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# NARVIK AND AFTER

A study of the Scandinavian Campaign

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**Author of:**

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(Published in America under title "Peace or War?")

FREEDOM OF THE SEAS
(In collaboration with Sir George Young)

NEW WARS, NEW WEAPONS

INDIA: A WARNING

THE REAL NAVY

OUR DAILY PAY: THE ECONOMICS OF PLENTY

SAILORS, STATESMEN AND OTHERS,
AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

THE BATTLE OF THE RIVER PLATE

# NARVIK AND AFTER

A study of the Scandinavian Campaign

by

LORD STRABOLGI, R.N.

(Former Admiralty War Staff, London;
Assistant Chief of Staff, Gibraltar)

*With 62 Illustrations*
*and 5 Maps*

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*. . . Emblem of man elate above death,*
*Token of all brave captains and all*
*intrepid sailors and mates,*
*And all that went down doing their duty.*

WALT WHITMAN.

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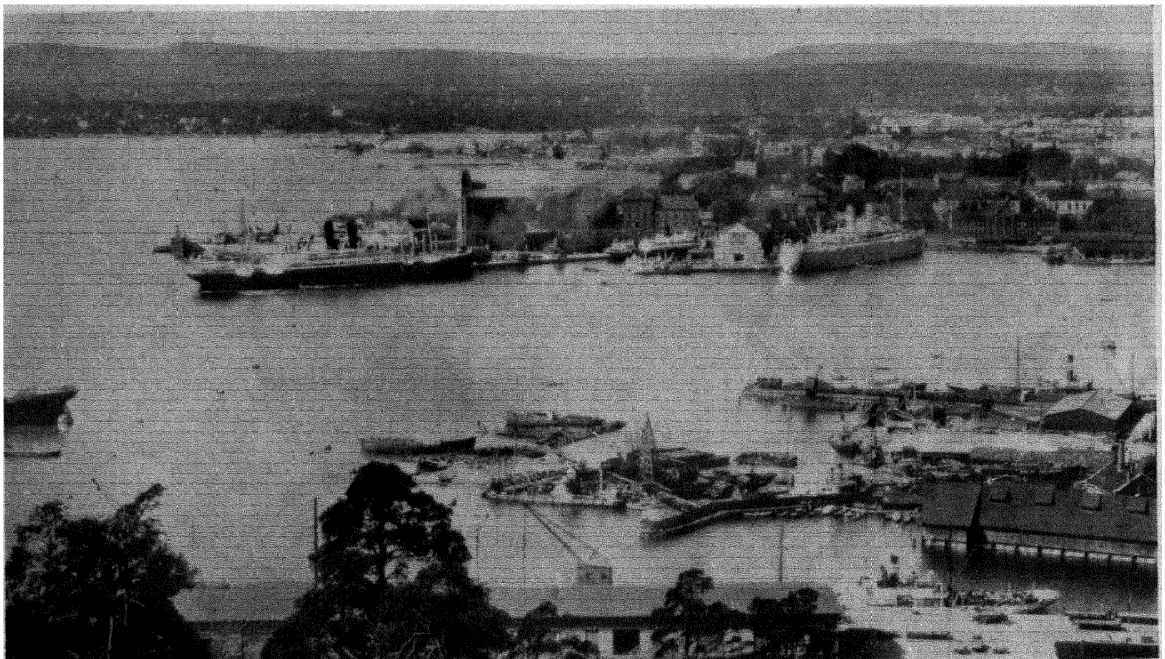
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*Keystone*

OSLO HARBOUR

# FOREWORD

THIS ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST STAGE OF the Scandinavian campaign is a record of heroism and determination in the face of difficulties and heavy odds. Placed in an impossible position, through causes for which they were in no way to blame, British troops, fighting among the Scandinavian mountains most of them receiving their baptism of fire, covered themselves with glory. The Royal Navy, with its Fleet Air Arm, and the Royal Air Force, performed wonders. Their gallantry and efficiency were beyond all praise.

I have attempted to draw certain important lessons from this campaign; though it is not possible, for obvious reasons, to deal with many important matters while operations are still in progress. All the facts cannot yet be given.

Though we lost the first round, the fallen did not give their lives in vain. Those who fell, and those who suffered great hardships and privations, together with their brave Norwegian comrades, performed a great service to the Allied cause. The Nazis were deprived in Norway of the easy walk-over which they had expected, relying partly on the surprise stroke delivered, and partly on treachery. In the event, large numbers of the best German troops had to be sent to Norway and they suffered

heavy losses in the process. At least 200 German war planes were destroyed or put out of action in these operations. Many of the most skilful and brave of the Nazi pilots made their last flights in the Scandinavian campaign. These planes and their crews would have been invaluable to the German High Command in the vast actions which began on the Western Front almost immediately after the Allied withdrawal from Central Norway. It is true that valuable lives were sacrificed and much material loss suffered by our Allies and ourselves. Yet, for reasons to be fully described, an early attempt to turn the Germans out of Norway had to be made.

The Germans must be ejected from Norway, and as soon as possible.

As soon as the implications of a German occupation of Central and Southern Norway are appreciated, it will become a cardinal point in British policy to clear Norway of German forces and German influence. This objective is not a 'sideshow,' nor is it a quixotic adventure to help a small, unoffending people forced under the brutal rule of the Gestapo. The safety, and, indeed, the continued existence of the British Commonwealth of Nations depend on the frustration of the Nazi plans to establish themselves along the vast Norwegian coastline, with its magnificent harbours and almost numberless points of concealment, and with the outlet to the Atlantic it gives them. The west and north

coasts of Norway in hostile hands are daggers thrusting at the heart of the Empire.

For three hundred years we English were always prepared to fight to prevent a Great Power on the other side of the English Channel dominating the Low Countries. That safeguard is still a vital necessity for British safety. It is just as necessary that no Great Power, capable of constructing a large Navy and Air Force, should be ensconced along the Norwegian coast.

Narvik lies far within the Arctic Circle. Its importance, and the importance of this part of the Norwegian coast, does not rest on its convenience as a loading place for cargo steamers carrying iron ore from the Swedish mines. If the Germans are allowed to occupy Narvik in force and to remain there, they outflank our naval defence lines in the North Sea and Atlantic. We may take it for certain that however this war ends, and whatever the form of the post-war settlement, the Nazis, if they still hold power, will make every effort to keep a foothold in Norway. If this is permitted, it will mean that we have abandoned the attainment of what should be a major war aim. It is devoutly to be hoped that sombre and terrifying events elsewhere will not be allowed to overshadow the importance of the coast of Norway to the Allied cause.

As I write these lines, the fighting for the re-occupation of the port of Narvik and its hinterland

continues. This would hardly have been possible, in all the circumstances, but for the success of the first and second battles of Narvik which I describe. Not only the British Commonwealth of Nations, but all men who value freedom and justice and who desire that the world should be rid of the Nazi scourge, owe an immense debt of gratitude to the young officer, Captain Warburton-Lee, who led his inferior forces into Narvik fjord in the first action. Though he lost his own life, he won a great naval and, still more important, a very great moral victory.

I would plead, also, for full recognition for the services of the officers and ship's company of H.M.S. *Renown*. Her dramatic encounter with the *Scharnhörst* and *Hipper* was unexpected; but her people were ready, their shooting was excellent under terrible weather conditions, and the results of the action of the greatest importance.

The full story of the Scandinavian campaign has yet to be told. Its importance will be recognized by the future historians of this war; and it would be well if it were recognized by those still locked in this life and death struggle, and especially by those who have the responsibility for the conduct of the fight.

One of the objects of this book is to indicate the reasons.

STRABOLGI.

# NARVIK AND AFTER

## CHAPTER I

### THE PLOT

AT DAWN ON APRIL 9, 1940, THE TOWN and port of Narvik were quiet. The majority of the normal inhabitants were asleep, but there was great hidden activity. A number of merchant ships were in the harbour. They flew British, German, Swedish, American, and Finnish flags. Some were loaded with iron ore, and were ready to sail to their respective ports. Others were awaiting berths or were in process of loading. Two Norwegian coast defence-ships, the *Norge* and the *Eidsvold*, were also in the port. Some of their men were on shore leave, and the warships were not cleared for action. The two warships were lying alongside the quay.

Norway was at peace with the world.

But there were many awake in this northern town and seaport. Four of the German merchant ships, one of them a floating factory ship for whaling, were filled with German soldiers. Their empty holds had been converted into barracks. These soldiers were picked men, specially trained, and heavily armed. Their commander was one Karl Dietl, a well-known

ski jumper and an organizer of the winter section of the Olympic Games. His intimates nicknamed him 'The Bull' because of his passionate temper and brutal ruthlessness.

In one of the inlets of the sixty-mile fjord which leads to the open sea from Narvik, lay three more large German merchant vessels crammed with soldiers, artillery, ammunition, and military stores. They had been joined during the night by a flotilla of six of the largest and newest German destroyers. The merchant ships had been lurking within Norwegian territorial waters for three weeks, their soldiers kept below decks during the daytime. The German whale-factory ship, the *Jan Wellum*, had entered the fjord flying the United States flag, and with the Stars and Stripes painted on her sides.

The German destroyers had taken advantage of darkness and a spell of remarkably bad weather, the fag end of the worst winter in living memory, to sneak up the coast of Norway to Narvik, all ready for zero hour. All these disguised troop transports, munition ships, and war vessels were operating on a long prepared and carefully thought out plan. At the appointed zero hour simultaneous attacks were to be made on Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, Norway's principal airport, at Stavanger, and Narvik itself. Apart from the usual vulgar attacks by the Nazi-controlled Press on all small neutrals, there had been no special newspaper campaign against Norway such as preceded the attacks on Austria, Czecho-

slovakia, and Poland. No ultimatum or diplomatic protest or complaint had been presented to the Norwegian Government. During the night of 5 April, the German Minister in Oslo had invited the members of the Government and nearly everyone else who mattered, to his Legation for a party. It was not an ordinary party. We have to go back to the days of the Borgias to find a parallel. The principal item of entertainment for the distinguished guests was a special film (*The Baptism of Fire*) made in Poland by the official Nazi cinematographers, depicting in its raw horror a blitzkrieg in action. The stark realism of this film, with its scenes of death and destruction, and particularly the air bombing of unarmed towns and villages and the enormous destruction and suffering inflicted on the civil population, has horrified audiences in Germany. The Nazi diplomat's intention in showing it was to strike terror in the hearts of the honoured guests of the German Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of His Majesty the King of Norway. It was seen in horrified silence. The host then explained that this was a peace film, not a war film. It was made to show that nations which avoided war saved themselves from pain and agony.

The plotters in these Norwegian cities and ports were not all of German nationality. For months and years the Nazi Secret Service had been busily at work. One of the main channels of corruption and intrigue was, and is, the Nordische Gesellschaft,

with branches throughout Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland. Ostensibly founded for the purpose of spreading 'Nordic culture,' the Gesellschaft is a vast network of espionage and treachery.

In all the Scandinavian countries, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland, there is a Nazi movement. In Denmark it has its bases in the German-speaking minority. But there is no German-speaking minority in Norway. Here Norwegians, some of them in important official positions, formed the Fifth Column.[1] Some of these unhappy wretches had been bought with German money. Others had been flattered or promised important positions and, in the case of Major Quisling, the most important member of the Fifth Column, with the exception of Bishop Berggrav of Oslo, it has been stated that he was, perhaps, genuinely misled. He believed, so I am informed, the Nazi stories that their object in establishing a protectorate over Norway was altruistic, and that it was not proposed to interfere with the internal affairs of the country. Whatever the truth of this, Major Quisling proved himself inimical to his Nazi masters, and his services were soon dispensed with.

Quisling was in Berlin on 5 April, and returned to Oslo on 6 April, no doubt with his instructions in his pocket. He nominated four other well-known

[1] This expression has passed into international currency from the time of the Spanish Civil War when General Franco was advancing to besiege Madrid held by the Republicans. He boasted that he had four marching columns, and a fifth, consisting of his sympathizers, within the city.



GERMAN TROOPS LANDING IN OSLO HARBOUR

*Planet News*



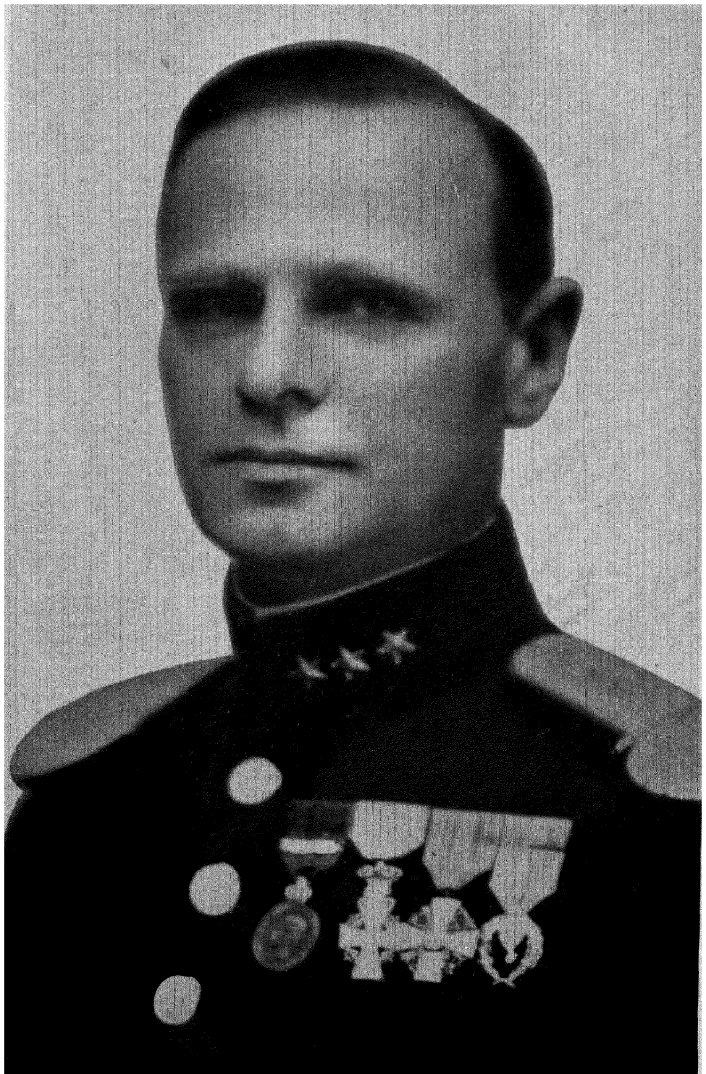
SOLDIERS LANDING FROM GERMAN TROOP CARRIER

*Sport and General*



PART OF THE OSLO-BERGEN RAILWAY LINE

*Planet News*



*Topical Press*

BIRGER LJUNGBERG,
NORWEGIAN MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

pro-Nazis as 'Ministers' in the puppet government set up by the German army of occupation. The most prominent of these was a retired Army officer, Major Hvoslef, who was on his way to Norway from Finland, where he had been fighting the Red Army with the Norwegian volunteers. Another was Jonas Lie, a member of Major Quisling's small Fascist and pro-Nazi party, the Samling. Lie was chief of the Norwegian State police, which shows how desirable it is in a democratic State to keep the police, and especially their chiefs, out of politics.

The four nominees of Major Quisling have claimed that they were not consulted, and cried off very soon. Hvoslef never, in fact, took office with Quisling and his puppet administration, but managed to join the Norwegian Army in the field, and put himself at the disposal of the legal Norwegian Government.

Lie was in the North of Norway at the time, and also offered his services against the Germans. The Gestapo were not fortunate in their choice of dupes, except for the Bishop of Oslo.

In Narvik, the head of the spy organization was the German consul, a certain Herr Nolda. This typical Nazi 'diplomat' was a U-boat commander in the last war. At the Disarmament Commission of the League of Nations he appeared as a naval expert. When Germany left the League of Nations Nolda was appointed consul at Havre. While Nolda was there the great French liner, *Paris*, was destroyed

by fire under suspicious circumstances. He was then sent as consul for Germany to Trondheim as a preliminary for his work at Narvik.

When the sudden attack, just after dawn on 9 April, was launched, mysterious orders were sent to the two coast defence ships that, as resistance was useless, they had better offer no opposition. To their honour, the officers of these small warships attempted to do their duty, though they were not so successful as the commanding officer of the *Oskarsborg* battery at Oslo, who insisted on firing on the advancing German naval forces with his 11-inch guns, and helped to put out of action the brand-new battle cruiser, *Gneisenau*, with heavy loss of life.

The tragedy of the *Norge* and *Eidsvold* is that, if they had had warning and had been allowed to defend themselves, they could have engaged the Nazi destroyers on not unequal terms. They were actually lying alongside the quay. Though nearly forty years old, these stout little warships of 4,166 tons displacement, were each armed with two heavy guns of 8.2 in. calibre in armoured turrets, six 6-in. guns, and ten smaller guns. They were heavily armoured, and carried a crew of 270 men each. Unless the officer commanding the Nazi destroyers was sure that the two Norwegian warships were unprepared to give battle it is doubtful if he would have steamed up the fjord in broad daylight.

The first shots at Narvik were fired by a band of heavily armed German soldiers, who swarmed

ashore from a German merchant ship alongside the quay, shooting with their automatic weapons, and throwing hand grenades. The only opposition they met with was from a few sleepy and unarmed Customs officials, and half a dozen of the local police. Simultaneously, the German flotilla of destroyers entered the harbour at full speed. The commotion had given the alarm on board the Norwegian gunboat *Norge*, and her crew fired a warning shot across the bows of the leading Nazi destroyer. That ship immediately launched four torpedoes against her, one of which struck her squarely, and she capsized immediately. Her crew were soon swimming in ice-cold water, and the Germans opened machine-gun fire on them. A German officer then put out in a motor launch, and boarded the other Norwegian gunboat, the *Eidsvold*, ordering her captain to surrender. On this officer's refusal, the German officer returned to his launch, and fired a rocket from a signal pistol. The destroyer immediately torpedoed the *Eidsvold*, and she sank in two minutes.

More German soldiers were now landed from the other merchant ships, and dividing up into parties seized all the key positions in the town. One band, headed by a Gestapo man, surrounded the Grand Hotel, and arrested the British Consul. It is reported that he was asked for information about the disposition of the British naval forces, subjected to the third degree, and, on refusing to comply, was put up against a wall and shot.

The Germans have since declared that he was, unfortunately, killed in an air raid.

All British merchant seamen on shore leave were arrested. It is stated that one young man who, though unarmed, offered resistance, was executed in front of a parade of other British seamen in an attempt to terrorize them.

The big whale-factory ship, the *Jan Wellum*, was afterwards used as a floating prison for fifty British merchant seamen captured on board the *Blythemore*, *North Cornwall*, and *Mersington Court*. After the first naval battle of Narvik, when a number of the German supply ships were sunk, the floating prison was undamaged. In anticipation of another attack, the Germans put the prisoners ashore in charge of an armed guard. The British merchant seamen managed to escape, and joined the survivors from the destroyer *Hardy* at the village of Ballanger, being very kindly treated by the Norwegian inhabitants. In order to avoid the danger of their recapture, the Norwegian country people fitted them out with Norwegian clothing. They were all rescued after the second naval battle of Trondheim.

The German staff work failed at one point. In Narvik was the 9,000-ton German liner, *Bochenheim*. Her master had not been told what was afoot. When the shooting began on that cold winter morning, the good captain thought the British were attacking the port. He slipped his cables, ran his ship ashore, and set fire to her to avoid capture. This

German carried out the policy of scuttle prematurely.

The local Norwegian military forces consisted of one company, about a hundred strong. The Germans landed 1,200 men, but the small Norwegian force managed to retire from the town, and take up a position in the hills above the Rombak fjord. This fjord is a continuation of Narvik fjord, and we shall hear more about it when the subsequent naval operations are described. The small garrison was originally commanded by a Norwegian military officer, one Colonel Sundlo, a Quisling adherent. He co-operated with the assailants, but was replaced by Captain Omdahl. Omdahl arrested his chief, and his small force acted with decision and great bravery. They were joined by volunteers who skied long distances over the snow-clad mountains to join them. This force held their position with great gallantry for over a week, and performed a vital service to the Allied cause. They prevented the seizure of the vital railway line from Narvik to the Swedish frontier, and thence to the Kiruna iron mines and the loading port of Lulea in the Gulf of Bothnia.

Amongst the German forces landed at Narvik were a number of expert skiers from the Tyrol, and a surprisingly large number of them spoke Norwegian. A considerable number of the Austrian-Bavarian troops used by the Germans in Norway are Norwegian-speaking.

Norwegian, as a language, is not usually studied by foreigners except those who live, or intend to live, in the country. That is why the Norwegians themselves are good linguists. The explanation of the Norwegian-speaking attackers is that, after the last war, when the Austrian and Bavarian population were suffering severely from famine, the kindly Norwegians gave hospitality to large numbers of children from Austria and Bavaria sent by the Society of Friends and other charitable organizations. They were fed, clothed, educated, and affectionately treated by their hosts, for considerable periods, until they could return after some economic restoration of their countries had taken place. During their stay, these children learnt to speak Norwegian, and now, as grown men, are in the forefront of the German aggression. Such is the effect of Nazi teaching on the young.

Why was this expedition sent to this northern port so far within the Arctic Circle? As a military operation it would appear to be grotesque. True, amongst the German supply ships were vessels carrying artillery which it was hoped to mount at the entrance to Narvik fjord to meet any counter-attack. Some guns were actually landed, with great rapidity, and placed in position.

Narvik, thanks to the Gulf Stream, is free of ice all the year round, and has great importance strategically. If it could be held, fortified, and a fleet based there, it would outflank the British blockading lines

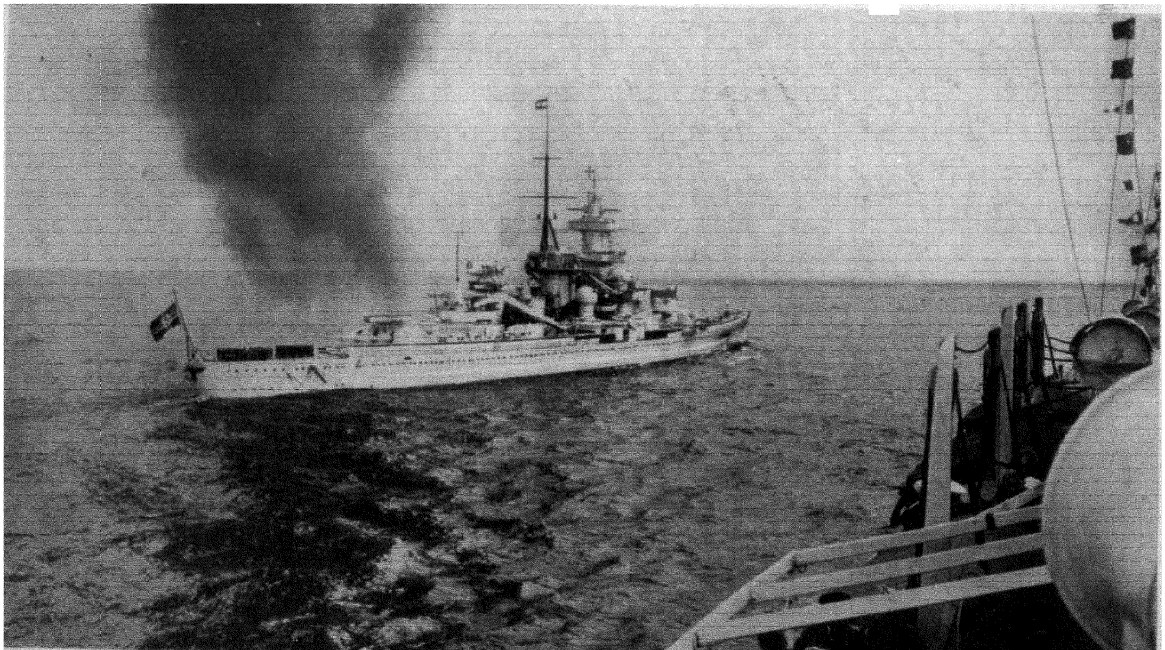
between the Shetland Islands and Bergen. Yet Narvik has no means of communication with Southern Norway except by sea. Undoubtedly the German General Staff had hoped to occupy the whole of Norway with little resistance in a few days. They nearly succeeded. With both Norway and Denmark firmly under occupation, the position of Sweden would have been very difficult. The great prize in Sweden, in Nazi eyes, is the rich ore deposits round Kiruna and Gellivara.

