

NATO - Canada-U.S. Region

The defence of Canada is, of course, the primary task of Canada's Armed Forces. However, it is difficult to separate Canada's defence at home from NATO, because almost everything that is now being done for continental defence by the working partnership of Canada and the United States follows naturally from our NATO commitments. The defence of the North American continent is of very great concern to NATO not only because of the vast industrial potential of the Canada-United States region but also because the U.S. Strategic Air Force constitutes the major bombing force capable of carrying out nuclear retaliatory action against an aggressor.

For the defence of the Canada-U.S. region, Canada has available a brigade group less an armoured regiment. The three infantry battalions of this group each have a parachute element. These battalions, plus supporting arms and services, are available to deal with enemy lodgements, particularly in the North.

The air defence systems of Canada and the United States which were previously closely co-ordinated at all levels of command centres have now been placed under the operational control of an integrated headquarters North American Air Defence Command (NORAD) at Colorado Springs, Colorado. The joint air defence system provides facilities for detecting and identifying potentially hostile aircraft; interceptor aircraft and anti-aircraft weapons to deal with attacking forces; and co-ordinated communications and command centres.

The R.C.A.F. at present maintains nine regular squadrons equipped with long-range all-weather CF-100 jet aircraft for interception duties. Eight of these squadrons are deployed in eastern Canada and one in western Canada.

In Canada, there are three radar systems; the Pinetree System, the Mid-Canada Line, and the Distant Early Warning Line. The Pinetree System, a joint Canada-United States project, provides the radar network and communications system to direct interceptor forces under the operational control of NORAD. As a result of further joint planning, Canada has constructed, financed and operates a second and supplementary warning line, the Mid-Canada Line, which runs generally along the fifty-fifth parallel