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Air Ministry News Service

Air Ministry Bulletin No.12076

WELLINGTONS ATTACK RANGOON RAILWAY

Flying over heavy cloud formations to reach their target, R.A.F. Wellington bombers attacked the railway station, rolling stock and sidings at an important junction on the main Mandalay-Rangoon railway line, scoring hits and starting fires.

An R.A.F. officer who flew with the crew of one of the Wellingtons gives the following eye-witness story:

"Leaving our base we climbed steadily to get over the hills. As we crossed the ridge, cloud formations came up covering the area for miles around. The only thing we could see then was the peak of a high mountain which stood out like a gigantic island on a sea of foam. Over the hills the clouds began to clear. Our American pilot from Grand Rapids, Michigan, was the first to spot the Irrawaddy and altered course to find the target.

As we approached the junction I saw other Wellingtons drop a stick of bombs and incendiaries across the centre of the target. The white glare soon changed to a dull red glow as the fires caught hold, and bomb bursts added to the blaze.

"Two bursts of flak, the first and only ones we saw, didn't seem to matter. I felt the vibration of my seat as load after load left the aircraft. I wheeled round in the astral dome as we pulled away just in time to see the reflection of two large explosions. Fires were burning all over the place, almost forming a triangle across the railway station and tracks. Smoke appeared right across the whole area as we turned for home.

"Coming home we all felt highly elated with our work, and as our pilot said 'well, Jappy got a bit from everybody tonight'."

"It was quite an international affair because my aircraft was piloted by an American in the R.C.A.F., the bombardier was a Welshman from Cardiff, the navigator a Sergeant from Middlesex, the wireless operator was from Athlone, and the tail gunner is an Australian".

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