

THE ATTACK ON KARLSRUHE

Last night in the clear light of the half-moon, Karlsruhe was easily found by our crews. There were very few clouds and only a slight haze on the ground. Landmarks in and about the town itself showed up clearly, crews saw the channel leading from the Rhine to the inland harbour and the shape of the docks, which spread outwards like the fingers of a hand. They could see the circular boulevard which is one of the characteristics of the city.

The fires at Karlsruhe were enormous. They blazed in the docks as well as elsewhere in the town, and at the end of the attack the smoke became very dense. One pilot described the objective as "a flaming hell". The crew of a Halifax waited until the end of the attack so that they could make a special report. The pilot said that the attack was an obvious success.

It was one of those very rapid attacks which have lately proved so effective in confusing the defences.

There were a number of combats. Near Karlsruhe a Wellington shot down two Junkers 88s within four minutes. Both were seen to explode on the ground, not only by the crew of the Wellington but by eight other bomber crews.

Capital of the province of Baden, Karlsruhe is one of the main railway centres of the Upper Rhine. Traffic from Munich and south-east Germany passes through it on the way to France, coal from the Ruhr goes southwards by way of Karlsruhe to Italy. Marshalling yards and railway workshops largely engaged in the manufacture of goods waggons and passenger coaches add to the importance of the town.

Barges from the Ruhr unload at the inland harbour, and their cargoes are taken on by road and rail. Coal and timber are chiefly handled by the harbour which has recently been enlarged. The town's own industries are mostly engineering works. The manufacture of small arms and ammunition has become one of its main activities - and fire fighting appliances, motor tyres and army uniforms are among other essential war products made.