

04-01-1978 Palliser Bay New Zealand – Greg Rowe – LEO – Boat Accident



On April 1, 1978, Constable Gregory Rowe, 20, was caught in a tow rope and dragged overboard from the Lady Elizabeth II police launch during a yacht rescue in rough weather off the Wellington coast. His body was never found.

Tears for constable 30 years on

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/352393>

07/04/2008 The Dominion Post



NOT FORGOTTEN: Robyn Ashley, engaged to Greg Rowe at the time of his death, remains in touch with his family and helped organise the memorial weekend.

KENT BLECHYNDEN/The Dominion Post

The final resting place of Constable Greg Rowe continues to be the wild sea that lashes Wellington's south coast - so 30 years after his death, his family and police colleagues reunited on those same rough seas.

Carrying wreaths, six of Greg's siblings, his elderly father and close friend and former launch master Wayne Wilkie boarded maritime police boat Lady Elizabeth III last Friday for Karaka Bay. There, the police chaplain gave a service similar to the one 30 years earlier after the search for Greg's body was called off.

On April 1, 1978, Greg, 23, was just days away from transferring back to his native Canterbury so he could spend more time with his large farming family and fiancée, whom he was to wed in two months.

On the last shift before his move, the close-knit team responded to a yacht in trouble near Palliser Bay. Winds were

gusting up to 25 knots as the Lady Elizabeth II began to tow the stricken vessel. Greg's leg became entangled in a rope and he went overboard.

"After 30 years, [the details are] not important," said Robyn Ashley, Greg's fiancée. "You think about what's happened to you in the past 30 years, rather than those details. It was just an accident."

Ms Ashley, also a police employee, has kept in touch with the Rowe family and helped arrange a memorial weekend at Pounui Homestead in the Wairarapa, attended by more than 50 police cadets from the 70s and their families.

"We looked at photos, talked, laughed and remembered," Ms Ashley said. "There were a few tears, but not too many. Tears were 30 years ago."

Messages of remembrance from around the globe were read out, including one from the assistant commissioner of police, who was in Afghanistan.

Last Sunday, Rowe family members trekked to a remote point near where Greg went missing. There they placed a stylised angel plaque on a boulder, where it "is not the closing of a chapter, just an acknowledgement".

	Constable	Greg Rowe	23	1 April 1978	Drowned after leg became entangled in a rope and fell overboard from <i>Lady Elizabeth II</i>	Palliser Bay(nearby)	[60][61]
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"Police News" (PDF). New Zealand Police Association. May 2008. p. 97. Archived from [the original](#) (PDF) on 14 October 2008. Retrieved 2009-04-13.



MEMORIES: Family members, his former fiancée and police colleagues were amongst those who laid a wreath at a memorial service held on Wellington's south coast recently to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the death of Constable Greg Rowe, who drowned on 1 April 1978. Mr Rowe's leg became entangled in a rope on the Police launch, the Lady Elizabeth 11 and he was dragged overboard. The launch had been responding to a distress call from a yacht which was in trouble at Palliser Bay. Members of the Rowe family also laid a stylised angel plaque on a boulder in a remote location near where Greg drowned. Pictured are Ian Rowe, Nicola Barrett (nee Rowe), Stuart Rowe, Kevin Rowe, Denise Rowe and Kay Rowe.

- Photo courtesy of The Dominion Post

<https://web.archive.org/web/20081014052614/http://policeasn.org.nz/communications/newspdf/PoliceNewsMay08.pdf>

New Zealand Police Museum

https://www.facebook.com/NewZealandPoliceMuseum/posts/1156660787697486?comment_id=1156684357695129&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R%22%7D

March 31, 2016 ·

Today we mourn the loss of Constable Gregory Donald Rowe, 38 years after his tragic death. Our thoughts are with his family, friends and colleagues.

Name & rank: Constable Gregory Donald ROWE

Police number: 4284

Born: 11 February 1955

Years in New Zealand Police: 5

Died: 1 April 1978

Age: 23

Engaged



Gregory's story:

Gregory Rowe was born in North Canterbury and joined the Police in August 1973. The newly attested Constable Rowe was posted to Wellington, where he spent some time working with the Criminal Investigation Branch. He was assigned to the wharf Police unit at the beginning of 1978.

Having applied for a transfer to Christchurch to be closer to his fiancée and family, he was about two weeks away from moving at the time of his early death. His wedding was only two months away.

At 3pm on 1 April 1978, Constable Rowe and two other officers went out in the Police launch Lady Elizabeth II to help tow a disabled yacht into Wellington Harbour. The sea was rough that day, with strong winds gusting up to 25 knots. In the early stages of the tow, just off Windy Point, Constable Rowe's leg was caught in a tow rope and he was dragged overboard. The crew of the Lady Elizabeth II searched for him for a long time before finally heading back in to port. Despite an extensive sea, ground and air search, Constable Rowe's body has never been found.