



DND photo ggd2011-0178-03 by Corporal Jennifer Kusche.

A Canadian Forces CP-140 *Aurora* arrives in a blizzard at CFS Alert, 23 March 2011.

WHY CANADIAN AIRMEN ARE NOT COMMANDING

by Michael J. Hood

Introduction

It would seem reasonable that, in a unified military such as the Canadian Forces (CF), the concept of *jointness* should permeate naturally throughout the organization. Indeed, given the amount of time that has passed since the 1968 unification of the Canadian Army, the Royal Canadian Navy, and the Royal Canadian Air Force, one would expect that a relative balance of service representation in senior billets would have long been the accepted norm in Canada. Unfortunately, in examining the senior ranks of today's CF, this does not appear to be the case.

The recent appointments cycle within the CF serves to identify that balance in service representation at senior levels is lacking in Canada's military.¹ By way of example, of the 14 principal CF General Officer positions that were available for joint service in 2010, the assignments plan saw only a single air force officer posted among these most influential senior joint positions.² Thus, at the dawn of a complex transformational period for Canada's military, heavily influenced by the scope and scale of recent experience in Afghanistan, the CF now finds itself with few airmen in strategically relevant positions. Whither the air force?

Interestingly, this trend appears not limited solely to Canada. In a recent article published in the United States Air

Force's (USAF) *Air Force Magazine*, the Director of the Mitchell Institute for Airpower Studies, Dr. Rebecca Grant, explored a similar phenomenon in *Why Airmen Don't Command*. Grant researched why USAF generals were so rarely appointed as Combatant Commanders since the development of the Unified Command Plan in 1947, and concluded that the lack of USAF representation was not simply a coincidence. She suggests that, to reverse the trend, the USAF had to do a better job of grooming its leading officers for command positions and tours "... where Air Force officers gain credibility as warriors."³ And while this advice might be equally pertinent north of the border, the question that this article will seek to answer is: are there reasons to explain the paucity of Canadian airmen competing successfully for the senior joint billets presently available within the CF? Why are Canadian airmen not commanding?

Well, to those outside the air force, the issue of diminished representation might be of little relevance, given the

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military operations within which the CF presently finds itself embroiled. Even so, while diminishing air force influence at the strategic level might be of secondary importance, given today's ongoing operations paradigm, future geo-strategic challenges facing Canada might well call for a much more balanced view of the military pillar of national power. Therefore, from a strategic perspective, this article will argue that Canada – and its military by extension – would be best served by a more proportionally representative leadership construct.

All things being equal, the present lack of senior representation could suggest that the challenges facing the air force might be internal to the service itself – possibly due to limitations inherent within its present professional development model. Indeed, if this is also an issue of concern to the air forces of close allies, it might imply that an *air* culture that celebrates those who have “slipped the surly bonds of earth”⁴ might be counter-productive to developing senior joint military commanders. Within Canada, this possible cultural bias might be further compounded by the present dearth of opportunities for command within the air force. Indeed, since 1997, when the air force amalgamated an entire echelon of command with the closure of all of the Group Headquarters and the creation of 1 Canadian Air Division (1 Cdn Air Div), the number of air force general officers filling senior joint billets has slowly declined to today's historic low (See Figure 1, page 47).⁵ Add in the number of lieutenant-colonel-commanded flying squadrons that have closed over the same period, and one might ask if there remain sufficient command positions available at all levels within the air force to support a professional development model that can build senior CF joint leaders.

Thus, the air force would be well-served to review its development model, such that it ensures its emerging leaders possess the requisite experience to command credibly and effectively at the highest joint levels. If the necessary command positions are not presently available to successfully develop enough senior officers within the existing air force structure, consideration should be given to evolving it in support of the broader strategic objectives of a joint CF. The air force might also explore other opportunities to provide the requisite senior war fighting experience through exchanges with key allies. Lastly, the air force would be wise to continue to socialize the need for proportional representation in senior command positions among the other services such that the necessary ‘pull’ to put the system back into balance is forthcoming.

