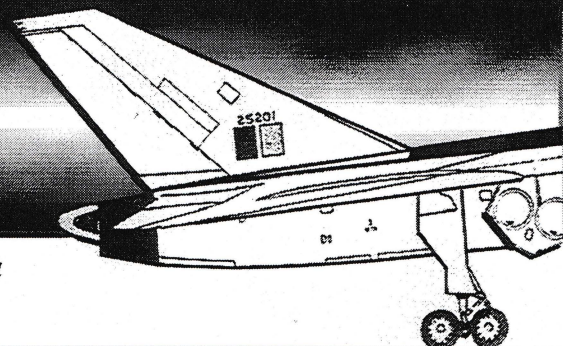


Pre-Flight

A Publication of the Aerospace Heritage Foundation of Canada
P.O. Box 246, Etobicoke "D", Etobicoke ON M9A 4X2



Vol. 18, No. 2

March - April 2007

WHERE? WHEN? WHY? WHO?

Information about the demise of the Avro Arrow has been partially declassified.

There has never been any question about the location of the destruction. The archives of the news media definitively answer the second question. As to the 'why', this has resulted in documented articles, commentaries and several books. However, the fourth question is still a mystery, with several probable explanations. Here is yet another explanation of who was responsible for the decision to totally erase the tangible existence of the Avro Arrow from Canadian aeronautical records. It is found in five sequentially dated letters, cold, precise, and composed with the governmental style and terminology of the day. These letters, devoid of any feeling or emotional content, are offered for your thoughtful consideration and eventual conclusions.

Letter no. 1

1038CN-180(CAS)

MEMORANDUM

March 11th 1959
The Minister

Arrow Cancellation - Disposal of Material

1. The termination proceedings for the Arrow Weapon System contract, as a result of the Government's decision to cancel the project, will involve the disposal of a considerable amount of material. The major items on which disposal decisions are required are:

- (a) 5 Arrow Mk 1 aircraft with their 19 Pratt and Whitney J75 engines.
- (b) 3 Arrow Mk 2 airframes and 10 Iroquois engines. These items are in various stages of assembly since the first complete Arrow/Iroquois aircraft was not scheduled to fly until early May;
- © 2 Hughes MA-1 electronic systems.

2. The 5 Arrow 1 aircraft are strictly development prototypes that have flown only 65 hours total. It has been estimated that 1000 flying hours are required to clear these aeroplanes for airworthiness and reliability. Consequently, there is considerable development left to be done before they could be used by the RCAF. We have explored the possible use of these aircraft by the National Aeronautical Establishment as research vehicles. However since spare parts are in short supply, the aircraft would have to be maintained by AVRO at Malton. Considering the development left to be done, the difficulties in supporting the aircraft and the cost of doing the research flying from AVRO, it has been concluded that this approach is not practical. In summary, then, it can be said that there is no use in the RCAF or NAE for these aircraft.



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Legal Consultant Jerry Faivish
Editorial Consultant John Thompson
Air Force Liaison Don Pearsons

PRE-FLIGHT Nicholas Doran
Ted Harasymchuk

President's mailing address:

1951 Rathburn Rd., E.
Unit 199
Mississauga ON L4W 2N9
905-624-4909

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Aerospace Heritage
Foundation of Canada
P.O. Box 246, Etobicoke D
Etobicoke ON M9A4X2
(416) 410-3350
www.ahfc.org

From the President

This issue of *Pre-Flight* offers additional insight into why the Arrow was suddenly cancelled. Of course, there still are many more reasons why the ultimate decision was made. These may surface in the months or even years to come. I hope the following letters will bring some clarification to a very complex period.

In last issue's *Pre-Flight*, we all know that the first flight of the Jetliner was in 1949, not 1959. Also Murray Willer's name was inadvertently misspelled. Please accept our apologies.

Frank

Letter no. 1, cont'd.

3. The Mark 2 airframes and the Iroquois engines have not reached the stage in production, assembly or test where they could be put together and flown as proven vehicles in any reasonable time. Consequently, these are nothing more than components of an unfinished project. The MA-1 electronic system is at least two months away from a prototype installation in a Mark 1 aircraft. Thus, this system is in the category of unassembled components.

