

Written sources on the air raid on the Parnall Aircraft factory, 27 February 1941

Source A

Extract from the Civil Defence Report on the air raid

14.30 hrs, 6 H.E.s including 3 UXBs on Parnall's Aircraft Factory. The Office Block was hit by several H.E.s and subsequently destroyed by fire. This was under control by 15.55 hrs. The Drawing Office suffered badly when a DAB exploded 10 minutes after it fell, doing a good deal of damage, destroying the master plans of many original designs, and causing considerable loss of life. Some of the employees had been on their way back to retrieve what they could when the bomb exploded. The next day one of the draughtsmen was found dead in the rafters. There was not a mark on him, but all his clothes were blown off.

CASUALTIES: 53 killed, about 80 seriously and 70 slightly injured.

HEs are high explosives, UXBs are unexploded bombs and a DAB is a delay-action bomb.

Source B

Extract from the Luftwaffe report on the air raid

TARGET: 'Pirate' attack on the Parnall Aircraft Works at Yate

At 14.30 hrs the factory was sighted and, still hugging the railway line, the attack was prepared. The bombs were released over the factory from a height of 30 metres at 14.36 hrs, and the crew saw 5 of their 7 SC 250 bombs, which were fitted with Type 25 short-delay fuses, land on the workshops. The attack was met by light Flak and machine gun fire, to which the Bordmechaniker in the bodenwanne (lower gun position) replied with his MG 15 machine gun. But as the bombs were released the Heinkel's port engine was hit and lost power. The aircraft was then struck by more cannon and machine gun fire, including two hits in the bodenwanne, but the Bordmechaniker escaped injury, as did the rest of the crew.

Source C

Extract from an incident report about the raid from a 16 year-old employee of Parnall's

I remember diving under my desk – as others did – and at that moment, a bomb exploded close enough to demolish the office. There was no time to be afraid, or even think. I didn't really know where I was; I didn't 'feel' anything. Then I was aware of being face downwards, my legs and back trapped. It was pitch-black and I had the impression of being held by my legs as I hung over a ledge. I was able to move my arms around in a void and yet touch nothing...

Suddenly there was another explosion and I felt myself being lifted and propelled through the air. I was unceremoniously deposited in the service road, among debris.

Source D

Extract from a letter from Thelma Barlow to Yate's Town Clerk in 1988.

It was dreadful losing so many we knew & worked with & I'm afraid it very much unnerved us, because although we turned up for work as usual the next morning, & were put temporarily in the canteen from then on, as soon as the sirens sounded, we were gone out into the fields.