



The RCAF's Monopoly on Aviation

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RCAF'S MONOPOLY ON AVIATION

AIM

1. The aim of this service paper is to show that the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) monopoly of the aviation assets hinders the ability to be flexible, agile, and integrated with the other elements they support. Since the separation of aviation assets from the Army and Navy, RCAF has lost the ability to be fully integrated with the elements they support, and it has been detrimental to joint operations.

INTRODUCTION

2. This service paper will show current practices create an extra layer of Command and Control in joint operations, three element commanders competing for the same resources, element commanders competing for staff, separate procurement objectives and priorities, and competing budgets which hinder integration, creation of competition for resources, and a disconnection of mission requirements between elements.

3. This service paper will show, by returning aviation assets and its support units reintegrated back into the Canadian Army (CA), the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) and Canadian Special Operations (CANSOFCOM) in order to be truly joint in operations, procurement and staffing. This service paper will show the history when aviation assets used to belong to the elements, how integration and procurement met the requirements of each element, and staffing integration was a force multiplier.

DISCUSSION

4. The CAF conducts exercises and operations using different assets from each of the services and these assets support a lead element, usually army or navy, but they are not integral and usually attached when required. The CAF calls these exercises or operations joint but the services force generates (FG), procure material, and staff in silos before deploying. This has created frictions between the services and siloed procurement and training because each service wants to maintain their empire, thinking they are better than each other and compete for resources.

5. The RCAF has always monopolized the air assets for the CAF for decades and have developed a mentality of if it flies, it belongs to the air force. This has been problematic for the CAF post Korean War because of the need for joint operations, a better understanding on how to conduct joint warfare and the introduction of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) but the old mentality remained. In the 1960's some senior military leaders recognized the need to integrate support activities between the services. The CAF tried to unify air power under selected services in 1968 under Unification where the "RCN, CA and RCAF were abolished, and became a single service called the CAF."¹ Unification created a National Defence Headquarters and six

¹ LGen (Retired) William Keir Carr, "The Genesis of Air Command," Royal Canadian Air Force - Canada.ca (/ Gouvernement du Canada, May 23, 2019), <https://www.canada.ca/en/air-force/services/history-heritage/genesis-air-command.html>.

functional command, Maritime, Mobile, Air Defence, Air Transport, Material and Training. This caused several senior officers to resign because they wanted to maintain the historical services. Later, the RCAF formed Groups such as the “Maritime and Tactical Air Group (MAG and 10 TAG”², respectfully to support the services. AIRCOM still responsible for providing “operational ready Regular and Reserve Air Forces to meet Canadian, Continental and International Defence Commitment...”³ The purpose of these groups were to support the other element Commanders conduct their training and operations; however, this was proven to be inefficient because the oversight and responsibilities were left unchecked,

“By early 1974, it was obvious that we could no longer ignore the need to face up to the dismembered and abused state of the Canadian Forces military air assets. Aircraft were being misused, some units were not maintaining acceptable levels of proficiency and, in several instances, it was discovered that local commanders had grounded aircraft so as to use the money which was budgeted for aviation fuel, for purposes which were more suitable to their preoccupations and priorities.”⁴

6. In 1997, the RCAF consolidated all the air groups under 1 Canadian Air Division (1 Cdn Air Div) and had operational command (OPCOM). By 2011, any remaining parts of Unification had disappeared. Unification was not successful because of egos, fighting for resources, not understanding what joint force and a reduction of staffing and funding is, caused the integration not to work, however with our current resources and how the CAF conducts joint operations currently, unification would work but it should be called consolidation.

7. Consolidation of Tactical and Maritime Aviation under the CA, CANSOFCOM and RCN will help improved interoperability and integration but the RCAF needs to give up personnel, material, finances and supplies. The RCAF can still be the overall overseer of air operations but will not have OPCOM over these forces, nor have the responsibility to Force Generate (FG) or Force Employ (FE) combat forces and professional development of personnel. This will shrink the RCAF to be only responsible for initial training to basic wings/qualification standards, fighters, SAR and transport. The CA, CANSOFCOM and RCN will be responsible for FG combat forces and FE. It is a paper exercise of simplifying an already a complex Command and Control (C2) structure, transferring command authority and responsibilities, expanding commanders tactical and operational knowledge to employ aviation assets, consolidate overlapping resources and staffing, and improve integration.

² Larry Milberry, *Canada's Air Force Today: 1991 Update* (CANAV Books, 1991).

³ LGen (Retired) William Keir Carr, “The Genesis of Air Command,” Royal Canadian Air Force - Canada.ca (/ Gouvernement du Canada, May 23, 2019), <https://www.canada.ca/en/air-force/services/history-heritage/genesis-air-command.html>.

⁴ LGen (Retired) William Keir Carr, “The Genesis of Air Command,” Royal Canadian Air Force - Canada.ca (/ Gouvernement du Canada, May 23, 2019), <https://www.canada.ca/en/air-force/services/history-heritage/genesis-air-command.html>.

