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RESEARCH MEMORANDUM

TESTS WITH HYDROGEN FUEL IN A SIMULATED AFTERBURNER

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RESEARCH MEMORANDUM

TESTS WITH HYDROGEN FUEL IN A SIMULATED AFTERBURNER *

By W. R. Kerslake and E. E. Dangle

SUMMARY

An investigation was conducted in a 16-inch-diameter simulated afterburner using gaseous hydrogen fuel. No flameholder was used with a multipoint fuel injector. The burner length was varied from 9.5 to 38 inches. The afterburner-inlet conditions were: temperature of 1200° or 1550° F, pressure of 14 to 44 inches mercury absolute, and velocity of 300 to 780 feet per second. The measured combustion efficiency ranged from 85 to 98 percent over an equivalence-ratio range of 0.2 to 1.0. The cold-flow pressure-drop coefficient was 1.0 for the system. Spontaneous ignition was always possible at temperatures above 1200° F but was not possible below 1100° F for all pressures and velocities tested.

INTRODUCTION

Liquid hydrogen is being considered for ram-jet and turbojet fuel since the heating value per pound is approximately 2.7 times that of a hydrocarbon fuel. Although the density of liquid hydrogen is low, the high heating value per unit weight will increase the operating range considerably if the aircraft is operating at high altitudes (ref. 1). High altitudes are desirable for military aircraft since they reduce vulnerability.

For operation at high altitudes, the engine must have high thrust per unit weight. The thrust of air-breathing engines decreases rapidly with increasing altitude; thus the weight of the engine must be reduced to keep the thrust-to-weight ratio high.

Because of the high flame speed and large heat capacity of hydrogen fuel, savings in turbojet-engine weight should be possible by use of the following: (1) a compact, highly efficient primary combustor, built to operate at high-altitude conditions (ref. 2); (2) hydrogen as a heat sink for turbine cooling, permitting higher engine operating temperatures, and thus higher thrust per unit weight (refs. 1 and 3); and (3) a compact, highly efficient afterburner.

*Title, Unclassified.

A compact efficient afterburner appears to be practical since the ram-jet-combustor development work described in reference 4 shows that hydrogen burned to 95-percent combustion efficiency in a 16-inch-long combustor at pressure, temperature, and velocity conditions of 20.9 inches mercury absolute, 618° F, and 209 feet per second, respectively. The purpose of this investigation, therefore, was to extend the ramjet work of reference 4 to afterburner conditions. Test conditions were: inlet temperatures of 1200° or 1550° F, inlet static pressures of 14 to 44 inches mercury absolute, and velocities of 300 to 780 feet per second. The lower pressure simulated conditions in an afterburner of an advanced turbojet engine with a compressor pressure ratio of 3.1 at an altitude of 80,000 feet and a flight Mach number of 2.5. Higher altitudes were not simulated because of facility limitations.

APPARATUS

Afterburner Installation

The installation of the l6-inch-diameter simulated afterburner in the test facility is shown in figure 1. Air flow was metered by an orifice in the supply line and controlled by a butterfly valve upstream of the primary combustors. Clear gasoline was burned in four tubular turbojet combustors to heat the air from 60° to 1200° or 1550° F. The air from the four primary combustors discharged into a mixing chamber, flowed past a plug valve, and through a perforated plate into the annulus section between the 6-inch-diameter centerbody and the l6-inch-diameter outer wall. The plug valve regulated the pressure in the primary combustors, and the perforated plate was used to smooth out the velocity profile. The static-pressure-drop ratio across the mixing chamber to the annulus was 2 or more. The inlet velocity and temperature profiles, measured by rakes in the annulus, are shown in figure 2.

The combustion efficiency of the primary burner was calculated from the measured temperature rise. Corrections for radiation losses from the thermocouples were made in the efficiency calculation. This combustion efficiency varied between 90 and 104 percent, but was usually 94 to 99 percent.

The afterburner length, defined as the distance from the fuel injectors to the water-spray quench, was varied by moving the water-spray quench forward or backward. The afterburner exhaust gases and quench water spray came to equilibrium in a calorimeter, which was part water jacketed and part insulated. The resulting exhaust-gas and steam temperature was measured by thermocouple rakes before the gases flowed into the exhaust system. The exhaust system was evacuated by air ejectors.

