



NEW KIND OF DART. The Hon. J. A. D. McCurdy (left) Canada's pioneer pilot of the Silver Dart, contemplates the RCAF's newest and most controversial aircraft, the Avro CF-105 interceptor. With him is Chief of the Air Staff, A/M H. L. Campbell.

the three armed services were again united in one department, as they had been in the period from January 1923 to November 1938. By the end of that year (1946), when the last WDs were released and the Women's Division was dissolved, the RCAF had contracted to a total of 12,735 officers and airmen.

There was a small expansion in strength, from 11,569 at the end of 1947 to 13,832 at the end of 1948, and new aircraft were introduced, including the Canadair North Star (September 1947) and the RCAF's first jet fighter, the de Havilland Vampire, in January 1948.

UN and NATO

By the end of 1948, however, the glow that had been generated by the coming of peace and the signing of the United Nations Charter in 1945 had been chilled by icy blasts of the cold war. The threat of Nazi-Fascist

domination had been supplanted by the menace of Communism.

On December 28, 1948, The Minister of National Defense announced an expanded program for the Dominion's armed forces to meet "changing circumstances." The ceiling on strength was removed.

The expansion of Canada's defense forces was given a further stimulus in June 1950 by the Communist attack upon South Korea. When the United Nations undertook to resist this aggression the RCAF contributed a transport squadron, No. 426, which in July 1950 began flying on the airlift to Japan.

In addition to the work of this squadron, a number of RCAF fighter pilots engaged on operations with units of the USAF in Korea where they acquitted themselves with distinction in combat against enemy MIGs. They flew Canadair-built Sabre jet aircraft.

Simultaneous with the RCAF's participation in the UN's resistance to Communist aggression in Korea, the Force's responsibilities under NATO increased. Facilities were made available for training NATO aircrew in Canada. Eight countries (the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Belgium, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands and Portugal) sent pupils to Canada for training in RCAF schools. The training plan continued until last year.

To the support of the NATO forces in Europe the RCAF sent its 1st Air Division, equipped first with Sabre aircraft and latterly with the Avro CF-100 all-weather interceptor. This was the first military jet aircraft designed and built in Canada. In all, about 600 of them were built at Avro Aircraft's Malton plant.

Manned or Unmanned

When production of the CF-100 ceased last month there came yet another pause in the RCAF's history. For once again, the future of the force is uncertain, as the form of its next defensive weapon is weighed in the balance. The Avro CF-105 Arrow interceptor, designed and built to the RCAF's specification for a supersonic long-range interceptor, may be replaced by an unmanned weapon—the Boeing Bomarc anti-aircraft missile.

Of all the upheavals which Canada's air force has faced during its existence, this promises to be the greatest. The removal of the man in the machine, hitherto considered about the most important single factor of the weapons system, would necessitate a great deal of reorganization in Air Defense Command.

However the use of conventional aircraft—the RCAF's new Canadair Argus, for maritime reconnaissance and its transport fleet of North Stars and Comet jet aircraft, soon to be joined by the Canadair CL-44 and the Canadair 540 Eland turboprop—will continue for many years to come.

With the introduction of the Comet in 1953, incidentally, the RCAF became the first air force in the world to operate pure jet powered transport aircraft.

The RCAF has, throughout its history, played an important part in peace as well as in war. During the establishment of the radar warning lines across Canada in recent years, RCAF helicopters and transports provided a vital link between the sometimes extremely inaccessible sites and civilization. The Service will undoubtedly enjoy a continuing role in its assistance to the government and the Canadian people in times of need—both in war and peace.