

48 heavy and 60 light anti-aircraft guns, one Hurricane Squadron, one Gladiator Squadron and, possibly, one Army Co-operation Flight. The telegram also stated that only the first object, namely, the denial of iron ore supplies to Germany through Narvik, and the third, the preservation of the integrity of Northern Norway, could be accomplished at present, but that the possession of a base in Narvik might make the second object, namely, the interference of ore supplies to Germany through Lulea, possible in time. The telegram concluded by requesting my views as to the retention of Narvik in these circumstances.

27. On 21st May, after consultation with Lord Cork and Group Captain Moore, R.A.F., I sent a reply to the effect that my considered opinion was that the land forces suggested by His Majesty's Government might be sufficient with certain small additions, that the provision of anti-aircraft artillery was unlikely to be adequate should the enemy make heavy air attacks and that I adhered to my original estimate of the minimum air forces required, namely, two Hurricane Fighter Squadrons, one bomber Squadron and one Army Co-operation Squadron.

28. Throughout this period the installation of such anti-aircraft artillery as had been made available for the force, namely, 48 heavy and 58 light anti-aircraft guns, was pushed forward with skill and energy by Brigadier Rossiter, Commanding the Anti-Aircraft Defences. Except at Harstad itself the disembarkation of these guns had to be carried out by transferring them into motor landing craft and then ferrying them ashore. The extremely mountainous nature of the country increased the difficulty of finding suitable positions for the guns, and the indented character of the coast complicated the maintenance of isolated detachments. In spite of these obstacles the establishment of the anti-aircraft artillery was effected with commendable speed and efficiency and materially added to the security of the Force and its bases.

The allotment of the limited guns available was made on the principle that it was only possible to give a minimum degree of protection to really vital areas and that smaller and less important areas must go without.

On 20th May I decided that the best disposition of these guns would be:—

| Situation             | Heavy Guns | Light Guns |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|
| Bardu Foss ...        | 8 (16)     | 12 (24)    |
| Harstad and Skaanland | 24 (48)    | 18 (36)    |
| Bodo ...              | 8 (16)     | 12 (12)    |
| Tromso ...            | 8 (24)     | 16 (24)    |
|                       | 48 (104)   | 58 (96)    |

The figures in brackets show the number of guns considered necessary to give really adequate protection to each area.

In addition, there were demands for anti-aircraft artillery to protect French troops in the forward areas round Narvik, at Lodingen at the mouth of Tjelsundet Fjord to protect the coast and naval anti-submarine defences there, to cover the R.D.F. stations to be installed in the Lofoten Islands and elsewhere, and also for the protection of a third landing ground under preparation at Elvenes, near Salangen.

In actual fact these proposed dispositions did not materialize and the distribution of anti-aircraft artillery at the end of May was:—

| Situation         | Heavy Guns | Light Guns |
|-------------------|------------|------------|
| Bardu Foss ...    | 12         | 12         |
| Sorreisa ...      | —          | 2          |
| Elvenes ...       | —          | 4          |
| Tromso ...        | 4          | 4          |
| Harstad ...       | 12         | 5          |
| Skaanland ...     | 15         | 10         |
| Ballangen ...     | —          | 4          |
| Ankenes ...       | —          | 4          |
| Bjerkvik ...      | —          | 4          |
| Bodo ...          | —          | 2          |
| Loaded for Bodo   | 4          | 4          |
| With the Navy ... | —          | 1          |

(Protecting French forward troops)  
(Two lost at Mo)  
(in a "Q" Ship)

The despatch of the guns to Tromso was in response to a Norwegian demand for protection as already recounted.

29. On 24th May telegraphic instructions were received from the Chiefs of Staff that Northern Norway was to be evacuated as soon as possible.

#### The Reinforcement of Bodo.

30. The security of the vital base area round Harstad was essential to ensure the success of the operations and was now threatened by the rapid Northward advance of the enemy from Mosjoen. It was necessary, therefore, to check this advance, and it appeared to me that it was essential to hold the port of Bodo so as to ensure adequate depth in the defence and because it was the only port available for use as an advanced base which still remained to us, Mo being already threatened by enemy forces in its immediate proximity. I therefore decided that an adequate force must be established in the area.

I determined to transfer the British Contingent to that area and to use the French Contingent, helped by the Norwegian Army, to continue the pressure on the enemy in the Narvik area. I issued instructions to this effect to General Bethouart on 14th May and gave him as his task the destruction of the enemy forces in that area and the capture of Narvik.

31. It has already been mentioned that the 1st Battalion, Irish Guards, and other troops sailed from Harstad on 14th May in the *Chrobry*. The ship was attacked and set on fire by German aircraft when nearing Bodo. Six officers of the Irish Guards were killed, but nearly all the troops were saved by H.M. Ships *Stork* and *Wolverine*, whose complements showed the greatest courage and resource in the work of rescue, and were brought back to Harstad having lost practically the whole of their equipment.

Realizing the urgency of the situation at Mo, I then arranged to send the 2nd Battalion, South Wales Borderers, to Bodo as soon as they could be relieved at Ankenes by a French Battalion. This unit left for Bodo in H.M.S. *Effingham* on 17th May. When *Effingham* was within an hour's steaming of Bodo she struck an uncharted rock and eventually became a total loss. The South Wales Borderers and other troops on board were