

Air Doctrine Note 14/01, RCAF Air Task Force Commander: Considerations for the Employment of Air Power in Joint Operations

Article #6 in a series on command and control and the Royal Canadian Air Force¹

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With the 28 May 2014 approval by the Commander Royal Canadian Air Force (Comd RCAF) of Canadian Forces Air Doctrine Note (ADN) 14/01, formally entitled “Royal Canadian Air Force Air Task Force Commander Definitions, Roles and Responsibilities,” the way forward for the command and control (C2) of the air task force (ATF) has now come into sharper focus. Almost a year in the making, this ADN does two critical things for RCAF Air doctrine: it solidifies the ATF Comd concept, and it paves the way for the forthcoming second edition of the keystone-level B-GA-401-000/FP-001, *Royal Canadian Air Force Command Doctrine*.

The first pan-Air Force C2 doctrine since the end of the Cold War, the B-GA-401 was released in March 2012 following two years of research and review. The B-GA-401 provided a new, coordinated *RCAF C2 solution* for the evolving entities of the ATF and air expeditionary wing (AEW) in joint/combined operations. As an unexpected spin-off, the RCAF’s Command doctrine served as a catalyst for change across the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), prompting reviews of existing, outdated C2 doctrine. Since 2012, extensive “testing” of RCAF C2 doctrine has occurred through numerous operations and exercises and the Air Force Lessons Learned Programme identified a need for greater fidelity in available C2 options for the complex, ever-changing operating environment.

In short, the RCAF began to realize that the ubiquity and reach of air power comes with the responsibility for the RCAF to fit into every domestic or expeditionary operation with a predictable and tested C2 structure that is both flexible and agile. It was obvious that the normal four-year cycle of doctrine development would not be fast enough to capture the C2 lessons being learned, so B-GA-401’s second edition was fast-tracked. It is expected to be promulgated later this year.

In the meantime, Comd RCAF guidance in the form of ADN 14/01 ensures planners and commanders of current operations and exercises can benefit from the analysis of these lessons learned until the revised B-GA-401 is approved. The result of Air Force-wide collaboration and consensus, ADN 14/01 offers planners and commanders of air operations with options to ensure the effective C2 of the RCAF’s principal war-fighting force, the ATF.² ADN 14/01 will be incorporated into the second edition of B-GA-401 to ensure it continues to be a central component of the RCAF’s C2 solution.

The following pages contain a signed copy of ADN 14/01 in an effort to help socialize its contents; it includes key guidance on the following items:

**Article 6 – Air Doctrine Note 14/01, RCAF Air Task Force Commander:
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- a. new definitions: air task force, air task force commander, air task force headquarters (ATFHQ) and residual authorities (RA);
- b. considerations for the selection of an ATF Comd;
- c. ATF Comd roles and responsibilities;
- d. the C2 relationship between the CAF joint force air component commander (JFACC) and ATF Comd;
- e. the ATF Comd with other C2 roles such as an AEW Comd or detachment commander (DETCO); and
- f. five basic options for ATF Comd employment in the form of C2 organization charts for different types of operations. These options are designed as a starting point for staffs, planners and commanders for operations where:
 - i. the CAF JFACC exercises operational command (OPCOM) of the ATF;
 - ii. the ATF is supporting a regional joint task force commander (RJTF Comd);
 - iii. the ATF is part of a CAF joint task force (JTF) employing the component command method;
 - iv. the ATF is part of a CAF JTF employing the direct command method; and
 - v. the ATF is part of an allied/coalition (multinational) operation.

Abbreviations

ADN	air doctrine note
AEW	air expeditionary wing
ATF	air task force
B-GA-401	B-GA-401-000/FP-001, <i>Royal Canadian Air Force Command Doctrine</i>
C2	command and control
CAF	Canadian Armed Forces
comd	commander
JFACC	joint force air component commander
JTF	joint task force
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force



National Défense
Defence nationale

ADN 14/01

CANADIAN FORCES AIR DOCTRINE NOTE 14/01



ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE AIR TASK FORCE COMMANDER DEFINITIONS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

LIST OF EFFECTIVE PAGES

1. Insert latest changed pages, dispose of superseded pages in accordance with applicable orders.
2. Dates of issue for original and changed pages are:

Original02014-05-28	Change3.....
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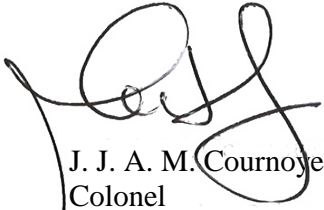
3. Zero in Change No. column indicates an original page. Total number of pages in this publication is 14 consisting of the following:

