

## The Register Guard – Tuesday April 28, 1998

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1310&dat=19980428&id=3U5WAAAAIBAJ&sjid=zusDAAAAIBAJ&pg=5551,7424841&hl=en>

### **Officer killed trying to rescue surfer**

**OCEAN SHORES, Wash. —** Rough waters swamped two rescue vessels coming to the aid of a surfer on Sunday, killing an Ocean Shores police officer, the U.S. Coast Guard said.

Four officers from the Ocean Shores Police Department's Surf Rescue Team — two on a personal watercraft and two on a motorized raft — were coming to the aid of a 26-year-old surfer in distress when both vessels overturned in the 4- to 6-foot surf and strong riptides, the Coast Guard said.

A Coast Guard helicopter from Astoria and a Coast Guard motor surf boat from Grays Harbor, Wash., picked up the surfer and the four rescuers.

One of the rescuers, Lt. James Davis, died at a local hospital. Davis, 41, was a 10-year veteran of the Ocean Shores Police Department. He was the first to die in the line of duty in the department's 28-year history, department spokesman David McManus said.

Davis appeared OK when he was rescued but then stopped breathing, McManus said.

The surfer and the four rescuers were all wearing wet suits, the Coast Guard said.

*— From news service reports*

## **Ocean Shores Police Officer Drowned In Surf**

<http://community.seattletimes.nwsources.com/archive/?date=19980428&slug=2747681>

*April 28, 1998 The AP*

OCEAN SHORES, Grays Harbor County - The death of an Ocean Shores police officer during the rescue of a surfer was due to drowning, Grays Harbor Deputy Coroner Ed Fleming said yesterday.

Fellow police officers had speculated Lt. James L. Davis, 41, a veteran of surf rescues, suffered a heart attack or was fatally injured after his small motorized craft overturned in heavy waves.

"There was no heart attack or undue injuries or anything of that nature," Fleming said.

Four officers from the Ocean Shores Police Department's Surf Rescue Team, aboard two small watercraft, were thrown into the water while trying to aid a surfer in distress Sunday afternoon.

A Coast Guard helicopter from Astoria, Ore., and a Coast Guard motor surf boat from Grays Harbor picked up the surfer and the four rescuers.

Davis was attached to a line from the helicopter by a Coast Guard rescuer, lifted out of the water and taken to the beach.

Fleming said the last time anyone saw movement from Davis was when he was picked up by the helicopter.

Efforts to resuscitate him on the beach failed.

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# OFFICER DOWN MEMORIAL PAGE

REMEMBERING ALL OF LAW ENFORCEMENT'S HEROES.

## Family, Friends & Fellow Officers Remember...

<http://www.odmp.org/officer/reflections/15079-lieutenant-james-ladow-davis>

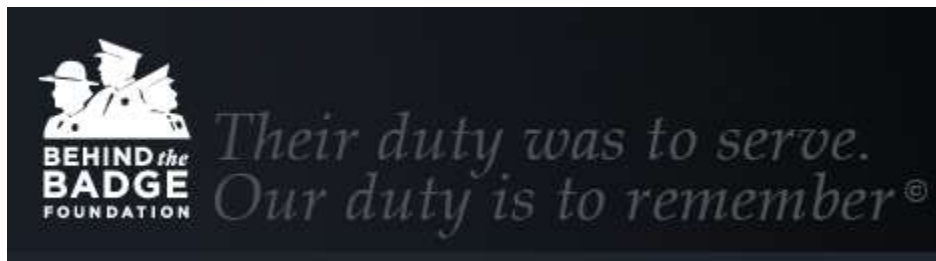
[United States](#) > [Washington](#) > [Ocean Shores Police Department](#) > [Lieutenant James LaDow Davis](#) > **Reflections**



***Lieutenant***

**James LaDow Davis**

Ocean Shores Police Department, Washington  
End of Watch: Sunday, April 26, 1998



## Davis, Lt. James L.

<http://www.behindthebadgefoundation.org/roll-call/davis-lt-james-l>



**End of Watch:**

Sunday, April 26, 1998

**County:**

Grays Harbor

**Agency:**

Ocean Shores P.D.



Lieutenant Davis died during a rescue attempt of a stranded surfer. Davis and three other members of the Ocean Shores Police Surf Rescue Team had gone out in the 10 to 12-foot swells in two separate boats. The in-flatable boat Lieutenant Davis was in capsized and both occupants were thrown into the water. He was brought ashore by the US Coast Guard but was not breathing. He was transported to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead. All of the others involved were rescued. Lieutenant Davis had served with the agency for 18 years. He was survived by his wife and five children.

[https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1314&dat=19980430&id=TCgzAAAAIBAJ&sjid=A\\_IDAAAAIBAJ&pg=6816,8369844&hl=en](https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1314&dat=19980430&id=TCgzAAAAIBAJ&sjid=A_IDAAAAIBAJ&pg=6816,8369844&hl=en)

## **James Davis**

*Ocean Shores, Wash.*

Visitation for James L. Davis, 41, will be from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. today at Pines Baptist Church. Funeral will follow at the church. Hazen and Jaeger Funeral Home is in charge of local arrangements.

Memorial service will be held at a later date at the Ocean Shores Convention Center. Cofeman Mortuary in Hoquiam, Wash., is in charge of Ocean Shores arrangements.

Mr. Davis, a 10-year resident of Ocean Shores, drowned Sunday while rescuing a surfer.

He was born and raised in Spokane and graduated from North Central High School and was a member of the football and track and field teams. He had been named to All-City in the hurdles.

Mr. Davis served with the Army from 1974 to 1979 where he was a military policeman. He had earned the National Defense Service Medal, the Good Conduct Ribbon and had qualified as a marksman with the M-16 rifle.

