

Section 3.—The Royal Canadian Air Force

The Royal Canadian Air Force, composed of a Regular or Permanent Force, Auxiliary and Reserve Forces together with a Women's Division and the Air Cadets, developed considerably during the war years. On Sept. 10, 1939, the Regular and Auxiliary Force had 4,606 officers and men. At its peak in December, 1943, the R.C.A.F. numbered 206,350 of whom 15,153 were women. Forty-eight squadrons took part in operations overseas and many thousands of its personnel were sent to Royal Air Force squadrons and other units scattered all over the world. Another 40 squadrons were held in Canada for home defence. In addition, the R.C.A.F. undertook the operation of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, whereby 131,553 trained members of aircrew were provided for British and Dominion Air Forces (see pp. 1090-1099).

To facilitate the transition from wartime to peacetime conditions, an Interim Force has been set up which will continue in existence until Sept. 30, 1947, when a plan for a permanent establishment, authorized in February, 1946, will go into effect.

The peacetime Permanent Force is to consist of Regulars, Auxiliaries and Reserves and will contain fighter, bomber and transport squadrons together with their necessary ancillary units. There will be eight operational squadrons and eight composite flights in the Permanent Force with a total strength of 16,100 officers and men. Two bomber-reconnaissance, two transport, one fighter-reconnaissance, one fighter-bomber, one air observation and one photographic squadron will comprise the operational force. The composite flights will provide for communications, air-sea rescue, target-towing, gliding, and practice flights for members of aircrew engaged in administrative duties. Both the glider unit and the air observation squadron will employ Army as well as Air Force personnel.

Fifteen auxiliary squadrons are projected. These will have a total strength of 4,500 officers and men. Ten of these squadrons will be fighters, three fighter-bombers and two fighter-reconnaissance. The auxiliary squadrons will be situated, so far as possible, at those cities the names of which were used by operational squadrons during the War. Collectively they will provide a force, fully organized, manned and equipped so that they can be mobilized as a Tactical Air Force for co-operation with the Army in a manner similar to that whereby R.C.A.F. wings formed a part of the Second Tactical Air Force in 1944-45.

The Air Cadets will continue, as in the past, to prepare young men for entry into the Regular and Auxiliary Forces or into civil aviation.

The Department of National Defence for Air will also employ a number of civilians. These employees on Mar. 31, 1946, numbered 5,936.

It is estimated that the cost of the Regular Force will be \$55,650,000 per annum, of the Auxiliary Force \$3,000,000 and of the Reserve about \$500,000. The annual total for the R.C.A.F. will therefore be \$59,150,000.

The Air Force is at present administered from Ottawa, Ont. Under the Minister of National Defence for Air are a Deputy Minister, the Chief of the Air Staff and four other members of the Air Council. Under the direction of Air Force Headquarters are five geographical commands. These commands on Mar. 31, 1946, were: No. 1 Air Command (Trenton); No. 2 Air Command (Winnipeg); Eastern Air Command (Halifax); Western Air Command (Vancouver); and North West Air Command (Edmonton). Maintenance Command (Uplands), created