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Interim Report 1946/14

Propellants Plastic

Use with Light Alloy Motor

P.D.E. Aberporth

September, 1946.

Summary

The report describes experiments carried out to date on the filling, static firing and projection of a light alloy rocket using both high and low energy binder plastic propellants. The main defects fall roughly into two classes and some progress has been made in overcoming them.

Contents

- I. Introduction
- II. Filling Technique
 - 1. General.
 - 2. Tube Lacquers and Finishes.
- III. Static Firings
 - 1. High Energy Binder Propellant.
 - 2. Low Energy Binder Propellant.
 - 3. Venturi Erosion and Defects.
 - 4. Functioning of Thermal Fuze.
- IV. Discussion of Causes of Bursts
- V. Projection Trials
- VI. Conclusions
- VII. Future Work

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I. Introduction

The original object of making rocket propellants with plastic properties was to enable the propellant to be loaded against the wall of the motor, with the gas conduit centrally placed. One of the main objects of this is to protect the wall of the motor from the hot propellant gases, so that the motor may be made lighter than would otherwise be necessary, and the performance of the weapon thereby improved.

In using light alloys as a means of lightening the motor, it is particularly important that the propellant shall in fact provide the protection intended, in a reliable manner, because the mechanical properties of light alloys fall off badly under a moderate rise of temperature. It was scarcely to be hoped that an assembly reliable enough for Service use would be developed without considerable experiment and experience. The present report describes the work so far carried out; which though very incomplete should, it is thought, be set out at this stage because it indicates fairly clearly the direction of the next advance.

Effective inhibition over the ends as well as the walls of the charge is necessary in the charge design used (P.D.882/1 and 2) since if recession is permitted to take place, the motor wall will overheat at the exposed parts. The method at first used was to provide end plates of an annular width equal to the web thickness of the charge. As the results show this method has not proved adequate and proposals for its improvement are discussed.

II. Filling Technique

1. General

No serious difficulties have been encountered in the filling operation and the majority of the charges have been exceptionally well formed and free from air inclusions or other visible defects. A tendency has been noticed for the charges to be slightly pulled away from the shell rings by the withdrawal of the former after pressing. The behaviour is somewhat erratic in this respect and so far it has not been possible to correlate this observation with any other variable.

Drawings for vacuum filling attachments have been prepared and part of the equipment manufactured but this work has not been given high priority as no large air inclusions have been encountered in over sixty pressings and it is thought improbable that the adhesion of the propellant to the wall of the motor can be improved by the use of vacuum filling in this particular charge design. (As produced by filling tools to P.D. 882/1 and 2).

A considerable variation in the plasticity of different batches of R.D.2633 propellant has been noticed which has necessitated frequent changes in pressing temperature in order to get reproducible results. It is felt that attempts should be made during manufacture to improve the uniformity of the physical properties of the propellant.

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2. Tube Lacquers and Finishes

At present a kaolin-filled "Alvar" lacquer is being applied over the anodised surface by C.S.A.R. It is considered that both the adhesion and mechanical strength of this lacquer require improvement before it could be recommended for Service use (See however G.S.A.R.'s Report No. A.R.D. Explosives 211/46).

No information is at present available on the precise type of anodising process used for these tubes and it is possible that the adhesion of the lacquers varies with the method of anodising.

A supply of specially roughened tubes for large-scale adhesion experiments is awaited from C.E.A.D.

III. Static Pirings

1. High Energy Binder Propellant

A total of 58 rounds has been fired statically. Temperatures of -50, Air and 140%, have been covered. The full results are given in Table I, while Table II gives details of the behaviour and results of examination of all bursts. Table III gives a brief summary of all static and projection firing to date.

Considering the work in chronological order the following results have been obtained. The first twelve rounds were pressed in unlacquered tubes and on firing at air temperature two practically instantaneous bursts were obtained. A further seven rounds with unlacquered tubes in which the pressure during the forming of the charge had been maintained for five minutes were then fired at air temperature quite successfully. Ten rounds which had been coated with a filled lacquer by C.S.A.R. were pressed and then stored in a vertical position for three days at 120°F. In order to ascertain that no charge-slip was induced by the lacquer and then fired statically. Of the five fired at 140°F, three burst late in burning while the others functioned correctly. The remaining five all burnt correctly at -5°F, with the exception of one round which gave a tube perforation just before the end of burning.

The failures at 140°F. may have been due in part to deterioration of the propellant brought about by the three days storage at 120°F. The storage undoubtedly caused the high initial peaks which were recorded but the fact that they were late bursts and the correct behaviour of the stored rounds at -5°F. suggests that there may have been some additional cause (See Table II).

A further four unstored rounds were next fired successfully at 1400F, but of ten rounds supplied pressed by C.S.A.R. two burst late in burning at 140°F, while three similar bursts were obtained at -50F.

It seemed clear at this stage that late bursts were in general caused by tube failures at a point immediately to the rear of the venturi plate indicating that the walls had become exposed to the hot gases by detachment of the propellant at this point. (See Figs. 17, 19 and 20). In order to overcome this defect a

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lengthened venturi-plate has been evolved (P.D. drawing 820/7; Fig.25). Ten rounds fitted with such a plate have been filled and fired statically at -5°F. Of these, four burst almost instantaneously while the remainder functioned correctly, there being no sign of tube perforation or overheating in the neighbourhood of the venturi entry. Subject to further confirmation it appears likely that this modification will eliminate the majority of late-bursts. It is noteworthy that the lot of propellant involved in these ten rounds was the hardest so far supplied, the softness figure being 10. (See Table II). Abnormal behaviour at -5°F. is not therefore surprising.

A selection of pressure and thrust-time curves for firing temperatures of -5°, air and 140°P, is attached (Figs. 3 to 11).

2. Low Energy Binder Propellant

Sixteen rounds have been filled using propellant R.D. 2049 in tubes coated with "Hycar" lacquer. Of these, five fired at air temperature functioned correctly (See Table I and curves Figs. 12 to 14); but of the same number fired at -50%, two failed about half way through burning due to the use of light alloy venturi plates which were almost completely eroded away. The remaining three were quite satisfactory.

The times of burning were naturally longer than those obtained with the high energy binder propellant R.D. 2633, the thrusts being correspondingly lower.

3. Venturi Erosion and Defects

It was noticed that a number of venturi were swollen at a point just outside the throat after firing with propellant R.D.2633 (See Fig. 24 showing sectioned venturi). In the case of rounds 5.P.344 and 5.P.282 the venturi were completely split open just before all-burnt as illustrated in Figs. 26 and 27. These components were examined by C.E.A.D. and stated to be below the specified wall thickness.

The high energy binder propellant causes considerable erosion of the venturi entry. This is shown in Fig. 24 while Fig. 25 shows the appearance of the venturi, fitted with modified venturi plate, before and after firing. In general the throat diameter using R.D.2633 does not alter appreciably, being sometimes slightly reduced and sometimes slightly enlarged on firing. On the other hand the low energy binder propellant R.D.2049 causes appreciable reduction in throat diameter. This may be due to the fact that there is a greater area of metal exposed to the gas stream in the latter case due to the use of a smaller venturi throat.

4. Functioning of Thermal Fuze

Seven of the firings at air temperature already mentioned were made in conjunction with tests of the thermal fuze. In all cases correct arming was observed while four records were obtained showing satisfactorily functioning of fuze to P.D.786/2.

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IV. Discussion of Causes of Bursts

A description of the type and probable cause of each burst appears in Table II which should be studied in conjunction with the photographs (Figs. 15 to 23) and miniature pressure or thrust time curves (Figs. 1 and 2).

It will be noticed that in general bursts have occurred very early, i.e. at not more than 0.2 sec. after the commencement of burning or late, i.e. after 0.6 sec. burning. Examination of fragments of tubes and propellant from the former type has generally indicated that they were due to detachment of the propellant from the walls of the motors leading to excessive burning surfaces, the high pressures then developed were clearly established by the pressure recording. This type of burst is portrayed in Fig. 1 rounds Q.818, 823, 819, 824, 701, 744 and Fig. 2 round Q.788.

The late bursts, or merely tube perforations as they are in some cases, occur without any marked rise in pressure and in a mild case as shown in Fig. 1 round Q.774 and Fig. 2 round Q.784, there is nothing in the pressure-time curve to suggest any fault. Measurement of the performance indices shows that this figure is slightly below normal in these two cases, indicating that the perforation occurred almost at the end of burning. The majority of the remaining failures of this type were clearly due to the same phenomenon i.e. overheating of the exposed wall at the venturi end because of detachment of the propellant at this point. The only doubtful late bursts appear to be rounds Q.768 Fig. 16 in which the tube burst only at the head end and 5.P.351 Fig. 18 which was fired without recording the pressure-time curve and again failure appears to have started at the head end. The pressure at which the latter burst occurred is unfortunately not known.