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Fuel Injection System

The hydrogen fuel was supplied in cylinders with total capacities of 420 pounds of hydrogen and a gas pressure of 2400 pounds per square inch. The fuel was taken directly from the cylinders through a pressure reducing valve, a metering orifice, and a throttling valve to the afterburner. Gas analysis of the hydrogen indicated it was more than 98 percent pure by weight.

The fuel injector consisted of five concentric rings with six supply struts. The rings were split into six equal sectors, one of which is shown in figure 3. A total of 894 injection holes, 0.038 inch in diameter, was drilled through the flattened rings. Nine-tenths of the hydrogen was sprayed cross stream, while the remainder was sprayed downstream. The fuel injectors blocked 21 percent and the centerbody 14 percent of the 16-inch-diameter cross section. The same fuel injectors were used throughout the investigation.

Engine Configurations

Configuration A is shown in figure 4(a). It consisted of a 6-inchdiameter centerbody with a tapered downstream end. The fuel injector rings were located in the annulus at the start of the taper. The waterspray quench was either 14.5 or 38.25 inches downstream of the fuel injectors.

Configuration B, shown in figure 4(b), consisted of the same centerbody as that of configuration A except that the tapered end of configuration A was replaced by a blunt end to form a sheltered piloting zone 6 inches deep. The fuel injector rings were located in the annulus, 3 inches from the end of the centerbody. The water-spray quench was either 9.5 or 16.5 inches downstream of the fuel injectors.

Configuration C, shown in figure 4(c), is configuration A with a conical exhaust nozzle. The nozzle was 12 inches long with a 0.5 contraction ratio and was water cooled. A water-cooled total-pressure rake was positioned so that the tips of 14 probes were in the plane of the nozzle exit. The distance from the fuel injectors to the total-pressure-rake tips was 20.5 inches. The water-spray quench was an additional 12 inches downstream.

METHODS AND PROCEDURE

Operating Conditions

The air flow was held constant at either of two values, approximately 54,000 or 30,000 pounds per hour. The primary combustors were set to give



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an afterburner-inlet temperature of 1200° or 1550° F. An electric spark was discharged between an electrode and a fuel spray bar to ensure ignition except when the spontaneous ignition temperatures were determined. The altitude exhaust ejectors usually were set at full capacity to give the lowest pressure and highest velocity possible in the afterburner. As combustion progressed in the afterburner, the afterburner pressure increased and the velocity decreased, corresponding to the increase in heat addition.

The inlet conditions for runs 1 to 6 and 9 to 13 (table I) were selected to simulate the inlet pressure, temperature, and velocity conditions of an afterburner on an advanced turbojet engine (ref. 1) with a compressor pressure ratio of 3.1 at a flight Mach number of 2.5. The altitudes simulated by the pressures were from 58,000 to 80,000 feet.

The inlet conditions of runs 7 and 8 were selected to simulate those in an afterburner of a current turbojet engine with a compressor pressure ratio of 8.0 and a flight Mach number of 1.6. For runs 7 and 8, the altitude exhaust pressure was varied in an attempt to hold the afterburner velocity and pressure level constant for the full range of heat addition. The average velocity was 422 feet per second, and the pressure levels were 32 and 18 inches mercury absolute. The altitudes simulated by the pressures were 49,000 and 60,000 feet, respectively.

Determination of Combustion Efficiency

The heat-balance system (calorimeter) was used to obtain the combustion efficiency for all data points. The technique was similar to that first used in reference 5. In the combustion-efficiency calculation, the reaction was assumed to take place at the calorimeter-outlet temperature (approx. 800° F) to eliminate the enthalpy change of the products. Combustion efficiency was defined as the total enthalpy change of the air (1550° F or 1200° F down to 800° F), the fuel (60° up to 800° F), the quench water (60° up to 800° F), and the jacket cooling water (60° up to 120° F) divided by the lower heating value of the gaseous fuel (50,770Btu/lb at 800° F).

