The Bombing of Colonel Light Gardens.

On 22 August 1942, a US Liberator bomber ‘bombed’ properties on West Parkway, Colonel Light Gardens. The newspaper reports of the time are produced here.

However, it appears that it was not the full story. There have been a number of reports of this in the Adelaide Advertiser, one in 1986 and then again in August 1999. John Mack contacted Rex Jory, of the Advertiser and provided additional information on the incident. Mr Mack provided a copy of his letter and it is also reproduced here.

A 1949 aerial photograph of the affected section of Colonel Light Gardens. The location of where the bomb bay door was as described by the (late) Peter Searles who had souvenired a piece on his way to CLG Primary School. The red oval area is the area described in the newspaper reports as to where the goods were found.
Bomber Drops Liquor & Eggs On Adelaide

Residents of West Parkway, Colonel Light Gardens, were showered with champagne, sparkling burgundy, beer, cocoa-cola, eggs, and oranges about 8 a.m. today.

The shower came in crates and bottles accidentally dropped from a big, low-flying American bomber. Part of a bomb-bay also dropped. The crates and bottles smashed holes in roofs of houses, ripped gaps in fences, and gave residents a nasty fright.

Several children had narrow escapes from injury, but no one was hurt.

Narrow Escapes

The general feeling in the district after the excitement had died down was disappointment that so much good liquor was wasted.

Two bottles of champagne were reported to have survived the fall, but they could not be located.

Mr. P. W. Ryan, of Goodwood Road, got two dozen unbroken bottles of cocoa-cola, and a soldier is reported to have saved one bottle of beer which had had the neck knocked off. He reported that the contents had been unspoiled.

At the home of Mr. H. H. Wright of 98 West Parkway, one bottle of cocoa-cola was knocked through the bathroom window, shattered six-year-old Marlene Wright, Mr. Wright’s grand-daughter, with the drop-off did not hurt her.

John Kingsdon, 21 months, was in the back yard when a crate of beer hit a lemon tree and knocked it out of the fence on its way through to the backyard. Mrs. L. F. McDonald’s yard.

Eggs Near Fowlyard

Mr. H. W. S. Wright, of 104 West Parkway, had been in the fowlyard at the back of his house a minute before a crate of eggs crashed into the lane separating his property from that of Mr. Ryan.

He heard the plane approaching, came out to see it flying very low, and when objects began to tumble from it, he thought they were packages.

Later he found that it was beer and cocoa-cola which had tumbled through the fence into his place. All the bottles were broken.

At the house of Mrs. O. Bean, in West Parkway, a bottle of champagne shattered on the front porch, another hit the roof of the house, and the pieces dropped on the path. A young boy spotted where she usually puts the bits in its pram.

RAID ON KURLES

Washington.—Pacific Fleet destroyer Sullivans sank and strafed Ramah island in the Kuriles on Saturday. Three Japanese aircraft took off but did not attempt to intercept the American planes.

Soviet Grip On Baltic Broken

LONDON, Monday.—Russian troops have evacuated Tukums, in Latvia, after inflicting...

U.S. SUBS SINK 19 JAP SHIPS

WASHINGTON. Monday.—A Navy communiqué issued today states that U.S. submarines have...
LONG CABINET TALK TO COAL MINERS

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PLANE ‘BOMBS’

SUBURB

Liberator Drops
Many Crates

Flying across the southern
suburbs of Adelaide at less than
300 feet above the ground, a four-
engined United States Liberator
bomber dropped a bomb door and
several crates of beer, sparking
Burgundy, aerated portland, eggs,
and oranges to a dozen houses in
West Parkway, Colonel Light Gar-
dens, shortly after 8 a.m. yester-
day.

Nobody was hurt, but several
women and children had narrow
escapes. The crates and bottles
smashed holes in roofs, burst
through fences, tore limbs from
trees, and littered acres of ground
with fragments of glass.

United States Army authorities
in Adelaide are conducting an en-
quiry into the incident, and an
official report will probably be
completed today. It will then be
sent on to US headquarters in Aus-
tralia.

