

they were covered by 1 K.O.Y.L.I. in position South of Dombås.

Demolitions at Rostå and Dovre were blown after the rear parties had crossed the bridges.

49. The breakaway was clean, and the fact that the enemy made no immediate attempt to follow it up was undoubtedly due to the reverse he had suffered during the afternoon.

The value of the Norwegian Ski Troops operating on the flanks should be mentioned. They were the only means of flank protection, and were of great value in guarding against surprise.

During the night 28th/29th April, many Norwegian troops were withdrawn from the Lines of Communication and there was a possibility of having no troops between Dombås and the base at Åndalsnes, some 60 miles away.

The obvious danger was that enemy parachute detachments might land on the Lines of Communication. Brigadier Morgan's force was therefore disposed in detachments at Lesja, Lesjaverk, Lesjaskog and Verma, with as much transport for each detachment as he could raise.

50. During the night 28th/29th April, General Paget's headquarters moved to Botheim. An early reconnaissance made of the Dombås position disclosed that the K.O.Y.L.I. was well established there, with the Green Howards and Y. and L. just assembling in the woods after their train withdrawal.

During the morning, General Ruge pointed out that he could not withdraw his Foldal detachment until the night 29th/30th April. There could thus be no question of the withdrawal of British troops from Dombås until night 30th April/1st May. This meant the enemy had 48 hours to follow up from Otta, and that another battle might have to be fought on the Dombås position. General Ruge offered the support of a Norwegian Field Battery of four guns, which was gratefully accepted. These guns were later to prove most useful.

The enemy was very active all day in the air, bombing and machine gunning all movement on the Lines of Communication. It was the habit of his bombers to fly direct to their objective, drop their bombs at the most convenient height, and then on their way home to carry out low flying machine gun attacks on the road traffic.

51. About noon Lieut. Colonel Clarke arrived from England to say that shipping would be available as follows:—

Night 29th/30th April for 1,000-1,500 personnel.

Night 30th April/1st May for 2,200 personnel.

Night 1st/2nd May for the remainder if necessary.

The plan made as a result of this was to withdraw 1 Y. and L. from Dombås and send them with Base Details on the night 29th/30th April.

On night 30th April/1st May:—

(a) 15th Infantry Brigade and all troops (less 1 Y. and L.) would withdraw from present positions through the Royal Marines (covering Åndalsnes) and embark.

(b) The following were approximate strengths:—

H.Q. Sickle Force	...	...	40
1 K.O.Y.L.I.	...	...	500
1 Green Howards	...	...	500
Anti-Tank Company	...	...	80
Section, 55 Field Company	...	...	100
168 Light A.A. Battery	...	...	65
H.Q. 15 Infantry Brigade	...	...	60
Signals, 15th Infantry Brigade...	...	...	40
Morgan's Force	...	...	400
			<hr/> 1,775 <hr/>

(c) *Transport: By Motor Transport.*

Leave Dombås	{ 55 Field Company
2030 hrs.	{ H.Q. 15th Infantry
	{ Bde. & Sig. Sec.
	{ Rear parties
	{ K. O. Y. L. I. and
	{ Green Howards.

*By Train*

Leave Dombås	{ 1 K.O.Y.L.I.
2130 hrs.	{ 1 Green Howards
	{ (less rear parties)
	{ Anti-tank Coy.
	{ Details R.E. & R.A.

This plan was communicated to Norwegian G.H.Q. and the necessary details arranged.

During night 29th/30th April the Norwegian detachments at Hjerkin and Foldal withdrew through the British force at Dombås. These were the last Norwegian troops in the area for the covering of whose withdrawal General Paget was responsible.

52. The train conveying the Y. and L. to Åndalsnes on the night 29th/30th April only reached Lesjaskog, owing to a break in the line. There was no train available to take them on from the other side of the break to Åndalsnes, so they marched on.

Enemy reconnaissance aircraft and bombers were active, but no other special incident occurred during the day until 1530 hours when 15th Infantry Brigade reported that the enemy could be seen advancing up the valley from Dovre. The early reports were conflicting, one mentioned four battalions, another parachute troops, a third transport. The force was probably the usual reconnaissance detachment, possibly reinforced by machine gun and mortar detachments landed by parachutes. This contact, though not unexpected, was undesirably early. There were some five to six hours of daylight left and it seemed possible for the enemy to stage an attack on the K.O.Y.L.I. from which it might be difficult to extricate them.

53. The K.O.Y.L.I. were extremely well hidden; it is probable that the Germans were surprised to find them there at all, and they must have been even more surprised when the Norwegian guns opened fire on their forward positions. Lieutenant-Colonel Cass commanding 1 K.O.Y.L.I. had made a very wise decision earlier in the day to withdraw his right company across the river, as the water level had risen considerably, making the river unfordable for the withdrawal. When later the Germans made contact, they were forced to use rubber boats to attempt the crossing. These were all destroyed and their crews knocked out.

The enemy's forward troops were supported by a close reconnaissance aircraft, which