When the exhaust nozzle was used (configuration C), the combustion efficiency was calculated from total-pressure measurements as well as from the heat balance. Total pressure, measured at the throat of the choked nozzle, was used with the continuity equation to calculate total temperature. The total temperature determined a theoretical afterburner equivalence ratio. The combustion efficiency was defined as the theoretical divided by the measured afterburner equivalence ratio. This definition is the same as a ratio of enthalpies if the nozzle temperature profile is uniform. The measured afterburner equivalence ratio ϕ_A was defined as

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$$\varphi_{\rm A} = \frac{w_{\rm f}/w_{\rm a}}{0.0294(1 - \varphi_{\rm P})}$$

where

 w_f/w_a measured hydrogen-air ratio (where w_a is the air flow into the primary burner)

0.0294 stoichiometric fuel-air ratio for hydrogen

Φ_P preheater equivalence ratio

Spontaneous Ignition

The afterburner flow was set at a desired temperature, pressure, and velocity. The hydrogen flow was then gradually increased to 0.2 of stoichiometric Φ_A . Ignition was noted by either a combustor pressure rise or a temperature rise in the calorimeter.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Combustion Efficiency

<u>Configurations A and B.</u> - The performance of configurations A and B is listed in table I and plotted in figures 5(a) and (b), respectively. It can be seen from the table and figures that variations in afterburner pressure, temperature, and velocity had negligible effect on the performance of the afterburner. Similarly, variations in the afterburner length had little effect on performance. The recirculation piloting zone included in configuration B had no effect on the combustion efficiency nor on the spontaneous-ignition temperature level of the afterburner.

The combustion-efficiency curve peaked between 0.4 and 0.7 fraction of stoichiometric at a value above 95 percent. The lean and rich ends of the efficiency curve were reasonably flat, dropping to values of approximately 87 percent at equivalence ratios of 0.2 and 1.0. Individual runs indicated slight differences in combustion efficiency with variation of inlet temperature, pressure, velocity, and burner length; but these trends were of the same order as experimental errors.

Hydrogen demonstrated no combustion limit nor instabilities over the range of variables and configurations tested.

Configuration C_{\bullet} - A convergent exhaust nozzle was primarily placed on the burner to measure combustion efficiency by a second independent



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method - total-pressure measurements. The secondary reason was to determine the effect, if any, of a nozzle on the combustion or flow characteristics of the burner. The 12-inch length of the nozzle was 60 percent of the burner length.

Although the nozzle was 60 percent of the burner length, the heatbalance combustion-efficiency curve of figure 5(c) was similar to the combustion-efficiency curves measured with configurations A or B and showed no effect of the nozzle. The efficiencies calculated from the total-pressure-rake measurements were higher in the lean region and lower in the rich region than were the heat-balance efficiencies. The totalpressure efficiencies, however, were very sensitive to air leaks, incorrect air measurements, and nozzle area calibration. Due to the limited exhaust facilities the nozzle could only be operated near the critical pressure ratio; and if the nozzle were not choked, the total-pressure analysis could not be applied because of the assumption that the Mach number was unity at the nozzle exit (ref. 4).

Afterburner Pressure Losses

A total-pressure drop ΔP was measured from upstream of the fuel spray rings (station 1) to the exit of the convergent exhaust nozzle (station 3) for runs 12 and 13. Figure 6 is a plot of the total-pressure-drop coefficient $\Delta P/q_1$ against the density ratio ρ_1/ρ_3 . The value of q_1 (velocity head) as well as ρ_1 (density) was calculated on the basis of the maximum cross-sectional area, a 16-inch-diameter circle. Measured values for adiabatic or cold-flow $\Delta P/q_1$ were small, about 1.0. For cold flow, $\rho_1/\rho_2 = 1.0$ and $\rho_1/\rho_3 = 1.53$. For afterburner heat addition, $\Delta P/q_1$ varied from 1.1 to 4.0.

The significant result shown in figure 6 is that the solid line drawn through the data points is almost parallel to the theoretical (dashed) line for heat addition. A parallel solid line would indicate that the heat addition took place at or near the maximum cross-sectional area. Since the data points diverge slightly from the solid line, two possibilities are indicated: (1) Burning takes place where the physical area is less than the maximum, such as the annulus or the convergent nozzle; or (2) combustion takes place in a flow region of a nonuniform velocity profile, resulting in more momentum loss in the high-velocity regions which is not completely compensated by the reduced momentum pressure loss in the low-velocity regions. For example, if all the heat release (corresponding to a ρ_1/ρ_3 of 4.0) took place in an area equal to the annulus (station 1), the theoretical $\Delta P/q_1$ due to heat addition would be 2.45 for the annulus instead of 1.73 for the l6-inch-diameter

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duct. Subtracting 1.0 for cold-flow drop from the measured $\Delta P/q_1$ at ρ_1/ρ_3 of 4.0 leaves $\Delta P/q_1$ of 2.2 due to heat addition. This value could result from heat addition part way between the annulus and full 16-inch-diameter duct.

