

the rockets were coming from an area so remote that armed reconnaissance of it could not be performed with maximum efficiency by fighters operating from this country. Unfortunately the airfields on the Continent which had fallen into Allied hands were already so congested that facilities for my aircraft to operate from them could not be provided. I could not resist the conclusion that the task must now be done by a force based on the Continent. Accordingly, at the end of September the Second Tactical Air Force assumed responsibility for armed reconnaissance of the firing areas. Air Marshal Coningham's headquarters in Brussels was not well placed, however, for the detailed work of collating intelligence on this subject, which came from a variety of sources; and we arranged that this should continue to be done at my headquarters, where good communications existed. From the 1st October onwards, therefore, my intelligence staff transmitted to Brussels a daily signal—for which we coined the name "Benrep"—containing a brief appreciation of the most recent information and a note of the areas in which armed reconnaissance seemed most likely to be fruitful.

190. Rockets continued to fall near Norwich during the first half of October, but on the 3rd October, as we shall see, London also became a target once again. Thereafter little evidence of firing from Garderen was forthcoming, and most of the rockets apparently aimed at Norwich seemed to come from northern Holland. The evidence of the radar pointed to the shores of the Zuyder Zee and the islands of Vlieland and Terschelling; and secret informants confirmed the presence of firing points in wooded country near Rijs, in the former area.

191. Altogether, from the 25th September onwards, some 36 rockets apparently aimed at Norwich fell on land or close enough to the shore to be reported. Not one fell inside the city, although the enemy's shooting against Norwich was actually somewhat better than that against London, inasmuch as the rounds that reached this country were more closely grouped. The last round of this phase fell on a farm in Norfolk soon after half-past seven on the morning of the 12th October.

192. Meanwhile fighters of the Second Tactical Air Force visited a number of suspected firing areas in the course of the operations of wider scope which they were conducting in support of the campaign on land. Apart from a few trails, however, their pilots saw nothing that threw much light on the activities of the firing troops. But by the end of the attack on Norwich a number of fresh factors had combined to produce a new situation, which ultimately led to a further change in the allocation of responsibility for armed reconnaissance.

(g) *The Attacks: Third Phase (London, 3rd October to 18th November, 1944).*

193. Among the most important of these factors was the resumption of attacks on London. On the 3rd October an agent reported that the firing troops might be in the process of returning to the Hague. Sure enough, late that evening a rocket fell at Leytonstone—the first in Greater London for a fortnight. More followed on the 4th and 7th. By the middle of the month—when attacks on Norwich ceased—the new phase of activity against the capital seemed to be settling down to a rather unsteady

average of two or three rounds a day. The degree of concentration achieved was about the same as in September, but the mean point of impact was further east.

194. So far as we could judge, the Germans were now firing at London from some half-dozen wooded parks and open spaces within the built-up area of the Hague and on its southern outskirts. Possibly a few sites elsewhere were being used as well. The firing troops were said to have taken over a lunatic asylum in the suburb of Bloemendaal and to be storing rockets and equipment in the grounds and neighbouring woods. In addition, informants who had usually proved reliable in the past reported that vehicles and equipment were stored in a wooded park adjoining the Hotel Promenade, in the centre of the town. We were told that supplies were reaching the Hague by way of the goods station at Leiden, and that laden railway trucks were often parked at the main railway station in that town.

195. All this information, and much more besides, we passed to the headquarters of the Second Tactical Air Force by means of the daily "Benreps". Officers from my headquarters visited Brussels to give Air Marshal Coningham's staff the benefit of such experience as we had gained in the first three weeks of the campaign. Both in the "Benreps" and verbally we stressed the desirability of confirming by visual reconnaissance the intelligence obtained from other sources. More than this we could not do. The responsibility for conducting the armed reconnaissance sorties which alone enabled visual observations to be made now rested solely on the Second Tactical Air Force; and according to a recent decision of the Air Commander-in-Chief, this situation was unaffected by the resumption of firing from the Hague.

196. Whatever the merits of this decision, as far as I was concerned the situation to which it led had one grave disadvantage: Air Marshal Coningham, with his many commitments in the battle area, could spare few aircraft for subsidiary tasks. Instead of making sorties over the Hague expressly for the purpose of observing and harassing the firing troops, as my forces had been able to do, the Second Tactical Air Force was obliged to rely on its general programme of armed reconnaissance over the enemy's lines of communication. This method of tackling the problem was probably right in the circumstances; but from my point of view it had several shortcomings. It left us without any means of judging the effect of so indirect a counter-measure; nor did it throw any light on what the enemy was doing at the Hague or meet our demand for visual reconnaissance of suspected areas. Indeed, from the date when the Second Tactical Air Force assumed responsibility for armed reconnaissance up to the 17th October—when this issue came to a head—we were without any report to say that pilots of that Command, while engaged on these duties, had seen or attacked anything on the ground which could be associated with long-range rockets.

197. Another factor which helped to give a new aspect to the problem created by the A-4 was an increasing scale of attack on Continental cities. By the middle of October well over 100 rockets were known to have fallen on the Continent; and with the capture of Antwerp,