

Another Zeppelin Raid

Seven Airships Visit North Midlands and Other Districts Driven off by Anti-Aircraft Guns Twenty-Nine Deaths: No Munition Works Damaged

The Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief the Home Forces reports as follows:

Tuesday, 12.10 p.m.

Seven airships carried out a raid on England last night and in the early hours of this morning.

The districts attacked were the South Coast, East Coast, North-East Coast, and the North Midlands.

The principal attack was aimed against the industrial centres in the last mentioned area.

Up to present no damage to factories or works of military importance has been reported. It is regretted, however, that a number of small houses and cottages were wrecked or damaged in some places, and 29 deaths have been reported.

No attempt was made to approach London.

The raiders were engaged by the anti-aircraft defences, and were successfully driven off from several large industrial centres.

Earlier communiqués issued by the Field Marshall Commanding-in-Chief Home Forces were as follows:

Monday, 11.45 p.m.

Several hostile airships crossed the east and north-east coasts between 10.30 p.m. and midnight.

Bombs are reported to have been dropped at several places in the northern and north-midland counties.

An airship has been reported off the south coast.

No reports of casualties or damage have been received.

Tuesday, 3.15 a.m.

Several hostile airships, probably six in number, visited the north-eastern and southern counties during the night.

Bombs were dropped in the northern counties and some casualties and damage are reported.

Full reports have not yet been received.

The Press Association's correspondent says about midnight one or two Zeppelins passed over a north-eastern county, and about 15 bombs were dropped. So far, as can be ascertained at present, there were some casualties. A number of houses were damaged.

No damage whatever was done to military works or to munition works.

Another correspondent says: Last night's Zeppelin raid to place on a north-eastern county, about eleven o'clock. Under a dozen bombs were dropped, and an incendiary bomb and another dropped doing no damage. The raid lasted under 10 minutes.

About fifteen bombs were dropped soon after midnight on a North Midland County. It was a calm night with hardly a breath of wind, but was overcast with stars only occasionally showing. The Zeppelin came over from the North. Several small houses were wrecked and many had their windows, and doors severely damaged.

In a working-class district a chapel was wrecked by a direct hit from a bomb, which fortunately inflicted no other damage. The second or third bomb that dropped destroyed four small houses. It is known that two or three of the inmates were killed, one of them an elderly man. The other inmates, some of whom were blown down into lower rooms by the explosion were rescued. A number of them were injured. The houses on the opposite side of the road were also damaged. Windows were smashed, and doors flung bodily into the rooms. One woman was saying good night to her sweetheart at the door when the bomb exploded, injuring him on the back and leg and knocking him down, and blowing the door down upon her. She was injured about the face. A soldier home on leave, who was in bed five houses away from the spot, was shot clean out of bed downstairs where he arrived unhurt and smilingly went to look after his mother.

So far as can be at present ascertained the casualties total about ten killed and about half a dozen injured, and some missing.

Five persons, two women, two men and a boy, were admitted to a hospital, and their condition was such to necessitate their detention. One woman was stated to be in a critical condition. The men aged 54 and 49, were badly lacerated on the head and face.

In one street consisting of artisan dwellings, a row of houses was hit squarely by several high explosive bombs. Three houses were utterly wrecked at the top end, and the debris was piled up in indescribable confusion. Another dwelling was reduced to ruins, and it is believed a young married woman and her baby were buried. In the surrounding streets the window-panes of houses were blown out, and the thoroughfare, where most damage was done, was littered with piles of bricks, ironwork, and timber. Stretcher parties got to work with all possible speed, and by the aid of torch lamps tried to clear away the rubbish and get to the victims imprisoned beneath. Half an hours hard toil resulted in the recovery of two bodies, presumably those of the married couple, from the spot the three houses had stood. Both persons were dead, and were removed. An eye-witness of the raid definitely states that he was on top of a high building and saw bombs drop in quick succession.

Considerable damage of a minor nature was done in a narrow street of poor houses. The gable end of one house was shattered, and several houses had windows smashed. One tenant said his kitchen had been smashed by a bomb which fell while he, his wife and son were in the house.

Debris was scattered for a very considerable distance from the actual scene of attack. One man likened the noise of the exploding bombs to that of a “That of a great rattle intensified a thousand times”.

In the Danger Zone

Graphic Story by an Eye-Witness

A member of a newspaper staff who lives within a couple of hundred yards of where the first bomb was dropped, retired to rest about 12.15, and a few minutes later had a fine view of the awe-inspiring spectacle.

“Before I was nicely seated,” he said “I was startled by a vivid blue glare followed immediately by a terrific reverberating roar. I jumped out of bed and went to the window, and was in time to see a second flash, and hear another explosion succeeded quickly by a third within a radius of a few hundred yards.

“The sound of the bombs dropping was like nothing so much as a clean shot from a gun which, preceded by a glare seemed to indicate that the anti-aircraft guns had got to work. Each report was clear and well defined. I hastily dressed myself and joined my father, who had been an outside witness of the affair.

“The raid did not last more than four minutes. I saw no sign of a raider or raiders. I heard eleven projectiles explode. To their credit folk seemed to take the business with characteristic British phlegm.

“A fire made its appearance on our left,” he continued, “whilst another of larger dimensions sprung into life in front of us a short distance away. At the first glance it looked like wreckage from a falling Zeppelin, but we were disillusioned by the fact that there was too much smoke coming from the spot. Smoke was issuing from the fire in thick balloon-like clouds. Round about us we could constantly hear the tinkle of broken glass and constant appeals by specials to “put out that light.” The fire on our left had by this time died out, and the larger one had seemingly been got under, for it disappeared soon afterwards.

“I went in the direction of where I thought the first missile had been dropped. All the glass in the windows of the dwellings had been blown out. One door was partly torn away from its hinges, while two dwellings which I visited were in a state of general disorder and littered with soot and broken glass.

“On woman who had been blown some distance by an exploding bomb was sitting in the centre of the recreation ground on a chair nursing a little child who was prattling away as if there was no such nightmare as Zeppelin raids.

“I offered my services to two houses and helped to make things a bit ship-shape. Journeying farther afield I could see that the shock of the explosions was pretty widely diffused. Window-panes, sashes, and doors had been blown out in all directions. A few

minutes' walk brought me to a crowd of people, and here I found a house completely razed to the ground.

Lady's Experiences

A lady telegraph operator had quite a narrow escape from the bombs. She states that she was in bed at the time the first bomb was dropped, and was awakened by the explosion, the concussion from which was so violent that she was thrown of her feet and fell to the ground. Hastily donning some apparel, she rushed from her room downstairs, and made for the cellar. Here she was joined by her landlady. The frightened ladies reached their place of refuge not a moment too soon, for ere they were at the bottom of the stairs a second bomb crashed with a deafening roar just outside the house and scattered its deadly contents through all parts of the front of house. On emerging from the cellar she witnessed the havoc that had been wrought. The curtains in the front sitting room downstairs were blown from their position, and were hanging from the picture frames on the opposite side of the room. The furniture was all topsy-turvy, whilst large portions of shrapnel were embedded in the doors, the walls, and the furniture.

Screams for help reached the ears of the terrified ladies from their newt-door neighbours. They proceeded to investigate the calls, and then discovered that on one side a married couple were seriously injured, and on the other side a lady had been killed. "It was a sight I shall never forget." Added the lady in conclusion. She paid a warm tribute to the local clergyman for his work.