



Fire Watch

Los Angeles Fire Department Newsletter

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Our Mission

“To Preserve life and property, promote public safety, foster economic growth through leadership, management and actions, as an all-risk fire and life safety response provider.”

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CITY OF LOS ANGELES PORT FIRE PROTECTION IN THE 21st CENTURY

Many of you are aware that the City of Los Angeles recently spent nearly 12 million dollars to purchase four world-class Fireboats as replacements for

their aging predecessors. One of these, new Fireboat 2, is recognized worldwide as the most powerful Fireboat in service today. Later in this story, I'll address what the City got for it's money,



Fire Boat 2

and why these boats are so uniquely capable to perform their duties.

However, before we get there, have you ever wondered why the City would spend this much money to replace four Fireboats, especially in an era of declining tax revenue, and competing demands for funding?

Let's take a quick and somewhat broad look at the Port of Los Angeles, and what it means to the overall health of the City. The Port of Los Angeles, known as POLA, covers a total of about 8000 acres of area, including 43 miles of waterfront. It houses 27 terminals, numerous subsurface pipelines carrying various petro-chemical products, recreational facilities, ecological preserves and even restricted areas for endangered bird species. The terminals process a wide range of goods that arrive in diverse forms including containers of various sizes, liquid, dry and mixed (or break) bulk commodities, and many makes of automobiles. In addition, the cruise ship terminal services 12 cruise lines who



carry approximately one million travelers per year, and there are slips for approximately 6000 pleasure boats of various sizes. The port is a global trading area, and it is the primary entry point in the United States for goods from the Pacific Rim. Ships from all areas of the world routinely call on the port including vessels from Denmark, Japan, Mexico, China, South America, South Korea, Southeast Asia, Taiwan, The United Kingdom and Vietnam.

As you can see, the port is a gateway to the world, and a major relay center for international cargoes. The Port of Los Angeles is the number one container port in the United States, handling approximately six million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent) annually. It is number eight in the world, and if combined with the neighboring Port of Long Beach, the two become the third busiest container port in the world behind Hong Kong and Singapore. With the advent of even larger container ships, and our port's ability to receive them, the volume through the port was projected to nearly double between 1998 and 2010, and it's on track to achieve those projections. An incredible amount of infrastructure enhancement has taken place in the last few years to ensure that the port maintains its ability to attract commerce to this area. Some of these may be familiar to you and others may not. A few major examples are the construction of "Piers" 300 and

400. Each site is a major landfill in the port.

Pier 300 is approximately 300 acres in size, and pier 400 is approximately 600 acres in size.



Fire Boat 2

Both have created additional container terminals where there was once only water. Pier 400 by itself is the largest container terminal in the world, and it's smaller neighbor, pier 300, is the largest dedicated container terminal in North America. In addition, the twenty-mile long, 2.4



Billion-dollar Alameda Corridor Project was designed and built to provide enhanced train access directly to the ships and their cargoes, and terminates at the water's edge.

As a result of the combined efforts of the Port and its tenants, POLA's "economic engine" causes goods valued at more than 104 billion

dollars annually, to pass over the wharves of Los Angeles. This port activity impacts nearly 260,000 jobs in Southern California, (that's one in 24), and nearly a million jobs nationwide.

Now, in perspective, the purchase of modern, highly capable Fireboats to help keep the port operating and safe from fires, and other types of incidents starts to look like good business.

So, with your new port expertise, what kind of Fireboats would you buy to protect this unique infrastructure, and where would you go to get them?

Since August of 1909 members of our Fire Department have asked themselves this question. Back then, when the communities of Wilmington and San Pedro were annexed to the City, the LAFD inherited a new marine responsibility. The City

and its Fire Department initially answered this question by contracting for the services of two tugboats that had a level of Firefighting capability. These boats were normally staffed by their civilian crews, but Firefighters

were placed on board when needed. In 1915, the LAFD purchased its first purpose built Fireboat; a 20-foot vessel called the "Aeolian." As the challenges in the port grew, and the LAFD became increasingly engaged in port fire protection, the types and capabilities of the Fireboats also grew. Until April 12, 2003, our existing fleet of Fireboats



consisted of three 34 foot, 1000 gpm “small boats,” and two large boats. Fireboat 2, the venerable Ralph J. Scott, built in 1925 was our largest at 105’ long, and capable of approximately 18,600 gpm. Fireboat 4, the Bethel F. Gifford, built in 1962 and capable of approximately 9000 gpm was, and remains, our second largest boat at 76’ long.

These vessels were all considered extremely capable when they were put in service, and due primarily to various ideas for ongoing improvement, and the high level of care that they received from their crews, they remained effective much longer than their designers could have anticipated. The Ralph J. Scott even became the oldest front line Fireboat in the United States.

