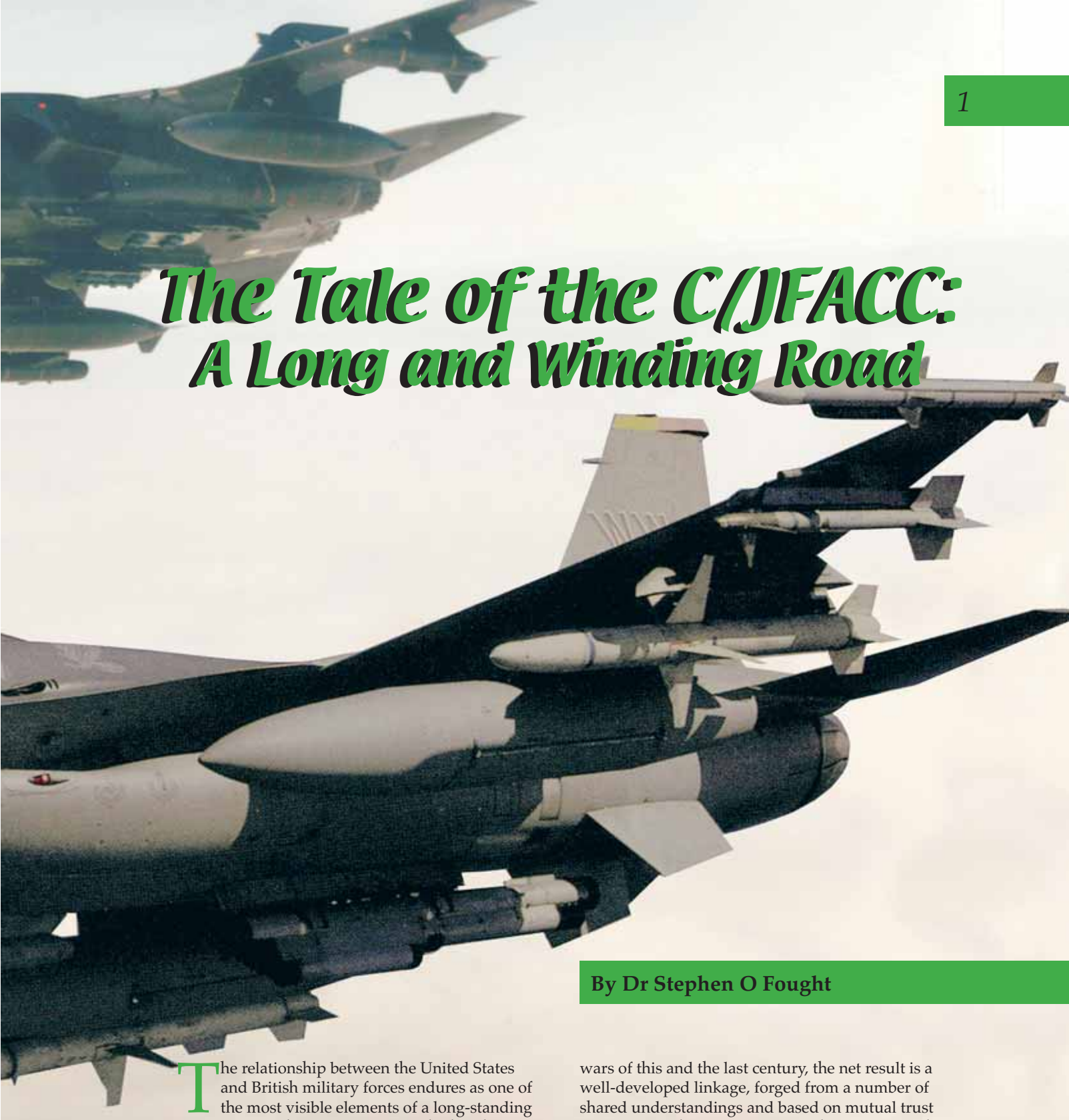

The Tale of the C/JFACC: A Long and Winding Road

By Dr Stephen O Fought

The relationship between the United States and British military forces endures as one of the most visible elements of a long-standing bond between the two countries. Whether this comes from a common heritage, a reasonably common language, or the fact that our two nations have fought alongside each other in all of the major wars of this and the last century, the net result is a well-developed linkage, forged from a number of shared understandings and based on mutual trust and respect. This article explores that linkage with regard to the air forces of each country, especially as manifested in today's concept of the combined/joint force air component commander (C/JFACC).

