

WAR IN THE AIR (CONTINUED)

AIR LOSSES DURING WEEK ENDING SEPT. 14

Sept.	German			British	
	By R.A.F.	By A.A.	Total	Aircraft	Pilots
8 ...	5	6	11	3	2
" 9 ...	49	3	52	13	7
" 10 ...	2	—	2	0	0
" 11 ...	80	9	89	24	17
" 12 ...	1	2	3	—	—
" 13 ...	1	1*	2	—	—
" 14 ...	16	2	18	9	3
Total: ...	154	23	177	49	29

* By Barrage Balloon.

One of the British bombers which raided Berlin on the night of Wednesday, Sept. 11, had an adventurous time on the way back. It had been damaged when diving through heavy *Flak* fire and ran out of petrol in the North Sea. The four members of the crew took to the rubber dinghy, and were adrift for 12 hours before they were picked up off the South Scottish coast.

They were located by a flying-boat which guided the launch to them, and indicated the position of the dinghy by repeatedly diving towards it. The sea was so rough that before the flying-boat arrived the launch had passed within 50 yards of the dinghy without observing it. All the survivors were unhurt, and, although exhausted, gave an account of the Berlin raid after coming ashore. The Captain reported that he saw a fire in the suburb of Berlin when he was 60 miles away from the city. "This turned out to be the gas works which was my target," he said.

In the meantime our reconnaissance machines had spotted large numbers of self-propelling barges and other ominous-looking craft in the harbours of the coast, and the Bomber and Coastal Commands launched continuous attacks on them. It really looked as if the preparations for the threatened invasion were almost ready, but the R.A.F. determined to put as many spokes as possible into the wheel.

Holding Off the Invasion

WHILE Berlin was being raided on Tuesday night, September 10, other sections of R.A.F. bombers attacked the docks at Bremen and the naval yard at Wilhelmshaven. Several hits on the docks were made in spite of bad weather and one bomb-aimer saw four small fires and several explosions follow one of his salvos. Another target was the Bremen Focke-Wulf aircraft factory. Three buildings were on fire after the attack. At Wilhelmshaven weather conditions were rather better. In an early morning attack one of the heavy bombers was especially successful. The pilot began to bomb a few minutes after three a.m. In just over a quarter of an hour his bomb-aimer had landed a heavy bomb on the naval barracks, just south of Bauhafen, and another on a large building west of Bauhafen which at once burst into flames. Other bombs fell on the docks, but their effect could not be seen. This raider had to cope with violent opposition from the defences. The aerodromes at Wesermunde and Barge where there were several explosions and the Duisberg railway centre were also bombed. The night's operations included attacks on military objectives in Belgium.

The captain of the R.A.F. aircraft which raided Calais on the same night said "We had no difficulty in picking up Calais and its port, which showed clearly in the bright moonlight and the light from a string of ground fires. We made our run from a fairly low height and dropped bombs in a short stick along the east side of the Carnot Basin. There were many barges packed on this side of the Basin, and our bombs burst among them. Masses of debris flew into the air. When we left we saw fires started by our incendiaries and observed a number of explosions. When we made our attack the ground defences opened up in earnest, and as we climbed higher we were pursued by a storm of tracer and heavy shells. My rear gunner shot

them 'au revoir' with a burst of machine-gun fire and one or two of the anti-aircraft crews ceased fire immediately."

These sort of raids by our bombers went on every day and night. On the night of *Friday-Saturday, September 13-14*, Antwerp was the most important target, though there were British raids all along the coast. A Flight Lieutenant, describing his part in the raid on Antwerp, said:—

"As we approached the Dutch coast a Messerschmitt 110 came up. It was about 500 yards on our port side. I think it was just spotting our height and course, because it never came in to attack. It circled the aircraft once and then turned off. We picked up the river about 10 miles from Antwerp. Fires were already burning in the dock areas when we arrived. It was so clear it was almost like day. It was the perfect target. Even from 6,000ft. I could see perfectly. I could make out streets and houses in the town. We dropped our first stick of bombs from 6,000ft. They straddled the dock. I decided I would make a low-level attack to drop the second stick. We circled over the town, went away about five miles, and then came down with a steep dive. Just as we were approaching the dock we ran into a very intense barrage of anti-aircraft fire. The port main plane was hit, and I could feel a sort of kick on the stick. The wireless operator came along and said that this wing was on fire. He told me it was lighting up the whole of the interior of the aircraft where he was. I looked out and saw the fire. We were then dead over the target. We carried on, then dropped a stick of 10 heavy bombs. The first six went across the docks where these barges were.

"I could make out a brick building with a large chimney which might have been a warehouse or a power station. Our last three bombs straddled the end of this target, and there was the most colossal explosion. It really was terrific. As I turned the aircraft I could see bits of the target flying up into the air. As soon as we had bombed I pulled up the nose and began to get back some height. The fire in the wing had gone out; it only lasted about three minutes or so. We found out afterwards that there was about four square feet of fabric burnt off. We came back as fast as we could. The port engine started to cut owing to the main petrol pipe in the port wing having been damaged. We drew petrol from the starboard tanks, and it picked up again. We could see the fires in Antwerp docks from 30 miles away."

A Novel Incendiary

THE Royal Air Force are using a form of incendiary weapon which could be described as a self-igniting leaf. It is designed to set fire, for example, to military stores standing in the open at an arsenal or ammunition factory, to a dump of engineer's stores in the field, to military supplies in an open railway truck in a marshalling yard, to a park of military lorries and other similar objectives. It would also set light, under suitable conditions, to a wood in which a military unit, a depot or ammunition plant has been concealed. It is known that the enemy has concealed such targets in woods. The accusations made by the Germans that the "leaves" cause poisoning is false. The "leaf" is not poisonous, but if handled it would, of course, cause burns just as every other incendiary bomb would do.

A Norwegian motor torpedo-boat, co-operating with British naval forces, has shot down a German aircraft into the sea. The Norwegian motor torpedo-boat was in the vicinity of a merchant vessel when both were attacked by enemy dive-bombers. They were at once engaged and the formation broken. It was then observed that aircraft which had unsuccessfully attacked the merchant ship were passing overhead. They were at once engaged and several hits with tracer bullets were seen. One of the aircraft then side-slipped badly and was seen to be on fire. It succeeded in flattening out, but continued to lose height. It touched the water once, rose a few feet, and then crashed into the sea.