

NCAR

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BRITISH RESEARCH PLANE ARRIVES HERE FOR AIRCRAFT SAFETY EXPERIMENT

DENVER--A British twin-jet research aircraft from the Royal Aircraft Establishment in Worcestershire, England, arrives in the Denver vicinity this evening to participate in a major field experiment investigating aircraft safety.

The research plane, a Hawker-Siddely 125, accompanied by 12 scientists and crew members from the Royal Signals and Radar Establishment, will be making a series of flights for the Joint Airport Weather Studies (JAWS) project. The program is a joint effort between the University of Chicago and the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder, Colorado. The project is funded, in part, by the National Science Foundation, which also sponsors NCAR. Additional funds or support have been provided by NASA and by NOAA's Prototype Regional Observing and Forecasting Service.

To support the JAWS program, which is investigating the meteorological conditions that emanate from thunderstorms and create hazards for aircraft during takeoffs and landings, the British aircraft will conduct a series of flights during the next three weeks.

A carbon dioxide laser velocimeter system, housed in the nose of the research aircraft, will measure wind shear and turbulence around and below thunderstorms.

Information gathered from the British aircraft and other NOAA, NASA, and NCAR planes, radars, and meteorological equipment will enable scientists to better understand microbursts--small regions of intense downflows and outflows of air often associated with thunderstorms--and their relationship to aviation safety.

Specifically, the goals of the British scientists and their American colleagues will be to determine the effects of low-level wind shear on aircraft performance, test and evaluate wind-shear detection and warning systems, and extend the usefulness of Doppler radars for detecting conditions about which pilots and the public need to be warned.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: The Hawker-Siddely 125 is equipped with extra seats to accommodate the media. Contact Joan Vandiver Frisch if you would like to be put on one of the research flights between June 28 and July 15.

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