During winter, this iron ore can only be exported via Narvik. During the first seven months of the present war a traffic in iron ore from Narvik has been going on, the ore being taken to German ports by cargo steamers making use of Norwegian territorial waters. The Allies had decided that this traffic must cease, and, with it, the abuse of Norwegian territorial waters. For this purpose, three minefields were laid twenty-four hours before the launching of the general German attack on Denmark and Norway, but some days after the commencement of the expedition. The object of these minefields, the existence of which was notified to all the world in accordance with recognized international law, was to force these ore-carrying ships out into the open, where they could be dealt with by our contraband control. No doubt the Nazi Government had long anticipated some such move, and had realized that, if the use of Narvik was denied to Germany, the port of Lulea was not equipped to

take the whole of the traffic, even during the summer months, when the northern part of the Gulf of Bothnia is free of ice.

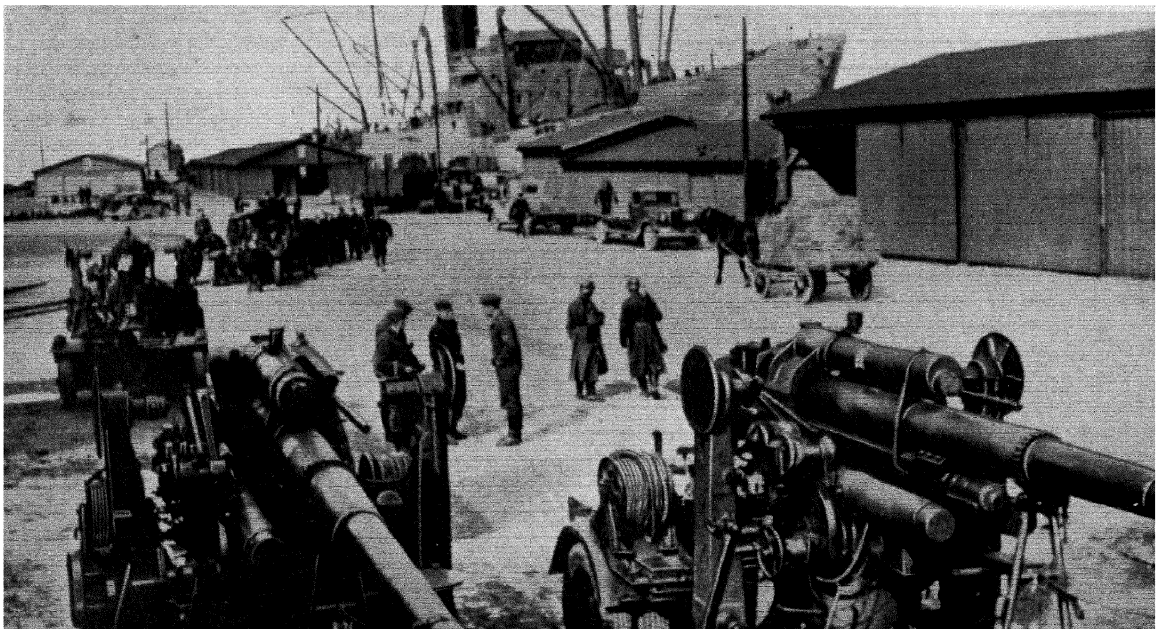
A certain proportion of the very rich iron ore from the Swedish mines was reaching Britain through Narvik. If Germany was not to have it, the plan was to deny it to the Allies. That the attack on Norway was a preliminary to an attack on Sweden is beyond doubt. The whole operation is not comprehensible otherwise. The Swedes would either have to capitulate or be invaded in their turn. In any case, Germany had to have the iron ore, for there was no alternative supply she could reach except, possibly, the Russian surplus from the iron-ore mines in the Southern Ukraine. These supplies are normally shipped to Odessa, and thence by sea to their various markets. It is possible for Germany to obtain iron ore from the Russian Ukraine by railway, but this is uneconomic, and difficult in any case.

In 1938 Germany produced fourteen million tons of low-grade ore, which yielded only four million tons of metal. In the same year she imported twenty-two million tons of high grade ore, producing eleven million tons of metal. The majority of the blast furnaces in Germany are designed to smelt only high grade ore. The Swedish ore is the best in the world, and essential to Germany in this war. The following table gives the position at a glance.



GERMAN BATTLE-CRUISER *GNEISENAU*

*Sport and General*

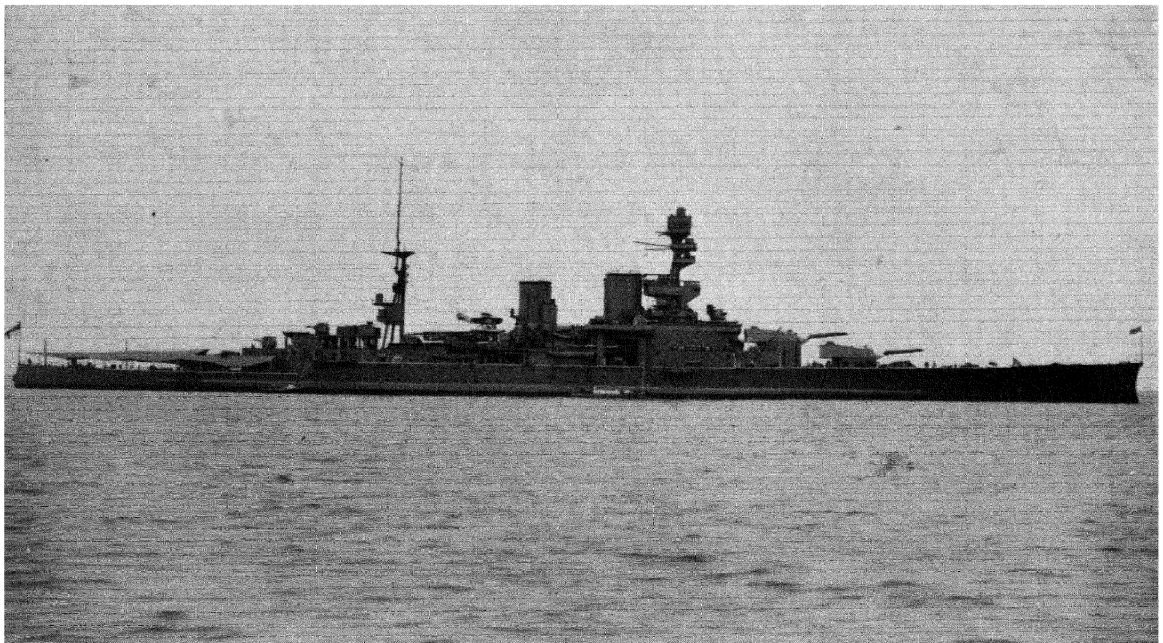


GERMAN ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS AT TRONDHEIM



GERMAN SOLDIERS JUST LANDED AT STAVANGER AIRPORT

*Associated Press*



*Keystone*

GERMAN BATTLECRUISER *SCHARNHÖRST*

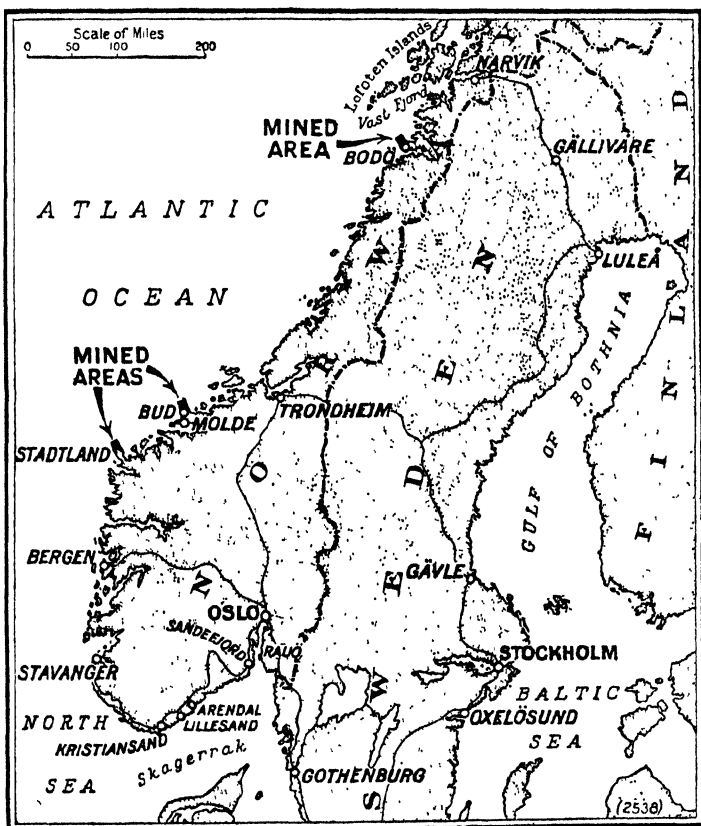
FIGURES FOR 1938

| | Iron Ore (in tons) | Metal Content (in tons) | Per cent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Home Production · Germany and Austria .. | 13,750,000 | 4,041,000 | 26 |
| Imports from Neighbouring Neutrals : | | | |
| Sweden .. .. | 8,992,000 | 5,480,000 | |
| Luxembourg .. | 1,718,000 | 515,000 | |
| Greece .. .. | 249,000 | 120,000 | |
| Switzerland .. | 121,000 | 34,000 | |
| | 11,080,000 | 6,149,000 | 40 |
| Imports Now Out of Reach : | | | |
| France .. . | 5,056,000 | 2,053,000 | |
| Africa .. . | 2,233,000 | 1,195,000 | |
| Norway .. | 1,118,000 | 726,000 | |
| Newfoundland .. | 1,122,000 | 584,000 | |
| Spain . . | 1,083,000 | 510,000 | |
| Brazil .. .. | 122,000 | 80,000 | |
| | 10,734,000 | 5,148,000 | 34 |

Lulea is a small port served by a single-track railway. Its capacity is limited to about four and a half million tons a year. Another two or three million tons might be shipped from other Swedish ports. If the Nazis decided to invade Sweden, an attempt had to be made to prevent help from reaching the Swedes via Narvik. Hence the importance of delaying tactics at that northern port.

We now know that the Nazi expedition to Denmark and Norway had been in preparation for several months. The original plan of campaign might well have been to wait until the British and French had sent an army through to Finland to assist the

Finnish resistance to the Russian Red Armies, and then to make the attack. In the event, both Norway and Sweden refused to permit the passage of these




troops. Peace was made between the Finns and the Russians, and this excuse for the Scandinavian aggression disappeared. The need for the iron ore,

however, remained, and the three Scandinavian countries were tempting prizes for other reasons. All three have merchant navies, the Norwegian mercantile marine being particularly important. The Norwegian merchant navy, the fourth largest in the world, consists of 1,960 ships, totalling 4,500,000 tons. The Danes had 800 ships, totalling 1,500,000 tons. Certain of the Danish and Norwegian ships were captured in harbour, at the very beginning of the operations. These ships can only be used by Germany in the Baltic, but at any rate their use would be denied for trade of interest to the Allies. Fortunately, most of the Norwegian and Danish ships were abroad and were saved from Nazi seizure. They will now serve the Allies.

Norway is an important producer of aluminium. The bauxite, chiefly brought from Yugoslavia by sea, is worked up cheaply in Norway by the use of the abundant water power in that country. The country also produces nickel and other minerals, and its forests are particularly valuable. Germany needs timber. Norway also produces wood pulp, the raw material for the manufacture of newsprint and other paper; and Dr. Goebbels has an insatiable appetite for paper.

Practically the whole Norwegian coast is indented with deep, navigable fjords, which would provide lurking places for German commerce raiders, both surface and submarine. There were reasons enough, therefore, why a successful overrunning of Norway

would appear attractive in the eyes of Herr Hitler and his confederates.

Narvik itself has an added importance in German eyes. In the days of Czarist Imperialism, it was a tempting prize as an outlet to ice-free ocean. Russian Imperialists had long cast covetous eyes on this great natural harbour. A successful seizure of Narvik, therefore, would, at some future date, provide the Nazis with a useful bargaining counter with their mighty Russian neighbour.

I will describe presently how the plot was foiled, thanks to resolute British naval action, so far as Narvik was concerned.

The capture of Bergen was achieved by similar means. Bergen is the second most important city in Norway, and the port has great commercial value. From the middle of March, three weeks before, three German military supply ships had been anchored at the Pudde fjord, off Bergen. They were full of German soldiers, artillery, and munitions. Two of them flew the Finnish flag, and one the Swedish. At dawn on April 9 German destroyers entered Bergen harbour, and landed armed parties. They were received by the leaders of the local Fifth Column. Bergen harbour was defended by an electrically controlled minefield and by shore batteries. The telephone lines to the forts and the controlled minefields had been cut by the German agents. Bergen fell with little resistance. As at Trondheim, the garrisons of the forts had neither

the time nor the will to throw the breech blocks of their heavy guns into the fjord. The commander of a small battery of anti-aircraft guns at Bergen did his duty by firing on German planes ; but that was the only resistance.

The first German soldiers to land carried white flags, and announced that they had come as friends. By eight o'clock the chief of police at Bergen had been arrested, and, as at Narvik, the various parties of heavily armed German soldiers, still carrying their white flags, had occupied the town hall, post office, telephone exchange, and wireless station. The round-up of refugees, British merchant seamen, British and French residents then commenced.

There was some resistance from the Norwegian soldiers of the rank and file, and eighteen were killed. Two German destroyers and two cruisers had managed to enter the harbour under cover of darkness, but another cruiser, the *Köln*, was torpedoed by a British submarine on her way in, and was brought alongside the quay in the narrow harbour at Bergen badly damaged. Her destruction was completed by bombs aimed at her by aircraft of the British Royal Air Force. She was hit by two large bombs, and sank in ten minutes, many of her crew being killed. I describe this air attack in a later chapter.

The first occupation of Bergen was made by perhaps 200 German soldiers in all. The people

were utterly bewildered. As many of them as could get transport immediately evacuated the city.

When the blow fell on Trondheim, an American cargo steamer, the *Mormacsea*, was in the port. She had on board over £1,000,000 worth of Swedish gold which the Swedish Government was sending to America for greater safety. This ship was actually lying alongside the quay, and an officer from a German cruiser asked if he might bring his ship's boats, with the landing party of soldiers, alongside the *Mormacsea*, and cross over her to the dock. Her master, Captain W. H. McHale, refused to allow any Germans on board his ship, though he agreed to move her away from the berth. A German merchant ship, full of soldiers, took her place, and Captain McHale got to sea with his gold as quickly as he could. Stavanger aerodrome was captured by soldiers landed from passenger aeroplanes fitted as troop carriers. As this aerodrome is near the sea, with plenty of good landing places near, it could have been recaptured by the Allies if the situation had been appreciated in time.

Just before the surprise attack was made on Bergen, a British convoy of 37 merchant ships, 31 of them neutral, under the command of Captain Pinkney, master of the Whitby ship, *Fylingdale*, had sailed for England.

At 9 a.m. on 9 April, the *Fylingdale* passed a Swedish ship. Captain Pinkney was hailed from the

bridge : "Have you heard there are German troops in Bergen ?"

Thirty-six hours before Captain Pinkney had himself been in that unsuspecting city ; and this piece of news seemed incredible.

To the south-east armies were on the march ; to the north the damaged *Scharnhörst* had fled from the *Renown* ; but all that the captain of the *Fylingdale* knew was that there were heavy squalls of snow, and that he had 37 ships in the convoy of which he was leader.

The fjord where the convoy had assembled is narrow, and there was little room for the 37 ships to manœuvre in safety while waiting for orders to proceed. On his beat down it two German machines had flown inland low overhead, without even the customary salute of machine-gun fire.

A wireless message was brought up to the bridge. It instructed all British ships in Norwegian waters to sail immediately.

Feeling by now thoroughly uneasy, Captain Pinkney turned his ship up the fjord, and at that moment he saw the German tanker *Skagerrak* coming round its southern point. As he described it, "She bolted back." Shortly afterwards they heard her wireless sending a code message addressed to Deutschlandsender Oslo, without any of the usual preamble. Within a few hours the *Skagerrak* scuttled herself, true to Nazi tradition ; but, at that moment, as he had seen, her decks were crowded with men.

Here was proof that something unusual was on. The signal, "Convoy proceed to sea at once" was hoisted.

The first job of Captain Pinkney, upon whose shoulders the responsibility for 37 merchant vessels had fallen, was to get the convoy safely away to sea. Would the 31 neutrals follow ?

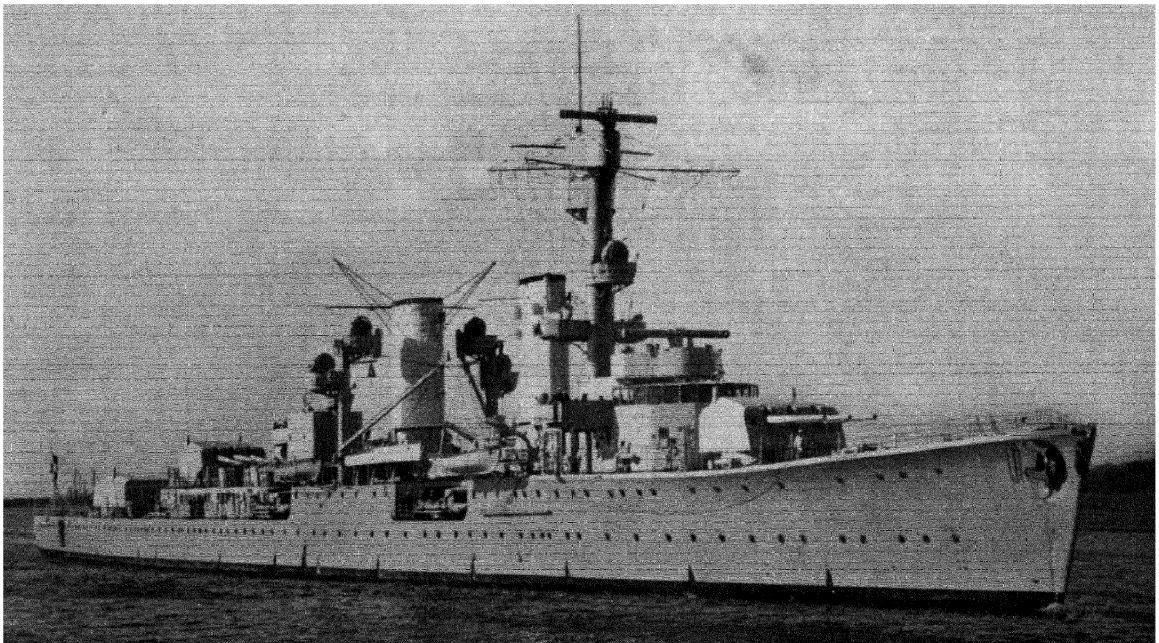
Quietly, the *Fylingdale* moved on up the fjord with her signal flying, turned at the entrance, and moved slowly out to sea.

Every neutral followed. The first part of the job was done. He had got them all to sea.

At 4.30 p.m. that afternoon the *Fylingdale* sighted three warships, hull down on the horizon ; other ships of the convoy sighted them, too, and signals fluttered out : "What do you intend to do ? Warships in sight". It was all meant to be helpful, but it was not much help to the lonely man on the bridge, who had to decide whether these were friends or foes, and, if foes, what to do. Should he make the signal for the convoy to scatter at once ?

Those who know the North Sea will appreciate how hard it is to recognize a far-off ship in the fickle light of an April afternoon, and will realize what coolness was needed to hold on.

The warships apparently had not sighted him, and he was hoping for the best when an aeroplane was sighted. The afternoon sun was behind it as it flew past them straight to the warships, and it was unrecognizable.



GERMAN CRUISER *KARLSRÜHE*

*Planet News*



*Topical Press*

DR. HALVDAN KOHT,
NORWEGIAN MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The warships altered course straight for the convoy.

As he hoisted the signal to scatter, Captain Pinkney must have been a prey to feelings of great self-reproach. He must have felt that he had held on too long, that he had brought these 31 neutrals from Norway to their deaths, for the German knows no mercy.

As the dark shapes came nearer he must have braced himself for the first gun flashes.

Imagine Captain Pinkney's relief when those sinister shapes turned out to be a British escort sent to meet the convoy.

As night fell the convoy passed what Captain Pinkney said looked like "the whole Allied fleets stretched across the horizon." He would have given his right hand to have seen them a few hours earlier.

Safely the convoy passed to England, and the Fleet passed on to its appointed duty.

The full story of the capture and occupation of Oslo was told by a special correspondent of the London *Daily Telegraph* in two remarkable despatches published on 16 and 17 April, 1940. These despatches made one of the greatest journalistic scoops since the war of 1914–18. They explain much that is essential to this narrative, and I reproduce them here by the courteous permission of the Editor of that great paper. The special correspondent is a brilliant American journalist.

For the first time the story behind Germany's paralysing twelve-hour invasion of Norway on Tuesday, 9 April, can be told.

Between midnight and noon on that bewildering day Norway's capital, all her principal seaports and her most strategically valuable coastal defences fell into German hands like over-ripe plums.

The Norwegian people were stunned, as the Belgian people must have been stunned in 1914, and most of them still have not the slightest conception how this incomprehensible tragedy could have happened.

I spent those hours in Oslo, together with two other American newspapermen who were on the spot—Warren Irvin, of the National Broadcasting Corporation, and Edmund Steevens, of the *Christian Science Monitor*—and we ourselves could scarcely accept the evidence of our eyes. But I had to remain in Oslo through four days of the German occupation to learn how this miracle of lightning naval and military occupation was made possible. Then I could scarcely believe my ears.

After that, with the last train connections with Sweden severed, Irvin and I decided to try somehow to get across the border.

It was the only possible way to give a detailed account of the most astonishing thing that has happened since the second World War began.

Norway's capital and great seaports were not captured by armed force. They were seized with unparalleled speed by means of a gigantic conspiracy which must undoubtedly rank among the most audacious, and most perfectly oiled political plots of the century.

By bribery and extraordinary infiltration on the part of the Nazi agents, and by treason on the part of a few highly placed Norwegian civilian and defence officials, the German Dictatorship built its Trojan horse inside Norway.

Then, when the hour struck, the German plotters spiked the guns of most of the Norwegian navy and reduced its formidable fortresses to impotence.

Absolute control by only a handful of key men in administrative positions and in the Navy was necessary to turn the trick and everything had been faultlessly prepared.

