

MIKE LITHGOW'S AIR SPEED RECORD.

Once again air speed records are in the news. Near Tripoli in Libya the scene of some of the fiercest tank battles during the Desert Campaign, a small team of Britishers prepare a Vickers Supermarine Swift for the task of beating the record set up by Neville Duke in a Hawker Hunter only a few weeks ago. At the controls is Lieutenant Commander Mike Lithgow, Vickers chief test-pilot.

Now the blue-painted Swift takes off to make a bid at the world record of 727.6 miles an hour. A long straight road across the desert is used as the three kilometre course. Four times Lithgow has to make his run - and here he comes!

Timing stations set up along the course record Lithgow's speed electronically. All points are linked by telephone, and can speak to the Swift by radio. At about 740 miles an hour, Lithgow comes in again.

The four runs completed, observers look up again as Lithgow, confident that he's done it, flicks the Swift into a victory roll.

On his four runs, Lithgow averaged 737.3 miles an hour, a new world's air speed record. Now comes news that an American test-pilot has exceeded Lithgow's speed. But his time wasn't one per cent faster so he doesn't establish an official record. Just the same Lucky Lithgow is going to try again.