

THE ROYAL



OBSERVER CORPS

RECOGNITION

Journal
and R.O.C. GAZETTE



Vol. 3 NOVEMBER 1961 No. 11

Still Going Strong The Vampire T II

The Vampire is a familiar aircraft having been in R.A.F. fighter squadron service from 1946 until the mid-fifties. The trainer version, the T Mk. II is still in service with Flying Training Command of the R.A.F. and its naval counterpart, the Sea Vampire T Mk. 22, is serving the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Navy. Apart from a deck arrester hook the T II and T 22 are identical for recognition purposes. An export version, the T Mk. 55, is in service with various air forces throughout the world. Read the lesson instructions on page 166 before looking at the solutions on the back cover.



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*Identification Lessons

On Your Marks!

MK. II, Mark 2, BII or B. Mk. II—or does it matter? Well, if you're going to put anything down at all, it might as well be right.

Before the war, mark numbers were rarely applied to R.A.F. aircraft, and each variant had a different name. Typical was the Hawker Hart series. The Hart itself was a two-seater day-bomber, but modified as a two-seat fighter it became the Demon and fitted out for a general purpose role it was known as the Hardy; and an army co-operation version, fitted with a message pick-up hook, was known as the Audax—"Audax my Aunt Fanny, it's a ruddy 'Art with an 'Ook," as one Flight Sergeant expressed it! It was a very good system for those days, imagine the difficulties today if each variant had a different name!

From the R.A.F. expansion of 1936, mark numbers came into general use for service aircraft. Typical examples of the early war years are Spitfire V and Wellington X. In 1942, it was decided that the mark number should be prefixed by significant letters, indicative of the aircraft's role and thus we had: Spitfire F.IX (F—Fighter), Sunderland G.R.V. (G.R.—General Reconnaissance) and Defiant T.T.III (T.T.—Target Tug).

So far, it will be noted, Roman numerals have been used; these became rather unwieldy when it got to a Spitfire F.XXIV, but not until 1947 was it ruled that all mark numbers would be expressed in normal figures. Some people still use Roman numerals, but let us, for the sake of brevity, conformity and correctness, use the Arabic figures. While the form "B.Mk. 6" is correct, the abbreviated form "B.6" is acceptable.

Prefixes currently in use are:—A.E.W.—Airborne Early Warning, A.O.P.—Air Observation Post, A.S.—Anti-submarine, B—Bomber, B.(I)—Bomber (Intruder/Interdicter), B.(K)—Bomber (Tanker-refueller), B.(P.R.)—Bomber (Photographic Reconnaissance), C.—Cargo, C.C.—Cargo/Communications, F.—Fighter, F.(A.W.)—Fighter (All-weather), F.(G.A.)—Fighter (Ground Attack), F.R.—Fighter Reconnaissance, H.A.R.—Helicopter, Ambulance and Rescue,

H.A.S.—Helicopter, Anti-Submarine, H.C.C.—Helicopter, Cargo/Communications, M.R.—Maritime Reconnaissance, P.R.—Photographic Reconnaissance, S.—Strike, T.—Trainer, T.S.R.—Tactical Strike Reconnaissance, U.—Unmanned (e.g. Pilotless Target Aircraft).

The Canberra provides us with an interesting example of mark number allocation. The initial production version differed from the first four built, so that B. Mk. 1 was allotted to the first four pre-production and B. Mk. 2 to the main production; photographic and trainer versions developed later became the P.R. Mk. 3 and T. Mk. 4 respectively. While it is a general rule that the numbers are allotted in numerical sequence, they do not always appear in sequence. The Lightning F. Mk. 1 and its trainer version the T. Mk. 4 have long been known to us, but further development of the fighter version, the F. Mk. 2 and 3 have only recently been announced and security still cloaks details.

A further complication is the allocation of blocks of mark numbers. Again the Canberra provides a typical example, where Mark Numbers 1–19 are reserved for British-built versions (up to B.16 has been taken up) while Mk. 20 upwards is reserved for Australian production and Mk. 50 upwards for British production to the requirements of overseas customers.

A question that has often been asked is why was the only version of the Chipmunk to enter R.A.F. service, the T. Mk. 10? This again is due to the blocks of numbers. The Chipmunk was a de Havilland (Canada) design and Mk. 1–9 were reserved for the R.C.A.F., thus when de Havilland put the Chipmunk in production in England for the R.A.F. it became the T. Mk. 10 in R.A.F. service.

As a rule it is not operationally necessary to identify aircraft down to marks unless there are significant differences. But there is considerable training advantage to be gained from doing so whenever possible, particularly in *Journal* lessons as this forces much closer discrimination and observation. It goes without saying, too, that you should know what the appropriate role prefixes mean. So mark these words.



British Locomotive “Invested” with Long Service Decoration

WATERLOO STATION, LONDON, was the scene on July 2nd of a unique ceremony—the investiture of a British Railways Southern Region locomotive with copies of the ribbon of the Long Service Medal of the Royal Observer Corps.

The Corps, which won immortal fame during the war, especially during the Battle of Britain, by its aircraft spotting for Fighter Command, decided to honour Battle of Britain Class locomotive No. 34050, built with others after the war to commemorate units and personalities associated with the Battle, with an enlargement of the ribbon worn by Observers completing 12 or more years' service. This locomotive, which carries the name “Royal Observer Corps,” has served on Southern Region for over 14 years.

Before a Guard of Honour of 50 Observers, many of them Long Service Medal holders, and their families and friends on Platform eleven, the R.O.C. Commandant, Air Commodore C. M. Wight-Boycott, unveiled the ribbon plaques already fixed to the locomotive asking Mr. C. P. Hopkins, General Manager, Southern Region, to accept them. Now, No. 34050, which is used for long hauls to the West Country, is the only engine in Britain wearing a long service decoration.

In a brief address the Commandant remarked how appropriate it was that the engine so honoured should be one travelling Southern England, “where the R.O.C. first won its spurs.” Said he: “This locomotive—I shall call her ‘our locomotive’—has given steadfast and effective service to the community, even as the veterans of the R.O.C. have done.” He emphasised the vital importance of the Corps' primary role today—the plotting of nuclear fall-out if war came to Britain, and declared that the Royal Observer Corps was in fact the only organisation in Britain equipped and trained to handle nuclear fall-out reporting on a national basis, and to present a national picture of the situation and provide immediate information as to the power, location and height of nuclear bursts. If ever war came it would become in its hundreds of headquarters and posts throughout the country the unseen “guide” of Britain's Civil Defence organisation, the land-based military forces, and the population itself.

Above:

The Guard of Honour, composed of Long Service medallists being inspected by Air Commodore C. M. Wight-Boycott.

Its nuclear information would be relayed to the Warning and Monitoring Organisation of the Home Office, to Fighter and other Commands, and to N.A.T.O. countries, and from it, clear pictures of both contaminated and "free" areas of Britain would be provided without which rescue work would be impossible. Details of the power of nuclear bombs, the heights at which they had burst, and the track of their deadly fall-out would be given—in fact, the R.O.C. would indeed provide the initial confirmation that a nuclear attack had begun.

Mr. Hopkins, accepting the plaques "on behalf of all my fellow railwaymen of the Southern Region," called the R.O.C. "one of the proudest stars in a very proud galaxy." "Yours was a heavy task during the war," he said, "but you stood fast. In a smaller but similar way we of the railways did so too. We did our best to emulate your courage, endurance and skill."

The R.O.C., today over 15,000 strong, still urgently needs men and women volunteers for its strength is inadequate for the vital task for which it trains. Appealing to Britons to join the Corps as part-time Observers, and to British Railways people to "give a lead" in this and join up as so many railway people had done in the past, Air Commodore Wight-Boycott said: "If I might paraphrase a famous quotation,

I would say, 'we have the tools. Give us the men and women and we will do the job.'"