V. Projection Trials

Six rounds filled H.E.B. propellant R.D.2633 have been projected at air temperature at a low v.E. All rounds functioned correctly with the exception of one which became unstable near the end of burning and ranged short. Because of the smoke cloud it was impossible to observe the behaviour fully but it is thought probable that the tube perforated, as in several of the static firings, and the venturi and fin assembly became detached.

Of six similar rounds employing the L.E.B. propellant R.D.2049, all the motors functioned correctly but some small objects, probably fins, were observed to fall off one round near the end of burning.

The gravity drop was noticeably greater with R.D. 2049 propellant and the ranging, at the low Q.E. considerably less than with R.D. 2633. (See Report to Trial 155 F(1)).

The projection trial established that the fin assembly will require strengthening for Service use.

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VI. Conclusions

- 1. The nature of the failures is now fairly well understood. They are of two kinds (a) the propellant burns at the wall soon after ignition, developing a high pressure in consequence, and so bursting the motor, (b) the propellant gases reach the motor wall comparatively late in the burning period and the wall gives way at the working pressure owing to loss of strength.
- 2. Both kinds of failure are thus ultimately due to insufficient adhesion between the propellant and the light alloy wall. The effect '(a)' is accentuated in the less soft batches of propellant. Improvement in adhesion would appear to be the most profitable line of attack in the
- 3. A closer correlation between firing trials and rheological and adhesion tests, for a given batch of propellant should be instituted. A variety of laboratory adhesion measurements including a "peeling" test is desirable.
- 4. An investigation with the object of securing less batch-to-batch variation in the rheological properties of the propellant should be

VII. Puture pevelopment at P.D.E.

- 1. It is proposed to carry out further trials to obtain conclusive evidence that the lengthened venturi end-ring to P.D. 820/7 is essential. Propellant R.D. 2633 (H.E.B.) will be used since it is more likely to fail
- 2. Experiments will be continued in order to prove that it is necessary to maintain pressure during filling for about five minutes. The system being completely closed during this period.
- 3. Demonstration that, having cleared 1, and 2. above, and ignoring for the time being, the effects of climatic storage and rough usage, the L.E.B. propellant will give reliable results when fired statically or projected.

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Table I

Static Firing Results for LAF/R.F. R.D. 2653 and R.D. 2049 propellants

Serial N	umbers	Charge	Ignition	Time of	burning (sec.)	Initial Po	eak	Maxo	kaxo	Performance	Charge		Venturi d	iam. (ino)	Date	Batch	
Filling		tempo F.	Interval (sec.)	Total	To half thrust	Pressure (lb./sq.in.)	Thrust (1b.)	Pressure lb./sq.in.	Thrust (1b.)	Index	Weight lbs oz.	Igniter	Before firing	After firing	of Firing	Noc	hemarks
5P-267 274 265 266 264 275 283 282	9.696 697 698 699 700 701 744 745	50 78 54 58 40	0.04 0.03 0.04 0.04 0.04 N.R. 0.05	1.53 1.58 1.48 1.56 1.54 0.06 0.21 1.61	1.07 1.00 1.01 1.01 1.04	>2500 N. R.	6410 7300 7000 7400 7440 >10000 >12000 7160	1453 Ng Ra	6445	171 179 173	41 - 5 41 - 14 41 - 6 41 - 14 41 - 10 41 - 4 41 - 5	Standard 3"carton " " " " "	2.155 2.164 2.155 2.153 2.140 2.152 2.149	2.17 2.12 2.19 2.18 2.18 2.18 N.R. N.R.	6.11.45. 9.11.45. 14.11.45.	NAOS NAO7 NAOS	Burst Burst Venturi split open near end of burning.
28 7 285 284 28 8 29 7	746 747 748 749 760	45	0.03 0.03 0.04 0.03 0.05	1.54 1.58 1.56 1.60 1.56	1.04 1.04 1.04 1.06 1.03	N.R. N.R. N.R. N.R. N.R.	7160 7080 7560 7052 7240	N.R. N.R. N.R. N.R. N.R.	7160 7244 7280	176 178 178 178 178	41 - 6 41 - 6 41 - 6 41 - 6 41 - 6	15 15 27	2.147 2.151 2.151 2.149 2.158	2.10 2.20 2.17 2.12 2.11	15. 1.46.	# # # # # # # # # # # # # # # # # # #	Filling technique modified for
301 299 296 300 298 295 347	761 762 763 764 765 766 767	14	0.03 0.03 0.03 0.04 0.03 0.03	1.46 1.50 1.48 1.44 1.48 1.52	1.03 1.04 1.03 0.998 1.02 1.03 0.87	N.R. N.R. N.R. N.R. N.R. 2535	7532 7312 7320 7392 7468 7120 143 5 0	N.R. N.R. N.R. N.R. N.R.	7500 7320 7396 7400 7000	178 179 176 176 176 176 176	41 - 12 41 - 8 41 - 9 41 - 7 41 - 7 41 - 1 41 - 0	LAF/RP filled SR. 371C	2.148 2.152 2.156 2.142 2.162 2.145 2.145	2.10 2.11 2.12 2.10 2.10 2.13 2.13	130 30460	WA. 8 WA. 8 WA. 8 W. 34-	This round and all the following in Lacquered tube
348 349 350 351 341 342 343 344 345 358	765 769 - 770 771 772 773 774 778	-5 : : : :	0.03 0.03 0.04 0.04 0.05 0.04 0.02	0.45 0.72 1.68 1.64 1.61 1.62 1.53 1.13	1.09 1.09 1.010 1.011 1.00 1.011 0.84	3155 2540 Not Rece Not Rece 1241 1271 1240 1288 1268 N.R.		1340 1280 1340 1280 1280 1237 No. Ro	6884 6832 6920 6552 6440	176 175 176 176 174 171 176	41 - 0 40 - 8 40 - 14 40 - 9 40 - 12 41 - 0 39 - 11 40 - 11 40 - 10	LAP/RP	2.148 2.152 2.151 2.146 - 2.16 (nominal)	N.R. N.R. 2.14 N.R. 2.12 2.12 2.14 N.R.	160 40460	# # # # # # # # # # # # # # # # # # #	Burst Burst Functioned correctly # Burst Venturi split open # Burst
359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 455	779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 804	-5	0.02 0.02 0.02 0.02 0.02 0.02 0.03 0.02 0.03 0.02 0.03 0.02	1.16 1.17 1.15 0.60 1.11 1.13 1.17 1.13 1.39 0.06 1.40 0.66 1.45 1.81	0.85 0.84 0.84 0.85 0.83 0.84 0.84 1.07	N.R. N.R. N.R. N.R. N.R. N.R. N.R. N.R.	10600 9912 9860 11660 12040 11960 12230 11480 6400	N. R. 1420	7288 7048 7348 7720 4,7620 4,340	180 179 178 176 175 176 177 175		22 gmo Go12 "" "" "" "" "" "" "" "" "" "" "" "" ""	" " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " "	99 98 98	24. 4.46. 11 126. 4.46. 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 1	50 50 50 50 60 60 50 50 50 50 50 50	Pressed by C.S.A.R. Burst "" " " Burst "" " " Burst "" " Burst "" " Burst "" " Burst "" " Burst
45° 457 458 459 460	805 806 807 808 815	" " "	0.03 0.03 0.06 0.03 0.02	1.96 1.98 2.01 1.94 1.32	1.58 1.59 1.58 1.60 0.97	-	11111	1448 1396 1440 1459 1340	4322 4304 4440 4390 7980	159 159 157 158 177	40 = 0 40 = 0 40 = E 40 = 10	# # # # # # # # # # # # # # # # # # #	2.16	1.55 1.54 1.54 1.54 N.R.	# # # #	# # # 44 & 45	RoDo 263). Modified end rings
461 462 463 464 465 466 473 474 475 476 477 479 480 482	816 817 818 819 820 821 822 823 824 831 832 833 834 835	17 18 18 18 19 19 19 19 19 19	0.02 0.04 0.02 0.02 0.03 0.03 0.03 0.03 0.03 0.02 0.03 Hang-fire	1.019 1.032 0.06 0.07 1.34 1.19 1.024 0.06 0.14 2.039 1.43 1.51 2.18 2.23	N.R. 0.95 0.95 0.95 0.86 	850	N.R. 3000	1470 1462 > 2000 > 2000 1478 1680 1560 > 2400 > 2600 1126 1152 1141 1158 1130	8200 10000 10300 N. R	No Ro	41 - 18 41 - 13 40 - 13 40 - 14 40 - 11 40 - 12 40 - 13 40 - 13 40 - 14 40 - 13 40 - 14 40 - 15 40	# # # # # # # # # # # # # # # # # # #	(nominal)	10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 1	16.8.46. 10.9.46.	13/14/20	" " " Burst " " Burst " " " Burst

[/] Stored for 3 days at 120°F.

