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THE RCAF'S TRANSFORMATION INTO AN EXPEDITIONARY AIR FORCE

Colonel Luc Girouard

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THE RCAF'S TRANSFORMATION INTO AN EXPEDITIONARY AIR FORCE

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ABSTRACT

This study will add substance from a Canadian perspective to the intellectual debate around *expeditionary* air power and better inform future aviators and leaders of its relevance in the domestic security and foreign policy domains. The Royal Canadian Air Force's (RCAF) internal and external struggle for strategic relevance in Canada's national security and foreign policy calculus remains extant and has been since its inception. In the face of a demanding and debilitating Post-Cold War international security environment, the RCAF's most likely partner in expeditionary operations, the United States Air Force (USAF), transformed itself into an expeditionary air force in the late 1990s and early 2000s in order to maintain its strategic relevance and to meet the demands placed on it. Did the RCAF embark upon the same expeditionary evolutionary path in *its* quest for strategic relevance?

Using the body of work representing the findings of an air power symposium which examined the question of RCAF expeditionary forces in 2002 as a baseline starting point, this study assesses the RCAF's transformation into an expeditionary air force and what it could mean for Canada. Through an analysis framework that progressed from the conceptual, to the systemic and structural, to the more tangible capabilities of the RCAF, it was found that the RCAF had indeed significantly evolved since the mid-2000s into its own *made-in-Canada* version of an expeditionary air force, reflective of its unique expeditionary culture. The RCAF's evolution in its *expeditionary ways and means*, in line with the thoughts of Canadian air power academics considered in this study, reveals that Canada's air force has transformed into a more relevant strategic tool, definitively enhancing the Canadian Armed Force's (CAF) standing in the domestic security and foreign policy arenas.

THE RCAF'S TRANSFORMATION INTO AN EXPEDITIONARY AIR FORCE

INTRODUCTION

Considering Canada's geographical position and that it has fought most of its wars overseas, much discussion on expeditionary operations in a purely Canadian context could be expected. At the very least, the use of the term expeditionary in the Canadian context can be traced back to the 1914 Canadian Expeditionary Force which saw hundreds of thousands of men enlist and join the British effort in the Great War.¹ Just as Canada has matured as a nation since that era, so have the discussions on Canadian expeditionary forces and operations. The use of the term expeditionary in and of itself has evolved so that it now encompasses a much broader range of concepts related to modern military operations.

As a matter of fact, the term expeditionary has been a subject of particular interest for Canada's powerful neighbour to the south, the United States of America. More specifically, the USAF has used the term expeditionary as its foundational premise in order to transform itself from its Cold War resource-rich posture to a force that seeks to "balance reductions in force structure and forward presence with the ambiguity of the Post-Cold War world."² The USAF's transformation of the 1990s has deeply interested its allies and their air forces and has certainly not been inconsequential to Canada's air force, notwithstanding glaring differences in scope and scale.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s a series of Air Force focused symposia were held at the Canadian Forces College examining a broad range of topics from doctrine, space, intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance and command and control. The symposium most relevant to this research paper, the fifth of the series, was held in 2002 and focused on the idea of expeditionary air forces from a Canadian perspective.

According to Dr. Allan English, editor and author of the forward to the proceedings representing the body of work of the symposium, exploring this topic was a difficult undertaking at that time. The foundations buttressing the term 'expeditionary' apparently not yet created, institutionalized or even understood in any great depth in either CAF or RCAF doctrine.³ From each chapter of *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5*, one can surmise that although the CAF's operations remained somewhat expeditionary in nature, the theoretical, doctrinal and organizational foundations of the term expeditionary were not well developed within the RCAF. From that body of work and through its examination of the RCAF's most

¹ Richard Gimblett, "The Canadian Way of War: Experiences and Principles," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5*, ed. Allan English (Winnipeg: Centre for Defence and Security Studies, University of Manitoba, 2004), 11.

² Michael J. Nowak, "The Air Expeditionary Force: A Strategy for an Uncertain Future?" (Air War College Maxwell Paper No.19, Air War College, August 1999), 7.

³ Allan English, "Forward," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5*, ed. Allan English (Winnipeg: Centre for Defence and Security Studies, University of Manitoba, 2004), 1-2. The term RCAF was not in existence at that time as it was only re-introduced in 2011. At the time of this publication, the RCAF was known as Air Command or simply the Canadian Air Force. However, for the sake of consistency, the term RCAF will be used in this study throughout and will include the former Air Command and Canadian Air Force.

likely partner in operations, the USAF, it also could be deduced that Canada's air force was nowhere near the expeditionary developmental stages of its southern neighbour. Despite obvious close cooperation between the USAF and the RCAF on expeditionary operations, and an inevitable predisposition for the latter to try and adopt the former's mode of behaviour, the symposium proceedings clearly demonstrated that the adoption of an expeditionary mindset by the RCAF seemed complicated or even of little practical utility for a swath of reasons.⁴

With this conclusion firmly in mind, the evolution of the modern day RCAF towards an expeditionary mindset has captivated the author's interest over the past decade. This is embodied in his professional experiences in the RCAF: particularly his appointment as the Commanding Officer of 2 Air Expeditionary Squadron in 2012, and most recently as the Wing Commander of 2 Wing in 2019, the RCAF's leading edge standing high readiness expeditionary capability. Considering the state of affairs in 2002 as indicated in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5*, and the transformation of the RCAF in the last fifteen years or so, the following questions beg to be explored: from an expeditionary mindset perspective, has the RCAF evolved to the same degree as the USAF? Has it evolved into an expeditionary Air Force in its own way, yet evolving in an expeditionary manner nonetheless? What could this evolution mean for Canada?

This paper will argue that the RCAF, although of much smaller size, scope and capability when compared to the USAF, has significantly evolved into its own unique Canadian version of an expeditionary air force, thus becoming a much more relevant strategic and foreign policy tool for the Government of Canada. Before detailing how this argument will be addressed in this study, it is important to address the literature about expeditionary air forces in general and Canadian air forces specifically.

As could be expected, there is a significant amount of literature revolving around the topic of expeditionary air forces mostly emanating from within USAF circles starting in the late 1990s. The intra-USAF literature which was reviewed for this research was a mix of USAF academic persuasive papers, think-tank studies, institutional historical accounts, service oriented magazine articles, and speeches or statements by high ranking civilians and USAF officers in Command.⁵ This USAF oriented literature, was then also often alluded to in other Canadian and international works which also spoke of the topic at hand, and discussed the applicability of the USAF system to other smaller air forces.⁶ From a Canadian perspective, except for the body of

⁴ Dr. James Fergusson, "Over There, From Here: Expeditionary Forces and the Canadian Air Force," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5*, ed. Allan English (Winnipeg: Centre for Defence and Security Studies, University of Manitoba, 2004), 44-45. Fergusson did caveat his comment by stating that although the Air Expeditionary Force model could perhaps prove helpful in designing new force structures and in determining how to sustain them, its value in managing or mitigating a resource vs capability gap remained to be proven.

⁵ Speeches and statements from high ranking civilians and USAF officers such as F. Whitten Peters, Secretary of the Air Force, General Michael E. Ryan, General John P. Jumper, General Ronald E. Fogleman General David Goldfein, and Major General David MacGhee were used throughout this study. Other USAF historical and expeditionary transformation accounts emanated from the Air Force History & Museums Program, the Air Combat History Office, the Air War College, the RAND Corporation and the Air Force Research Institute

reference which consists of the starting point for analysis, most of the literature related to the Canadian expeditionary air force came into being almost a decade after the USAF's initial thrusts into its expeditionary transformation. Certainly, outside of RCAF discussions on the matter, there is much less Canadian literature on the topic. That said, Canadian sources used for this study were drawn from a mix of academic, theoretical, RCAF institutional and doctrinal references, combined with personal operational experiences, transcripts of first-hand accounts, post operational reports and lessons learned to demonstrate the arguments presented herein.⁷

It is the intent of this research paper to positively contribute and add something of substance to the burgeoning body of study of the RCAF's expeditionary mindset and hopefully generate more discussion and greater interest in Canadian air power in general. It will add to the ongoing intellectual debate as well as provide more impetus for the continued study and development of expeditionary capabilities, air power strategy and employment principles. With these factors in mind, it is hoped that this study will be useful to new generations of aviators who will be the ones staunchly defending the RCAF's equities amongst the other services (environments), expertly leading its future expeditionary operations and valiantly representing the best of Canada on the world stage.

As such, only through further study, reflection, debate and dialogue will RCAF aviators truly achieve "professional mastery of air power"⁸ and remain agile in the face of future challenges. Finally, it is hoped that this study will serve to further inform strategic Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) leaders, Public Servants and Politicians of the relevance and truly strategic foreign policy tool that has become today's modern expeditionary RCAF. In order to do so, however, a strong theoretical basis and analysis framework is required. These will be described in the sections to follow.

⁶ The question of the applicability of the USAF system was applied to the Royal Australian Air Force, and European Air Forces as well. Many references to the USAF's transformation were also made in the main body of work used as a baseline starting point for this study.

⁷ For example Lessons Learned from the RCAF's initial deployment to Kuwait as part of Operation IMPACT, and Operation RENAISSANCE in the Philippines, as well as Post-Operation Reports from operations in Haiti and Libya were used. Other Canadian references related to the RCAF's evolution emanated from the RCAF Aerospace Warfare Centre, the University of Manitoba's Centre for Defence and Security Studies, the *RCAF Journal*, the *Canadian Military Journal*, and from authors such as Pux Barnes, Alan English, John Westrop, Richard Goette, Daniel Heidt, Rachel Lea Heide, and Aron Jackson.

⁸ Sanu Kainikara, "Seven Perennial Challenges to Air Forces." *Royal Australian Air Force Air Power Development Centre*, (November 2009). x. Accessed 20 December 2019. <http://airpower.airforce.gov.au/APDC/media/PDF-Files/Contemporary%20AirPower/AP21-Seven-Perennial-Challenges-to-Air-Forces.pdf> ; Brad Gladman, Richard Goette, Richard Mayne, Colonel Shayne Elder, Colonel Kelvin Truss, Lieutenant-Colonel Pux Barnes, and Major Bill March, "Professional Air Power Mastery and the Royal Canadian Air Force: Rethinking Airpower Education and Professional Development," A Paper Sponsored by the Commander, Royal Canadian Air Force. *Royal Canadian Air Force Journal* 5, no.1 (Winter 2016): 8-23.

ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

This research project will examine the unique Canadian way of air force expeditionary operations by analyzing the RCAF's evolution into an Expeditionary Air Force. To do so, it will use the ideas posited by Dr. Allan English and the authors of the applicable chapters of *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5* as the opening point of reference, along with the USAF's own evolutionary pathway into an Expeditionary Air Force. It will demonstrate how the RCAF's multi-faceted evolution into an Expeditionary Air Force has made it a more relevant strategic foreign policy tool for the Government of Canada.

The proposed analysis framework will encompass four chapters. Chapter one will explore the ideas providing impetus and momentum for this transformation such as the motives for change, the concepts behind the existing definitions of the term expeditionary, the comparison of mindsets between the USAF and the RCAF, and the ensuing development of RCAF doctrine. Chapter two will examine the RCAF structures and systems developed over the past decade or so which could be equated to similar structures and systems implemented by the USAF in their quest to become an Expeditionary Air Force. Systems and Structures such as the Managed Readiness Plan, the Air Task Force Construct, the Wing Restructuring Initiative, and the advent of 2 Wing and its evolution will be examined in this chapter.

As the study moves from the conceptual, to the systemic and structural, to the more tangible capabilities buttressing the RCAF's evolution, Chapter three will examine the actual Capability Models proposed by the *Bison Paper 5*. As such, the suggested Basic and Robust Models will be examined to determine how the RCAF would now measure up to these established benchmarks in comparison to the USAF. Finally, using the supporting lens of air power academics Richard Goette, James Fergusson and Thierry Gongora as a backdrop, chapter four will examine how the RCAF's evolution has made it into a much more relevant strategic foreign policy tool for Canada, despite it being a Small Air Force.⁹

When coupling the components of the first three chapters of the analysis framework - the ideas, the structures and systems, and the capabilities - the evolution of the RCAF into its own unique Canadian expeditionary air force will be evident. It is from this evolutionary perspective that the use of the RCAF as a more relevant strategic foreign policy tool for the Government of Canada will be proven and provide a glimpse into how it will most likely be used or could be used in the future. In order to set the stage, putting aside chronology for the moment, the analysis must open with the conceptual and ideological foundations of the USAF's and RCAF's transformation.

⁹ Sanu Kainikara, "The Future Relevance of Smaller Air Forces." *Royal Australian Air Force Air Power Development Centre*, Working Paper 29 (April 2009). Accessed 20 December 2019.
<http://airpower.airforce.gov.au/APDC/media/PDF-Files/Working%20Papers/WP29-The-Future-Relevance-of-Smaller-Air-Forces.pdf>.

CHAPTER 1 - THE FOUNDATIONAL IDEAS

Introduction

The foundational underpinnings of the RCAF's transformation into an expeditionary air force must be explored at the onset as they will set the stage for the entirety of the study. This ideological foundation consists of the impetus, the 'dynamo' providing momentum for this transformation. As such, the driving forces behind the USAF's and the RCAF's ideological shifts will be explored herein. This chapter will then examine the evolution in the ideas behind the USAF and RCAF earlier definitions of the term expeditionary and propose a new contemporary RCAF-centric definition. After analyzing the evolution in ideas and how these were implemented in each respective air force, the study will examine the ensuing development of RCAF doctrine buttressing the expeditionary mindset. Finally, the chapter will close with an examination of how the mindsets were codified and institutionalized.

Motives for Change

For both air forces, necessity drove change. In this context, the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union are the key landmarks for both the RCAF and the USAF transformations. The 21st century security environment facing Canada and the US morphed into something vastly different than what was previously seen during the Cold War period. When the anticipated peace dividend did not materialize and was instead replaced by an even more volatile and operationally demanding "Hot Peace,"¹⁰ the urgent necessity for change emerged. The *urgency* was at least more evident from a USAF perspective.

In the face of an increased number of crisis operations, the ever more pressing requirement to lead them, and a radically more demanding operational tempo, the Post-Cold War USAF was left lagging with a diminished force structure, restricted forward basing options and constrained infrastructure.¹¹ Compounding the problem was the fact that not only did the USAF have less forces deployed in a permanent manner and fewer bases which could be used by the U.S. regional commands structure, but these new conflicts and operations were also happening where the U.S. had no previously established basing rights or suitable infrastructure.¹² As such, it

¹⁰ Richard Gimblett, "The Canadian Way of War: Experience and Principles," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5 ...*, 13; Curt Van de Walle, "Back to the Future: Does History Support the Expeditionary Air Force Concept?" *Air and Space Power Journal*, Chronicles. Accessed 19 May 2020. <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/ASPJ/journals/Chronicles/vandewalle.pdf>.

¹¹ Timothy Peppe and Rachel Lea Heide, "Bending but not Broken: The USAF's Expeditionary Air Force Experience in the 21st Century," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5*, ed. Allan English (Winnipeg: Centre for Defence and Security Studies, University of Manitoba, 2004), 35; Richard Davies, "*Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force*" (Washington, D.C.: Air Force History and Museums Program, 2003). Accessed 6 April 2020. <https://media.defense.gov/2010/May/25/2001330280/-1/-1/0/AFD-100525-073.pdf>. In 2002 the authors of this chapter posited that the USAF had to face this enhanced operational tempo with a third fewer personnel, and two thirds fewer overseas bases while expeditionary deployments had increased four-fold. Moreover, each one of these deployments required the USAF to bring its own infrastructure. These precepts were supported by other US sources and most authoritatively by the one referenced above.

became painstakingly clear to USAF leadership that its atrophied force structure, mostly home based on the North American continent, was inadequate to deal with a US national defence strategy that had gone from containment of the Soviet Union to active global engagement. This global engagement strategy involved a greater variety of operations and mission sets along with a higher operational tempo. As the USAF discovered early on in the First Gulf War in Iraq, and later on during operations in the Former Yugoslavia, enacting this active global strategy in an *ad hoc* fashion was difficult to mount and sustain in the best of favourable conditions. These difficult yet institutionally forming experiences, from 1990 to 1998; almost a decade of doing things the hard way, eventually led to the turn of the century transformation of the USAF's mindset into an expeditionary air force way of doing things. The USAF's transformation aimed to address the daunting challenges of responding quickly to contingency operations abroad, at sometimes strategic distances, through the deployment of task-tailored military units and to optimally sustain the demanding tempo of these operations.¹³

Lagging behind the USAF yet trying to emulate its partner in most envisioned scenarios in many aspects, was the RCAF. Facing a similar global security environment, Canada's air force leadership also chose to examine the issue of becoming an expeditionary air force, although at a much more deliberate pace. From the fall of the Berlin Wall to roughly 1995, the expected peace dividend correspondingly ravaged the RCAF from the personnel and capabilities perspectives.¹⁴ Similarly to the USAF, despite an equally impactful emaciated force structure, the RCAF also faced a dramatic increase in operational tempo. This difficult Post-Cold War reality and inherent repetitive operational deployments in high-stress, sometimes hostile environments had a devastating impact on the RCAF, its personnel, families and capabilities leading to debilitating retention and operational effectiveness challenges.¹⁵ As such, senior

¹² Dr. James Fergusson, "Over There, From Here: Expeditionary Forces and the Canadian Air Force," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5*..., 43; Curt Van de Walle, "Back to the Future: Does History Support the Expeditionary Air Force Concept?"...; Richard Davies, "*Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force*..."..., 30; Jeffrey Hukill, Kristal Alfonso, Scott Johnson, John Conway, "Next Generation Expeditionary Air Force." *Air Force Research Institute*, AFRI Papers, February 2012, Accessed 19 May 2020. https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/AUPress/Papers/AP_HUKILL_ALFONSO_JOHNSON_CONWAY_NEX-GEN_EXPEDITIONARY_AF.PDF.

¹³ Richard Davies, "*Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force*" ..., 30; Thierry Gongora, "The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Perspective," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5*..., 22-23. There is an important nuance to note. The first Air Expeditionary Forces (AEFs) were created between 1995-1997 and eventually led to the extension of the AEF format to the entirety of the USAF in 1998. Its full implementation occurred in 2000. The terms Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) and Expeditionary Air Force (EAF) and inherent nuances will be defined in chapter 2 of this study.

¹⁴ Robert Martyn, "Signposts from the Past: Expeditionary Air Force Operations Revisited," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5* (Winnipeg: Centre for Defence and Security Studies, University of Manitoba, 2004), 56; Richard Davies, "*Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force*" ..., 30; Allan English and John Westrop, *Canadian Air Force Leadership and Command: The Human Dimension of Expeditionary Air Force Operations* (National Defence and the Canadian Forces, 2007), 43. Over the ten-year period ending in 1995, the USAF's budget was reduced by 40%, while its personnel were reduced by almost half from 600 000 to 370 000. The RCAF, in roughly the same time period, reduced its personnel by 48%, its aircraft by 49% and cut its Yearly Flying Rate by 59%.

¹⁵ Robert Martyn, "Signposts from the Past: Expeditionary Air Force Operations Revisited," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5*..., 56-57; Canada, DND, "At a Crossroads: Chief of the Defence Staff

RCAF and Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) planners, much like their USAF neighbours, were likewise bedeviled in finding solutions to the complex problems they were facing.

Starting with operations in the First Gulf War in the early 1990s all the way through the next fifteen years, with operations in Ex-Yugoslavia, Libya, Haiti, and Afghanistan, the RCAF was delivering full spectrum air power in a very non-efficient, *ad hoc* way. This negative pattern of bad practices was putting at risk its credibility in the eyes of its inter-service brethren, its government, its allies and coalition partners.¹⁶ Much like the USAF, but at a more measured pace, the RCAF was in a desperate position where it needed to find a means to progress a more reasonable way of rotating the deployment burden, while also finding a way to generate more predictable, responsive, adaptive, task-tailored capabilities to its Commanders.

It was finally in October 2006 that the RCAF's Air Board formally recognized the need for a transformational shift to an expeditionary fighting spirit, which would take the form of the Air Force Expeditionary Capability. This new ideological operationally focused foundation, born from the now defunct support driven Air Force Support Concept, would drive the RCAF to endow itself with the ability to force generate discrete units of agile, task-tailored, scalable and readily deployable expeditionary air power addressing the multi-layered organizational, operational tempo, and sustainment challenges it was facing.¹⁷

Despite differences in scale and scope from a capabilities perspective, the RCAF, as a small air force, and the USAF as the *prima inter pares* air force, were obviously facing a similar volatile and equally demanding international security environment. They both faced these daunting challenges after having been constrained from the resourcing and basing perspectives as a result of an anticipated yet elusive peace dividend. Considering its engagement, its *ways*, in comparison to its *means*, the RCAF was feeling the same stressors as the USAF; the resulting stress ratio being the same. As such it is safe to deduce that the motives for change, the driving ideology behind the need for transformation, for both air forces was similar in nature.¹⁸ Both air forces used an ideological framework, the Expeditionary Air Force and the Air Force Expeditionary Capability, unique to their condition, to propel themselves and pursue such an ambitious and profoundly transformational change vector. Before exploring these two ideas, the

Annual Report 2001-2002," Ottawa, 2002, 11.; Rachel Lea Heide, "Canadian Air Operations in the New World Order," in *Air Campaigns in the New World Order*, ed. Allan English, Silver Dart Canadian Aerospace Studies Volume II (Manitoba: Centre for Defence and Security Studies, University of Manitoba, and the Canadian Forces College, 2005).

¹⁶ Lieutenant-Colonel Pux Barnes, "The RCAF Air Task Force: The New Kid on the Block." *Royal Canadian Air Force Journal* 4, no. Fall (2015): 38; Lieutenant-Colonel Pux Barnes, "The JFACC and the CAOC-Centric RCAF: Considerations for the Employment of Air Power in Joint Operations," *Royal Canadian Air Force Journal* 3, 3 (Summer 2014): 18.

¹⁷ Canada, DND, "AFEC Concept of Operations: Revision 1," Ottawa, 16 July 2012, 1; Allan English and John Westrop, *Canadian Air Force Leadership and Command: The Human Dimension of Expeditionary Air Force Operations* ... The RCAF's AFEC and the USAF's EAF will be covered in more detail in section 3 of this chapter.

¹⁸ Robert Martyn, "Signposts from the Past: Expeditionary Air Force Operations Revisited," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5*..., 57.

next section will examine the nuances in definitions of the term expeditionary from the U.S. and Canadian perspectives.

The Definitions of the Term Expeditionary

The definitions and nuances of the term expeditionary have evolved over time. This is especially the case from an RCAF perspective, where they have gone from virtually nonexistent to culturally rooted in its operational mindset. However, given that American military definitions are of importance from a nuance comparison perspective, the definitions from various U.S. armed services perspectives, especially the USAF's, will also be explored.

