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Headnote by A. Scott Berg

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BOMBERS OVER LONDON

The New York Times

With each passing day of the conflict, any notions of chivalry in battle collided with the realities of modern warfare. The Italians first used aerial bombing in Libya, fighting the Ottomans in 1911. As airplanes increased in range and engine power, so too did their ability to destroy. World War I saw the first bombing of enemy cities far from any battlefield. Germany launched nighttime raids against England with Zeppelin airships in January 1915, executing its first raid on London during the night of May 31, 1915. Two years later, they initiated daytime raids, using Gothas, twin-engine biplane bombers based in Belgium. The unnamed correspondent who wrote this story for *The New York Times* witnessed the first Gotha raid on London, the most lethal air attack of the war, leaving 162 dead. Aerial raids on England would continue until May 1918, leaving a death toll of 1,413 (557 from Zeppelins and 856 from airplanes). During the war, Austro-Hungarian and German air raids killed 984 people in Italy, while British, French, and Italian bombing took 797 lives in Germany.

GERMAN AIRMEN KILL 97, HURT 437 IN LONDON RAID

Enemy Squadron Bombs East End and
Business District at the Noon Hour.

120 CHILDREN VICTIMS

Ten Killed and 50 Injured in One School—
Harrowing Scenes in the Poor Quarter.

ONLY ONE PLANE DOWNED

Attackers Said to Number Fifteen,
Although Only Three Visited the Capital.

LONDON, Thursday, June 14.—There came to London yesterday the nearest vision of modern warfare that it has yet known. A squadron of enemy airplanes, variously estimated at from

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three to fifteen, bombed the East End and business districts of the city in daylight, killing 97 persons and injuring 437. Many of the victims are women and children, 120 of the latter being either killed or injured.

The Zeppelin raid which swept over the city in October, 1915, came in the darkness and mystery of night; it was in the late dusk of an Autumn evening that Londoners watched the monsters of the air dealing death upon the innocent. Yesterday it was different. In the gracious loveliness of a perfect Summer's day, when the sky was blue and gold and clear, enemy airplanes journeyed through the clouds like little silver birds, and their passage was watched by thousands of men and women who had but dimly seen the Zeppelins of other days.

It happened that I boarded a bus at Ludgate at 11:40. It was eastward bound. We had passed St. Paul's Cathedral, when there suddenly came in swift succession several tremendous crashes. The people on the bus jumped as people will at unexpected alarms, but there was no uneasiness.

WATCHING THE SKY DRAMA.

"Our guns are at it again," some one remarked; but the demeanor of the people in the streets suggested something else. From every office and warehouse and tea shop men and women strangely stood still, gazing up into the air. The conductor mounted the stairs to suggest that outside passengers should seek safety inside. Some of them did so.

"I'm not a religious man," remarked the conductor, "but what I say is, we are all in God's hands and if we are going to die we may as well die quiet."

But some inside passengers were determined that if they had to die quiet they might as well see something first and they climbed on top and with wonderstruck eyes watched the amazing drama of the skies. It was amazing because it was so beautiful. It was not easy to believe that those little silver specks far up in the heavens had the power to bring death and destruction and unendurable suffering to men and women, and little children living at peace.

Few people saw the entire fleet of Taubes at one and the same time. It seemed as if they were playing hide and seek in

the clouds, for like little gleaming bits of quicksilver you could see one suddenly appear, only to vanish as quickly behind a filmy cloudmist, while another emerged to lose itself as swiftly in the shadows.

The bus went slowly on until some one stopped it, wishing to descend. Very soon, watching as we were from the top, the birds of war vanished altogether. One could see only the sharp white flame of bursting shrapnel, of its soft gray smoke. And still there was no panic. There came a moment, however, when some of us felt anxious. In the distance thick towers of smoke rose up from a certain point, which suggested gas bombs. There was something in the close, curious columns which seemed different from the smoke from fire, and we remembered how in the long ago we had been warned to use gas masks. I do not suppose one person in a thousand among the crowds possessed such a thing.

We came a little nearer to what seemed to be the real danger. Whiffs of smoke floated by, but they gave out no poisonous fumes and there was relief in our hearts as we realized our mistake. All along this eastward journey bombs were falling and guns were making great noises, but I saw no quick searching for shelter, no taking cover. If it had been an exhibition of flying at Hendon, the attitude of the people would not have been very different except in the immediately affected streets. Men and women and office clerks, little more than children, stood watching, vastly interested, a little excited, but not in the least frightened.

After minutes of tense interest and deafening noise the sudden silence was awful. The cessation of gunfire told that the raiders had been driven off, and, looking to the sun, one could see that peace had come once more to the air. Watching the light and movement in the sky drama had so fixed one's attention as to eliminate even a flashing thought of its meaning, but with silence came the swift running of ambulance cars, and pealing bells told of the ugliness of it all and its deep significance. And these ambulance cars darted out from all sorts of little side streets, joining together in one long stream that flowed eastward like a rapid stream. The special constables marched quickly about their business; fire engines came from

nowhere, as it seemed. Where but a little while ago there had been stillness in the streets and great noises in the air there was now quiet above and queer noises and movements below.

