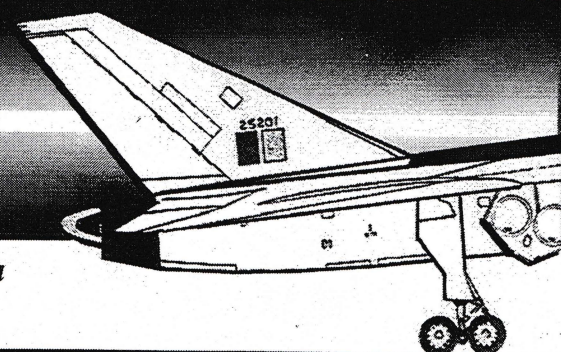


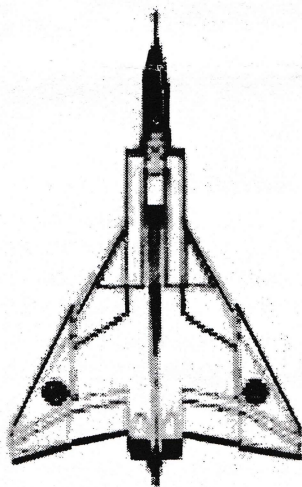
Pre-Flight

A Publication of the Aerospace Heritage Foundation of Canada
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In Part Two, Gerry continues to share his feelings about those wondrous days during and after the rollout of RL201. He laments the cancellation of the production of the Jetliner. He is frustrated by his inability to do something. Gerry then rails against decisions made by the government and begins to drift into musing about possibilities available to him. His thoughts are tinged with righteous anger, as he recalls the halcyon days of enthusiastic workers and the result of their combined efforts. He remembers the long line of sturdy aircraft, serving the needs of the country over the years. Like Hamlet, he could well say, "... that it should come to this." His narration also lets the reader catch a glimpse of the dedicated men and women in the aircraft industry. But he also shows a dark side to his story.

The Fallen Arrow

by

Gerry Barbour

"I shot an arrow into the air.
It fell to earth, I know not where."

Part Two

What are a few taxpayers dollars compared to the prestige generated by establishing those records? The Arrows would be saved and it was quite possible the Prime Minister would be forced, however reluctantly, to re-energize the Arrow contract. The citizens of Canada, howled over by the knowledge that Avro was the top dog in the world of aviation, would demand it.

Leaping to my feet, I protested vigorously to anyone who would listen, anyone who looked like they were upper echelon "inmates of the Administration Building". Something must be done to save these airplanes." I didn't find a friend. Not one. Returning to the darkened Design Office, my thoughts went on the rampage again. I had found, over the years, that those in charge of projects, tend to concentrate on the game at hand, delight in seeing their design placed on paper, get sent off to the shops and finally emerge as the finished product. They are startled, disconcerted, utterly bewildered when the project is run off the rails by individuals who haven't the wit to realize the worth of the project.

I thought of my beloved Jetliner and the wayward decision by C.D. Howe, that powerful politician in Ottawa who put an end to Avro's dream of dominating the airlines of the world by our transport aircraft. There are ways, some not too pleasant, to circumvent any problem. However, it does take a ruthless individual, one who is skilled in nefarious dealings to handle the problem. I had the training. My thought, when informed the Jetliner had been stopped dead in her tracks, had been one of incredulity.



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From the President

I hope all members are enjoying the articles for Pre-Flight, written by Gerry Barbour and which are continued in this issue. I would encourage any members with memories of the Avro and Orenda days to share them in future issues of Pre-Flight by contacting Nick Doran or myself.

Frank

The Fallen Arrow, *cont'd*

I longed to be in a position to stand squarely up to C.D. Howe, puncture his inflated ego and show the man how to save both projects, the Jetliner and the Canuck. It didn't matter if my ass got busted. The point had been made. Let someone else carry the ball.

Thinking of the politicians in Ottawa opened the mental floodgates. I fell to mulling over the system by which we govern ourselves. The democratic system? It is the best yet devised by freedom loving people. However, it has a glitch. It is too democratic. If the party in power has a clear majority, they are in a position to push through any legislation that they, often in their dubious wisdom, see fit, and over protests from the opposition party, newspapers, and irate citizens of Canada. Short of downright anarchy, the citizens of this great country can bitch, fuss and fume all they like but their protests often fall on deaf ears.

