



"Six CF-100's stood shining in the brilliant sun..."

RL892-1955

## Scramble to attack

By Clive Baxter

*Nearly every day a strange game is played high in Canadian skies. The prize is survival in future war. Bombers of the USAF Strategic Air Command criss cross the country on simulated missions. Canadian and U. S. interceptors are there to meet them.*

*Canadian Aviation was recently given permission to fly in a CF-100 of 428 Squadron taking part in the "air war." Strict security forbids description of the exact techniques used, but something can be told of the feelings and tensions of the men who guard our country night and day.*

Six CF-100's stood shining in the brilliant sun. The time, shortly after 11 o'clock. The place, Uplands airfield outside of Ottawa.

They were the readiness flight of 428 "Ghost" Squadron. Their crews had been sitting, ready for instant take off, in the cockpits for ten minutes. Oxygen was switched on to 100%. Each breath produced a harsh tearing sound in the earphones

and a reassuring blink on the oxygen flow indicator.

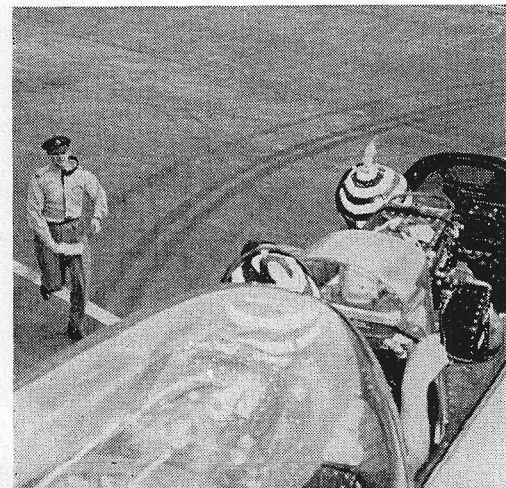
► **CF-100's Best.** I was in the radar navigator's seat of S/L H. E. Bodien's interceptor. The Squadron Leader—an RAF night fighter expert—transferred to the RCAF last year. He describes the CF-100 as "the best weapon of its kind in the free world today."

Despite a partially open cockpit cover the heat grew more and more uncomfortable. The G suit supplied by the squadron pressed close against legs and stomach, causing large splotches of sweat.

Finally at 11.10 the loudspeakers which line the hanger wall, sprang into life. "Scramble first pair." As ground crew hurried to position, an officer ran from the ready room holding a scrap of paper. He handed it to the pilot of the first aircraft. Within seconds the Orenda engines were roaring, blowing up great storms of dust as the planes taxied off toward the runway.

Then quiet again. At 11.30 off

went the second pair. Only our aircraft and one other remained. It looked as if we were to be unlucky. ► **Scramble.** Finally at 11.40 we got our scramble. Suddenly the long,

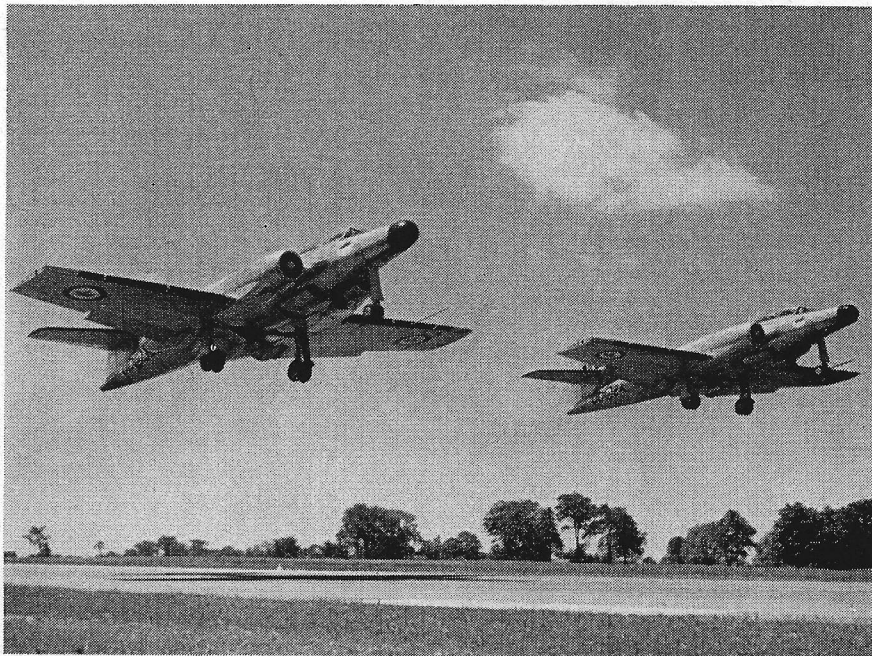


"An officer ran from the ready room with our first order."





