

FOREIGN PRESS REVIEW

DAILY SURVEY OF WORLD COMMENT ON THE WAR

COMPILED FROM TELEGRAPHIC REPORTS RECEIVED BY THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

No. 30

18th February, 1940

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BOARD OF TRADE ANNOUNCEMENT

Import Licences for Hat Hoods

The Board of Trade announce that the Import Licensing Department are now prepared to consider applications to import limited quantities of hat hoods and capelines of wool felt and hat hoods of straw and similar materials from firms which imported these goods in the twelve months before the war.

Board of Trade.

18th February, 1940.

18/2/40. - No. 3.

FRENCH OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE (MORNING)

Paris, Sunday February 18th, 1940.

The following official communique was
issued today by the French G.H. :-

NOTHING OF IMPORTANCE TO REPORT.

-----oOo-----

18.2.40

No. 4.

MEM. TO SUB-EDITORS.

RELEASED FOR PUBLICATION AFTER
9.30 P.M. THIS (SUNDAY) EVENING.

As this script is issued in advance it is necessary to check it against the broadcast at 9.15 P.M. this (Sunday) evening on 391 or 449 metres.

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 (Sunday) evening at 9.15 a talk entitled "The B.B.C. programme for the Forces". He said:-

"Today the B.B.C. is broadcasting its first full twelve-hour 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, and I want in passing to pay them the highest tribute.

"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 two

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, on this first night of the 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. Most 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 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 free to listen. You can turn on to any station in the world that your sets can pick up. Our one 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 greetings and good wishes and the hope that in these programmes you will find many hours of relaxation and enjoyment.

THE FOLLOWING IS ISSUED TO THE
PRESS BY NAVAL AFFAIRS FOR SUCH
USE AS THEY MAY WISH TO MAKE OF IT.

A burly Scottish seaman, skipper of a fishing trawler which had been bombed and machine-gunned by German aircraft, was asked whether, if the German aeroplane had crashed into the sea after attacking his trawler, he would have picked up any survivors.

Being a Scot, and a seafaring man, he weighed his words carefully before he spoke. Then this man, who had so lately been attacked, replied: "I look at it this way. We are fighting this war for the right, and so we'd do the right and pick them up."

The crews of several German bombing craft have been saved after their planes have been shot down when engaged in raid against East Coast shipping. This may have happened to the very men who machine gunned the crews of the TEMPO in her lifeboats. The Germans have denied that such a thing could be possible, but confirmation has been received from Oslo that the men of the TEMPO, a Norwegian ship bombed and sunk in an air raid on February 3, were machine-gunned while in the lifeboats. The captain added that the Norwegian flag was plainly shown and that her colours were painted on the ship. The TEMPO was proceeding independently.

In reply to a question in the House of Commons on February 15 as to "whether in view of the murdering of unarmed seamen by German airmen, he would consider ceasing to send ships out to pick up these German airmen when the aeroplanes were brought down in the sea", Mr Churchill replied: "The ordinary instincts of humanity require the rescue from the sea of drowning men or castaways, should they be observed by his Majesty's ships in the course of their duties".

It may be difficult for men who indulge in these heartless attacks to believe this, but, as the Scottish trawler skipper said, "We are fighting this war for the right, and so we'd do the right and pick them up."

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

18/2/40. - No.6.

H. M. S. REPULSE.

It is customary in the British Navy to give leave to officers and men whenever possible, and as the exigencies of the Service did not allow of the ship's company of H.M.S. REPULSE to be given leave at Christmas, she is now in port for this purpose.

German propaganda claims this as proof that H.M.S. REPULSE was severely damaged at Scapa Flow when H.M.S. ROYAL OAK was sunk and from Hamburg they announce that "One can imagine how big the hole must have been".

Even a British warship cannot keep the seas for months with a hole in her, and since the ROYAL OAK was sunk at Scapa Flow in October of last year H.M.S. REPULSE has been busily engaged in tightening the Allied grip in Germany.

It would certainly be in the interest of Germany herself to know on what services units of the British Navy are engaged from time to time, and it is clearly the object of this and other German claims to draw such information from British sources.

NAVAL AFFAIRS

Training
18/2/40 - No.8.

ARMY OFFICERS' EMERGENCY RESERVE.

The War Office announce that unfounded statements have appeared recently in the Press which are liable to mislead those members of the Army Officers' Emergency Reserve who have not yet been informed of the result of their attendance before interview Boards.