If, for example, an elected MP makes a grievous blunder, verbal or otherwise, he or she receives a slap on the wrist from the leader of the party and is made to sit in the corner until the storm of ridicule "blows over." The number of outright lies, dumb decisions, and broken promises made over the years by many of our elected representatives in parliament is staggering. A far better system, to my mind, would have the "committer" of these blunders turfed out on their ass and compel them to return and face the ire of their constituents. *They* will make the decision as to whether the "committer" may return to Ottawa and take his or her seat in the House of Commons. Can you imagine John Diefenbaker returning home, head down, tail between his legs, face his constituents and try to explain the loss of fifty thousand jobs, that figure being the number who were "tanked" on that fateful day when he cancelled the Arrow contract?



Avro Jetliner



*House of Commons, Ottawa Ontario
Locus of the Edict*

Fallen Arrow, cont'd.

I'd like to place a private taxpayer's bill before the "House" to that effect. Do you think it would make the Order Paper, be tabled for discussion or even reach a first reading? No, No, and No! Too bad though. Our politicians would think twice before they put their foot in their mouth.

I put all those wayward thoughts on the back burner and returned to the business at hand. That being the snip, snip, slash, slash of Arrow drawings. My brain refused to co-operate. The snipping slowed and finally all activity ceased. I refused to believe that nothing could be done, that Avro Aircraft had received a blow from which she might never recover.

Once again, that dark side of my being demanded that I pay attention.

During my very young growing-up years the Sunday School teacher had impressed upon me the idea that two very different personages dwelt within my being. One good, one evil. A constant fight was always taking place between these two forces and good must always triumph over evil. The idea that a fearsome-looking individual clad in a dark cape, mask over his face, was ready to pounce if I took that extra cookie that had been expressly forbidden, was disconcerting to one so young. Good man though he was, I never forgave him for implanting that thought into my brain. It has hampered my daily activities to no end. Giving free rein to my emotions, I let the dogs out. The good and the evil staged a knockdown drag 'em out fight for supremacy. Guess who won?

Evil flattened good. Like always. By God, I would do anything, anything at all, to save those Arrows or even one of them from destruction. Furious, I had murder in my soul. Anyone, male or female, is quite capable of murder. That fact has been proven repeatedly over the centuries. My anger still on the boil, I fell to mulling over what I would like to do.

I would journey to Ottawa, barge into Dief's office and, bang! He would be the first, the very first Canadian Prime Minister to be whacked. Hell! Our American cousins do it all the time. Don't like a President? Ka-Boom! He's gone. Dief would be famous in a half-assed way. Make the history books, while I would just be history.

The inevitable happened. Waving those damn scissors aloft, stabbing at those drawings, I stabbed my left hand. That brought me up short, made short work of my mulling. Sucking on that injured member, I thought, "Man, you're stupid, all that garbage you've been dreaming, is just that... garbage." I mentally resorted to bad language. Dam Diefenbaker, Dam the Conservative Party. They would be out on their ass next election. I was angry, steaming mad. A danger to myself and all about me. With all those wild emotions churning inside me, a brisk walk was needed to clear the cobwebs.

Head down, preoccupied with dispelling those murderous thoughts, I practically bumped into the rolling gate where, over the years, I had watched with delight the parade of airplanes. Lysanders, Yales, Harvards, Lancasters, the shot in the ass York, the magnificent Jetliner, the CF-100 Canucks, and the last, the top of the crop, the superlative, supersonic Avro Arrow.

Leaning on the gate, gazing reflectively at the airport humming with activity, I noticed the gate was padlocked. Locked? The rolling gate locked? That gate was never locked. Why now? Were they afraid somebody would steal an Arrow? I chuckled inwardly. Impossible. My murderous rage now somewhat abated, I gave my head a shake and turned to leave, and out of the past, out of my subconscious, words surfaced so often spoken by Mean Joe Green.

