

Operations.—The Royal Canadian Air Force was, as 1950 closed, in the midst of an expansion campaign to boost its fighter strength to “more than” five squadrons and generally build up the operational element of the Force. Production orders for Canadian-built CF-100 ‘Canucks’ and for F-86 ‘Sabres’ have been speeded up and all regular force fighter squadrons will be equipped with these top-ranking jet aircraft. As an interim measure, propellor-driven ‘Mustang’ fighters purchased from the United States will be flown by some squadrons.

The build-up of the Air Force is not strictly confined to fighter squadrons. It is the role of the Navy and Air Force to defend the thousands of miles of coast line around Canada and to keep open the sea lines of communication. To meet this commitment the R.C.A.F. will operate maritime squadrons.

But it is in the field of fighter activities that the most important advances are being made. In addition to the jet aircraft, radar facilities are being expanded to warn of the approach of enemy aircraft.

Canada’s new jet-equipped squadrons will undoubtedly rate with the world’s best. The Canadian-designed and built ‘Canuck’, an all-weather fighter, carries two crew members, a pilot and a radio-navigator. The aircraft combines very high speed with long range.

The prototype model was fitted with two Rolls Royce ‘Avon’ engines, but the ‘Canuck’ will eventually be powered by the Canadian ‘Orenda’ jet engine.

The ‘Sabre’ is a United States aircraft now being built at Montreal. It holds the world speed record. Without the range of the ‘Canuck’ but boasting many other valuable characteristics, the ‘Sabre’ is an ideal running mate for the Canadian-designed aircraft.

R.C.A.F. regular and auxiliary fighter squadrons have been using the British DeHavilland Vampire III as their operational aircraft, but present Air Force policy is aimed at standardizing equipment as much as possible with the United States Air Force, our close ally in the air defence of the North American Continent.

Contribution to the United Nations Airlift.—In the transport field, the R.C.A.F. began in July, 1950, a substantial contribution to the United Nations airlift in support of the Korean campaign. A squadron of four-engined ‘North Stars’ was placed on shuttle runs back and forth between McChord Field, near Tacoma, Washington, and Tokyo, carrying vital war cargo for the United Nations forces in Korea.

Transports.—The R.C.A.F. Air Transport Command operates a substantial airline supplying isolated Arctic bases and carrying out other necessary internal communications flights.

In 1950 the Air Force completed the major portion of its long campaign to photograph the uncharted Canadian northland. Three squadrons, two doing actual aerial photography and the other supplying the photo flyers, were engaged in the work all summer in Lancaster, Dakota, Canso and Norseman aircraft.

Under the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) agreement, the R.C.A.F. is responsible for co-ordinating Canada’s commitment for search and rescue operations. A smooth-working plan of action has been worked out with the Navy, R.C.M.P. and other agencies involved. With rescue centers at key points across Canada, the organization can be swung into action on a moment’s notice.