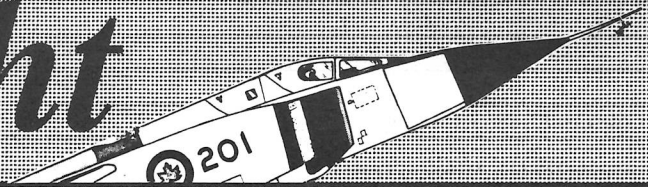


Pre-Flight



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January - February 1997

Lancaster FM - 104
at Battery Park, just
south of the Princess
Gates at Exhibition
Place. She is one of
only a handful left
worldwide.

PLANE TO SEE

by
Kevin Hebib



A behemoth rests defiantly on a concrete pedestal on Toronto's waterfront, the once deafening roar of her four massive engines replaced with the chirping of birds who make the engine cowling their home. She looks a little weary, but then again, so would you after being held in the same position for 31 years. For those who don't know her, she's Avro Lancaster FM-104, located at Battery Park just south of the Princess Gates at the Canadian National Exhibition. She's one of a handful of WW II Lancasters remaining in the world. The Lancaster is only one of 38 City of Toronto monuments and public art works cared for by the Toronto Historical Board (THB). But unlike conventional memorials like statues and sculptures, she's not an artistic interpretation of something; she's the genuine article and that dictates special care. Her composition is complex - aluminum alloy, rubber, steel, plexiglass and wood to name only a few materials. It's a conservators nightmare with all of these materials acting and reacting with each other, a problem compounded by the fact that planes aren't built to last forever, particularly outdoors. This means THB conservation and property staff must execute routine monitoring and periodic cleaning and painting to ensure

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

- James C. Floyd

AHFC

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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.

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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:

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

We have winners for our second lottery and the information is found on the last page of this newsletter.

I wish to thank the many members assisting in the sale of the tickets. To the members expressing their concern that they were unable to help - we still thank you. To the many members who took the first opportunity to renew their membership and make a donation - all will be processed very shortly. If there is a discrepancy with any membership, please advise me in writing as soon as possible.

Although the weather is cold, our hearts are warmed as we see a renewed interest in AVRO and the CF-105 ARROW. We look to Ottawa, the National Aviation Museum and their display, soon to be opened.



Nick Doran, President AHFC

Lancaster, continued:

the plane's survival. This is no small task since there are about 5,600 square feet of area to cover. In the past, the THB has relied on teams of specialists, aircraft enthusiasts and volunteers to help undertake the overwhelming work. However, despite diligent attention, wind, rain, snow and ice do take their toll. It's now over 50 years since the end of WW II and Toronto's Lancaster continues an ongoing battle against weather and vandalism.

Over the years, THB has fielded scores of questions from around the world about the plane. Most ask if the markings refer to any Canadian squadrons, if it had flown on any famous missions or had been crewed by famous Canadians. The fact is FM-104 has a fairly uneventful war record. The designation marking "FM-104" is simply the production serial number assigned to a plane by Victory Aircraft during its construction - though it has been painted on the fuselage like the alpha-numeric code for a fictitious squadron and plane number. As for her war service, she rolled off the assembly line in the spring of 1945 destined for service in the skies over Europe. But the war ended before she could be ferried overseas and her destination was changed to Canada's east coast. Throughout the 1950s and early 60s, she served as a maritime patrol and search and rescue aircraft at Greenwood, NS and Torbay, NF. She remained on the east coast until 1964 when she was finally retired and flown to CFB Downsview and sold to the Toronto Region Royal Canadian Air Force Association for preservation. Over her lifetime, she has sported a couple of different peacetime paint schemes. Today she is painted as the RCAF night bomber she never became with an earth brown and dark green upper camouflage pattern and flat black underside.

Avro Lancaster FM-104 is one of 430 Mark X Lancs built by Victory Aircraft. She was presented as a memorial to the City of Toronto by the Toronto Region RCAF Association on August 22, 1964 (CNE Warriors Day) and dedicated in memory to the 250,000 men and women who served in the wartime RCAF. From a civilian standpoint, she is one of the very few reminders of Canada's war effort. FM-104 spent her first year on the grounds of Exhibition Place and was disassembled, moved and reassembled the following year on the concrete pedestal at Battery Park.

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Canadian-built Lancaster Mark Xs were one of three principal classes of this aircraft built from 1941 on, though only Mark Xs were built in Canada and differed from their British counterparts. They were powered by four V12 Rolls-Royce-designed Merlin 224 engines built by the Packard motorcar company. These engines were capable of generating about 8,000 horsepower and could carry an 18,000 lb. payload. These Lancs were usually fitted with Hamilton airscrews. These were broader than the British variant, giving the late model Canadian Lancasters improved performance over their earlier cousins.

Those who crewed the "Lanc" as she was affectionately known, dubbed her "Queen of the Heavies" because of her extraordinary bombload and enormous size (21.1 m long with a wingspan of 31.1 m). The plane accommodated a six-member aircrew that included a pilot, flight engineer, navigator, bomb-aimer/front turret gunner, rear air gunner and upper mid air gunner.

