

Neither Bomber Command nor No. 2 Group attacked any rocket targets during the week. Indeed, the latter were not asked to attack any, for up to this time none suitable for the method of precise bombing in which No. 2 Group specialised had been discovered.

183. All this time aircraft of No. 100 Group, Bomber Command, were flying special patrols with a view to intercepting and jamming any radio transmissions which might appear to be used to control the rocket. Aircraft of my Command provided fighter escort for these missions both at this stage and subsequently. In addition, thousands of reconnaissance photographs were being taken and interpreted. This procedure was in accordance with the scheme which the Air Staff had prepared before the attacks began.* One of the provisions of that scheme was that every area indicated by the radar, sound-ranging, and flash-spotting complex as a suspected firing-point should be photographed as soon as possible. My staff pointed out, however, that since many of the estimates based on these data were manifestly incorrect,† and since experience had quickly shown that the firing-points could not be seen on reconnaissance photographs,‡ the procedure served no useful purpose. At our suggestion the Air Ministry agreed to a modification which saved much effort on the part of skilled pilots and interpreters: henceforward only areas in which we expected reconnaissance to reveal something of interest were photographed. We also took advantage of the lull to perfect arrangements for the rapid provision of the "target material" which was used in briefing bomber crews, and to discuss our problems with Bomber Command.

(f) *The Attacks: Second Phase (Norwich, 25th September to 12th October, 1944).*

184. On the evening of the 25th September the lull came to an end. At 1910 hours a rocket fell near Diss, in Suffolk. Neither the flash-spotting nor the sound-ranging troops could give us any useful data about its origin, and at first the radar stations were equally reticent. Even the objective which the Germans had meant to hit remained unknown. Hence the rocket might have come from any area in German hands which was within 230 miles of the point of impact—for this, as we had reason to believe, was the maximum range of the A-4. Thus we were reduced to this hypothesis: that if the rocket had been aimed at London, then it must have come from the Hague or somewhere near it; but if at some other target, then it could have come from another part of Holland, from the Frisians, or even from a part of Germany near Cleves.

185. On the following afternoon another rocket landed in East Anglia—this time about eight miles from Norwich, which subsequently proved to be the target. Once again the technical devices were silent; but five minutes before the rocket fell, chance observers flying over a point about fourteen miles west

of Arnhem saw a trail rise, as they supposed, from a wood some twenty miles away, called the Speulder Bosch and adjoining the village of Garderen. Immediately afterwards the wood appeared to catch fire over an area of perhaps two acres and remain alight for about five minutes. The trail, or one like it, was also seen by chance observers who were flying well north of the Frisians, and thought it came from Ameland or Schiermonnikoog.

186. Now, Garderen lies between Amersfoort and Apeldoorn, in the direction which the firing troops were said to have taken when they left the Hague. Moreover, a secret informant had mentioned Apeldoorn as the apparent destination of a trainload of rockets and fuel which he claimed to have seen a week before. That the rocket which had fallen near Norwich originated from the Speulder Bosch was thus a plausible hypothesis, especially as a trail ascending from that area might well look to observers over the North Sea as if it came from the Frisians.

187. Meanwhile the films which should have recorded any data obtained by the radar stations about the rocket that fell near Diss had been scrutinized without success. They were scrutinized again; and this time faint traces were found on them. These traces showed that the missile had come from a point more remote from the stations than had the rockets observed during the earlier phase of the attacks. Armed with this evidence, the specialist whose task it was to calculate the location of firing points from such data went to work. After some delay he gave an "estimated position" which coincided with the village of Garderen.

188. Superficially the case for Garderen as the new firing area now looked stronger than, perhaps, it really was. The specialist, who was frankly giving an estimate and not the result of a purely objective calculation, may have been influenced by the knowledge that the next rocket was supposed to have come from the Speulder Bosch. If so, the whole case really rested on a single item of positive evidence—the trail seen from a distance of twenty miles. Yet one thing was certain from the impartial testimony of the radar traces: the Suffolk rocket had not come from the Hague or Wassenaar but from some more distant spot. Accordingly I authorised the removal of the suspected storage sites at Terhorst, Eikenhorst, and Raaphorst from the list of "Crossbow" targets which we had furnished to Bomber Command.

189. On the 27th September No. 12 Group sent four Tempest pilots to make an armed reconnaissance of the area between Amersfoort and Apeldoorn. They saw signs of military activity at two points in and adjoining the Speulder Bosch and a third point just south of the neighbouring railway; but there was no proof that this activity had anything to do with rockets. However, on the same day and the two following days six more rockets fell near Norwich and one off the Norfolk coast. In four of these seven cases the information furnished by radar suggested or was consistent with firing from the area between Amersfoort and Apeldoorn. Whether our suspicions of the Speulder Bosch were justified or not evidently

* See paragraph 165, above.

† On several occasions areas under water or otherwise unsuitable for rocket-firing were indicated.

‡ During the previous few weeks nearly 100,000 photographs of western Holland had been examined by interpreters. Not a single firing point had been found.