

AIR CHIEFS BATTLE UNKNOWN ENEMY

Britain's Rocket-Robot makes its first public bow as the security curtain is lifted from experiments in supersonic flight. At a West of England airfield the improved 12-foot-long, 18-inch diameter robot - controlled by automatic pilot when in flight - is made ready for its first test. Carried under the fuselage of a Mosquito, and powered by chemical fuels as used in the German V-2s, its release will be made over the Atlantic off the Scilly Isles.

Radar detectors are used to "Track" the robot, which aims to reach a faster-than-sound speed where earlier attempts had failed. Part of the little-publicised Research Development Work by the Ministry of Supply, the test proves Britain's active research into this new development in air travel. At 30,000 feet, where the speed of sound is 600 miles-an-hour, the rocket is released.

Fifteen seconds later, its automatic pilot forces the machine into level flight. It covers 15 miles in 70 seconds - piercing the sonic barrier at nearly 900-miles-an-hour - before plunging itself mechanically in the Atlantic.