

28. Captain L. E. H. Maund acted as my Chief Staff Officer; he was assiduous and untiring in his work and in all administrative matters of the greatest help. To him can be given much of the credit for successful evacuation.

29. Finally, I must express my gratitude to Lieutenant-General C. J. E. Auchinleck in whom I could not wish for a better colleague. His sound and soldierly views on all subjects were of great assistance and support and the period of our service together will for me always be a pleasant memory.

(Signed) CORK & ORRERY,
Admiral of the Fleet.

APPENDIX "A".

REPORT ON OPERATIONS IN NORTHERN NORWAY.

14th April to 13th May, 1940.

The following Report was submitted to the Secretary of State for War on 15th May, 1940, by Major-General P. J. Mackesy, C.B., D.S.O., M.C.

Harstad, 15th May, 1940.

SIR,

I have the honour to report that I handed over command of this Force to Lieutenant-General C. J. E. Auchinleck, C.B., C.S.I., D.S.O., O.B.E., at 1830 hours on the 13th May. I submit the following brief report to the Secretary of State for War of events up to that time.

2. I arrived in the Narvik area, actually in Vaags Fjord, in *H.M.S. Southampton* at daylight on the 14th April. I was accompanied by a small staff and had on board two companies of the 1st Bn. The Scots Guards and some details.

3. Having first ascertained that Harstad was not in enemy occupation and having obtained some information from local officials at that place, I proceeded to obtain touch with the 6th Norwegian Division under Major-General Fleischer, whose headquarters proved to be in the Bardu area. The two companies 1st Bn. The Scots Guards were landed at Salangs-Verket and Sjoveien on the Sag Fjord during the afternoon and were put in touch with elements of the 6th Norwegian Division. This early contact and the subsequent co-operation of this detachment with our Allies had an important effect upon the spirit and determination of the Allied Forces.

4. During the 14th April and the following days all available information pointed to Narvik itself being strongly held and to the fact that the naval action of the 13th April had by no means demoralized the garrison as a whole. The probability was that the garrison had in fact been increased by nearly 1,000 good fighting men from the sunken German ships: this was fully confirmed by subsequent intelligence reports. My troops had been embarked for a peaceful landing at a friendly and organized port and could not be ready for active operations for some days. I decided therefore to disembark the Force at Harstad and to establish my base there also in the first instance.

5. Disembarkation at Harstad was carried out under great difficulty. Transports had to lie at considerable distances—10 miles and more—from the harbour and signal communication between ship and shore was impossible. Air attacks, against which my force had no defence, complicated the operation. However disembarkation of the first flight of the force was completed on the evening of 16th April.

6. Although nobody without personal experience of Arctic winter conditions can possibly picture the climatic difficulties we experienced in the early days, a word or two of description may not be out of place. The country was covered by snow up to 4 feet and more in depth. Even at sea level there were several feet of snow. Blizzards, heavy snow storms, bitter winds and very low night temperatures were normal. Indeed until the middle of May even those magnificent mountain soldiers, the French Chasseurs Alpains, suffered severely from frost bite and snow blindness. Troops who were not equipped with and skilled in the use of skis or snow shoes were absolutely incapable of operating tactically at all. I had no such troops at my disposal when I first landed. Shelter from the weather was of vital importance.

7. It soon became certain that the enemy held Narvik in considerable strength. All the existing defences had been handed over intact by the Norwegian garrison. A personal reconnaissance convinced me that topography favoured the defence and that an opposed landing was quite out of the question so long as the deep snow and existing weather conditions persisted and so long as my force lacked landing craft, tanks, adequate artillery support, adequate anti-aircraft defence and air co-operation. The problem was, of course, not merely one of landing, but one of carrying out a subsequent advance of several miles; yet, owing to the configuration of the ground, not even during the first mile could support be given by ships' guns.

I decided therefore that my first objective must be to secure the Oijord and Ankenes peninsulas, North and South of Narvik, from which in due course observed artillery fire could be brought to bear on the enemy defences. Both these peninsulas were held by the enemy.

With this in view I moved the 1st Bn. The Irish Guards to the Bogen area and (at a later date) the 2nd Bn. The South Wales Borderers to Ballangen. The detachment of the 1st Bn. The Scots Guards, under Major L. Graham, M.C., which I had landed in the Sag Fjord on 14th April, moved forward to co-operate with the 6th Norwegian Division in the Forsbakken area. The state of the roads, lying under 2 to 4 feet of snow and ice, and the impossibility of moving across country without skis, prevented further progress by these forces for the time being.

8. On the 20th April Admiral of the Fleet the Earl of Cork and Orrery was placed in sole command of the operations. It may however be convenient to have on record a brief summary of the subsequent operations from an army point of view. On 24th April a naval bombardment of the Narvik defences was carried out with the object of making the enemy surrender. The 1st Bn. The Irish Guards, embarked in one of H.M. Ships, were held