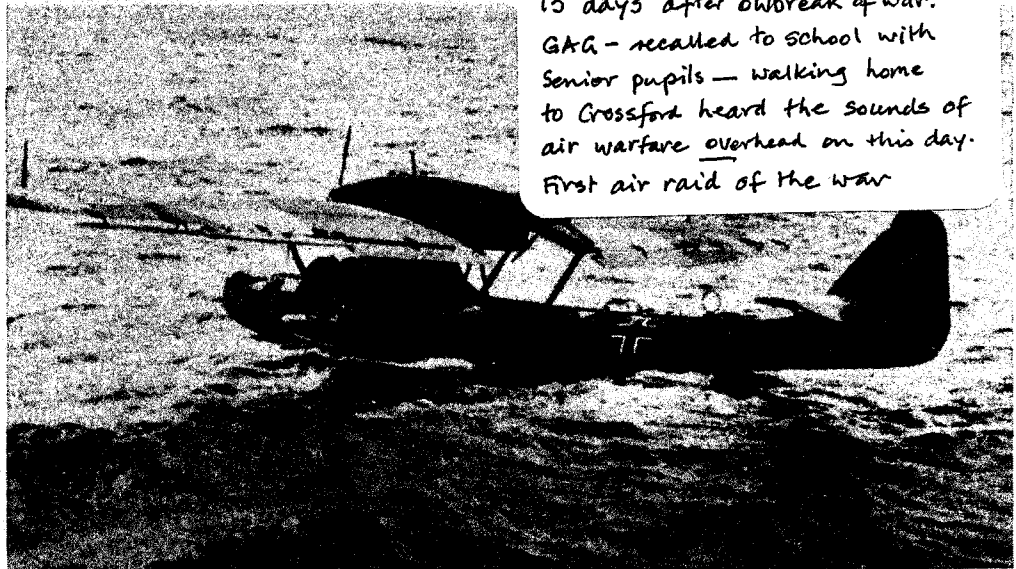


IN THE NORTH SEA.—A Dornier Do 18 flying-boat which was forced to alight during the attack on ships of the British Navy on October 9. The photograph was taken from a British destroyer as the German crew was attempting to launch a rubber boat. The light bombs carried by Do 18s could do little damage to ships of the Navy.



October 16, 1939 - one month + 13 days after outbreak of war. GAG - recalled to school with Senior pupils - walking home to Crossford heard the sounds of air warfare overhead on this day. First air raid of the war

Air Raids Over Britain

SCOTLAND suffered Great Britain's first air raid of the War on Oct. 16. About 14 German bombers, Dornier Do 215s and Heinkel He 111Ks, both with two 1,150 h.p. Daimler-Benz DB 601 motors, attacked ships of the Royal Navy in the Firth of Forth and attempted to destroy the Forth Bridge. Little damage was done, although three Naval officers and twelve men were killed and two officers and 42 men were wounded, eleven seriously. Four civilians were injured, two men by bullets from machine guns, two women by fragments of anti-aircraft shells.

Four of the bombers, two Dornier Do 215s and two Heinkel He 111Ks, were shot down—three by defending Supermarine Spitfire and Gloster Gladiator fighters of the Auxiliary Air Force and one by anti-aircraft fire. Two fell in the sea, two on land. Several other German aeroplanes were damaged and may not have survived the 500-miles' crossing of the North Sea back to Germany. Only one of the fighters was hit. An armour-piercing bullet went through the cowling of a Gladiator. A Gladiator was also fired at by a cruiser in a wild fit of enthusiasm.

The following is the official communiqué issued by the Admiralty, Air Ministry and Ministry for Home Security:—

"To-day, Oct. 16, between 09.00 hrs. and 13.30 hrs., several German aircraft reconnoitred Rosyth."

[These were probably reconnaissance versions of the Dornier Do 17 bomber.]

"This afternoon at about 14.30 hrs. a series of bombing raids began. They were directed at ships lying in the Forth and were made by about a dozen machines. All batteries opened fire upon the raiders and the Royal Air Force fighter squadrons ascended to engage them.

"No serious damage was done to any of His Majesty's ships. One bomb glanced off the cruiser *Southampton* (9,100 tons),

causing slight damage near her bow and sank the Admiral's barge and a pinnace which were moored empty alongside. This was the first hit upon a British ship which German aircraft have made during the War.

