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THE RCAF IN THE CONGO, 1960

Among the Most Challenging Assignments Undertaken by Canadian Forces in the Peace Keeping Role

BACKGROUND TO THE UN CONGO OPERATION

Until Somalia and Bosnia, in the 1990s, the UN operation in the Congo (ONUC; Organization des Nations Unies au Congo) was the most violent and by far the largest peacekeeping operation ever conducted by the UN. The Mission was authorized on 14 July 1960 and finally wrapped-up officially on 30 June 1964.

The weaponry and firepower employed by ONUC's military component included jet fighter aircraft, artillery, armored Personnel Carriers and tanks. At its peak, the Force consisted of almost 20,000 troops from 28 countries. Over its lifetime 93,000 troops served in the force. One hundred and twenty seven military personnel died in action and 133 were wounded, "along with scores of European expatriates and hundreds of Congolese."

ONUC began as a conventional peacekeeping mission modeled on the UN Emergency Force in the Sinai. Like UNEF, ONUC was mandated initially only to use force in self-defense. This idea was considerably extended in due course as; for example, the need arose to protect civilians at risk.

Towards the end, i.e. 63/64, by robustly asserting its freedom of movement in Katanga the UN Force was able to detain and expel foreign mercenaries and prevent civil war.

ONUC ceased to operate on 30 June 1964. UN expenditures amounted to \$400,130,793. This figure represents only what is referred to as "incremental costs" (those costs billed by contributing nations as being direct out-of-pocket expenses to them).

THE TASK TAKEN ON BY THE RCAF IN ONUC

The aim of this article is to tell the tale of RCAF involvement in the Congo peacekeeping operation in 1960, and to recall some of the things that still stick in my memory 44 years later.

WHY WE BECAME INVOLVED AND HOW THE OPERATION GREW

The Congo, a country relatively unknown by Canadians until 1960, was subsequently shown to have been granted independence before it was able to assume the mantle of nationhood. For nearly 100 years it had been the private domain of the King of Belgium and later a totally dependent colony of Belgium. One

factor that sped the decision to grant independence in 1960, was the action by other colonial powers of recently granting self-government to no less than 17 former African colonies.

The first government of the Congo was formed on 24 June 1960, with Joseph Kasavubu as head of State and Patrice Lumumba as Prime Minister. On 29 June, in Leopoldville they signed a Treaty of Friendship with Belgium and King Beaudoin proclaimed Congolese independence. Almost at once, a breakdown occurred in what had previously been a system of militarily imposed law and order.

The more than 200 tribes, speaking a myriad of languages, had never viewed Belgian colonization as a benefit, or a stabilizing influence on historic enmities. On the 5 July, parts of the 25,000 member native army/police "Force Publique" mutinied against their Belgian officers. This led to the wide-spread unrest. Belgium reacted by flying in troops to provide protection for its more than 100,000 nationals.

Belgium was unable to add legitimacy to this move by its failure to convince Lumumba to invoke the Treaty of Friendship and seek help from the



Opposite: RCAF NS17517, one of the last North Stars to fly to the Congo, is marshalled into position at N'Djili Airport, Leopoldville, 28 August 1962. DND PL140337 VIA L. MOTIUK. **Above:** W/C McClure, acting CO of RCAF Uplands, wished G/C Carr "Bon Voyage" prior to his trip to the Congo. With him are, L-R, W/C Kerr, S/L Morrison, S/L Henderson, W/C Allison, W/C Dicks and W/C Borden. VIA THE AUTHOR. **Left:** Sgt R.E. Ralph and Cpl Peter Gray (RCAF Telecommunications Technicians) serving with ONUC, have identities checked by guards at N'Djili Airport. PL146103 VIA L. MOTIUK

on the scene on 18 July. The build-up of troops was rapid and within a month, more than 14,000 military personnel were located throughout the country. They had been delivered directly to their final destinations within

now more than 10,000 Belgian soldiers in the country.

During the second week of July more trouble and violence arose as the mutiny spread. After evacuating all Belgian nationals from the area, Belgian soldiers and warships attacked the port city of Matadi with a considerable loss of life among the local population. Hyped-up reports of this action carried on the Congolese army radio network, sparked new rounds of violence even in areas that previously had been quiet. Far from stabilizing the situation, the appearance of Belgian paratroops at widely separated locations resulted in even more unrest. Increasing numbers of attacks on the remaining Europeans followed.