/ Standard LAP/RP igniters could not be used as they failed to fit the shell rings.

N.R. Not recorded.

Note: The word "Burst" in the above table implies some form of motor tube failure.

Table II

Examination of Burst Rounds

Bound r	rumber	Firing	Propellant	CodenoRo 18	The of Armir, to	Maximum		irobable Cause of	Fressure or Thrust-Time	Photograph
ri.ling	Firing	Temp.	Lot No.	Softness Figure	point of turst (sec.)	(lb./sq.in.)	Nature of Burst	Burst	Curve Fig. No.	Fig.No.
51° 0275	4. 701	Air	AA.7	22	0.06	Off scale at 2,300	Tube fragmented	Detachment of propellant from wall of tube over considerable area.	4	None
253	744	on the state of th	WA. B	16	0.21	Off scale at 2,500	*		1	15
348	765	140	34-35	33	0.45	Off scale at 3,200	Tube fragmented over half length starting at head.	Not certain	1	16
349	769	140	10	33	0.72	2,500	Venturi ejected together with small (threaded) portion of tube.	Overheating of tube behind venturi plate		17
351	-	140	**	33	N.R. but about same as two previous rounds.	N.R.	Tube split from end to end, a few fragments.	Not certain		18
345	774	-5	*	33	Near end of burning	1,237	Hole in tube to rear of venturi plate.	Overheating of tube behind venturi plate	1	19
362	762 *	140	W. 10	49	0.6	N.R.	Venturi and extreme end of tube ejected.	ER 15 16 16 16	2	20
364	764 =	140	n	**	Near end of burning	N.R.	Small hole to rear of venturi plate.	и и и и и	2	20
36 5	788 💆	-5	**	## ##	0.10	N. R.	Tube split into large fragments.	General detachment of propellant from wall of tube.	2	21
370	790 ≒	5	*	19	0.86	N.R.	Venturi and extreme end of tube ejected.	Owerheating of tube behind venturi plate.	2	20
371	791 *	5	Ħ	e9	0.50	N.R.	и и и	и и и и	2	20
463	ბ1 შ	-5	44 & 45	10	0.06	Off scale at 2,000	Tube fragmented	General detachment of propellant from wall of tube.	1	22
464	819	-5	•	**	0.07	Off scale at 2,000	Shell ring ejected, tube only slightly damaged.	10 m cr. m m m	1	None
474	823	-5	*	, "	0.06	Off scale at 2,400	Tube split and fragmented at one end only.	M H H H H	1	23
475	824	5	, e	29	0.14	Off scale at 2,600	Venturi and extreme end of tube ejected.	M 14 pt pt 27 eq	4	20

^{*} Rounds pressed by C.S.A.R.

Table III

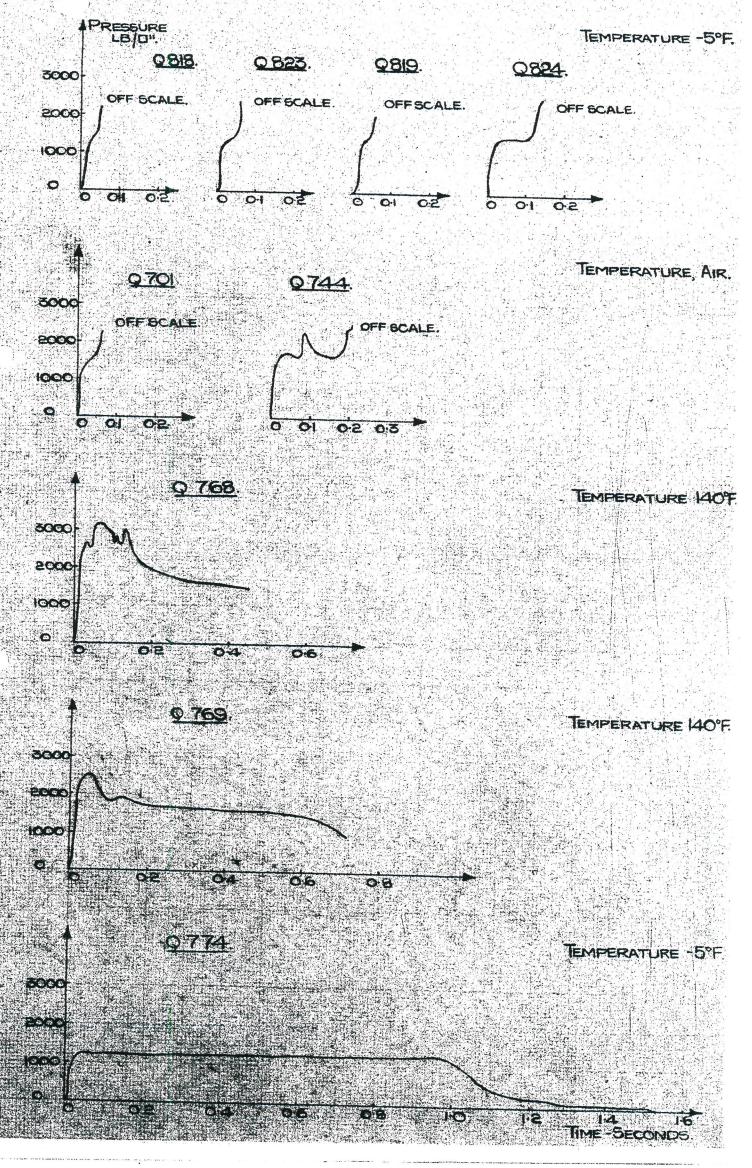
Summary of Results of both static and projection furings

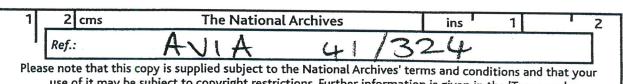
Firing		Number of rounds					
Temperature OF.	Propellant	Functioned correctly	Early Burst	Tube Failure			
- 5	R.D. 2633	12	5	3			
Air	16.D. 2633	22	2	1			
144	A.J. 2633	9	υ	5			
_=	R.D. 2049	3	0	Q			
Aur	A.D. 2049	1 11	0	0			
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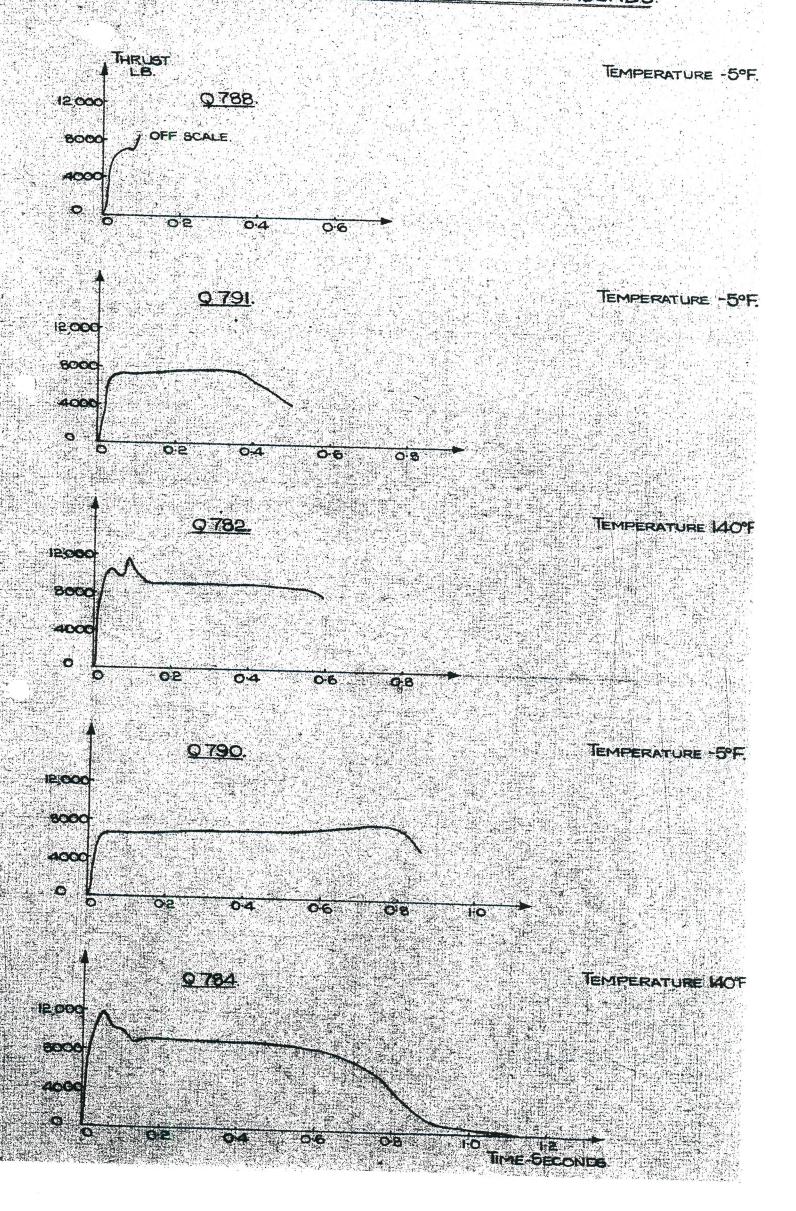
Fig.1. PRESSURE TIME CURVES FOR LAP/RP BURST ROUNDS.

