

CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE
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Transforming Canada's Post-Cold War Air Force

The Transformation of Western Airpower
Conference, Centre for Military Studies,
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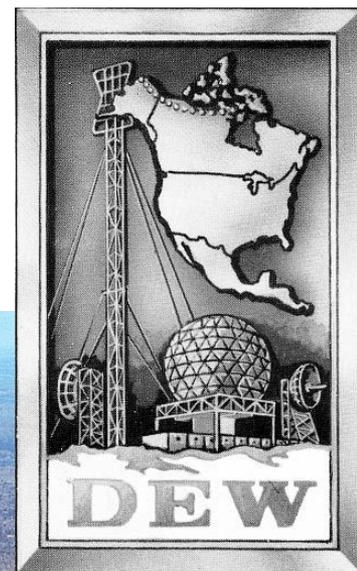
Outline

- Golden Age
- Unification
- Air Command
- Late Cold War
- Post-Cold War
- 9/11 and Afghanistan
- CF Transformation
- Canada First Defence Strategy
- Current Challenges



Early Cold War RCAF

- Post war planning and cuts
- Peace Dividend
- Largest peacetime military build-up in Cdn history
- Integrated air defence with United States – NORAD (1957)
- NATO:
 - 1 CAD
 - Maritime Air Command





The RCAF in the 1950s

- **Golden Years:** 50% of defence budget
- mid-1950s RCAF at post-war peak of 3,290 aircraft in 41 sqns (29 regular, 12 Aux) with 54,000 men and women on strength
- NATO aircrew training in Canada turns out 1,400 aircrew per year





Unification: the Dismemberment of the RCAF

- Canadian Forces Commands:
 - Mobile Command (army + ground support aircraft)
 - Maritime Command (navy + maritime support aircraft)
 - Air Transport Command
 - Air Defence Command
 - Training Command
 - (CF Europe) - Army + squadrons based in Europe
- A “CF Culture”? Those green uniforms...



The Honourable Paul Hellyer, Canada's Minister of National Defence, 1963-1967.





Effects of Unification on Canada's Air Force

- overall negative impact – almost destroyed as an institution; lowest point in Canadian air force history
- “air element” at a disadvantage in maintaining and advancing air power capabilities
 - cost cuts led to disproportionate reduction of “air element” programs
 - dilution/fragmentation of air elements into various commands and subordination to them





Effects of Unification on Canada's Air Force (Cont'd)

- “strong service” culture Maritime Command and Mobile Command became more like the old navy and army, respectively
 - headed by 3-star sailors and soldiers who could champion maritime and land programs
- air element – no single command to identify with
 - lack of strategic oversight and leadership; declining *esprit de corps*
 - deficiencies in professional development and doctrine
 - was this the death of air force doctrine, culture and traditions?
 - “disintegration” of the integrated command structure



Addressing the Problem



Chief of the Defence Staff
General Jacques "Jimmy
Jadex" Dextraze



Vice-Chief of the Defence
Staff Lieutenant-General
Bill Carr



Minister of National Defence
(and former RCAF pilot)
James Richardson



Establishment of Air Command (1975): Rebirth of the Air Force?

- consisted of all the CF's air assets, including maritime and army
- the integration of army aviators and “nasal radiators”
- Air Command made up of designated “Air Groups”:
 - Air Defence Gp
 - Maritime Air Gp
 - 10 Tactical Air Gp
 - Air Transport Gp
 - Air Reserve Gp
 - 14 Training Gp
 - 1 CAG (formerly 1 Cdn Air Division Europe)

CDS Gen Dextraze announcing the standing up of Air Command with LGen Carr, 1st Commander, Air Command, Winnipeg, 2 Sept 1975





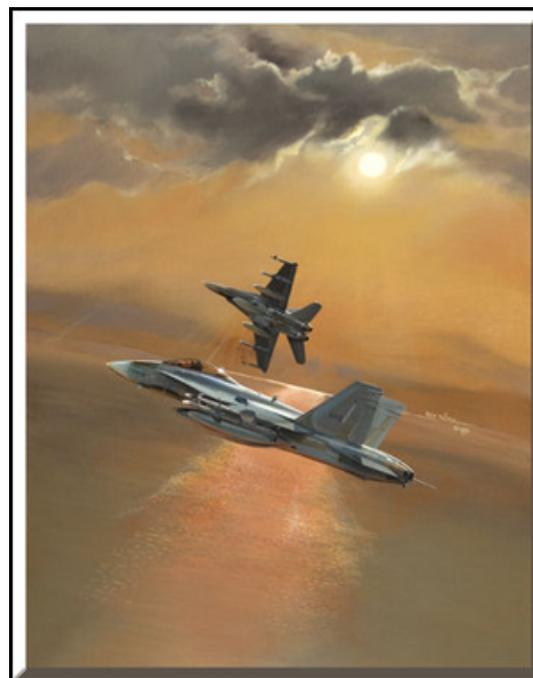
Air Command: Realizing the Airman's Indivisibility of Air Power Concept

- air force owns and operates all Cdn military aviation
- indivisibility of air power: a nation's military aviation should be centralized under airmen in an air force institution
- the breadth of Air Command's air power capabilities and responsibilities was greater than the RCAF's
- enhanced the potential for joint operations
- Cda has a small/medium or "smedium"- sized air force
- can the RCAF operate effectively given its smaller size and its large breadth of national air power responsibilities?
 - especially for a country of huge geographical size?