Locomotive 34050 brought a gasp of admiration from the hundreds gathered on the platform. She literally glittered from stack to coal-tender with new paint and shining metal. The maintenance people at Stewarts Lane depot, Battersea, had done a magnificent job of preparing her for her "investiture." Proudly in her cab stood Driver Ernest Partridge, railway veteran of 46½ years, and his fireman, James Musgrove. As the ceremony ended, Locomotive 34050 hauled a special train-load of 300 Observers from all over Britain to Bournemouth for the day, at her front a large board proclaiming "Royal Observer Corps Special Train." At Bournemouth West the party, with Observer Commander G. A. D. Bourne, Commandant of No. 5 Group, Watford, in charge, were greeted by Observer Officer J. Williams, of No. 14 Group with headquarters at Winchester. Then they headed for the seaside, surf and sunshine to enjoy a pleasant few hours of relaxation. The excursion was arranged to coincide with the 1961 annual R.O.C. camp which was held at R.A.F., Binbrook, Lincolnshire, which some 3,000 men and women Observers attended. Some members of the train party had come from as far away as Durham, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.



The Commandant, Air Commodore C. M. Wight-Boycott, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.A., presents souvenir spoons to Driver Partridge and Fireman Musgrove. Also in the picture are Mr. C. P. Hopkins, General Manager, Southern Region of British Railways and Observer Captain W. Rusby, O.B.E., Deputy Commandant.

VARSIITY

Born 1949—*still going strong*, indeed the Varsity may go on for several years yet in R.A.F. training. It remains, and will remain, unchanged in outward appearance and the key-view and target No. 20 are characteristic of the Varsity T. Mk. I aircrew trainer. To polish up your ability to identify it, use these two views to identify other Varsity targets in this group. Full lesson instructions appear on page 166 and solutions are on the back cover.



M.H. 260 Super Broussard

THE SUPER BROUSSARD is a light transport, suitable for civil or military use, with accommodation for 17-23 passengers or equivalent amount of freight.

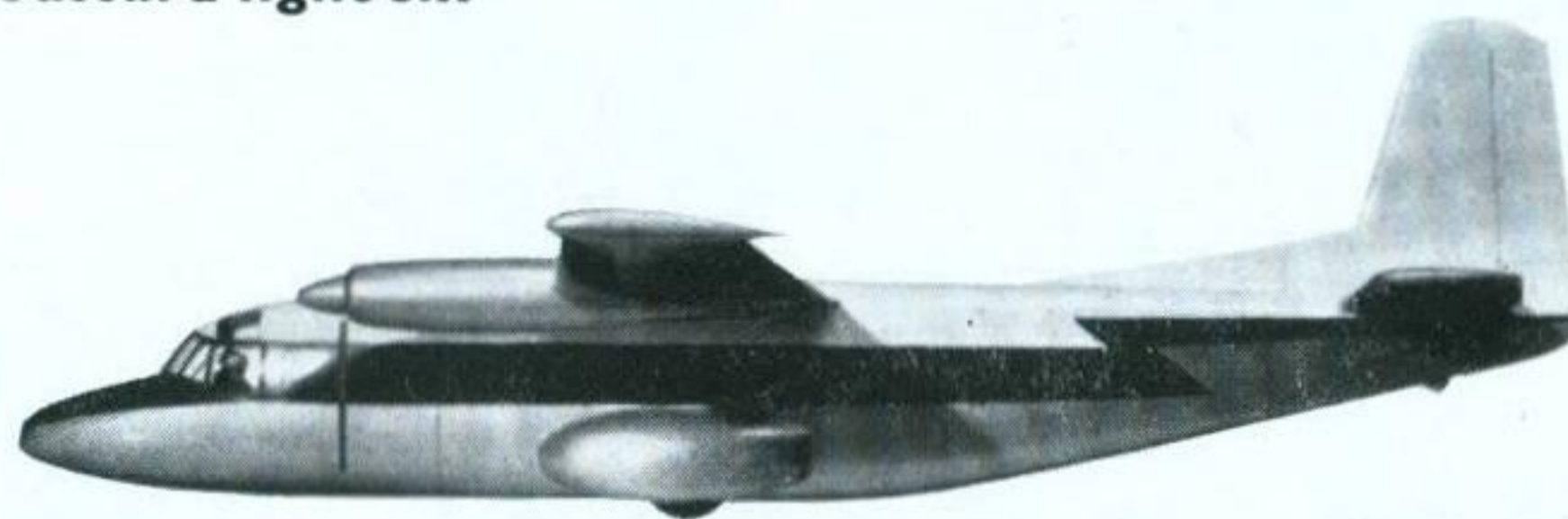


The first model flew with large Pratt and Whitney radial engines, but the production version, featured here, has Turbomeca Bastan III turboprops housed in long slim nacelles. These nacelles, together with wing-tip tanks and unusually large wheel fairings, provide recognition features that should enable you to distinguish it from Dart-Heralds or Friendships of the same basic configuration.



Only in name and firm of origin, the French company of Max Holste, does the M.H. 260 Super Broussard have any connection with the M.H. 1521 Broussard light six-seat observation aircraft.

Span: 72 feet





Lesson instructions on page 166.

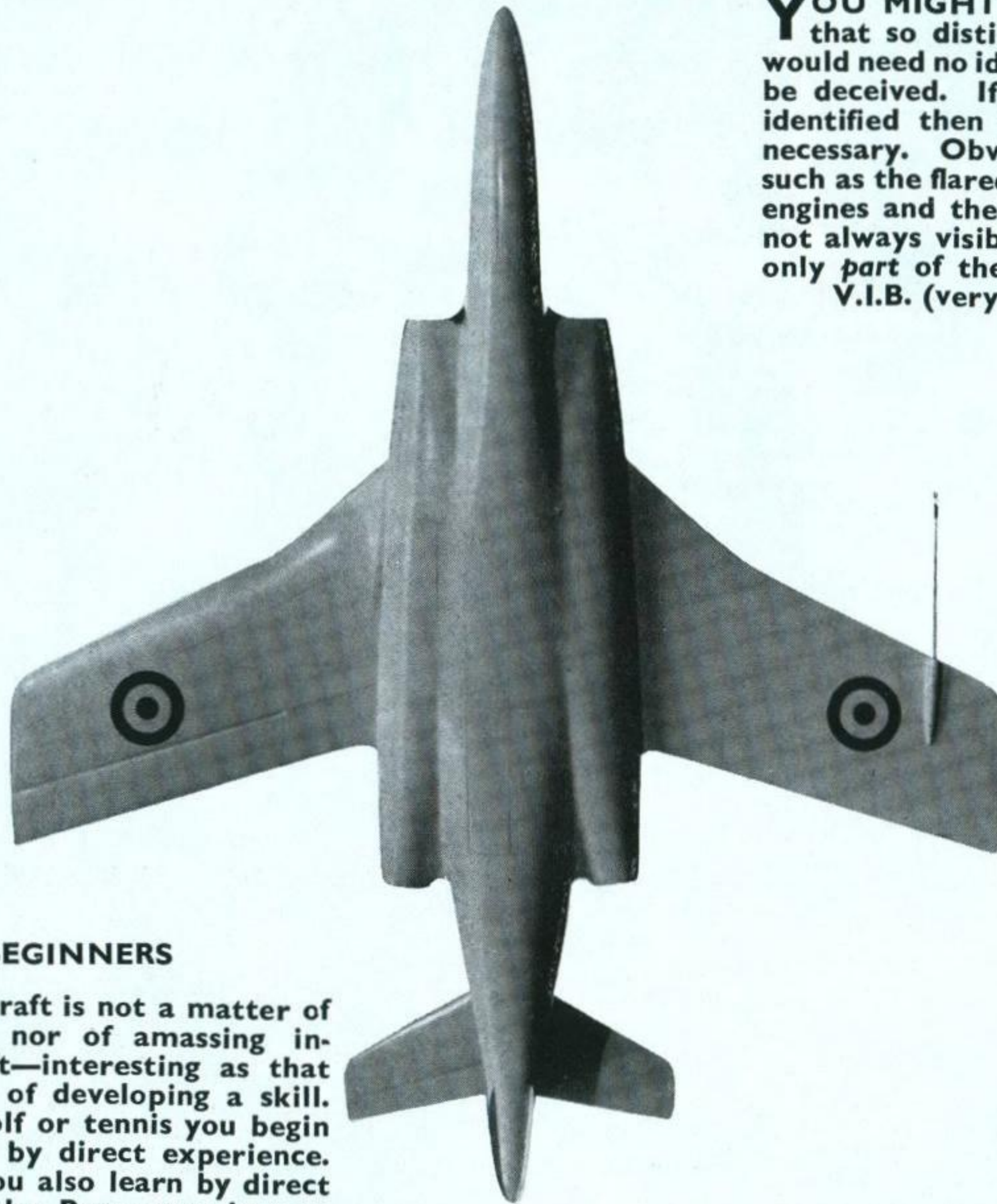
Solutions are on the cover.