Simplifying C2

8. In the RCAF, all FE is under the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC) and FG is under the Comd 1 Cdn Air Div, which is the same person. 1 Cdn Air Div ensures that their forces are combat ready to support the services but is not integrated with other command services. If another service requires assistance for their FG or FE, they will have to ask, through their chain of command (CoC), for support, which takes time. At the tactical level, the RCAF unit commanders are force to integrate, unofficially with the services that they support, to ensure that their readiness is inline with their planning, which also takes time.

9. On deployments, the Joint Task Force (JTF) Comd has and Air Task Force (ATF) Comd to advise and assist but the JFACC is responsible for 5 residual responsibilities; “air doctrine, aircrew training and standards, flight safety, Operational airworthiness, and technical airworthiness.”⁵ Under consolidation, the RCAF would be responsible for only initial aircrew training, the remaining responsibilities would be consolidated under the services, thus merging the RCAF support services under the respective services. For example, sections of the RCAF flight safety program will be under the CA, CANSOFCOM and RCN, streamlining and consolidating staffing and removing the requirement to go through the JFACC. These changes will enforce unity of command, but the service Comds need the authority, responsibilities, and accountabilities to execute their mandates.

Transfer Command and Control

10. The definition of OPCOM is

“the authority granted to a commander to assign missions or tasks to subordinate commanders, to deploy units, to reallocate forces, and to retain or delegate operational control, tactical command (TACOM), and/or tactical control [TACON] as the commander deems necessary.”⁶

11. This authority would allow Comds at the tactical and operational level to execute their missions without asking for command authority from the RCAF. They would also need Administrative Control (ADCON) which is.

“direction or exercise of authority over subordinate or other organizations in respect to administrative matters such as personnel management, supply, services, and other matters not included in the operational missions of the subordinate or other organizations.”⁷

12. This Transfer of Command Operational and Command Authority (TOCA) will have to come from the Comd RCAF and will have to include OPCOM and ADCON to manage the control are operations, FG and staffing. This construct is similar to the TOCA for the transfer of

⁵ “Chapter 1 - Command and Control Fundamentals,” in *Royal Canadian Air Force Doctrine: Command and Control* (Ottawa ON: Department of National Defence, 2018), pp. 8-9.

⁶ “Chapter 1 - Command and Control Fundamentals,” in *Royal Canadian Air Force Doctrine: Command and Control* (Ottawa ON: Department of National Defence, 2018), pp. 6.

⁷ “Chapter 1 - Command and Control Fundamentals,” in *Royal Canadian Air Force Doctrine: Command and Control* (Ottawa ON: Department of National Defence, 2018), pp. 7.

427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron (SOAS) to Comd CANSOFCOM but it takes it even further to personnel control.

13. The RCAF will have to relinquish authorities such as technical airworthiness to help with maintaining safety and airworthiness of their aviation assets. The RCAF will argue that only RCAF officers can only manage airworthiness because they are the only ones that understand and have the experience within the air domain, which is not true when other nations have divided up the responsibilities. There could be an overarching policies such as the Aeronautics Act with the CA, RCN and CANSOFCOM will have to follow. They can use their aviation officers to fill these rolls, thus not requiring additional personnel and they can consolidate current resources and sections currently in use in the RCAF. For example, the Technical Airworthiness Authority (TAA):

“is responsible for the regulation of the technical airworthiness aspects of the design, manufacture, maintenance, and materiel support of aeronautical products. The TAA also determines the airworthiness acceptability of those products prior to operational service.”⁸

14. This authority is held by the Director General Aerospace Equipment Program Management (DGAEPM) which has sections that deal with airworthiness for each of the RCAF platforms. These sections can be reallocated to support the CA and RCN assets but a new CANSOFCOM section will need to be created. This will give the CA, RCN and CANSOFCOM commanders direct access to the airworthiness programs and will be in sync with new capabilities instead of the current stove pipes. This restructure will still give aerospace oversight since DGAEPM is an aerospace engineer and works for the RCAF commander.

Expanding Tactical and Operational Knowledge

15. Once the service Comds have OPCOM, their service will have aviation experience embedded within their CoC. These members can work at the tactical, operational and strategic levels to be the special matter experts (SMEs) for their commands. These SMEs will be integrated within the CoC and their knowledge of their service that they support will expand and help with planning and execution with less friction. Most CAF members are only exposed to joint planning and operations when they get to Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC) which is too late. They need to start understanding the capabilities and functions at the tactical level and having members under their supporting CoC and being part of service's capabilities and functions. Professional development courses such as the Army Operations Course (AOC) and Maritime Warfare Course will increase their knowledge and integrate them because they can speak the “same language”.

