

LOVELY FUNERAL OF SIX ENGLISH AVIATORS IN VADUM

VICTIMS OF 15 OCTOBER DECENTLY BROUGHT TO REST.

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Yesterday in the Vadum churchyard six British Aviators, killed on October 15 1944, were buried. As we have already stated the Vadum community had looked after the English being disinterred and put into coffins, and yesterday they were given a decent funeral. The coffins were wrapped up in the Union Jack and there were a great many wreaths, signed among others by Vadum Consistory. There was a guard of honour at the tomb with the British and the Danish colours carried by eight representatives of the Royal Dragoons in Aalborg. On the church's flagpost the British and Danish colours were on half mast, swaying slightly in the light breeze. Among the many present Policemaster Bach was seen in dress uniform.

YOU MET WITH A BEAUTIFUL DEATH.

After the hymn "Praise the Lord" the Vadum rector, pastor N. Moeller, preached. A provisional pulpit had been erected with a microphone put up, as a big crowd had assembled for the ceremony. Pastor Moeller began with a verse out of the hymn "Sleep well in Schleswig's soil" which runs: "Beautiful is the death you met with, there is none more beautiful". We can quote these words with regard to the English Aviators. There has been a certain prejudice against this hymn - it has been said there could never be anything beautiful about a man's death amidst the turmoil of combat, not even when he dies for his country. Pastor Moeller then quoted once more a verse from Grundtvig's hymn: "Alone because no loving hand closed the glassy eyes, no friend shook your hand nor heard the last sighs". The parson said the English Aviators had yet met with a beautiful death because they had died in fighting for their country. But they had not only fought for England, all of them, the first four buried here, the next fourteen and now these last six, but also for our country, her liberty, her happiness. So it is quite the right thing to do for us to take care that they are buried in holy soil, to put a monumental stone above them and ornament their tombs. These six Aviators must be put on the same level with the men we had to sacrifice and with the South-Jylland-men who had to give their life for the Reunion. The aviators lying here had a share in the improving of friendship between Denmark and England. May God be with their relatives in the time of sorrow and may He let them remember that their dear ones were killed in the fight for Liberty and Democracy.

The hymn "Nearer my God to Thee" was sung and pastor Munster of Bierstedt preached. He explained the motives behind this ceremony: we have come here because we must respect human beings and death - a double feeling lacking in ours and that of those six men common foe to such an incomprehensible degree. They thought the inanimate bodies of human beings could just be thrown down - we feel that our thousand years old culture bids to give these men a funeral in holy soil. And there is something else behind that. They are strangers to us, but not indifferent, because they also fought for our cause. The parson then spoke of the only man who had survived the accident - Bill. He got in touch with the Danish Underground Movement and came to Danish homes. He explained here that one motor got out of action when they came over Danish territory but that they decided to go on. Later on the aeroplane was hit by a shell-splinter and nose-dived.

There is a further reason for our coming here today: we thank the English people in doing so. When England killed the Nazi dragon the Angel of peace came to Denmark. We got back once more Justice, truth and liberty. And we have learned what deities they are during these years. No greater misery can befall a nation than to hear lies from the official authorities all day, to meet injustice everywhere and to feel the yoke press its shoulders. We will say with our King when he opened the Parliament and said to General Dewing: "We thank you that you came." We thank and honour you who staked their life and we also thank the living. But at the same time we will remember another royal saying: we will say with King Christian being celebrated on his 25 years jubilee: "the thanksgiving must be addressed higher up". We will thank God for what he did for our nation.

#### ENGLISH THANKS FOR THE CELEBRATION.

A hymn was followed by the throwing of earth by pastor Moeller and the flags were lowered above the tomb. Then the British Captain Lee expressed his deep gratitude: "I am very sorry I cannot speak Danish. I am very much moved by the exceedingly beautiful celebration we have witnessed here". Captain Lee proposed a thanksgiving for the Danes' loyalty, faithfulness and hospitality and said: "I know it will be a consolation for these airmen's relatives to know what you did for them and I am very anxious to tell them about it. I would love to send them a photo, so that they could see how many men are here. I specially want to thank the Community Board and the local Underground Movement which made this funeral possible".

