



CP PHOTO

**SUCCESS DENIED:** Young Niklas Korowai (left) appears with Aidan Devine, who plays the chief engineer, in *The Arrow*, a CBC mini-series about the tragic demise of the Avro Arrow, the Canadian built space age interceptor of the 1950's

## Flying sequences were a challenge

TORONTO (CP) — Director Don McBready knew he had a challenge on his hands when he began shooting in Manitoba for *The Arrow*, the CBC's four hour miniseries on the demise of the 1950s Canadian jet plane, the Avro Arrow.

"I worried early on how we were going to make the Arrow fly," McBready confesses, noting that the budget was big, but not big enough for slick Hollywood style computer generated special effects.

Besides, he says, computer shots look good only in brief glimpses but not in the long, lyrical sequences he envisaged. There was plenty of stock footage that survived but it was mostly grainy, scratchy and unusable.

So they built models, big ones that were essentially remote controlled jet planes. One team member would launch the model, then hand radio control off to another person hanging out an open door of a helicopter.

"Oh, I wouldn't have gone up there," says McBready. "It was, I think, quite risky what these guys were doing."

ating up the budget was the \$10,000 a day rental fee for the helicopter, a special aerial camera set up and the crew.

"As time went on and they built the models and they crashed and they crashed and they crashed, we

got really nervous."

But McBready says everyone wanted the shoot to work and went the extra mile by working free one last day, the day they finally got good weather and tremendous aerial footage.

It looks like the real thing in the final cut as the gleaming white space-age Arrow with its red maple leaf logo zooms through the clouds.

McBready says it's difficult even for experts to distinguish the model shots from newsreel footage and some computer-generated clips, all of which are skillfully intercut in color and black and white.

Then there was the full-scale model, used for scenes in the hangar and in a famous ceremonial roll out sequence that occurred in 1957.

An Albertan named Allan Jackson began building his own model in 1990 and the filmmakers learned about it on the Internet and contacted him. Jackson's partially completed pet project was transported to Winnipeg where film crew technicians put on the finishing touches.

One of the most dramatic contributions to the film occurred within the final days of production. The producers got their hands on the original aerial still photos taken by a journalist showing the partially destroyed airframes of the remaining Arrows being dismantled.

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