

# *Police Department City of New York*



## *100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the New York City Police Department Flag*

*May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
0900 Hours*

The Honorable  
Bill de Blasio  
*Mayor of the City of New York*

James P. O'Neill  
*Police Commissioner  
City of New York*



March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1941 St. Patrick's Day Parade  
Credit - Ret. P.O. Joseph Marino



Sheepshead Bay Police Camp  
Credit -New York's Finest Magazine, March 1984





**‘Program to commence at 9:00 A.M.’**

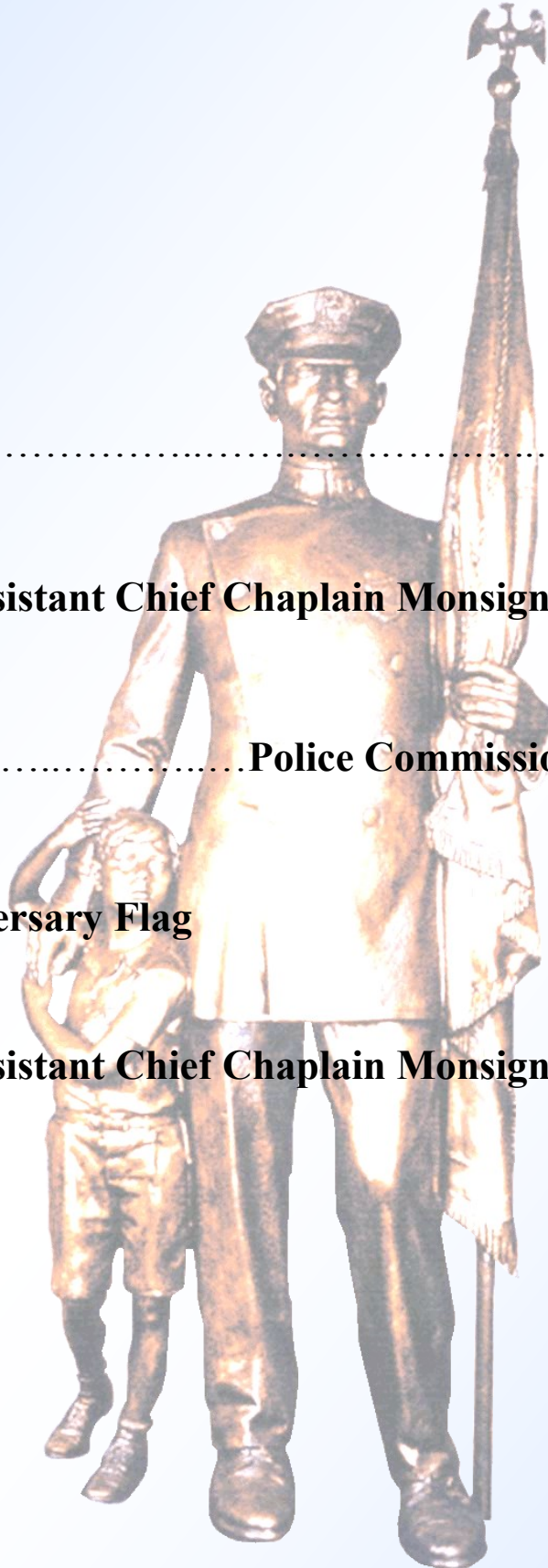
**National Anthem.....NYPD Singers**

**Invocation.....Assistant Chief Chaplain Monsignor Robert J. Romano**

**Remarks.....Police Commissioner James P. O’Neill**

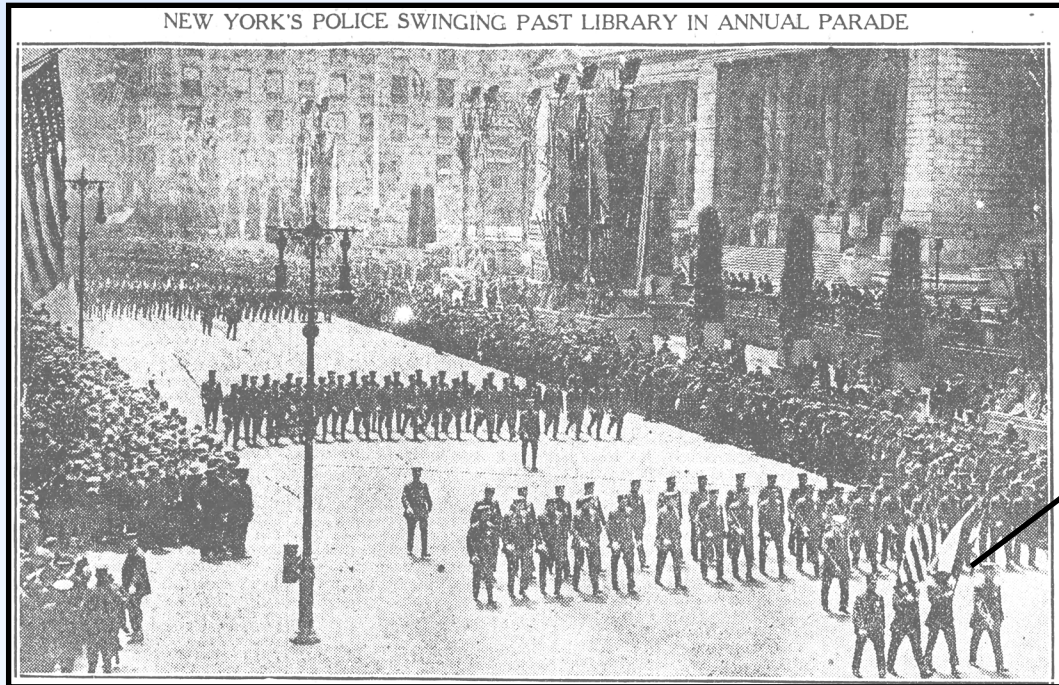
**Raising of the Anniversary Flag**

**Benediction.....Assistant Chief Chaplain Monsignor Robert J. Romano**



Today we celebrate and honor another milestone of our Department,  
The **100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** of the adoption of the present  
New York City Police Department Flag.

On May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1919, *one hundred years ago today*,  
our Flag made its first public appearance as it lead the “Greatest Police Force in the  
World” up Fifth Avenue, from 26<sup>th</sup> to 110<sup>th</sup> Street, at the Annual Police Parade.



New York Tribune,  
May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1919,  
Credit - Ret. P.O. Joseph Marino



New York City Mayor John F. Hylan  
(1918 - 1925),  
Police Commissioner Richard E. Enright  
(PC 1918-1925),  
“5,500 Bluecoats, 3,000 Police Reserves,  
1,000 Women’s Police Reserves,” Motorcycles,  
Bicycle Companies, and Mounted Squadrons  