Buccaneer

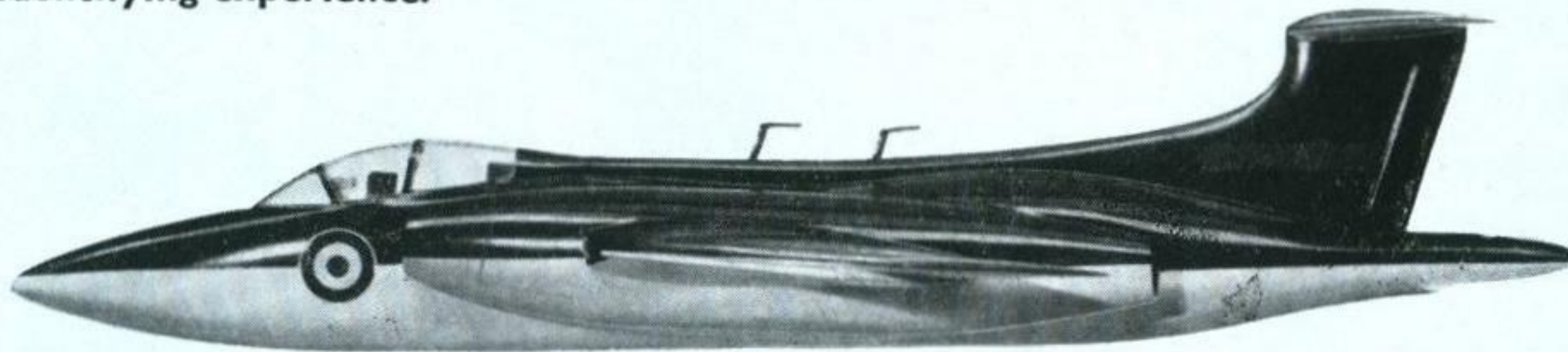
Span 43 feet

YOU MIGHT be forgiven for thinking that so distinctive an aircraft as this would need no identifying practice. Don't be deceived. If the Buccaneer is to be identified then identification practice is necessary. Obvious features, seen here, such as the flared wing roots, diverging jet engines and the prominent tail cone are not always visible. They are in any case only *part* of the character of this Naval V.I.B. (very important bomber).



NOTE FOR BEGINNERS

Learning to identify aircraft is not a matter of prodigious memorising, nor of amassing information about aircraft—interesting as that can be. It is a matter of developing a skill. As in learning to play golf or tennis you begin to learn by playing, i.e. by direct experience. In identifying training you also learn by direct experience. So far as the Buccaneer is concerned the targets displayed here if identified according to the rules on page 166 will produce direct identifying experience.



TARGETS START HERE ▼



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ROYAL NAVY

XK490

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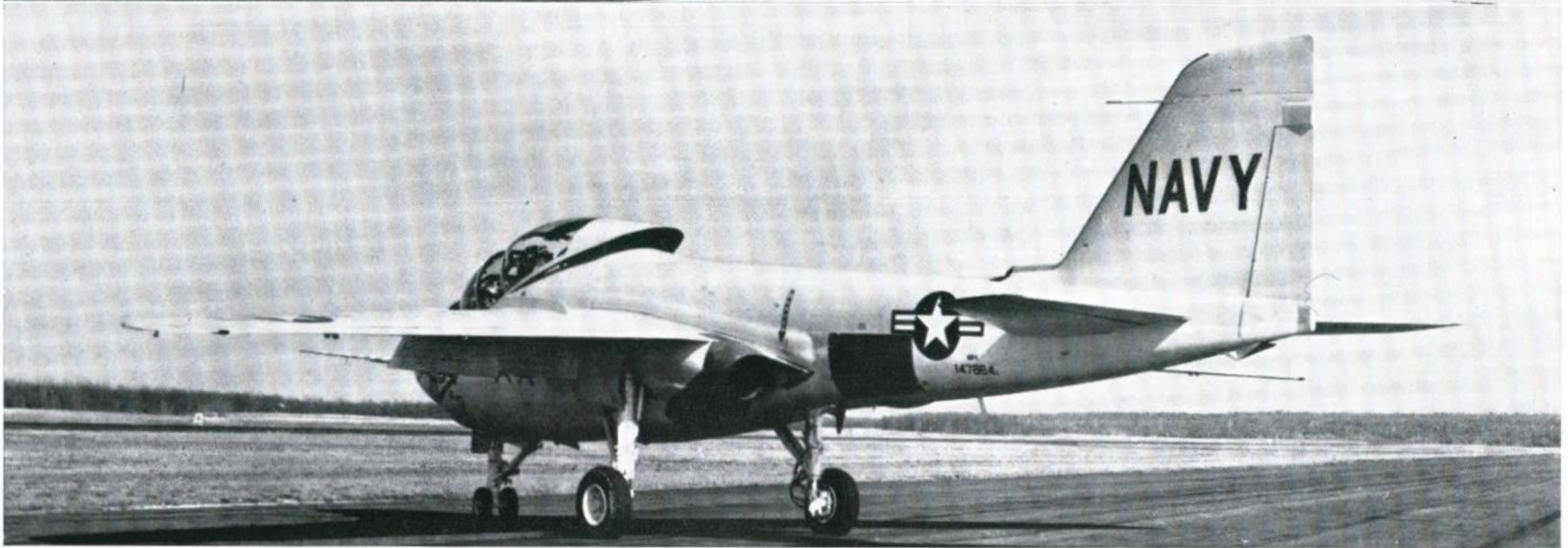
Page 171

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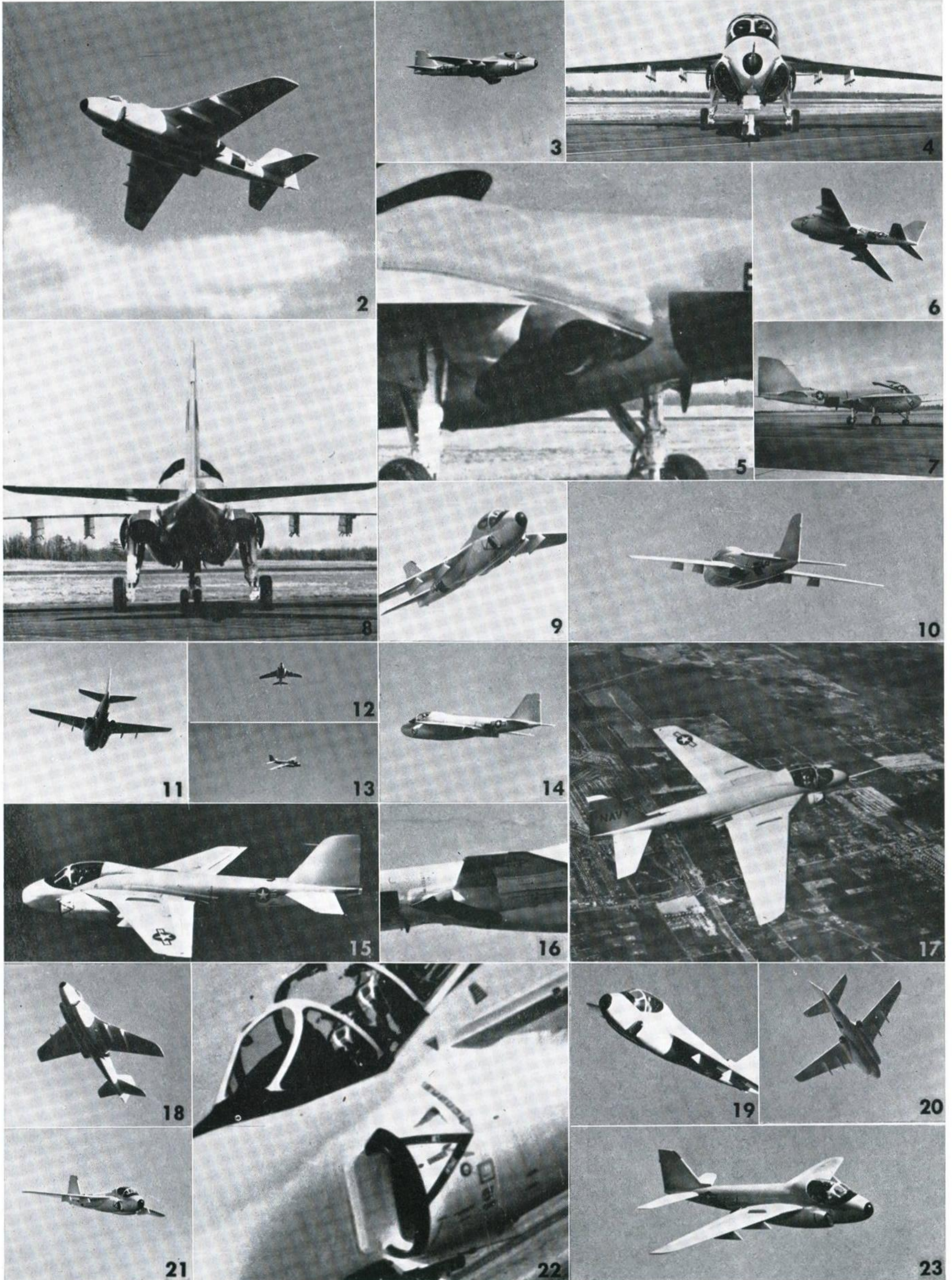
INTRUDER

