

**Sovereignty and Command in Canada–US  
Continental Air Defence, 1940–57**

*Richard Goette*



**UBC**Press · Vancouver · Toronto

Sample Material © UBC Press 2018

# Contents

List of Illustrations / viii

Foreword / ix

*By Lieutenant-General Pierre St-Amand*

Acknowledgments / xi

List of Abbreviations / xv

Introduction / 3

- 1 Command and Control, Sovereignty, Civil–Military Relations,  
and the Profession of Arms / 21
- 2 Command and Control Culture and Systems / 36
- 3 Wartime Planning for Command and Control / 71
- 4 Wartime Operational Level Command and Control / 86
- 5 Replacing ABC-22 / 106
- 6 Organizing and Coordinating Canada–US Air Defences / 132
- 7 The US Northeast Command / 151
- 8 Integrating North American Air Defences under Operational Control / 170

Conclusion / 193

Appendices / 201

Notes / 211

Select Bibliography / 275

## Introduction

CANADA HAS NEVER fought a war alone. Entering conflicts allied with another country or as a member of a coalition is part of the Canadian way of war.<sup>1</sup> This principle holds equally true for Canada's participation in expeditionary operations and continental air defence. Before the Second World War, Canadian armed forces primarily fought with or within British forces. After 1939, the Canadian military continued this trend, but gradually during the war its forces increasingly operated with American forces. This was particularly apparent in the area of continental air defence, where Canada and the United States worked together to protect North America first from Axis aggression and then from the Soviet bomber threat. In developing their continental air defence partnership, the two countries tackled the central issue of managing command and control over the operations of their combined forces.

This book offers a detailed assessment of the Canada–United States continental air defence command and control relationship from 1940 to 1957, starting with the Ogdensburg Agreement and ending with the establishment of the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD). In particular, it critically examines the degree of command and control authority that each nation was willing to grant commanders to exercise over their combined military forces to accomplish a mission. This authority was embodied in specific command and control principles, the definitions of which varied depending on the degree of authority and responsibility exercised. This book shows that the effort to find compromises between the unique joint command and control cultures of Canada, the United States, and Britain had a significant effect on the growth of the Canadian–American defence relationship. Equally important, history reveals that Canada upheld its sovereignty through this continental air defence command and control relationship.

## National Command

*The concern for command arrangements is not entirely based on emotion or pedantry. They are real concerns of national sovereignty.*  
– Douglas Bland<sup>2</sup>

In 1941, Lieutenant-General Andrew McNaughton, Canada's top soldier and future Minister of National Defence, remarked that "the acid test of sovereignty is the control of the armed forces."<sup>3</sup> This study on Canadian–American command and control arrangements encourages revision of McNaughton's statement to reflect the reality of the bilateral defence relationship. Definitions of command and control principles continually evolved from 1940 to 1957, and military personnel used terms with less precision than do members of today's Canadian Armed Forces (CAF).<sup>4</sup>

As McNaughton's quote demonstrates, military personnel often used the words "control" and "command" interchangeably. This is problematic, particularly as Canada's degree of command and control authority over its military forces has re-emerged as an important issue in the twenty-first century. Recent continental defence policy and organizational developments include the establishment of the United States Northern Command in 2002; the ongoing debate regarding Canadian participation in American ballistic missile defence; the establishment of Canadian unified commands in 2005 and Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC) in 2012; NORAD's expanded maritime surveillance mission and renewal "in perpetuity" in 2006; the possible enlargement of NORAD to include all continental defence responsibilities in addition to its aerospace defence role; and the 2017 Canadian Defence Policy's emphasis on a Canada "secure in North America" by being "active in a renewed defence partnership in NORAD and with the United States."<sup>5</sup> In several of these cases, some commentators fear that Canada's command and control relationship with the United States is undermining Canadian sovereignty.

For instance, in anticipation of the possible creation of a new Canadian–American North American Continental Defence Command, international law professor Michael Byers stresses that the NORAD operational control arrangement (discussed in [Chapter 8](#)) erodes Canadian sovereignty. In his report "Canadian Armed Forces under US Command," Byers asserts that the NORAD definition of "operational control" is too broad and includes "many of the powers civilians would envisage as falling within command," leading him to assert that "concerns about sovereignty cannot be overcome by technical distinction between 'command and operational control.'"<sup>6</sup>

This book offers an alternative hypothesis based on a careful examination of the historical evolution of command and control principles, including operational control. Whereas Byers asserts that “control over one’s armed forces is regarded as a central quality of a sovereign state,” this study demonstrates that the retention of *command* over a country’s armed forces is a central quality of a sovereign state.<sup>7</sup> The difference between command and operational control is not mere semantics. It represents a fundamental feature of Canadian military tradition and command and control culture: to retain command when operating with American armed forces in continental defence.<sup>8</sup> The purpose of this study, therefore, is to demonstrate that the key issue for Canada in its continental defence relationship with the United States was not control but *command*: command over Canadian air defence forces was the actual “acid test of sovereignty.” Canada was able to maintain command of its forces in all continental air defence command and control arrangements with the United States, thus securing Canadian sovereignty.

