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Canadian Armed Forces pass significant milestones in 1976

Olympics, improved search-and-rescue capabilities, more effective distribution of army elements in Canada, orders for new tanks and long-range petrol aircraft, and a new defence minister were some of the things that Canada's Armed Forces encountered in the past 12 months.

On balance, defence planners conclude, some significant milestones were passed in 1976. An aura of stability began to emerge as a result of the Government's decision in late 1975 to compensate for inflation in the Department's personnel, operations and maintenance budgets and to arrest erosion in Armed Forces' capital budgeting, permitting the planning of needed re-equipment programs to go ahead.

That decision dictated that the capital part of the budget would be increased, "in real terms", at the rate of 12 per cent a year for five years commencing with fiscal year 1977-78.

What is meant by "real terms" is that the prevailing annual inflation factor will be added to the 12 percent increase. The new formula begins from

the 1976-77 fiscal year base of \$470 million.

Surveillance in the North and along Canada's coasts, and more modern equipment for troop formations assigned to NATO in Europe, are the first priorities for increased funds for equipment expenditures.

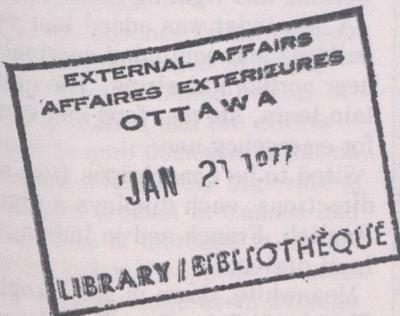
As a result, orders have been placed for 18 long-range patrol aircraft — the *Aurora*, rated as among the best in the world — and 128 German *Leopard* tanks for the army's mechanized formation in Germany.

Looking ahead, initial planning has begun to replace ships and fighter aircraft that will become obsolete and liabilities sometime in the 1980s.

Danson to Defence

A late-year Cabinet shuffle resulted in Barney Danson, former Minister of State for Urban Affairs, taking over the defence portfolio from James Richardson, who resigned.

Since then, the new defence minister, an infantry officer wounded in Normandy in 1944, has sized up troops on visits



(Photos courtesy Department of National Defence.) Helicopter pilot prepares to land on the Canadian destroyer HMCS Algonquin.