

SMASHING BLOWS FROM AIR

AXIS TRANSPORT LOSSES

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CAIRO, APRIL 9

The allied air offensive from the east against enemy troops beating a hasty withdrawal into Sfax reached a new peak of intensity during the 24 hours ended at dusk yesterday. During Wednesday night a large force of Halifaxes and Wellingtons carried out heavy attacks against transport moving along the coastal road between Mahares and Sfax, and bombed encampments on each side of the road, causing several fires, and "straddled" the tented camps. The Wellingtons, after dropping their bombs, came down within a few hundred feet of the ground to machine-gun enemy vehicles.

Other attacks were made on Sfax itself. The target was first brilliantly illuminated by flares, and then the bombers went in and dropped salvos of bombs on railway sidings and barracks, one very heavy bomb falling between the sidings and barracks near by and causing extremely violent explosions which were echoed by another similar explosion from the barracks themselves.

Dawn reconnaissances having reported the presence on the roads and tracks leading into Sfax of large numbers of enemy transport, allied light and fighter bombers attacked continuously almost the whole day. Bostons, Baltimores, and Mitchells took part in the raids, while Kittyhawks were on the job from first light to last. By evening it was obvious that the stream of transport had been seriously disorganized, and had been split into a number of small groups, leaving many vehicles smashed and burning. During Wednesday and Thursday it is estimated that at least 130 enemy vehicles were destroyed with over 200 damaged by such attacks.