4. Since there is no particular use for the Arrow or its major components, the RCAF intends with your approval to:

(a) negotiate with the USAF for the return of the 19 J75 engines (original cost: \$6.9M) and the 2 MA-1 electronic systems (original cost: \$13M);

(b) make the necessary arrangements to dispose of the Arrow airframes and Iroquois engines.

(Hugh Campbell)
Air Marshal
Chief of the Air Staff
cc: AMTS
(HR Foottit) G/C

Letter no. 2

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

MIN. FILE.....
H.G. FILE 1038-CY-80 TD9072

Ottawa, April. 8th, 1959
ARROW Cancellation - Disposal of Material

With reference to your memorandum of March 26th on the above subject, my understanding of the proposal is as follows:

a) There is no intention of attempting to fly or maintain in service the complete aircraft.

b) Every effort will be made to salvage engines, instruments and parts that can be used or returned to the original supplier for credit.

Letter no. 2, cont'd.

e) The aircraft, as whole aircraft, will not be put up for disposal but will be reduced to scrap after all useful and creditable material has been removed.

On, the above understanding I agree to your proposal,

MINISTER

Letter no. 3:

1038CN-80 (CAS)

MEMORANDUM

24 Apr. 59.

The Minister (Through Deputy Minister)

Arrow Cancellation - Disposal of Materiel

I . In my memorandum of 26 Mar, same subject, dealing with the recommended method for the disposition of the Arrow airframes and Iroquois engines, I recommended in para. 2 (b) disposal by DDP in which case "DDP can reduce it to scrap."

2. Your approval by memorandum of 8 April is predicated on the understanding that the aircraft" will be reduced to scrap."

3. I wish to advise that the intent of your direction has been communicated to DDP and agreement obtained. However, we are informed that such action is being withheld in respect to 5 aircraft pending the outcome of the enquiries being made on behalf of the Royal Aeronautical Establishment, Farnborough, of which I understand your are aware.

(Hugh Campbell)
Air Marshal
Chief of the Air Staff

cc: Deputy Minister

Letter no. 4:

1038CN-80 (AMTS)

APR 27 1959

Deputy Minister,
Department of Defence Production,
No. 2 Temporary Building,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Sir:

Arrow Cancellation
Disposal of Airframes and Iroquois Engines

While there is an agreed understanding at the termination team levels of our respective departments as to the method of disposal to be adopted in respect to the Arrow airframes and Iroquois engines, I think that it would be well to confirm this understanding by stating the position of this department.

Letter no. 4, cont'd.

(a) there is no intention of allowing the completed aircraft to be flown, maintained in service or left in the whole state;

(b) every effort will be made to salvage engines, instruments and parts that can be used or returned to the original supplier or such uses as may be stated by this department; the aircraft, as a whole aircraft, or airframe or engine will not be put up for disposal as such but will be reduced to scrap after all useful and creditable materiel has been removed.

I would appreciate confirmation of your understanding and agreement to this expression of our views. However, may I add, we would be willing to review our position if the present enquiries from, the U.K. are found to warrant such consideration.

Yours sincerely,
(Signed) F.R. Miller

A/C MB MacKinnon/ pk
C/Mat
2-3417

(JA Easton) A/V/M
AMTS
2-2743

Letter no. 5

DEPUTY MINISTER
OF
DEFENCE PRODUCTION

May 12, 1959.

Dear Mr. Miller:

Arrow Cancellation
Disposal of Airframes and Iroquois Engines
Your Letter 1038CN-80 dated April 27. 1959

I am in complete agreement with your understanding as expressed in the referenced letter and confirm that airframes and engines will not be disposed of in a useable condition. The five completed Mark I aircraft are being retained "as is" pending a decision by the United Kingdom, but, all others are being reduced to scrap. Equipment and parts with better than scrap value are being segregated and disposed of separately.

For your information, arrangements are being made to return the MA-1 Electronic Systems and J-75 Engines to the U.S.A.F.

Yours faithfully,

D.A. Golden
Deputy Minister

Mr. Miller, Esq.,
Deputy Minister,
Department of National Defence,
Ottawa, Ontario.