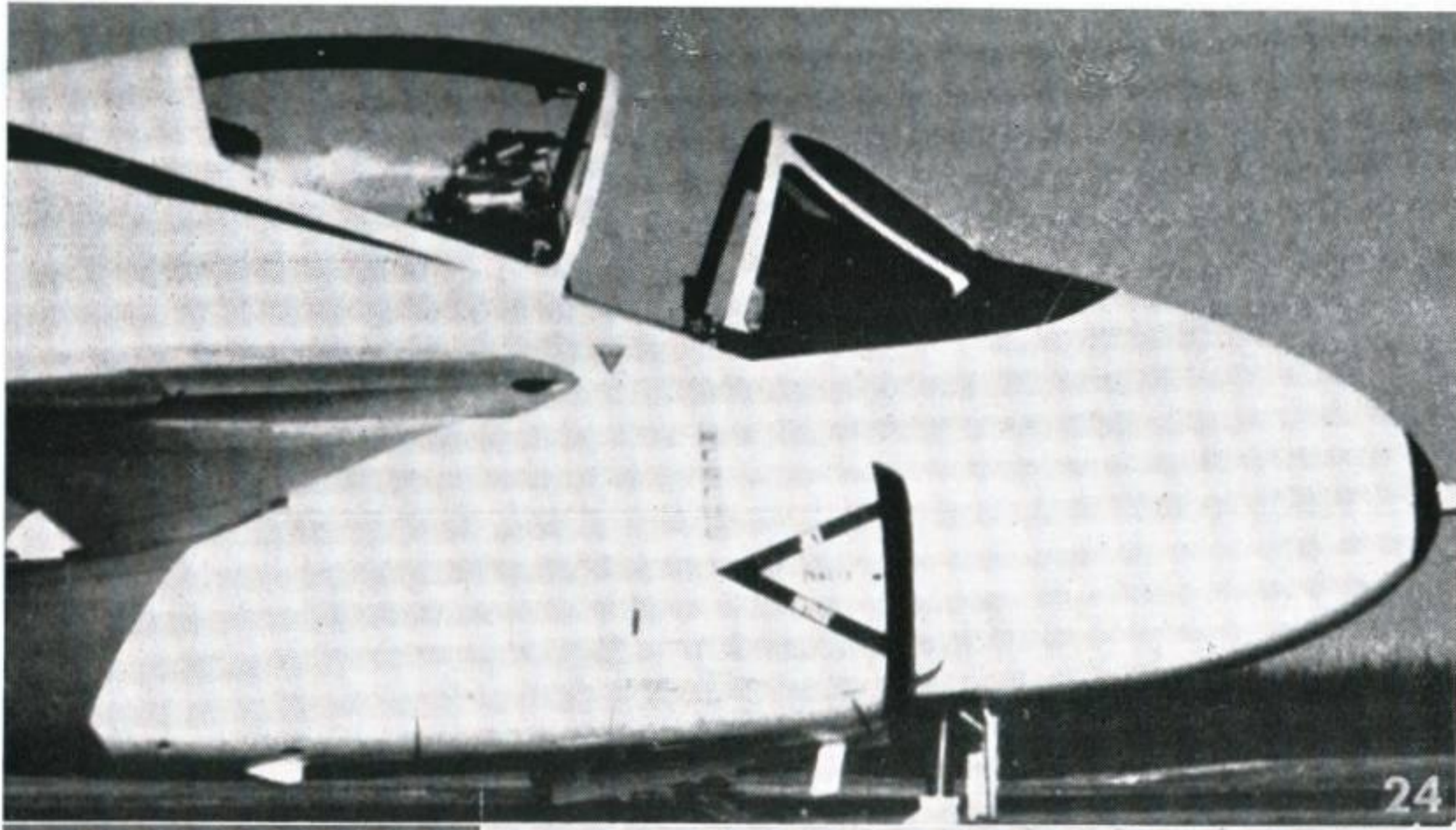
(Grumman A2F)

(Carrier Based Attack Aircraft of U.S. Navy)

This aircraft has distinctive characteristics which might lead you to suppose that it is easily identified: and so it is, if you do identifying practice instead of just *looking* at the pictures. This group contains close-up and distant views of the aircraft providing a wide experience. There are no targets which, if you carry out the training procedure properly, cannot be identified even if you have not met the Intruder before, but keep a look out for jokers. Use the key information and other targets already known to you, particularly in the close-up views to get your answers right. By all accounts the Intruder is formidably armed and can carry thirty 500-lb. bombs in clusters on the pylons beneath wings and fuselage, making a total bomb load of fifteen thousand pounds. An unusual feature of the aircraft is its tilting exhaust tail pipes to direct the jet efflux downward and improve its short take-off performance.







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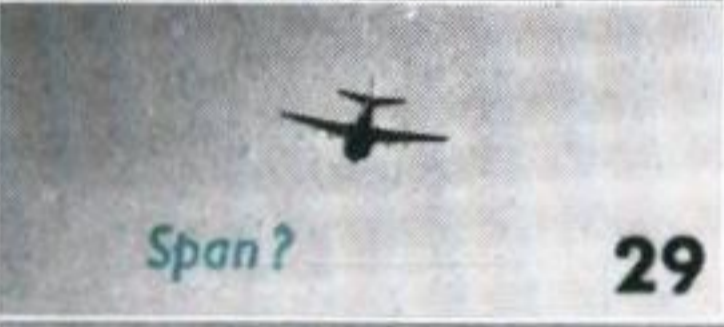


Span?