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FOREWORD

1. It is essential that commanders and their staffs understand the organization and fundamental concepts of command and control (C2) for air power operations, including the command of a Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) air task force (ATF) participating in domestic, expeditionary, allied and coalition operations.
2. This air doctrine note (ADN) was produced in consultation with 1 Canadian Air Division Headquarters (1 Cdn Air Div HQ) to ensure that RCAF doctrine, procedures and understanding were harmonized. It provides definitions, roles and responsibilities of a relatively new position within the RCAF—the ATF commander (ATF Comd). The ATF Comd represents a key component of the RCAF C2 solution to successfully integrate air effects in joint/combined operations.
3. Recalling foundational RCAF Command doctrine, the following concepts apply:
 - a. Command is the vested authority over assigned forces.
 - b. Control is the mechanism used to exercise command.
 - c. If you have command, you have control.
 - d. You can delegate command up to the level you have.
 - e. If you have command, you can delegate control.
 - f. You can delegate control up to the level you have.
 - g. No matter what level of command or control you have, you can never delegate the associated responsibility.
 - h. An ATF Comd is an officer delegated command of the ATF. This ADN describes the context within which the RCAF will employ an ATF Comd.
 - i. Understanding the relationship between command and control is fundamental to understanding this ADN and B-GA-401-000/FP-001, *Canadian Forces Aerospace Command Doctrine*.

4. ADN 14/01 is effective immediately and is hereby promulgated for use during operations. The contents of this ADN will be incorporated into the second edition of B-GA-401-000/FP-001, *RCAF Command Doctrine*, with promulgation anticipated in 2014.



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ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE AIR TASK FORCE COMMANDER DEFINITIONS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Aim.** This ADN describes the organization and fundamental concepts of the RCAF ATF Comd during air-power operations and includes associated definitions, roles and responsibilities.
2. **Background.** When the RCAF assigns forces to an operation, these forces are normally organized as an ATF. The RCAF has participated in numerous operations and major exercises over the past few years (including Operation [Op] HESTIA, Op MOBILE, Op NANOOK, Op RENAISSANCE and JOINTEX) where the need for an ATF Comd has become apparent. Increasingly, senior RCAF leadership is employing an ATF Comd during domestic and expeditionary (joint and combined) operations.
3. While existing Canadian Forces (CF) Aerospace Command doctrine clearly defines operational- and tactical-level roles—such as the air component commander (ACC), air component coordination element director (ACCE Director), wing commander (W Comd), air expeditionary wing commander (AEW Comd) and detachment commander (DETCO); however, the ATF Comd concept is both relatively new and distinctly different, requiring development and definition. In order to be relevant, RCAF Aerospace Command doctrine must define the roles and responsibilities of an ATF Comd within existing C2 structures.
4. **Definitions.** The following definitions of the ATF Comd concept will be employed in subsequent editions of RCAF capstone and keystone doctrine. They are derived from a number of Canadian, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and allied sources:
 - a. An **air task force** is a temporary grouping of RCAF operational/tactical formations, squadrons, units or detachments formed for the purpose of carrying out a specific operation, mission or task.
 - b. An **air task force commander** is an operational- or tactical-level commander that exercises command authority over an ATF.
 - c. An **air task force headquarters (ATFHQ)** is a scalable HQ comprised of the staff and line personnel necessary to assist the ATF Comd in planning, coordinating, directing, monitoring and assessing ATF activities.
 - d. **Residual authority (RA)** within the RCAF is the authority that remains with the applicable force generation (FG) commander (normally, Comd 1 Cdn Air Div on behalf of the Commander, RCAF [Comd RCAF]) and is, therefore, retained outside the force employment (FE) chain of command.
5. **ATF Comd selection.** The Comd RCAF normally delegates the authority to select an ATF Comd to the Comd 1 Cdn Air Div, who designates an RCAF officer to perform the role of ATF Comd for a specific operation or exercise. Selection of an ATF Comd is based on a number

of factors, including the individual's operational and command experience as well as the size and complexity of an operation, mission or task.

