



Crowds swarm around the first Avro Arrow at the rollout of the aircraft at the Avro plant in Malton in 1957.

'ARROW ONLY NOW OBSOLESCE'

By Doug Stuebing

Had the Avro Arrow been built, it would still be in service today, MGen James E. Hanna, one of its test pilots, said.

Gen Hanna, who retired last year after more than 30 years in the regular RCAF and Canadian Forces, was interviewed just before his retirement as Commander, Canadian Forces Europe, in Lahr, West Germany.

"I think if we had been able to go ahead with the Avro Arrow, it's an aircraft that would still be in service today and only now would be becoming obsolescent. I think you might make some comparisons to the U.S. F-106, but the Arrow would have been superior to the F-106 in a number of ways," Gen Hanna said.

Notwithstanding his feelings about the Arrow, Gen Hanna does not disagree with the decision to scrap the project.

Unaffordable

"I don't think Canada could afford the Avro Arrow without somebody else buying it. We couldn't afford to build it and keep a production line going on our own. The whole project depended on sales outside Canada, which didn't materialize. That's the really unfortunate part."

(In that he echoed the sentiment of the late C.D. Howe, the trade minister who was the father of the Arrow program. Interviewed shortly after the Conservative Government cancelled the Arrow, Mr. Howe refused to criticize the government. He summed up his feelings about the cancellation when he said: "I'm glad I didn't have to do it.")

Gen Hanna has more than passing knowledge of the Arrow. He was stationed at Avro, about four years as an acceptance test pilot. Had the Arrow program con-

tinued, he would have been one of the RCAF pilots to fly it. He was a member of the Central Experimental and Proving Establishment Detachment from Jan 1957 to Aug 1960. His principal responsibility was to test the CF 100s coming off the production line, to make sure they fulfilled the specifications of the flight envelope. He also did flight testing at deHavilland, on Beaver and Otter aircraft being modified.

Never Flew It

But Gen Hanna never actually flew the Arrow.

"I got to sit in the aeroplane and once I

had the opportunity to run the engines. But during the period that the Arrow program was active my principal responsibility was as an acceptance pilot," Gen Hanna said.

"S/L Jack Woodman, now chief of flight operations for Lockheed Aircraft, was the only RCAF pilot to actually fly the Arrow.

"I was designated as a test pilot in Phase Four of the Arrow program — systems proving — but of course it never came to that. I was occasionally asked to sit in the aircraft and give my impressions, so I knew the Arrow to some extent, but not as well as

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Test pilots on the Avro Arrow program in 1958, gather around the cockpit of one of the test aircraft. Left to right W. "Spud"

Potocki, Peter R. Cope, S/L Jack Woodman, the only RCAF pilot to fly the aircraft, and Jan Zurakowski. (Avro Aircraft Photo)

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some on the program," Gen Hanna reported. "I was there before the roll out, until well after cancellation. I knew the Arrow essentially from the sidelines and I knew some of the personalities involved right up to Crawford Gordon (President of Avro)."

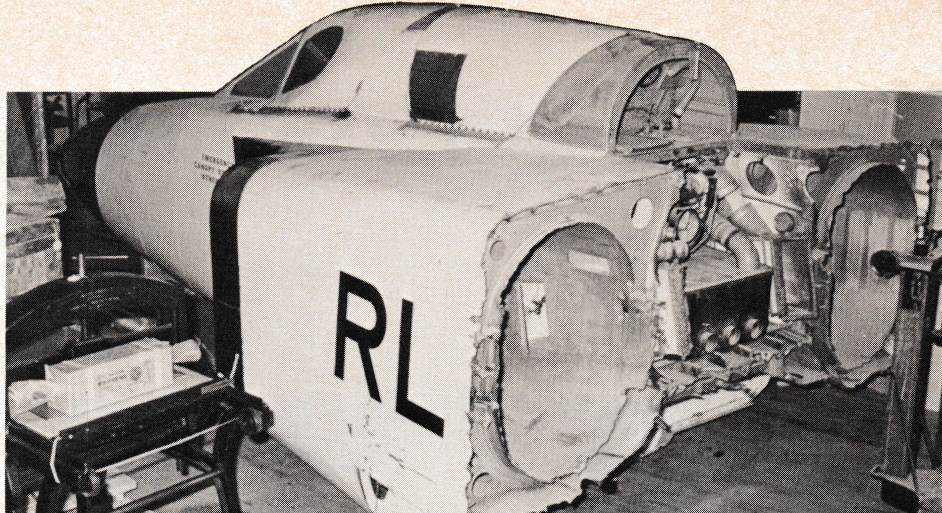
It was intended to arm the Arrow with missiles, he reported.