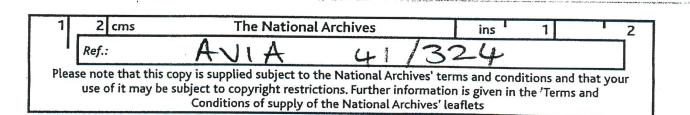


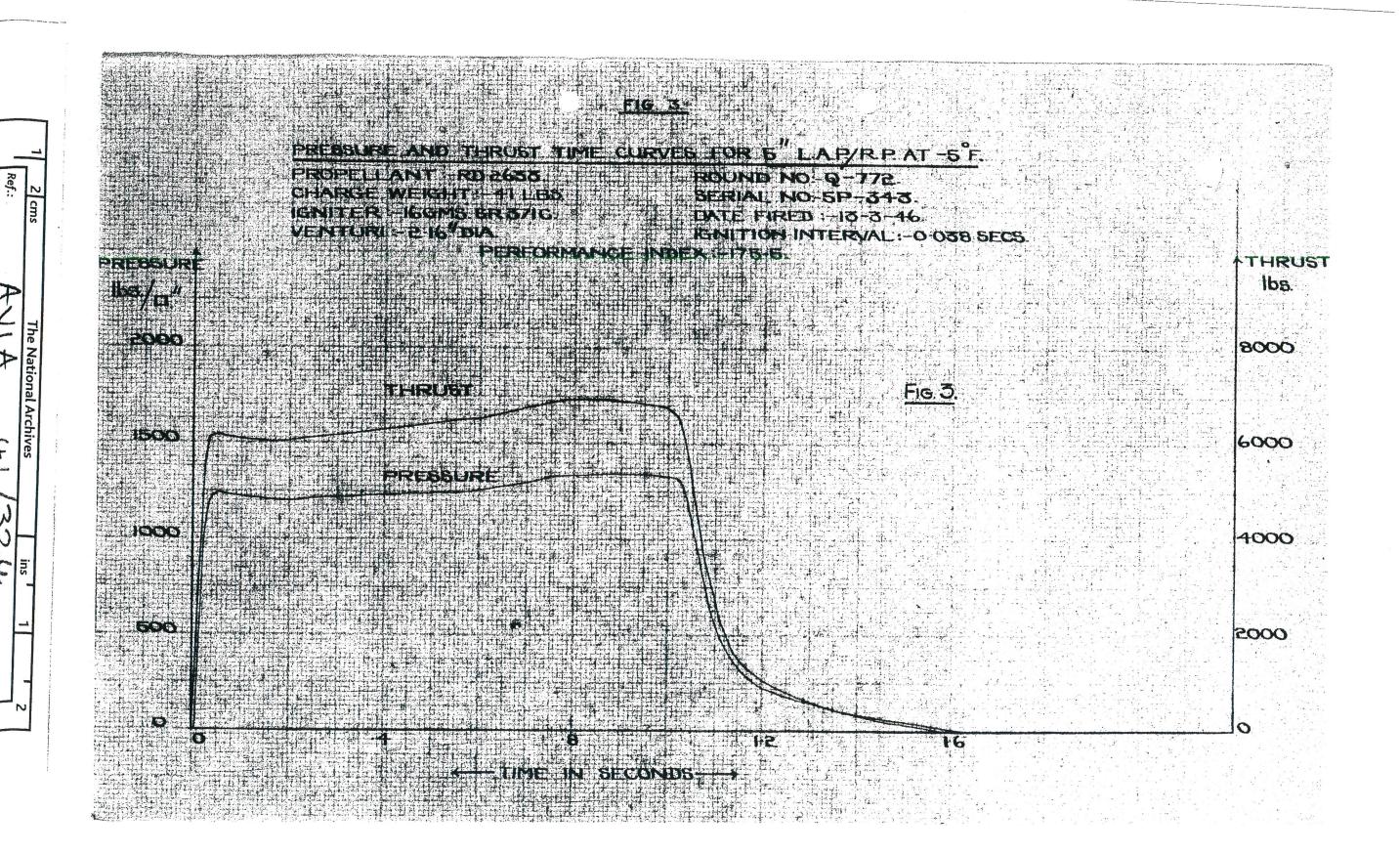


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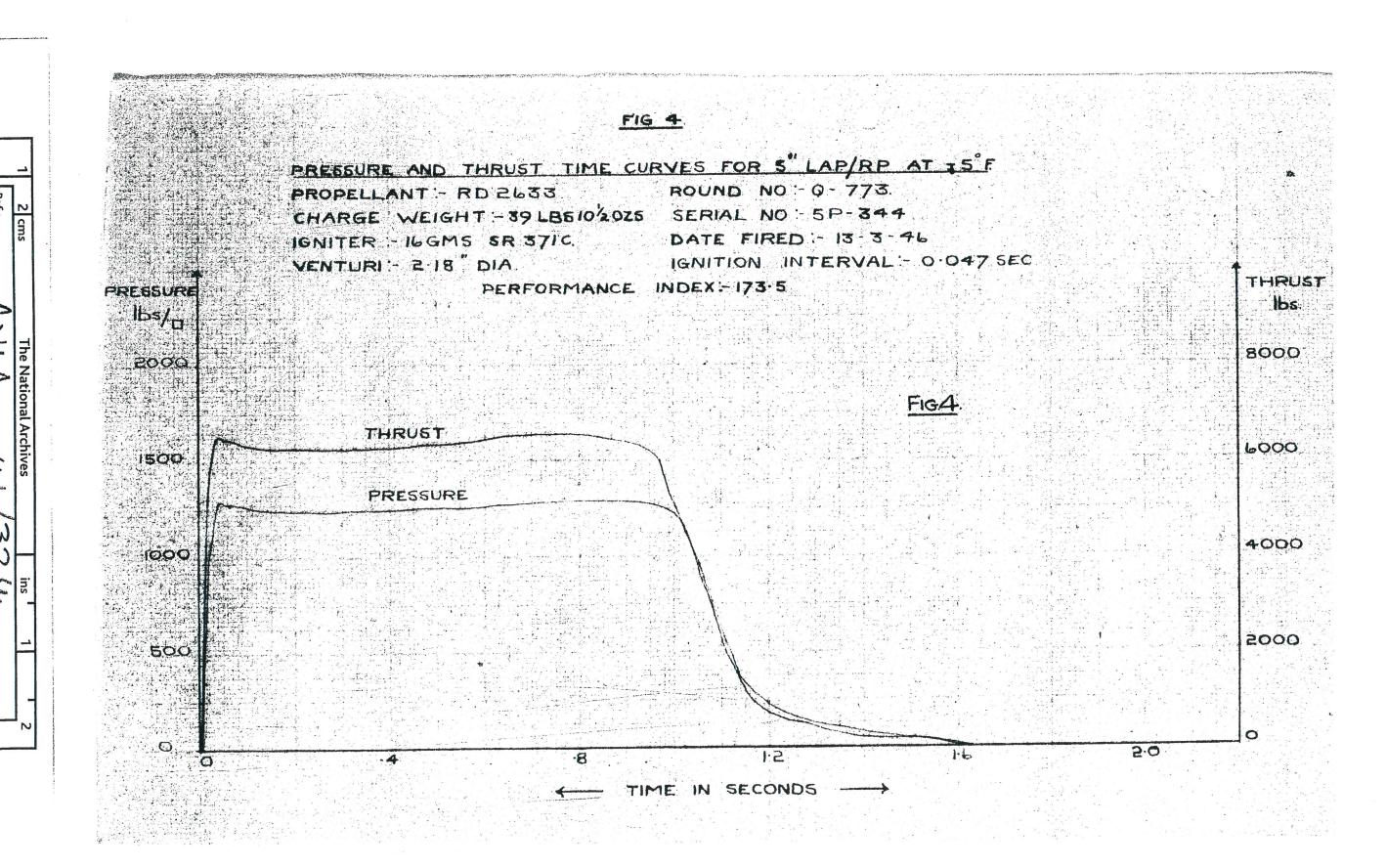
FIG.2
THRUST TIME CURVES FOR L.A.P/R.P. BURST ROUNDS

