

"I SHOT AN ARROW IN THE AIR..."

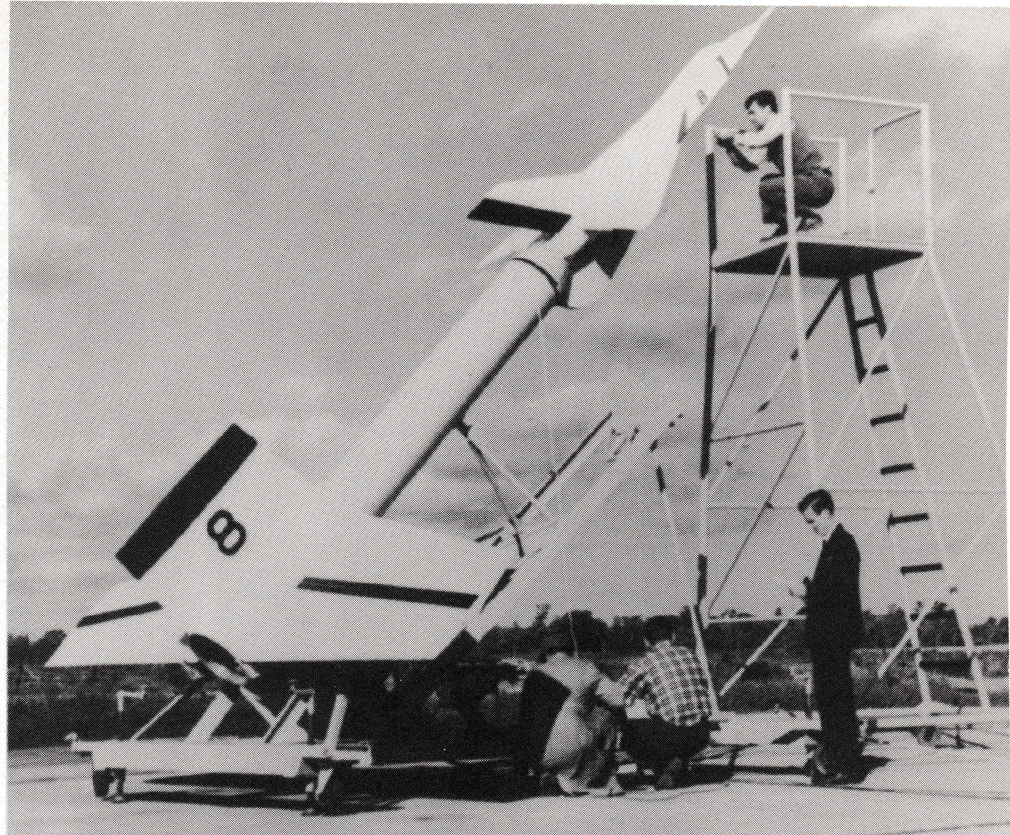
by Captain Tony Keene

They shot nine Arrows into the air in the mid-1950s, and they came down somewhere in Lake Ontario. Now, a group concerned with aviation history wants to locate the models of the Avro Arrow that were used as test beds for the design of the advanced fighter.

"The models are controlled by heritage regulations, so at the moment we only have a permit to look for them, not to do anything with them," says W.R. "Bil" Thuma, a member of the search team from the Aerospace Heritage Foundation of Canada, which focuses on post-war flying history. "Much of the information about trajectory, firing angle and so on was classified until recently but now we know where they splashed down."

The models, each three metres long and 2.5 metres wide, were made of magnesium alloy with some stainless steel and aluminium. Each weights about 300 kg, and is precision machined to one-eighth scale.

When the CF-105 Arrow was being



Engineers and technicians from the A.V. Roe Company prepare a model Avro Arrow to be launched over Lake Ontario atop a U.S. Army Nike missile

designed, the models were fired from a launch pad at Point Petre, south of Picton, Ont. The site today is a DND communications site, right next to the Point Petre lighthouse, about 45 minutes drive from 8 Wing Trenton.

"They were fired from a mobile launcher, and the concrete apron is still there," Thuma says. "I can't say exactly where we think they came down, but we believe it's within free diving depth."

The group plans to search the waters off Point Petre next summer, using a side scan

sonar. They have reviewed launch films and records of ballistic information. The lake in the search area is about 345 metres deep, and has a base rock bottom. The models were launched to Mach 2 speeds atop Nike rocket boosters which separated, leaving the models to fly alone. Each model contained radio telemetry equipment, and flight was also tracked using radar and theodolites. Two other models were fired from the Wallops Island Range in Virginia.

The CF-105 Avro Arrow was an aircraft way ahead of its time. Its performance was similar to that of the CF-18. The Arrow program was terminated by the government in 1959, and the six completed aircraft were scrapped. Only small pieces of one of them remain at museums and in private collections. Thuma says recovery of the test models could add significantly to knowledge about the entire CF-105 project. The group plans to place them on display in its own museum and at air shows. ☺

(Ed note: Capt Keene is a public affairs officer at Air Transport Group Headquarters in Trenton.)

At the time of its design, the Avro Arrow was on the cutting edge of aircraft technology. Today, only parts of the six original aircraft remain as mementos of another era

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