

RCAF 1959 ROUNDUP

For the RCAF, 1959 was highlighted by the announcement of the order of the supersonic CF-104, and by the delivery and installation of other new and progressive equipment to put the Service in pace with the times.

NEW JETS

In July, the Canadian Government announced that the eight F-86 Sabre squadrons of the RCAF's European-based NATO Air Division would be re-equipped with CF-104 strike-reconnaissance jet aircraft. More than 200 of the 1400-miles-an-hour jets will be built under licence in Canada for the RCAF, and will come into operational service in about two years time. Canadair Ltd., Montreal, has been awarded the contract to build the CF-104 airframes, while the engines will be built by Orenda Engines Ltd., Toronto.

At Oldenburg, Germany, the RCAF Advisory Group from the Air Division continued to give operational training to German pilots on F-86 Sabre jets. Initiated last year, the programme also includes on-the-job training for German groundcrews in servicing techniques.

For the second year running, RCAF aircrew competed with top aerial marksmen of other NATO air forces in air firing competitions at Cazza, France, and won for Canada the Guynemer Trophy, emblematic of air-gunnery supremacy within the Allied Air Forces Central Europe.

BUSY YEAR

Air Transport Command, with headquarters relocated at Trenton, recorded a busy year as its aircraft airlifted close to 21 million pounds of cargo (approximately 50 per cent more than last year) and 69,000 passengers. More than 150 scheduled round-trips were made to Europe during the year in support of the NATO Air Division and the United Nations Emergency Force in the Middle East. In addition to regular flights to the Middle East, 532 troops were airlifted between Montreal and El Arish on special UNEF rotation flights. On other special flights, 475 troops were rotated by the Command from the Canadian Infantry Brigade in Germany.

Late in 1959, the RCAF's new long-range CC-106 turbo-prop transport aircraft, made its first flight. Built by Canadair Ltd., as a replacement for the veteran North Star, the four-engine transport is capable of carrying 65,000 pounds of freight or 135 passengers.

TRAINING COMMAND

During the early part of 1959, the final group of pilots and observers to be trained in Canada under the original NATO aircrew training scheme, were graduated. Under separate arrangements replacing the original plan, training is still being given to a limited number of aircrew from Norway and Denmark. Some German pilots also received training in

Canada during the year under a similar agreement.

AIR DEFENCE COMMAND

During the year, elements of Air Defence Command were kept in top operational form as they took part in both large-scale NORAD exercises and local exercises under the control of the Command.

At North Bay, Ont., and the Mount Laurier area of Quebec, work began on Canada's two BOMARC "B" bases. Also during 1959, siting work was carried out for the 45 gap-filler and the seven heavy radars which will be built to improve the Pinetree Line.

Earlier in the year, RCAF personnel began to man operational positions at the DEW Line stations in Canada which had previously been done by U.S. personnel. Before taking over this task, the RCAF officers were given special training on the equipment in the U.S.A.

QUEEN UNVEILS MEMORIAL

A highlight during the visit to Ottawa of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness Prince Philip, was the unveiling of the Commonwealth Air Forces Memorial at Green Island. The Memorial was built to commemorate the 798 men and women who died in Canada while serving with the Air Forces of the Commonwealth from 1939 to 1945, and who have no known graves.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

The RCAF's search and rescue organization was kept busy during 1959 as its aircraft logged approximately 5800 hours. More than 40 searches were conducted by the organization during the year, of which 18 involved the saving of lives.

MUTUAL AID

During the year, 75 aircraft were ferried across the north Atlantic to Europe as gifts to France, Turkey, Greece and Portugal under Canada's mutual aid programme.

Included in the ferry operations was a mass flight of 25 Expeditor aircraft -- 19 for France and six for Portugal -- and 59 T-33 jet trainers.

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ELECTRONIC LANGUAGE AID

A language "laboratory" believed to be the first in a high school in Canada has been installed by the County of Thorhild, Alberta, at the Redwater High School. The "laboratory" has facilities for 20 students and is used as an aid in teaching Ukrainian and French.

The "laboratory" consists of electronic equipment enabling the students, individually or in pairs, to hear and repeat pre-recorded lessons in the language being studied. There are ten semi-soundproof cubicles, each equipped with a specially-designed dual-track tape