



A Retractable Rocket Pod

A RETRACTABLE rocket launching pod which is similar in conception to that to be installed on forthcoming production models of the CF-100 has been revealed as standard armament on the North American F-86D.

Designed as a high-altitude, all-weather interceptor, the F-86D carries 24 "Mighty Mouse" 2.75-inch folding fin rockets (in photo showing rockets being fired, fins of one rocket are just beginning to snap into position) in its pack, which pops out from the bottom of the fuselage. Immediately after firing, the pod snaps back into the aircraft, giving it an unbroken surface for high speed flight.

Though no information has been released on the CF-100 installation, it is understood that it is generally similar, though capable of carrying more rockets (40). The CF-100 pack will also be installed in a ventral position.

Little Similarity: It is, however, only in the rocket pods and the fact that they are both for all-weather flight, that the two aircraft bear much resemblance. The F-86D carries a crew of just one and has an extremely short range, while the CF-100 carries a crew of two and is capable of staying aloft for comparatively long periods on a single fuelling.

The F-86D, one of the several interesting variants of the Sabre species, is just now coming into USAF squad-

ron service. Production is confined to North American's Los Angeles plant. It is this model of the Sabre that holds the current official world absolute speed record of 698.5 mph, set last November . . . a record that was made with a full combat load of rockets.

Though the general resemblance of the D and E models of the Sabre is close, examination shows that the D, with a maximum gross weight of 18,000 pounds is 2,000 pounds heavier than the E. It is also more than four feet longer. Its General Electric J47-GE-17 is a later version of the model used in the E, and while the rating of both engines is 5,200 lbs. th., the J47-GE-17 is fitted with an afterburner, which raises the thrust to 7,700 lbs. for short periods. The installation of radar equipment in the nose of the F-86D naturally made it necessary to lower the air intake somewhat, though North American engineers were able to retain the straight-through configuration. Another detail difference in the two aircraft is the use of the clamshell canopy (that is, it is raised, pivoting at the rear, for cockpit access) on the D, as opposed

to the sliding type on the E.

A Full Load: North American describes the F-86D as being equipped with more electronic equipment than an average television station.

Conceived as a home defence interceptor, this aircraft is intended to climb to interception height at great speed. Initially, the pilot is guided to a target area by ground radar. Then his own airborne radar picks up the enemy aircraft and locks him on an interception course. Electronic devices automatically compute range, speed, and probable course of the target.

The pilot, who might never see his enemy except as a "blip" on his radar scope, can fire all 24 rockets simultaneously. A single rocket is said to have the destructive power of a 75 mm artillery shell. The rockets attain a maximum speed of approximately 2,000 miles per hour.

Another approach to the all-rocket configuration is to be found in the Lockheed F-94C Starfire, which carries 24 Mighty Mouse 2.75 inch rockets in tubes arranged in a ring around the nose radome and faired in with flap covers which snap open just before the rockets emerge on firing. The Starfire also carries a total of 24 additional 2.75 inch rockets in two wing pods. This gives it a total capacity of 48 rockets, less than half the reported 100 capacity of the all-rocket version of the CF-100.

THE PHOTOS: Picture at upper left shows the rocket launching pack in the extended position. At right the rockets are shown being fired in flight. First rocket has tail fins fully extended while one behind it has fins just beginning to open after leaving the launching pack.