

V. BOMBER SETS RECORD.

Bomber Command Squadron two-one-four prepared for a headline flight. Wing Commander Beetham briefed his crew, who were to fly their Valiant Bomber from Marham to Salisbury, Rhodesia, refuelling from another Valiant in the air over the Sahara on the way. The airmen learned how that complicated manoeuvre would be carried out, and the tanker-aircraft met over the desert. Outside on the aerodrome, the two Valiants waited.

The drogue at the open end of the ninety-foot pipeline has to be picked up in flight by the bomber. When connection is made the fuel is transferred. The capacity of a Valiant is not public knowledge. The tanker-bomber took off first, on the way to the Sahara Rendezvous.

Later it was announced that the flight to Salisbury, 5,319 miles took ten hours, twelve minutes; speed, just over 520 miles an hour. Beetham and his crew were wished good luck by Air Vice Marshal Cress, who in May will be head of Bomber Command. The successful exercise is a feather in the cap for the R.A.F.