

Before Delivery at 7.30 p.m.

CAPTAIN BALFOUR AT WOOLWICH

Following are notes of a speech by Captain the Rt. Hon. H.H. Balfour, M.C., M.P., Under-Secretary of State for Air, at the Polytechnic, Woolwich, tonight (September 8) at 7.30 p.m.:-

The citizens of Woolwich invested more than £860,000 in the "Wings for Victory" campaign as their help for delivering shrewd blows at the heart of the German and Italian war machines.

Their investment has shown speedy dividends at frequent intervals. These are not paid half-yearly or quarterly, but rapidly and regularly as our bombing effort builds up. In due course, I hope we shall see these dividends paid, if not every night, at anyrate very nearly so.

Two months after Woolwich's "Wings for Victory" week we paid a visit to Krefeld, where our bomber force dropped five 4,000 lb bombs every minute at one time during the 50 minutes which the raid lasted. That night we sent out 700 bombers and 44 did not return, but because of your investment in response to the national appeal, it was Woolwich which made good half that night's losses in aircraft. The replacements you gave just a little later on did their bit in Berlin - and then on Berlin again; then on Munich, and so back to Berlin.

Naturally, Woolwich is a borough in which the Luftwaffe could have been expected to show interest and they have tried to invest something in a German air effort on Woolwich. The dividends they drew were small, and their capital shrunk, so that they could no longer send their bomber force against your town, and other towns, with the strength at which they had started their effort.

Compare for a moment the damage which was done to Krefeld and the damage done to Woolwich, for both these towns have about the same population. As a result of the raid on Krefeld more than half the city was destroyed and the industrial damage was severe. The Gas Works were heavily hit. The Electricity administration offices were gutted. Municipal and other Fire Stations were knocked out. Post Offices were rendered inoperative. The Tramway Depots were wiped out. The city of Krefeld could not continue functioning as an effective part of Germany's war industry with these essential points put out of action.

Woolwich has come through its ordeal and is triumphant. You "took it", but we have now given it back in full measure. Most of the war capacity of Krefeld is out, and no doubt, if it starts rearing its ugly head again it will get another bash. Krefeld citizens are terrified at the prospect which confronts them and the rest of Germany's war machine. You, today, are brave in spirit and firm in character, and as determined as ever that Woolwich shall continue to play its part in every way it is asked until the day of victory.

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The log books which are today handed over to the Royal Air Force will, at the end of the war, be returned to you entered up with the details of aircraft, the names of crews, and the operations on which each aeroplane has been engaged. They will be given to you to keep as a precious memory of how citizens of Britain were able to share directly in the wonderful achievements of the finest people in the world - those who are manning the aircraft of the Royal Air Force.

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AIR MINISTRY