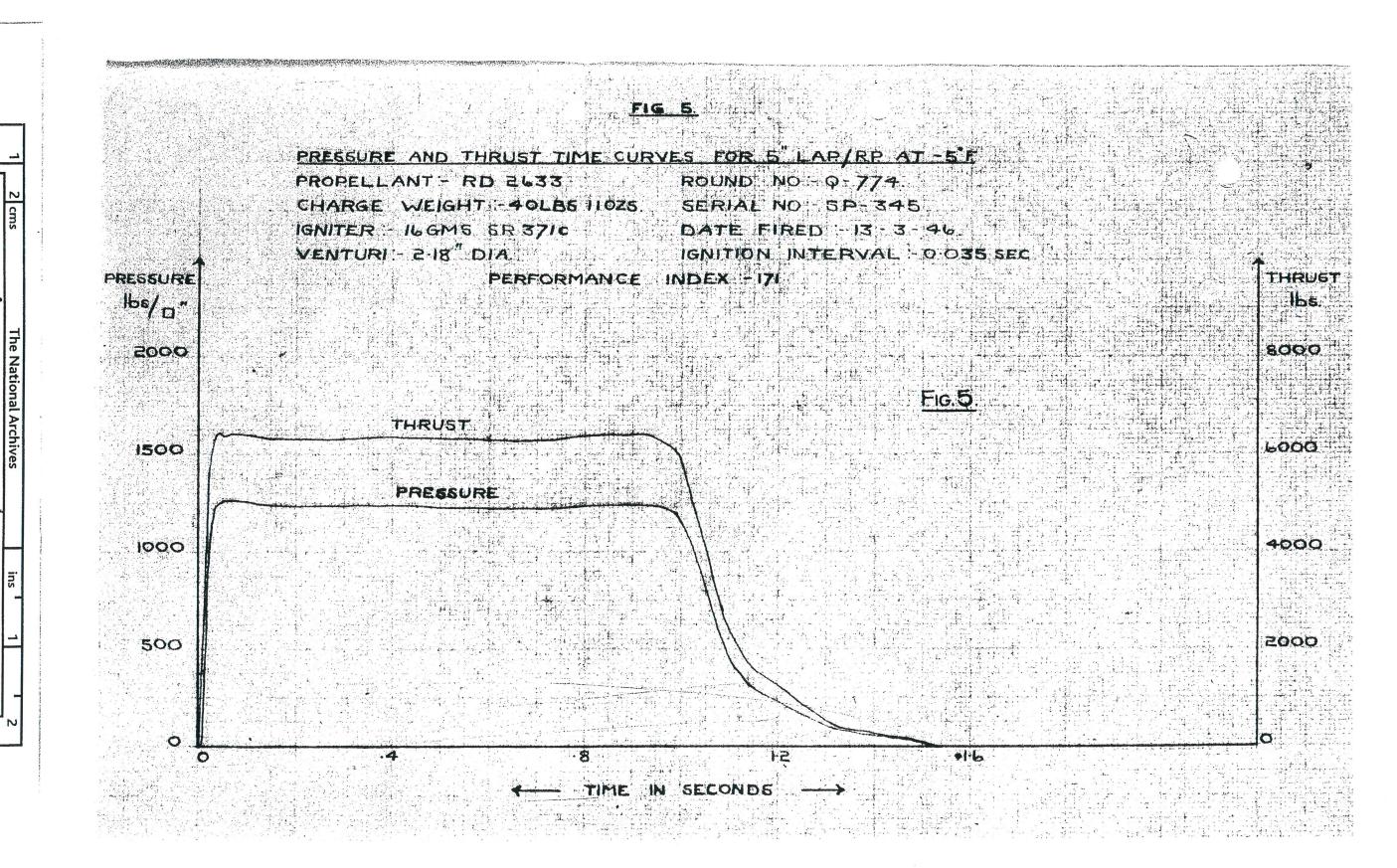


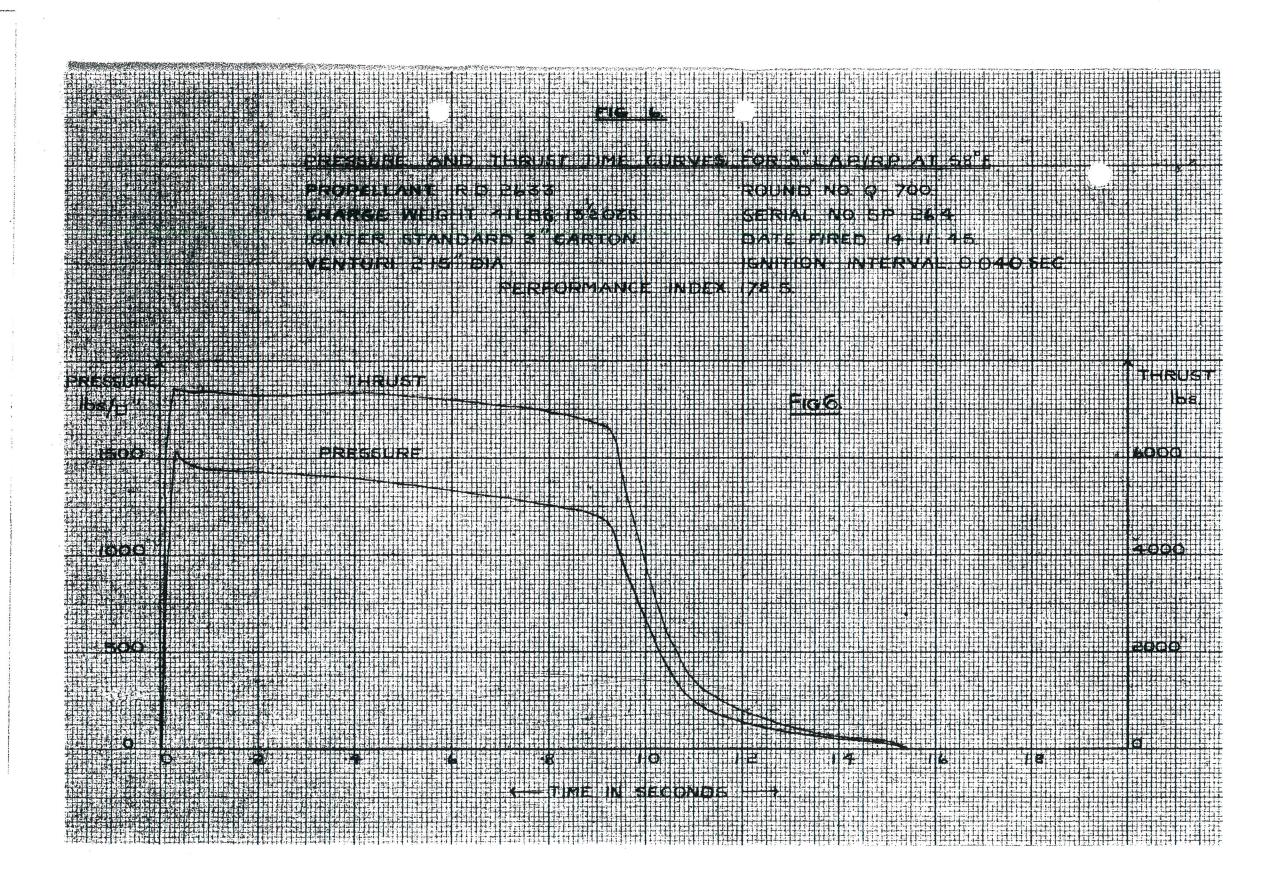




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