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Flight Test Centre Building Named After Canadian Aviation Pioneer

by Canadian Forces Major Keith Agar



Janusz Zurakowski gives a "thumbs up" from the cockpit of a C.A.F. Griffin helicopter.

The recently constructed Canadian Flight Test Centre building at C.F.B. Cold Lake was named the Janusz Zurakowski Building after the famous Canadian aviator. Mr. Zurakowski, originally from Poland, had a distinguished flying career with the R.A.F. during World War II. After the war he became a test pilot with the Fleet Air Arm Squadron and in 1952, he came to Canada from the Gloster Aircraft Company in England where he had been an Experimental and Development Test Pilot. In Canada, as a test pilot for Avro, he flew over 100 different aircraft types in the skies over Eastern Canada. He piloted the CF100 "Canuck" as Chief Experimental Pilot.

This turned out to be Canada's last fighter aircraft designed and built in Canada. He later flew the first Avro "Arrow" (#25201) on its maiden flight. He also flew the next two Arrows (#25202 and #25203) on their maiden flights and accumulated a total of more than 20 hours on this aircraft type. In 1958 he was awarded the McKee Trophy, Canada's highest award for aviation. He was inducted into the Canadian Aviation Hall of Fame in 1997.

Mr. Zurakowski, who is well into his 80s, attended the dedication ceremony for the Janusz Zurakowski Building, held at C.F.B. Cold Lake on March 20, 2000. He and his wife Anna reside in Barry, Ontario, where they operate a tourist lodge.

Editor's Note: Mr. Zurakowski was inducted as an Honourary Fellow into the prestigious Society Of Experimental Test Pilots on September 30, 2000. His name will be added to a list which includes such notable aviators as Charles Lindbergh and "Jimmy" Doolittle.