

# FOREIGN PRESS REVIEW

DAILY SURVEY OF WORLD COMMENT ON THE WAR

COMPILED FROM TELEGRAPHIC REPORTS RECEIVED BY THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

No. 31

19th February, 1940

DENMARK:     ALTMARK - AVERAGE DANES' OPINION.

"That's a tremendous loss of prestige for the Germans"

This comment on the Altmark incident was made by a Danish citizen reading news flashes outside a newspaper office in Copenhagen yesterday and his expression of opinion was generally representative of the view of the Danish "man-in-the-street".

The affair has almost completely monopolised the Danish Press and the criticism of the British action was said to be stronger than the Danes would dare use against Germany. The British argument was relegated to the inside pages of the newspapers which all censured the British action.

The strongest comment came from the KRISTELIGT DAGBLAD which stated: "This affair is really reminiscent of the attack on Copenhagen in 1807. Regardless of the protests of two Norwegian torpedo boat commanders, the English forces fought a battle inside a Norwegian fjord and retired triumphantly with their plunder."

U. S. A.     ALTMARK INCIDENT FEATURED.

The view that the British action in boarding the Altmark was justified in the circumstances, is generally taken in today's New York Press.

The NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE writes: "There is undeniably a good deal of grim humour in the wild cries of anger and pain and of outraged moral virtue being sent up by Berlin, in connection with the Altmark case. The nation whose governors made brute force their deity; which has torn up one treaty obligation after another with no regard for the law of decency; which butchered the Polish civil population without compassion; which torpedoed crowded liners without warning; which has strewn murderous mines in the world's shipping lanes without thought of either the rights of humanity or neutrality and which never admitted that any feeble 'plutodemocratic' considerations could stand in the way of its sacred ambitions, has had the tables turned upon it in a relatively mild way.

"It suddenly shrieks to the high heavens of this 'criminal' inversion of the natural order of things.

"It would seem that the Norwegian authorities failed in their duty of defending their neutrality when they overlooked the presence of the Altmark's prisoners. One really doubts that anyone outside Germany is going to be profoundly shocked and that Norway is going to be forced into war as a result.

"Many Americans, listening to the German outcries, and remembering how little help that country has given to the reign of law, are hardly able to repress a sardonic smile."

The view of the NEW YORK TIMES is expressed in the words: "The failure of the Bergen officials to discover, or even suspect the presence of more than 300 prisoners, who declared they howled and yelled and beat on the hatch covers, seems incredible."

In another section of this newspaper, the view is taken that Germany is probably suffering more than Britain and France from the period of waiting in the present war.

"One wonders whether Germany does not suffer more in this latest phase of the war of nerves than her foes," it is declared. "All standards of living must fall, but hers, which is already low, falls most. All trade is restricted, but hers is strangled. The period of unrestricted German success is ended. There is the possibility of German defeat to be reckoned with. There must be those within Germany who see that every day of this ghastly waiting is in itself a German defeat. German strength is at its peak, but that of her enemies is still mounting."

The New York Press yesterday stressed the Altmark incident as the biggest story of the war so far. The NEW YORK TIMES and NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE featured London dispatches on their front pages, as well as stories from Leith, Oslo and Berlin. The British Admiralty's statement was carried verbatim on the inside pages. Headlines used were "Reich Ablaze with Wrath" and "Nazi Prison Ship Captives Saved".

One correspondent described the Altmark as a "floating Concentration Camp", and an agency dispatch used the phrase "Conquering British Destroyer Home To-night."

#### SWEDEN: BRITAIN'S ALLEGED VIOLATION OF NEUTRALITY.

The Altmark affair has been given great prominence in the Swedish Press and the SVENSKA DAGBLADET yesterday described the incident as "A deliberate violation of Norway's neutrality."

In a leader, this paper summarised the details of the action and concluded: "It is a question of the Altmark being an auxiliary cruiser and the propriety of the transport of prisoners through Norwegian waters. One assertion faces the other. But even if the grounds for the English assertion remain, the fact is that there has been a deliberate and grave violation of neutrality."

The DAGENS NYHETER wrote: "The grave violation of Norway's sea frontier by British men of war, in connection with the attack on the Altmark, has naturally resulted in immediate energetic Diplomatic activity. The Norwegian protest to the British Minister was made as a matter of course."

Referring to the Admiralty's order to the Cossack to enter Norwegian waters, this paper stated: "This is what respect for the neutrals' rights is worth when great powers' interests are at stake..... While crowds cheer in Leith, and the latest heroes are being received, the Norwegian Foreign Office is burning the midnight oil."

Criticising M. Hansson's attitude to the Finnish war, the SVENSKA DAGBLADET declared that M. Hansson had misjudged public sentiment and concluded: "The Parliamentary champion of the Swedish home life is unsuitable to be the helmsman of the ship of State in a raging storm."

The DAGENS NYHETER considered it natural that Finland should turn first to Sweden for help and asserted that help had already been provided, greater than the public imagined. This paper, however, went on to stress that the assistance for Finland was still insufficient and declared: "If it is impossible to supply fighting men in addition to volunteers, the people wish to know the reason why."

"The ill matched Russo-German Pact also influences the situation, but despite the delicate nature of these matters, they must be reported to the public which must have a guarantee that all volunteer help possible, without abandoning the principle of neutrality, will be given."

BELGIUM:            NEUTRALITY PROBLEM IN ALTMARK AFFAIR.

"The Norwegian attitude deserves no reproach from Germany. Since the German navy has frequently shown that it scarcely respects neutral property, the Reich is in no way entitled to pretend that Norwegian ships should have fought the British squadron"

This comment on the Altmark affair was made in yesterday's XX me SIECLE, the Catholic newspaper.

The STANDAARD, the Flemish Catholic journal wrote: "The British prisoners were the kernel of the problem", but added: "Whenever such a breach of neutrality occurs, it must be condemned; all the more when an allegation is made against Norway that she did not act consistently with neutrality."

Discussing the Nazi war against neutrals, the GAZETE VAN ANTWERPEN, the Christian Democratic newspaper declared: "Many Greek and Portuguese ships have joined British convoys and no-one can pretend that these nations are not neutral. It must be seriously considered whether the best answer to the Nazi actions is not to make use of Britain's organised convoys."