"There were casualties on board the *Southampton* and on board the cruiser *Edinburgh* (10,000 tons) from splinters. Another bomb fell near the destroyer *Mohawk* (1,870 tons), which was returning to harbour from convoy escort. The bomb burst on the water and its splinters caused 25 casualties to the men on the deck of the destroyer. Only superficial damage was caused to the vessel, which, like the others, is ready for sea.

"On the other hand, four bombers at least out of 12 or 14 were brought down, three of them by fighters of the Royal Air Force.

"The first contact between Royal Air Force aircraft and the enemy raiders took place off May Island, at the entrance to the Firth of Forth, at 14.35 hrs., where two enemy aircraft were intercepted. They were driven down by our aircraft from 4,000 ft. to within a few feet of the water and chased out to sea. Another enemy aircraft was engaged 10 minutes later over Dalkeith. It fell in flames into the sea.

"Within a quarter of an hour a sharp combat took place off Crail and a second raider crashed into the sea. A third German aircraft was destroyed in the pursuit.

"Two German aviators have been rescued by one of our destroyers, of whom one has since died."

One of the Heinkels was hit and one motor put out of action. With the VDM aircrew feathered the machine hedge-hopped from Kirkliston to Dunbar below the level of church steeples, pursued by a British fighter. The Heinkel managed to escape out to sea and may have survived the crossing.

Three of the crew of four were rescued from one machine shot down in the Firth. All were injured and one died later.

A British civil-type aeroplane, a D.H. Tiger Moth, strayed into the middle of the scrap and was shot at by a German, but got off.

In his statement in the House of Commons on Oct. 17 Mr. Chamberlain said that the raid was made by twelve or possibly



ABANDONING SHIP.—Two of the crew of the Do 18 in their boat after it had broken adrift during launching from a sponson. The other two of the crew had to swim to the destroyer. The flying-boat shows no sign of damage, so it may have been forced down by motor trouble rather than by anti-aircraft fire. The Do 18 was sunk by the destroyer after the crew were taken off.

D3



more aeroplanes in waves of two or three at a time. The damage to ships was slight and both the *Southampton* and *Edinburgh* were ready for sea. Because the attack was local and appeared to be developing only on a small scale and because the defences were fully ready, air-raid warnings were not issued. They would have caused dislocation and inconvenience over a wide area.

There were several enemy reconnaissance flights and raids the next day and air-raid warnings were sounded from the Firth of Forth down to some parts of Kent. The raids were made on Scapa Flow and the Orkneys, the first attack being at 10.30 hrs. on Scapa Flow by four enemy aeroplanes. Two bombs fell near H.M.S. *Iron Duke* and caused some damage, but there were no casualties. One enemy machine was shot down either by ship or shore guns and another was probably damaged.

The *Iron Duke* is the last survivor of the Grand Fleet of 1914 and was demilitarised under the London Naval Treaty of 1930. She has since been used as a depot training ship.

The second attack was made over the Orkneys from about 12.30 to 14.30 hrs. by two formations of six and four aeroplanes. No damage was done and there were no casualties. One raider was shot down. The Orkney raiders also attacked the mail and passenger steamer *St. Ola*, plying between Scapa and Thurso, but without success. Two more bombs were dropped harmlessly near a Belgian trawler in the Pentland Firth.

Following the reports from the Observer Corps of enemy air reconnaissance along the East Coast, which caused all the warning sirens to wail, the Air Ministry announced that two German aircraft were seen later off the North-East coast and brought down by R.A.F. fighters. The crew of one machine was rescued.

More reconnaissance flights were made on Scapa Flow on Oct. 18, when enemy aircraft were seen approaching from the direction of Kirkwall and Duncansby Head. No bombs were dropped and no aircraft officially accounted for.

According to eye-witness accounts, the Scots would seem to have marvellous eyesight. A large raider was seen over Kirkwall flying at a great height, estimated at 25,000 ft., and when attacked by heavy anti-aircraft fire was seen to "lurch" badly. Unconfirmed reports later said this machine was forced down off the Scottish mainland.

People at Wick said they heard two flights of enemy aircraft over Pentland Firth during the morning and could see anti-aircraft shells bursting high in the sky, but could not see the machines. How they knew they were "enemy" aeroplanes is just one of those things known only to "eye-witnesses."