A spokesman said yesterday—
"It was clearly an accident, and
there is no foundation for rumors
that the crew were jettisoning cargo
because they found themselves in
difficulties. We appreciate the atti-
itude of those affected. Actual
damage will probably not exceed
a few pounds, but compensation will
be paid."

It is understood that the aircraft
was on a routine flight, and that
the supplies were a portion of
supplies going from one base to
another. There were a crew of six
and two passengers on board.

Many people who saw the Libera-
tor said that it flew no lower than
the Laborator bomber last year.

The pilot and crew of the bomber,
after landing at an aerodrome
raced out to West Parkway to see
what damage had been done. The
pilot told residents he had bombed
the Japanese north of Australia.

But had never been so scared as
when he accidentally "bombed"
Colonel Light Gardens.

Narrow Escapes

Yesterday morning West Park-
way was corded with residential
and onlookers as police and US
provinces questioned those affected.

Mrs. W. F. McLean, of 100 West
Parkway, was lying in bed when a
carton of cool drink smashed
through the gauzework iron roof
of her washhouse, a few yards
away. "A quart of an hour later,
I would have been standing at
that cistern," she said.

A crate of beer fell in her back
yard and bounced over into an ad-
joining lane.

A crate of burgundy fell in the
garden of Mrs. J. Opi, at 96 West
Parkway, and a case of oranges in
the yard of Mrs. Ellis. Oranges also
fell on the roof of Mr. E. G. Wis-
son at 96 West Parkway.

Portion of a bomb bay landed in
a plantation outside the home of
Mr. H. Ball saw crates and boxes fol-
low in quick succession, and
thought the crew must be dropping
leaves.

The Rev. Pr. P. M. Horgan was
sitting in a sun-room at the rear
of his house in Oxford Circus. He
heard the roar of the approaching
plane and then a shattering of
glass as a crate of beer ripped off
the hedges of a tree and burst
through a gauzework roof before
and a crate of cocoa landed
less than three yards from the sun-
room.

Insulators on an electric light
pole in a laneway at the rear of
his house were broken, and power
was cut off in the neighborhood.
The circuit was restored later in
the morning.

At 102 West Parkway Mrs. P. D.
Smith’s chicken house was
smashed.

At the home of Mr. H. A. Pitt-
ard 98 West Parkway, a bottle of
cool drink hurtled through the
bathroom window, drenching Mr.
Pittard’s six-year-old granddaugh-
ter, Marlene Kingdon, but doing
her no harm. In the backyard
John Kirk, aged 21 months, was
narrowly missed by a crate of beer
which hit a lemon tree.
Mr. Rex Jory,
The Advertiser Newspapers,
G.P.O. Box 339,
ADELAIDE S.A. 5001

Dear Rex,

Here are the circumstances surrounding the “Bombing of Adelaide” during 1944 by an American Liberator of the United States Airforce, 380th Bombardment Group.

I was Warrant Officer in Charge of an Australian Army Cinema and Visual Education Unit at Adelaide River, Northern Territory.

We regularly exchanged our 16mm Australian films for feature films via the 126 American Signal and Radio Intelligence Unit at the 80 MILE. My mate there was one Jacob Perle, their film officer.

The Americans were leaving the area, and Jake “accidentally” left two nice 16mm movie projectors in the scrub for us when they went.

A Liberator went down to Adelaide for a collection of goodies partly paid for by a round-robin amongst the unit and one can imagine how pleased they were to lose most of the cargo over Colonel Light Gardens.

Liberators had a narrow aluminium cat-walk suspended by rods from the roof between the racks of bombs and of course above the bomb-bay doors. On these rods were handles which could be manually operated to get rid of errant bombs which had not dropped when the airmen got the order “Bombs Away”.

On the Adelaide occasion a member of the crew tossed his personal pack into the cargo after the aircraft left Parafield, but the shoulder strap pulled down a manual release lever and the weight of the goodies burst open the bomb-bay doors - the rest is as you have reported it.

Security really was very good in Australia during World War II but on this occasion my mate told me their sad loss some hours before it was news “Down South”.

There was no mention of it in the Territory where we and the Americans only received our army newspaper!

I remember Jake saying “As you Aussies would say, it’s not bloody funny”.

Yours sincerely

(C. JOHN MACK)