In the midst of all this turmoil,

Tsombe, the provincial governor of mineral-rich Katanga province announced its secession. Lumumba flew to Elizabethville, the provincial capital, to seek conciliation, but his aircraft was prevented from landing. The incident led to a further breakdown of relations with the Belgian government, which supported Tsombe for financial reasons, from behind the scenes.

Confronted with a situation beyond his control, Lumumba asked the United Nations for help on 12 July. The Security Council gave unanimous approval for a security force to be sent to the Congo. A Swedish General, Carlson Von Horne, then Chief of Staff of the UN Truce Supervisory Organization in the Middle East, was appointed to command the force, and he arrived

the Congo, mainly by US and RCAF aircraft

CANADA'S KEY ROLE

Because of its already well-earned reputation in UN Peace Keeping, and having played a key role in every UN Peace mission to date, Canada became involved at the outset in the planning for the Congo operation. Specifically, the Secretary General asked Canada to take on the job of running all air operations throughout the Congo and, in addition, also to provide a long-range radio network for the UN Forces which would be located at key centres. Canada agreed.

The Air Officer Commanding RCAF Air Transport Command, A/C Fred Carpenter, accompanied by W/C Jack

Maitland, the CO of 426 Squadron, the long-range North Star Transport Squadron, were dispatched immediately to survey the needs and make recommendations as to how they could be satisfied. Carpenter's recommendations were approved and, within days, a small air staff to implement the decisions was assembled and sent on its way to Leopoldville.

Canada also agreed to establish and operate the UN Forces' radio network as requested by the Secretary General and, coincidentally, took on the task of reactivating and operating the civilian systems which had collapsed with the departure of the Belgians.

While this was happening, my family and I were holidaying at a lake west of Ottawa. I was the W/C CO of the RCAF's 412 VIP Squadron. Early one morning in late July, the Bonnechere airport manager drove up in his pick-up and told me I was wanted on the phone by "some big-shot" in Trenton! I went to the phone and spoke to my boss, A/C Carpenter. His words were, "You're to go to the Congo tomorrow." Naturally, I politely asked why, and for how long. "You're to set up and run an air transport operation for the UN operations in the Congo," he replied. "You're to jump on a 'plane and head for New York, where someone from UN Headquarters will meet you and brief you in more detail. From there you will head for Brussels where you'll get a detailed briefing on the situation in the Congo, and then you'll head by Sabena Airlines to Leopoldville. You should be away for a few weeks and, by the way, you're promoted to G/C as of today.

I did as I was told, and arrived in

New York — where no one met me. I phoned UNHQ and spoke to Dr Bunch's SA, Brian Urquhart, (Later Sir Bryan) whom I had met before, and went on to Brussels by commercial air. There, the RCAF air attaché met me, gave me a bottle of scotch and wished me luck, having informed me he had no idea what was going on. The Belgians were too busy to brief me. The next morning I arrived in Leopoldville and was met by Jack Maitland whom the A/C had left behind to help out until the small air staff group from Trenton and I arrived on the scene.

THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS AIR TRANSPORT FORCES (UNATF) IN ONUC

The press release from UN HQ used

the phrase that I was "to command all UN air forces in the Congo." Obviously, this was a further endorsement of Canada's reputation and had little to do, I suspected, with my particular talents.

The role of the UNATF was to operate and control aircraft, air traffic and the facilities needed to support the ONUC commander in the effective execution of his mandate. Our arrival within days of the receipt of the request by Ottawa, saw our crew

Below: L-R, Col Bernie Guimand, General Van Horne of Sweden, Col Bert Mendelson, and an Ethiopian B General (Chief of Staff). VIA THE AUTHOR. **Bottom:** 426 Squadron North Stars on the flight line at RCAF Trenton, 27 December 1960. L. MILBERRY VIA L. MOTIUK.

Opposite: Sgt W. Wiser supervises Air Congo workers fuelling a North Star at N'Djili Airport, Leopoldville, 26 May 1961. DND PL124720 VIA L. MOTIUK.



of ten Canadian airmen undertake an operation which had no precedent in UN peace-keeping history.

On arrival, I had met with General Von Horne, the supreme commander, and came away with a vague understanding of what the ONUC would need by way of air support. My first job was to write my Terms of Reference and define our role as precisely as could be done. The General immediately approved what I put in front of him.