Members of the Reserve who have yet to be informed as to their prospects are asked not to write to the War Office for information. By so doing they will only delay the machinery of classifying the results of the Boards. The Boards are expected to close shortly after the end of this month, and the bulk of notifications may be expected during March.

Any suggestion that all those who have not yet been notified have no prospect of employment is wholly inaccurate, although the employment of those in later middle age, or not in the highest medical grade, may be restricted.

WAR OFFICE,
WHITEHALL,
S. W. 1.

S/S ALTMARK: FOREIGN OFFICE STATEMENT.

Lord Halifax yesterday lodged a complaint with the Norwegian Minister against the failure of the Norwegian authorities to establish the presence of between three hundred and four hundred British prisoners on board the ALTMARK when she was searched at Bergen.

The Norwegian Minister was asked to obtain urgently an explanation of the circumstances which have given rise to this complaint.

He was informed that it appeared to H.M. Government that the Norwegian Government had in this matter failed in their duty as a neutral, and H.M. Government felt that the case against this particular ship was such that they were justified in pressing that the ALTMARK should be interned.

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1

S. S. ALTMARK: THE FACTS.

The German claim that the Altmark is an "unarmed merchant ship" has caused considerable astonishment in London.

The following facts are recalled in this connection.

1. There is no trace of any vessel called Altmark in Lloyds Register of Merchant Shipping.
2. On the other hand in the June, 1939, list of Coast and Ship Stations published by the International Union of Telegraphic and Wireless Communications of Berne - a body sponsored by the International Postal Union - the name of a German vessel named Altmark appears marked with crossed swords thus indicating that she was then classed as a warship.

The information from which this list is compiled is submitted to the International Union by the Government departments of the countries concerned.

3. In messages intercepted by British warships the Altmark used the call signal DTAK which is the call signal allotted to the Altmark listed by the International Union.
4. Leaving aside, therefore, such details as the fact that the Altmark was armed, that it acted as supply ship for the Graf von Spee, and that it had for several months been used as a prison ship for the German navy, it is for the German Government to explain, if it can, why the Altmark was described as a warship last June and last night in the broadcasts from Hamburg as "an innocent merchantman".

18/2/40 - No. 11.

FRENCH OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE (Evening).

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

After a very heavy preparation with trench mortars, the enemy attacked one of our outposts to the east of the Moselle. He failed entirely.

On other parts of the Front, patrol activity on either side.

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SIR ALLAN POWELL'S BROADCAST POSTPONED

The B.B.C regret that as, for technical reasons there was no transmission this evening after 7-40 on 342 metres, the speech which the Chairman of the B.B.C., Sir Allan Powell, was to have broadcast in the 9 p.m. News will not be given, but it is hoped that it will be broadcast tomorrow (Monday) evening in the nine o'clock News.

Note to Editors;

In view of this postponement, advance copies of Sir Allan Powell's broadcast which were issued through the Press Bureau today (Issue No. 4) should not be released until further notice.

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18/2/40 - No.13.

ALTMARK: OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE.

The following communication has been made by His Majesty's Government to the Norwegian Government with regard to the manner in which the Norwegian authorities dealt with the German ship, ALTMARK, while she was in Norwegian territorial waters: -

It was notorious that the ALTMARK had participated in depredations of the Graf Spee to which she had been acting as an auxiliary. We had the best of reasons, confirmed by the British subjects taken off the Graf Spee and previously imprisoned in the ALTMARK, for knowing that there were some three or four hundred British subjects aboard who had for long been living under intolerable conditions. The ALTMARK was also credibly believed to possess offensive armaments. The record of this ship must have been well known to the Norwegian Government and in the view of His Majesty's Government it was incumbent on the Norwegian authorities, when she entered Bergen and requested passage through Norwegian territorial waters, to subject her to a most careful search.

His Majesty's Government would be grateful for full particulars as to how this search was conducted and what facts were discovered. Reports received by His Majesty's Government indicated that the examination had been perfunctory, as shown by the fact that no prisoners had been discovered. So far as the facts were at present known to His Majesty's Government, it appeared to them that the Norwegian Government had failed in their duties as neutrals.

If they had in fact found British prisoners on board, what would they have done with them? Either they would have released them or they would at any rate have held them pending full examination of the position. His Majesty's Government felt, therefore, that they had every right to complain of the inaction of the Norwegian Government. As stated above, three hundred British subjects had been kept for weeks and months in close confinement, and if these prisoners had found their way to a camp in Germany, the Norwegian Government would have been responsible for the fate of these men.

