

Chapter 1 : V1 Flying Bomb at Holmwood Road | From the Sky

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Buzzbombs By Wallace Wood Click images for a larger view September 11, , just two airliners brought down two of the greatest buildings in the world-The Twin Towers of New York. What if New Yorkers faced not two "flying bombs" that day, but two hundred? Not recently, when terror bombers blew up small backpacks in the subways and buses of the city and killed dozens of Londoners. No, it was 61 years ago, in when thousands died, as they did in New York. Picture thanks to Fiddlers Green The first bombs were dropped on London and other British cities in and It was the first "Blitz". But bombers dropped those. Things were fairly quiet at home for three years until the second Blitz of the V-1 flying bombs. We have the story of that first jet--vs. They sounded like a motorbike running without a silencer. You would listen for them to stop and if they stopped overhead you knew they would hit close by. They sounded like a loud two-stroke motorcycle, people who heard them will tell you. But the scary part was the silence. The bomb was on its way down. The V-1 had the official name of Fieseler Fi. The "V" was from the German word for "Revenge". It weighed as much as your car. A ton was high explosives. It just spun a long screw. When the screw turned over so many times, a switch turned the engine off and the V-1 became a "Diver" headed for the ground and self-destruction like a mindless suicide bomber. German engineers figured out just how many turns it took to go just so far. The fat thing on top like a stovepipe was the simplest of jet engines. Toss the V-1 in the air fast enough and the wind would push open the air intake and cheap gas or kerosene would be squirted in and sparked off. That was the first "sputt". Hitler had high hopes for the V Cheap to make, he ordered them in the thousands, and 9, were launched at Britain. Another 6, were launched at other targets. More than 14, people were killed and 35, injured. One bomb could take out a big building. In fact, it took out many buildings at once, leaving much of London in rubble. A million people left London to get away from the bombs, most of them children sent to visit relatives by their frightened parents. First Salute To the Jet Age Most people have heard of the Spitfire, and maybe even the Hurricane, two great airplanes that helped turn the Germans back from invading Britain. That was "The Battle of Britain" before the first "Blitz" and is a story in itself. Unless you are a World War II buff, of course. These planes came later and fought the second Blitz, the Blitzkrieg of V-1 flying bombs. The greatest of these was probably the Tempest. The "Mossie" was made almost entirely of molded plywood. Which any skilled woodworker could do. Laughed at by German engineers at first, the German air chief of the Luftwaffe, Hermann Goering, later wished he had such a plane "any piano maker could build" when metals were in short supply because of the war. Fast as a fighter because it had the same Rolls-Royce fighter engine as the American-built P Mustang and the famed Spitfire, the Mosquito could do just about anything. And it had two such engines. It could carry 5, pounds of bombs-as much as some bombers. It was a "pathfinder" for the slow bombers, dropping flares to mark the target. It did ground support. And it could hunt V-1 bombs at night with the heavy radar sets installed. Claims are made for nighttime V-1 "kills" by Mossies, nevertheless. So protective and secretive were the British, the Meteor never saw direct combat against its German rival, the Messerschmitt Me A million people left London to get away from the bombs, most of them children sent to visit relatives by their frightened parents So the Meteor was added to the list of other fast fighters hunting V-1 flying bombs close to home in It came too late to score a great total. In addition to being an effective fighting platform, the Meteor flew in some of the most colorful schemes out there This proved a great irony during the Suez Crisis of This plane looked like a bulldog with a huge chin. Made by the same company that made the Hurricane, the Tiffy was pressed into service along with the fastest Spitfires and Mustangs to stop the V-1 devastation. Tiffies were great ground support planes. For D-Day in , Typhoons took out German tanks; tanks that might have helped turn the Allied invasion back on the beaches. Typhoons had two problems: Not a good combination. It was relegated to ground support in favor of: Son of "Tiffy", the Tempest had the same aggressive chin. The Tempest also had one of the most remarkable engines of the war. One of the most powerful and advanced piston engines ever built, the 2, cubic inch Napier Sabre pulled the Tempest along at mph in the prototype-an unofficial record. The Napier Sabre had 2, horsepower to start with, eventually upped

