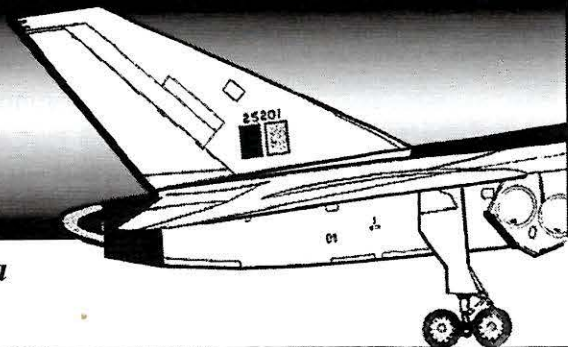


# *Pre-Flight*

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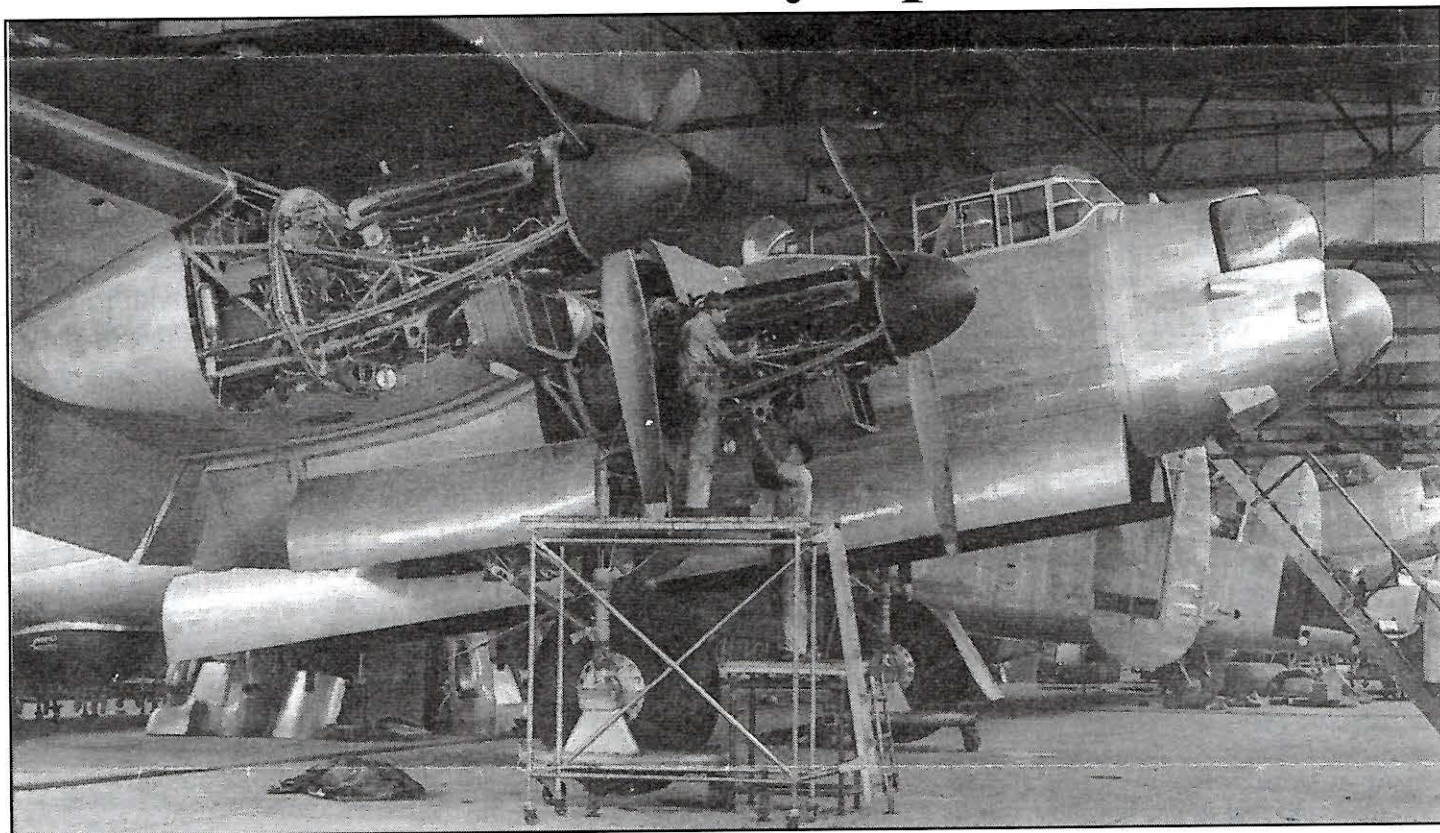