The founding of the RAF marked "the first time an Air Force had been created anywhere in the world with the intention of conducting air war without reference or subordination to Army or Navy command"

The question under examination asks how both the British and Americans determined that central command of air was viable and how they made that finding acceptable to associated organizations that possessed air forces. This approach, therefore, looks at problems that arose in managing organizational change during the evolution of service and joint doctrine by focusing on the various pulls and tugs among the players as they sought to bring unity of effort and unity of command to airpower.

Since organizational change serves as the guiding principle of this article, one should briefly discuss that framework. Such change may prove the most difficult task for senior leadership. A mature organization — a bureaucracy with established operational procedures — develops a kind of inertia that causes it to do what it has always done, often without regard to the responsiveness of that behavior to a new situation. A combination of three factors usually precipitates organizational change: (1) looming disaster, especially one accompanied by a shortage of resources (this scenario sometimes forces individuals to set aside organizational [political] differences, albeit only temporarily); (2) abject failure, if it is recognized and admitted internally (unfortunately, all too often those who could influence change from within the organization do not recognize that failure has occurred); and (3) a powerful outside force, capable of forcing internal change by strength of personality, quantity of resources, or other mechanisms. All of these aspects will play out in the long and winding trail that leads to the modern-day C/JFACC.

World War I and the interwar years

The tale begins by noting that the US Air Force (USAF) and Royal Air Force (RAF) sprang from different roots and matured on opposite sides of the world under different circumstances. The British had the gift of prescience, and the RAF leadership demonstrated its skill in organizational survival. Their foresight is obvious: the founding of the RAF marked "the first time an Air Force had been created anywhere in the world with the intention of conducting air war without reference or subordination to Army or Navy command".[1] British leadership proved equally impressive: even though the RAF was "created with the aim of the strategic bombing of Germany", Air

US forces demobilized after the war (as did the British); for the Air Service, this process meant reabsorption into the lower ranks of the Army and the partitioning of air assets among the nine standing Army corps

Marshal Hugh Trenchard, the first RAF chief of staff, brilliantly kept the fledgling service out of an internal squabble with the British Army, holding it tightly to the close air support (CAS) mission while he changed the essence of the organization from a defensive to an offensive force.[2] Because of Trenchard's genius, the RAF could spend its organizational energies and political capital resolving the problems of operating with other nations' air forces — the US Army Air Corps in particular.

On the US side of the pond, the air element of the armed forces remained embedded in the Army as the US Air Service, which performed briefly but well in World War I alongside its British counterparts. During the war, the Air Service found itself attached to lower-level units — a factor that presented a challenge in terms of unity of effort. In 1918 these air units became groups (I Corps Observation Group in April, the 1st Pursuit Group in May, and then a next-higher level called the American Expeditionary Forces [AEF]). By the end of that year, the AEF had 14 groups, including observation, pursuit, and two new bombardment units. Slowly but surely, unity of effort emerged through unity of command under the AEF.

Had the AEF remained extant after the war ended and had the Air Service redeployed to the States, one might have witnessed the genesis of an air organization along the lines of the RAF (i.e., an independent air arm) and, eventually, a full-fledged, unified/consolidated command and control capability. However, US forces demobilized after the war (as did the British); for the Air Service, this process meant re-absorption into the lower ranks of the Army and the partitioning of air assets among the nine standing Army corps.

For the next 10 years, little changed in terms of unity of command/effort for the Air Service except its name, when the air arm became the Air Corps in 1926. By 1942 a series of gradual changes within the Army effected a restructuring in the War Department to accommodate three Army commands — Ground, Service/Supply, and Air. At the same time, naval air remained part of the Department of the Navy. The United States entered World War II with this arrangement, and the unity of command/effort issues that surfaced in each theater would frame the debate over airpower for the next 50 years.

