

RCAF YEAR-END ROUNDUP - 1958

As 1958 ended, the RCAF looked back on a year of sustained effort which saw vital new equipment come into squadron service in the Maritimes, and which was highlighted by its first major step into the missile age.

Work continued on the CC-106 turbo-prop transport, and the Cosmopolitan medium transport aircraft, both being built for the RCAF by Canadair, Ltd.

AIR DEFENCE COMMAND

Elements of Air Defence Command stood ready on a 24-hour-a-day basis throughout the year to detect and attack any hostile aggressor. Keeping these elements in top operational form were several NORAD exercises, together with the Command's own continuous operational training.

In September, Prime Minister Diefenbaker announced that an integrated weapons system which includes the BOMARC missile and SAGE (semi-automatic ground environment) would be introduced into the Canadian air defence system by 1961. The extension and strengthening of the jointly built and operated Pinetree radar control system was also approved. Two bases for firing BOMARC missiles are to be built in the general Northern Ontario and Quebec areas and others may be located in Canada in the later development of the programme.

A milestone in the history of the Canadian aviation industry came in March when the delta-wing Avro Arrow, first supersonic aircraft produced in Canada, made its initial flight at Toronto's Malton Airport. In a statement issued in September, Prime Minister Diefenbaker said "...the Government has decided that the development programme for the Arrow aircraft and Iroquois engine should be continued until next March, when the situation will be reviewed again in the light of all the existing circumstances at that time".

Runway barriers were installed at seven Air Defence Command bases in Canada during the year. An emergency device, the barrier is designed to prevent tricycle-wheeled aircraft, up to and including the weight of the CF-100, from becoming damaged if they should overshoot the runway on landing.

NO. 1 AIR DIVISION IN EUROPE

Overseas, the approximately 6,000 members of Canada's European-based Air Division continued to retain their high operational standard of the previous year. Simulated combat exercises were carried out during 1958 among the RCAF's four fighter wings and with other NATO countries, to maintain this standard of readiness.

Canadian aircrews again won top honours from the cream of aerial marksmen of other NATO air forces during the air firing com-

petitions at Cazza, France, winning for the Air Division the Guynemer Trophy, which is emblematic of air gunnery supremacy within the Allied Air Forces of Central Europe.

Operational training of German pilots on F-86 Sabre jets got under way this year at Oldenburg, Germany, under supervision of an RCAF Advisory Group from Canada's No. 1 Air Division. In addition to aircrew training at the new German operational training unit, RCAF technicians are giving on-the-job training in servicing the Sabres to German groundcrews.

TRAINING SLACKENS OFF

In July, a ceremony held at RCAF Station Winnipeg marked the closing of the original NATO aircrew training scheme which began in 1950 as one of Canada's mutual aid contributions to NATO. Final intakes of NATO aircrew personnel to be trained under the plan are now nearing completion of their courses and are scheduled to graduate early in the new year. Under separate arrangements replacing the original plan, training is continuing for a limited number of aircrew from Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands, and some German pilots are being trained in Canada under a similar agreement.

Since the inception of the original scheme, the RCAF has graduated more than 5,000 aircrew from 10 NATO countries. With the gradual reduction in training, two of the Command's bases--Clareholm, Alta., and London, Ont., were closed during the year.

BUSY YEAR

1958 was a busy year for Air Transport Command, as its aircraft airlifted nearly 14 million pounds of cargo and more than 70,000 passengers. During the year more than 180 scheduled round trips were made to Europe in support of the RCAF's No. 1 Air Division and the United Nations Emergency Force in the Middle East. In addition to the regular Middle East flight, nearly 650 replacement troops were airlifted from Montreal to El Arish and 675 were returned, on special UNEF rotation flights made between mid-September and November 1.

Late in 1957, the RCAF's two Comet aircraft were put into scheduled service on the trans-Atlantic air route to Europe and since that time have made 28 round trips, carrying personnel to and from the overseas Air Division. One of the Comets set a new record for the Command in October, when it spanned the Atlantic from Gander, Nfld., to overhead Shannon, Ireland, in 3 hrs, 36 mins.

Also in October came the announcement that Tactical Air Command Headquarters in Edmonton would disband January 1, 1959, and that Air Transport Command would assume command of all

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