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GANGES, BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Former island resident claimed in line of duty

Funeral services were held today (Wednesday) in Campbell River for former Salt Spring Island resident Tom Shelby.

Shelby, 26, a Canadian Coast Guard crew member, was killed in the line of duty last Friday while answering a distress signal from a tug off the coast of northern Vancouver Island.

The Seaspun tug was being towed to safer waters after it had radioed that it was having steering problems in heavy seas while towing a pulp barge.

Coast Guard public affairs officer Craig Dougans said Shelby's death resulted after a rogue wave estimated to be 23 feet high picked up the tug and dropped it on the Coast Guard vessel.

Shelby and two other crew members were thrown overboard at the time of the collision. The other two crew members were rescued unharmed. Shelby was airlifted to the Port Hardy Hospital, where he died.

Turn to Page A3

Coast Guard employee dies while answering distress call

From Page A1

Shelby began his career with the Coast Guard in Ganges in September, 1980, as a relief worker on the lifeboat. Frank Wilkins was the officer in charge at the Ganges station when Shelby was hired on as a student during the summer months.

"He was a really good kid," Wilkins said. "He was very mature for his age — very trustworthy and responsible when it came to the job. He will be sadly missed, not only by his

family and friends, but by anyone who has ever worked with him."

Shelby had just received his ticket with the Coast Guard and was working on his first regular shift out of Bull Harbour, on Hope Island at the north end of Vancouver Island, at the time of the accident.

Shelby is survived by his wife, Denele Shelby, and daughter, Kimberly, of Campbell River; his parents, Alexander and Helen Shelby of Ganges; and two sisters, Marianna Holst of Courtenay and Alison Kerr of Ganges.