6. **ATF Comd roles and responsibilities.** As a commander at the operational or tactical level (depending upon the scale and complexity of the operation), the ATF Comd normally exercises operational command (OPCOM) or tactical command (TACOM) over all elements of the RCAF ATF. The ATF Comd is responsible to ensure all national operational and administrative issues pertaining to the ATF are dealt with in a manner that meets the goals of either:

- a. the CF joint force air component commander (JFACC) during domestic and expeditionary operations where OPCOM has been delegated to the CF JFACC; or
- b. the CF joint task force (JTF) commander during domestic and expeditionary operations where OPCOM has been delegated to a CF JTF Comd.

7. In addition to commanding the RCAF ATF, the ATF Comd is responsible for the overall coordination of activities and acts as the single point of contact for issues affecting all elements of the ATF including:

- a. monitoring RCAF RA issues within the ATF to ensure they are consistently practiced in accordance with the direction provided by the Comd 1 Cdn Air Div;
- b. implementing and monitoring operational-risk (OR) management processes to include mission-acceptance (MA) and launch-authority (LA) processes that bridge RCAF RA and CF JFACC / CF JTF Comd OR management authority;
- c. ensuring effective coordination lines between various ATF elements, national/allied/coalition commanders and operations centres / HQs. The ATF Comd deploys air task force coordination elements (ATFCEs), as required, to effect this coordination;
- d. managing and coordinating the sustainment of the ATF in cooperation with the CF JTF HQ, national command element (NCE) J-staff and the joint task force support element (JTFSE); and
- e. monitoring, in accordance with the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Strategic Targeting Directive, the ATF's target engagement authority (TEA)³ process at the allied/coalition combined aerospace operations centre (CAOC).

8. **Dual-hatting the ATF Comd.** ATF Comd responsibilities are distinctly different from those of existing C2 roles such as the ACC, ACCE Director, W/AEW Comd or DETCO. As such, the geographic location and anticipated workload must be considered if the ATF Comd is to be double-hatted with one of these roles.

9. **Options for ATF Comd employment.** When selecting the best option for the employment of an ATF Comd, a number of factors must be weighed, including the size,

complexity and length of the operation. When an operation evolves, it may be necessary to recommend a change in the ATF Comd option in order to ensure the appropriate level of Air Force leadership is present in theatre. The five options are:

- a. **Option 1 – RCAF operations when the JFACC exercises OPCOM.** During operations that are limited in size and complexity in which the CF JFACC exercises OPCOM (see Figure 1), the CF JFACC will designate an ATF Comd who may also fulfill the role of W/AEW Comd or DETCO, as required. An example of this option is Op MALI, where the ATF Comd was dual-hatted as the DETCO.