Later in the day a second alarm was sounded in Kirkwall, making eight in two days, and it was reported that five raiders were on their way. They failed to appear.

Mr. Chamberlain, in his weekly report on the progress of the War to the House of Commons, said that in the raids of Oct. 17 and 18 eight German machines had been destroyed without the loss of a single British aeroplane. Not more than 30 German machines had taken part. The Germans admitted the loss of one machine only.

Mr. Chamberlain repeated that neither the *Hood* nor the *Repulse*, nor any other capital ship, had been damaged. These are the latest German claims.

Daylight reconnaissance flights were made by the R.A.F. over Western and Northern Germany on Oct. 16. One machine did not return.

According to a report from Amsterdam, a British machine was forced down by a German pursuit aeroplane near Lingen, North-West Germany, close to the Dutch frontier. The British machine is said to have struck a farm building and to have caught fire. The crew of three, one of whom had been wounded by machine-gun fire, was rescued.

Conflicting reports have been made of air raids on the German naval base at Emden on Oct. 17. Gunfire and heavy explosions were heard in Dutch frontier villages and the reports ranged from R.A.F. attacks, which were denied by the Air Ministry, to French raids, also denied in Paris, and to another case of German "jitters." Later reports would seem to confirm the "jitter" theory, as Dutch machines on frontier patrol were said to have been fired on by German anti-aircraft guns.

Later reports and photographs show that the air attack on a squadron of the Royal Navy in the North Sea on Oct. 9 was not confined to flying-boats, as indicated at first. Two of the German machines which made forced landings in Denmark after the action were Heinkel He 111K two-motor bombers. Other photographs showed that Dornier Do 18 two-motor flying-boats took part in the raid and that one at least was forced to alight on the sea. The crew was taken off by a British destroyer and the flying-boat sunk by gunfire.

Apparently the Germans have a healthy regard for the anti-aircraft guns of the Fleet. Although the first attacks were made from fairly low, successive attacks got higher and higher until the bombs were being dropped from more than 20,000 ft. As the ships were zig-zagging at high speed this accounts for the poor marksmanship of the attackers. Low bombing attacks pressed home with heavy bombs, and with torpedoes dropped by aeroplanes, have yet to be experienced by the Navy. Such tactics would be expensive in aeroplanes, but might be even more expensive for a Navy.

A report from Norway on Oct. 16 said that fishermen had seen a running fight between three warships and several aeroplanes, believed to be British, and a German warship, which was sunk.

Next day, Oct. 17, reports from Holland spoke of an engagement between six ships of the British Navy and twelve German aeroplanes, just outside the Netherlands territorial waters. Several aeroplanes were shot down.

Two German airmen, whose reconnaissance machine had been shot down in the North Sea on Oct. 17, landed at Whitby in a rubber dinghy on Oct. 20. The other two members of the crew had died in the machine. The Germans were taken to hospital and later interned.

Further reconnaissance flights near the Firth of Forth were made by German aeroplanes on Oct. 20. British fighters took off but did not make contact with the enemy. The German aeroplanes were probably reconnaissance versions of the Dornier Do. 17 two-motor bomber. German reconnaissance aeroplanes approached points on the East Coast again on Oct. 21 and 22. They were driven off. One German machine was shot down on Oct. 22. There were no British casualties.

Two German airmen killed in the raid on the Firth of Forth, Under-officer Seydel and Observer Schleicher, were buried with military honours at Portobello on Oct. 20. There were wreaths from the squadron of the R.A.F. with whom they had fought. The padre paid tribute to the faithfulness in duty "of those who had fought fairly and died bravely." Six other German airmen who took part in the raid are still in hospital.

Twelve German flying-boats, probably Dornier Do. 18s again, attacked a convoy of British merchant ships on Oct. 21. The escorting ships met them with anti-aircraft fire and shore-based fighters engaged the attackers, four of which were shot down. Eight German airmen, some of them badly injured, were rescued from the sea and from rubber dinghies and brought to shore by fishing boats.



DEFORESTATION.
—The wreckage of a Heinkel He 111K short-nose bomber which crashed in a forest in Denmark after the raid on British warships on Oct. 9.