

No. 99 Squadron was attacked by six hostile machines fifteen miles over the lines. These were driven off. Ten hostile machines attacked about fifteen miles over the lines. They were also driven off. Fifteen hostile machines then attacked over the objective. After dropping bombs the formation turned towards the hostile machines, which apparently disconcerted them, as they became scattered. On the return journey several enemy scouts kept up a running fight, one scout attacking from in front was driven off by the leader's observer firing over the top plane.

No. 104 Squadron was attacked at a long range fifteen miles over the lines. The enemy were driven off. Fifteen hostile machines heavily attacked over the objective and followed the formation back for seventy miles. Near the lines the formation was again attacked by seven hostile machines.

Over two tons of bombs were dropped at Mannheim in this raid.

On the night of the 16th-17th September seven Handley Page machines were missing. Five of these, detailed for Cologne and Mannheim, were probably unable to return in the face of a strong south-westerly wind, which increased after the machines had left the ground.

The missing machines undoubtedly attacked various objectives well into Germany before they had to land. It was reported that one machine landed in Holland with engine trouble, after having dropped its bombs on Bonn, and was interned.

On the 25th September No. 110 Squadron, led by Captains A. Lindley and A. C. M. Groom, dropped over 1½ tons of bombs on Frankfurt. They were opposed by a large number of hostile machines, two of which they destroyed. Four of our machines did not return, and, in addition, one observer was killed and one observer and one pilot were wounded. This was the first long-distance raid carried out by this squadron.

On the night of the 21st-22nd October machines of Nos. 97 and 100 Squadrons attacked the railways at Kaiserslautern in very bad weather. Several 1,650 lb. bombs were dropped, but bad visibility obscured the results.

One very large fire and five smaller ones were observed, and all these fires were seen to be still burning when the town was lost sight of in the mist.

I would like to bring to your notice the work of bombing aerodromes done by No. 100 Squadron, commanded by Major C. G. Burge, when it was equipped with the short-distance F.E. 2b machines, and also with Handley-Pages. The squadron bombed aerodromes from low heights, and photographs show that a large number of sheds were hit.

The Independent Force, at the request of Marshal Foch, co-operated with the American First Army in its attack on the St. Mihiel salient, and it further co-operated with the Army by attacking important railway junctions behind the French lines in the combined offensive of the 26th September.

My thanks are due to Brigadier-General B. B. Gordon, D.S.O., my Chief of Staff, who carried out his responsible duties with the most commendable smoothness and efficiency.

I also desire to thank Colonel G. R. M. Church, C.M.G., my Army Troops Commander, for the admirable manner in which he carried out his very responsible duties.

Finally, I desire to express my great appreciation of the loyal work of all my own Staff, of the Commanders of Formations and their Staffs, and all the Units in the Independent Air Force serving under me, who carried out their difficult task of organising and carrying through with tact and energy the work of forming a new Air Force during active hostilities.

I have forwarded the names of officers and other ranks deserving of special mention in a separate despatch.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Obedient Servant,

(Sd.) H. TRENCHARD,
Major-General,

Commanding Independent Force,
Royal Air Force.

The Rt. Hon.

The Lord Weir of Eastwood,
Secretary of State for Air,
Air Ministry,
London.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

To be purchased through any Bookseller or directly from
H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE at the following addresses:
IMPERIAL HOUSE, KINGSWAY, LONDON, W.C. 2, and 28, ABINGDON STREET, LONDON, S.W. 1;
37, PETER STREET, MANCHESTER; 1, ST. ANDREW'S CRESCENT, CARDIFF;
23, FORTH STREET, EDINBURGH;
or from E. PONSONBY, LTD., 116, GRAFTON STREET, DUBLIN.

Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by WYMAN & SONS, Ltd., Fetter Lane, Fleet St., London, E.C. 4.

Wednesday, 1 January, 1919.

Price Four Pence, Net.