



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## Newest Staten Island Ferry Boat, the SSG Michael H. Ollis, Takes Inaugural Journey

ANDREW J. LANZA February 14, 2022



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*“Today, as the SSG Michael H. Ollis ferry takes on its first passengers for the 5.2 mile ride across New York Harbor, we pause to remember SSG Michael Ollis, who heroically gave his life in service to our nation,” said New York State Senator Andrew Lanza. “Thousands will ride this ferry, and as they pass Lady Liberty in the harbor, I am confident that they will be reminded and inspired by Michael Ollis’ American patriotism. With the launch of the first of the Ollis class of ferries, we permanently etch Michael’s sacrifice and his shining example*

*into the hearts and minds of all who will ride this state-of-the-art vessel.”*

New York City Mayor Eric Adams today announced that the newest Staten Island Ferry has taken its inaugural ride and begun regular passenger service. The *Staff Sergeant Michael H. Ollis* — an \$85 million state-of-the-art ferry that is the first new vessel added to the fleet since 2005 — is named for a New Dorp resident who was killed in Afghanistan saving the life of a fellow soldier in 2013. Members of the Ollis family joined the boat’s inaugural trip from St. George Terminal on Staten Island to Whitehall Terminal in Lower Manhattan.

“Staff Sergeant Michael Ollis made the ultimate sacrifice for his country and one of his brothers in arms, and I am proud to honor his legacy today,” said **Mayor Adams**. “Michael’s bravery knew no bounds, and now thousands of New Yorkers and visitors from all over the world will be able to recognize that bravery every single day. We owe the entire Ollis family a debt of gratitude for all they have given and for allowing us the honor of remembering Michael.”

“This vessel represents the best of our city: A top-of-line ferry named in memory of someone who was truly selfless,” said **Deputy Mayor for Operations Meera Joshi**. “I am proud to take this inaugural ride with Staff Sergeant Ollis’ family, and I am so gratified knowing that people crossing New York Harbor will always remember Staff Sergeant Michael Ollis.”

“The staff of the Staten Island Ferry have trained extensively on this completely new vessel for the last few months — and, today, we are so proud to join the Ollis family in showing it off to the rest of New York,” said **Commissioner of the Department of Transportation Ydanis Rodriguez**. “We thank Mayor Adams, as well as the administration of Mayor Bill de Blasio, for the forward-thinking investment that brought us this boat and will bring two other new

boats to the harbor later this year.”

The *Staff Sergeant Michael H. Ollis* is the first of three new ferries that will enter service this year, collectively known as the *Ollis*-class vessels. Together, the vessels represent a transformative upgrade for the nation’s busiest municipal ferry system; the three new ferries are larger, more modern, and better equipped for extreme weather than the existing fleet. They will feature popular design elements of past Staten Island ferries, phone charging outlets, and comfortable seating, as well as an oval upper-deck promenade that will, for the first time, serve as an outdoor “walking track” for riders.

The *Ollis* completed harbor trials and passed U.S. Coast Guard inspections late last year. The other two *Ollis*-class ferries are expected to be commissioned later this year.

“I am honored to be a part of this moment in history as we watch the new *SSG Michael H. Ollis* ferry take its maiden voyage to downtown Manhattan this morning,” said **Staten Island Borough President Vito Fossella**. “As a Staten Islander, it is with great pride that we remember Staff Sergeant Ollis and his heroic act of saving the life of a fellow soldier. May this ferry remind all travelers of the legacy he leaves behind.”

“Army Staff Sergeant Michael Ollis gave his life to save a fellow soldier of the coalition fighting to end terrorism and for the people of Afghanistan, and it is because of his heroism that all of us are able to live each day freely,” said **Staten Island District Attorney Michael E. McMahon**. “It is only fitting that a Staten Island Ferry — an iconic vessel thousands of New Yorkers and people from around the world rely on every day for safe passage — will bear the name of Sgt. Ollis, as well as serve as a daily reminder of the ultimate sacrifice he made for us and as a symbol of the courage shown by all of America’s heroic veterans and the men and women who wear the uniform of our Armed Forces. I know that Bob and Linda and their whole family are incredibly proud of Michael, and we join them and all Staten Islanders

today in pride and admiration of his courage and selflessness.”

“Today, as the *SSG Michael H. Ollis* ferry takes on its first passengers for the 5.2 mile ride across New York Harbor, we pause to remember SSG Michael Ollis, who heroically gave his life in service to our nation,” said **New York State Senator Andrew Lanza**. “Thousands will ride this ferry, and as they pass Lady Liberty in the harbor, I am confident that they will be reminded and inspired by Michael Ollis’ American patriotism. With the launch of the first of the Ollis class of ferries, we permanently etch Michael’s sacrifice and his shining example into the hearts and minds of all who will ride this state-of-the-art vessel.”

“Michael Ollis was an exemplary Staten Islander, New Yorker, and a true American hero. Today’s inaugural ride on the *Staff Sergeant Michael H. Ollis* Staten Island Ferry is a celebration of his life and a testament to his legacy,” said **New York State Assemblymember Michael J. Cusick**. “This ferry that bears his name will serve as a reminder of his sacrifice and heroism for decades to come.”

“Like many Rockaway residents, Staten Islanders rely on a fleet that is dependable, safe, modern, and efficient to travel into Manhattan,” said **New York City Council Majority Whip Selvena N. Brooks-Powers, chair, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**. “As one of the nation’s busiest municipal ferry systems, it is essential we provide New Yorkers a state-of-the-art fleet that can withstand extreme weather conditions and a growing population. I am honored to stand with Department of Transportation Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez, Deputy Mayor Meera Joshi, and my colleagues in government, as we announce the first of three new ferries that will enter into service this year.”

“Today is an historic day for Staten Islanders as we honor our hero, Staff Sgt. Michael Ollis,” said **New York City Councilmember David Carr**. “Launching the maiden trip of a ferry dedicated in his name will ensure that his legacy will never be forgotten, and his story will continue to be passed on for generations to come.”

“Michael Ollis gave his life in order to save a fellow soldier; as Jesus tells us, “There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for another,” said **Timothy Cardinal Dolan, Archbishop of New York**. “May the *Staff Sergeant Michael H. Ollis* ferry not only safely transport its passengers but also serve as a constant source of inspiration to self-sacrifice and love of others for all who use it.”