Fireboat 4, The Bethel F. Gifford, remains in service, highly capable, and is expected to continue as such for many years to come. In fact, in many ways it exemplifies the ongoing evolution of our Fireboat fleet. Fireboat 4 was built with a very limited

Firefighting Foam capability, however after recent design modifications, it now carries a state of the art foam system and 2000 gallons of foam concentrate. The boat was also recently re-powered, which has added the muscle for it to continue in it’s place as an exceptionally capable Marine Firefighting tool.

However, as the recently retired Fireboats once replaced others, our newest Fireboats are taking the Port’s level of protection to new

heights.

The new boats are the result of a ten-year, joint effort project

between the Fire Department and the Port of Los Angeles. It began with a focused needs assessment. This process

researched the current and projected future port protection role of the Fire Service in the port area, including the possibility of responding beyond the port’s limits as needed. The port’s hazards, potential, and expansion projects were studied in close detail. The entire port area was divided into hazard

equipment and capabilities required to address the port’s needs was developed. This list included items such as Firefighting Foam capacities and flow rates, on board EMS facilities, SCUBA program needs, towing capabilities, improvised water supply ability and many many others.

Once all of these issues were addressed, the platform that would best carry the equipment and address our delivery requirements was researched. Among the top priorities for the new boat were overall strength, longevity, technological superiority, and a wide range of enhanced capabilities. Ultimately, Marine Architects and other specialists were hired to formally develop the Department’s specifications, and the new large and small boats became a reality.

New Fireboat 2 was built at the Nichols Brothers Boat Yard in the State of Washington. This builder is one of the best in the country for vessels of this size, and was chosen because of their experience building large Fireboats and Tractor Tugs. The Tractor Tug design was chosen due to its tried and true reputation in the work boat industry.



Fire Boat 5



Fire Boat 1

types, and then further refined into specific target hazards. The target hazards were then measured for fire flow, fire stream reach, potential Firefighting Foam requirements, alternate water source needs and a wide range of other criteria. Once this was accomplished, the data was compared against our existing Fireboat capabilities, and the potential for enhancement, or reduction was carefully studied. On completion, a list of

The three new small Fireboats are identical to each other, and were built by Kvichak Marine Industries in Seattle Washington. This boat builder is also one of the best in the country, and has a great deal of experience building mid sized Patrol and Fireboats.

Here’s a side by side comparison of some of the major capabilities and components of the old Fireboats and their recent replacements.



Fire Boat 2

Commissioned:
 Length:
 Width:
 Draft:
 Crew:
 Pumping Capacity:
 Largest monitor flow:
 Main monitor reach:
 Under wharf nozzles:
 FF Foam concentrate:
 Foam capable monitors
 EMS capability
 Top speed
 Crane/lift basket

Ralph J. Scott

October 20, 1925
 105 Feet
 19 Feet
 08 Feet
 08 Members
 18, 655 gpm
 9, 958 gpm
 473 Feet
 2 X 3,000 gpm
 40, 5 gallon cans
 N/A
 EMT Trauma Kit

 N/A

Warner L. Lawrence

April 12, 2003
 105 Feet
 29 Feet
 15 Feet
 08 Members
 38,000 gpm
 14,500 gpm
 550 plus
 2 X 2000 gpm
 6000 gallons
 Multiple
 Full EMS room
 14 Knotts
 1000 lb Capable
 50' Extension

Fire Boats 1, 3 and 5

Commissioned:
 Length:
 Width:
 Draft:
 Crew:
 Pumping Capacity:
 Largest monitor flow:
 FF Foam concentrate:
 Foam capable outlets:
 EMS capability:
 Top Speed:
 SCUBA capable
 Climate controlled cabin
 Fuel
 Hull

Drake Craft Boats

July 1967
 34.0 Feet
 12.5 Feet
 Approx, 3 feet
 3 Members
 1000 gpm
 500 gpm

 Yes
 EMT
 30 knotts
 Yes
 No
 Gas
 Glass covered wood

Kvichak Marine Boats

April 12, 2003
 40 Feet
 13'6" Approx.
 2.5 Feet
 3 Members
 2,500 gpm
 1,000 gpm
 50 gallon tank
 Yes
 Patient treatment table
 30 Knotts
 Yes
 Yes
 Diesel
 Aluminum

The Department's new fleet of Fireboats were built to proudly serve the citizens of Los Angeles, and the commercial port, for generations to come. We fully expect that Firefighters who are yet to be hired by the LAFD, will be long retired before these new Fireboats are introduced to their replacements, many years in the future.



****Assistant Chief John D. Badgett is a 31 year veteran of the Los Angeles Fire Department and the Division Commander of Division II "A" Platoon in the Southern end of the City. Chief Badgett has had extensive experience in Harbor operations having been assigned as a Battalion Chief to the Harbor and San Pedro area.