*"... that government of the people,
by the people, for the people, shall
not perish from the earth."*

Gettysburgh Address
Abraham Lincoln



Fallen Arrow, *cont'd.*

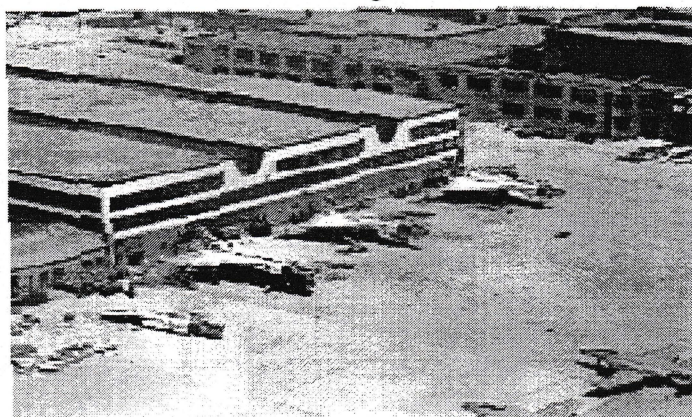
I could hear him plainly. "Let nuthin' 'r nobody stand in your way. You want sumthin', go get it. Trample the opposition. Damn the torpedoes ...full speed ahead." Chuckling, I remembered telling Joe, an American seafaring man, Admiral Farragut, had coined that little phrase, and therefore it wasn't appropriate for the escapade we had planned for that evening. His reply was unprintable.

"You wanta save an Arrow? Steal the sonofabitch." I laughed, "Get thee behind me Satan." I felt that was an apt quote. Joe, on occasion, was the devil himself. Returning to the abhorrent job of destroying blueprints, the thought kept surfacing, steal an Arrow, steal an Arrow.

Joe had taught the rudiments of a successful heist. For kicks, bored out of our skulls, we had actually planned to swipe the payroll; the Navy payroll at H.M.C.S. Scotian. Stiff the paymaster on his way to the pay office. We had cased his every move for weeks, the route he took, the time, the whole ball of wax. It was simplicity itself. A clout with the sap, heave the payroll over the fence to a waiting Joe, and we would be off and running. We would blow the lot on a night of riotous living.

Joe, con man that he was, after careful consideration "nixed" the deal. The pittance our benevolent government paid us for putting our rear on the line wasn't worth the risk. The take had to be of greater magnitude. Big bucks. Instead, the dopey bastard wanted to hold up a downtown bank. I "nixed" that. With so many military types flooding the city of Halifax, I had spotted armed guards, plainclothesmen loafing unobtrusively within the building. Get shot in the rear by a fellow Canadian? By one of our own? Not one of the enemy? No way. Besides, I hate guns with a passion ...especially when pointed my way.

Glumly stoking up the inner man on the remains of my noon break sandwich, that inner voice kept repeating "steal one...steal an Arrow. C'mon you can do it. Dam Diefenbaker and his goddamn orders."



No explanation necessary.

I pushed the thought aside but that little voice obstinately refused to go away. The idea kept surfacing all afternoon as I systematically destroyed drawing after drawing.

It came over me in a rush. My brain "short-circuited." I snapped. I simply could not stand idly by and see all those beautiful airplanes butchered. I would do something, anything to save one from the saw and the torch. Save it for future generations to gaze upon, awestruck that Dad and Mom or Grampa and Granny had helped produce this mechanical marvel.

It helps, I thought, to have a touch of larceny in one's make-up, make free with other people's property. Steal from the government? Why not? They had dipped into my pocket often enough. I had thought their taxes simply outrageous.

Still, these airplanes belonged to the Government of Canada. They had backed the project, at least the Liberal party had and they were the elected representatives of the people. Technically those airplanes belonged to them. But look at it this way. The party in power is elected. Put into office by the Canadian people, to serve the people.

Being part American, the closing segment of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address flashed through my mind, "that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

I was a people person, a voting person, a taxpaying person. Technically that airplane belonged to me, at least a part of it. So, how could one steal from one's self? Impossible. I was quite within my rights to salvage what was rightfully mine.

My conscience was now clear. I had been trained by one of the very best larcenous sonsabitches it had ever been my misfortune to meet. I don't need to mention his name.

I would steal an Arrow.

Calm now in my own mind, I set the mental wheels rolling. This would be no Mickey Mouse undertaking. Steal a whopping big Arrow? Sure, why not? The bigger the deed the harder they fall. Right?

Joe had laid out the ground rules for success at any venture that smacked of, well, was slightly off-beat.

