

directly the Group had landed, collected the chief Quisling, took over the telephone exchange and, before leaving, wrecked the instruments.

34. In the meanwhile Group 3 had been instructed (0925) to send a party by landing craft to destroy the herring oil factory at Mortenes, and at 1015 Captain A. S. Ronald landed with his troops in the area of the factory and completed its destruction without meeting opposition.

35. From 1000 hours onwards, the situation became confused in South Vaagso, where Group 2 were encountering strong opposition in the northern end of the town. The destruction of communications with the forward troops rendered control by the Flagship difficult.

36. By 1020 hours the whole of Group 4 had been despatched to the assistance of Group 2, and were committed on the left flank.

37. By 1030 hours house-to-house fighting in the centre and northern end of the town had become bitter, resulting in severe casualties, especially in officers and senior N.C.O.s. Group 1 arrived from Halnoesvik and was committed in support of No. 4 Troop in the centre. With the authority of Force H.Q., Group 3 on Maaloy Island contacted Group 2, and on request the latter despatched No. 6 Troop.

38. No. 5 Group at North Vaagso were ordered to move south and close on the rear of the enemy in South Vaagso.

39. No. 1 Troop (Group 2) secured the landing place, cleared the southern end of the town, capturing a prominent Quisling, and prepared the main demolitions.

40. At 1230 hours Lieutenant-Colonel Durnford-Slater, after personally directing operations in the town, reported to Force Headquarters that resistance was nearly overcome and that demolitions were in progress.

41. As the majority of the industrial targets had been destroyed and as landing craft were becoming dispersed in ferrying wounded and Norwegian volunteers out to the ships and might take some time to reorganise for withdrawal purposes, the Military Commander, in agreement with the Naval Commander, ordered re-embarkation at 1250 hours.

42. The withdrawal of all groups was carried out without opposition. The Firda factory, which was the last of the industrial targets, and the Seternes Lighthouse were demolished before the troops re-embarked.

43. Group 5, who had been delayed in their southward move along the coast road by the shelling of beached merchant shipping in Ulvesund, were ordered to re-embark in ORIBI to the north of South Vaagso.

44. At 1408 hours Lieutenant-Colonel Durnford-Slater reported that all troops had left the shore, and returned himself in the last landing craft.

45. The re-embarkation had been completed and all landing craft hoisted by 1434

46. In considering the course of the operation particular attention is drawn to the following factors which both had important bearings on the course of the fighting: in the first place,

the hampering effect of the desire to comply strictly with the orders which had been issued to avoid all possible damage to Norwegian property; and in the second place, the conflicting claims of the comparatively short time limit imposed by the whole nature of the operation, and of the restrictions on speed which are inherent in all street fighting but particularly when it is conducted against determined opposition.

47. It here requires mention that the opposition was overcome, and all the demolition tasks completed, often under heavy enemy fire, well within the time limits laid down and that such results could not possibly have been obtained had it not been for the personal leadership of Lieutenant-Colonel J. F. Durnford-Slater, and for the sense of discipline, the initiative and courage that was shown time and again by junior leaders, both officers and N.C.O.s.

#### *Tasks Completed*

48. One hundred and two prisoners were captured, comprising 7 officers (1 Army and 6 Merchant Navy), 91 ratings and other ranks (40 Army, 15 Navy and 36 Merchant Seamen), and 4 Norwegian "Quislings". In addition 77 Norwegian volunteers were embarked. It is estimated that at least 150 Germans were killed in South Vaagso and Maaloy by Naval, Army and R.A.F. Forces in the course of the operation.

49. The tasks executed on shore were as follows:—

(i) All German Offices were burnt or demolished.

(ii) The W/T Station and mast were destroyed.

(iii) The German car and lorry garage was destroyed.

(iv) One German tank of 10 to 15 tons was entirely destroyed.

(v) Four coast defence guns and one anti-aircraft gun on Maaloy Island were blown up.

(vi) The petrol tanks on Maaloy Island were cut by explosives.

(vii) The ammunition store on Maaloy Island was demolished.

(viii) The German barracks and Headquarters on Maaloy Island were burnt out by the initial Naval bombardment.

(ix) A searchlight and generator were blown up on Maaloy Island.

(x) A beach mine store was destroyed.

(xi) A telephone cable hut was destroyed.

(xii) All huts used as billets by German soldiers, both in South Vaagso and Maaloy were burnt down.

(xiii) The Ulvesund Hotel, entirely occupied by German soldiers and held as a strong point, was burnt down.

(xiv) The mechanism of Seternes Lighthouse was destroyed.

(xv) The road was cratered between North and South Vaagso.

(xvi) The telephone exchange at Rodberg was taken over and the apparatus smashed.

(xvii) The building and plant of the main canning factory in South Vaagso were entirely destroyed by explosives.

(xviii) The herring oil factory at Mortenes was entirely destroyed by explosives and fire.

(xix) The Firda factory was set on fire and left blazing.