

# CANADIAN HUN

THE AVRO  
CF-100  
WAS  
CREATED  
AS A  
FIRST-LINE OF DEFENSE  
AGAINST SOVIET BOMBER  
FORCES COMING IN OVER  
THE POLE / PART ONE

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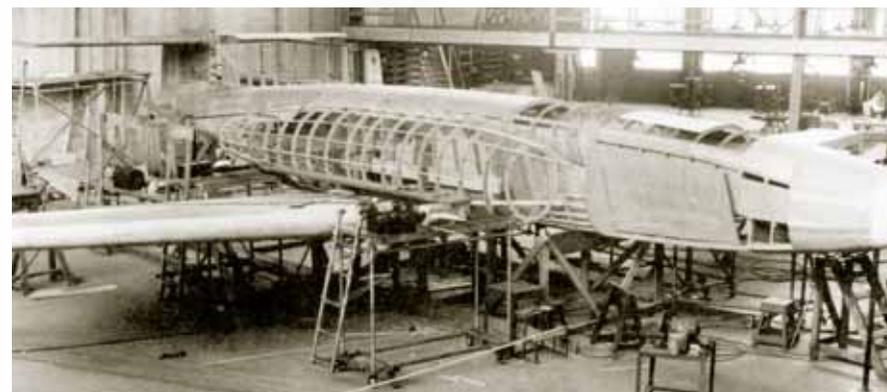
The twin-engine Avro CF-100 never received the publicity enjoyed by its contemporary south of the border — the North American F-100. There were several reasons for this. First, only about a quarter as many (692 — a stunningly large order by 2017 standards) were built compared to the F-100. Second, it served almost exclusively as an Air Defense fighter and never saw combat, whereas the F-100 performed numerous roles and fought extensively in Southeast Asia. Thirdly, it was an older technology aircraft and, although a number of air forces operated the F-100, only Belgium flew the CF-100 in addition to the Royal Canadian Air Force.

The CF-100's mission, that of long-range patrol and interception, also went largely unnoticed and, in an era when one Century Series fighter succeeded another, each one faster, more powerful, and better armed than its predecessor the CF-100 just soldiered on — long-lived, steady, largely unknown, and often unappreciated.

But not by the men who flew CF-100 nor the ground crews who maintained the only significant Canadian designed, built, and deployed combat aircraft in that nation's history.

Avro's CF-100 had a remarkably long service life. It became operational in 1953 and was not retired until 1981, although, by that time, most of its examples had been withdrawn from active duty. Solid and dependable, its somewhat antiquated airframe was powered by the best performing jet engines of the day, also an Avro product — the Canadian Orendas, which were also installed in later versions of the Canadair F-86 Sabre,

Uncomfortable and drafty, so much so that there frequently was little to differentiate between the Arctic weather inside the aircraft and the polar freeze outside, the CF-100 was



Partially completed mockup shows the slightly higher position of the engines nacelles.

a mass of contradictions. It featured a great escape ejection seat system. Unfortunately, canopies had a tendency to blow off, leaving the rear seat observer with his arms pinned outside the aircraft. Extremely stable, the CF-100 flew well on instruments, even if the instrumentation had been laid out haphazardly, with little regard to standardization. Still, the big fighter had a good 4-hr flight endurance, carried heavy armament and, with a well-trained weapons/radar officer, was able to lock on to targets quickly and score kills.

A bit smaller than its American-built Air Defense contemporary, the Northrop F-89 Scorpion, the CF-100 was 40-mph faster, with the same 2000-mi range, and of all the two-seat all-weather fighters of its time — including the Lockheed F-94C Starfire — the British Gloster Meteor and the French Vautour, it was the only aircraft that regularly performed in the atrocious weather found over the Canadian Arctic, doing so for nearly 30-yrs.

and more heavily armed interceptors would be employed but, during those first years of alert, it was the mission of CF-100 crews to scramble first, usually in minimal and often abominable weather, find, and take on enemy intruders. As attacking bombers flew south toward the metropolitan areas of Canada and the northern US, more American fighters, such as F-89s, would be vectored toward them and, as they drew closer to cities like Boston, New York, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and Seattle, shorter range F-86s and F-84s would also challenge them. But there is little doubt that in any attack launched from over the pole, CF-100 crews would be the first to fix the enemy in their scopes.

In those days, the primary Soviet long-range bomber was the Tupolev Tu 4, a direct copy of our own B-29, designed and built from data the Soviets confiscated from B-29s forced down over China during WWII, some of which landed intact. Flying over the pole from Russian bases in the Arctic, this propeller-driven bomber could reach northern US cities only on a one-way, no return mission. Given the United States' lead in nuclear warheads and bombers, there was little risk that the Soviets could or

The pride of Canadian aviation in 1950: The menacing all-black Avro CF-100 prototype (RCAF 18101) poses with the company's C-102 Jetliner. When the C-102 first went aloft on 10 August 1949, it was the first flight of a jet transport in North America and the second in the world, for the de Havilland DH-106 Comet had flown two-weeks earlier in Britain.