"I can't remember which missiles we were going to arm it with, but in the late 50s context we were probably looking at both conventional and nuclear capability with the aeroplane. And I say that mainly because that was the state of the art of the weapons systems. Of course now you don't need nuclear weapons in their defence role because the accuracy is so much greater. Nuclear weaponry makes up for inaccuracies. They would have been carried inside the aircraft for the Arrow had a great weapons' bay," Gen Hanna said.

Stayed Two Years

After the shutdown of the Arrow program, Gen Hanna remained at Avro for about two years. He flew most of the Canucks that were left in the system when the aircraft was retired at ceremonies in North Bay last September.

He started his military career as a trumpeter in the NPAM in the Artillery, serving three years and advancing to the rank of bombardier (corporal).



All that remains of RL 206, the last Arrow produced by Avro before cancellation of the program. The nose section and cockpit, saved from the wreckers' torches, is in the

"When I joined the RCAF (Special Reserve) I hoped to be a pilot, but I was trained as a flight engineer and graduated at Aylmer, Ont. In March 1945 I was commissioned and released to the Class E reserve a month later. There was no requirement for us as the war in Europe was grinding to its end.

"About two years later I was transferred to the Class F Reserve into the University Air Training Plan. I was in the first group of people to hold the subordinate rank of flight cadet. Nobody had been a flight cadet, so we lived in the other ranks quar-

warehouse at the National Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa. (Canadian Forces Photo by Danny Bryantowich)

ters and ate in the men's mess. But about a year later it was decided we were somewhere around NCO equivalent so the summer of 48 we spent in the sergeants' mess.

"At the end of the summer, because the RCAF regular flying training program was taking in flight cadets, it was decided that they were subordinate officers and therefore should probably be in the officers' mess. My last summer of flying training was the summer of 1949 which I spent at Centuria and I got my wings in Aug 49 from the then Minister of National Defence, Brook Claxton," Gen Hanna said.

Joined Regulars

After graduation from the University of Toronto in aeronautical engineering he joined the RCAF regular force and flew Vampires, Mustangs — "a great airplane" — Sabres, and CF 100s.

"When I was flying Vampires, no one had successfully baled out of a Vampire. But when I was at the Empire Test Flying School in England they had an ejection seat for the aircraft.

"I never did test it. I thought about baling out once or twice but decided to stick with it and still survived."

Looking ahead to the future, Gen Hanna says that there should be some kind of service identification so that the man on the street can identify the troops as army, navy or air force.

"For financial reasons we couldn't go back to three separate services and I do not see us dispensing with green uniforms. But the question of identity is important.

"A lot of time has elapsed since unification in Feb 68. Well over 50 per cent of the people in the service now have no knowledge of pre-unification. People who enlisted up to three years after unification have carried on the traditions, but those who joined over the last ten years don't have quite as strong an affiliation," Gen Hanna said somewhat sadly.

After his retirement leave Gen Hanna settled in Ottawa.



W/C (Ret) Frank Fajtl and Air Marshal

Two veterans of WW II met for the first time in Prague last fall during the Department of Veterans Affairs pilgrimage to almost forgotten war graves in Eastern Europe. W/C Frantisek (Frank) Fajtl, DFC, of Prague and Air Marshal (Ret) Hugh Campbell, representing the Royal Canadian Air Force Association, met during a reception given by the mayor of Prague for the veteran's representatives.

The Wingco served as a pilot officer with the RAF in the Battle of Britain. He took over as CO of 122 RAF Sqn in 1942 and on 5 May of that year was shot down over France, near Dunkirk. Encircled by the Germans he escaped during the night and after walking eight days reached Paris.

Hugh Campbell. (Canadian Forces Photo by Margaret Reid)

With the help of the French underground he managed to get through both Occupied France and the Vichy controlled area to Spain. There he was imprisoned 2½ months before British authorities in Madrid obtained his release and return to England 20 Aug.

In 1944 he was discharged from the RAF and went to Russia to command the Czech air wing, fighting in the Slovak region. He completed his service with the Czech air force in 1949.

During his career as a fighter pilot Fajtl shot down four enemy aircraft, two Do 217 and two Me 109s.

He is now retired and living in Prague.