

THE AEROSPACE HERITAGE FOUNDATION OF CANADA
is pleased to present

**"CELEBRATING
FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE"
(1945 - 1995)**

A.V. ROE CANADA LIMITED



**SATURDAY
OCTOBER 5, 1996**
Toronto Airport Holiday Inn
970 Dixon Road
(opposite Pearson International)
following the ORENDA "Open House"

PROGRAM

1400 - 1800 h - DISPLAYS, MEET & GREET, HANGAR FLYING
1800 - 1900 h - CASH BAR
1900 - 0001 h - DINNER and PRESENTATIONS

MASTER OF CEREMONIES - David Onley, CITY-TV
DINNER - \$45.00 person

Cut! Cut! Cut! -----

A.H.F.C. AVRO "50" DINNER

★ **FOR MORE INFORMATION
CONTACT A.H.F.C AT:
(416) 213-8044.**

- ✓
- ☐ Yes! I will attend the Dinner.
- ☐ Please reserve seating for _____ person/s.
- ☐ I have enclosed \$ _____ at \$45.00 per person/s.

**For confirmed reservation,
please send this form and
cheque or money order to:**

**AHFC
P.O. Box 246, Etobicoke D
Etobicoke ON M9A 4X2**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PC / ZIP _____

COUNTRY _____

PHONE () _____

Pre-Flight

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P.O. Box 246, Etobicoke "D", Etobicoke ON M9A 4X4*

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August 1996

**A.V. ROE
CANADA
LIMITED**

THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES!

*An overview of the operations of
A. V. Roe Canada Limited
(1945 - 1995)*



In 1943, R. H. Dobson, managing director of A.V.Roe, Manchester, the designers of the Lancaster, and a director of the Hawker Siddeley Group, visited Canada to review Lancaster production at Malton, as well as the aircraft industry as a whole. He was impressed and formed the opinion that the post-war activities of the Hawker Siddeley Group should be focussed there. He further envisaged an industry complete with design and technical facilities. During this visit, preliminary discussions were held with the government for the takeover of the management of Victory Aircraft. Nothing was concluded but ideas were planted for germination.

Two years later, in the spring of 1945, Dobson again visited Canada in an effort to enter into some form of arrangement for the takeover of Victory Aircraft. Although the war in Europe had just ended, that with Japan was still raging. Victory had some Lancasters to complete and was changing over production to the larger Lincoln, for operation in the far East.

Dobson returned to England with a lease-purchase agreement for signature based upon the continued production of Lancasters and Lincolns. At the conclusion of the war with Japan in September, the Lancaster and Lincoln contracts were cancelled. Of

(cont'd on p. 2)

"If it seems to be impossible, do it anyway, because the nearly impossible task is usually the one most worthwhile."

- James C. Floyd

AHFC

James C. Floyd, Patron

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The Aerospace Heritage Foundation of Canada (AHFC) is a federally-chartered not-for-profit organization. The current emphasis is on Avro and Orenda and the Foundation is actively trying to locate former employees of these companies.

✓ Western Canada – please contact:

Michael L. Bullis, 164 Berkshire Close NW,
Calgary AB T3K 1Z4. Phone (403) 274-7497.

Cash donations over \$25.00 and "gifts-in-kind" will be acknowledged by a receipt for income tax purposes. For more information on the AHFC and

how to support its activities, please write to:

**The Aerospace Heritage Foundation
of Canada,**

**P.O. Box 246, Etobicoke "D",
Etobicoke ON M9A 4X2**

24-HOUR

Information/Answering Machine:

416-213-8044

BBS 905-845-0905

Internet e-mail:

sysop@aerohost.org

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I extend an apology and a warm welcome to new Board member John Hughes (retired Orenda, Q&A) for failing to recognize him in my last message. John is already hard at work on a new project.

I have received numerous letters and telephone calls from members regarding the Avro Arrow movie, currently in production in Winnipeg. The Board of Directors, at a recent meeting, has taken the position of not commenting on the movie at this time, since the Board has not viewed the script nor does it know the historical content.

I trust you, the membership, understand the position the Board has taken. Our mandate is to accurately record AVRO and ORENDA's history.

Those wanting room accommodations for the 50th Anniversary Dinner, can book the reservation for the special rate of \$78 per night plus tax by calling 1-800-HOLIDAY and register under AHFC with your name. For further information and updates, call (416) 213-8044 or call me at my home (416) 231-0438. Book early! Do not be disappointed!

