

with His Majesty. He told me he knew what I had come about and that I was going to see his Ministers. The object of my visit was to obtain the authority of the Norwegian Government for (1) far more drastic control in the military areas over the civilian population and the innumerable small steamers and "puffers" navigating the fiords, etc., and upon which the life and communications of the people largely depended; (2) closer collaboration between Civil Government and British Military Authorities to make this control effective. Colonel Pollock had already discussed the subject with General Rugé, who was understanding and sympathetic and undertook to insist to the Government that action in this respect was essential. General Rugé left me to go to his Headquarters when I arrived at the King's residence.

19. On leaving His Majesty I drove back with Sir Cecil Dormer to Storsteinnes from where I flew to Tromsø and saw the Prime Minister, Ministers for Defence, and for Foreign Affairs. The three Ministers also were cordial and friendly, and promised that these matters should be closely gone into—and a Government representative sent to Harstad to arrange details. This conference was somewhat rudely put an end to by an air attack aimed at DEVONSHIRE in the harbour. They had only returned to Tromsø that day, and the attack that evening was unfortunate. I also saw Admiral Diesen on the subject of the control afloat who undertook to do everything necessary. Vice-Admiral Cunningham had already taken the matter up with him and accompanied me to this meeting. The Norwegian Ministers mentioned the need for A/A artillery and equipment for their troops and also the necessity of refitting their ships which they had understood the British authorities would be able to arrange. The Norwegian Ministers showed every intention of being helpful and anxious to continue the fight, but they were not unnaturally concerned about the unavoidable delay in meeting their requirements on these points.

SECTION III

ANTI-AIRCRAFT DEFENCE MEASURES

1. The enemy commenced attacks by air on the day that the first convoy arrived and continued throughout the period of the campaign. When, after the withdrawal of our forces from South Norway, enemy was able to develop air bases in Trondheim and other places the attacks greatly increased in intensity and frequency. Our fighter craft of the Fleet Air Arm and Royal Air Force, in those periods when they were available, wrought great havoc among the enemy and afforded a very welcome relief. From the earliest days the establishment of aerodromes was a major preoccupation, but at the beginning, the land all being covered by three or more feet of snow, the problem presented unusual difficulties. The Norwegian authorities reported Bardufoss as having been used by Gladiators. Lieutenant Francklin, R.N. (F.A.A.) organised much of the preliminary work in clearing this and also a suitable ground discovered at Skaanland, the latter having the advantage of being situated adjacent to the merchant shipping anchorage in Lavangs Fiord between Harstad and

Tjeldsundet passage. The thaw was late this year and it was the 30th April before I was sure it had commenced. The flying boat "Cabot" brought Wing Commander Atcherley to the area on the 4th May and he then took charge of the finding and development of aerodromes both to the north and to the south.

2. Heavy snowstorms and bad weather in the early period interfered with good work by the FURIOUS but her aircraft operated to their full capacity at every opportunity. She was recalled on April 23rd to re-equip, having then only eight aircraft fit for service. The urgent need for A/A artillery was emphasised in a telegram to the Admiralty on April 25th.

3. After the evacuation of Namsos and Aandalsnes, the enemy air attacks in the Narvik Vest Fiord and Vaags Fiord areas were intensified and the stationing of H.M. Ships with good A/A Batteries in each area where merchant ships were anchored or troops working became more than ever necessary. The enemy steadily developed the supplying and reinforcing of his troops in Narvik by means of troop carrying flying boats and by the method of parachutes. Minelaying was also frequently suspected but not actually proved until May 29th; when five enemy aircraft were seen to do so in Tjeldsundet. Sweepers investigated and four mines were exploded.

4. On April 30th, I was informed by the Admiralty that 48 3.7 in. H.A. Guns and 48 Bofors (making 60 in all with 12 already in the area) were to be sent, as A/A protection was of primary importance and two A/A Cruisers were also ordered to join me on completion of certain other operations. The next day, as if to emphasise the matter, the enemy obtained a direct hit on the building used for Naval accommodation in Harstad, fortunately killing only two ratings. At the same time they bombed the Hospital Ship ATLANTIS anchored wide away from all other ships and a Norwegian Hospital Ship, causing many casualties in the latter.

5. The lateness of the thaw caused a depressing delay in the preparation of aerodromes. I had hoped that Bardufoss would be ready by the 15th May, in which case Carriers with the necessary aircraft would have left England on the 11th May but on the 4th May I had to report that the snow was causing insuperable delays. Concerning the preparation and use of Bardufoss, considerable tact was necessary in dealing with the Norwegians, as they firmly wished to keep it under their control. The acceptance of Norwegian pilots and other air personnel for training in England did much to bring a convenient working arrangement into force.

6. The first 3.7 in. A/A Guns arrived in the area on the 6th May. Bofors Guns reached Bardufoss on the 7th. Four of the 3.7 in. Guns were in action at Harstad on the 9th and the other four were on their way to Bardufoss. Men bombed on shore could now begin to feel that they had some chance of hitting back; a psychological factor of considerable importance.

7. The ARK ROYAL joined and was able to commence operations from a position at sea well to the northward on the 6th May and the presence of her fighter aircraft had an immediate and most noticeable effect upon the enemy's freedom of attack.