First- "Keep a clear head." Second- "Plan the operation minutely." Third- "Carry it through without any qualms whatsoever. Whack whoever gets in the way. The end justifies the means."

Finally - "Never look back, sumthin might be gainin on you." I could hear him plainly. "Hey man, you got somethin heavy goin down? I want in on the action. Here's the way to go." "Find a safe hiding place for the goods." "Transportation?" "The get-away car?" "Logistics man, logistics." "Plan the escape route." "Remove all obstacles from the path of the item

Fallen Arrow, cont'd.

to be ...ah...snatched." "Find a place to stash the goods until the heat dies down." Gradually things began to come together.

First, the hiding place. Where to stash the Arrow? There would be a hue and cry. I knew that. John D. would rouse the hounds, furious that an Arrow had flown the coop. The Gendarmes would be out in full force. No stone would be left unturned. Find the culprit and place him in durance vile. They would call it a Federal Offence. Punishable by what? I refused to dwell on that.

I had successfully suppressed my desire to dump C.D. Howe on his ass the day of the rollout of the CF-100 Canuck and had joked about the dungeons in the Parliament Buildings. A Federal Offence? An F.O.? More like take off, Dief. I would be careful. As always, during any of my off-beat schemes a bright light would shine through the darkness and it happened again.

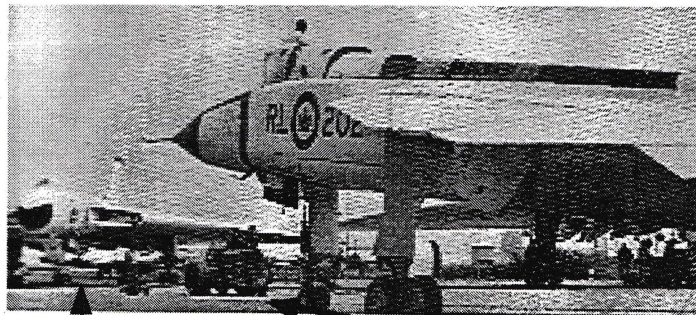
I have innumerable friends, one of whom ran a successful horse-breeding farm near Brampton, a small town near to Avro Aircraft. So intertwined in my scheme, did this man become, I refuse to divulge his name. "Clure" will suffice. With Clure, in the sulky, one of his horses, Star Nib by name, put his nose in front of the pack one evening at Woodbine racetrack, and that fact enabled me to pay off a sizeable chunk of the mortgage on the old homestead.

I sent Star Nib a message. "Star old boy, you keep pickin 'em up and layin 'em down. You hear?"

Transportation? The get-away car? A breeze. The mule, the power-operated "pull 'em" used to haul aircraft hither and yon was sitting forlornly on the tarmac near the airplanes ...keys still in the dash. I had a momentary qualm. "What if someone removed the keys?" Only momentary, Joe had taught the method of "hot-wiring." One evening in downtown Halifax we had come across an Army jeep, unattended. I timed him. It took exactly ninety seconds from the lift of the hood until the engine sprang to life. I remembered every detail of the operation. We ran that jeep all over downtown Halifax. Hot wiring? No problem there.

The logistics? Nothing to it. I could see it plainly. A visit to the plant at night, say around eleven o'clock. Borrow the bolt cutters from stores. Hitch the mule to RL-204 and be off down the road to the rolling gate. Snap the padlock with my trusty bolt manglers and the road to freedom was before us. I would have an Avro Arrow in my hip pocket.

But those mysterious individuals who watched every move out on the tarmac? What about them? Would they be around at night? Nah! Government officials quit when the sun goes down. Or earlier. To hell with them. Noise? Minimal. Just the gentle squish of tires, an occasional creak here and there ... a cough



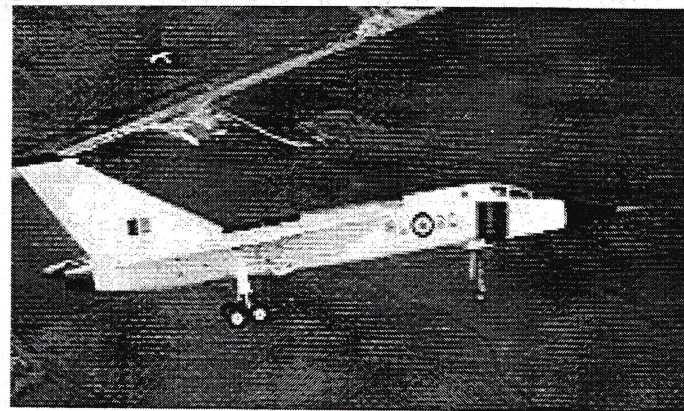
Visiting Vulcan flew over from England
for the Canadian National Exhibition 1958

