

Aircraft Supply in the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan

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This article explores the supply of training aircraft in the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) and Canada's roles in this project, focusing on the structures of arms transfer between the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada, as well as sentimental and military ties within the British Commonwealth. The BCATP was organised by the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and trained 140,000 pilots and aircrews, mainly in Canada, during World War II. For this project, it was crucial that a steady supply of training aircraft was obtained for the training schools, and Canada took a leading role in developing this aircraft. This article first examines the establishment of the BCATP and its training programmes, followed by an analysis of the aircraft supply scheme. Lastly, it considers the increase in supply of aircraft and engines from the United States after the Air Training Conference in 1942. In conclusion, the BCATP made a great contribution to strengthening British air power as well as forging the sentimental tie between Britain and the three dominions. It was, moreover, Canada that underpinned this project with economic and military support from the United States. Therefore, Canada's aircraft supply in the BCATP not only strengthened the integration of the Commonwealth through the joint training programme but also dissolved it by forming a closer relationship between Canada and the United States.