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HOLLAND: "CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF SENSELESS WANTONNESS".

The Dutch Press has continued to comment strongly on the sinking of the Burgerdijk and the UTRECHTSCH DAGBLAD stated yesterday: "The Burgerkijk is likely to become a classic example of an absolutely unjustifiable and senseless wantonness."

HET VOLK, the organ of the Social Democratic Labour Party, stated: "Germany expects us to take it with a good-natured smile but if you are too good you are apt to be made a fool of."

The Catholic organ DE MAASBODE affirmed: "Goebbels has tried to stem the tide of neutral indignation with a speech about neutral policy but without success.....The German Press gives a completely false view of happenings and it is a sure sign of weakness if a Government has recourse to such pitiful methods to justify this action by a responsible submarine commander. Similar actions might create a situation having unpleasant results for Germany."

The NIEUWE ROTTERDAMSCH E COURANT, the Liberal newspaper, admitting the special responsibilities of neutrals, declared: "It would be un-neutral to recognise the arbitrary thesis of one of the belligerents which is unfounded in international law."

FINLAND: GERMANY WORRIED.

Germany is worried about the possibility of having to wage war on more than one front, according to the Berlin correspondent of the HELSINGIN SANOMAT.

"Germany now considers that each anti-Russian blow is also an anti-German blow," added this correspondent. "This is increasingly evident since Germany as well as Russia has felt the consequences of the Finnish war."

UUSI SUOMI reported from Kaunas that German experts are to re-organise Russian industry and help in the construction of new aircraft factories.

TUNIS: RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WAR.

The blame for the Anglo-French-German war has been laid by a section of the Tunis Press on Hitler and Stalin.

The Arab newspaper EN-NAHDA accused the two dictators of being responsible for the war because "they deprived the weak nations of liberty thus forcing the democracies to take a defensive attitude.

"A German offensive will be a bloody disaster. Therefore she will lose when her raw materials are exhausted. Hence in any case the patience of the democracies will have achieved its goal after which the world will enjoy a quiet peaceful life."

The editor of this paper approved the French repression of Communists.

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SYRIA: WHY SYRIA SUPPORTS DEMOCRACIES.

The Syrian newspaper AL ANNAHER has inaugurated a plebiscite on "Why we support the Democracies" with the answer of Sheikh Bishara Khouri, the leader of the Constitutionalist Party.

The Sheikh declared: "I wish victory for the Allies because it is my conviction that they fight for justice and the protection of liberties necessary for world happiness.

"On the German side we see nothing but the teachings of hatred, aggression, broken promises and racial arrogance."

EGYPT: LOYALTY TO BRITAIN.

Egypt's loyalty to Britain was demonstrated at a Press representatives' meeting with Mr. Eden when three well-known journalists voiced Egyptian sentiment in support of the Allied cause.

Mohamed Hussein Heikal Pasha stated: "All Egypt is extremely anxious that Great Britain and her Allies should win the war."

Gabriel Takla Pasha stated: "It is the wish of everyone at this meeting that our feeling be known towards England."

Faris Nimi Pasha declared that the Allies' cause was Egypt's cause and that this feeling was shared all over the Arab world.

ROUMANIA: ITALO-ROUMANIAN FRIENDSHIP.

The visit to Rome of M. Sidorovici, the leader of the Roumanian Youth Movement is taken up by the Roumanian Press to stress Italo-Roumanian friendly relations and their prospects for the future.

"The political efforts of Italy from the beginning of the war, to create and maintain in the Mediterranean and South-Eastern Europe, an atmosphere of peace and confidence, had a far-reaching effect on Roumania", writes UNIVERSUL today. "The sentiments of the Roumanian Nation towards Italy have never been slackened and the remembrance of the common sacrifices ensures mutual confidence. Roumanian public opinion, sensitive to the Italian manifestation of friendship, greatly appreciates Italy's international political action.

"Roumania desires the Italo-Roumanian friendship to be as closely enduring as possible.

CURRENTUL states: "Italo-Roumanian friendship has never been dimmed. The Road to Rome, is the Road to Peace. Rome is today the guarantor of European civilisation. Italy's policy is a non-belligerent one, not one of passivity.

"Roumania and Italy have met each other on the Road to Peace. The Balkans feel they have today a great partner."

"Thanks to Mussolini's political fore-sight Italy today is the guardian of Peace in the Mediterranean and the Balkans," declares ROMANIA. "Italy has made a helpful contribution towards improvement in the collaboration of the Balkan States.

FRANCE: BRITISH ACTION ON ALTMARK APPROVED.

Unanimous approval of the British action in the Altmark affair has been expressed in the French Press, the French view being, as the PETIT JOURNAL stated yesterday, identical with that of the Admiralty.

Pertinax in the ORDRE thought the incident would probably make the Scandinavian States pay more attention to their obligations as neutrals. This Diplomatic correspondent wrote: "The status of a neutral carries with it rights and complementary duties. These rights cannot be put forward to one belligerent, except in so far as the other has respected them - either willingly or under compulsion. If this were not so the neutral would be likely to provide material help for the most brutal and the most enterprising belligerent - the one most ready to ignore the obligations of international law."

Madame Tabouis in the OEUVRE also strictured the repeated complaisance of Norway towards the German Navy, and the FIGARO and other organs recalled three German violations of Norwegian territorial waters as an answer to the tendentious account of the Altmark incident given by the official German News Agency.

The EPOQUE was amazed that Germany, of all Powers, should have the cynicism to protest, in the name of international law, against an action of the British Navy fully justified by the circumstances. This paper wrote: "Germany, who was the first to unloose the blind force of mines, who torpedoes passenger ships without thought for women and children; Germany who sinks neutral ships without warning, who sends her squadrons to attack peaceful fishing boats; Germany whose destructive madness has no respect for humanity or for agreements, who is guilty every day of "murder on the high seas" - Germany has the effrontery to protest in the name of international law against an act of the British fleet which was plainly justified by the circumstances. Our readers will judge for themselves which side is in the right.

"But we know already of course that for the Reich there is only one law - German law."

