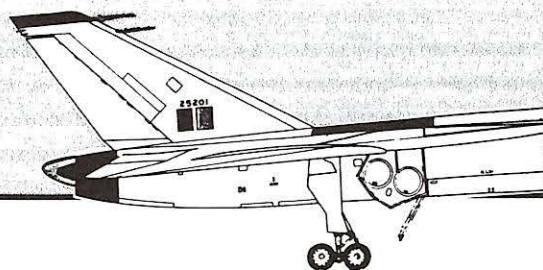


Pre-Flight



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Memories of AVRO DC-3

The Joy of Flying in Better Days

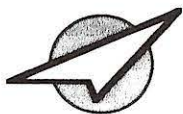
by
Bill Devine

In December 1954, I joined Avro. During my interview with Chief Pilot, Don Rogers, he said that he needed a full-time, instrument rated DC-3 Captain. I was his man, and was hired to captain the Avro DC 3, CF-DJT, seen above in an official Avro photo (prior to the installation of the Maximizer kit, serenely cruising above the clouds). I was fresh out of a career in the RCAF Air Transport Command, where I flew Dakota DC-3 type aircraft and a small bit of C119. I had about four thousand hours flying time, mostly IFR DC-3 in Canadian skies and in the northland to places such as Cambridge Bay, Frobisher Bay, Churchill and Whitehorse. Along with me was Denny Young, my very able co-pilot/engineer, who flew right seat with me most of the time. Paddy Ferguson, was our second AME, and a finer engineer and easy-to-get-along-with man you could ever find. We ran the "Air Transport Service" for Avro until about October 1959. We flew in fair
(cont'd on p. 2)

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The Aerospace Foundation of Canada (AHFC) is a federally chartered non-for-profit organization. The current emphasis is on Avro and Orenda. The Foundation is actively trying to locate former employees of these companies.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

On behalf of all the members of the Foundation, I extend our deepest sympathy to Senior Vice-President Frank Harvey and his family on the recent loss of his father. The Board of Directors has authorized a donation to the Alzheimers Society in his father's memory.

The CF-100 Reunion Dinner succeeded beyond our initial expectations. Thanks to Chairman Mike Deschamps and his Committee of Mike Brigham, Nick Doran, Norma and Tara Deschamps, Frank Harvey, Christine Mason, and our Patron Bill Coyle. Their personal contributions helped make the event such a success.

Our sincere appreciation to our guest of honour, L.Gen. Raymond Henault, Deputy-Chief of Defence Staff; to U.S. astronaut Frank Borman, Chief of U.S.A.F. Museum Planning; Terry Aitken and Gary Strong, who displayed his magnificent CF-100 models.

A special thanks to our volunteers: my daughter Janet Farrar, Helen Jancic, Capt. James Pickett, AirForce History and Heritage Section, and last but by no means least, the Officers and Cadets from No. 865 AVRO Arrow Squadron.

As this was a tribute to all people involved with the CF-100, we were overjoyed at the strong support from former CF-100 Squadrons, notably 414, 433 and 440; and especially the participation of L.Col. Michel Prudhomme, current C.O. of 440 Squadron, who came all the way from Yellowknife, NWT. We were honoured by your attendance and support.

None of the foregoing is intended to diminish the distinguished AVRO/Orenda contingent, which is too numerous to list. But I will say this: Jim Floyd is our Santa Claus and you can't have him.

To all who attended and met old friends or made new friends, the AHFC is pleased to have facilitated such an event.

The Board of Directors has plans for a variety of future events. One such possible event is a two-day trip to the USAF Museum, Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio. So please keep in touch.

IAN FARRAR

DJT, cont'd from p 1.

weather and foul. During that time, we logged 2500 hours of VIP, corporate and freight-carrying time, flying all over North America. We carried such luminaries as Crawford Gordon, Fred Smye, Jim Floyd, Air Marshall Curtis, Air Vice Marshall Plant, just to name a few.