A resume of the speech was translated and school-master Waxm spoke in English:

" Because I am one of the few who spoke to the only surviving member of the air crew of Canadian and English heroes and because here are representatives of the glorious British Army I will deliver my greetings to England in the English language. Bill Parks was lying in my home that ghastly night of 15 October. When he understood that his comrades were dead he said: 'We were all very good pals; I will never forget any of them. You must not hand me over to German War Captivity; I will go back to England and tell them about my comrades'. And that is apparently how it turned out. We, the residents of this small country town will never forget these six gallant soldiers".

Towards the end the congregation sang "Our God is a strong castle" and the celebration was over. There had not been a single cloud in the skies during the whole ceremony and there was a strange contrast between the beautiful life-giving summer weather and the seriousness and deep musing caused in many a heart by the idea of six young men having died in a country far away from their own.



At the British Airmen's Funeral at Vadum Churchyard Sunday 3 June, 1945.

Hymns sung:

1. Praise the Lord the King of Heaven.
2. Hearer my God to Thee.
3. Like dew upon beaten fields Life's word falls on Christian sick-beds in heaven where hope grows/and consolation from death is it's harvest which makes vanish all bitterness.

Like the sun is sinking behind a little wood in the skyblue sea, on a summer evening when birds are softly twittering/so sweetly smiling the soul goes to rest, feeling that with His Word our God is living amongst us.

Like our body shivers in the dawn of a summer day while the morning star shines and praises the new day/while the summer day dawns amidst white morning clouds - so goes with the light of life our last shiver.

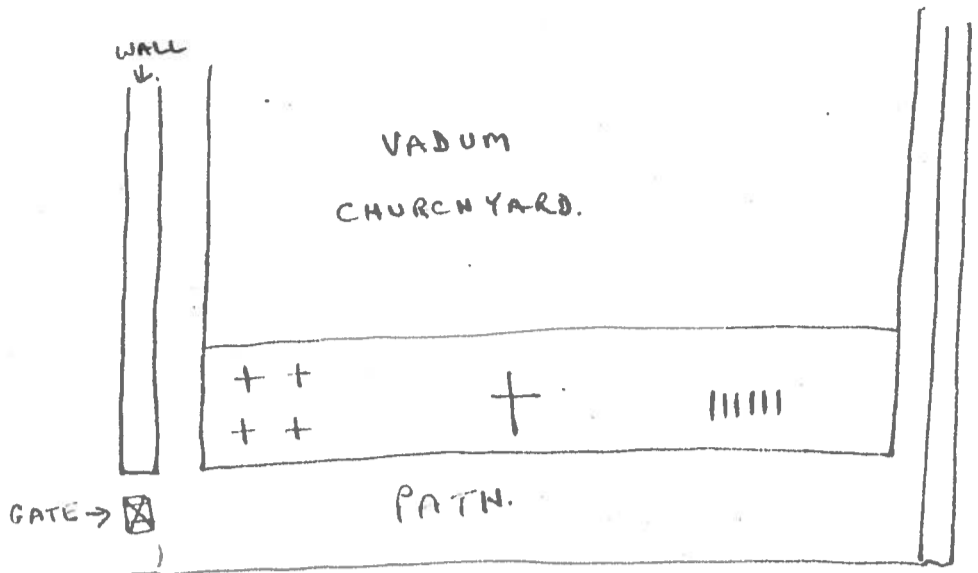
4. Christ has risen from the dead in the dawn of Easter morning.  
Christ has risen from the dead, our sin has been expiated.  
Christ has risen from the dead, in heaven we will meet Him.

Thereafter in full pomp his congregation sings loud and happily:

Honour to God in Heaven!

Translation: HILDE ESKERAM.

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