

essential to obtain full powers from the Norwegian authorities to put security measures into force, but it is doubtful whether these measures would have been effective had they been carried out through the Civil Authorities, which is the ideal method. It is probable that a complete Military Government would have had to be set up unless the civil population had been completely evacuated from all areas in close military occupation. Again, had sustained air attack been directed against towns such as Harstad, civil resources could not have met the demands for hospital accommodation, food, light and sanitation which would have resulted.

It is recommended, therefore, that full weight should be given to these considerations when planning a campaign of this nature, and that a definite policy of evacuation or military control of all civilian activities in the theatre of war should be insisted upon from the outset.

105. The Force relied mainly upon local hired craft, such as Diesel-engined fishing boats, and small steamers, for the distribution by water of food, ammunition and stores of all kinds. This system proved very unsatisfactory, and at one time, after comparatively light bombing of the base area, threatened to break down completely owing to the defection of the civilian crews, even though military guards were placed on board. It is unreasonable to expect civilian hired personnel to incur the risks inseparable from such work under heavy air attack, and the replacement of these civilians by skilled and enlisted personnel subject to military law and discipline would have become inevitable.

In any future expedition of this nature, this important subject must receive full consideration before the expedition is launched and adequate provision of suitable craft, including fast motor-boats for inter-communication and control, together with trained crews must be made.

106. In conclusion, the first general lesson to be drawn is that to commit troops to a campaign in which they cannot be provided with adequate air support is to court disaster.

The second lesson is that no useful purpose can be served by sending troops to operate in an undeveloped and wild country such as Norway unless they have been thoroughly trained for their task and their fighting equipment well thought out and methodically prepared in advance. Improvisation in either of these respects can lead only to failure. Our preparation and provision for ensuring the comfort of the troops were magnificent, too good perhaps; it was in respect of fighting equipment that we compared unfavourably with the enemy.

107. As will be seen from what has previously been stated in this report, the two outstanding difficulties from the administrative point of view, were, first, shortage of administrative transportation and movement control staffs, and, secondly, the entire lack of any organization to operate what was, perforce, the main transportation agency, namely, inland water transport. In the main, although the role of the force since its inception had been changed several times, its composition remained substantially as originally designed.

The first difficulty, except in respect of movement control staff, was to some extent overcome on my arrival by the additional administrative and transportation staff that I brought with me.

Pending the arrival of personnel and staff of the Inland Water Transport organization, the steps taken to set up some form of organization were as follows:—

On his arrival the Assistant Director of Transportation took over the control of the improvised organization which had previously operated the Inland Water Transport fleet. A part of the railway operating company was used on its arrival to form the nucleus of an inland water transport organization. All craft were numbered, organized into fleets, and their movements recorded. The captain of each craft was given written orders each time he was detailed for duty, and a system of leave for "puffer" crews was started, otherwise they would not work for more than a limited period. One soldier was placed on board each "puffer" and most of the steamers were manned by naval crews.

During the evacuation the armed guard in each "puffer" was increased to two, and each fleet was placed under the command of an army officer.

Even with this amount of control it was difficult to prevent the "puffer" crews absenting themselves with their craft, especially after a bombing attack, and the Inland Water Transport situation remained precarious up to the end.

Summary.

108. I trust it will be clear from this report that although my command in Norway lasted for about four weeks only, the problems which my staff officers and the troops under my command had to face were complex and unusual. That they were solved and, so far as lay in their power, solved successfully, is, I submit, the best tribute I can offer to those who served under me.

109. In the strategical and tactical sphere, the outlook changed rapidly from a situation in which I had every hope of receiving the forces and resources for which I had asked to enable me to maintain the integrity of Northern Norway, recapture Narvik and assume the offensive against the enemy to the southward, to one in which it appeared as if the Force would have to fight hard to retain a fringe of the coast round Narvik and Harstad with inadequate support in the shape of ships, artillery and aircraft. This phase again quickly gave place to the final problem of complete withdrawal from Norway in the face of increasing enemy pressure on the sea, in the air and on the ground.

I fully realise that these changes were inevitable and essential, and I mention them only to stress the efficiency and loyalty with which every one in the Force responded to what must have been to those not in the possession of inside knowledge, a bewildering and possibly disheartening succession of changes of plan on the part of the higher command.

110. Co-operation between the three services and within the Force itself was excellent throughout, which is perhaps remarkable considering the very mixed composition of the Force.

111. I have already had occasion to mention certain individuals by name, but I desire