The conspiracy went about 90 per cent according to schedule. Only in two or three places was it marred by unexpected hitches, but Norway's sea gates were already wide open.

For the success of the German plan the capture of three key cities was essential. These three were Oslo, Bergen, and Narvik. It is reported that Narvik was betrayed to the Germans by its commanding officer. How Bergen's harbour defences were taken remains a mystery so far as I can learn. But most important of all to the Nazi plot was the immediate domination of Oslo Fjord, with its mighty fortresses, and the forcing of its virtually impregnable narrows at Drobak, together with the seizure of the great Norwegian naval base at Horten.

Only in this manner could the Germans penetrate to Oslo and deliver the almost irreparable blow to Norway's Parliamentary Government.

To seize the whole of Oslo Fjord and force its narrows would have appeared impossible to any foreign Government except the Nazi Dictatorship ; but by methods even more astonishingly efficient than those which it used against Austria or Czechoslovakia, the inconceivable was accomplished. Until now, I believe the outside world has had to guess how it was done.

To understand the scope of the conspiracy one must go back to somewhere near the climax of the plot. In Oslo I learned on most reliable authority that Germany's sea forces and troopships sailed from the German ports for their Norwegian adventure during the night of Thurs-

day, April 4—three full days before the British mined the upper Norwegian coast between Bergen and Narvik. I was also informed with impressive assurance that the German army chiefs strongly opposed Hitler on the plan to invade Norway, because they insisted that the communication lines for an army of occupation in Norway would be most dangerously limited and exposed.

The Nazi Party's Radical leaders supported the Fuehrer in a decision taken against the counsel of the regular army chiefs. . . .

On Sunday night the British sowed the minefields below Narvik. On Monday Berlin's Press flamed against that provocation.' In the first hours of Tuesday, 9 April, Norway's naval defences were betrayed to the German fleet and the first German troops were landed at Fornebu, Oslo's airport, a few hours after daybreak.

This brings us to the methods by which Oslo Fjord and Oslo itself were captured from the sea in the early morning hours of 9 April.

The Germans could not enter without controlling the vital Norwegian naval base of Horten. At 1.30 that morning—three and a half hours before Berlin's ultimatum was handed to Dr. Koht, the Norwegian Foreign Minister —the commander of three Norwegian warships at Horten received an urgent message. It was supposedly signed by Koht himself, and was accepted as coming direct from the Government via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It ordered the Norwegian ships not to fight against German warships which were about to come up the fjord, and to put all their men ashore immediately—without their arms.

Without questioning the origin of the order, the commander ordered all his men ashore except stokers and messmen.

Here one slight hitch occurred which was costly for the

In this fashion Norway's capital was betrayed from within and the German occupation of Oslo assured before its Government knew what had happened or Parliament had courageously refused to capitulate.

Before the Germans had captured Horten, the Oslo Government had already ordered mobilization as a precaution. Accordingly, before daybreak on 9 April scores of young Norwegians reported at Horten Railway Station. They were immediately rounded up by German marines of the landing party and placed aboard the German ships which had come up.

Meanwhile we had spent an eerie night at Oslo's Grand Hotel, with a succession of air raid alarms, of which the first sounded 35 minutes after midnight, about the time the mobilization was ordered.

At first I did not understand the alarm, as the sirens were different from those of Helsinki and sounded like motor-cars honking in a traffic jam. Later Steevens and I decided that the Norwegians were only rehearsing the air alarm as a precaution. So I refused to get up until seven o'clock. Then a Finnish diplomat informed me of the ultimatum and the Government's decision to leave.

At 7.45, while we still had not the slightest idea what had happened in Oslo Fjord and at Horten, five Nazi bombers suddenly came roaring over the rooftops so low that they almost touched them. We watched them come, expecting every moment that bombs would fall. For two and a half hours German planes dived over the city, always only three or five in number. They were intended to terrorize the populace into surrender and the authorities into action, while the first troops were being landed by air at Fornebu, outside the city.

Thousands of Osloans gazed at them curiously and fearfully, but there was no panic. None of us dreamed that German warships were in the inner harbour and that Oslo

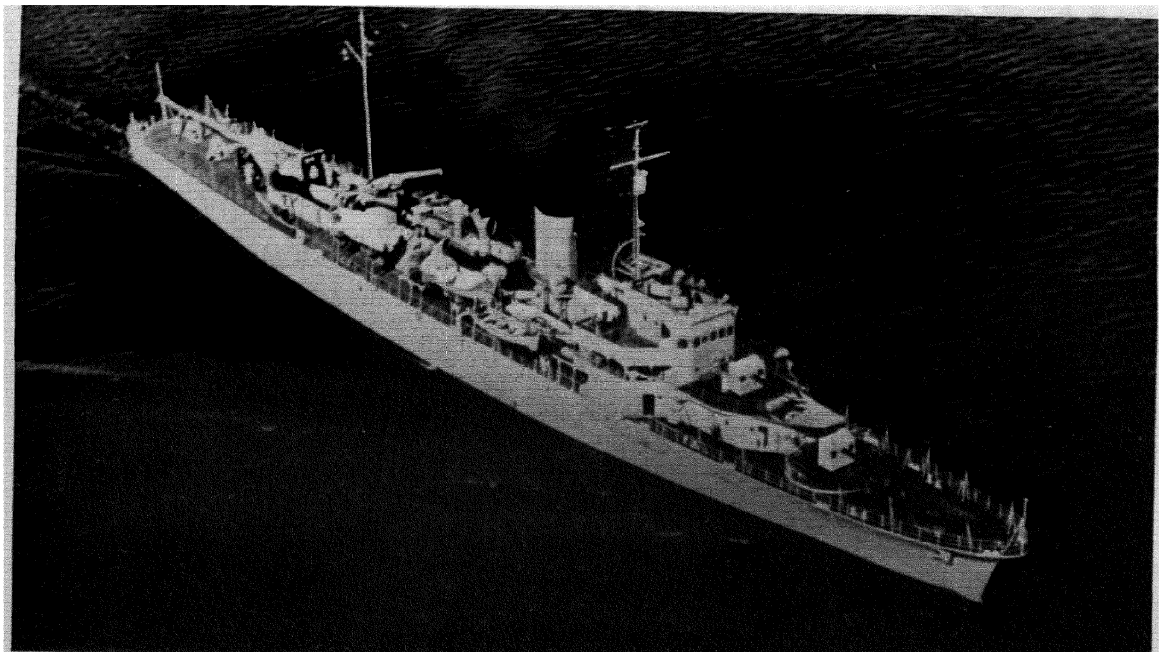
was already doomed. We still thought that British ships and planes might come at any moment. It seemed utterly incredible that the Narrows could have been forced by the Germans and the powerful forts of the Fjord silenced.

The same madness of incomprehensible events continued all day long. First there was mystification over the city's complete lack of defence from its naval forces and coastal forts. Then it was the immunity of the low-flying Nazi 'planes to the thousands of machine-gun bullets which spattered almost incessantly until after 10 o'clock. Then it was the further fact that only one anti-aircraft battery seemed to be firing against the German planes, and that even this became silent after firing only a few shells, all of which were inexplicably wide of their mark.

Finally, at 10.30 came an equally fantastic lull, during which the German 'planes only circled occasionally and absolutely nothing seemed to happen.

Tens of thousands of persons clustered in the streets and on the pavements, waiting, utterly baffled. We all asked where the British were, but, also, where were the Germans? Meanwhile I had a great battle to get the Telegraph Office to accept a despatch without a special Government Press card. At nine o'clock in the morning Steevens and I could find no responsible chief at his post in the telegraph building, only groups of perplexed employees standing about in the corridors—those few who had reported for work. It was only through the personal intervention of Mr. Raymond Cox, First Secretary, who remained in charge of the American Legation, that our first despatches were finally accepted—the only despatches which were allowed to pass for more than 24 hours.

Norway's capital in every quarter was a scene of dazed disorganization, completely without leadership. Apparently even the men who had been called to the



NORWEGIAN CRUISER *OLAV TRYGGVASON*

*International Graphic Press*



*E.N.A.*

GERMAN TROOPS LANDING AT COPENHAGEN

colours did not know where to go or simply forgot about it.

The streets were filled with men of fighting age, all standing watching the German 'planes, waiting and speculating, but doing nothing and going nowhere.

It was like this until 2.30. Then, as I walked up to the hotel desk the porter asked me: "Aren't you going out to see the Germans come in?"

"What do you mean, the Germans?"

"Yes, they're marching up Carl Johan Boulevard any minute now."

I called Irvin and Steevens; we rushed outside into the strangest scene imaginable. Oslo's beautiful main boulevard was jammed with people all flocking to see the Germans come in. Strangest of all were the Norwegian policemen calmly forming lines along the pavements, clearing the streets for the Germans' triumphal entry. One policeman told me the Germans would be there within ten minutes.

All this and what follows I told in a despatch which I handed in that afternoon—but the Germans had just taken over the telegraph building and I learned two days later that not a line of the despatch was ever sent.

Meanwhile we supposed that the world knew most of the story.

We waited half an hour on the hotel balcony with an excellent view all the way up the boulevard to its beginning at the foot of the hill on which the Royal Palace stands.

Shortly before three o'clock two lorries filled with a dozen German soldiers rolled along the street. Soldiers lolled in them with rifles dangling as if they had been assured that they had not the slightest resistance to fear. From the rear of the second lorry two machine-guns poked their noses out, straight down the boulevard. Their crews lay prone with intent, hard faces, ready to

fire. This was the only show of force and all that was needed.

At 3.3 a murmur ran through the crowd. We could see two mounted men swinging into the boulevard in front of the Palace, then six more, then the head of a marching column in field-grey. The mounted men were Norwegian policemen actually escorting the German troops which were occupying the capital. We looked on uncomprehendingly. Later I was told that the Norwegian policemen never carry any kind of arms ; this also was why they failed to fulfil the Government's order to arrest Quisling.

The German column marched steadily nearer through a lane of 20,000 or 30,000 Osloans, fully half of whom were men of military age. A tall, broad-shouldered officer, General von Falkenhorst, and two other officers marched directly behind the mounted police. Then came the German regulars in columns of threes, as if to make the line look as long as possible. One out of nine carried light machine-guns ; all carried compact aluminium kits and bulky shoulder-packs.

They were hard-muscled, stony-faced men. They marched with rifles on shoulders with beautiful precision. Mostly they stared straight ahead, but some could not restrain triumphant smiles in the direction of the onlookers.

Several times Falkenhorst and the other two officers returned the Nazi salutes of persons in the crowd, who must have been German advance agents and had been busy in Oslo for weeks before this crowning moment.

From our hotel balcony two Nazis gave the salute. I noticed in particular the beaming face of a chic, slim, blonde German woman whose husband had been very active in our hotel since we arrived the previous Thursday.

It was a thin, unbelievably short, column. It required only six or seven minutes to march past. It was composed

only of two incomplete battalions—surely less than 1,500 men in all.

Norway's capital of nearly 300,000 inhabitants was being occupied by a German force of approximately 1,500 men.

The last of the German troops went by without a single tear noticeable on any Norwegian face. Like children the people stared. Thousands of young men stood watching this occupation parade. Not one hand or voice was raised. We could discern no sign of resentment upon any face about us. This was the most incomprehensible thing among all the incomprehensible things of this fantastic 24 hours.

Somehow it seemed as if curiosity was the strongest sentiment in the throng of Oslcans who watched the Germans come in. No other emotion was betrayed in the countless faces we scanned anxiously. The only indignant people we met or saw that day were foreigners. The Norwegians of Oslo seemed stunned beyond recovery. All acted curiously, like children suddenly given a chance to see a parade of strange creatures out of prehistoric times—something which had no connection with real life.

But within two hours real life was making itself felt in Oslo. The Germans had occupied the capital. They simply paraded in, taking it over, much as Frenchmen or Italians might parade into a colonial village somewhere in the interior of Africa. Now they went to work. It was the urgent task of the tiny force of 1,500 men to seize the key places of the nation's capital. They did it swiftly, without any fear of interruption.

When I hurried into the telegraph building I had hopes. There were still no German troops guarding the door. But immediately I knew I was too late.

The first hint came when a woman employee who always addressed me in perfect English spoke to me in German and tried to refuse the message on the ground that

I had no special telegraph card. But her chief had already accepted my despatch at one o'clock. Finally she accepted it reluctantly, together with 64 dollars' worth of Norwegian crowns which had to be paid in advance. Then she told me in German that I must see Fräulein Hauge the next morning, or no more messages would be accepted. Of course, my own and all other despatches for the next 24 hours were never sent. The Germans had closed all wires as well as the telephone lines to the outside world.

Next day, Wednesday, was as unbelievable as the events of 9 April had been. German troops now stood guard over Parliament, the University, the City Hall and other public buildings. My first shock came early in the morning as I passed the Storthing. Two score German soldiers filled the open windows of the third floor of the Parliament building, all singing lustily, while one pumped joyfully at his accordion. Osloans stood watching and listening on the pavements below. I looked closely, but as far as I could see they were simply curious and somewhat entertained. As on the previous night, after the occupation of the city, the cafes were filled in almost normal fashion, and a large number of young men were lolling in them as if no such thing as a regular Norwegian Army were ready to offer resistance to the invader only 50 miles north of the capital.

Wherever we went we saw groups of young people clustered round German soldiers on guard. Some of them chatted pleasantly with the soldiers, some stared at their rifles and machine-guns and asked questions about them. Many young girls gazed admiringly at the men in field-grey uniforms.

Outside the telegraph building I encountered an open car with half-a-dozen hardened German regulars who had a machine-gun mounted for action. The crowd laughed and joked with the soldiers. One man, apparently half

intoxicated, shouted "*Deutschland ueber Alles*" several times. The soldiers laughed. The chief of the machine-gun crew looked down upon their admirers with an indescribable smile. He stood up proudly, like a member of a conquering Roman legion who realized he had a right to do so.

Such scenes, far from infrequent, had not ended when I left Oslo on Friday. By that time, however, many young Norwegians had disappeared from the capital with packs on their backs. A great many more went after the Germans had landed 20,000 troops on Oslo's quays on Thursday afternoon. This sight at last awakened many men from the daze which they had been in. Many others, however, still remained in the capital on Friday—seemingly a large part of the men.

On Wednesday evening we discovered that the Quisling Government had been formed in Room 430 of the Continental Hotel. I went there about a matter which was said to require the new Premier's personal decision. Three Germans in civilian clothes and one Norwegian were in Room 430. After waiting I saw Quisling very briefly, but he turned for advice to a sharp-faced German who introduced himself as Reichsamtleiter Schoedt. The Reichsamtleiter decided the matter while another German assisted, giving further directions.

From there we were referred to the German Legation, where we were received courteously. It appeared that the German military censorship had not yet been completely organized. Nothing could be arranged about the transmission of despatches until next day.

Nevertheless, we made another call at the telegraph building. The public hall was deserted when I entered, after passing the German guards. Inside, two German privates were standing. While we wrote our cablegrams they began an exercise in mass psychology. They marched

15 or 20 steps slowly, deliberately pounding the heels of their boots down on the cement floor at every step. Each step echoed loudly and menacingly against the ceiling. After a few seconds' pause the two soldiers pounded their heels again. They continued this exercise as long as we were in the hall. The echo of the hobnailed heels was amazingly eloquent.

This is how Norway's capital was captured, without a bomb being dropped and without a shot being fired, within several miles of the city. I believe it to be the first story of any completeness to reach the outside world.

I also believe it to be the most important newspaper despatch I have ever had occasion to write.

It is my conviction, for the sake of history and also for the sake of the ultimate restoration of security and freedom in all three Scandinavian countries, that it is crying to be told now. I am closing it with the earnest hope that it will reach the outside world quickly.

17 April, 1940.

The Nazi regime conquered Oslo by ruse and treason, but fewer than 3,000 German troops held Norway's capital for the first 48 hours by a gigantic bluff. They kept more than 250,000 Osloans who remained in the capital mesmerized by music, discreetly intermixed with cocky parade marches, in different sections of the city, by 20, 50 or perhaps 100 soldiers at a time.

But music and song were the chief weapons used to lull the public into the illusion that all was normal. Thus we witnessed the extraordinary spectacle of a nation's capital being held securely by impromptu soldiers' choruses, by one 12-piece military band, and by two accordions.

The Germans—at least, the Nazi leaders—have learned a lot more about psychology than they are given credit for. This is why the tiny German force was able to dominate

Oslo, from the moment it set foot on land last Tuesday, simply through bluff and rollicking tunes.

The Nazi band began its concerts in the park alongside Carl Johan Boulevard in the centre of the city on the morning after the occupation. Soon several hundred Norwegians had clustered round, listening to a jovial rendition of 'Roll Out the Barrel.' They kept arriving, pausing for ten minutes or more in groups. Nobody seemed to think of rolling out the Germans.

On Wednesday morning, too, one company of spick and span men with rifles shining marched down the Carl Johan Boulevard with pounding heels, singing as they went. At the same time skeleton bodies of troops who were occupying Parliament and the city hall also developed the urge to sing popular songs and old German favourites from windows.

But the cleverest bit of musical mass psychology was staged on Thursday afternoon, just after the first of 20,000 German troops had disembarked at Oslo harbour, thereby assuring the Nazi grip on the capital.

After watching the first transports tie up at the quays, I hurried to the telegraph office. When I returned half an hour later the harbour's semi-circle of quays presented a curious sight.

I heard what sounded like a students' chorus at a football match long before I could make my way through the throng of Osloans near the embankment. Lounging on the embankment were perhaps three platoons of German infantry. Their kits, blankets, rifles and bayonets were piled in neat rows on the pavement below them.

The soldiers, sitting with arms locked, were swinging from side to side, shouting out the words of a German song, 'Going to town,' in splendid harmony. Before them stood a hardy Teuton getting the maximum syncopation out of his accordion.

All the singers acted like a group of carefree young men whose only desire in life was to have fun and serenade the people. Behind their booming choruses it was implied that there was nothing serious about these thousands of iron-muscled troops who were marching down the gangways at the edge of the quays.

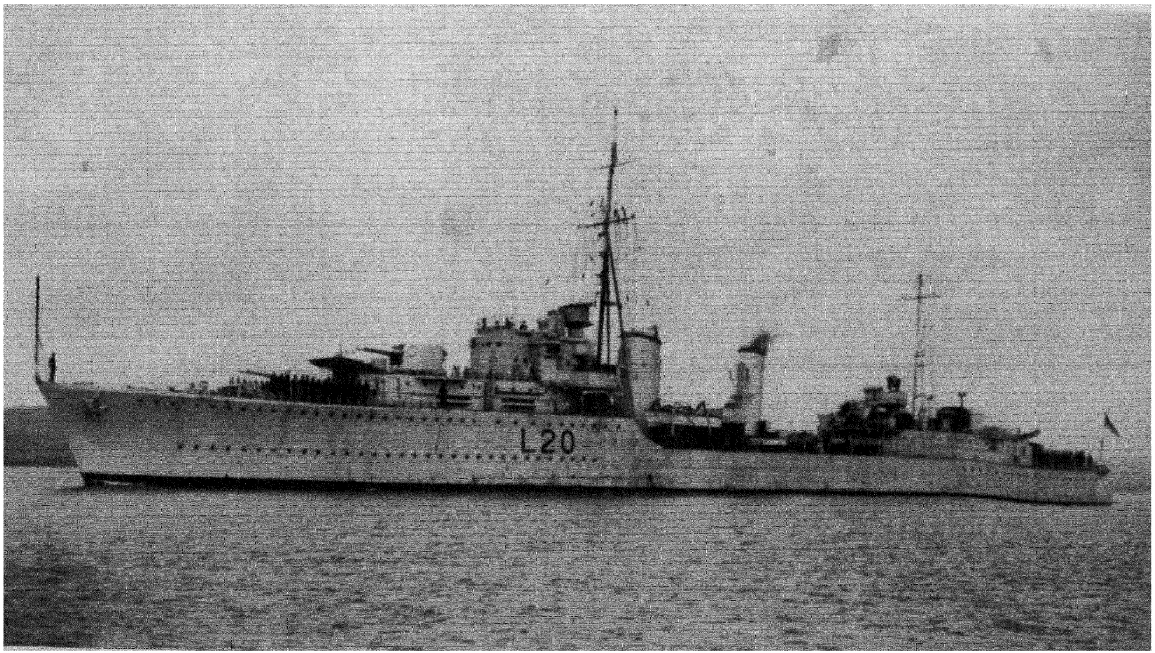
Almost unbelieving, several thousand Osloans paused and listened during the next two hours. But their expressions had changed from the incomprehensible curiosity and seeming indifference of the past two days.

Now, for the first time, I saw many people turn away silently. Now, for the first time, were faces, many faces, with harassed lines and troubled eyes.

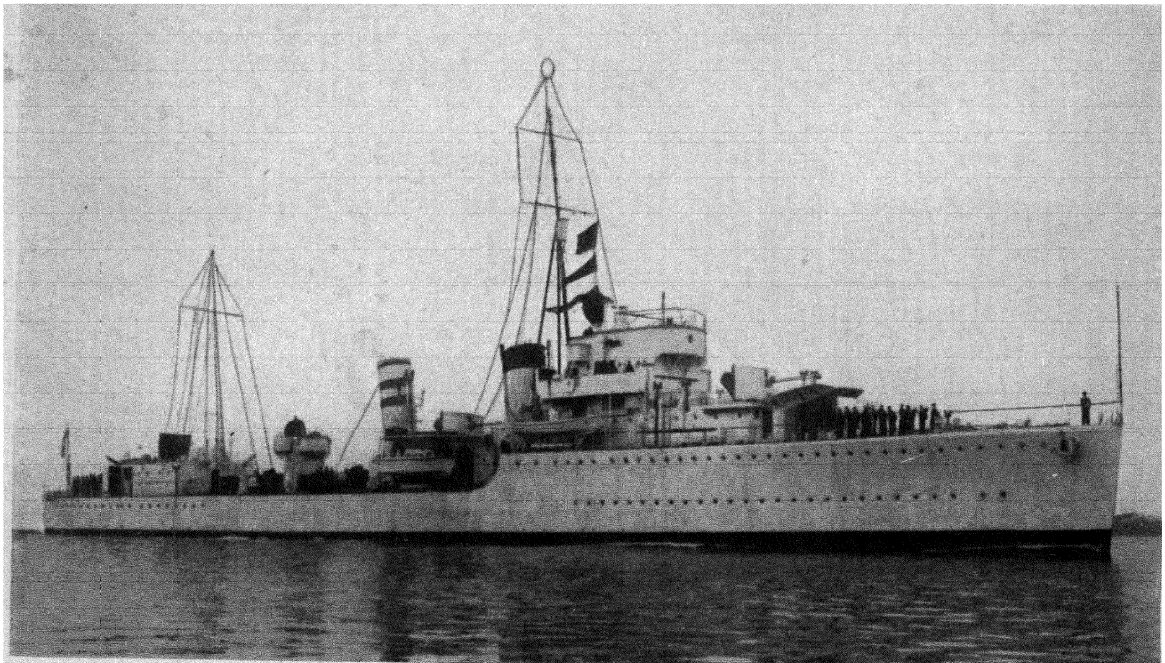
All the songs chosen had lots of gaiety. They attracted people but they did not hold so many. Something, some sharp realization, had at last sunk into the consciences of the Norwegians in Oslo. After 48 hours, it was beginning to sink in.

