Harbor Unit Station House (HUSH). The Harbor Unit Operations Supervisor (O/S), Harbor George 55' launch and 36' launch responded from Launch Repair Shop (LRS) located at Randall's Island in the Harlem River.
- 1535 hours: Air Sea Rescue #23 deployed from Floyd Bennett Field.
- 1537 hours: Harbor Operations Supervisor advised units to continue until confirmation was received, conflicting reports were received (e.g. "movie shoot").
- 1540 hours: SCUBA 55' launch passes North Cove.
- 1542 hours: Air Sea Rescue #23 on scene.
- 1542 hours: Air Sea Rescue deployed divers into water.
- 1552 hours: SCUBA 55' Launch arrives on scene with 3 additional divers ready for deployment, assists and retrieves both Air Sea Rescue divers from the water.  
**(Twenty-one (21) minutes – 1<sup>st</sup> NYPD Launch on scene)**
- 1557 hours: Harbor Charlie 55' launch arrives and starts search for aiders and removes USCG crew member from the wing of the aircraft. SCUBA 55' launch and Charlie 55' launch were on scene prior to the arrival of the large FDNY boat McKean. Upon arrival of the 129'- FDNY boat McKean, SCUBA 55' launch and Charlie 55' launch ran a line through the front doors (front of the fuselage) of the aircraft, then did assist in securing the aircraft to the fire boat McKean. **(2<sup>nd</sup> NYPD Launch on scene in within 27 minutes)**

- 1600 hours: 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Sea Rescue was established for citywide coverage.
- 1608 hours: Harbor George 36' launch arrives on scene starts search for aided and debris.
- 1610 hours: Harbor Unit C.O. arrives on scene in 31' launch.
- 1611 hours: Harbor George 55' launch arrives on scene starts search for aided and debris. **(Five launches on scene within 41 minutes)**
- 1612 hours: Harbor Charlie 55' launch arrives with the SCUBA Lieutenant. SCUBA Lieutenant is detailed to the fire boat McKean to coordinate and liaison with FDNY to determine safe water location to guide plane to. **Six (6) Harbor launches on scene directed to search for aided and recover victims.**
- 1620 hours: Harbor Unit C.O. directs additional Harbor assets to stay south of the scene to search for aided and debris.
- 1623 hours: Harbor Adam 55' launch is forward deployed to the northwestern edge of Adam Post in the vicinity of the Verrazano Bridge.
- 1625 hours: SCUBA Truck 3512 loaded at Harbor Unit Station House with additional tanks and directed to respond to the Battery.
- 1629 hours: Harbor C.O. advising that the Coast Guard security zone is 500 yards around the plane.
- 1638 hours: Harbor base advising that Army Corp of Engineers has been notified and responding.
- 1640 hours: Harbor Units continue to collect debris and maintain security zone around incident. All property collected was categorized and secured onboard a Harbor Unit launch.
- 1650 hours: Harbor Units maintains communication with FDNY Marine Units and commercial vessels.
- 1708 hours: Harbor requests ESU to clear the seawall at the World Financial Center.
- 1700-1715 hours: Aircraft is at Battery Park sea wall, Harbor Unit / U.S. Coast Guard establish security zone around plane.
- 1730 hours: Harbor Unit requests USCG to pull back assets to 500 yards, close Battery Park Ferry Terminal and remove all remaining ferries from the area.
- 1735 hours: Harbor Unit directed to pull back all assets to allow room for Army Corps of Engineers to pull in to the World Financial Center ferry dock.
- 1830-1900 hours: Harbor Unit CO attends interagency meeting.
- 2020 hours: Divers in water to rig plane with straps.
- 2100 hours: Divers out of water.

#### **Friday January 16, 2009**

Maintain security zone at plane site. Conduct side scan sonar searches for plane engine and deployed ROV (Remote Operated Vehicle) on targets of interest. Coordinate sonar searches with Army Corp of Engineers, NJSP Marine, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

- 0600 hours: Harbor Unit CO attends inter-agency meeting.
- 0800 hours: Harbor Unit CO chairs meeting with NOAA and Army Corps of Engineers and NYPD SCUBA Team to formulate grid search sonar plan.
- 1100 hours: SCUBA 55' launch conducting side scan sonar search in Hudson River for jet engine.
- 1600 hours: 10-98 from sonar search, search suspended due to ice conditions.