The air transport job would include the control of the External Airlift and the operation and control of Internal Airlift. The External Airlift involved the movement of military units and equipment, and ingoing logistic support from overseas to the Congo. The Internal Air Transport would include the movement of UN military and civil-

ian personnel and materiel throughout the Congo. In addition it was to provide the resources to be able to deploy by air, a battalion Group of infantry to trouble spots as might be required, to help the local UN commander reestablish stability in his regions.

We soon discovered that this involved not only operating numbers of different kinds of aircraft over a very wide area, but it would also require the operation of an air traffic control system and the airfields which would be used. To cap it all, the air navigation and communication systems, as modern as any in Europe, had been abandoned by the Belgians and no local Congolese had been trained to the level necessary to put them back in operation. In some cases the equipment had been sabotaged while in others it had been vandalized.

With more than 15,000 UN troops already on location at many widely spread points, we obviously could not wait to produce a nice neat plan to put the whole project together. The troops had to be fed and supported. The limited road and rail and very expensive river transportation systems used by the Belgians were no longer in operation. Simultaneously, we would have many activities on the go. All of these, hopefully, would lead eventually to the neat (and very expensive) package we could see down the road, but had neither the time nor the information to create in the rush. Inundated with demands on their talents and time never

before experienced, our ten intrepid members managed it with aplomb — and perhaps many shortcuts. We did have help from a Pakistani Army motor-transport company in assembling loads and dispatching aircraft. And we increasingly commandeered people and equipment from the HQs, and on the road, to get the job done.

EVOLUTION OF THE UN AIR TRANSPORT FORCE

With the Security Council's decision, Hammarskjöld's staff had immediately appealed to selected member nations for the resources they believed to be necessary to meet the mandate. With total confidence in their infallibility, and some limited advice from an eclectic array of ex-military UN employees, infantry units and air force personnel and aeroplanes were requested from different sources. In the army case it worked out well, as some expertise was evident in the staff and useful offers were made and accepted. In the air force case, however, no such know-how seemed to be on hand when the non-specific requests for airmen and aeroplanes went out. And, unbelievably, before the requirement could be defined in detail, numbers of each appeared on the scene.

On our arrival, we discovered 17 C-47s (Military DC-3s) had arrived, along with five C-119s. These had apparently been dug out of the NATO war reserve in Europe and, until their delivery, some had not flown for upwards of 15

years. A mixed bag of helicopters and several Beaver and Otter fixed-wing aircraft as well, had been generously shucked off from Middle East UN missions. While this raised our eyebrows, it was nothing compared to the surprise we got when we discovered that we had, or would shortly have on hand, aircrew and ground crew in uncoordinated lots from 11 different nations! The one encouraging offer of assistance was an Indian Air Force C-119 Squadron which would come as a formed unit. It was followed a short while later by an Italian Air Force C-119 Squadron.

In this confused atmosphere, we soon

"In this confused atmosphere, we soon discovered that we had pilots who had never flown the types of aircraft we had inherited . . ."



discovered we had pilots who had never flown the types of aircraft we had inherited and mechanics who were not qualified to fix them. To make matters even more difficult, there was the Yugoslav contingent of mechanics, real experts on their Russian version of the DC-3, but who had no facility in either of the languages our Brazilian and Argentinian pilots spoke. The pilots spoke good English but the Yugoslavs spoke only Serbo-Croatian, with their Sergeant able to speak some French. Initially, this too, created a problem, but the expertise of the Yugoslav mechanics soon convinced our South American pilots that these foreigners were as good or better than any they had worked with at home.

The UN Air Transport Force, with a fleet of obsolescent aircraft, many aircrew unqualified to fly them, and mechanics of questionable skills and know-how, was not off to a very impressive start — from the outset it would be expected to logistically support a field force of upwards of 20,000 troops widely dispersed over an area of nearly 1,000,000 square miles. However, with the unqualified dedication and ability of a few key members, we were soon running conversion courses to qualify personnel, and were routinely doing pilot check rides on all our pilots, whether they liked it or not. Flight Safety, if nothing else, required it. We were responsible for the safe results of our efforts and had to make sure an acceptable standard could be met.

Flight checks were done using RCAF check standards. There was no sitting in the office and having someone else do it. After the initial run-through we were able to recruit others to accept some of the responsibility. Obviously the Indian Air Force and Italian Air Force Squadrons maintained their own air force standards, even though the first time I flew with an Italian C-119 crew, I was a bit surprised to see a wicker-covered bottle of Italian vino in an especially fitted holder between the two pilot seats. (The explanation that potable water simply was not available in the Congo, and seldom in Italy, left me a bit uncomfortable, despite its purported logic!)