The Canada–United States continental air defence relationship deliberately excluded administration and discipline over Canadian forces in bilateral command and control arrangements. Instead, authority over these matters has remained a national prerogative.<sup>9</sup> It formed part of the command or “national command” that Canada’s civilian government maintained over Canadian forces, exercised through its military chiefs of staff – a practice that continues. From 1940 to 1957, these national military authorities were the Canadian Chiefs of Staff Committee (CSC) and, more specifically, the RCAF’s Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) for air force operations. All aspects of national command were a service (i.e., air force, navy, and army) prerogative, including authority over the assignment and original composition of forces, logistics, and administration and discipline. These powers could not be assigned or delegated to a commander from a foreign nation; the retention of national command in command and control arrangements with other countries was an effective guarantee of Canadian sovereignty.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, as [Chapter 2](#) demonstrates, Canada’s retention of national command as a service prerogative was consistent with American command and control practice and culture.

[Chapter 1](#) examines the link between command and sovereignty, demonstrating how the source of the Canadian military’s national command was (and remains) the Crown and flows down the military chain of command. The National Defence Act (NDA) granted the three service chiefs of staff responsibility for overall control and direction of their respective services under the direction of the Minister of National Defence (MND).<sup>11</sup> The heads of Canada’s air force, navy, and army thus had the authority to assign forces to a command organization and to delegate operational command of them to operational-level

commanders for specific tasks. This arrangement ensured a clear chain of command up from the operational-level commanders to the service chiefs of staff and onward to the defence minister.<sup>12</sup> In 1941, Brigadier-General Maurice Pope explained that the function of the service chiefs in Ottawa was

to assign missions and to provide the means necessary thereto. It is for the local [i.e., operational-level] commanders ... to execute the missions they receive. The Department of National Defence can only exercise its true function by means of directives. Any action on its part to take charge of operations as such, would simply hamper the responsible commander in the field.<sup>13</sup>

A service chief could technically exercise operational command of his service's forces, though this was not normal practice because he "would simply hamper the responsible commander in the field."<sup>14</sup> The exercise of operational-level command and control authority by a service chief also threatened to draw attention away from his national command responsibilities at the strategic level in Ottawa.<sup>15</sup>

Instead, a service chief usually delegated operational command to his service's operational-level commanders. For example, the RCAF's Chief of the Air Staff delegated operational command to the Air Officer Commanding (AOC) Eastern Air Command (EAC) in Halifax during the Second World War and to the AOC RCAF Air Defence Command (ADC) in St-Hubert during the 1950s. A service chief could also grant operational command (or operational control) to a commander from a different service for joint operations or, if necessary, to a foreign commander in command of bilateral or multilateral forces.<sup>16</sup> As the research in this book reveals, the subject of delegating operational command or operational control of RCAF forces to an American commander was a key issue in the Canada-US continental air defence command and control relationship.

Service culture and operational factors therefore played a large part in the decision to permit one's forces to come under the operational command or operational control of a foreign commander. From 1940 to 1957, national command and also operational command of Canadian air forces defending North America remained with the Canadian Chiefs of Staff, specifically the Chief of the Air Staff, and through him RCAF operational commanders. In this way, the Canadian military was able to protect Canada's sovereignty in its continental air defence relationship with the United States.

This book is written as Canadian military history, focusing specifically on the Royal Canadian Air Force's role in the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty from 1940 to 1957. The central aim is to show how Canadian military

professionals ensured effective command and control arrangements for the prosecution of the Canada–US continental air defence effort while maintaining Canadian sovereignty by retaining command over air defence forces. This study takes a more military functional approach to the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty – a perspective that needs to be explored in further detail in order to properly understand Canada–US continental air defence cooperation between 1940 and 1957.