World War II: The Pacific theater

In the European theater, the organizational problem took the form of creating a CFACC (i.e., learning to work with air forces of other nations), and in the Pacific, was dominated by the problems of creating a JFACC (i.e., of getting US air to operate in concert). Of the two theaters, the Pacific provides the richer set of cases for describing the difficulties the United States experienced in achieving the same degree of success in terms of organizational design that the British enjoyed from the outset. The Pacific theater, therefore, serves as a useful basis for examining the organizational change that led to an independent Air Force and, eventually, to the watershed Goldwater-Nichols legislation that codified 'jointness'.

The United States entered (and exited) World War II — in particular, the Pacific theater — with its services holding three distinct views of airpower. Considering airpower integral to naval operations, the Navy maintained that air should remain under the purview of the fleet commanders. Further, given the mobility of naval forces, naval air should follow suit (ie , not tied to a particular land campaign or subjugated to a ground commander). The Army's view of airpower mirrored the Navy's: since air supported ground operations, a ground commander should control it. Within the Navy, the Marine Corps had taken exception to the Navy's concept of operations from the outset; indeed, after the experience at Guadacanal (see below), the Corps would have a dedicated air arm for the foreseeable future. Members of the Air Corps, of course, took a different view — opting for an air arm independent of land and sea forces, with unity of command determining the unity of effort for the air campaign. In addition to these perspectives, three other factors complicated the use of airpower in the Pacific: (1) the division of forces (air forces in particular) between Admiral Chester Nimitz, commander in chief of the US Pacific Fleet and

Pacific Ocean Area, and those of General Douglas MacArthur, commander in chief of the Southwest Pacific Area; (2) the division of air forces between the Navy and Army; and (3) a lack of either training or doctrine from which one could build a learning curve, leaving joint air operations in the realm of the ad hoc.

Stung badly at Pearl Harbor and short on combat resources, Admiral Nimitz marshaled his forces around the Midway Islands to meet and, hopefully, beat the next wave of Japanese attacks. By coincidence, he controlled two major air organizations — the fleet (at sea) assets under the immediate command of Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher (USS Yorktown and USS Enterprise) and a grab bag of Marine, Navy, and Army air assets ashore at Midway under Capt Cyril T Simard (commanding officer of Naval Air Station

Wildcats cruise over Guadacanal

Withdrawal of the carriers from Guadacanal at D+2, leaving marines ashore with no air cover for nearly two weeks, except for the far-distant aircraft based in the New Hebrides, exacerbated the problem. The Marine Corps has never forgotten this. The air forces that would eventually arrive at Guadacanal were a mix of Marine and Army Air Forces (AAF) fighter- and dive-bombers, eventually known as ComAirCactus

The roles, missions, and budget battles that ensued, especially over aviation assets, would plague US war-fighting efforts for the next 40 years as each service with air assets sought to engrain and protect its own view of airpower

Midway). Most of the robust collection of literature on the Battle for Midway indicates that the two air components (land and sea) could not coordinate their efforts.[3] The question of whether or not better organization, planning, and training would have made a difference is moot. The simple fact is that the air assets were in place to achieve some sort of unity of effort, but no mechanism existed for causing the pieces to move together in an orchestrated manner (air and sea-based forces) or even for exploiting relative advantages among the land-based forces. As a result, the three air elements fought as three independent — although deconflicted — forces. On the positive side, deconfliction represented an important first step, and the United States earned a dramatic victory.

In the Solomon Islands, Vice Admiral Robert L Ghormley commanded three task forces: two afloat and one ashore.[4] This lash-up, especially with its unfortunate geographical proximity to MacArthur's forces, set out a dual challenge for Ghormley: coordination of his own land- and sea-based air forces and coordination between theater commands. Withdrawal of the carriers from Guadacanal at D+2, leaving marines ashore with no air cover for nearly two weeks, except for the far-distant aircraft based in the New Hebrides, exacerbated the problem. The Marine Corps has never forgotten this. The air forces that would eventually arrive at Guadacanal were a mix of Marine and Army Air Forces (AAF) fighter- and dive-bombers, eventually known as ComAirCactus, commanded by General Roy S Geiger, USMC, with headquarters in the New Hebrides. These forces operated ashore at Guadacanal, reporting to both Adm John S McCain (for air) and Gen Alexander A Vandegrift (as a marine in the Solomons). Perhaps surprisingly, it worked reasonably well from the outset and provided partial relief to the crisis situation at Guadacanal. As the war proceeded, the original ComAirCactus concept managed to adapt its organizational structure and operational approaches.[5]