"We got our scrap of paper, '040 angels 40 call Iceberg on Fox.'"



"... scramble first pair, bogies at 40,000"

Under C.O. S/L E. W. Smith, DSO, CD, the RCAF's CF-100, 428 "Ghost" Squadron at Uplands, perpetuates a famous wartime bomber squadron.

Born during World War II at Dalton, Yorkshire, it started operational training on Wimpies (Wellingtons) as part of the RAF's bomber command, later joining RCAF 6 Group when it was formed in 1943.

The squadron's first action was on the U-boat base at Lorient, France, January 26, 1943. Its last of 283 missions was with Halifax's on Wangerooze, on April 25, 1945. Between was Dusseldorf, Berlin, D-Day, Hamburg, Peenemunde and the Me. 262 jets. Looking back 428 chalked up a creditable record.

frustrating wait seemed of no importance. We got our scrap of paper. In a hurried hand was pencilled "040 angels 40 call Iceberg on Fox."

These were the first vital orders from the controller to his pilot. Translated they stood for: "Take off and climb on a heading of 040 to a height of 40,000 feet. Once airborne call me on frequency F."

Taxiing is fast in these scrambles. In fact to the passenger, rammed deep in his seat and held there by innumerable straps and tubes, it was hard to define the moment when we stopped taxiing and began take-off. Almost at once the engines were fully opened and acceleration had the fighter in its grip.

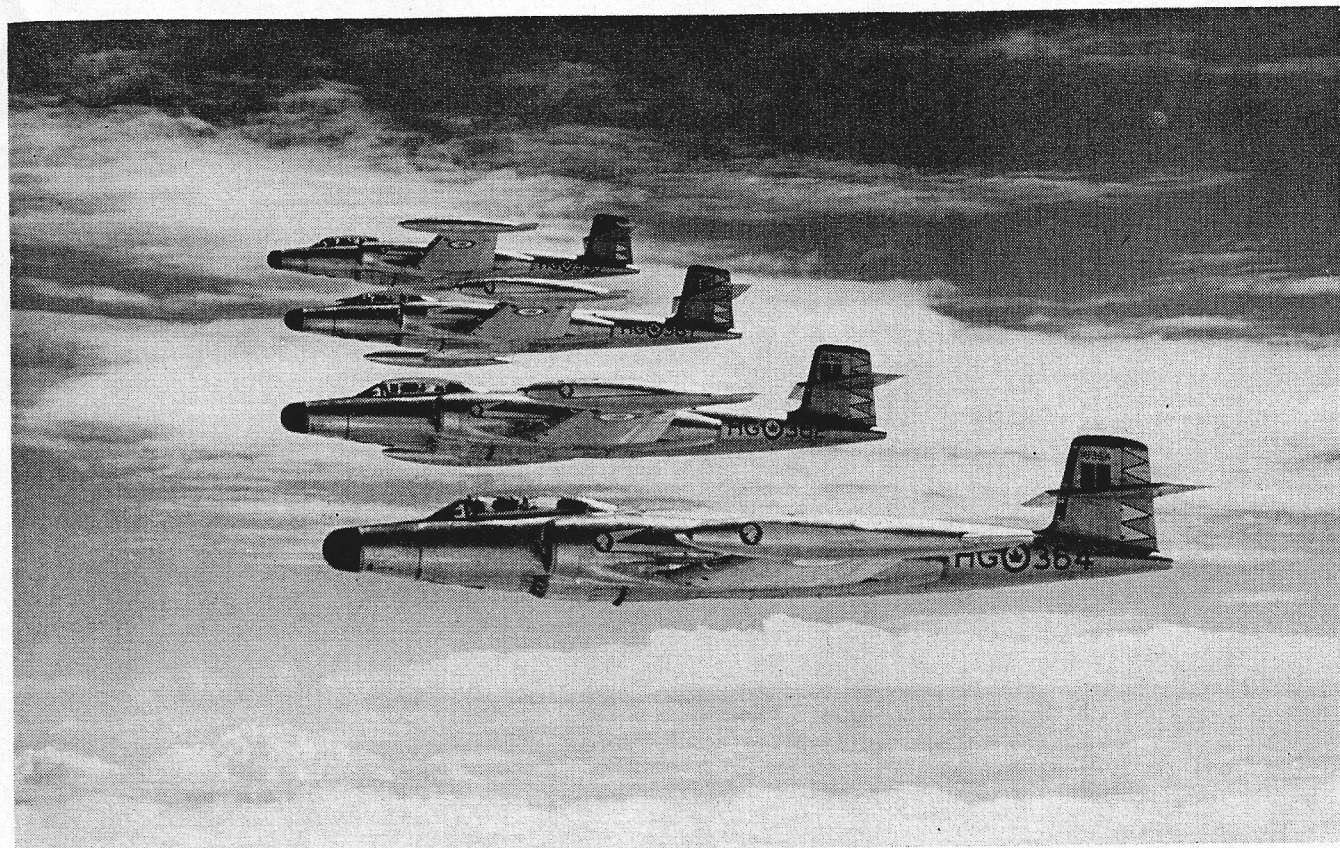
From the runway the climb is surprisingly steep. The nose seems to grope for the sky. The altimeter winds up like a lunatic clock.