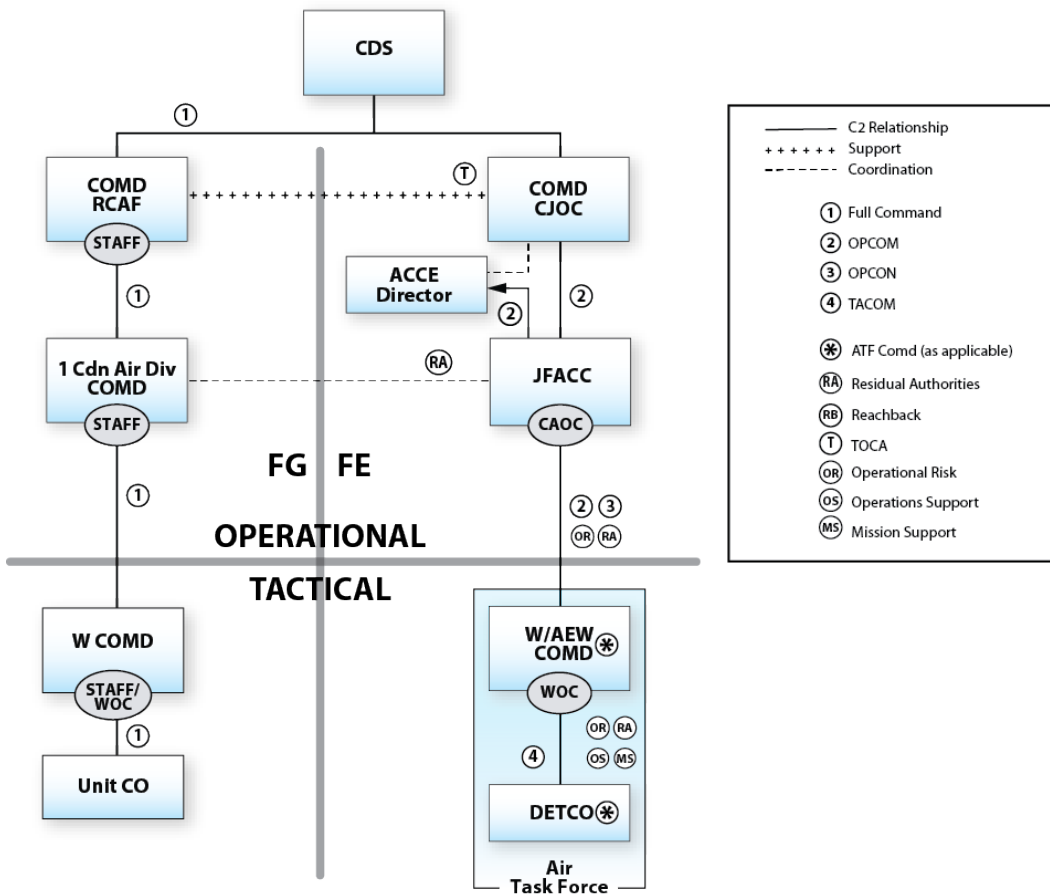


Figure 1. RCAF operations when the JFACC exercises OPCOM

b. **Option 2 – RCAF supporting an RJTF.** During operations when the RCAF supports a regional joint task force (RJTF) commander (see Figure 2), the CF JFACC will designate an ATF Comd who may also fulfill the role of ACCE Director, W/AEW Comd or DETCO, as required. This is the normal arrangement during domestic operations and offers the CF JFACC several options for the designation of an ATF Comd, depending on the size and complexity of an operation.

