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REF.

COMBAT REPORT.

(Capt. S/Edk Salt)

20

OF 315

Stirling mark I "A" of 149 Squadron, whilst returning from Mainz area on the night of 12/13th August, 1942, was attacked at 0220 hours at a height of 2000 feet from port quarter below by an ME.110 which was first sighted 30 miles S. of Liège emerging from the tops of 10/10 strato-cum., about 1000 feet below. Stirling, (at time of attack) whose I.S.S. was 170 and heading 288°M, had jettisoned incendiaries at 0149, had not been picked up by searchlights or fired at by flak, but thru' occasional breaks in the dark clouds, ground lights had been seen which, despite evasive action, continued to indicate track of our aircraft from time when bombs were jettisoned. The E/A was commencing its attack when first seen, firing an approx. 10 seconds burst of cannon and m/g fire. As it closed in from port quarter our rear-gunner Sgt Hughes, fired two short bursts at a range of 750 feet and E/A broke away sharply to port when about 500 feet away. Again our rear-gunner fired two short bursts at this range, aiming at the cabin of the E/A which was clearly outlined and in a steep bank. No strikes were observed on the E/A, but Stirling was damaged the port fuel system being hit, causing petrol to escape and for a short time black smoke and flames were observed coming from region of the port inner engine and also from near the W/O's position. In addition, both M/U and Front turrets were rendered inoperative, and the power operation of the undercarriage put out of action. The flames died down quickly as Stirling took evasive action by making a steep diving turn to port and E/A was not seen again as cloud cover was entered immediately after. No member of the crew was injured during the attack. There was no moon and I.F.F. was switched off. (This Stirling later crash-landed at Hanston owing to petrol shortage. All crew safe.)

*Revised*

dam. NIGHT

*K.H. Moulding P/O*

*Stirling*

*V ME.110*

Operations Officer,

R.A.F. Satellite, Lakenheath.