

27. One other attribute of a naked steel bullet must not be overlooked, viz., its incendiary effect when it strikes a ferrous structure. During ground trials a Blenheim was set on fire by the second hit from a "solid" bullet. Unfortunately, German aircraft do not normally contain much iron or steel.

28. If we look into the not too distant future, I think we shall find that an additional and quite different reason may arise for the adoption of the high-velocity gun with a comparatively heavy projectile. I refer to the increasing intensity and effect of return fire from Bombers.

29. Our Fighters are protected to a very large degree from the return fire of Bombers which they attack from astern, so long as they have to sustain the impact only of rifle-calibre bullets.

30. The situation will be quite different, however, if turrets with .5-inch guns are commonly used in Bombers. The Bomber has the comparative advantage over the pursuing Fighter of firing "down-wind" (one may get a clear idea of the situation by imagining both aircraft to be anchored in space, with a 300-m.p.h. wind blowing from the Bomber to the Fighter). The result is likely to be that effective armouring of Fighters against return fire will be impossible, and fighting ranges in good visibility may be considerably lengthened. In such circumstances high velocity, flat trajectory and a heavy projectile will attain increasing importance; attention will also have to be paid to accurate methods of sighting, and allowance for gravity drop.

LONDON

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

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