An Uncertain Future

To senior leaders falls the responsibility of ensuring that the CF satisfies the requirements of the Government's national security policy and is ready for whatever an uncertain future may bring.⁶

In an ideal world, a mature joint military force would possess a leadership cadre that would resemble proportionally

its constituent members. But unfortunately, the CF does not enjoy the benefit of living in a perfect world. Thus in the absence of perfection, why should the issue of proportionality be considered so important? One fundamental reason is the accepted axiom that the future is so hard to predict – and for military practitioners, envisioning the future security environment is equally difficult to forecast. Scanning the available literature, there presently exist many visions as to what the future may hold for Canada – visions inevitably seen through lenses influenced by individual experience, but often focused in very different areas. Therefore, in a country of modest size and resources such as Canada, the difficulty lies in ensuring that any national security strategy accounts for the widest range of possibilities, yet does so within a budget that cannot conceivably afford to cover them all. Clearly, each major military equipment purchase must first and foremost be essential to protecting vital national interests, both those of today and well out into the future. The difficulty, however, lies in the cost of these major programs relative to the defence budget, since the country simply cannot afford to make choices that do not address the perceived threats of the next twenty to thirty years, or, in some instances, up to fifty years.

“The air force might also explore other opportunities to provide the requisite senior war fighting experience through exchanges with key allies.”

One challenge within the present acquisition system is the relative priority of these procurement projects and how key decision-makers must necessarily try and balance their own perceptions of the future security environment against parochial service interests. Take, for example, the Chief of the Land Staff's (CLS) 2003 efforts to shape the Strategic Capability Investment Plan (SCIP)⁷ in support of his ongoing army transformation plan.⁸ Within the CF's limited means at the time, the army's plan could only be realized at the direct expense of planned navy and air force acquisition programs. In his memorandum to the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) and Deputy-Minister (DM), the head of the army offered his opinion: “... [that] the reality of the emerging security environment suggests that is unlikely that the CF will be called upon to fight in ‘blue skies or blue waters.’”⁹ Yet, barely eight years later, is this limited version of the future security environment still considered plausible?

Noted military author Douglas Bland would disagree wholeheartedly. In a Toronto *Globe and Mail* article that celebrated the Canadian Navy's 100th Anniversary in 2010, the newspaper opined:

In noting that, not only does Canada have a number of vital security interests in the Caribbean and Latin America, and that global warming and oil exploration are turning the Arctic into a strategically contested space, and that the Pacific Ocean could be witnessing the early stages of an arms race as China expands its navy, academic Douglas Bland was quoted as suggesting that Canada should be “... building a navy-centric armed forces, not an army-centric one.”¹⁰

And while many may question the probability of Bland's 'navy-centric' future security concerns, it nonetheless exemplifies the variety of credible opinions that presently exist. For the air force, the notion that Canada would never fight 'in blue skies' again is equally inconceivable. Who within the military could have predicted that, after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the CF's front line fighter, the CF-18 *Hornet*, would deploy into combat twice in nine years as Canada's principal military contribution to two Allied-led wars: the 1990 Gulf War and the 1999 Kosovo War? And history has repeated itself, embodied in the recent overseas deployment of CF-18s for Operation *Mobile*, the UN-sanctioned Canadian Forces commitment to the multinational response to the crisis in Libya. Perhaps all this only serves to reinforce the maxim that how one views the future is shaped by where one presently resides.

said than done, however, as similar lessons are being learned by many of our key allies, including the British. The former commander of the British Army, General Sir Richard Dannat, recently posited:

Any respectable defence and security review must be led by policy, and start with a clear analysis of the character and nature of future conflict. This, if carried out honestly, will identify the future threats to our security. It must also be set against our national ambition... (and) today's highest priority may not always remain so. If our aspiration is to stabilise Afghanistan sufficiently so that our troops can come home by 2015, then at that point our Land Forces might no longer be the highest priority.¹³

This is an important reason relevant to why the CF should strive to keep a balance of service representation at the most senior levels. When critical force structure and acquisition discussions are taking place – decisions that could very well bind the CF to one particular view of the future security environment – a sufficiently broad yet balanced composition of key decision-makers is critical to ensuring the wisest possible outcome. If it is agreed by a joint leadership team that future threats demand a preponderance of effort and resources towards a specific service, then this must drive present force structure

decisions. However, those charged with shaping the future force need to keep an eye focused squarely forward and to avoid the tendency often attributed to military strategists of planning *to fight the last war*. Indeed, given that a decade ago the West largely failed to predict the rise of non-state actors and the asymmetric nature of *today's* war fighting, it is equally conceivable that *tomorrow's* threat will be in the form of a 'near-peer country,' or take place in a warfare medium – the cyber domain or in earth's orbit for example – that sees the present force structure poorly situated to address.

