

London: At Church House, Westminster, aeronautical scientists arrive for the Court of Inquiry into the mystery crashes of two Comet airliners, in the Mediterranean, earlier this year.

So came to light one of the most remarkable feats of scientific detection ever achieved. The story begins at the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough - where, under the direction of Sir Arnold Hall - an air-tight steel tank, 112 feet long, was built around one of the remaining Comets. ^{With the tank} Filled with 200,000 gallons of water, the ~~pressure~~ pressure was raised to actual flight conditions. The Comet was being "tested to destruction?"

Simultaneously, each wing was flexed by means of hydraulic rams, to simulate both an artificial load and flying stresses...

Time was vital, and by these means, three hours of actual flying were compressed into five minutes of "test-tank torture". In this fashion, the plane made the equivalent of three-thousand flights. Then came evidence of metal-fatigue. The Cabin split, leaving traces similar to those found on parts of the Comet fuselage, ~~and~~ salvaged near Elba...

All this time, another Comet became a flying guinea-pig, with R.A.F. Test Pilots and twenty scientists (including one woman), continually risking their lives in the toughest flight-tests ever made by civil aircraft.

The prestige of the Comet was at stake. That alone justified the extreme risk, as instruments recorded every stress and strain.

Mrs Anne Burns, the lone woman scientist, made forty of these flights into danger as the member of a brave team ^{whose} ~~work~~ work will be of lasting benefit to the world of aviation..