PROGRESS

By the end of August, the dust had begun to settle. We were running regular flights to main UN troop locations, and had a better sense of safety regarding the situation on the ground at the airfields we were us-

ing. Thanks to the generosity of the Canadian Government, the RCAF had been allowed to provide a few bilingual air traffic control tradesmen, and ICAO too, through its European office, provided further help. At the outset we had asked much of the aircraft crews in having them operate into insecure and uncontrolled airfields where the local political situation was uncertain. The Canadian Army Signallers at most of these sites were of inestimable help, and our crews went out of their way to make sure that the needs of the signal detachments and our tradesmen took priority. Much innovation was involved, in acquiring vehicles, accommodation and such amenities as we could locate. The UN support system was simply not geared for this kind of operation. However, their ignorance was our bliss!



By mid-September we had aircrew of 11 nationalities flying 78 aircraft of 13 different types. Despite the language barriers, inadequate training and lack of supplies, we were getting results. We still required the backup of Air Congo (A politically less offensive name invented for Sabena) charter C-54s as well as in the maintenance and repair of our aircraft.

Air Marshal Hugh Campbell, our incomparable Chief of The Air Staff, was well known for keeping his ear close to the ground on all matters affecting his RCAF members and what they were doing. He called one day from Ottawa, via our SSB long-range radio, and asked how things were go-

ing and whether there was anything we needed. I briefed him on some of our aircraft serviceability and aircrew proficiency problems and mentioned that we had a very large backlog of vehicles and equipment that was urgently needed in the field. He asked whether a couple of C-119s on temporary duty (with crews) would help. I, of course,

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said 'yes' and within three days they were in Leopoldville! (I wonder if today's brass could react so quickly and completely.)

In the two months we really needed them, these two borrowed aircraft and crews moved 386,000 pounds of freight backlog and hundreds of passengers. Also, during the ONUC operation at this time, the RCAF's 426 Squadron North Stars, in 392 flights, had airlifted more than 2,000 tons of freight and 11,476 UN passengers into and within the Congo.

To further give body to the UN Air Transport Force, Canada had purchased four de Havilland Caribou aircraft and offered them to the UN

for internal airlift. It was busily training the aircrews and ground crews to ferry them to the Congo and operate them as part of the UNATF when the Secretary General, bowing to Russian pressure, refused the offer. This was a blow to our hopes. The Russian pressure was reportedly because of Canada's strong position in NATO as well as its membership in the Commonwealth which had a history in African affairs not necessarily covered with glory. The Russians openly supported Lumumba, even after he had been fired by Kasavubu.

The records show that, by the middle of October, our 'mixed bag' UNATF had actually moved more than

sergeant in the Belgian-officered Force Publique/ANC, promoted himself and had led a *coup d'état*. Dr Bunche, the Secretary General's Representative on the spot recognized Mobutu as the point man to deal with. The Russians objected strongly, but the Sec Gen supported this position. Russian support for Lumumba was strong, even before Congolese independence had evolved. They saw him as the means to get re-established in Africa, having lost their footholds in Egypt and Tanzania.

The Russians tried to pressure the UN into allowing them to participate in the provision of aid and, despite the denial of over-flight clearances by NATO nations as a result of a

barrels on them as soon as we gave them word that the Russians were airborne. Our UN commanders did as requested, and the IL-12 pilots, on learning there was no Congolese destination open, had no alternative but to return to Khartoum.

In retrospect, it is amazing how easy it was to get things done when one judiciously avoided being trapped by the UN bureaucratic network. A few times I was chastised for not seeking authority ahead of time. But, when the results looked good and all could take a bow, shorting the system was overlooked! The fact was, we were far too busy to waste time on details, when the course of action was obvious.

Again, their ignorance was our bliss!

HOW TO GROUND A RUSSIAN TU-104

Late one afternoon in October, a Russian TU-104 military transport jet landed in Leopoldville. General Von Horne informed me that its likely purpose was to lift Lumumba out of the country, and this was not what the UN wanted to happen. He wondered if we airmen could quietly arrange to delay his departure for a few hours. I met with two of our intrepid, innovating airmen, stated the problem and was reminded that a high performance jet

couldn't taxi or takeoff, with flat tires. Since we controlled the airport, and our good buddies the ANC guards were now very friendly with us, (because we had arranged that they be paid their overdue wages), in the dark of night the deed was done.

