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Ottawa, Canada

Canadian Forces participate in non-defence activities, 1

Program boosts scientific businesses, 3

Canada signs property claims agreement with Cuba, 3

Pearson peace medal, 3

CIDA funds to assist Ethiopian drought victims, 3

Tax treaty signed, 3

Defence minister visits NORAD headquarters, 4

Federal government studies fuel options, 4

Canada-France social security pact, 4

Film on handicapped wins award, 5

New program challenges students, 5

Trade centre fosters business for Canadian companies in Japan, 5

Grapes improved by cloning, 6

Spanish galleon taking shape, 6

Forest centre of calm, 6

Special welcome for Indochinese refugee, 6

News of the arts — prints, films, 7

News briefs, 8

Canadian Forces participate in non-defence activities

During 1979, the Department of National Defence (DND) provided assistance to a number of non-defence agencies. Excerpts from the department's 1979 annual review, which follow, outline some of the tasks undertaken by the Canadian Forces during the year.

Search and rescue

The Canadian Forces have the responsibility for co-ordination of all search and rescue (SAR) activities in Canada and adjacent ocean areas. This includes full responsibility for SAR related to air incidents and provision of aircraft resources in response to marine incidents.

Surface vessels required for marine SAR are supplied mainly by the Department of Transport's Canadian Coast Guard and, to a lesser extent, by the Department of Fisheries and the Environment. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources also assist with operations.

Responses to SAR distress situations are co-ordinated by four rescue co-ordination centres (RCC) situated at Victoria, Edmonton, Trenton and Halifax. These centres, under the operational control of the respective region commanders, are manned by Canadian Forces members, with officers of the Canadian Coast Guard attached to all centres except Edmonton.

Rescue centres have at their disposal dedicated SAR resources composed of fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters and surface vessels, including hovercraft. When necessary, the RCC may call upon Regular and Reserve squadron aircraft and ships of the Canadian Forces to augment the SAR capability.

In border areas, co-operative SAR agreements have been worked out between Canadian and U.S. authorities to provide for the most efficient use of each country's SAR facilities.

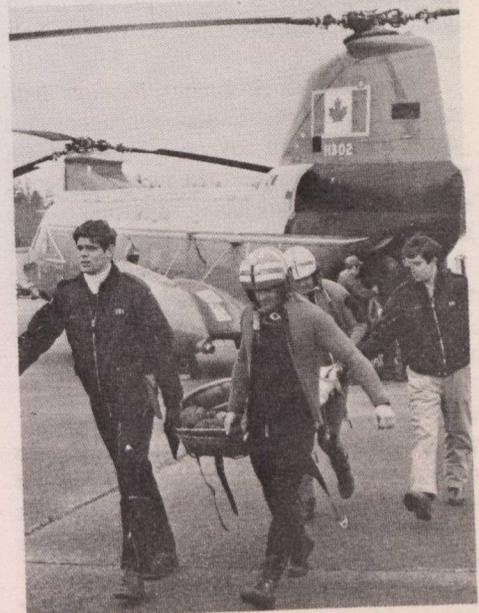
All government services related to SAR

are formally reviewed on an annual basis. This process involves local identification of SAR needs in all regions of Canada, and assembly of these into a comprehensive set of proposals for review by the Interdepartmental Committee on Search and Rescue (ICSAR) which is co-chaired by senior officials of DND and Transport Canada.

Recommendations from this committee form a proposed national plan of SAR activities for the coming year, which is submitted to ministers for consideration. Canada's fourth national SAR plan, formally approved by the federal cabinet in November 1979, places emphasis on a balanced interdepartmental response to national SAR needs, both in terms of resources and prevention through education.

Incidents increase in 1979

During the year the four RCCs responded to a total of 9,251 incidents, an increase of 1,238 over 1978. This represents an average of more than 25 a day. Of the total number, 1,945 were air incidents, 6,566 were marine related, 515 were of a



Search and rescue personnel respond to a medical evacuation in British Columbia.

Twenty-four years ago this week...

The first 20 Canadian servicemen to join the United Nations Emergency Force arrived in Egypt.

Mike Pinder, Citizen