► **Vector to Attack.** Once the details of take off were finished the headphones came to life. "Iceberg, Drainpipe 8 do you read over." It was S/L Bodien's calm, calculating RAF accent.

At once Iceberg replied, confirming our vector and height, telling us there were a number of "bogies" at 40,000 feet coming in from the north east.

The rate of climb remains con-





*"Your bogie is now 11 o'clock range 30 . . . the sun burns through the perspex . . . above the sky is a violent unreal blue."*

stant and impressive. Below and behind Ottawa has taken on the size of a small handkerchief. Soon it looks like a postage stamp. Far below the scattered clouds have the appearance of small bumps clinging close to the ground. (Actually ceiling that day was nearly 10,000 feet.)

At the required 40,000 feet the engines are throttled back. There is an uncanny silence punctuated by the embarrassingly noisy sound of two people breathing regularly into their masks.

Above, the sky is a violent, unreal blue. The radio comes alive with chatter. One of the CF-100's scrambled earlier, suddenly comes on to tell Iceberg: "Two 47's with a CF about a mile behind."

Someone else reports seeing a Sabre above him. In the few minutes of his engagement with a B47 he has followed it down to Niagara and USAF defenders are swinging into attack.

**► Collision Course Interception.** Meanwhile we remain heading steadily away from what seems the centre of activity. Montreal is behind us. We appear to sit unmoving in the sky. Only the airspeed indicator shows that we are closing with our target at a probable combined speed of more than 1,000 miles an hour.

So far we have yet to see another aircraft.

Iceberg tells us we are leaving his area and to call Lover on D dog. On the new frequency all is changed. Lover is calling out messages quickly, excitedly. Our target is only 50 miles ahead. Other CF-100s from another squadron can be heard calling out positions on "47's" they can see and are attacking.

Now the pilot-controller team's supreme moment is close. Now comes the kill—or if either misjudges the forlorn and futile chase from behind. The "enemy" are now jamming the frequency. Messages are hard to decipher.

Despite the knowledge this is only practice the tension is electric.

**► In For Kill.** "Your bogie is now 11 o'clock range 30" . . . "He is crossing you left to right" . . . "Bogie's height still 40,000." Each of the controllers' messages, now short and curt, is answered by a calm—"Roger" from the Squadron Leader.

Then, quite suddenly, the B-47 is in sight exactly where the controller said it would be. Today is too warm for contrails, so the lack of telltail wake through the sky has delayed our sighting.

From here on it is up to the pilot. We bank very slightly to head on

a collision course across the bomber's intended path. It appears now to be sliding sideways toward us. The sun flashing off its giant wings.

Closer and closer . . . then a touch on the stick and we slide under with the regulation 500 feet safety clearance. From sighting to our kill only a few moments have passed. We turn slowly again but already our "47" is out of sight.

