



At 2204 on Sept. 3, 2008 M-1 picked up a report on Police SOD of a person in the water in the Hudson river in proximity to the Lackawanna pier. Capt. Johnson realizing the location in close proximity to M-1 qtrs radioed Manhattan they were going to respond on a verbal to the reported location using M-1A 27' safeboat. When M-1A left dock they heard Hoboken Fire Rescue over VHF radio confirming that there was indeed a person in the water North of the Lackawanna pier Jersey side of Hudson. Additional reports over VHF stated that Hoboken PD had incident with this person who was reported to be a distraught type EDP who had threatened to harm himself by jumping in the water and in fact did so. Both these reports validated that a person was in fact in the water and now added the unknown threat of a dangerous EDP type person evading Police and having to be removed from the water.

Marine 1 operates using 2 vessels, a 130' fireboat The John D. McKean and a rapid response 27' Safeboat for water rescues. The SOP for M-1A response and operation for water rescue and is to operate with the normal 2 FFs and the officer. While responding Capt. Johnson continued to monitor radio reports, FF Krol piloted safeboat monitoring radar, while FF Sullivan donned Mustang cold water rescue suit and tied off necessary knots for attaching himself to tether line.

Marine 1 upon arrival at reported location received verbal reports from Hoboken PD and Hoboken Fire Rescue pointing out an area of a pier at which the individual had jumped in the water and was swept under that pier by a fast moving North bound current. At that time Capt. Johnson notified Manhattan dispatcher of their arrival at box and confirmed victim in water.

The pier in question was a very large 300 X 150' pier under construction off the Hoboken shoreline. The pier and surrounding area being under construction had no lights and had numerous work type floating docks around it's perimeter making approach to the area in question very precarious. The condition of the surface of the pier was also dangerous preventing FD land units and PD from safely operating on it. Hoboken Fire Rescue was operating a 25' boat and asked if we could maneuver in the tight quarters necessary to reach victim's last known location and that they would position at opposite end of pier. Capt. Johnson asked Hoboken Fire Rescue to position on North east side of pier and instructed FF Krol to carefully pilot vessel towards last known location of victim. M-1A had to move slowly watching for unknown obstructions in water and to maneuver carefully in these tight quarters. Upon reaching closer it was noticed that due to high tide the distance between the water and underside of pier left only 18" space adding to the already dangerous conditions. Capt. Johnson shined the light under pier and could barely make out the outline of victim in question about 100' under pier who appeared to be struggling to stay afloat. Capt. Johnson made several attempts to call out to victim but received no response. It was felt at this time felt that victim struggling to stay afloat for at least 15 minutes had very little time left before going under which would have made rescue near impossible in this very dangerous location. Capt. Johnson made final tether line attachment and made decision for FF Sullivan to enter water.

FF Sullivan having full knowledge of the dangers involved, dangerous EDP type person, fast moving current, low headroom, operating 100' under pier with unknown construction hazards in total darkness at great personal risk entered water in attempt to save victim.

Capt. Johnson took hold of tether line and monitored his progress while FF Krol continued to pilot boat and maintain communication with Hoboken Fire Rescue. FF

Sullivan swam to location of victim negotiating thru various debris and tight quarters under pier finding victim barely above water clinging to piling. Using torpedo float FF Sullivan was able to gain control of victim keeping his head above water. FF Sullivan made the decision to continue heading north 25 additional feet to exit out from under pier to the Hoboken Fire Rescue boat as opposed to making the dangerous trek back with the victim 100' to M-1A. At this point Capt. Johnson could not see FF Sullivan and victim and the tether line was now reaching within a few feet of the end of it's 150' length. Luckily Hoboken Fire Rescue reported FF and victim were coming from under pier and reaching their location. FF Sullivan assisted victim being loaded onto Hoboken Fire rescue boat that treated and transported via Hoboken EMS to Jersey City Medical Center. The fast actions of FF Sullivan swimming a long distance under dangerous unknown conditions and putting himself at great personal risk certainly saved a mans life and is deserving of recognition.