The Russian encroachment on the advanced positions on the Mannerheim Line caused the Press to accentuate its warnings that Finland needs men as well as munitions. M. Blum in the POPULAIRE told the Scandinavian countries that Finland is their advanced guard and that they are being drawn into the war, not by England and France, but by Stalin and Hitler, and the semi-official EXCELSIOR warned them of the fate which Berlin and Moscow have in store for them if they repeat "Pontius Pilate's gesture"

Lord Chatfield's speech was well-reported, the PETIT PARISIEN and other organs quoting in prominent headlines his phrase about England's having had a narrow escape when she sought Russia's friendship.

ITALY: ALTMARK INCIDENT DWARFS OTHER NEWS.

All other front page news was entirely dwarfed in last night's press by the Cossack's feat in rescuing British prisoners from the Altmark.

Long dispatched from London gave graphic descriptions of the fight and Norwegian and German protests were printed as well as Lord Halifax's statement. A German message gave the German version of the incident stressing the alleged British shooting of unarmed Germans.

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HOLLAND: PANAMA CANAL ALLEGATION.

HET VADERLAND, the Liberal newspaper, commenting on the Altmark incident wrote yesterday: "The British action in Norwegian waters shows that the wrong is not all on one side." A Berlin dispatch to this paper stated that the Germans were stressing the fact that Britain had transported prisoners through the neutral Panama Canal.

A London Message in this journal declared: "It is true that the Norwegian authorities did not do their duty as neutrals and the British action can be explained by that."

Sweden's decision regarding Finland has been noted by the Dutch Press but one paper said that "it must have been done with a bleeding heart."

DE TELEGRAAF yesterday printed a long letter from Professor Telders comparing the Altmark and Venlo incidents, pointing out that the Altmark should have released her prisoners and should not, as an offensively armed merchantman, have been in the territorial waters or ports at all under article three of the Norwegian neutrality laws. It was stated that article four permits war-ships twenty-four hours in territorial waters so the British ~~did~~ not in that way violate neutrality. The Norwegians were also in error - they should have refused the ship entry or taken the prisoners off, but doubtless "they were fooled or were the victims of lies."

The letter concluded: "The Venlo ~~was~~ the worse incident as the Germans killed a Dutchman but the British killed no Norwegians."

DENMARK: PRAISE FOR BRITISH NAVY.

The Altmark incident still monopolises the Danish Press to the exclusion of other news, and the text of the British note to Norway ~~is~~ published in all papers.

Praise for the British Navy is contained in a dispatch by the London correspondent of the NATIONALTIDENDE to his paper. This correspondent writes today: "The drama of the British fleet's liberation of the Altmark prisoners has made the blood of British seamen flow faster through their veins. The boarding of the Altmark will go down in British Naval history side by side with the Battle of the Plate."

SWITZERLAND: "IS GERMANY THE ONE TO COMPLAIN?"

The Swiss Press to-day publishes long accounts of the British action in boarding the Altmark and the British statements are well displayed.

The GAZETTE DE LAUSANNE writes: "Germany has violated international law in many cases and has no respect for territorial waters. In these conditions, the carefully elaborated principles of international law become non-existent. It is not doubted that the British Admiralty, having given precise orders, clearly violated maritime law, but we must ask ourselves 'Is Germany the one to complain so indignantly?'"

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The JOURNAL DE GENEVE writes: "The Altmark, armed at the outset of her cruise, was the auxiliary of the Graf Spee, and must be considered a part of the German war fleet. Therefore, it has no right to remain over 24 hours in neutral territorial waters."

The Press continues to show resentment over the Federal prohibition of Doctor Rauschning's book, resulting in a German demarche.

The NATIONAL ZEITUNG writes: "By its decision, the Federal Council acted contrary to the Swiss people's deepest sentiments of freedom. The capitulation before the arbitrary German interpretation of neutrality, which is directed towards the subjugation of all foreign freedom of thought, must result in destroying the independent development of Swiss public opinion."

19/2/40 - No.1.

Not to be quoted as an Air  
Ministry announcement.

HOW THE ALTMARK WAS LOCATED.

R.A.F. Pilots' Stories.

It is now possible to give a fuller account of the location of the German Fleet Auxiliary Altmark by aircraft of the Royal Air Force Coastal Command on Friday, February 16th.

The leader of the formation of three aircraft which went to find the Altmark said that he had been warned on the previous night that he would be on morning long-range patrol across the North Sea, but he had no idea then of the real nature of his task.

"I was roused at 6 a.m." he said, "earlier than had been arranged, and in the station Operations Room was told that a very special job was in hand.

"When I heard the name, Altmark, I looked at Lloyd's Register of Shipping but found that the name was not there. I was given a verbal picture of the ship. I was told that she was a 20,000 ton vessel of the tanker type, and that, when last seen, she was painted black with yellow or white upperworks. A distinguishing feature of the ship, I was told, was that her large single funnel was aft.

"We set off, first, for the opposite coast.

"Visibility was not too good, but our crews have done this journey a number of times since the war began and there was never any likelihood of any of us wandering from our course, or losing touch for long.

"It later became a beautiful day, with gorgeous sunshine and a Mediterranean sky. Visibility increased to more than 40 miles.

"I said to myself that if ever I was to have any luck, I should have it now. Near the coast we found the sea frozen over. It looked like pack ice, with great tracks of clear water through it where the ice had been broken up by currents or ships.

"The coast of Norway, with its snow-covered mountains, was visible more than 30 miles away.

"We proceeded to comb most thoroughly an area from the extreme south point of Norway northwards. Flying well outside territorial waters, I examined every mile with binoculars. Then 15 miles ahead I saw a smudge of smoke and a minute later a ship with a black hull and cream upperworks steaming directly towards us. We swung out slightly to get a broad-side view of her. My heart sank when I recognised from her lines that she could not be our quarry.

"But fifteen seconds later I spotted something else - a grey ship, with funnel aft, the distinctive feature of the Altmark. We flew up to her at 1,000 feet and inspected her through glasses at a mile range. Then we turned in on top of her for a close inspection.