Canadian Historical Perspective

Authors such as Fergusson, Gongora and Gimblett observed that the use of the term expeditionary was not commonly found in CAF or RCAF doctrine, nor was it present in defence, military or security discussions. It was bewildering due to the fact that with no natural enemies looming on Canadian borders and given that Canada has usually been secure at home, due to patronage of larger powers, Canada's military operations have largely been expeditionary in nature. This is most interesting when one considers that Canadians have most often associated security at home with security abroad and that this perception is firmly embedded in Canada's defence strategy Strong Secure Engaged.¹⁹ Furthermore, Fergusson argues that with the exception of forces dedicated to homeland security such as the ones dedicated to the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), and Search and Rescue, the remainder of the CAF has been largely optimized for overseas or expeditionary operations. He claims that if they had been solely developed for domestic needs they would look significantly different than they do today or have been since the Second World War.²⁰ As such, when analyzing the discourse and the ideas put forward in 2002, the authors are hinting that an eventual Canadian definition of the term expeditionary should espouse notions of operations away from the North American continent, but also notions of national security which could conceivably include operations at home.²¹ Likewise, it would also be plausible for a future RCAF definition to include an 'organizational element' referring to how forces are organized for such operations.

¹⁹ Thierry Gongora, "The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Perspective," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 21; James Fergusson, "Over There, From Here: Expeditionary Forces and the Canadian Air Force," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 45; Richard Gimblett, "The Canadian Way of War: Experience and Principles," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 13-14.

²⁰ Dr. James Fergusson, "Over There, From Here: Expeditionary Forces and the Canadian Air Force," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 45; Richard Goette, *Preparing the RCAF for the Future: Defining Potential Niches for Expeditionary Operations* (Royal Canadian Air Force Aerospace Warfare Centre, Trenton, Ontario, 2020), 7; Lieutenant-General Michael J. Hood, "The Royal Canadian Air Force and NATO," *Transforming Joint Air Power: The Journal of the JAPCC* 23, no.2 (Autumn/Winter 2016): 16. That said, Goette and Hood maintain that the truth is that the RCAF is much more balanced than what is proposed by Fergusson in that the domestic and expeditionary roles are complementary.

²¹ Richard Goette and Daniel Heidt, "This is no 'Milk Run': An Historical and Contemporary Examination of Operation BOXTOP, 1956-2015," in Whitney Lackenbauer and Adam Lajeunesse, eds., *Canadian Arctic Operations, 1945-2015: Lessons Learned, Lost and Relearned*. Fredericton: The Gregg Centre for War & Society,

Notwithstanding these initial discussions in 2002 and in the absence of a definitive Canadian definition, the authors of *Canadian Expeditionary Forces Bison Paper 5* were in need of more formal existing definitions as a starting point for debate and analysis amongst participants of the symposium. As such, US definitions had to be sought.

U.S. Military Perspectives

US Joint doctrine, which is applicable to all services, defined an expedition as “a military operation by an armed force to accomplish a specific objective in a foreign country.”²² This definition also embraced notions of operations external to a nation’s territorial boundaries, and introduced the notions of a temporal, non-permanent nature. It also included the attainment of specific national objectives as a driver for the establishment of an expedition. The U.S. Marine Corps definition also included notions of “national interests and national security” and then introduced notions of “crisis response” as well as operations spanning “the full spectrum of operations.”²³

As such, research shows U.S. Joint and Marine Corps expeditionary definitions were definitely embedded in their respective doctrinal cultures. The ideas behind these definitions encompassed concepts revolving around mission-focused military operations, which were external to territorial boundaries, and temporarily formed in response to crisis and urgency. From their perspectives, expeditionary operations were formed in order to achieve national objectives, and guarantee U.S. interests and security. They also specified that while expeditionary forces could be formed for kinetic operations, they could also be purpose-built for operations other than war, including peacekeeping, humanitarian aid and disaster relief.²⁴

From a USAF perspective, the definition of the term expeditionary was also well embedded in its mindset and doctrine. Research shows that the mindset which initiated the transformation of the USAF into an expeditionary air force took shape in the 1990s and was formalized in the early 2000s. Its definition, forged through those impacting experiences, espoused similar themes as its other U.S. Service partners, such as the means through which the USAF would provide effects-based packages in rapid-response to crisis, urgencies and impromptu deployments, in order to achieve national objectives and protect national interests and security.²⁵ The definition also put forward concepts of full spectrum operations not limited

2017. Accessed 11 Mar 2020.

<https://www.unb.ca/fredericton/arts/centres/gregg/what/publications/CdnArcticOps2017.pdf>.

²² Curt Van de Walle, “Back to the Future: Does History Support the Expeditionary Air Force Concept?” ...; Jeffrey Hukill, Kristal Alfonso, Scott Johnson, John Conway, “Next Generation Expeditionary Air Force.”...; Thierry Gongora, “The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Perspective,” in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5*..., 21.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ US Air Force, “CSAF Signs Air Force Basic Doctrine.” Last Accessed 25 February 2020. <https://www.defense-aerospace.com/articles-view/release/3/29866/usaf-chief-approves-operational-doctrine-%28-%dec%.html/>; US Air Force. “The Expeditionary Air Force Takes Shape.” Last modified 20 July 2008. <https://www.airforcemag.com/article/0697exped/>.

to kinetic ones but including ideas revolving around Military Operations Other than War (MOOTW).²⁶ It also stipulates that USAF expeditionary operations are tools for global engagement, hinting that USAF expeditionary operations are of an international nature and would imply operations outside of U.S. or North American territory.²⁷ This aspect of the definition also has implications that U.S. security at home relies on and even hinges on security for its citizens and its interests abroad.²⁸ Finally, the USAF definition speaks of organizational structuring of its forces and comprises rotational scheduling concepts in order to respond to the operational tempo challenges described earlier. Very similarly to the RCAF's case, despite the relative newness of the USAF's expeditionary organizational concept and how it has been seen as "one of the defining capabilities for the decades just ahead,"²⁹ its operations have been expeditionary all along.

It is therefore apparent that common themes come through when examining the ideas encompassed in the definitions of the term expeditionary from a U.S. Armed Services perspective. These ideological themes are very much congruent with the motives for change and with the implemented solutions to the problems they were facing. Now that the initial absence of a definition from a Canadian perspective has been recognized, and that a baseline from a USAF perspective has been established it is important to examine how the term expeditionary has evolved from an RCAF perspective.

Burgeoning Discussions from an RCAF Perspective

As mentioned in the opening paragraph of this section, although some of the authors of *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5* underscored and rightfully lamented the absence of (and called for) an RCAF definition of the term expeditionary, other authors in the same body of work boldly ventured definitions. For example, Rachel Lea Heide and Timothy Peppe put forward a Canadian Forces College Command and Staff Course student definition of the term expeditionary demonstrating that ideas were being put forth at senior RCAF levels and at recognized CAF academic professional military education institutions in the same time period. Their definition proposed that an expeditionary RCAF "needed to be a collective of task-tailored aerospace assets that were rapidly deployable and able to sustain themselves in operations

²⁶ Michael J. Nowak, "The Air Expeditionary Force: A Strategy for an Uncertain Future?"..., 6; Curt Van de Walle, "Back to the Future: Does History Support the Expeditionary Air Force Concept?"...

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁸ US Air Force, "Light, Lean, and Lethal: Air Combat Command and the Aerospace Expeditionary Force 1998-2001." ACC Office of History Headquarters Langley Air Force Base Virginia, Last modified October 2018. <https://media.defense.gov/2018/Oct/23/2002054380/-1/-1/1/Light%20Lean%20Lethal%20ACC.pdf/>. Although SSE came into being a long time after these American foundational ideas, Canada's Defence Policy under the Trudeau led Liberal government seems aligned with the ideas behind the USAF's transformation into an expeditionary air force.

²⁹ US Air Force, "The Expeditionary Air Force Takes Shape."... ; Curt Van de Walle, "Back to the Future: Does History Support the Expeditionary Air Force Concept?"... ; Jeffrey Hukill, Kristal Alfonso, Scott Johnson, John Conway, "Next Generation Expeditionary Air Force,"...

outside of Canadian territory.”³⁰ As such, even as early as 2002, one can already denote similar themes and ideas to the U.S. ones buttressing their definitions. This early definition assumes that expeditionary operations are of a temporal nature, are tailored for specific mission sets and that these operations would occur outside of Canadian territory. The authors go on to suggest that the RCAF needed to re-organize itself into its own version of a Canadian Expeditionary Aerospace Force if it wanted to remain internationally and strategically relevant, thus confirming that the definition of the term expeditionary would also have, much like the USAF, an organizational component inherent to it.³¹

Another author in the same body of work, Richard Goette, later combined aspects put forth by other authors to produce another definition. According to Goette, the term expeditionary refers to “the deployment of Canadian Forces resources outside of Canadian territory into a foreign country or foreign territory for the purpose of accomplishing a specific objective.”³² He reiterated some of the same recurring themes from a Canadian perspective, but also introduced the concept of national objectives to be attained. As we can see, even as the Canadian discussions on defining the term expeditionary were just burgeoning in the early 2000s, they were already propped up by the same ideas as the foundational ones, which brought on the USAF’s transformation into an expeditionary air force.³³

Contemporary RCAF Discussions

There has undeniably been a significant evolution in the internal-to-RCAF discussions surrounding the definition of the term expeditionary since 2002. More notable modern definitions will be examined to demonstrate the evolution of the discussions as well as denote the similitudes between USAF and RCAF ideas.

The first example used is contained in the 2012 *Air Force Expeditionary Capability (AFEC) Concept of Operations (CONOPS)*. It states that while new aircraft would bring an enhanced aerospace capability to the RCAF, it must be able to deploy and sustain its assets for an indeterminate period of time to meet its commitments. It could only do so by “continuing its transformation into a truly expeditionary construct that takes into account the resource-constrained reality and remains focused on the uniqueness of aerospace operations.”³⁴ The *AFEC CONOPS* went on to say that “the RCAF needs to be expeditionary in order to conduct

³⁰ Timothy Peppe and Rachel Lea Heide, "Bending but Not Broken: The USAF’s Expeditionary Air Force Experience in the 21st Century," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 35.

³¹ *Ibid.*; Jeffrey Hukill, Kristal Alfonso, Scott Johnson, John, Conway, “Next Generation Expeditionary Air Force,”

³² Richard Goette, "Command and Control Implications for Canadian Forces Air Expeditionary Operations," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 67.

³³ Interestingly, in the absence of specific Canadian air force definitions/conceptualizations of “expeditionary,” Canadian academics definitely had to refer to the existing outside-of-Canada writing on the subject, which was mostly from the USAF.

³⁴ Canada, DND, "AFEC Concept of Operations: Revision 1," Ottawa, 16 July 2012, iii.

operations effectively at home and abroad.”³⁵ As such, more recent Canadian discussions still took into account the seemingly constant dilemma between resources and ambitions, which will be explored in chapter four. That said, similar dilemmas and ideas, although on different scales, also existed within the USAF discourse as seen earlier. These discussions also introduced an interesting development where expeditionary operations, from an RCAF perspective, could also include operations within Canada. The *AFEC CONOPS* spoke in more detail of how the RCAF as an expeditionary air force was not a revolutionary concept but rather a “re-organization of RCAF assets to ensure that the RCAF, the Canadian Forces, and the Government of Canada can respond to domestic and international contingencies.”³⁶ Obviously these discussions reiterated that an expeditionary transformation of the RCAF would entail a reorganization of its capabilities and that this reorganization would benefit the RCAF, its service partners as well as other governmental departments in their ability to respond to global and domestic contingencies. These themes of RCAF re-organization and Canada’s foreign policy implications are worth examining even further and they will be in chapters two and four respectively of this study.

Later in 2016, the meaning of the term expeditionary was again refined in the *Future Air Operating Concept*. This document specified that expeditionary “referred to operations outside of Canadian or continental territory and approaches”³⁷ This definition is somewhat contradictory to what was suggested in other discussions, from a theatre of operations perspective, as it seems to exclude operations within Canada from the expeditionary definition.

This contradiction was not elucidated in Lieutenant-General Meinzinger’s 2019 version of *RCAF Vectors*. The RCAF Commander’s strategic document also seems to hint those expeditionary operations are distinctively international in nature. More precisely, it states that RCAF Force elements are organized into groupings. These groupings are one, Persistent Canadian and NORAD missions, which are North American in nature, and it makes the distinction with a second grouping, Expeditionary missions. The latter consist of Air Task Forces for full-spectrum operations (FSO), for limited operations (LO), for Non-Combatant Evacuation operations (NEO), and for Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Relief operations (HADR). This

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.* Further demonstrating an evolution in the discussions, the 2015 version of *RCAF Vectors* (Lieutenant-General Yvan Blondin was the commander at the time) stated that the RCAF of the future “will have to balance the defence of Canada with maintaining expeditionary capabilities.” This statement shows that even in 2015, there still seems to be contradictions in understanding if the term expeditionary encompasses domestic operations or not, and what that differentiation in theory could mean from a practical perspective.

³⁷ Canada, DND, *Future Concepts Directive Part 2: Future Air Operating Concept* (Trenton, ON: Canadian Forces Aerospace Warfare Centre (CFAWC), 15 August 2016), 10, accessed Mar 10, 2020, http://rcmf.mil.ca/assets/RCAF_Intranet/docs/en/d-air-rdms/future-air-concept/future-air-operating-concept-160908-with-signature-mod.pdf; Lieutenant-General Michael J. Hood, “The Royal Canadian Air Force and NATO: In Preparing for Domestic Continental Missions, the RCAF prepares for NATO Operations – Interview with Lieutenant-General Michael J. Hood, Commander, Royal Canadian Air Force” *Joint Air Power Competence Centre Journal*. vol. 23 (2016):17. The FOAC was written by Operational Research Scientists at the RAWC and signed by the Commander of the RCAF at the time, Lieutenant-General Michael Hood. Contrarily to the ideas proposed in the FAOC, Lieutenant-General Hood, in an interview with the *Journal of the Joint Air Power Air Competence Centre* in the Fall of 2016, seemed to reinforce the idea that the RCAF was preparing for NATO expeditionary operations during domestic expeditionary operations. This reflection will be importantly explored in the next paragraphs.

document also adds that “the likelihood of collective actions abroad will require robust, multipurpose, integrated, and expeditionary air and space power capabilities.”³⁸ This statement may lead the reader to interpret that these groupings are theoretically distinct. However, in practice, in some cases, RCAF air task forces have been formed for the purpose of domestic missions, that are persistent yet temporal in nature. One need only examine the RCAF Air Task Forces formed for the purpose of Operation LENTUS or more *au-fait* Operation LASER-type missions through which the CAF lends assistance to other governmental departments and provincial governments in the event of natural disasters affecting the Canadian population or in the throes of a pandemic affecting Canadians.³⁹

Furthermore, in the event of a perceived NORAD threat from Canada’s northern approaches, it could be conceived that an RCAF Air Task Force would be formed to deploy temporarily at a suitable northern airfield in response to that national security threat as part of a nascent NORAD agile basing concept. As such, it becomes important to clarify from the theoretical and practical perspectives that expeditionary operations, which call for the formation of RCAF Air Task Forces, are not necessarily limited to international operations, but can be domestic in nature as well.⁴⁰ This leads to the following question: If expeditionary operations can also be domestic in nature, how are these different than the day to day operations occurring at RCAF Wings as part of their mandated mission sets? Thankfully, this question was answered by what one could consider the utmost official reference from an RCAF perspective and that is within its own expeditionary doctrine.

Research on the RCAF’s ideas buttressing its transformation into an expeditionary air force would not be complete without an examination of its doctrine. This will be covered in more depth in section three of this chapter. However, for the purpose of examining definitions of the term expeditionary and demonstrating the evolution of discussions and ideas revolving around this idea, it is important to examine the definition put forward by RCAF expeditionary doctrine. Ironically, the novel RCAF expeditionary doctrine was published 31 July 2018 before the latest edition of *RCAF Vectors*. Its relative newness can perhaps explain why there still seems to be some level of contradiction within the RCAF in other reference material, even after its release

³⁸ Canada, DND, “RCAF Vectors,” (Ottawa, ON: Director General Air Readiness, 22 July 2019), 15, accessed Mar 11 2020, http://rcf.mil.ca/assets/RCAF_Intranet/docs/en/d-air-plans/airforce-vectors/rcf-vectors-final-22-july-2019-comd-rcf-signed.pdf.

³⁹ Government of Canada, Department of National Defence, Operation LENTUS, 2018 B.C. Wildfires. Accessed on 21 Mar 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/operation-lentus.html>.; Commander 1 Canadian Air Division, *1 Canadian Air Division/Joint Force Air Component Commander Operation Order 13315/20 Op LASER 20-01*. Winnipeg Manitoba: 1 Canadian Air Division, 6 March 2020. Another recent example of domestic employment of an RCAF ATF is the stand-up of ATF LASER which encompasses all air elements in support of JTF LASER, a domestic JTF stood up by CJOC in response to a pandemic like the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

⁴⁰ Richard Goette and Daniel Heidt, “This is no ‘Milk Run’: An Historical and Contemporary Examination of Operation BOXTOP, 1956-2015.”..., 270-306. The authors of said reference were already hinting at this idea in 2017, previous to the 2019 RCAF Vectors publication, when they posited that expeditionary operations should perhaps also encompass domestic operations that occur away from the RCAF’s Main Operating Bases.

and publication, as evidenced in previous paragraphs. The opening paragraph of said doctrine clearly emphasizes that:

In the context of air operations, an expeditionary operation is any operation conducted away from the main operating base. Expeditionary operations may be conducted in domestic, continental or international theatres.⁴¹

It goes on to define an expeditionary operation as one that:

... requires the projection of military power over extended lines of communications into a distant operational area to accomplish a specific objective.

Notes:

1. In the context of air operations, an expeditionary operation is any operation conducted away from the main operating base.
2. Expeditionary operations may be conducted in domestic, continental or international theatres.⁴²

As such, the question posed earlier is answered. Domestic expeditionary operations are differentiated from day-to-day operations at RCAF Wings by the interpretation that the later occur away from the RCAF's Main Operating Bases.

That said, taking this reflection even further, the expeditionary-domestic complementary point highlighted earlier is significant. It is an important point as it relates to explaining/justifying expeditionary operations to the government/strategic level: if investing in these capabilities means they are complementary to both domestic and expeditionary operations, then it makes them more attractive to the government because it ensures greater value/efficiency for investing in them. It is part of the perpetually existing effectiveness vs. efficiency balance where the military wants to ensure operational effectiveness, while the government wants to ensure efficiency for taxpayer money invested and spent. As such, the complementary nature of RCAF capabilities can maximize this balance.

⁴¹ Canada, DND, B-GA-402-005/FP-001, Expeditionary Air Operations Doctrine, (Trenton, ON: CFAWC, 31 July 2018), 1-1. Accessed 11 March 2020, <http://w08-ttn-vmweb01/rawc/en/doctrine/pubs/b-ga-402-005-fp-001-royal-canadian-air-force-doctrine-expeditionary-air-operations.pdf>. This relates to the apparent disconnect between the air staff drafting the RCAF Vectors and the RAWC team drafting the doctrine.

⁴² *Ibid.*, Gloss-3. Additionally, the entrenching of the ATF concept in RCAF expeditionary and C2 doctrine supports this point. That said, the idea that the RCAF “fights from its bases” could be further emphasized and developed in said doctrines. This is not so much a doctrinal issue, as the doctrine is clear that when the forces are away from the bases (and come under an ATF) they are considered expeditionary. However, although considered ‘expeditionary’ the degree of support from the bases continues, hence the “fighting from bases” point.

It is therefore evident that from an evolutionary perspective, RCAF discussions and ideas revolving around the term expeditionary have evolved significantly since the early 2000s when even the mention of the term was quite novel in RCAF and CAF circles. When examining the themes and concepts forming around the evolved RCAF definition of the term, it is also obvious that analogous themes were found in American definitions, more specifically in the USAF since its transformation into an expeditionary air force. Themes such as the temporal nature of expeditionary force elements, the organizational aspects embedded within the term, the geographical boundaries discussion that comes inevitably with the definition, the national security, interests and objectives dynamic are all universally shared within the USAF and the RCAF discussions evolving around the term.

Accordingly, from a greater conceptual perspective, the motives behind the changes, and the ideas propelling the evolution of RCAF definitions of the term expeditionary, are quite aligned with the ones associated with the USAF. This obvious institutional and conceptual momentum demonstrating that the RCAF is trying to catch up to the USAF from an expeditionary perspective, despite some ongoing and recent discrepancies in interpretation, eventually led to the official promulgation of RCAF expeditionary operations doctrine. This evolution of expeditionary doctrine needs to be examined further as part of this examination of the RCAF's ideas supporting its transformation into an expeditionary air force.

The Development of RCAF Expeditionary Doctrine

The purpose of this section is not to historically recapitulate the evolution of RCAF air and space doctrine since its origins. Its purpose is much more precise. It is meant to demonstrate that the evolution of ideas impelling the RCAF's transformation into an expeditionary air force also led to the establishment of the RCAF's own unique expeditionary doctrine, distinctive from the USAF's doctrine and other CAF environmental doctrines.

Although this section is not a historical retrospective, it must be highlighted that formal theory and ideas on the use of air forces are relatively recent, in comparison to other arms such as land forces and maritime forces, as they are "the most recently established branch of Western armed forces."⁴³ Correspondingly, and for a variety of reasons, independent air force thought on the use of its own air forces, autonomous from the other services, is also a relatively new notion spanning less than a century, which was originally met with significant resistance.⁴⁴ This has undoubtedly delayed the conceptualization of air force doctrine, and even more so for small air forces such as the RCAF. In the RCAF's case, a reliance on USAF operational and tactical doctrine increased its dependence on its NORAD partner in operations and also proved to be a disincentive for the development of its own ideas, strategic thought and institutional doctrine.⁴⁵ It

⁴³ Canada, DND, Aaron P. Jackson, "Doctrine, Strategy and Military Culture: Military-Strategic Doctrine Development in Australia, Canada and New Zealand, 1987-2007." (Trenton: ON CFAWC, 2013), 107. Accessed 11 March 2020. http://www.rcaf-arc.forces.gc.ca/cfawc/eLibrary/eLibrary_e.asp. According to the author, Air Warfare and Air Warfare theory really only emerged during the First World War, and only began to flourish in the 1920s.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 109. The biggest detractors were senior leadership of other services and/or environments.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 110.; Brian L. Murray (Lieutenant-Colonel), "What Air Forces Do." Canadian Air Force Journal. Volume 4, Number 4 (Fall 2011): 40. It is also mentioned that the 1968 Unification of the Canadian Forces, as well as the ensuing Command structure were factors impeding the development of independent RCAF doctrine.

is only with the advent of the First Gulf War that the first glimpses of ideas were put in writing by RCAF aviators, which eventually brought the formalization of RCAF doctrine in its most basic sense in 1997.⁴⁶ Since then, the RCAF has evolved significantly from a doctrinal perspective, in every aspect, continuing to do so even to this day in 2020.

