

BOOK REVIEWS

"Fall of an Arrow" by Murray Peden, Q.C. 185 pages, illustrated. Published by Canada's Wings, Box 393, Stittsville, Ontario K0A 2G0. \$14.95 hardcover

Twenty-one years ago on March 25, 1958 the Avro Arrow lifted off the runway at Malton Airport under the capable hands of Jan Zurakowski.

Eleven months later on February 20, 1959 John Diefenbaker scrapped the Arrow and ordered the six complete Arrows cut into scrap.

It has been a burning issue in Canadian aviation circles ever since that time.

Murray Peden of Winnipeg, former bomber pilot in the Second World War, has obviously seethed over the cancellation and it shows through in his book, "Fall of an Arrow".

Twenty-one years elapsed time has permitted many facets to clarify and the author presents as best he can both sides of the controversy.

He details how and why it was a Canadian accomplishment, unequalled in the World, and makes comparisons both economically and militarily to show how it could be flying today on Air Defence duty.

Of course, aviation in Canada is studded with examples of stupidity and lack of vision and the Avro Jetliner to my mind is a bigger mistake (if possible) than the Arrow tragedy.

It is a pity that Crawford Gordon, President of A.V. Roe Canada, is not alive to enlighten us even further on the sharp disagreements between Avro and the Government.

However, the author has interviewed and corresponded with hundreds of officials directly involved with the Arrow from drawing board to flight testing.

The book is thorough and the photographs, many from private collections enhance the story and bring the



tremendous Arrow achievement all back again. An aerial view of the Arrows being hacked and torched apart is in the authors words "perhaps the best commentary on the whole sorry affair".

I liked the way the author ended this great piece of historical writing.

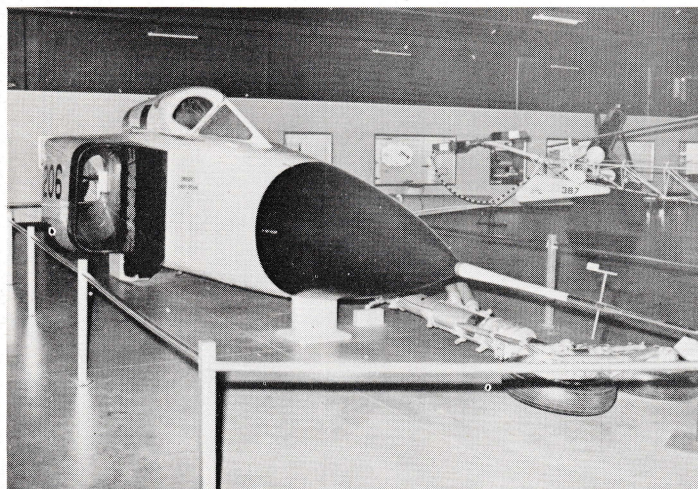
"Looking back over the two decades, there is an old lesson to be re-learned in Canada from the sorry epilogue of the Arrow. National security cannot be procured on the cheap. Political leaders in democratic countries have always tended to shy away from that unpalatable truth. And yet, how many times in recent history have those same politicians, who shrank from asking the electorate to spend money on national security, unhesitatingly and shamelessly asked the country's youth to lay down their lives to restore it? A nation that cannot afford to

build the best weapons for its defence forces, but which can afford to spend upwards of a billion and a half dollars for the sports spectacle of the Olympic Games, is in more serious trouble than its political leaders appear to realize.

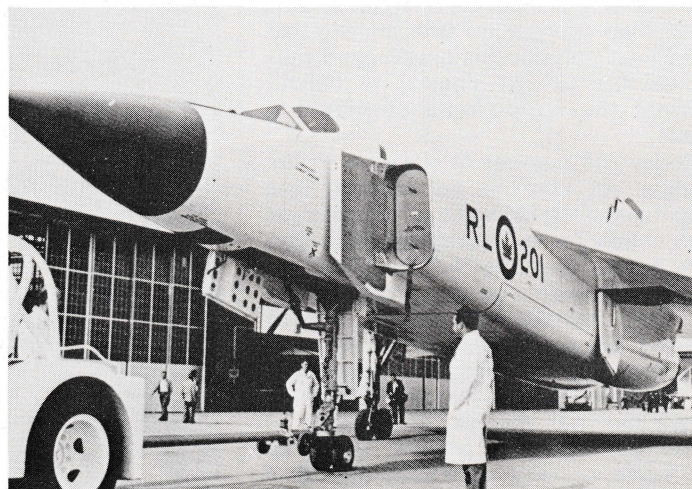
Another lesson that Canada will have to re-learn apparently, is that sophisticated defence industries cannot be erected overnight. When war and mortal danger became imminent, it is too late to set about trying to assemble an aircraft industry, or tank and gun factories, or shipyards. There is a price for keeping these facilities in existence in the piping times of peace. Countries which are not prepared to pay that price will ultimately pay a far higher one".

"Fall of an Arrow" proves this conclusively.

— The Editor



This is all that could be hidden from the torch squad sent to destroy the Arrow.



With the roll-out ceremony behind it, Arrow No. 1 leaves to begin its ground trials and taxi trials.