The Air Force in the Late Cold War

- acquisition of the CF-18 to replace 3 platforms: the CF-101, CF-104, and CF-5; gradual closing down of radar lines
- Trudeau “rust-out” and “commitments-capabilities gap”
- development of a “corporate culture” in the CF – is service a vocation or a job?
- 1991 Gulf War: CF-18s used in escort and bombing operations (first time Cdn aircraft had been deliberately placed in harm’s way since 1945)
- hope from the 1987 White Paper, but dashed with the end of the Cold War and changes in the international environment





End of the Cold War: Operational Tempo Increases...

- ...despite massive cutbacks to defence spending in the post-Cold War period
- government's "can-do" attitude"
- CF (including the air force) became increasingly overstretched





1994 Defence White Paper

- three roles for the Canadian Forces:
 1. the protection of Canada
 2. the defence of North America in co-operation with the U.S.
 3. contributing to international security
- multi-purpose, combat-capable force that could respond to a range of operations
 - Peacekeeping & observer missions
 - Enforcing will of international community
 - Collective defence
 - Fight alongside best & against first-rate opponents



DND Cuts

- defence budget cut from appx. \$12 billion to \$9 billion
- civilian personnel cut from 20,000 to 10,000
- CF reg force cut from 90,000 to 60,000
- 1990s: NATO deployments to Europe ended
 - Canada gradually withdraws its forces in Europe (including 1 Cdn Air Group)
- cuts did not bode well for the increased CF operational tempo and roles
- 1990s: “Decade of Darkness”



Post-Cold War Changes

- 1993: adoption of the “wing” organizational structure
- in 1997 functional Air Groups dissolved and all air assets consolidated under 1 Cdn Air Div
- Re-establishment of the position of Chief of the Air Staff





Post-Cold War Reductions

- CF Regular Force reduced by about 20%
- Air Force reduced by 48%
- massive cuts to the number of airframes lead to reduced capabilities just when demands on them increased:
 - expeditionary taskings doubled and personnel deployed tripled
 - also many domestic operations





The State of the Air Force in 2005

“The air force is ‘beyond the point where even constant dedication is sufficient to sustain the capabilities needed to meet assigned Defence tasks,’ [and the Air Force] ‘remains fragile due to chronic underfunding and asymmetric cuts to personnel. Our Wings and Squadrons are too hollow to sustain the current tempo of operations.’”

- LGen Ken Pennie, CAS, April 2005



9/11 and the Canadian Military



- The Shock of 9-11
 - Canada's loyalty tested
- Canadian response
 - supporting our ally and closest friend



Contributed to the war in Afghanistan...

...but not the 2003 invasion of Iraq



Canadian Forces in Afghanistan

- Canadian Forces in a war-fighting and state-building role
- NATO-led ISAF mission in Kabul (2003)
 - Gen. Rick Hillier commander of ISAF (2004)
- Air Mobility support to sustain forces
- Cdn Air Wing deployed in 2006
 - Griffon escort role
 - rented Chinooks and Heron UAVs





Canada's International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World

- a defence *and* foreign policy statement
- Three defence priorities:
 - 1. Protecting Canadians
 - 2. Defending North America with the U.S.
 - 3. Contribute to international peace & security
- 3-D+C approach
 - Defence, but also Development, Diplomacy, and Commerce
 - Greater inter-government and inter-agency (including allies and NGOs) co-operation; state-building
 - “3-block war” concept
 - HUMAN SECURITY; failed and failing states





Canadian Forces Transformation (2005) Under CDS Gen Rick Hillier

- integrated and unified approach to operations
- single line of command
- four new unified commands
- based on 2 main ideas:
 - from “balanced force” to non-traditional & small wars
 - from management to operations primacy CF culture

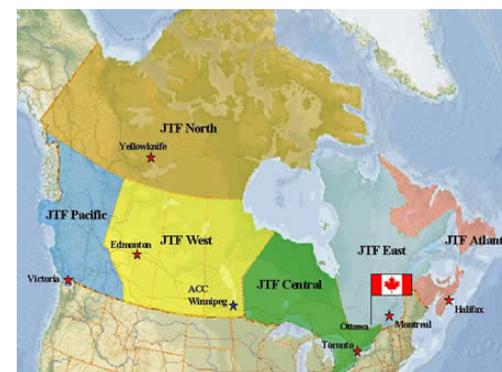


General R.J. Hillier, CMM, MSC, CD, Chief of Defence Staff.