As mentioned earlier, the new RCAF expeditionary doctrine, one of the latest doctrines to be developed, was officially published in 2018. It consisted of operational level doctrine “for use by RCAF personnel, units and headquarters and other CAF elements that command or support RCAF units in expeditionary operations, including those preparing to do so.”⁴⁷ As such, it is apparent that the ideas inherent to the doctrine were for informational and educational purposes, not just internally to the RCAF, but also equally focused on external stakeholders. When extrapolating ideas put forward by Aaron P. Jackson’s *Doctrine, Strategy and Military Culture: Military-Strategic Doctrine Development in Australia, Canada and New Zealand, 1987-2007* it could be inferred that, much like all other RCAF doctrine developed since the late nineties, the 2018 RCAF Expeditionary Operations Doctrine had a purpose to enhance competitiveness of the RCAF amongst other CAF environments, and also served to “influence strategic and acquisition policy.”⁴⁸ As such, ideas behind RCAF Expeditionary Operations Doctrine had the purpose of influencing other ideas, such as governmental and political leadership ones, related to the RCAF’s relevance as a strategic foreign policy tool. This can be stated with some level of assurance as RCAF Expeditionary Doctrine, despite it being operational level doctrine, is not isolated from all other doctrines, RCAF or Joint, or even from Canada’s Defence Policy for that matter. In fact, it is clearly stated within its opening paragraphs that it (must) be used in conjunction with all other RCAF doctrine including Command and Control, Sustainment, and Force Protection Doctrine. It (must) be used with Canadian Joint Force Publications which consists of joint doctrine in and of itself and (must) be used with Strong Secure Engaged.⁴⁹

As such, it becomes very clear that RCAF doctrine usually stems from ideas rooted in the needs of the time. These ideas have of course evolved since the 1990s, when expeditionary ideas were burgeoning and have continued to progress since then, eventually laying the foundations for the establishment of formal RCAF Expeditionary Doctrine. This ideological foundation buttressing RCAF Expeditionary Doctrine plays a key role in enabling the RCAF’s ability to conduct its assigned missions at home and abroad and seems, for the time being, to outlast the test of time as it is still quite *a propos* in all current operations and heavily relied upon by RCAF and Joint planners. As stated in this new doctrine, in order for the RCAF to be an agile expeditionary force it must have “the personnel, the doctrine, the infrastructure, the equipment, the training and the (mindset) in order to project air power.”⁵⁰ Some of these more tangible

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, iii.

⁴⁸ Canada, DND, Aaron P. Jackson, “Doctrine, Strategy and Military Culture: Military-Strategic Doctrine Development in Australia, Canada and New Zealand, 1987-2007.” ..., 128.

⁴⁹ Canada, DND, B-GA-402-005/FP-001, *Expeditionary Air Operations Doctrine* (Trenton, ON: CFAWC, 31 July 2018), iii-iv. Accessed 11 March 2020, <http://w08-ttn-vmweb01/rawc/en/doctrine/pubs/b-ga-402-005-fp-001-royal-canadian-air-force-doctrine-expeditionary-air-operations.pdf>.

aspects will be covered in later chapters of this study, but since this chapter focusses on the ideas providing impetus and momentum for the RCAF's transformation, the next and final section of this chapter will examine how the USAF and RCAF mindsets were codified and institutionalized.

Codifying and Institutionalizing the Mindsets: The USAF's EAF and the RCAF's AFEC

As this study has shown, clearly conceptualizing a mindset is one thing in and of itself. Finding ways to codify and then institutionalize a shared mindset, in order to ensure that subsequent change becomes long lasting, is certainly as complicated.

The USAF's EAF

According to authors of the *Bison Paper 5*, the Expeditionary Air Force (EAF) is the framework used by the USAF to codify and then later institutionalize the principles, which guided its transformation into what it has become.⁵¹ At the onset of its transformation in 1999, the Acting Secretary of the Air Force stated that:

EAF is a journey, and a vision. We have many more steps to take along this path as we transform the Air Force from a forward-based, Cold War force to an expeditionary force able to respond to crises around the globe. EAF is not just one event. It is a completely different way at looking at how we do our business. It is also a fundamental change in the way we operate.⁵²

The codified EAF as a mindset has obviously evolved and it still remains very germane to how the USAF operates to this day. As the EAF mindset was about to celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2019, Chief of Staff of the USAF General David Goldfein underscored the fact that the "EAF initiative had become emblematic of the way in which the Air Force had conducted its deployed operations."⁵³ This bold statement demonstrated that the code, the EAF, was firmly institutionalized, even twenty years later. That said, he also warned that the USAF, over time, had slowly drifted away from its intended expeditionary mindset, relapsing to its old comfortable

⁵⁰ Canada, DND, B-GA-402-005/FP-001, *Expeditionary Air Operations Doctrine...*, 1-1.

⁵¹ Thierry Gongora, "The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Perspective," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 22; Dr. James Fergusson, "Over There, From Here: Expeditionary Forces and the Canadian Air Force," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5 ...*, 43.

⁵² F. Whitten Peters, (speech, Air Force Association Symposia, Orlando, Florida, 5 February 1999), *Today's Challenges – Tomorrow's Vision: Positioning the EAF for the 21st Century*. Accessed 19 March 2020, <http://secure.afa.org>. The close equivalent to the Canadian Minister of National Defence is the US Secretary of Defense. In Canada, all three environments are commanded by three leaf generals (Lieutenant-Generals), united under one four-leaf Chief of Defence Staff, who reports to the Minister of National Defence. As such, there is no real Canadian equivalent to the US Secretary of the Air Force.

⁵³ US Air Force. "Light, Lean, and Lethal: Air Combat Command and the Aerospace Expeditionary Force 1998-2001." ...; I; John Tirpak, "Goldfein: USAF Needs to Return to Our Expeditionary Roots." *Air Force Magazine*, Last modified 18 September 2018. <https://www.airforcemag.com/usaf-goldfein-time-to-return-to-our-expeditionary-roots/>

ways, remaining too heavily reliant on well-established bases, with healthy infrastructure. This limited its agility and responsiveness. As such, he called for the USAF to return to its original idea, its ‘expeditionary roots,’ as future operations will require a more cunning shell game, where many small detachments will likely disperse to many small and more austere airfields, taking with them only enough support and personnel as required.⁵⁴ Therefore, even though the EAF code seemed well conceptualized and institutionalized in the USAF, twenty years after its inception, it needed refreshing and a renewed focus to meet the challenges it would face in the 21st century.

Before the RCAF’s codifying and institutionalizing efforts are examined and compared to the USAF’s, it is important to clarify two USAF terms that have often come up in this research and could cause confusion for someone on the outside looking in. This section has focused on the USAF’s EAF as a mindset, but the use of the term is often correlated with the USAF’s Air Expeditionary Force (AEF). Although somewhat similar from a nomenclature perspective, and ostensibly related, these two terms are not interchangeable and have different meanings. As the term AEF encompasses more structural and systemic elements, and is more akin to tangible operational capabilities, it will be examined more closely in the next Chapter of this study.

The RCAF’s AFEC

From an RCAF perspective, the authors of *Bison Paper 5* make no precise mention of past or current attempts by the RCAF to codify or institutionalize its own expeditionary conceptual aspirations. That said, Howard G. Coombs, in the last chapter of *Bison Paper 5*, spoke of sustainment dilemmas for 21st century aerospace operations and examined an emerging combat service support solution being suggested for RCAF expeditionary operations. This support centric idea was called the Air Force Support Capability (AFSC).⁵⁵ The AFSC never materialized as an independent idea for a variety of reasons, but it could be said it would become the precursor to something much bigger and more enduring. Consequently, most of the AFSC’s foundational ideas were subsumed by a greater RCAF ideological concept, not just focused on sustainment, which would see the day in 2009, the Air Force Expeditionary Capability (AFEC).⁵⁶

The Commander of 1 Canadian Air Division at the time, Major-General Wheeler stated:

...since 2006 the RCAF has continued with its transformation shift into an expeditionary ‘fighting spirit.’ The Air Force Expeditionary Capability

⁵⁴ John Tirpak, “Goldfein: USAF Needs to Return to Our Expeditionary Roots.” ...

⁵⁵ Howard G. Coombs, "Supporting Canadian Aerospace Expeditionary Forces: Air Power Sustainment in the 21st Century," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5*..., 85-86; Allan English and John Westrop. *Canadian Air Force Leadership and Command: The Human Dimension of Expeditionary Air Force Operations*, ..., 66. Coombs, English and Westrop suggested that given their lack of a sustainable expeditionary capability, RCAF Air Expeditionary Forces should be sustained through the use of formed Mission Support Units (MSU). These MSUs were compared to the USAF Expeditionary Combat Support (ECS) resources designed to support AEF deployments. They also stated that due to the lack of support technicians across the RCAF, and a required important shift in organizational structures, the implementation of the AFSC would prove problematic.

⁵⁶ Canada, DND, "*Air Force Expeditionary Capability (AFEC) Concept of Operations (CONOPS)*," Winnipeg, September 2009. iii.

Concept of Operations was thus developed to [help] transform the RCAF into an effective, combat-capable, flexible, and responsive expeditionary force.⁵⁷

As such, in a similar fashion as the USAF's EAF, but using its own unique coding and terminology, the RCAF's AFEC was the foundational ideology behind the expeditionary mindset "encompassing its overarching pursuit of a comprehensive expeditionary capability to enable rapid and decisive delivery of national military air power."⁵⁸ Similarly to the EAF, the AFEC has also evolved since then.

Under the leadership of Major-General Parent as Commander 1 Canadian Air Division, a revised version of the AFEC Concept of Operations was published in 2012 by which it reiterated its ideological expeditionary aspirations, but also offered more precision on how the RCAF would endow itself with a "structured expeditionary capability designed to facilitate the rapid deployment of aerospace power in support of Canadian Forces operations."⁵⁹ The revised version detailed guiding principles, which established contextual boundaries and ensured alignment with other strategic initiatives. These guiding principles would ensure institutionalization of this structured expeditionary capability and encompassed notions of further entrenchment of an expeditionary mindset, or culture, in all aspects of RCAF doctrine, procedures and plans. These guiding principles also spoke of an increased focus on interoperability ensuring better alignment in a combined or joint context; and moreover, they involved notions of increased flexibility in order to meet the demands of, and stay within the constraints imposed by, the Government of Canada. Again, akin to the USAF's EAF, the AFEC principles introduced notions of an organizational nature by which they called for organizing and training as they fight and a managed readiness system.⁶⁰

The 2012 AFEC Concept of Operations, much like the USAF EAF, also reinforced the idea that many other sub-initiatives were contained in this ideological foundation, which once integrated, would form the greater system enabling RCAF expeditionary operations. These AFEC sub-initiatives included the formalization of the RCAF's Air Task Force Structure, the advent of 2 Wing, the 1 Canadian Air Division's Managed Readiness Plan and the AFEC Programme amongst others.⁶¹ As these sub-initiatives are less abstract and less in the conceptual

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 2. Curt Van de Walle, "Back to the Future: Does History Support the Expeditionary Air Force Concept?"... ; Jeffrey Hukill, Kristal Alfonso, Scott Johnson, John Conway, "Next Generation Expeditionary Air Force,"... Referring back to Section 2 of this chapter where ideas buttressing the term expeditionary were discussed, clear parallels can be drawn between the USAF's EAF and the RCAF's AFEC with regards to their conceptual expeditionary aspirations.

⁵⁹ Canada, DND, "*AFEC Concept of Operations: Revision 1*," ..., 4.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 4. According to the reference, these guiding principles were listed in order of precedence. As such, the importance of institutionalizing the expeditionary mindset as part of the RCAF's organizational culture is reinforced.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*; Pux Barnes, "*The RCAF Air Task Force: Considerations for the Employment of Air Power in Joint Operations*," Article #5 in a Series on Command and Control as a supplement to Royal Canadian Air Force B-GA-401-000/FP-001, Canadian Forces Aerospace Command Doctrine, 2-3. Accessed 24 March 2020, <http://www.rcaf->

realm, they will be examined in more detail in later chapters of this study and compared with commensurate initiatives within the USAF. Much like the EAF, the AFEC has evolved since its inception in 2009. However, given its relative newness in comparison to the USAF, its evolution will be better demonstrated through the examination of a few of its sub-initiatives in the next two chapters.

When comparing both the USAF's EAF and the RCAF's AFEC from an ideological perspective, it can be safely argued that they were both used as a means to codify, and perhaps to 'brand,' significant transformational change. Although the ideas are very comparable, the RCAF chose to use its own unique code, which evolved from other preceding RCAF ideas for change instead of adopting the USAF's version and terminology wholesale. Nonetheless, both codified ideas are all encompassing ones, which were then used as foundational frameworks to buttress other more tangible and systemic aspects. The more prominent ones will be examined and compared in the following chapters. Finally, the RCAF's AFEC is obviously newer and it is therefore difficult to determine at this stage how institutionalized its ideology has truly become. Nevertheless, by shifting the overarching examination from the ideological aspects to more tangible and systemic ones, the institutionalization of the RCAF's expeditionary mindset can be better assessed.

Conclusion

From an all-encompassing ideological perspective, it can be contended that the motives for change were analogous for both the RCAF and USAF. When comparing the ways and means for both, the stress ratios brought upon by the Post-Cold War era were relatively the same and prompted the need for transformation towards an expeditionary mindset. Both air forces needed, perhaps for somewhat distinct reasons, to remain strategically relevant. These motives for change also accelerated the evolution of the definitions of the term expeditionary, especially for the RCAF of late.

Although there has been a notable increase and evolution in the discourse revolving around that definition, there still seems to be contradictions in important and high-level direction and guidance within the RCAF, perhaps attributable to the relative newness of its own ideology. Nonetheless, in the same vein as the USAF's expeditionary doctrine, the RCAF definition was officially confirmed and institutionalized to a certain extent in the recently published RCAF's Expeditionary Operations Doctrine. The unique and distinctive RCAF definitions, doctrine, and mindset, were codified in the AFEC. The AFEC, like the USAF's EAF, was the brand used by senior leadership of both air forces to provide a foundational and ideological framework, which would buttress their more tangible and systemic transformational efforts. Both the EAF and the AFEC have evolved, even if the AFEC is much more recent.

The examination of the USAF and RCAF's more systemic and tangible aspects of their respective and unique expeditionary transformations in the next chapter will demonstrate just

arc.forces.gc.ca/en/cf-aerospace-warfare-centre/aerospace-doctrine.page. The AFEC Programme is a key sub-initiative of the AFEC. In broad terms, it is an omnibus project, which will oversee the establishment of expeditionary capabilities within the RCAF from the infrastructure, materiel and personnel perspectives. The AFEC Programme is well under way and should see all capabilities delivered by 2029.

how comparatively institutionalized these initiatives actually are. That said, the examination can be undertaken with the conviction that from an ideological perspective, both air forces began with the same mindset and took relatively similar conceptual approaches to undertaking these changes. However, it is also clear that the RCAF did not adopt the USAF approach wholesale, and formed its own unique Canadian expeditionary identity and culture.

CHAPTER 2 – THE SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

Introduction

Now that the conceptual underpinnings have been examined, this research project will explore how these foundational ideas translated into less abstract organizational systems and structures. This examination, from the USAF and RCAF perspectives, will firmly demonstrate a level of institutionalization and operationalization of the ideas presented in Chapter 1.

This chapter will first examine the USAF's AEF and define what it represents from the systemic and structural perspectives, playing a key role in the USAF's transformation into an expeditionary air force. The next three sections will then move on to a comparative examination of the RCAF's unique equivalent systems and structures, which encompass in most respects, the same aims and functions as the AEF construct. As such, the RCAF's Managed Readiness Plan, Air Task Force construct, Wing Restructuring Initiative and the advent of 2 Wing will be studied. The examination of these unique and relatively recently implemented expeditionary systems and structures will demonstrate just how institutionalized the ideas buttressing the RCAF's transformation have become. Furthermore, it will add further substance to the argument that while the RCAF has implemented its own unique Canadian systems and structures these have clear parallels with similar USAF ones, proving that both air forces have clearly adopted an expeditionary ideology, and implemented systems and structures within their means to institutionalize it.

The USAF's AEF

According to *Bison Paper* – 5 authors Gongora and Fergusson, the AEF is the USAF's "operational component, created to provide regional commands with holistic and organic aerospace capabilities."⁶² It should be reminded that these authors were examining the USAF's AEF to determine its applicability and feasibility in a Canadian context. It is safe to say that within the RCAF of 2002, there was no real equivalent system or structure.

Other research demonstrates that the AEF is at the heart of the USAF's EAF concept and although it is seen as the more tangible air power structural package, it consists of both a structure and a system.⁶³ This dynamic is best described by the USAF's Air Combat Command History Office which states that the AEF construct was designed to help reduce operations tempo (OPSTEMPO) and personnel tempo (PERSTEMPO), and that its foundational concepts primarily responded to a need for improvements in forecasting the way resources were made

⁶² Thierry Gongora, "The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Perspective," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 22; Dr. James Fergusson, "Over There, From Here: Expeditionary Forces and the Canadian Air Force," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 43.

⁶³ F. Whitten Peters, (speech, Air Force Association Symposia, Orlando, Florida, 5 February 1999), *Today's Challenges – Tomorrow's Vision: Positioning the EAF for the 21st Century...* ; Global Security.Org, "Aerospace Expeditionary Force (AEF) Air and Space Expeditionary Task force (ASETF) (Formerly Air Expeditionary Force)." Accessed 28 February 2020. <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/usaf/aef-into.htm>.

available to theatre commanders, and what they should look like.⁶⁴ It is thus apparent that twenty years after its inception, the USAF's AEF concept, along with its implied systemic and structural implications, were destined to become a permanent part of the USAF's service culture.⁶⁵

To provide a more tangible and operationalized explanation of what the AEF actually encompassed, it is important to highlight that under the EAF construct, the USAF organized its Total Force into ten AEFs. The AEFs, drawn from geographically separated and diverse units, and grouped in pairs, embarked on a rotational 15-month life cycle, which included periods of normal training (10 months), preparation (2 months) and then a period of on-call/deployment eligibility (3 months).⁶⁶ Furthermore, each AEF would have a somewhat similar basic composition that, along with the rotational aspects described earlier, demonstrate the structural and systemic dynamics encompassed in the AEFs. From these AEFs, Air and Space Expeditionary Task Forces (ASETf) would be formed and task tailored for specific expeditionary missions.⁶⁷

It now seems clear what is understood in the USAF's AEF construct from a structural and systemic perspective. When searching for an RCAF equivalent system or structure in 2002, the authors of *Bison Paper – 5* could not find a comparable construct. Even to this day, an uninformed reader searching for an RCAF AEF could be tempted to come to the same conclusion, especially if they were intimidated by the sheer differences in scale and scope between the USAF and the RCAF or if they only skimmed the surface in their research. It could even be argued that the capabilities of only one USAF AEF could trump the entire RCAF. The only comparable system noted in 2002 by Thierry Gongora was how the RCAF attempted to manage its Fighter Force, in order to respond to contingency operations while minimizing the impact to the community's force generation efforts. These efforts however, were very stove piped in nature, without a real overarching Pan-RCAF strategy, and were only applied to the RCAF Fighter Squadrons at 3 and 4 Wing specifically.⁶⁸ To summarize the general Canadian perspective on the matter maintained in the *Bison Paper*, Gongora finally went on to deduce that while the RCAF could find ways to organize itself better, and should, in order to improve its ability to respond to expeditionary contingency operations, it was its size rather than its ability to organize itself "that would be the determining factor of [its] ability to maintain the operational

⁶⁴ US Air Force, "*Light, Lean, and Lethal: Air Combat Command and the Aerospace Expeditionary Force 1998-2001.*" ...

⁶⁵ Richard Davies, "*Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force*"..., 36-37.

⁶⁶ Global Security.Org, "*Aerospace Expeditionary Force (AEF) Air and Space Expeditionary Task force (ASETf) (Formerly Air Expeditionary Force).*"... ; Timothy Peppe and Rachel Lea Heide, "Bending but Not Broken: The USAF's Expeditionary Air Force Experience in the 21st Century," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5*..., 37.

⁶⁷ Global Security.Org, "*Aerospace Expeditionary Force (AEF) Air and Space Expeditionary Task force (ASETf) (Formerly Air Expeditionary Force).*"... The reference notes that each AEF will be more formidable than the air forces of most nations and would each consist of about 150-175 aircraft and 15000 personnel.

⁶⁸ Thierry Gongora, "The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Perspective," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5*..., 25; Richard Goette, "*Preparing the RCAF for the Future: Defining Potential Niches for Expeditionary Operations*"..., 81-85. RCAF Fighter Force Main Operating Bases are 3 Wing in Bagotville Quebec, and 4 Wing in Cold Lake Alberta.

tempo associated with an expeditionary force posture under contemporary and future conditions.”⁶⁹

The next sections will not argue that the more tangible RCAF expeditionary capabilities have significantly grown in size or that the RCAF has expanded its force to add thousands of aviators to its establishment. Instead, it will argue that it has evolved significantly since 2002 and that during the last decade or so, the RCAF has endowed itself with new unique Canadian systems and structures that, when analyzed holistically, are congruent with the existing USAF AEF construct, thus enabling the modern expeditionary RCAF. The first system to be examined, akin to the USAF’s AEF construct will be the RCAF’s Managed Readiness Plan.

The RCAF’s Managed Readiness Plan

The RCAF’s Managed Readiness Plan (MRP) was born out of necessity and out of hard lessons learned during RCAF expeditionary operations since the 1990s. Despite being tactically proficient at delivering air effects, significant shortcomings were repeatedly being noted across most sizeable RCAF expeditionary deployments, putting at risk the RCAF’s reputation in the eyes of its service brethren, its government, and coalition partners.⁷⁰ The research related to this project revealed that these shortcomings revolved principally around Command and Control and the *ad hoc* nature of how the RCAF force generated and presented its forces for employment.⁷¹ All of these issues will be addressed in some form in this chapter or the next.

The MRP was first developed in 2012 by staff within 1 Canadian Air Division Headquarters, the operational level commanding the RCAF’s operational wings and capabilities and was meant to find a force generation and readiness solution to the RCAF’s OPSTEMPO and PERSTEMPO problems. It was Major-General St-Amand and his A5/A7 team’s intent that the MRP, as a system, would produce an acceptable level of predictability to RCAF Wings, despite an elevated ops tempo, and give options to Commanders for the employment of Canadian air power.⁷²

The most recent version of the MRP, published in July of 2019, demonstrates that this system is enduring and on the verge of celebrating a decade of existence. Its connectedness with political and strategic policy and directives, with RCAF expeditionary doctrine, as well as with operational level direction and guidance has only increased since its inception.⁷³ As such, it

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Barnes, Pux. “*The RCAF Air Task Force: Considerations for the Employment of Air Power in Joint Operations*,”..., 1. Pux Barnes states that the method used by the RCAF to identify and correct those shortcomings is the Air Force Lessons Learned Programme.

