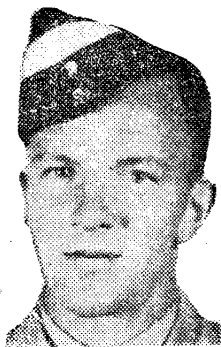


Berlin Defenses Poor, Canadian Fliers Find

London, Jan. 17 (CP).— Many Canadians attached to Lancaster bomber squadrons were with the attacking force that swarmed over Berlin Saturday night to send block-busting high explosives and thousands of incendiary bombs crashing into the German capital. No R.C.A.F. aircraft took part in the raid, however.



Sgt. H. Champion.

Like the returning British airmen, the Canadians expressed surprise at the lightness of resistance offered by the Nazis during the long trip from Britain.

"Kiel and Cologne were a lot worse," said WO. John

Patterson, of Bobcaygeon, Ont., a 21-year-old navigator. "We have never taken so long over our bombing run as we did last night. The flak wasn't bad and we saw only one searchlight.

Patterson, a school teacher in peacetime, was praised highly by his skipper, an English sergeant, for the manner in which he found the target despite heavy clouds.

"He took us straight over the target without getting a pinpoint en route and we arrived dead on," the sergeant said. "It was so thick all the way that you couldn't see anything to pinpoint on. It was super navigation."

Four long strings of incendiaries were seen burning near the marshalling yards in the eastern part of Berlin by Flt. Sgt. Jack McAvoy of Aneroid, Sask., who told how his bomber was attacked by three night fighters over the target area.

After the bombs were released the fighters jumped on the tail of the Lancaster and the big bomber was forced into a 6,000-foot dive to shake them off, said McAvoy, a navigator. The fighters pursued the Lancaster as it turned for home and the pilot was forced to lose 9,000 feet more before shaking them off for good.

"The defenses weren't as stiff as we had expected," McAvoy continued. "Our boys were right on track. We passed any number of Lancasters going into the target as we were coming away. We went in ourselves with four others in V formation. It wasn't planned, of course, we just went in close together and found ourselves in formation with our kite leading. I believe we were still in formation when we bombed.

"We were lucky to see the target as it was thick all the way over," McAvoy said. "I thought it was going to be a disappointing trip but over Berlin the clouds opened right up for us. I saw the marshalling yards and four long strings of incendiaries in and around the yards. The fires hadn't started to take a good hold, but we were there early."

Other Canadian crew members included Sgts. Art Staves of Winnipeg, Harry Champion of 1228 Dovercourt Road, Toronto, E. G. Dolby of Milton, Ont., M. Fleming of Drinkwater, Sask., and Flt. Sgt. Ralph Wooley of Alberni, B.C.