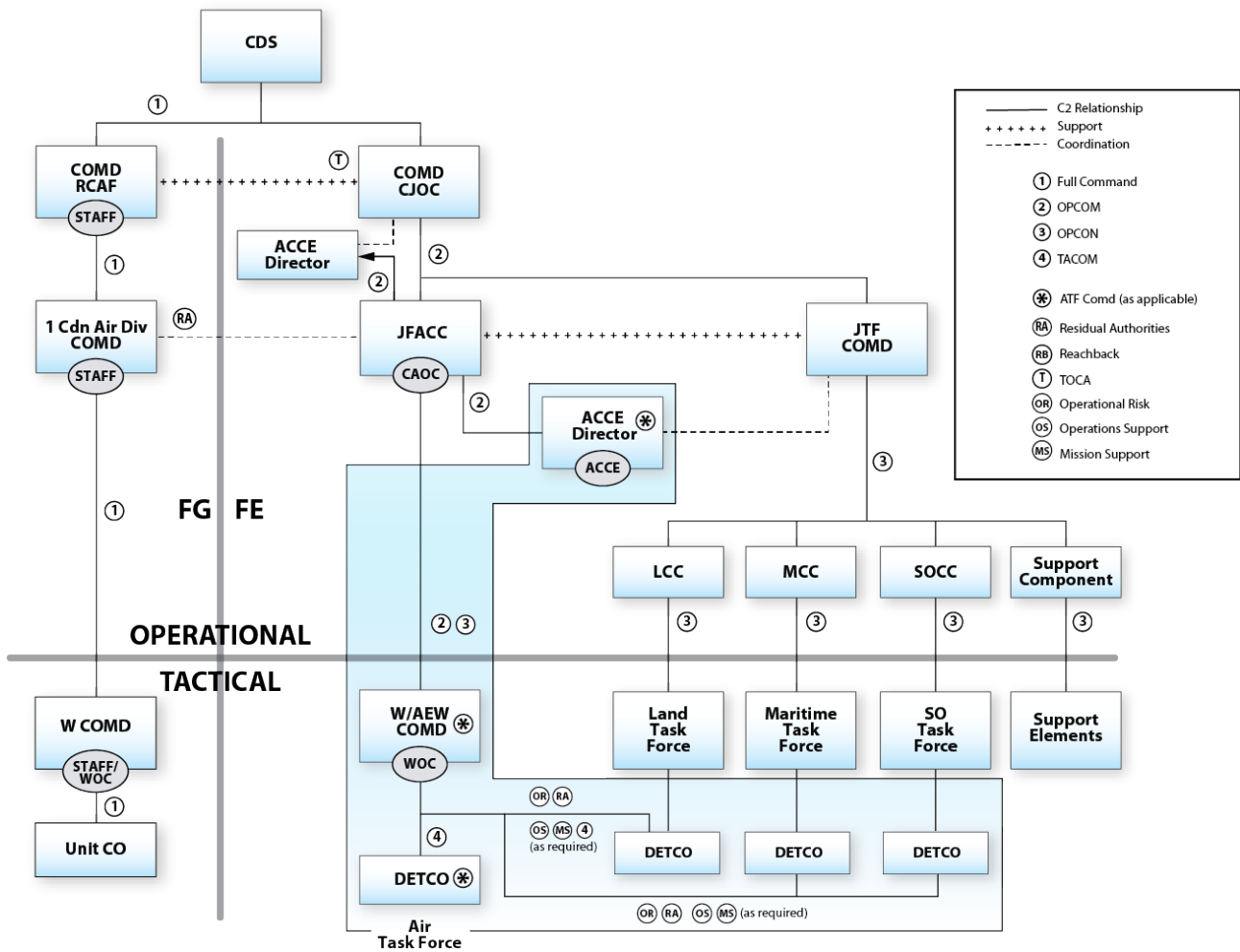


Figure 2. RCAF supporting an RJTF

c. **Option 3 (A) – RCAF as part of a CF JTF employing the component command method.** During operations when the RCAF is part of a CF JTF employing the component command method (see Figure 3 [A]), the CF JFACC will designate an ATF Comd who may also fulfill the duties and responsibilities of an ACC, as required. Examples of this option are Op RENAISSANCE 1301 and Op NANOOK 1301 where the ATF Comd was also responsible to perform the duties and responsibilities of an ACC. Depending upon the size and complexity of an operation, the CF JFACC also has the option of designating the ATF Comd as the W/AEW Comd or DETCO.

