

12/12/42 - No. 22

Air Ministry News Service

Air Ministry Bulletin No. 8715

THROUGH FOUL WEATHER TO TURIN

Last night, our bombers had to fly through thick icing cloud almost all the way to Turin. Over the target were layers of cirro-stratus cloud but with a few breaks. The pilot of a Lancaster described how he flew over the target for half an hour before his bomb-aimer found a suitable gap.

Other crews were more fortunate. Though it was difficult to see results, fires were reported in the target area. One pilot was confident that his bombs had hit a large factory in Turin.

"Only a small part of the glass of my compartment was clear of ice," one Lancasters bomb-aimer said, "and through it I searched for a gap in the clouds. Ice had formed all over the aircraft and snow fell as we approached the Alps. When I went into the front turret after bombing I found several inches of snow behind the gunner's seat."

The effect of snow and ice on the engines of another Lancaster forced the captain to turn back just when the aircraft had reached the foothills of the Alps. "Shortly after crossing the Channel we ran into thick cloud," the captain said. "The further we went the worse it got. Then we struck an electrical storm. Vivid streaks of bluish light darted along the glass in front of my cabin and there were bright sparks between the barrels of the guns. At first we thought they were flashes of flak. The windows began to ice up and then we ran into driving snow. Very quickly the fronts of my windows and of the gun turrets were covered with ice and snow which also interfered with the smooth running of the engine.

"We began to lose height. Three of my engines cut out for short periods and for about ten seconds only one engine was working. The flight engineer got the engines running again, but I had to decide not to risk crossing the Alps. The weather was equally bad coming back."