



The cast of *Search & Rescue*, from left, Claudette Mink, Steve Bacic, Zoie Palmer and Jeremy Guilbaut mug for a photo on the deck of the Coast Guard major lifeboat Cape St. James. Behind them, the boat's real crew takes its own pictures. JON MURRAY — THE PROVINCE

Search & Rescue mission

DRAMA: Explores crew members' personal, professional lives



Dana Gee

ON THE SET

Cape St. James.

The drama, which will likely air in March 2008, on Global, revolves around the professional and personal lives of four Canadian Coast Guard members.

With a lot of the action on or near the water, the production has set up camp in Britannia Beach and Squamish.

"It's so nice to be up in Squamish, but I don't know if I will be saying that in January," said Claudette Mink, who plays Laura, the first mate.

While there are plenty of exciting rescue sequences and even action at a nudist colony, the series is designed to peel back the wetsuit, if you will, and reveal the personal lives of the crew.

"There's lots of action, but the reason I really like it is there are lots of character-driven scenes," said Mink, hiding out from the rain in the cabin of the MLB as it sat moored at a dilapidated dock just off of the Sea-to-Sky Highway. "When they are at work they are adrenaline junkies. They are risking their life and rescuing people. There's lots of choppers and boats, and diving and underwater sequences. And when they're at home they're

kind of messed-up people with real problems and lives like the rest of us have."

Sure we all have problems, but we don't all get to hang out on a cool boat or fly in helicopters.

"Those are the fun days, being out on the MLB with the real Coast Guard guys," said Mink. "My character has a lot of chatter sequences, too. The power and the noise and the action really gets your adrenaline going."

But for some of the cast the action is literally chilling.

"It involves Zoie [Palmer] and I being in the water a lot," said Jeremy Guilbaut, who along with Palmer plays a Coast Guard rescue swimmer. "At first it's OK, you know for the first five hours, then the next five hours it was cold and it's only October. Wait until January."

"I feel for Zoie and Jeremy. They are very courageous people," added Bacic, who admits he's been trying to figure out ways he can convince the Coast Guard crew to let him take the wheel of the MLB.

Elliot, a veteran of many different shoots, is also sympathetic to Guilbaut and Palmer's



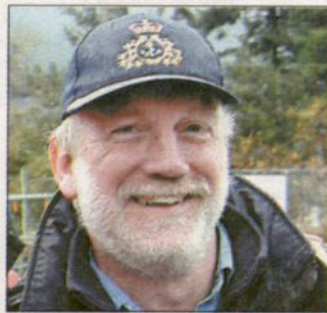
JAG's David James Elliott is one of the stars of *Search & Rescue*.

watery world.

"You think it's cool, you know, jumping in the water. All day is something else, though," said Elliott, who is double-teaming these days with *Search & Rescue* and a movie shoot in his hometown of Toronto. "You know, I've had my fill of the freezing cold at 2 a.m."

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Catch Dana Gee on *The Morning News* on Global Fridays at 8:45 a.m.



DUKE SNIDER JON MURRAY — THE PROVINCE

Rescuers hope show ups interest

BY DANA GEE
TELEVISION WRITER

While Global TV hopes its new series *Search & Rescue* will be a commercial success, the Canadian Coast Guard hopes it will be successful as a commercial.

The series — which is currently in production in the Squamish area — focuses on a Coast Guard rescue team stationed here on the West Coast.

While the storylines may wade heavily into the personal lives of the crew, there is still plenty of watery action — which will be buoyed a great deal by Coast Guard equipment, staff and expertise.

In return, the civilian-manned fleet will get some serious PR support once the series airs next March.

"It's a perfect opportunity for outreach. It's great for recruitment," said Coast Guard director of Pacific operations Duke Snider.

The need for this kind of exposure is a sign of the times.

"People are retiring and the youth has an awful lot of choices out there," said Snider, who has been with the Coast Guard for 25 years. "We're competing for the same type of people as the RCMP, the armed forces, fire departments, police departments. It's a challenge and we've been a silent service for a long time."

Another challenge is simply educating people about the Coast Guard.

"The most typical thing we see is people equate us with the United States Coast Guard," said Snider, who oversees 560 personnel and 32 vessels. "They look at the armed Coast Guard, and we are a totally different organization. It's not just search and rescue. It's ice-breaking, it's science, it's pollution response, it's a whole host of activities."

Snider's hope that network-TV exposure will bump up recruitment is apparently well-founded, as one of the show's stars can personally attest.

David James Elliott, the star of *JAG*, the U.S. primetime drama about the legal branch of the military, said the decade-long show served the military well.

"When we first started *JAG*, it was hard to get any co-operation," said Elliott. "Then [the U.S. military] realized their induction rates were going up because people were joining after seeing the show."

■ If you are interested in joining the Coast Guard, then go to cgg-gcc.gc.ca.