Meanwhile the case against the ship itself was such that His Majesty's Government were justified in pressing that the ALTMARK should be interned.

FOREIGN OFFICE NEWS DEPT.

Corr:
20/2/40. No.16.

THE AIR MINISTRY REQUESTS THE FOLLOWING CORRECTION
TO THE WEEKLY NEWS LETTER (EVENING NEWSPAPERS) NO.5.
ISSUED ¹⁸20/2/40.

On page 10 (Visits to B.E.F. wounded in France), paragraph 1, please delete 'very serious' and insert 'dangerous'.

In paragraph 5, delete 'In serious cases' and insert 'In dangerous cases'.

AIR AFFAIRS.

NOT TO BE PUBLISHED BEFORE
THE EVENING NEWSPAPERS OF
WEDNESDAY, 21ST FEBRUARY, 1940.

AIR MINISTRY WEEKLY NEWS LETTER
(Evening Papers)

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OVER 80 DEGREES OF FROST.
REST ROOM "CRIME FUND"
"COME AND GET IT"
TOTEM POLE IN FRANCE
THE WARRANT OFFICER'S WAY
V.C.'s OF THE AIR
ADVANTAGES OF THE "SITZKRIEG"
VISITS TO B.A.F. WOUNDED IN FRANCE

Press & Publicity Branch,
Air Ministry,
King Charles Street,
Whitehall, S.W.1.

21st February, 1940.

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The Royal Air Force can produce its own weather records from the great frost. Three weeks ago, there was an attack by Fighter Command aircraft on a Heinkel, which was sighted at 25,000 feet off the north-east coast of Scotland. The temperature during the action was recorded as between 50 and 55 degrees below zero. In other words, there were at that height between 82 and 87 degrees of frost.

Fighter pilots suffer less under such conditions than might be supposed. Heat from the engine circulates through their small enclosed cabin, and by adjustment of a ventilator the pilot can keep the temperature inside at a comfortable level. The efficiency of British fighter aircraft under such severe conditions is proved by the fact that the raider in question was brought down.

REST ROOM "CRIME FUND".

The constant reiteration of the word "actually" so preyed on the nerves of a Squadron Leader at a Fighter Command station that he suggested a fine of sixpence for each use of this adverb.

The squadron agreed. The cash collected in a fine box was to be devoted to brightening up their rest room.

At the end of the first week they had enough to buy a new dart board. Next week there was hardly anything in the box. The squadron had been cured of "actually".

So they invented rest-room "crimes". There were fines of sixpence for using the floor instead of the ash-tray for cigarette ash, for leaving newspapers on chairs instead of on the table and for entering the room in dirty boots.

The radio set, for which pilots subscribed weekly sums, is naturally a precious instrument. Anyone who mishandles it must pay a fine of 1/-.

The rest room, where the pilots wait "at the ready", is now a cosy place. It is close to one of the hangars. The "fine fund" is increasing fast. The men hope soon to be able to buy a carpet, 15 feet by 20 feet. But if someone should "actually" make them a present of a carpet the fines would be liquidated by the throwing of a party.

"COME AND GET IT".

Every morning at 7 a.m. the bells of Big Ben, borne on the radio, shatter the stillness of Block E at a Royal Air Force Elementary Flying Training School.

As the last echo dies away a loud voice rings through the frosty freshness of the corridors with the

invitation "Come and get it". Pupil pilots still reposing in bed, or those who have already managed to crawl out, respond to this call with the same zeal that they show towards a pay parade.

Out of their rooms they pour, in various stages of undress. They swarm after a figure who precedes them with leisurely and measured gait. Silence falls on the assembled crowd as the figure mounts half-way up the stairs, where the occupants of both floors can hear, even if they cannot see.

When the silence is complete, the "Bishop" - to give him his nickname - begins to distribute the heavy correspondence of Block E.

In his hands are the pieces of paper which mean so much - letters with stamps affixed at all angles, and with mystic symbols written on the back - letters from home - letters which are received by eager hands and carried off tenderly to some secret place to be read in privacy - depressing envelopes with O.H.M.S. inscribed on them.

At last the sonorous tones cease. The end of the mail has been reached. With a cheery word to the disappointed and some chaff with the more fortunate ones, the Bishop comes down from the rostrum. He ceases to be the centre of attraction until his next morning call of "Come and Get it".