first honored the flag by marching behind as  
members of the “Corps of Aviators”  
“escorted” overhead.

Known as the “1919 flag”,  
it was designed by then  
**Fourth Deputy Police Commissioner  
Frederick A. Wallis**  
under the direction of  
Police Commissioner Richard E. Enright



Even one hundred years ago, the 1919 flag honored and represented the rich diverse history of the Department and City it continues to serve. The “official” description of the 1919 flag was published in the 1919 NYPD Annual Report.

The disposition of the “Jack and Stripes” is modeled in the American tradition of our National Colors.

The **five (5)** alternate **bars** of *white* and *brilliant green* have been chosen to symbolize the **Five Boroughs of New York City**.

The **twenty four (24)** stars represent all of the **cities, towns, and incorporated villages** that were amalgamated into the “**City of Greater New York**” in **1898**.

The **cities** - New York, Brooklyn, and Long Island City - form the **center three (3) stars**.

The **towns** - Jamaica, Newton, Hempstead, Flushing, Middletown, Northfield, Southfield, Westfield, and Casleton - **compose the nine (9) middle ring of stars**.

The **villages** - Richmond Hill, Arverne, Far Rockaway, Rockaway, Jamaica, Flushing, College Point, Whitestone, New Brighton, Port Richmond, Edgewater, Tottenville - are represented by the **twelve (12) outer ring of stars**.

“These stars, reposing in unbroken order, have been set upon a field of deep blue, the color of the uniform, by which the guardians of our security and order are daily recognized by the millions who are within the shielding of their vigilance and strength.”

The fringes and **tassels of orange**, the **blue field**, and **white stars and stripes** incorporate the colors of the city flag into the police flag.



