

A.A. GUNS DO THEIR WORK

Three of six bombers destroyed by gun fire within 48 hours during recent raids, were accounted for by mixed batteries of A.A. Command. Two batteries on the East Coast were in action for several hours on the first night. A.T.S. were in the Command Posts and gunners kept up a fast rate of fire.

It was not until dinner time the following day, however, that they learned that they had brought down a Heinkel and a Dornier. Wreckage washed up on the shore helped to confirm the claims and reports showed that both bombers were hit as they were heading out to sea on their return journey.

During the same raids, a searchlight was exposed on a Junkers 88, flying along the coast at a height of between 200 and 400 feet.. Light guns scored direct hits, causing explosions inside the bomber, which nose-dived into the sea a short distance from a beach. One of the crew swam ashore, and was detained by gunners. Other were saved by a launch.

In the Midlands, a Dornier was damaged as it swept across a searchlight site at 100 feet. The detachment opened fire with all the weapons they possessed, including a tommy gun, Lewis gun, rifles and revolvers.

On another searchlight site a sergeant, warned that an enemy plane was heading in his direction, opened up with Lewis gun fire as a bomber, according to him "came through the trees". The bomber it is believed, was only 10 or 15 feet above the trees. The sergeant fired two bursts, saw the bomber drop to 30 feet and heard later that it had crashed. The sergeant, an ex-storekeeper from Mansfield, who has been in the Territorial Army since 1931, said afterwards, "After three years of waiting it was grand stuff to get a Jerry".

Other Midlands gunners got their revenge against the Nazis for an attack a year ago. They were with a Heavy A.A. Battery when the ship, in which they were proceeding to a British port, was bombed. A number of men were killed and wounded.

After firing only a few rounds during Nazi attacks on Midlands towns, they scored direct hits on a bomber which civilians saw falling down in flames. A 28 years old ex-rail worker at Manchester Central Station now a sergeant, was in charge of one of the gun crews.

He said, "We all feel that we have done something towards paying back the Germans, because several of my closest friends were killed when they bombed the ship a year ago".

The sergeant was trapped with other men below decks, when a bomb tore away the companionway of the ship. With others he managed to get away through scalding steam from burst boilers.

Operational A.T.S. who had played a part in the coastal successes have said they wished they could have seen the plane brought down.

Among them was a Fulham dressmaker in peace time, a Watford telephonist a Leighton Buzzard nurse, an Aberdeen weaver, a Horsham domestic servant, a Southend-on-Sea telephone assembler, a London shop assistant a Hazelmere (Bucks) children's nurse, and a Newcastle-on-Tyne tailoress, all aged between 18 and 27.