Tactical Warriors and Strategic Leaders

... all CF members must master the art of warfare in their own medium if they are to become true professionals in the joint, combined and inter-agency context that characterizes modern conflict. Expertise must be distributed according to the harsh demands of this environment, and the military ethos must accommodate the separate identities forged by combat at sea, on land and in the air.¹⁴

In examining the broader issue of the lack of air force representation at senior levels, it might be useful to question



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A CF-18 *Hornet* launches on an operational mission from Trapani, Italy, as part of Operation *Mobile*, 20 April 2011.

As illustrated, forecasting the future security environment will always be an imperfect science and the military tools necessary to meet these imprecise challenges are equally hard to define. Proof of this difficulty can be found within the same 2003 CLS memorandum, which opined: "... [that] the central theme of Army Transformation is the fundamental shift from a reliance on mass to a reliance on information."¹¹ Ironically, it was the army's own plans to divest itself of heavy armour in 2003 that is now testament to the difficulty of forecasting the future. The recent purchase of the *Leopard 2* main battle tank, and the pending acquisition of the heavily armoured close-combat vehicle aptly attest.

Solace might be found, however, in the fact that Canada has a long history of poorly assessing the future security environment. As one analyst criticized following the federal government's release of the 1987 White Paper, "... neither the 1964 nor the 1971 White Paper was particularly astute in predicting the evolution of the strategic environment, and it is questionable whether the 1987 White Paper will be more successful."¹² Therefore, with sufficient reason to be skeptical of any one vision of the future, it is even more essential for the CF to support acquisition decisions that have the broadest relevance across as wide a spectrum as possible. This is easier

whether the service has focused enough energy upon developing leaders who can compete with their peers from other services for key joint command opportunities. Is it possible that there may be something peculiar with respect to the development of air force leaders that is now resonating poorly in today's joint environment?

Notwithstanding the progress that has been made in developing a truly joint force since the unification of the CF, there nonetheless remain fundamental differences among the three services; a fact that has long existed, and that is unlikely to change any time soon. The young army platoon commander and the young navy divisional officer are both thrust into the crucible of command at an early stage in their careers, and, understandably, they have their leadership styles shaped by the regimented leadership hierarchies of their respective services. Interestingly, both these services have a near-complete focus upon the persona of the commander, and the deference with which commanders are held undoubtedly shapes a climate conducive to nurturing an aspiration to these positions among junior officers.

This stands in considerable contrast to the fighting arm of the air force, which trains young aircrew to fight largely independently. Indeed, while both the army and navy develop their young officers with increasingly demanding leadership challenges, command opportunities for many airmen typically arrive later in their careers, as the high cost of aircrew production necessarily requires a relative return on investment that necessitates early-to-mid career paths be focused upon flying operations. Indeed, the time required for the air force to produce a fully qualified and combat-capable fighter pilot, for example, presently exceeds four years – a time period during which junior officers in the other services would be both fully trained and completing their early operational tours, having gained considerable leadership experience along the way. Notwithstanding the diversity in early developmental opportunities, there nevertheless remain additional differences in the command approach between the services that have grown out of the inherent demands of each warfare domain.

Professor Allan English studied these specific differences, and concluded that there is a fundamental lack of understanding in the diversity of leadership styles across the three services. Of interest, in his interviews, he found that some army officers "... characterized certain senior leaders from the other

services in joint appointments as indecisive or not forceful enough because they employ participative- or delegation-based leadership styles."¹⁵ This should not really come as much of a surprise – different roles and environments require different leadership styles – and there is no one model that perfectly suits all three warfare domains. Moreover, those very same skills that might be cherished at the tactical level are not guarantees of success in future key strategic leadership roles within a joint Canadian Forces. Former Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) Lieutenant-General (ret'd) Angus Watt, captured the essence of the problem:

Unfortunately, the pool of talent from which we select strategic leaders late in their careers is determined by individual performance as tactical leaders early in their careers. It's a key disconnect in our system.¹⁶



Lieutenant-General Angus Watt (left), then-Chief of the Air Staff, in Kandahar, Afghanistan, 3 March 2009.