TOTEM POLE IN FRANCE.

In a French wood "somewhere in the R.A.F. area" there stands a perfect reproduction of a Red Indian totem pole. Visitors to the station, walking through the wood, stare in surprise at the pole, which has heads of chickens, wolves, bears and dogs, carved all over it from top to bottom.

The animals' faces are coloured, and the eyes gleam in a lifelike manner.

A Canadian officer serving with the R.A.F. has used his leisure hours to carve the pole which is regarded by his fellow-pilots as a lucky mascot. It is a reproduction from memory of the totem poles which the officer has seen in the Dominion's Indian country.

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We are told that the old-fashioned Sergeant Major is dead. In the Royal Air Force he never existed.

The methods of Warrant Officer X, disciplinary warrant officer at a Fighter Command station in England, are a good example of the iron hand in a well-padded glove. A warrant officer is the Royal Air Force equivalent of a Regimental Sergeant Major. He presides by tradition over the Sergeant's Mess, no matter what his relative seniority.

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the last years of the last war. He has seen service in both Iraq and Palestine, wears the Long Service and Good Conduct medal, has never been known to raise his voice, and looks both pleasant and contented.

He will always pull up his car and give an airman a lift, or have a word with the children as they make their way to school. But he knows the name of every man in the station, and just a little more about each of them than they guess.

His methods are to let it be known that he would like to see a thing done, and it generally is. But if an order is wilfully disobeyed, the offender looks two shades greener after his interview with the warrant officer than he did before.

In time of peace a good station warrant officer is highly desirable. In time of war, he is essential. The Squadron officers must spend all their time attending to flying duties. The Commanding Officer can give less time than usual to administration. The station warrant officer, by the use of tact and a vigorous personality, can do a great deal to fill the gap. That is why Mr. X's station is a happy one.

V.C.'s OF THE AIR.

Nineteen Victoria Crosses were won by British airmen during the Great War, 1914-1918. Below is the second of a series of records of the deeds which won the decoration.

2. Flight Sub-Lieutenant R.A.J. Warneford.

Flight Sub-Lieutenant Warneford's career in the Royal Flying Corps was a mixture of triumph and disaster - a series of vivid contrasts akin to the character of the man himself.

Warneford was born in Darjeeling, India, in 1891 - son of a civil engineer father. He was educated at the English College, Simla, and King Edward's Grammar School, Stratford-on-Avon. He joined the Royal Naval Air Service from the Royal Fusiliers in February, 1915.

He gained his flying "ticket" at Hendon, flying a Bristol "Box Kite" (Biplane). He celebrated the occasion by flying the machine round the aerodrome at a ceiling of 200 feet and landing it on his Officer Commanding's favourite aircraft. This incident was followed by Warneford's early transfer to France.

On June 7th, 1915, flying a Morane biplane, Warneford attacked a German Zeppelin at 6,000 feet between Ghent and

Bruges. He dropped six bombs from close range, and the last bomb hit the airship.

The force of the explosion turned his aircraft upside down. The engine cut out, and he was compelled to make a forced landing in enemy territory. After 15 minutes, he succeeded in restarting his engine single-handed - no mean feat in those days - and returned to his aerodrome. For this action he became the first air V.C.

Ten days later he was far behind the lines testing a Henri Farman aircraft when it broke up in the air. Warneford and his American passenger were killed. Warneford's body was brought across the Channel for burial in England.

ADVANTAGES OF THE "SITZKRIEG".

In the stress of the last war it was not uncommon for pilots to go to France after the minimum number of flying hours had been accomplished.

One of the advantages of the present "Sitzkrieg" is that it allows ample time for all the later stages in training and for the acquisition of that sense of team-work which is perhaps the most valuable part of an airman's equipment.

Some of the later training is devoted to bombing of targets from various heights, imaginary bombing of moving

targets on roads and railways (checked by a camera) diving on a fixed target and using a machine gun on it, formation flying, avoiding searchlights and anti-aircraft fire, and exercises with fighters to bring familiarity with the various methods of attack and counter-attack.

In fact there is a long and intensive preparation before any of these airmen take part, in normal conditions, in action against the enemy. First there have been qualifying classes; then comes the intermediate course, which mixes theory with practice; and finally the introduction to responsible duty with an active squadron.

