

MORE THAN 4,000 TONS ON MANY TARGETS

More than 4,000 tons of bombs were dropped by well over 1,000 aircraft of Bomber Command last night on many objectives. The military depot at Bourg-Leopold, which was the most heavily-attacked target is probably the biggest of its kind in the whole of the occupied west. It consists of a concentration of barrack huts, and large heavily camouflaged storage sheds. The depot just outside the town of Bourg-Leopold, some 35 miles east of Antwerp, occupies an area of about one mile by two-thirds.

Last night, there was no cloud, and all crews were able to take steady aim at the ground-markers from a clear sky. More than 1,200 tons of bombs were dropped on the depot, and night photographs show that our aircraft were right over the target area. At about five minutes past two there was a violent explosion which reminded many crews of the explosion of ammunition dumps in recent attacks in France. In the attack on a similar military depot at Mailly, a munitions dump in the target area was hit and blown up. Before the last bomber had left Bourg-Leopold, smoke covered the greater part of the depot.

There was opposition from flak in the target area, and on the homeward run, the German night fighters arrived in strength, some of them following the stream of bombers a long way across the sea. Our gunners were kept busy and shot down several of the enemy.

Another attack was made on the Rote-Erde railway yards at Aachen, the main outlet from the Ruhr and Western Germany into Northern France and Belgium. Here again the weather was clear, and both marking and bombing were well concentrated. Great clouds of smoke rolled over the target before the attack was over. Between target and coast, there was determined fighter opposition.

Almost all the ground defences of Berlin seemed to have been roused when more than one squadron of Mosquitos arrived over the capital. There was a great deal both of predicted and of barrage flak and large numbers of searchlights came on. Crews report good bombing, with the flashes of 4,000-pounders well placed around the markers.

The airfield at Rennes-St. Jacques was one of the main targets attacked in France. Night fighters were actually over the target at the time of attack but the bombing was methodically carried out. There is reason to believe that the airfields ammunition dump was hit. A very large explosion was seen, and tracer spouted up from its middle.

The railway centre at Nantes, a junction on a main line between Paris and the Biscay coast, with railway repair shops was also heavily bombed.

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