"Just as we had turned to dive low on the ship, I saw another aircraft of our formation also sweep down. He was going 'hell for leather' and I thought for a moment he would hit the sea. But he flattened out over the stern and I came in on his tail two seconds afterwards. At the same moment I noticed that the third aircraft was also diving.

"As we dived, my eyes were rivetted on the stern, searching for a name. I saw letters about a foot high. Because of the speed at which we were diving, the letters seemed to dance in a jumble. I expected that when they could be read they would spell a Norwegian name.

"I could not suppress a whoop of joy when I saw that they read 'Altmark'. Of course, we know now that the German had reverted to her own name earlier in the week.

"The pilot of one of our aircraft told me afterwards that he saw the Altmark's name on the stern below what appeared to be a Norwegian flag.

All the members of my crew saw the word 'Altmark'. I caught sight of my men out of the corner of my eye. They were not holding one thumb up - the signal of success. Each man had both thumbs up.

"For a few moments they 'went wild' as we swept across the Altmark's decks at funnel height. I could see only one man on the deck. He was hanging over a rail as if seasick or looking for mines. There was no other sign of life aboard and not the slightest evidence of any alarm. Not a shot was fired from the Altmark's hidden guns.

"But we could guess that after our three aircraft had flashed over the ship, the German crew must have been feeling a bit uneasy. We took note of the Altmark's position, and having accomplished the task of finding her we headed for home.

"How thrilled we were when we heard of the Royal Navy's magnificent operation."

The three British aircraft returned safely after an 8-hours flight across the North Sea and back, during which no enemy aircraft was seen.

Air Ministry,  
Whitehall, S.W.1.

19/2/40. - No. 2.

FRENCH OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE  
(MORNING)

Paris, Monday, February 19, 1940.

The following official communique was issued this morning from French G.H.Q.:-

During the night, to the East of the Nied, one of our detachments suffered some losses when stumbling into an ambush.

On the Rhine firing from the casemates on either side.

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19/2/40. - No. 3.

PRESS NOTICE.

The following telegram has been received by the First Lord from General Manager, Officers' Merchant Navy Federation:

"Please convey to officers and all concerned the thanks and admiration of 18,000 navigating and engineer officers of the British Merchant Navy for their brilliant success in rescue of Merchant officers and seamen from 'Altmark'. This daring exploit will create yet another bond of enduring comradeship between the Royal and Merchant Navies".

The following reply has been sent:

"Your tribute to the officers and men who rescued the 'Altmark' prisoners will strengthen the ties between the Royal Navy and their comrades of the Merchant Navy.

Winston Churchill.

ADMIRALTY,  
Whitehall,  
S.W.

19/2/40 - No 4.

OFFICIAL ADMIRALTY COMMUNIQUE

The Secretary of the Admiralty regrets to announce that H.M. destroyer DARING, Commander S.A.Cooper, has been torpedoed and sunk. One officer and 4 ratings have been picked up.

Nine officers and 148 ratings are missing and it is feared have been lost.

The next of kin have been informed.

ADMIRALTY, S.W.1.

19th February, 1940

No. 5.  
M.A. F. 154.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE ANNOUNCEMENT.

POSTPONEMENT OF CALLING UP FOR AGRICULTURAL WORKERS.

Farmers are reminded that if they wish to apply for postponement of the calling up of any of their workers who registered on 17th February and are not covered by the Schedule of Reserved Occupations, applications must be sent to their County War Agricultural Executive Committee on Form N.S. 100A to reach that Committee not later than Saturday, 24th February. It is of great importance that the registration number and the name of the Employment Exchange at which the worker registered should be quoted correctly on the form, otherwise it may not be possible to trace the worker in time to withhold his calling up notice.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE.

NEWS SERVICE FOR ALLOTMENT HOLDERS No. 14.

PEAS AND BEANS.

Fair Crops From Most Deeply Cultivated Soils.

Peas and beans occupy a leading place among the valuable food crops which can be successfully grown in gardens and allotments and should be a prominent feature of war-time cropping. Although these crops succeed best in well manured soil, fair crops can usually be grown on soils which are deeply cultivated, moderately fertile and not short of lime. Peas do quite well on freshly broken land provided it is well consolidated and in a tilthy condition at sowing time.

Superphosphate is a valuable fertiliser for both peas and beans and should be applied and well worked into the soil before sowing, at the rate of 2 oz. per square yard.

There are many varieties of peas of different habit of growth, dwarf, medium and tall, ranging from 1½ ft. to 5 ft. Some succeed best in some districts and some in others and it is advisable to be guided by local experience when selecting varieties. Peas require support, and where sticks are scarce or expensive dwarf and medium varieties will be found quite satisfactory as they can be supported at less cost.

Peas can be sown in warmer districts during the latter part of February but generally speaking March is early enough to make the first sowing, beginning with the round-seeded varieties. Sowing can be continued at intervals of 2 to 3 weeks until July. Broad drills from 1½ to 2½ in. deep should be drawn and the seed scattered thinly and evenly. To protect against mice, shake the seed in a tin with a little red-lead or paraffin before sowing; a few strands of black cotton stretched over the rows about 6 in. from the ground will protect the germinating seeds from birds.

Peas should never be watered in dry weather but overhead syringing in the evening will help the plants to withstand drought. If mildew attacks the later-sown crops, dust the plants with a little green sulphur.

Broad Beans, either the Windsor or Longpod types, can be sown in late February and early March. The seed should be sown in drills, 3 in. deep and 9 in. apart and in double rows. Pinch out the tops of the plants when the first flowers are opening.

Dwarf or French beans are tender plants and should not be sown until late April or early May according to the district. If weather conditions are warm and showery, the plants will produce a crop in about eight weeks. To provide a succession of crops, sowings should be made at intervals of 2 or 3 weeks until August. A good rule with both peas and French beans is to sow again when the previously sown crop is well above the ground. French beans should be sown in single rows, in drills 3 inches deep, spacing the seeds 12 in. apart. Unless the crop is being grown for dried haricots, the beans should be picked frequently, at least twice weekly, in order to prolong the plants' bearing period.