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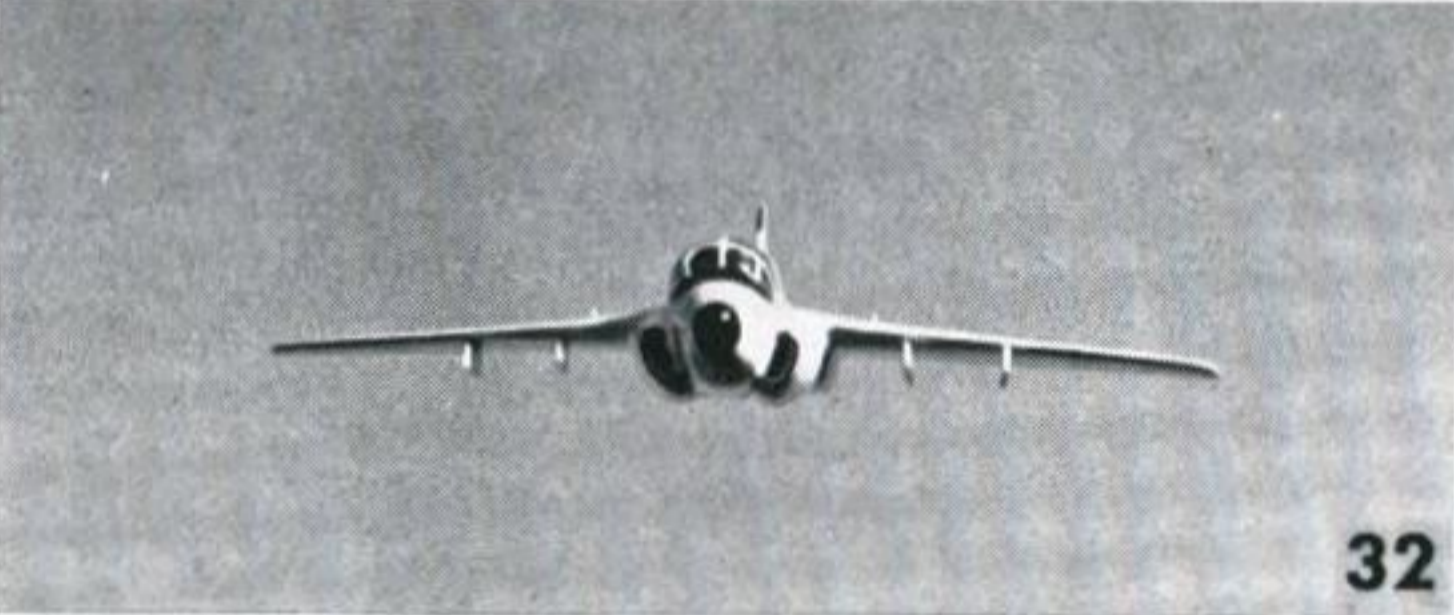


Span?

