

It is argued by the advocates of gliding that the pilot becomes very much more "one with the elements." That is true. It is also true that every landing is a "dead stick" landing. But there is all the world of difference between landing a high-efficiency glider, carrying some 4-5 pounds per square foot of wing area, and landing a modern military aeroplane, loaded at more than 20 pounds per square foot and having its undercarriage down and very likely wing flaps "on." If one wants an analogy, one may compare gliding and power-driven flight on high-power aircraft with sailing a light dinghy and driving a destroyer through a rough sea. The similarity is not much greater than that.

But apart from all this, there is the question of finding room in this tiny country of ours for a lot of gliders. Even if one grants that cloud soaring need not be practised, and that the gliders would be mostly making short hops from hillsides, the prospect is not very attractive when it is remembered that service aircraft may at any moment be called out in any part of the country and heading in all sorts of different directions.

One of the reasons for the Empire Training Scheme is that the space available for aerodromes, and the volume of sky surrounding that space, is already getting overcrowded. To add to the congestion by introducing thousands of gliders is out of the question.

Much as one sympathises with the youths who would love the opportunity, one cannot help feeling that the Air Ministry has acted wisely in abandoning gliding for the present.

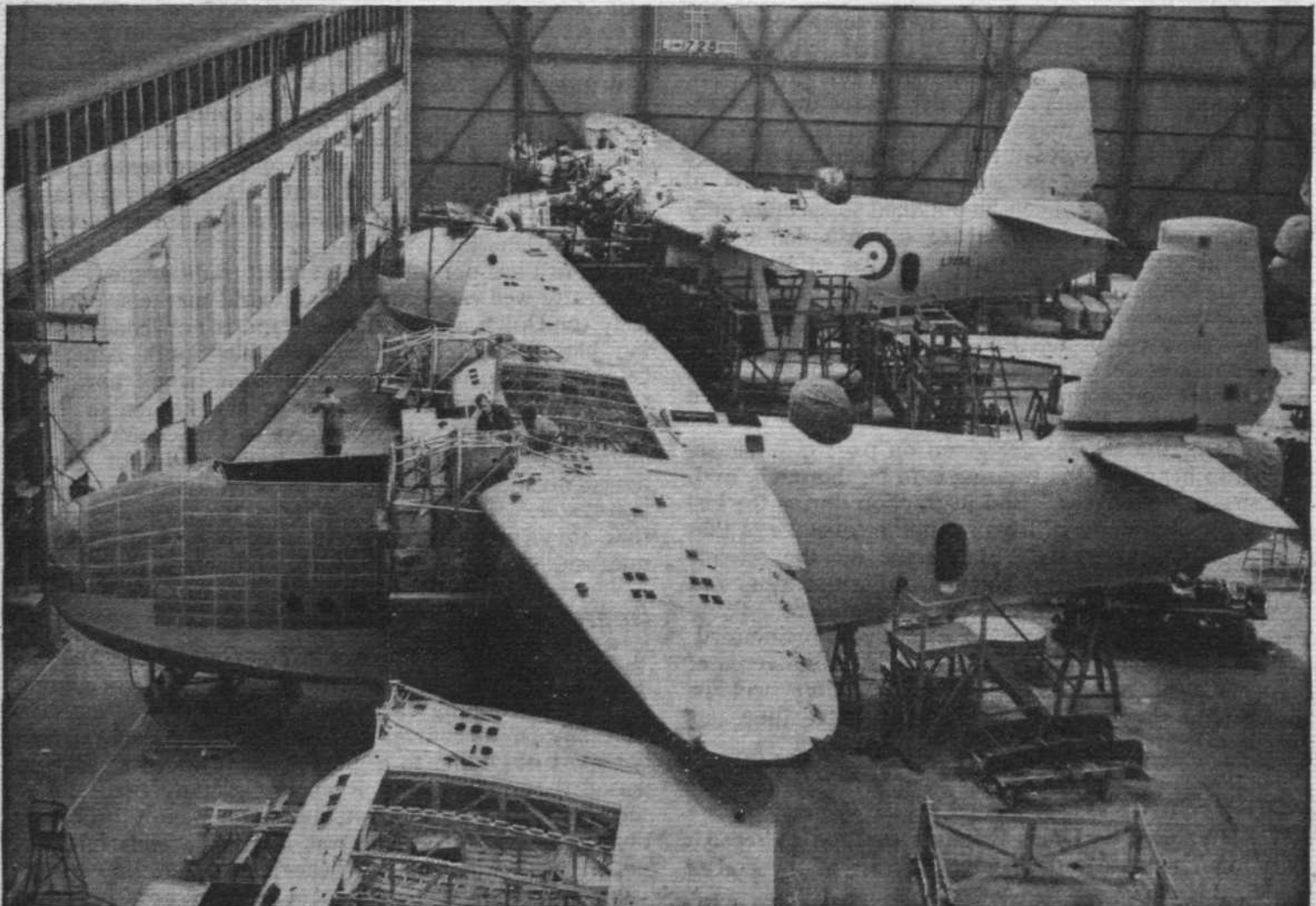
There are other and more practical ways in which the youth of the country can be given an opportunity to prepare itself for doing its share in adding to the growing strength of the R.A.F.

"Citadelle Volante"

THE Americans have some big four-engined Boeing bombers armed with five large-bore manually trained machine guns, and have named them "Flying Fortresses." The French, too, dubbed one of their first turret-equipped bombers the *Citadelle Volante*. But the Wellington, which has a more effective armament than any bomber in the world, is just "the good old Wellington."

The Wellingtons which gave such a fine account of themselves at Heligoland were equipped with Nash and Thompson power-driven gun turrets, which are at once the envy and despair of the German air gunners. There is a pair of Brownings in the nose, another two in the tail, and a further brace in a "dustbin" beneath the fuselage. This means that the armament which can be brought to bear astern is equivalent, if not superior to, that normally carried by the Messerschmitt Me 109, and that is why the pilots of the Schumaker Squadron expressed their respect for the Wellingtons. It also means that the gunners in a Wellington or a Whitley can take on an Me 109 more or less on equal terms, and are entitled to regard themselves as doing the work of a fighter pilot. But they must be even braver, for it is not for them to break off the combat when bullets begin tearing through their Perspex; nor have they the comforting mass of an engine between them and the enemy's fire.

So while we have tail turrets we shall need brave men. Cool men. Dead shots. Men who like a fight and can stand their ground. We must continue to give them the best guns and the quickest, smoothest working turrets.



PATROL BOATS: Lerwick high-speed long-range flying boats in production at the Saunders Roe works. They are fitted with two Bristol Hercules sleeve-valve engines and have gun turrets in the bow, approximately amidships and in the stern. This picture contravenes several Air Ministry regulations, but has been passed by the Censor.