

the
FIREMEN'S
grapevine



The FIREMEN'S Grapevine

Dedicated to the Welfare of Firemen and the Fire Service

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FRONT COVER

L.A.'s brand new fire boat leads her elder sisters, Fire Boat #2 and Fire Boat #1 up the main channel as she arrives in the Port of Los Angeles on February 22, 1962.

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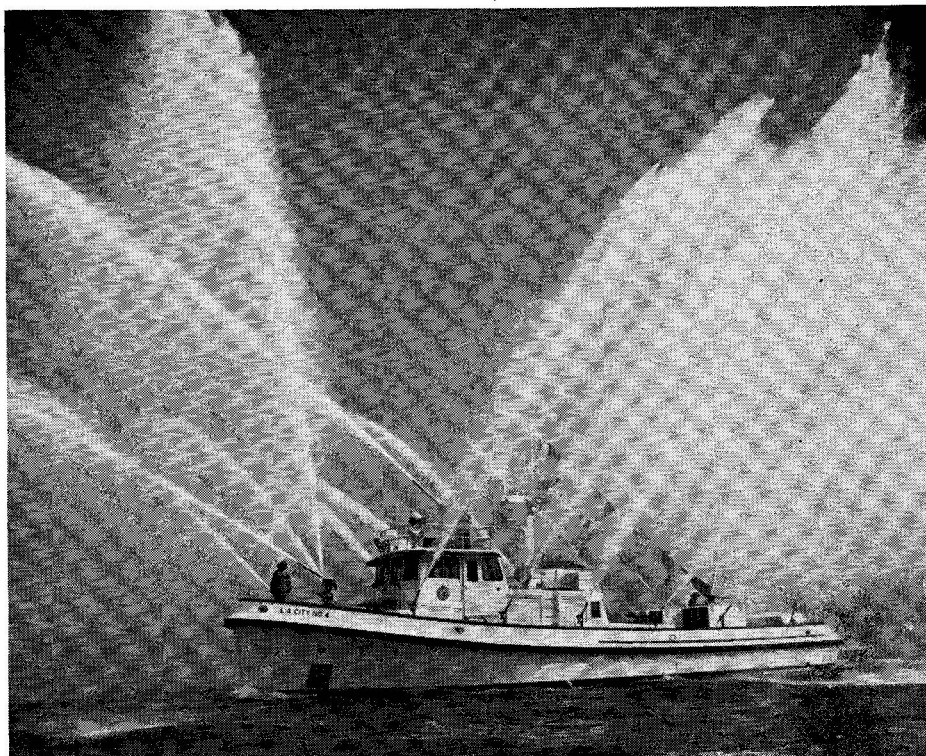
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THE NEW GIRL

An Eyewitness Report of the Arrival of L.A.'s Newest Fire Boat



"L. A. City No. 4" soaks her bunting as she lets go a fire stream salute upon entering the Port of Los Angeles for the first time. The new fire boat will be stationed at Berth 29 near Fort MacArthur in Waichorn Basin.

By **LEE ZITKO**

Thursday, February 22, 1962, dawned cloudless after weeks of cleansing rain in Los Angeles, and by noon the chill Pacific breeze had blown the harbor mists away to reveal a post-card blue of sky and choppy water for the thousand and some who had lined the Port of Los Angeles to watch the new girl arrive.

And suddenly here she came, around the Angels Gate light, dipping smartly to the awaiting escort of fire boats, Harbor Department vessels, Navy and Coast Guard crafts, and a myriad of small crafts that raised a din of cheers, toots and sirens as they picked up the foam-laced edges of the newcomer's wake to follow her up the harbor's main channel.

Proudly she paused to take aboard the Mayor of her newly chosen City and his party before passing photographically beneath the twin arch-sprays of her two elder-sister fire boats. Then on she bore, leading her entourage straight up the channel toward her new home. At the Pilot Station entrance to the channel she suddenly raised a dozen white eyebrows of her own—the first answering fire streams ever tossed back at L.A.'s Fire Boats #1 and #2 in their long careers of welcoming newcomers to their Harbor.

Now the procession strung out in a sort of wild formation. All manner of small outboard boats played about like daring porpoise, criss-crossing the bows of such larger, spectator-bearing vessels

as the side-wheeler "Princess," on loan from the picturesque Ports O' Call restaurant, the "Nona-K" owned by Cummins Diesel with dignitaries aboard, the "Catalina Special" out of Norm's Landing and the Harbor Department's huge towboat, the "Angels Gate," loaded with press photographers and reporters.

