

AIR NEWS

At Briey airfield, near Orleans, the pick-a'-back plane makes its bow before a selected group of aviation experts. To the pilot of the uppermost model - a 3-ton glider - falls the trickiest task. For if his mid-air take-off is successful, his next pick-a'-back flight will be in a jet bomber. Today's experiment will show whether the odds in his favour are big or small.

20,000 feet up, the glider leaves its parent plane and heads for home. The pilot's verdict on the trial flight - 100 per cent successful. Next time, he'll do it in a jet.

Over in America, airmen are experimenting with an automatic air-crash machine. On a specially-built track, a rocket-propelled sled is used to show the impact of a plane crashing at 150-miles-an-hour. Shooting across Muroc Dry Lake, the sled heads for a dead stop.

Now a volunteer prepares to see if the human body - speeding along at 75-miles-an-hour - can stand the shock of stopping in one-fifth of a second - 35 times the force of gravity.

Because of these tests, tomorrow's air passengers may ride backwards. It's safer.