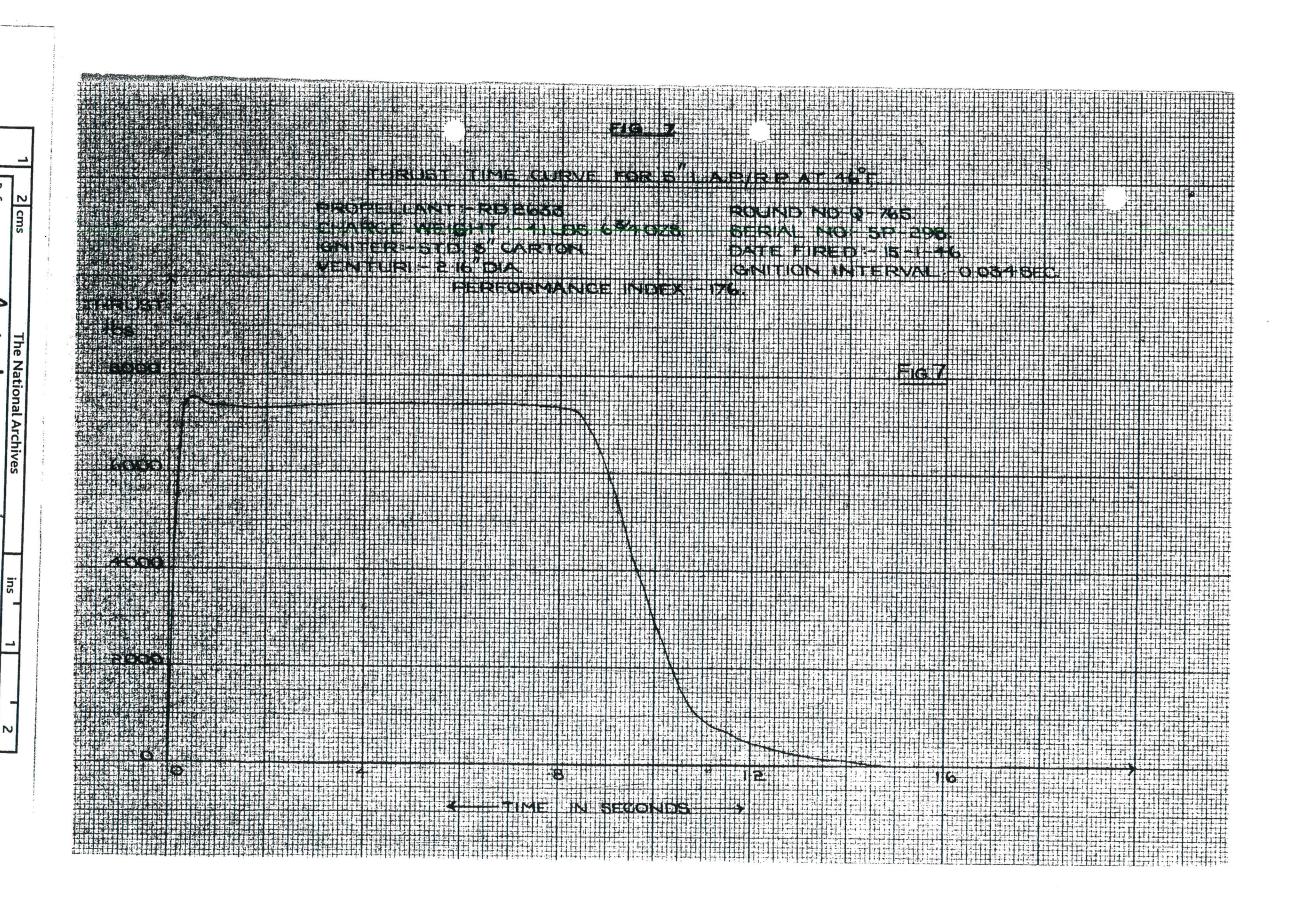




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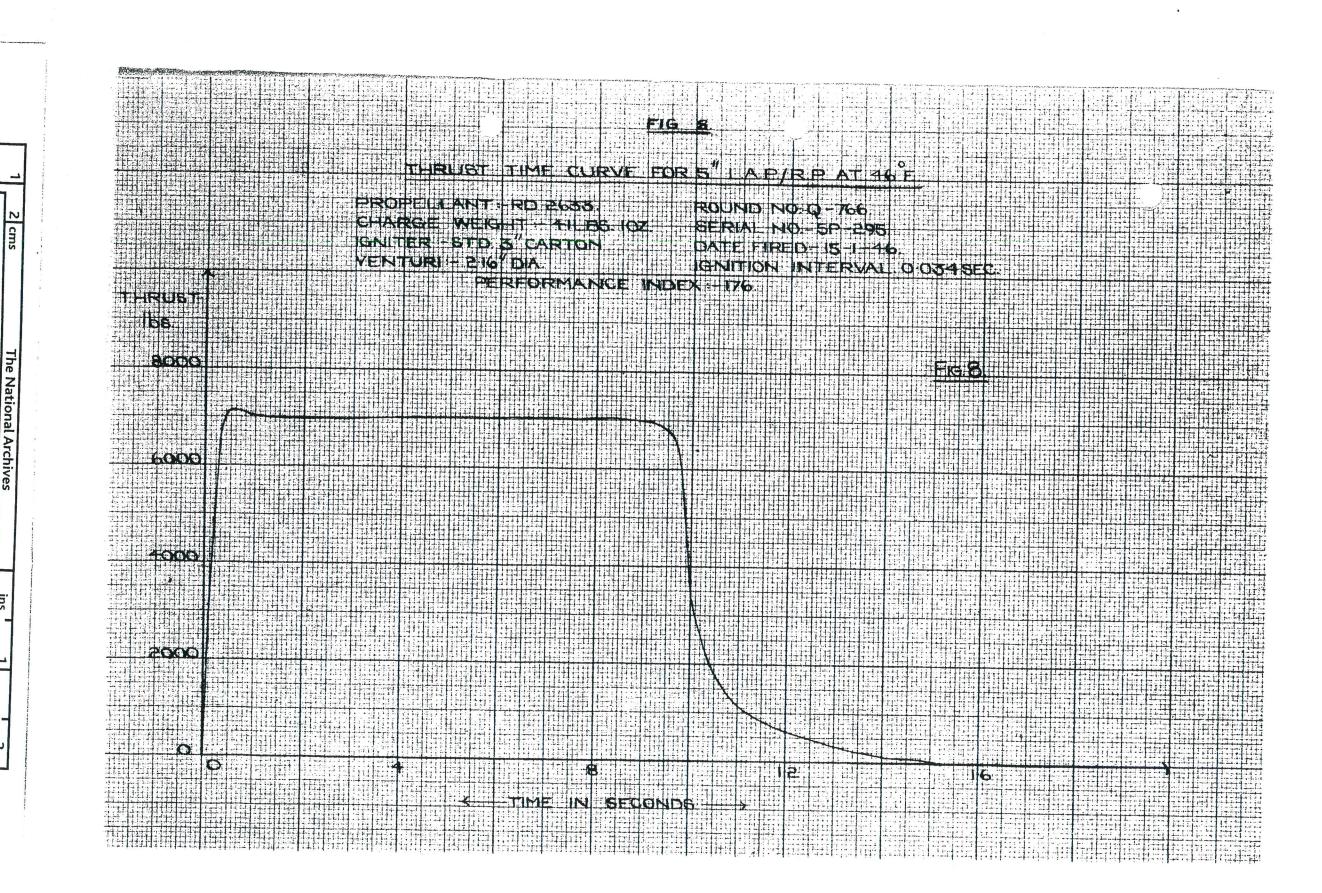


