

High flying days of mighty AVRO Arrow

So there I was, walking through Yorkdale shopping centre, not really looking for anything in particular when I decided to peruse the plaza's hobby store.

Entering the store, I was absolutely flabbergasted to see a huge display of plastic models of a Canadian designed and built jet aircraft that has been dead for almost three decades, an airplane that continues to elicit controversy every time its name is mentioned.

The AVRO Arrow: It was 34 years ago that the then Royal Canadian Air Force issued specifications for a new supersonic all-weather interceptor aircraft to replace their mainstay, the CF-100.

The RCAF's requirements were so exacting that if they were all met the resulting aircraft would exceed any other then in service or under development anywhere in the world.

In the incredibly short span of four years, the engineers at A.V. Roe Canada adjacent to Malton airport

(now Pearson International) had succeeded in creating the required aircraft and on March 25, 1958, the first AVRO Arrow made its maiden flight.

The Arrow was better than anyone had hoped for and on Nov. 11, 1958, just 7½ months later, the second Arrow, aircraft number 25202 was flown at Mach 1.96 or almost *twice* the speed of sound. And that was 29 years ago!

Over the next few months, a total of five Arrows were built and flown and another five were in various stages of completion when, on Friday, Feb. 20, 1959, the Conservative government of John Diefenbaker cancelled the entire project.

Then, in an incredible demonstration of shortsightedness (or was there something to hide?) welders were ordered to cut the revolutionary craft into small pieces.

No, not one Arrow would be kept nor would any be

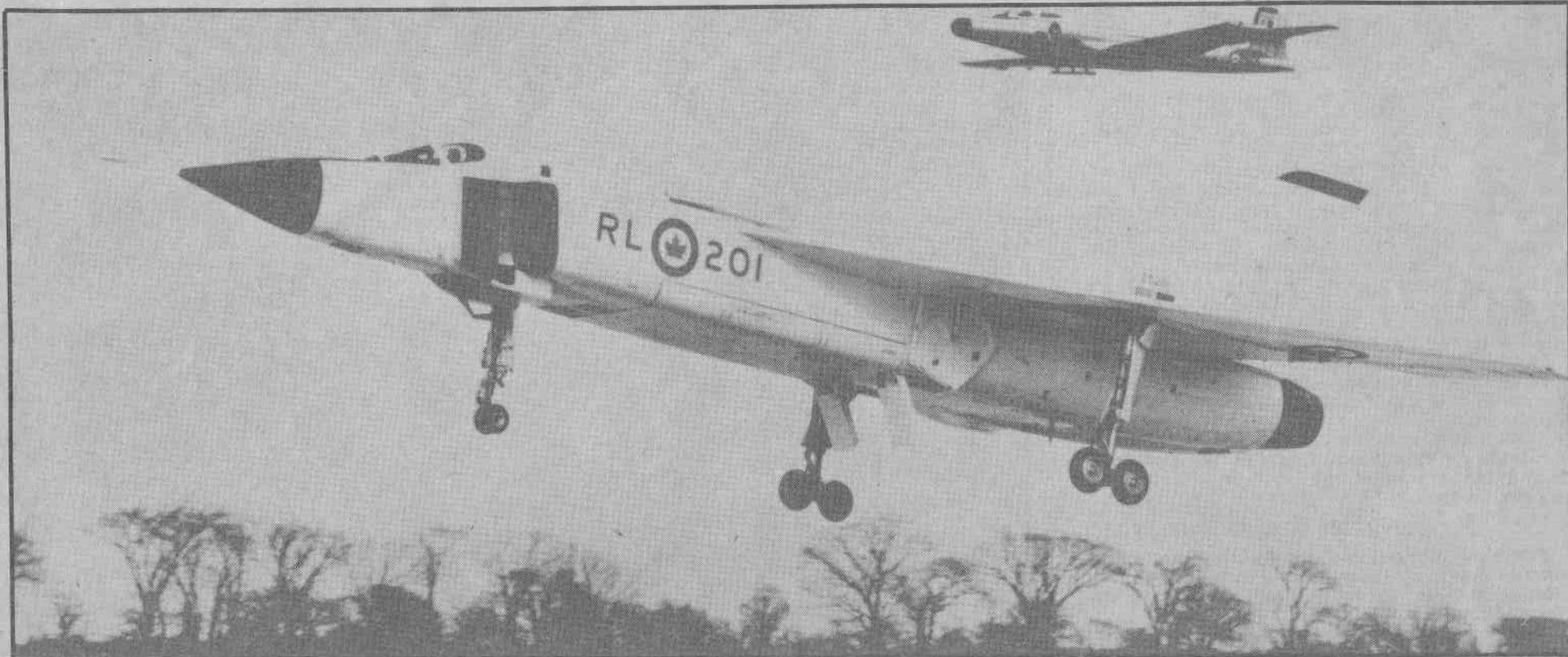
turned over to the Americans or British to continue with its development.

Now here we are, 28 years later and Canada's Arrow is back, though it took a local plastic model company, Hobby Craft and a Korean model-making company to make a buck on what would probably still be the world's most powerful fighter aircraft.

Oh, Canada!

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Join me this coming Wednesday evening, Aug. 19 for another special historical tour of Toronto Harbor and Island. My very special guest on this voyage will be the first "Lady of the Lake" Marilyn Bell DiLascio. We depart from the Gray Line's Yonge St. dock at 7:30 p.m. sharp! Call 364-2412 for reservations.



ARROW 25201, with a CF-100 chase plane in the background, prepares for touchdown during March, 1958 flight trials.