Although beyond the scope of this article, the story of the Solomons is (as before) worth telling and knowing, especially how ComAirCactus morphed into ComAirSols; how its command alternated among marines, naval aviators, and AAF Airmen; and how the AAF viewed being under the command of Navy or Marine aviation. ComAirSols laid the foundation for resolving unity of command/effort because it established a single commander for air who could direct a considerable level of effort toward the broader (theater) campaign. Further, the position of single air commander was not a function of the service-of-origin but was accepted by the combatant commanders.[6]

Unfortunately, the lessons provided and the framework offered by ComAirSols vanished at the end of the war. When the United States began its traditional demobilization, the armed forces returned to their usual battle over the budget, but this time the United States added a competitor (a new service — the Air Force) at a time when resources were shrinking dramatically.[7] The roles, missions, and budget battles that ensued, especially over aviation assets, would plague US war-fighting efforts for the next 40 years as each service with air assets sought to engrain and protect its own view of airpower. One can again divide the US side of the story on unity of command/effort for airpower into two parts: the Cold War and a string of 'hot' wars (a couple of them, once again, in the Pacific theater).

Korean War

At the outset of the Korean War, a single commander, Lieutenant General George E Stratemeyer, USAF, had responsibility for air (since only the USAF was available). However, within a month, naval air (under Vice Admiral C Turner Joy, as MacArthur's commander of Naval Forces Far East, which included the US Seventh Fleet) entered the fray. Joy resisted incorporation under Stratemeyer, insisting instead upon a separate area for naval air, arguing the possibility that

The F9F Panther was the stalwart of US Navy jet operations during the Korean conflict

Operational necessity dictated that the Navy dispatch an officer to the JOC to coordinate air actions and to select targets for naval aviation (still under Navy control). The Navy officer in the JOC, however, did not have the authority to commit naval assets

other events requiring the use of Navy forces in the Pacific made this arrangement necessary. They reached a degree of compromise, however, by coining the new term *coordination control* and by creating a new organization: the joint operations center (JOC). Unfortunately, the term *coordination* was not compelling, leaving the services free to offer up for 'coordination' whatever excess sorties existed and to accept as 'coordinated' those sorties they wished to fly in the first place. Problems with the arrangements for air were further compounded over differences in the services' approach to CAS and as the Marine Corps (with its memories of Guadacanal) entered the war (the Marines provided air to the JOC only when the Corps's assets clearly exceeded Marine requirements). Nonetheless, the JOC matured over time. Initially formed to address the problem of coordinating the efforts of Fifth Air Force and Eighth Army, the JOC would eventually 'manage' (an intentionally vague term) the air assets of each service by giving naval air a choice of targets; the Marines, as mentioned above, offered air to the JOC when it became available. This arrangement allowed each of the services to operate under its concept of the use of air with some modicum of deconfliction — but it clearly fell well short of applying air in an integrated or synergistic manner to the ground campaign or having a single ground commander control it.

The period following Vietnam was punctuated with military and national-security-policy disasters, including the SS Mayaguez . . . Critics circled the Department of Defense (DOD) like vultures, some decrying the Air Force as the problem and claiming that the United States had not won a war since the creation of that service

On 11 May 1975, Cambodian forces boarded and captured the American merchant ship SS Mayaguez. US Marines are seen here in the retaking of the ship

As in the Solomons, necessity and crisis created the opportunity for innovation. Following the massive Chinese assault in late 1950, one would have expected the war-fighting organizations to find a way to put differences aside and work together on the issue of scarce resources (air assets). Such was the case with respect to unity of effort but not unity of command. Indeed, operational necessity dictated that the Navy dispatch an officer to the JOC to coordinate air actions and to select targets for naval aviation (still under Navy control). The Navy officer in the JOC, however, did not have the authority to commit naval assets — only to relay requests back to the fleet for resolution. On the other side of the coin, Marine air (ashore) worked fairly smoothly at the operational level, with Marine air tasked (daily) through an annex to the Fifth Air Force frag order.

