

THE DE HAVILLAND ENTERPRISE

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THE DE HAVILLAND 110 ON BOARD H.M.S. ARK ROYAL

The largest and most advanced all-weather aircraft yet ordered by the Royal Navy successfully completes its naval trials at sea.

The handling qualities of this large, high-performance aircraft on and off a fleet carrier clearly demonstrated in operational conditions.

The D.H.110 satisfactorily completed its carrier trials in April aboard H.M.S. Ark Royal. This aircraft is the largest and most advanced all-weather fighter ever to be built for the Royal Navy, and that fact is the more significant because, together with its long range and endurance and its very comprehensive radar equipment and armament, it possesses an extremely high performance such as is more appropriate to a single-seater. Moreover it has to be capable of operation within the limits imposed by flight-deck dimensions.

The technical progress accomplished since the first landing-on and take-off by a jet aircraft from a ship at sea (the Sea Vampire fighter acquired this distinction in December 1945, operating from H.M.S. Ocean - a light fleet carrier) is indeed remarkable for the passage of a mere ten years. A prodigious task of specialised development has been tackled in that period; and it has been conducted in such secrecy that few outside the technical team have been given any opportunity to appreciate the problems involved and, therefore, the shortness of the time taken to master them.

The trials demonstrated the practicability of working a large aircraft like the 110 from a carrier. To those who observed them they seemed to do more than that. They appeared to justify the very policy of continuing with the large fleet carrier in the new conditions created by the atomic bomb, for they proved that the type of air defence which is necessary for continental strategy in these new conditions can be afforded also for the protection of surface traffic across the wide oceans of the world.

Her Majesty's Aircraft Carrier Ark Royal is the latest of her type to enter service with the Royal Navy and is equipped with all three of the new features considered indispensable for modern

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operations - the mirror landing-aid, the angled-deck and steam catapults. In addition the ship is fitted with the latest type of arrester gear which alone is capable of dealing with the landing speeds and weights of the new generation of naval aircraft now to be produced.

The de Havilland 110 was flown out to join the ship from the Aircraft and Armament Experimental Establishment at Boscombe Down, and the pilot was Commander S.G. Orr, D.S.C., A.F.C., R.N. who commands the naval test section there. Watched by naval officers and ratings who will in future handle this aircraft in squadron service and by several of the design team, Commander Orr entered ship's circuit and turned in on "finals" to place the aircraft smoothly on the flight-deck in a manner which belied the fact that this was a first performance and rather gave the impression that this officer had been flying 110's from carrier decks for a substantial part of his naval career.

This particular aircraft, the first to have been constructed in the de Havilland factory at Christchurch, near Bournemouth, was subject to a comprehensive testing programme, including both free and catapult take-offs, handling assessment in the air and on the flight deck and fully arrested landing-on. The aircraft was flown by several senior naval pilots from the Boscombe Down establishment and by Lieutenant Commander Elliot, the de Havilland naval test pilot who is in charge of flight testing at the Christchurch works. It may be recorded that the aircraft and its twin Rolls-Royce Avon engines acquitted themselves under these exacting conditions in the manner which was expected of them and, in doing so, has justified the Admiralty and Ministry of Supply decision to order 110's in quantity for naval service.

The first impression of seeing the D.H.110 stationary on the flight deck is, of course, that it is a large aeroplane, which indeed it is, in comparison with current operational types; but in satisfying the latest requirements of an all-weather fighter it is possibly the smallest of the category required to carry a crew of two with comprehensive and complex radar and fire-control equipment, an armament of four 30 mm Aden guns and guided missiles and sufficient fuel for a lengthy operational mission. Mere size in itself however, is not the yardstick by which one measures the handling quality of an aircraft in the air, and much of the programme of development flying which has been carried out both at Hatfield and at Christchurch with the D.H.110 has been aimed at endowing this aircraft with characteristics which are just as good as, or better than, its much smaller predecessors. It is for this reason that the aircraft now has a performance which allows it to meet a single-seat adversary on level terms if need be, a very high degree of manoeuvrability throughout a speed range between the supersonic combat dive and the slow speed approach of carrier operation and, above all, the positive and viceless control which is demanded by the flying conditions likely to be encountered in its all-weather role.

VICKERS-ARMSTRONGS LIMITED

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N.113 DECK LANDING TRIALS

Vickers-Armstrongs (Aircraft) Limited announces that the Supermarine N.113 naval fighter has successfully completed its initial deck landing trials.

The trials took place in H.M.S. ARK ROYAL off the South coast of England. Altogether 29 landings were made. The pilots were Mr. Mike Lithgow, Commander S.G. Orr, Lieut. Cdr. C.M. Little and Lieut. P. Whitehead, R.N.

H.M.S. ARK ROYAL, the Royal Navy's most modern aircraft carrier, is fitted with the angled-deck, mirror sight landing aid and steam catapult. The N.113, however, made free take-offs throughout the trials without using the catapult.

The two main objects of the trials were to assess the recommended approach speed for the N.113 when deck landing, and to enable the carrier to gain experience of handling the aircraft. Before going to the ship, simulated deck landings were carried out at the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Bedford, on a runway fitted with arrestor gear similar to that in a carrier. The N.113 made ground runs at increasing speeds into the runway wires and records were made of aircraft decelerations, entry speeds and strains imposed on the arrestor gear. The preliminary trials successfully completed, the aircraft was ready for actual carrier landings.

The pilots who carried out the trials did intensive N.113 dummy deck landing exercises at A. and A.E.E., Boscombe Down, before landing on the ARK ROYAL. Thirty-eight flights were completed by the aircraft in 10 days without any hitches.

The N.113 is the most advanced day fighter ever developed for the Royal Navy and can fulfil the dual roles of interceptor fighter and strike aircraft. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty has announced that it can carry the atom bomb and that the possibilities of equipping later models with guided missiles are being investigated.

A substantial order for N.113's has been placed for the Royal Navy.

Mr. Stockwell