

Attention Arrow admirers

I was reminded this week by an old friend of the family that I may have been remiss in my editorial responsibilities by allowing February 20 go by without making some remark.

Setting myself up, I asked this friend just what he could possibly mean.

I soon found my scepticism disappearing as he reminded me that two dozen years ago, he, my father and countless others heard an announcement that was to change their lives and the history of Canada.

He had been present on the shop floor of Avro Canada Limited when a special announcement informed the employees of that great company that their services were no longer required. At the time, the workers in his section had been conducting modifications on the CF-100 (commonly known as the Canuck, or in later years The Clunk), another milestone Canadian aircraft. Production of this fine machine had almost run its course, however, and the news was all of the CF-105 — the Avro Arrow, that brilliant, record-breaking, magnificent culmination of all that was good in Canadian industry, and most particularly in aviation.

It has been put to me (not altogether laughingly) that, if you lived in the south end of what is now known as Caledon during the late Fifties, you either worked for Calverts and Dales Florists in Brampton, or you worked for Avro. Talk to anyone over 40 years of age who lived here during that period, and you'll probably discover that they were involved directly or indirectly with either Avro, or its engine producers at Orenda Engines.

Orenda survives as a subsidiary of the Hawker-Siddeley Company of Great Britain, but has turned to more sedentary work such as producing subway trains. Gone is the greatest project ever embarked upon by Canadian industry, albeit as a branch of the British company of A.V. Roe.

Although the orders went out from the offices of Dief the Thief (may we speak ill of the dead?...the legacy lives on!) to destroy virtually every vestige of the project, bits and pieces were salvaged by those who saw the enormity of the crime at the time. The Peel Museum was the home of one of the remaining Iroquois Engines until recently, constructed to give the Arrow performance only just matched by the aircraft of today. On an initial test-bed run, this Orenda product is reputed to have blown the back out of the testing facility.

One other Iroquois is displayed at the Canadian Aviation Museum at CFB Uplands in Ottawa. The only existing cockpit and nose-cone section somehow still manages to look majestic despite its decapitation at the Museum of Man, also in Ottawa. Various bits and pieces of the actual aircraft survive in the home of those who lovingly worked on the Arrows.

There are, of course, photos which the government couldn't get a hold of and which remind us of the lovely lines of the Arrow. Even for those who aren't actually

aircraft aficionados, the huge delta wings with their corresponding gaping engine intakes spell speed and grace. The pride of a generation of aircraft manufacturing at Malton came to a halt with the close of Avro.

With it left the capability of Canada to provide its own aviation base. Many of the most brilliant minds in aviation had to resort to working in the U.S. or the U.S. after finding no outlet for their talents in this country. Witness Canada's souring love affair with the F-18, heavily criticized by the U.S. military, as the cost to us soars and soars.

There are many people still in this area who managed to survive the personal and financial devastation of suddenly finding themselves unemployed by moving into new fields of endeavor.

These are the people to whom I'm writing this particular column. I've had a love affair with this aircraft that was destroyed before I was born, as have many since. Any publication about it which comes out is almost automatically snatched up by curious readers and employees alike.

What we at the Citizen are proposing is a special page dedicated to the thousands who worked at Avro during the increasingly darkening days of 1958 and early 1959. We want to hear your recollections, anecdotes and stories of the final days of the Arrow. You don't necessarily have to have been on the floor, in the offices or out on the flight line. This is a story that transcends those directly involved with the company. We want to hear from the wives and husbands, the sons and daughters, the new employers and the residents of the area as well. We want to run your memories, nostalgic or bitter, in an article that will be a statement by the people involved. It would be a fitting way to greet the 25th anniversary of an event so cataclysmic in nature.

The one thing that no government can destroy is our memories.

Let us share your memories with our readership. Personally, this will be a labor of love. Please forward your thoughts to:

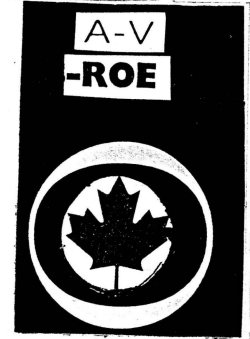
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Attention: Avro Arrow

Please understand that we can't return any of the stories submitted to us and, while contributors will be identified by name, no addresses or phone numbers will be published. We would request that you include your job or position at that time if you were an employee, or your relationship if you weren't directly involved. I hope that this project receives the response that I believe it deserves, and we'll let you know how things are coming along from time to time.

Although it remains a strictly Air Force motto, the following seems particularly apt in closing:

"PER ARDUA AD ASTRA"



Orenda



Iroquois