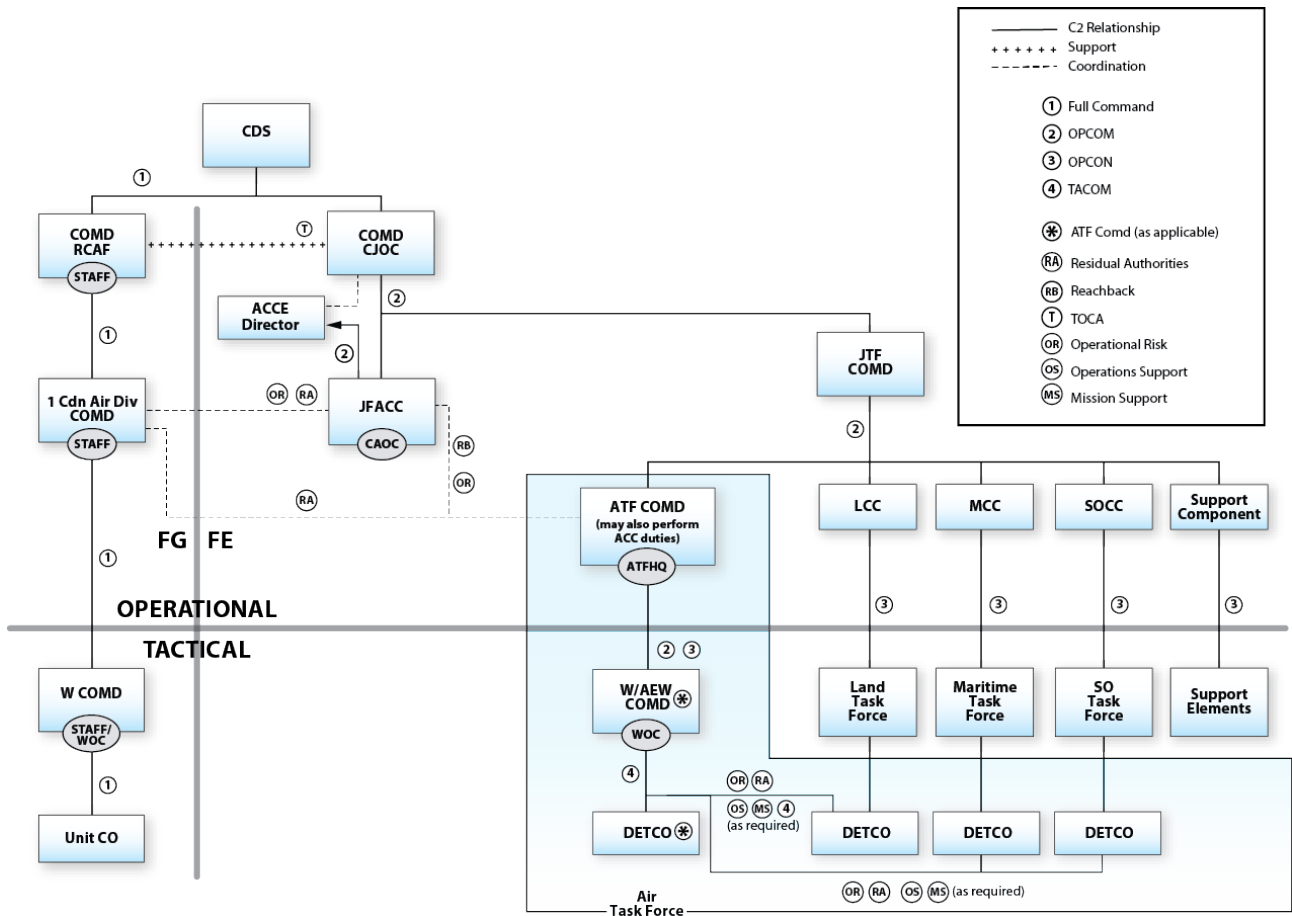


Figure 3 (A). RCAF as part of a CF JTF employing the component command method

- d. **Option 3 (B) – RCAF as part of a CF JTF employing the direct command method.** During operations when the RCAF is part of a CF JTF employing the direct command method (see Figure 3 [B]), the CF JFACC will designate an ATF Comd who may also fulfill the role of W/AEW Comd or DETCO as required. In any C2 relationship based upon the direct command method, the ATF is assigned missions and tasks through the ATF Comd, except where elements of the ATF are under the TACOM of another task force (TF) commander (e.g., Land, Maritime or SOF TF Comd). An example of this option could be a relatively short-duration/limited-complexity operation such as a non-combatant evacuation operation (NEO) where it has been determined that no component-command structure is required.

