

Moon Landing Hoax

If we put a man on the moon, why can't we put a man on the moon?

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The Mail**(Letters to the Editor)**

[selected letters]

It wasn't until I read Apollo: The Race to the Moon by Charles Murray and Catherine Cox, a history of the engineers who worked on the American moon-landing mission, that I realized the story of the Arrow is one of the world's great what-ifs. The authors quote a source who thought that the flood of suddenly unemployed world-class aerospace engineers from Canada was essential in meeting U.S. president John F. Kennedy's commitment to landing humans on the Moon. What if the Canadians hadn't gone to the States? What if the Russians had landed on the Moon first and established a permanent presence? Would the space race have continued and would space today be a battleground? The Avro did not just alter history; its demise was pivotal in what many would consider the pivotal event of this century.

*Jay Kirkland,
Edmonton*

That the cost of the Arrow spiralled out of control is a matter of record: to \$9 million per aircraft from \$1.5 million within a period of five years. As for the F-101 McDonnell Voodoo fighters (which the Royal Canadian Air Force acquired in 1961) being "barely capable of breaking the sound barrier," that plane already held the world speed record of 1.83 times the speed of sound. And it is not very likely that the CIA was nervous about the prospect of a foreign aircraft outperforming its top secret U2 spy plane. This high-altitude, subsonic reconnaissance aircraft bore no relation whatever to a supersonic fighter. I never heard my National Research Council colleagues predict that the Arrow would not achieve supersonic speed, as recalled by former Avro engineer James Floyd. But in any event, it was not the performance of the aircraft that is significant; the Arrow was doomed for other reasons. The unrealistic notion of an independent role for the RCAF in the defence of North America yielded a specification for a complex and expensive weapon system for a national market too small to support the necessary research and development. The success of Canada's aeronautical design - from Pratt and Whitney engines, de Havilland Beavers and Dashes, and Canadair jets - can be seen in the skies of many countries; there is no need to invoke the Arrow episode to prove it.

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