



CDA Association Annual Report Cover Sheet

Association Name: _RCAF Association_____ **Year:** 2019

Association Head Office: Location: #405 – 222 Somerset St. West, Ottawa, ON, K2P 2G3

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Membership & Chapters (or next lower level organizations):

Number of Members/Number of Chapters (or Next Lower Level Organizations): 4,988 / 54

Location Of Chapters/Next Lower Level Organizations: Too many to list, here.

Website: <http://rcafassociation.ca>

Newsletter (Title/Frequency): RCAF Association News / weekly (every Friday)

Subscription Details (If Aval): Visit <http://rcafassociation.ca>

Externally-Focused Events/Programs or Projects Held (Date/Location/Description/Recurring?):

The expression “externally-focused” is confusing. Most if not all military associations have instrumental functions, which by definition are intended for the benefit of non-members, being those outside (external?) of the association. Additionally, military associations also happen to have expressive functions, which by definition are intended for the benefit of members, being those inside (internal?) to the association. But, military associations for whom service-specific advocacy is a significant component of their mission, are actually hybrid instrumental-expressive organizations, and the RCAF Association is no exception. These military organizations do not perform functions crafted solely for the benefit of members (expressive), so much if not all of what they do is (presumably) externally-focused (instrumental). What they do, however, is both expressive and instrumental. The major events undertaken by the RCAF Association include: Air Force Day on Parliament Hill/Annual/28 November 2018/yes; Dawn Patrol Breakfast/Chateau Laurier/Annual/February 2018/yes

Reasons for Success or Failure, Suggestions for Future:

The two events are popular, and are presumed to be successful, because society (those members in the ‘field’ toward which the association directs its efforts) continues to confirm the legitimacy, and value of the association and its work. However, failure is creeping ever closer because generationally speaking, younger citizens find different ways (social media, for example) to ‘affiliate,’ and these different ways mean fewer and fewer of these younger members come to our doorstep, or involve themselves in our efforts. In many respects it would appear younger generations are being duped into the belief that their social media participation is serving some sort of instrumental purpose of benefit beyond themselves, but in reality their social media activities are more readily seen as expressive activities that benefit only themselves, and serve no other real useful purpose.

Externally-Focused Events/Programs or Projects Planned (Date/Location/Description/Recurring?):

- Dawn Patrol Breakfast 13 February 2019/Chateau Laurier/Advocacy function/yes-annual
- RCAF2024 – We are working with the RCAF committee commissioned to orchestrate the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the creation of the RCAF on or about 1 April 2024.

Biggest Problems:

Demographics – a 2016 survey of the RCAF Association’s members benefiting from a substantial response of 1,199 replies. The survey showed the average age of the members exceeded 75. This has significant implications for managing our chapters (Wings), and it also has enormous implications for member-at-large involvement as well.

Stakeholders – Chapter (Wing) leaders have become increasingly beholden to local stakeholders, meaning their pecuniary (economic and financial) interests now overshadow their fiduciary (RCAF Association charter) interests. The declining population of air force veterans, amongst the Wing members makes it easier for Wing leaders to direct more of their attention toward local (community) stakeholders, since doing so resonates with the non-military-veteran population of members that have been permitted to join the association beginning in the early 1970s. The decision to open doors to new citizens, and abandon a homogeneous membership policy of the late 1940s, was the right thing to do, but it was not very well thought through. The policy change should have led to a commitment to regular governance training, and in the complete absence of governance training the Wing leaders have grown increasingly discontent with an association that “does nothing for them.”

Legitimacy & Reputation – the legitimacy of any association like ours is not for the members of the association to determine. Legitimacy is a measure applied by society in general, and society determines the legitimacy of the association, based on their perception of the association’s reputation. One element of society from which the RCAF Association is in need of a favourable legitimacy assessment, is the men and women in RCAF uniform today. In 1993, LGen Huddleston, Commander of the Canadian Air Force of the day (Air Command) released a CANAIRGEN message highlighting aspects of the RCAF Association/Air Force Association of Canada, which would appear to have helped declare the legitimacy of the association. In the four years that followed, the uptake/recruiting of members far exceeded any previous period in the RCAF Association’s history. Over the past 15 years our reputation has not fared well, amongst the cadre of “Contact Officers” in the RCAF, to the extent the entire program was abandoned in 2013. We are working with the new RCAF Commander to explore these issues,

Biggest Strength/Advantage/Success/Accomplishment/Lesson Learned:

The RCAF Association may be at a crossroad. It would appear at the highest levels the association has become a pastime, far from the vocation that it once was, in the wake of the Second World War. The strength of the association would have to be in the people who understand the range of important work the association can still do, but it is becoming increasingly evident that the capacities and capabilities are on the wane.

An organization’s value proposition is an expression of what the association and its members do, that helps members and their intended benefactors “gain” what they need, and are unable to source elsewhere, as readily as they might like, while helping those same members and benefactors alleviate “pain” they experience, while attempting to achieve or obtain that which they are in need of accomplishing. The RCAF Association’s “gains”-related work, includes our ability to inform new

generations of Canadians about the proud history and traditions of their country's air force. Since the Royal Canadian Air Cadets and the Air Cadet League are involved in a program that prepares young Canadians for a possible career in either civil or military aviation or both, the RCAF Association works closely with and supports the Air Cadet League and the many communities in which we can find air cadet squadrons. Finally, in advocacy terms, the RCAF Association tries to help alleviate the "pain" aerospace industry companies may experience, promoting, advertising and marketing their innovations to decision-makers. Our efforts in this regard, include important events like the Air Force Day on the Hill and the Dawn Patrol Breakfast. Putting all of these things together, we remain proud of our quarterly publication Revue Airforce Magazine, which is meant to serve as a tool in support of these value proposition focused activities.

Support/Assistance Required from CDA and/or Other Assns:

Develop products specifically for sharing with individual members, within our associations, to help show yet another means by which their membership adds value. At one time we were able to distribute hard copies of "On Track", but distribution is different now, in that it is digital, but associations with aging populations derive less value, since access to digital products is not assured.

Other Comments or Suggestions: