

RAF PUT BOMBING ON STIRLING BASIS

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Title: If I Were King.

Track: do.

Lines: Stagg.

Voice: do.

A squadron of Short-Stirlings, biggest bombers on active service in the whole world, was filmed while preparing the latest raid on the Ruhr and Rhineland. Their 5,000 horse-power lifts the 22-ton craft, plus a load of bombs nine times heavier than Blenheims carry.

The pilot's cabin at the top of the three-decker nose is the height of a tall house from the ground. Under the fuselage thousand-pound bombs lie snug till their next stop, Somewhere in Germany. And when they arrive everybody hears about it. Fuelled and bombed-up the first aircraft had engines running and was off along the runway, while another crew embarked ready to follow.

The mascot brings them the luck brave men deserve. In by the back door go the crew. Only six men are required to man Stirlings; that's only one more than Wellingtons have - one more man three times the load. There are three gun-turrets on the giant bomber, in the nose, amidships and at the rear, where Tailseat Charlie has four guns to play with. No wonder this squadron shot down 23 Messerschmitts in one month.

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(BACK VIEW: THREE AFTER CU TURRET) German targets are so far off that the heaviest bombers are far and away the most effective. So here's to Stirlings and more power to their bomb-racks.

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