I walked on a few paces, for another body of singing soldiers was so close that the songs clashed midway between the two groups. These men in field-grey had one tenor whose voice was a winner. One of their best songs, one which each group sang repeatedly, was something about a Rhineland town which "has the finest girls in the world. We want to love them. We want to love them".

With that kind of song and that kind of singing, people are not supposed to remember that their capital is being conquered. Yet a great many Osloans did not linger so long now round the German troops as they had been lingering for the past two days. They were seeing an enormous amount of machine-guns, too, and several more troop ships, lined with soldiers, were out in the harbour waiting their turn to tie up. From the largest, more singing echoed to the shore.




H.M.S. *GURKHA* *Central Press*



H.M.S. *HARDY*

*Central Press*

Meanwhile, in the park directly in front of Parliament the people of Oslo had, from eleven in the morning onward, been treated to the most amazing band concert the Norwegian capital had probably ever heard. The little 12-piece band played almost ceaselessly all the afternoon, just as if nothing important was happening anywhere, least of all down at the harbour.

The band played countless American dance tunes, interspersed with German waltzes and occasional Nazi marches. They kept up the entertainment, never lacking an audience of two or three hundred. The soldiers ended their music only at nightfall, when fully 5,000 more troops had already safely augmented the German garrison of occupation.

By the next morning, Friday, the musical period of occupation had completely ended. There was no further need for bluff. Much more serious business was at hand.

Before leaving we learned from a Red Cross nurse that one Norwegian had been shot by the occupation forces for refusing to drive a commandeered car. This was the only case we heard of up to that time.

With the arrival of 20 or more transports, however, resistance inside Oslo became impossible. 'Roll Out the Barrel' had become the unparalleled and incredible dirge of Norwegian independence so far as Osloans were concerned.

For greater historical accuracy I give now the account of the destruction of the battlecruiser *Gneisenau* (not the *Blücher*), and the light cruiser *Bremen*. The information was given to me by the Norwegian naval attaché in London, Commander J. Espeland, Royal Norwegian Navy.

The Norwegian minelayer *Olav Tryggvason* en-

gaged the *Bremen* with gunfire as she entered the narrows. The *Tryggvason* has no torpedo tubes. The *Gneisenau* was struck by a torpedo fired by a Norwegian submarine, and then came under heavy fire from the 11-inch guns of Fort Oskarsborg. Her captain ran her aground, badly damaged, to avoid sinking. The Oskarsborg Fort held out for two days under intense bombardment from the sea and air, and was only reduced when all the scanty supplies of ammunition had been exhausted.

On these events I venture to make the following observations. During these two fateful days a determined attempt to relieve Oslo by a squadron of heavy British men-of-war might have succeeded. The German garrison in Oslo was absurdly small, and it was not possible to reinforce it by sea while Oskarsborg held out. The whole course of the war in Norway might have been changed. Oslo was occupied in the first place by soldiers landed by German troop-carrying aeroplanes on the civil aerodrome at Fornebu. They came at dawn, overcame slight local resistance, and marched straight into the city, which was open and unfortified, from the land side.

For such a relieving operation to succeed, very rapid action and firm decision were called for from the British Government. The official excuse put forward is that a British fleet attempting to relieve beleaguered Oslo would have exposed itself to concentrated air attack by bombers flying from the

German airfields. I propose to examine the implications of this strategy in a subsequent chapter.

The action fought by the little *Olav Tryggvason* would have been creditable to any Navy. When all was dark and treachery rife, the *Tryggvason* showed the true mettle of the Norwegian Navy. What a tragedy that the remainder of Norway's armed forces were not given an equal chance to distinguish themselves !

The *Emden* was completed in 1925. Her displacement was 5,400 tons, and her crew numbered 534. She carried eight 5.9-inch guns and four torpedo tubes as main armament. She was lightly armoured along the water line, and had a speed of 29 knots.

The *Tryggvason* was completed in 1933. Her displacement is 1,596 tons, and her crew numbered 128. She is fitted as a minelayer, and carries as main armament four 4.7-inch guns firing a 45-lb. shell, as compared to the 100-lb. shells of the 5.9-inch guns of the *Emden.*

Her speed is 20 knots, and she has no armour protection. In theory, the Norwegian warship had less than half the fighting strength of her victim.

Though Norway had not been at war for 125 years, and the country was lightly armed, the three main ports of Oslo, Trondheim, and Bergen, were fortified. The long, narrow entrance to Oslo fjord was defended by an observation minefield. Mines laid on the bottom could be electrically fired in lines from a concealed shore station when the instruments

showed that a hostile vessel was over the line. Heavy guns were mounted in shore batteries. At Bergen there was a minefield and shore fortifications also. At both Bergen and Oslo were shore torpedo tubes to fire torpedoes at incoming hostile ships. At Trondheim the water is too deep, and the tide too strong, for the use of minefields, and there were no submerged torpedo tubes; but the entrance is narrow and intricate, and at the mouth were three batteries of old naval guns.

If the masses of the Norwegian people had had any inkling of what was afoot, if the surprise had not been so complete, if treachery had not been so rife, these three important positions could not have been taken without heavy fighting. The unfortunate Danes might, perhaps, not be blamed for the policy of non-resistance. Even so, hundreds of Danish soldiers sacrificed their lives in doing their duty.

If a strongly armed nation like Germany is prepared, without any kind of warning, to attack a peaceful and trusting neutral like Norway, initial advantages can usually be gained by such gangster methods. At one stroke the principal mobilization centres and arsenals of the Norwegian Army were occupied. Five out of six airfields were captured immediately, a special technique being employed. The Sola airfield at Stavanger, which was afterwards so heavily attacked by the Royal Air Force, was taken by parachute troops. It was guarded by a Norwegian officer with a small force. Ten Nazi

bombers appeared, swooping over the field and the Norwegians opened fire with their three machine-guns. Suddenly 120 men, each one equipped with a light machine-gun, parachuted from the German planes, set up their machine-guns and opened overwhelming fire on the small Norwegian force. The Norwegians fought to the last, but were overwhelmed.

For several months prior to 9 April, 1940, the British and French Governments had been suggesting to the Norwegian Government that it might be attacked, that if it were, help would be given, but that it would be as well to enter into Staff conversations so that some concerted plan of defence could be drawn up in advance. These overtures were rebuffed.

At the same time, the Norwegian Government was given repeated assurances by the Nazis, through the usual diplomatic channels, that they had nothing to fear from Germany. This childish belief in German good faith was their undoing. It was a lesson to every one of the remaining neutral nations within reach of the German air arm.

The plot nearly succeeded. The King of Norway and his Ministers suddenly found their country the victim of a treacherous attack for which I can find no historical parallel. The numerically small but socially powerful Fifth Column was all for capitulation. The masses of the people were for resistance.

The heroic action of such Norwegian troops as could be mobilized and the small Norwegian naval and aerial forces which were in a position to fight was highly creditable. Bishop Berggrav, the Bishop of Oslo, had been preaching the doctrine of non-resistance for years, and especially since September 1939. When by cunning and treachery the Germans secured their foothold in Oslo, this Prelate felt it his duty to broadcast an appeal to his countrymen to accept the situation and lay down their arms. Few obeyed this treacherous ecclesiastic.

Yet if Herr Hitler had been in the slightest degree conciliatory, he might have negotiated a capitulation. The whole German case was that they had come as peaceful protectors of the poor Norwegians threatened by "brutal French and British aggression." There was never any intention to bring armed pressure on Norway either from London or Paris ; but this was the German case.

If Hitler had been even as reasonable as Stalin, who undertook not to interfere with the domestic affairs of Latvia, Lithuania and Esthonia if only he were allowed to control their strategical strong points, and has kept his bargain so far, he, Hitler, might have succeeded ; but he insisted that the wretched Quisling must be Prime Minister and head of the Government. As Quisling spoke for only a small section of the Norwegian people and that section was hopelessly compromised, no self-respecting monarch and no democratically elected

Parliament could possibly agree. Herr Hitler overreached himself once more. The Norwegians did not capitulate. The German military attaché, who had played the role of a local Ribbentrop in Norway, attempted to capture the King; and the German Air Force, following on the Polish and Dutch pattern, pursued the ruler and his Government in bombing aeroplanes wherever they could be located.

The situation in Norway was, however, saved from utter disaster by the heroism and devotion of the common people of Norway.

Why were the immense preparations for this invasion allowed to proceed for so many months without the knowledge of the Governments of London and Paris? Why could this underground burrowing, bribery, corruption, plotting and espionage be carried on in Norway without at least some of the facts being known? Whitehall was as astonished by the turn of events as were the Government circles in Oslo. When the first news reached London the then British Prime Minister was allowed to state from his place in the House of Commons that the report of the capture of Narvik was a mistake, there being a small port named Larvik near Oslo, and confusion had arisen between the two names! There are hundreds of British residents, including important British business men in Norway. Britain and Norway are bound together by the closest commercial ties, our system of economic warfare depends for its success on accurate inform-

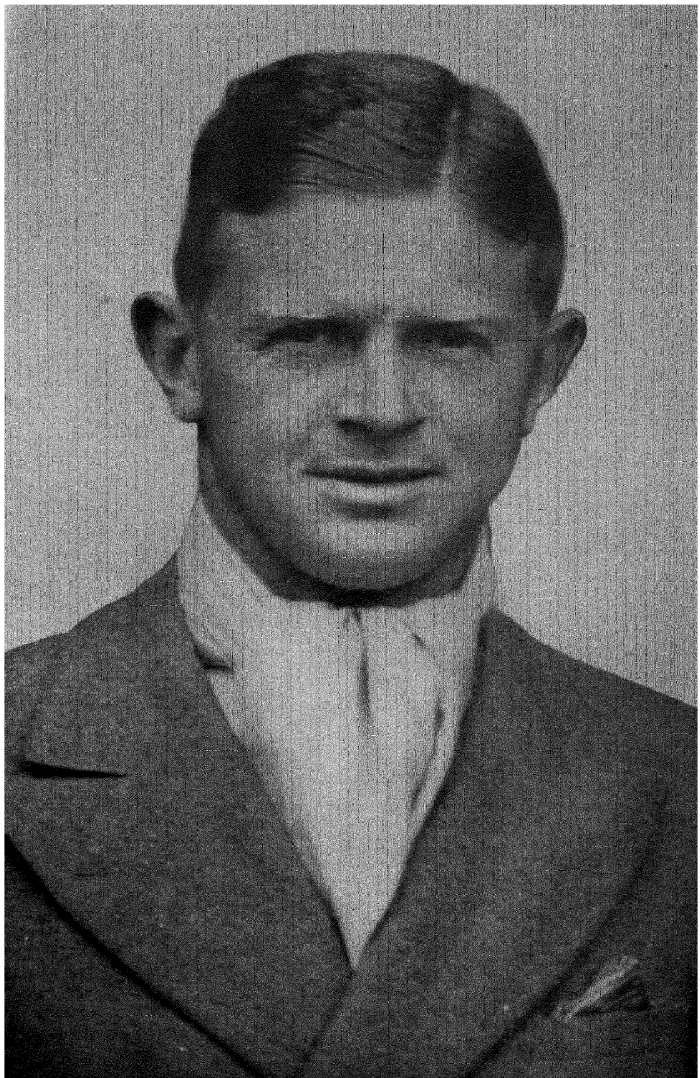
ation, and yet the first news that anything out of the ordinary was afoot came from British reconnaissance planes scouting over the Heligoland Bight which reported a portion of the German fleet at sea on 7 April.

The answer is inescapable. Our Intelligence Service was inefficient. In the World War of 1914–18 I had the best reasons for knowing about the excellence of our means of information. When serving in the Planning Division at the Admiralty, it was my duty to peruse the Intelligence reports. We received excellent information from all the neutral countries, including Norway. Our Secret Service obtained reliable information from inside Germany. True, the preparing of troop transports and landing forces in the German Baltic ports was known ; but that they were being got ready for a descent upon Norway was apparently unexpected. The only way apparently open to us for finding out what forces lay in the vitally important port of Narvik was to allow a British flotilla of destroyers to enter the fjord to find out.

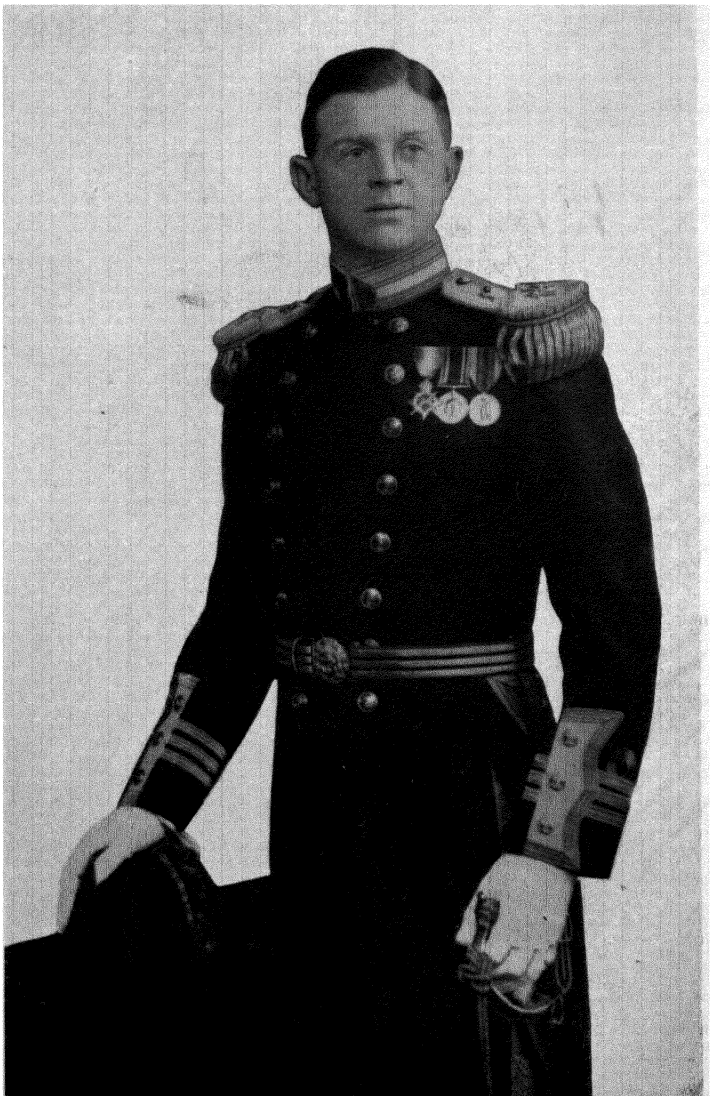
But for the lucky encounter between the old battle cruiser *Repulse* and the German battle cruiser *Scharnhörst* and the armoured cruiser *Hipper*, these two powerful units might have reached Narvik and presented an even more difficult naval problem.

The conclusion that we were caught napping is inescapable.

Norway's trade, shipping, strategical situation,

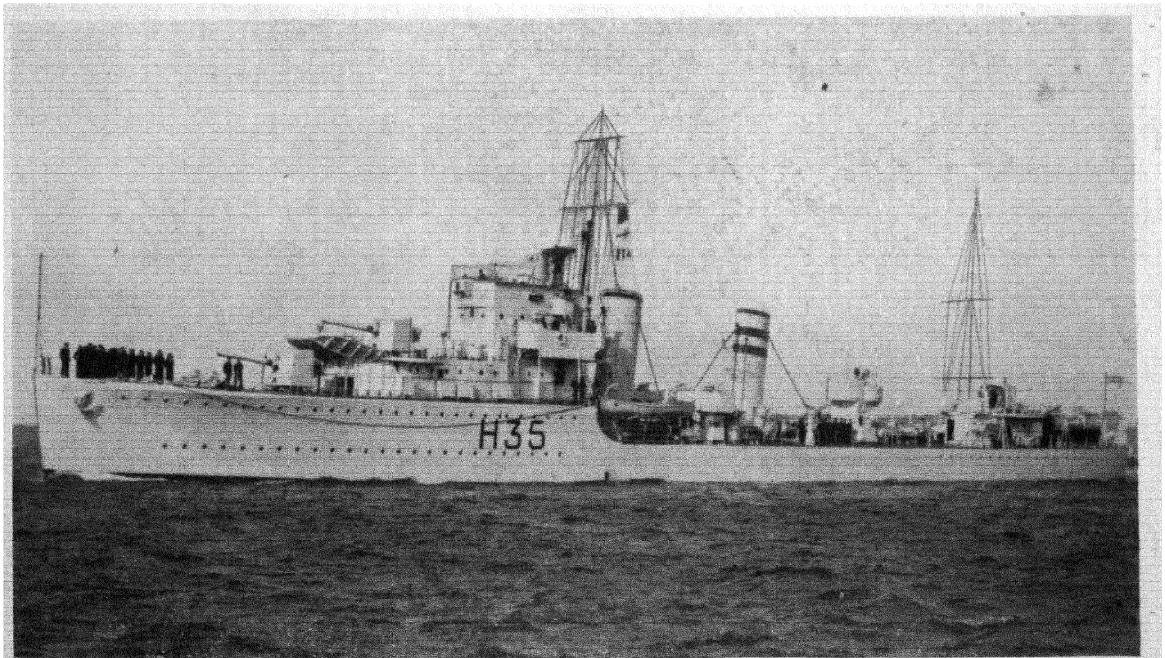


CAPTAIN B. A. WARBURTON-LEE *Sport and General*



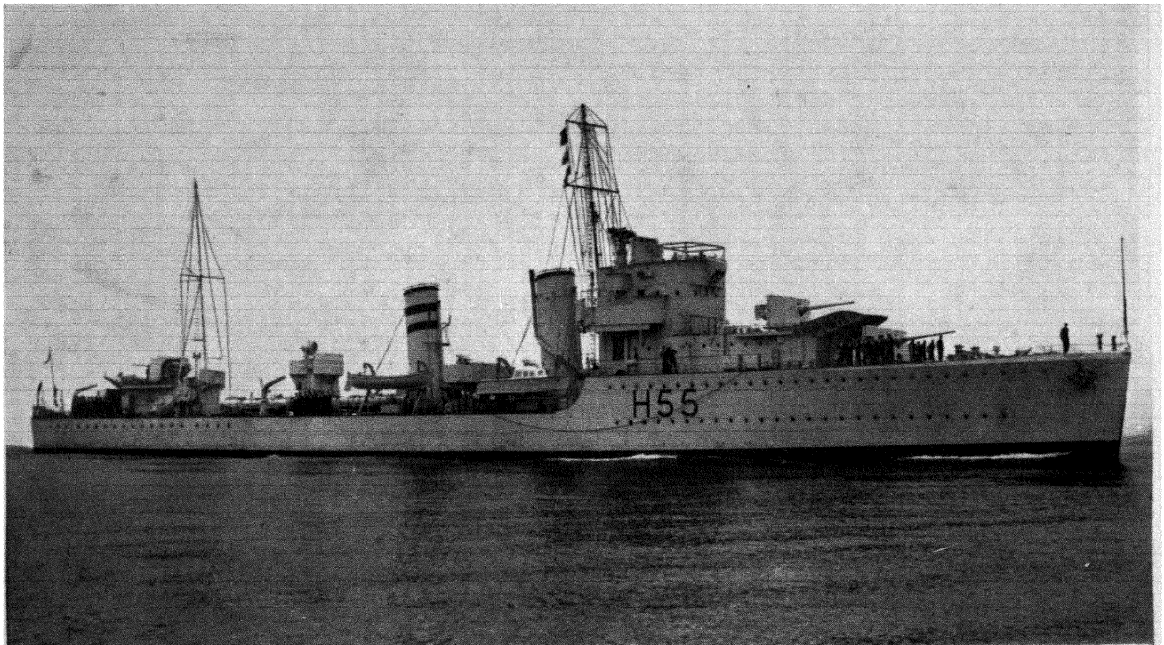
*L.E.A.*

B. WARBURTON-LEE AS A COMMANDER




*Central Press*

H.M.S. *HUNTER*




*Wide World*

H.M.S. *HOSTILE*

are so important that blame must be attached to our Secret Service, to our Foreign Office, to our Trade Intelligence Department, and to the Intelligence Services of the Army, Navy and Air Force. Whatever else may be said about Herr Hitler and the present clique who dominate Germany, they are not orthodox. In waging war, as in everything else they do, they may be expected to adopt revolutionary methods. The old, gentlemanly, conventional, orthodox means of counteraction are not sufficient. The whole technique of the aggression against Norway, with its undermining and burrowing, its treachery and cunning, provide an object lesson for all the world to see.

In the event, however, a difficult and unexpected problem was presented to our fighting services. How they dealt with it will be described in subsequent chapters.

# CHAPTER II

## WHY DENMARK WAS INVADED

NO EXCUSE HAS EVER BEEN PUT FORWARD for the German invasion of Denmark. True, the commanders of the entering troops informed the unlucky Danes, as they told the Norwegians, that they had come to protect them from the English and French; but nobody in his senses outside Germany believes for one moment that either the British or French Governments of that period had any aggressive designs. There were plenty of reasons for the invasion by Germany of her small neighbour. One is comprised in the single word LOOT.

Denmark, for her size, was the richest agricultural country in the world. She produced immense quantities of excellent butter, cheese, eggs and pig products. The Germans were able to cut off the export of these foodstuffs to Britain thus causing us inconvenience. Fortunately, we have other sources of supply. Danish agricultural economy was based on the large-scale importation of feeding stuffs. With these cut off by sea blockade, the production of foodstuffs will fall off. The cattle, pigs and hens would provide meat, however, to the hungry Germans for some months. Two hundred

and fifty thousand tons of petrol and oil were in the country. It will last Germany for about a fortnight at present rates of expenditure. A portion of the Danish Mercantile Marine was captured. There was a good shipbuilding industry, cement works, and other manufacturing enterprises all of which would be useful to the conquerors. No doubt the pacific Danes are already being coerced to build submarines for their masters in their own naval dockyard. The free port of Copenhagen was glutted with goods from all over the world at the time of its almost bloodless capture. The warehouses were overflowing and, for want of space, goods were stacked in piles outside on the wharves. These goods belonged to merchants of various states, but the majority were British owned. For several months prior to the invasion, the Danish Government had made difficulties about issuing licences for the export of these goods to Britain. This was the result of German pressure.

Within a few hours of the German occupation, the looting of Copenhagen began. An endless procession of lorries, loaded with goods of every description, started on their journey to Germany. The systematic despoiling of the rest of the country went on apace. All the raw materials, manufactured goods, foodstuffs, scrap iron, anything that could be of service to the Reich, was sent to Germany by land, or by sea through the Baltic. The comfort-loving Danes, fond of good living,

were placed on short rations. Petrol was forbidden for civil use. The gold and negotiable securities in the banks were appropriated.

There was, however, a more sinister motive for the Danish invasion than the wish to loot the country. In the war of 1914–18 the Danes were left alone. The Germans got their quota of Danish agricultural products, but they understood better than Herr Hitler to-day that this was a diminishing asset once Denmark's sea-routes to the outer world were severed. The Danes were forced to lay a minefield in the Great Belt ; and that was the end of it. The country was practically helpless. Without Allied aid, no adequate resistance was possible. Indeed, officially no resistance was attempted. Some of the Danish garrisons insisted on fighting, and a number of Danish soldiers lost their lives but saved at least a part of the honour of their country. How many of these brave men perished, in the face of overwhelming odds, we may not know till the present war is over. The number has been variously stated as between 800 and 1,200 and probably lies between these two figures.

