

as far north as Great Yarmouth; initially intended to consist only of male batteries, it later included mixed batteries as well. Steps were taken to protect Bomber Command aircraft and U.S. Air Force bombers which regularly crossed this strip of coast.

92. On 22nd September, 1944, orders for the deployment of the "Diver Strip", as it was called, were given.

For a variety of causes, many beyond our control, the deployment was not completed till 13th October, 1944. Even this date would not have been achieved but for the excellent work of the R.A.S.C. drivers who drove both themselves and some of their transport to a standstill in their effort to meet the conflicting demands made upon them.

93. Generally, the deployment in the Diver Strip followed the lines which had proved so successful in the Diver Belt. 34 Heavy Batteries were deployed and 36 Light Batteries; the rôle of the latter, however, was changed from that previously used in an attempt to produce an intermediate effect between Heavy and Light anti-aircraft fire. Of the 36 Batteries only 15 were equipped normally, the remaining 21 had 2 static 3.7-inch Heavy guns in place of 4 of their 40-mm. Bofors; these were controlled in 15 instances by No. 10 predictors and in 6 instances by No. 3 predictors modified for range-finding by radar means. Thus there were in all 516 3.7-inch guns and 503 40-mm. guns. Within a month it was clear that the Light Anti-Aircraft units, even when modified for an intermediate rôle, were not providing a satisfactory contribution and they were withdrawn. The total of Heavy guns was increased to 542.

For initial intercommunication 200 wireless receivers were distributed, but these were replaced as soon as land lines could be provided. In the marshy districts of the deployment, where the country was everywhere intersected by considerable streams, this was a considerable task, involving 2,000 miles of cable, much of which had to be carried on poles. Once more our Signals showed their quality.

94. In this new phase of flying bomb activity the average height of the missiles dropped to 1,000 feet. Guns firing proximity fuzes could still deal with them though they had to be most carefully sited if they were to do so successfully; the radar sets in particular provided a problem since the need to detect the bombs at long range and the need to eliminate clutter at low angles of sight were mutually antagonistic; searchlights were most affected because the lower the height of the target the more difficult was continuous illumination.

95. The need for constant alertness produced that same degree of strain which had been evident for a time on the South coast, but I had not now available, owing to manpower cuts, the same reserves on which to draw for reliefs.

96. For some time we had been representing to the War Office that the war establishments of Anti-Aircraft Command units were anomalous, based as they were on the assumption that A.A. units were similar to units in a field army which had spells out of the line however continuous the fighting. In a spell of continuous air activity, no unit of Anti-Aircraft Command could anticipate any period of rest, and to base

its war establishment on the assumption that air activity would be sporadic was a fallacy. It was agreed therefore that, if a spell of continuous air activity threatened or occurred, a special increment could be made to the establishment. This is not altogether a satisfactory solution owing to the consequent lack of team training.

In the present instance it was possible to allow units to rest by day because attacks were almost always made at night, and radar information from sets in both the Low Countries and in England gave detailed advance information of impending attacks.

97. This series of air-launched flying bomb attacks continued until 14th January, 1945, but of a total of 1,012 plotted only 495 bombs came within range of the guns, for, in spite of the extension of the Strip to Great Yarmouth many still outflanked it to the north and many were inaccurately aimed and flew elsewhere than to London. Of the 495 targets only 66 got through and reached London.

98. On 14th October, 1944, that is as soon as the deployment was complete, a decision was taken about providing winter quarters in the area. Events at the approaches to Germany had shown that the war was likely to continue through the winter; and the extreme wetness of the autumn weather made living conditions in the already marshy land extremely uncomfortable. The Mixed batteries were offered the opportunity of leaving the Strip for better quarters inland but unanimously they asked to remain.

The project was a considerable one, involving the building of 60 miles of road, 3,500 huts and the laying of 150,000 tons of rubble and hardcore in the mud as foundation for guns as well as buildings. The cost of the project, which was equivalent to the building of a town the size of Windsor, was £2,000,000 and the building trade estimated the work would take 6 months to complete. It was carried out by the Construction Batteries, reinforced by 7,500 men of Anti-Aircraft Command, the latter being responsible for the collection, loading, unloading and distribution of materials and for providing unskilled labour. The work was completed in 2½ months.

99. On 24th December, 1944, a further deployment was ordered when 40 flying bombs were launched across the Yorkshire and Lincolnshire coasts towards the industrial areas of Lancashire. In spite of heavy snow and fog the deployment was completed in 5 days, for all the necessary preliminary reconnaissance had been carried out some months previously. These defences, known as the "Diver Fringe", extended from Flamborough Head to Skegness and remained in position until the end of hostilities although no further attacks on the North were made. 152 Heavy guns were involved in this area.

100. During February, 1945, information was received that land-launched attacks with bombs of longer range might be resumed from the Dutch coast, and on the 2nd/3rd March, 1945 attacks began and lasted until 29th March, 1945. Out of 157 bombs plotted, 107 came within range of the guns who destroyed 81. On eight days 100 per cent. successes were obtained. Only 13 bombs reached London.