Clearing the afternoon shadow cast by the tall spars of MGM's movie frigate "Bounty" with only a glimmer of respect for the past, the new girl plowed deeper into the heart of the modern industrial waterfront which she had been born to protect. Abreast of Berth #228-A, where a crowd had gathered to hail her safe arrival and bless her heavily responsible future, she executed a tight turn, briefly sending out arms of churning white water at four different points on her waterline. Next the new girl eased her seventy-six and a half feet into the relatively narrow slip of Berth #228-A where she commenced a series of ballet-like executions, flexing her automatic propeller pitch, her 400 horsepower Cummins diesels and her waterline maneuvering jets which she had introduced during her turn in the channel, all in a nimble manner which was at least prideful if not downright haughty! After a couple of Pirouettes, a Rondesharm and a Media-corte-dooblay, she let go both fore and aft starboard jets and crabbed sideways, warping the pilings perfectly and stopping dead in the water

with her port jets. (Some thought they even saw her blow lightly on her fingernails and polish them on her lapels.)

Thus the "L. A. City No. 4," newest of the Port of Los Angeles' flotilla of City-owned fire boats, terminated the second and final leg of a six-day delivery voyage from her birth-yard at the Albina Engine & Machinery Works in Portland, Oregon. She had made a safe passage under the dotting crewing of a hired skipper and two mates, five Albina representatives and three L. A. City firemen. The latter three were Pilot Arthur G. Woodman, Engineer Sam Le Doux, and the technical father of this, the latest word in modern fire boating, Assistant Fire Chief Bethel F. Gifford.

For Bethel Gifford, Commander of the southern Division including L. A.'s Harbor fire forces, the ride down was a chance at last to relax, despite heavy seas; a chance to watch gauges; to listen to the throb of engines and to feel a fifteen year old dream become a surging reality under his feet. It was a time of relative aloneness with the thoroughly gratifying product of five years of tireless planning, deciding, selecting, consulting, debating, and finally, designing and executing. For it was through all these stages that Chief Gifford had poured the vitality and acumen of the long career of a fire expert into his special assignment as coordinator and liaison man for the building of L. A.'s first new fire boat since 1925.

"Boat Four," as she must inevitably be-

come referred to, is a gal with some interesting measurements. Her functional requirements were merged with lines of power and grace on the drawing boards of L. C. Norgaard, Naval Architects of San Francisco. Seventy-six and a half feet from stem to stern, she's roomy in the waist with a 24 foot beam. Her 7 foot draft is occupied by a bottom architecture suitable for open sea, and her high forepeak and graceful bows push back the swells in an impressive bow-wave.

Six power plants for the new boat were furnished by Cummins Service and Sales, a Los Angeles plant. The boat's twin Ka-Me-Wa controllable pitch propellers have a 12-cylinder Cummins (VT-12-M) on each shaft, each set up to deliver 400 hp at maximum loading, for a total of 800 hp for propulsion. The designed speed of the vessel is 13 mph.

Two other VT-12's are for pumping

water exclusively and each has a DeLaval centrifugal, opposed impeller type pump. Each of these pumps will throw 3,000 gallons of water per minute at 150 psi. They turn at 1,680 rpm and have 240 total head feet.

Additional pumping capacity is provided by two Cummins NRTO-6-M Diesels, each attached to a 1,500 gpm DeLaval pump. Thus the boat can pour a rated 9,000 gallons of water a minute on a fire. The two smaller engines also provide electricity for the boat by turning 50KW General Electric generators.

This combination of power and pumping flexibility makes Boat Four the first fire boat anywhere to be designed from the keel up especially with the fire fighting problems of the harbor she serves in mind. Her versatility, Chief Gifford points out, is comparable to that of a modern land fire company in the ability to handle



CHIEF BETHEL GIFFORD

a wide range of large and small fire situations with the right amount of "fire-power" for a given job.

Among the unique design features of the new boat are a pair of waterline bow nozzles capable of shooting firestreams up underneath a burning wharf. Detachable deck guns at port and starboard railings are supplied by below-decks piping, eliminating the necessity for hundreds of feet of flexible supply lines cluttering the foot room on deck. Inside the pilot house, an impressive console of valves, levers, and gauges, with duplicate control layouts on the left and right sides of the house, gives the pilot finger-tip control as he cons the vessel from either the port or starboard windows of the pilot house.