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## **The Way Up**



Once one Lancaster a day had rolled off the line. in 1945: storage.  
Later conversion for maritime reconnaissance.

### **Continued from May - June Issue**

In England, contracts were being cancelled wholesale, too. Although Sir Roy had some supporters among his associates, others thought the time eminently unripe for taking on a faraway company whose prospects now seemed the dimmest of dim. Weeks dragged by. Fred Smye finally went to Ottawa to try and find out what was going on. "I think they probably want to forget the whole thing," one man in the government said. "And I wouldn't blame them." Fred Smye didn't think so. He called Sir Roy by trans - Atlantic phone. Sir Roy said, "I made a deal and I'm going to stick to it, and what the hell's all the talk about?" Smye obtained an aircraft priority to go to England. That was one afternoon in Ottawa. He flew from Montreal the next day. In a few weeks he was back. Sir Roy followed. There was something of Canadian history in his meeting then with C. D. Howe in the minister's office in Ottawa.



**Founded 1989**

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**Aerospace Heritage Foundation of Canada**



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## From the President

On Saturday, June 4th. I had the pleasure of attending The 40th Annual Inspection of the 845 Avro Arrow Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Cadets at the Hershey Centre, Mississauga.

As in past years I had the honor of presenting both the James C. Floyd and Jan Zurakowski Awards.

The 2016 James C. Floyd Award was presented to Fsgt. Aneesh Sri-dhar, and the 2016 Jan Zurakowski Award to Sgt. Joshua Chiasson.

Congratulation to both Royal Canadian Air Cadets and welcome aboard as new members of the Foundation.

*Frank Harvey*

Continued from page 1

Mr. Howe gave Sir Roy a chance to back out, if he wished. Partly, this was because of the order cancellations, partly because of other circumstances attending the end of the war. Aircraft plants in early summer had employed 80,000; now they had 8,000 --- and the number was still falling. Prospects for the industry seemed of the grimmest.

Around Ottawa, people who knew of the Howe-Dobson meeting had decided opinions. One said, "If Dobson goes through with it, I either admire his courage, or he's crazy, I'm not sure which." Fred Smye says, "Most of them didn't bother with alternatives --- they just thought he was out of his mind. We found no encouragement whatever in Ottawa, except from Mr. Howe."

And even Mr. Howe, when Sir Roy said he wanted to go through with the deal, insisted that Sir Roy take a few more days to consider.

Sir Roy and Fred Smye went back to Malton. There were further discussions with J. P. Bickell and J. S. D. Tory --- but they were not on whether it should be done, but how. "The really amazing thing," Fred Smye says, "is that here was a man at the peak of his career, riding the crest, with everything to lose, and he was willing to gamble it all on his belief in this country's future. All he worried about was how much of the Victory plant we could handle."

They decided that a small part --- the office building, and the first bay --- would be enough for a start. They got on a train and went back to Ottawa. Fred Smye waited in a hotel room while Sir Roy met Mr. Howe. In a while they returned. Sir Roy walked in, threw his briefcase on the bed, and said, "Remember, we were only going to take part of it?"

"Yes," Smye said.

