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AIR NEWS

Slow motion films, taken at an Ohio research station, show an aircraft with engines at full throttle being guided towards destruction by fire. Scientists have staged the accident to study means of reducing the normally heavy death rolls which result from plane crashes, for it is not the crash itself, but the fire which follows, that is responsible for most casualties.

Under the same conditions, an aircraft equipped with fire preventive devices is crashed. Immediately the plane's fuel supply and electrical system are shut off; a fire extinguishing agent is injected into the engine, and water is sprayed onto the hot metal parts to create steam. In controlled research crashes like this, the devices have proved themselves almost 100% efficient. Soon it is hoped they will be adapted to give greater safety to both combat and commercial aircraft.

Dorset

A giant American "Flying Tanker" takes off from Tarrant Rushton Airfield in Dorset. Three R.A.F. Meteor jet fighters are already airborne waiting to refuel simultaneously from the tanker in mid-air. Three separate drogues, located in the fuselage and on each wing tip, supply the fuel through probes fitted to the nose of the jets. Until recently only one aircraft could refuel at a time, but this new British development makes it just as simple for three as for one.

Three minutes later the fighters disengage with their tanks full, ready to continue their flight. Fighters which previously could stay airborne for no more than an hour-and-a-half, can now keep going almost indefinitely without landing, and thus can give protection even to long distance bombers.

This system is the only one that allows the receiver pilot to control the intake of fuel. Because of this (and the fact that it is still the only method of triple refuelling while airborne), the American Air Force has now decided to adopt this all-British invention.