The Russians were most upset when, late the following morning, they explained to us why they needed to borrow our air compressor. They departed Leopoldville that afternoon and Lumumba was not on board. Dr Bunche did mention later how lucky ONUC had been that the Russians aircraft had had a problem and Lumumba was unable to get away as he had planned. We choose not to enlighten the UN staff on what happened. With hindsight, had we sought CYA authority, it would never have been granted and Lumumba would not have been stymied.



10,000 tons of freight and hundreds of passengers in its military aircraft! We had also met the UN's voracious need for paper work by having issued Organization Orders, Air Staff Instructions, Supply Demand forms, Job Descriptions, and other 'useful' documents. (They were all actually modified RCAF Forms printed locally with ONUC letterhead.) The world wondered how such a small and busy bunch of airmen could produce this stuff and still run an air operation.) I still marvel at it!

An interesting political situation existed during this period when, for a while, no one knew who the government was. Lumumba claimed the PM job, because he had been appointed into it, even though Kasavubu, with outside encouragement, had fired him, and Joseph Mobutu, a recent

Opposite: the last 426 Squadron flight into Leopoldville, captained by F/L Danny Mahoney (at bottom of stairs) in North Star NS17821, 8 September 1962. E. EMPEY VIA L. MOTIUK. **Above:** North Star, NS17817, being serviced at Idris (near Tripoli) Libya, en route to the Congo autumn, 1960. DND PL1456104 VIA L. MOTIUK.

timely Canadian recommendation, the Russians did try. At one stage a dozen IL-12 aircraft loaded with 'equipment' for Lumumba arrived in Stanleyville, via a very circuitous route, intending to proceed further to Leopoldville. The Ethiopian commander at the airport called on the radio and told me the aircraft were loaded with arms and ammunition. General Von Horne agreed that we should try to prevent this from being delivered. Since we airmen controlled the airfields, we ordered the UN detachments at the useable ones to block their runways by parking vehicles or 45-gallon gas

OFFICIAL GUESTS' DINNER LIST

While Lumumba was still in the chair, he hosted a 'black-tie' dinner to which some UN staff members were invited. I Col "Johnnie" Berthiaume, an incredibly able R22eR officer, who was acting Chief of Staff to General Von Horne, and I were seated at the head-table. At the appropriate time our host decided to speak to his guests, which included the US representative, and up-date them. His speech soon developed into an anti-Western harangue, where Canada in particular was vilified. Col Berthiaume and I listened for a while and with Lumumba still in full flow decided simultaneously, I think, to depart the gathering in protest. We were featured in the local press the following day. While we felt some political upsets might follow our actions, I personally was more worried that one of Lumumba's AK47-armed and highly visible guards might shoot me in the back as we left.

THE UN SUPPLY SYSTEM

In ONUC, the UN civilian staff handled logistics and this included accommodation and ground transportation. There were Official Forms for everything including the bits and pieces we needed to repair our aircraft. To say it was a slow process is being generous. Our supply NCO working with his buddies back in Trenton, somehow got around this by setting up a process whereby we ordered stuff through the RCAF supply system and billed UN New York after the fact. The UN civilian staff was more than pleased and soon became very cooperative in things Canadian originated by our guys and the Army signalers.

A case in point, concerns the lack of vehicles for getting our crews from their accommodation to the airport and for other administrative purposes. No civilian transportation systems were operating either locally, on the few highways and rail spurs, or on the river system. Early on, this shortage hamstrung our efforts, so having had no response from the UN system, one of our can-do RCAF Flight Lieutenants conned his UN civilian supply friends into giving him the forms to requisition the vehicles we needed. He did, and four years later, I received a query from UN New York, asking the whereabouts of a dozen or so vehicles I had signed for in August 1960!

OTHER TALES, OTHER TIMES

The cultural and political sensitivities of contingents from 28 different



national sources created many headaches for staffs. For example, bivouacking 'flip-flop'-shod Guinean troops along side American Infantry-booted Liberian troops caused the Guineans to demand that they be kitted just as well as their neighbours. The UN complied and, in passing, had real trouble rounding up boots big enough to fit previously un-shod feet. A similar problem arose over UN service allowances. Egyptian soldiers claimed \$6.00 per day, Canadians \$0.30 per day!

