

Arrow
Book

Last Avro Canada test pilot dead at 89

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The man who oversaw flight operations for the revolutionary but ill-fated Avro Arrow has died.

A memorial service will be held Thursday in Toronto for Don Rogers, who died of cancer last week at the age of 89.

After the death last year of Arrow test pilot Peter Cope, Rogers became the last surviving test pilot for the company. Formerly Avro's chief test pilot, he went on to become director of flight operations, overseeing Cope and three other pilots involved in the day-to-day testing of the Arrow.

The group's contributions to aviation and Canadian heritage should not be taken lightly, said Andrew Hibbert, president of Arrow Recovery Canada.

"All we ever talk about now is astronauts and people like that, but these were the astronauts of their day," Hibbert said. "They were the most ad-

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ANDREW HIBBERT,
ARROW RECOVERY
CANADA

vanced and well-trained pilots in the world at that time.”

In addition to be-

ing a well-respected pilot, Rogers — who died July 19 at his home in Toronto — was very caring and “a gentleman's gentleman,” said his son Raymond, 65.

“He was very old-school, he really was,” Raymond said. “He was an absolute gentleman. He was quiet, he was unassuming, he was extremely modest about what he's done and accomplished in his career.”

In addition to Raymond, who wasn't a pilot, but worked in aviation for 36 years, Rogers had two other children: Connie Mount, 58, and Stephen, who died in a car accident about 30 years ago.

Rogers made headlines in 1950 when he flew airmail aboard a jet for the first time ever, piloting the company's jetliner from Toronto to New York in 58 minutes — half the previous record.

The Arrow, an ambitious aircraft that was considered revolutionary and extremely advanced for its time, had its life cut short when the supersonic interceptor jet project was scrapped by the federal Conservative government in 1959.

“(The Arrow) was light years ahead of its time,” said Hibbert. “When it was built in the '50s, it probably was one of the most advanced aircraft in the world.”