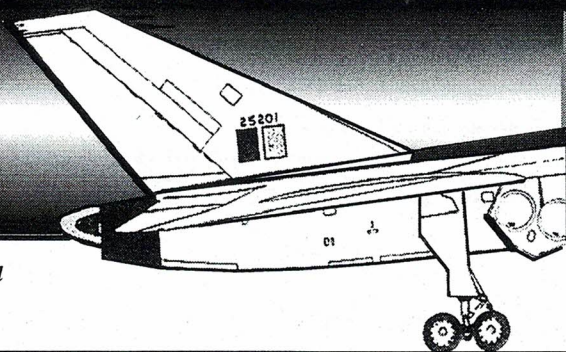


Pre-Flight

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"There are old pilots, there are bold pilots, but there are no old, bold pilots.". *Test pilot truism.*

Jack Woodman lived in the present. As a professional test pilot, he had to. While in the RCAF, having to check out in the military aircraft of the day, he quickly learned that there was no sense in being overly concerned about what might happen tomorrow. As surely as having to awaken daily at 0600 hrs, the day would just as surely arrive with its own complement of troubles and challenges. Perhaps this conviction was one of the key factors that, like other famous test pilots, made it possible for Jack to be so professionally successful. Honed by years of demanding experience "in the trade", he was able to transfer his skills to the commercial aviation field, involving demonstration flying, promoting and managing. Jack Woodman loved what he did and he wanted to contribute something to the wellbeing of society. He did this in a short lifespan. Because members requested a follow-up to his life story in *Pre-Flight*, this article brings some third-dimensional quality to Hall of Fame member - Jack Woodman.

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From the President

I wish to thank all the members who attended our AGM at the Toronto Aerospace Museum on June 25th. Many thanks also to the TAM for making space available, and to Claude Sherwood for giving an update on the Arrow model progress and the Museum's progress and plans.

On June 11th 845 Avro Arrow Squadron held there annual review and inspection. This year the James C. Floyd Award was presented to Warrant Officer Second Class, Ross Baumann and the Janusz Zurakowski Award was won by Flight Sergeant, Ted Crammond.

Since the resignation from the board of Bob Saunders who led the Arrow Model Recovery Plan, we have been in on-going talks with the Arrow Recovery Canada group from London regarding a joint effort to locate the Arrow Free Flight Models. We will up-date members at a future date.

I wish to welcome new Board Member Len Dutek. Len and his wife Robin have been working closely with the AHFC for over two years and he wishes to have closer ties with the AHFC and 845 Avro Arrow Squadron, Mississauga.

Frank

Jack Woodman: You may owe him your life.

by James J. Los Angeles

With his nondescript appearance, 44 years-old Jack Fraser "Woody" Woodman (in 1969) could pass for almost anything except, perhaps, one of the world's best flyers. But that's what he was. Woody was certainly the most legendary test pilot ever to wear Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) wings; he's a man to whom millions of airborne Canadians (passengers and crew alike) owe their safety and comfort, if not their lives, and if Canada had joined the space race, he would have been our first astronaut.

Yet Woody wasn't at all impressive to look at. He was stocky, of medium height, his nose flattened like a boxer's (although he was never been one), and his hairline was starting to recede. And the last thing he would choose for a casual conversation would be flying. It's not that he was shy or even studiously modest. Rather, Woody, despite aerial triumphs including the world's unofficial altitude record and a race to the Canadian Arctic on an errand of mercy that captured the country's attention - felt that he had really done nothing out of the ordinary. For a flyer, that is. He far preferred to talk of golf (he was an eight handicapper), or his unlamented bachelorhood (which he abandoned at 36 to marry vivacious Gladys Van Salter, widow of a test pilot killed in a Lockheed F-104) and about water-skiing, his favourite nonflying sport.

