

JET MEN GO TO WORLD'S FASTEST SCHOOL

A Yorkshire airfield becomes a school for speed kings. Men with wings go back to the class rooms to study jets. Their average age 23, they've been hand-picked for an eight-weeks-course at a newly opened school at Drifffield. Here, the pilots of a new age are introduced to their new charge - the jet engine. The world's fastest college prepares for the graduation of its first class. An important lesson in the curriculum is a thorough and detailed analysis of the engine that will become their life.

Before the Drifffield school opened, students would have graduated via Spitfires and Mosquitoes to the Meteors. Now, under the speeded-up syllabus, they go from trainer planes straight to the jets. By this system, Britain - already holding a world lead in jet fighters - will soon attain another - in jet pilots.

Motto of the jet school is speed - in the air and on the ground. Aircraft take off and land every 60 seconds. Refuelling breaks all established records. It takes each plane just over five minutes to fill up with 300 gallons of kerosene. Nine minutes after touching down, the Meteor is serviced, refuelled and ready for another trip.

For 10-mile-a-minute pilots there can be no second thoughts. Mae West life-jackets are their dress order. At their speeds, they are never more than 25 minutes from the sea, no matter what airfield they fly from in Britain. Their first trip is in a Meteor seven, with an instructor, to get the feel of zooming along at 600-miles-an-hour. With the Meteor's flying time limited to 40 minutes, each plane must be clocked out at traffic control so that the pupil-pilots can be warned when their time is up.

Streaking through the air at four times the speed of a piston-engined plane, the jet-student-pilots are making flying history. They are the men of tomorrow - the men who'll hold Britain's first line of defence.