Runner beans are also tender and should not be sown until May. They delight in well manured soil and succeed best when a trench is taken out and the lower spit of soil incorporated with well rotted manure. A little bone meal or superphosphate should be added to the top soil. Sow the seeds in double rows, in drills 3 in. deep, and space the plants at least 1 foot apart. The beans crop best if staked, but fair crops can also be secured by pinching out the growing shoots to produce dwarf, bushy plants.

Slugs are very partial to the young plants of peas and beans, especially French beans, and a watch should be maintained for signs of damage.

BOY SCOUTS DO THEIR GOOD DEED.

The Horticulture Committee for the town of Leamington Spa have enlisted the help of Boy Scouts for the distribution of propaganda leaflets, and they have dealt with 10,000 leaflets to date.

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SPEEDING THE SPADE.

The Sunderland Horticulture Committee has secured the co-operation of the local Technical College in the testing of soil samples. All the allotment soils have been tested for their lime requirement and the results have been published in the local press.

The Public Museum at Sunderland has also proved useful for the exhibition of specimens of insect pests and fungus diseases of plants. Horticultural lectures are to be given every Thursday.

In Public Libraries, displays of books on gardening, propaganda posters and literature are being arranged. Printed lists of the works are often available for further distribution.

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PROGRESS AT BRADFORD.

Bradford reports a net gain so far of 172 tenanted plots and 138 new allotments. The Corporation Parks Committee report that 30,000 cabbage seedlings have been supplied to a large number of growers at practically cost price. Plans have also been made for providing seed potatoes in several varieties at reduced prices at the Committee's office.

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LEICESTER ASKS FOR MORE.

Enough Corporation Land Available For 4,000 New Allotments.

Over 1,000 applications for allotments have been received by Leicester Corporation since the war began. The Corporation have accepted them and are asking for more. In fact Mr. Harold Ledger, the estate manager, states that there is sufficient Corporation-owned land for 4,000 new allotments. There are 300 acres that can be made immediately available for this purpose.

The numbers of new applicants do not compare with those of the last war. But this is because the last war made Leicester allotment-minded and the movement has thrived ever since. Also there are many gardens attached to the houses on the new housing estates.

Instruction in the arts of allotment management is being arranged through the various societies in the city and here, as in other centres, the Society of Friends are doing valuable work through their scheme for supplying seeds and implements to the unemployed at low charges and easy payments.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES,  
10 Whitehall Place,  
London, S.W. 1.

THE ALTMARK INCIDENT.

The following is issued to the Press by Naval Affairs for such use as they may wish to make of it.

The German Captain of the ALTMARK, which was an auxiliary vessel of the German Navy and does not therefore appear in the register of the world's merchant shipping, has invented a pretty story of the incident. Unfortunately for him, however, he has contradicted himself more than once. He said that the ALTMARK had entered a small fiord and was lying there with the entrance guarded by Norwegian gunboats. Quite untrue, but he goes on to say that the British destroyers signalled "If you don't heave to, we fire!" This is contradicted since the ALTMARK was not on passage but lying in a fiord with very little sea room for so large a ship. What the Captain of the ALTMARK conveniently forgot to mention was that the signal received from the British destroyer was an order to stop engines since he was manoeuvring these in an attempt to ram the British destroyer. This, the first hostile action, was on the part of the Germans.

The German Official Trans-Ocean Wireless states that the Captain of the ALTMARK declared that there were only 133 British prisoners on board. Strange since more than double that number were rescued by H.M.S. COSSACK and brought back to England.

The Captain of the ALTMARK says that the British sailors boarded the ALTMARK and opened fire on the unarmed defenceless German crew. This is a slander of which only a disciple of Nazism could be capable. The true facts of the case are as follows:-

The British destroyer evaded the ALTMARK'S attempts to ram her and drive her on to the rocks - the initial hostile action on the part of the Germans - and went alongside the German Naval auxiliary. Boarding parties went on board the ALTMARK in order to find and release the British prisoners which the German Naval auxiliary was illegally trying to take .....

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to Germany through Norwegian territorial waters. The only violence shown by the British at this stage was when the Captain of the ALTMARK had to be removed from the Engine Room Telegraphs in order to prevent him from continuing to manoeuvre in his attempt to drive the destroyer on to the rocks. Later when the boarding party was searching the ship for the prisoners, a British Officer - Mr. Smith, Gunner-in-Charge of the after boarding party - was shot and wounded. This was the second hostile action of the Germans, and no shooting took place until Mr. Smith was wounded.

Meanwhile some of the armed guard which had been placed on board the ALTMARK by the scuttled German raider ADMIRAL GRAF SPEE had clambered over the stern of the ship and made their way across the ice to the shore. These men were not civilians, but active service personnel of the German Navy - a fact which is proved since one of the British sailors came back from the incident with a German naval rating cap as a souvenir. Nor were these men unarmed. For when they reached shore they opened fire on the British boarding party which was then on the after deck of the ALTMARK. Thus once more the Germans started the shooting. If the British sailors fired back it was in self defence. It was during this firing that two Germans were hit as they were on their way across the ice to join in the shooting.

These are the facts and they show conclusively that the Germans began hostilities on three separate occasions and that the British sailors never opened fire first or fired upon unarmed merchant seamen. Further two British naval officers jumped overboard in an attempt to save a German life.

This British conduct is in strong contrast to the behaviour of the German airmen who recently bombed and sank the defenceless Norwegian steamer TEMPO and afterwards machine-gunned the defenceless men in the lifeboats.

CO-OPERATION WITH ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION.

At Liguanea, not far from Kingston, the capital of Jamaica, the magnificent Jubilee Memorial Tubercular Hospital, costing £89,000, was recently opened. The money was provided jointly by the Home Government, the Government of Jamaica, and public subscription.

The hospital, which is situated in beautiful surroundings, and stands in grounds 45 acres in extent, has 200 free patients and 22 paying patients.

Its construction has been planned on the most modern lines, with reinforced concrete, tiled floors, steel windows, and large, airy wards with deep verandahs on all sides. There are a kitchen steam cooking range and a large storage refrigerator.

Facilities exist for the most modern therapeutic practice, and there are a fine operating suite, an X-ray department and laboratory, all equipped on the most up-to-date lines.

The specialist in charge is a doctor with wide experience, including one year as a Travelling Fellow under the Rockefeller Foundation in the chief centres of the United States.