Though a reasonable idea, the JOC eventually fell victim to service cultures. Even under the utmost strain, the JOC simply served as a coordinating organization. The most severe difficulties occurred between the Navy and the Air Force, the Navy stubbornly holding to its position that naval air served a higher priority in the theater than the ongoing war and the Air Force (equally stubbornly) arguing that only a single (USAF) air commander could effectively employ air assets during the war effort.

Vietnam War

From 1965 forward, the US effort in Vietnam ramped up sharply. With respect to our themes of unity of effort/command for airpower, the war represents a dismal failure to unite under either banner. Indeed, the war was a conglomeration of internal battles: over CAS and

General Schwarzkopf

He instructed his division commanders, "There's only going to be one guy in charge of the air: [Gen Charles A] Horner. If you want to fight the interservice battles, do it after the war"

rotary-wing aircraft among the Air Force, Army, and Marines; over strategy, target selection, and overall priorities among Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), Commander in Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC), and the White House; over operational and tactical control between Strategic Air Command (SAC) and Tactical Air Command (TAC) (manifested as a running duel between Seventh Air Force in-theater, charged with prosecuting the air war, and Eighth Air Force in Guam, which exercised control over the B-52s through Headquarters SAC at Offutt AFB, Nebraska, with no control by Seventh Air Force); and over 'strike' between the USAF and the Navy. To paraphrase our cartoon friend Pogo, "We had met the enemy, and he was us".

Compromises allowed each participant to preserve its mode of operation in lieu of creating solutions that better accomplished mission objectives. Along the lines of the Korean War's coordination control emerged the concept of *mission direction* — a term no better defined than the earlier one. Predictably, the results proved equally poor. At best, the USAF and Navy achieved a modicum of deconfliction through the route-package (route-pack) system. In the end, the war laid open the entire military apparatus for all to examine. The central argument in both cases concerned the combatant commander's lack of control over combat operations — but in particular the problems associated with having multiple air forces.

The period following Vietnam was punctuated with military and national-security-policy disasters, including the SS Mayaguez, Desert One, the loss of marines in Beirut, and the near-chaos (but mission success) in Grenada. Critics circled the Department of Defense (DOD) like vultures, some decrying the Air Force as the problem and claiming that the United States had not won a war since the creation of that service. Dr Carl Builder, the dean of RAND scholars, noted in his book *The Icarus Syndrome* that the Air Force seemed to have lost its way — and certainly its culture — in the post-Vietnam period. Some, more rational, observers blamed 'the system', in that the needs of the combatant commanders could only fall victim to interservice rivalries by virtue of the organizational structure within the DOD itself. In any case, out of these doldrums came a powerful outside force — the Goldwater-Nichols legislation, which forced change upon the DOD (against the will of the services, according to some observers).

Goldwater-Nichols Act

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 gave considerable power to the combatant commander, especially in terms of allowing him or her to organize and employ available forces.[8] In theory, this gave commanders authority to resolve issues involving unity of command/effort — and it most certainly gave them independence from the service chiefs and, consequently, service rivalries in favor of conducting the joint fight. Furthermore, the act gave the Joint Chiefs of Staff responsibility to develop joint doctrine — a level of thought intended to reside above service doctrine and one that would define the joint war fight.

For the Air Force, Goldwater-Nichols presented a combined threat and opportunity in the same bundle. On the one hand, increasing the power of the combatant commander, traditionally from the Army or Navy (the former a doctrine-oriented service), could have relegated the Air Force to a subservient role. On the other hand, the act invited the Air Force to come up quickly with a new command concept — the JFACC — around which the service could develop its ideas for unity of command/effort on the same tier as naval and ground forces. To the betterment of all, opportunity overcame threat, and the Goldwater-Nichols legislation moved the US armed services down a path toward jointness.

As US armed forces performed their various organizational minuets, our British colleagues entered a period during which they too appreciated the need for change. Elsewhere in this issue, Wing Commander Redvers T Thompson, RAF, argues that during the Cold War the forces of the United Kingdom (UK) had become too focused on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) scenario and, with respect to the RAF, too dependent on main operating bases. Operation Desert Storm generated a full realization of the need for change and caused the term *expeditionary* to re-enter the RAF vocabulary. In turn, UK forces opted for a Permanent Joint Force Headquarters, within which the RAF would opt for a US-like model for command and control (the JFACC); this, in turn, would lead to the RAF's developing a fully trained battle staff and organizational process — the joint air operations center (JAOC) — to implement the air portion of a joint operation.[9] In the meantime, we rejoin the story of how the United States managed to orchestrate the changes directed and facilitated by Goldwater-Nichols.