Prominent Danish friends told me months before the present war broke out that the sentiments of themselves and their countrymen were wholeheartedly with the British and French Democracies, but they would desire to remain neutral in the event of war. If, however, they had to come in, it would have to be on the side of Germany,

much as they hated Hitlerism and all it stands for.

The second and perhaps more important reason for the invasion was strategical.

There are three entrances to the Baltic: the Little Belt and the Great Belt, lying wholly within Danish territory, and the Sound, bounded on one side by Danish land and on the other side by Swedish land. The Little Belt is only navigable by small ships. The Great Belt can pass the largest vessels and is an international highway. At its narrowest part it is ten miles wide. The Great Belt can be passed without infringing Danish territorial waters.

The Little Belt is navigable by shipping, but not by the largest warships or liners. During the Crimean War a combined British and French fleet entered the Baltic through the Great Belt on two occasions in the course of operations against Russia. A strong Power holding the Great Belt controls the Baltic.

During the negotiations for the passage of British and French troops across Norway and Sweden to aid Finland during the Russo-Finnish war, the Swedes were threatened by Germany with invasion if they agreed to the British and French proposals. Before Germany could have attacked Sweden her forces had to be in firm possession of the Great Belt; otherwise a British naval squadron could have passed through this international waterway

and cut off the German transports from Germany and the German fleet from its base.

When we debated the Finnish capitulation to Russia and the events which led up to it, in the House of Lords on 19 March 1940 I drew attention to the probable German plan of campaign against Sweden in the following words :

> . . . No German Admiral would have agreed to a great fleet of German transports leaving a German port without the Great Belt being secured ; otherwise a large British force could enter the Baltic and shoot up his transports within a few hours. The necessary prelude must have been the overrunning of Denmark ; command of the land was there just as necessary as command of the sea. (Hansard, Vol. 115, No. 33, col. 940.)

Presumably preparations were made for just such an operation : the passage of the Great Belt, if the Swedes had consented and we had sent a large military and air force to aid the Finns. It is known that the British and French War Cabinets gave assurances to the Swedish Government of all assistance in our power if Germany attacked Sweden as Herr Hitler threatened. Our naval forces entering the Baltic would then have had the use of the Swedish defended harbours and our aircraft the use of the Swedish aerodromes.

Presumably, also, such plans were put into cold storage when the proposal to send aid to Finland was abandoned.

The surprise sprung on the Allies was the invasion

of Denmark and Norway *first* and when the excuse of creating a diversion in Russia's favour no longer existed ; but was it wise to put the plans into cold storage and disperse the expedition prepared for Finland when we were preparing to lay the mine-fields off the Norwegian coasts ?

As events have developed, it is at least arguable that we were well out of the Finnish expedition. Germany is not able to call on Russian naval help in the Baltic nor on Russian military help in Northern Sweden.

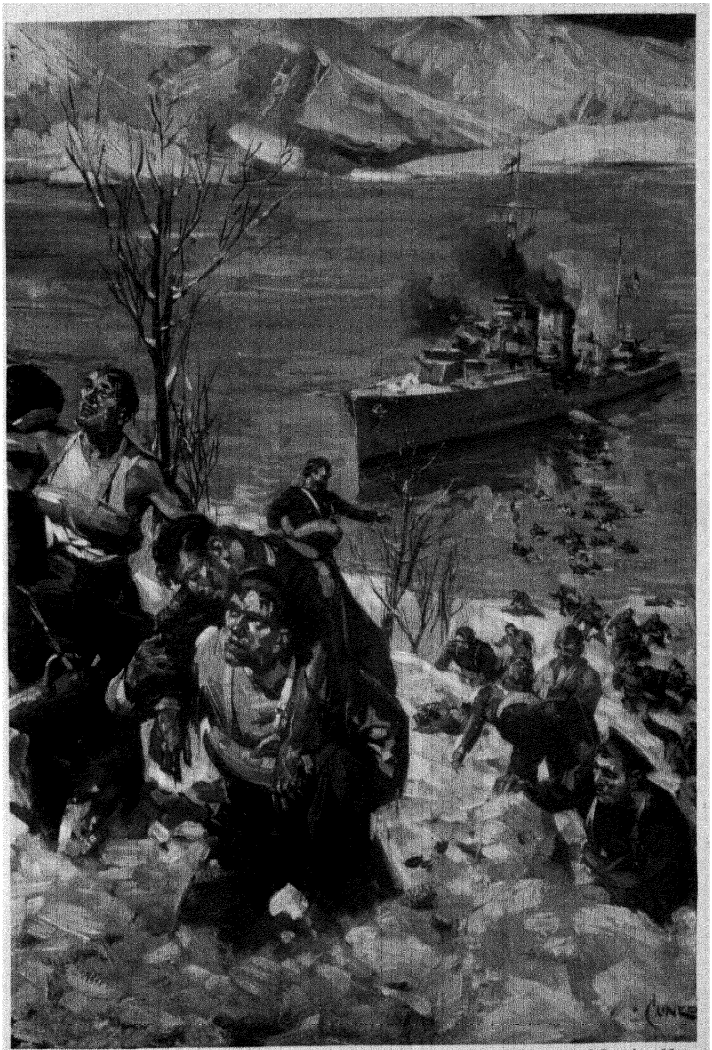
The Russian naval officers, whatever the Russian politicians may think about it, can hardly regard the turning of the Baltic into a German lake with equanimity. We may see strange, and perhaps unexpected results, of a kind not favourable to Germany, flowing from Herr Hitler's incursion into Scandinavia.

In the early months of the war of 1914–18, the late Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fisher was reappointed as First Sea Lord. That great sailor was a bold and skilled strategist. He at once set to work on plans to force the entrance to the Baltic, join hands with the Russians—then our allies—and create a diversion by disembarking Russian troops on the Baltic coast of Prussia. As part of this plan, he ordered the building of a large number of special naval units. The most important were three very fast, lightly armoured, but powerfully armed battle cruisers, the *Furious*, *Courageous* and *Glorious*.

They were to carry 17-inch guns. Admiral Fisher was a lone worker. He imparted his plans to no one else. Though this avoided dangers of leakage, it had certain disadvantages. When the old autocrat resigned, because the Dardanelles campaign was drawing on resources he had accumulated for his Baltic expedition, he left little on record behind him at the Admiralty. His successors, not strong enough to draw the bow of Achilles, did not know what to do with these three freak ships, as they called them, and they turned them into aircraft-carriers. The *Courageous* was torpedoed and sunk on 17 September 1939, with heavy loss of life.

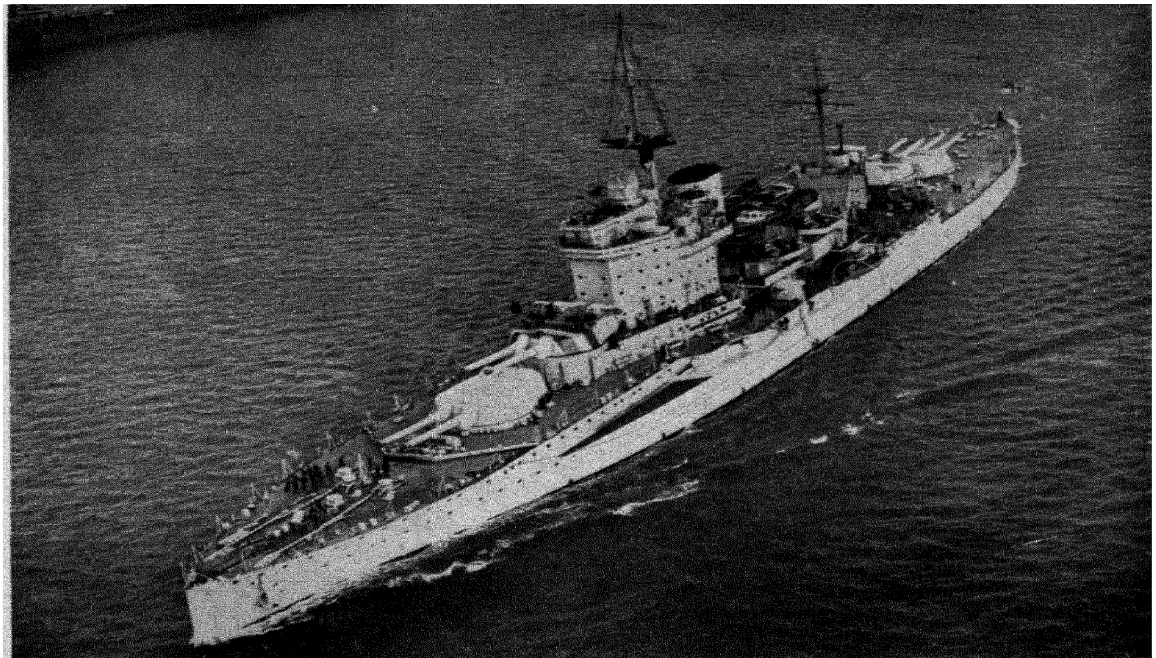
A more far-seeing strategy in this war might have included plans for entering the Baltic, where many things could have been accomplished. Bases would have been needed, and a firm alliance with, at least, Sweden was required. Indeed, if the League of Nations had been given teeth when the prestige of that idealistic institution was high, as many of us advocated, collective security would have meant the detailed drawing-up of defensive plans to thwart any aggressor in any direction.

Great Britain and France in firm alliance with Norway, Denmark and Sweden, under the Covenant of the League, could have drawn up detailed staff plans for just such an operation. Then a German invasion of Denmark would have meant the rapid reinforcement of that country by sea and air, the



*By courtesy of the Illustrated London News*

THE END OF THE *HARDY*



H.M.S. *WARSPITE*

*Associated Press*

holding of the Great Belt and all the strategical advantages which would have followed.

Perhaps as a result of this war a real system of collective security in Europe will be evolved.

As an alternative, plans might have been prepared for going to the assistance of Denmark. For this, the willingness of the Danish Government was essential. The alliance would have been purely defensive ; but the Danes were so obsessed by the power and ruthlessness of their mighty neighbour that they hoped to save their independence by pandering to the Nazi bully.

In the previous chapter, I described the Norwegian reluctance to agree to mutual defence plans.

The shyness of the Danish Government was certainly an obstacle to any concerted scheme to deal with such a situation as arose in April 1940. Yet it is interesting to consider what would have happened if the Grand Fleet of Britain, supported by our magnificent Air Force, had gone immediately to the rescue of the Danes by way of the Great Belt. Troopships would have followed. Some modicum of Danish resistance was necessary. As it was, this highly civilized, cultured, peaceful people had to be abandoned to the tender mercies of the Gestapo. One more capital city, with its art, literature, music, commerce and industry, one more prosperous, hard-working people had fallen to treachery, bad faith and overwhelming force. It was the drone of the hundreds of Nazi bombers

over the beautiful city of Copenhagen which sapped the powers of resistance of the once great military people of Denmark. Unfortunately, the same sound reached Downing Street, London.

The immediate results of the overrunning of Denmark were, firstly, the securing of a comparatively safe passage for German troops and munitions proceeding to the conquest of Norway; secondly, a stranglehold on Swedish commerce; and, thirdly, a great increase in the difficulties in the way of sending help to Sweden if and when that country came under the Nazi harrow.

# CHAPTER III

## THE FIRST BATTLE OF NARVIK

WHILE THESE SOMBRE AND TERRIFYING events were taking place in Denmark and Norway, the Royal Navy had not been idle. Early in the War, the defences of Scapa Flow had been found defective when a German submarine had made an entrance and torpedoed the battleship *Royal Oak* lying at anchor. The base was also insufficiently defended by anti-aircraft guns and fighting aeroplanes. These defects had been made good and the Grand Fleet, under Admiral Sir Charles Morton Forbes, K.C.B., C.B., D.S.O., had resumed its war station there five weeks previously.

The first news that something was afoot was a report on 7 April 1940, by a reconnaissance aeroplane, maintaining the usual patrol over the Heligoland Bight, that a portion of the German Fleet was at sea and heading north. Though, as stated in an earlier chapter, it had been known for some months that there had been concentrations of troops in North Germany and a gathering of troopships in the German Baltic ports, there was no exact indication of the enemy's intentions. Why was this German naval squadron at sea? There were several alternatives. A raid might be con-

templated on the big convoy of 37 merchant ships, about to sail from Bergen, whose fortunate escape I have described in the first chapter. Again, this sortie might be a covering movement to assist the escape of surface commerce raiders into the Atlantic.

The Germans would presume, and probably their spies in Norway gave them the information, that we would have naval vessels watching the newly laid minefields off the Norwegian coast, and ready to snap up any blockade runners forced outside the waters by these same minefields. It might be intended to raid these light detached forces.

On 8 April the first definite information reached the Admiralty that enemy transports were at sea. The 6,800 tons Hamburg liner *Rio de Janeiro* was sighted at 1 p.m. on that day off Lillesand by two British submarines on patrol. They hailed her to stop, but she made for the coast at full speed. A torpedo was then fired which hit the liner and she began to sink. The *Rio de Janeiro* was full of soldiers, who began to jump overboard. About 150 of these soldiers were drowned and about the same number picked up by small craft which put out for the purpose from the Norwegian coast. No rescue could be attempted by the submarines. They could only have accommodated a handful of the soldiers in any case.

Whatever the enemy intentions, a wide sweep was made down the North Sea to about the latitude of Bergen by our Grand Fleet. The weather was vile

all over the area of operations. Strong wind, heavy seas and blinding snow storms hampered air reconnaissance work and the lookout of our forward spread cruisers alike. The old battle cruiser *Renown* had been delayed in sailing with the rest of the fleet, so she was stationed with her escorting destroyers at the northern end of our lines of operation. At daybreak on 9 April, the *Renown* was off the Norwegian coast in the latitude of Narvik, and heading down the coast. The weather was thick, but the snow clouds suddenly lifted and she found herself within long range of the new German battle cruiser *Scharnhörst* and the modern heavy cruiser *Hipper*. The previous morning, the *Hipper* and four destroyers had encountered one of the British destroyers, *Glowworm*. *Glowworm* had lost a man overboard while proceeding with her consorts to lay the original minefields off Narvik, and had been delayed to pick him up. She was thus isolated and had first sighted two German destroyers and immediately attacked. As elsewhere, the weather was bad, with high seas running. Two more German destroyers then came in sight and presently, through the mists and driving snow, the cruiser *Hipper*. The *Glowworm* immediately threw out smoke screens and attempted to torpedo the *Hipper* under their cover. The attempt only just failed, she came under an overwhelming gunfire from the heavily armed cruiser and was sunk. So far as is known, about a third of the members of her crew

were rescued. This was first blood in this naval operation to the Nazis; an easy victory. The *Renown* was a different proposition. Yet if the Germans had emulated the tactics of Rear-Admiral Sir Henry Harwood in the Battle of the River Plate, dividing their forces and attacking the *Renown* from two sides they might have won the action.

Let us here compare the rival forces in this important action. For if one theory of the enemy's intentions is correct, namely that these two powerful vessels were making for Narvik and had succeeded in reaching that port, they would have made the reoccupation of this vital area more difficult than it was.

The British battle cruiser was of pre-Great War vintage. She was laid down in 1914 and completed in March 1916. Originally designed as a battleship, it was decided to convert her into a battle cruiser as a result of the lessons of the Falkland Islands engagement in that war. Between 1936 and 1939 the old ship was completely reconstructed. This reconstruction cost approximately the same as the original cost of the ship, or over £3,000,000. Her protection was strengthened, particularly against air attack, and the range of her guns increased. On a displacement of 32,000 tons she has a speed of 29 knots and carries as main armament six 15-inch guns. The *Scharnhörst*, sister ship of the *Gneisenau*, put out of action at Oslo as described in Chapter I, was completed in October 1936, and has a dis-

placement of 26,000 tons. Her speed is not known officially, but judging by the rate at which she withdrew from the action after the hitting had begun, it is probably considerably higher than the 27 knots for which she was designed. As main armament she carries twelve 11-inch guns, and twelve 6-inch guns, and is heavily armoured. In theory, the *Scharnhörst* alone should have been a good match in a single ship action with the *Renown*. The *Admiral Hipper* is a 10,000-ton heavy cruiser, with strong armour and a main armament of eight 8-inch guns in four turrets. She was completed in August of last year, and is a rather more powerful vessel than the *Exeter* which engaged the pocket battleship *Graf Spee* in the battle of the River Plate, with such unfortunate results for the Nazi warship. Her designed speed was 32 knots.

The *Renown* was ready for instant action, and as soon as her guns were brought to bear she opened fire on the *Scharnhörst* at a range of 18,000 yards. The German battle cruiser replied a little more slowly. Her first gun spoke after three minutes. The whole action only lasted about 15 minutes, for the opposing targets were hidden from each other from time to time by the snow drifts. At least two salvoes from the *Renown* hit the *Scharnhörst* quite early in the fight and the Nazi ship immediately turned away. One shell is believed to have put her main fire control tower out of action and her after-turret appeared to have been

struck. A vertical column of smoke rose from the stricken ship and she ceased firing altogether. Both the German ships had now worked up quickly to a very high speed, and the *Hipper* spread a smoke screen to cover the *Scharnhörst*, which was already in retreat. The *Renown* then turned her attention to the *Hipper*, but the two German cruisers had an advantage in speed and managed to escape. The last shots were fired by the *Renown* at a range of 29,000 yards. The *Scharnhörst* was reported to have struggled into Bergen, and was seen there, apparently badly damaged, with her stern under water. The only explanation I can find for the shyness of these two heavy ships for close action was that they had orders to avoid battle, if possible, with British forces of any strength.

The *Renown* was scarcely damaged and remained at sea. One 11-inch shell entered her hull aft above the waterline and went right through the ship without exploding; another shell hit the foremast, carrying away the wireless aerial. There were no casualties among her crew. It may be, as I have suggested, that these two Nazi ships were on their way to the North Atlantic in order to raid the trade routes. Whatever operation they were engaged upon, they thought better of it, and made for the nearest point of safety.

These operations in the North Sea by the Grand Fleet were aimed at cutting off the German warships from their bases and bringing them to action.

The bad weather and frequent periods of low visibility, already referred to, allowed the inferior German forces to escape, and in the meantime the Norwegian ports and air bases had been surprised and captured as described in Chapter I. On 9 April heavy air attacks were made on certain of our warships by German bombers. This was in the latitude of Bergen. The flagship, the battleship *Rodney*, was hit but suffered only superficial damage.

The only loss from air attack on this day was the destroyer *Gurkha*. She survived the damage for four and a half hours and nearly all her crew were saved.

But if the sweeping operation against the German naval units was unsuccessful our air forces had the opportunity of inflicting damage on the enemy and took it with great gallantry and efficiency. A light cruiser, the *Köln*, one of two in Bergen fjord, was heavily bombed by the Royal Air Force on 10 April and sunk.

Captain W. E. Wollaston, of the U.S.A. merchant ship *Flying Fish* was in Bergen and saw the destruction of the Nazi cruiser.

"One bomb," said the American captain, "struck the *Köln* squarely amidships between the funnels at 7.30 a.m. We saw clouds of smoke and at 9 a.m. there was an explosion. The cruiser started sinking by the head. Flames were leaping 100 feet in the air and she sank deeper and deeper. Her stern went up into the air, showing the propeller, and

50 minutes later she capsized and sank as columns of smoke rose above her."

The same evening the second German light cruiser in Bergen was sunk in a concentrated attack by 16 aeroplanes of the Fleet Air Arm. The next day a Nazi destroyer in Trondheim fjord was torpedoed and sunk by other aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm. Gliding down close to the surface of the water the torpedoes were released to run below the sea and they found their mark. These were heavy losses for the Nazi fleet. The most spectacular action and certainly the most important strategically was the first battle of Narvik.

On the evening of 9 April, news reached the Admiralty that a flotilla of German destroyers, believed to be six in number, had entered Narvik fjord. Actually they were nine, and were the newest and strongest destroyers in the Nazi Navy. As described in the first chapter, they had sneaked up the Norwegian coast, taking advantage of the thick weather and low visibility and had captured the port of Narvik by surprise. Off Narvik, watching the newly laid minefield as already described, was the second destroyer flotilla consisting of the *Hardy*, senior officer's ship, commanded by Captain B. A. W. Warburton-Lee, who was also in command of the flotilla, the *Hunter*, *Havoc*, *Hostile* and *Hotspur*.

It became known at the Admiralty that the Nazi destroyers were accompanied by supply and ammunition ships and had landed troops. Furthermore,

gallantry of this action is enhanced by the fact that the information which had reached Whitehall as to the strength of the enemy forces was vague. It was wrong in the first place with regard to the number of German destroyers present. There were nine of them, though only seven actually came into action. There might easily have been a German cruiser in the fjord. Though from the open sea to the town of Narvik is some 50 miles, the Vest fjord, which is a continuation of Narvik fjord, is indented with deep bays and inlets and Narvik fjord itself has a number of backwaters. Hostile forces might be lurking in any of these inlets. The boldness of the attack was thoroughly justified by the result. There was always the chance of taking the enemy by surprise or at anchor, and in any case even if the whole British force were wiped out, they could hope to do considerable damage. The navigational difficulties were serious. None of the officers in our flotilla had ever visited Narvik before. To arrive at dawn it was necessary to enter the outer or Ofort fjord, while it was still dark. The channel is 15 miles long, less than two miles wide for most of the distance, and is bounded by high cliffs. All lighthouses and other aids to navigation had been extinguished. Heavy snow was falling and visibility bad. There is a pilot station near the outer entrance, and the previous evening Captain Warburton-Lee had sent two officers ashore in search of information. The Norwegian pilots

had news that Narvik was occupied in force by the Nazis and that at least six enemy destroyers of the largest type were off the port.

The plan was to enter at full speed on a line of bearing, or what the soldiers would call *en echelon*, so that all the forward guns of the five ships could fire, and then to sweep round so as to bring the torpedo tubes to bear. When the torpedoes had been discharged, the British destroyers, now in line ahead, would sweep round again, reload their torpedo tubes, engaging, as they would bear, with their stern guns and repeat the attack. The odds against the British flotilla were greater than mere numbers might indicate when the respective strengths of the opposing forces are examined. The *Hardy* was the flotilla leader, with a displacement of 1,500 tons and carried a complement of 175. She was armed with five 4.7-in. guns, and eight 21-in. torpedo tubes. She was completed in 1936. The other four destroyers are of a displacement of 1,330 tons, also carry eight torpedo tubes, and their main armament consists of four 4.7-in. guns.

