

Bacup Times October 1940 Nazi Bomber Attacks Town

Many Houses Damaged, But No Serious Casualties.

A number of people had a remarkable escape when a North West town was bombed for the first time early on a recent morning. Two high explosives were dropped near a housing estate, and though windows of many houses over a wide area were shattered, doors blown in, and other danger done, there were no serious casualties.

The bombs appear to have been dropped simultaneously, one falling at the junction of two roads, and the other in a near-by hen pen, where a number of poultry and ducks as well as cotes were destroyed. In one of the two houses nearest where the bomb dropped in the roadway a man and his wife, Arthur Ashcroft 60 and Mary Ashcroft 57 who were in bed at the time received slight cuts on the head. Mr Ashcroft said, " There was a terrific crash, and all the windows and doors were blown in, and the ceiling came down on top of us. A son and daughter in other bedrooms were unhurt, although the wall of the daughters room was damaged. Mrs G.A.Smith and her son and daughter who live next door also escaped uninjured. Miss Smith said she did not even hear the bomb fall. The first she knew of it was when the ceiling plaster fell on top of the bed.

"BLOWN OUT OF BED

There were several cases of people being blown out of bed without being injured. About fifteen persons received treatment at the first aid posts for slight cuts and shock. In one house near the crate a kerbstone, measuring 3ft by 14in was afterwards found on a bed. It had been hurled through the window without damaging the frame. The owner of the hen pen, John Hamersley had a narrow escape, a dagger like piece of glass, about a foot long, which penetrated the bedclothes missing him by inches. A number of families had to be evacuated until repairs to their houses were effected much plaster having been brought down as well as the damage to doors and windows.

Windows at a Mill were also broken. The report caused by the exploding bombs was heard over a wide area and out the civil defence personnel on alert. Within a few minutes a preliminary report was transmitted by a air raid warden. The police and special constabulary immediately responded and they and the wardens performed extraordinarily good work. All rose to the occasion in a very commendable manner. Householders were temporarily found shelter, and the canteen shelter, supervised by members of the W.V.S functioned admirably. Rescue and demolition parties were also soon on the scene, and various services coordinated extremely well.

The team work being magnificent. A detachment of local home guard also rendered assistance in maintaining a cordon, and the special constabulary assisted the regular police in patrolling the area. The departments responsible for repair to damaged property were quickly at work. The conduct and courage of the civilians who resided in the vicinity was of the highest standard, characteristic of the people of this country under the stress of circumstances like these.

Some of these people were accommodated at a canteen shelter and others went to the homes of relatives and friends. These included Mr J.A.Stansfield and his wife and eight children, who live

in a house not far from the crater in the roadway. Mr Stansfeild who received a small piece of glass in one foot, said that though the doors were blown open and plaster brought down, the contents of a china cabinet were not damaged. He added that they had escaped very luckily. Debris from the craters was blown all over the place, one piece of stone penetrating the the roof of a house nearly half a mile away. The windows of some houses in the vicinity remained intact, while others over a quarter of a mile away were shattered.