

Sinking the Saskatchewan



Photo by Jeanne Karcz



Above: An aerial view of the sinking with the *Saskatchewan* in the centre. Hundreds of boaters showed up in all kinds and sizes of vessels, the smallest being kayaks and the largest the B.C. ferry (below) which accommodated the largest number of on-lookers. Left: An RCMP inflatable makes a final round of the *Saskatchewan* shortly after the detonation of charges.

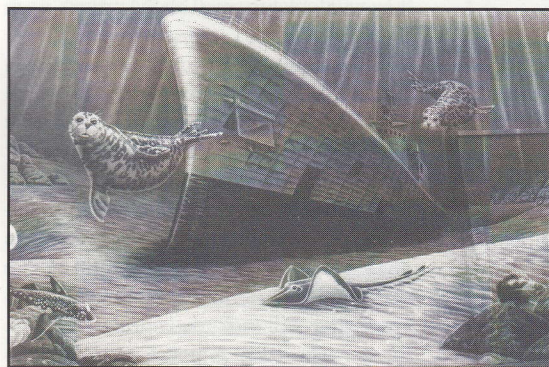
Photos by Peter Vassilopoulos



Hundreds of boats of all sizes arrived early on June 14 to ensure a good view of the sinking of the H.M.C.S. *Saskatchewan*, the fourth in a series of 366 foot long decommissioned destroyer escorts to be sunk in British Columbia waters. Snake Island, a low-lying, treeless island a few miles east of Nanaimo, British Columbia, provided the backdrop and closed off the circle of vessels surrounding the slightly submerged *Saskatchewan*.

With little fanfare, but in record time, less than three minutes, the *Saskatchewan* landed safely on ocean bottom. Reports from the Artificial Reef Society of British Columbia reveal that she lies upright in approximately 130 feet of water with a 15 degree list to port. The majority of the "interesting" parts of the ship lie between 80 and 100 feet, while the mast is at 45 feet.

The ARSBC went to a great deal of trouble to make this wreck diveable for all skill levels by cutting many large holes at close proximity to each other the length of the ship. Although an exit is visible from any entry point along the ship, it is recommended that divers get some form of wreck experience before penetrating the vessel. ■



Jeff King, a marine wildlife artist painted the mural at left in commemoration of the sinking of the *Saskatchewan*. The mural is painted on the side of a building in downtown Nanaimo. Sponsors of the project have their names included in the lower left-hand corner of the wall. Right: Nina Norman, winner of the Cousteau Society's draw to raise funds for the building of the *Calypso II*, pushes the button that sinks the *Saskatchewan*.



Photo by Ken Burton