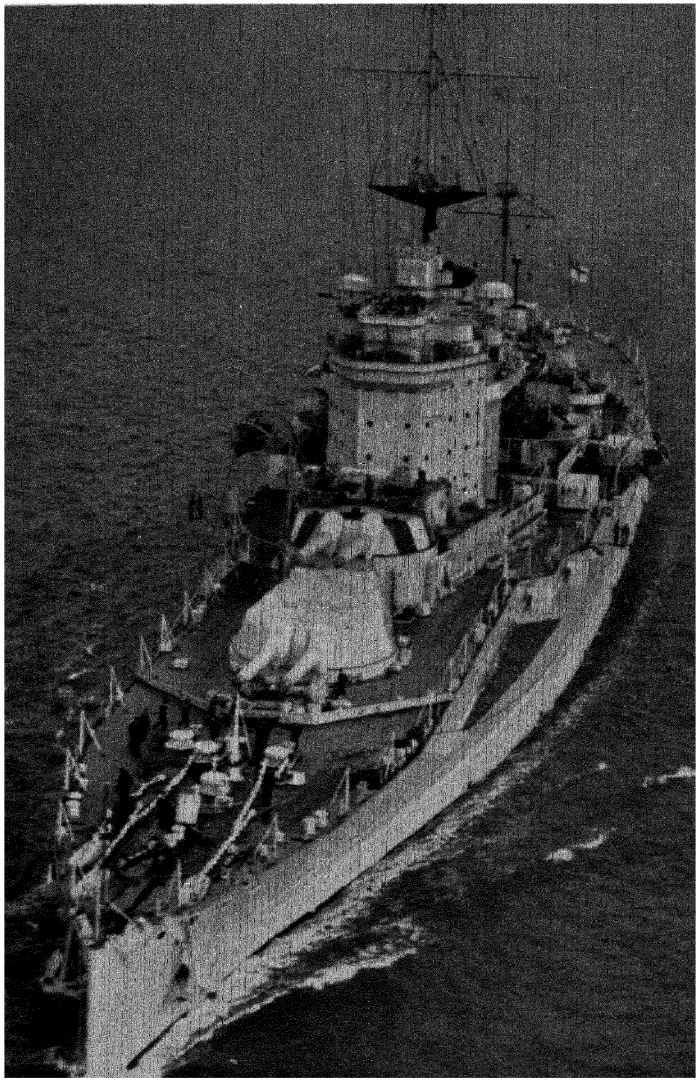
The German destroyers all belonged to the 1939 programme and were of the '*von Roeder*' class. They have a displacement of 1,800 tons and mount five 5-in. guns, and, like the British destroyers, each has eight torpedo tubes. The British flotilla steamed up the fjord without opposition, though after the action commenced they were fired at by small guns from the shore. It was barely light,

and off the port of Narvik a number of merchant ships were visible, and amongst them two enemy destroyers at anchor. Rapid gunfire was opened, to which the Germans replied, the turn was made according to plan, and bouquets of torpedoes were fired into the crowded ships. One torpedo hit a German destroyer amidships, she broke in half at once with the explosion, and a number of the supply ships were sunk. The original plan of making a combined advance upon the harbour and roadstead of Narvik had to be modified. The fjord and outer harbour were congested with shipping. There was less room to manœuvre than had been expected. The British flotilla, therefore, had to alter formation into line ahead, or single file in military language. The *Hardy* thus made the first attack unsupported, but her consorts were close astern and all swept round in their turn firing all their guns and torpedoes into the congested anchorage full of enemy supply ships and with two of the enemy destroyers among them. One Nazi destroyer was now accounted for and the other, damaged by gunfire, was burning. The *Hardy* then swept round again and returned to the attack for the second time. Two fresh German destroyers now came into action and were heavily engaged by our ships. The two fresh German destroyers were overwhelmed with gunfire ; and the guns mounted on shore, which had also been heavily fired on by our ships ceased firing. The victory appeared to be complete.

The following German transport and supply ships which were at Narvik on 9 April were sunk :

| | *Tons* | |
|---|---|---|
| *Jan Wellum* | 11,776 | (Oil refinery ship) |
| *Neuenfels* | 8,096 | |
| *Aachen* | 6,388 | |
| *Altona* | 5,892 | |
| *Hein Hoyer* | 5,836 | |
| *Bockenheim* | 4.902 | |
| *Martin Hendrik Fisser* | 4,879 | |
| *Frielinghaus* | 4,339 | |
| | 52,108 | |

Up till now our forces had suffered little loss. Six torpedoes had been fired at the *Hardy*, all of which missed. The sweep-round was made for the third time and once more the *Hardy* and her flotilla advanced to the attack. Then three fresh German destroyers were sighted to the eastward steaming out of Rombaks fjord and firing rapidly. This inlet is a continuation of the Narvik fjord, beyond the town. These fresh forces opened heavy fire on the *Hardy*, the gallant ship was badly damaged, two of her consorts were hard hit and the British flotilla made for the outer fjord and the sea. The German counter-attack came too late, however, to save their supply and ammunition ships, the sinking of which was the real object of the raid. The German fire was concentrated on the

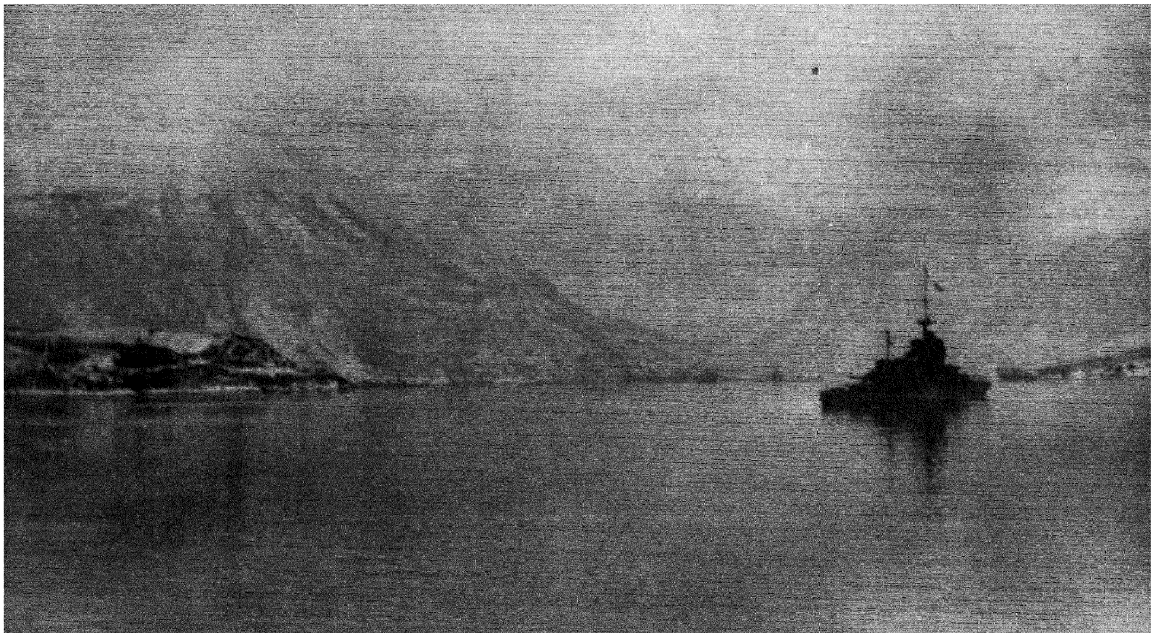


H.M.S. *WARSPITE*

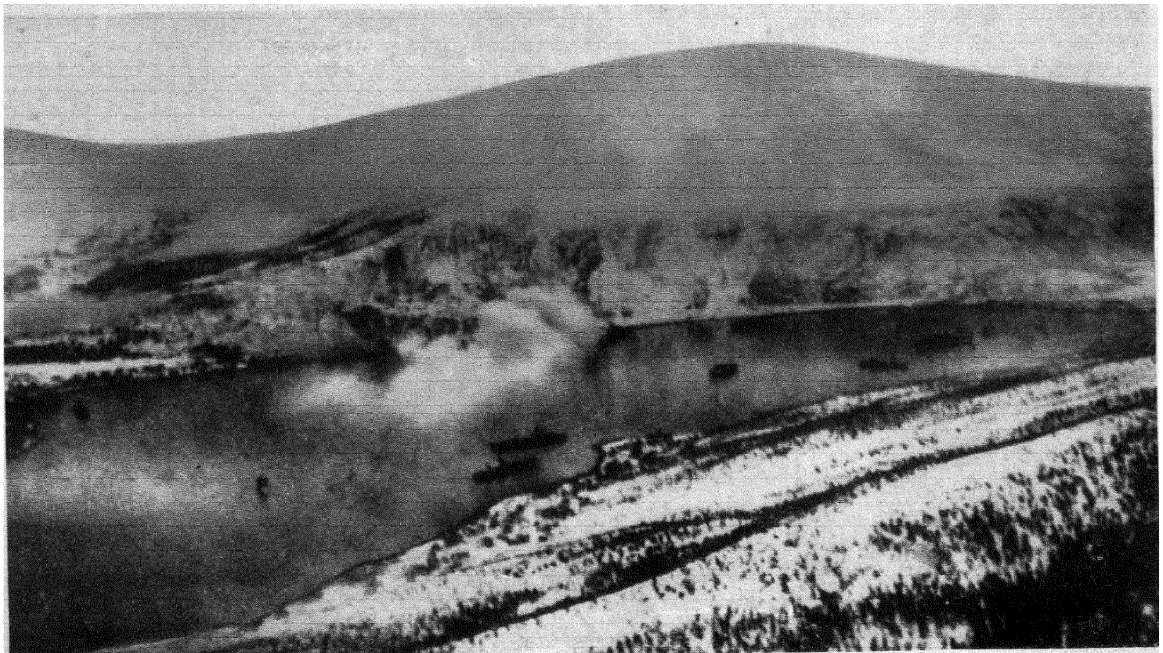


*Photographic News Agencies*

SECOND BATTLE OF NARVIK. THE APPROACH
BRITISH DESTROYERS ADVANCING UP OFOT FJORD



H.M.S. *WARSPITE* IN NARVIK FJORD



H.M.S. *COSSACK* IN NARVIK FJORD ENGAGING THE SHORE BATTERIES

*Hardy*, and she was hit on the bridge, every officer and man there being killed or wounded seriously, including the captain, except Paymaster-Lieutenant G. H. Stanning, the captain's secretary. He had been hit in the foot but managed to drag himself to the steering-wheel. The coxswain, who had been steering the ship, had been killed, as was Lieutenant Cross, the signal officer. The captain, and the navigating officer, Lieutenant Commander Gordon Smith, were both seriously wounded. The First Lieutenant, Lieutenant Commander Mansell, was aft in command of the stern guns which were firing hard at the enemy.

The *Hardy* had been badly damaged by this time, but she was steaming at full speed. An Able Seaman then reached the bridge. Paymaster-Lieutenant Stanning turned the wheel over to him and took charge of the navigation of the sorely stricken destroyer. Using a shell-hole in the wheel-house as a lookout, he was trying to avoid the shore. The undamaged guns of the *Hardy* were shooting as rapidly as possible at the German destroyers from Rombaks fjord, which were now at nearly point blank range and concentrating a heavy fire. A shell hit the engine-room and the *Hardy* began to lose speed. Her end was near. In order to save life, Paymaster-Lieutenant Stanning ordered course to be altered to the shore and she grounded in shallow water about 300 yards from the rocks.

Captain Warburton-Lee ordered "Abandon ship,

every man for himself, and good luck," and this was the last order he gave before he died. Heroic efforts were made by his crew to get him ashore on an improvised raft, but he died on the way. The crew got ashore mostly by swimming, and I will describe their subsequent adventures later.

By this time, in addition to the German destroyer sunk by torpedoes, three had been heavily hit and were badly on fire. Our losses were also heavy. The *Hunter* was sunk. The *Hotspur* received serious damage and the *Hostile* was hit but only slightly damaged. The *Havoc* received no hit. The *Hostile* and *Havoc* then assisted the damaged *Hotspur* to withdraw from the action, and they made for the open sea again. On the way out they met a German supply ship, the *Ravensfeld*. She was stopped and examined and found to be carrying ammunition for the Nazi landing party. This ship was blown up. The remaining German destroyers, of whom at least six were fit for further action, made no attempt at pursuit. Six of the German supply ships were sunk. Great damage was also done to the quay at Narvik, which hampered the subsequent German operations. So ended this very gallant action.

The destruction of our two destroyers was grievous. Still more grievous was the death of so many splendid officers and men.

Captain Bernard Warburton-Lee was a great loss to the Royal Navy. He was a born leader and loved by the men he commanded. With a first-

class brain, he succeeded in everything he did. Apart from his professional attainments, which were of the highest, he excelled at sport. He was a good shot, a skilled dry-fly fisherman and an outstanding polo player. He was a good player at tennis and golf. In the Army he would have made a brilliant cavalry leader before this age of mechanization, barbed wire and machine-guns. In the Navy he had scope for a display of the same qualities in command of a flotilla of fast, nimble destroyers.

'Wash,' as he was known throughout the service, was beloved by everyone who came into contact with him.

I am indebted to Mr. C. P. Hastings for a reminder in a letter to *The Times* soon after this action, of the passage in Southey's *Life of Nelson*, which is not inapplicable in describing the death of this fine officer.

> Yet he cannot be said to have fallen prematurely. . . . The most triumphant death is that of the martyr, the most awful that of the martyred patriot ; the most splendid that of the hero in the hour of victory, and if the chariot and the horses of fire had been vouchsafed for Nelson's translation he could scarcely have departed in a brighter blaze of glory. He has left us a name and an example which are at this hour inspiring thousands of the youth of England—a name which is our pride and an example which will continue to be our shield and our strength. Thus it is that the spirits of the great and the wise continue to live and to act after them ; verifying in this sense the language of the old mythologist :
>
> Brave spirits never die—'tis high Jove's will ;
> As gods on earth, they succour mortals still.

It will be my duty in a subsequent chapter to examine the argument for the employment of the Narvik tactics of Captain Warburton-Lee during the same period in the not dissimilar case of Trondheim.

As stated above, the *Hunter* sank and some of her survivors were picked up by the Germans and made prisoners. Forty-three of her crew, including two officers, eventually reached Sweden.

Let us return now to the remainder of the *Hardy's* crew. It was reported at the time that they had landed in their own boats, fully armed and prepared to defend themselves. Actually, they had not a boat left fit to float. One of the whalers was lowered into the water, but it had been riddled with splinters and sank at once. The crew obeyed their captain's last orders and swam for the shore. During this time they were under a heavy fire from one of the German destroyers, and some men were hit in the water. The torpedo officer, Lieutenant Hepple, a first-class swimmer and a great athlete, who had played Rugby football for the Royal Navy, saved a number of men, wounded or exhausted in the water, from drowning. Nineteen had been killed in the action, and 170 were got ashore. Most of the men were half-naked, the weather was bitterly cold, and their remaining clothes froze to their bodies. The snow was six feet deep but they managed to reach a Norwegian farmhouse where they were most kindly received by the farmer's wife, Madame

Christiansen, and her daughter. Eighty of them camped in this small farmhouse of only five rooms. The two women mustered all the clothing in the house, including some of the garments they themselves wore, tore up curtains, blankets, and carpets to make rough coverings, tended the wounded, gave them all the food and coffee they had, and enabled the seamen to start off on the 15 mile march to the village of Ballanger. Among the surviving officers was Surgeon-Lieutenant Waind. He had been wounded, but did what he could for the other injured survivors, who all behaved with great fortitude. Able Seaman Bailey, half dead with cold, and with a hand shot off, sat for an hour and a half, and never once murmured.

They were in danger of capture by the enemy, and had to make for the interior as best they could. A friendly Norwegian went to Ballanger for an ambulance, and this took the more serious cases. Other injured men were moved by sledge. Chief Stoker Styles died of his wounds on the way to safety, and was buried under the snow. Captain Warburton-Lee was at his last gasp when he was towed ashore on the raft by Mr. McCracken, the Gunner, and a seaman. He lay dead on the beach, and was buried there by the Norwegian country-people.

At Ballanger the villagers treated the *Hardy's* men with the greatest kindness. They were fitted out with Norwegian clothing, and were presently joined by the party of British merchant seamen who

had escaped from their German captors as described in the first chapter. All were rescued after the second battle of Narvik, and brought to England. The *Warspite* was given the news of the whereabouts of the *Hardy* survivors by four of her crew, who found an abandoned motor-boat from one of the German destroyers. They manned it, put out into the fjord, and signalled in the gathering darkness with an electric torch. Most of them landed in England still in their Norwegian clothing, including the 'baby' of the ship, Chief Petty-Officer 'Tubby' Cock, who weighs twenty-four stone, and who announced on arrival, "I just floated ashore. I'm unsinkable."

They received a great welcome from the people of London, and were treated to an address by Mr. Winston Churchill on the Horse Guards Parade.

Your countrymen are well content with the manner in which you have discharged your duties (he said). You have shown the courage and the readiness to take opportunities by the hand and make your way through the difficult situations which are always associated with the flotillas of our destroyer force. The Board of Admiralty welcomes you for yourselves, and also because you represent the flotillas of the destroyer forces, numbering scores and scores, who are serving night and day on all the coasts of our country and on other coasts as well. The hard service demanded of the flotillas has been freely given, and it has played a notable, and indeed an indispensable part in securing the safety of the country during the opening months of this hard and obstinate war. Therefore, in

paying our tribute to the officers and men present, the Londoners gathered here are also paying a tribute to the whole of the Royal Navy.

Your gallant captain, Captain Warburton-Lee, took the responsibility of ordering that determined attack, and sealed his great decision with his life.

You are the vanguard of the army which we and our French allies will use this summer to purge and cleanse the soil of the Vikings, the soil of Norway, from the filthy pollution of Nazi tyranny. Therefore we welcome you home, and we know that after a short rest you will be anxious to resume your duties in this conflict. In the name of the Board of the Admiralty, I wish you good fortune and success.

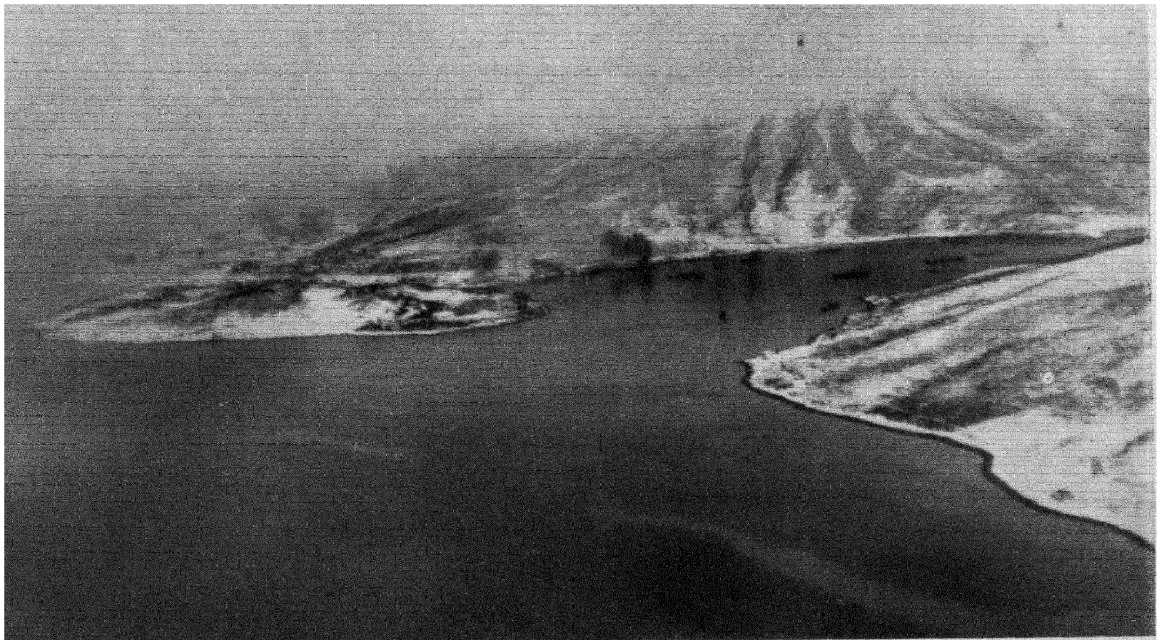
Mr. Churchill had with him on this occasion Sir Dudley Pound, First Sea Lord, Sir Charles Little, Second Sea Lord, and Sir Victor Warrender, Financial and Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty.

At first sight this gallant attack on the German warships and supply ships in Narvik fjord may have appeared as a minor episode, a hard-fought engagement between light forces, and of no particular significance. It was, in fact, of great importance. The German troops already landed at this northern port were, as described in an earlier chapter, all picked men, skilled ski-runners specially trained and practised for their work. The surrounding country is most difficult, and well-suited for defensive tactics. Had the whole expedition gone according to plan they would have been supplied with munitions and

provisions to withstand a long siege. They were reinforced by other specially picked troops taken there by converted passenger aeroplanes. The operation of mopping them up and securing the port and district of Narvik has been difficult enough, as subsequent events have proved. The loss of the Nazi supply and ammunition ships was of great benefit to the allied cause. Captain Warburton-Lee's quick appreciation of the situation and his prompt action were, therefore, of great material benefit, when every hour counted.

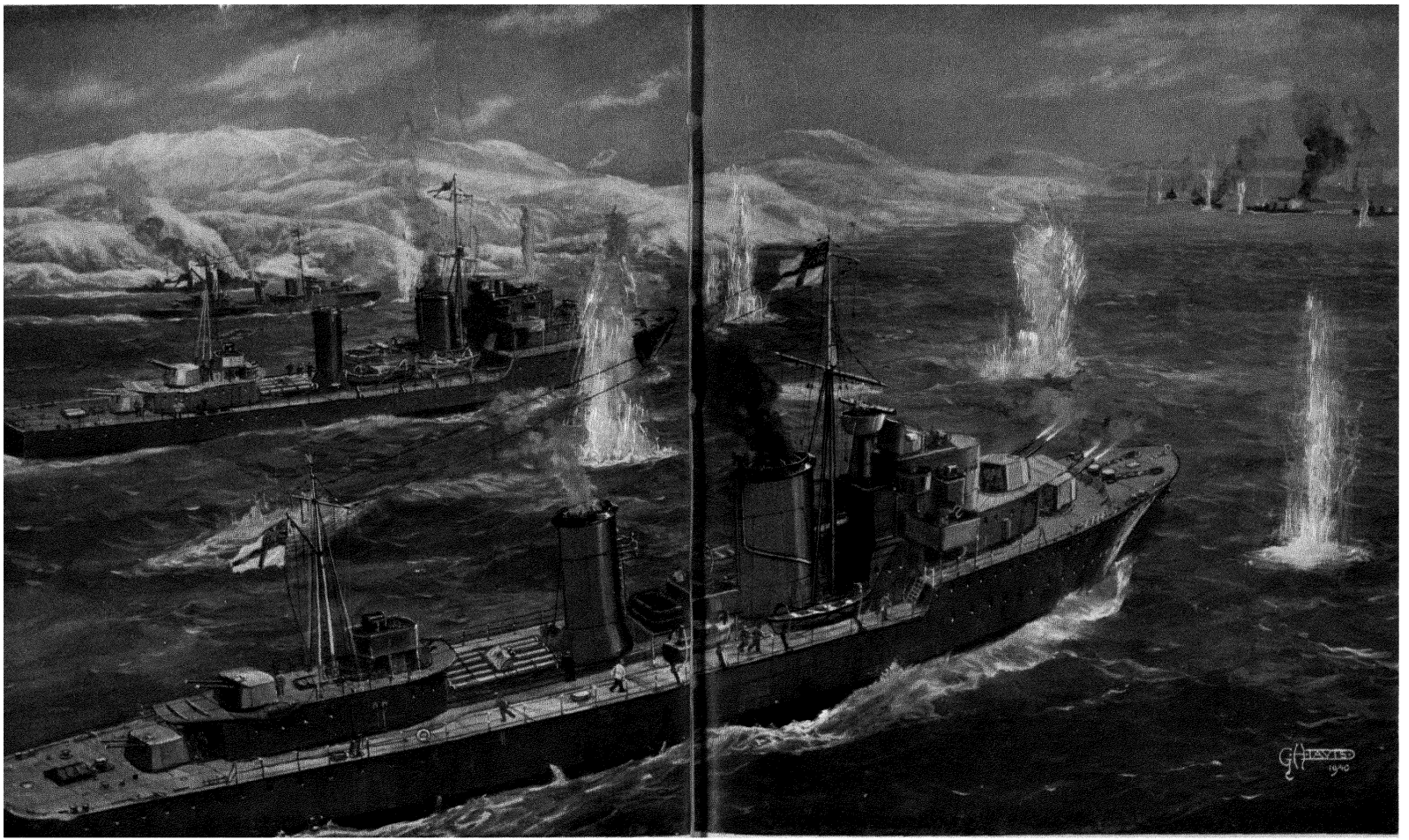
The moral results of this action were more important still.