It all happened in a quarter of an hour; all these things had been done in fifteen minutes that seemed like sixty when the time had come and gone. People went back to their shops and their offices and homes to carry on their normal way of living. They looked at their watches and thought they had stopped. When the regular lunch hour arrived they poured out into the streets once more, following the track of the raiders.

CHILDREN SLAIN IN SCHOOLROOM.

The terrible scenes at what Bonar Law, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in making his statement in the House of Commons said was a London County Council school in the East End of London, were described by a soldier who assisted in rescuing uninjured children.

"Hearing what I thought was gun firing," the soldier said, "I stopped to speak to a policeman. Just then there was another explosion, and the policeman, pointing upward, said:

"The raiders are out. Good heavens! They have got the school. Run round and give them all the help you can and I will get the police."

"I looked up in the sky, and there could just see five tiny little things like gilded fish miles up, almost invisible. Looking round, I could see another three more to the south, and perhaps on the other side of the Thames. I dashed around to the school as the policeman advised, and there I found the class mistress, who had got the uninjured children into a passage where, if there came another bomb, they would be less likely to be hurt. She was all alone until I came. Then we both set to get out the uninjured. She brought down two or three from the upper room first, then we went into the classroom where the bomb had sunk into the earth when it exploded. The sight was a terrible one, and but for the excitement it would have been unbearable. Many of the little ones were lying across their desks, apparently dead, and with terrible wounds on heads and limbs, and scores of others were writhing with pain and moaning piteously in their terror and suffering.

“Many bodies were mutilated, but our first thought was to get at the injured and have them cared for. We took them gently in our arms and laid them out against a wall under a shed. I didn’t count them, but I should think there were twenty or thirty. I was just wondering what we should do next when some more people came to help, including soldiers, naval cadets, police, and special constables. We were frantic for ambulances and it was impossible to carry them to the hospital, which was half a mile away. Just then two lorries drew up and the driver suggested that he should help. We packed the poor little souls on the lorries as gently as we could and he drove as if he was afraid of something giving away and so at last we got them to the hospital.

“While they were gone I put a sentry on the door, and I can tell you it was a tough job. The women were not in the slightest degree panicky, but they were selfish in their love at first and in their earnestness to get at their own babies endangered by others who were lying on the floor. Some mothers were almost insane with grief, and when they couldn’t find their own children would rush through the bodies looking for them, and when you remember that there was a hole in the roof four feet deep and covering the whole area of the classroom it will be understood what that meant.

“The worst part of our task was the last—that of picking up the mutilated fragments of humanity.”

Most of the victims were children in a school. Others were residents in a neighboring street; a baby, three days old, and the father who held it in his arms were killed, while the convalescent mother lay close by.

Eight enemy aircraft appeared to pass over in sight of the onlookers in this part of London. Apparently they were following the track of the Thames, one squadron of three on the south bank and another of five on the north, both undoubtedly searching for docks and aiming bombs with a view to the destruction of the shipping therein. Many bombs were heard to explode before the raiders reached this district, and hereabouts they dropped three more in an area of 200 yards, one killing several people in a side street and two others dropping in and close to the school. The bomb that did the most damage dropped in the outside rooms, where between sixty and

seventy children were at class. Had it pierced the middle of the building the casualty list would have been three times as great.

NO PANIC IN LONDON.

Word of the approach of the raiders ran through London with incredible rapidity, but was received with the utmost calmness. A man riding down one street on top of a bus was attracted by the sight of dozens of clerks and typewriters gazing northeastward in the sky. In a square there were small crowds, all looking heavenward, but with nothing in sight. At last a faint, dull boom was heard in conjunction with a circular cloud of fleecy smoke.

"Wot cher, 're's another raid," remarked a passenger who had seen service in France. "But the Archies made twice as much noise over there."

All the streets and every window were now filled with people staring toward the sky. There was no panic, merely intelligent interest and curiosity.

"Observe the terrorized public," said a young officer, and his companion laughed. The chief emotion shown lay in the questions why nothing was done to stop this sort of thing in the third year of the war.

News of the damage done circulated remarkably quickly. Five minutes after one building was struck it was known throughout the city. A small bomb hit the roof, lifted a small section like a trap door, and wrecked the janitor's quarters on the top floor, leaving it like a place gutted by fire, except none of the ordinary blackening. The janitor's wife and her father stepped under cover two seconds before the bomb fell. The neighboring roofs were covered with splinters of glass. A man was repairing a flagpole on a building close by. "I heard an explosion, looked and saw something like a stick falling. I didn't want nothing else; never came off a roof quicker in my life," he said afterward.

