

## WAR IN THE AIR (CONTINUED)

## AIR LOSSES DURING WEEK ENDING OCTOBER 19

	GERMAN		BRITISH	
	Aircraft	Fighter Aircraft	Pilots	
Oct. 13	2	2	—	
" 14	—	—	—	
" 15	18	15	6	
" 16	6	—	—	
" 17	4	3	3	
" 18	—	—	—	
" 19	2	—	—	
	<b>32</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>9</b>	

British losses in R.A.F. raids on enemy territory: Oct. 13, 1; Oct. 14, 4; Oct. 16, 5; Oct. 18, 1.

bombs. But it takes a lot of bombing to put a factory completely out of action, and we have not yet a sufficiently large force of bombers to lay low every factory in Germany, or even all the key factories. There is no sign that the efforts of the Bomber Command will cause serious embarrassment to the German armies if they are ordered to commence a campaign in the Balkans. Still, for the moment that Command is doing all that it can, and in time it may close down the Krupp works at Essen and other factories as well. British bomber pilots and their crews are full of grit and skill, and though the mere list of places which they visit every night makes dull reading, *Flight* yields to nobody in its admiration for their gallantry and determination. Of late they have been suffering from the rigours of approaching winter, have had to endure cold, have found visibility bad over their targets, and have been in trouble from ice forming on their machines. In fact, on the night of Thursday, October 17, the weather conditions were so bad that all the projected R.A.F. bombing operations were cancelled. It is to be hoped that German bomber pilots will suffer even more from these causes as the winter advances.

The German raiding and our counter-raiding on the nights of *Friday, October 18*, and *Saturday, the 19th*, and on the intervening days showed no novel features. The German night bombers are naturally less deliberate on wet and cloudy nights, and of late it has seemed that Messerschmitts with bombs have been used more and more, and Junkers and Heinkels less. On the Saturday night particularly Londoners could note the speed with which the raiders approached and moved off. That night the A.A. guns seemed to be firing on a new plan, and some of the salvos which greeted the raiders were terrific. The firing of the batteries seemed concentrated.

On one afternoon during the week a formation of Messerschmitts dived out of the clouds above Canterbury and dropped 20 bombs of sorts on the city. It was a most deliberate attempt to wreck the Cathedral. Luckily the fane itself was undamaged, but the Deanery suffered. Such action can only be part of the German plan of punishing all who venture to oppose them, and they care nothing that this great Cathedral is precious to all civilised humanity.

### Invasion Thwarted

THE Air Ministry has issued a bulletin which gives details from neutral sources, and concludes that the date fixed for the invasion of Great Britain was September 16. It was a day of full moon, and the tide was exceptionally high. But on the preceding day the *Luftwaffe* had made a huge mass attack on Britain, and had been beaten back with a loss of 185 machines. The R.A.F. in turn made a wholesale raid on the invasion ports and did immense damage. Neutral observers believed that German troops had embarked on the barges, and were drowned in thousands by the wrecking of those light craft as the British bombs fell among them. Some of the neutrals put the German losses in men at between 40,000 and 50,000. At any rate, up to the moment of writing these words, the invasion has not taken place.

R.A.F. aeroplanes played a part in the naval brush in

the Channel on *Thursday, October 17*. First a machine of the Coastal Command reported a force of German destroyers, four of them, steaming westward off Brest. British naval forces went in pursuit, and a cruiser opened fire at extreme range. Thereupon the German ships turned back to port, and escaped. Both sides sent out aircraft. The German machines made two attacks on our ships but obtained no hits, while a bomber of the Coastal Command dropped a bomb near the bow of one enemy destroyer. In the gathering darkness the result of the shot could not be seen. Had the positions been reversed the Germans would probably have claimed that they had sunk H.M.S. *Hood*.

The Minister of Home Security has announced that during September 6,954 civilians were killed and 10,615 seriously injured in air raids on the United Kingdom. So far as classified returns have been received the totals are divided as follows:—Killed: Men, 1,920; women, 2,210; and children under 16, 694. Seriously injured: Men, 4,178; women, 3,629; and children under 16, 675. Of the remaining 2,130 killed, 1,157 were males and 973 were females. Of the remaining 2,133 seriously injured 1,231 were males and 902 were females.

### The Middle East

WITH the advance of German troops into Rumania, attention has lately been focused on the Middle East, and there is reason for supposing that Göring has been moving contingents of his heavy bombers in that direction. All the remaining Balkan States are now on the *qui vive*, awaiting developments. Turkey and Greece are reported to be resolute to oppose any advance by the Axis. Soviet Russia remains, as hitherto, an enigma. Marshal Graziani still delays his advance, and the R.A.F. of the Middle East Command continues to harass his ports and sink his supply ships.

In the meantime the Royal Navy has not been inactive, and with the Navy goes the Fleet Air Arm. A few days ago the naval C.-in-C. in the Mediterranean carried out an extensive sweep in the central and eastern areas of that sea. During the operations H.M.S. *Ajax*, of River Plate fame, made contact with three Italian destroyers and sank two of them. Shortly afterwards she sighted one heavy cruiser and four large destroyers. She engaged again and badly crippled one of the destroyers, which proved to be 1,620 ton *Artiglieri*. Darkness was coming on, and the Italian squadron disappeared. Next morning, however, the Fleet Air Arm came into action and discovered the *Artigliere* in tow of another destroyer. The *Ajax* then steamed up, whereupon the towing ship slipped her tow and made off, while the crew of the *Artiglieri* began to abandon ship. H.M.S. *York* then arrived, and sank the damaged destroyer with a torpedo. Then for four hours Italian aircraft attacked the British Fleet, but hit none of them, while four Italian machines were shot down by the fighters of the F.A.A. and the A.A. guns on the ships. Two more were entered as "probably destroyed." All our aircraft returned safely.

However, the cruiser H.M.S. *Liverpool* was damaged during an attack by Italian torpedo-carrying aircraft while returning to her base from the operations. She reached port safely.

On the night of October 12-13 our naval units working in co-operation with the Royal Air Force also successfully bombarded enemy troop concentrations at Sidi Barrani.

On the night of October 13 aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm attacked the port of Lago in the Dodecanese islands, achieving a complete surprise. Barracks, workshops, hangars, and a petrol tank were hit and set on fire. From this attack all our aircraft returned safely.

There have been raids by enemy aircraft on Gibraltar, Malta and Aden, but no damage of any account was done.

Further developments in the Mediterranean and the Middle East are expected, and even hoped for. All the British forces in that part are full of the aggressive spirit.