An example of politics entering day-to-day affairs was the case

"A round trip for a North Star crew from Trenton to the Congo was approximately 70 flight hours."



Opposite, top: celebrating Canadian Thanksgiving at the Leopoldville Tennis Club in 1960. Seated fifth from left, on the far side of the table, is Van Horne, with Mendelson to his left and then the author (in light suit). On the other side of the table, Guimand looks over his shoulder toward the camera. VIA THE AUTHOR. **Opposite, bottom:** 426 Squadron Maintenance Personnel change an engine on a North Star at Kano, Nigeria on 21 December 1960. D. SMITH VIA L. MOTIUK. **Left:** 426 Squadron North Stars at N'Djili Airport, Leopoldville, in July 1960. L. MILBERRY COL VIA L. MOTIUK.

of the Israeli-packed and -labeled canned-pork products doled out to the Egyptian contingent by the UN quartermaster. A political crisis ensued, with the Egyptians accusing all and sundry of a deliberate attempt to embarrass them. While members of a United Nations force, they were still enemies at home!

The chasm between officers and other ranks in some contingents were eye-openers also. For example, we had one group whose Wing Commander complained that their officers were expected to ride on the same bus as their mechanics, and this was unacceptable. He wanted separate buses. I suggested to him, that, if his government would indicate its willingness to buy an additional crew-bus and supply a driver, we would have no objection. But, in the mean time, perhaps they could arrange to share the bus, with some sitting up front and the others at the back. I heard no more from that source.

African military personnel, especially from former colonies, seemed prone to respect the authority of us foreigners more than they did that of other Africans. I could cite many examples of tribal attitudes being basic behavior drivers — but one sticks out. The Force Publique/ANC detested the Ghanaian officers who bossed them in the provision of airport security. When one group of French-speaking Canadian troops arrived and were mistaken for Belgians, it was the interjection by an on-site RCAF officer that stopped the mayhem, with absolutely no move to help by the Ghanaian

officers who stood by and watched. These officers claimed the Congolese soldiers paid no attention to the orders given them.

Compared with the Commander-in-Chief's job of keeping his troops from 28 nations fed and happy, our job to help, while critical to his courses of action, had few of the political and sociological factors to distract us. We had untrained personnel, but they were being trained, and our multi-national Air Force was making good progress. Safety of our crews and passengers was paramount and, for the most part, luckily, we were successful.

THE RCAF NORTH STAR LIFELINE

During the deployment phase of the ONUC operation, 426 Squadron's 13 North Stars were flown at the — until then — unequalled rate of 180 hours per month each, for a total monthly flying rate of 2,340 hours. The unit played a critical role in terms of support to the whole UN Congo build-up.

Being unpressurized, the aircraft usually operated below 10,000 feet, especially with passengers on board. There was no passenger oxygen installed. Consequently, and unlike today's high-performance passenger jets, the North Star crews spent much of their time flying on instrument flying rules (IFR) rather than above the weather. It was hard, tiring work and poorly paid, but a challenge these professionals accepted and relished as their duty.

A round trip for a North Star crew from Trenton to the Congo was ap-

proximately 70 flight hours. Through the use of en route 'slip-crews' the aircraft could be back in Trenton in a little less than four days. The crews, however, limited to 12-hour duty days, could be on the route for eight days or more.

The initial Canadian deployment route was from Trenton via The Azores to Dakar, thence to Accra and on to Leopoldville. After these deployments were finished, with the North Stars having helped on the international ones as well, a twice-weekly scheduled flight via the European Pisa terminal, normally used for the RCAF Middle east shuttles, was instituted at the request of the United Nations. These flights continued until the wind-up of ONUC in 1964. (From late 1960 onwards they were carried out by the Yukon, the new and much more operationally-capable North Star replacement.)

THE UN AIR STAFF

Our airmen from 11 nations, speaking six languages were nothing short of amazing in what they were able to do. They needed little supervision or direction, and regardless of nationality, seemed to be blessed with the know-how and understanding which led to the on the spot innovation and action that produced the results needed, and which normally would not have been seen to be possible, even from personnel of much higher rank and experience. Biased, I may be, but in retrospect, the glue in the whole operation provided by the small group of highly motivated, dedicated and loyal RCAF officers, was the key to the amazing success which was achieved in the