

**Bill Trbovich**, [btrbovich\(@\)iamaw.org](mailto:btrbovich(@)iamaw.org), 16.04.2009 23:57

After producing a documentary on the demise of the Arrow and numerous tv news stories on the subject for both CTV and Global Television, for which I conducted many interviews with former AVRO employees including Jim Floyd, John Sandford and the late John Diefenbaker, the Prime Minister who made the cancellation in 1959, one thing is abundantly clear, the Americans didn't kill the Arrow, we did it all by ourselves. Two factors stand out, the RCAF made constant design and performance changes which drove the price per aircraft through the roof. Originally to be designed in stages, the Mark 1 with Canadian airframe, American engines and weapons systems and British avionics. The Mark 2 was to have Canadian airframe, Canadian engines(Iroquois2)Canadian avionics(Marconi Montreal)and American weapons systems. The Mark 3, Canadian airframe, Canadian engines(Iroquois 3), Canadian avionics and Canadian weapons systems (housed in a retractable weapons bay with eight Sparrow missiles, capable of lowering, firing a missile and retracting within four seconds during flight). The RCAF wanted everything at once. The second factor not widely know is that when AVRO Canada president Crawford Gordon went to Ottawa to meet with Diefenbaker to discuss the mounting cost overruns, he was told not to swear, smoke or drink in front of the Prime Minister. Gordon who sources say felt that Diefenbaker was a country bumpkin who knew nothing about aircraft, ignored the cautionary advice. When he met with Diefenbaker he smelled of booze, swore like a trooper and blew cigar smoke in the Prime Minister's face! This coupled with bad information about the capabilities of the BOMARC missile and the Arrow's fate was sealed. The American's for their part, weren't interested in buying the Arrow because they build their own (The Martin Canberra bomber and McDonnell Douglas Harrier are the only exceptions) but they bent over backwards trying to help us develop it...wind tunnel testing, the loan of a B-47 test bed for the Iroquois engine etc. It was in their best interest to have an ally that could produce its own supersonic interceptor for its air force to adequately share North American air defence in order to cut American costs and responsibilities. I have no doubt that had the Arrow been produced and placed into service with the natural progression of models over a period of time, versions of it would still be flying today. But such is not the case and many countries have made similar mistakes when cancellation decisions are based on bad information..look no further than the BAC TSR-2 .

Bill Trbovich  
Communications Director  
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers