

# FROM ALL QUARTERS

## RAF Thor Completion

SIXTIETH and last of the Thors required to equip present RAF sites in Britain was leaving the Douglas plant at Santa Monica, Calif, last Tuesday morning in a Globemaster of the 40th Air Transport Squadron. Flying via Dover, Delaware, where a crew-change was scheduled, the aircraft was due in England—at Luffenham, Lakenheath or Driffield—on Thursday.

On board, by invitation of the USAF, was Kenneth Owen of *Flight*, who will describe this missile-delivery flight—typical of many made by MATS—in a forthcoming issue. (In today's issue, pages 339-342: "Thor in Service.")

## RAF Assistance at Agadir

AIRCRAFT of the Royal Air Force have been assisting relief work at Agadir by carrying in supplies and evacuating casualties from the earthquake-devastated town. Shackletons of No 224 Sqn, based at Gibraltar, have flown-in large quantities of blankets, medical supplies, rations and chemicals and the squadron has made a gift of 10,000 cigarettes to survivors. Its aircraft have also brought out survivors to Marseilles, Rabat, Casablanca and Gibraltar. A Beverley from RAF Dishforth took to Agadir five tons of plague-prevention chemicals from Mulhouse in eastern France.

## Exports: A Good Start

JANUARY export figures were the largest ever recorded by the British aircraft industry during the first month of a year. The total, £13,310,502, was made up as follows: aircraft and parts, £6,616,002; aero engines, £6,084,977; electrical equipment, £299,443; aeronautical instruments, £247,296; and tyres, £62,784. Leading buyers of aircraft and parts were Switzerland (£1,712,155), Argentina (£1,101,327) and India (£565,329); and leading buyers of aero engines and parts—published by the Board of Trade for the first time—were the US (£1,266,995), France (£710,801) and India (£675,999).

## Longest-Distance Exercise

BRITANNIAS of RAF Transport Command are being used for the first time on a large scale in a strategic airlift in Exercise "Starlight," the joint Army-RAF enterprise being undertaken in North Africa this month. The largest exercise of its kind ever held outside the UK, with about 4,000 troops and 130 vehicles being moved by air, this is also the first occasion on which No 38 Group of Transport Command has taken part in one of these mobility exercises.

AVM Peter Wykeham, the AOC, was at a press conference in the Ministry of Defence last Monday to describe the air aspects of Starlight, the strategic lift for which was due to begin yesterday (March 10). The build-up had begun last month when Whirlwinds, Pioneers and Twin Pioneers were flown out to North Africa and groundcrews, administrative staff, stores and equipment positioned. AVM Wykeham said that the fighting troops would be flown out in nine Britannias, 16 Hastings and 16 Beverleys, making respectively 29, 26 and nine sorties. Two Comets would also be engaged, on special duties.

The AOC explained that El Adem was to form the strategic base for the exercise, and Tmimi, 50 miles north-west, the airhead. The Beverleys would be flying into this desert strip, familiar to those who participated in the Western Desert campaigns of the last war. From the airhead the fighting troops would be supplied by the Twin Pioneers, Pioneers, Whirlwinds and Alouettes. Simulated fighter activity was being provided by aircraft from HMS *Albion*, and Fighter Command were sending out a small strike force of Hunters.

Maj-Gen R. G. S. Hobbs, who with AVM Wykeham is joint director of the exercise, explained that Starlight would have three phases—the airlift from the UK, the lift from El Adem to Tmimi and operations west of Tmimi (March 21-27). Lt-Gen Sir Nigel Poett, as commander of the Strategic Reserve, has overall responsibility for the exercise with the AOC-in-C Transport Command, Air Marshal Sir Denis Barnett.

**LOX BOX:** At the Normalair Works recently, James C. McDonald, UK representative of Republic Aviation, received the final batch of liquid-oxygen converters to complete current contracts. These converters are installed in the F-84 Thunderstreaks used by NATO air forces. In the picture Mr McDonald is taking over the last unit from Normalair foreman C. Millman

## France's Supersonic Bomber

THE Mirage IV two-seat supersonic bomber, built by Marcel Dassault and powered with two SNECMA Atar 9 turbojets, has completed its constructor's trials. On its 53rd flight it was ferried to the Flight Test Centre at Istres, on which occasion it sustained M1.9 for eighteen minutes. The pilot was René Bigand.

## Cessna-Holste Co-operation

A MINORITY interest in the French aircraft firm Avions Max Holste is being acquired by the Cessna Aircraft Co. The latter's president, Dwane L. Wallace, said recently that final arrangements were not yet completed but all necessary approvals for the transaction had been given by the French Government.

## More Atlantic Facts

THE latest announcement concerning the Bréguet Atlantic maritime reconnaissance and anti-submarine aircraft for NATO air forces quotes a cruising speed (presumably maximum cruise) of 600km/hr (373 m.p.h.). It is also stated that the submissions by 26 companies—representing eight countries—were narrowed down to proposals by Bréguet, Nord and Avro. Nord was eliminated and on December 31 last the Bréguet was chosen.

A "direction committee" has been planned which will represent the countries concerned in building the aircraft (France, Holland, Germany and Belgium). A technical consulting committee has also been set up, and this is open to all countries. Thus, Great Britain and Canada will be able to watch the development.

## The 2N Crusader

ALTHOUGH Chance Vought's F8U-3 Crusader never came to fruition, the basic Crusader has been steadily improved. Finest of all the derivatives is the F8U-2N, which will be the first supersonic all-weather interceptor in US Navy service. The first 2N flew for 84min on February 16, three days ahead of schedule.

Although superficially similar to the F8U-2, the new version incorporates a new search and tracking radar of greater power; increased internal tankage (early Crusaders have flown for nearly 4hr without refuelling); a revised Vought autopilot; a Pratt and Whitney J57-P-20 engine of increased thrust; provision for firing "advanced missiles now under development" in addition to Sidewinder; "hard-harness" wiring, all looms being packaged in glass-fibre ducts; and revised instrumentation and interior and exterior lighting systems. Contracts for the 2N total \$100m, and will keep production going through next year.

## Canadair at Work

FEW Western manufacturers have three entirely different aircraft in the flight-test stage. One such firm is Canadair, and the following notes summarize present progress.

**CL-44.** Powered by four Rolls-Royce Tyne 512s, the Forty Four has flown 50hr in 30 flights since mid-November. Tests have included stalls, trim-control, manoeuvring, stability, measured take-offs and initial systems checking. Training of RCAF CL-44 pilots has started.

**Canadair 540.** Powered by two Napier Eland 504s, the first production 540 has flown 30hr in 20 flights since January 7. The 40hr test programme (7hr normal plus 33hr special testing to military specifications) is near completion. Items included are take-offs at up to 57,500lb, autopilot behaviour, electrical loads and fuel dumping.

**CL-41.** Powered by a Pratt & Whitney JT12, this aircraft has flown 24hr in 26 flights since January 13. Completed tests included general handling and stalls, spins, and dives up to M0.7, sufficient to give a flight-envelope suitable for demonstration purposes.

