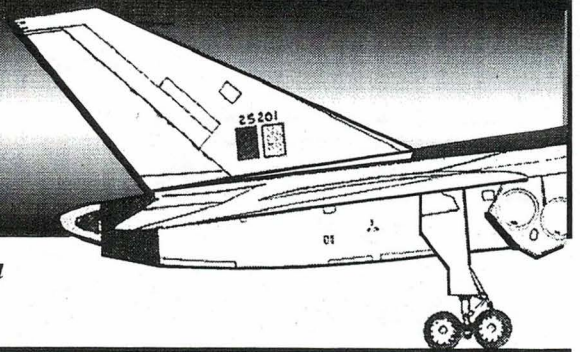


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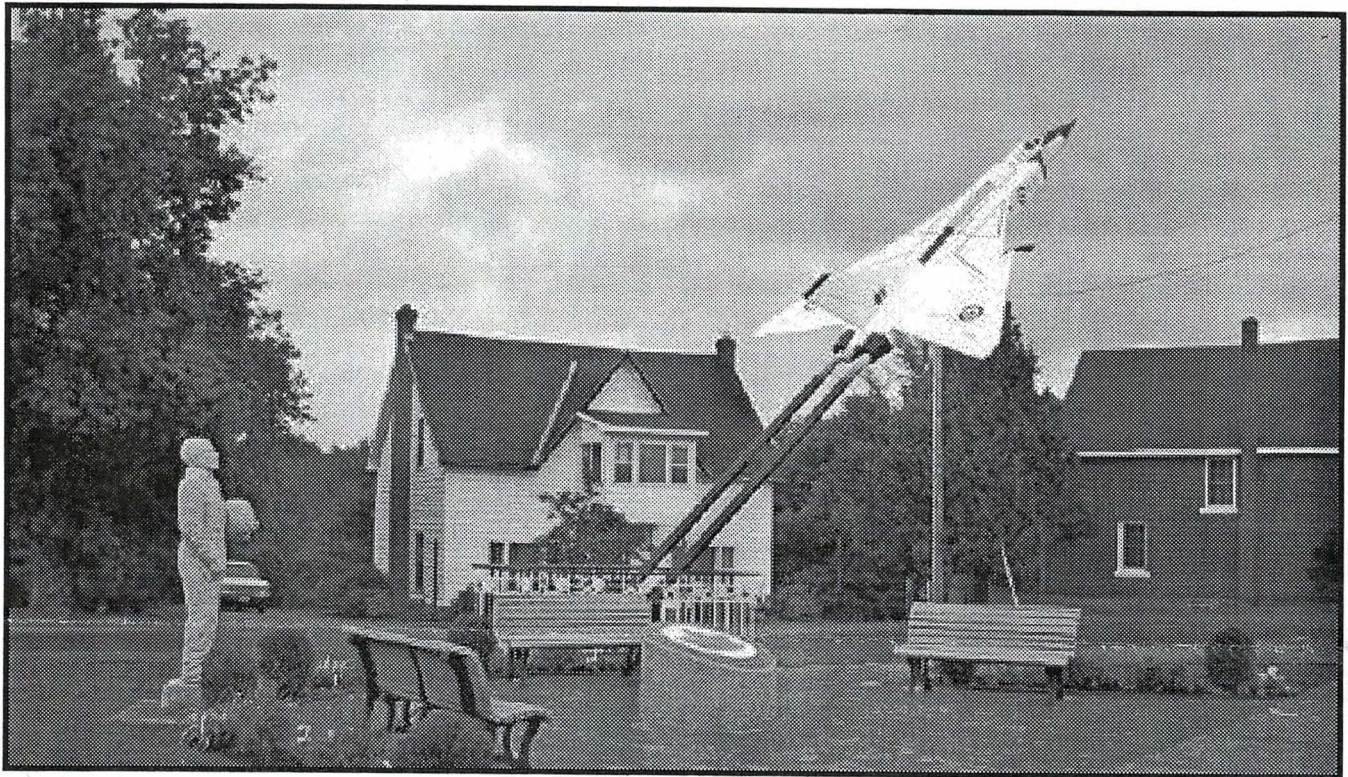