### **A Functional Approach**

Borrowing a designation from American political scientist Joseph Jockel, this book takes a 1957 “functional view” instead of a 1958 “political view” of the Canada–US continental air defence relationship and the founding of NORAD. The former concerns the September 1957 establishment of NORAD as a binational Canada–US command with operational control authority over the two nations’ air defence forces. This perspective, based on the functional military professional imperative (discussed in greater detail in [Chapter 1](#)), focuses on the purely military or “functional” aspects of the Canada–US continental air defence relationship, particularly the efforts of officers from both countries to ensure effective coordination at the operational level to defend North America. By contrast, the political perspective (based on the May 1958 exchange of diplomatic notes as NORAD’s founding date) focuses on intergovernmental relations. It places greater weight on officials from Canada’s Department of External Affairs (DEA), who emphasized the “political” features of the continental air defence relationship such as diplomatic procedure and enhanced strategic consultation.<sup>17</sup>

“Functionalism” or the “functional principle” was a popular and much discussed Canadian foreign policy subject from the mid-1940s to the early 1950s. Representative of Canada’s internationalism and greater engagement in world affairs during this “golden age” of Canadian foreign policy, it entailed “the idea that state participation in international affairs be determined on an issue by issue basis, contingent upon the state’s interests, its prior contribution and its capacity for further involvement.”<sup>18</sup> While the military functionalism examined in this book is similar to the foreign policy functional principle in that both emphasize Canadians contributing to international endeavours and increasing Canadian influence, it also has important differences.

The functional 1957 perspective highlights that Canadian forces played an active and integral part of the overall air defence effort with the United States. Whereas the 1958 political perspective focused on Canada having a “seat at the table” to ensure a say in continental defence policy and strategy, the 1957 functional perspective allowed for a more intimate operational relationship

between Canadian and American military personnel. This exemplifies what Canadian political scientist Joel Sokolsky has called a “seat at the console” – a concept of equal if not more importance than “a seat at the table” because it allows Canadian officers at the operational level, working hand in hand with their American colleagues, to exercise and safeguard Canadian sovereignty while at the same time fulfilling an important operational role.<sup>19</sup>

Through a functional approach, the Canadian armed forces also negated a “defence against help” situation with the United States. As W.A.B. Douglas observed, “so often in coalition warfare, large and powerful allies sometimes seemed to pose the greatest threat.”<sup>20</sup> The concept of “defence against help” thus dictates that a country has to establish and maintain military credibility in order to avoid unwanted “help” from its larger neighbours. As theorist Nils Ørvik explained: “One credible objective for small states would be, while not attempting military resistance against a large neighbour, to persuade him that they are strong enough to defend themselves against any of the large neighbour’s potential enemies. This could help avoid the actual military presence of the great neighbour on one’s territory for reasons of military ‘help’ and assistance.”<sup>21</sup> Although Canada was (and still is) the larger partner geographically in the North American defence relationship, the United States was (and remains) much greater in terms of population, economic power, and military might. These factors, coupled with the strategic reality that Canada’s geography placed it between the United States and its enemies, meant that the “threat” that Douglas referred to put Canada in a classic potential defence-against-help situation from 1940 to 1957.

The concept of defence against help stressed that Canada maintain a certain credible level (in American eyes) of defensive capabilities. Canada could not take a “free ride” when it came to defence: if the United States lost confidence in Canada’s ability to defend itself, it might usurp Canadian sovereignty by taking independent unilateral action in Canadian territory, waters, or airspace to protect US security and defence interests.<sup>22</sup> General Pope articulated the dilemma succinctly in a 1944 letter to a colleague on the topic of postwar planning with the United States: “To the Americans the defence of the United States is continental defence, which includes us [Canada], and nothing that I can think will ever drive that idea out of their heads ... What we have to fear is more a lack of confidence in the United States as to our security, rather than enemy action.”<sup>23</sup> When Canada began collaborating with the Americans in continental defence during the Second World War it faced a defence-against-help situation; and that situation was only enhanced during the Cold War period with the rising threat posed by the Soviet Union. “Canadian actions would be determined not by ‘what we think the Soviets might do,’” Louis Grimshaw



explained, “but rather by ‘what we think the Americans think the Soviets might do.’” Preventing American unilateral action in Canadian territory to defend its northern flank became a key concern of the Canadian government.<sup>24</sup> From 1940 onwards, Canada had to ensure its security from the enemy through close collaboration with the United States while at the same time safeguarding its sovereignty in the context of bilateral defence cooperation.<sup>25</sup>

While some literature on Canada’s early defence relationship with the United States has a negative tone, this study pursues a more positive approach. Pessimistic defence commentators have argued that the military situation during the Second World War and the Cold War placed Canada in the unenviable position of having to bend to American pressures and become a US “satellite” or “protectorate.”<sup>26</sup> By contrast, this study shows that in its continental air defence command and control relations with the United States, Canada was able to protect its sovereignty by avoiding a defence-against-help situation. Canadian steadfastness was important, but so too was the accommodating and respectful approach that the United States took with its northern neighbour. Granted, some American officials were annoyed by Canadian resoluteness – what one called Canada’s “pride and little brother attitude.”<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, the Americans were also quite cognizant of Canadian sensibilities regarding sovereignty and command. For this reason, they did not try to coerce Canada into accepting the United States’ position.<sup>28</sup>

