

# FROM ALL QUARTERS

## Shorts' Royal Visitor

A DISTINGUISHED visitor to the Belfast works of Short Brothers and Harland, Ltd., last Friday was H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester. In the course of a two-hour tour in the company of the chairman, Sir Matthew Slattery, the Duke saw the SC.1 being made ready for its tethered-hovering trials; he also inspected the Britannia production line.

## Silent Satellite

RADIO transmissions from the Russian Earth satellite were reported by the Mullard radio-astronomical laboratory, Cambridge, to have ceased last Friday, October 25, and the Soviet news agency Tass confirmed during the weekend that the batteries carried by the satellite had become exhausted. They had provided power for continuous transmissions for a period of three weeks from the initial launching.

At the request of the Royal Observatory and the Russian Astronomical Council, the Jodrell Bank radio-telescope was used to locate and track the satellite's final-stage rocket case on October 26. The object was picked up at a range of more than 1,000 miles and, according to Prof. A. C. B. Lovell, was 80 minutes ahead of the satellite. The observations indicated that the orbit of the rocket was descending more slowly than had been expected.

A shaggy dog named Kudryavka appeared before the microphones of Moscow Radio on October 27. It was said to have made several rocket flights to high altitudes, and to belong to a team of dogs which had been conditioned in preparation for the launching of the first animal-carrying satellite.

## U.S. Missile Progress

SPURRED on by the presence of Sputnik—the Soviet satellite described in our issue of October 11—several American missile programmes have begun to yield successful results. That most closely associated with the Russian satellite is Project Vanguard which is, in fact, the American counterpart. On October 23 a complete Vanguard vehicle was successfully launched and, even though only the first-stage engine was fitted, an altitude of 109 miles and a speed of 4,250 m.p.h. (in excess of the design figures) were reached.

Another research programme which has at last yielded success is Project Farside, in which small instrument-carrying rockets are being launched from balloons some 20 miles above Eniwetok atoll. After several failures, two Farside rockets were successfully fired on October 23. One reached an altitude of approximately 1,000 miles and the other is believed to have reached between 1,000 and 4,000 miles, although failure of the telemetering as the rocket passed through the balloon cut off all transmission of information. (These rockets, of course, are not established in an orbit and merely fall back to earth.)

Progress with guided weapons has included Thor, Jupiter and Bomarc. A Thor IRBM was fired from Patrick A.F.B. on October 24 and it achieved an almost perfect mission of some 1,500 miles, landing "in the pre-selected impact area." The U.S.A.F. claimed that it was the third completely successful firing in eight attempts. Its competitor, the Army Jupiter, has had fewer failures and achieved another perfect mission from Patrick A.F.B. on the night of October 22. The big U.S.A.F. Bomarc anti-aircraft missile achieved a singular success on October 23. A

test round was fired against a B-17 more than 100 miles out in the Atlantic and, even though no warhead was fitted, the Bomarc dived on its target from more than 60,000ft and actually hit and destroyed it.

## PanAm and Their 707-120s

ACCORDING to the *Seattle Times*, Pan American World Airways may sell or lease their Boeing 707-120s and order 717s or Convair 880s instead. PanAm are due to receive their first 707-120s in December 1958, but these aircraft will not be suitable for regular transatlantic service (although they may be used to inaugurate token services). More probably they will be employed on the airline's routes to South America, for which medium jets would be more suitable. The same source reports that the company will use their 21 DC-8s for transatlantic services and their 17 707-320s for transpacific services.

Two years ago, when PanAm placed their historic order for Boeing 707s and Douglas DC-8s, Boeing stated that the first 707-120 would roll off the Seattle assembly line in October 1957. This event duly took place on October 27.



WINNER of a U.S. Navy Bureau of Aeronautics design competition for a utility helicopter is the Kaman HU2K, powered with a General Electric T38 turbine, and shown as a mock-up.

## Airships on TV

ON B.B.C. television last Friday, in the series *First Hand*, viewers were treated to a feature on airships. The programme was about evenly divided between some remarkable film extracts (onward from the time of Santos-Dumont's Eiffel Tower flight of 1901) and studio interviews with six men who had practical experience with dirigibles; and it would be difficult to say which of the two treatments was the more absorbing.

The six old hands interviewed by Peter West were Cdr. F. M. Simon, R.N., who navigated the Wellman airship which attempted an Atlantic crossing in 1910, to meet gallant failure, ending in rescue by a ship, after 1,000 miles in 72 hours; W/C. J. N. Fletcher, with some entertaining reminiscences of the early Army airships flown by No. 1 Sqn., R.F.C.; Maj. J. C. Struthers, who was responsible for 16 of the 27 attacks on U-boats made by the British Naval airships that flew 9,000 patrols during World War I; Mr. F. P. Browdie, an engineer in R.34 during her double Atlantic crossing in 1919, with recollections of cooking the crews' meals in boilers on the exhaust-pipes of the Sunbeam Maori engines; W/C. R. S. Booth, captain of the R.33 and the R.100 on several historic long-distance flights; and Lord Ventry (whose Airship Club built the

**RESEARCH AND RECONNAISSANCE:** Recent visitors to Shorts at Belfast (below, left) were W/C. Larson (centre) and S/L. Hubbard, both from R.A.E. Bedford. They are seen with Tom Brooke-Smith (left), Shorts' chief test pilot, on the platform of the special gantry in which the SC.1 jet-lift research aircraft is soon to undergo initial hovering trials. The second picture shows Avro test pilot Johnny Baker taking leave of Major Eden and Captain Van der Walt of the S.A.A.F., who were about to fly the fourth and fifth Shackleton M.R.3 aircraft from Woodford to South Africa.