16. By integrating aviation elements under the CA, RCN and CANSOFCOM, new tactical and operational capabilities could be explored and incorporated in the CAF, such as amphibious warfare or Close Air Support (CAS) without using fighters for example. Currently the RCN can not support the CA with amphibious warfare and the CA requires strategic and tactical mobile

⁸ National Defence, “Technical Airworthiness Authority Overview,” Canada.ca (/ Gouvernement du Canada, March 15, 2018), <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/military-airworthiness/technical-airworthiness-authority-overview.html>.

airlift such as the CC-117 or CC-130J for transport. With integral aviation assets, the RCN can develop concept of operations (CONOPS) of supporting the CA from sea based assets that can carry aviation assets, such a variant of a CH-147 chinook for transport along with helicopter gun ships. The RCN does not have staff that is dedicated to providing naval aviation capabilities nor the resources to expand current capabilities. Plus, the RCAF focuses on RCAF capabilities and does not put the necessary resources into supporting the RCN and the CA aviation domains that they operate. The RCAF is siloed and is focused on the attractive assets, such as fighters and air mobility but does not see the other work horses of maritime and tactical aviation are working just as hard. By giving those resources to CA, RCN, and CANSOFCOM, they can developed their own aviation assets and capabilities to support the air domain that they operate in.

Consolidate overlapping resources and Staffing

17. There will be no change to staffing levels, if fact, under staff positions will decrease because you will be consolidating staffing, for example, Base Orderly Rooms (BOR) and Squadron Orderly Rooms (SOR) can merge or augment their Human Resource Administrators (HRAs) and Financial Support Administrators (FSAs) which are short in demand. Medical and logistic support can be consolidated, reducing the staffing shortage and integrating the support staff. Support requirements are similar between the services and consolidation will relieve the pressure of a shrinking CAF however, some unique trades/qualifications will need to remain, such as aviation technicians but a review of trades of are uniquely air force will need to be evaluated. The only difference is the service that they serve under. Trades that were uniquely air force trades can be incorporated under each of the services, they will be maritime aviators, army aviation technicians or CANSOFCOM air traffic controllers. It would be the responsibility of the service Comds to provide the training required which already exists, those members would be just wearing a different uniform. The CAF would only have to transfer positions and funding to the respective service Comds and give them the authorities to manage their new staff. The RCAF will shrink, and the other services will grow but the cross trading will benefit the CAF since members can move more freely between the service because they are capable to provide the same service and only have to familiar themselves to the new environment.

Improve Integration

18. The processes, material, personnel, training facilities are all in place, no new infrastructure, finances nor personnel are required. For example, 12 Wing Shearwater, that supports the RCN, their Wing Commander (WComd) will report to the Commander (Comd) of Maritime Atlantic Forces (MARLANT) instead of Comd 1 Cdn Air Div for FG and FE. All of 12 Wing's infrastructure, support services and personnel will be under Comd RCN. Procurement, testing and evaluation, professional development, and integration will be the RCN responsibility, ensuring continuity, cohesion, and focus. Instead of RCAF members serving on warships, they are part of that warship and will be maritime aviators instead of Air Force pilots.

19. When CJOC goes through the operational planning process, having embedded forces within the services will make planning easier because the services will know what they have available instead of asking the RCAF, which takes time.

20. Currently, procurement is done by each service and sometimes requirements don't match up. For example, the RCN is looking for a new torpedo to replace their aging one but it is the same torpedo that the CP-140 Aurora and CH-148 Cyclone carries, thus the RCAF was brought in to the conversation. The RCAF was considered a stakeholder and not a primary, and the determination for how many torpedoes require was based on what the navy needed first and then the other platforms. Under consolidation, the air arm of the services will be included into the primary purchase, showing the real requirement and cost. Another example is when the RCN acquired the Halifax class ships. During the identification phase of purchasing a new warship, the RCN could have looked at acquiring a new maritime helicopter because consolidation will remove the competing priorities within the RCAF. The RCN can prioritise what they need to be operational relevant, and a replacement maritime helicopter would have happened sooner with the proper integration as mid-life cycle improvements are discussed and requirements are written.

CONCLUSION

21. Unification in the late 1960's was an opportunity to consolidate forces during a declining CAF numbers and resources. Ego, pride and not seeing the big picture, ultimately cause unification to fail. The RCAF aggressive willingness to keep all air assets within themselves, has been short minded within a global area of military jointness and consolidation because of limited resources. Assigning OPCOM and assets and personnel to the other service Comds, would improve integration, consolidate resources, expand knowledge in the joint air domain, and simplifying C2. Transferring of Command Authority to the service Comds of aviation assets and personnel would be a force multiplier, will streamline the authorities, responsibilities and accountabilities for those forces, simplify C2 and it will make better commanders at all levels in a joint environment.

RECOMMENDATION

22. Recommend the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) transfers OPCOM and ADCON of RCAF assets to Comd CA, CANSOFCOM and RCN that naturally support them. Furthermore, recommend aligning the C2 structure, doctrine, orders and regulations to support the transfer through a tiger team to ease the alignment of C2 and doctrine.

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