"Well, I wound up with the whole damn thing."

The "whole damn thing" at that time certainly wasn't the most promising set-up in the world. Some areas had an almost eerie atmosphere. Once 9,600 people had worked here day and night, and armed guards had patrolled the fences for security, and one Lancaster a day had rolled



off the line. Now machines and tools stood exactly where they had been left when contract cancellations stopped all work. When A. V. Roe Canada Limited took possession December 1, 1945, 300 people were the survivors of that once great working force.

Flight Test, once with personnel of 380, had only Dave Wagner, who is now flight test superintendent of Avro Aircraft Limited, and one other. Among the security guards, Len Theobald a few months before had been sergeant in charge of a 40 man shift; he and about 20 others now held the fort. Kathleen Burrows had come from high school to the plant in 1941 when National Steel Car owned it. In 1945 she was in accounting, "and every day a few more were gone and the rest of us kept wondering when our turn would come." It didn't. She has been Avro's cashier since February, 1946. Another in accounting then was Jean Cronie, now secretary to Walter McLachlan, vice-president and general manager of Orenda Engines Limited. People she often sees at Orenda these Jean Cronie days date from 1945 or earlier at Malton. Among them are Jack Hilton, who had been foreman of repair and overhaul at Victory Aircraft and now is Orenda's superintendent of assembly and tests; Bill Macdonald, Orenda's procurement manager, who'd been in purchasing at the Malton plant since the days of National Steel Car; and Bill Clancy, his assistant in procurement now, a payroll clerk then. L. E. (Laurie) Marchant, now chief inspector and quality control manager of Orenda, also was one of those who remained. He had been on the site back in the late thirties when it was a plowed field, had been the first manager for National Steel Car, and then chief engineer for Victory. When A. V. Roe Canada took over he was manager of the engineering division, with only a fraction of his former staff, and later was a key man in early production of Orendas. Don Rogers, now Avro Aircraft's chief test pilot, had been a Lancaster test pilot. For six months he greased Lancasters for storage until in mid 1946 there were aircraft to test again. Ernie Alderton, now Avro Aircraft's industrial relations manager, had been Victory Aircraft's general foreman. His first job under A. V. Roe Canada was to unload personally and by hand a truckload of eight by eight timbers to put under the axles of Lancasters going into storage, to hold the tires off the ground. Murray Willer was one of the six left of hundreds who had been in the service department. He is now Avro's

assistant to the vice-president, sales and service. Earle Brownridge, now vice president, manufacturing, of Orenda Engines, was in the standards department. He was laid off for a couple of weeks. Then he was recalled. His first job then was to assist S. L. Wilson, who had been head of Victory's industrial engineering department, had been left as the sole member of that department, and now holds the same position at Avro Aircraft.

Zoltan S. (Stan) Cyma, who had been chief plant engineer from the days when National Steel Car owned it, remained in that job, and had one of the hardest fights of all. Much machinery owned by the government had to be declared surplus. Included in the first surplus list was a 5,000 ton press which Stan Cyma had picked out and bought specifically for making bomber parts. Only he believed that the fighter of the future would be so big that it would need a press like that, and he fought like a tiger to have it taken off the surplus list. "Thank God he did," Fred Smye said later. "That press saved our lives." For it did turn out that the new fighters indeed needed a press of at least that size.

These and the few hundred others were key people, the originals. (All but 50 of them are still with Avro Aircraft or Orenda Engines, two of the four companies which now make up the A. V. Roe Canada group.) They didn't care what their jobs had been. It was the future which interested them. At first they did whatever the new management could find for them to do --- storing Lancasters, making forms for plastic hair brushes, fenders for trucks and tractors, designing an oil furnace, dozens of other small jobs, all visibly removed from the original dream of an all-Canadian aircraft industry, from the ground up.

And then the future began to open out into what it has now become.