Behind the pilot, another console or bank of valves and gauges furnishes the Engineer with complete one-man control of all pumping pressures and gates. These control mechanisms are duplicated in a windowed-off control room located below decks and directly aft of the engine room. A compartment forward of the engine room contains complete head facilities beneath the floor of which is located a 585 gallon foam solution tank connected to a bank of foam outlets on deck directly above.

Upon docking at Berth #228-A, the newcomer disembarked her crew which now included the Mayor, members of the Fire Commission and Fire Chief William Miller, and lay quietly while these and other officials mounted a bannered platform to participate in a brief welcoming ceremony, very capable emceed by Battalion Chief Jack Douglass. For that gentleman, who as Division Commander in Chief Gifford's absence had handled the million and one details of preparing the new fire boat's welcome, the ceremony marked the successful and well-timed execution of plans long threat-



Engineer Sam Le Doux manipulates levers and checks pump rpm's in pump control room just aft of Fire Boat #4's engine room.

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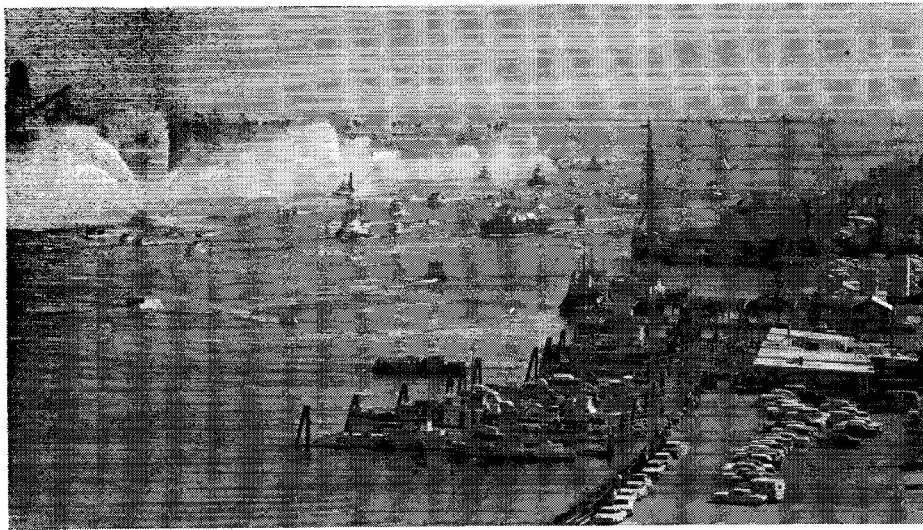
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For more information, please call Red Cross at DUnkirk 4-5261 and ask for Marie Fuess, director of Nursing Services.



Fire Boats #4, #2 and #1 throw a total of over 20,000 gallons of water per minute coming up the main channel of L. A. Harbor. Square rigger at right is MGM's movie ship "Bounty."

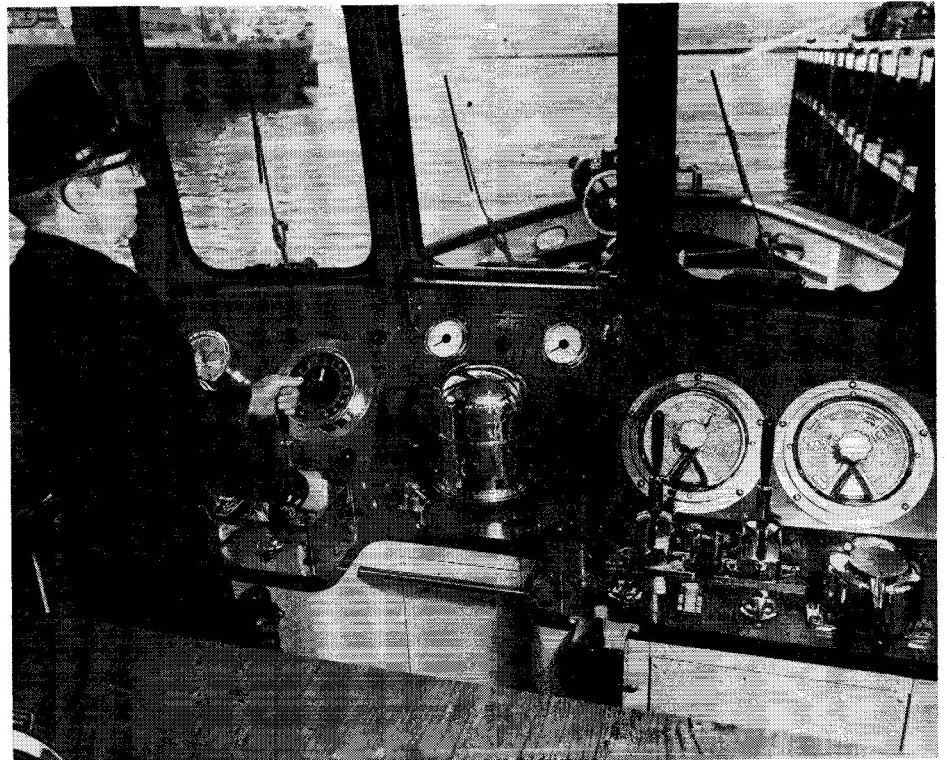
ened by weather and uncertainty about the boat's punctual arrival.

