

Bardu Foss, another in the neighbourhood of Harstad and probably a third further south possibly at Bodo, with the necessary complement of anti-aircraft artillery.

(b) The protection of the naval anchorage which could be defended economically against surface, under water and land attack, and around which ground anti-aircraft defences could be installed.

(c) The selection and occupation of an area which could be adequately defended against sea, land and air attack and within which suitable base installations could be developed to supply a force of approximately three divisions through the port of Narvik and the railway to Lulea.

I estimated that this area would have to include not only an area South of Narvik at least as far as the Tysfjord (40 miles South of Narvik) but also an area East of Narvik along the frontier. Further, that the Northern portion of the area would have to include Hatten which lies 80 miles North of Narvik at the head of the Lyngen Fjord and covers the approaches to Tromsø.

6. I submitted also to the C.I.G.S. a provisional estimate of the forces which I considered would be required. These in general, apart from air forces and troops required for administrative purposes, amounted to twelve infantry battalions, one or two machine gun battalions, a divisional cavalry regiment (mechanised) with a due proportion of artillery and engineer units.

In conjunction with the technical experts available in the War Office, I estimated the requirements in anti-aircraft artillery at 144 3.7 guns and 112 Bofors Light Guns.

Departure for and arrival in Norway.

7. I embarked with an advanced headquarters staff at Leith in the Polish liner *Chrobry* on the 7th May and landed, after an uneventful voyage at Harstad on the 11th May.

8. Lord Cork was away in his flagship at Skaanland when I landed, but I met Major-General Mackesy and his General Staff Officer, Colonel Dowler, at once, and learned the situation from them. Hearing that a landing operation by the French contingent was about to take place near Bjerkvik at the head of Herjangs Fjord, and that Lord Cork was to direct the operation in person, I at once went to Skaanland with my Brigadier General Staff, Brigadier Gammell, and met Lord Cork.

I explained my position to Lord Cork, and with his approval, remained in *H.M.S. Effingham* with him. Neither General Mackesy nor any member of his staff was present on the Flagship, though General Bethouart, Commanding the French Contingent and his staff embarked just after myself and remained aboard throughout the operation.

9. The landing took place under a heavy bombardment from the guns of the Fleet in cold and cloudy weather in the early hours of the 13th May, and, in spite of the fact that there was now continuous daylight throughout the twenty-four hours and appreciable opposition from enemy machine guns on shore, was completely successful. The enemy was ejected from the area North and East of Herjangs Fjord and the French landing parties not only effected a junction with their own troops advancing from

the North from the direction of Gratangen but also cleared the country down to Oijord immediately across the Rombaks Fjord from Narvik.

Although I was present in the capacity of a spectator only, I am constrained to express my admiration for the way in which the whole operation was conceived and effected by all concerned. I was particularly struck by the business like efficiency of the French Foreign Legion which carried out the landing. That the landing was not interfered with by enemy aircraft was almost certainly due to the fortunate weather conditions prevailing at the time. At this period, there were no land based aircraft available in Norway with which to counter enemy air attacks and a bombing raid might well have turned the operation from a success into a failure.

10. I returned with Lord Cork to Harstad in *H.M.S. Effingham*, arriving on the afternoon of the 13th May.

Assumption of Command.

11. Immediately *H.M.S. Effingham* reached Harstad, Brigadier Fraser, Commander of the 24th Guards Brigade, came on board with Colonel Dowler of the General Staff, to discuss plans for operations in the Mo and Bodo areas with Lord Cork. Owing to ill health, Major-General Mackesy was not present.

12. With the concurrence of Lord Cork I listened to the ensuing discussion which centred round the question whether reinforcements already embarked at Skaanland should be sent to Bodo or to Mo, where an advanced detachment consisting of 1st Battalion Scots Guards and some "Independent Companies" had already been landed under heavy enemy air attack. At this conference I told Lord Cork that, in accordance with my instructions from the War Office, I proposed to assume command of all military forces forthwith.

13. I then gave verbal orders to Brigadier Fraser that he was to proceed at once with 1st Battalion Irish Guards and other troops to Bodo and not to Mo, and that he was to hold Bodo permanently, and Mo, for as long as he could. These orders were subsequently confirmed in writing.

14. On landing from *H.M.S. Effingham* I at once informed Major-General Mackesy that I had assumed command. Throughout my dealings with Major-General Mackesy I found him uniformly helpful and informative. In fact, many of my subsequent actions were based on information and advice received from him.

Situation on 13th May, 1940.

15. Briefly the dispositions, on the 13th-14th May, were:—

(a) In the Narvik area:—

- i. One battalion Chasseurs Alpins and the 2nd Battalion South Wales Borderers on the Ankenes Peninsula in touch with enemy detachments, but not yet in possession of Ankenes itself.
- ii. The enemy still in possession of Narvik and the whole peninsula on which it stands.
- iii. Two battalions of the Foreign Legion and one battalion of the Polish