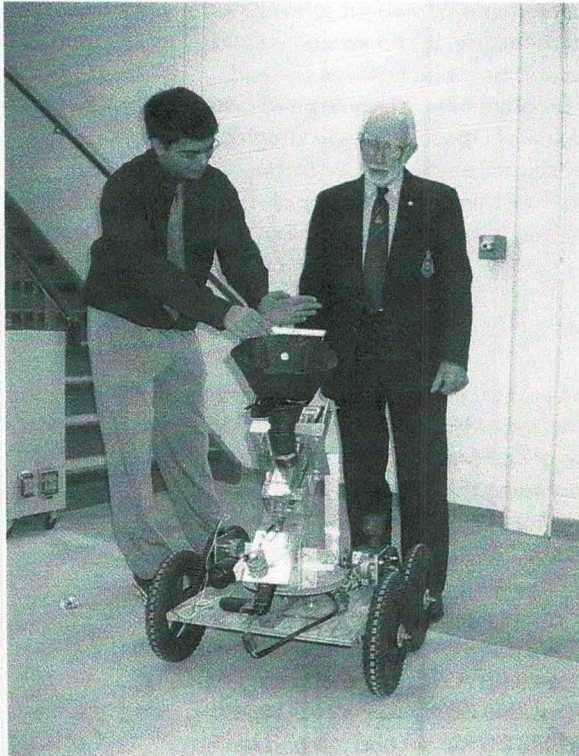


DR. JAMES C. FLOYD

A Canadian Aviation Pioneer and a Proud Patron of Canada FIRST



James C. Floyd is one of the great figures in Canadian aviation history. As chief designer for Avro Canada, Floyd played a central role in the development of some of the greatest planes in Canadian aviation including the C102 Jetliner, the CF 100 fighter and – possibly the most famous – the Avro Arrow. Members of his design and engineering team later played key roles in America's Apollo project to put a man on the moon. His career accomplishments have been reflected in numerous honours in Canada and internationally.

Canada FIRST is proud that Jim Floyd has been a patron of the Games for the past six years and has lent his name to the annual Canada FIRST Jim Floyd Award for Design Excellence. He also provided the inspiration for the recent establishment of the Canada FIRST Jim Floyd Scholarship at the new University of Ontario Institute of Technology. The scholarship is available to a qualified student participating in the Canada FIRST Robotic Games.

Jim Floyd's career demonstrates the values – excellence, enthusiasm and teamwork – that underlie Canada FIRST. When Floyd arrived in Canada at age 31, he already had an impressive record in aircraft design in England. By his mid-twenties, Floyd was working on the drawings of what was to become the Lancaster bomber of World War II fame. By age 29, he was chief project engineer, working on advanced projects including the application of jet engine technology.

After the war, Avro sent Floyd to Canada to head a design team to develop a jet-powered passenger plane for Trans-Canada Airlines, the forerunner of Air Canada. First flown in August 1949, Floyd's Avro C102 Jetliner set early records as the first jet-powered commercial passenger plane in North America. In 1950, Jim Floyd was the first non-American to be awarded the prestigious Wright Brothers Medal for his work on the Jetliner.

By 1952, Floyd had become Avro's chief engineer in charge of all research, design, and testing. He had built up a growing team of experts to develop the CF 100 fighter aircraft which served the RCAF and NATO forces for over a quarter of a century. The need for a new supersonic interceptor to defend the northern reaches of North America led to the CF 105 project – the Avro Arrow – one of the most advanced and ambitious military aircraft projects then being undertaken anywhere in the world.

roboticgames

The first Arrow was produced by the end of 1957 and test flown in March 1958. Over the next several months, five Arrows were completed., drawing international attention and praise due to their highly advanced design and capabilities.

While Jim Floyd plays down his part in the Arrow project by paying tribute to his "brilliant and highly sophisticated team of experts", historical records and honours point to his inspiring leadership. In 1958, the Canadian Aeronautical Institute presented him with the J.D. McCurdy award for his leadership in the project and "the quality of his technical judgment and ...his infectious energy".

Political considerations, however, were to end the Arrow project early in 1959. Prime Minister John Diefenbaker announced the cancellation of the project, ordering all of the airplanes, drawings and other materials to be destroyed. The 14,000 employees on the project were laid off.

The cancellation of the Arrow project was also devastating for Floyd and his highly skilled team. With his assistance, many were placed with North American Aviation, Boeing, Douglas, Lockheed and other firms. Twenty-six of the Floyd group joined the U.S. space agency to work on the Mercury, Gemini and later on the Apollo moon landings. One of the top NASA engineers later said that the Canadians "had it all over us in many areas...just brilliant guys...bright as hell and talented and professional to a man."

Floyd turned down several lucrative job offers in the United States to accept an invitation from England to study advanced aviation technology and space vehicles. In 1962, he established his own consulting firm and for 18 years worked with airlines and aviation companies worldwide. He was a consultant on the Concorde project from 1965 to 1973.

After his retirement in 1980, Jim and his wife returned to Toronto where they still live. He subsequently wrote a widely acclaimed book about the C102 Jetliner and also received a number of Canadian and international awards in recognition of his contributions to aeronautical engineering. In 1993, he was inducted into Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame. He also received an Honourary Doctorate in Engineering from the Royal Military College in 2000. He is a Patron of the Avro Arrow Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Cadets.

After the 1988 World Conference on Hypersonic Flight in the 21st Century, one participant recalled, "My most vivid memory of the event was how revered Jim Floyd was in that company of experts. He was, in fact, the living symbol of the proud legacy this nation [Canada] has carved in aviation history."

"If something seems worthwhile but impossible, do it anyway!"

- Jim Floyd

Biographical Information from: M. James, Wayfarers: Canadian Achievers, 1996
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