Gulf War of 1991

The first real test of the combatant commanders' new authority, in terms of resolving airpower disputes, came in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. As Dr Ben Lambeth notes in *The Transformation of American Air Power:*

> Desert Storm finally saw a vindication of the 'single-manager' concept for the command and control of airpower. The success of the JFACC approach came close to capturing the essence of . . . centralized coordination of all air assets under the control of an autonomous air force command, freed of its dependency on the army. . . All of the services accepted, at least in principle, the need for a single jurisdiction over allied airpower in Desert Storm.[10]

Although the concept worked imperfectly, it worked well.[11] Perhaps even more importantly, a broad spectrum of the service leadership accepted the idea of unity of command/effort, all with an eye toward meeting the joint force commander's (JFC) objectives. According to Lambeth:

When General McPeak took down SAC and TAC in one blow, replacing them with Air Combat Command (ACC), he did the Air Force a service and set in concrete an institutional structure that could finally concentrate on warfare in all its dimensions

"As General [Merrill A] McPeak [chief of staff of the Air Force] was quick to note after the shooting stopped, [General H Norman] Schwarzkopf as the CINC set the cadence of coalition operations, and all of the pieces of the war plan were "his concept, including the air piece" . . . As early as November Schwarzkopf was clear about his blessing of the JFACC concept and who had final authority for making air tasking decisions. He instructed his division commanders, "There's only going to be one guy in charge of the air: [Gen Charles A] Horner. If you want to fight the interservice battles, do it after the war."

Drawing from Williamson Murray's work *Air War in the Persian Gulf*, Dr Lambeth adds one other extremely important point: "Even army generals like Schwarzkopf and [General Colin] Powell were looking for broader applications of air power than just supporting 'the ground commander's scheme of maneuver.'"[12]

Frames of reference

Force application had moved from the days of independent air and ground/naval operations, through a period when deconfliction was the best that one could hope for, and on to a point where integration became possible on a regular basis. In the process, airpower (and space power) began to hold its own and, quite possibly, become the mechanism for true synergy — the shining hope of joint warfare. In order to achieve this level of capability, both the Air Force and the joint community had to create some new frames of reference.

In the joint community, the frame of reference was effects-based operations (EBO). Placing the JFC's guidance in terms of creating certain effects dramatically changes the dialogue between the JFC and political leaders and between the JFC and subordinate commanders. The change becomes far more significant than taking targeting and weaponeering out of the hands of the politicians (as some people have suggested). Because EBO is a broad statement of intent (rather than a specific choice of method), it actually increases the number of options a JFC might present to the political leadership. Going in the other direction, when a JFC communicates via EBO to subordinate commanders, the participants can debate the air, ground, and naval approaches on a level playing field directly related to the mission (ie, not service parochialisms). EBO is powerful stuff and probably key to the synergy of joint forces; thus, it is extremely important to the application of airpower.

The second frame of reference entailed the Air Force's finding a more flexible mechanism for commanding and controlling its forces than the mechanical air tasking order (ATO) process that mindlessly (some say unresponsively) serviced an infinite target list with a finite set of resources. The 'push CAS' system developed by General Horner during Desert Storm was certainly a start, as was the 'Black Hole', but the more robust, more accessible air operations center (AOC) concept, which developed after the war, fleshed out the process.

Finally, the Air Force had to settle its internal differences between SAC and TAC, a struggle that colored the service's contributions to more serious dialogue with respect to joint warfare. By the time the Cold War ended, whatever differences that existed between strategic and tactical airpower had vanished: throughout the hot conflicts of the Cold War, strategic aircraft bombed tactical targets, and tactical events had strategic consequences — despite what advocates from each command espoused. When General McPeak took down SAC and TAC in one blow, replacing them with Air Combat Command (ACC), he did the Air Force a service and set in concrete an institutional structure that could finally concentrate on warfare in all its dimensions. Moreover, subsequent USAF leaders could begin to develop an expeditionary air force structure — a design more suited to the needs of a post-Desert Storm world.

