

Teledyne-Ryan

FIREBEE

The Teledyne-Ryan Firebee drone was acquired by the RCAF to provide training for interceptor crews, probably in anticipation of the procurement of the CF-105 Arrow interceptor. At the same time, two Lancaster Mk 10 aircraft were reactivated from storage to act as “mother” ships for the drones. The Lancaster modifications were carried out by Fairey Aviation and included fitting of Firebee launch racks under each wing along with the associated electrical wiring and control units. The Lancasters were then operated by the Central Experimental Proving Establishment and the drones were primarily planned for testing and evaluating of present and proposed weapons sys-

tems. After release from the launch aircraft, the Firebees under remote control could climb to 40,00 feet in approximately 10 minutes and could be made to perform any manoeuvre of which contemporary high performance aircraft were capable. An airborne duration of 1 hr 20 minutes was typical. The drones could also be fitted with wingtip mounted radar reflector pods to ensure optimum radar energy reflection. Assuming the drone was not shot down, recovery was achieved by means of a two-stage parachute, which had a built-in flotation system. Refurbishment and re-use for up to 15 operational flights was possible.



Two RCAF Lancaster Mk10s were modified as launch and control platforms for Teledyne-Ryan Firebee drones in Canadian service. Recovery of the drones was achieved with parachutes. (CF Photos)

DETAILS

Designation:	Model No: KDA-4 or Q2A	Marks:	Role: Target Drone
TOS: 1957	SOS: 19??	No: 30	Service: RCAF

SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer:	Teledyne-Ryan		
Crew/Passengers:	None		
Powerplant:	1,000 lb (454 kg st) thrust Fairchild K-20 jet engine		
Performance:	Max Speed: 610 mph (976 km/h)	Cruising Speed: 575 mph (920 km/h)	
	Service Ceiling: 42,500 ft (12,960 m)	Stalling Speed: 162 mph (259 km/h)	
Weights:	Empty: 1,181 lbs (536 kg)	Gross: 1,849 lb (839 kg)	
Dimensions:	Span: 11 ft 2 in (3.40 m)	Length: 17 ft 3 in (5.26 m)	
	Height: 5 ft 10 in (1.79 m)	Wing Area:	
Armament:	None		
Cost:	\$45,000		