In 1975 he married Sherry Gentry in Clarkston, Wash., and they returned to Spokane after his military discharge.

He worked for the Spokane County Sheriff's Department and in 1988 moved to Ocean Shores where he joined the Ocean Shores Police Department. He was a detective until two months ago when he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant.

While in Spokane he assisted with Cub Scouts for many years, served as a Cubmaster and also coached Little League Baseball.

He was instrumental in the establishment of the surf rescue team in Ocean Shores. Mr. Davis was the recipient of the Ocean Shores Elks Lodge Policeman of the Year award in 1994 and was awarded the Ocean Shores Police Department Medal of Merit three times for rescuing people from the surf.

Mr. Davis was a member of the North Beach School board of directors and had served as their president since January of this year.

He was involved in the DARE Program in area schools, was an assistant track coach with North Beach High School, a range officer and a customs agent.

While serving as a detective, he was a member of the task force which the cities of Ocean Shores, Westport and Montesano, Wash., developed to aid one another in special crime and criminal investigations.

Survivors include his wife; a son, Travis Davis of Ocean Shores; four daughters, Wendy Bunegas of El Paso, Texas, and Crystal, Jenna and Amber Davis, all of Ocean Shores; his mother, Ann Bissan of Spokane; four brothers, Perry, Gary and Kerry Gorman, all of Spokane, and Marcus Gorman who is stationed in Greece with the Air Force; a sister, Michelle Bissan of Spokane; and three granddaughters.

Memorial contributions may be made to Breast Cancer Research, c/o Grays Harbor American Cancer Society, P.O. Box 743, Aberdeen, WA 98520.

## **Memorial Set To Honor Ocean Shores Firefighter--- (Washington)**

<http://www.pwctoday.com/showthread.php?t=68893>

03-23-2006

**OCEAN SHORES** - A memorial has now been set for Mar. 29 to honor Ocean Shores firefighter Rob McLaughlin, who died in a surf rescue training exercise.

*The Surf Rescue Team is run by the Ocean Shores Police Department, but with three members of the fire department. Fire Capt. McLaughlin was one of them.*

*McLaughlin spent 20 years as a firefighter paramedic, but this was his first year on the Surf Rescue Team. Monday he was out training in the heavy surf of Ocean Shores when he and his partner were tossed out of their personal watercraft.*

*"Basically, we were out training and we both got knocked off the watercraft," said surf rescuer Curt Begley. "I didn't see much after we got off the craft because the trainer was out there and took Rob and started in with him. I was out there and lost sight of them until we got to the beach. We just came off a wave a little sideways and we lost the craft and away we went."*

*Begley says he didn't think much of it because they train to get tossed into the water.*

*"I lost sight of him when the instructor started taking him to the beach. I was trying to get back on the watercraft and taking the waves as they came," he said. "I was basically staying out there until they got Rob to the beach and then come pick me up. As time went by I realized he's not coming back as quick as he should so it's time for me to start working my way back in."*

*Police Lt. Russ Fitts of the Surf Rescue Team says, "One of our officers tried to assist him back onto his personal watercraft he couldn't make it up on board. Subsequently we handed him another floatation device and he had a tough time holding onto that. And as the officer was calling for additional help he went back to see him floating in the water and brought him to shore."*

*McLaughlin was in full floatation gear and was talking to the first trainer who got to him. But he was unconscious when they got him to shore.*

*"It's virtually impossible for us to go completely underwater with the amount of gear we have on us," Fitts said. "Invariably, something still can happen."*



*McLaughlin died just after midnight Wednesday morning.*

*"I'm angry that I've lost one of my best commanders and one of my good friends," said Ocean Shores Fire Chief Jim Hodges. "But it's not an anger at the Surf Rescue Team, it's an anger at my own helplessness in this situation."*

*It's the second death for the team. Eight years ago, team founder Lt. Jim Davis died in a surf rescue operation. Ironically, it was Rob McLaughlin who was the first to try to save him. He spoke with us back then.*

*McLaughlin in 1998 said, "Couple times along the way, we did have pulses back. But we were unable to sustain it."*

*So he knew the danger, yet Rob McLaughlin wanted to part of it.*

*"Rob was fireman all the way," Hodges said. "He lived it, he ate it, he breathed it and unfortunately he died it, but he died doing what he loved doing and that was preparing himself to save and give to other people."*

*A memorial fund for his wife and three children has been set up at Twin Counties Credit Union in Rob McLaughlin's name. They can be reached at 1-800-258-3115.*

*Fire fighters from all over the region are expected to come to Ocean Shores for the memorial March 29 at 2 p.m. at the Ocean Shores Convention Center.*

*Investigators still don't know if he drowned or perhaps had some medical condition go wrong.*

## **Officer Who Drowned In Effort To Rescue Surfer Memorialized**

<http://community.seattletimes.nwsources.com/archive/?date=19980501&slug=2748241>  
*May 1, 1998 Seattle Times Staff: Seattle Times News Services*

SPOKANE - An Ocean Shores police officer who drowned while trying to rescue a surfer off the Washington coast was remembered as a hero at his funeral yesterday.

Lt. James L. Davis, 41, was among four officers from the Ocean Shores Police Department's Surf Rescue Team who were thrown into the water while trying to aid a surfer in distress Sunday afternoon.

A Coast Guard helicopter and surf boat picked up the surfer and the four rescuers. Davis was lifted out of the water and taken to the beach on the end of a helicopter cable, but efforts to resuscitate him failed.

Davis had been decorated three times for rescuing people from the Pacific Ocean, mourners yesterday were told at the South Pines Baptist Church. He was also a former Spokane County police officer.

Davis, a 10-year veteran of the Ocean Shores Police Department, was the first to die in the line of duty in the department's 28-year history, spokesman David McManus said.