The Americans did not violate or undermine Canadian sovereignty by bullying Canada and imposing undesirable command and control arrangements. Instead, respectful of Canada’s opinions, the Americans did what they have always done and continue to do: they sat down and negotiated mutually agreeable solutions that respected Canadian sovereignty and that placed limits on American command and control over Canadian forces. This was entirely consistent with the historical record of Canadian–American relations as they relate to sovereignty (especially in the Arctic) in that Canada was able to balance sovereignty and security interests, the United States did not undermine Canada’s sovereignty, and collaboration and compromise remained an effective and viable approach.<sup>29</sup>

After 1940, the Canadian military (and specifically the RCAF during the early Cold War period) also aided the cause of Canadian sovereignty through its attitude towards the continental defence relationship. Instead of taking a belligerent or defensive stance, the Canadian military advocated playing an active role by developing effective and efficient bilateral command and control arrangements with the Americans. In other words, Canadian officers chose what historian Whitney Lackenbauer has called a “piece of the action” approach: participating in continental defence efforts with the United States

enabled Canada to protect its sovereignty from American intervention.<sup>30</sup> Early Cold War RCAF officers definitely understood this requirement. Writing in 1954, Air Commodore W.I. Clements observed:

I feel that one of *the most important* considerations is that now, in peacetime, we have a good opportunity of getting a set-up that would suit us or come somewhere near it (“us” being Canadians – government, services and civilians). If nothing is done until war comes we might find things moving with great rapidity and the Americans might, on the excuse of national survival, suddenly take over everything overnight and if New York, etc., were being hydrogen bombed Canada’s complaints about national sovereignty might not be heard above the other noises. I feel Canada should take the initiative now in view of what we stand to gain.<sup>31</sup>

What Canada stood to gain was a “seat at the console” for the RCAF. Canadian airmen would have a “piece of the action” in terms of an important operational role in continental air defence while simultaneously safeguarding Canadian sovereignty.

Active participation with the United States in air defence also promised another, often overlooked advantage for Canada. Not only would Canadian sovereignty be protected, but working with the Americans would also help protect Canadian territory and people from enemy attack.<sup>32</sup> Canada’s relationship with the United States was not simply a choice between sovereignty *or* security: by engaging with the Americans in the defence of North America, Canada could have both.<sup>33</sup>

In summary, this book fleshes out Lackenbauer’s “piece of the action” hypothesis. Despite the overwhelming power of the United States, Canada took an active role in arranging an effective continental air defence command and control relationship with the Americans, which helped ensure that Canadian forces did not come under US command. Canada was able to avoid a defence-against-help situation with the United States, maintain Canadian sovereignty, and provide effective air defence of the continent.

### **Distinguishing between Continental Defence and Coalitions**

There are unique circumstances in a continental defence situation compared to coalition undertakings that dictate a different approach to command and control. In the experience of Canada and the United States, a coalition effort, whether it is a formal military alliance such as NATO or a collection of “two or more nations’ militaries working together to support a specific objective,” is typically expeditionary and almost always consists of various nations. In this

case, the term “combined” (denoting the multilateral interaction of forces from two or more countries) applies.<sup>34</sup> Command and control of operations in coalitions can be very complex and inefficient due to varying and often conflicting national interests. Martha Maurer describes this best:

Within a coalition, common cause and mutual interest are balanced against minority views and national interests. One body has one head and one perspective, but a coalition has many heads and many national views reflecting economic, cultural, and institutional differences. The motivation and self-interest that underline the development of a coalition must be powerful enough to counter the forces of separation. Yet, divisiveness remains part of the nature of the coalition and that tension must be acknowledged.<sup>35</sup>

Some differences can be avoided in formal military alliances such as NATO, where there is greater standardization of equipment, doctrine, and approaches to operations.<sup>36</sup> This is more difficult in coalitions consisting of nations with greater cultural differences. Again, Maurer’s observations are illustrative: “any coalition can be overlaid with regional variations of politics, ethnic and cultural values, and religious influences. These differences may extend into the command and control arena. Different philosophies of life or world view (Western, Asian, Arab) may influence national theories of command and control and, therefore[,] of military doctrine.”<sup>37</sup> Although Canada–US continental defence has some similarities to coalition command and control, there are also important differences.

