

WHAT BOMBER CREWS THINK OF THE RAIDS

Members of bomber crews are occasionally given time off to visit factories and talk to the people who make the aircraft they fly. Sometimes they go to ordnance factories to watch bombs being filled or to workshops where flying instruments are made.

At all factories the workers always want to know what it feels like to drop a bomb. It is a difficult question to answer because bombing has become such a scientific business that personal reactions do not come readily and there is usually no time to analyse feelings. Here, however, are some of their replies.

A squadron leader, captain of a Halifax:- "It's a rare thing to feel anything at all. But sometimes something spectacular happens to impress itself on you. I remember, for instance, one of the nights we bombed Nuremberg. The first time we went there we flew high, but the second time I decided to go down to get well below the clouds. The clouds were lower than I expected and we were flying at only 2,000 feet when we made our bombing run.

"When the thousand pound bombs went off one after another the aircraft went up and down from the force of the explosions: we could even hear the noise above the roar of the engines. Then the navigator called out 'the buildings are coming up', and sure enough as I looked down I could see the stuff rising towards us in the light of flares and fires as roofs and rubble were thrown into the air. You certainly get a firm impression of what bombing can do when that happens".

A flight sergeant :- "For the first few trips I got quietly excited as I pressed the bomb switch. Now, after twenty-five operational flights, I don't have any feelings at all. It's just a job to be done. If you could always see your own bombs burst it might be different, but at night and with so many other aircraft bombing at the same time, it's almost impossible".

A sergeant flight engineer :- "I always try to see as much as I can of what's going on, and when I hear the clicking sounds underneath as the bombs leave the bays I feel the satisfaction of knowing that the job has been well done".

A pilot officer rear-gunner :- "Daylight bombing is the best because you always see something. At night it's not so easy. But usually I get a good view of everything that's happened as we turn away from our target and head for home. Naturally I always like to think that the biggest factory fires have been caused by our bombs".

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