

234. In this battle the part played by gunners and fighters was so conspicuous and important that it tends to monopolize attention, perhaps unduly. I am conscious that in writing the foregoing account of the flying bomb campaign I have not resisted the natural tendency to bring out those features which make for easy narrative and positive statement. I wish, therefore, in this summing up, to emphasize that victory over the flying bomb was gained by the joint efforts of thousands of men and women of the different Services, working in every variety of unit and at all levels of responsibility. As an example of this co-operation I may cite the mutual trust and unity of purpose that always existed between General Pile's staff and mine. So far as the work of the gunners and fighter crews is concerned, the bare chronicle of their achievements requires no embellishment. Nothing need be added, therefore, except perhaps a word of tribute to those whose work was done outside the limelight. The contribution of Balloon Command, too, speaks for itself, although perhaps in too modest a tone for its true value to be apparent. Every one of the 232 bombs brought down by the balloons was one which had eluded the other defences and would almost inevitably have hit the target if it had been allowed to continue on its way. To the administrative skill and practical efficiency which enabled the deployment of the initial barrage to be completed in less than a third of the time originally forecast, I can give no higher praise than by comparing this feat with those performed by Anti-Aircraft Command at the same time and in July. The part played by the Royal Observer Corps—the Silent Service of the air defences—was an epic in itself. Together Anti-Aircraft Command, Fighter Command, Balloon Command and the Royal Observer Corps made up a team in whose play I am proud to have had a share.

235. Of the helping hand extended by many who were not members of the team, limitations of space forbid that I should say much. A hint has already been given of the technical advice and assistance rendered by distinguished men of science. Acknowledgement must also be made of the important part played by the Royal Navy and the Admiralty, especially in connection with the problems of obtaining and utilising early warning of the approach of flying bombs over the sea, and also that of helping pilots to "pinpoint" their position off the coast. In particular, the heroism of those who sailed in the small craft which operated off the French coast, under the noses of the Germans and exposed to attack by land, sea, and air, deserves to be remembered.

236. Teamwork, aided by such help as this, won the "battle of the bomb". Indeed, it is not too much to claim that the flying bomb was prevented from achieving even a secondary purpose; for although we suffered casualties and damage, the flow of supplies to the Allied Armies across the Channel went on unimpeded by the worst the flying bomb could do.

237. Such, then is the answer to our question, so far as it concerns the flying bomb.

238. I turn now to the A-4 rocket. This was in some ways a more disturbing menace than the flying bomb. Not that it was more destructive; but it was difficult to counter, and

fore-shadowed further developments which still loom ahead of us. Albert Speer, one of the ablest and most far-seeing of our enemies, remarked soon after the German surrender that, whereas the flying bomb had had its day, the rocket must be considered the long-range weapon of the future. On the other side of the scale must be set the complication and high cost of such missiles. Delivering approximately the same explosive charge as a flying bomb, the A-4 rocket required twenty times the productive effort, or as much as six or seven fighters.

239. That the German rocket attacks of 1944 and 1945 were conceived with a well-defined military object in view is open to doubt. I fancy that if the situation had been less desperate the Germans might have postponed active operations until further trials enabled them to attain a higher standard of accuracy. Their plight was such, however, that in September, 1944, they found themselves constrained to improvise a rocket offensive from Holland in order to cushion the shock resulting from the obvious failure of the flying bomb. This does not mean that if northern France had remained in their hands, and our countermeasures to the flying bomb been less successful, they would not have used both weapons together; but that in such circumstances the use of the rocket would have been equally premature. The standard of accuracy attained, the many misfires, and the inconsistency of method adopted by different firing units, all point in the same direction.

240. To an even greater extent than the flying bomb campaign, then, the rocket offensive must be regarded merely as a harassing attack. In the outcome it was not particularly successful in that capacity. Why was this? The contribution of the defences, as I have related, was practically limited to tracking the missiles, trying to locate the firing points, and attacking these and other targets more or less frequently and more or less effectively with fighters and fighter-bombers. As I urged at the time, these measures were not, by themselves, enough to interfere seriously with the rate or quality of the enemy's fire. The ineffectiveness of the A-4 rocket was due rather to the inaccuracy of the weapon and to the restricted scale of attack, reduced as it was by the enemy's insistence on dividing his efforts between Antwerp and London, probably from propagandist motives. But to say this does not imply that no effective countermeasure to the rocket would have been possible in any circumstances. In one sense its very lack of weight was what made the attack so hard to counter. For if the enemy had begun to fire at a much greater rate, he could no longer have lived from hand to mouth. He would have been obliged to store rockets and fuel in bulk near the firing area. Valuable bombing targets would then have been offered to us; and in such a case the Chiefs of Staff would doubtless have considered lifting their virtual ban on the use of the strategic bomber forces against rocket targets. I have little doubt that if this had been done and the diversion of part of our bomber effort been accepted, we should soon have been able to restore the scale of rocket attack to its original proportions.

241. Accordingly, so far as the rocket was concerned the answer to our question is that, although in the circumstances the effect of the