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A Day at Zurakowski Park Part 2



For those present at the dedication of the Park in Barry's Bay, it was impossible not to sense the deep feeling of affection for the man who spent the first part of his life in Europe in the air and the second part in Canada, on the ground. Though no one actually did a physical count of those present, the number of 500 at the dedication was not an exaggeration. Neither the distance nor the

sudden downpour deterred their enthusiasm. Mark Robbins, the dedication Chair, was rightly concerned about the weather in the immediate area, for he had a full agenda. He did not have to be overly concerned. Even when the deluge did descend, people improvised and the program continued. The guests of honour, dignitaries, federal, provincial and municipal members and the

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From the President

Since the last issue of *Pre-Flight*, I have received many telephone calls and e-mails from members expressing sadness due to the passing of the President of AHFC, Ian Farrar.

They all asked me to send their condolences to Terry, Janet and the rest of the family.

In this issue, Nick Doran, as AHFC representative, continues the second and concluding part of his report on the dedication ceremony at Zurakowski Park in Barry's Bay.

Be sure to read it!

Frank

Zurakowski Park II, cont'd.

appreciative enthusiasts of the Arrow era had a sense of history. They understood that here was a man who had lived a full life of 88 years and counting, and was one of the few to whom so much was owed in the early war years. After hostilities ended, Janusz did what he excelled at: being a test pilot who flew most of the prop-driven, single and twin engine aircraft; it also including the first British military jet, the Gloster Meteor, as well as the Javelin.

Some in the crowd knew of his fabled exploits as a test pilot both in the air and on the ground. As a consummate professional, he took nothing for granted. Before he suited up and was strapped into the seat, he first checked what was needed to be checked, using, when appropriate, his trusty slide rule. Just a few years after WW II, he set a speed record of 520.5 mph. And there are still some around today, though not many, who were privileged to witness his phenomenal aerobatics in the MB-5 at Farnborough in 1956. Then came the Zurabatic cartwheel in a Meteor. His careful pre-flight planning was a significant factor in these and many other occasions. Truly, the contribution of a committed and creative professional test pilot.

The Polish Ambassador to Canada, Pawel Dobrowolski, paid his special ebullient tribute in English and Polish to Janusz, when he said: "This man is called the father of Canadian aviation. He has made Canada a nation of flyers. I am proud to say his skills and his love of flying are a product of Poland." Indeed. By his flying of Avro Arrow RL 25201 into first-flight history on March 25, 1958, he fired the imagination of young men of his day, and focused their attention and dreams on flying. He did these and many other things because they needed to be done to better understand the unit being tested and assess the critical causative factors involved. A good example: breaking the sound barrier in a CF-110 Mk 4 Canuck when he was working at A.V. Roe Canada, in Malton. And, of course, the testing of the Avro Arrow, helping to push back the boundaries of flight.



Saturday - Park II, cont'd

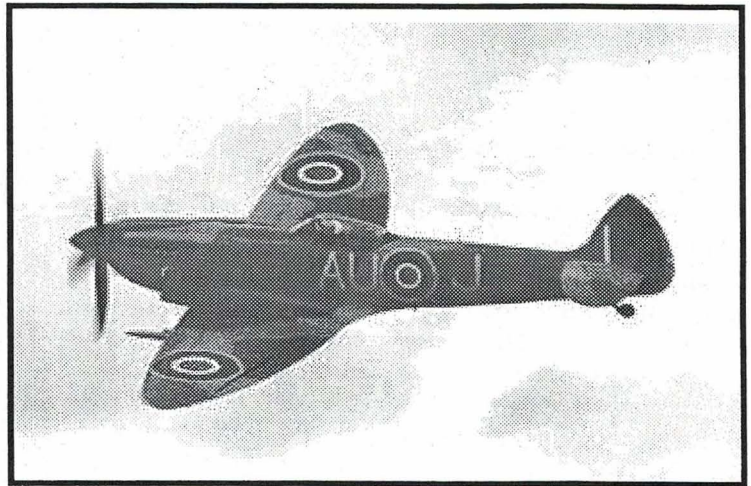
One person who worked closely with Janusz and the Arrow, but was unable to attend was Jim Floyd. In his message, he said, "I am sorry that my less than robust health prevents me from attending this event to honour an old friend and colleague for whom I have always had the deepest respect and admiration." The Park Project, he said, "... is a fitting tribute to an extraordinary aviator whose courage and skill has helped broaden the boundaries of aviation technology." Janusz remained for the main parts of the ceremony, and even stood proud during the somewhat lengthy singing of the Canadian, British and Polish anthems.

