

AIR FORCE FORCE AÉRIENNE

Crew Brief

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Message from the Chief of the Air Staff

As the new Chief of the Air Staff and Commander of Air Command, I am pleased to forward you this Fall edition of *Crew Brief* on behalf of all members of the Air Force team. For those of you who may have attended the Change of Command ceremony in July, you know that I am keen to build on the accomplishments of my predecessor, Lieutenant-General (Ret'd) Lloyd Campbell and continue his outstanding work in leading the Air Force through these interesting and challenging times.

My comments are brief in this edition because I think the accomplishments, developments and challenges outlined in this issue speak volumes about where we're at as an organization and how we're continuing to fulfill the Air Force mission in spite of those challenges.

Even though times are tough on both the personnel and equipment fronts we are dealing with these challenges. Our biggest asset is our "can do" ability to do the job in spite of these facts; our biggest liability is that we "can do" our assigned missions so well in spite of severe shortages.

The cumulative effects of budgetary, personnel and other pressures are exposing unexpected and unintended consequences concomitant with reductions in readiness and capability that are being dealt with in the near term so that the Air Force can remain viable and relevant. We could not have weathered the shocks of the past decade without the excellent quality of our men and women.



Former Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) LGen (Ret'd) Lloyd Campbell (left), Chief of Defence Staff General Ray Henault (Centre) and incoming CAS LGen Ken Pennie at the Change of Command ceremony in July.

As you know, we have recruiting and retention issues; the modernization, upgrading and / or age of our various fleets is a continuous challenge to our ability to fulfill our operational and training commitments; and of course, the evolving global, regional and national security environment is creating new enemies and new threats, changing relationships and altering the very nature of military operations.

Can we respond? Absolutely, as long as we as an Air Force get back to the basics of producing a fit, disciplined and expeditionary force, one that reinforces the Chain of Command as our raison d'être and the driver of achievable results at every level within the organization.

Of course, we at the headquarters continue to develop programs and strategies to support the Chain of Command and we will continue to update you on those initiatives. In the meantime, thank you for your ongoing support and I hope you enjoy reading this latest sit rep on what we've been up to these past few months.

Sic Itur Ad Astra

Ken R. Pennie
Lieutenant General
Chief of the Air Staff

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CHECK OUT THIS YEAR'S AFAC AWARD WINNERS AND AN OPERATIONS UPDATE AT:

http://www.airforce.forces.gc.ca/news/crew/index_e.htm



EQUIPMENT

Air Force gives breathing room to CC-130 Hercules and Maritime Helicopter expected to go to tender

You may recall in our last issue we spoke of the ripple affect facing our CC-130 *Hercules* fleet in terms of grounded aircraft due to maintenance, spare parts and hangar space issues.

Although these issues continue to be a challenge, the Air Force has decided to reduce the Yearly Flying Rate (YFR) for the *Hercules* fleet this fiscal year from 21,000 flying hours to 16,200 flying hours. Other measures include contracting-out some periodic inspections to civilian firms and having some periodic inspections performed by 435 Transport and Rescue Squadron at 17 Wing, Winnipeg. A high operational tempo and an aging fleet have combined to reduce the number of available aircraft to the point where it became obvious that 21,000 flying hours was simply unattainable.

The nineteen older E-model *Hercules* in use by the

Canadian Air Force are the highest-time military *Hercules* in the world, with most having accumulated between 40,000 and 44,000 flying hours. As the aircraft age, the time required for periodic inspections, which are conducted every 900 flying hours, has increased. As well, the Progressive Structural Inspections, conducted by a contracted maintenance facility every 3,600 flying hours in concert with a periodic inspection, also consume more time.

The reaction from the Wing level seems to be one of relief, that the YFR reductions will allow the squadrons some much-needed breathing room and the time to "roll with the punches" as we continue to address the future of air mobility at the strategic level.

Meanwhile, I am happy to report that the next major milestone in the search for a new Maritime Helicopter will be the release of a Request For Proposal (RFP), which was

scheduled for sometime this fall with the announcement for the winning bid for the new maritime helicopter (MH) contract expected in early to mid-2004.

The RFP is for 28 fully integrated maritime helicopters, a simulation and training suite, integrated logistics support, ship modifications and a 20-year in-service support contract.

In December 2002, the Government gave the MHP team the procurement strategy and go-ahead for the pre-qualification phase. The project team is confident in the process and is convinced the helicopter they are asking for will meet the CF's needs well into the 21st century and arguably be one of the world's most robust maritime helicopters.

The process began with the 1999 Statement of Operational Requirement (SOR), which defined the operational needs

of the Air Force and Navy as directed by the two environments. The SOR has not changed since its approval in 1999.

