ORDNANCE

Exploring Upper Air

V-2 rockets from Germany are serving Army, Navy and scientific groups in research into atmospheric conditions above the earth. Aerojet missiles also are being fired.

➤ GERMAN V-2 rockets, on peaceful missions seeking new knowledge for science, will be sent streaking through the skies over the desert at White Sands, N. M., until at least next April, according to a tentative schedule announced by Lt. Col. J. G. Bain, chief of the Guided Missiles Branch, Rocket Division, U. S. Army Ordnance.

From a stock of 25 completely assembled V-2's, 10 have been fired, and 10 more will be sent into the upper atmosphere by early Feb., 1947. The others will probably follow in the next two months, but a decision will be made early next year on whether to construct more of the German weapons or turn to other designs in future exploration of the region around 100 miles overhead, Col. Bain said.

Of an original request for 100 complete V-2's, only 25 were obtained. Some parts are available but others will have to be manufactured in the U. S., using captured German plans, if it is decided to continue the V-2 program after the first 25 are expended.

Meanwhile, an anti-aircraft guided missile has been fired in Utah, first of 60 standard Aerojet rocket-propelled units scheduled for firing this year, the Army has announced.

Called "gapa," ground-to-air pilotless aircraft, the missiles are built by the Boeing Aircraft Co. Pencil-slim, the latest postwar weapon is 10 feet long.

The tenth Nazi missile actually to be fired at White Sands was instrumented by a group including the Army Air Forces and headed by Dr. W. G. Dow of the University of Michigan. This winds up the first round of rockets with the scientific groups each getting another V-2 in the second series beginning in October, under present plans.

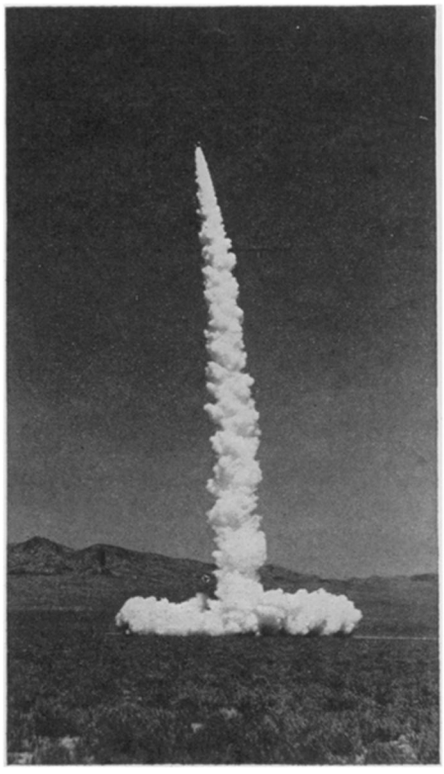
The eleventh rocket, to be fired Oct. 3, will be a second one for scientists of the Naval Research Laboratory, Washington, D. C. The Navy scientists directed the data-recording work on the V-2 shot off June 28, but got only a partial record of the flight on their instruments.

The twelfth V-2 will be in the scientific hands of the Johns Hopkins Laboratory of Applied Physics, Silver Spring, Md. This group sent instruments up in the record-breaking flight of the eighth V-2, July 30, and troops are still searching the desert for records of the trip, recorded on instruments that fell separately from the rocket.

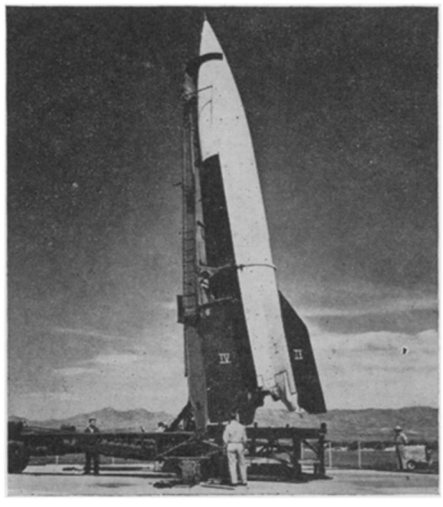
Princeton University scientists will be in charge of the 13th rocket, scheduled for firing Oct. 31, and other V-2 shoots are listed at two-week intervals into early 1947.

Dr. E. H. Krause, head of the rocket sonde section of the Naval Research Laboratory's research section, is chairman of a V-2 technical group in charge of the scientific use of the Nazi weapons being fired at White Sands.

Science News Letter, August 24, 1946



GAPA—This heretofore secret guided missile has been fired for the first time over the salt fields of Utah. It is pencil-slim, 10 feet long, and has been designed as potential defense against attack by enemy aircraft.



U. S. Army Air Forces Photos

RESEARCH MISSILE—V-2 rockets have been fired higher than 100 miles into the stratosphere. Special instruments replace TNT in the warhead and may be lowered by parachute after ejection. These instruments furnish data for scientists.

SEISMOLOGY

West Indies Quake=8:25

Only three recorded tremors have been rated higher than the earthquake with its serious aftershocks which rocked the West Indies.

➤ THE EARTHQUAKE that rocked the West Indies Aug. 4, and with its aftershocks killed more than 65 people, was a harder shock than the famous Japanese quake in 1923 that claimed nearly 100,000 lives, seismologists at the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey have stated.

The tremor that centered in the Caribbean off the Dominican Republic has been rated at 8.25 on the scale devised by Dr. Beno Gutenberg of the Seismological Laboratory of the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, Calif. Another 8.25 quake was the devastating San Francisco shock of 1906, and only three recorded tremors