Sir Roy was the first president. Chairman of the board was J. P. Bickell. The first directors' meeting was held and the constitution drawn up by J. S. D. Tory, then and still a director. Despite foreign exchange restrictions which made it impossible to send money out of Britain at that time, Hawker Siddeley was able to finance the project entirely by guaranteeing a Canadian bank overdraft of several millions to buy the property and provide working capital. Walter Deisher, a man of high prestige in the Canadian aircraft industry, was



brought in from Fleet Aircraft as the first vice-president and general manager. Fred Smye, the catalyst who had helped to fruition so many fervent hopes besides his own, became assistant general manager --- sales and contracts. Edgar Atkin came from Avro Manchester as chief engineer, and with him a fair-haired, sandaled young man named Jim Floyd who had worked in the design teams for the Avro Anson, the Lancaster, and the York. All they needed now was work, and by work they meant not so much the aircraft repair and overhaul and storage and conversion jobs which were the company's bread and butter at that time and later, but work which pointed toward the company's original aim --- to produce, from drawing board into the air, a Canadian aircraft.

And at this time, early 1946, something happened which provided really the full basic rounding of the company. From as far back as 1943 the government, through the National Research Council and later a crown company called Turbo-Research Limited, had been doing research work on jet engines. Turbo-Research now had a jet engine at the design stage. The government either was going to have to put in a lot more money to produce a prototype jet engine, or drop Turbo-Research altogether. Sir Roy heard that Turbo-Research's future was hanging at the edge of a cliff. He offered to take over Turbo-Research as part of A. V. Roe Canada. This was done.

When the new company was endeavouring to line up business, the Royal Canadian Air Force and Trans-Canada Airlines naturally were the first ports of call. At first, the air force was not encouraging. Its official attitude was really the attitude of almost the whole nation --- fed to the teeth with war, up to the neck in surplus materials of war. "We're certainly not going to order any more aircraft," the new company was told. TCA was a little more encouraging. The success of jets in the latter stages of the war interested TCA as it did all airlines. What were the transport possibilities? And a few months later the R.C.A.F. official attitude changed. Remember the officer who had pleaded in vain for Hurricanes in 1942? He'd been Air Commodore W. A. Curtis then. Now he was an air vice-marshal, and vice chief of air staff. Although it was impossible in the present temper of the government to get much money allotted, the R.C.A.F. asked A. V. Roe Canada to work on the design of a training plane as well as on a twinjet

fighter which would, it was hoped, be powered by the engine Turbo-Research had been working on.

In 1946, these threads all began to come together. Jim Floyd had come to Canada in February, his family (including a week-old son) to follow. He'd done some thinking and preliminary design work on the jet transport idea in England. In June, Walter Deisher sent him to Winnipeg to talk with TCA about it again. TCA was still interested. By now the government had agreed in general terms to support the project financially. In September, 1946, design work on the Jetliner began.

Meanwhile, the R.C.A.F. had cancelled design work on the trainer and had revised its ideas about what its first home-grown fighter should be. The first one hadn't got beyond the drawing boards --- but had given the design staff a good workout getting it that far. The jet engine on which Turbo-Research had been working to power that original fighter was called the Chinook. It was almost scrapped then, too, as specifications were drawn up for a more powerful engine, the Orenda, to drive the much more powerful fighter, the CF-100. But Paul Dilworth, a dark and slim 1939 graduate of the University of Toronto, 31 in 1946, was head of what then was A. V. Roe Canada's gas turbine group. Some men in the aircraft side had built aircraft. His men had never built an engine. He thought the Chinook would be invaluable as a teething ring, even while work went on with the Orenda, planned to better the best then on the drawing boards in the United States and United Kingdom. Others agreed.

So here you had a brand new company. It was in the most exacting industry of all --- the design and development of new aircraft and new engines. It was untried in any one carried-through project. And instead of feeling its way along cautiously with one, in the classic tradition of crawling before you walk, it was up and running with plans for two aircraft and two engines.

