

# Hyslips take flight

Calgary couple built models for CBC mini-series about the Avro Arrow

BOB BLAKEY  
Calgary Herald

**M**any Canadians will beam with pride when CBC's mini-series *The Arrow* first shows the beautiful Avro Arrow fighter-interceptor soaring toward the clouds.

But none will have a rosier glow than Calgary's Donette and Doug Hyslip, who built the operating scale models used in the flying sequences of the drama series starring Dan Aykroyd and Sara Botsford, which airs at 8 p.m. Sunday and Monday on Ch. 6-9.

## Preview

**THE ARROW**, starring Dan Aykroyd and Sara Botsford, airs at 8 p.m. Sunday and Monday on Ch. 6-9.

There's never any doubt over the course of the four-hour series that months of planning, building and testing the models paid off. The flight sequences are realistic and are blended seamlessly with other footage, some of it historical. Many viewers

will think an Arrow actually survived, as the script contends.

For Donette Hyslip, it was a remarkable feeling when their 10-foot-long Arrow first flew.

"I would suggest we felt the way that the original Avro employees felt when the full-scale airplane got off the ground for the first time.

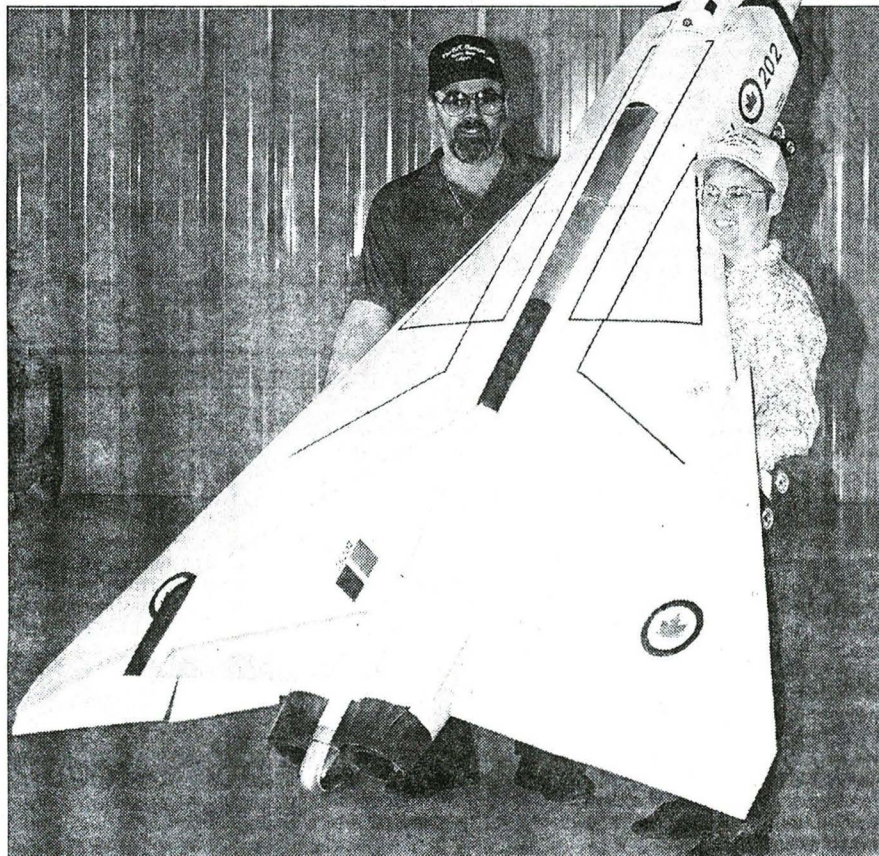
"I was proud to be a Canadian, proud to have been involved with it."

Doug and Donette run the R/C Hangar on Ogden Road in southeast Calgary. It's a retail hobby shop that specializes in flying model planes.

Their first experience in movie work came when the producers of *Angel Flight Down*, an ABC-TV movie that aired last year, needed to crash a plane on film. Then came another airplane sequence on *Wild America*.

Two more movies are in the works for the couple, Doug Hyslip says, including one in the south of France.

But *The Arrow* mini-series was the biggest challenge to date. The Hyslips built four flying



David Lazarowich, Calgary Herald

**CANADIAN PRIDE:** Doug and Donette Hyslip with a scale model of the Avro Arrow that was built for the new CBC mini-series *The Arrow*.

models in all — two Arrows, plus two CF-100s, the 1950s jet fighters that Canada was aiming to replace with the new delta-wing wonder.

Doug also operated the models by radio from a

helicopter during filming. Post-production special effects added such touches as different backgrounds and the exhaust blast of jet afterburners.

Airborne camera work was done at the Airdrie

airport and at Gimli, Man.

The couple was planning an Arrow model more than a year ago when the film-makers, including co-producer Mary Young Leckie and writer Keith Ross Leckie, started scouting for something that would pass for an Arrow in flight.

This was one of two props crucial to the mini-series' success. The other was a full-size, non-flying model of the plane. One turned up partly completed in Wetaskiwin, Alta., 233 km. north of Calgary, where a former machinist and plane enthusiast, Allan Jackson, was building it as a hobby.

Technicians completed Jackson's 80-foot-long wooden model as part of a deal for the rights to film it in hangars and taxiing on a runway.

The nose section of Jackson's model is now on display at the Reynolds Alberta Museum in Wetaskiwin.

"There's no space available for that aircraft because it's so large," Jackson says.

A committee has been formed to find space for the full plane, but Jackson says it could be a year or more before that happens.

When the Leckies got an agreement from the Hyslips to make the flying models, the making of *The Arrow* mini-series was assured.

The model makers started last April 1 and had 90 days to get the four small planes into the air. For the couple and a crew of assistants, making it happen was a moving feeling, says Donette Hyslip.

She believes viewers will share in the enthusiasm of what the original Arrow accomplished before the project was cancelled by the Diefenbaker government in 1959.

"It's something that the Canadian public hasn't been exposed to, that Canadians are good enough to do world-renowned things," she says.

"It takes me back to when I first found out that the Canadian was in the space shuttle.

"Canadians can do it, and Canadians have in the past. The public should be aware of it. We're as good as anybody and better than some."

The Hyslips' model is now on display at the Aerospace Museum, 64 McTavish Place N.E. in Calgary.

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