⁷¹ Luc Girouard (Colonel), “RCAF Command and Control: Where it Needs to Be?” (National Security Programme, Command Paper, Canadian Forces College, 2018), 2.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 7. Pux Barnes, “The RCAF Air Task Force: The New Kid on the Block.”..., 39.

⁷³ Commander 1 Canadian Air Division, *1 Canadian Air Division Managed Readiness Plan 2019*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: 1 Canadian Air Division, 29 July 2019. The document refers to its connectedness with Strong

could be posited that as a system, the MRP has become firmly institutionalized within the RCAF and robustly interconnected with the political and strategic levels. In the latest version of the MRP, the current Commander of 1 Canadian Air Division Major-General Pelletier's strategic communications message was that it will "provide maximum planning and flexibility for operations, ease of scheduling and enhanced quality of life to its members."⁷⁴ He also adds that the MRP is a centrally controlled blueprint meant to synchronize training and readiness activities across multiple wings within a well-defined cycle.⁷⁵

Now that the basic foundations of the MRP have been explained, and clear parallels can already be drawn with the conceptual and scheduling aspects of the USAF's AEF construct, it is important to examine it more closely and reveal the more tangible aspects of this system. The MRP is the system that allows the Commander of 1 Canadian Air Division to force generate Air Task Forces (ATFs) and Air Detachments (AIRDETs) for deliberate, and contingency operations, while maintaining its NORAD responsibilities and national Search & Rescue capabilities. It is a two-year cyclical, 6-month rotational system, which empowers Wing Commanders to manage their wing's readiness.⁷⁶

The MRP provides the RCAF with two sustained ATFs and one surge ATF capable of meeting the missions prescribed in *Strong Secure Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy*. The two sustained ATFs are meant to respond to a deliberate Line of Operation (LoO1) and a contingency Line of Operation (LoO2). For deliberate operations, the MRP is geographically aligned by Canadian region and consistent with the Canadian Army's own planning construct. Each of the three regions (Western, Central, Eastern) consists of two Main Operating Bases, each of them being the home station of an RCAF Wing. When a region's turn comes up for its high readiness period, a lead wing and a supporting wing will be designated and the lead/supporting roles will be reversed the next time the region's turn comes around, 18 months later. Specifically, for LoO2-type contingency operations, 2 Wing is the RCAF's standing high readiness and rapid response formation of choice, the spearhead of the expeditionary RCAF. Each wing's responsibilities and capabilities are also explicitly addressed in the MRP, clarifying responsibilities tied to specific named expeditionary operations. Also, for those wings that do not have a major role in the regional construct of the MRP, but play a major role in delivering air power in support of other environmental Commanders, like the Royal Canadian Navy, and the Canadian Army, their responsibilities are also encompassed in the MRP.⁷⁷ As such, similarly to the USAF, the RCAF deliberately went through a process of grouping and re-organizing its forces as part of its transformation into an expeditionary air force. Its regional construct, and its

Secure Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy, CDS and Comd RCAF Force Posture and Readiness Directives, RCAF Expeditionary Doctrine as well as Comd 1 CAD Operational Direction and Guidance.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

specific lines of operations, all part and parcel of its MRP, would allow it much more flexibility, agility and responsiveness.⁷⁸

When comparing the scheduling and rotational aspects of the USAF's AEF construct with the RCAF's MRP, clear parallels can be drawn. Both systems aim to provide solutions to OPSTEMPO and PERSTEMPO problems. Both air force systems aim to provide an acceptable level of predictability to their commanders and aviators, while maximizing planning, agility and flexibility. Both air forces had to re-organize themselves internally, creating groupings in order to enhance their agility and responsiveness. Both systems apparently seem to have attained a solid level of institutionalization within their own respective organizations, and both seem to be well interconnected with strategic and political circles and policies.

Despite these similarities, these systems are not identical. The RCAF MRP is a unique Canadian solution, tailored for its own reality, its own needs and means. It is certainly not as broadly all-encompassing as the USAF's AEF construct and of course not of the same scope, depth and size.

The AEF does speak to how the USAF has organized itself as an expeditionary air force, and to how it employs its force. It therefore speaks of structure. In this comparative analysis, the question then begs to be asked. Has the RCAF correspondingly evolved from a structural perspective? The next section of this chapter will answer this question by examining how the RCAF has evolved, from a structural perspective, over the past decade or so. It will demonstrate that the RCAF has evolved significantly in how it generates its forces, but very importantly in how it presents its forces for employment.

The Air Task Force Construct and the Wing Restructuring Initiative

In order to situate the reader, the formalization of how the RCAF would present its forces for employment, the ATF Construct, really took flight roughly at the same time as the birth of the MRP. The RCAF had done its fair share of learning how to do things the hard way and the recent concurrent operations in Libya, Operation MOBILE, and in Haiti, Operation HESTIA had almost broken its back.⁷⁹ These expeditionary operations were but the latest, in a longer line of struggles for the RCAF, where it could not come to grip with a construct that was agile enough, yet afforded a somewhat predictable model for how it would present its forces for employment.⁸⁰ The development of the ATF Construct also came on the heels of the RCAF's elaboration of its own command & control (C2) doctrine and filled an important gap according to Pux Barnes who wrote extensively on the matter. He explained that what the RCAF C2 doctrine did not do was

⁷⁸ It is important to note here that the RCAF's regional construct, reflected in the MRP, is an overlay to the RCAF Wing construct that aligns most RCAF capabilities functionally. For example, all dedicated RCAF SAR Squadrons are aligned functionally under 19 Wing, even though they are resident on multiple Wings across the country. The same can be said for Long Range Patrol capabilities that are aligned functionally under 14 Wing.

⁷⁹ Pux Barnes, "*The RCAF Air Task Force: Considerations for the Employment of Air Power in Joint Operations*," ..., 1.

⁸⁰ Luc Girouard (Colonel), "RCAF Command and Control: Where it Needs to Be?" ..., 3-11. Although this paper only examined the RCAF's struggles for these two operations, one could argue that the RCAF had indeed 'struggled' in how it structured its forces on expeditionary operations at least since the 1990s.

“tell Commanders *how* to deliver air power.”⁸¹ In other words, the ATF Construct would become that guide to Commanders on how to organize their forces for employment and would “[break] that prevailing negative cycle of *ad hoc* planning and execution.”⁸² In order to explain how the RCAF’s MRP and ATF Construct work together, Pux Barnes used the following:

... generating a scalable and agile force, capable of deploying anywhere in the world, is the goal of the RCAF’s MRP. The ‘operational currency’ of the RCAF, defined by what it brings to the fight, is the Air Task Force.⁸³

The ATF Construct’s development was led by a team at the Canadian Forces Aerospace Warfare Centre (later RCAF Aerospace Warfare Centre, abbreviated to RAWC), working in conjunction with the entirety of the RCAF. Its work was based on a challenge issued in 2012 by the Commander of 1 Canadian Air Division Major-General St-Amand. The Commander of the Royal Canadian Air Force, Lieutenant-General Blondin, finally approved the construct in May of 2014 after 18 months of development, testing and establishment of stakeholder buy-in.⁸⁴

The RCAF, differently than the CA or the RCN, rarely places an entire squadron or unit on high readiness and then deploys them for an extended period.⁸⁵ The norm is rather that only an element of the squadron or unit is on high ready status and deploys on short notice. These elements deploy as air detachments both flying and non-flying and remain the core, the centerpiece, of the ATF Construct. At the heart of the ATF is a robust, well-planned, high readiness C2 solution for different size ATFs that remain scalable and modular. As such, an ATF is “a temporary grouping of RCAF operational and tactical formations, squadrons, units or detachments formed for the purpose of carrying out a specific operation, mission or task.”⁸⁶ In short, an ATF can range from being small and simple, consisting of a few aircraft and a handful of personnel, to a large and complex ATF consisting of multiple types of platforms, flying and non-flying detachments, a headquarters, and even an Air Expeditionary Wing (AEW) which would normally consist of a Mission Support Element (MSE), an Operational Support Element (OSE) and a Force Protection Element (FPE).⁸⁷ ATFs are inherently flexible due to their scalable and modular nature. As such, few ATFs will ever look the same.

The ATF concept has been employed ever since its inception on domestic and expeditionary operations. The approved ATF concept, or test case versions of it, were seen in

⁸¹ Pux Barnes, "The RCAF Air Task Force: The New Kid on the Block." ..., 39.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Pux Barnes, “*The RCAF Air Task Force: Considerations for the Employment of Air Power in Joint Operations*,” ..., 7.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Pux Barnes, "The RCAF Air Task Force: The New Kid on the Block." ..., 39.

⁸⁶ Pux Barnes (Lieutenant-Colonel), "Air Doctrine Note 14/01 RCAF Air Task Force Commander: Considerations for the Employment of Air Power in Joint Operations," *Royal Canadian Air Force Journal* : 7.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

action with ATF Mali as early as 2012, with Op LENTUS in Alberta, Canada in the summer of 2013, with Op REASSURANCE in Romania in 2014, with Op IMPACT in Kuwait in 2015, and with Op RENAISSANCE in Nepal in 2015, only to name the first major ones. The ATF Construct has been used consistently ever since, for all types of operations, and is now more of an organizational reflex.⁸⁸ It is clear that, more than just subtly, RCAF elements deployed on expeditionary operations have stopped being just a collection of different fleets of aircraft and professional personnel with specialist skills.⁸⁹ The ATF Construct is now completely embedded in the RCAF's expeditionary culture, institutionalized and operationalized. RCAF ATFs are now deploying, and have been for several years now, as part of an organized and cohesive force delivering air power in support of GoC operations more effectively. Although the ATF Construct is painted in a very positive light and is very congruent with the organizational and structural aspects of the USAF's AEF, it is not to be said that it did not have a few challenges.

The first challenge related to the ATF Construct is that RCAF aviators were only ever exposed to its 'ways of doing things' on expeditionary deployments or large-scale exercises. In other words, an aviator, who has spent most of their career operating at RCAF Main Operating Bases, would in some cases never or rarely be exposed to the ATF Construct. This would bring challenges in understanding 'who did what for whom,' and 'who was responsible for what' in expeditionary settings, as the Main Operating Base structures, familiar to RCAF aviators, would no longer be in place and replaced by an unaccustomed-to ATF Construct. Even though the ATF construct was taught on developmental professional military education courses,⁹⁰ and mission specific collective training,⁹¹ it could be said that students only *really* learned those lessons once deployed in an expeditionary setting. The concept of 'learning by doing' in this case was somewhat late to task.⁹²

⁸⁸ Commander 1 Canadian Air Division, *1 Canadian Air Division/Joint Force Air Component Commander Operation Order 13315/20 Op LASER 20-01*. Winnipeg Manitoba: 1 Canadian Air Division, 6 March 2020. Even in the face of never before seen crisis such as the one brought upon the world with the COVID-19 pandemic, the RCAF organized its domestic response by forming a task tailored ATF, named ATF LASER, through which it would tactically command its assigned air detachments. At the core of this contingency ATF Headquarters is 2 Wing personnel.

⁸⁹ Pux Barnes, "The RCAF Air Task Force: The New Kid on the Block." ..., 39.

⁹⁰ RAWC Air Warfare Education Defence Wide Area Network Page. Accessed 13 May 2020. <http://w08-ttn-vmweb01/rawc/en/professional-development/search.asp#>. These courses are listed on the page and include the Tactical Command and Control Course (TCCC) and the relatively recently developed Aerospace Power Operations Course (ASPOC).

⁹¹ RAWC Air Force Expeditionary Readiness Standards and Evaluation Team (AFERSET) DWAN SharePoint page. Accessed 13 May 2020. <https://collaboration-airforce.forces.mil.ca/sites/W08/AFERSET/2CT/AFETS/SitePages/Home.aspx> When conducting collective training for expeditionary operations 2 Wing, through its AETS, bases its training objectives on the Air Force Expeditionary Training Standards (AFETS) which were originally developed by 2 Wing in 2012-2013 but since held by the RAWC and its AFERSET.

⁹² Royal Canadian Air Force. *Draft 1 Canadian Air Division Wing Restructure Master Implementation Plan*; Winnipeg, Manitoba: 1 Canadian Air Division Headquarters, A1 Force Management, 2018, ii.

In order to correct this phenomenon, the RCAF embarked on a Wing Restructuring Initiative which was trialed by a few test Wings in 2016 and finally approved in principle by the Commander RCAF in December of 2018.⁹³ The spirit of the Restructuring Initiative would see the RCAF Main Operating Base structures adopt a generic structure based on the RCAF's expeditionary ATF Construct. This reorganization of Main Operating Bases would consider other strategic CAF initiatives affecting home station operations such as the implementation of Shared Services Canada initiatives related to communications and information services, and the implementation of the Real Property Operations initiatives affecting construction engineering and infrastructure maintenance operations. Moving forward, the Wing Restructuring Initiative would order larger RCAF Wings to adopt the ATF Construct as a guiding organizational structure, therefore replacing the Wing Logistics and Engineering, the Wing Administration and the Wing Operations constructs with the more expeditionary-minded Mission Support Squadron, and Operational Support Squadron.⁹⁴

This strategic direction with important operational and tactical outcomes demonstrates that the RCAF's expeditionary-minded ATF Construct is firmly institutionalized and operationalized, to the point where it has had direct influence on the organizational construct of RCAF MOB organizational structures which had been in place since 1993 when the Wing concept had come into being.⁹⁵

The genesis of the last challenge related to the RCAF's ATF Construct ironically stems from an organization external to the RCAF yet force employs RCAF assets on a regular day-to-day basis. The issue revolved around the rigidity and perhaps blind application of nomenclature of RCAF force elements presented to the Commander of the Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC) for employment.⁹⁶ In this relatively recent guidance to senior RCAF leadership and planners, Lieutenant-General Meinzinger, current RCAF Commander, recognized that RCAF doctrine had come a long way since its inception in 2014. He also recognized the

⁹³ *Ibid.* In the author's research it was confirmed that the Master Implementation Plan has not been officially approved and signed by the Commander of the RCAF. That said, all RCAF Wings have undergone the required transformation and have followed, to a certain extent, the spirit of the plan in draft format.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1-4. Commander RCAF directed that 3, 4, 8, 14, 17 and 19 Wings would adopt the ATF Construct. The Wings would also adopt a Deputy Wing Commander structure under which most Main Operating Base non-deployable organizations, still necessary for the optimal functioning of Main Operating Bases, would be folded. In the case of 5 and 9 Wings, due to the size of their Wings the Mission Support and Operational Support organizations will be designated as flights instead of squadrons and stand-alone unit designations will not be sought.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*; Allan English and John Westrop. *Canadian Air Force Leadership and Command: The Human Dimension of Expeditionary Air Force Operations ...*, 63-67. It should also be noted that another intriguing driver of the RCAF's Wing Restructure Initiative was very 'protectionist' in nature. There was apparently a perception at senior RCAF levels that RCAF commitments to expeditionary operations under the 'Engaged' portion of Canada's Defence Policy really placed outsized demands on RCAF MOB resources, perhaps unjustifiably trumping the requirements to maintain the ability to meet the 'Strong and Secure' mandates of each MOB. It was hoped, that the restructuring of the RCAF MOBs, would level the playing field, from a priority perspective, between resources protected for domestic and international operations.

⁹⁶ Royal Canadian Air Force. *Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) Expeditionary Organizational Structure Design: Guidance to Planners*; Ottawa, Ontario: National Defence Headquarters, DG Air Rdns, 29 July 2019. 1.

institutionalization of expeditionary organizational structures, their nomenclatures and their use. When speaking of RCAF expeditionary organizational structures he meant the doctrinally accepted Air Expeditionary Wing (AEW), the ATF, and the Air Detachment (AIRDET). Historically, the RCAF has perhaps gravitated too dogmatically towards calling all of its force elements presented to CJOC for Force Employment ‘ATFs,’ no matter the size, or complexities envisioned.⁹⁷ This rigidity in nomenclature and in application of doctrine caused confusion with CJOC planners and led to a request to the RCAF, by CJOC, if it “would consider defining threshold guidelines to facilitate transition between these two force structure models [the AIRDET and the ATF].”⁹⁸ After careful consideration, and for clarity’s sake, the RCAF produced a formal directive with a list of ‘determinant factors,’ for use during mission analysis, in order to select the optimal nomenclature for its forces when presented to CJOC for Force Employment. In broad terms, future smaller, less complicated force elements would be called AIRDETS, and larger, more complex force elements would be called ATFs. Regardless of nomenclature, the main components of these expeditionary force structures, consisting of the flying or non-flying detachment, the Mission Support, Operational Support and Force Protection elements would remain extant.⁹⁹

It is apparent when looking at this more recent aspect of the ATF Construct’s evolution that it is constantly evolving and regularly being refined. It is being refined by the RCAF itself, which is obviously the principal stakeholder, but also by other organizations that clearly have a vested interest in having a robust and operationally effective expeditionary-minded RCAF. CJOC, a level one headquarters at the same level as the RCAF, also bridges the gap between the operational and strategic levels of the CAF.¹⁰⁰ As such, it could be reasonably posited that RCAF advancements in its expeditionary evolution could have reverberations, certainly at the highest

⁹⁷*Ibid.* On the RCAF’s contribution to Operation Unified Protector, see: Richard O. Mayne, “The Canadian Experience: Operation Mobile,” in Karl P. Mueller, ed., *Precision and Purpose: Airpower in the Libyan Civil War* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2015), 239- 266. The AEW is intended for large, high-intensity, conventional conflict and while doctrinally relevant it has not been applicable in RCAF contemporary Force Employment scenarios. That said, one could perhaps argue that given the complexities and geographical dislocation of assets, RCAF tactical level elements deployed as part of Op MOBILE in support of operations in Libya, as well as Op IMPACT in support of U.S. led Coalition operations against Daesh, could have consisted of an AEW. The only time the AEW nomenclature was formally used to identify an RCAF force element was for exercise purposes during JOINTEX 2013, a large Combined Joint Inter Agency training event in Wainwright Alberta. Regardless, this phenomenon left the RCAF with two options for contemporary operations, the AIRDET and the ATF.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*

⁹⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Canadian Joint Operations Command Internet Web Page. accessed 13 May 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/organizational-structure/canadian-joint-operations-command.html>. This is somewhat representative of LGen Rouleau’s advocacy of the “power to the edge” concept and how he likes how the RCAF’s set-up with 1CAD as the ACC and the ATF/AIRDET concepts embody this. It will be very interesting to see what approach Lieutenant-General Christopher Coates will take, essentially coming from one of the three force employers (NORAD) to another – and the biggest – CJOC, especially since he is the one who literally wrote the article on air mindedness: BGen Christopher J. Coates, “Airmindedness: An Essential Element of Air Power,” *Royal Canadian Air Force Journal* 3, no. 1 (Winter 2014): 70–84.

levels of the CAF, but even up to the political levels. This aspect will be explored in chapter 4 of this study.

Overall, the RCAF's ATF Construct is obviously congruent with the USAF's AEF from an expeditionary forces structure perspective. When looking at their origins, motives and aims it is clear that they are very closely aligned. That said, the unique Canadian way of doing things is also manifestly apparent. The ATF Construct itself, and its evolution, both in its practical application on expeditionary operations and in how it has driven the restructuring of the RCAF's domestic Main Operating Bases, are indicative of Canadian experiences and realities here at home and abroad.¹⁰¹ It is also an inescapable and important conclusion that the RCAF's advances in this domain are not overlooked by other stakeholders and have reverberations at the highest levels of the CAF, perhaps even within the governmental and political realms.

Moreover, when the RCAF's intertwined MRP and ATF Construct are considered holistically as uniquely Canadian complimentary systems and structures, and compared with the USAF's AEF, the parallels become even more evident. Prior to proceeding with the last section of this chapter it is important to briefly explore two phenomena, linked to the USAF's AEF construct, which will set the stage for the study of the advent of the RCAF's 2 Wing. Firstly, when researching how the USAF reformed itself into an EAF, it became apparent that the original use of the AEF system and structure actually came before the development and refinement of the EAF as its foundational expeditionary mindset.¹⁰² In other words, the use of 'First Generation AEFs' from 1995 to 1997, structured as USAF force packages for deployment to Southwest Asia to fill gaps in theatre specific air power was the spark that ignited the USAF's greater transformation. That initial effort by the USAF in the mid-90s, narrowly focused on making its expeditionary operations more efficient from a structural perspective, was subsumed by that greater idea of the EAF which served as the foundation for its cultural and ideological reform and for the later refinement of its AEF construct.¹⁰³ Secondly, the research also revealed that the USAF's AEF construct originally called for 'on-call' Wings that were designated for rapid global response. Together, these on-call wings shared the responsibility to meet unplanned pop-up contingencies and were to be able to respond within 48 hours. As the USAF's EAF concept evolved, the USAF hoped to absorb these two on-call wings into its AEF Construct.¹⁰⁴

These two important phenomena, catalytic elements in the USAF's transformation into an EAF, seem to have been the sparks leading to significant transformational change. In the next section, this study will now examine and answer the following questions: did a similar spark

¹⁰¹Throughout this analysis, the reader needs to put aside and move beyond obvious differences in size, scope, and means when attempting to compare the RCAF's advances with the USAF's.

¹⁰² Richard Davies, "*Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force*"..., 30.

¹⁰³*Ibid.*, 30-31. In even simpler terms changes to USAF expeditionary structure lead to changes in its expeditionary culture and not the other way around.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 35; Global Security.Org, "*Aerospace Expeditionary Force (AEF) Air and Space Expeditionary Task force (ASETF) (Formerly Air Expeditionary Force)*"..., 3.

exist within the RCAF? By the same token as the USAF, did significant changes in RCAF culture follow narrowly focused changes in structure, or was it the other way around?

The Advent of 2 Wing: The RCAF's Standing Air Expeditionary Wing

Keeping the USAF AEF developmental and structural phenomena well in mind, and what we now understand of the RCAF's transformation into its own unique version of an expeditionary air force, it is important to chronologically situate the advent of the RCAF's 2 Wing. Obviously, the body of work which has consisted of this study's principal reference, *Bison Paper 5*, was put together after a 2002 symposium and made no reference to the RCAF's expeditionary transformation, much less something as novel as 2 Wing. Other RCAF expeditionary foundational concepts such as the AFEC only came to light much later in 2009 and all other significant systemic and structural developments like the MRP, ATF Construct, and Wing Restructuring Initiative only formally came about in 2012, 2014, and 2018 respectively. Where did the advent of 2 Wing fit in this puzzle? Did this structural capability development *follow* the formation of an expeditionary mindset within the RCAF or was it *the spark that headed the movement*?

