

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the last issue of *The Canadian Air Force Journal* (CAFJ)! With the announcement by the Minister of National Defence, Peter MacKay, on 16 August 2011, that the Canadian Air Force would once again be known as the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), another page has turned in Canadian military aviation history. Throughout the Air Force this became the starting point for a gradual process to re-introduce the RCAF nomenclature into publications, documents and orders. Production staff at the Canadian Forces Aerospace Warfare Centre (CFAWC) are busy working on a new cover layout and *The Royal Canadian Air Force Journal* (RCAFJ) will be introduced with the publication of a first issue in 2012.

With the restoration of the RCAF name, there may be a natural tendency to focus on the linkages with the pre-1968 RCAF. Although understandable, the RCAF of 2011 is the sum of far more constituent parts. Incorporated into our history and heritage are those who have gone before us not only as members of the RCAF, but as naval aviators from the Royal Canadian Navy and army flyers from the Canadian Army—not to mention the individuals who served as part of the Air Element and Air Command of the Canadian Forces. In many ways, the re-emergence of the RCAF in 2011 has more in kin with the original birth of the RCAF on 1 April 1924. On that date, the original cadre, small as it was with fewer than 400 souls, contained members who had served with the Royal Flying Corps, Royal Naval Air Service, Royal Air Force, and the short-lived Canadian Air Force. On that spring day so many years ago, individuals from many different backgrounds came together under the banner of the RCAF to serve Canada and Canadians when and where required.

Two days after the Minister's announcement, I had the privilege of being present at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, for the stand down of the air wing. More than 150 airmen, airwomen, and soldiers were on parade to formally recognize the 32 months of support the Air Force had provided to coalition operations in Afghanistan. I am not sure if this was the first formal parade of the "new" RCAF, but the name change was certainly prominent in the various speeches. The individuals on parade had served in Afghanistan as part of Air Command, but were returning to Canada as members of the RCAF. They were representative of the thousands of Canadians who had donned Air Force blue (or green, or tan, or khaki, etc.) and, as noted in the original submission for the use of the "Royal" prefix in 1923, had "by their efficiency, gallantry, and devotion to duty added lustre to the name of Canada."¹ Regardless of our name, for the "big blue," it is very much business as usual.

Business as usual is what our readers can expect from the *RCAFJ*. With your contributions, the *Journal* will continue to serve as a mechanism for professional discourse from a historical, contemporary, and evolutionary perspective.



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Senior Editor

1. Correspondence from Acting Deputy Minister to Undersecretary of State for External Affairs, 5 January 1923, quoted from F. H. Hitchins, *Air Board, Canadian Air Force and Royal Canadian Air Force* (Mercury Series, Canadian War Museum Paper No. 2, Ottawa, 1972), in W. A. B. Douglas, *The Creation of a National Air Force*, Official History of the RCAF, Volume II (Ottawa: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 61.