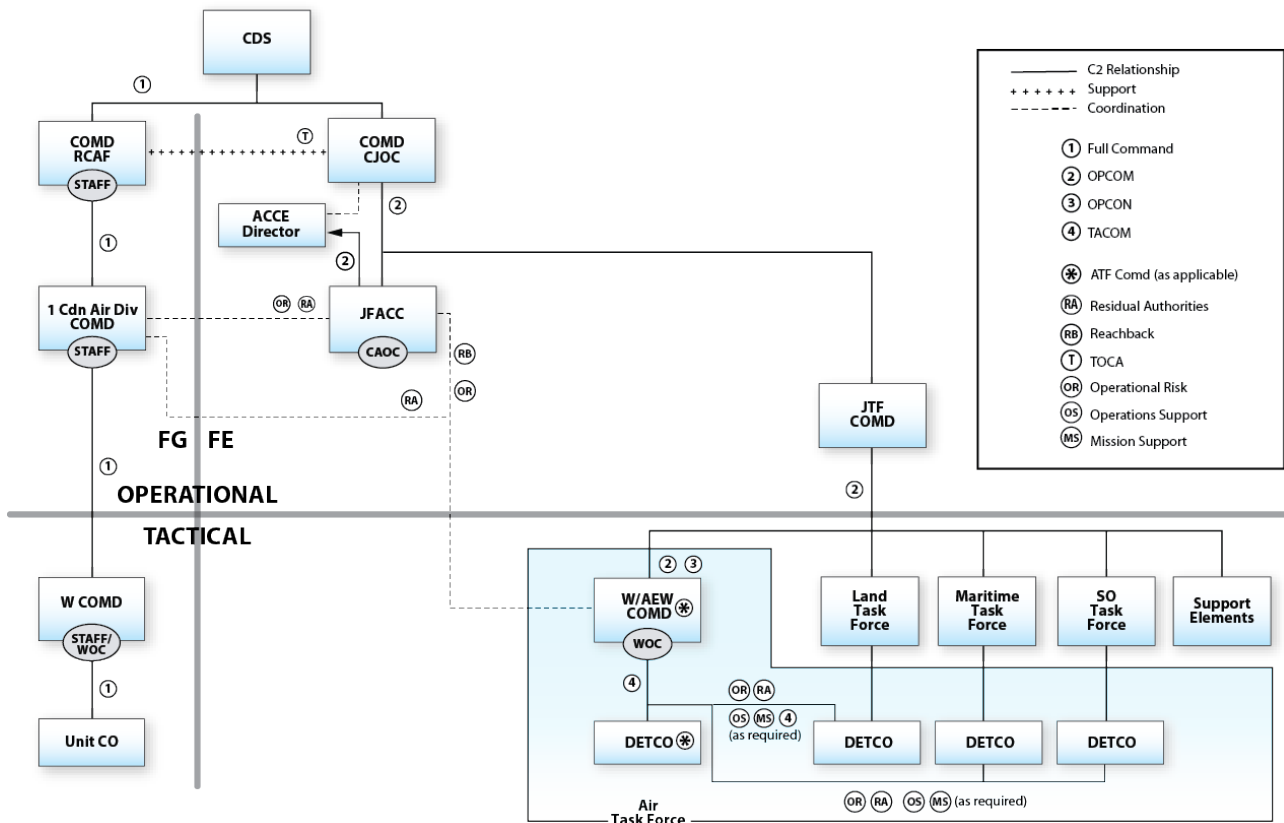


Figure 3 (B). RCAF as part of a CF JTF employing the direct command method

- e. **Option 4 – RCAF as part of an allied/coalition operation.** During large, complex operations involving allied/coalition partners, the CF JFACC will designate an ATF Comd that is normally not dual-hatted with another role. Normally, the ATF Comd will be collocated with the CF Canadian national commander (CNC) / JTF Comd (see Figure 4). For example, during Op MOBILE, after temporarily using Option 1, Option 4 (appointing a separate ATF Comd) was employed because the operation grew in size and complexity.

