



Lt.Col. Jason Major and Col. Bill Seymour served with LRP Squads in Iraq, 2003

By Richard Sanders, coordinator, Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade

Col. Bill Seymour and Lt.Col. Jason Major both built their Air Force careers around Canada's CP-140 spy planes. Both have seen combat missions aboard these Long Range Patrol (LRP) aircraft, and both had a taste of the war against Iraq.

Lt.Col. Jason Major

Lt.Col. Major is now the Commander of the 405 "Pathfinder" LRP Squadron in Greenwood, Nova Scotia, which operates CP-140s. After becoming a pilot in 1995, he was posted to the 407 Squadron at Comox Air Force Base on Vancouver Island. While there, he was promoted to Captain, became a Crew Commander, and was chosen to go on "exchange" with "206 Sqn at Royal Air Force [Base] Kinloss [in Scotland] to fly the Nimrod MR2 aircraft."¹

Nimrod MR2s are Britain's

equivalent of Canadian "Auroras." Both countries deployed these LRP aircraft to the Persian Gulf in the early 2000s to abet U.S.-led plans for the impending war against Iraq. Then, in early 2003, when the "shock and awe" bombing of Iraq was launched and the war officially began, Canadian and British LRP aircraft and crews were already on hand to join the fray. This was how Major found himself flying British Nimrods and helping to wage the air war during America's so-called Operation Iraqi Freedom:

"While on exchange, Capt Major served as the Sqn Standards Pilot and was Crew Commander of one of the Maritime Counter Terrorism Crews. In 2002, he and his crew deployed to the Middle East in support of Op Enduring Freedom conducting patrols in Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Gulf. In 2003, Captain Major returned to the Middle East again, this time to fly in Op[eration] Iraqi

Lt.Col. James Irvine

As former Commander (2008-2010) of Canada's west coast fleet of CP-140s at Comox Air Force Base in BC, Irvine was

"very proud of the Sqn's role in Operation Athena providing mapping imagery to the ground troops in Afghanistan, providing airborne surveillance at the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver for Op Podium and providing air surveillance at the G8 – G20 political summits in Ontario for Op Cadence."

(Source: 405 Long Range Patrol Squadron, Change of Command Parade, August 26, 2010.)

Freedom, where he earned the Iraq War Medal."²

Major's "Iraq War Medal" was given to him by the UK's Ministry of Defence. It honours participants in what the British called Operation Telic, which began January 20, 2003. The medal was "awarded to UK Armed Forces and civilian personnel, including embedded media, and certain for-



Nimrod MR2 firing a Harpoon missile

Canada's Lt.Col. Jason Major flew a British Nimrod MR2 during the Iraq war, in 2003. These spy planes are armed with Sidewinder air-to-air missiles, Stingray anti-sub torpedoes, and Harpoon anti-ship missiles. They were also fitted with L3 Wescam's MX-15 target-finding sensor turret made in Canada.



eign nationals assigned to the operation.”²³

Like Canadian Auroras of today, most of the Nimrods used in the Iraq war in 2003 had state-of-the-art sensor/camera turrets made in Burlington Ontario by L3 Wescam (See p.41.). The Nimrods had

“new L-3 Wescam MX-15 electro-optical turrets under their starboard wings, and were employed to obtain reconnaissance imagery over Iraq—very different from their normal maritime patrol duties.”²⁴

The Nimrods in Iraq “used their electro-optical equipment to identify potential targets” and specifically to “assist AC-130 Spectre [Attack] Gunships and RAF Tornado GR4 [Fighter-Bomber] aircraft by pinpointing targets with their sensors.”²⁵ (See p.51 for some information about AC-130 gunships.)

Major has served as vice president of a global network to “foster goodwill and fellowship” among LRP flyers “of the free world” who have flown 2000 hours or more aboard these spy planes.⁶ Both Irvine and Seymour are proud members of this club.

Col. Bill Seymour

Col. William F. Seymour’s Air Force career has included work as a navigator on NATO E-3A “Airborne Warning and Control System” warplanes as well as aboard Canadian CC-130 “Hercules” transport/cargo aircraft. (See pp.28-31 and pp.32-37, respectively.) However, most of Col. Seymour’s flying time has been with CP-140 “Auroras.”²⁷

In July 2009, Seymour—with

more than 3400 flying hours flying CP-140s—took command of 14 Wing Greenwood, in Nova Scotia. Greenwood has two squadrons (named 404 and 405) that operate thirteen of Canada’s eighteen CP-14s.

Seymour served “multiple flying tours” aboard CP-140s, including twice with 407 “Demon” Squadron, at the Comox Air Force Base, on Vancouver Island, BC, and twice with the 404 “Thundering Herd” Squadron, based in Nova Scotia. (Seymour was the Commanding Officer of 404 Squadron between 2005 and 2007.)

During one of his CP-140 overseas operational tours, Seymour was a

Col. Bill Seymour is the Commander of 14 Wing Greenwood, Canada’s largest east coast Air Force Base. Home to 13 of Canada’s 18 CP-140 “Auroras,” 14 Wing deployed two of these Long Range Patrol spy planes to help the Iraq war in 2003.



crew commander “flying armed missions” during Operation Sharp Guard to enforce the imposition of economic sanctions against the Former Republic of Yugoslavia.⁸

As for his tour of duty in the Persian Gulf, Seymour’s official biography states:

“In 2003 he deployed to the Middle East prior to the second Gulf War to support LRP operations in Operation Apollo as the Canadian LRP Liaison Officer to [the Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command] COMUSNAVCENT in Bahrain, supporting Canadian CP-140 Aurora and [Canadian Forces] CF Naval operations in the region.”²⁹

Although Seymour may not have flown onboard CP-140 during their missions against Iraqi targets, his leadership role was pivotal to ensuring that all such Canadian missions were efficiently subsumed within the U.S.-led “War on Terror.” His job involved reporting directly to the leading American Naval officer in charge of the huge Central-Command “Area of Responsibility.” CENTCOM is responsible for waging all U.S. wars throughout the Middle East and Central Asia, including Iraq and Afghanistan.

In his key role as the Canadian LRP Liaison Officer to the Commander of the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, Seymour was ultimately responsible for coordinating Canada’s CP-140 sorties over the Persian Gulf, with America’s 5th Fleet.

References

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