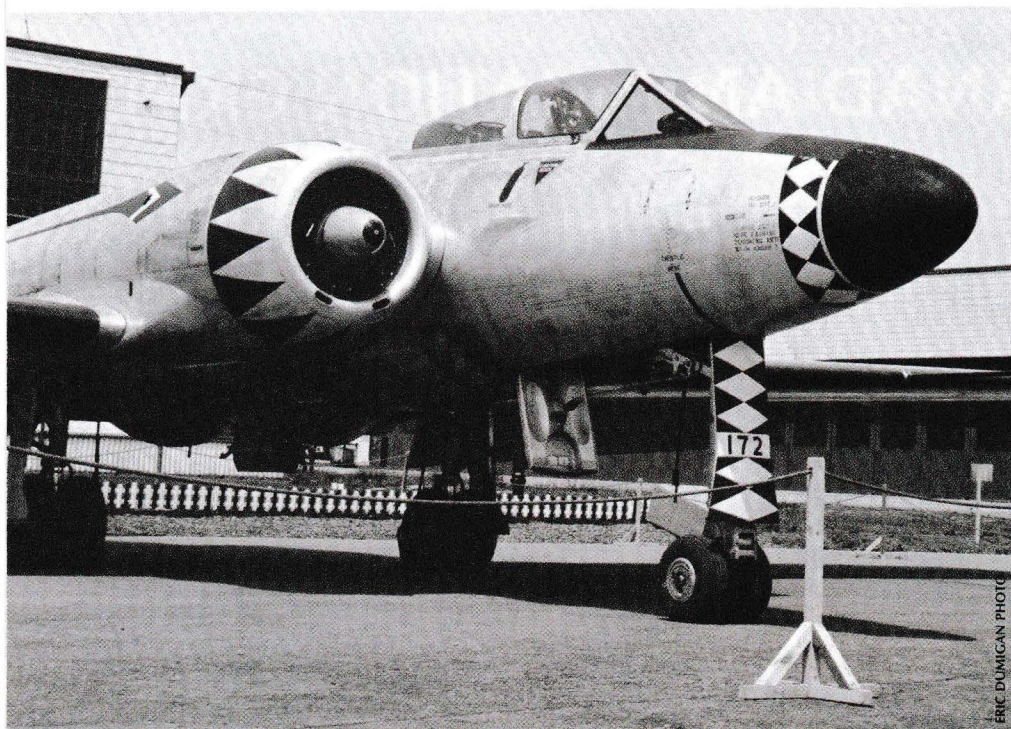


Airmail

Letters from our readers



Overlooked Legacies

I really enjoyed your editorial on the Wright Brothers [in the November/December 2003 issue]. Too many U.S. publications are deifying them these days, when, as you well point out, they accomplished much, but were not the nicest people to be around!

However, about the article on the 10 Greatest Canadian Aircraft, in general I thought the choices were good, but any limited list like that is bound to generate controversy and reader opinion. I know you expect that!

So, here is my attempt to add to that controversy. I would have dropped the Avro Arrow and Jetliner from my list. Heresy, perhaps? While historically very important aircraft, neither one saw any of the service for which they were designed. Neither one led to anything else either as the company died right after their tandem cancellation.

I would have nominated two aircraft to replace them on the list. The first is the Avro CF-100 Canuck, or "Clunk" to all those who flew it. This was Canada's only homegrown fighter. It saw service for many years and in many marks and variants—the last one was retired in 1982! In its day it was the best all-weather fighter available and it soldiered on long after its fighter days in the EW role. It was good enough for Belgium to

buy a small quantity of them and fly them for some years as well. Truly a Canadian first.

My next choice is a bit more controversial—the Lazair ultralight. Without going into reams of detail (including that I rebuilt two of them and flew one for a while and so am obviously a bit slanted towards the benefits of the design). The Lazair was the most-produced Canadian-designed aircraft ever built. More than 2,000 flew, about half in Canada and half in the U.S.A., with a few in many other countries. That is more than even the number of Beavers built.

The Lazairs were produced in Port Colborne, Ontario, from 1978 to 1984 by Ultraflight Sales. The plane was the brilliant design of Canadian engineering student Dale Kramer. In the early days of the ultralight revolution the Lazair stood out as one of the very best of the breed—innovative, strongly built, a delight to fly, a real head-turner at fly-ins. Many are still flown in Canada and the U.S. They are well loved by their owners.

It is too bad that they get perennially missed in "best-of" lists. Even the Canada Aviation Museum lacks one to show the nation. That is a real pity as they are a great Canadian aviation achievement!

—Adam Hunt
Ottawa, ON

Sounding Off

I don't have a lot of good comments about the Sounds of Silence article. After reading the article, I am still just as confused about dB ratings and such as I was when I purchased my original headset earlier this year. The only thing I did learn was that there is active and passive noise canceling. However, which headsets are the "Editor's Picks," or which ones are best suited for what purposes, I still have no clue. As a new pilot, I would have loved to read this article with an "Editor's Pick" of headsets.

The reason why I am interested is because I have already purchased a headset, but I may purchase a better one if I knew what to look for. That said, I do appreciate all the different brands I learned about in the article.

By the way, this was my first issue of *Aviator* and I did enjoy the articles. I have put in my order for a year's subscription.

—Phil Childerhose
Oakville, ON

Phil, thanks for your thoughtful comments on our headsets article, Sounds of Silence, in the September/October 2003 issue of Aviator. I appreciate your point that it would be nice if the editor (me) took a stand and just said "This is the best headset on the market, and here's why."

Unfortunately, doing so is easier said than done. For example, one headset might be nicer than another, with lots of bells and whistles, but it may be more than you need and out of your price range. Instead, our intent with the article was to introduce pilots to the best headsets of each major manufacturer, thus allowing readers to make a more informed decision.

Nevertheless, you raise some good points. Our next product review is on VHF hand-held transceivers (appearing in the March/April 2004 issue) and writer Matt Lang is presently beaver away, testing various communication units with your comments in mind. Rest assured, we'll continue to make every effort to provide the most informative and balanced aviation product reviews available.

On a different note, we're glad to hear you enjoyed all the other articles and that you have joined us as a subscriber. Stay in touch.

—Editor