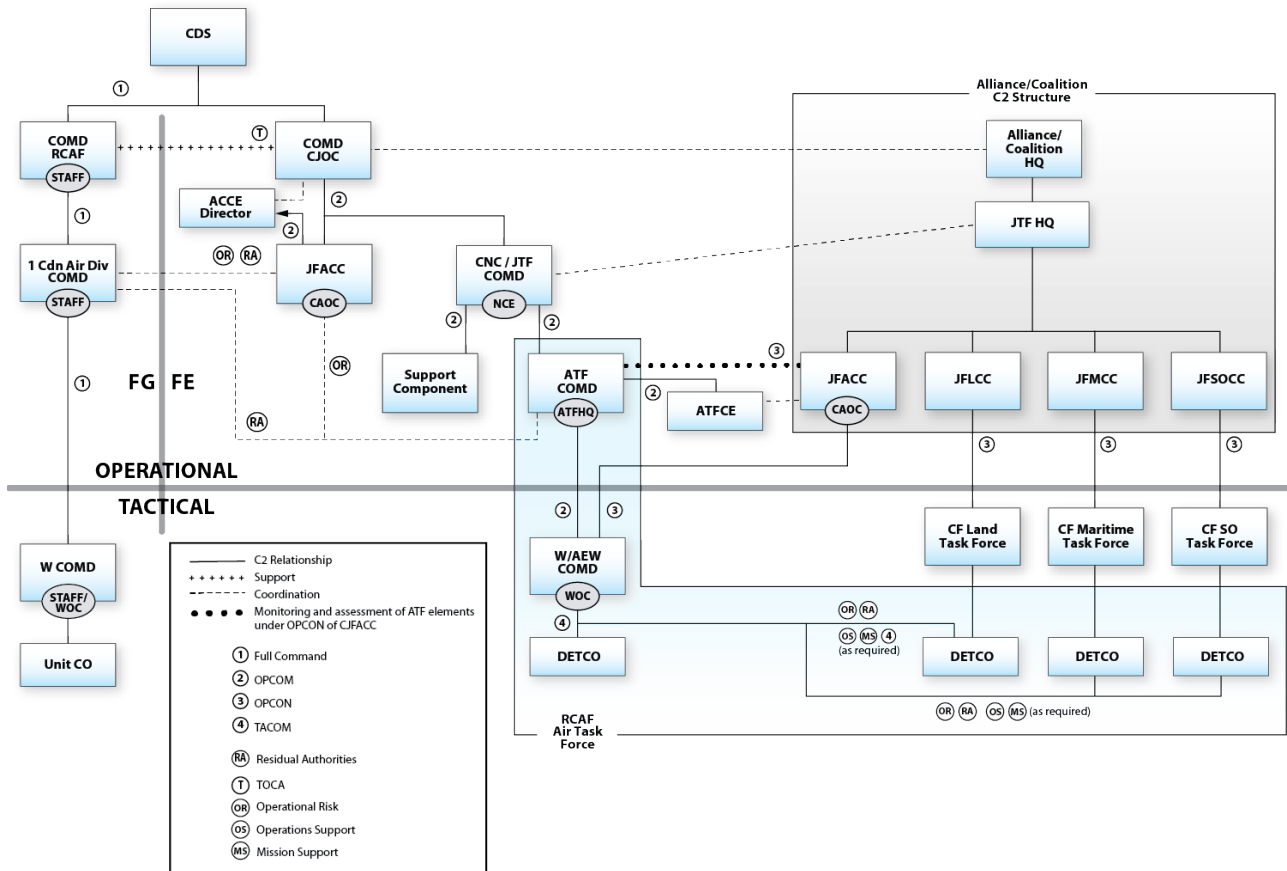


Figure 4. RCAF as part of an allied/coalition operation

10. **Conclusion.** The employment of an ATF Comd in air operations is an important part of the RCAF C2 solution that seeks to effectively integrate air power into joint operations. Exercising command authority on behalf of the CF JFACC or CF JTF Comd, the ATF Comd performs the critical role of leadership as it applies to the ATF, acting as a single point of contact for all ATF issues, including RA and OR.

ABBREVIATIONS

1 Cdn Air Div	1 Canadian Air Division
ACC	air component commander
ACCE	air component coordination element
ACCE Director	air component coordination element director
ADN	air doctrine note
AEW Comd	air expeditionary wing commander
ATF	air task force
ATFCE	air task force coordination element
ATFHQ	air task force headquarters
C2	command and control
CAOC	combined aerospace operations centre
CDS	Chief of the Defence Staff
CF	Canadian Forces
CJOC	Canadian Joint Operations Command
CNC	Canadian national commander
CO	commanding officer
comd	Commander
DETCO	detachment commander
FE	force employment
FG	force generation
HQ	headquarters
JFACC	joint force air component commander
JFLCC	joint force land component commander
JFMCC	joint force maritime component commander
JFSOCC	joint force special operations component commander
JTF	joint task force

LA	launch authority
LCC	land component commander
MA	mission acceptance
MCC	maritime component commander
MS	mission support
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCE	national command element
Op	operation
OPCOM	operational command
OPCON	operational control
OR	operational risk
OS	operations support
RA	residual authority
RB	reachback
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
RJTF	regional joint task force
SO	special operations
SOCC	special operations component commander
TACOM	tactical command
TF	task force
TOCA	transfer of command authority
W Comd	wing commander
WOC	wing operations centre

REFERENCES

The development of this ADN employed the following sources as references:

- a. AAP-6, *NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions*;
- b. B-GA-400-000/FP-001, *Canadian Forces Aerospace Doctrine*;
- c. B-GA-401-000/FP-001, *Canadian Forces Aerospace Command Doctrine*;
- d. B-GJ-005-300/AF-001, *CFJP 3.0, Operations*;
- e. “CDS Directive on Canadian Armed Forces Command and Control and the Delegation of Authority for Force Employment,” 28 April 13, accessed June 9, 2014, <http://sjs.mil.ca/sites/intranet-eng.aspx?page=15496>;
- f. “CDS Strategic Targeting Directive,” October 2013 draft; and
- g. *Defence Terminology Bank (DTB)*, accessed June 9, 2014, <http://terminology.mil.ca/term-eng.asp>.

**Article 6 – Air Doctrine Note 14/01, RCAF Air Task Force Commander:
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Notes

1. This is the sixth in a series of short articles on the subject of command and control in the RCAF. For more detailed information, consult B-GA-401-000/FP-001, *Canadian Forces Aerospace Command Doctrine* found on the Internet at <http://www.rcaf-arc.forces.gc.ca/en/cf-aerospace-warfare-centre/aerospace-doctrine.page> and the Defence Wide Area Network at http://trenton.mil.ca/lodger/CFAWC/CDD/Doctrine_e.asp (both sites accessed September 29, 2014).

2. A detailed discussion of the RCAF ATF and ATF Comd can be found in article #5 of this series. Command and Control and the Royal Canadian Air Force, Lieutenant-Colonel Pux Barnes, “The RCAF Air Task Force: Considerations for the Employment of Air Power in Joint Operations,” Canadian Forces Aerospace Warfare Centre, both sites accessed September 29, 2014, <http://www.rcaf-arc.forces.gc.ca/en/cf-aerospace-warfare-centre/command-and-control.page> (Internet) and http://trenton.mil.ca/lodger/cfawc/CDD/C2_e.asp (Defence Wide Area Network).

3. Also informally referred to as a “red card holder.”