Yet, there may very well be an 'albatross around the neck' of the air force as it seeks to develop effective joint leaders. Lieutenant-General Watt had coined the phrase "the Culture of the Cockpit" in describing the tradition within the air force of eschewing broadening joint opportunities in favour of a return to flying duties or flying-related command appointments. For many airmen, the prospect of a flying tour may often supplant thoughts of career progression. And while the CAS counselled that this phenomenon had to be overcome in order to ensure the air force was capable of producing sufficient senior leaders within the appropriate time frame, it is clear that there is much more work required to change this air force paradigm. Indeed, one of Rebecca Grant's principal criticisms of the USAF in her article relates precisely to this theme. Specifically, she contends that United States Air Force officers tend to aspire to leadership positions within their own service, instead of to joint positions that will lead them to the coveted combatant command opportunities.¹⁷

DND photo AR2009-0028-008 by Corporal James Nightingale.

It is noteworthy that the CF's capstone leadership doctrine highlights: "... [that] senior leaders at the operational and strategic levels require broader knowledge and expertise relating to strategic systems and institutional functioning."¹⁸ Within a Canadian context, it is important that the different services' leadership philosophies are both understood and embraced – and that early tactical acumen does not predominate strategic leadership potential when assessing future institutional leaders. Nonetheless, for the air force to transcend any latent cultural biases, perceived or not, it will require a deliberate strategy that moves the focus away from the cockpit and onto the institution.

Air Force Structure

Future commanders will be required to be multi-skilled, broad-minded, imaginative and culturally intuitive and to have a full understanding of the breadth of joint, coalition, combined and OGD operations within a comprehensive approach.¹⁹

Command at the most senior levels within any military must necessarily stem from a progressive organizational structure that supports both the educational and experiential requirements for success. A review of the CF's present service structures suggests that both the army and the navy have the requisite progressive commands at all rank levels to develop strong candidates for the most senior positions within the organization. This would appear to be borne out in the present distribution of senior billets within the CF. What, then, of the air force? Is there something within the present structure of the air force that might account for why the service is producing fewer senior joint leaders?

Studying the senior echelons of the military over the years, it is clear that, until recently, the structure of the air force *did* serve to produce appropriate representation at senior levels of the CF. In examining the position of CDS, for example, an air force officer has held the position for 16 of 47 years between 1964 and 2011.²⁰ What has changed or influenced the structure that now contains so few air force general officers in key joint positions? Perhaps the *Decade of Darkness* for one thing – a portentous phrase that has become synonymous with the major reductions to personnel and resources across the CF that commenced in 1994. It should be noted, however, that while the entire CF shared a personnel reduction of some 20 percent of total strength during that period, the air force had its numbers slashed by an astounding 48 percent.²¹

The subsequent reorganization of the air force following the upheaval of the mid-1990s amalgamated all operational command of CF aerospace assets into a single headquarters with the creation of 1 Canadian Air Division in 1997. Could it be possible that this restructure might be contributing to waning air force influence within the CF some 14 years later? This *does* appear conceivable, as both the army and the navy largely maintained headquarters structures that aptly provided for command opportunities at virtually every rank level. Consequently, these two services retained an organizational structure that ensured their leading officers would remain

competitive for senior joint billets in a selection process where a premium is placed, in part, upon command experience.

Prior to the onset of the *Decade of Darkness*, the operational air force was divided among five Group Headquarters: Fighter Group, Air Transport Group, 10 Tactical Air Group, Maritime Air Group, and 14 Training Group. Brigadier-generals commanded four of these headquarters, while the Commander of Fighter Group was a major-general, 'dual-hatted' as Commander Canadian NORAD Region. In accordance with air force doctrine, this structure aligned air power along functional lines that also provided a reasonable balance between command opportunities and headquarters resources.

In response to the significant resource cuts that commenced in 1994, the Department of National Defence (DND) and the CF created the Management Command and Control Re-engineering Team (MCCRT), which sought, among other initiatives, to reduce headquarters overhead across the CF. In response, the air force aggressively amalgamated the five Group headquarters into one, deciding that a leaner command and control (C2) construct was more essential than any effectiveness afforded in the existing model. The result was the creation of 1 Canadian Air Division (1 Cdn Air Div), commanded by a major-general. The second-order effect, and the more worrisome result for a Canadian Forces that now values a command-centric philosophy more than ever, was the elimination of four air force general officer commands. The resultant structure consisted of the Commander 1 Cdn Air Div leading the entire operational air force, with an exceptionally flat organization comprising 13 Wings, and their colonel wing commanders as direct reporting officers to the commander of the air division.