Delivering on a 2006 electoral campaign promise, the Conservative Government under Prime Minister Harper announced the creation of 2 Air Expeditionary Wing in Bagotville, Quebec. This 2007 announcement by then Minister of National Defence the Honourable Gordon O'Connor, created the initial cadre of an operationally focused, agile and rapidly deployable unit (in-becoming) in support of RCAF expeditionary operations.¹⁰⁵ It is apparent that this political announcement caused the strategic level of the RCAF to quickly react, wanting to seize this opportunity, as the Air Board then met later in October of the same year in order to set in motion the RCAF's greater expeditionary air force transformation.¹⁰⁶ More specifically, with this announcement, the Air Board capitalized on the golden opportunity and recognized the Air Expeditionary Wing construct and the necessity for integrated air detachment, operations support, force protection, and mission support forces as the way ahead for future RCAF expeditionary operations.¹⁰⁷

The first official document which clearly explained in significant detail what 2 Wing was all about, its Force Employment Concept, was drafted in August of 2014 and approved by the Commander of 1 Canadian Air Division Major-General Wheeler in February of 2015. In its opening paragraphs, the 2015 Force Employment Concept confirms retrospectively that the political announcement of 2007 along with the stand up of 2 Wing were the genesis to the

¹⁰⁵Alexandre Shields, "Bagotville hébergera 550 militaires de plus," *Le Devoir*, 21 July 2007. Accessed 16 April 2020. <https://www.ledevoir.com/politique/canada/151001/bagotville-hebergera-550-militaires-de-plus>

¹⁰⁶ Canada, DND, "*AFEC Concept of Operations: Revision 1*," ..., 1. The Air Board consists of senior leadership within the RCAF and serves as a senior advisory body to the Commander of the RCAF. The author was stationed in CFB Bagotville at the time of the political announcement and was a firsthand witness to the ensuing follow on reactions by the RCAF, albeit at the tactical level. The announcement was certainly unexpected amongst more senior leaders of the RCAF, yet brought a sense of hope that it would bring opportunity to CFB Bagotville and the RCAF as a whole.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*; Pux Barnes, "The RCAF Air Task Force: The New Kid on the Block." ..., 39. The original RCAF Air Expeditionary Wing construct would evolve and later be formally recognized as the Air Task Force Construct.

RCAF's overarching pursuit of a comprehensive expeditionary capability.¹⁰⁸ It is therefore conclusive that much like the 'original AEFs' were the sparks to the USAF's evolution into an expeditionary air force, the RCAF commenced its transformational journey, changing its culture and ways of doing things, by implementing important structural advancements. The spark that really started the RCAF's transformation into an expeditionary air force was the advent of 2 Wing. The answer now seems clear. For both the USAF and the RCAF, changes to structure brought significant changes to culture.

In order to address the second phenomenon exposed earlier it is important to understand what 2 Wing is and how it fits within the expeditionary RCAF. From a conceptual point of view, 2 Wing is and always has been a key component of the RCAF's AFEC, keeping in mind that the AFEC represents the ideology, the mindset behind the RCAF's transformation into an expeditionary air force.¹⁰⁹ From a systemic point of view, 2 Wing fills an important role in the RCAF's MRP, providing an agile, rapid, task tailored response for contingency operations, Line of Operation (LoO2) – type operations.¹¹⁰ Although specific capabilities within the RCAF maintain a high level of readiness and response capabilities, there is no other standing high readiness Wing within the RCAF's arsenal. 2 Wing obviously plays an important role from a systemic perspective, but also from a structural perspective as its responsibilities are not limited to LoO2 contingency operations. 2 Wing could be asked to provide its Airfield Activation and Surge Team (AFAST) in support of any LoO1-type operations for more deliberate RCAF expeditionary operations.¹¹¹

Given that 2 Wing is a lodger Formation stationed at Canadian Forces Base Bagotville, it has no significant 'base' responsibilities. Because it is mostly focused on upcoming expeditionary operations, in jest other Wing Commanders with *base* responsibilities have said that 2 Wing has "no real day job."¹¹² On the contrary, much like the USAF's standing on-call wings, 2 Wing is consistently the RCAF's on-call wing, waiting for those pop-up contingencies, whether domestic or around the globe. Although a part of the RCAF's MRP, 2 Wing is not on a

¹⁰⁸ Commander 1 Canadian Air Division, *1 Canadian Air Division Approval 2 Wing Force Employment Concept*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: 1 Canadian Air Division, 3 February 2015. 2. The spearhead of the expeditionary RCAF, 2 Wing, has evolved significantly since 2015 and its evolution has been captured in its latest version of its Force Employment Concept approved in March 2020 by Commander 1 Canadian Air Division Major-General Pelletier.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*; Commander 1 Canadian Air Division. *1 Canadian Air Division Approval 2 Wing Force Employment Concept*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: 1 Canadian Air Division, 23 March 2020. iii.; Canada, DND, "AFEC Concept of Operations: Revision 1," Ottawa, 16 July 2012. 1.

¹¹⁰ Commander 1 Canadian Air Division, *1 Canadian Air Division Managed Readiness Plan 2019*. ..., 3.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² This is based on the author's experience as Commander 2 Wing, interacting with other Wing Commanders and on previous experiences while Commanding Officer of 2 Wing units such as 2 Air Expeditionary Squadron and 2 Expeditionary Readiness Center. This is particularly interesting as it is somewhat contrary to the reasoning behind the formation of the RCAF Wing as an organizational construct and the "One Wing, One Boss" concept as explained in Allan English and John Westrop's *Canadian Air Force Leadership and Command: The Human Dimension of Expeditionary Air Force Operations* National Defence and the Canadian Forces, 2007.

rotational or cyclical system. It is rather always contributing to most RCAF expeditionary operations, either through direct contributions of its capabilities or indirectly enabling RCAF ATFs through its Air Expeditionary Training Squadron (AETS), which delivers on-point, mission specific collective training to teams prior to their deployment. In the words of a previous 2 Wing Commander, Brigadier-General Luc Guillette, making a comparative reference to the operational training units (OTU) for each RCAF community, claimed that 2 Wing's AETS is becoming the RCAF's expeditionary OTU. 2 Wing was becoming a sort of expeditionary centre of excellence for the RCAF.¹¹³ Furthermore, maintaining such a high level of readiness and responsiveness is the Formation's full-time job. 2 Wing does in fact have a day job; it is enabling the expeditionary RCAF.¹¹⁴

It is therefore apparent, when considering the conceptual role of the USAF's on-call wings, as part of its AEF Construct, that 2 Wing is the RCAF's equivalent standing on call wing enabling its expeditionary responses to contingency and deliberate operations. From a structural perspective, 2 Wing can be considered as the glue that makes the different parts of the AFEC, the MRP and the ATF construct fit and stick together as one system enabling RCAF expeditionary operations. Much like the USAF's AEF structure has evolved, 2 Wing is also firmly institutionalized in the RCAF as well as in other expeditionary operations stakeholder organizations such as CJOC.¹¹⁵

2 Wing's operationalization has also been constantly evolving since its inception. 2 Wing has added two more units as part of its formation, bringing in other key niche expeditionary capabilities such as 4 Construction Engineering Squadron (4 CES), in Cold Lake Alberta, as well as 8 Air Communications and Control Squadron (8 ACCS), which consists of its Headquarters and A Flight in Trenton Ontario and B Flight in Bagotville Quebec. These units, added in 2015, have added significant breadth and depth in 2 Wing's expeditionary capabilities in the specialized construction engineering, communications and information systems, and expeditionary aerospace management fields.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Richard Goette, "*Preparing the RCAF for the Future: Defining Potential Niches for Expeditionary Operations*" ..., 104-105; Commander 1 Canadian Air Division, *1 Canadian Air Division/Joint Force Air Component Commander Operation Order 13315/20 Op LASER 20-01*. Winnipeg Manitoba: 1 Canadian Air Division, 6 March 2020. Even in a recent example of a domestic operation, related to the COVID-19 crisis in Canada, while 2 Wing contributed the core of the ATF HQ, 2 Wing was also tasked by Commander 1 Canadian Air Division to deliver mission specific training to the ATF HQ, AIRDETS, and Regional ACCES.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* Richard Goette makes this argument in his *Defining Potential Niches for Expeditionary Operations* book where he argues that 'being expeditionary' is part and parcel of the RCAF's functional alignment and reorganization.

¹¹⁵ In the Fall of 2019, as CJOC was embarking on a wholesale review of its Joint Sustainment Doctrine Canadian Forces Joint Publication 4.0 Support under the leadership of Brigadier-General Harding, its Director of Support. 2 Wing was invited to participate as the only RCAF tactical level formation. In this scenario and in many other planning ones, 2 Wing's expertise on RCAF expeditionary operations is often sought by RCAF Higher Headquarters, as well as in the joint domain.

¹¹⁶ Commander 1 Canadian Air Division, *1 Canadian Air Division Approval 2 Wing Force Employment Concept*. ..., iii; Richard Goette, "Phoenix Rising from the Ashes: 2 Wing Bagotville's Air Expeditionary

2 Wing has also ensured alignment with all other RCAF Wings with regards to the Wing Restructuring Initiative. Its revised Force Employment Concept of 2020 demonstrates alignment with the expeditionary ATF Construct in that it has reorganized its MOB unit structure to reflect a Mission Support Squadron, and an Operational Support Squadron, as well as renaming its Expeditionary Readiness Centre into an Air Expeditionary Training Squadron.¹¹⁷

Further expansion of 2 Wing capabilities is also currently being studied. Expansion could be a possibility with regards to the capabilities resident within 14 Construction Engineering Squadron, a Reserve Construction Engineering Squadron, consisting of 4 Flights spread across Canada, which specializes in expeditionary aircraft shelters, currently under command of 14 Wing Greenwood. Expansion of 2 Wing's role is also being considered, as a new governance structure is being studied for the RCAF's Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) capability, currently under no specific tactical command arrangement.¹¹⁸ These potential advancements are testimony to the fact that although 2 Wing has matured significantly since 2007, it is still a relatively young formation, and its mandate and responsibilities are constantly being refined. It is perhaps also a sign of its agility and flexibility in responding to new challenges faced by the RCAF.

What is certain is that 2 Wing is firmly institutionalized within the RCAF's expeditionary systems and structures. That said, it is still fresh and nimble enough to be malleable in order for it to be responsive to the RCAF's evolving expeditionary needs. Its politically driven announcement and subsequent operationalization have been the sparks, which fired up the RCAF's desire to pursue an expeditionary mindset. Perhaps 2 Wing's own evolution, and its evolving roles within the AFEC, and within the MRP, have helped the greater RCAF maintain its momentum towards an expeditionary transformation.

2 Wing as the RCAF's only on-call expeditionary wing also comparatively aligns itself well with the USAF's AEF construct and its on-call Wings. As such, in the same vein as the AEF Construct, where the USAF has endowed itself with the operational means to meet the challenges it was facing, 2 Wing is at the heart of the RCAF's unique Canadian way of doing things and the lynchpin to its expeditionary systems and structures.

Expertise." *Airforce Magazine* 41, no. 2 (2017): 8-15; Richard Goette, "2 Wing: Enabling RCAF Expeditionary Operations." *Airforce Magazine* 41, no. 1 (2017): 22-33.

¹¹⁷ Commander 1 Canadian Air Division, *1 Canadian Air Division Approval 2 Wing Force Employment Concept...* . Originally in 2008, 2 Wing consisted of a small cadre of personnel called 2 Air Expeditionary Support Squadron (2 AESS). In 2012, it expanded into four units consisting of 2 Wing Headquarters, 2 Air Command and Control Unit (2 ACCU), 2 Expeditionary Readiness Centre (2 ERC) and 2 Air Expeditionary Squadron (2 AES) which was the largest of the units and was an amalgamation of functions normally held within a Mission Support Squadron (MSS) and an Operations Support Squadron (OSS). Since 2019, 2 Wing consists of its Headquarters, 2 OSS, 2 MSS, 2 AETS, 4 CES and 8 ACCS.

¹¹⁸ 2 Wing has been verbally asked by 1 CAD HQ DComd FG to participate in discussions with 1 Canadian Division Headquarters and the Air Land Integration cell to better define the problem space around the Force Generation of the TACP capability. Discussions are still quite preliminary and no formal written direction has been received yet, other than to participate in discussions.

Conclusion

As this study moves from the conceptual to the more tangible aspects of the RCAF's transformation into an expeditionary air force, this chapter has examined RCAF systems and structures to determine if they were comparable with the USAF's AEF Construct. More specifically, it holistically examined how systems and structures like the RCAF's MRP, ATF Construct, Wing Restructuring Initiative and the advent of 2 Wing, could compare, from the systemic and structural standpoints, with the USAF's AEF Construct.

Similarly, to the conclusions uncovered in Chapter 1, where the ideas and conceptual foundations of both air forces' transformations were congruent, yet distinct in their own ways, it is conclusive that the trend continues in this Chapter of the study. The RCAF systems and structures examined, although very much akin to the USAF's AEF Construct, were markedly an endorsement to the RCAF's own unique Canadian expeditionary identity and culture.

Although the AEF terminology can be found nowhere in the RCAF lexicon, it is apparent that the RCAF has put in place systems such as the MRP and structures such as the ATF, typically Canadian inventions, in order to achieve the same aims as the USAF but in our own unique Canadian way. Looking at the 'original AEFs' and at 2 Wing, in the ways these structures have come about and evolved, and in how they became the sparks driving significant transformational change, there are clear similitudes between both air forces. Chronologically, it seems as though the expeditionary mindset and corresponding systems, for both air forces, were built around these expeditionary structures. Certainly, although the ATF Construct is built around the AIRDET, the most tangible capability within the RCAF, it is also apparent that 2 Wing is at the heart of the RCAF's expeditionary systems and structures.

From a Canadian perspective looking outside of the RCAF, it is also apparent that it is not the only stakeholder in its inherent expeditionary structures. Clearly, joint entities like the Canadian Joint Operations Command have a stake and can directly or indirectly influence how the RCAF interprets and implements its very own doctrinal expeditionary systems, and structures. As such, perhaps due to the relative newness of its 'coming into being' as an expeditionary air force, the RCAF will have to make the understanding by other stakeholders of its own 'ways,' not just its 'means,' a top priority. This study will now continue its transition to the more tangible analysis of RCAF capabilities in comparison to USAF capabilities by taking a fresher, more contemporary look at the author's position and the proposed models in the 2002 *Bison Paper 5*.

CHAPTER 3 – THE CAPABILITY MODELS

Introduction

In Chapter 3 of the 2002 *Bison Paper 5*, which spoke of capability implications for the RCAF as an expeditionary air force, Thierry Gongora declared that “what is perhaps less understood are the implications of developing and maintaining expeditionary capabilities.”¹¹⁹ Through his analysis of his proposed expeditionary models, Gongora was trying to help inform the debate revolving around greater Canadian defence and foreign policy issues. In other words, he proposed that an enhanced understanding of the nuances of the capability models, and their implications would help Canadian decision makers make better informed choices.

In this light, it is important to define what will be examined in this chapter of the study and what will be assessed later. To be clear, the more elevated strategic aspects of Canadian foreign policy aspirations, somewhat related to Gongora’s capability models, will be discussed in the next chapter of this study. What will be examined in the next paragraphs of this specific chapter are the more tangible capability aspects from the USAF and RCAF perspectives using Gongora’s model as the comparison framework.

Gongora’s Models

When referring to the USAF and USMC models, Gongora suggested that expeditionary capabilities could be categorized into two models: a baseline model and a robust model. In his view, these models implied that there were two nuanced shades of the term expeditionary. In broad terms, although each model had inherent nuances, they were not completely distinct. The robust model included all of the capabilities inherent to the baseline model proposed by the USAF’s AEF; but additionally, it also accounted for the possibility of an opposed entry into a territory and the potential absence of host nation support and was more attuned to the expeditionary definition proposed by the USMC or advancements by the USAF under its “Global Strike Task Force” concept in the early 2000s.¹²⁰

Gongora stated that although the advancement of a Canadian version of an air expeditionary force-like capability could be appealing to a nation like Canada, and that organizational improvements were achievable and desirable, ambitions would be limited by the size of its air force. In his words, the RCAF’s scale and scope “would be the determining factors in its ability to maintain the operational tempo associated with an expeditionary force posture under contemporary and future conditions.”¹²¹ In the end, amongst many valuable conclusions, Gongora did not argue for or against the RCAF’s transformation into an expeditionary air force,

¹¹⁹ Thierry Gongora, "The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Perspective," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 24.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 23. In other words, an AEF could not be akin to the robust model, without having all the capabilities included in the basic model.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 25.

explaining that “this is a choice that can only be made after discussing broader issues of defence and foreign policies that are beyond the scope of this (his) paper.”¹²²

An analysis of Gongora’s Baseline and Robust Expeditionary Models in terms of their applicability to the RCAF, its advancements in that domain since 2002, and challenges that remain extant is now instructive. Comparisons to the USAF’s expeditionary journey will also help determine, from a capability implications perspective, just to what extent the RCAF has transformed itself into an expeditionary air force.

The Baseline Model

According to Gongora, the Baseline Expeditionary Model proposes the following characteristics:

- high readiness;
- sustainable expeditionary force generation;
- strategic mobility;
- deployable command and control elements;
- interoperable with main coalition partners;
- lean in-theatre support; and
- modular force package (task-tailored).¹²³

When deconstructing these Baseline Model characteristics and using them as a comparative lens to assess how the RCAF has progressed towards becoming an expeditionary air force, the evidence demonstrates a clear transformation towards becoming an EAF.

High Readiness and Sustainable Expeditionary Force Generation

The first two Baseline Model characteristics are high readiness and sustainable expeditionary force generation. When taking a generalist view of these characteristics it is clear that both capability implications have been thoroughly addressed by the RCAF. Its creation and implementation of its MRP, the ATF Construct, along with the stand-up of 2 Wing, all of which were described in the previous chapter, clearly focused on fixing its ability to respond quickly to crisis, as well as maintain deployment ready forces consistently and for the long term. These RCAF systems and structures clearly meet the characteristics proposed by Gongora.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 32. This citation from Gongora exposes the domain worth further exploration in the next chapter of this study as it pertains to what this transformation may mean for the RCAF, for the CAF and for Canada’s foreign policy implications.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 24.

However, when Gongora further developed on these first two characteristics, he curiously focused on the challenges related to the aircrew-training dimension. More specifically, he commented on how aircrews, when employed in a specific expeditionary setting had an inclination to become very specialized in that mission set and tended to lose proficiency in others. While this operational dilemma still remains applicable today, the same challenges also still exist within the USAF.¹²⁴ That said, this phenomenon might be more strongly felt within the RCAF given its smaller size and narrower scope. The RCAF addresses this challenge in some cases by ensuring less lengthy rotations for aircrew deployed on expeditionary missions. As such, the shorter rotations for aircrews employed on narrower mission sets mitigate and counter the effects of long-term mission specialization.¹²⁵

From the broader force generation and training perspectives, the RCAF has undertaken an impressive training regimen associated with its MRP. Indeed, since 2006, the RCAF has been undertaking large-scale collective training, conducting air centric and joint training with its CAF, NATO, coalition, combined, joint, and Inter-Agency partners in domestic and expeditionary settings.¹²⁶ Furthermore, through 2 Wing's Air Expeditionary Training Squadron, the RCAF's expeditionary OTU, each large ATF undergoes mission-specific collective training prior to their deployment, ensuring its readiness.¹²⁷

As such, when taking a more generic and holistic look at the two characteristics there has irrefutably been significant progress since the times of *Bison Paper 5*. Similarly, to the USAF, the RCAF's "need to establish a sustainable expeditionary force generation model"¹²⁸ has clearly been a driving force enabling its transformation into an EAF.

¹²⁴ Thierry Gongora, "The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Perspective," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5*..., 24; Michael J. Nowak, "The Air Expeditionary Force: A Strategy for an Uncertain Future?"..., 11.; Richard Davies, "*Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force*"..., 84.

¹²⁵ This phenomenon was observed by the author on various RCAF expeditionary operations such as Op ECHO in Aviano Italy in support of NATO operations in the Former Yugoslavia, Op ATHENA in support of operations in Afghanistan, and during Op IMPACT in support of U.S. led coalition operations against 'Daesh'. These shorter aircrew rotations were applicable to Fighter, Tactical Mobility, Long Range Patrol and Air-to-Air Refueling Communities. Of note, this phenomenon is not usually applicable to the Tactical Aviation Community who tends to leave its aircrews in the Theatre of Operations for lengthier rotations, as observed during Op PALLADIUM in the Former Yugoslavia, Op ATHENA in Afghanistan and Op PRESENCE in Mali.

¹²⁶ Some examples of these large-scale expeditionary training events are the JOINTEX series of exercises, MAPLE RESOLVE, and Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercises, not to mention more air-centric exercises such as SERPENTEX, MAPLE FLAG and many other community centric exercises only to name a few.

¹²⁷ Commander 1 Canadian Air Division, *1 Canadian Air Division Approval 2 Wing Force Employment Concept*. ... 8.

¹²⁸ Thierry Gongora, "The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Perspective," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5*..., 25.

Strategic Mobility

Strategic Mobility is the next characteristic in the Baseline Model. Gongora stated in 2002 that the RCAF “has a relatively good record with regard to strategic mobility.”¹²⁹ It can be argued that the RCAF’s strategic mobility record has seen significant improvements over the last decade or so with the acquisition of a key strategic lift capability such as the C-177 as well as the acquisition of CC-130J in order to replace the older CC-130H Hercules models. Also, SSE has committed, costed, and budgeted resources to the recapitalization of the next generation strategic air-to-air tanker-transport capability (CC-150 Polaris replacement).¹³⁰ Furthermore, these capabilities have been consistently tried and tested since their implementation and employed on countless RCAF expeditionary operations, truly enabling its Global reach. These improved strategic capabilities undoubtedly buttress the RCAF’s expeditionary capability. Furthermore, part and parcel to strategic mobility, are the aspects of strategic lines of communications (SLOC) and support nodes such as the Operational Support Hubs (OSH). From a broader CAF perspective, these SLOCs and OSH, especially those linking Canada with the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and the Middle East have been significantly tested in recent years with the Op RENAISSANCE, Op IMPACT, and Op REASSURANCE deployments. These more joint capabilities have certainly enabled the greater CAF expeditionary capabilities as well as the strategic mobility capabilities intrinsic to the RCAF.¹³¹ As such, the evidence demonstrates that the RCAF’s strategic mobility capabilities are solid and are undoubtedly buttressed by other joint enablers, therefore highlighting a requirement for integration and coordination with regards to these capabilities in order to assure expeditionary success.

Deployable Command and Control

The next characteristic proposed in the model is the deployable command and control elements. Indeed, air-minded academics such as Gongora and Goette observed that when elements of the CAF are deployed they require clear command and control mechanisms and structures to “ensure that the mission objectives are realized, the resources are used efficiently and that Canadian interests are taken into account.”¹³² This characteristic was a significant challenge for the RCAF as highlighted during its expeditionary operations of the last 10-15

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹³⁰ Government of Canada, *Strong Secure Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy*. Ottawa, Ontario: Government of Canada, 2017. 109.