But all this soon changed. Lockheed Aircraft Corporation named Woody chief engineering test pilot of its big California division - spawning ground for some of commercial aviation's biggest and military aviation's most top-secret aircraft. In the pecking order of aeronautics, Woodman found himself at the top of the heap, head of a staff of 15 engineering test pilots, consultant to free world air forces, and holder (or withholder) of the stamp of approval for some of today's



most advanced aircraft. Not the least of them is Lockheed's 270-passenger "Airbus". Air Canada has ordered 10 of the third generation jetliners. Canadians will begin riding them as passengers sometime in 1972. Long before that, Woodman and his staff will have flown them, lived with them and pushed them to the brink of endurance - wringing them out at altitudes, speeds and under stresses far in excess of anything they'll encounter in commercial service. "The flying part of it is strictly no sweat," says Woodman. "What is . . . is all the fanfare."

Nowadays he finds himself pestered by the press Woody's recourse, when a newsman probes in to his past, is to hand him a battered brown scrapbook. It is titled simply that: Scrap Book. Its pages are strewn with clippings, almost none of them dated.

Kaleidoscopically, the clippings fall into place:

- Woody, looping, rolling and diving the Canadian-built CF-100 jet fighter to instant stardom at the Paris Air Show. Woodman did magnificent erobatics, including the only spin of the whole show.

- Woody, the pilot secretly selected to become Canada's first astronaut, had Canada teamed with the United States in space. "The RCAF pilot's roster was checked over unofficially and three or four pilots were picked - unknown to them - as possible astronauts. Top man in the listing was Flight Lieutenant Jack Woodman."

- Woody, cast in the improbable role of comic strip hero, as Danny Fortune, an RCAF Davy Crockett of the jet age, in the newspaper strip of the same name. "Danny Fortune", the artists revealed, "is modelled after the aerial exploits of renowned Canadian RCAF test pilot Jack Woodman."

- Woody, in the hardly less plausible role of girls' swimming team coach at the University of Saskatchewan. Mustered out of the RCAF bomber command, a warrant officer after 23 missions over Europe as a tailgunner, Woodman took two years of engineering at the University of Saskatchewan. He quit to rejoin the RCAF, this time for pilot training. At the University of Saskatchewan, Woodman - a part time Saskatoon city lifeguard - coached the girl's swim team. He and the girls got along swimmingly, though their record in intercollegiate competition was something of a wash-out. "Physical education," Woodman once confessed, "is what I really wanted to go into."

From such a potpourri of clippings ("the Woodman archives" his wife called them), the newsman, expecting a comprehensive biography, finds instead a jigsaw. As he puzzles over its pieces, Woodman wryly interprets, deftly reducing each headline achievement to the prosaic.

For example: His appointment, in 1952, as Canada's and the RCAF's representative to the Empire Test Pilots School, Farnborough, England, a 10 month finishing school for test pilots to which, annually, Commonwealth air forces are invited to send their single most outstanding flyer.

"As I recall," shrugged Woody, "my commanding officer handed me an application form and suggested I fill it out. To get reassigned out of Churchill, where we were flying lake surveys for future flying boat operations, I'd have signed almost anything." In fact, Woodman had been accorded the RCAF's greatest honour. And with it, an uncommon challenge. During their 14 days, Farnborough students were expected to fly 14 different types of aircraft a new, often unfamiliar plane, every day. Failure usually meant death. Of Farnborough's Class of '52 (31 pilots, each the best of his nation), two died in crashes. Woody was promoted to flight lieutenant even before graduation. For the next decade he was to be the RCAF's ranking experimental test pilot.

It was Woodman who flew acceptance tests (and gave the nod) on the Avro CF-100, which would become the RCAF's interceptor backbone. He was the air force's project pilot for the all-Canadian, all-weather CF-105 Avro Arrow, a Mach 2 delta-winged interceptor which died stillborn in 1959 when the Diefenbaker government abruptly nixed the program and bought the US Bomarc missile instead. Woodman - the only military man ever to fly the Arrow - had turned in a close to ecstatic positive report on the CF-105. The plane would have been the first supersonic fighter born and bred on Canadian soil.

In 1960, Woody was assigned-in-residence to Lockheed - again as RCAF project pilot, this time on the F-104 supersonic Starfighter. The CF-104 - more than 200 have been built under Lockheed licence by Canadair in Montreal - remained the RCAF's most versatile fighter, as it was for some 13 other nations who flew it.

