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Air Ministry News Service

Air Ministry Bulletin No. 11641

"TRAIN-BUSTERS" OVER BURMA

Beaufighter squadrons of the Royal Air Force operating over Burma has become known as "train-busters". These powerfully armed fighters have put out of action more than 60 Japanese-controlled locomotives during the last six months.

In Burma they are playing a similar role to that of the crack Mosquito squadrons operating over enemy-occupied Europe. Much of the Beaufighters work was carried out in the monsoon, and how bad this can be is only known to the air crews. Dense clouds and heavy rain hamper flights to the target areas and obscure objectives.

Attacks of the "hedge-hopping" variety are not uncommon and many of the photographs brought back by the Beaufighters look as though they had been taken from ground level. These attacks sometimes provoke small arms fire from the enemy but they are so swift and so sudden that aircraft usually are not seriously bothered.

An outstanding "train-buster" team includes Sergeant-Pilot Cyril Johnson, of Gosport, Portsmouth who was an accountant in civil life, and Flying Officer Alexander Moir Dinwoodie of Edinburgh, the navigator, who was formerly a pharmacist in that city. Both took part in a recent attack on a million-gallon oil tank in Burma.

Here is the sergeants' description of a typical "train-busting" operation. "One morning we found a record bag while patrolling the railway line between Toungoo and Thazi, six trains with steam up were in a marshalling yard. We had a grand time and when we left the boilers and tanks were leaking like sieves. Later we found two more locomotives and gave them a pretty good plastering."

Another team with a fine record in the blitz is Flight Lieutenant Reginald Robert Williams, the pilot, of Bristol, who had a bacon curing business there before he joined the R.A.F. Flying Officer Kenneth Edward Herbert of Selston, Surrey, the navigator.

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