

# B. A. F. O. DISPLAY

*Exhibitionism par Excellence  
at Gütersloh: Aircraft, Tanks  
Bombs and Rockets*

Front-rank spectators included, left to right: Air Chief Marshal Sir James Robb, C.-in-C., A.F.W.E., Lt. Gen. Sir Charles F. Keightley, C.-in-C., B.A.O.R., and Air Marshal Sir Thomas M. Williams, C.-in-C., B.A.F.O.



ORIGINALLY planned for June 15th, the second air display by the British Air Forces of Occupation, at Gütersloh, about 35 miles west of Münster in the British Zone of Germany, had to be postponed because of bad weather until Tuesday, June 20th. Somewhat naturally, this diminished the number of spectators, but even so, there was a healthy attendance—of the order of 10,000, mostly troops of B.A.O.R.—and in compensation for previous ungraciousness, the weather was magnificent.

Proceedings opened with an inspection of the guard of honour by the C.-in-C. Air Forces, Western Europe, Air Chief Marshal Sir James Robb, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O., D.F.C., A.F.C., who then took the salute at the march-past. Thereafter, the flying events got under way spot-on the advertised time with a demonstration of aerobatics by F/L. Carson, M.C., in a Grunau Baby sailplane. Gliding is a very popular sport in B.A.F.O., and this display by the C.F.I. of the Gütersloh Gliding Club earned the applause of a critical audience. As the little sailplane landed, a Horsa glider cast off the tow-rope from its Dakota tug at about 1,000ft down to leeward of the field and, landing a trifle short, rolled to a stop a little distance from the enclosures; the nose was swung open, a jeep and a pair of signals trailers were unloaded, hitched up and, with the crew of four men aboard, were rapidly driven away. As this event was finishing, a pair of Spitfire 14s, one with a forward-facing F.52 camera fitted into a modified drop-tank, and the other with an ordinary F.24 oblique camera, flew over and photographed the gathering. Immediately the aircraft landed, the photographs were processed by a mobile field photographic section.

Sixteen Mosquitoes in squadron boxes of four in line-astern next made their appearance, as the first item in their programme of demonstrating air drill, and were followed by a couple of Chipmunks from the Central Flying School in an instructor and pupil act—which was remarkable for the beautifully polished flying by the instructor and the equally skilled ham-fistedness of the "pupil." Two sections, each of four Vampires, then followed in what was, for many spectators, the highlight of the purely flying side of the display. For the first time in public, one saw formation aerobatics by jet aircraft tied together, one of the sections flying in box formation with the leader and wing men linked by thin ropes; the man in the box was, of course, free. This section alternated with their colleagues, and between them virtually covered the gamut of formation manoeuvres, both in terms of sticking close together whilst convoluting and, by contrast, changing formation during loops and rolls: a beautiful exhibition.

After the contrasting section-fly-past of the sixteen Mosquitoes, this time in echelon starboard in line-astern, individual aerobatics were demonstrated by P/O.s Bruce

and Moorhouse, both in Vampires. There was little to choose between the performances of these pilots, although P/O. Moorhouse had, perhaps, the more difficult task in executing a vertical 8, a lazy 8 and a bunt. The last-named manoeuvre is uncomfortable enough in a slow aircraft; in a quick machine like a Vampire it must be tough. The Vampire individualists then gave place to F/L. Chandler and Pilot II Blake in Meteor 7s who, in their turn, showed the agility and precision with which twin-jet types could be disported. Their first effort was perhaps the most startling—a half roll immediately after take-off and an inverted climb-away. Another rather nice manoeuvre was a complete roll at the top of a loop. At the end of their act Blake flew past at 115 m.p.h. with everything out whilst Chandler nipped smartly across at something like 600.

An American contribution to the afternoon's entertainment was provided by a section of four F-80 Shooting Stars, led by Captain Vince Gordon, and known as "The Skyblazers." These chaps were good, and whilst there is no doubt that the cruciform plan view of the F-80 enhances the apparent tightness of formation—particularly box formation—the Skyblazers' station-keeping was first-class. Inevitably, one is given to making a comparison with the same sort of show put on previously by the Vampires and, in this connection, we feel impelled to state that neither the R.A.F. nor the U.S.A.F. need indulge in any heart-searching; both Services can feel proud of their respective members. One of the Skyblazers' items is, however, particularly worthy of mention. Known as the "bomb-burst," it entails a shallow high-speed dive in box formation; then, on the pull-up, the leader climbs and rolls, the wing men branch off at 45 deg, rolling and climbing, whilst the man in the box flies straight ahead doing a series of high-speed slow rolls: most spectacular.

After a 20-minute interval, the second part of the programme was devoted to an illustration of the way in which modern aircraft can give support to army land forces. A set-piece, consisting of three blockhouses, a bridge, and an enemy headquarters building surrounded by a gun area, formed, respectively, targets A, B and C in the middle of the airfield. The situation at the start was that the leading elements of an armoured force represented by four tanks and four 25-pounder guns, were held up in their advance by fire from the enemy strong point at target A. Gunfire from the 25-pounders directed by Capt. O'Brien in an Auster was impressive but, according to the programme, was supposed to be unsuccessful, and an air strike was called for. The first element of the R.A.F. contribution was a low-level bombing attack by eight Mosquitoes, which had a go at target C with 60-lb instantaneous-fused bombs dropped from about 250ft, and jolly exciting it was to watch, too.