



WORLD NEWS

SIR GEOFFREY DE HAVILLAND

With great regret we record the death of Sir Geoffrey de Havilland, OM, CBE, AFC, which occurred last Friday (May 21) in hospital at Watford after a short illness. He was 82 years of age, and with his passing British aviation loses a name that has been prominent in its annals since the very earliest days.

Geoffrey de Havilland, who was the



son of a clergyman, had been interested in engineering from boyhood and as a young man was employed in several of its branches. In 1908-09, in association with Frank Hearle (who was to remain a close associate in the great later days of his career) he designed and built not only an aeroplane but its powerplant also. It was wrecked at the first attempt to fly; but, using the original engine, the two friends built another, on which he taught himself to fly.

Recognizing the skill of de Havilland and Hearle, the Government offered them posts in the Farnborough factory that was later to become the RAE, and there de Havilland designed the B.E. (British Experimental), first of the series of biplanes that were the mainstay of the British air effort in the early stages of the 1914-18 war. In 1914, seeking more scope, he joined the Aircraft Manufacturing Co at Hendon as designer and test pilot. Meanwhile he had been commissioned in the RFC; but his true *métier* was the drawing board,

and he was soon back at Hendon, to design in steady succession the famous D.H.1, 2, 4 and 9.

In September 1920 he formed his own company, at Stag Lane, Edgware, with friends (C. C. Walker, W. E. Nixon, F. E. N. St Barbe) who, like Hearle, have remained his friends and colleagues. Another was Major Frank Halford, the gifted engine designer, and soon the company was able to form an offshoot to manufacture powerplants, followed by another to make propellers.

In 1925 the D.H. Moth appeared, the trusty, inexpensive little biplane that made the company and was to become the backbone of private flying and later—as the Tiger Moth—of *ab initio* training; in 1933 came the D.H.84 Dragon, first of a new concept in small, compact transport aircraft and progenitor of the Rapide and the Express.

To the British effort in the 1939-45 war Geoffrey de Havilland contributed as greatly as he had in the earlier conflict, though with one outstanding type—the Mosquito—rather than with a succession of designs.

His company pioneered the jet airliner with the post-war Comet and its power-plant; and though he was not its designer, the aircraft was produced under his guidance as technical director.

The last aircraft identified by his initials were the D.H.121 (the Trident) and the D.H.125 (HS.125), before the Hatfield company became part of the Hawker Siddeley organization in 1961. Even then, at the age of 78, he remained actively interested in the affairs of the enterprise he had founded.

Sir Geoffrey leaves a widow, and a son by his first marriage; two other sons by that marriage, John and Geoffrey, both lost their lives flying as de Havilland test pilots.

(An appreciation of Sir Geoffrey de Havilland will appear next week.)

is already nearing completion at the Dornier and VFW factories.

Though no doubt the discussions in Bonn last week were based on hard-headed consideration of technological facts they certainly will not have been harmed by the highly charged atmosphere of Anglo-German goodwill and reconciliation which attended the Queen's visit to Germany. The agreement of the two sides on recommending continuance of the programme is a reassuring indication that the very wide German VTOL programme is not yet completely sold out to American interests and that there are still worthwhile opportunities for Anglo-German aircraft industry collaboration, if they are recognized and seized.

MARTIN-BAKER'S 1,000th

Last week the Martin-Baker Aircraft Co Ltd were able to announce with justifiable pride that on May 6 the magic figure of 1,000 lives saved was recorded for their ejection seats. The man concerned—his name is not yet available—was a USAF F-4C Phantom pilot who baled out over Arizona.



Mr James Martin

Martin-Baker seats are now in service with air forces of some 36 nations—a fact, incidentally, which implies a valuable export achievement. One major user is the US Navy, followed by the USAF with the Phantom; and in recent years a number of Continental air forces have retro-fitted Martin-Baker seats in T-33s, F-84s and F-86s. The seats are also standard in French- and German-built aircraft—notably, in the many experimental VTOL types.

Mr James Martin, CBE, MIMICHE, FRACS, the company's managing director and chief designer, has for many years been universally acknowledged as a leading authority on the design and production of aircrew-assisted escape systems. His work has brought him high awards from learned societies and other bodies; in 1958, for instance, he was the first non-American to receive the US Laura Taber Barbour Air

AGREEMENT ON THE Do31

British and West German representatives decided in Bonn last week to recommend to their respective governments the continuance of the Dornier Do31 VTOL tactical transport programme. The Dornier Do31

involves the efforts of the German company whose name it bears and of Hawker Siddeley Aviation. Basically a German airframe incorporating Bristol Siddeley Pegasus vectored-thrust engines and eight Rolls-Royce RB.162 lift jets for the full-load VTOL case, the initial Do31E is also scheduled to incorporate mainly British electronics. Engine changes are planned for the heavier production version.

In advance of a bilateral Government decision on the continuance of the programme, expected within the next few months, construction of three experimental Do31Es (two flight and one test specimen)

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