

SEARCHLIGHTS HELP NIGHT FIGHTERS.

In last night's raid over this country nine enemy aircraft were destroyed. Searchlights helped the night fighters of Air Defence of Great Britain to play their part.

Many of the raiders were caught in the beams, and effectively held until the fighter pilots could close in to attack them.

"It was the first time I had worked with the searchlights during a raid", one pilot said, "and they certainly put up a grand show. I saw at least three held in the cones - one of them a big brute which was held by 30 beams".

Taking advantage of a moonless night, most of the raiders came in singly or in pairs. No sooner had they crossed the coast than they began weaving violently in an attempt to evade the network of the searchlights.

Two crews each claimed two enemy aircraft destroyed.

S/Ldr. E.N. Bunting, D.F.C., of Worcester, a former Oxford under-graduate, who brought down a Ju.188 a week ago, added two more to his score, which now stands at seven.

"A short burst at the first set the port engine on fire, and the aircraft started sliding away," he said. "I fired again, and as it rolled over I saw its bomb-doors were open and the bombs hanging from the fuselage. As it went down in flames my observer, F/Lt. C.P. Reed, of Harrow, saw the bombs being jettisoned.

"The second one was in the beam of a searchlight when I saw it. I fired at it but missed. Then I got it in my sights again, pressed the button, and finished it off".

Two parachutes fluttered out of one of the two enemy raiders destroyed by F/Lt. R.L. Davies, 22-year-old Anglesea pilot.

"Both my Hunns were Ju.188's", he said. "I hit the starboard motor of the first, and the parachutes came out before it disintegrated. About a quarter of an hour later I picked up the second one. I opened fire and at first thought I had missed him. Then he turned half-to-starboard, and started going round like blazes. He hit the deck soon afterwards".

Another successful pilot, F/Lt John Hall, of London, S.W., who sighted one of the raiders which was held in a big cone of searchlights, said: "The Hun pilot was bouncing about all over the place in an effort to get out of the way. I hit his port engine, then his port wing root and then peppered the fuselage. He then went down in flames."