It was necessary to mass weight the measured total pressures at station 1 because of the nonuniform velocity profile. The nozzle-exit totalpressure profile was ±4 percent of the mean pressure, with lower pressures in the center and higher pressures near the walls.

Spontaneous Ignition

The afterburner-inlet-air temperature at which spontaneous ignition did or did not occur is presented in figure 7 for a range of typical pressures and velocities. The solid symbols represent spontaneous ignition at the first flow of hydrogen into the burner (φ_A of about 0.03). The tailed symbols represent delayed ignition until the fuel flow reached φ_A of about 0.2. The open symbols represent no ignition with any fuel flow up to φ_A of about 0.2. For each data point on the pressure plot, the corresponding velocity point has also been plotted.

Ignition always resulted at a temperature of 1200° F or greater but did not occur below 1100° F for all pressures and velocities tested. There was a slight decrease in the ignition temperature at the lower pressures. This decrease was consistent with the concentric-tube data of reference 6, which has been drawn as a solid line for comparison. There was no effect of velocity on the ignition temperature nor was there a difference in the data with the piloting region of configuration B over that of the tapered end of configuration A. It was likely that the ignition occurred in the disturbed air-flow region of the fuel spray rings and that the flame seated at the fuel injection port, thus eliminating the need of a flameholder.

Heat-Balance Check

The combustion efficiency measured by the calorimeter may be sensitive to the amount of quench water since it affects the (1) penetration and mixing of water jets into the air stream, (2) freezing of the reaction, (3) time to come to equilibrium in the calorimeter, and (4) heat losses through insulation. Therefore, a series of data points were taken with configuration A in which the afterburner fuel and air flow remained fixed while the amount of quench water was varied to give different outlet equilibrium temperatures.



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The results are included in figure 8 for four different afterburner flow conditions. All four conditions gave acceptible combustion efficiencies in the normal operating range (700° to 800° F) of the calorimeter. Three of the conditions resulted in a flat combustion-efficiency curve even for the extreme range of calorimeter temperatures. The explanation for the curve at the fourth afterburner condition was that the system was not designed for a wide range of calorimeter temperatures at this lowest air and fuel-flow condition. The percentage error of flow measurements at this condition was greater; and certain assumptions, such as negligible heat loss in the insulated part of the calorimeter, were no longer valid.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The following results were obtained from combustion of hydrogen fuel in a 16-inch-diameter simulated afterburner for inlet-air temperatures of 1200° or 1550° F, pressures of 14 to 44 inches of mercury absolute, velocities of 300 to 780 feet per second, and burner lengths of 9.5 to 38 inches.

1. Hydrogen was burned with a maximum efficiency of 98 percent in a 14.5-inch-length and an efficiency of 95 percent in a 9.5-inch-length afterburner. The efficiency curve was reasonably flat, dropping to 87 percent at 0.2 or 1.0 fraction of stoichiometric.

2. The resulting combustion efficiency was not significantly changed with the test range of temperature, pressure, velocity, or burner length.

3. Hydrogen demonstrated no combustion limit or instabilities over the range of variables and configurations tested. Also, no flameholder was required, as the flame seated on the fuel spray rings.

4. The pressure-drop coefficient across the fuel spray rings and exhaust nozzle was about 1.0 without combustion. With combustion, the pressure-drop coefficient increased by an amount only slightly greater than the theoretical value due to heat addition.

5. Hydrogen fuel spontaneously ignited at inlet-air temperatures above 1200° F but did not ignite below 1100° F for the entire range of pressures and velocities tested.