Meanwhile managers had hard work to shepherd their girl clerks to the basement, as all were anxious to run to the roof to get just one look. Two men were wounded by this bomb, which seems to have fallen down an elevator shaft. One man ran out into the street, his clothes all awry and his gold watch chain curiously twisted. He was stone deaf for the moment,

bleeding, and cut from glass. A woman hurried him into a saloon and gave him a stiff glass of brandy.

In a narrow thoroughfare, perhaps thirty feet wide, along one side of a strip of churchyard, a bomb fell among some ancient graves, dug a hole six feet across, shattered a wall on the other side of the street, but hurt no one. At one of the busiest corners in one section in the bombed area a bomb fell, smashing in a window of a large clothier's shop. A few were cut by falling glass, but it was curious to see in the window a dozen tailors' lay figures lying prostrate, their clothes and wigs disordered, gruesomely suggesting real persons injured.

The worst injury was done to a public elementary school, where ten children were killed and a number injured.

All the afternoon there were crowds of persons visiting the places where the bombs dropped, but business proceeded undisturbed and there were no signs of panic anywhere. Many large offices sent staffs to their lower floors for a brief period while the raid was in progress, but anger and curiosity were by far the most predominant emotions.

"They didn't come here; there are no infants' schools here," said a porter of one of the principal Government buildings. This fairly represents the general feeling.

HINT GERMANS SOUGHT PERSHING.

American medical officers who visited the scenes of the air raid today indulged in speculation on the reason for the attack. It was suggested that possibly the Germans planned the attack to coincide with the visit of General Pershing, not knowing that he left this morning for Paris.

One party considered it quite likely that some idea of the kind had actuated the enemy, for Pershing's visit to London, of course, was well known in Berlin. Others, however, were inclined to the belief that the Germans were probably well aware that Pershing and his staff would not long remain in England and that meteorological considerations, which it is possible to forecast, dictated the time of the raid. A thick heat haze hung over the east coast all morning, and although the London skies were blue in the main, there were frequent patches of vapor to help the raiders.

The officers who were Major Hugh Hampton Young, Captain

Montague L. Boyd, Captain Louis C. Lehr and Captain Howard Leo Cecil, all of the Medical Officers' Reserve Corps, U. S. A., visited under the guidance of THE NEW YORK TIMES correspondent a part of the area upon which bombs were dropped.

"The first lesson in kultur, gentlemen, the killing of women and children," called out a man in one crowd we passed through. The American officers, whose uniforms had caught the man's attention, thought his remark apt.

"Pretty good, that," said one of them.

The raid was indeed successful in the killing of women and children. On that point there was full agreement by the American officers, who were allowed to see everything there was to see, being most courteously conducted by the officials and police through places strictly barred to the public.

Major Young and his colleagues, by courtesy of an official of the railway company concerned, were taken over to the station mentioned in the communiqué. Here the chief victims were women and children. The military damage was negligible. Had the raid occurred in the evening, when hundreds of people would have been awaiting suburban trains, the loss of life would have been immeasurably greater. As it was, the station was not very full, but it was a very terrible scene. A train which was just about to start was bombed, and it immediately caught fire. Within twenty minutes of the attack the fire was well in hand. Three doctors in one carriage were injured, and one man at least in their company, who was pinned beneath the wreckage, was burned to death before their eyes.

The American medical men who listened to the story on indisputable authority set their jaws a little tighter. "I suppose the Germans will try it on New York one day," said one, suggesting that the Germans might one day manage to slip a vessel with airplanes aboard through the allied patrol. At another place where a bomb fell squarely on a roof of a block of offices in a purely commercial part of the raided area, one of the American Army men speculated as to the effect a bomb would have on one of New York's skyscrapers. Here the bomb had completely gutted a four-story building, leaving nothing but the walls standing. "I was standing looking up the street at the time," a witness told the American, "and the whole top of the building

seemed to blow up and melt in the air. Then a thick cloud of dust and smoke obscured everything from view."

Dr. Hugh H. Young of Johns Hopkins Hospital, Major in the Medical Officers' Reserve Corps, U. S. A., when requested to make a statement by THE NEW YORK TIMES correspondent, said:

"The victims were injured not only by flying fragments and shrapnel, causing deep penetrating wounds and fractures, but also by severe burns from the incendiary character of the bombs, which were apparently about ten inches in diameter and evidently fell from a great height, as was shown by one which penetrated a concrete wall for a great depth without exploding.

"The psychological aspects of the incident were most interesting. The population showed no fear. As soon as the explosions and counter-bombardment were heard the people crowded the streets, verandas, windows, and roofs, and showed only contempt for the infernal methods of the Germans, who only succeeded in maiming and killing helpless women and children and some men, accomplishing nothing of a military value."

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