

Canadian Armed Forces Report

Armed forces pursue peaceful purposes

For a country at peace, Canada has a busy armed forces. Their expertise in peace-keeping and truce observing was summoned once again by the world community in 1973, Canadian servicemen being dispatched on two new missions, half a world apart.

The year saw Canadian Armed Forces personnel on duty in Vietnam, Laos, the Middle East, Europe and other parts of the world, as well as responding to sporadic national and international crises.

They flew millions of pounds of grain to parts of famine-stricken Africa, essential food and other supplies to Newfoundland and Labrador, and evacuated people and livestock from the menacing flood waters of New Brunswick's Saint John River.

The Middle East

The Arab-Israeli clashes that brought Canadian troops to the Middle East in 1956 again erupted, prompting their return to the Sinai Desert late in the fall as part of a new United Nations Emergency Force. Roles of the more than 1,000-man Canadian contingent in the new force involve logistics and communication support for the international force, expected to reach approximately 7,000 in number. The force's objective is to keep feuding elements apart while leaders attempt to work out a solution for lasting peace.

As Canadians went about their jobs in the Middle East, their compatriots on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, about 225 miles away, carried out a similar role, one in which they have been involved with other UN peacemakers since 1964.

In the first 30 days of the year, Canadians were in the vanguard of another tenuous peace operation, supervising the uneasy truce between warring parties in South Vietnam. The task of the Canadians, basically, was truce observing – along with contingents from Hungary, Indonesia and Poland – but not under the auspices of the United Nations.

The operation was an arduous and frustrating one, and Canada soon decided that conditions were such that it could make no further contribution. The 290 military and foreign affairs experts were withdrawn July 31.

At Home

While meeting commitments abroad, the forces also continued to support Canadian authorities from coast to coast, as well as hone their skills as military professionals.

Men and equipment made sojourns into the Arctic the jungles of Jamaica and in, under and over the world's oceans. They took part in North Atlantic Treaty Organization and North American Air Defence training operations, to assess capabilities of maintaining Canada's sovereignty and independence and their contributions to collective security.

They flew patrols to identify and control intrusion into Canada's 12-mile coastal limit by foreign vessels, and recorded and helped clean up oil spills threatening environmental damage to coastlines.

They also mounted sea, land and air search-and-rescue and mercy missions, built airstrips in the Arctic, roads on British Columbian Indian reserves and coordinated government projects to provide summer employment for students.

Search, rescue and mercy missions for the first nine months of 1973 added up to 3,387 incidents, an average of more than 12 a day.

Thaw on defence spending

A thaw in the budget was announced Oct. 10 by the Canadian defence minister, Mr. James Richardson, ending a three-year freeze on defence spending. The minister explained that the budget will be increased by seven per cent a year over the next five years. At the end of that time, the total defence budget will be more than \$3 billion, to meet a modernization and renewal programme, with the emphasis on new equipment.

During the budget freeze, the forces were required to maintain operational efficiency by cutting back on non-operational maintenance and allowing back-up stocks of spare parts and ammunition to dwindle to minimum levels.

The major equipment acquisition during the year was the last of four DDH-280 helicopter destroyers for Maritime Command, said to be the most modern of their kind in the world.



Ferret Scout Car in Cyprus