New Operational Command Structure (“dot Coms”)

- a more “integrated and unified approach to operations”
- four new unified operational commands:
 - **Canada Command (Canada COM)**
 - **Canadian Expeditionary Force Command (CEFCOM)**
 - **Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM)**
 - **Canadian Operational Support Command (CANOSCOM)**



Protect and Defend Canada



Stephen Harper

- “Canada First” Defence Strategy
- CF expansion and revitalization
- Arctic Sovereignty (most recent)
- personnel and equipment (increased funding)
 - i.e., F-35 Joint Strike Fighter
- better capabilities
- but recently: more defence cuts and cost-saving measures





Current Challenges

- a high operational tempo has worn out air force equipment and personnel
 - this has caused other challenges – i.e., little time for training and education aspects of professional development
- uneven bell curve of experience due to 1990s “Decade of Darkness” budget cuts
 - retention is a huge issue – make the RCAF an appealing long-term career choice (get them in and keep them there!)
- fiscal restraints put further strains on RCAF capabilities
 - live within its own means (a historical challenge)



Criticisms of CF Transformation

- the dangers of over-specialization
- focus on land-centric missions where the air force is only in a supporting role
- “joint” really means “jarmy”
- “boots on the ground” focus
 - is the air force just a “taxi service” for the army?
 - risky and costly (casualties)
 - air power options more appealing to the government because less risk (i.e., ISIS/ISIL)
 - does not appreciate air force culture





The RCAF Consists of a Number of Communities (inefficient stove pipes?)





Air Force Identity

- RCAF Mark I (pre-1968): air force culture, loyalty and personal bond to the RCAF as an institution
- Post-Unification: loose “air element” – no “air force” culture, loyalty, bond
- since Air Command (1975): identification with one’s operational community, not the air force as an institution



Major (ret.) Steve James: a “federated air force”

- “a federated institution of rival communities”
- four specific rival communities:
 - 1. fighters
 - 2. maritime air
 - 3. tactical aviation
 - 4. air transport-SAR





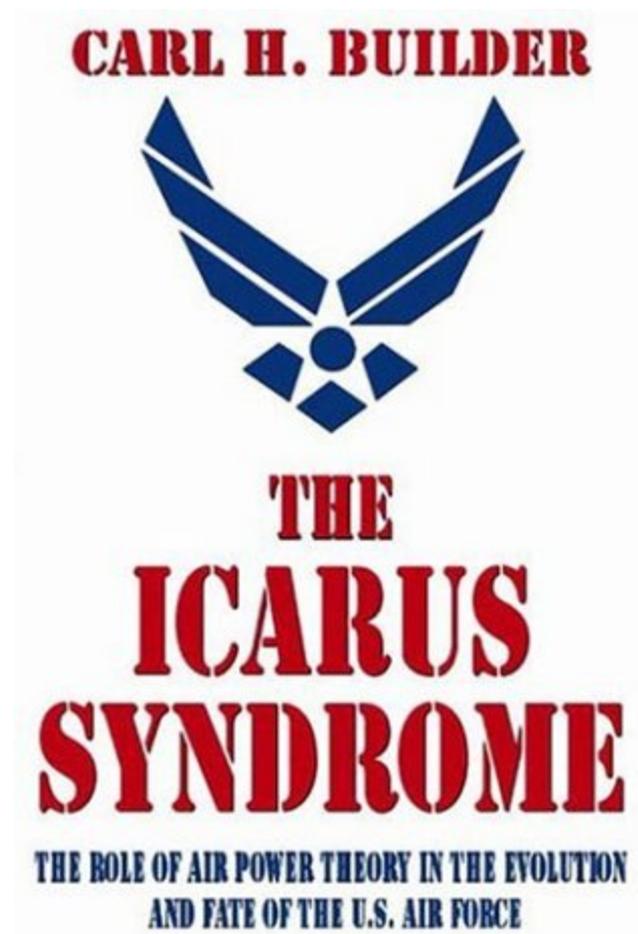
James: A Lack of Identity, Purpose, and Vision

- Canada's air force "has been found wanting in creating a unifying identity and vision across its various parts"
- air force leaders "have consistently fallen short in creating a singleness of purpose and unity across its disparate communities"
- they have "failed to create a singleness of purpose and vision"



Scot Robertson: the Canadian Air Force's "Icarus Syndrome"

- despite the experience of the Second World War, Canada's air force "failed to develop an appreciation of the broad range of airpower [sic] roles"
- does the RCAF risk being a "jack-of-all trades and a master of none" trying to fulfill the large breadth of air power responsibilities?





Requirement for “air-to-air integration”

- an overarching “air force” identity?
- a renewed sense of RCAF identity and culture
- understanding of its various air power responsibilities
- based on the institution; the sum of its parts
- greater interoperability within the RCAF between various operational communities
 - all on the same page: identity, culture, doctrine
- a fully integrated force



The End. Thank you.