The forlorn mule.

or two from the mule. The airport shuts down for the night at 11:00 P.M. It would be a piece of cake. A stroll in the park. Delighted with my scheme. I slipped down into fantasy land and could plainly see it all unfolding:

A quick look around and off down the east-west runway, the runway on which Lee Capreol had lifted the Lysander on that never-to-be-forgotten day in the summer of 1939, the same runway beside which Jimmy Orrell and Don Rogers had slipped the Jetliner so smooooothly onto the grass. A short run to the west fence. Now, my friendship with Al Cox and his merry band of welders would pay off. Sitting on the mule was Al's cutting torch and its ever present cylinder.

A spark, and the torch is lit. I snapped down Al's goggles and set to work. The wire mesh and the steel bars fell before my dexterous handling of the torch. Freedom beckoned. I glanced at the Arrow shimmering in the half-light. God, she was a beauty. If time permits I'll go back and get RL-201, the aircraft in which I gave John D. his famous ride. How I wished I'd opened the clamshell canopy, flipped RL-201 upside down, pressed the ejection mechanism and dumped the old boy out on his ass from five thousand feet, right over the lawn of the Parliament Buildings. Would've saved us a pack of trouble, and a lot of jobs.



Avro Arrow, RL-201, banking sharply over Malton, with rear undercarriage extended but not yet rotated, prior to landing.



30 Anniversary, *cont'd.*

Goddammit, I get these good ideas too late. Easy now, keep your mind on your work. That ditch is deep, careful, down slowly. There we go. Up, up, and away. There's the road ...not too wide ...have to get her around ...wish Jan or Spud was in the cockpit.

A touch of right brake and RL-201-2-3-4 or 5 would be sitting squarely in the middle of the Britannia Side Road. A quick trip north, wheel her onto the dirt road to Clare's farm, all quiet there. He's an early to bed guy. No matter. Into his massive barn and bed down my beauty among the chickens, goats, cows and horses. Give Star Nib an affectionate pat on his velvet nose, whisper my thanks in his ear, and I'm off back to Avro. All bases covered. Mission accomplished. Logistics completed.

I received a sharp dig in the ribs and turned to see Mr. X. "Dreaming again are you? What is it this time? Planning on stealing an Arrow?" The old bastard. Did he realize how close he had come to the target? Something in my face gave me away. He was startled and he opened up on me. "You were, weren't you? You were actually planning something as stupid as that. You're daft, man...completely bonkers. It's impossible. It's a federal offence."

Mr. X. ranted on and on. To placate him, I said, "Nah, it was just a thought, a momentary lapse. A fling at planning the steal of an Arrow. RL-204 to be exact. I

know it's impossible." Mr. X. was no dummy. He was still suspicious. "Listen, Buster, do not, do not, entertain any thoughts of anything so dumb. You will be caught. You will be found guilty. You will spend a considerable amount of the rest of your life in prison. I do not wish to spend any part of my retirement years visiting you in Kingston Pen."

I felt a momentary rush of affection. I had known Mr. X. for such a long time, away back in Lysander days. In my mind's eye, I could see him squinting at the D-spar. The D-spar on which I had set that Coke bottle and which had subsequently been riveted into the innards of the spar. It seemed eons ago. So much had happened since then.

He was such a good friend.

Giving me a stern look, he wagged a long finger under my nose and made his departure. I sighed, and with his words of warning ringing in my ears went back to the odious job of carrying out John Diefenbaker's goddamned orders. Under the onslaught of the shears, chop-chop, snip-snip, the pile of blueprints steadily diminished, but the seed, having fallen upon fertile soil, clamoured to burst forth into full bloom.

Mr. X, stuff your warnings John Diefenbaker, kiss my A-foot. I would put the arm on an Arrow and to hell with the consequences.