Extensive schemes are under way for combating tuberculosis in Jamaica. Apart from this hospital, there are to be special tubercular wards and a tubercular clinic in each parish. Facilities will be carried to the remotest districts by mobile X-ray units in motor vans.

The Government of Jamaica are also co-operating with the Rockefeller Foundation in the large scale provision of vaccine. This work is an entirely new step in public health administration.

BOARD OF EDUCATION ANNOUNCEMENT.

The use of household shelters for children  
attending school.

In a Memorandum issued today by the Board of Education, Local Education Authorities are advised of the principles to be observed in making arrangements for the dispersal to shelter of those school children for whom shelter cannot be provided on the school premises:-

- (1) Householders within five minutes of the school who are known, from information which can be derived from the Air Raid Precautions Committee, to have shelter or protected accommodation should be invited to agree to accept an appropriate number of children for shelter if a public air raid warning has been given. In a large number of cases it will be found that the members of the household likely to be at home during the hours of school attendance are less than those for whom the shelter was provided, and there will accordingly during those hours be some spare accommodation available.

The arrangements must provide for named children to go to specified households.

- (2) Practice in dispersal must be undertaken and the children must know the address of the household to which they are going and must have periodical test exercises in going direct to such households.

In many areas it will be possible to obtain the co-operation of Air Raid Wardens in the vicinity of the school to supervise these test exercises and to undertake similar supervision when air raid warnings are actually sounded.

- (3) Children attending school whose homes are within five minutes of the school and have in them either an Anderson Shelter or some other form of properly protected accommodation, should go home.

Similar arrangements may be adopted in neutral areas in consultation with the Regional Commissioner in the case of schools at which, owing to their restricted sites or similar reasons, it is not possible to provide protection in or near the school premises for all the children for whom school accommodation is required.

19/2/40 - No.10.

BOARD OF TRADE ANNOUNCEMENT.

EXEMPTION FROM KEY INDUSTRY DUTY.

The Treasury have made an Order under Section 10(5) of the Finance Act, 1926, as amended by Section 2(1) of the Import Duties (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1939, exempting dodecyl alcohol from Key Industry duty from the 21st February, 1940, until the 30th June, 1940.

Copies of the Treasury Order, which is entitled "The Safeguarding of Industries (Exemption) No.4 Order, 1940", may be obtained from H.M. Stationery Office.

Board of Trade.  
19th February, 1940.

19/2/40 - No. 11.

THE ALTMARK INCIDENT.

Naval Affairs request the following correction in the bulletin (not to be quoted as an Admiralty communique) which was issued at 12.6 p.m. today (No.7):-

In line 7, the words "quite untrue" should read, "quite true".

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PRESS NOTICE

The Secretary of the Admiralty announces the following results of the Final Examination held on completion of the Acting Sub-Lieutenants (Non Cadets Entry) Course at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, Christmas, 1939.

| <u>Name</u>       | <u>Part I (Science)</u> | <u>Part II (Science)</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| J.T.Rushforth     | 320                     | 215                      | 535          |
| L.J.Evans         | 269                     | 164                      | 433          |
| W.L.Irving        | 245                     | 181                      | 426          |
| R.L.Hogarth       | 278                     | 144                      | 422          |
| A.H.Clegg         | 238                     | 183                      | 421          |
| C.H.Jeffery       | 243                     | 175                      | 418          |
| W.L.Cranefield    | 234                     | 177                      | 411          |
| H.Q.Rose          | 213                     | 197                      | 410          |
| D.C.Wood          | 229                     | 177                      | 406          |
| E.J. D.Huke       | 204                     | 201                      | 405          |
| P.C.Carpenter     | 205                     | 197                      | 402          |
| W.Duckett         | 217                     | 176                      | 393          |
| J.W.S.Culham      | 226                     | 140                      | 366          |
| J.R.Jamieson      | 221                     | 142                      | 363          |
| J.G.Baldwin       | 188                     | 173                      | 361          |
| D.L.Satterford    | 193                     | 165                      | 358          |
| P.A.Hill          | 182                     | 175                      | 357          |
| J.E.Douglas       | 222                     | 135                      | 357          |
| W.B.N.Wilson      | 148                     | 205                      | 353          |
| S.W.A.Thrippleton | 160                     | 186                      | 346          |
| D.L.Binnington    | 145                     | 188                      | 333          |
| P.W.Reid          | 140                     | 186                      | 326          |
| R.D.C.G.Simmons   | 147                     | 157                      | 304          |

19/2/40 - No.13.

SEVEN THOUSAND MILES BY AIR - CAPTAIN BALFOUR'S TOUR.

Captain Harold Balfour, M.P. under Secretary of State for Air, landed in England today on return from a ten-day tour by air to R.A.F. units in the Near and Middle East. During his tour he flew a distance of approximately seven thousand miles. The flight to and from Cairo, via Malta, was made in an Imperial Airways aircraft with Mr. Eden.

The tour, which began on February 9th, was continued from Cairo in R.A.F. aircraft. Visits were made to R.A.F. units stationed in Palestine, Transjordan, Iraq, and Egypt.

The Egyptian section included a tour of squadrons at the desert stations.

AIR AFF. IRS.

NORWEGIAN SEAMEN PROTEST AGAINST NAZI

SEA WARFARE.

It is pointed out in official circles that on February 16th, the Norwegian Seamen's Union, the Norwegian Engineers' Union, the Norwegian Merchant Officers' Association and the Norwegian Masters' Union presented a resolution to the Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs the text of which reads as follows: -

"The Norwegian seamen's organisation have today at a joint meeting discussed the present position of neutral shipping and the treatment which is being meted out to defenceless neutral seamen.

"Acting on information in our possession we are resolved to protest with the greatest indignation against the form of sea warfare which is now being waged and which seems to have as its prime object the terrorisation of neutral ships.

"We are also to express our disappointment at the prevailing powerlessness in the face of demands that international law should be respected.

"Neutral shipping nations seems to know of no means of demanding the cessation of massacre of shipping.

