

The Nottingham Evening Post

FRIDAY, JULY 30, 1943.

DAMAGED OVER HAMBURG

But Got Home

During the last attack on Hamburg, this message from a Halifax was picked up: "Mid-upper killed. Two injured. Request ambulance. Returning on three engines."

When the captain returned to England he told his story of what had happened, says the Air Ministry News Service. The pilot, a New Zealander, Pilot-Officer W. E. Elder, D.F.M., had just dropped his bombs on the target, and was turning for home, when he was attacked by two fighters. Cannon shells and bullets crashed into the rear turret and put it out of action, and the gunner was wounded in the arm, leg and face.

The fighters attacked again, and killed the mid-upper gunner. The flight engineer, Sergeant W. Berry, of Belfast, at once took his place in the turret, but he had only just manned the gun when

another burst of fire wounded him in both legs. He returned the fire, and thinks that he hit one of the enemy aircraft.

The Halifax had been badly damaged during these exchanges. The port inner engine had been put out of action. The bomb bays were on fire, some of the controls had been shot away, the inter-comm between the rear-gunner and the pilot was not working, and the hydraulic system was unserviceable.

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Still lying in the wreckage of his turret, the rear gunner tried to tell the pilot what the enemy were doing by signalling with an emergency light.

For 10 more minutes the enemy aircraft kept up their attack, and then, either because they had run out of ammunition or because they thought the Halifax had been too badly hit to stand a chance of getting home, they made off.

Crawling to the bomb inspection panel, Sergt. Berry tried to deal with the fire. Air rushed up, blowing the flames towards him, but he turned the fire extinguisher on them until they went out. The Halifax had 300 miles to go. Sergt. Berry worked wonders with the engines, and at last they reached the English coast.

Pilot-Officer Elder ordered the uninjured members of the crew to bale out in case he should crash. They all left the aircraft and came down safely. Although he had to come down with the undercarriage jammed Elder made a good landing. The injured were taken to hospital, where they are recovering.

Elder, who had been commissioned that day, won his D.F.M. a few weeks previously, when he went on to bomb Krefeld, despite the fact that one of his engines became unserviceable on the way.