

2507 Anthony "Tony" A. Saunders

Avro Draftsman Feb 54 – Black Friday 20 Feb 59 (ended as Design Draftsman on the Arrow)

Sent: Monday, January 20, 2020 8:27 PM

A brief life story. I was a Limey immigrant, 1953 and eventually took out Canadian citizenship in 1958. My first job was as a draftsman for CCM in Weston, Ontario. About 10 months later I got a job with Avro. I lived initially in Weston, then somewhere else closer to town, can't remember where. Black Friday - remembered. I was at lunch and coming back to my section, I noticed men (can't seem to remember too many women) gathered in groups. Strange! So I went to my area and there my sectional co-workers were gathered around. In the middle of the group on a table was the latest edition of the Globe and Mail newspaper. From memory (?) screaming headlines "Avro Arrow Out" and a photo of the Arrow diving straight down. This newspaper report is a memory only but could easily be checked. We were all stunned, silence, it was a most strange atmosphere. I went back to my drawing board and there in front of me was this beautiful design of a machine I was working on. I definitely remember picking up my pencil, and I drew one line of the design. Then I put my pencil down, slid my drawing machine away, and stood back to admire my half finished work. What the hell. Despair. Then - say - 10 minutes later, the announcement over the PA, gates thrown open, leave, don't take anything with you (ignored) and come back on a designated day next week for final pay. I still have a small titanium blade which "fell" into my pocket as I walked out (naughty!). One of my work mates got a contract to do some quantity estimating, so we did some work, but didn't last long. Trane Air Conditioning came next. A four week assignment designing ducts. Then another four week temporary job as a pricer at a lumber company. I also shared a flat with a Scotsman who was a drummer, he taught me and sold me his old kit. I played some gigs at dances he couldn't do. Great fun. I also used up some of my unemployment insurance. Stopped going to Ryerson. Come late August, it was obvious that a permanent job in Toronto was impossible. So with the Winter coming on, I sold the car (a Monarch) said goodbye to the steady girlfriend and caught the "Homerick" from Montreal to the UK (Oct 1959). Got a job in no time with Napier Aero Engines in Acton, London (eventually became Rolls Royce). Resumed my studies at London University. Then a few months later, Canadian girl friend sent me a "dear John" letter. She had met, and later married a policeman. What a great break this turned out to be. I subsequently met someone even better, my wife, an Australian on a working holiday in London. When I left Canada and the UK, I said I would never live in a cold place again - and I haven't. I like visiting ice and snow, but not to live. In Australia (for 50+ years), I became a Management Consultant for many years with Price Waterhouse. Also lived/worked in the Pacific Islands, Papua New Guinea, Fiji etc. Great fun. After I left Napier Aero Engines (which was taken over by Rolls Royce) I never worked in the aircraft industry again. Probus. There are lots of clubs in Australia. Some are male, some female, but most these days are mixed. I belong to two clubs. Sydney Probus which is men only and is in the true spirit, Professional and Business only. sydneyprobus.org. We meet at a business club monthly in the centre of Sydney. The other club is our local mixed Probus, Hunters Hill, the first Probus club formed in Australia.

The picture is of an Avro Orenda titanium rotor blade, I think it was a 10th stage Iroquois? I was working on the design of a special machine at the time to shape the aerofoil and when I was "let go" on Black Friday, I souvenired it. Beautiful piece of work, only a small item, 6.5 centimetres long - is the museum interested in the donation?

As you can see it is titanium. The following is all from memory. We were working to half thousand of an inch on some parts of the blade. The scallop at the top of the blade from memory was to "cut" a path through the outer casing made of honeycomb material (also titanium?) on first rotation. That way there was little spacing between blade and outer. I was working on the design of a production machine to shape the air foil. I am sure it was from the Iroquois because I don't think the Orenda had titanium blades. At that time, I wouldn't have been working on a design other than for the Iroquois. It is a small blade so some of your experts may know. Is it a stage 10? It may have been an experimental idea for improvement of the Iroquois?



Other messages from Tony include:

Sent: Thursday, January 9, 2020 5:35 PM

I was just a low level employee but I remember the day well. It was the only time I ever saw Crawford Gordon (I was told who he was by my boss). He walked through the office, face as black as thunder and went into the GM's (?) office. About 5 minutes later, the announcement was made over the pa for us all to go. I was told to come back the following Thursday for my final pay and I think my unemployment insurance book? Sudden and traumatic.

Sent: Sunday, January 5, 2020 4:18 PM

I was initially a trainee draftsman and ended as a Design Draftsman in the special machine design section - turbine blades. I was also studying part time at Ryerson.

Sent: Saturday, November 14, 2020 7:47 PM

I was a Design Draftsman so generally never met people "above my pay grade" A story. When I joined as a bottom of the rung green trainee, the boss of my department sent me to the furthest part of the plant to collect a "tap stretcher" The plant as you would know was huge. When I got there, that department boss said he had sent it to another distant part of the plant. So off I went, backwards and forwards between departments chasing after this "tap stretcher". Eventually, one of the dept heads told me he had sent it back to my boss. So off I went back to my department. The "penny dropped" when I returned. I think the whole of Avro knew about this prank. Laughter everywhere - I felt a goose! They had obviously been phoning ahead to keep me on the go. I had been sent on a fools errand. For the information, a "tap stretcher" is like a left-handed screwdriver or a glass hammer or stripped tartan paint etc.