"Lover" asks us to remain in the area in case of further "trade." For another half hour we orbit around the sky. Everything seems anticlimax now. Other fighters can still be heard closing in on their targets—reporting kills or that they are giving "that one" up.

**► High Altitude Fatigue.** Once the thrill of the hunt is over the seat and the G suit become intensely uncomfortable. The sun burns through the perspex. The oxygen mask presses unpleasantly on the bridge of one's nose.

Our order to return to base is a welcome relief. In all we have been in the cockpit over two hours. Divebrakes go down and we head steeply back for Uplands. Soon we are in sight of base.

(Continued on page 68)



## AIR LOGISTICS

(Continued from page 29)

the long hauls between continents, to be distributed among our many bases or areas of distribution in foreign lands.

It is evident that no single airplane can do every transportation job. We need airplanes with the greatest possible ton-knot productivity for mass movement of material over long ranges which we, at Doug-

las, believe should be turboprop. Use of such transport planes will reduce materially the quantity of supplies in surface pipelines, in depots, and ammunition dumps.

► **Air Pipeline.** High-speed jet transports afford excellent opportunity in effecting the personnel pipeline. There also will be those inevitable bottlenecks that are created by unforeseen situations that will require high-speed jets. The quick supply of plasma, a small but critical replace-

ment part, litter patients from the battle zone, where the cost is not important, will be solved by the quickest means now known—the jet.

In addition to high-speed jet and long-range requirements, there is the need for distribution and collection of material on either end of long hauls.

Finally, the complete supply chain would require serious study of a vertical-capability transport which will be able to operate into forward areas where landing and take-off facilities must be extremely limited.

All these varying types of aircraft, or family of aircraft, are needed to utilize fully the advantages of air transportation. It is the development of a system that will pay the real dividends.

► **Air-Logistics Policy.** We cannot and should not expect to have the system of air logistics by a sudden appearance of these large transports. It will take time before we can place the huge potential to work profitably. It is the use of the present-day aircraft that will make the transition possible. Further, we cannot let our aircraft sit on the ground with low utilization and expect cost per ton-mile that will reduce the total military expenditures by using air. Some reserve is necessary, but only by a fleet-in-being and daily flying will the services be able to perform the total airlift requirements during time of emergency.

The speed of the present-day activities on the battle front requires that we be ready at all times and yet use the tools that are provided profitably during so-called peacetime.

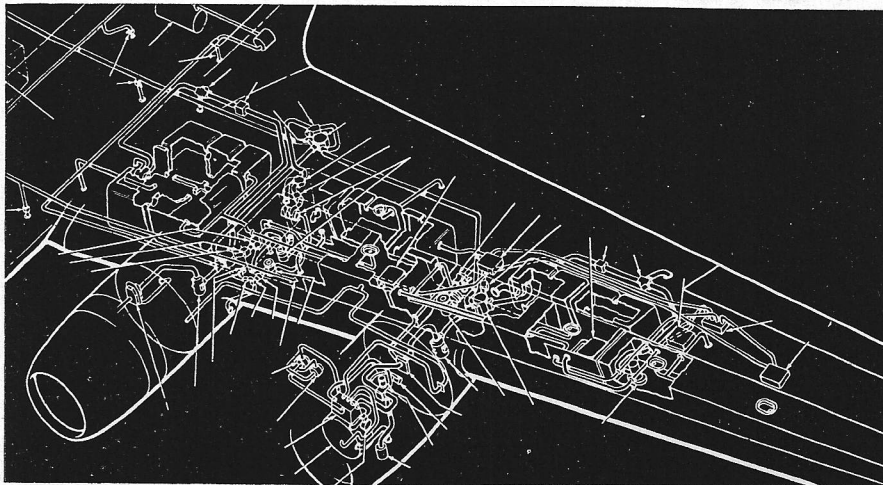
## SCRAMBLE TO ATTACK

(Continued from page 27)

A curve sweeps us over Ottawa and we join the circuit. The runway rushes up to meet the wheels.

Taxiing in S/L Bodien opens the cockpit cover. The blast of cool air is like a tonic. By now the B-47's are deep in the U. S. Somewhere else fighters are hurtling up to meet them.

Back in the crew room each pilot reports results to the operations officer. Then a few minutes rest and a cigarette before strolling over to the mess for lunch. For the squadrons it was a routine affair that will be repeated over and over in readiness for the day or night that each member prays will never come.



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