After the speakers made their presentations, he was asked to address the crowd. Standing small and frail, he spoke in a quiet voice, with effort. "I am very old, eighty-eight. I am very sick actually and very weak. That is why I will keep my speech to a minimum. Dear friends, I would like to thank everybody, especially the organizing committee and the committee around Barry's Bay. This place has been my home for 43 years. I don't think I deserve this. I hope this place will be a reminder of the thousands of people who wanted to develop a Canadian aviation industry and who worked so hard." He continued, "I was very proud, not because they put my name here, but because of the aircraft *Arrow*. In the end, the Prime Minister and his supposed experts hoped that the name *Avro Arrow* would disappear and be forgotten. But instead, it went the opposite way. Every year, more and more people are trying to remember the *Arrow*. It has become a Canadian icon."

With such deeply sincere words, in his typical understated fashion, he directed attention to others, to the bigger picture. In spite of himself, Janusz was and is important to Canada and is part of our infrequently recognized heritage. But the generals, the political representatives, the Polish ambassador, the other organizations and people there clearly and publicly in accolade after accolade proclaimed him to be a worthy and honoured person in their midst.

There was a poignant moment toward the end of the proceedings, when a Spitfire Mk IV, piloted by owner Michael Potter of Cognos, broke through the cloud cover. Flying overhead in this fabled aircraft; it was his gesture of gratitude and appreciation, of honouring Janusz. After two passes, he flew off into the still-lowering eastern horizon.

There were other moments when Janusz must have felt proud. One was the christening of the large 1/4 scale replica of the Arrow. With his father looking on, his son Mark smashed a bottle of champagne against the base of the support. The other was the unveiling of a life-size granite statue of Janusz by his other son,



Spitfire Mk.IV flypast

George. In the background, the large billboard portrayed future plans for the Park, which included a museum. The project was estimated to be over \$375,000, of which \$125,000 was already donated.

Janusz and Anna were first to leave, almost reluctantly, with the crowd singing "Sto Liat" in Polish, which wished them many, many (at least a hundred) good years. The people then were encouraged to wander around at their leisure, look more closely at the model, the property proper, meet others, or just relax and enjoy the day. Or prepare for the evening program in the Paul J. Yakabuski Community Centre.



Happy diners enjoying food and friendship.

Prior to the actual dinner program, there was the usual pre-dinner prep at the bar, about 5:00 pm or so. This is a proper custom, for it creates a more convivial atmosphere. And it really was, if one could use as a valid criterion the pleasant decibel level of conversation.



Saturday - Park II contd

What else would one expect from friendly people at a happy occasion! Present was Anna, but understandably, Janusz could not attend.

When all were seated, at the appointed time the MC for the evening, Mark Robbins welcomed everyone and called upon Capt. John O'Neill, CAF for the reading of John Gillespie Magee's "High Flight". Then all sang the National Anthem with right patriotic vigour, and then Grace was said by Msgr. Ambrose Pick. Dinner was promptly served by the efficient staff (no waiting), and everyone happily did their appointed duty befitting the occasion - enjoyed the dinner and pleasant company.

Though it appeared that people just wanted to continue sipping coffee and talking, nevertheless Mark Robbins as MC took control and interrupted and got on with the program, and introduced the dignitaries of the evening, which included Don and June Rogers.

He next called upon John Hildebrandt. John, with his wife Beth nodding in agreement, thanked his committee for the splendid cooperation and effort for the many things that had to be planned and done.

George and Mark Zurakowski, shared as only sons who loved their father could, a captivating and light-hearted summation of what it was like living in the Madawaska Valley with a Canadian Legend. By the way, those early pioneer years, fascinating years, would take hours and hours to narrate, years which reflect the depth of character and resolve of Janusz.