Credit - NYC Police Museum

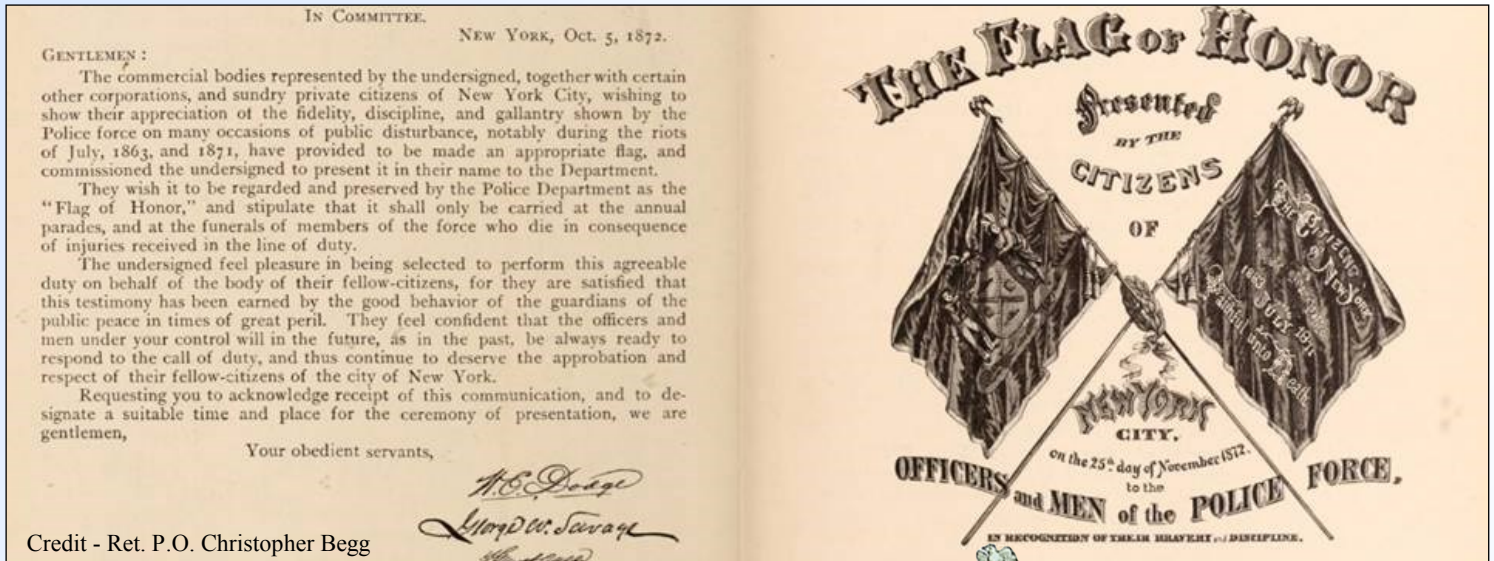
**Green** is the “**traditional and sentimental**” **color** of the New York City Police Department and is a subject of historical debate. Some attribute the color to the large number of Irish members in the department at the time. While others trace it back to **1658** when the first paid police force of New Amsterdam called the “**Rattle Watch**”, from which the NYPD can claim direct decent, used **lanterns with green glass** sides as a means of identification. When not in use, these lanterns were hung outside to signify the watch was in; thus the reason why Green Lights are mounted in front of each New York City Police Department Precinct.





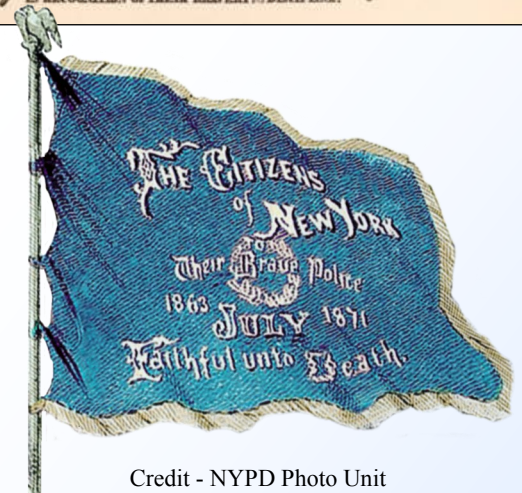
Despite various Command Post, Unit Flags and Pennants used by the Department, there have been other flags which represented the entire “Department” before the current 1919 flag.

## “1872 Flag” - Known as the “Flag of Honor”



Credit - Ret. P.O. Christopher Begg

On October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1872, the “Flag of Honor” was presented by the citizens of New York City to the Department to honor its “fidelity, discipline, and gallantry” shown during the 1863 “Draft Riots” (Civil War Draft) & 1871 “Orange Riots” (Irish Catholics and Protestants). The first Department flag was imprinted “The Citizens of New York, To Their Brave Police, 1863 July 1871, Faithful unto Death”. It was only supposed to be used on special occasions such as police parades and Line of Duty Funerals.



Credit - NYPD Photo Unit



Credit - Ret. Criminal Invest. Pascal Storino

## “1888 Flag”

Although little is known, the “1888 Flag” was designed by Detective James G. Cooper Jr., of Superintendent (Chief of Department) William Murray’s office. Most likely the presentation of the honorary flag and its limited use brought to light the need for a Official Department Flag. The New York Times

reported in 1888 that this flag was first flown at the Annual Police Parade that year. This flag was later described as having been made of “blue silk and pendant-shaped, 5 feet long and 4feet wide at the staff, surmounted by a gold eagle” (atop the wooden pole)



*Since that day in May a hundred years ago,  
our flag has waved over our city, carried across foreign battlefields,  
and covered the remains of our fallen brothers and sisters.*

*Wherever and whenever it may fly,  
we honor the rich history of our department with pride and humility.*

## **Special Thanks**

To all the uniformed and civilian members that helped  
make this Anniversary Memorial Possible!

**NYPD Ceremonial Unit**

**NYPD Printing Section**

**NYPD Photo Unit**

## **Photo Credit & Historical Assistance**

**Retired Police Officer Joseph Marino**  
Patrol Borough Queens South Operations  
(Patrol Borough Queens South Museum)

**Retired Sergeant Mike Bosak**  
Patrol Borough Queens South

**Retired Police Officer Christopher Begg**  
Suffolk County Police Department

**Retired Detective Pascal Storino Jr.**  
Westchester County D.A. Squad

**Mr. Marc A. Hermann**

**S. S. A. John Schroeder**  
Patrol Borough Queens South Operations  
(Patrol Borough Queens South Museum)



*Courtesy*

*Professionalism*

*Respect*