Lieutenant-General Watt confessed to the author of long having been dissatisfied with the lack of brigadier-general command opportunities in the air force, and in 2008, he initiated staff studies to explore mitigating solutions. He noted that, while the existing command structure was lean and efficient, it was inevitably poor for senior officer development and command credibility within the broader joint CF.²² While a number of proposals to address this concern were examined in 2008-2009, the decision was deferred until the outcome of the government-mandated 2010 Departmental Strategic Review was clearer. That said, in order to continue the momentum, General Watt directed the creation of a brigadier-general-commanded 2 Canadian Air Division (Doctrine and Training). The CAS acknowledged that this would be a step in the right direction for an evolving air force command structure, yet also acknowledged that more effort would be required over the long term to alleviate the absence of airmen in the most senior joint positions and to reverse the trend being examined herein. By 2011, however, the fiscal landscape remains challenging, and there can be little doubt that the CF will need to continue to strive for efficiency, particularly among headquarters staff. Unfortunately for the air force, this is not an environment conducive to creating new command opportunities within existing force structure.

In fairness to the many senior air force leaders who have enjoyed successful careers that included key senior joint bil-

lets over the past 15 years, it is important to recognize that the phenomenon at the time of this article did not simply happen overnight. It took time to manifest – specifically, from 1995 to 2010 by this analysis. For instance, in the period since the MCCRT project, beyond the numerous commanders of the air force and senior NORAD positions, the air force has developed a number of credible leaders that excelled in joint positions – General Ray Henault as both CDS and Chair of the NATO Military Committee, Lieutenant-General George Macdonald as VCDS in the early 2000s, as well as Lieutenant-General Marc Dumais as both DCDS and Commander Canada Command from 2005 to 2007. Nevertheless, the downward trend being examined, in part attributable to the after effects of diminished command opportunities since the establishment of 1 Canadian Air Division should remain an area of concern for air force senior leaders moving forward.



Lieutenant-General George Macdonald.

The Present CF Joint Environment

Among other things, leaders need to be skilled in war fighting, statesmanship, and enterprise management.²³

Another area worth exploring as to why airmen are not commanding are the changes made to the command structure of the military during the 2005 CF Transformation initiative. In his directive to the transformation team, the CDS, former-army General Rick Hillier, succinctly wrote that his aim was a CF "... that is strategically relevant, operationally responsive and tactically decisive, supported by an effective,

efficient, and adaptable defence institution."²⁴ This vision was warmly received within the defence establishment as it spoke of goals that resonated among military professionals. But among the risks of articulating such a broadly positioned end-state for a multi-service joint force is that the vision is difficult to 'operationalize' without individual services seeing their own war-fighting roles as central to the solution. Thus, after reviewing the distribution of key joint general officer positions since 2005, it is noteworthy to consider the increased influence of army leaders on the Canadian Forces as a result of General Hillier's transformation efforts.

Whether the distribution of influential positions that resulted from the 2005 transformation effort is acknowledged by senior leaders as a concern moving forward is unknown, but it may well be worth noting as the institution now positions itself for a second round of change. In June 2010, the CDS announced the formal creation of the Chief of Transformation, a three-star position that is to "... act as the driving force behind organization changes and re-positioning the Canadian Forces for the future,"²⁵ and chose the former Chief of the Land Staff (CLS) to lead the initiative. Interested stakeholders might now pause to reflect whether the force structure created out of the 2005 transformation to fight in Afghanistan will be sacrosanct, or whether a more fulsome discussion with respect to the future security environment might consider the possibility of different conclusions.

And herein lays one of the challenges inherent to any transformation initiative: namely, that it risks parochial solutions to the problem set if the organization's key decision-makers lack a sufficient variety of backgrounds to fully challenge assumptions and to evaluate options. As this article has already stated, it is individuals that bring their own appreciation of the future security environment, and what specific tools and skills would be required to be "... operationally responsive and tactically decisive," and that the institution needs to consider balanced senior input from across its stakeholders to mitigate any hint of parochialism. Moreover, the entire process is confounded by the inherent challenge of finite resources when there are so many possible future directions and events for the nation to consider. Nonetheless, irrespective of General Hillier's precise intent, the end result of his transformation effort to this point in time has been a remodelled and decidedly 'army-centric' chain of command that consists of four new joint operational commands (all presently led by army officers), coupled with six new Regional Joint Task Forces (RJTFs), three of which can only be commanded by the army, and two others firmly in naval hands.²⁶ Add to this the latest headquarters to be established as a result of ongoing transformation, namely 1 Canadian Division in Kingston, whose major-general army commander characterized it to the author as "... an army-centric joint headquarters,"²⁷ and there appear to be few advantageous opportunities left for the air force.