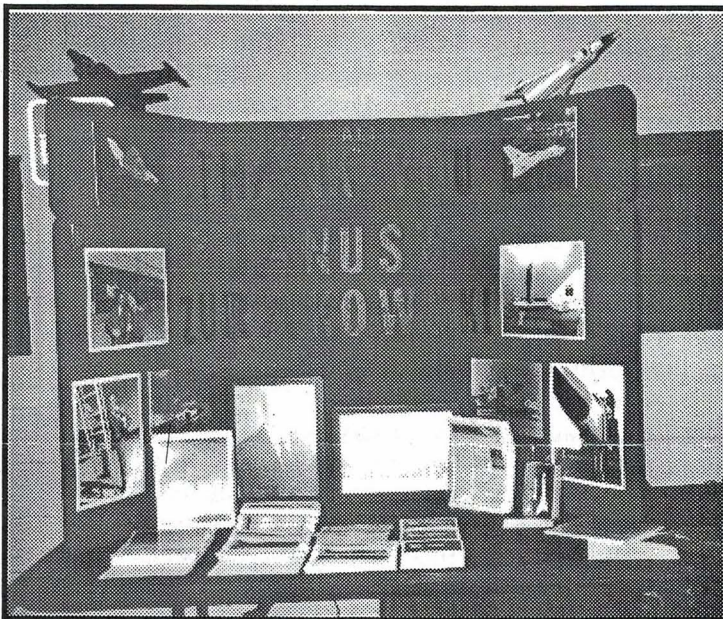
Bill Zuk, a professional biographer, presented an interesting slide and talk entitled "Janusz Zurakowski, Legend in the Skies". Bill spoke with respect, with appropriate slides. A worthy presentation.

But the highlight of the evening was Krysia Zurakowski and her short, heartfelt words on "My Grandfather, My Inspiration". She won the attention and hearts of everyone.

The next item on the after-dinner program was the presentation of gifts. Mark Robbins called Robin Dlutek, who on behalf of No. 845 Avro Arrow Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Cadets, presented a cheque for \$500 toward the Park. She was followed by Nick Doran, representing A.H.F.C, who also presented a cheque for \$500, as well a Spitfire Mk IIc model "DW-K" of 610 Squadron, RAF. The plaque at the base states "To Janusz Zurakowski from A.H.F.C. 26/07/03."

After these presentations, Mark Robbins closed the evening program, inviting everyone to view the displays in the entrance corridor. He also urged them to toss inhibitions to the wind and get out onto the floor. and dance to the lilting music of the famous Spitfire Band. It wasn't too long before the floor was busy with

dancing, the real kind, to band music that didn't rip your ears off!



The Foundation booth.

And what about our faithful, fearless representative? Well, he was in the corridor, at the Foundation booth. Overtop was a banner "We Thank You, Janusz!" He had our large Arrow model set up, with the help of Len and Robin Dlutek, with all sorts of photographs connected to Janusz, the *Arrow*, and the pilots that flew it. Pins, crests, and other saleable items were there for the people's consideration. Nick and his long-suffering wife Shirley truly deserve a full vote of thanks for all their work at the Park opening.

Nick has a fond memory, one that made him feel that special warmth inside. It came, when at our display, Sue, Mark Zurakowski's wife, called him aside. Nick remembers her exact words: "Nick, I took all the gifts back to Dad and showed him everything, while he was resting on his bed. As I was leaving, I turned and looked at Dad; he had the Spitfire in his hands and he was stroking the wings. Nick, that was a wonderful gift from the Foundation, and I thought you would like to know this." And now that we too know this, I am sure that all of our members will feel that same warmth.

On Sunday, after packing up all the A.H.F.C. exhibit paraphanelia, Nick and Shirley returned to the Park, to bid fond farewell. It was then that the whine of a jet turbine was heard, coming from the east. Soon a Canadian Forces Tutor appeared. It made several passes and on the last, dipped its wings and flew off westward. What a fantastic way to end A.H.F.C.'s participation to honour Janusz Zurakowski in the Park Project!