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**Monday, January 7, 2013**

::: 63 Years Ago and The Loneliest 'Clunk' of All :::



January 1st.

Late afternoon.

Hondas zoom by.

This is Canada, remember.

Hapless cars spreading salty slush like some sick squadron of mechanized fertilizing machines.

Not a care in the world, these folks.

It is whip-snap cold outside.

The air is pure peppermint.

I make my way to the Summit where **Toronto's only CF-100** can be found.

On this first day of the new year, I am the only one here.

Night falls.

We are a long way away from those days when Toronto-based Avro engineers designed and produced the CF-100.

Yes, far way from those days when dozens of these Canadian fighters would be parked at Malton Airport and just as many would fill the local skies.

No more.

**January 20, 1950...the Avro CF-100 'Clunk' (as we've always called her) flew for the first time...and famously became Canada's FIRST JET INTERCEPTER and also, simultaneously, Canada's FIRST ALL-CANADIAN MILITARY AIRCRAFT.**

CANADA had dutifully retained its' colonial mentality until right after WW II wherein we purchased every single military aircraft for the RCAF, up to that point...from every other country, any country other than our own glorious CANADA!

CANADIANS even missed—if you can believe it— the entire era of propeller-driven military aircraft!

Bombers and fighters alike.

We did produce a trainer though, the Fleet Fort. We got that one in at the last minute of that grand old age.

Big deal~

We fall back on the Arrow, so it's laughable we couldn't even come up with one homegrown military design in the 40 years of the prop engine era!

We bought British, we bought American, hey, we even bought French...we never even thought about producing, and buying Canadian!

If ever a country wanted to remain a colony—it was Canada.

(\*Sheesh. Where are my antacid pills, anyway?)

And while we did produce almost 700 CF-100s for both Canada and Belgium, in the end RCAF pilots preferred **the Canadair Sabre (a hopped-up Canadian version of the American F-86 Sabre)**, to the CF-100 Canuck, as she was officially known, and in kind, came up with all kinds of derogatory nicknames for her. The Clunk moniker came forth because of the disconcerting sound the front landing-gear made while retracting into its undercarriage well. Unfortunately, the 'Clunk' was also called the 'Lead Sled', the CF-Zero, the Beast, and the Zilch.

**IN SPITE OF the laughter today for our first act of R&D independence ...the Avro CF-100 had some notables, people.**

**1) It was the ONLY all-weather NATO fighter stationed in Europe in 1956 and into '57. The Clunk was the only NATO fighter able to operate in extremely poor weather conditions and ZERO visibility—**

**2) At the start of the Korean War, the USAF needed jet-propelled all-weather interdiction/surveillance aircraft so desperately and no American manufacturer had yet produced one...they considered the Avro**

CF-100 and the English Electric Canberra for the role. The USAF almost never considers foreign aircraft to fill its ranks. The Canberra was eventually chosen, but the CF-100 was a serious contender.

**3) The "Great Zura", Avro Canada's Chief Development Pilot, S/L Żurkowski flew the CF-100 in the 1955 Farnborough Air Show.** He demonstrated the Clunk in the "falling leaf" aerobatic manoeuvre and really put it on display! The crowds and Belgium were impressed! It was a large all-weather NATO fighter aircraft yet Zura flew it like a stunt plane! Belgium ended the year with a purchase order for 53 Clunks because of what Belgian air force officials saw at Farnborough.

**4) In 1952, the Great Zura took a CF-100 into a dive and it became the first straight-wing aircraft to break the sound barrier!** What it could not do in level flight, it did do in a dive without breaking up!

'nuff, said—

Posted by Never Was An Arrow II at [4:13 PM](#)