"A number of sinkings which have recently taken place must be condemned as demonstrably conflicting with international law and human feeling. In this connexion we will mention the SONGA proceeding from America to a neutral port in Europe which was sunk far out in the Atlantic and the crew driven out into open boats in mid-winter. We will also mention the sinking of the TEMPO as the most monstrous thing that can be imagined. This ship was proceeding on a neutral voyage when it was attacked by German aeroplanes which, not content with sinking the ship, went so far as to shoot at the crew when they had got into the boats. So much has been proved by official enquiry. From official enquiries into the sinking of the ENID it is also apparent that the crew were exposed to gunfire after they had got into their boats.

"It may perhaps be possible to destroy the Norwegians' shipping but it is impossible to frighten them into staying on land. In the meantime we shall do what is in our power to do. We can urge upon our members not to go in ships which carry cargo to a belligerent power which has declared itself proud of war and of aimlessly murdering defenceless seamen. The seamen's organisations are resolved further to demand that the authorities give due attention to the war on our merchant ships when trade agreements are concluded, and ensure that in future seamen shall not be exposed to the illegal warfare which is now in progress."

15 missing

Ministry of Food Announcement.

19/2/40 - No.16.

RETURN OF FLOUR BAGS.

Bakers, grocers and other commercial users of flour are urgently reminded by the Ministry of Food of the importance of promptly returning to their owners charged flour bags as soon as they are empty.

The heavy demands of the fighting and civil defence services for jute and hessian bags have caused delay in the deliveries of new supplies for industrial use. As a result, the production of flour at several mills is being hampered by a shortage of bags in which to pack it. If the large supplies of returnable bags known to be in the hands of bakers and others are not speedily released, it may become necessary to deliver flour generally in non-returnable bags, at additional cost to the purchaser.

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19/2/40 - No. 17

PRIVATE SECRETARY TO DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE

The Duke of Devonshire, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Dominion Affairs, has appointed Mr. H. V. L. Swanzy to be his Private Secretary.

EMPIRE AFFAIRS

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19/2/40 - No.18.

MEM. TO SUB-EDITORS:  
RELEASED FOR PUBLICATION AFTER  
9.30 P.M. THIS (MONDAY) EVENING.

As this script is issued in advance it is necessary to check it against the broadcast at 9.15 p.m. this evening on 391 or 449 metres. (This amended script substitutes that issued on Sunday, Feb.18 (No.4.))

B.B.C. TO GIVE THE FORCES THE PROGRAMMES THEY WANT.  
NOT WHAT OTHERS FANCY MIGHT BE GOOD FOR THEM.

The B.B.C. announces that Sir Allan Powell, Chairman of the B.B.C., broadcast in the Home Service programme this (Monday) evening at 9.15 a talk entitled "The B.B.C. programme for the Forces". He said:-

"Yesterday the B.B.C. broadcast its first all-day programme to the Forces. At this moment I can be heard by home listeners as well, and I am sure they will forgive me if for a few minutes I speak not so much to them as to members of the Navy, Army and Air Forces on active service wherever they may be.

"When war broke out last September the B.B.C. had to come down abruptly to a single home programme. All listeners understand the reason for that - the fact that a broadcast programme can in certain conditions give guidance to enemy aircraft.

"We at the B.B.C. regretted the change as much as listeners did. But I am sure there is not a listener in the country who would have wished a single life to be risked in order that he or she might get a choice of programme.

"We made up our minds then that if our engineers could devise some way of putting a second programme in English on the air, it should be a programme for the Forces. Only those behind the scenes of wartime broadcasting can fully realise the great difficulties which had to be overcome, but by their ingenuity and hard work the engineers have won through, though as you may have gathered last night there are occasional factors which are beyond ordinary control, and I would like to pay the highest tribute to the engineers and to all those whose united efforts have made these programmes possible.

"Fortunately there are no set frontiers in broadcasting. Many of us at home will be able to hear pretty well the programmes which are meant for you, and many of you, the men and the women who are on active service, will now be able to tune in also to the home programme. We believe that listeners in the field and their families and friends at home will like to feel that they can share some of their listening together.

/But the

But the two programmes will be different from each other, and this programme for the Forces will in some ways be unlike any other programme which the B.B.C. has yet put upon the air. The reason for this is not that people change their tastes when they put on uniform.

We know very well that they don't. But the careful inquiries which have been made about the needs of this entirely new service, including the visit which Mr. Ogilvie, our Director-General, recently paid to France, of which he told you last week, have taught us something more; that is that listening conditions on active service are quite different from listening conditions at home.

It is the difference between listening in groups, if not in crowds, and listening alone or with your family at your own fireside. The B.B.C. is out to give the Forces what they want, and not what anyone else fancies might be good for them. That means, we believe, light entertainment and light music - and the news. There will be other items now and then - an outstanding talk, for example - a short play - pictures of what the different Forces are doing.

But let me say, at the beginning of this new service, that we want to make it your service, and we need you as partners in building up the sort of programmes that you can really enjoy. Many of us at Broadcasting House have sons or brothers serving with the Forces and no doubt we shall get some home truths from them, but for the most part we rely on you.

So listen to this new service and write freely to us - the B.B.C. London - the simplest address in the world. Tell us what you have liked and what you have disliked, and suggest items which you think would be enjoyable.

Unlike what happens elsewhere, you are all radio-free - free to turn on to any station in the world that your sets can pick up. Our aim at the B.B.C. is to make these programmes so attractive to you that they will constantly tempt you to turn your sets on to catch them.

And to all sailors, soldiers and airmen the B.B.C. send their cordial greetings and good wishes and the hope that in these programmes you will find many hours of relaxation and enjoyment.

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19/2/40 - No.19.

FRENCH OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE - EVENING.

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Paris, Monday, February 19th, 1940.

The following official communique was  
issued this evening from French G.H.Q.:

TO THE WEST OF THE SAAR A GERMAN DETACHMENT  
TRIED TO APPROACH ONE OF OUR POSTS AND WAS  
DRIVEN BACK WITH LOSSES.

RESUMED FIRING FROM THE CASEMATES ON THE BANKS  
OF THE RHINE.

(NOT to be quoted as an Air Ministry announcement)

CAPTAIN BALFOUR'S TOUR.  
7,000 MILES AIR TOUR TO MIDDLE EAST.