The close regional Canada–US defence partnership makes the North American continental security relationship unique. Although the term “combined” could technically apply to the Canada–US continental defence effort, the terms “bilateral” or “binational” are more accurate and are accepted in the lexicon of the two countries. Whereas bilateral denotes cooperation between two separate national military chains of command, binational entails (in addition to two separate chains of command) the integration of two nations’ military forces into a single, unified entity. In the case of Canada and the United States, that organization has been institutionalized in the form of NORAD, the world’s most successful binational military command.<sup>38</sup>

The most important distinctive feature of continental defence is that it is the defence of one’s sovereign territory *in partnership* with another nation in the defence of their territory. There are correspondingly important command and control considerations. In national (domestic) defence operations one has full national command over one’s forces and there are no restrictions on the authority of one’s operational commanders.<sup>39</sup> In coalitions there are multiple

restrictions and caveats. Continental defence is different because it is neither purely national defence nor is it coalition warfare. Because part of continental defence involves defending one's own territory, authorities and inherent sovereignty concerns need to be taken into account in command and control arrangements. It was therefore predictable that Canadian military leaders adopted a harder line to ensure Canadian command over its forces in its continental air defence relationship with the United States.

One reality of both coalition (combined) and continental defence (bilateral) command and control is that the more substantial the contribution by a nation – in terms of both number of forces provided and financial responsibility assumed – the greater influence it will have over the command and control of operations.<sup>40</sup> The nation that contributes the most will in all likelihood provide the overall commander exercising command and control authority over the assigned (combined or bilateral) forces. The size of contribution became a key consideration for Canadian and American planners and commanders during the Second World War (notably in Newfoundland, as [Chapter 4](#) demonstrates) and was one of the main reasons why the USAF took a leading role when Canada and the United States began coordinating and then integrating their air defence forces during the early Cold War period. It is also the primary reason why the NORAD Commander has always been an American four-star officer (with a Canadian air force three-star deputy).

Since the air defence mission dominated the problem of continental defence in North America by the early Cold War, this book focuses on the Canada–US continental *air* defence command and control relationship. During the Second World War, however, air defence formed an integral part of the overall continental defence effort – army, navy as well as air force – in both countries. When examining that time period, therefore, this study analyzes the bilateral air defence command and control relationship within more general continental defence efforts. The air forces that Canada and the United States devoted to continental defence during the war also played an important part in the defence of Allied shipping. Since both countries' air forces conducted most operations in a maritime trade defence role, the issue of command and control over maritime air forces became intimately involved with the overall Canada–US debate over continental defence forces. So too did military culture.

### **Military Culture, Institutional Service Identity, and Motivations**

Military culture embodied in institutional service identities, interests, and other motivations related to the profession of arms played an important role in Canadian–American negotiations for continental air defence command and

control arrangements. The military profession possesses what political scientist Eliot Cohen calls a “corporateness or a sense of community and commitment to members of one’s group.”<sup>41</sup> The Canadian planners who conducted the command and control negotiations identified themselves as being part of a unique profession and as an integral part of an important national institution. In addition to identifying with the profession of arms writ large, Canadian military officers identified with their particular operational environment or service. This was embodied in service culture, and identifiers included specific customs and traditions associated with membership in the army, navy, or air force, but also particular institutional knowledge and skills of the service – military expertise.<sup>42</sup>

Professional military identity was also transnational. As American political scientist Samuel B. Huntington noted, “the possession of a common professional skill is a bond among military officers cutting across other differences,” including nationalities and borders.<sup>43</sup> Canadian officers saw themselves as Canadian military professionals but also as part of the community of Western military professionals. This is what Joel Sokolsky calls the “international fraternity of the uniform.” It emphasizes the military functional imperative and consists of a “set of institutional and personal ties, which can exist almost independently of governments. In this fraternity, allegiance is to the common goal and the military means of implementing it.”<sup>44</sup> Traditionally, Canadian officers identified most with the British military and thus adopted British military culture and traditions. During the early Cold War period, however, they increasingly came to identify with their American allies. This was especially so for Canadian airmen.

