

creation of a road control organisation under the Quarter-Master-General, on the lines of that in use in the French Army, had already been submitted, but unfortunately too late for more than preliminary results to be achieved.

Security.

67. Akin to the foregoing problem is that of security. Until 10th May the work of the Intelligence Service in this respect had been heavy and constant, but when operations began, it assumed almost unmanageable proportions. This was due to the opening of the Belgian frontier, the mass movement of refugees, and the arrival of enemy saboteurs and agents by parachute.

The troops, however, soon became aware of the danger and realised the importance of security measures and the paramount need for discretion.

Supply and Transport.

68. As has been already indicated in this Despatch, the operations showed clearly how complete reliance cannot be placed on any one channel of movement or maintenance. Enemy action by mobile forces or by air may put important road or railway routes out of action for hours or days at a time, or even completely sever communications with the bases.

The proportion of reserves held forward, and under load, on rail or on lorry, must therefore be high, despite the resultant extravagance in transport. The War Office had provided Lines of Communication Railhead Companies, R.A.S.C., to operate in the event of a railhead being out of action for a time, and these units fully justified their existence.

During the final phases of the operations, the civilian employees of the French and Belgian railways were often not to be found, and the Railway Operating Companies, R.E., had to take over the working of the trains at short notice.

The change of bases made necessary after 20th May was a fine example of quick decision, flexible administration, and the power of the administrative staffs at home and in France to improvise at short notice.

The Behaviour of the Troops.

69. Most important of all, the Campaign has proved beyond doubt that the British Soldier has once again deserved well of his country. The troops under my command, whatever their category, displayed those virtues of steadiness, patience, courage and endurance for which their corps and regiments have long been famous.

In addition to the fighting troops, the rearward units, as well as the three divisions sent to France for pioneer duties, all found themselves, at one time or another, engaged with the enemy although often incompletely trained and short of the proper complement of weapons.

Time and again, the operations proved the vital importance of the good junior leader, who has learned to encourage, by his example, the men whom he leads, and whose first care is the well-being of the troops placed under his command. Firm discipline, physical fitness, efficiency in marching and digging, and skill at arms, old-fashioned virtues though they may be, are as important in modern warfare as ever they were in the past.

APPRECIATIONS

*The Royal Navy; the Royal Air Force;
Commanders and Staffs*

The Royal Navy.

70. I have already referred to the embarkation of the Force from Dunkirk and its transport to England which evoked the wholehearted admiration of the Army. The operation was carried out in accordance with the finest traditions of the Royal Navy. The plan involved the use of hundreds of privately-owned small craft, and was put into execution at short notice and at a time when Naval resources were severely strained by demands elsewhere. It was carried through regardless of danger and loss by enemy bombing. My deep gratitude is due to all concerned, particularly to Vice-Admiral Sir B. H. Ramsay, Vice-Admiral at Dover, Rear-Admiral W. F. Wake Walker, who superintended the actual embarkation and Captain W. G. Tennant, R.N., the senior naval officer ashore. Nor can the Army forget the sterling work of all those members of the Merchant Navy and the civilian owners of small craft, in many instances volunteers, who unhesitatingly and regardless of dangers gave their services to the British Expeditionary Force.

The Royal Air Force.

71. Successful operations on land depend more than ever before on the closest co-operation between aircraft and troops on the ground, and the B.E.F. owes a deep debt of gratitude to the Royal Air Force for their work throughout the operations. Pilots returned to the air again and again to carry out essential tasks for both French and British Armies, when they were long overdue for rest and sleep.

The embarkation of the Force would have been well-nigh impossible but for the fighter protection afforded. The toll taken* of the enemy aircraft on this and earlier occasions has once again established the individual superiority of the British airman in the air.

I wish specially to record my thanks to Air-Marshal A. S. Barratt (now Sir Arthur Barratt), Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, British Air Forces in France, and to the Air Officer Commanding my Air Component, Air-Vice-Marshal C. H. B. Blount.

Commanders and Staffs.

72. The course of operations in May afforded very unequal opportunities for the several branches of the Staff, Services and departments to show their efficiency, and it would, therefore, perhaps, be invidious to deal with their work in detail to a greater extent than I have already done in this Despatch. Some, however, were required with their Staffs to bear a specially heavy and prolonged strain of responsibility and I wish to refer particularly to the valuable services of my Chief of the General Staff (Lieut.-General H. R. Pownall), my Quarter-Master General (Lieut.-General W. G. Lindsell), and my Engineer-in-Chief (Major-General R. P. Pakenham Walsh), my Signal Officer-in-Chief (Major-General R. Chenevix-Trench), and my Military Secretary (Brigadier Sir Colin Jardine, Bart.).

From the narrative of events, it will be evident how great is the debt I owe to the Commanders

*On one day, 77 enemy machines were shot down at the loss of only 16 of our own.