

INVENTION

# Current U.S. Patents

► A FLOATING RUNWAY may one day zip in and out of busy harbors carrying ready-to-fly airplanes as passengers.

Equipped with jet engines, the hydrofoil runway would skip over the water, reaching speeds of 100 miles an hour or more.

Two Demarest, N.J., engineers, Fred H. Wilken and Herman Roberts, were awarded patent 3,191,566 by the U.S. Patent Office in Washington, D.C., for the runway, which they believe will solve the ever-increasing problem of lack of adequate airport space in crowded urban areas.

The floating runway would be about 200 feet long and about 40 feet wide. It would be able to pull into a port, pick up one loaded plane at a time, take the plane out into the water away from crowded areas, and while speeding along, let the plane take off from it.

With the radar equipment available today, it would also be easy for a plane to land on the speeding runway, Mr. Wilken told SCIENCE SERVICE.

The aircraft cannot run out of or overshoot the runway because the hull forming the runway travels along with and under the aircraft as long as needed for takeoff and landing. Aircraft noise problem is also eliminated, Mr. Wilken noted.

## Food Irradiator

A system for pasteurizing food by giving it a dose of radiation could one day prove to be a significant tool in food processing.

Two Brookhaven National Laboratory scientists, Otto A. Kuhl, Northport, N.Y., and Adolph B. Oltmann, Bayport, N.Y., were awarded patent 3,192,054 for the irradiator, which is now being used on a developmental scale in Gloucester, Mass., with various seafoods, such as shrimp.

Patent rights were assigned to the Government through the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission.

## Other Interesting Patents

A newly patented space probing system would take pictures of the moon or a planet and send the information back to earth. The camera, which peeks through a window in the space vehicle, goes into action when light from the moon triggers a photoelectric eye. Harold D. Nuffer, China Lake, Calif., and Richard G. McCarty, Santa Barbara, Calif., earned patent 3,192,476 for the system. They assigned patent rights to the Government through the Secretary of the Navy.

An electronic lip reader that can detect the position of the lips and teeth during speech earned patent 3,192,321 for Ernie G. Nassimbene, San Jose, Calif. To be used with voice recognition machines, the reader distinguishes between letters that sound alike by catching the reflection from a light beamed at the speaker's mouth. Patent rights were assigned to International Business Machines Corporation, New York.

Snake-proof trousers, lined by a special plastic material, have been invented to help save outdoorsmen from snake bites. Robert F. Martin, Selma, Ala., was awarded patent 3,191,185 for the snake-proof pants.

A tiny heater mounted inside a car door can keep the door locks from freezing up. The lock heater can be thermostatically controlled so that if the temperature drops below a certain point, the heater will go on automatically. William H. Swindall, Jackson, Tenn., was awarded patent 3,192,359 for the heater.

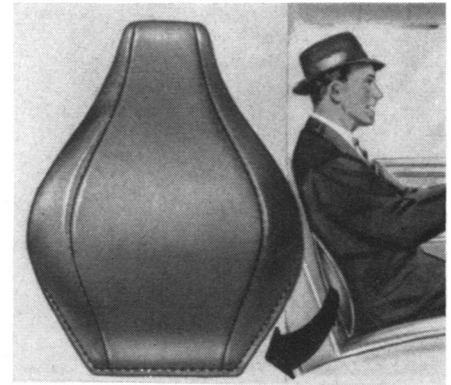
• Science News Letter, 88:45 July 17, 1965

## Do You Know?

Vestiges of a city believed to be the capital of the *Mali Empire*, founded in the 13th century by the Mandinga people from the Sudan have been unearthed in Guinea.

Controlled explosions indicate that underground *rocks* in the western United States are hotter than those in the East, consistent with the hypothesis that the West is geologically young.

• Science News Letter, 88:45 July 17, 1965



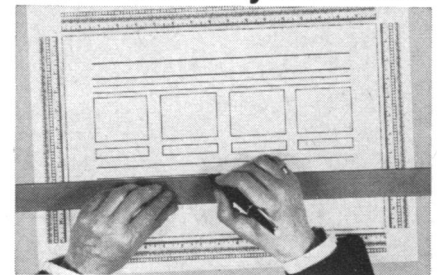
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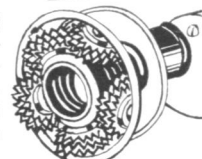
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