

attacks or revealed that certain airfields were being used for maintenance and servicing purposes. During July and early August, it proved unnecessary to maintain any serious effort against enemy airfields, but from 13th to 16th August, strong forces of heavy bombers operated against several night fighter airfields in Holland and Belgium, from which night fighters, maintaining a high operational effort, were hampering our heavy bombers on night operations. In these attacks, 1,004 aircraft of R.A.F. Bomber Command and 1,743 aircraft of the United States Eighth Air Force dropped over 10,000 tons of bombs in three days. There was an immediate cessation of enemy activity from these airfields.

364. During the enemy withdrawal from France and the Low Countries, an excellent chance was afforded of making profitable attacks on aircraft on a number of airfields. These aircraft were grounded through lack of fuel. Hitherto the heavy concentrations of flak on G.A.F. airfields had made attacks on them costly and had frequently compelled us to use heavy bombers in high level attacks when medium and fighter bombers could have been better spared for this task. During this period of hasty withdrawal however, the enemy flak defences were weakened. In consequence, our losses were reduced and we were allowed much greater freedom in the selection of method of attack.

365. The following statistics show the weight of bombing attacks on airfields in the period D-Day to 30th September. The chief contribution of the aircraft of A.E.A.F. was, however, in low level strafing and destruction of aircraft on the ground.

*Total Sorties against Airfields during the period
6th June to 30th September, 1944*

<i>Force</i>	<i>Sorties</i>	<i>Tons of Bombs</i>
A.E.A.F....	310	156.7
U.S. Eighth Air Force ...	11,118	24,747.0
R.A.F. B.C. ...	2,433	12,283.7
	<u>13,861</u>	<u>37,187.4</u>

Defence against Flying Bombs and Counter-Action against Flying Bomb Installations.

366. In paragraph 169 et seq. I have briefly described air operations prior to D-Day, against

the sites the enemy was preparing for the launching of flying bombs and rocket projectiles against the United Kingdom. It was not fully appreciated at the time, that the enemy was also preparing modified and less conspicuous sites. Air operations against "Noball" targets had been suspended before D-Day in order to release the air forces for the major tasks of "Overlord". It was thought that the operations by then carried out had virtually eliminated the menace; in fact, it is known that these operations, coupled with our attacks on his transport system, oil and manufacturing centres had reduced the enemy's potential capacity to launch flying bombs from a probable 6,000 per day to a relatively very small fraction of this number. Nonetheless, his power to hit us with these weapons had not been entirely destroyed.

367. On the night of 12/13th June, the enemy launched his first jet-propelled flying bomb against England and aimed at London. In the first phase between 0405 hours and 0430 hours on 13th June, seven of these flying bombs were observed, one of which reached London. Later, three more operated over Kent.

368. No further flying bombs were reported until the evening of 15th June, when activity began afresh on a fairly large scale. Long-prepared defence plans were immediately put into operation. Direct responsibility for this defence was allotted to Air Marshal Sir Roderic Hill, K.C.B., M.C., A.F.C., the Air Marshal Commanding Air Defence of Great Britain. Additional guns and balloons were deployed to counter these weapons, whilst airborne and fighter patrols were put up both over the Channel and south of London. The United States forces contributed wholeheartedly to this defence with A.A. guns and fighter patrols. Large scale bombing operations were also undertaken against the launching sites and their ancillary installations. The diversion of effort from "Overlord" tasks now assumed larger proportions.

369. From the commencement of flying bomb activity until 30th September, fighter aircraft flew 24,572 sorties on interception patrols. This commitment was almost exclusively met by the aircraft of A.D.G.B. These patrols accounted for 1,915 flying bombs out of a total of 7,503 launched. The following figures give the results of all types of defence against these weapons:—

Period 12/13th June to 2100 hours 30th September, 1944

<i>Despatched</i>	<i>Made Landfall</i>	<i>Reached Greater London</i>
7,503	5,431	2,421

Flying Bombs Destroyed—period 12/13th June to 30th September, 1944

(a) By Fighter Patrols:—

	<i>Day</i>	<i>Night</i>	<i>Total</i>
Over land ...	287	388½	675½
Over sea ...	1,034½	205	1,239½
Total ...	<u>1,321½</u>	<u>593½</u>	<u>1,915</u>

(b) By all causes:—

<i>Fighter Patrols</i>	<i>A.A.</i>	<i>Balloons</i>	<i>Other Causes</i>	<i>Total</i>
1,915	1,547	278	33	3,773