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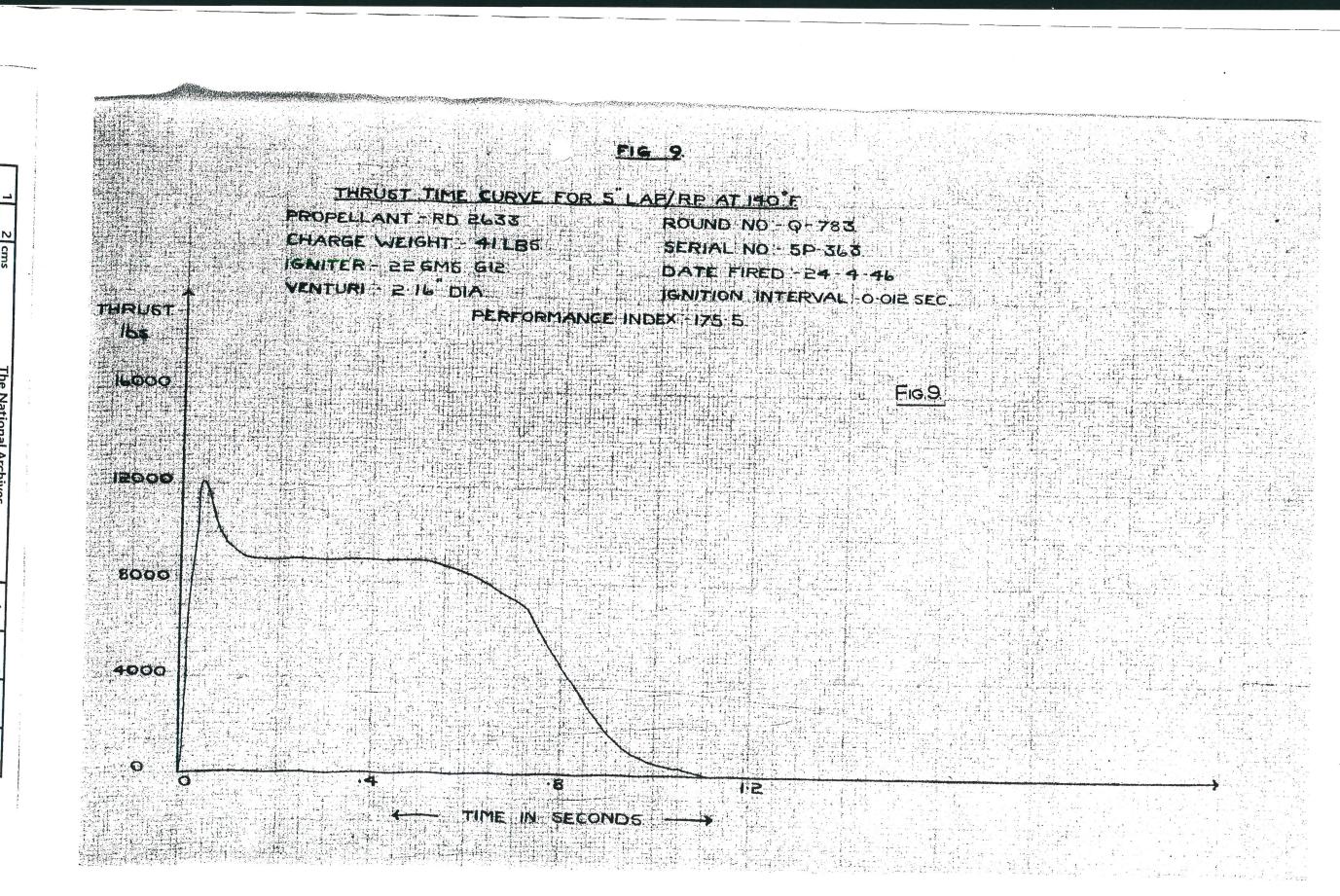
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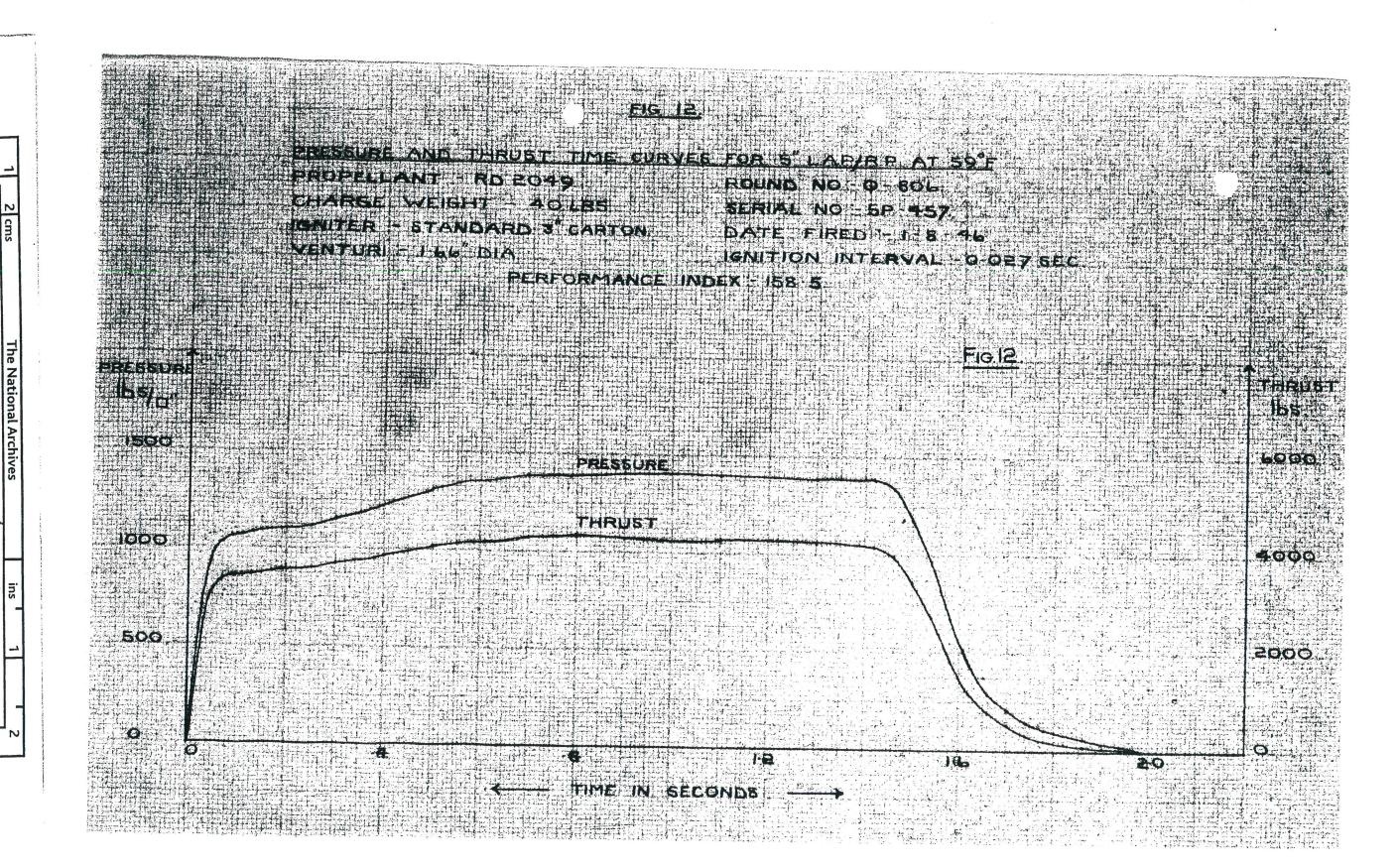


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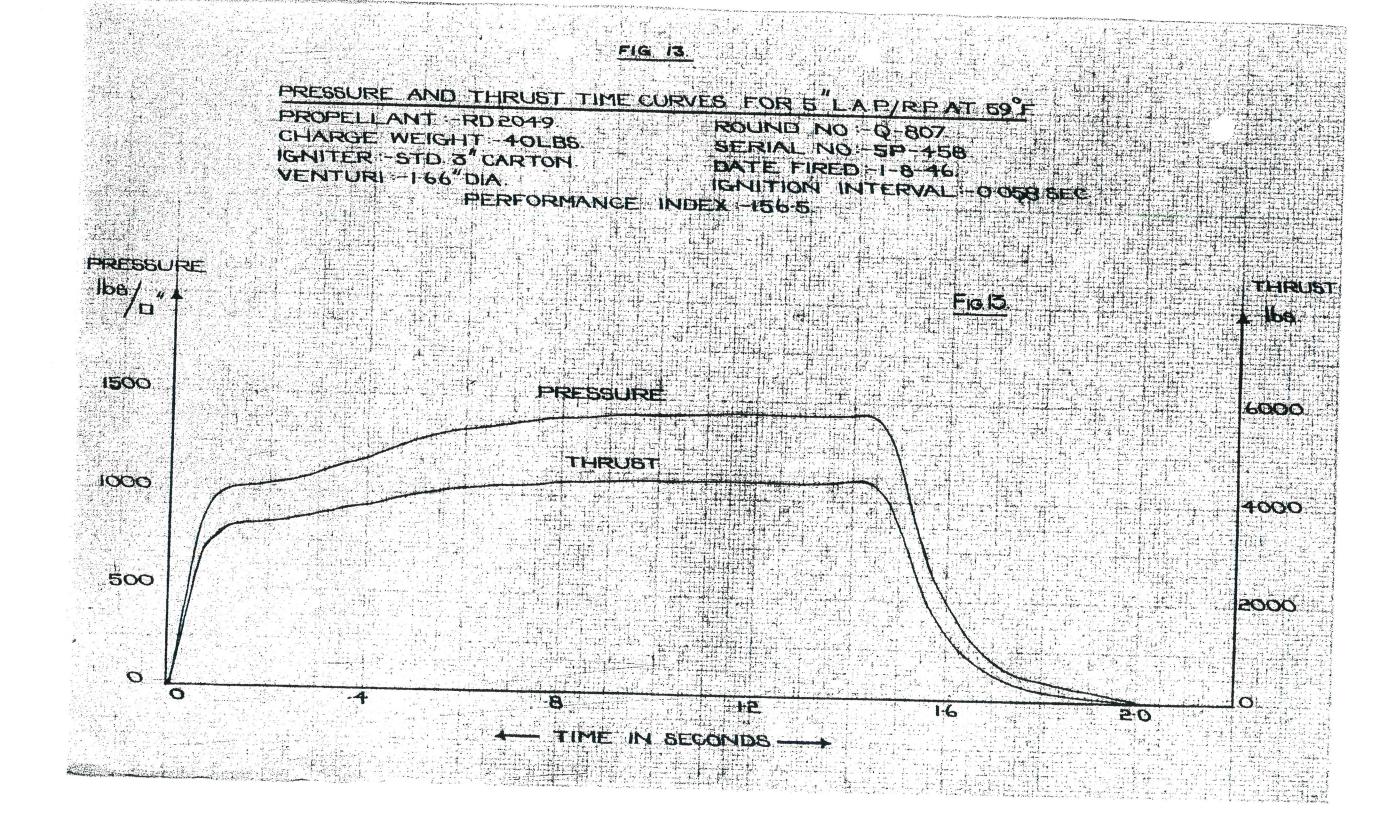
FIG. 10. THRUST TIME CURVES FOR 5" LAP/RP AT 140°F PROPELLANT :- RD 2633. ROUND NO :- Q-779. CHARGE WEIGHT :- 40LBS 9 20Z8. SERIAL NO :- 5P-359. IGNITER: - 22 GMS. G12: DATE FIRED: -16-4-46.
VENTURI: -2-16" DIA. IGNITION INTERVAL: -0-021 SEC. PERFORMANCE INDEX :-179 5. -TIME IN SECONDS-