By the end of the war in 1945, 7,377 Lancasters had been built worldwide by the Lancaster Production Group, a collection of six different companies. Of these, 3,932 were lost in action. The remaining aircraft were relegated to scrap heaps, served out their lives into the jet age until obsolete, were sold to foreign countries or stripped for replacement parts. Canada was among the largest post-war users of the Avro Lancasters with many having been modified for photo reconnaissance, maritime patrol and search and rescue. Only a handful ever found refuge as monuments.

What the future holds for Toronto's Lancaster FM-104 is unknown. She is not a particularly good candidate for a flying restoration since the main spar that spans across the inside of the wings was cut to accommodate the support pedestal. In general, the past two decades have seen vintage aircraft restoration take off in Canada with several monumental planes finding their way into museums and commemorative flights. Some planes, like the Andrew Mynarski Memorial Lancaster at the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum at Mt. Hope have been restored to flying condition. Others have been stabilized and put on indoor display.

Kevin Hebib edits the newsletter "Explore Historic Toronto" and is a volunteer with the Meuseum of Applied Military History.

SUGGESTED READING:

Dunmore, Spencer and Carter William: *Reap the Whirlwind*, McClelland & Stewart, Inc. Toronto 1991.

Kostenuk, Samuel and Griffin, John: *RCAF Squadron Histories and Aircraft*, Samuel Stevens, Hakkert & Co. Toronto 1977.

OBITUARY



Wladek "Spud" Potocki died quietly in his sleep last year in December, after contracting pneumonia. He was 77. Like other test pilots, he became an important figure in Canadian aviation and aerospace history. "Spud" Potocki, like his flying compatriot, Janusz "Zura" Zurakowski, was born in Poland. Like so

many pilots of Polish descent, he joined the RAF during WWII, as soon as he was able to get out of occupied Poland, to help bring down the Nazi war machine. He was an excellent pilot and after the war, was accepted at the British Empire Test Pilot School (BETPS). He graduated as a test pilot from this world-famous training institution with a reputation of being a top pilot. When he came to Canada in the early '50s, he had no difficulty finding employment as a test pilot at Avro. It already had developed the hugely successful but not marketed "Jetliner", followed by the CF100 and now was developing the revolutionary fighter aircraft, the "Arrow". He had the privilege of taking part, along with Zurakowski, in the test protocol of this legendary fighter. As one of the very select few, he knew what a marvel he was guiding through the air. At the time, Canada had the cream of designers, engineer, technicians and aircraft workers. For a few, short and wonderful years, it was at the leading edge of aerospace. "Spud" Potocki, part of the "Arrow" team, actively and enthusiastically participated in the design of the Arrow by offering insightful, cogent suggestions. People had nothing but praise for "Spud" Potocki; he was a brilliant pilot who did not receive full recognition for his efforts. He and Jan Zurakowski were legends in the aircraft industry during their era. It is recorded that "Spud" Potocki reached the speed of Mach 1.9 during a flight of one of the "Arrows". But it was common gossip around the circuit that he had exceeded this speed and had reached Mach 2. After the cancellation of the Arrow program by the then Conservative government under John Diefenbaker on Black Friday in February 1959, "Spud" Potocki went to work as a test pilot for North American Rockwell. But because of an unfortunate accident, unrelated to flying, he lost an eye in 1970 when he was struck by a snapping steel packing strap which he was undoing. He was unable to continue to work in the field in which he excelled. He lived his last years in Columbia, Ohio, where he purchased and, together with his wife, operated a motel complex and business in Columbia, Ohio. Unfortunately, he was stricken with Alzheimer's disease and lived his remaining years in an institution. We shall remember his gentle sense of humour, his courage, dedication and willingness to work toward a common cause.

We have winners - again!

The AHFC Lottery, Licence No. M 435548, had its official draw on January 11, 1997 at 5:00 pm at the Woodbine Centre, Etobicoke. The winning tickets were drawn by Elizabeth Brown, Councillor for Etobicoke Ward 10. She was the official representative on behalf of the Mayor's Office. Others attending this draw were Nick Doran, AHFC President; Directors John Hughes, Gerald Saunders, Robert Saunders, Michael Deschamps, John Robertson, Ian Farrar; Member Michael Bringham and about a hundred shoppers/ticket holders.

LUCKY WINNING TICKET HOLDERS:

1st Prize - CF 105 AVRO ARROW replica plastic model. Wingspan 4' 1", fusilage 6' 8".

Ed Poulin
754 Hillcroft Street
Oshawa ON L1G7H6
Lucky Winning Ticket No. 0468

2nd Prize - TRIP FOR TWO to Reno, Nevada, including accomodations for 4 nights.

W. Fitzakerley
40 Beacon Road
Scarborough ON M1P 1G7
Lucky Winning Ticket No. 3277

3rd Prize - 25" SHARP COLOUR TV, including remote, timer and closed caption.

Russell McKay
RR # 9
Dunnville ON
Lucky Winning Ticket No. 10823

4th Prize - A VANDERHORST LIMITED EDITION PRINT [Avro Arrow]

E. Walter
81 William Street
Bolton ON
Lucky Winning Ticket No. 0455

