



Flying the Arrow

by Jan Zurakowski

The first flight of the Arrow was very simple: check the control response, engines, undercarriage and airbrakes, handling at speeds up to 400 knots, and low speed in a landing configuration. There certainly was more excitement for the several thousand Avro employees watching my first flight than for myself seated in the cockpit trying to remember hundreds of do's and don'ts. The unpleasant part of my first flight was my feeling of responsibility, combined with the realization that the success of this aircraft depended on thousands of components, especially electronic and hydraulic, with only a small percentage under my direct control. But total responsibility for the flight was mine.

Flight by flight, I was going a bit faster and a bit higher. On flight N° 7, climbing at 50,000 feet I exceeded 1000 MPH and that was the only performance released at that time by Air Force headquarters.

Phase One of the Arrow flight test programme was successfully completed, and Jack Woodman made

familiarization and initial flights. Development flying was speeded up when Spud Potocki and Peter Cope joined testing. For me, the time to retire from testing had arrived. I was leaving experimental flying in good hands: Potocki, Cope and Woodman were all excellent pilots.

On 20 February 1959, the President of the Avro Company informed all working personnel over the public address system that the Prime Minister had just announced the termination of the Arrow and Iroquois programmes.

The destruction of everything connected with the Arrow followed. The five aircraft which had flown and others on the production line were cut to pieces for scrap. Blueprints, brochures, reports and photographs were all reduced to ashes. There was a common impression at the time that politicians wanted all tangible evidence rubbed out to prevent it returning to haunt them in later years.

(Article courtesy of Canadian Aviation Historical Society)