Lewis Flight Propulsion Laboratory National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics Cleveland, Ohio, April 16, 1956

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Afterburner	Combus-	Afte	rburner-inle	et	Air	Ну-	Preheater		
equivalence ratio	tion effi- ciency, percent	Pressure, in. Hg abs	Temper- ature, ^O F	Veloc- ity, ft/sec	flow, lb/hr	dro- gen flow, lb/hr	Gasoline flow, lb/hr	Combustion efficiency, percent	
		Run	l, configura	ation A					
0.277 .437 .658 .787 .861	85.0 97.9 93.9 90.0 89.7	21.3 24.8 28.3 31.5 30.5	1237 1237 1241 1246 1246	636 547 481 448 433	5.60×10 ⁴ 5.23 5.25 5.25 5.25 5.25	322 507 766 915 1001	817 895 895 895 895	96 96 97 96 96	
	· .	Run 2	configurat	tion A					
0.198 .383 .476 .721 .951 .965	89.4 96.2 95.3 92.9 86.5 86.5	13.5 15.7 16.9 19.9 18.7 18.8	1212 1227 1204 1229 1221 1230	547 484 442 383 408 408	2.88x10 ⁴ 2.95 2.93 2.95 2.97 2.97	127 251 313 473 631 637	515 515 515 515 515 510 515	90 92 90 93 94 94	
	Run 3, configuration A								
0.217 .385 .540 .688	87.1 92.1 95.7 94.3	21.0 23.2 25.3 27.6	1561 1567 1583 1577	785 712 658 602	5.32x10 ⁴ 5.32 5.31 5.32	229 406 565 722	1180 1180 1180 1180	97 98 99 99	
		Run 4	, configure	ation A					
0.251 .359 .517 .673 .830 .987	90.0 89.5 93.7 93.3 92.7 87.9	13.9 16.2 15.5 16.7 18.2 19.2	1555 1571 1578 1585 1590 1599	658 565 594 551 509 483	2.95x10 ⁴ 2.93 2.95 2.93 2.95 2.93 2.95 2.93	147 208 300 388 480 566	680 680 680 680 680 680 680	94 94 95 95 96 96	
		Run 5	, configura	tion A					
0.221 .531 .698 .824 1.040	94.8 103.9 99.1 91.8 86.0	21.3 26.3 28.9 30.4 32.9	1192 1199 1205 1205 1205	632 512 467 444 410	5.35×10 ⁴ 5.32 5.32 5.32 5.32 5.32 5.31	266 632 829 979 1231	826 826 817 812 800	101 102 102 103 104	
		Run 6	, configura	tion A					
0.498 .694 .854 1.033	97.1 94.7 90.5 86.4	17.7 17.1 18.1 19.5	1182 1181 1215 1210	427 448 432 399	3.01×10 ⁴ 3.06 3.06 3.06	337 478 581 702	475 480 508 493	100 100 98 101	

TABLE I. - PERFORMANCE OF HYDROGEN IN 16-INCH-DIAMETER AFTERBURNER

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ABLE I Continued. PERFORMA	NCE OF	HYDROGEN	IN	16-INCH-DIAMETER	AFTERBURNER
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Afterburner	Combus-	Afte	rburner-inl	et ·	Air	Hy-	Preheater	
equivalence ratio	tion effi- ciency, percent	Pressure, in. Hg abs	Temper- ature, ^O F	Veloc- ity, ft/sec	flow, lb/hr	dro- gen flow, lb/hr	Gasoline flow, lb/hr	Combustion efficiency, percent
	·	Ru	n 7, config	uration B				
0.187 .281 .416 .672 .873	93.5 98.0 98.2 94.9 91.7	32.5 32.3 32.5 31.8 34.4	1195 1205 1210 1220 1214	436 442 440 446 393	5.62x10 ⁴ 5.62 5.61 5.54 5.30	235 351 519 827 1036	911 911 914 914 865	98 99 100 99 97
1.162	78.1	34.4	1268	395	5.16	1321	865	100
		Ru	n 8, configu	uration B				
0.308 .420 .484 .764 1.140	92.6 93.1 94.6 94.2 82.8 69.6	17.5 18.4 18.0 18.4 19.6 22.2	1221 1245 1221 1279 1271 1183	442 424 430 417 394 360	3.01×10 ⁴ 3.01 3.02 2.89 2.91 3.19	208 279 326 482 727 1009	523 525 513 523 523 523 508	93 95 96 94 94 98
Run 9. configuration B								
0.282 .488 .637 .769 .965 1.132	95.5 94.4 94.9 92.5 85.6 77.8	22.0 25.4 27.5 29.0 31.0 32.4	1508 1515 1520 1525 1523 1531	715 621 575 547 511 491	5.22×10 ⁴ 5.22 5.21 5.21 5.21 5.21 5.21	298 515 670 807 1013 1185	1107 1107 1107 1107 1107 1107 1107	98 98 98 99 99 99 99
	-k	Ru	n 10. confi	guration H	3			
0.184 .375 .540 .767 .955 1.09	91.8 91.8 92.4 92.1 86.2 82.6	14.0 16.8 16.2 16.7 17.6 19.5	1513 1515 1520 1524 1535 1538	631 525 546 530 505 456	2.91×10 ⁴ 2.91 2.91 2.91 2.90 2.90 2.90	108 220 316 448 556 633	637 637 637 637 637 637 637	96 96 96 97 97
		Ru	n 11, confi	guration H	3			
0.203 .342	92.6 98.8	21.7 23.2	1331 1330	664 621	5.26x10 ⁴ 5.26	230 388	986 979	95 95