Captain Harold Balfour, M.P., Under Secretary of State for Air, landed in England yesterday at the conclusion of a ten-day tour of R.A.F. units in the Near East and Middle East. This involved flying a total distance of approximately seven thousand miles. The pre-arranged time-table and programme was fulfilled without trouble of any sort and to exact time.

Leaving England on Friday, February 9th, Captain Balfour flew in the same Imperial Airways aircraft as the Dominions Secretary, Mr. Eden.

With a following wind a direct flight from Marseilles to Malta was completed in four hours on Saturday, February 10th. Still helped by favourable winds and in bright sunshine, flying at 9,000 feet, Alexandria was reached the following morning by lunch time, and Cairo in the afternoon.

At dawn the next day, Monday, February 12th, Captain Balfour took off in a fast bomber type Royal Air Force aircraft for Iraq. As on the outward journey from England, the prevailing westerly wind helped to such an extent that after a call at Amman Transjordan, the chief Royal Air Force station in Iraq was reached by noon. For this part of the flight a height of 8,000 feet was held with a ground speed of more than 300 miles per hour. Navigation here is made easy today as compared to the time when the Royal Air Force first opened up the route, for there is always the Iraq oil Pipe-line from the Persian Gulf to its Mediterranean port to check position and direction.

Apart from inspection of the Service side of the Iraq chief station, calls were made on the officers' and mens' Social Clubs, the golf course, tennis courts, the popular Sailing Club and bathing beach on the nearby Lake, the Cinema and the kennels of the Royal Air Force pack of hounds. These, together with the usual football, cricket and hockey grounds, form some of the main amenities which go to sweeten life in this desert post some 60 miles from Baghdad which was visited during the evening for official calls.

On taking off at 10 a.m., Tuesday, February 13th, what had been a helpful wind became a head wind, and four hours were needed to reach Lydda, Palestine. During this flight, white cumulus clouds over the mountains of Judea were encountered up to 10,000 feet. Directly the aircraft entered them, in spite of blue sky and warm sun above, severe and rapid icing conditions were met with, the crystals forming instantly on windscreen and wings. However, after a few moments when the aircraft passed out of the clouds into clear air the ice melted.

From Lydda Captain Balfour motored to a Royal Air Force Station at which is located one of the units which played a leading part in air operations during the Palestine rebellion. Several members of this squadron gained awards for gallantry. In the improved conditions now obtaining in Palestine, travel is permitted almost without restriction where it was previously unsafe.

/At this

At this station golf is one of the most popular games. It is played on a 9-hole course laid out by the personnel. Sets of clubs have been provided out of sports funds and can be rented for a nominal charge and so far the men have been able to beat the officers, but the contest is not yet over. Small game shooting during the season is also popular with all ranks as an off-duty sport giving great exercise in walking up and down the foothills.

Tuesday night was spent in Jerusalem, and on Wednesday at 7.30 a.m. a two hours' flight to Cairo commenced, the Suez Canal being crossed after an hour and a half in cloudless blue sky with visibility up to 100 miles. The remainder of the day was spent on official work at Royal Air Force Headquarters.

At dawn on Wednesday, the 19th, accompanied by Air Chief Marshall Sir William Mitchell, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Middle East, the Under Secretary of State commenced an air visit to R.A.F. units in the western deserts of Egypt. It is at these stations that the high degree of ingenuity and adaptability attained by the Royal Air Force can be seen to the full.

Portable generating plants bring electric light to tents, messes and huts. Radio telephony and wireless communication with civilization is maintained from mobile transport vehicles. A new pattern issue of sand-proof, paraffin-fired, hot-water tank is proving popular and is filling a previous need. At one unit the cook-house is equipped with a large hot-plate system for keeping food hot made from soldering together old petrol tins.

Artistic talent has full opportunity at these stations and the walls of both messes and canteens are usually found embellished by the squadron artist with scenic effects, examples of the modern school, or in some cases with paintings, of alluring ladies in the "Kirchner" style.

Aircraft packing cases are eagerly sought after for conversation into extra huts, shelters or offices.

At such stations full use is made of available space in large and small aircraft flying out from and back to Headquarters with mails and supplies, so that married men with their families at one of the bases can pay occasional visits "home" while doing their turn of duty in the desert.

Health in the desert stations is surprisingly good, and many ranks express a preference for service at one of these localities where the small community is "on its own".

Followed some miles behind by severe sandstorms, reported by radio to be moving at 40 miles an hour and reducing visibility to 100 yards, Captain Balfour's return to Cairo was made before dusk.

On the morning of Friday, February 16th, the return

journey/

journey by Imperial Airways land aircraft was begun, but this time against the winds which were so welcome on the outward journey. After  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours Sollum was reached, where two young Royal Air Force pilots from one of the stations visited the previous day were found. They had landed after inspecting landing grounds to see how much of their identification was left after the recent severe dust storms. One, a flying officer, came from South Africa, the other, a young sergeant from Motherwell, Scotland, where his wife is living, hastily wrote a letter to her on leaves of a notebook while sitting in the cockpit and this letter will be delivered just a week-end after it was penned in the desert.

From Sollum a long flight of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  hours above cloud brought the aircraft to Malta, which was under grey skies and steady rain and where goodbye to sunshine was said.

On Saturday, February 17th, just a week after Malta had been reached on the outward trip, the flight to Marseilles via Tunis was carried out in  $6\frac{1}{2}$  hours, and England was reached to-day shortly after noon.

During the tour pilots and pupils under instruction from Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Rhodesia, as well as from home were met scattered throughout the Commands. News of the progress of the war, the Royal Air Force's achievements and progress in development of new types were subjects in which the greatest interest was shown. High morale, good spirits, cheerfulness under all conditions and keenness on technical efficiency were observed, without exception at all the places visited.

AIR MINISTRY.

19/2/40 - No.21.

The Air Ministry requests that the following important correction be made in the Weekly News Letter (Evening press) No.5 -

Please delete the word "first" in line 8 on page 8 and there insert the word "second". The sentence will then read "for this action he became the second air V.C."

AIR MINISTRY,  
WHITEHALL, S.W.I.