

THREE FIGHTERS REFUEL TOGETHER IN AIR

The Super Fortress flying from a Dorset Airfield had been stripped of armaments and loaded with petrol in three tanks, two at the wing extremities, one in the fuselage. Three fighters followed the tanker, all aiming to connect ^{to} ~~the~~ nose-probes with ⁵ ~~6~~ drogues trailing from the Fortress. Contact made, by highly skilled flying, drogue and probe automatically locked to form a pipe through which the fuel was pumped. Each pilot cut the connection when the tanks were full.

2 That was how it looked from the fighters' viewpoint. Now see it from the tanker. It ^{appears} ~~looks~~ simplicity itself but ~~many hours hard practice lie behind this perfection.~~

35 Advantages of air refuelling are obvious, both in military and civil flying. Longer range - very important to fighter planes - no less so for bombers and airliners; big time saved by not going back to refuel on land, a tremendous economy. ~~Even more important, it means that fewer planes do the same amount of work.~~ Sir Alan Cobham, Air route pioneer of a generation ago, is one of the brains behind ^{barely} ~~the idea.~~ It takes fighters ~~hardly~~ three minutes to fill their tanks ~~in the way.~~ As for air travel, perhaps the new system will make it safer, quicker and, may we hope, cheaper.