In conjunction with the changes just discussed, the United States took the opportunity after Desert Storm to create a new organization. Beginning in 1993 and using the organizational landscape of NATO's Atlantic Command (a Cold War creation comprised of Navy and Marine Corps forces), assets of the Army (Forces Command) and Air Force (ACC) merged with those of the Navy (Atlantic Fleet) and Marine Corps (Marine Forces Atlantic) under Atlantic Command. Further, the command was charged with training, integrating, and providing forces worldwide — the first US-based force to have that responsibility (a force logically parallel to the United Kingdom's

new Permanent Joint Headquarters). Atlantic Command became Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) in 1999 — the only unified command with both geographic (closely aligned to NATO) and functional responsibilities, the latter being 'transformation' and experimentation.

The loop was now complete: there existed a forged concept of operations (EBO), a mechanism (AOC), and an organizational structure (JFCOM/ACC) through which airpower could merge into the joint fight on an equal footing with land and sea warfare. Perhaps coincidentally (but perhaps not) the two great air powers — the United States and the United Kingdom — reached the same conclusions, albeit via different paths.

Implications and conclusions
At this point, it is reasonable to propose that airpower had run the gamut of attempts at organizational change and had finally become institutionalized. The seeds planted by Billy Mitchell and others at the beginning of the century, which grew so naturally in the United Kingdom under the care of Air Marshal Trenchard, had finally taken root in the United States. They first sprouted in the Solomons, in the face of a looming disaster and shortage of resources, but withered in the drought of demobilization. Over time, culminating in the abject failure of Vietnam, even airpower advocates admitted that something was terribly wrong — with the US military structure and most certainly with airpower. Then a powerful outside force, through the instrument of the Goldwater-Nichols legislation, forced change. The world saw the net result in the joint warfare of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom — and it was awesome.

In the end, having traveled a long and winding road to achieving unity of command/effort for airpower, the Air Force has three responsibilities on the horizon, three major-league tasks that will prove crucial to institutionalizing these hard-fought changes. First, the mechanical aspects of the C/JAOC have to work. Second, we must populate the C/JAOC with well-trained individuals who are properly organized, trained, and equipped (and attuned) to the JFC's requirements. Finally, we must share the C/JAOC with our joint/coalition/alliance partners.

Mechanics
If EBO is the framework for synergy at the JFC level and if the AOC (C/JAOC) is the Air Force's method of achieving unity of command/effort, then assessment is the linchpin that keeps the mechanisms moving together. Otherwise the system comes apart, and the C/JAOC defaults to the earlier ATO system of mindlessly servicing an endless target list with a finite set of resources. The crux is that assessment of EBO is very difficult — wholly different than the traditional problem of conducting battle damage assessment (BDA). BDA is a static measure taken instantaneously (eg , photo recce, etc): either a target is damaged (to a specified degree) or it is not. As a dynamic process, EBO lends itself better to trend analysis (ie, measurement and evaluation over time). Further, it is likely to be multi-dimensional. Unlike observing craters, collapsed areas, or other damage following attack on a revetment or runway, evaluating effects involves a wide range of considerations. The latter include whether or not military operations have succeeded in eliminating (or reducing) an adversary's ability to maintain the support of the army, the relative cohesion of local political leaders, or even the continuity of the internal power grid. The bottom line is that we must channel much intellectual energy into figuring out how to conduct assessment in order to keep the C/JAOC cycle moving.

Organizing, training, and equipping
If airpower and the JFC's plan do in fact come together in the C/JAOC, then it is a place for polished professionals — it is not a pickup game. The RAF has wisely recognized and acted upon this fact, and the USAF cannot afford to let it languish, even though taking the proper steps will prove very difficult for a service already feeling the stressful effects of personnel tempo. The ongoing dialogue on reshaping the numbered air forces holds promise, but no matter how many ways one arranges the beans, there are still only so many beans. Counting them isn't much fun for a bunch of pilots, but at some point they have to do it to see if there are enough to fill the task jars sitting on the shelf.