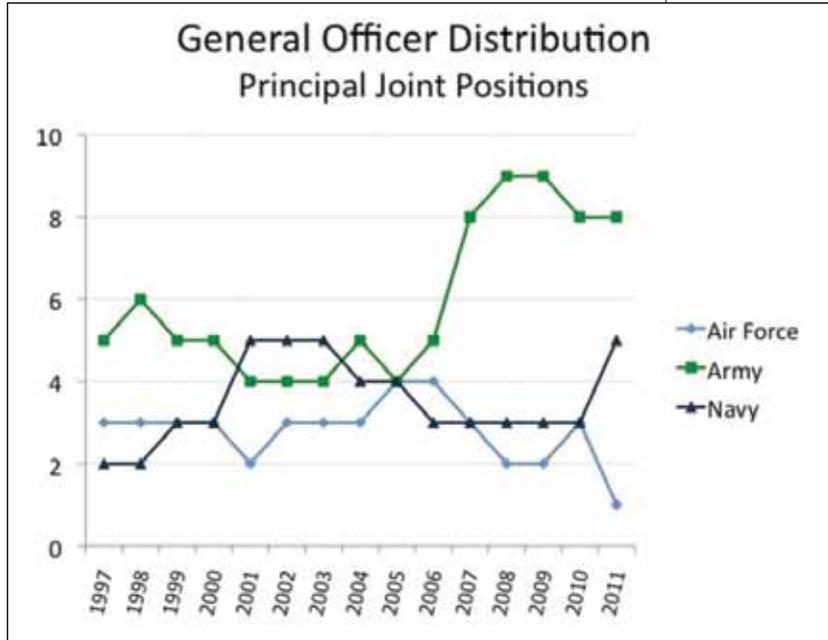
It is clear that the CF has always valued *command* as the principal currency of credibility among senior leaders. General Rick Hillier's transformation vision included a renewed emphasis upon 'command-centricity,' which would become one of the guiding themes during his leadership of the CF when the CDS was placed back into the direct operational

DND photo (CFJIC) SUC01-0260-2.

chain of command, with four operational joint commanders reporting to him. Therefore, it falls naturally that this premium would transcend other qualities to become pre-eminent in the selection of officers for the most senior positions. Consequently, the present transformed CF command and control construct poses significant challenges for air force futures. If the current fiscal climate is leaving little room for the service to consider an internal restructure in support of greater command opportunities, how can the air force avail itself of greater opportunity for existing joint command positions when so many are built upon existing army and navy formations?

operational missions. Accordingly, a continued emphasis upon professional development and succession planning is essential.

Secondly, the air force must come to terms with whether present structure is supporting its aspirations. If the service is to contribute meaningfully within a balanced joint force, it needs to make certain that it provides the necessary command and joint experience to ensure airmen are competitive for the most senior joint positions. Where opportunities and resources exist, the air force should seek to create more command positions within its own structure. When such prospects are slim, the service should be creative and look elsewhere whenever possible. Senior positions with our key allies, particularly in the United States and Great Britain, should be investigated. The air force should also insist upon a greater proportion of key deployed positions where joint war-fighting skills are needed and can be honed, noting that only three air force general officers have deployed to Afghanistan over the ten years of conflict, in comparison to countless army generals to both Kandahar and the various headquarters in and around Kabul. The navy has equally enjoyed the opportunity to command Allied fleets in operations over the same period. If not in Afghanistan, this goal could certainly be attained elsewhere, where Canadian Air Force leadership will be valued, and experience and credibility gained.



The Way Ahead

The CF, and the air force in particular, have undergone a period of significant change since 1994, and many of the second-and-third-order effects of this change are only now becoming evident to today’s air force. As the Canadian military embarks upon the early stages of the ambitious twenty-year funding model provided within the Canada First Defence Strategy, it is critical that the senior leadership of the CF possess the best possible balance of knowledge and experience from across the joint force to ensure the best outcomes in decisions that will have very long-lasting effects upon the military pillar of national power. This article has argued that this expertise will be best assured through a balanced representation of all three services within the senior echelons of joint command within the CF. As a corollary, the air force can only ensure it is facilitating this representation if its candidates are competitive with their peers from the other services.