Three interested companies have been identified as capable of meeting the stringent requirements of the new MH: E.H. Industries Limited, Lockheed Martin Canada Inc. and Sikorsky International Operations Inc. The process has taken a lot of work and debate, the end result being a very robust SOR and technical specifications. There's no doubt in our minds it will be the premier maritime helicopter in the world when delivered.

In the meantime, our CH-124 *Sea King* crews continue to perform in an outstanding fashion as they, like the rest of us, wait with great anticipation to see what the future holds for this important and necessary component of CF operations. ■

Last Cormorant arrives

The Air Force took delivery of the last of 15 state-of-the-art CH-149 *Cormorant* Search and Rescue helicopters earlier this summer, marking a major milestone in the Canadian Search and Rescue Helicopter project. The well-travelled *Cormorant* and crew departed the EH Industries factory at Vergiate, Italy on Canada Day, arriving at 8 Wing Trenton on July 15, by way of France, England, Norway, Belgium, Scotland, the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland, Iqaluit, Kuujuaq and Bagotville. The route across the North Atlantic has become well-travelled since the first *Cormorant* made its maiden voyage to Comox in October, 2001. Since then, it has assumed helicopter SAR duties at two of four squadrons, replacing the CH-113 *Labrador* helicopter, which has been in service since 1963. With its speed, carrying capacity,

endurance and all-weather performance, the *Cormorant* provides Canada with a powerful new search and rescue aircraft that is already effecting spectacular rescues that would have been impossible with the *Labrador*. Greenwood-based 413 Squadron is midway through its transition to the new helicopter while 424 Squadron in Trenton is expected to finalize overall implementation of the *Cormorant* fleet in March 2004.

Meanwhile, a five-member crew from 103 Search and Rescue Squadron became the first to earn the new *Cormorant Helicopter Rescue Trophy* for their



courageous efforts in successfully rescuing sixteen crewmembers from a stricken vessel off the coast of Newfoundland on a stormy winter night last January. The trophy was commissioned and given to the Canadian Forces last year by Agusta-Westland / EHI, makers of the *Cormorant* helicopter, to recognize the heroic efforts of search and rescue professionals. ■



MEMBER PROFILE

Colonel (Ret'd) Chris Hadfield



Colonel (Ret'd) Chris Hadfield, (pictured in 1987 at 3 Wing Bagotville) Air Force pilot and the first Canadian to walk in space, officially retired from the Canadian Forces in October to pursue his career as a civilian astronaut with the Canadian Space Agency in Houston. Earlier this year, Col (Ret'd) Hadfield reflected on how his career in the Air Force prepared him for life as an astronaut.

After a lifetime of anticipation and years of training, the morning finally arrived. The crew and I woke up in Florida, a team of people suited us up, and we stepped on to the silver bus and rode out into the morning sun.

The Space Shuttle *Atlantis* awaited us, standing tall on her launch pad. We rode the elevator up 60 meters to the White Room, crawled on hands and knees through *Atlantis's* hatch, and strapped into the space ship, one by one.

Lying on my back, staring straight up into the brightening November sky, I had a couple hours to wait while the ground crew put *Atlantis* through her final checks. I joked with my crewmates, and reviewed and re-reviewed my checklists and tasks during the upcoming launch. But there was also time to think, and look not only forwards at the upcoming event, but also backwards at the path that had led me to that seat, in that cockpit, waiting for the engines to light.

I had always wanted to fly. Ever since I watched the first

men walk on the Moon I had sought to be a pilot, a test pilot, and an astronaut. I joined the Air Cadets when I was 13, and learned to fly gliders at Mountainview, and powered airplanes in London. I joined the Air Force in Hamilton in 1978, and went to Royal Roads and the Royal Military College. And I learned to fly, to really fly, in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.

Lying there, I thought back to one of my early solo training flights in the *Tutor*, south of Old Wives' Lake. The flight was intended to practice specific manoeuvres to get ready for a flying test, but it was a summer's day with tall puffy cumulus clouds, and I spent the whole tank of gas soaring and twisting higher and freer than I'd ever been in my life, chasing those clouds and smiling and laughing 'til my face hurt.

Snapping back to reality, we worked through the last minutes of launch countdown, until *Atlantis's* engines violently roared into life. With huge shaking and power we tore up off the pad, and were pummelled and squished into our

seats as we were hurled up off of Earth, above the atmosphere, and into space. Nine minutes later we had used up all our fuel, the engines suddenly shut down, and we were weightless in orbit.

I watched everything start to float around me, and slowly and carefully unstrapped. Gently easing out of my helmet and gloves, I opened a locker and took out a huge camera to take photos of the external tank and of earth. And less than 90 minutes later we had flown around the earth once, and were coming up over Southern Ontario.

