

Navy pitches in

By Ruthanne Urquhart

Photos by Corporal Mike Barley

When natural disasters strike anywhere in Canada, Regular Force personnel and Reserve Units of the Canadian Navy are prepared to react quickly and effectively to requests for emergency assistance from civilian authorities.

Winnipeg, Man., is used to seeing the Navy pitch in when the unpredictable Red River overflows its banks. In May 1950, a large number of Canadian Navy personnel were sent to fight the flooding Red and Assiniboine Rivers and help in disaster relief.

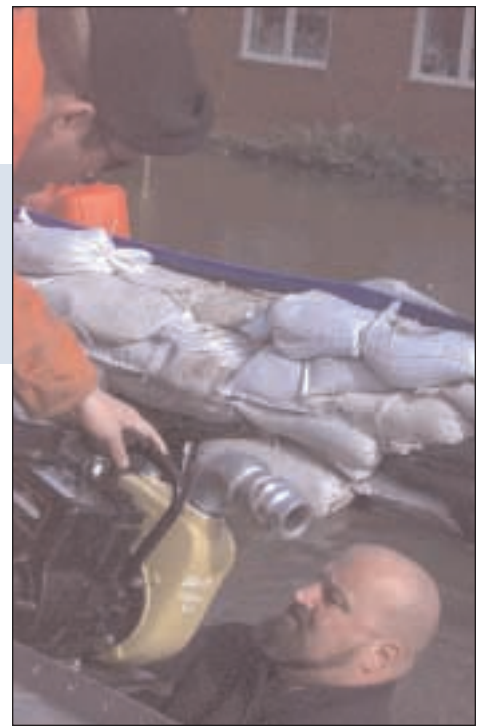
That deployment was repeated during the first two weeks of May 1997. After a winter of heavy snowfalls and a spring of ice jams upriver, the Red River, with a drainage basin covering more than 32,000 square miles in Manitoba and 39,200 square miles in North and South Dakota,

As part of Operation ASSISTANCE, HMCS Chippawa Naval Reservists Leading Seaman Ken Lugg, right, an inspection diver, and Leading Seaman Morden deliver portable pumps to a threatened dike in Grande Point, Man.

and Minnesota, overflowed its banks. Navy personnel were sent to the flooded Red River Valley area to contribute to Canadian Forces' Operation ASSISTANCE.

Navy diving teams worked around the clock on dike reinforcement, and small boats and personnel from Maritime Command and Naval Reserve units across the country helped with transport and with the evacuation of affected areas. As well, three Sea King helicopters were sent to assist in the evacuation. When floodwaters began to recede, Navy personnel helped reopen transport routes.

Naval Reservists, with the co-operation of their civilian employers, also responded to the call for assistance. Personnel from Winnipeg's HMCS Chippawa responded



immediately and worked tirelessly to support relief efforts in the Winnipeg area. Naval Reservists from HMCS Griffon, out of Thunder Bay, Ont., got the call on a Friday night and arrived in Winnipeg the next morning.

In all, more than 360 Navy personnel, plus Naval Reservists, battled the Red River during "The Flood of the Century".

Ruthanne Urquhart is Navy editor with the Department of National Defence/Canadian Forces newspaper The Maple Leaf.



Leading Seaman Rodney Pennell, who normally sails in HMCS St. John's out of Halifax, drives a ten-person zodiac inflatable boat laden with sandbags over once dry prairie land south of Winnipeg.

At the end of St Mary's Road in South Winnipeg, Leading Seaman Harold Delosreyes, right, of Toronto's HMCS York, and Corporal Steven Boone, from Third Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, Edmonton, sling sandbags destined to augment dikes being built by local residents.



Making bad times bearable

By Ruthanne Urquhart

Photos by Lieutenant(N) Gary Hussey

Good Bears of the World (Canada) is the name; giving teddy bears to children under stress or experiencing trauma is the aim. And Navy's scoring a bull's-eye.

This year, the Mississauga, Ont., organization has distributed 9700 bears to 63 agencies—hospitals, shelters, fire and police departments, ambulances, and the like—across Canada.

Now, working with Maritime Forces Atlantic Public Affairs Officer Lieutenant(N) Pat Jessup, Good Bears has sent hundreds of bears to Canadian Forces Base Halifax, to be carried by CF personnel and distributed wherever—in Canada and around the world—they encounter children who could use the comfort of a teddy bear.

"We never dreamed we'd be giving teddy bears at the federal level," said Andrew Cotterell, director of Good Bears of the World (Canada). "We were very

HMCS Charlottetown's Corporal Mike Brown, left, and Petty Officer 2nd Class Mark Bearss are obvious choices as bearsitters.

excited to get a call from the Navy, and now there's a year-round program for the next 10 years in the making."

Mr. Cotterell, Deborah Fairlie, of Toronto, and Frank Glenn, of Oakville, are the directors of Good Bears of the World (Canada). The non-profit organization has six directors designate, ready to step in as directors when needed, and eight official advisors representing some of the larger groups distributing the organization's bears.

Good Bears sets up displays at major shows in the Toronto area, fielding questions, accepting donated bears and getting the particulars of groups needing bears.

"People will stop by, and a week or two later we'll get a call and find out they're Girl Guide or Boy Scout leaders or teachers, and they've gone out and collected bears for us," Mr. Cotterell said. "When



the average Canadian hears what the Navy does for children in general, they're very proud. People who were there Friday night come back Sunday with bears, saying, 'Give these to the Navy'. It makes them and us proud to be Canadians."

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Crewmembers of HMCS Charlottetown welcome aboard a second crew of good-will ambeassadors.