¹³¹ Roy C. Bacot, (Lieutenant-Colonel), “Global Movements and Operational Support Hub Concept: Global Reach for the Canadian Forces,” *The Canadian Air Force Journal* 2, 3 (Summer 2009): 9-17. http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2009/forces/D12-13-2-3E.pdf; Luc Girouard (Lieutenant Colonel), “The Fusion of Doctrines: A Discussion of Sustainment Operations during Op IMPACT.” *Royal Canadian Air Force Journal* 7, no. 1 (Winter, 2018): 26-35. The OSH and SLOC network, although a responsibility of the Canadian Joint Operations Command, clearly directly or indirectly enable RCAF strategic mobility.

¹³² Thierry Gongora, “The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Perspective,” in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 26.; Richard Goette, “Command and Control Implications for Canadian Forces Air Expeditionary Operations,” in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 68. Although the quote stems from Richard Goette, both authors, Gongora and Goette, posited the same ideas.

years.¹³³ The RCAF has significantly and positively evolved in this domain since Gongora's observations, creating new command and control doctrine and implementing new constructs (i.e., the ATF Construct), which have been tried and tested.¹³⁴ This characteristic of command and control is of great importance, as it will play a key role in the next chapter of this study, by which the ways the RCAF has transformed itself into a much more relevant strategic foreign policy tool will be examined. Nonetheless, the RCAF has significantly evolved in this dimension and continues to evolve to this day.¹³⁵

Interoperability with Main Coalition Partners

Interoperability with its main coalition partners is another important characteristic; especially since most RCAF expeditionary operations are conducted in a multinational context and usually closely involve partners and allies.¹³⁶ Gongora observed that this area has always been a strength of the RCAF considering its privileged relationship with the U.S. and history of operating together within NORAD. Indeed, this relationship would certainly make some nations envious of the RCAF's position. Nonetheless, Gongora denotes areas for improvement, especially in the field of communications and data links. These are certainly still valid to this day, but perhaps to a lesser extent than they were in 2002, considering that the RCAF and the USAF have been working closely together in support of operations in Afghanistan, in Iraq and in Syria for an extended period of time now.¹³⁷ Certainly interoperability comprises a technology component, which is ever evolving, but it also comprises a significant human dimension to it which is only mitigated with a deliberate effort towards working together on problems of

¹³³ Brigadier-General Derek Joyce, *End of Tour Report – Task Force LIBECCHIO* (Italy: Government of Canada,[2011]. 1-3.; Joint Task Force Commander, *End of Mission Report Joint Task Force (Haiti) - Op HESTIA* (Port-au-Prince, Haiti: Canadian Armed Forces,[2010]).: 1-2.; Department of National Defence, "Lesson Analysis Project – Findings Report: Airlift Command and Control – Operation HESTIA," (Canadian Forces Aerospace Warfare Centre: Project Number AF-AP-2010-01), 19 November 2010: 13-15.; Colonel S. Sukstorf, "Haiti: Tactical Success; Strategic Failure" Canadian Forces College): 20.; R. L. Heide, M. E. Dixon, and I. A. Collin. *Designing a Seminar War Game: The Operation Hestia Case Study*. Trenton, Ontario: DRDC CORA TM 2012-250, 2012.

¹³⁴ Lieutenant-Colonel Pux Barnes, "Command Or Control?: Considerations for the Employment of Air Power in Joint Operations," ..., 29.; Royal Canadian Air Force, *Royal Canadian Air Force Doctrine: Command and Control BGA-401-002/FP-001* (Trenton, Ontario: Canadian Forces Air Warfare Center, 2017).; Pux Barnes (Lieutenant-Colonel), "The RCAF Air Task Force: The New Kid on the Block," ..., 39; Royal Canadian Air Force, *Royal Canadian Air Force Doctrine: Command and Control...* ; Allan English and John Westrop, *Canadian Air Force Leadership and Command: The Human Dimension of Expeditionary Air Force Operations...* .

¹³⁵ Royal Canadian Air Force, *Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) Expeditionary Organizational Structure Design: Guidance to Planners...* .

¹³⁶ Thierry Gongora, "The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Perspective," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 26.

¹³⁷ Pux Barnes (Lieutenant-Colonel), "The RCAF Air Task Force: The New Kid on the Block." ..., 38-46; Luc Girouard (Lieutenant Colonel), "The Fusion of Doctrines: A Discussion of Sustainment Operations during Op IMPACT." ..., 26-35. Beyond NORAD, the RCAF has been working closely with the U.S. as part of coalition or Alliance operations in Afghanistan (Op ATHENA), and more recently in Iraq and in Syria (Op IMPACT), closely integrating RCAF contributions with NATO or U.S. led structures such as the Combat/Combined Aerospace Operations Center (CAOC) while flying combined air operations throughout.

common interest. Considering that the RCAF has been using an important amount of US based technology on its platforms, and has worked closely with its USAF partners on common areas of interest for the past decade or so, then it is safe to deduce that the RCAF has interoperable capabilities commensurate with an expeditionary model. Furthermore, the RCAF's ATF construct, its standing high readiness wing, and doctrines, such as its Expeditionary Operations doctrine and its C2 Doctrine, are all made-to-measure for operating in coalition and allied constructs.

This dimension is also important for the next chapter of this study as one could assume based on its National Defence Policy, that Canada will most likely continue to work in an expeditionary manner, on problems concerning national security, through the nexus of international rules-based structures, bi-national agreements, coalitions and alliances.¹³⁸

Lean In-Theatre Support

Lean in-theatre support is the next characteristic of the Basic Model. According to Gongora, this is key in order to "minimize strategic mobility requirements, and the number of personnel forward deployed."¹³⁹ This means that reach back to Canada is key and that the Strategic Lines of Communications (SLOC), from the National Support Framework to the operational theatre must be robust.¹⁴⁰ It also means that RCAF squadron pack up kits, and contracted maintenance mechanisms if involved, must be robust enough to enable self-sufficiency for an initial period allowing the SLOC and the support nodes to activate themselves.¹⁴¹

The support dimension related to RCAF expeditionary operations is a complex one which would warrant a separate study. Nonetheless, collective training and operations in the last decade or so have helped significantly in the refinement of RCAF sustainment doctrine, along with Joint support doctrine. Operation IMPACT, Canada's contribution to the U.S. led coalition against Daesh, which saw a RCAF ATF deploy under a Joint Task Force and supported by a Joint Task Force Support Component, is an example of how the RCAF ATF's sustainment footprint (the Mission Support Element (MSE)) was optimized using CAF joint enablers, allowing the alleviation of force generation pressures for the RCAF at large.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Government of Canada. *Strong Secure Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy*. Ottawa, Ontario: Government of Canada, 2017. 109.

¹³⁹ Thierry Gongora, "The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Perspective," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 26.

¹⁴⁰ Canadian Joint Operations Command, *Canadian Forces Joint Publication 4.0 Support*, Ottawa, 2013. National Support Framework. 10.

¹⁴¹ In this realm, the role of the National Support Framework, including support constructs within the Canadian Joint Operations Command, 1 Canadian Air Division Headquarters, RCAF Wings and 2 Wing are key and play a key role in making this in-theatre support construct actually work.

¹⁴² Luc Girouard (Lieutenant Colonel), "The Fusion of Doctrines: A Discussion of Sustainment Operations during Op IMPACT." ..., 26-35.

Furthermore, the RCAF's AFEC Program, the expeditionary materiel acquisition and infrastructure component of the greater AFEC, will significantly enhance the RCAF's ability to rapidly deploy, independently from any other CAF environment, in an austere setting. Although the delivery of materiel associated with the AFEC Program has begun, it will only be fully implemented across the RCAF, and more specifically within 2 Wing in 2029.¹⁴³ In the meantime, the RCAF is capable of deploying in austere settings, but the Force Generation of materiel and equipment required to do so, will be much more challenging.

Despite certain short-term limitations accounted for in the latest 2 Wing Force Employment Concept, these developments in themselves align well with a 'Lean' expeditionary perspective proposed by Gongora and demonstrate the RCAF's clear shift towards an expeditionary mindset. Considering the relatively speaking limited and fixed dollar value of the AFEC Program, these tangible support capability advancements are commensurate with the RCAF's and the Government of Canada's means. It will be interesting to examine in the next chapter of this study if these means are commensurate with the Government of Canada's aspirations, and what that could mean.

Modular and Task-Tailored

The last characteristic of the baseline model is its modular and task tailored nature. In Gongora's general idea, "expeditionary forces are rarely complete Formations."¹⁴⁴ As such, he maintains that expeditionary air forces are modularized and scaled so that they can be integrated into a multi-national, coalition or a national joint task force. The RCAF's ATF Construct is underpinned by this very concept and has been employed on a variety of recent expeditionary operations, domestic and international, with great success. Aligned with Gongora's way of thinking, the RCAF ATF can provide a range of capabilities, tailored to the mission, and can span the full spectrum of operations depending on the mission requirement, allowing RCAF officers to exercise delegated command and control over RCAF units whereas much of this was given to joint or coalition partners in the past.¹⁴⁵

This said, the RCAF has never had to generate an ATF which could produce a full and integrated menu of capabilities capable of responding to *all* contingencies. In other words, the RCAF has never had to generate a full-scale ATF which could conduct all operations ranging from kinetic, to peace support, to humanitarian relief ones. Furthermore, in the Canadian context, often, centralized command and control has been maintained at a higher echelon than the ATF for high demand, low-density RCAF assets such as strategic airlift. In the same vein, the USAF AEFs also have limitations and as such do not include many of the high-demand/low-density assets that are often required in expeditionary operations such as the airborne command and control, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms, strategic airlift, combat

¹⁴³ Commander 1 Canadian Air Division. *1 Canadian Air Division Approval 2 Wing Force Employment Concept*. . . .

¹⁴⁴ Thierry Gongora, "The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Perspective," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5*..., 27.

¹⁴⁵ Pux Barnes (Lieutenant-Colonel), "The RCAF Air Task Force: The New Kid on the Block," ..., 39.

search and rescue and air force special operations assets.¹⁴⁶ In the USAF context, it is even argued that carrying the full spectrum of combat and support aircraft within the same AEF “would get in the way of staying light and lethal.”¹⁴⁷ This could also be applicable to the Canadian context where agility in responding to contingency expeditionary operations is so important. This discussion begins to delve into the domain of the enhanced version of the Baseline Model and it is at this juncture that the size and scope of the RCAF, in comparison to the USAF, perhaps comes into play. The differences and nuances become even more glaringly evident when more closely analyzing the characteristics of the Robust Expeditionary Model.

When looking at all the characteristics of the Baseline Model, it is clear the RCAF’s advancements in the conceptual domain, in its systems and structures, and in some specific capabilities, have filled the gaps that were once upon a time more glaringly apparent. Many of these advancements such as the RCAF’s endowment of its own expeditionary and C2 doctrine, its ATF Construct and MRP, and its creation of its own standing high-readiness wing are testimony to its own unique ways of doing things, its expeditionary culture. These advancements conclusively meet the precepts of Gongora’s Baseline Model. These advancements are understood as being part of the RCAF’s greater conceptualization and institutionalization of its AFEC, which is commensurate with the USAF’s EAF. It is also apparent that the degree to which the RCAF can be expeditionary in meeting the dictums of the Baseline Model is heavily influenced by other external stakeholders such as the Canadian Joint Operations Command which owns the Strategic Lines of Communications (SLOCs) and will be heavily involved in sustaining joint expeditionary operations overseas through its Operational Support Hub network and its Joint Task Force Support Components. As such, the RCAF should not be oblivious to these joint constructs and processes and endeavour to understand them and influence them in *enabling* the delivery of effective and efficient air power. In a reciprocal manner, the RCAF should also invest in educating others in its expeditionary culture and in its unique ways of doing things.

Before this study proceeds with the analysis of Gongora’s Robust Model and its more nuanced characteristics, it is important to reemphasize that further analysis can at least proceed with the firm conviction that the RCAF, with all its advances in the last decade or so, has endowed itself with the intrinsic capabilities which fulfill all characteristics of the expeditionary Baseline Model proposed by Gongora.

The Robust Model

In comparison to Gongora’s Baseline model, the Robust Expeditionary Model has the following additional capability implications:

¹⁴⁶ Thierry Gongora, "The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Perspective," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 23.

¹⁴⁷ John Tirpak, “*The Expeditionary Air Force Takes Shape*.”... . In this citation Tirpak is quoting Air Force Brigadier General William R. Looney III who commanded the USAF’s second air expeditionary force - AEF II which deployed in Jordan for several months in 1996.

- capable of operating in any terrain and climate;
- capable of forcible entry;
- full-spectrum force protection;
- capable of reconstitution while forward deployed;
- capable of sustaining itself in an austere environment without host nation support; and
- multi-mission capable (general-purpose task force)¹⁴⁸

Of importance to the analysis from an RCAF perspective, according to Gongora, the Baseline Model should be analyzed. In other words, capabilities within the Baseline Model cannot be developed in isolation without the other ones. As such it is more of an all or nothing concept.¹⁴⁹ On the other hand, with regards to the Robust Model, Gongora maintains that more discretion can be used. As such, in his view, the six capability requirements of the Robust Model are not part of a whole. Therefore, it could be considered that an expeditionary air force could be 'Robust' in one area and not so in another. That said, some of the Robust Model's Characteristics are not easily dissociable, therefore some will be grouped together.

Capable of Operating in any Terrain or Climate, in an Austere Setting, without Host Nation Support

For a more logical analysis, related criteria have been grouped together. As such, the first criterion, described in the Robust Model as related to how a Robust AEF needs to be capable of operating in any terrain and climate has been grouped with the capability to operate in an austere environment independently of host-nation support.

The RCAF has demonstrated its ability to operate in any terrain and any climate based on its ongoing operational capability to operate anywhere in North America and also based on its recent operations around the globe. These operations have spanned areas in the High Arctic, to built up areas, to mountainous areas, to tropical regions, to deserts. According to Gongora, this capability was mostly derived from the RCAF's need to operate anywhere in Canada and not from a deliberate effort to maintain a Robust-like expeditionary capability.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, in this case, domestic needs would have interestingly yielded advancements and capabilities that are of dual-use for both domestic and international expeditionary operations.

Nonetheless, the RCAF has developed the capability required to operate in challenging terrain, climate, and in austere settings harmonious with the Robust Model, but with certain

¹⁴⁸ Thierry Gongora, "The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Perspective," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 27.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 28. Gongora's statement would align itself well with Canada's National Defence Policy and its Strong at home and Secure in North America components.

limitations, congruent with the USAF's.¹⁵¹ For example, the RCAF does not have the capability to build a runway in the middle of nowhere without significant effort, just like the USAF. The RCAF would need aircraft fuel availability for such locations, just like the USAF. Therefore, in this sense, the RCAF is capable of operating in most envisaged scenarios, but with certain limitations.

Accordingly, it should be noted that its ability to operate independently in an austere environment requires significant planning and a weighty Pan-RCAF Force Generation effort in order to conglomerate the required capabilities, materiel and equipment required for such demanding conditions, perhaps to a greater extent than the USAF.¹⁵² This increased requirement for planning and materiel Force Generation of course take away some of the RCAF's agility especially in the case of its readiness and its responsiveness for contingency operations. 2 Wing will eventually hold this high readiness capability, on behalf of the RCAF, but only when the AFEC Program has delivered on this aspect of the overall project.¹⁵³

Therefore, it is safe to state that the RCAF can operate independently in most terrains and climates, in an austere environment, with certain limitations requiring more planning and more

¹⁵¹ John Tirpak, "*The Expeditionary Air Force Takes Shape.*" ... ; Lionel Galway, Roger S. Tripp, Timothy L Ramey, John G. Drew, Supporting Expeditionary Aerospace Forces: New Agile Combat Support Postures. Prepared by the RAND Corporation for the U.S. Air Force, 2000. xiii. Accessed 27 April 2020. <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a377840.pdf>. Again citing Air Force Brigadier General William R. Looney III, Tirpak wrote that AEFs cannot go just anywhere and are not meant to replace the USN Aircraft Carriers. The Rand study proposed categories of Forward Operating Locations (FOLs) that would support AEF global deployments. Even the most austere FOLs, dubbed category-3 FOLs would have at a minimum a runway, water supply, and fuel availability.

¹⁵² Government of Canada Operation PRESENCE Web page. Accessed 13 May 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/op-presence.html>. ; Government of Canada Operation IMPACT Web page. Accessed 13 May 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/operation-impact.html>. There is somewhat of an exception to this rule and that is of course the Tactical Aviation community of the RCAF which maintain a significant capability to operate in austere environments. These capabilities of the Tactical Aviation community have been tested as recently as 2018 in Northern Iraq and in Mali in support of U.N. operations. This said, for a multi-platform ATF of a significant size, in an austere environment, even for Tactical Aviation operations, the RCAF would most likely require the assistance of joint enablers such as the CFJOSG in order to adequately support its expeditionary forces. Furthermore, operations with limited Host Nation or Lead Nation support would be significantly demanding for RCAF Strategic Airlift as well as requiring robust SLOCs and ideally a robust OSH network in the same Theatre of Operations.

¹⁵³ Canada, DND, "*AFEC Concept of Operations: Revision 1,*" Ottawa, 16 July 2012. The AFEC Program, although already at Interim Operating Capability will only have delivered its full suite of expeditionary equipment, fully enabling RCAF expeditionary operations in austere environments in 2029. Some expeditionary equipment and vehicles have already been delivered. In the fall of 2019, Infrastructure that will eventually house the bulk of 2 Wing personnel and materiel, was officially announced with construction slated to begin in early 2022. In the meantime, 2 Wing has begun to receive its expeditionary shelters and Pack Up Kits holding the bulk of them in temporary locations across Canada. 2 Wing expeditionary materiel and equipment is held on Canadian Forces Base Bagotville in Northern Quebec where the bulk of 2 Wing units are stationed, on Canadian Forces Base Trenton, in Ontario, co-located with RCAF strategic airlift and its communications and control unit, 8 Air Communications and Control Squadron and on Canadian Forces Base Cold Lake, in Alberta, co-located with its specialized engineering training unit 4 Construction Engineering Squadron.

FG effort as the conditions worsen. Furthermore, although there has been much focus on austere operations requirements in conditions associated with the Middle East, there has also been a recent rejuvenation towards deepening the level of situational awareness required for operating in Canada's isolated and austere Northern regions.¹⁵⁴

Regardless, considering the RCAF's recent operational experience around the globe, and advances related to the AFEC Program and 2 Wing, it can be surmised that it has the intrinsic capabilities in order to operate in any climate and in any terrain, with limitations congruent with those of the USAF. Although such operations would require significant planning and pan-RCAF Force Generation efforts today, especially in austere conditions with limited Host Nation support, its capabilities will only improve with the full implementation of the AFEC Program in the not-so-distant future.

Forcible Entry

The second criterion involves the capability for forcible entry. For ease of analysis, this criterion has been grouped with the capability for full spectrum force protection operations, as it is logical to group those two capabilities together. Although the RCAF could contribute specific capabilities to a coalition or alliance operation requiring forcible entry operations, it is highly unlikely that the RCAF would undertake such operations independently. From Gongora's perspective, he maintains that these capabilities "defy the military means of a middle-power like Canada."¹⁵⁵ When considering Canada's National Defence Policy *Strong Secure Engaged*, it is more likely that Canada's RCAF would participate in an operation requiring forcible entry as a partner within a coalition, playing a role in supporting different facets of the operation with its intrinsic capabilities.¹⁵⁶ As such, this characteristic raises the question of 'will' of a nation, such as Canada, to participate in such missions, let alone having the capabilities to do it. This question will certainly be addressed in the next chapter of this study.

From a force protection perspective, airfield security and defence for such operations in a high threat environment would have to be guaranteed by the Canadian Army as the RCAF withholds only a limited capability in the airfield security domain. Such operations would also prove challenging for the USAF according to Gongora and other experts and would most likely fall in the domain of the USMC or U.S. Army for execution.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Commander 1 Canadian Air Division, *1 Canadian Air Division/Joint Force Air Component Commander Tasking Order 13307/20 Agile Dispersed Operations (ADO) Northern Recces*. Winnipeg Manitoba: 1 Canadian Air Division, 4 February 2020. In 2019, 2 Wing was tasked with planning and eventually conducting reconnaissance of multiple less known airfields in Canada's North as part of NORAD Agile and Dispersed Operations discussions ongoing between Canada and the U.S.

¹⁵⁵ Thierry Gongora, "The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Perspective," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5*..., 28. The notions of middle power and Canadian foreign policy is a discussion more akin to Chapter 4 of this study.

¹⁵⁶ Government of Canada, *Strong Secure Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy*. Ottawa, Ontario: Government of Canada, 2017. 61. This would align itself with the 'engaged in the world' component of the policy.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 28-29.; John Tirpak, "The Expeditionary Air Force Takes Shape."

As such, when looking at these characteristics of the Robust Model, the domains of forced entry and full spectrum force protection operations would prove to be difficult and complicated for existing RCAF expeditionary capabilities. In other words, the RCAF would be significantly challenged in undertaking such operations independently from other environments and would require significant extra-RCAF support. Furthermore, with the current National Defence Policy it would prove very unlikely that Canada would undertake such missions independently from other nations or multilateral organizations such as NATO, the United Nations or coalitions of willing and like-minded countries. Instead, it is most likely that Canada would play a role in support of a coalition, taking-on specific responsibilities based on its intrinsic RCAF capabilities.

Capable of Forward Deployed Reconstitution and Multi-Mission Capable

The third criterion consists of being capable of reconstitution while forward deployed and will be grouped with the criterion which involves the capability of being multi-mission capable. The RCAF has rarely had the need to reconstitute an ATF while it was deployed and has not had to regularly re-assign an ATF to a new expedition. RCAF ATFs have usually conducted what has been termed as 'Relief-in-place' or rotations with the deployed elements returning to their home wing after rotation and re-constituting their unit at their MOB, while being replaced by a new rotation in theatre. Having said this, rather exceptionally, elements of 425 Tactical Fighter Squadron, from 3 Wing Bagotville, were re-assigned from a Op REASSURANCE role in Romania to a NATO Baltic Air Policing role in Lithuania in 2014.¹⁵⁸ This was a rather exceptional event and it is certainly not common practice to reconstitute RCAF expeditionary elements in a deployed setting. As for the capability to maintain a multi-purpose force package, Gongora maintains that even with the USAF and USMC models, the reality of operations may not require this capability most of the time.¹⁵⁹ From his perspective, a multi-purpose EAF would be capable of fighting, maintaining the peace and delivering aid, all in the context of a single mission. From an RCAF perspective, although rarely seen (never seen in recent operations), it would not be out of the realm of the possible for an ATF to accomplish all those tasks as a part of a multi-purposed ATF in support of a single mission. Having said this, although a RCAF multi-purpose ATF could be envisioned, and that it has the doctrine, and 2 Wing to enable it, it would certainly be a complex and challenging endeavour, for any air force for that matter.