Sharing the wealth
Finally, if the AOC (C/JAOC) is the key to

commanding and controlling airpower, then will the USAF allow members of another service to command it? In short, does the C/JAOC belong to the JFACC or the commander, Air Force forces (COMAFFOR)? Once again, our British friends seem to have thought this out and arrived at the right answer: their JFACC headquarters, including the JAOC, would be assigned under the Permanent Joint Headquarters. However, as it stands now in the United States, the relationship remains unclear. Certainly, though, when a USAF Airman serves as the JFACC, then he or she commands independent staffs to support COMAFFOR and JFACC duties. But if, say, a marine is designated as the JFACC, would the C/JAOC be brought up for that marine's use? One hopes that is the case, but both joint doctrine and Air Force doctrine need to make that clear.

We now return to the original proposition that the relationship between the British and American armed forces (in particular, that between the RAF and USAF) is special and why this is so. In the case of the air forces, the two nations have faced similar questions with respect to achieving unity of command and unity of effort. The RAF came up with the right answers, and it stuck to its positions. The USAF fought internal battles, some of legionary proportions, eventually arriving at the same answers.

In the post-Cold War era, both face the problem of building expeditionary air forces. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that both nations have reached the conclusion that the C/JFACC concept and the accompanying J/AOC mechanism represent the right way to go. Now, having reached the same conclusion, they have an obligation to make it stick and that means resources. After all, to paraphrase a central point made by Commander Thompson in his article, "A vision without resources is an illusion". The time has come to press the question of resources.

Notes

1 See 13 May 1918, RAF History Timeline: 1780 to 1918 Overview, http://www.raf.mod.uk/history/line1780.html.

2 Ibid.

3 One finds many possible reasons for this lack of coordination, including problems with operations security, a lack of training, and a general unfamiliarity with each other's operations. Whatever the reasons, the land-based air assets launched (on 4 June) in order to survive the Japanese attack; once launched, aircraft characteristics (range, payload, etc.) determined their operational use. In contrast, the sea-based assets fought a more conventional air-naval battle based on the enemy's known position. Within the land element, Army, Navy, and Marine air fought according to those services' own doctrines, against targets appropriate to their operating procedures.

4 Task Force 61 had three carriers; Task Force 62 consisted of an amphibious force with marines embarked; and Task Force 63 included land-based US Navy, Marine, and Army air forces alongside Royal New Zealand air forces.

5 An axiom of organizational decision making under pressure (crisis) holds that professionals usually find a way to make things work, in spite of the organizational structure. Said another way (more appropriate to combat ops), it's time to put aside pettiness when you're getting your backside shot off. Find time to fight each other later (and they did).

6 A considerable amount of literature covers the air war in the Pacific and the associated command and control issues. The point of reference for the discussions here is James A. Winnefeld and Dana J Johnson's Joint Air Operations: Pursuit of Unity in Command and Control, 1942–1991 (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1993).

7 A "powerful outside force" (ie, Congress) generated this change with the Defense Reorganization Act of 1947. However, as with any sort of organizational change, it encountered resistance — at the outset, in terms of the frame of reference (the legislation), and after the legislation passed, in terms of implementation. Even more interesting, a battle ensued within the new Air Force between fighter and bomber advocates. This issue may never see total resolution, but at least it reached a partial one with the creation of Air Combat Command in the early 1990s.

8 In addition to the authority to organize and direct forces, Goldwater-Nichols imbued combatant commanders with a more forceful voice in the resource-allocation process, implemented through the Joint Requirements Oversight Council. Equally important, it implemented a long-term program for joint education (joint professional military education [JPME]) and a structure for adding joint experience (the joint service officer positions), all of which combined to become wickets through which officers had to pass on their way to promotion to general or admiral. Although some services resisted these moves, they institutionalized jointness across the spectrum of service activities.

9 Readers should study Commander Thompson's article in detail, paying particular attention to the RAF's decision to permanently staff and train a JFACC headquarters instead of just a J/AOC. Once again, this issue illustrates the prescience of our British colleagues; we Americans would do well to follow suit.

10 Benjamin S Lambeth, The Transformation of American Air Power (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 130.

11 One certainly encountered a number of implementation issues. For instance the daily air tasking order had to be flown out to the fleet since compatible communications did not exist. However, these sorts of issues, although ugly and difficult to manage, do not refute the value of the overall concept of a JFACC and an AOC.

12 Lambeth, Transformation of American Air Power, 132–33; and Williamson Murray, Air War in the Persian Gulf (Baltimore: Nautical & Aviation Publishing Co of America, 1995).