THRUST STIME GURNE FOR 5 LAP/RP AT 140°F PROPELLANT - RD 2434 ROUND NO - Q-786 CHARGE WEIGHT : 40 LBS IS 025 SERIAL NO: 5P-3LL INITER - 22 GMB G IE DATE FIRED: 24-4-46 YENTURI E E 16 DIA IGNITION INTERVAL : 0:016 SEC PERFORMANCE INDEX, 174.5 THRUST lbs. 12000 8000 ← TIME IN SECONDS ---

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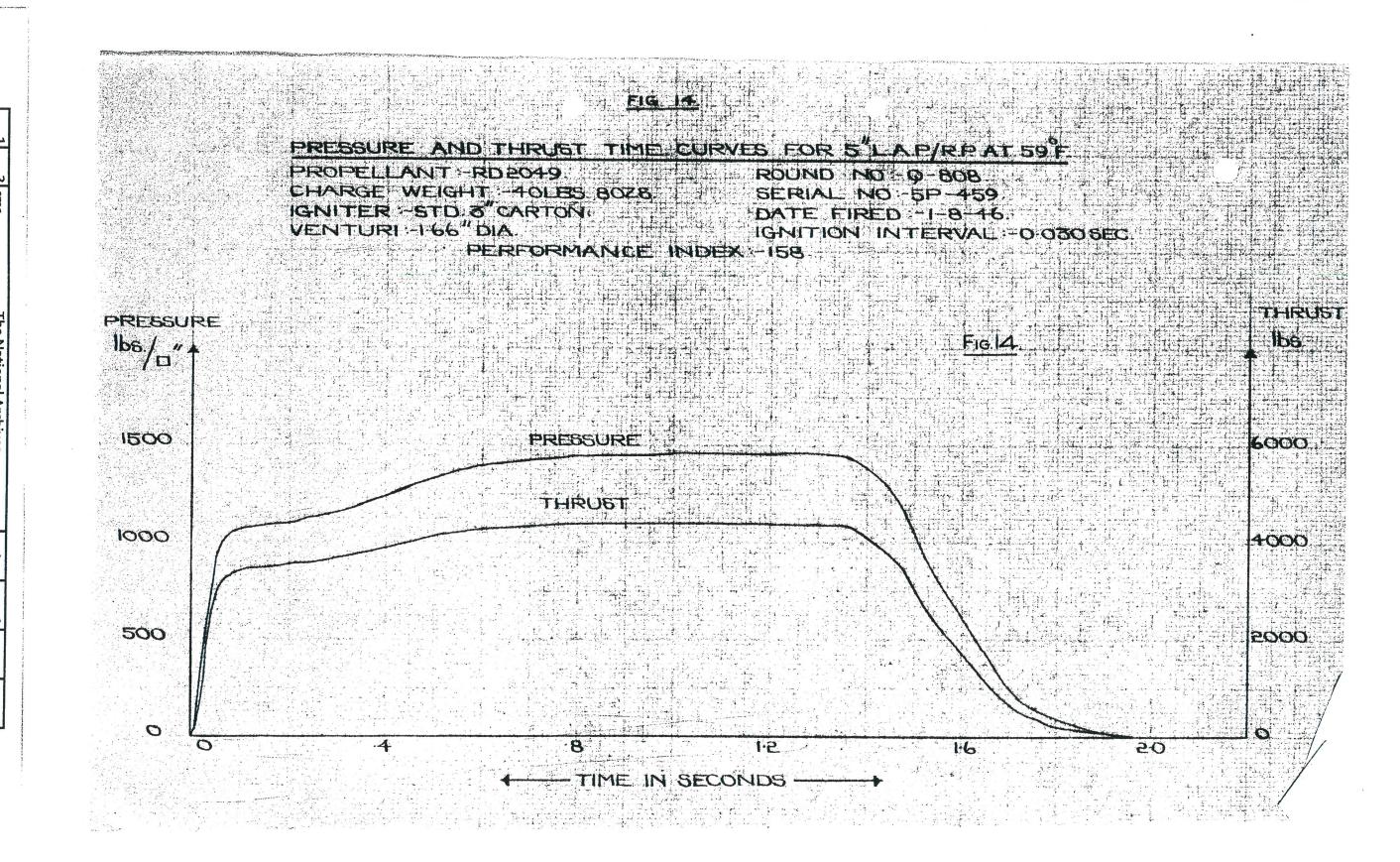




Fig. 15. 5.P.283. Q. 744.



Fig. 16. 5.P.348 Q. 768



Fig. 17. 5.P.349 Q. 769

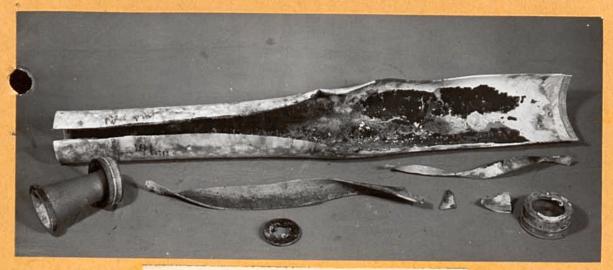


Fig. 18. 5.P.351

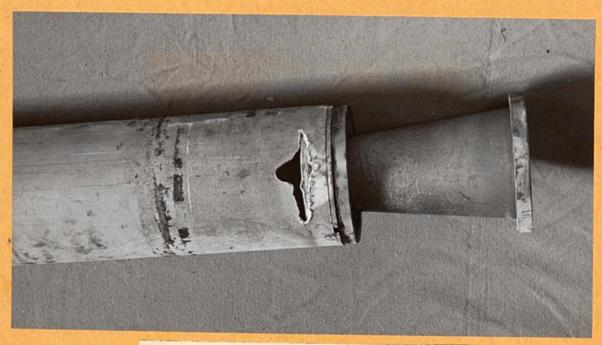


Fig. 19. 5.P.345 Q. 774



5.P.475 Q. 824

5.P.371 Q. 791 5.P.370 9.790 Fig. 20 5.P.364 Q. 784

5.P.362 Q. 782



Fig. 21. 5.P.368 Q. 788



Fig. 22. 5.P.463 Q. 818

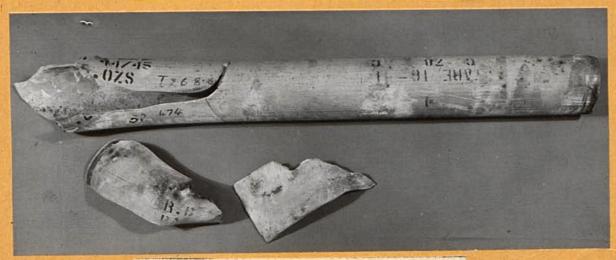


Fig. 23. 5.P.474 Q. 823



Fig. 24.



Fig. 25.



Fig. 26.



Fig. 27.