

in August 1940, the second a conference the following November-December, the third a meeting in the April following. After the appointment of a Canadian High Commissioner to Newfoundland in the summer of 1941, negotiations in bilateral conferences gave way to negotiations by "diplomacy". Both methods assumed a partnership based on equality of status between Newfoundland and Canada, despite profound differences in size, power and wealth and in the degree of self-government enjoyed. This practice made the introduction of Canadian forces more acceptable than a broad grant of power, as originally proposed by Canada, might have done.

The first bilateral conference promptly took action to strengthen Newfoundland's defences. It was quickly agreed that Newfoundland forces would come under Canadian operational command and that the necessary legislative steps would be taken immediately by Newfoundland, including enactment of a *Visiting Forces (British Commonwealth) Act* similar to that in force in autonomous countries of the Commonwealth. The Act provided for two ways in which two or more Commonwealth countries could co-operate for military operations in event of war. The forces might be declared formally to be "serving together" with the forces of another Commonwealth country, or to be "acting in combination". If "serving together", they would retain their national identity and separate command structure. If "acting in combination", they might be brought within a unified command under a commanding officer chosen from either force and appointed by the Crown.

After the passage of the *Visiting Forces Act* by Newfoundland both governments formally declared that their forces in Newfoundland were "acting in combination".¹³ This facilitated the establishment of an Atlantic Command, which embraced the Maritime Provinces, with a Commander-in-Chief based on Halifax and a Newfoundland sub-command. Newfoundland also formally recognized the Canadian commander of the Newfoundland sub-command as commander of Newfoundland forces.

Canada also agreed to station a battalion of infantry at St. John's, to provide coastal artillery and to erect harbour defences at St. John's. Canadian plans also included construction of an air base adjacent to St. John's, if the terrain proved suitable, to provide fighter cover for the city and nearby shipping (a proposal first mooted by the Newfoundland Commissioner for Justice in early defence talks in Ottawa)¹⁴ and an advanced naval base at St. John's and possibly a summer base at Botwood. Two further conferences were held during the following months, the second of which completed an agreement for the transfer of Gander air base and Botwood sea-plane base to Canada for the duration of the war.¹⁵ At the same conference Newfoundland also gave written approval for the construction by Canada of an airport at Torbay.¹⁶

¹³ Documents 284 and 285, Canadian Order in Council No. 3822 of August 13, 1940 and Newfoundland *Visiting Forces Order*, No. 1, March 4, 1941.

¹⁴ Document 67.

¹⁵ Appendix E.

¹⁶ Document 460.