

Zeppelin Raid. Edinburgh, April 2nd 1916.

The experiences of R.W.C. E.M.C. & L.H.C.

At 9.15 p.m. on April 2nd we were sitting round the fire at 15 Glencairn Cres. when we became aware of a growing dimness in the lighting arrangements of the room. The electric light was going out, it flickered now & again, entirely disappeared for a moment, then settled into a dull, red, glowing wire of light. Zeppelins! the warning! However we thought it might be merely a general warning to the East Coast towns & that possibly Edinburgh would not be specially selected for bombardment. We agreed to go quietly to bed & await events, asleep if possible. Slowly the ~~me~~ hours went by to those who were awake, in many houses the inmates sat in the basement, but to those who slept it was not long before the raiders came. One of us, a light sleeper heard them coming in the distance, & crept out of bed to see them from the window. Far away he could hear the propellers whirring & the occasional thud of a bursting bomb. To these sounds was soon added the rapid crack-crack of a machine gun as the Zeppelins drew nearer the watchful city. The whirring of new boucles, the bombs made a greater report & became more frequent while the machine guns clattered out their welcome with greater & greater celerity, until a bomb, bursting a hundred & fifty yards away, awakened the heaviest sleepers with a start. The sounds crescendo, into a veritable turmoil of noise. The chattering guns interspersed with the heavy thud of the bursting bombs, the whirring & rushing of the Zeppelin & our own aeroplanes, all combined in their very loudest form to make the citizens shiver.

→ shake with excitement. A crackling fire → mighty thunderstorm → a high wind seemed to be combined in one medley of noises. This did not last for very long however, soon the bombs fell further away → the machine guns gave out more intermittent volleys, the Zeppelin propellers were lost to sound, → then the guns were silent, the bombs were heard no more. But we were too much excited → aroused to fall asleep readily. For a long time we lay awake listening to the aeroplanes humming up above, now faint now clear as they circled round the city. At each slight noise we asked ourselves; is that the Zeppelin again? was that another bomb? But no, all was as still → quiet as the desert except for that ever watchful aeroplane. Then came the sound of a motor car, an ambulance perhaps, at work with the casualties, then another, later the whistle of a train as it approached the city, sure sign of safety, another → another in quick succession told us that they came in fast, after many hours of waiting in different parts of the country, many hours late & full of weary passengers. Then a light shone in the building opposite. We switched on the electric lights & were greeted with a full blaze of brilliance. All the dangers must now be over so with little further effort we went to sleep. Next morning we viewed the damage done. In Magdala & Douglas Crescents many windows were smashed for a bomb fell below, by the Waters of Leith. Round the Castle we saw the effects of three bombs, one on the Rock, one in the County Hotel, & one in Grassmarket which caused most of the casualties. There was a great deal of broken glass but the solid stone houses stood firm. We did not see the other damage.