



PARACHUTE RECOVERY—Shown here being examined for damage by U. S. Air Force and Ryan Aeronautical Engineers is a comparatively lightweight recovery parachute used for high-speed, heavy-weight drops in the New Mexico desert.

AERONAUTICS

Parachute Robot Plane

Robot plane about half the size of a jet fighter can be parachuted back to earth after its use as a military target plane, thus saving wear and tear on the electronic equipment.

► AN AIR Force radio-controlled "fighter" plane, used in military target practice, parachutes to earth when its flight mission is ended, the Air Research and Development Command has reported.

Known as the Ryan Q-2, the robot plane is about half the size of a jet fighter and flies at regular fighter plane speeds. It is controlled remotely from a box on the ground at the Holloman Air Development Center, Alamogordo, N. Mex., and acts as a target for the guns of fighter planes and anti-aircraft artillerymen.

Because of its delicate and expensive electronic stuffings, it is desirable to use a parachute to bring the plane to earth. The parachute can land the plane with less risk to the electronic equipment than can the remote-control system.

No bullets are fired at the plane during target practice. Instead, the plane gives airborne and ground-based radar something to lock on and to track as it maneuvers at near-sonic speeds through the skies.

Especially lightweight for its size, the parachute is unhitched automatically when the plane touches the ground. It has been successfully used in the past to lower some of the heaviest objects ever dropped from aircraft. Some of the objects, such as big guns, plummet through the air at near-sonic speeds, yet are undamaged by the fall.

Although they are a novelty, parachuting airplanes are not new. As early as 1927, aeronautical engineers attached parachutes to planes and proved that the craft could be lowered safely by 'chute in emergencies. It was thought in the 1930's that all commercial aircraft eventually would be equipped with them.

Science News Letter, February 14, 1953

PUBLIC HEALTH

Cosmetics Dangerous To Inquisitive Children

► KEEP THE cosmetic bottles, metal polishes, paint removers and insect repellents securely closed and out of reach of the children, warns Dr. Morton J. Rodman of Rutgers University College of Pharmacy, New Brunswick, N. J.

These substances may contain chemicals that can poison a small child if he drinks them. Since in many cases the ingredients are not listed on the label, the doctor called to treat a child who has taken a swallow or two out of curiosity does not know what antidote to give.

Dr. Rodman predicts that 600 children will die of poison in America during the next 12 months.

Science News Letter, February 14, 1953

DENTISTRY

Women Keep Teeth Better Than Men

► BECAUSE WOMEN visit their dentists more often than men, they lose fewer teeth, the American Dental Association announced in Chicago.

One out of each 10 grown men has lost all his teeth but for grown women the figure is one out of each 15, an association survey shows.

Perfect dental health was found in about one out of 12 of the patients examined.

The survey was made by more than 4,000 family dentists and covered 39,679 patients. Other facts from the survey, appearing in the *Journal of the American Dental Association* (Feb.), are:

Tooth decay was found to be the principal reason for the loss of teeth up to the age of 39 for women and 34 for men. After these ages, periodontal diseases (ailments of the gums and other tooth-supporting tissues) were primarily responsible for loss of teeth. Almost 50% more men than women were found to be in need of extractions because of diseased gums, further indicating more dental neglect by males.

Teen-agers between the ages of 15 and 19 were most in need of dental fillings. Dental patients in this age group were found to have an average of five decayed teeth each.

About one-fourth of all boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 14 were in need of orthodontic (realignment of teeth) treatment.

One out of each ten adult dental patients needed immediate treatment for diseases of the gums.

Science News Letter, February 14, 1953

AERONAUTICS

Eight Jet Engines Power Air Force's New Bomber

See Front Cover

► THE STRANGE-LOOKING airplane on the cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER is the U. S. Air Force's super-secret bomber, the XB-52. The big plane is powered by eight Pratt and Whitney J-57 turbo-jet engines, believed the most powerful in the world. The engines are slung in double pods under the plane's swept-back wings.

Ordered into production in March, 1951, the plane is 153 feet long and has a wing-span of 185 feet. The curious wing shape shown on the cover is due to three things: the angle at which the photograph was taken, the atmosphere, and the normal upward flexing of the wing tip at the moment the picture was snapped.

Although the Air Force says little about its new plane, onlookers at Boeing Field, Seattle, reported the big ship cracked seven-inch-thick concrete runways there during ground tests. Its engines made so much noise that nearby buildings shook.

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