

The Canadian Forces' largest fleet

Of the two Canadian Forces' east coast fleets, the larger is the lesser known. Destroyers, supply ships and submarines dominate a fair strip of the Halifax waterfront; but alongside the same jetties and tied up in the cambers are the craft of an even larger fleet, the Canadian Forces Auxiliary Vessels (CFAVs).

There are some 50-odd CFAVs dedicated to moving, resupplying and refueling naval ships, ferrying passengers, putting out fires, and conducting research for the Defence Research Establishment Atlantic (DREA). To manage all this the CFAV fleet includes passenger launches, floating cranes, cargo scows, "pup" tugs, harbour docking tugs, ocean-going tugs, a fire tug, oil tankers, barges of all descriptions, an ex-corvette and "the quietest surface ship afloat".

Auxiliary vessels have been part of the Halifax waterfront scene since the British founded the city in 1749. Canadian naval personnel began operating the auxiliaries in 1910, the year the Naval Service Act was signed, and responsibility for the CFAV organization was passed on to civilians after the Second World War.

Many seamen spend their entire careers aboard CFAV vessels, which number among them some of the most modern and some of the oldest craft on the coast. The *Sackville*, for instance, is the only former RCN ship actually to have seen battle and still be in use today.

Performers of many tasks

There have been a lot of changes in the CFAV fleet in the past few years. A new



New harbour tug Glenside.

generation of "Glen" tugs, the harbour tugs which assist ships in berthing and move other non-propelled vessels about, recently came into service. Coastal and harbour docking tugs combined, they are 28.5 metres long and capable of producing 1,700 brake horsepower.

The 13.5-metre pup tugs, capable of 365 brake horsepower, are also new. Captain Alan Stockdale, CNAV relief master, says the pups are among the most manoeuvrable vessels in the dockyard.

Captain Stockdale claims the tugs form "the most effective tug fleet in Canada". There are nine in all; three Glens, three pups; the *Riverton*, a coastal tug; the *St. Charles*, an ocean-going tug; and a new fire tug delivered from a west coast shipyard this summer.

Quietest ship afloat

The showpiece of the CFAVs is the *Quest*. CFAV *Quest* came into service in

1969 as an acoustic research ship for DREA. In the words of skipper Jim Bennett, "she's the quietest ship afloat".

Thick, sound-deadening tiles coat large areas of the ship's hull, reducing the vibration of plates and frames. Machinery and sea-connected piping sit on rubber mounts, and noisier equipment is housed in tiled enclosures.

The effort expended to make the *Quest* silent was carried out for a particular reason. Up to 16 scientists carry out a whole range of experiments each trip designed to measure the physical properties of the Atlantic Ocean that affect acoustic detection of submarines. During these experiments ship-radiated noise must be kept to a minimum.

Quest has operated in the Arctic (it was designed for navigation in ice), off the coast of Europe and in the Caribbean. It spends close to 200 days a year at sea, while scientists on board conduct experiments which include dropping bulky scientific equipment to depths of 15,000 feet.

Bold little corvette

The *Sackville* is the sole survivor of the North Atlantic escort fleet still at work in Canada.

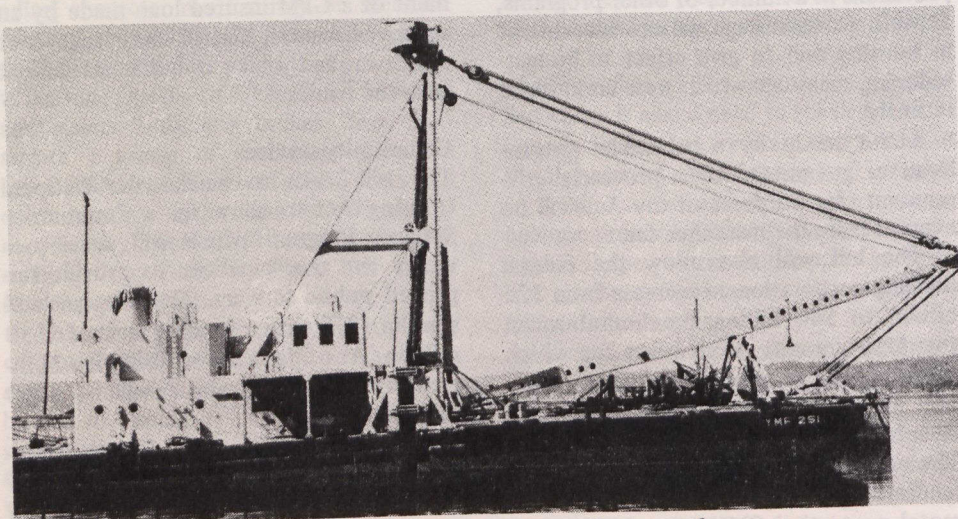
Its lines have changed to reflect the tasks it has carried out since it accompanied its last convoy. Over the years it's been fitted with winches, samson posts, derricks, laboratories, a larger bridge and a longer hull.

It's served as a training ship and hydrographic and fisheries research vessel. It has removed anti-submarine fixed defenses and acted as an auxiliary generator to the dockyard heating plant during a coal strike.

Today it's an acoustic research vessel, operated by the Department of National Defence on behalf of the DREA and commanded by Captain Roy Short.

But despite the changes, those who know *Sackville's* history recognize the features that still identify it as a corvette — the circular sectioned funnel, duck's-bottom stern and long flaring "fo'c'sle". And there are those who look upon the little vessel and remember a fighting ship; one bold enough to attack three German submarines in less than 24 hours.

As an acoustic research vessel, *Sackville* is away about 190 days a year. The ship has crossed the Arctic Circle, steamed as far south as Barbados and as far east as the Bay of Biscay. In 1977



This floating crane is one of many hard-working auxiliary vessels.