After brief addresses by Mayor Yorty and Fire Chief Miller, the Very Reverend Monsignor M. J. O'Callaghan, Fire Department Chaplain, tendered the blessing of the new boat. Chief Miller then read aloud the boat's assignment roster, and with a salute to the awaiting crews ordered the newly assigned officers to take command of her. This done, a benediction was given by Fire Department Chaplain Battalion Chief Joseph Hoffmann.

The audience of several hundred spectators spent an additional hour inspecting the new fire boat and enjoying refreshments which were prepared and served by The Fire Belles, a group of firemen's wives in the Harbor Area.

On the Sunday following the arrival of the new fire boat this writer and a friend went down to Berth #228-A to get a personal introduction to "the new girl." After a pleasant and informative half hour or so with her, it seemed only right to pay respects to the grand old lady in Boat Two's slip before leaving the Harbor. Upon making a passing remark to a Boat Two Engineer about "not wanting to slight the old girl," writer and friend were strategically blocked from the exit, given a near tape-recording-perfect rundown of Boat Two's faithful attributes and enviable record, and politely but firmly made to understand that she wasn't taking a back seat to anybody, hydraulically operated watch-a-ma-call-its and maneuvering thing-a-ma-bobs or not!

I left the Harbor that Sunday reminded of the stuff that really puts out fires—thinking that "it," in combination with that which is proven and that which is promised by modern design, will keep good care of the reputation enjoyed by the Port of Los Angeles as the "world's safest harbor."



LAFD PHOTO BY CUMMINGS

Pilot Arthur (Woody) Woodman operates left bank of pilot house controls on L.A.'s new fire boat. Black handled levers at lower right and seen at left behind Pilot Woodman's back are steering levers, eliminating conventional ship's wheel type of helm.

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History of Fire Boats in L. A. Harbor



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Early "fire boat" in L. A. Harbor was two steam pumps on a barge. This arrangement was used for about two years until the purchase of Fire Boat #1 in 1919.

When the communities of San Pedro and Wilmington were annexed to Los Angeles in 1910, the City inherited a

minimum of land-based fire protection and 8 miles of water front fire hazards with no fire boat protection. The City im-

mediately contracted for the services of two privately owned fire fighting tugs, the "Warrior" and the "Falcon," from the Wilmington Transportation Company on a monthly rental basis. No firemen were assigned regularly to these two vessels, but fire fighters from land-based stations went to work aboard them at the scenes of fires. This contract arrangement was used until the "Falcon's" services were discontinued in 1915, and the "Warrior's" services dropped in 1917. At this point the Fire Department placed 2 steam pumpers on a barge, which combination became the first "fire boat" actually owned by the City. One of those steam pumpers, an 1881 Amoskeag, is periodically on display at the old Plaza Fire station in downtown Los Angeles.

The Fire Chief, Archie J. Eley, had been asking for a fire boat in the Fire Department budget every year from 1910 up to 1919, at which time the City purchased *Fire Boat No. 1* for \$33,000. It was first stationed at the foot of First Street in San Pedro, and it was moved in 1927 to Berth No. 260 in Fish Harbor, where it is now located. Boat #1 is 62 feet long with a pumping capacity of 2,000 gpm.

Fire Boat No. 2, launched October 20, 1925, was built at a cost of \$214,000. It was built by the L. A. Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company from bond issue money. It was stationed at Berth No. 227, where it is still located. Boat #2 is 99 feet long and can throw over 10,000 gallons of water per minute.

Fire Boat No. 3, the smallest of the four fire boats, was accepted on March 22, 1928. She is 34 feet long and can pump 800 gpm.

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