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Model Avro Arrow found in Lake Ont.

BELLEVILLE, Ont. (CP) — A marine mechanic says he's beaten a handful of so-called experts in locating one of nine scale test models of the fabled Avro Arrow on the bottom of Lake Ontario.

Dave Gartshore, 44, of nearby Carrying Place, released video he said shows one of the models of the Arrow. The video was made earlier this week by divers after only eight days of searching the lake bottom.

"I'm very excited about this find, but I don't know if the initial shock has worn off, to tell you the truth," said Gartshore of the huge national interest in anything tangible as a record of the ill-fated supersonic jet fighter, scrapped by the government in 1958.

Gartshore said he became interested in the Arrow models, fired from a test range out over Lake Ontario 40 years ago, because he has long had an interest in marine artifacts in Lake Ontario.

He has been a member of some of the teams involved in the search for the Arrow models, but made the find this week on his own, he said, using borrowed equipment.

Gartshore first pinpointed the Arrow model using side-scan sonar and later sent down two divers "who stayed back from the model and did not touch it while video-taping it." He used an advanced model of sonar, called Edge Tech, borrowed from the manufacturer in Massachusetts.

"I didn't need a lot of the technical calculations the others have been running around with," said Gartshore.

"I used historical records for three days and gave up. It came down to having the best equipment. That's what did it."

He said he used eye-witness accounts of the firings from Carmen Johnson, a technician who worked on the model test firings, to help him locate the general area where he believed the models to be.

Meanwhile, national interest in his find has soared.

"In the past 18 hours," he said, "I've spent 17 and a half of them on the phone across Canada."

The story of the Arrow models is well-documented, but the search for them has been frustrating for organizations from London, Ont., to Toronto. Groups have been on the water off Prince Edward County since 1995 looking for the models.

In the past five years, no fewer than four teams of Arrow buffs, aviation conservation groups and underwater salvage companies have scoured the bottom of the lake with side scan sonar technology looking for the models.

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