to over 3, hp. One was even tested at 4, hp. The Napier Company made record-breaking speedboat and automobile engines before turning to aircraft. At first the speed was dropping below 100 mph and I rolled the Tempest lazily inverted, then allowed the nose to drop until the horizon, at first above my head, disappeared below or rather above the now inverted nose the fields and woods steadied into the centre of the windscreen and then whirled around as I put the stick hard What! It must be very dull here. Steadying again I pulled out over the tree tops at 100 mph, throttled back and pulled hard over towards the airfield in an over-the-vertical climbing turn, lowering the wheels and flaps in a roll as the speed dropped. What a magnificent aeroplane! They could have all their Spitfires and Mustangs! German jet pilots said it was the only enemy plane they respected. A promising start for its first combat. The RAF aircraft defenders brought down almost half of the 9, V-1 flying bombs. At the end of the V-1 "Blitz" it was down to 1 out of 5. Top performance was well under 25, feet. Not only by the British defenders, but by the Allied bombing campaign that targeted the V-1 takeoff sites. Left with few catapult sites, they finally were launched from bombers in the air, just like some cruise missiles today. Thousands lost their lives to the terrible V It could have been many thousand more. It was, in a way.

Chapter 2 : The V1 and V2 Weapons | From the Sky

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UK Terror of the Doodlebugs: Britons accurately termed it a flying bomb. The V-1 flying bomb would kill thousands[PH] They also called it a "buzz-bomb" and a "doodlebug" because of the strange intermittent buzzing noise it emitted. Its official name, by which it was known by the German scientists who developed it, was Vergeltungswaffe 1, meaning "revenge weapon". Or, for short, the V The first V-1 landed on the East End of London killing seven people. Over the next four months they were to cost the lives of more than 6, civilians with another 18, injured, as the jet-engined missiles packed with high explosives arrived in droves over the capital. The V-1 was the first "cruise missile" and was powered by a simple jet engine and carried a 1,lb warhead. Launched from northern France it could travel at mph with a range of up to miles. It contained a device that counted the revolutions in a tiny propeller in its nose and when it reached the number calculated to have brought it over its target the engine cut out and the missile fell to earth, detonating on impact. Three years after the terror of the Blitz, Britons had at last become hopeful that war on the home front had ended. News of the D-Day landings on June 6, , had been greeted with euphoria. The Germans were being pushed back from the Channel. Victory in Europe was at last more than a dream. Adolf Hitler had other ideas. His scientists had developed a top-secret "wunderwaffe" wonder weapon which the Fuhrer saw as a way to rescue Germany and still win the war. The first time it was seen in action was in the early hours of June 13 when Wehrmacht officers, under allied bombardment from the Normandy coast, peered into a clear moonlit sky and watched a missile hurtle in the opposite direction - westwards towards England. Captain Wehr of the 81st Infantry Division recalled: A dark object slid into view, like a steel cigar, trailing a flame behind it. Three of them fell harmlessly in the countryside but the fourth droned on towards the target that had been set for all of them: The engine cut out. We waited, then came a loud explosion. The sturdy Victorian structure survived but the houses surrounding it did not. Four people died and 10 were wounded. What Mr Hunter had witnessed that night was the first of more than 9, V-1s to be aimed at London, at the peak about a day. In the first 48 hours, the public were deliberately kept in the dark, official bulletins referring only to "short alerts" being sounded and "bombs that fell in a working-class area". The death toll of 58 civilians and 63 servicemen shook the nation. A young ATS subaltern, Elizabeth Sheppard-Jones, who was trapped beneath the stone blocks of the demolished chapel, recalled hearing "someone screaming, screaming, screaming, like an animal caught in a trap. My eyes rested on the bloodstained body of a young soldier whose eyes stared unseeingly. I tried to convince myself this was a nightmare". Finally she was freed by a young guardsman, of whom she asked hysterically: Tell me how I look! But the public was no longer fooled. Two weeks later, a V-1 landed in busy Aldwych. The blast sucked Air Ministry workers out of their office windows and killed a group of girls taking a break on the roof. Among the 46 dead and seriously injured were shoppers in the street and passengers on buses. The following day, July 1, the Daily Express captured the tense mood of the capital with a famous cartoon by Giles depicting Londoners listening with giant ears and captioned: V-1s fell on Croydon, where PC William Holloway rescued a distraught mother from a wrecked house in danger of further collapse. Still inside was her young daughter, Elizabeth Wagstaff. The brave policeman admitted to being "scared stiff" as the house threatened to cave in on him but he found the child. One pilot claimed 50 "kills".