

Diving deep for the Avro Arrow

By IAN ROBERTSON
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On "Black Friday," Feb. 20, 1959, Parliament shot down the Avro military jet interceptor.

This Thursday, aircraft history buffs will

start searching the bottom of Lake Ontario, more than 120 feet down, for long-lost test models of the A.V. Roe CF-105.

If found, the 10-foot-long metal models "will be the only complete Arrow left," says Bob Saunders, director of the Metro-based Aero-

space Heritage Foundation of Canada's underwater recovery project.

The decision to stop work on the Arrow threw 14,000 people out of work and sent the Canadian aeronautical industry into a tailspin. At the same time, the Tory government and prime minister John Diefenbaker's hopes for re-election fell from the sky.

All five 75-foot prototype planes and several others near completion on the A.V. Roe assembly line at Malton were put to the torch. The 2,785 tons of scrap were sold for \$304,370 — far short of the 10-year research project's cost, which various sources quote at a low of \$150 million and a high of \$780 million.

Only the nose of a CF-105, a landing wheel and two experimental engines survived.

But after a video maker found a film in an

Ottawa archive that shows telemetry flights by the 750-pound models off Prince Edward County, near Belleville, the Aerospace Heritage Foundation was able to pinpoint where the mini-Arrows came down.

"We figure the team will be out on the lake for three days," Etobicoke search specialist W.A. "Bill" Thuma said. "There's a lot of scrap down there from other military tests, but it's shallow enough we should find something."

But even if successful the team can only photograph the wreckage as they need another provincial licence to bring it to the surface.

Thuma will use a sonar device like the one he used in Greenland in 1990 to peer through 50 feet of ice and find P-38 Lightning fighters abandoned during World War II.

IN DEPTH...

Sonar specialist Bill Thuma (far left) and Etobicoke diver Bob Saunders hope to locate and photograph Avro Arrow test drones submerged in Lake Ontario near Belleville.



— Ian Robertson, SUN