

THE SAD RETURN:

The Germans paid tribute from the heart to the Manchester United victims whose bodies were flown back from Munich. On the previous night twenty-one coffins were put into the Viscount aircraft that was to take them home. The police of Munich formed the Guard of Honour. Barely a week had passed since the carefree men who made up a great football team flew into Belgrade. Now members of the German Football Association, Airport Officials, and Municipal Authorities said their tragic goodbye. Most abruptly fate closed the door of life on men whose mission it was to bring pleasure to millions.

Already arrived at London Airport from Munich were the two hostesses of the crashed airliner, Captain James Thain (wearing moustache) and the radio operator, all fortunate to be alive but still haunted by the horror they went through. Into Liverpool Street Station, came two who survived the disaster unharmed, Harry Gregg, goalkeeper, Billy Foulkes, accompanied by Assistant-Manager Jim Murphy. Naturally many people pressed to congratulate them on their survival, but understandably the men's only wish now was to catch the train home.

Perhaps the most moving scene of all was at Ringway Airport, when the Viscount Airliner touched down. The flight from Munich was over; the bodies of seventeen men, all abundantly full of life only a few days before, were back in Manchester. They had left the city to play, or report or watch a game of football. The tributes of their friends in Germany - and Manchester United had made friends all over Europe - bore witness to the appalling fate that snatched from them their dearest possession, life itself. Four bodies, of the twenty-one that came from Munich, had been taken off at London Airport. Sporting journalists and the incomparable Manchester United have suffered grievous loss.

Great players and writers who made the sport live for millions at home, were borne in the slow cortage. Along the route to the Club Ground, 100,000 people stood in homage. Man hath but a little time here below. For these poor men even that little was begrudged them and curtailed. Why, it is no use to ask, The Nation, like Manchester, can only Mourn.....