

## **M.E.B.A. was Part of Rescue Ops During “Miracle on the Hudson”**

M.E.B.A. mariners were part of an armada of boats that sped to the rescue on the Hudson River on Thursday, January 15th when US Airways Flight 1549 made a splash landing with 155 people aboard. A flock of Canadian geese took out both of the plane’s engines around 3:30 pm and the pilot executed a perfect three-point landing in the river. Rescuers were able to extract all passengers and crew from the A320 airbus. Everyone survived and there were only a few reported injuries, all relatively minor. The plane left from LaGuardia Airport at 3:26 bound for Charlotte, NC. It crashed in the river near 43rd Street, on Manhattan's West side minutes later.

M.E.B.A. members aboard the FDNY fireboats were dispatched immediately. Fire company Marine 1 boat **McKEAN** was onscene with Capt/Pilot Robert Spadaro, C/E Lenny Burmester and Assistant Engineer Pat Astegher. The **McKEAN** immediately tied a mooring line to the plane to keep the two knot current from taking it down the river. Fire company Marine 9 boat **FIREFIGHTER** arrived shortly after the **McKEAN** and also assisted in stabilizing the plane. After the passengers were rescued by the NY Waterway ferries both boats kept the plane afloat and guided it down to Battery Park. The **FIREFIGHTER**, Capt./Pilot Joe Gagliardi, C/E Fred Domini and Assistant Engineer Dan Rowland also transported the FDNY Rescue 5 dive team to the scene. Fire Company 6 boat **KANE**, Capt/Pilot Shawn O'Connor, C/E William Cody also arrived on the scene and assisted in the rescue and stabilization of the airbus. After the plane was secured at Battery Park the **FIREFIGHTER** stood by through the night because of their ability to deliver foam.

The plane ditched miles away from where the M.E.B.A.-crewed Staten Island Ferries transit, but the 36-foot **AMERICAN LEGION** utility boat was sent to assist in rescue operations. Also involved were the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers aboard the M.E.B.A. contracted vessels **GELBERMAN** and **HAYWARD**. Chief Engineers Bill Carl and Ed Quirk were at the controls and Chief Engineers Dan Reddan, Tony Hans, Jim Murray and Jim Branigan provided logistical support. At the helms of these vessels were MM&P brothers in arms Captains Brian Aballo, Dan Petrick, Liz Finn and Bill Lyness.

Also on the scene was the M.E.B.A. contracted vessel **SAMUEL CORSON** from the Governors Island Ferry. They arrived later and were instructed by the Coast Guard to stand by. M.E.B.A. members included Bill Welch, Barry Torey, Steve Mitchell, Seth Pinto and Ben Pedrosa.