Nick Doran, President AHFC

A. V. Roe (Canada) Limited, continued:

the staff of some 9,000 at the Malton plant, all but about 400 were released. With the end of war, the aircraft industry including its suppliers virtually collapse, the one exception being Canadair, preparing for the production of the North Star. Subsequently, de Havilland had some of its facilities returned, enabling it to begin again to design and produce what became its line of famous post-war types. Not only in Canada was it the case that the aircraft industry all but collapsed. The same was true in the USA and UK; but in those cases, the companies retained the nucleus of their management, engineering, and highly skilled staffs to undertake work in the post war era.

It was into this background that Dobson returned to Canada in November of 1945 with a signed agreement for the takeover of Victory Aircraft. The government had assumed that he would back out of the agreement since its foundation, production of the Lancaster and Lincoln, had disappeared. This fact merely dictated an amendment to the agreement, whereupon it was signed. A.V.Roe Canada, Limited, was formed and took over the operations and facilities of Victory Aircraft as of December 2, 1945.

Needless to say, the international aviation world, and most of his UK colleagues too, thought that this now famous man had lost his head. In their eyes this assessment was correct. Dobson's eyes, however, reflected a very different vision. He had unbounded faith in Canada, in Canadians and in their future. He foresaw his young Canadian company with its vigour and enthusiasm leading the world in the limitless future of jet flight.

The name of the Canadian company was chosen by Dobson out of his immense pride in the renowned name of his own company, A.V.Roe Limited, Manchester, a subsidiary of the Hawker Siddeley Group Limited. This group was the largest and most versatile aircraft in the world at the time. Norwithstanding the name, the Canadian company was a wholly-owned, direct subsidiary of Hawker Siddeley. A forceful director of Hawker Siddeley, Dobson's key colleagues were Sir Thomas Sopwith and Sir Frank Spriggs. From this group came the famous World

Continued

War I Sopwith Camel and the Avro 504. The more recent claim to fame of the Group arose during World War II.

✓ A. V. Roe Limited, designers and producers of the Lancaster and Lincoln bombers and, subsequently, of the Vulcan.

✓ Armstrong Siddeley Limited, designers and producers of the Cheetah engine. A pioneer in gas turbine development, from which came the Sapphire engine.

✓ Gloster Aircraft Limited, designers of the world's first experimental jet aircraft. From this beginning came the Meteor, the world's first operational jet.

✓ Hawker Aircraft Limited, designers and producers of the famous Hurricane which played such a major part in the defence of Britain. Had it not been for the foresight and courage of this company, there would have been fewer of Churchill's famous "so few" in the Battle of Britain.

✓ High Duty Alloys, pioneers and producers of advanced technology forgings and castings, required by the rapid progress in aeronautical development.

Owing to British government controls at the time, the parent company was unable to bring money from the UK. The cost of incorporation of the company was met by J. P. Bickell, newly appointed Chairman of the Board. Initial operating expenses of the company were covered by a bank overdraft guaranteed in sterling by the parent company.

Walter P. Deisher, formerly VP and GM of Fleet Aircraft, was chosen as the VP and GM of the new company, replacing David Boyd. Deisher brought some key ex-Fleet personnel with him. Other than this change, the core of Victory Aircraft remained. It contained such stalwarts

as Laurie Marchant, E. J. Solsby, Percy McQueen, Elwood Butler, Murray Willer, Henry Garside, Mario Pesando, Jack May, L. F. McCall, Ernie Alderton, Bob Johnson, Stan Wilson, Earle Brownridge, Don Rogers, Ron Adey, Bill Shaw and Joe Turner.

Fred Smye was engaged by Sir Roy before the company's formation and was to be appointed A-GM. J. A. Morley and J. F. Taylor were also to join the company from the Department of Munitions and Supply. E. H. Atkin from A. V. Roe Manchester was appointed chief engineer and he brought S. E. Harper with him as his administrative assistant. J. C. Floyd also came from A. V. Roe Manchester to head the civil aircraft engineering section, and J. Frost from de Havilland was to head up military design. Jim Chamberlain, a Canadian with Noorduyn Aviation in Montreal, was recruited at the outset as chief aerodynamicist. In May of the following year, the former Turbo Research Team, led by P. B. Dilworth, were to join the organization as the Gas Turbine Division.

This was the mixed group of some 400-odd, rattling around in an empty plant of some one million square feet, who were to undertake the design and production of a civil jet transport, a jet fighter and its engine.

The key people were for the most part relatively young - in their 30s. A. V. Roe Canada was a young company in every sense of the word. Their great asset was that they did not know that they should not be able to do what they did.

**It is this birth that we celebrate
fifty years later.**