An important part of the identity of Canadian air force officers was the RCAF’s institutional knowledge of and skill in air power. Because these officers identified themselves as airmen, service concerns about the RCAF as a professional air power institution – including the future of that institution<sup>45</sup> – were key features of continental air defence command and control arrangements with the United States. During the early Cold War period in particular, this institutional air power service culture also meant that RCAF officers began to increasingly identify with their USAF brethren. Airmen on both sides of the border saw air defence as a common continental problem and agreed on the interrelated goals of defending people, cities, and industries in North America from Soviet strategic bombers armed with atomic bombs and protecting the deterrent value of the USAF’s Strategic Air Command (SAC) as a means to prevent the outbreak of a nuclear war.<sup>46</sup> As James Fergusson notes, “for the two air forces, strategic air defence cooperation made simple functional sense, reinforced by the natural ties that exist via organizational culture between functionally identical military services.”<sup>47</sup>

The RCAF dedicated a significant amount of its resources and attention to the air defence role in conjunction with the USAF. This included designing and fielding all-weather jet interceptors such as the CF-100 Canuck, building American F-86 Sabre fighter aircraft in Canada, and working in conjunction with the United States to build a series of radar lines in Canada's North.<sup>48</sup> The RCAF also sought to achieve greater standardization, interoperability, and integration with the USAF. In 1947, the Canada–US Permanent Joint Board on Defence (PJBD) released a Joint Statement calling for “common designs and standards in arms, equipment, organization, methods of training and new developments” with the United States, and in 1948 the RCAF was a signatory to the Air Standardization Coordination Committee, the forerunner of today's Air Space Interoperability Council.<sup>49</sup> The RCAF's increasing identification with the United States Air Force (USAF) was also an important cultural paradigm shift for Canadian airmen.

During the early Cold War period, Canadian airmen began to identify less with Britain's Royal Air Force (RAF) and more with the USAF. The RCAF adopted much of the USAF's doctrine and methods, sent some of its officers to American professional military education institutions such as the National Defence College and the Air University, and began posting officers to the USAF Air Defense Command to ensure greater consistency in practices and a common operational picture. Historian Ray Stouffer notes that Canadian and American airmen “came from similar social backgrounds” and that working closely with the USAF “was less [of] a cultural affront” to the RCAF because American airmen treated the Canadians as allies, unlike the British, who had treated them as “colonials” – which the Canadians resented – during the Second World War, when Canadian airmen deployed overseas served under the RAF (see [Chapter 2](#)).<sup>50</sup> Here the value of the “human element” was readily apparent.

This study demonstrates the importance of the “human element” of individual professional interaction in the Canada–US continental air defence relationship. Canadian military personnel had to foster common views and cordial and effective working relationships with individuals from their own service, members from the other Canadian services, and American personnel as they planned and worked together at the operational level. The relationship between Canadian and American personnel could be difficult and confrontational at times, but the development of positive, personal working relationships between like-minded people promoted close bonds and encouraged common views on air defence, especially during the early Cold War. From an air force perspective, professional interactions, mutual respect, and cordial

working relationships enhanced the bonds between Canadian and American airmen and the interoperability between their services.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, this shared identity as airmen working together in the continental air defence effort strengthened the functional imperative and was a key factor in the increased coordination, integration, and centralization of Canadian–American air defence command and control during the 1950s, which culminated in the formation of NORAD in 1957.<sup>52</sup>

The cultural bonds between Canadian and American airmen also served the RCAF's institutional interests. Canadian airmen were able to convince their political masters of the primacy of air power in the nuclear age and thereby further the RCAF's institutional goals.<sup>53</sup> As James Eayrs has noted, during the early Cold War the RCAF's "role was more easily defined, its status more prestigious, its connections more powerful. Its funds, in consequence, were more plentiful and its future more assured."<sup>54</sup> It was no surprise that during these "golden years" the RCAF garnered the lion's share of the Canadian defence budget, a significant portion of which was dedicated to air defence. With this increased funding came increased responsibility and accountability as well as difficult choices regarding priorities, but the RCAF leadership was able to successfully advocate air power (especially the air defence role) and leverage its growing bond with the USAF to further its institutional goals.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, by focusing on the air defence role and greater integration and interoperability with the USAF in carrying out this role, the RCAF was also able to reinforce its independence from the Canadian Army and Royal Canadian Navy.<sup>56</sup> Yet by no means did the growing military bond between Canada and the United States mean that Canadian officers submitted entirely to American wishes.

Canadian nationalism was also an important motivation in the Canada–US continental air defence command and control relationship. It was not just politicians and officials from the Department of External Affairs who, anxious to consolidate gains made during the interwar period in securing greater Canadian autonomy, were desirous of freedom of action and weary of American domination of the Canada–US defence relationship. Canadian officers identified as Canadians and expressed nationalist passions in their efforts to retain command of Canada's military forces.<sup>57</sup> For personal and nationalistic reasons, no Canadian officer indicated that he was keen to be forced under foreign command.<sup>58</sup> Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrate this nationalism most clearly in the context of the negotiations for the ABC-22 Canada–US defence plan and the operational relationship in Newfoundland during the Second World War. Different national cultural approaches to military matters between Canada and the United States affected their command and control relationship. This

included conflicting national strategic estimates of the enemy threat to North America as well as differing strategic, organizational, and doctrinal approaches to air power, all of which were instrumental to Canadian success at resisting American unity of command during the Second World War. Canadian officers went to great lengths to retain Canadian command when negotiating command and control arrangements with the United States, affirming their nationalist motives and concerns about protecting Canadian sovereignty.