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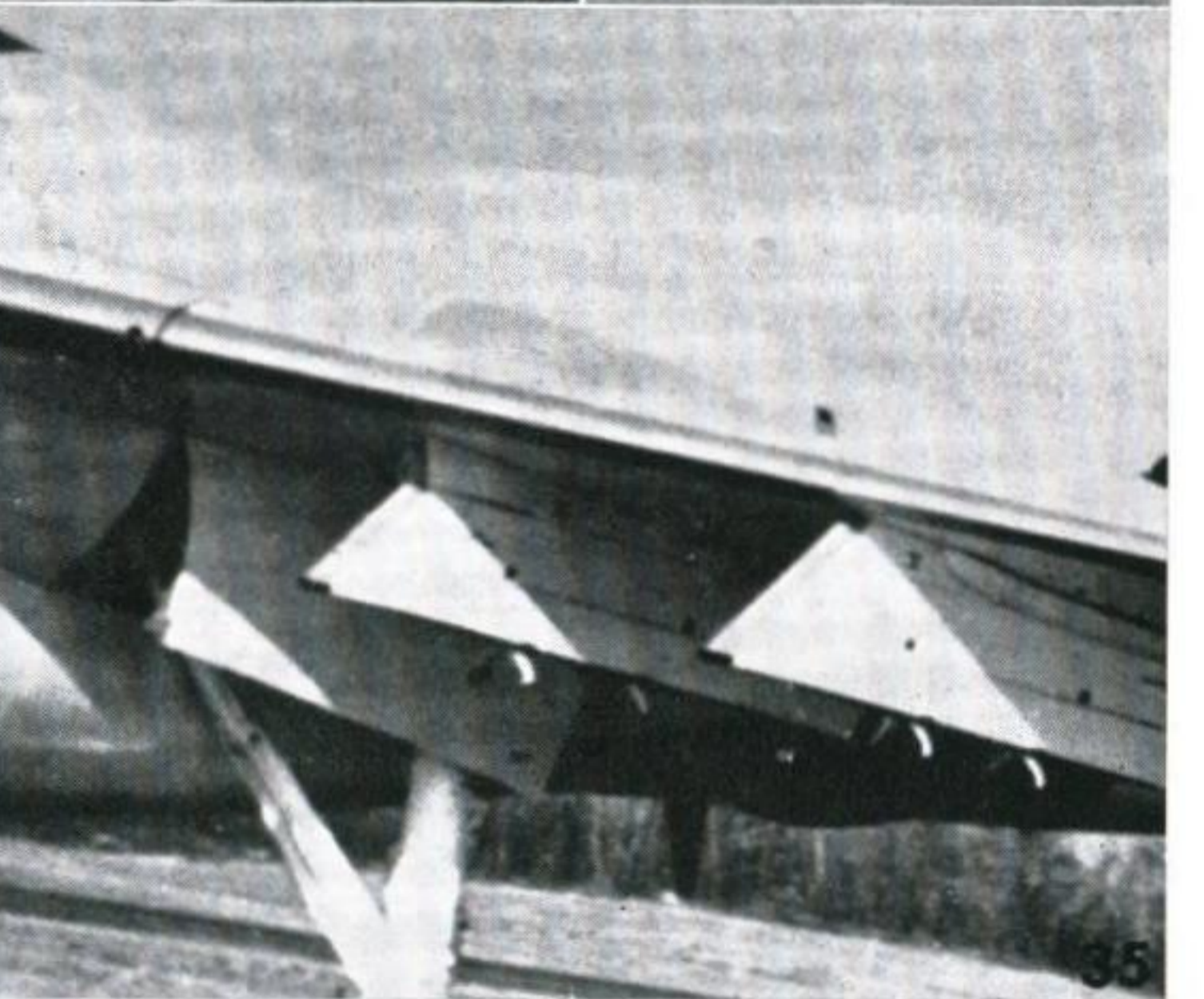
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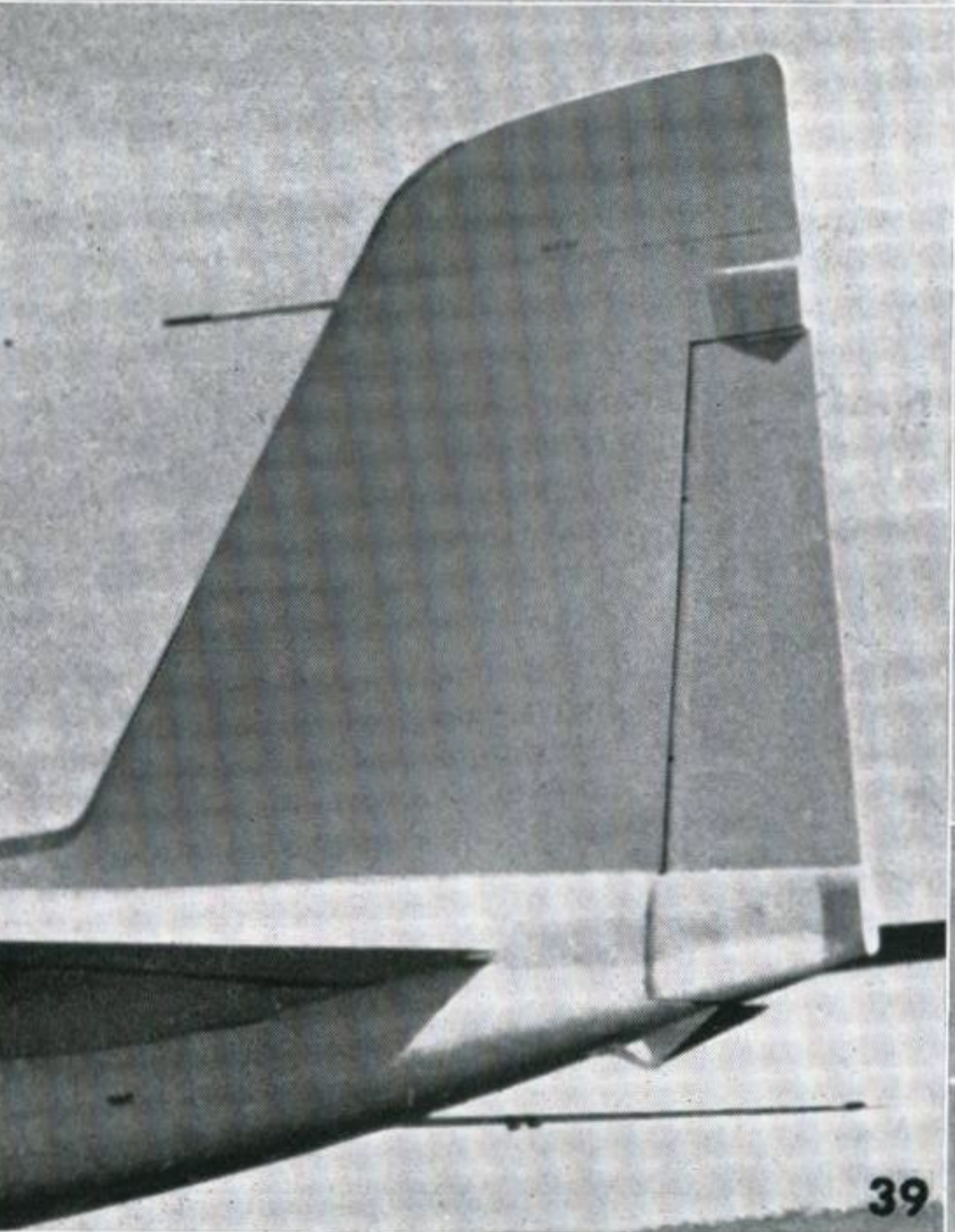
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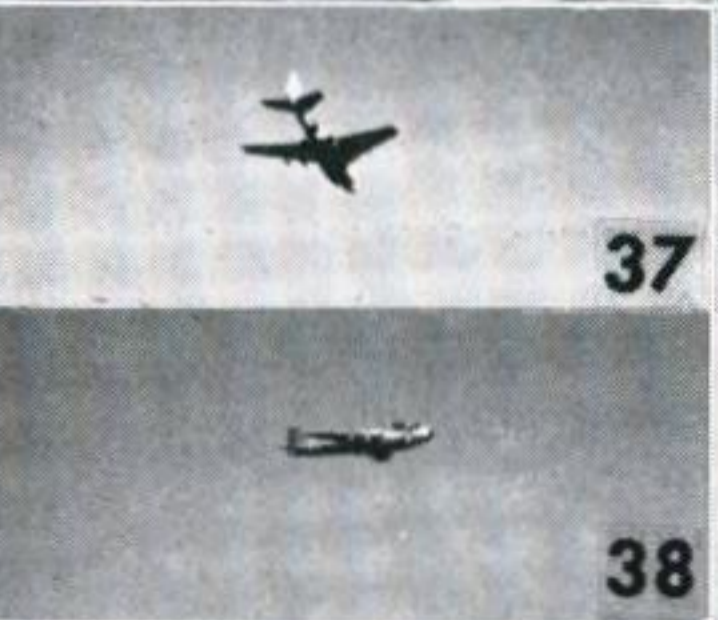
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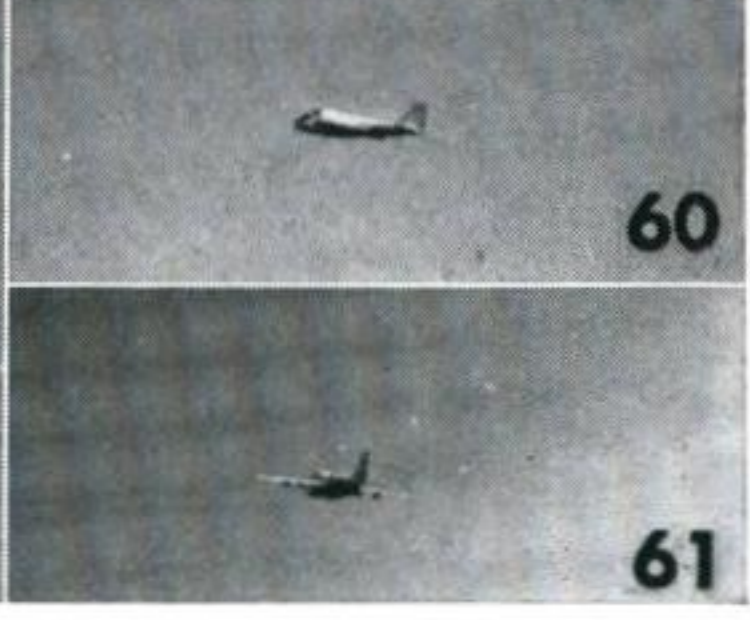
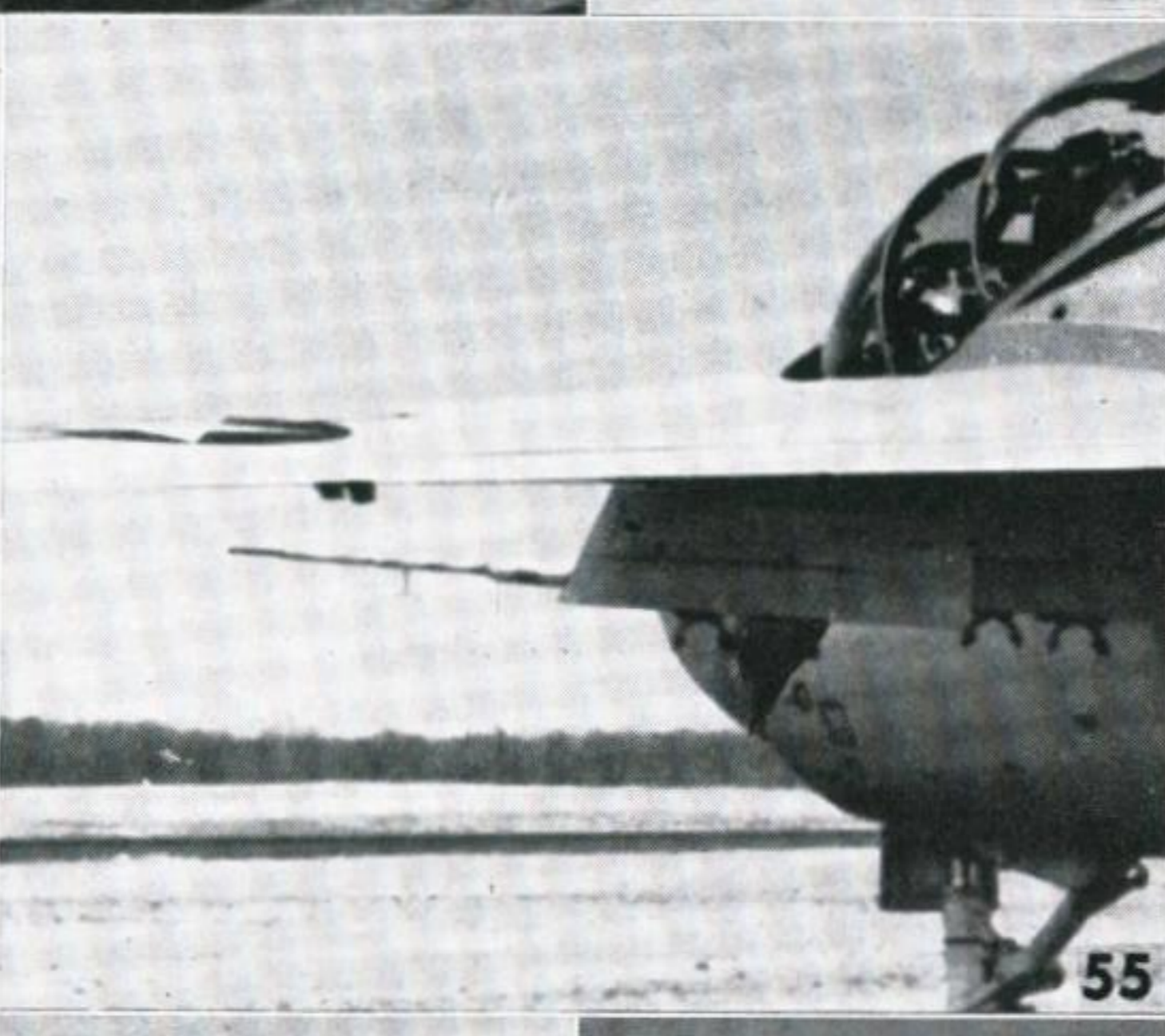
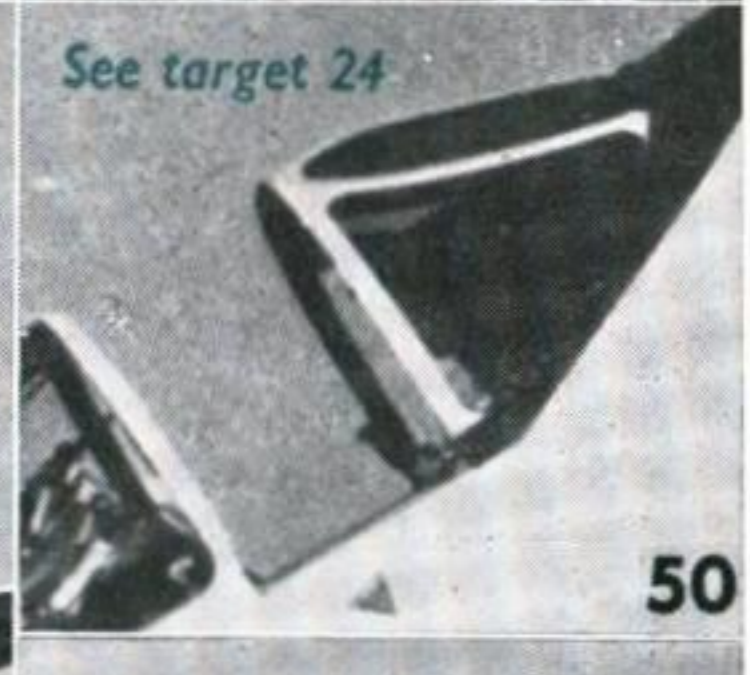
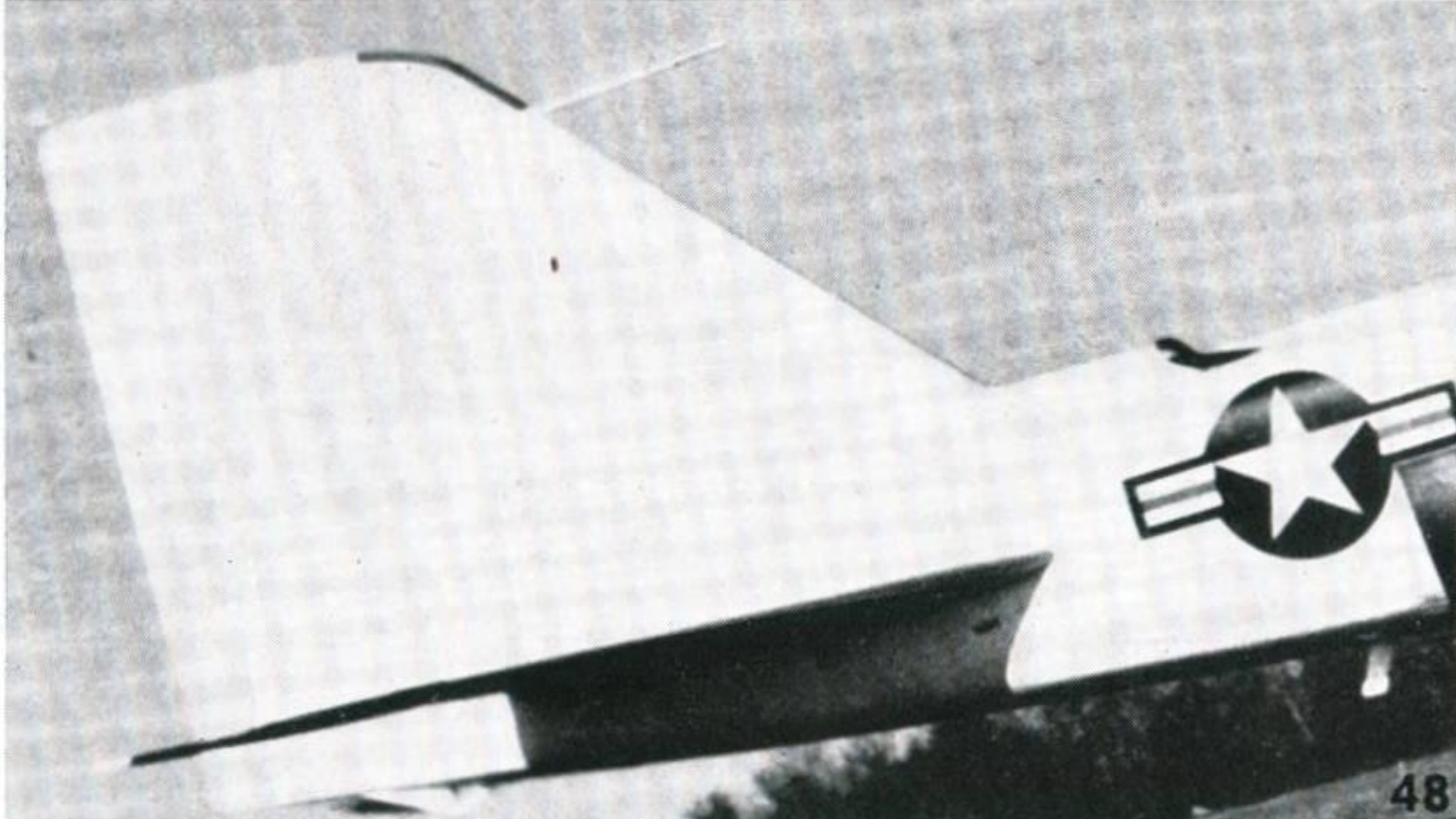
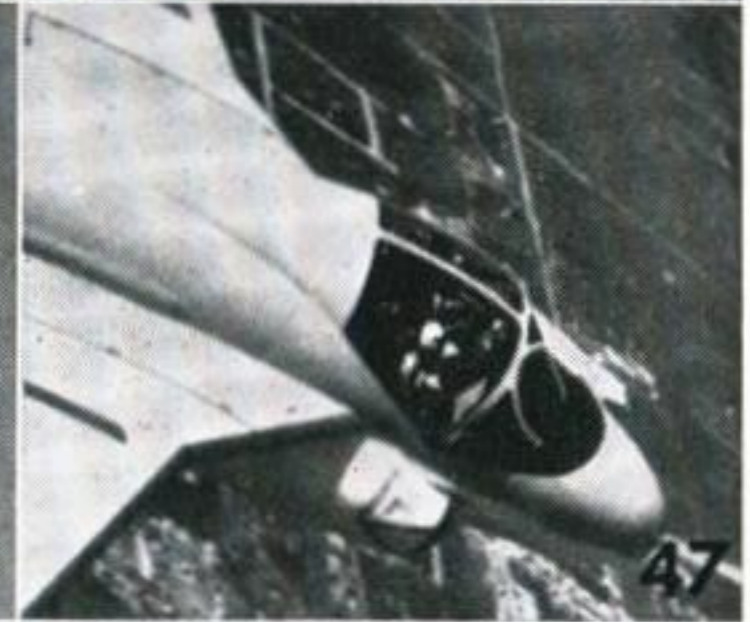
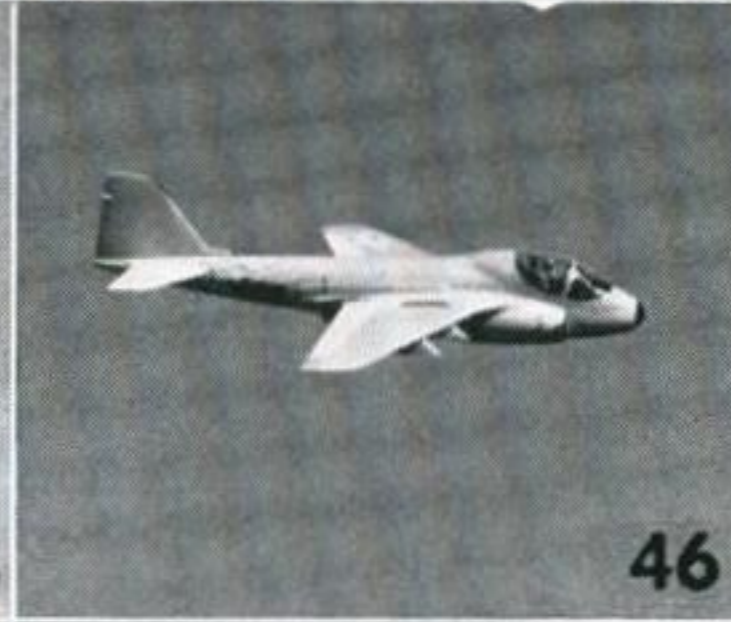
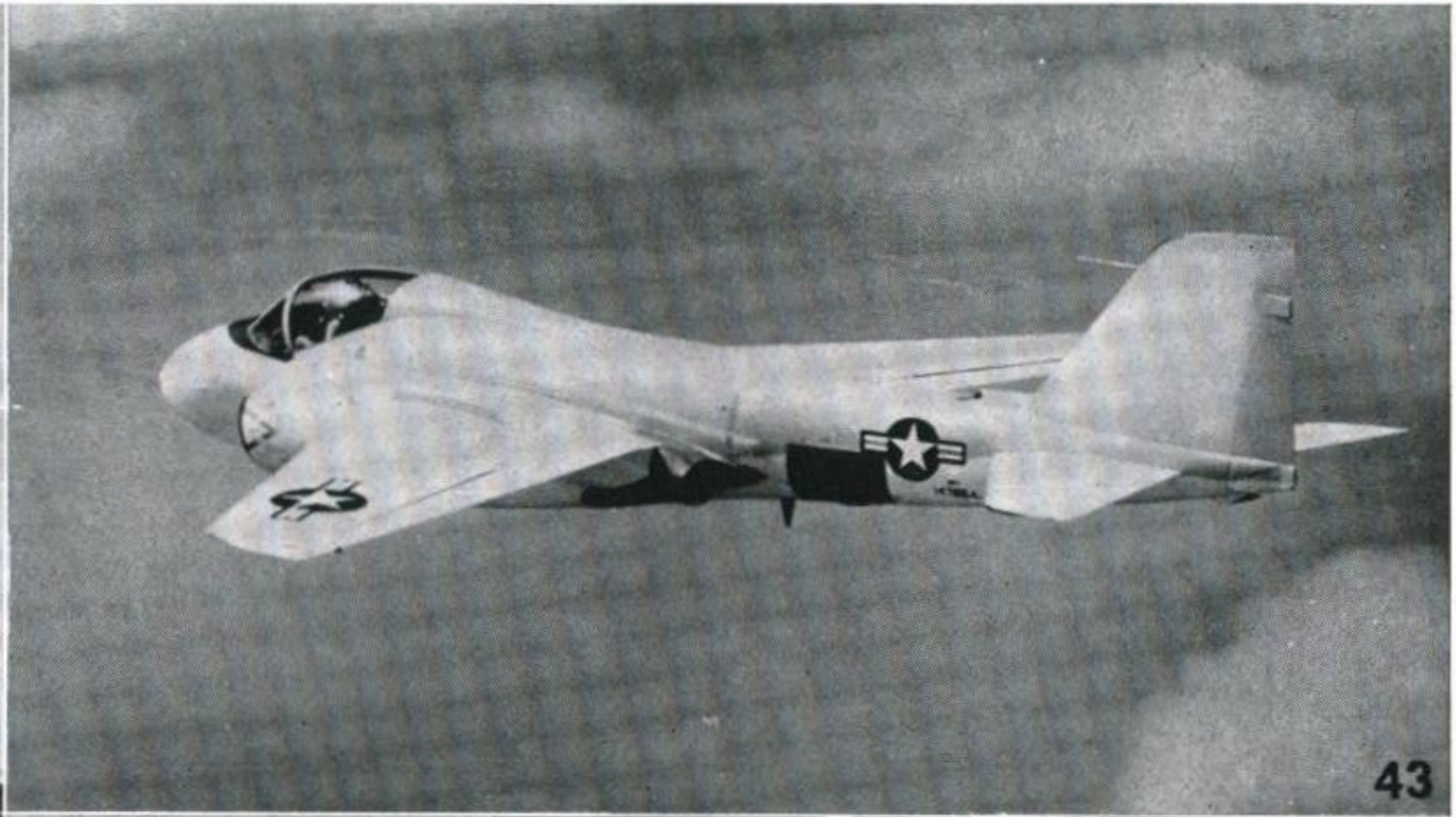