The opening phases of the Scandinavian campaign had not been encouraging for the Allies. I will examine the course of these stages of the campaign, and the lessons to be drawn from it, later on. The Germans having their plans already laid, not only worked to a carefully prepared timetable, but altered and expanded their plans quickly as the situation developed. The Allies, taken by surprise, and with insufficient or tardy information, were at a disadvantage despite their numerical superiority at sea. The Second Destroyer Flotilla was on the spot. Its commander, given liberty of action, made use of his freedom to undertake aggressive tactics without an hour's delay. Despite the losses suffered, the moral tonic was invaluable ; and in war it is the moral and psychological factors which count in the long run.



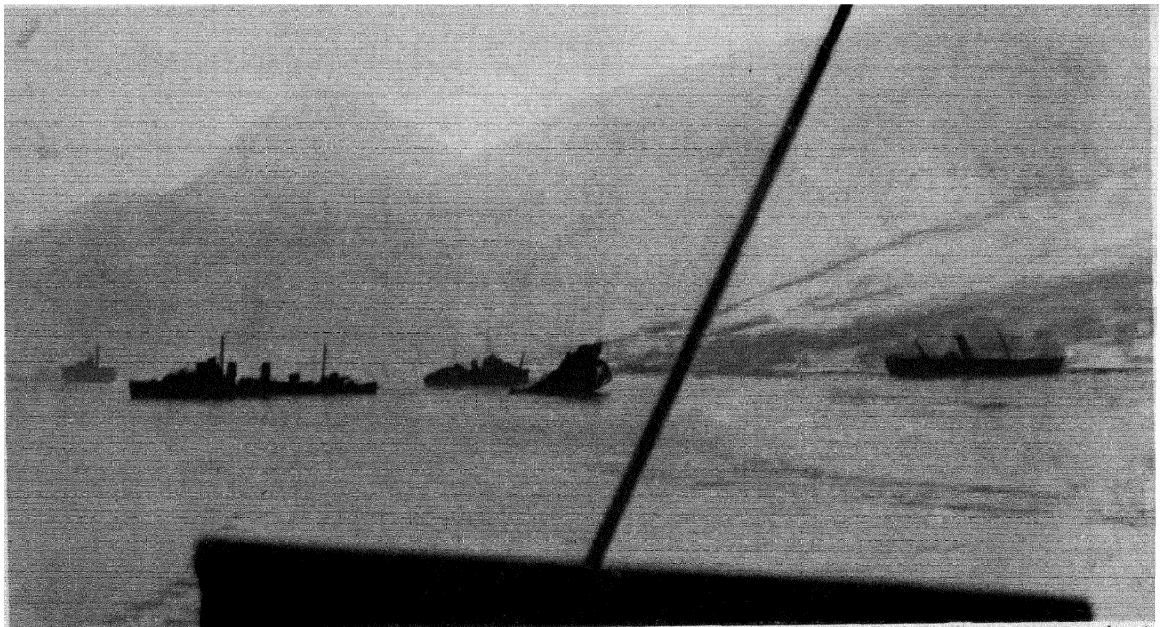
*Photographic News Agencies*

GERMAN DESTROYER BURNING IN NARVIK FJORD



*By courtesy of The Illustrated London News*

VICE-ADMIRAL WHITWORTH'S GALLANT FORCE PUTTING THE GERMAN DESTROYERS TO FLIGHT—SECOND BATTLE OF NARVIK



*Photographic News Agencie*

NARVIK HARBOUR
H.M.S. *COSSACK* AND *FORRESTER* AND SUNK GERMAN TRANSPORTS

# CHAPTER IV

## THE SECOND BATTLE OF NARVIK

THE DEATHS OF CAPTAIN WARBURTON-LEE and his gallant comrades did not go long unavenged. In any case, it was part of Allied strategy to seize the port and district of Narvik and establish a base there. The port is so far to the north that the danger of counter-attack from the air could be ignored, so long as the Nazis were held in Southern Norway. The nearest ready-made aerodrome was at Varnes, some 20 miles from Trondheim; and although Trondheim and its environs were in enemy hands, a small garrison of heroic Norwegian soldiers were holding out in the fort of Hegre, and their guns dominated this aerodrome. It was hoped to beleaguer and capture Trondheim from the Germans, while the Stavanger base was to be made unserviceable by concentrated air attacks. There is a small aerodrome 20 miles north of Narvik at Bardu. It is 800 yards across and quite serviceable, especially for fighter aeroplanes. The Germans would have seized this aerodrome by an air expedition. Fortunately, the commander of the local Norwegian troops was a man of resource. He had trees cut and the logs scattered all over the aerodrome surface. This simple but

effective plan outwitted the Nazi airmen, and the logs could be removed in a few hours as soon as the Allies had sufficient air force available to make use of it. The fighter aeroplanes would have had to be conveyed to near Bardu in aircraft-carriers. In the meantime our next move at Narvik could be planned without the menace of counter-attack from the air. Before any landing operations at or near Narvik could be undertaken, and actually the first troops were to be ashore on 14 April, which was quick work under all the circumstances, the undamaged German destroyers had to be accounted for. Even destroyers operating in a long indented navigable fjord like Narvik can have a great nuisance value, as was shown only too vividly under similar circumstances in Trondheim fjord and its extensions. Furthermore, the German naval forces in Narvik might be reinforced. The heavy cruiser *Hipper*, for example, which escaped in the snow storms from the gunfire of the *Renown*, might have made her way there. If nine Nazi destroyers could slink up the coast of Norway and reach Narvik, other naval forces could make their way there from the enemy ports under cover of the mists, snows, and rain storms which were prevalent during all that fateful week. German submarines are known to have entered the fjord during the present war, and they might do so again.

The question has been raised in some quarters as to how the Nazi destroyers reached Narvik when our

Second Destroyer Flotilla was guarding the newly-laid minefield and blockading the port at the same time. The answer is interesting. When the *Renown* sighted the *Scharnhörst* and *Hipper* off Narvik as described in the former chapter, it was seen that the German warships were accompanied by destroyers. Two of these destroyers were engaged by the *Glowworm* before she was sunk by one of the enemy cruisers. The *Renown*'s people did not know that the German warships would turn tail so soon after action was joined. They might have fought matters out. Admiral Whitworth, on board the *Renown*, signalled by wireless to the Second Destroyer Flotilla to join his flag in order to deal with the Nazi destroyers. This was quite sound. The second flotilla left their patrol station of Narvik fjord to join the *Renown*, and before they could return the Nazi destroyers had slipped into the fjord.

It is a sound principle in strategy to concentrate an overwhelming force at the point of attack at the decisive moment when this is possible.

An overwhelming force was accordingly employed. Nine powerful destroyers and the battleship *Warspite* made their rendezvous off the entrance to the West fjord on 13 April. The *Warspite* flew the flag of Vice-Admiral William Jock Whitworth, C.B., D.S.O. commanding the Battle Cruiser Squadron of the Grand Fleet. As already stated, Admiral Whitworth was flying his flag in the *Renown* on 9 April during her short but decisive engagement with the *Scharnhörst*

and *Hipper*. For these operations he transferred his flag to the *Warspite* on 12 April. The *Warspite* is a sister ship of the *Queen Elizabeth*, and ranks as a fast super-dreadnought battleship.

Laid down in October 1912 at Devonport dockyard she was completed in March 1915. In 1934 she was extensively reconstructed, and practically made into a new ship, special attention being paid to added protection against aircraft attack. She and her sisters have a speed of 24 knots, and mount the powerful main armament of eight 15-in. guns. The destroyers consisted of the following vessels: *Icarus*, *Hero*, *Foxhound*, *Kimberley*, *Forrester*, *Bedouin* *Punjabi*, *Eskimo*, and *Cossack*. The *Warspite* carries four aeroplanes, which are launched from a catapult on the upper deck. In the event, the British naval force was overwhelming. Nevertheless, the operations entailed certain hazards. The long, narrow channel leading to Narvik is dangerous without a local pilot, and the *Warspite* was certainly the biggest ship that had ever entered it. Submarines might have been lurking in the numerous backwaters or tributary fjords of the main channel. A German U-boat was, in fact, lying off the coast, and attempted to follow the *Warspite* in. This U-boat was sunk by the battleship's aeroplanes. The German destroyers might have been lying hidden near the entrance ready to fire their torpedoes at an enemy approaching. Minefields might have been laid; and, as already discussed, the

German naval ships could have been reinforced. It was unlikely that shore torpedo tubes could have been mounted in the time, and also unlikely that heavy artillery could have been put in place. Deciding to take no risks, Admiral Whitworth launched his aircraft, and these flew towards Narvik just before his squadron entered the long, narrow channel leading to Ofot fjord. They had a double function. They would reconnoitre for possible enemy reinforcements, wirelessing back the information, and they were to attack the quays and piers at Narvik with bombs. The weather was thick with fine rain and clouds of mist near the surface of the sea. At 12 noon, the British squadron commenced the passage. British destroyers carry high-speed sweeping gear, and this was employed to clear a passage through any possible minefields ahead of the battleship. The van was led by the *Icarus* and *Bedouin*.

The first sight of the enemy was at 12.26 p.m., when a single German destroyer loomed out of the mist on the south side of the fjord, near Ballanger Bay. She was seen by the leading destroyers, the *Icarus* and *Bedouin*, who opened fire immediately. The German destroyer turned about at once, and disappeared into the mist. At 12.45 a second German destroyer was seen, was fired on by our leading destroyers, and returned the fire. At 12.50 another German destroyer joined in the action, which became brisk; and then the *Warspite*

appeared out of the mist, and opened fire with her great guns. While this action was in progress, a radio message was received from one of the *Warspite's* aeroplanes that another enemy destroyer was hiding in Ballanger Bay. This enemy was seen by the *Icarus* at 1.7 p.m., and shots were at once exchanged between them. The German also came under fire from three other British destroyers, and in eight minutes was burning furiously. She had been hit repeatedly. Her people fought with the greatest gallantry. With only one gun in action, the surviving members of her crew continued to fight until the ship was finally destroyed by the *Warspite*. More enemy destroyers now appeared, zig-zagging down the Ofot fjord, and presently there were six of these German destroyers in action against our ships. The fight became hot and furious. The German destroyers fired their 5-in. guns in salvos, and our ships, manœuvring at high speed, frequently altered course to avoid the fall of shot. During this phase of the action, no British ship was hit.

By 1.45 the German destroyers were in retreat. Several of them were struck by our shells, and one was hit by a British torpedo, and sank immediately. By this time the *Warspite* was within range of the shore batteries established by the Germans, and opened a heavy fire on these.

One of the damaged German destroyers was now on fire and sinking off Narvik town, and another

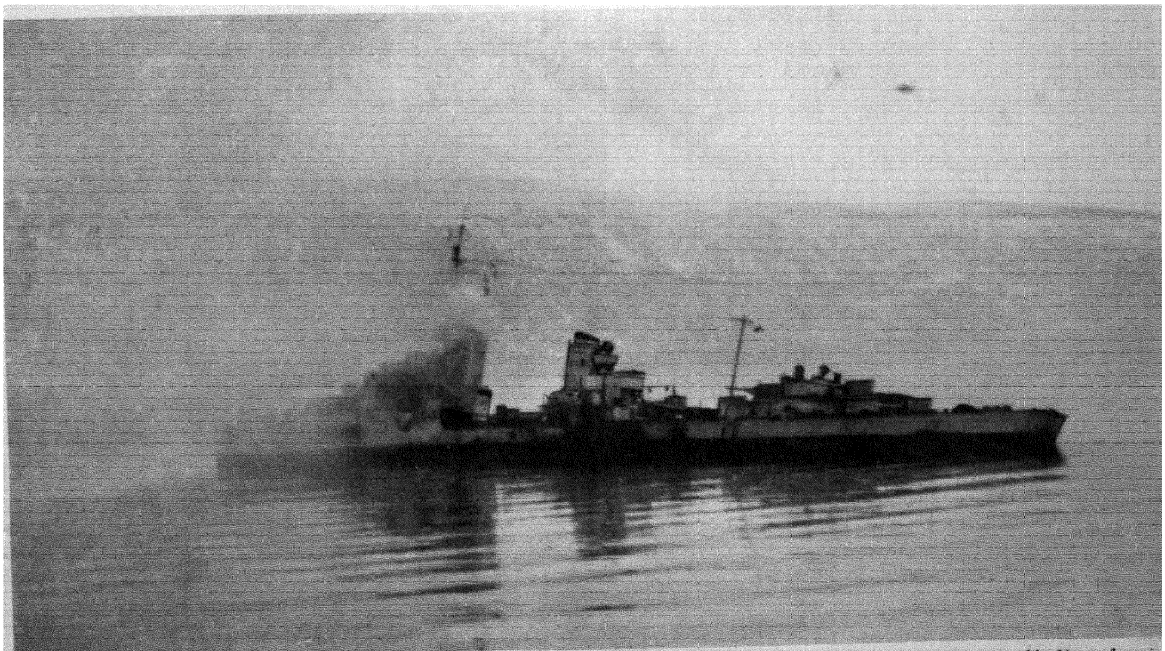
fled into Herjangs fjord, a deep inlet opposite Narvik, and ran aground badly on fire.

Thus, three of the enemy were accounted for, and a fourth was badly damaged. These four surviving German destroyers now sought to escape, making for Rombaks fjord, which is a continuation of Ofot Fjord. As they fled, they dropped floating smoke bombs into the water, these generating clouds of black smoke, to cover their retreat.

The *Warspite* continued to bombard the shore batteries near to Narvik harbour, being assisted by H.M.S. *Cossack*. The latter ship ran close in under the shore, and engaged these batteries at less than 1,000 yards range, silencing an enemy howitzer. The *Eskimo*, *Forrester*, *Hero*, *Bedouin*, and *Icarus* now prepared to enter Rombaks fjord and give the *coup de grâce* to the remaining Nazi destroyers. This fjord is 10 miles long, but the entrance is only half a mile wide. After five miles it narrows until the distance from shore to shore is only 200 yards. Beyond this narrow channel the fjord takes a sharp bend. A ship entering the fjord has to pass two points beyond which it is impossible to see what lies farther on. The four surviving German destroyers passed through the narrow neck, hotly pursued by our ships. One damaged enemy ship beached herself about a mile beyond the narrow neck. The *Eskimo*, leading the British destroyers, steamed at full speed through the neck, and then came under fire from this destroyer which, though

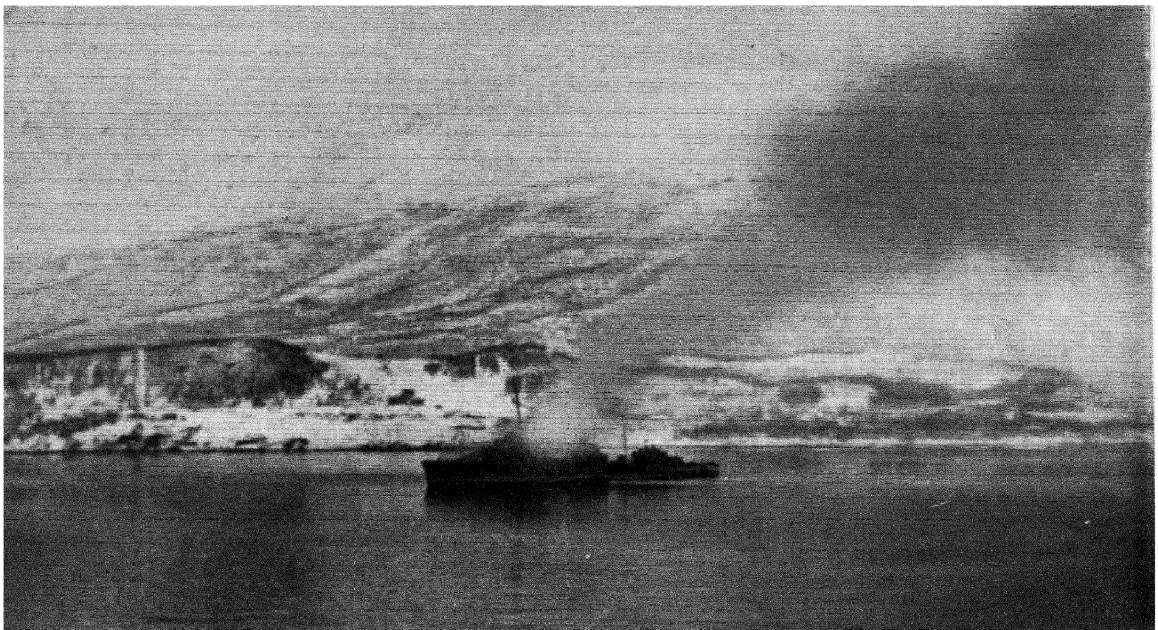
damaged and aground, was able to use her armament. The *Eskimo* received some hurt, but poured in a heavy fire, and soon the German destroyer which had been run aground was on fire from stem to stern. Continuing the pursuit, the British destroyers found the remaining three Nazi ships lying alongside the ice at the very head of Rombaks fjord. One lay apparently undamaged, but there was no sign of any crew aboard of her. The second was sinking, only her bows showing above the water. The third had a fire blazing in the stern, but otherwise appeared to be undamaged. At this stage of the action the *Hero* and *Kimberley* were in advance. They fired a few shots at the two enemy ships still afloat, but as there was no reply they ceased firing. The two British ships then closed in and lowered their boats, with armed sailors on board, to investigate. As they rowed towards the first German destroyer, which had appeared to be undamaged, she turned over and slowly sank. Her crew had scuttled her.

The British sailors then made for the German ship which was slightly on fire, and which was found to be the *Hans Lüdemann*. They hauled down the Nazi flag, and hoisted the White Ensign. Proceeding to search the ship they found nobody on board except one wounded officer. He was lying on a stretcher, and apparently his comrades meant to take him over the side on to the ice. But when our leading destroyer appeared in sight, the unwounded members of the *Hans Lüdemann* made a bolt for



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SECOND BATTLE OF NARVIK. GERMAN DESTROYER ABANDONED AND ON FIRE



*Photographic News Agencies*

SECOND BATTLE OF NARVIK: ENEMY DESTROYER ON FIRE



*Photographic News Agencies*

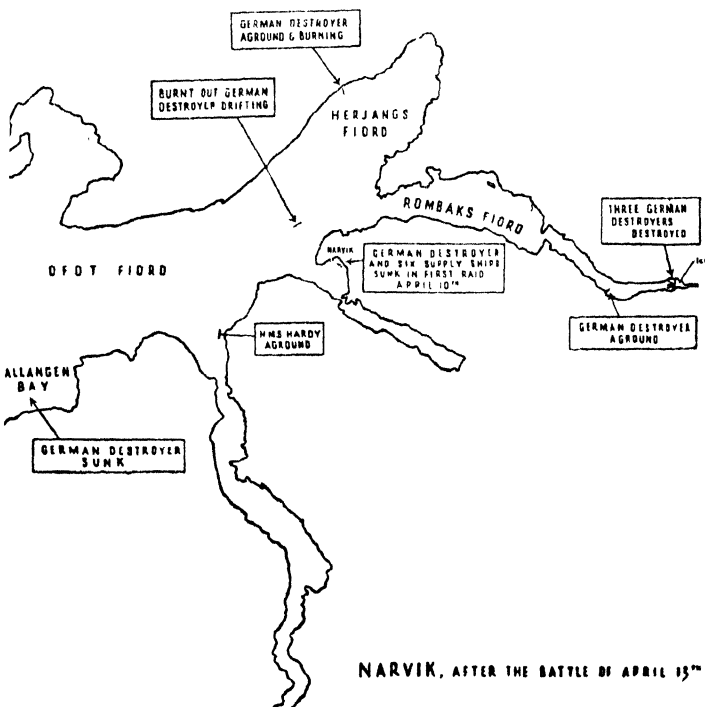
NORTH-WESTERN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE



*Photographic News Agencies*

NORTH-WESTERN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE ON THE WAY TO NORWAY

it, leaving their comrade in the burning ship. He was made prisoner, and taken on board H.M.S. *Hero*. The British boarding party then proceeded to put out the fire, which was not serious, and the




question now arose as to whether this destroyer should not be towed away as a prize. The difficulties of navigation, however, were too great, so the *Hans Lüdemann* was torpedoed. All German naval resistance was now at an end. True, the town

was full of German soldiers, some of whom were seen in flight over the hills, but the shore batteries had been silenced, and all enemy warships destroyed. Admiral Whitworth, therefore, left the fjord in the *Warspite*, with three of our destroyers which had been damaged, leaving the *Ivanhoe* and *Kimberley* in possession.

The *Ivanhoe*, on instructions from the *Warspite*, later rescued the survivors of H.M.S. *Hardy*. Her captain landed a party of twenty-four armed sailors and an officer. These marched to Ballanger village, and as it was dark by the time they got there, they decided to spend the night before escorting the *Hardy's* men, some of whom were wounded, back to their ship.

During the night there was an alarm. One hundred and twenty German sailors, survivors from the action, marched up to the village, and promptly surrendered to the twenty-four sailors of the *Ivanhoe*. The Norwegians in Ballanger were unarmed, and the situation might have been dangerous if the Germans had discovered how greatly they outnumbered the *Ivanhoe's* men. Mr. Midshipman Easy, in Captain Marryat's immortal novel, was faced with a somewhat similar problem. With a small armed guard he had to escort a large number of French prisoners to the British forces. Mr. Easy solved the problem by cutting off all their trouser buttons. They were so busy holding up their trousers that they could not run away. *Ivanhoe's* sailors

had a different method. They put all the German prisoners into the village schoolroom, which was centrally heated, and took their clothes away. They were comfortable only so long as they stayed in the schoolroom. If they ventured out into the Arctic night they would have frozen. In the morning reinforcements were sent for; but as the *Ivanhoe* had other duties to perform, the Norwegian villagers were provided with rifles and cartridges, and left on guard over the German prisoners.

So ended the second battle of Narvik. It was entirely successful from every point of view.

The next day the advance guard of the British troops were landed in the neighbourhood, and the operations for the capture of the town and port commenced.

Only one sign of enemy opposition from the air was seen. A German Heinkel bomber appeared during the battle. It cruised about amongst the mountain tops, eagerly watched by the anti-aircraft guns' crews of the *Warspite*. It never came within range.

This action was a model for mopping-up operations in enclosed waters. The same tactics could have been repeated at Trondheim. Had this been done, the whole course of the operations on land for the capture of Trondheim might have been altered to our advantage.

# CHAPTER V

## THE TRONDHEIM OPERATIONS

BEFORE WE CAN APPRECIATE THE FULL SIGNIficance of the Trondheim operations, it is necessary to consider the geographical situation of Norway. The three principal cities, in order of wealth and population, are Oslo, Bergen, and Trondheim. These three were seized by surprise and treachery by the Germans working on a prearranged scheme as described in the first chapter of this book.