Looking through the long lens of the camera and snapping pictures, I watched my homeland roll by. I saw Sarnia, where I was born, and then London, where I'd learned to fly. Toronto rolled by, and I brought up the lens a little to look for Trenton and Mountainview, the place of my first glider flight, and first solo. As it came into focus it was as if my camera, the Shuttle, and my whole life stopped for a moment. I suddenly saw myself, floating effortlessly, high above the place where my life's path had begun. The countless faces of those who had taught and guided me, the chances I had been given as a Canadian, and the life I'd had in the Air Force all instantly came home to me.

I whispered a silent, heartfelt thank-you to all those who had led me there, took a last few photos of that old runway so far below, and got back to work.

Per Ardua Ad Astra
Chris Hadfield
Colonel (Ret'd)
Astronaut

Note from CAS: I would be remiss if I did not accept Col (Ret'd) Hadfield's thanks on behalf of the Air Force and offer the Air Force's thanks in return for his 25 years of dedication, professionalism, and outstanding service. He has realized his dreams and our motto, Per Ardua Ad Astra.

Depart with Dignity

The Air Force and the Canadian Forces have long recognized the importance of recognizing the contributions of our most valued asset, the men and women in uniform who honourably serve their country. Unfortunately, we have not been very successful in recognizing their accomplishments upon their retirement. As a result, the CF has started a new program, **Depart With Dignity**, to ensure that all members are appropriately and consistently recognized upon their departure from the organization. The Air Force **Depart With Dignity** program took flight several months ago. Our program includes an Air Force certificate of appreciation that recognizes the devotion, dedication and professionalism of each releasing or retiring member of the Air Force (as well as those Navy and Army personnel who request their affiliation to the Air Force be recognized upon retirement). I have made it a point to personally sign each Air Force certificate of appreciation so that we can fully support the spirit of the program, which is to offer recognition to all members from the highest level possible. ■



PERSONNEL

Pilot recruitment campaign underway

The Air Force is mounting an aggressive pilot recruitment campaign, in conjunction with Canadian Forces Recruiting Group, to bolster the number of people applying to become CF pilots. Currently, we have about 1332 pilots, however, we should have approximately 1475.

As a result, we are attempting to recruit approximately 184 men and women under the Direct Entry Officer (DEO) plan. The total recruiting target for new pilots this year is 222, which includes entry via Royal Military College, direct from a civilian university (DEO), internal CF occupational transfers as well as a limited number of high school graduates under the recently re-activated Continuing Education Officer Training Plan. It may seem surprising that we are falling short for pilots, however, the challenges we're facing are due to complex and inter-related factors, including economic, demographic and organizational (training) issues. Also, the CF has not actively promoted or advertised the military pilot occupation in the past because historically there have been plenty of applicants. As a result Canadians may not be aware of the opportunities in this profession.

We hope that the \$4.5 million recruitment advertising campaign, which began this fall, will inform Canadians about the opportunities in the pilot occupation. We are confident that the pilot occupation offers a challenging and rewarding career for those Canadian men and women who have the right stuff for this exciting job.

Meanwhile, on the aircraft technician side of the house, and our efforts to regenerate the MOC 500 series trades (Avionics, Aviation and Aircraft Structures technicians), our recruitment, re-enrolment and regeneration efforts are slowly turning the tide. The 500 series trades have historically made up approximately 37-39 per cent of the Air Force; and with so many of those technicians approaching their retirement within the next few years, it's possible the Air Force will have to regenerate up to 70 per cent of those trades within the next 10 years. While the outlook is improving, the issue is fast becoming one of absorption as we juggle to absorb an inordinate number of new trainees while maintaining a vigorous ops tempo, something which we and our colleagues at 1 CAD are working hard to address. ■

MODERNIZATION

North Bay complex moving up

Our personnel at 22 Wing North Bay were no doubt heartened to hear the announcement by the federal government this past summer of \$23 million in funding for the construction of an above-ground complex and the relocation of the operations centre as part of Department of National Defence's Regional/Sector Air Operations Centre (R/SAOC) modernization project.

In making the announcement, Defence Minister John McCallum said the modernization project is a cost-effective means of ensuring our forces have the necessary tools to accomplish their mission to monitor and defend North

American air space. The R/SAOC modernization project will deliver air defence computer processing and display equipment, modernize the internal communications system, and relocate the operations centre to an above-ground complex.

The new command and control centre will be complete in Summer 2005. The funding for this initiative was provided for in the existing fiscal framework.

For more information on this and other DND news releases, go to www.forces.gc.ca/site/newsroom. ■

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