

RCAF 1952: As 1952 draws to a close, the RCAF, its operations extended from the Far East to the European Continent, looked back over a year crammed with activity and achievement.

New operational squadrons made their appearance, new training stations were formed, and new aircraft and equipment came into use. Personnel strength rose from 29,552 at the close of 1951 to an estimated 38,500 at the end of 1952. For the first time since 1945 RCAF fighter planes were based on the European Continent.

Most newsworthy Air Force operation of the year was perhaps the buildup of the RCAF's overseas strength, highlighted by the flight of four Sabre jet squadrons across the Atlantic.

OVERSEAS BASE

Late 1951 saw the formation of the RCAF's first post-war operational base overseas, the Fighter Wing at North Luffenham in England. One Sabre squadron arrived there for duty before the end of 1951. In early 1952 the second Sabre squadron arrived at North Luffenham, having travelled by sea, as did the first one. The third and final squadron to arrive at North Luffenham flew its own Canadian-built Sabres, made by Canadair Ltd. at Montreal, across the Atlantic in June, arriving at its new base without mishap. This movement, termed Operation Leapfrog One, marked the first trans-Atlantic jet flight by RCAF aircraft.

While the scream of Canadian-made jets was becoming commonplace at North Luffenham, work was going on preparing and manning other RCAF overseas bases. The RCAF's Air Materiel Base at Langar, not far from North Luffenham, was opened, and although not completely finished as 1952 ended, was "in business" with majority of its personnel established there. This base is responsible for supplying logistics support to the RCAF formations on the Continent and in the U.K., and forms a vital part of the Air Force's overseas force.

At the same time work was going ahead preparing for the 12-squadron Air Division on the Continent. Air Division Headquarters was formed at Paris and the first of the four RCAF air bases on the Continent was manned at Grostenquin, France, near Metz.

Canadian air carriers had gross operating revenues of \$7,545,739 in May -- a new high for the month -- as against \$6,231,110 in May last year. At the same time operating expenses increased from \$5,425,167 to \$7,015,534, resulting in a drop in net operating revenues from \$805,943 last year to \$530,205.

Of the 1,553,089 unmarried sons and daughters living at home in Canada in 1951, 739,815 or 47.6 per cent were in the labour force.

WHEAT, FLOUR EXPORTS: Exports of wheat as grain in October amounted to 27,100,000 bushels, 2,600,000 greater than in September. Although slightly lower than the October 1951 total of 27,600,000 bushels, they were almost double October 1950 exports of 13,800,000 bushels. The equivalent of an additional 6,300,000 bushels was exported in the form of wheat flour during October this year as against 3,900,000 and 3,700,000 in the same month in 1951 and 1950, respectively. Total exports of wheat and wheat flour in terms of wheat during the month were 33,300,000 bushels.

Combined exports of wheat and wheat flour in terms of wheat during the August-October period of 1952-53 amounted to 94,800,000 bushels, the highest first quarter shipments since 1945-46 when the total reached 117,100,000 bushels. Exports of wheat as grain during the first three months of the current crop year amounted to 80,200,000 bushels, an increase of 22 per cent over the 65,900,000 bushels in the comparable period in 1951-52.

CANADA-U.S. FISHERIES TALKS: Representatives of the Canadian and United States Governments on December 19 completed in Washington their preliminary discussions of a Great Lakes Fisheries Convention:

One of the chief problems of immediate concern to the Canadian and United States sections of the fishing industry of the Lakes is the parasitic lamprey which has recently cost them upwards of \$5,000,000 a year in lake trout alone. Most of the discussions concerned this and related problems. Each delegation offered proposals for the setting up of an international commission to deal with the lamprey and other problems of the fisheries of the Great Lakes.

The conference will resume discussions in late January.

RECORD RETAIL SALES: Sales of Canadian retail stores crossed the one-billion dollar mark for the first time in October, reaching \$1,006,385,000, 6.4 per cent above the September total of \$946,024,000, and 12 per cent greater than last year's October sales of \$898,635,000. With an unbroken series of gains from January to October, cumulative sales for the first ten months of 1952 advanced 7.1 per cent to \$9,142,789,000 as against \$8,533,262,000 a year earlier.

Sales were higher in all sections of Canada both in October and in the ten months, Saskatchewan registering the largest gains of 18 per cent and 14.2 per cent, respectively.

There were more females than males of 20 to 34 years of age and of 70 years of age and over in Canada in 1951, but more males than females of other age groups.