

12-30-2014 Santa Catalina Island - Timothy Mitchell – Harbor Patrol Crushed in Storm

Men Who Died After Storm Slams Catalina Identified

<http://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Harbor-Patrol-Officer-Dies-on-Catalina-Island-During-Storm--287200171.html>

Dec 31, 2014 By Jason Kandel and Michael Larkin - *Jonathan Lloyd contributed*

Several boats broke loose from their moorings during 40-mph wind gusts and fierce waves in Avalon Harbor

Two men died Tuesday when fierce winds and big waves tore boats from their moorings and tossed vessels onto the rocky shore in one of the worst storms to hit Santa Catalina Island.

Timothy Mitchell, 39, an Avalon Harbor Patrol officer, was crushed to death between a boat and a rock. Bruce Ryder, 53, was found floating in the water at 6:30 a.m. and died at a hospital, officials said.

The Harbor Patrol officer died while trying to save a dive boat, the King Neptune, from sinking.

He jumped off the boat as it came "perilously close" to striking rocks in the harbor, officials said.



A harbor patrol officer was among two people killed after strong winds slammed Avalon Harbor. Ted Chen reports for the NBC4 News at Noon on Wednesday Dec. 31, 2014. (Published Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2014)

"The patrolman became lodged between the vessel and the rocks under the turbulent waves and could not be reached," the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department said in a statement.

At least three boats broke from moorings as wind gusts up to 40 mph lashed the island and swells up to 8 feet crashed onto the beach. Catalina is about 20 miles off the coast of Southern California.

The storm snapped a section of pier on Avalon's beach. Three pleasure boats lay hard on their side on the beach, one smashed by rocks.

Don MacKenzie and Lois Laughlin were not on the boat they live in when the storm hit.

"We tried to get on it, but thank God we really weren't," Lois Laughlin said.

The cove was vulnerable in this storm because it's not protected from waves washing in from the northeast.

Residents said it was the worst storm to hit in years. Kurt Kaplan, a meteorologist from the National Weather Service, said cold, dense winds "crashed down" on the island harder and persisted longer than in recent memory.

"It's rare to see one that strong," he said.

Avalon's harbor patrol assigns moorings and provides security on the city's waterfront.

The staff includes 11 harbor patrol officers, according to the city.

LOSS OF HARBOR PATROL OFFICER TIMOTHY MITCHELL

<http://ecatalina.com/news/article/Loss-of-Harbor-Patrol-Officer-Timothy-Mitchell>

January 01, 2015 *By Avalon Harbor Master Brian Bray*



AVALON, Calif. – On December 30, 2014, the City of Avalon lost Harbor Patrol Officer Tim Mitchell, a hero and beloved member of the City family, who gave the ultimate sacrifice as he valiantly served the community defending life and property.

Tim was on duty as a Harbor Patrol Assistant, working from a patrol boat, trying to protect residents, visitors and boats that were being battered by the fierce winds and waves that quickly and mercilessly descended upon Avalon Harbort. He died as he tried to save the King Neptune, a boat upon which he had also served as a Dive Instructor here on Catalina Island for approximately the past 10 years.

Nearly 40 years old, Tim was a native of New Zealand, but a recent United States Citizen. He held joint degrees in Religious Studies and Sociology, and was an accomplished musician, playing multiple instruments.

Tim recently joined the Harbor Department in May of this year. However, he had served the City for the past five years as a Reserve Firefighter. In addition to his City family, Tim also enjoyed a close, extended family at ScubaLuv - home of the King Neptune - where he worked as a Dive Instructor, and was looked up to by all of his peers. He was a "2nd father" to Bob and Tina Kennedy's children (Bob and Tina being the owners of ScubaLuv, of course).

Tim leaves behind a mother, father, two brothers and Michelle Rodriguez, his girlfriend. He will be missed by all those who knew him. Our condolences to Tim's family - both biological and extended. Once we are aware when services will be held for Tim - and if anyone outside of family is invited to attend any of them - we will let you know.

Please join me in acknowledging the tragic loss of one of our own family members - this hero, Tim Mitchell - and his ultimate sacrifice in serving the City of Avalon.

Thank you, EVERYONE, for your prayers and condolences. For donations to the Mitchell Family, please make checks payable to the Avalon Harbor Employees Association, PO Box 1085, Avalon, CA 90704.