

REPORT OF MERITORIOUS ACT

F/F ROBERT W. PETERSEN

Name of Member

SEPTEMBER 1, 1996

Date of Act

8. NAME(S) OF TWO MEMBERS WHO ACTUALLY WITNESSED ACT (IF AVAILABLE)

RANK	NAME	UNIT
LIEUT.	ROBERT R. WALSH	MARINE COMPANY 1 MAR. OPS./SOC
PILOT	KENT S. WEISS	" " " " " "

9. NAME(S) OF TWO CIVILIANS WHO ACTUALLY WITNESSED ACT (IF AVAILABLE)

NAME	ADDRESS
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10. WAS VICTIM REMOVED FROM: Immediate fire area _____ Directly above fire _____
Other area (specify in detail): HUDSON RIVER - OFF OF PIERS # 54 & 56 TIDE: OUTGOING,
CURRENT-SPEED AT 2½-3 KNOTS - CHOPPY WATER CONDITIONS AT SCENE - DEPTH OF
WATER 45 FEET.

11. DESCRIPTION OF ACT: MANHATTAN BOX 561 14th STREET AND 11th AVENUE 0514 hrs. A.M.

REPORT OF CONFIRMED MAN IN THE WATER

Due to the close proximity of Box 561 and hearing screams for help, Lt. Walsh directed Firefighters Peat and Petersen to use the 13' Whaler to respond to the incident. Upon their arrival at the scene they found the victim exhausted and going under. Due to this situation, these Firefighters made a judgement that the quickest and safest method was to remove the victim together, into the Whaler while maintaining the integrity of this small boat. F/F Peat assisted by F/F Petersen exhibited a great deal of strength and courage in removing the victim from these choppy waters, due to the emotional state and resistive behavior of the victim. Their psychology and concerned manner in calming the victim down was again challenged in the Whaler on the way back to Marine Co. 1's Quarters. During this time the victim again attempted to throw himself back in the water and end a troubled life. F/F Petersen who was operating the Whaler had to call upon every bit of boathandling skill he had to maintain control of this small craft, thus assisting F/F Peat who had to place the victim in a scissor lock with his body to keep him from jumping into the water. This took a tremendous amount of strength and fortitude to subdue such an emotional behavior. Both these Firefighters were exhausted physically and mentally, but never waived in their efforts and responsibility to safely deliver this victim to Marine Co. 1 for transport to a medical facility. The victim would have undoubtedly perished had it not been for the quick actions of these two resourceful Firefighters.

The performance, efforts and actions of Firefighters Peat and Petersen during this unusual, arduous and stressful rescue was excellent in every sense of the word and in keeping with the highest traditions of bravery and courage of the New York City Fire Department. I respectfully submit this report to the Board of Merit for your consideration.