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TABLE	Τ.	_	Concluded.	PERFORMANCE	٩U	HYDROGEN	тΝ	16-TNCH-DIAMETER	
TUDTE	·	-	concruded.	T DITL OT BUT OF	OI.	III DAVOGEAN	111	TO-THOU-DIAMETER	AFTERDURINER

Afterburner	Combustion efficiency, percent		Afterburner-inlet			Air	Hy-	Preheater	
ratio			Pressure,	Temper-	Veloc-	lb/hr	aro- gen flow	Gasoline	Combustion
Ì	Heat	Total		° _F	ft/sec		1b/hr	1b/hr	percent.
	bal-	pres-					,		Friceno
	ance	sure							
			Ŕun	12, cont	figurat	ion C	·	.	.
0.171	89.0	101.8	29.8	1204	451	5.30×10 ⁴	203	831	101
.249	90.3	98.3	32.0	1243	435	5.36	297	840	101
.321	94.0	100.0	33.6	1202	400	5.30	381	831	101
.375	95.7	93.4	35.2	1245	395	5.36	446	840	102
.396	96.8	91.5	35.4	1225	388 -	5.35	472	840	103
.515	96.7	92.9	37.4	1202	360	5.30	612	822	102
.635	98.2	86.0	39.3	1245	353	5.34	752	826	102
.708	95.4	80.7	40.2	1202	334	5.28	840	819	101
.841	93.3	85.5	41.9	1202	320	5.29	996	822	102
.967	87.7	77.8	43.5	1209	312	5.24	1136	816	102
1.127	81.7	78.8	43.5	1212	302	5.24	1321	816	102
Run 13, configuration C									
1.155	72.2	99.2	17.5	1209	440	3.06×10 ⁴	106	508	96
.277	86.6	101.9	19.4	1196	401	3.07	190	496	['] 97
.399	88.1	90.9	21.2	1192	369	3.09	277	496	98
.557	92.7	93.8	23.2	1191	336	3.08	386	496	97
.690	95.9	86.9	24.1	1179	322	3.10	483	496	. 97
.783	93.5	88.9	25.1	1201	312	3.07	541	494	98
.949	89.5	85.3	26.2	1200	301	3.09	658	494	98



Figure 1. - Installation of 16-inch-diameter afterburner in connected-pipe facility.

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- (c) Configuration B; runs 7 and 8; four circumferential rakes; calculated velocity, 430 feet per second.
- (d) Configurations A, B, or C; four circumferential rakes; uncorrected for radiation.
- Figure 2. Typical inlet velocity and temperature profiles at annulus section of 16inch-diameter simulated afterburner.



Note: 149 Holes per one-sixth sector

Figure 3. - Details of fuel spray rings, one-sixth sector only.

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Figure 4. - Details of afterburner configurations.



(b) Configuration B.

Figure 4. - Continued. Details of afterburner configurations.



Figure 4. - Concluded. Details of afterburner configurations.

(a) Configuration A (tapered centerbody).

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Figure 5. - Concluded. Combustion efficiencies.

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Figure 8. - Effect of variable quench-water flow on measured combustion efficiency. Configuration A (burner length, 14.5 in.).

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