

Brigadier Morgan's decision to exceed his instructions and move his forces forward to the support of the Norwegians was in the circumstances entirely justified.

Owing to a misunderstanding the Norwegian Commander-in-Chief was under the impression that Brigadier Morgan's force was under his orders. Brigadier Morgan cannot be in any way blamed therefore for deciding to place himself under the orders of the Norwegian C. in C., and once having done so for employing his force in accordance with those orders.

61. Desire to carry out these orders may, however, have led him to adopt tactics which were not the best calculated to enable his force to provide the strongest support to the Norwegians or to give it the best chance of stopping the German advance. The Norwegian Army was withdrawing in the face of a rapid German advance. As our Manual on the subject teaches (Mil. Training Pamphlet No. 23, Part VI Withdrawal, Sec. 2) "the first step in the process of withdrawal will be the establishment of fresh troops on a position in the rear of those troops which are in contact with the enemy and through which the latter can retire. This position should be at such a distance that the troops occupying it will be given time to devise an effective defence before the position is reached by the enemy."

62. A more effective solution of the problem therefore would have been the establishment of the Brigade on a selected naturally strong position some distance in rear of the Norwegians where they would have had time to dig in and organise a proper defence. Such a position might well have enabled the Brigade, ill equipped as it was, with the aid of proper demolitions, to obtain protection against the attacks of Armoured Fighting Vehicles and to get sufficient cover to withstand bombardment and to hold off infantry attacks for a prolonged period. Behind such a position the Norwegians would have had a better opportunity to re-organise than was in fact ever given them.

63. After the arrival of Major-General Paget, I have no detailed comments to make on these operations except to say that there is abundant evidence to show that they were conducted with great skill and energy on the part of General Paget. The fact that it was possible to withdraw this force over a distance of 100 miles under the conditions which have been described in this narrative, to fight five rearguard actions and finally to re-embark without enemy interference is in itself a magnificent tribute to the skilled and determined leadership not only of the Commander but also of the subordinate commanders, notably Brigadier Kent Lemon, commanding 15th Infantry Brigade and Lieut.-Colonel Robinson, commanding 1 Green Howards, and also to the endurance, discipline and fighting qualities of the troops engaged: also to the fine work of the Royal Engineers in the destruction of communications which successfully delayed the enemy for the required period.

PART IV.

CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS.

64. I now proceed to set down what are, in my opinion, the salient lessons to be learned from the operations which have terminated with the evacuation of Central Norway.

65. *Co-operation with the Royal Navy.*

I am able to report with confidence that the co-operation between the Navy, including the Fleet Air Arm, and the Army has been of the highest standard possible.

Every officer to whom I have spoken is full of praises of the efficiency, the tireless devotion to duty and the complete disregard of personal safety of all ranks of the Navy with whom they came in contact.

The whole of the forces operating in Norway fully realise the deep debt of gratitude they owe to their sister service both for the support the latter gave them ashore and for the efficiency with which they were withdrawn at the end.

The arrival of the carriers of the Fleet Air Arm off the coast, and the operation of the Skuas and Rocs, gave a respite from bombing to the ports, especially Namsos, which was invaluable. The Germans would not face our Fleet Air Arm fighters which were handled with a boldness that was an inspiration to the troops who watched their manoeuvres from the ground.

Similarly the anti-aircraft cruisers and sloops, though continuously and heavily bombed themselves, kept station in the confined waters of the Fjords at the ports until their ammunition was exhausted and, by doing so, so affected the accuracy of the enemy bombing with their fire that the damage done whilst they were present was much reduced.

No words of mine can adequately express the gratitude and admiration I feel for the skill in planning and efficiency in execution of the tasks which the Navy have carried out in support of the forces in Norway.

66. *Armies and Air Support.*

The first outstanding lesson of these operations has been the vital need for air support for a modern army.

As in Poland, the Germans have used their air force in the closest co-operation with their military forces. They have been employed in three main ways:—

- (a) In direct support of their forward troops.
- (b) To attack H.Q. and communications.
- (c) To attack Base areas and aerodromes.

In the case of (a) high level bombing has been employed, but in addition low level bombing with small bombs from as low as 400 feet and the machine gunning of individual posts has been undertaken continuously.

Headquarters have been unceasingly bombed. It is not known whether the position of these was indicated by spies or German sympathisers who were working behind our lines, or by direction-finding of the wireless sets operating near these headquarters. The effect of this bombing on the conduct of operations is always serious and may easily be disastrous. The effect on the Lines of Communication was not serious. Craters were quickly filled and rails repaired. Such bombing is of a harassing value only. Unchecked bombing of communications will undoubtedly make supply and maintenance very difficult but it is infinitely less effective than direct attacks on troops using those communications.

The attack on the Bases was continuous and persistent. During the course of one day's bombing of Åndalsnes, which commenced at