At the time, Avro was churning out CF-100s, and at the same time, building that marvelous all-weather interceptor, the Arrow. The test pilots were Jan Jurakowski (who cartwheeled in the Gloster meteor), Peter Cope, Stan Haswell and, of course, the Chief Driver, Don Rogers. Don Rogers was my boss, and probably the best boss a man ever had. He would be captain when we flew together, which was seldom, and the rest of the time Denny would be in the right seat except for rare occasions, when Stan Haswell or Peter Cope would be along. They were not instrument rated and so on paper, I had to be on the flight plan as captain. We did many trips to RCAF Cold Lake station in Alberta, transporting ejection seats for CF-100s.

One time we overnighted at Cold Lake. The temperature was about minus 30 degrees C. The next morning we had to use the old reliable Herman Nelson heaters to pre-heat the engines. After a while, we finally got them started, taxied out, and took off. As we passed through around three thousand feet, we flew into a layer of warmer air. The whole cold-soaked airframe frosted over in the twinkling of an eye. We



DJT with Maximizer Kit installed. An Anson II is alongside.

Memories, cont'd from p. 2

had plenty of airspeed and seemed not to have experienced any loss of life. But it sure was an unusual incident.

The only time I was worried about fuel was when we had flown to Cold Lake from Toronto, after refuelling at Winnipeg. We were then planning to fly to Edmonton and overnight there. While our cargo was being discharged, we looked at the fuel gauges after landing. They indicated that we had just adequate legal fuel for a VFR (visual flight rules) flight to Edmonton, which was about 40 minutes away. So off we went, heading for the bright lights and cozy bistros of Edmonton. However, by the time the Edmonton Municipal Airport ("Muni") showed up, all the fuel gauges, four of them, were knocking on empty. We did a straight-in approach, no circuit, with our hearts slightly in mouths. Thankfully, DJT's engines did not falter.

At one point, Don Rogers decided to modify DJT with a mod called the Maximizer Kit. This involved a new cowl with a much smaller frontal orifice than the standard DC 3 cowl. It also included stub exhaust pipes, aileron gap strips and undercarriage doors which partially enclosed the undercarriage when retracted. The installation was done by Timmins Aviation in Montreal. An interesting side note to this was that when Denny and I went to Montreal to pick up DJT, after this work was done we decided to do an air

test to determine whether or not there was the increase in cruise speed that the kit advertised. So up we went, levelled off and set up cruise power and watched the air speed build up. Well, it went up so much that we couldn't believe it. So we performed a stall to see what that would produce; it stalled much higher than previously. After landing back at Dorval, we reported this to the Timmins techs. They discovered the pitot system was erroneously hooked up to the alternate source, which explained our phenomenal airspeed. Pity. And though we never lost an engine in all that time, nevertheless we practised regularly to maintain our proficiency.

Another time, we were flying from Winnipeg to Edmonton and were somewhere around Vermillion, the next RRS (radio range station) east of Edmonton. We were picking up quite a load of ice and had turned on the pump which was to spray de-icer fluid on the propeller blades. But unbeknownst to us, the pump wasn't working and by this time our speed was dropping off. Furthermore, the vibration from the out-of-balance ice-loaded propellers was moving the engines up and down in a fearsome way. Luckily, just after passing Vermillion, we broke out into clear blue sky and sunlight. I think I said "Thank you, Lord!" shortly thereafter.

Still another time, we were taking off out of Toronto and heading south to Florida. We had Avro VIPs and their wives on board, and everyone, crew excepted, was pretty happy after a few snorts. After an hour or so, one of the passengers needed to go to the head, which was in the back of the aircraft. This person soon returned and reported that there was no container inside the outer shell of the toilet. We had forgotten to install it! Well, thinking quickly, Paddy Ferguson emptied the cookie tin and placed it inside the toilet shell. Not a very big container, but better than nothing.