Nationalism and differing national approaches to military matters also extended into the early Cold War period. During this time, American strategic culture was very offensively oriented towards the nuclear-armed Strategic Air Command and strategic defence was thus not as much of a priority for the United States as it was for Canada. This factor would play into discussions on the future of air defence and Canada's role and relative importance. The main purpose of the RCAF's air defence system was to protect the SAC deterrent and provide warning time for USAF strategic bombers to launch a counter-strike against the Soviet Union – a role that was in direct support of (and therefore made an important functional contribution to) the overall American offensive strategic posture. Nonetheless, this RCAF role in the continental air defence system was still doctrinally a defensive one that appealed to the Canadian public and politicians and served Canadian security interests.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, Canadian airmen were also not as engrossed in SAC nuclear bomber theory and doctrine as their USAF counterparts. To be sure, the RCAF grew closer to the USAF in terms of its culture and identity, but it is notable that the RCAF adopted a “fighters first” emphasis on air defence and retained its distinctive British-style rank structure and uniform during the early Cold War period.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, James Eayrs credits Canadian airmen for their cautious approach of “capitalizing on (but capitulating to) doctrines of air power sedulously propagated in the United States” and “reject[ing] the simplistic SAC approach to international problems.”<sup>61</sup> James Jackson, a professor at the RCAF Staff College during the 1950s, echoes this sentiment, noting that the RCAF “avoid[ed] the USAF's excesses.”<sup>62</sup> The RCAF's functional approach to air defence found favour in Ottawa, which gave it a high priority in terms of political and material commitment. Ottawa devoted greater relative political and military attention to continental defence arrangements than Washington, a factor that helps explain how and why Canada was able to use its functional approach to protect Canadian sovereignty.

### **Chapter Summary**

This book has eight chapters. [Chapter 1](#) delves into the issue of command and control, articulating the various theories and approaches on the subject,



and shows the link between command and sovereignty. It also situates this study in civil–military relations (CMR) theory and Canadian Profession of Arms doctrine. [Chapter 2](#) discusses command and control culture by examining specific command and control principles, concepts, organization, and ideas, demonstrating that the Canada–US continental air defence relationship was based on a combination of British, American, and Canadian command and control culture and practice, categorized into five individual “systems.” [Chapter 3](#) argues that the unique Canadian and American command and control cultures conflicted once the two nations began planning together for the defence of North America in the early years of the Second World War. Nonetheless, the two countries were eventually able to put their differences aside and find middle ground by establishing a compromise cooperation/unity of command system in ABC-22. [Chapter 4](#) examines the relationship between Canadian and American operational-level commanders during the war. Focusing on Newfoundland, where the forces of both nations were stationed, and on the Pacific coast after Pearl Harbor, it shows that national disagreements persisted among commanders regarding what the command and control relationship between their forces should be. When it became apparent that the Canadian system was not working for combined Canada–US maritime air operations in the Northwest Atlantic, Canadian and American military officials implemented the more effective British operational control system, establishing an important precedent for the postwar period.

[Chapter 5](#) outlines the development of a new Soviet aerial threat to North America in the early postwar period and Canadian efforts to avoid a potential defence-against-help situation with the United States. Canada–US planning changed from a generalized continental defence focus to concentration on air defence, though the Canada–US Basic Security Plan (BSP) largely retained the same command and control arrangements. [Chapter 6](#) examines bilateral emergency defence planning and argues that Canada and the United States began to organize their national air defences under centralized command and control in response to the growing strategic threat from Soviet bombers, now armed with nuclear weapons, in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The two countries agreed to new arrangements for cross-border fighter interception and mutual reinforcement, which had important command and control implications.

[Chapter 7](#) offers a case study of the RCAF’s command and control relationship with the US Northeast Command. The United States and Canada formalized the principle of operational control in national airspace through an arrangement that allowed the RCAF to exercise operational control over USAF aircraft operating in Newfoundland airspace. This arrangement established a crucial precedent for NORAD, the culmination of the Canada–US continental air defence

command and control relationship, which is critically re-examined in [Chapter 8](#). When USAF and RCAF officers sought to integrate North American air defences and centralize them under one overall commander, Canadian officials expressed deep concern that they might be surrendering sovereignty by giving command of Canadian air forces to the Americans. This [final chapter](#) argues that sovereignty concerns were allayed by deciding, at the suggestion of the RCAF leadership, to formalize operational control as the command and control principle exercised by the NORAD Commander-in-Chief (and his RCAF deputy in his absence).

