

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 1940

Guns on French Cliffs Shell British Ships

Stukas Roar Down Upon Convoy After Big Berthas Fail to Hit Target From Shore

By the UNITED PRESS

A SOUTHEAST COAST PORT, ENGLAND, Aug. 22.—A British convoy in the Straits of Dover today ran the gantlet of a terrific cannonade of long range German artillery on the French cliffs from Calais to Boulogne.

The spectacular Channel bombardment was witnessed by thousands on the Dover cliffs. They reported that none of the 18 ships in the British convoy appeared to have been hit.

The long-range bombardment was topped off by an attack a few miles further up the coast by 12 German dive-bombers, two of which were immediately brought down by the British defenders.

A second convoy off the northeast British coast also was attacked by German planes which were driven off by anti-aircraft fire and Spitfire fighters.

Smoke Screen

As German super-Big Berthas blazed away in the first long-range German shore bombardment of enemy ships during the war, British men o'war escorting the convoy put out smoke screens.

The artillery thunder shook towns on the English side of the Channel and observers on the cliffs here saw gun flashes in long rows through the haze. There was a shattering din each time the guns boomed, apparently firing in batteries of four.

Shelling started about 11 a.m. Four great columns of water leaped up from the sea on the first salvo.

Eighteen vessels in the British convoy were subjected to the German fire for about 40 minutes.

Fearful of a German aerial attack at the same time, British fighter planes flew over the convoy, ready to repel any air blow.

Spotted From Air

When the convoy entered the Straits of Dover proceeding eastward, the German guns opened up.

During the bombardment a German plane, apparently a spotter for the shore batteries, appeared in the clouds over the sunlit channel. British fighters protecting the convoy chased it away.

Small motor boats moving at terrific speed appeared and with British destroyers obscured the attacked ships with smoke. The screen was perfect, but the shelling continued.

Many of the shells must have passed over the ships which gradually passed from sight, beyond Dover, apparently unharmed. There was about a minute between the time guns flashed on the French coast and shells splashed in the water.

Fierce Bombardment

The German bombardment was especially intense as the convoy passed this harbor. It did not diminish until the convoy had passed Dover steaming in the direction of Deal.

After guns at Boulogne had ceased firing, guns farther up the coast took up the bombardment.

One witness said that at least 100 rounds had been fired.

The ships still were in perfect formation despite the gantlet.

The ships in the convoy replied to the Stuka attack with savage anti-aircraft fire which apparently prevented the bombers diving low enough to aim accurately. Anti-aircraft guns pock-marked the sky with the black puffs of shell bursts while British fighters climbed steeply from their own coast to engage the raiders in fierce battle.

LONDON, Aug. 22.—A convoy was attacked by Nazi planes off the northeast coast today but was driven back by anti-aircraft fire and Spitfire fighting planes.

Fishermen said none of the bombs scored hits and that escorting warships put up a stiff anti-aircraft barrage.

Germany's airforce otherwise gave Britain its fourth straight day of respite from mass attacks. Only a few raiders appeared over Wales and other sections but damage was reported slight.—UP