For example: That 2,300-mile, 36 hour mercy mission (in June 1951) over the magnetic North Pole to Mould Bay, deep within the Arctic Circle, to pick up an American weather observer fallen critically ill. Shrugged Woody, "I suppose somebody or other recorded that flight - to quote the newspapers of the day - in the Annals of the RCAF. Actually, while we lost a bit of sleep over it, it was pretty routine. My flight crew and I were in the rescue business, assigned, as we were, to a search and rescue squadron based at Winnipeg. If we hadn't gone to get that fellow, somebody else would have." Aviation annals tell a far different story. Of 36 hours, 32 of them spent airborne, during which Woodman piloted the twin-engined



engined Dakota against sleepless odds and an errant compass which, over the magnetic Pole, spun aimlessly, once throwing them more than 40 degrees off course. They'd hopped off from Winnipeg about 6 p.m., picked up a doctor at Churchill and at 1 a.m. and still in broad daylight, this being the Arctic summer, fuelled at Baker Lake, NWT. Or more correctly, *on* Baker Lake.

Doubtful lake ice (still six feet this in midsummer but rapidly melting) was less doubtful than Baker Lake's make-believe airstrip. Setting down on the mid lake floe. Woody and his five-man crew lent a hand as drums of fuel were floated out to them. Then they were off again and headed for Resolute Bay where, around 5 a.m. they refuelled again, this time at an RCAF base. Landing at Mould Bay's weather station was less risky than the takeoff. The middling short airstrip was a morass of mud, in places eight inches deep.

For example: His at the time unofficial "and inadvertent" world altitude record for jets: more than 118,000 feet, nearly a mile higher than the official 113,982 feet attained, in 1961, by the USSR. "I plain couldn't prevent the plane from going that high." Reflected Woodman, at the time, almost apologetically. "Somewhere above 100,000 feet, I discovered I didn't have any controls." Electing to stay with his plane after losing control, he had plummeted more than 10 miles from the edge of space, regained control and landed safely. The feat has never been equalled. Woodman had done the seemingly impossible.

At the Woodman handsome new residence in Palmdale California, within walking distance of Lockheed's flight test centre, Woody spent his days with his feet more or less on the ground. One time he said, with obvious satisfaction "Too long a bachelor, I've stopped spinning and have things pretty well under control."

The Woodman household, in seeming accord, included not only his spirited wife Gladys, and her three rollicking children (daughters Sally, 17 and Lesley, 20, in college, and 12-year-old Scotty, a model airplane buff), but also Rebel, the Woodman's, year-old Labrador retriever.

Though not one to bring home his work, Woody always found domestic camaraderie when, on those rare occasions, he did bring some files to look over. A plaque hung on the Woodman playroom wall reflects and attests to a special spirit that "Gladys, without help of hostesses, with only coffee to drink and in the garb of a test pilot . . . did, as a passenger in a fighter plane . . . exceeded the speed of 600 mph".

Jack (Woody) Woodman, a professional and, in his own right, a Canadian hero, found a worthy measure of peace and tranquility in his family and home.

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The Arrow

Along With

DANNY FORTUNE



Adventure, intrigue
and romance
are his companions
as he guards
Canada's skies

**A New
Adventure
Cartoon
Strip**

Appearing in 52 Canadian Newspapers

Members Matter

The summer is here with a hot vengeance. Almost as hot as when I was in Florida for a while, back in early spring. While there, took in the Florida Airshow near Kennedy Space Centre. Tony Gencoe (Downsview Park) said thanks for a copy of *Pre-Flight*. Frank Harvey, our President, reports no reply as yet from the London Group regarding their interest in a joint **AMRP** effort. Watch for updates on the result of these ongoing talks in *Pre-Flight*.

Our Foundation presented a new metal turning **lathe** to TAM. A suitable plaque will be permanently attached, dedicating this lathe in honour of Claude Sherwood, Co-ordinator, Arrow Model Project.

AHFC is officially committed to the **Hobby Show** at the International Centre, November 4 - 6, 2005. This is good opportunity for PR and general information about our Foundation. Sales of related items (2006 calendars, magazines, books, etc.) bring in needed funds. If you can help with the set-up, or want information, please contact me (416-231-0438). And enjoy the summer!

Mich