

Air Power

RCAF at the crossroads

By Norman Avery

● The Royal Canadian Air Force is now established underground as well as travelling supersonically at low and high altitude. Defence firepower, although rather thinly spread across Canada, has never been greater.

Where nine squadrons once defended the country's vitals, only three squadrons of CF-101B Voodoos will carry out the interceptor role. These are the consolidated remnants of the five Voodoo squadrons that succeeded nine CF-100 squadrons two years ago.

Backing up the manned machinery are two squadrons of Bomarc B nuclear-tipped missiles. These are at La Macaza, Que., and at North Bay, Ont.

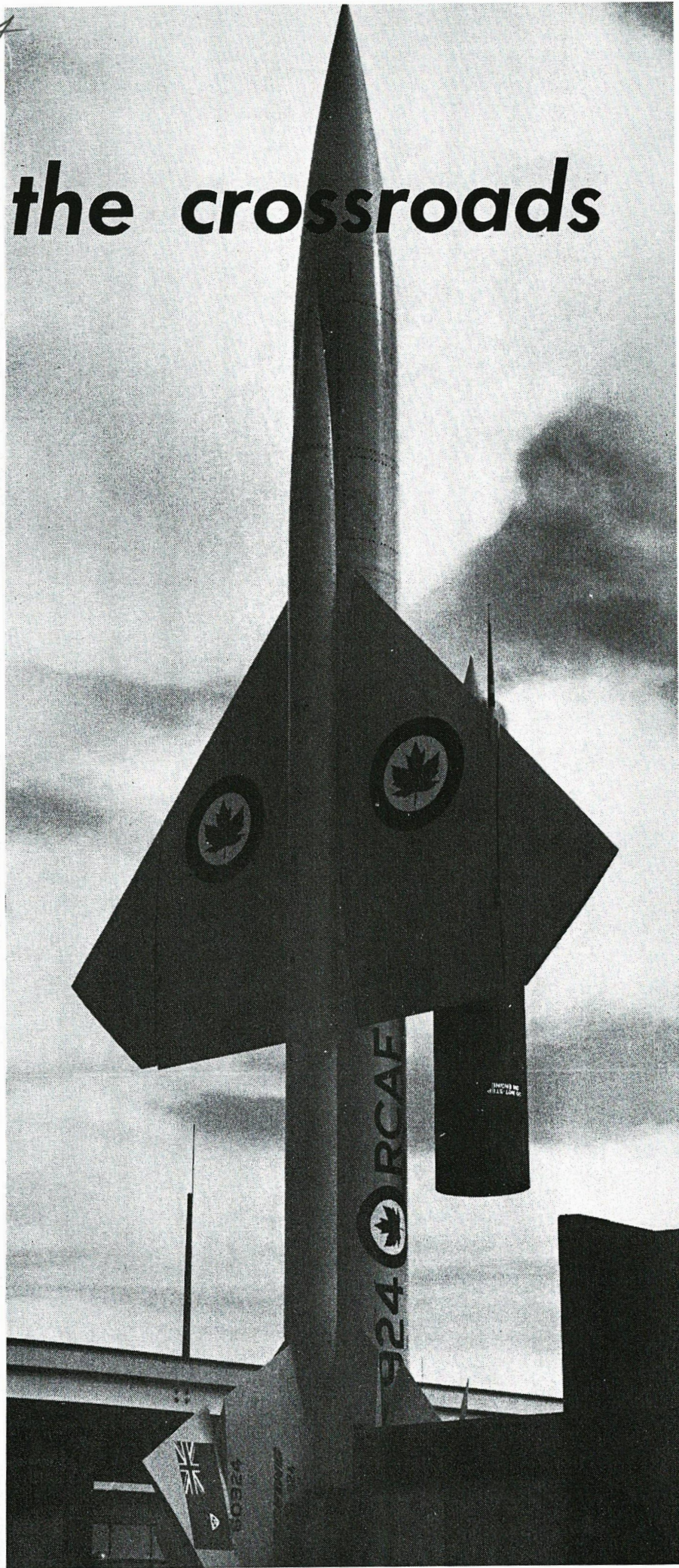
With the long-simmering nuclear question finally settled at home, RCAF units in Europe have hit a political snag that could trigger a whole new concept for the air force. France has forbidden foreign nuclear arms on her soil. Consequently, Canada has decided to close the base of No. 2 Fighter Wing at Grostenquin and move the two CF-104 squadrons to bases at Zweibrücken and Baden-Söellingen in Germany. This leaves two squadrons at Marville, France, for a convertible role of photo-reconnaissance and conventional strike.

The closing of Grostenquin will undoubtedly bring a reduction in defence costs and thereby please Defence Minister Hellyer whose White Paper, to be given shortly, may have other cuts to dovetail into the plan.

If he is looking for waste, he might note that Air Division Headquarters, with some 800 staff, is more than somewhat duplicated at the 4th Allied Tactical Air Force HQ in Ramstein, Germany. This organization has operational control of the Air Division's squadrons anyway and if far fewer than 800 Canadians joined the staff, the same ends could very likely be achieved.

There has been a cry to beef up Air Transport Command so as to give

RCAF's Boeing Bomarc B ▶



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