Conclusion

This chapter was the last one in this study's transition from the conceptual to the more tangible elements of the RCAF's transformation into an expeditionary air force. Keeping in mind Gongora's 2002 analysis of where the RCAF stood then, in relation to his proposed Baseline and Robust Models, it is irrefutably clear that the RCAF has significantly evolved since. Its evolution

¹⁵⁸ Government of Canada Operation REASSURANCE Web page. Accessed 13 May 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2019/01/canadas-air-task-force-completes-2018-deployment-with-nato-enhanced-air-policing-in-romania.html>.

¹⁵⁹ Thierry Gongora, "The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Perspective," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 29.

into an EAF, from a more tangible capabilities perspective, is evident and this determination is further reinforced when considered holistically with the other chapters of this study.

The RCAF has clearly evolved into an EAF, and it is safe to affirm that it meets all requirements espoused by Gongora's Baseline Model. Its effectiveness and efficiency in delivering air power in line with the Baseline Model do not solely hinge on its intrinsic capabilities, systems and structures but in fact also rely other CAF stakeholders such as the Canadian Joint Operations Command and its Operational Support Hub network and Joint Task Force Support Component construct. As such the RCAF's capabilities along with the ones inherent to the Canadian Joint Operations Command complementary in enabling RCAF expeditionary operations overseas. This being said, the differences in depth, scope and scale, between the RCAF and the USAF, also remain evident and are particularly apparent when considering the characteristics proposed in the Robust Model. However, to say that the RCAF has none of the capabilities proposed to any degree would also be unfair. Its limitations are often quite like the USAF's limitations where the stress ratios, considering their capabilities and OPSTEMPO, could be seen as mostly congruent. The RCAF is clearly in the process of addressing some of its capability deficiencies in the domains of austere environment operations.¹⁶⁰ Its main deficiencies remain in the areas of opposed entry and high threat environment operations, where the RCAF would most likely contribute its limited capabilities to a larger coalition or U.S. lead operation and could not (would not) operate independently.

When considering Canada's Defence Policy, *Strong Secure Engaged*, it would be fair to deduce that it would also be very unlikely, in the current political context, that Canada would have the will or the intent to 'go it alone.'¹⁶¹ This last statement will be addressed further in the next (and last) chapter of this study, where 'what the RCAF's expeditionary transformation means for Canada' will be explored.

¹⁶⁰ This is being done through the AFEC Program, which is well underway and will reach Full Operating Capability in 2029 having met all of its deliverables.

¹⁶¹ Government of Canada, *Strong Secure Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy*. Ottawa, Ontario: Government of Canada, 2017. 61.

CHAPTER 4 – WHAT THIS MEANS

Introduction

As stated earlier in the analysis framework, this final chapter will examine what the research in the prior chapters means to the Government of Canada. Of course, such analysis must be undertaken from an angle particular to this study, where the components of the analysis framework consisting of the ideas, the structures and systems, and the capabilities, now coupled together clearly demonstrated the evolution of the RCAF into its own unique Canadian expeditionary air force.

It is from this evolutionary perspective that the question of the use of the RCAF as a more relevant strategic foreign policy tool for the Government of Canada must be explored. In order to narrow the scope and focus the arguments, the supporting lens of air power academics Richard Goette, James Fergusson and Thierry Gongora will be used as a backdrop. Some of their ideas related to air power and foreign policy will be used to introduce the arguments presented herein.

James Fergusson’s Aerospace Power: Strategic Instrument and Leading Expeditionary Force of the Future

This section will examine two relevant ideas proposed by Canadian aerospace power academic, from the University of Manitoba-based Centre for Defence and Security Studies, James Fergusson. He is the Deputy Director of the Centre for Defence and Security Studies, and Professor in the Department of Political Studies at the University of Manitoba.

Aerospace Power as a Strategic Instrument

James Fergusson claims that the persistently dominant idea of aerospace power as a strategic instrument emerged from the stalemate of the First World War and has remained constant with the evolution of contemporary aerospace power. He argues that through time, it has become a clear and tangible means to quickly “demonstrate national presence overseas and a nation’s commitment.”¹⁶² He adds that, in comparison to the other services, air forces, as national foreign policy ‘instruments’ have provided rather economically cost effective and politically low-risk ‘means’ of applying force to a problem.¹⁶³

Aerospace Power as the Leading Expeditionary Force of the Future

Secondly, James Fergusson proposed that the management of the ‘commitment-capability gap’ is the lens from which the RCAF should examine the USAF’s idea of an expeditionary

¹⁶² James Fergusson, “Introduction”, in *Aerospace Power: Beyond 100 Years of Theory and Practice*. Edited by James Fergusson. Winnipeg: Centre for Defence and Security Studies, University of Manitoba, Volume I of the Silver Dart Canadian Aerospace Studies, 2005. 1-2.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.* Fergusson even adds that a nation’s international standing has been reflected by its ability to exploit the aerospace domain, referring to why nations have invested significantly in their contributions to winning the race to the Moon. This is interesting, and perhaps reflective of its ambitions, as China recently announced significant investments in a future Mars mission.

aerospace force.¹⁶⁴ This would ensure that an eventual RCAF expeditionary structure would be optimized for political purposes.¹⁶⁵ In his view, developing an expeditionary force structure, politically functional and capable of providing aerospace forces to intervene with the US in high-intensity combat missions and in other military operations short of war, where US engagement is unlikely, consisted Canada's and the RCAF's expeditionary challenge.¹⁶⁶

Fergusson maintained that the RCAF's case for adopting an expeditionary construct would be much stronger if it was founded on its non-discretionary national and domestic roles.¹⁶⁷ This loosely conceptualized prioritization of the home game over the away game, taking into account the politically sensitive considerations of taking more responsibility for Canada's sovereign interests, would serve as the foundation for "going over there" which is more discretionary and somewhat less politically slippery in nature.¹⁶⁸ As such, in his view, with an expeditionary RCAF structured for operations 'over there – from here' it could very well become the leading expeditionary force of choice for the Government of Canada.¹⁶⁹

Analysis of Fergusson's Ideas

Fergusson's ideas must be analyzed with the considerations put forward in the previous chapters of this study. First, the RCAF's recently formalized expeditionary doctrine provides its own definition of expeditionary operations, which includes international operations, but also its domestic operations away from RCAF Main Operating Bases. How this doctrine and definition have been institutionalized and operationalized is reflected in its expeditionary transformation and in its new RCAF structures and systems described earlier. As such, a solid case demonstrating that Fergusson's 'over there from here' foundational and inclusive principle, has been adopted by the RCAF.

¹⁶⁴ James Fergusson, "Over There, From Here: Expeditionary Forces and the Canadian Air Force," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5 ...*, 45-46.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.* By 'political purposes' Fergusson wrote that the will of Canadian decision makers to engage in overseas operations was led by several politically-based motives like influence, prestige, ethics, domestic politics and Canada's unchallenged 'good-guy' role on the international stage.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 47. He added that the riskier missions would be rarer but more dangerous, while the others would be the area where Canada could lead and would likely be more frequent, and somewhat less dangerous. Nonetheless, he maintained that Canada's air force needed to give the Government of Canada the option to do both and therefore endow itself with the ability and capabilities to execute them.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 51-53. He added that this was due to the fact that given its geography, bordered by large open bodies of water on three sides, and an open border to the south with a powerful neighbour, most threats to Canada and North America that required a military or defence response emanated from the aerospace domain, irrespective of how they were launched.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* The RCAF would be able to provide strategic value and act as a gap-filler when necessary, regardless of the role of the force, whether for full spectrum war fighting or MOOTW, in commitments with or independently of U.S. engagement.

Second, when considering the entirety of Canada's Defence Policy, and more specifically the section where it describes its investments in enhancing Canadian Armed Forces capabilities and capacity to support peace and security, it lends credence to the principle by which Canada will be first and foremost 'strong at home,' 'secure in North America' and *then* 'engaged in the world.'¹⁷⁰ The following citation from *SSE* is telling: "... conducting operations from its bases in Canada, the Royal Canadian Air Force will be able to operate from prepared or austere airfields anywhere in the world with an Air Task Force composed of a range of aircraft type."¹⁷¹ Again the fact that the RCAF's expeditionary construct is founded on its Government's domestic demands, and also inclusive of its Government's commitments abroad is reflected in its Canadian Defence Strategy. It is also reflected in its expeditionary structures at home and abroad, and in its broad menu of capabilities, congruent with a small balanced air force; giving its government a broad range of capabilities within the full spectrum of options (the means), in line with its foreign policy aspirations (the ways).¹⁷²

Third, as described earlier in the study, the RCAF's expeditionary transformation came about with a political and largely domestically focused announcement of 500 new troops to the Northern Quebec Region. The announcement, which shortly thereafter led to the formation and evolution of 2 Wing, was the spark that gave momentum to the RCAF's greater transformation represented conceptually by the AFEC and its foundational underpinnings. One could infer, perhaps wishfully, considering that Canada has no overtly published National Strategy,¹⁷³ that the political announcement by the Conservative Government of the day was aimed at giving itself a broader range of options for its political aims on the world stage. Certainly, less contentiously, it has been proven that through its ATF Construct, its Expeditionary and Command and Control doctrines, its MRP and its stand-up of 2 Wing, the RCAF endowed itself with the mechanisms (the means and ways) to respond to its Government's calling, no matter what it might be. As such, it could be said that the Canadian government, with its announcement, prompted the RCAF to deliver the means to represent the nation's power and raise the nation's prestige on the global stage.

Finally, when looking at the RCAF's employment on operations throughout and since its expeditionary transformation, the new expeditionary concepts, systems, constructs and capabilities have been put to good use, both domestically and internationally, in times of crisis and for more deliberately planned operations. The RCAF has been front and centre, leading Canada's interventions both at home and abroad, in some of Canada's more politically riskier

¹⁷⁰ Government of Canada, *Strong Secure Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy*. Ottawa, Ontario: Government of Canada, 2017. 14. Of course it is understood that these are concurrent and that RCAF expeditionary operations, more often than not, consistently happen all at the same time, at home, in North America and internationally.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁷² Also keeping in mind that this study proposed that as a small air force, the RCAF met all characteristics of Gongora's Baseline Model and that it would not be fair to discount all of its capabilities when the Robust Model was considered. Many of the RCAF's limitations, were also present to different degrees in the USAF.

¹⁷³ Thierry Gongora, "Delivering the Goods in Support of Canadian Foreign Policy", in *Aerospace Power: Beyond 100 Years of Theory and Practice*. Edited by James Fergusson. Winnipeg: Centre for Defence and Security Studies, University of Manitoba, Volume I of the Silver Dart Canadian Aerospace Studies, 2005. 133.

missions.¹⁷⁴ High visibility expeditionary operations close to Canadian hearts such as dealing with Climate change from coast to coast,¹⁷⁵ or protecting Canadian sovereignty in Canada's North as part of NORAD, have been numerous and impactful.

Internationally, the RCAF has also played a leading role. The RCAF responded quickly and still plays an important part in the US led coalition against 'Daesh' as well as with the NATO Building Partner Capacity mission alongside Iraqi forces. It was the first amongst Canadian Armed Forces' environments to *reassure* its NATO allies in Eastern Europe after the troubling Russian annexation of Ukraine's Crimea and continues to do on a regular basis. It has also been playing a leading and tangible role, as Canada tries to reassert itself, especially since the Liberals took power, with the United Nations in Africa providing critical aero-medical evacuation help to the U.N. mission in the Sahel Region as well as with providing intra-theatre airlift to a variety of U.N. missions in the central and eastern regions of the continent.¹⁷⁶

It is apparent that, when analyzing the ideas proposed by Fergusson by which the RCAF could be a strategic instrument and become the leading expeditionary force of the future, and matching those to the arguments put forth herein, the RCAF is definitely strategically relevant, and it certainly has given itself the means to be so to an increased degree. It is also definitely a foreign policy tool of choice, but also a valuable domestic political tool of choice, making itself even more relevant to Canadians and to the Government of Canada by default. The study will now continue with the ideas of another air power academic who has written on Canadian aerospace power, Thierry Gongora

¹⁷⁴ Adam Chapnick, *Canada on the United Nations Security Council: A Small Power on a Large Stage*, UBC Press, Toronto, 1 February 2020, 10; L. Axworthy, D. Beer, J. Coulon, M. Cuillerier, W. Dorn, P. Langille, P. Mason, G. Mitchell, B. Woroniuk, Edited by John E. Trent, "The United Nations and Canada: What Canada Has Done and Should Be Doing" *World Federalist Movement – Canada*, Ottawa, Ontario. 2017; Luc Girouard (Lieutenant Colonel), "The Fusion of Doctrines: A Discussion of Sustainment Operations during Op IMPACT." ..., 26-35. The early rotations of Op IMPACT when Canada deployed a Fighter Detachment as part of ATF IMPACT, conducting kinetic operations in Iraq in support of the US led coalition against Daesh was certainly a politically risky mission from a Canadian domestic perspective. Operation PRESENCE in Mali and later in Uganda, were also politically charged missions from a domestic perspective. They were less politically charged because of collateral damage risks as was the case with Op IMPACT, but mostly because of Canada's ambitions for a seat on the U.N. Security Council and because of its perceived prestige on the world's stage.

¹⁷⁵ Darren Major and Shivji Salimah, "Canada's Military Feeling the Strain Responding to Climate Change." CBC News web-site, posted June 24th 2019. Accessed 25 Mar 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-s-military-adopting-climate-change-1.5186337>.

¹⁷⁶ Internet link to Government of Canada Web page for Op PRESENCE UGANDA. Accessed 13 May 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/op-presence.html>.; Internet link to Government of Canada Web page for Op PRESENCE MALI. Accessed 13 May 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/op-presence.html>.; Internet link to Government of Canada Web page for Op REASSURANCE. Accessed 13 May 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/operation-reassurance.html>.; Internet link to Government of Canada Web page for Op IMPACT. Accessed 13 May 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/operation-impact.html>.

Thierry Gongora's perpetual tension between domestic and international operations and indissociability of aerospace power and foreign policy

This section will examine two ideas presented by Ottawa-based, RCAF Defence Scientist, Thierry Gongora. He was conducting strategic analysis with the Air Staff at National Defence Headquarters at the time of his writings.

Aerospace Power's Perpetual Tension Between Operations at Home and Abroad

When speaking of the existing dynamic between 'Homeland Security' and an air force's expeditionary capabilities, Gongora maintained that expeditionary operations could be conceived in certain circles as the "first line of defence for the ultimate protection of Canadian territory and values."¹⁷⁷ He added that this made sense when threats against North America were not direct or remained limited. This conception led him to state that consequently, Canadian expeditionary operations could eventually 'compete' with the defence and security of Canada, especially in times when Canada and North America were under threat or when resources for defence and security budgets were constrained.¹⁷⁸ As such Gongora was implying that there were unavoidable and difficult choices to be made. Based on this dynamic, his theory proposed four available options for the Government of Canada and the RCAF.¹⁷⁹ These will be described briefly below.

The first option favoured expeditionary capabilities over homeland security. He argued that 'forward defence' involving preventative engagement through the full spectrum of operations would guarantee 'homeland security.' For the RCAF, this option involved three possible paths. These paths were comprised of: firstly, emphasizing interoperability with allied air forces and favouring combined or coalition operations overseas; secondly, focusing on developing air support to joint entities and thirdly, the RCAF would focus on both, by which it would pursue capabilities congruent with combined and joint operations.¹⁸⁰

The second option reversed the priority, placing emphasis on homeland security rather than on expeditionary operations. This option assumed that although expeditionary operations were important, they remained largely discretionary, while domestic homeland security operations were perceived as the dominant 'no-fail' missions. Interestingly Gongora maintained that pursuing this option would have fewer implications than one could be led to assume as the

¹⁷⁷ Thierry Gongora, "The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Perspective," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 29. He specified that this was especially the case since the events of 11 September 2001, which could be considered a strategic shock from a Western society perspective.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 29-32.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 30. Gongora added that this third expeditionary path was kind of what the RCAF was doing in 2002. He said that this path could be maintained for most RCAF systems, at a perhaps greater cost, or the RCAF could be more selective in which systems it developed for either joint or combined operations, perhaps at the risk of coherence from a pan-RCAF perspective.

considerable vastness of Canada, and the remoteness of some of its regions would require capabilities congruent with expeditionary operations.¹⁸¹

The third option would attempt a compromise between the two, offering a way out of the predicament. This option would entail building capabilities for ‘homeland security’ and then drawing any excess capacity to support expeditionary operations. However, this option assumed that excess capacity would be generated and that the two ‘genres’ of operations would not be concomitant.¹⁸² It also assumed that the capabilities required for expeditionary operations would be intrinsic to the capabilities used for operations at home.

Finally, the fourth option consisted of limiting expeditionary operations to only one of the Canadian Armed Forces environments. Understandably this option was not very palatable nor was it developed in detail, assuming that the Government of Canada would always want a complete menu of options for expeditionary operations.¹⁸³

In the end, Gongora did not argue for either option, highlighting that there was no easy answer. That said, he successfully provided different angles for debate and made a convincing pitch that this debate should occur at the highest strategic and political levels.

The Indissociability of Aerospace Power and Foreign Policy

Gongora proposed in *Delivering the Goods in Support of Canadian Foreign Policy* that “what an Air Force *does* should be infused and informed by a Nation’s foreign policy.”¹⁸⁴ He qualified this statement by adding that reality was in fact much more complex than this statement could lead one to believe, especially in Canada’s tenuous case, where an “explicit and coherent national security strategy that links broad foreign policy objectives to specific defence missions and tasks”¹⁸⁵ was conspicuously absent. In other words, this notion led to the question ‘does Canada have the right kind of Air Force to pursue its foreign policy objectives?’

Gongora proceeded with a historical analysis of past RCAF operational expeditionary employment since the Second World War and demonstrated that the evidence indicated that ‘it

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.* Gongora used air-to-air refueling, long-range airlift, and the ability to operate from austere airfields as examples of capabilities congruent with this option.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 31. He added that the September 2001 attacks in the U.S. and the ensuing fallout demonstrated that a significant increased effort in both ‘homeland security’ operations and expeditionary operations, at the same time, was perhaps now more of the norm than an exception.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.* When Canada was offered options for contributing to the post 9/11 response, it had contributed maritime, land, special operations, and air elements as part of Operation APOLLO and sent those elements to Southwest Asia.

¹⁸⁴ Thierry Gongora, “Delivering the Goods in Support of Canadian Foreign Policy”, in *Aerospace Power: Beyond 100 Years of Theory and Practice*. Edited by James Ferguson. Winnipeg: Centre for Defence and Security Studies, University of Manitoba, Volume I of the Silver Dart Canadian Aerospace Studies, 2005. 133.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.* He added that this was further complicated by the fact that Canada’s Air Force had other ‘no-fail’ tasks such as national responsibilities for Search and Rescue, and along with the other Canadian Armed Forces’ Elements, responsibilities to assist civil authorities when called upon for a wide ranging variety of scenarios.

never fought alone' and that in this sense, it had indeed been faithfully serving Canadian foreign policy throughout.¹⁸⁶

In his closing arguments, he importantly stated that more Canadians, especially those entrusted with the power to decide, should recognize and understand the value of the RCAF's agility and that due to its 'multi-purpose character', had endowed the Government of Canada, and its policy and defence decision makers, with a broad range of options that had been valuably applied in the pursuit of its foreign policy objectives.¹⁸⁷

Analysis of Gongora's Ideas

It seems as though Gongora was discretely saying that the RCAF had maintained the right approach in staying attuned to the needs of its Government by endowing itself with capabilities (the means) that allowed for a wide range of options in dealing with its foreign policy thrusts and vectors. It can be argued that with its transformation into its own unique version of an Expeditionary Air Force as demonstrated in preceding chapters, the RCAF has then solidified its position in this Canadian Foreign policy domain, and endowed itself with new systems, structures and capabilities that allow it to prosecute such missions more efficiently and more effectively.

Given the RCAF's new, more encompassing definition of expeditionary operations and everything that conceptually, systematically, structurally and tangibly entails, it can also be argued that the RCAF's advances in the expeditionary domain will tend to assuage, perhaps negate some of the tensions described by Gongora, while still meeting the spirit of Canada's Defence Policy by which Canada will be first and foremost strong at home and secure in North America. Using Gongora's general idea, by continuing to selectively develop and maintain aerospace power expeditionary capabilities that enhance its ability to provide wide-ranging options, for both genres of operations, the RCAF will ensure its relevance, perhaps even influence in the strategic and foreign policy domains. That said, considering the CAF's contemporary environmental construct, unified under one single Chief of Defence Staff and one Minister of National Defence, the RCAF cannot undertake this independently from the Canadian Joint Operations Command and in isolation from the other CAF services.¹⁸⁸

Finally, setting the stage for the next section of this chapter where Richard Goette's ideas will be explored, it is important to bridge Gongora's two proposed ideas with the RCAF's transformation into its own Canadian version of an expeditionary air force. It is evident that as the Government of Canada enacts its National Defence Policy and considers options with regards to the RCAF's future capabilities, it should firmly keep in mind Gongora's precept that Canada's foreign policy and aerospace power are indissociable as it weighs domestic political issues in the background. As such, options that relegate either of those considerations (home and away games) to irrelevance should be resolutely discarded as they would leave long term capability

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 138.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 140.

¹⁸⁸ Keeping in mind the differences between the US Defence Services construct and the CAF's environmental construct highlighted in a previous chapter of this study.

scars on the RCAF, and by default constrain the Government's foreign policy or domestic aerospace power options. Regardless of the capability options chosen within those recommended parameters, the RCAF has definitely given itself the expeditionary means to keep 'delivering the goods' at home *and* abroad.

Richard Goette's RCAF as a 'Small Air Force' and Potential 'Niches' for Expeditionary Operations as the RCAF Prepares for the future

This third and last section of this chapter will examine two ideas of Canadian air power academic, Historian and Associate Professor at the Canadian Forces College, Canada's senior academic and professional military education institution, Richard Goette.

The RCAF as a 'Small Air Force'

In describing the RCAF and how it should prepare for the future challenges it faces, Goette refers to it as a 'Small Air Force,' in comparison to the USAF and the other world's air forces. It is important to understand where he has derived this characterization, and what implications this may have, as it will set the stage for the remainder of this section.¹⁸⁹

His characterization or measure is not solely based on the RCAF's numerical size but rather on the sum of other measurements such as the breadth of its capabilities, on its somewhat balanced force, on its limited depth and on Canada's limited national industrial capability.¹⁹⁰ Goette's characterization is based on Sanu Kainikara's categorization of the world's air forces in his 2009 working paper *The Future Relevance of Smaller Air Forces*.¹⁹¹ Kainikara suggested that 'Middle Powers' and their air forces, facing resource intensive constraints, aspired to have sufficient military aerospace capabilities to secure their nations, without having to seek assistance from other nations as much as possible. Amidst the contemporary rapidly evolving technological environment, and exponentially rising costs to stay relevant, such air forces had been forced to evolve into entities with 'all-round' capabilities, with limitations, but constrained in the length of time they could sustain such operations.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Richard Goette, "*Preparing the RCAF for the Future: Defining Potential Niches for Expeditionary Operations*"..., 25; Canada, Department of National Defence, *Future Concepts Directive Part 2: Future Air Operating Concept*, ...,1.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 25.; Sanu Kainikara, "The Future Relevance of Smaller Air Forces."..., 1. Kainikara is a former Indian Air Force Fighter Pilot who upon retirement became an air power theorist and strategist at the Air Power Development Center in Canberra, Australia.