### **Terminology and Language**

Precise terminology is important. Definitions of command and control principles were still evolving in the 1940–57 period, and military personnel often used terms such as “control” and “command” interchangeably to mean the same thing. This study reveals how modern definitions of command and control terms arose from years of evolution and change. For the sake of clarity and consistency, this book adopts modern definitions of command and control principles from current Canadian Armed Forces doctrine. In quotations that contain command and control terminology that does not adhere to current definitions, the modern command and control term is placed in square brackets.

It is also important to define the levels of war or conflict. The strategic level is the one “at which a nation, or group of nations, determines national or alliance security aims and objectives and develops and uses national resources to attain them.” The operational level is the one “at which campaigns are planned, conducted and sustained to achieve military strategic objectives within an area of responsibility.” The tactical level is where “military actions are planned and executed to achieve the military objectives assigned to tactical formations and units.”<sup>63</sup> The operational level thus connects the strategic and tactical levels and focuses on the use of military forces to accomplish missions. Command and control of Canadian air forces at the strategic level in Ottawa was quite distinct from the authority that Canadian or foreign commanders exercised at the operational level, which is where the most important command and control interaction between Canada and the United States took place from 1940 to 1957. Consequently, this book focuses on the evolution of operational-level command and control arrangements between the two countries.

In the 1940–57 period (and especially during the Second World War), the operational level of conflict remained a relatively new concept in the English-speaking world. Joe Sharpe and Allan English explain that Commonwealth aircrews during the war saw the term “operational” as “indicat[ing] that someone

was ready to go on 'ops' as opposed to still being in training."<sup>64</sup> The exact meaning of the term "operational" and the relationship of the operational level to the other two levels of warfare continued to evolve during the period studied. Military personnel used the term "operational" when referring to the operational level of warfare but also freely used the terms "strategic" and "tactical" interchangeably to mean the same thing.

Service personnel also used the terms "joint" and "combined" interchangeably, and oftentimes even in reverse of today's usage. To be consistent with current military terminology, the term "joint" in this book will mean two or more services, while "combined" will refer to multilateral (two or more nations) interaction, usually in a coalition or an alliance.<sup>65</sup> This study also uses the most recent Canadian Armed Forces doctrine to serve both as a basis of understanding for the reader and as a comparison to historical military terminology.

© UBC Press 2018

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without prior written permission of the publisher, or, in Canada, in the case of photocopying or other reprographic copying, a licence from Access Copyright, [www.accesscopyright.ca](http://www.accesscopyright.ca).

27 26 25 24 23 22 21 20 19 18 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in Canada on FSC-certified ancient-forest-free paper  
(100% post-consumer recycled) that is processed chlorine- and acid-free.

### Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

---

Goette, Richard Evan, author

Sovereignty and command in Canada – US continental air defence, 1940-57 / Richard Goette.

(Studies in Canadian military history)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Issued in print and electronic formats.

ISBN 978-0-7748-3687-6 (hardcover). – ISBN 978-0-7748-3689-0 (PDF)

ISBN 978-0-7748-3690-6 (EPUB). – ISBN 978-0-7748-3691-3 (Kindle)

1. Air defenses – Canada – History – 20th century. 2. Air defenses – United States – History – 20th century. 3. Command and control systems – Canada – History – 20th century. 4. Command and control systems – United States – History – 20th century. 5. Canada – Military relations – United States – History – 20th century. 6. United States – Military relations – Canada – History – 20th century. I. Title. II. Series: Studies in Canadian military history

UG735.C3G64 2018

358.4'160971

C2018-900885-7

C2018-900886-5

---

## Canada

UBC Press gratefully acknowledges the financial support for our publishing program of the Government of Canada (through the Canada Book Fund), the Canada Council for the Arts, and the British Columbia Arts Council.

This book has been published with the help of a grant from the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, through the Awards to Scholarly Publications Program, using funds provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Publication of this book has been financially supported by the Canadian War Museum.

Printed and bound in Canada by Friesens

Set in Minion Pro by Marquis Interscript

Copy editor: Matthew Kudelka

Proofreader: Judith Earnshaw

Indexer: Cathy Murphy

Cover designer: David Drummond

Cartographer: Mike Bechthold

UBC Press

The University of British Columbia

2029 West Mall

Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z2

[www.ubcpress.ca](http://www.ubcpress.ca)

Sample Material © UBC Press 2018