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The Ottawa Citizen**Letters to the Editor**

March 3, 1997

Why Arrows became scrap

The myth holds John Diefenbaker responsible for ordering the destruction of the Avro Arrow planes and all related engines, parts, plans and records.

No evidence has surfaced that would give credence to it.

Mr. Diefenbaker may not have been aware of the fate that awaited the Arrows.

It was Air Marshal Hugh Campbell, chief of the Air Staff, who in a memorandum to George Perakes, then minister of National Defence, who recommended on April 26, 1959 that all Arrow material be reduced "to scrap."

Selling it in "its original state... could lead to subsequent embarrassment... airframe and engine could conceivably be used... as a roadside stand."

The RCAF, the very organization that initiated and funded the Arrow project, demonstrated a complete lack of appreciation of the value of research and technology.

So did the constructors of the Arrow. When government contracts were no longer available, the British-owned A. V. Roe Canada Ltd. - by then a conglomerate of heavy industries - was not prepared to continue development with its own funds.

This was even though the Iroquois engine offered good prospects and the company decided to abandon aeronautics.


The Russians did better. Their unsuccessful Tupolev Tu-144 supersonic jetliner, developed to compete with the Concorde, was abandoned in 1978 but not scrapped.


The Tu-144LL now serves as a development test bed for a second generation supersonic transport.


This is a joint NASA-Tupolev project in which six American and British industrial partners are participating.


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