- 1135 hours: Harbor Unit reports negative report on search for debris of Lower Bay area.
- 1140 hours: Conferred with FDNY marine at NYPD Command Post.
- 2210 hours: Debris and property removed from the water is transferred to FBI Evidence Collection Team.

#### **Saturday January 17, 2009**

Maintain security zone at plane site. Conduct side scan sonar searches for plane engine and deployed ROV (Remote Operated Vehicle) on targets of interest. Coordinate sonar searches with Army Corp of Engineers, NJSP Marine, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

- 0930 hours: Harbor Unit reports negative results on search of Upper Bay.
- 1000 hours: SCUBA 55' launch conducting side scan sonar search in Hudson River for jet engine.
- 1020 hours: Salvage divers confirm that the starboard engine still attached to aircraft.
- 1200 hours: Member of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) aboard SCUBA 55' launch conducting side scan sonar searches in the Hudson River.
- 1810 hours: Debris and property removed from the water is transferred to FBI Evidence Collection Team.

#### **Sunday January 18, 2009**

Conduct side scan sonar searches for plane engine and deployed ROV (Remote Operated Vehicle) on targets of interest. Coordinate sonar searches with Army Corp of Engineers, NJSP Marine, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

- 1000 hours: SCUBA 55' launch conducting side scan sonar search in Hudson River for jet engine.
- 1400 hours: 10-98 from sonar search, search suspended due to ice conditions.

#### **Monday January 19, 2009**

Coordinate sonar searches with Army Corp of Engineers, NJSP Marine, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) personnel. Sonar searches suspended due ice condition.

#### **Tuesday January 20, 2009**

- 1200 hours: SCUBA 55' launch with NJSP marine division at 51<sup>st</sup> Street and Hudson River with possible target identified by NJSP marine.
- 1630 hours: SCUBA 55' launch / deployed divers in water to attempt to identify NJSP marine target.
- 1700 hours: SCUBA 55' launch / diver out of water unable to confirm NJSP target.

#### **Wednesday January 21, 2009**

- 0900 hours: SCUBA 55' launch with Army Corps of Engineers on board search suspended due to ice.
- 1030 hours: SCUBA 55' launch with NJSP marine division at 51<sup>st</sup> Street and Hudson River with possible target identified by NJSP marine.
- 1430 hours: SCUBA 55' launch / divers in the water.
- 1500 hours: SCUBA 55' launch / divers out of the water NJSP target identified as plane engine.

**Thursday January 22, 2009**

- Maintain security at plane engine site awaiting arrival of the salvage company.

**Friday January 23, 2009**

- Maintain security at plane engine site awaiting arrival of the salvage company.
- 0800 hours: SCUBA 55' launch with safety divers on scene with salvage company divers.
- 1615 hours: Plane engine out of water.

2. Graphic of Harbor Unit assets in relation to the incident *see attached Appendix A.*
3. Graphic of Harbor Unit normal deployment for Thursday, January 15, not at change of tour *see attached Appendix B.*
4. Graphic of weekday deployments of other harbor assets *see attached Appendix C.*
5. Members of the Harbor Unit who made significant contributions are as follows:
  - Det. Delany and Det. Rodriguez divers deployed from Air Sea Rescue assisting two victims to ferry boats for pick up.
  - SCUBA 55' launch crew Sgt. Chylinski, Det. Conroy, Det. Schnetzer, P.O. Moran and P.O. Mullen removed Air Sea Rescue divers from water and rigged a line through the fuselage of the plane and secured line to the fire boat McKean the largest responding vessel on scene.
  - Harbor Charlie 55' launch crew P.O. Lind, P.O. Eckert and P.O. Caputo upon arrival at scene removed US Coast Guard personnel from wing of plane. Crew helped rig a line through the fuselage of the plane and secured line to the fire boat McKean the largest responding vessel on scene.
6. For you **INFORMATION.**

DTD:jns

David Driscoll  
**DEPUTY INSPECTOR**