Once they are with an active squadron, the men know well that incessant practice may soon become the real thing. As a rule, each new operational crew includes men who have already been in action. There have, of course, been occasions when an entirely new crew has met the enemy, and in each instance the result of the engagement has clearly shown that each member of the crew has mastered his job.

Action brings home to the newcomer, more forcibly than any lecture can, the fact that he is now one of a team and that the team does its best work only when each unit slips smoothly into place. Not until pilot, observer, gunner and wireless operator each knows the part he must play in the team has each of them become an airman.

VISITS TO B.A.F. WOUNDED IN FRANCE.

Like members of the B.E.F. men serving with the B.A.F. in France may now receive visits from their relatives in case of very serious * illness. *(See con. sheet)

The first of such visits took place during the second week of February.

The arrangements are broadly the same as those operating for the B.E.F., and have been decided upon by the Casualties Branch of the Air Ministry in agreement with the War Office. There is at present no special Royal Air Force scheme, because the hospitals in France which receive sick or wounded airmen are Army hospitals.

The facilities which are granted, subject, of course, to the war situation, are restricted to near relatives. Two visitors are allowed and two women may go together, but a woman should not travel alone. She must be accompanied by a man. *(See con. sheet)

In serious cases,* a telegram would be dispatched to the next of kin of the sick or wounded man. The recipient may present the telegram at a police station in order to obtain a pass to London. In London the Air Ministry will arrange for his journey to France, which will be by train and boat, not by air.

There will be special permits which will make passports unnecessary.

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On June 7th, 1915, flying a Morane biplane, Warneford attacked a German Zeppelin at 6,000 feet between Ghent and

Bruges. He dropped six bombs from close range, and the last bomb hit the airship.

The force of the explosion turned his aircraft upside down. The engine cut out, and he was compelled to make a forced landing in enemy territory. After 15 minutes, he succeeded in restarting his engine single-handed - no mean feat in those days - and returned to his aerodrome. For this action he became the first air V.C.

Ten days later he was far behind the lines testing a Henri Farman aircraft when it broke up in the air. Warneford and his American passenger were killed. Warneford's body was brought across the Channel for burial in England.

ADVANTAGES OF THE "SITZKRIEG".

In the stress of the last war it was not uncommon for pilots to go to France after the minimum number of flying hours had been accomplished.

One of the advantages of the present "Sitzkrieg" is that it allows ample time for all the later stages in training and for the acquisition of that sense of team-work which is perhaps the most valuable part of an airman's equipment.

Some of the later training is devoted to bombing of targets from various heights, imaginary bombing of moving

targets on roads and railways (checked by a camera) diving on a fixed target and using a machine gun on it, formation flying, avoiding searchlights and anti-aircraft fire, and exercises with fighters to bring familiarity with the various methods of attack and counter-attack.

In fact there is a long and intensive preparation before any of these airmen take part, in normal conditions, in action against the enemy. First there have been qualifying classes; then comes the intermediate course, which mixes theory with practice; and finally the introduction to responsible duty with an active squadron.

Once they are with an active squadron, the men know well that incessant practice may soon become the real thing. As a rule, each new operational crew includes men who have already been in action. There have, of course, been occasions when an entirely new crew has met the enemy, and in each instance the result of the engagement has clearly shown that each member of the crew has mastered his job.

Action brings home to the newcomer, more forcibly than any lecture can, the fact that he is now one of a team and that the team does its best work only when each unit slips smoothly into place. Not until pilot, observer, gunner and wireless operator each knows the part he must play in the team has each of them become an airman.

VISITS TO B.A.F. WOUNDED IN FRANCE.

Like members of the B.E.F. men serving with the B.A.F. in France may now receive visits from their relatives in case of very serious* illness. *(See con. sheet)

The first of such visits took place during the second week of February.

The arrangements are broadly the same as those operating for the B.E.F., and have been decided upon by the Casualties Branch of the Air Ministry in agreement with the War Office. There is at present no special Royal Air Force scheme, because the hospitals in France which receive sick or wounded airmen are Army hospitals.

The facilities which are granted, subject, of course, to the war situation, are restricted to near relatives. Two visitors are allowed and two women may go together, but a woman should not travel alone. She must be accompanied by a man. *(See con. sheet)

In serious cases,* a telegram would be dispatched to the next of kin of the sick or wounded man. The recipient may present the telegram at a police station in order to obtain a pass to London. In London the Air Ministry will arrange for his journey to France, which will be by train and boat, not by air.

There will be special permits which will make passports unnecessary.