

TODAY'S WEATHER

RAIN
16 °C

4 Day Forecast | Traffic

With everything you need to find the right car, **Whccls.ca**

Tuesday, June 03, 2008 | Today's Toronto Star

PHOTOS VIDEO COLUMNISTS BLOGS PODCASTS RSS MOBILE NEWSLETTERS ALERTS

thestar.com

the star.com Web find a Business
Advanced Search | Full Text Article Archive

NOTICES
CAREERS
CLASSIFIEDS

HOME NEWS COMMENT BUSINESS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT LIVING TRAVEL WHEELS HEALTHZONE YOURHOME PARENTCENTRAL

Editorials | Columns | Speak Out | Readers' Letters | Polls | Corrections | Blogs

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Remembering the Avro Arrow

Mar 25, 2008 04:30 AM

Re:Bittersweet success

Ideas, March 23

As one who worked at Avro as an engineering student in the structural test, flight test and mechanical design departments, and was offered permanent employment two weeks before "Black Friday," I watched the development of the Arrow close up.

The words "amid rising costs" in your article reopened a source of great frustration to those of us who knew the facts.

The Arrow was unique at that time in that no mock-up was built before proceeding to production tooling. This was possible because of groundbreaking computer analysis techniques and extensive structural and functional testing of virtually every component. Six Arrows were built from the production tooling. These were virtually production models.

With a French Air Force order in hand, contingent on an order from the RCAF, the Diefenbaker government misrepresented the cost of the Arrow by dividing the cost of the entire program, including production tooling, by six. Of course the unit cost would have decreased with every plane built by "turning the crank" on the existing production line.

I am glad that a replica has been built at the Aerospace Museum, but I find the large areas of orange paint jarring when, in my mind, I recall the thrill of watching the clean white Arrow slicing through the Malton skies 50 years ago.

Michael Heuer, Toronto

As a young engineer I worked at Avro before and after graduation from the University of Toronto. I stayed there until after the Arrow cancellation when I accepted one of the offers that I had received from U.S. companies.

Most of my time was spent in the stress office, preliminary design or engineering planning. Preliminary design (sometimes called initial projects office) was where new designs were hatched: CF-100 fighter, used in quantity by the RCAF, C-102 jetliner, one of two groundbreaking jet transport aircraft, C-103 a swept-wing version of the CF-100, CF-105 Arrow.

The most important person at Avro, in my opinion, was James A. (Jim) Chamberlain. He held many titles – chief aerodynamicist, chief designer, etc. – but he was really the local genius. Any aircraft design and build organization that attempts to be successful needs a resident genius.

After the demise of the Arrow project, Chamberlain was asked by NASA to select a small group of engineers to join NASA. At one fell swoop, NASA took away a core group that lay at the heart of the Canadian industry.

Avro was filled with hard-working, knowledgeable technical people. Even the chief administrator, Ron Adey, was a very bright person.

The other two people who appear to be ignored completely are T.R. (Tommy) Loudon, a structural specialist, and Ben Etkin, an aerodynamicist. They were professors at the University of Toronto and they were the backbone of the Aeronautical Engineering course. That course of study, which was very selective as to who was allowed to enrol, produced a group of highly trained engineers.

Its graduates made a contribution wherever they went.

Arthur B. Schwartz, Toronto

Those looking back on the first flight of the CF-105 Arrow and retelling the fable of the aircraft's performance and demise should examine the fate of a fighter aircraft that took off on its maiden flight only two months later: the F-4 Phantom

Email story
Print
Choose text size
Report typo or correction

BOOKMARK

Advertisement

HELP WANTED

New to Canada?

canadianimmigrant.ca

MORE IN THE NEWS

McGuinty, Charest team up
Dr. Sheela Basrur, 51: Guided city through SARS
Mother still searching for missing daughter
Mississauga wants new photo radar
Making JPs retire at 70 is unlawful, judge rules
We've cut electricity use 4.6%

RECENT SPECIAL SECTIONS

Mobile Technology
Desi Life
Digital Photo
Golf 2008
Best Employers for Diversity
Sick Kids
Diabetes
Florida Travel

More Specials

Advertisement

Whccls.ca

MOST POPULAR ON THESTAR.COM

Most Read Most Emailed

- Wilson hire raises red flags
- Sykora keeps Penguins alive
- Horoscopes for Tuesday, June 3