



The 'Doodlebugs':

IWM SR 2344 (clip)

The difficulty of intercepting these 'doodlebugs' as we call them is considerable because they're so small and they certainly can shift. The light from the jet at the back makes it rather hard to judge the range accurately, particularly at dawn or dusk. Once you get used to this it's not so bad, but you've got to be careful that you don't get too close when firing or it'll blow up and you'll go straight through the explosion, which is extremely unpleasant I can tell you because it happened to me. I saw the 'doodlebug' when it was about two miles out to sea coming up to Dover at about 3,000 feet. I was then at right angles to its path and slightly above. I dived to the left until I was dead behind it. That made it about 400 yards away and then I fired a short burst. That didn't seem to make any difference because it continued to go like hell. I then closed and gave it another burst. One moment it was a 'doodlebug' and the next it was a colossal mass of orange flame and black smoke. I couldn't avoid it and instinctively ducked and closed my eyes. I flew straight into it and my aircraft bumped violently for a few seconds. I lost control and came out upside down. As soon as I'd realised what had happened I rolled it over again and came back to base not much the worse. Since then I've shut down another three, probably another, and I'm hoping for some more this evening.

Shooting down a V1:

IWM SR 2344 (clip)

There are one fighter, two fighters, three fighters after him. He's heading northwest. The fighters are still after him. Three of them swooping and turning round about him. Four fighters now – five. Chasing him into the sunset. And here's another fighter coming up hard. I see just little dots. They're shooting at him now. Now there's a strange sight away to the east. Two divers are coming in and from this distance they look as if flying in line astern one about four or five miles behind the other. And now fighters have joined in this weird procession and tracer shells and flying bombs make one long line of fire across the sky. The tracer shells seem as large as the diver. I lost sight of the second diver and fighter – they've vanished behind a ridge. But the first pair is still in view, going all out northwards and now the searchlights have joined in – a fantastic lighting plot, the glowing orange robo-plane, the flaming red tracer shells and the cold, blue-white light of the searchlight all in front of the backcloth of the sunset. And now, now the tiny orange glow of the divers burst into brilliance – the fighters have got him. And it's crashed, it's crashed behind a tree-clad ridge on a far horizon, I should say about five miles from here.

Capturing the V1s:

IWM SR 1762

This is Bill Herbert of the CBC reporting from a captured flying bomb or rocket site in the Cherbourg area. No one is quite sure what it is. From what I can learn this is the largest site of its kind in this sector. The actual site and the power plant immediately behind it occupy about seven acres of land. First let me describe the site itself. It's located on top of a hill overlooking the sea. Imagine a huge figure 'U' made of cement and steel with the open part facing due north. That'll give you a general picture of

what this site looks like. The two outside prongs of the 'U'-figure are approximately 14 feet thick and are about 24 feet apart. These two walls are about 25 feet high and they slope gently downwards toward the base or the closed end of the 'U'-figure. This base, I should say, is 40 feet high and the whole thing is encircled by poles from which flap pieces of bamboo-like camouflage. There are huge tunnels running into the hillside from the eastern wing of the 'U'. These tunnels slope downwards into the hillside and in some cases I judge that they extend at least 100 feet underground. They're huge cement tunnels, reminding you somewhat of the London Underground or the Tube stations. These tunnels apparently had a variety of uses. Some were doubtless storerooms for the bombs or rockets, while others were rooms in which oil supplies, radio mechanisms and power units were kept. Others were obviously used as eating places for we saw abandoned cookers with onions and beans and spaghetti strewn about the whole place. The Germans obviously left in an awful rush. Ammunition is poured over the floor. There are odd bits of clothing about, even three pairs of shoes. Someone left a letter lying on the floor. I forgot to say that the two main sides of the site are honeycombed with slots, which I'm told by officers who have examined the site that they're the ramps from which the bombs or rockets are actually launched. The tunnels I mentioned earlier all run into the eastern section. I suppose that the one close to the base was meant to be the storeroom for the bombs or rockets, while the one next door may have been a storehouse for the wings. All the tunnels are linked to the main part of the site by a narrow gauge railway. It seems to me that the bombs were meant to roll along this tiny railway onto the ramp and then the necessary adjustments would be made. At the base of the 'U', at the very bottom of it, is a small office with a narrow slot carved into the concrete block just at eye-level. I'm told this would be the actual firing point, behind which the enemy operators would stand when shooting off these 'doodlebugs' to escape the fire which trails out behind them. Word about the power plant – just a while ago I walked through another maze of tunnels and inspected by flashlight huge diesel motors, evidently intended to supply the electrical energy needed to keep the whole site in operation, and already parts of the power supply system are being utilised by the Americans who are in command of this sector. It's quite apparent looking at one of these sites that the Germans have had great faith in their flying bombs. There's enough steel in this structure alone to build a destroyer at least, if not a light cruiser, and enough solid cement to construct a good-sized departmental store. This site was never in actual operation but it was well on its way to completion when we captured it. It would be extremely difficult to do much damage by bombing on this site except with a series of Blockbusters all pin-pointed at the same place. As it stands, with a complete casing of cement all around it, which obviously was planned, it would be practically impregnable to bombs. But as I say this is one of the largest ones – the smaller ones undoubtedly have been given a terrific pasting by our bombers. Some small damage to the exposed portions of the site, either caused by bombs or shells, is apparent but on the whole the site is scarcely touched. A pilot who has flown over this area before, since D-Day and before D-Day, said the place is not very visible from the air and was extremely well ringed with Ack-Ack defences.