¹⁹¹ Kainikara, Sanu. "The Future Relevance of Smaller Air Forces."..., 4.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 2. In the model suggested by Kainikara in 2009, there was the airpower of the United States and then there was the airpower of the rest of the world. From amongst these 'other' air forces, there were the large, small, and niche air forces. Large air forces had the entire breadth of capabilities, in sufficient depth to sustain operations independently for the long term, as well as possessing the national industry to sustain themselves. Niche air forces did not have the full breadth of capabilities, nor the industrial base to sustain themselves therefore reliant on others, could only carry out select roles and functions, and certainly had little depth in those areas they could operate.

In exposing the RCAF's future challenges, Goette dutifully considered Canada's 'small air force' capabilities as they currently stood, the Canadian Defence Policy *Strong Secure Engaged*, the Canadian Armed Forces *Future Security Environment 2013-2040*, and the RCAF's *Future Air Operating Concept* as the bedrocks upon which he formed his ideas.¹⁹³

He maintained that Canada's 'small air force' would continue first and foremost to safeguard Canada, keeping in mind its vastness and remote areas, but that it would also continue to operate globally through the full spectrum of aerospace operations, most likely not working alone (but not necessarily with the U.S.), contributing to the Government's foreign policy and national security objectives in order to defend Canada and Canada's interests.¹⁹⁴ Considering the RCAF's air power characteristics of speed and reach, and that 'boots on the ground' were a politically less-acceptable option in light of the casualties from recent conflicts, Canada's air force would increasingly be a primary strategic foreign policy option for the Government of Canada.¹⁹⁵

Considering the roles and responsibilities handed by the Canadian Government to its air force, demanding increasingly state-of-the-art military capabilities, leading to an impressively ascending operational tempo with constrained resources from which to engage with, how does the RCAF reinforce its position or truly become a strategically relevant air force?¹⁹⁶

Goette's Potential Niches for RCAF Expeditionary Operations

It is important to first emphasize that Goette did not argue for or against the RCAF's turn into a 'Niche' air force. On the contrary, he was quite explicit that based on Canada's Defence Policy and the RCAF's *Future Air Operating Concept* such an option would not be strategically acceptable.¹⁹⁷ Goette did argue that further developing specific expeditionary niches would allow the RCAF to not only have a seat at the strategic table but also have a "seat at the console" at the operational level, contributing more greatly, and working even more seamlessly, with allies in coalitions.¹⁹⁸ It could be argued that the RCAF could expand in the areas of Goette's proposed

¹⁹³ Canada, DND, A-FD-005-001/AF-003, *Future Security Environment 2013-2040*, (Canada), 2014.; Canada, DND, *Future Concepts Directive Part 2: Future Air Operating Concept* ..., 10.; Government of Canada. *Strong Secure Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy*. Ottawa, Ontario: Government of Canada, 2017.

¹⁹⁴ Richard Goette, "*Preparing the RCAF for the Future*" ..., 1-2.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*; Sanu Kainikara, "*The Future Relevance of Smaller Air Forces*." ..., 7, 14. Therein lies the challenge to a 'small air force' like the RCAF according to Goette, sensibly influenced by the writings of Sanu Kainikara who stated that Small air forces needed to adapt or they would 'perish,' meaning sliding into strategic irrelevance and becoming purely tactical instruments.

¹⁹⁶ Richard Goette, "*Preparing the RCAF for the Future*" ..., 6.; Kainikara, Sanu. "*The Future Relevance of Smaller Air Forces*." ..., 2, 14; Sanu Kainikara, "Seven Perennial Challenges to Air Forces." ..., 5.

¹⁹⁷ Richard Goette, "*Preparing the RCAF for the Future*" ..., 27-28. By presenting both sides of the argument, for and against the niche approach, Goette implied that a niche approach may not be a best option for Canada. Because of the uniqueness of Canada's air force and in particular its massive responsibilities exercising the indivisibility of air power in a huge geographical land mass plus active expeditionary engagement, this required that the RCAF, based on Kanikara's categorization, be a balanced Smaller air force vice a niche air force

‘niches’ without actually becoming a less impactful ‘Niche air force’ and could actually become a more strategically relevant Small yet ‘balanced’ air force, punching even further above its weight.

One of the niches amongst others proposed by Goette in ameliorating the RCAF’s expeditionary contributions and in solidifying its balanced approach was the pursuance of its air-expeditionary-wing concept. In his conceptions, one of the best things the RCAF *could do* was “well, be expeditionary.”¹⁹⁹ By this he meant that the RCAF “needed to have an expeditionary concept, and construct that allows it to deploy self-contained, modular, and scalable forces quickly into theatre and to ensure that it does not become a burden on its allies.”²⁰⁰ In the remainder of his study, specifically regarding this expeditionary niche, Goette made a compelling case, backed by the RCAF’s *Future Air Operating Concept*, that it needed to pursue the full implementation of its air-expeditionary concept and 2 Wing. Specifically, he advocated for the completion of the acquisition projects related to the AFEC Program in order to add substance to the contributions it could make to allied coalitions.²⁰¹

Analysis of Goette’s Ideas

Based on this study, it could be argued that Goette was aiming for something even more encompassing than just the evolution of 2 Wing and the AFEC Program. Although these are important tangible aspects, parts of the RCAF’s evolution into its own version of an expeditionary air force, the greater sum of all the parts exposed in this study is really the target Goette was aiming for. The *full* institutionalization and continuous evolution of the RCAF’s expeditionary capability, the AFEC, the made-in-Canada version of the USAFs EAF, along with all of its concepts, doctrine, systems, structures, constructs and capabilities, are what the RCAF needed to embrace and embody, as the solid cultural foundational from which to step off of and build on as it faces the future.

In line with Goette’s and Fergusson’s ideas, the RCAF’s advances in the expeditionary domain, supported by its mindset, new doctrine and by its more inclusive definition of the term expeditionary contribute to expeditionary operations abroad as well as to operations at home and in North America (without overt incongruence).²⁰² Its expeditionary ‘ways’ and ‘means’ of doing things certainly align themselves well with coalition and combined operations, ensuring Canadian political considerations are taken into account, Canadian interests are protected and that Canadian resources are used effectively and prudently.²⁰³ They allow Canada to confidently

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 101.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 105.; James Fergusson, "Over There, From Here: Expeditionary Forces and the Canadian Air Force," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 51.

²⁰³ Richard Goette, "Command and Control Implications for Canadian Forces Air Expeditionary Operations," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5...*, 74.

lead, especially when the US chooses not to intervene for MOOTW. This last aspect is especially applicable in these times when the US is asking the international community to assume more of its share of the security burden for expeditionary operations.²⁰⁴

Finally, the RCAF's expeditionary transformation will allow it to take a welcomed leading role in Canadian Armed Forces operations at home and abroad, negating, even overturning Fergusson's *Bison Paper 5* observations that "past Canadian expeditionary operational experiences had seen the Navy take the lead, the Army defines and the RCAF lends substance."²⁰⁵

When considering Goette's idea of the RCAF as a small air force, and Kainikara's description of future challenges for small air forces, two of the latter's challenges are really brought to the forefront in answering the question what does the RCAF's transformation into an expeditionary air force mean? The two challenges being referred to are how small air forces will 'maintain an indelible connection between national grand strategy and air power strategy through a comprehensive and articulated military strategy,' and the second one is how small air forces will be affected by and be able to influence domestic and international political stimuli.²⁰⁶

Kainikara, and Goette to a certain extent, both argue that a small air force's ability to navigate these threatening skies of political compunction will determine how important it is in the national security equation. In the ideas of Kainikara, this will determine to what degree the small air force is truly a strategically relevant air force or merely a tactical air force, relegated to the back benches of strategic irrelevance, and left with the only option but to react to its governments' decisions.²⁰⁷

An entire treatise could be dedicated to this sole question and is not the purpose of this chapter. That said, this study proposes that despite the absence of a National Security Strategy as highlighted by Gongora, *Canada's Defence Strategy, Future Security Environment* and other strategic guiding documents such as *RCAF Vectors* and *Future Air Operating Concept* gave the RCAF a solid internal grasp of what could be expected of it, what tools would be given to it and in what kind of security environment it could be expected to operate in, domestically and internationally.²⁰⁸ It can now be firmly be argued that the RCAF's transformation into an expeditionary air force, and everything encompassed in that transformation as described in this study, guided the RCAF towards *how* it would go about dealing with those far reaching tasks, having played a key role in defining them. Certainly, the RCAF even as a small air force, has endowed itself with its own unique expeditionary culture, doctrine, systems, structures and

²⁰⁴ Richard Goette, "Preparing the RCAF for the Future" ..., 102.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 105.; James Fergusson, "Over There, From Here: Expeditionary Forces and the Canadian Air Force," in *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces – Bison Paper 5*..., 51.

²⁰⁶ Sanu Kainikara, "Seven Perennial Challenges to Air Forces." ..., 5.

²⁰⁷ Sanu Kainikara, "The Future Relevance of Smaller Air Forces."..., 29.

²⁰⁸ The RCAF definitely had direct and indirect responsibilities in the crafting of these strategic level documents.

capabilities, not just aircraft, making it much more than just a tactical air force. Judging by its expeditionary operational employment and evolution over the last decade, the RCAF has become a truly strategic air force, and a key influencer in the grand calculus of Canadian national security and foreign policy.

Conclusion

Using the ideas of Fergusson, Gongora, and Goette as the starting point, this Chapter demonstrated that the RCAF's evolution into its own unique Canadian version of an expeditionary air force has solidified its position as a strategic instrument. Its own ways of evolving, especially its conceptual foundations based on its expeditionary doctrine and its definition of the term expeditionary, have also undoubtedly assuaged some of the tensions related to the 'capability gaps versus resource constraints' facing strategic and political decision makers.

By pursuing its expeditionary evolution, the RCAF has made itself into a more effective and efficient balanced air force, despite its small air force status. This evolution has also broadened its menu of options, making it an even more relevant strategic tool, not just in the foreign policy 'away-game' but 'here' in the Canadian and North American homeland security calculus. Certainly, the RCAF's contemporary operational employment, and leading roles in multiple politically charged coalition and alliance missions, have demonstrated that it is at the forefront of relevance in the strategic foreign policy arena, and proves Gongora's theory that aerospace power and foreign policy are indeed indissociable.

Finally, by giving itself the means and ways that have strengthened its position in relation to the Canadian political and strategic agenda, here at home and abroad, the RCAF has made itself a truly strategic air force and quite possibly the leading expeditionary force of the future for Canada. By pursuing other ways and means, such as niches recommended by Goette, the RCAF can continue to evolve and remain on the cutting edge of this rapidly evolving aerospace power environment.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that the use of the term expeditionary has indeed drastically evolved in the Canadian context since the ideas theorized by the authors of *Bison Paper 5* in 2002. It is now firmly established that the USAF's transformation into an expeditionary air force has not been inconsequential to the RCAF's own evolution. That said, this study demonstrated that the American pathway to becoming an expeditionary air force was not dogmatically followed by the RCAF, nor was it adopted wholesale.

This study set out to prove fundamentally that although of much smaller size, scope and capability, when compared to the USAF, the RCAF had also significantly evolved into its own version of an expeditionary air force, thus becoming a much more relevant strategic foreign policy tool for the Government of Canada.

The ideas posited in *Bison Paper 5* were used as a starting point and undertook an analysis framework that went from the conceptual and ideological, to the systemic and structural, to the more tangible capabilities in order to prove its thesis. The study's final chapter then used ideas from three Canadian aerospace power academics,²⁰⁹ coupled with the findings of the first three chapters, to demonstrate that the RCAF had indeed become a much more relevant strategic *and* foreign policy tool for the Government of Canada.

More specifically, Chapter 1 focused on the foundational and ideological underpinnings of the RCAF's transformation, as these would set the stage for the entirety of the study. This first chapter initially examined the motives for such transformational change and found that both air forces were facing a similarly challenging Post-Cold War global security environment. Both forces had seen their numbers, structures and basing options significantly emaciated as domestic political imperatives had taken a toll on their force projection capabilities. Furthermore, both countries, perhaps using different approaches and with different motivations, were increasingly engaged in operations demanding interventions away from their Main Operating Bases. As such, despite significant differences in size and scope which could obstruct the view relative to the clarity of the situation, the *stress ratios* for both air forces were comparatively the same. Although this significant ideological change began in the USAF about fifteen years before it really took flight in the RCAF, this study concluded that the motives for change were commensurate with each other.

Chapter 1 continued with the conceptual analysis of the evolution of the definition of the term expeditionary in a Canadian context. It clearly demonstrated that the definition had evolved, along with the RCAF's institutional expeditionary culture. This evolution had undoubtedly been accelerated by the *urgent* need for change as described earlier. The evolution of the discussions around the definition of the term had gone from inexistent in the early 2000s to a more refined and more inclusive definition embraced by the RCAF in its very own *Expeditionary Operations Doctrine* published in 2018. This important definition remains key to this study's findings. The latest definition was inclusive of the following uniquely Canadian/RCAF idea where "... an expeditionary operation is any operation conducted away from the main operating base.

²⁰⁹ The aerospace power academics used in this portion of the study, James Fergusson, Thierry Gongora, and Richard Goette, have written significantly on Canada's aerospace power.

Expeditionary operations may be conducted in domestic, continental or international theatres.”²¹⁰ Interestingly, some of the authors of *Bison Paper 5* had been hinting, with much foresight, that a Canadian definition of expeditionary should be more inclusive than exclusive perhaps yielding a more advantageous position for the RCAF in a resource-constrained, domestically focused political environment. That said, despite these positive advancements, it was also found, perhaps explicable by its relative newness, that there remained some level of ambiguity on the inclusiveness of the definition of *expeditionary* in recent RCAF strategic level directives.

Nonetheless, research demonstrated that the RCAF’s expeditionary mindset was captured within its Expeditionary Operations doctrine and that this doctrine, although operational level doctrine, was explicitly and deliberately intertwined with Strategic, and even Political level policy, demonstrating a clear link between the RCAF’s expeditionary mindset and its status as a Strategic domestic security and foreign policy tool.

Finally, Chapter 1 demonstrated that both air forces used similar yet distinct means to codify their expeditionary mindsets. The USAF’s ideology was captured by its Expeditionary Air Force (EAF) framework, while the RCAF, remaining faithful to its own uniquely Canadian expeditionary culture, captured its ideology under the Air Force Expeditionary Capability (AFEC).²¹¹ In similar fashion, both ideas and codes have evolved since their inception. This evolution was embodied, for both air forces, by systems and structures which demonstrated how institutionalized the expeditionary mindsets had become. These systems and structures were examined in the next chapter of this study.

Chapter 2 continued with the shift from the conceptual to the systemic and structural evolution of the RCAF into an expeditionary air force. It began by describing the USAF’s Aerospace Expeditionary Force (AEF) Construct and demonstrated that it was at the heart of the EAF framework and consisted of both a system and a structure as a more tangible air power structural package. Clearly it was designed to alleviate challenges related to the USAF’s OPSTEMPO and PERSTEMPO. Since its inception, the USAF’s AEF Construct, with its systemic and structural implications have permanently become part of the USAF’s service culture. The authors of *Bison Paper 5* could not find a RCAF comparable to the USAF’s AEF. Furthermore, if one was blinded by the sheer size and breadth of capabilities inherent to just a single USAF AEF, any comparison or resemblance to an equivocal RCAF system or structure could understandably be dismissed. Eighteen years or so later, this situation has changed although the term AEF cannot be found anywhere in the RCAF lexicon nor has the RCAF adopted the USAF system wholesale. When observing specific RCAF systems and structures adopted since the ideas posited in *Bison Paper 5*, clear parallels can indeed be drawn between the two air forces. The RCAF’s MRP and ATF Construct are made-in-Canada systems and structures certainly congruent with the USAF’s AEF model and were put in place to achieve the same aims, especially from the scheduling and organizational structure perspectives. That said, their uniqueness is also an endorsement of the RCAF’s own expeditionary identity and culture. Even more indicative of congruence, both air forces needed a spark to get their transformations to take flight. From a chronological viewpoint, the USAF’s ‘original AEFs’ and the advent of the

²¹⁰ Canada, DND, B-GA—402-005/FP-001, Expeditionary Air Operations Doctrine..., 1-1.

²¹¹ An interesting fact worth mentioning is that the USAF had full time staff, led by a one-star USAF General Officer working on the institutional branding effort, ensuring that the EAF mindset was well understood and hoisted aboard across the USAF.

RCAF's 2 Wing were the respective sparks to kick things off and influenced the expeditionary transformation for both air forces. It can certainly be argued that the expeditionary mindset and corresponding systems and structures for both air forces were built around these nascent expeditionary structures. As such, from an RCAF perspective, it is clear that the ATF Construct and 2 Wing are at the heart of the RCAF's expeditionary transformation.

Finally, Chapter 2 concluded that much like the USAF, the RCAF was not the only stakeholder in its expeditionary *ways* of doing things and that other environments could influence how *it* interpreted and implemented its own doctrinal systems and structures. Perhaps due to the relative newness of *coming into being* as an expeditionary air force, the RCAF needed to make the understanding of its own *ways* and not just its *means* by others a top priority.

Chapter 3 would complete this studies transition from the conceptual, to the systemic and structural, to the more tangible capability aspects of the RCAF's transformation into an expeditionary air force. It used the Baseline and Robust capability models, proposed in *Bison Paper 5*, as the analysis framework in order to determine which *shade* of an expeditionary air force the RCAF had truly transformed itself into. The analysis convincingly demonstrated that the RCAF met all of the characteristics proposed by the Baseline model. That said, it was also demonstrated that other stakeholders played an important role in enhancing the RCAF's expeditionary capabilities related to specific Baseline Model characteristics such as 'strategic mobility' and 'lean in-theatre support.' The Canadian Joint Operations Command and its sub-Formations played a key role in extending the RCAF's reach and sustainability and therefore enhancing the understanding of each other's doctrinal and operational underpinnings would be important.

The differences in scope, scale and depth between the USAF and the RCAF became more evident when observing the characteristics of the Robust Model. However, to say that the RCAF possessed none of the characteristics proposed by the Robust Model, to any degree, would also be unfair. The RCAF's limitations are also quite congruent with and in the same domains as the USAF's, especially when considering the concept that both air forces' stress ratios are relatively the same. The RCAF is in the process of addressing deficiencies in its ability to operate in an austere environment through the AFEC Program which has started to bridge those capability gaps and should have delivered all of its materiel, equipment and infrastructure by 2029. Despite these positive and hopeful advancements, the RCAF's main deficiencies remain in the domains of opposed entry and of high threat environment operations, where it would most likely contribute its limited capabilities to a larger coalition or U.S. led operation and could not (would not) operate independently. Assuredly, when examining *Canada's Defence Policy* it is fair to declare that Canada would not go it alone. This last conception brings the question of *Canada's national will* to the forefront and introduced the last chapter of this study where *what this meant for Canada* was explored.

This broad reaching question was undertaken in Chapter 4 using the lens of Canadian aerospace power academics James Fergusson, Thierry Gongora and Richard Goette as a backdrop. Their ideas on Canadian air power were used to introduce the arguments presented by this study.

From a conceptual perspective, it was demonstrated that the RCAF had solidified its position as a strategic instrument. In its own unique Canadian way, reflective of its expeditionary culture, the RCAF's transformation had undoubtedly assuaged some of the tensions related to the *capability gaps versus resource constraints* facing strategic and political decision makers even though this conception would continue to perpetually challenge small air forces like Canada's.

This study also proposed that by pursuing its expeditionary evolution, the RCAF had made itself into a more effective and efficient balanced air force, despite its small air force status. Its evolution, enhancing its relevance as a strategic tool, had broadened its menu of options encompassing not only the foreign policy away-game, but also here in Canada's and in North America's homeland security calculus.

The RCAF's relevance in the foreign policy arena, demonstrated by its contemporary operational employment and leading roles in multiple politically sensitive coalition and alliance operations proved the theory that a nation's aerospace power and foreign policy were indissociable.

Chapter 4 finally concluded that by endowing itself with the *ways and means* which strengthened its position in relation to the Canadian political and strategic agenda, here at home and abroad, the RCAF had become a truly strategic air force, and arguably its leading expeditionary force of the future. It would also serve itself and its country well by pursuing expeditionary niches which would ensure its relevance as it faces evolving future challenges to Canada's foreign interests and national security.

When considering the analysis proposed by this study in a holistic fashion, it can be credibly stated that the RCAF has significantly evolved into an expeditionary air force, in its own unique Canadian way. Its evolution, indicative of its own identity, is comparable and congruent with the USAF's evolution, especially so in the ideological, conceptual, systemic and structural domains. It can be argued that these institutionally and culturally forming advances consist of the bedrock which has solidified the RCAF's position as a more strategically relevant air force, making it perhaps the expeditionary tool of choice. The RCAF has increasingly so become strategically relevant not just for expeditionary operations abroad, but also importantly for expeditionary operations at home.

Keeping in mind the different shades of expeditionary, when considering to what degree the RCAF has endowed itself with expeditionary capabilities, it is fair to say that it is not a *complete* Robust version of an expeditionary air force. That said, its limitations, some of which are in the process of being addressed in the short to medium term and others that are somewhat enduring and congruent with the USAF's limitations, are hinged on Canada's Defence Policy and its foreign policy aspirations and ambitions. As such, Canada's culture and identity are indissociable with its aerospace power. Therefore, the RCAF's pursuit of further niche expeditionary capabilities, adding to its strategic relevance, also needs to be congruent and aligned with its foreign policy.

Finally, the RCAF's expeditionary transformation has happened, and continues to evolve while remaining true to its unique Canadian identity and culture. That said, present day and future leaders must not ignore that there are other CAF stakeholders in its own aerospace power

ways and not just its *means*. This conception must not be ignored and enhancing stakeholder understanding will only serve to solidify the RCAF's position as the expeditionary tool of choice for strategic and national security imperatives of the future. This is especially important in the Canadian context where the RCAF, under one single Chief of Defence Staff and one Minister of National Defence, is perhaps not seen independently as a tool of national security or foreign and defence policy, but more as a part of the CAF writ large. Put differently, it is possible that the RCAF's transformation into an expeditionary air force makes it more strategically relevant to the Canadian government as it contributes to the greater CAF's strategic utility to the Canadian government.

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