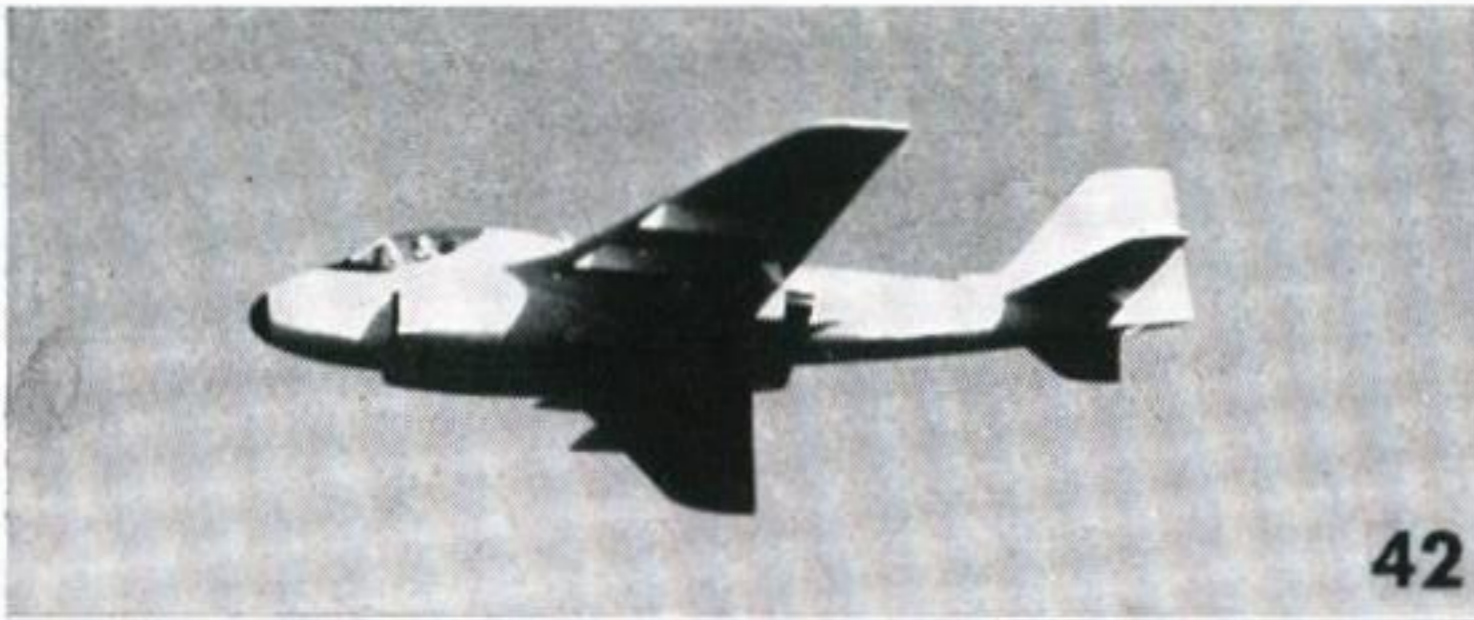
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Cover Photo: The "Battle of Britain" Class Locomotive No. 34050, Royal Observer Corps, prior to departure from Waterloo on Sunday, July 2nd, 1961.

SOLUTIONS TO TESTS AND EXERCISES IN THIS EDITION

VAMPIRE T II

Page 162

All targets are **T II Vampires** except numbers 7 and 16, which are respectively a **Sea Venom** and a **Sea Vixen**.



VARSITY

Page 167

All targets are **Varsities** except number 22, which is a **C-131A Samaritan**.



SUPER BROUSSARD

Page 168

All targets are of **Super Broussards** except numbers 21 and 26 which are **Dart-Heralds**.



BUCCANEER

Page 170

All targets are **Buccaneers** except numbers 11 and 33, which are both **Javelins**.



GRUMMAN A2F INTRUDER

Page 172

All targets are **Intruders** except number 33 which is a **Buckeye T2J-1**.



Solutions to Airborne Headaches No. 77 in the September, 1961, issue:—

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 693. Crusader | 701. Fishpot |
| 694. Comet 4 | 702. Delta Dagger |
| 695. Buccaneer | 703. Twin Pioneer |
| 696. Fresco | 704. Vautour |
| 697. Globemaster | 705. Marlin |
| 698. Skyray | 706. Victor |
| 699. Gannet | 707. Argosy |
| 700. Javelin | |

AIRBORNE HEADACHES

No. 78

