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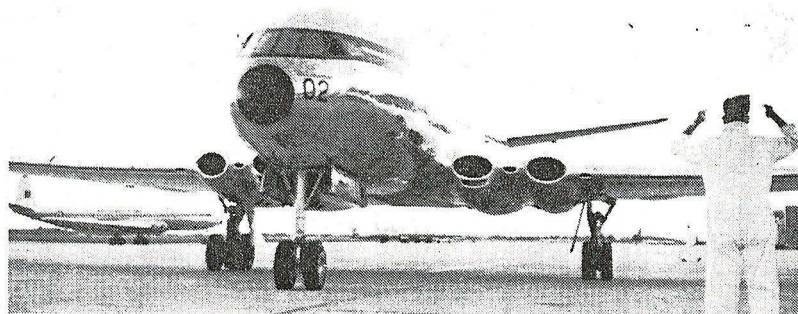


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RCAF COMETS COME HOME: Grounded since 1954, the RCAF's now airworthy Comets have returned to RCAF Station Uplands after modifications in the U.K. Flown by 412 Transport Sqn., the Comets will be used for general and personnel transport duties. Right: Hon. Geo. Drew, Canadian High Commissioner in London, is seen shaking hands with F/L D. Broadfoot, OC Comet detachment, before unit's departure from U.K. Behind the two are seen John Cunningham (de Havilland Chief Test Pilot) and P. C. Garratt, vice-pres. & managing director of de Havilland Canada.



ing practice and ground controlled interceptions. Maintenance and servicing was partly handled by American ground-crews. The bulk of this was handled by the squadron's own airmen who were airlifted to Harmon by ATC transport aircraft.

Comets Return

The RCAF de Havilland Comet 1A's, in the U.K. for structural modifications for the last year, returned to their home base at RCAF Station Uplands at September's end. The flight, made on Thursday, Sept. 26, followed a route from Hatfield to the Azores, thence to Chatham, N.B., and on to Uplands.

The aircraft were flown by crews from 412 squadron, to which they are attached. Aircraft commanders were Flight Lieutenant P. M. Lemieux and Flight Lieutenant W. B. Carrs.

The RCAF placed the two Comets in service in mid-1953 and thus became the world's first air force to fly jet transports. Both saw continuous service with 412 Squadron until being withdrawn from flying in January, 1954, following the series of accidents involving Comets in commercial airline service and attributed to failure of the pressure cabin as a result of fatigue.

Some modifications were made to the aircraft at the de Havilland Canada plant, but in August, 1956, they

were flown to the U.K. by de Havilland crews for major airframe modifications. These mainly involved the re-inforcement of the pressure cabin. The modification program, which cost \$400,000 per aircraft, has now been completed and the Comets are certified as fully airworthy.

RCAF air and ground crew have spent the past few months in the U.K. taking intensive training on the maintenance and operation of the aircraft.

The Comets, believed to be the only Comet 1A's (four DH Ghost 50's at 5,000 lb./th. each) in service in the world, are to be used for general transport work, including domestic passenger services, as well as on simulated bomber runs through the air defence system.

Postings & Careers

- Group Captain O. B. Coumans, MBE, CD, principal of Vaughn Road Collegiate in Toronto, is retiring as commanding officer of 15 Technical Training Wing, RCAF Auxiliary.

It was largely through G/C Couman's efforts that reserve training in the RCAF was broadened to include various ground trades, and 15 Technical Training Wing was formed in 1951 under his command. The Wing administers groundcrew training at Station Toronto through its two component units.