

Compass



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CANADIAN COAST GUARD AUXILIARY – PACIFIC
OCTOBER 2010

PORT ALICE CREW RESPONDS TO STATE OF EMERGENCY

The ocean was like chocolate milk, brown and opaque. Dozens of mudslides cut northern Vancouver Island's road network and filled the sea with debris. On September 24, an early winter storm hit the village of Port Alice hard. CCGA-P Station 43 Port Alice got permission from JRCC to aid in humanitarian efforts as long as required. Over the following days four members racked up many hours on the water.

A mudslide, caused by a month's worth of rain falling in 48 hours, had severed road links to the cellulose pulp

mill and left around 75 workers stranded. The station used their 27' Zodiac Mark 2 (1992) to transport food, paramedics and fire crew to and from the mill.

The half-dozen active member station is on call 24/7/365, but despite the large amount of recreational and commercial traffic, the crew only gets two or three missions per year. This multi-day mission challenged the crew with heavy rain and winds. It also challenged the vessel with hundreds of logs in the inlet that had broken loose from booms.

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RESCUE

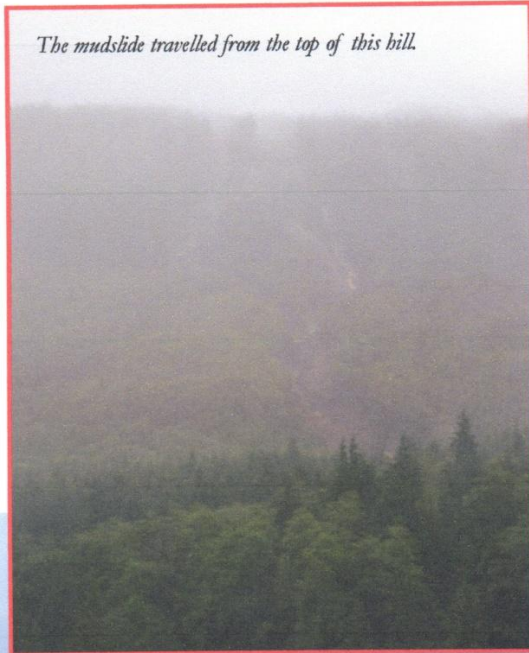
After several days of transporting emergency crews and people who had hiked in from their remote cabins, the RCMP brought in resources and the mill began running regular water taxis. The crew was able to dry the cuffs of their drysuits and get a full night's sleep.

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If you are ever on north Vancouver Island fishing, camping or sightseeing, the station would like to extend a welcome to join their weekly practices. Email Marc at marcbrackett@gmail.com.

Marc Brackett
Training Officer
CCGA-P Station 43 Port Alice

The mudslide travelled from the top of this hill.



Station 43 members Marc Brackett and Sean Watson

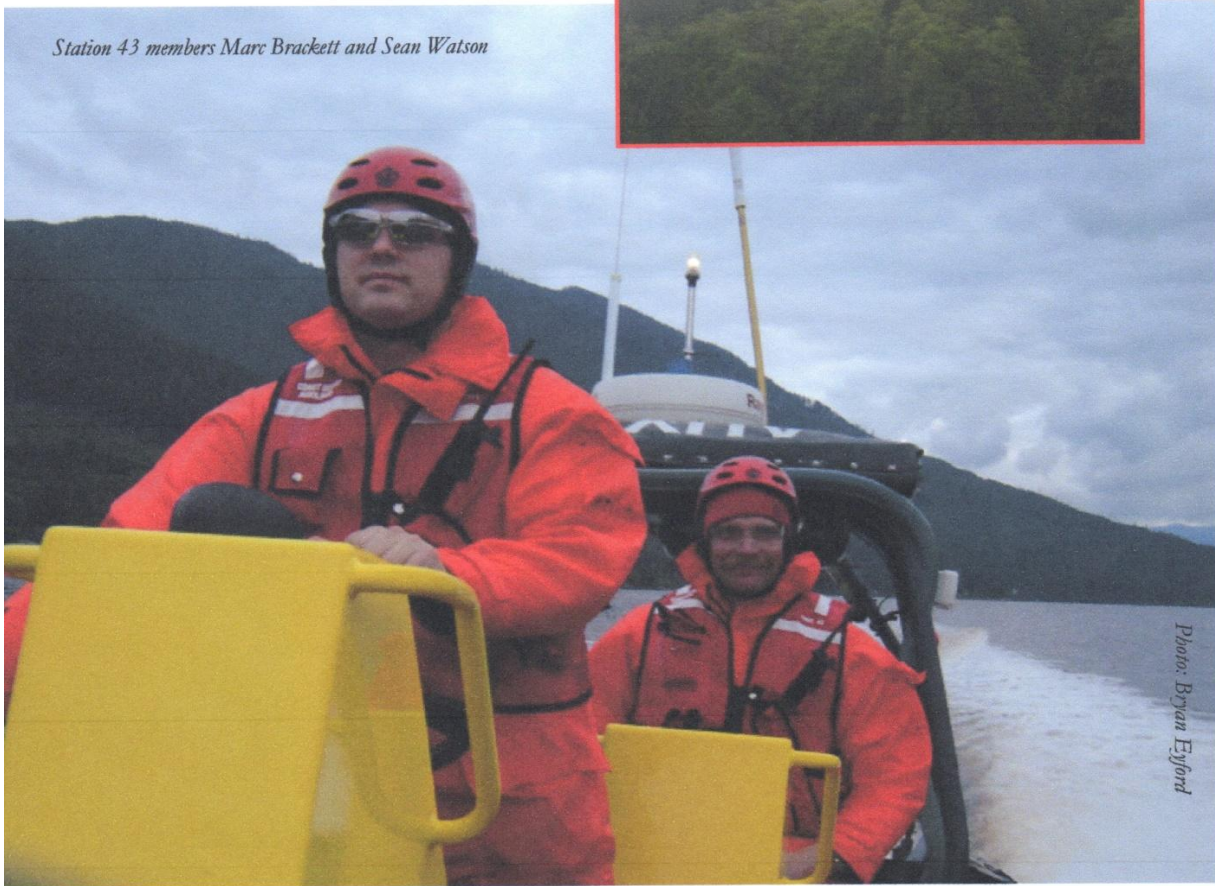


Photo: Bryan Eysford