



Rockets, Jets and other things

Behind darkened walls and corridors, in northern occupied Europe in secretive places, a control switch was ignited in the ladder part of the Second World War 9,251 times. The ignition sequence was never revealed during the course of the war. It was the firing of the Nazi gift to science, the revenge weapon known as the V-1 rocket.

Six thousand seven hundred and sixteen V-1 missiles were plotted by military radar before September 1, 1944, from the first one eighty-one nights before. Then the war gods proposed a new entrance. Two missiles were fired at Paris. It was September 6. Fortunately, for the Parisians they both exploded in flight before reaching their destination. And in another two days was ushered in the age of supersonic flight. September the eighth, the stage of rocket bombardment grew over England as a new type of rocket, the A-4 or V-2, flew. This flew at supersonic speed. No 2-stage transatlantic versions were ever produced but they were on the planning table, and had the war in Europe been extended to 1946 they could have conceivably been used against the U.S. The era of a limiting air frontier was over. This was not 1943.

For most of 1944, they were to be theoretically launched from some 100 sites, and in a day and a half were to deliver the same quantity of explosives and incendiary power as had caused the 1943 fire storm in Hamburg (see volume 3). The jet was another war wonder cast upon the Allies. As early as July the Allies had made positive