Lastly, the air force should invest effort to ensure that the paucity of air force senior joint leaders is both recognized and accepted as a *Canadian Forces* problem worth solving. If Canada is to have a truly joint force, there must be a broader recognition that these important joint command positions must be made available equally to all three services. While it is convenient that the Regional Joint Task Forces were built upon existing service headquarters for economies of scale, limiting any joint command billet in the military to a specific service in perpetuity does not help to move the ‘joint’ yardsticks forward.

What, in context, should the air force consider doing? First and foremost, it must look internally and seek to balance the *Culture of the Cockpit* with the requirement to develop senior joint warriors with the breadth of experience that is relevant to both today’s and tomorrow’s fights. This should include aggressively seeking out meaningful command opportunities at all rank levels to ensure that key leaders are groomed through successive key joint command positions and deployed

The future security environment remains shrouded in uncertainty, and this is unlikely to change at any time in the near future. Canada failed in the past to predict either the fall of the Berlin Wall, or the 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, and therefore did not have the benefit of an optimized force structure to meet the security challenges that ensued. A question for national security professionals in the coming years, therefore, is whether Canada’s security focus will need to shift westwards across the Pacific, or perhaps turn northward to address emerging national security threats. The challenge for a modest-sized military is to ensure that as much of these possible futures is accounted for in the joint decisions that are made, and the likelihood of this happening can only improve with balanced input from across the three services.

In the end, the air force needs to stand back and assess if its present structure is well-suited to the long-term health of the service. Without ample opportunity for educational and

experiential command positions at all levels, an insufficient number of air force officers with the requisite skill sets, experience and knowledge to properly populate senior CF joint billets will inevitably result. The concomitant lack of senior

air force input and influence at key military decision points should be cause for concern.



A CH-146 Griffon at dusk at Resolute Bay, Nunavut.

DND photo FA2010-2234-01 by Sergeant Ron Flynn.

NOTES

- While this article was originally written in support of National Security Program course work in the spring of 2010, it was subsequently updated towards the end of the 2010 calendar year in preparation for publication. References to specific services and the senior positions they held are based upon a November 2010 'snapshot.'
- CANFORGEN 069/10 CDS 007/10 241128Z MAR 10
- Rebecca Grant, "Why Airmen Don't Command," in *Air Force Magazine*, (March 2008), pp. 46-49. Dr. Grant is regarded as one of America's foremost air, space, and cyber power analysts.
- From the celebrated Royal Canadian Air Force poem *High Flight*, penned by Pilot Officer John Gillespie Magee Jr, a fighter pilot killed during the Second World War.
- The trend analysis covers the period 1997-2010. For the purposes of this paper, the author considered 14 senior joint positions within the CF in 2010 and worked backwards to 1997 to include their pre-2005 transformation equivalents. The positions referred to are (former positions in parentheses): Chief of the Defence Staff, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, Commander Canada COM (DCDS), Commander CEFCOM (COS J3), Canadian National Military Representative – NATO Brussels, Deputy Commander – Allied Joint Force Command Naples (COS SAC T, COS SACLANT), Commander CANOSCOM (new in 2006), Commander CANSOFCOM (new in 2006), Chief of Military Personnel (ADM HR[Mil]), Chief Defence Academy (Comd CFRETS), Director of Staff – Strategic Joint Staff (DGJFD – data only available from 2001 onwards), Chief of Force Development (DGSP), Chief of Program (DFPPC), and Chief Defence Intelligence (J2, DG Int).
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- General Rick Hillier, *CDS Planning Guidance – CF Transformation* (National Defence Headquarters: File 1950-9 (CT), October 2005).
- CF News Release, "Lieutenant-General Andrew Leslie Appointed Chief Of Transformation" NR-10.033, 30 April 2010; at <http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/news-nouvelles/news-nouvelles-eng.asp?cat=02&id=3350>; accessed 8 May 2010.
- With the manpower required to create the four joint operational commands in 2005 (CanadaCOM, CEFCOM, CANSOFCOM, and CANOSCOM), the transformation team was required to build the Regional Joint Task Force Headquarters (RJTF HQ) on existing service headquarters. Hence, three of the present RJTF commanders are 'dual-hatted' in army area command billets, and two are based upon naval formations on each coast. The sixth headquarters is RJTF (North) in Yellowknife, presently commanded by an airman.
- Commander 1 Canadian Division, Major-General David Fraser, in discussion with the author, April 2010.