

A NORWEGIAN FLIES HOME

Patrolling the Norwegian coast, peering down into his home country, flew a 28 year-old Norwegian.

At a certain place, he went down to 50 ft to have a look round.

"Some years ago," he said, "I used to travel on business to the little town I was looking for. It had a small harbour, and somehow or other I felt I just had to find the place.

"Presently I saw it, looking quiet and peaceful just as it used to. Some Norwegians, as I suppose they were, were lounging on the quay. Tied up at the dockside was a ship of about 1,500 tons. I opened the bomb doors, and flak started from all over the town. Right behind the ship was a factory where, I remember, they used to make fish oil. It was one of the biggest buildings in the town.

"My bombs hit the factory. We left it blazing as the oil caught fire. I hoped there were no Norwegians inside. It seems queer to go back to a town you know well, and drop a stick of bombs on its biggest building. But my job is to kill Germans, and I'll kill every one I can for what they have done to my country.

"Often, when I am flying over Norwegian towns, the people wave to me. I long to lean out of the aircraft and shout: 'I'm Norwegian too: cheer up ... Norway will be free again!'"

This pilot left Norway four years ago to go goldmining in South Africa, and has not been home since. Already he has bombed two ships off the Norwegian coast.

"Norwegians tell me," he said, "that they have a theory: in fact it's almost a religion, that if they are aboard a German ship which is bombed by the R.A.F., they will not get hurt. They believe that God will not allow the bombs to hurt them."

This pilot made a special request when he joined Coastal Command, to be allowed to fly over Norway and take part in raids. His knowledge of districts has been invaluable.

He says the Norwegians sometimes climb lampposts to wave at British aircraft. One friend of his who escaped from Stavanger, and who speaks very little English, surprised him by reciting practically the whole of Churchill's speech about "blood sweat, toil and tears." He had learnt it word for word.

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