

Letter to the Editor: the Avro Arrow

Re: "A piece of history found in OLDs" -
www.empireadvance.ca

Submitted / Virden Empire-Advance

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The Avro Arrow rolled out of a Toronto hangar.

PHOTO/ OLDS ALBERTAN

I was there: Feb. 2, 1959. CFB Trenton, Ont. the one and only time the Avro Arrow landed at a base other than its home base, Malton airport (outskirts of Toronto).

Fifty-nine years ago. It brings back these memories:

I was on duty at transient servicing that day when the flight line crash alarm bells sounded. At a distance it looked to be as large as a Dakota (C47) on touch-down, but then the drag chute was deployed, and this impressive aircraft taxied and parked on the tarmac across from the hangar where I worked.

I saw it land and we secured it with chocks. If I remember correctly, we had (AMU) Air Movements Unit bring one of their forklifts over to allow the one pilot to exit the cockpit. Our work aero stands were not high enough. The CF 105 Arrow is 14 feet high. The pilot made his own way out of the cockpit, and onto the wing, where he was rescued and welcomed by the Base Commander.

It took off the next day when the special fuel was brought in from Malton airport. There was only one RCAF pilot who flew the Arrow. The other three pilots were AVRO pilots. The initial Chief Test Pilot was Janusz Zurakowski. Murray Peden, himself a WW2 bomber pilot, wrote a book on this aircraft, and the trials and tribulations that had to be overcome. It's a good read, available at our Virden library – "Fall of an Arrow".

There are not many of us left to remember.

(The Avro Arrow aircraft program was scuttled and scrapped in 1959, just one year after having made its maiden flight.)

And because that was during my era of service in the RCAF, I will always remember this masterpiece of aviation, the dedicated test pilots, the engineers and trades people, who provided Canada with an aircraft, that 59 years later would still be glorified and talked about.

John Fefchak CD (CWO Ret.)

Virden, Man.

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