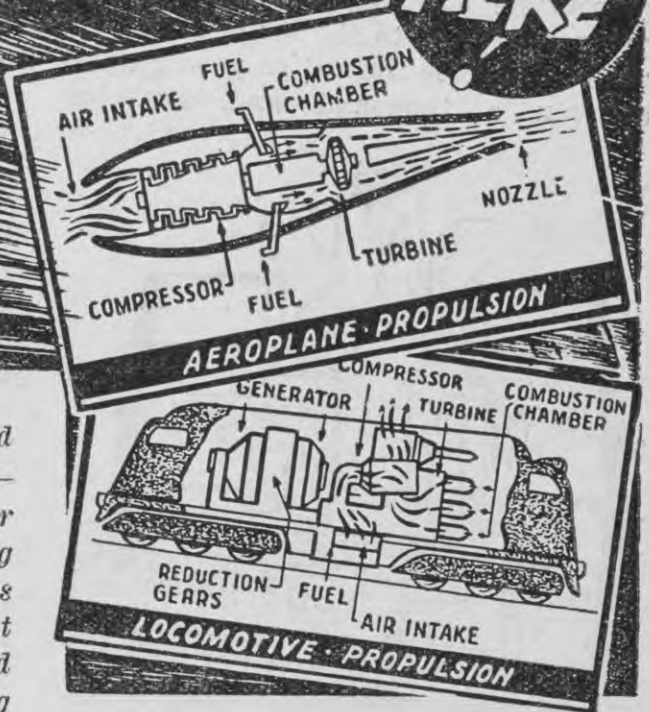


JET PROPULSION

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BACK in the winter of 1943 Allied pilots reported to their commanders the presence in the skies over France of German aircraft flying without propellers. The commanders were frankly sceptical, and even went so far as to give it as their considered opinion that the pilots had been seeing things.

But the experts pricked up their ears when, one by one, other pilots began to turn in similar reports. Fuller information was asked for and obtained, and the secret was out. Germany had introduced the jet-propulsion plane into aerial combat.

At the height of the flying bomb assault on Britain last year the world learned of the amazing success of a new jet fighter, the "Meteor", in countering the menace. At that time still on the secret list—details of its construction and performance have only recently been revealed—the "Meteor" was known to be intercepting and shooting down fly-bombs at a rate which, if it did not result in complete mastery over the new form of enemy attack, at least greatly reduced its effectiveness and helped to assure its ultimate defeat. The Germans had been the first to use jet planes in warfare, but the "Meteor", which soon

came to be classed as the finest fighter in the world, and which represented the result of fifteen years of experimentation by the brilliant British aeronautical scientist, Air-Commodore Frank Whittle, proved itself superior to the German type in every way.

The success of the jet-propulsion aircraft has served to focus attention on the post-war possibilities of the new heat engine, known as the gas combustion turbine, which gives it its motive power. The spectacle of propellerless planes, burning ordinary kerosene, streaking through the sky at sensational altitudes has given rise to visions of ships, locomotives, electric-generating stations and perhaps even motor cars being powered on the same principle. The world has gone gas turbine-conscious practically overnight, just as it marvelled at and accepted in turn the steam-engine, the steam turbine and the internal combustion engine.