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ANOTHER HEAVY ATTACK ON BERLIN

Last night's heavy attack on Berlin was concentrated into about 45 minutes. The bombers arrived over the capital shortly after half past eleven.

"It was a tense and exciting struggle from the moment we crossed the enemy coast", said a Halifax captain. "Enemy fighters were on patrol along the whole route, and my gunners could not relax for an instant until we were over the sea again. We were one of the first to arrive and as we approached the capital the defences were just coming into action. Hundreds of searchlights were turned on, but they were not so effective as usual because of scattered cloud over the city. We found a gap and dropped our bombs, and as we turned away - it was about five minutes after the attack had started - there was a very big explosion that went off with an orange flash".

Pilot-Officer G.A. Scarcliffe, of Leeds, the rear-gunner in one of the Halifaxes, was making the first flight in his second tour of operations. "I have not been to Berlin since last year", he said, "and since then there has been a great change in the defences. Last year I took part in two attacks on the capital and in those days there seemed even more guns there than in the Ruhr, but very few fighters. Now it is the other way around. There were 'bags' of fighters last night, but the flak was really only moderate.

"We were attacked three times by fighters while we were over the target. The first was a Junkers 88, and shortly after we had driven it off we were attacked by two single-engined aircraft. My captain out-manoeuvred them and we went on and bombed".

The pilot of a Stirling who arrived over Berlin after the attack had been in progress for about a quarter of an hour said the fires had then got a good hold and were spreading.

"There was a lot of cloud along the route, but it began to thin out as we approached Berlin", he said. "Presently far ahead of us, we could see a faint glow that grew stronger and stronger as we went on. Through the gaps in the clouds over the capital we could see the fires. My bomb-aimer called out over the inter comm. that he had dropped our load in the middle of one of them, and then we turned for home. The glow of the fires was still visible when we were 70 miles on our homeward journey."