Once a year, we would usually fly VIPs to Florida's Eglin Air Force Base. This was a USAF station which put on something called the "Annual Firepower Display". One year, I remember a Canberra twin jet bomber demonstrating toss bombing. The Canberra came across the field at low level, pulled up vertically, then released a simulated nuclear bomb which trailed smoke. Impressive. At this same display, a modern version of the Gatling gun was demonstrated. Its rate of fire was so rapid that it sounded like someone ripping a piece of cloth!

The year the Alexander Graham Bell Museum at Baddeck, had its official opening, I flew VIPs to the Sydney, Nova Scotia, airport. Everyone then proceeded up the Cabot Trail to the Celtic Lodge, where we all stayed. I had the pleasure of meeting J.A.D. McCurdy, one of the pilots of Bell's Aerial Experiment Association, which flew the June Bug and the Silver

Dart and others. He would have been in his 80s at the time.

After the Arrow program was cancelled, Avro was casing about for work to keep the factory busy. A Mr. Umbaugh had designed a jump gyro down in the States. It was more of an autogyro than a helicopter. It would wind up the rotor on the ground at zero pitch. When the optimum rpm was achieved, the rotor was given a positive pitch, de-clutched from the engine. The craft would then jump off the ground and translate into forward flight, propelled by the pushed propellor at the read of the fuselage. This little gem, it was planned, was to sell for about \$10,000. As a matter of interest, this aircraft is now known as the Air & Space 18A. It is powered by a 180 hp Lycoming and has a top speed of 112 mph. And it is selling for \$119,995 US.

The last little story about the Avro DC-3 happened as Denny and I were taxiing in after dark from a flight to St. Hubert and Ottawa on June 19, 1959. We taxied through the so-called "rolling gate" on the perimeter of the Avro property. Just then, horror of horrors, a very black cat trotted across in front of the aircraft, illuminated by our powerful landing lights. Denny and I looked at each other and gulped. This was several months after the Arrow cancellation and we were half-expecting that we might be terminated because of lack of work at the plant. Anyway, we shut down and I went into the flight shack to call the Chief Pilot, Don Rogers, and report our safe return, as was our S.O.P. After I finished my report, Don said, "I have some bad news, Bill. We are having to terminate the operation and lay off you chaps." Was it the cat? That was my last flight in DJT.

After being discharged, it was a very sad time for me and my crew. We had thought that we'd be flying the company aircraft until retirement. However, I soldiered on, filling the job of Chief Pilot at the now-defunct Sarnia Airlines, Chief Pilot at Domtar in Montreal on Hawker Siddely 125 jet type, and finally

as Captain on Lockheed Jetstar, Vickers Viscount and Beechcraft Kingair with Transport Canada Executive flight. The sole function of this flight was to transport the Prime Minister and his cabinet members, which lasted until my retirement in 1986.

I did a bit of production test flying on the CF 100. On my first solo flight, several things happened to make my life interesting. I was to climb to 45,000 feet, recording temperature and pressures at every 10,000 foot level as it hurtled by. When I got to 45,000 feet, I started seeing double. Thinking quickly, I reduced power, stuck out the speed brakes and got down to 25,000 feet. My vision cleared up and I surmised that I had suffered an oxygen deprivation. My mask was too loose. So after cynching up the adjusting straps, I went up to 45,000 feet again and this time everything was OK. However, on my descent back to Malton airport, the inside of the canopy frosted up about a quarter of an inch thick of frost. I was descending into busy Malton

with only forward visibility. Then the yaw damper began to malfunction and the rudder pedals began to oscillate fore and aft rapidly. This made me nervous. And then the low level fuel lights came on, glowing redly at me. Well, by this time I was in a real sweat and when I landed, glad to be back on Mother Earth.

DJT was never like this.

FOUND!

Someone left their eyeglasses at the Flight 2000 Dinner ticket table. For that individual, being without those specs can become truly bothersome. So please phone Ian Farrar (905-893-8023) and he will send them to you as soon as possible!