Such Allied plans has had been worked out by the British naval and military staffs to meet the eventuality of a German aggression on Norway had not contemplated German action of this kind. It was known by certain means, presently to be described, that part of the German strategical plan in the event of a new World War was the seizure of Norway. It was expected that the invasion of Norway would follow conventional lines, and that an expedition would first attack the Oslo district, and work its way up to the north. When the attempt to aid Finland against the Russians was abandoned, certain small forces, a fraction of the large army of 100,000 men which the British and French had prepared to send to Finland, were kept in being.

The plan was to send these small forces to Bergen, Trondheim, and Narvik, where it was expected the Norwegians would be in full control and welcome them as allies against a German attack which had already developed. The Hitlerian technique of boring from within and obtaining a foothold by surprise and the connivance of bought traitors presented a new situation altogether. However, the decision was taken to give immediate help to the Norwegians, and this was perfectly sound. In the war which broke out in September 1939 between the Allies on the one side, and Germany on the other, one of the chief objectives of ourselves and the French was to prevent or punish German aggression against weaker nations. It was necessary that these nations should make some show of resistance, if they were to be helped at all, and the Norwegians, once they had recovered from the shock of surprise, began to put up a strenuous fight. The British Parliament and public opinion alike demanded that assistance should be sent.

Apart from the question of principle and our chivalrous intentions, it was important that the Germans should not establish themselves in the magnificent harbours and fjords of the Norwegian coast. It has not, apparently, been generally known in Britain that there is an inner passage, known as the 'Leads', all along the western Norwegian coast nearly to Narvik. This passage runs inside the hundreds of islands off the coast, and is navigable

by fairly large ships. Certain politicians talking about the 'Norwegian corridor' seem to have supposed that this was the passage off the coast within the three-mile limit of territorial waters. The 'Leads' presents a far more dangerous problem. With the Nazis ensconced in Norway, their naval vessels, commerce raiders, and U-boats, could use the 'Leads' and the only sure way of detecting them would be with reconnaissance aeroplanes ; but with enemy fighter aeroplanes at the Norwegian aerodromes such air scouting operations would be difficult. And Bergen is only 200 miles from the Shetland Islands.

It was also important that the Nazis should not possess themselves of the riches of Norway, and particularly her metals and timber. For we had relied on blockade to weaken the German war effort. Furthermore, the Norwegian Mercantile Marine of 4,000,000 tons, the fourth largest in the world, was a rich prize which no doubt attracted Herr Hitler and his advisers. Another consideration was that, with Norway firmly in German control, Sweden would be in a particularly vulnerable position, both militarily and economically.

The trading interests of Britain in the Scandinavian countries are immense. In the last year of peace our commerce with Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland was worth £150,000,000, or more than our total commerce with France, Germany, and Russia combined. With the northern

Norwegian ports in German hands, and particularly Narvik, as has been pointed out, our blockading lines controlling the exits from the North Sea would be outflanked, while the Faroe Islands is a position of great strategical importance where an Atlantic base might be at the disposal of the Nazi navy. There are some grounds for believing that Herr Hitler's long-range policy is to secure Denmark and Norway, and then work for a 'stalemate' in the war and a patched-up peace. The next stage would be the building up of Nazi naval strength. The final step would be a new war with Britain alone. Herr Hitler may have read the history of the Punic Wars. From the strategically advantageous positions in Norway our final ruin and the break-up of the British Commonwealth of Nations could be accomplished. Those who were inclined to regard the Scandinavian campaign for the liberation of Norway as a 'sideshow' must have overlooked these possibilities.

For reasons of interest and honour, assistance had to be sent, and every effort made to dislodge the German invaders of Norway. To pretend that the Scandinavian campaign was a minor episode in a world war is puerile. Again, quite apart from political prestige and the effect on neutral opinion throughout the world, a failure to meet the German thrust in Norway would be extremely harmful to the whole Allied cause in the war with Germany.

As already stated, the counter-measure planned,

though not in any great detail, or with anything like the thoroughness of the German plot, was to send covering forces to the three points mentioned. The expedition to Bergen was actually under orders to sail, but when it was learnt that the Germans had managed to win a Fifth Column victory and fortify themselves there, it was countermanded. As already described, the Nazis had also established themselves at Stavanger. This was the largest and best-served aerodrome in Norway, and its possession by the enemy had an important effect on the whole of the subsequent operations. This, again, was an unforeseen development. If our tempo of decision had been rapid enough, it would, as explained in Chapter I, have been feasible and desirable from every point of view, to have counter-attacked and seized the aerodrome at Stavanger. It is near the sea, the sheltered harbour there has 1½ miles of stone quays, not easily damaged from the air; the German garrison had been sent by air, and had no artillery. A combined naval, military, and aerial counter-offensive against Stavanger would have had every chance of success. Then we could have flown our fighter aircraft over the 400 miles from the Yorkshire coast to Stavanger, and been in possession of the most important of the assets which we lacked in the Trondheim operations, and the Scandinavian campaign generally.

The operation of aircraft with the comparatively short range of fighter planes is a complicated one.

They could carry enough petrol to cross the North Sea, but not to return. Not only were aerodromes required, but the complicated system of ground services, repairing squads, and plant, fuel supplies, spare parts, reserves of ammunition, and the rest were necessary. All these could have been made available at Stavanger by sending there ancillary ground services in transport ships. But to do this, very rapid action was necessary. The fog of war enveloped the scene, it was first necessary to hold a meeting of the Supreme War Council, attended by the French, British, and Polish High Commands ; the opportunity was missed.

To return to the important facts of geography : the south-west of Norway is so mountainous and rugged that to this day no adequate road system is in existence between Oslo and Bergen. A railway was built twenty-five years ago, and with a single track. With every advantage accruing to them, it took the German invaders three weeks to establish direct contact between Oslo and Bergen, and therefore with Stavanger, by land. In other words, the Bergen-Stavanger area is cut off from the rest of Norway save for a single line of railway track, and the normal means of communication by sea, and at sea the Allies had overwhelming strength. Time, however, was the essence of the problem, and time was lost because, although the German plans for the invasion of Norway were known to the staffs of the British fighting services, and also, presumably,

to their French opposite numbers, the information had not percolated upwards to the statesmen exercising the supreme direction of the Allied war effort.

I must here explain how the German plans for the invasion of Norway came to be known to the Operational, Planning, and Intelligence Divisions of the Royal Navy, His Majesty's Army, and the Royal Air Force.

As long ago as 1926 a secret memorandum was prepared for the German Government by Rear-Admiral Wolfgang Wegener. We have had all the details of this and of the many discussions on it which took place among the senior German naval and military officers from a Professor of Naval Strategy and History, formerly attached to the German Naval Academy at Kiel and the Naval Staff College in Berlin, and who was forced to leave Germany because his grandfather had married a Jewess. Admiral Wegener's memorandum pointed out the alleged mistake made by the German High Command in the war of 1914–18 in respecting the neutrality of Denmark, and contenting themselves with compelling the laying of a minefield by the Danes in the Great Belt, as described in Chapter II of this book. Wegener argued, with a wealth of detail, and professional technicology, how advantageous it would have been to Germany to have done in 1915 or 1916 what the Nazis did in 1940. This memorandum was republished in 1929 in a confidential pamphlet, *Die Seestrategie des Welt-*

*krieges* ("Sea Strategy of the World War"). When Herr Hitler came to power, this pamphlet was brought to his notice. He became so enthusiastic about it that ever after it was described in Germany as the 'Fuehrer's Naval Bible.' This pamphlet is in the possession of the Naval Intelligence Division of the British Admiralty. Lectures based on it have been given at the Imperial Staff College, and the professional officers of the three Services are well aware of the doctrine. A shorter summary of Admiral Wegener's theories was actually made public in Germany, was translated into English, and received some attention from students of war and strategy. The refugee professor, however, had explained the whole plan of the Norwegian campaign to those whose business it was to study such matters in our own Admiralty. Our own naval staff had also received full details of a most important lecture on North Sea and Baltic strategy given at the German Military Academy (corresponding to our Military Staff College at Camberley) by Lieut.-Colonel Otto Niedermeier in 1936. This officer has a high reputation in Nazi circles. He outlined the very plans carried out in Denmark and Norway in April 1940. The discussion which followed and all details were made known to our own Admiralty experts. We were warned in plenty of time. Unfortunately, as already pointed out, what is known to the staffs of the fighting Services does not necessarily reach the minds of the political leaders.

The German attack on Norway, therefore, presented itself as an entirely novel situation to the men who had to take the decisions. The method of the attack which I have described in detail also presented novelties for their professional advisers. Our collaboration with our French ally has been close in recent years as the Nazi menace has waxed. Doubtless the French General Staff had also been informed of the Wegener plan just as the German plans for the invasion of Belgium in case of war with France in 1914 had been made known through the French General Staff to the British General Staff, but in the North Sea operations for the relief of Norway, the French would naturally expect the British to take the lead ; and in the operations which I am describing, the supreme command on land, sea, and in the air, was in British hands. The French can, therefore, be forgiven for leaving the preparations to meet such a diversion towards Scandinavia from Germany to the experts and their political chiefs in Whitehall.

The failure to acquaint the senior members of the Government of these plain indications of Germany's intentions towards Norway as soon as war was imminent or had broken out, or the neglect by these senior members to allow themselves to be informed or to appreciate the importance of the information was unfortunate. If the information had been conveyed to the Norwegian Government, the whole course of events might have turned out differ-

ently. There have been many complaints in authoritative quarters in Britain that the Norwegian Government had been invited to enter into preliminary arrangements in case of a German aggression ; but, in common with other neutrals, they had refused to agree to these elementary precautions. No doubt the Norwegian Government, like other neutrals, hoped that by adopting a friendly and completely non-committal attitude towards Germany they would be left alone. Might not the course of history have been altered, if the full details of the German plans and the fact that these plans were included in the German war doctrine had been fully explained to the Norwegian Cabinet by means of the usual diplomatic contacts ? If, of course, the statesmen in control of the high policy of this country were not aware of these designs themselves, they could not give instructions for the information to be conveyed to the Government in Oslo. It was at least unkind for the British Government spokesman in Parliament, defending the fact that we were taken so much by surprise, to excuse our lack of knowledge of what was afoot by stating that the Norwegian Government had no knowledge of it either.

Small States like Norway cannot afford to spend £1,500,000 a year on the Secret Service, in addition to maintaining large Intelligence and Information sections in their Foreign Offices, War Offices, Air Ministries, and Admiralties.

During the last war we developed the science of

decoding the German radio cyphers to a remarkable degree of efficiency. We were able to 'break' the codes, and read the messages passing by radio between the German Government's wireless stations and the German diplomatic representatives and other agents in far-off countries. Amongst the messages so decoded were the instructions to the German Minister in Mexico City to invite the Mexican Government to help Germany fight the United States of America, promising as a reward the States of New Mexico and Texas. This information was not, however, allowed to remain in the files of the Naval Intelligence Department. The then Director of Naval Intelligence, Admiral Sir Reginald Hall, made a point of importuning those in power and authority with all important items of information that came his way. Indeed, his complaint, which he made to me in 1916 at the Admiralty, was that he could not always persuade the authorities to take quick enough action on the information he obtained for them. What 'Blinker' Hall would have to say about the matters I discuss above can be left to the imagination. He had no complaint to make, however, about the use of the intercepted messages between Berlin and Mexico City. They were at once conveyed through the proper channels to President Wilson. The President and his Cabinet were outraged as soon as they had been convinced of the authenticity of this amazing news. This information had more to do with President Wilson's

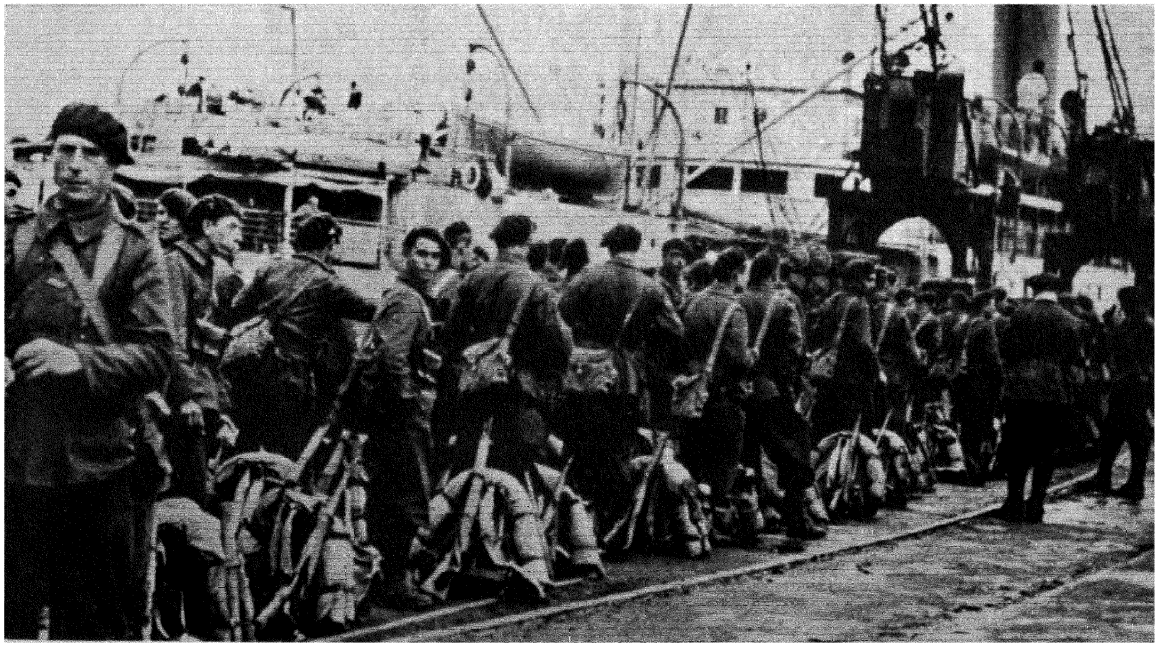
decision that the United States of America must intervene in the World War against Germany than the sinking of the *Lusitania*.

The time-factor, for the reasons given, being against us in south-western Norway, and with the vitally important Stavanger aerodrome in enemy hands, the next best thing to do was to attempt the recapture of Trondheim. The city is the old and historic capital of Norway. In the surrounding country is comparatively level and fertile land. There is a break in the rugged mountain ranges towards Oslo, which is situated in the southern plain ; and there is another at Trondheim where gentle slopes and easy country stretch for some way inland.

Trondheim is the gateway to Sweden. From the city and port excellent railway and road communications to the Swedish frontier are in existence. These pass to the eastward. The Trondheim fjord itself, from its entrance at Agdenes, where there is an obsolete castle, runs south-eastward for about sixteen miles and then takes another sharp turn to the north-eastward for another eighty miles. This stretch of deep salt-water runs far into the interior of Norway.

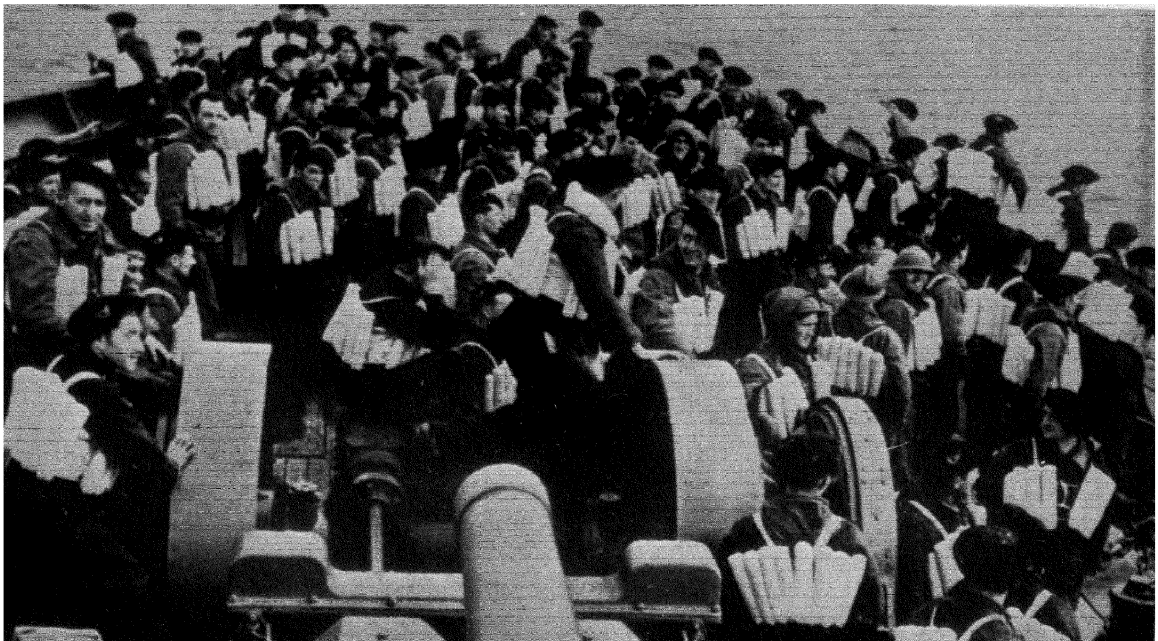
From Trondheim itself, in addition to the railway line to Storlien on the Swedish frontier, another railway runs along the shores of the fjord for fifty miles to the town of Stenkjer, of sombre memory, and then for another thirty miles skirts the shores

of Lake Snaasen, and then by way of Grong turns westward to Namsos. Another railway-line from Trondheim runs southward to Stoeren and then divides into two branches. One runs down to Dombaas, and from there along the valley of Gudbrands to Oslo. Another railway-line turns east from Stoeren and following the Oester valley runs on to Oslo again. These two long fertile valleys, and the areas round Trondheim itself, together with the southern plain in which stands Oslo, comprise the most thickly populated and wealthy districts of Norway. To hold Narvik and its hinterland and to abandon the rest of Norway would be as if in Britain we held John o' Groats and the Orkney Islands, and surrendered the rest of the kingdom to an invader. Any effort of value to Norway, and, incidentally, to Sweden, must be made at Trondheim. Immediate communications were opened between the Norwegian Government and the Allies. Strong representations were made by the Norwegians that the most effective help that could be given to them would be the recapture of Trondheim. Norwegian forces had rallied north of Oslo, and were holding up the German advance along the only two practicable routes, already described. If the Allies could recapture Trondheim, the King of Norway and his Government could establish themselves there, and the operation of driving the Germans out of Norway would resolve itself into an advance southwards along the two valleys of



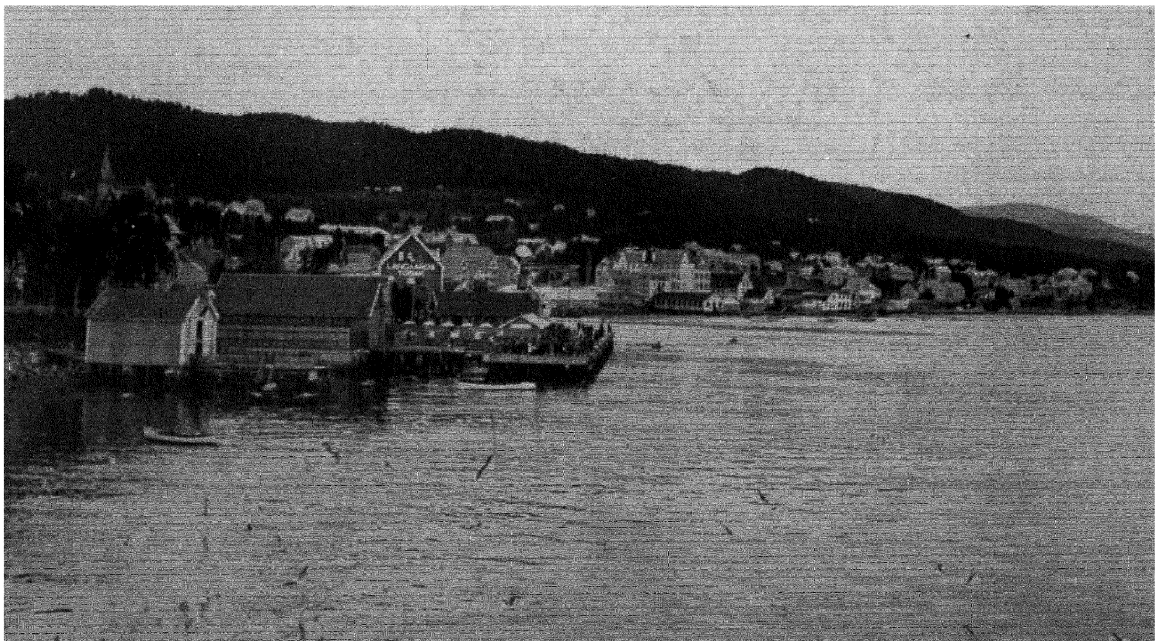
FRENCH TROOPS EMBARKING FOR NORWAY

*Topical Press*



RENCH ALPINE TROOPS LEAVING FOR NORWAY

*Associated Press*



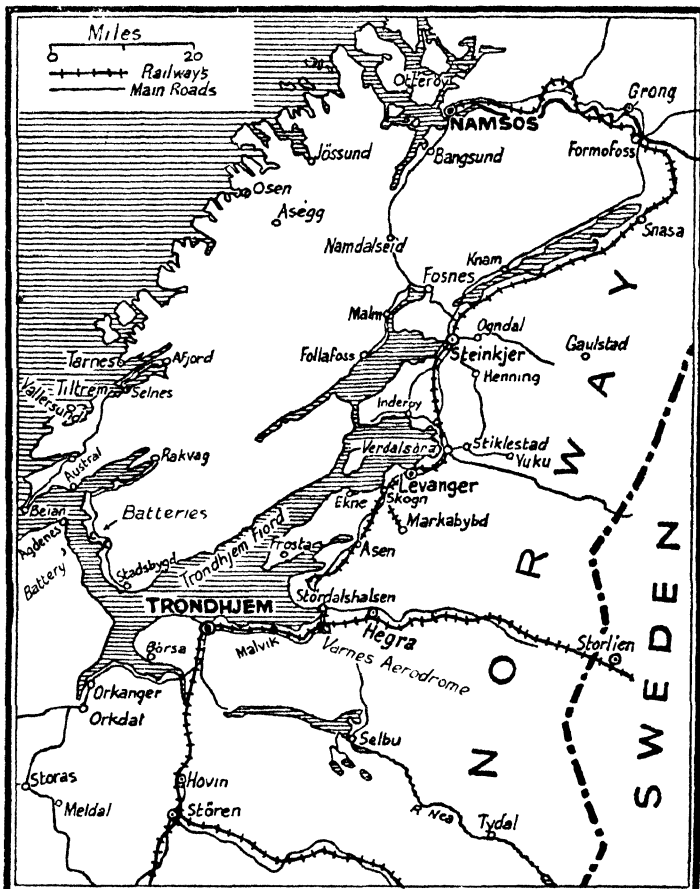
*Topical Press*

TOWN OF MOLDE AT ENTRANCE TO AANDALSNES FJORD



NAMSOS AFTER AIR ATTACKS

*Sport and General*


Miles
0 20
Railways
Main Roads
Oterdal
NAMSOS
Grong
Jössund
Bangsund
Formofoss
Osen
Asegg
Snasa
Namdalseid
Knam
Fosnes
Malm
Ogndal
Gaulstad
Tarnes
Afjord
Follafoss
Steinkjer
Henning
Tiltrem
Vallersund
Selnes
Inderøy
Verdalsøra
Stiklestad
Yuku
Austrat
Rakvag
Levanger
Skogn
Ekne
Batteries
Markabybd
Beian
Agdenes
Frosta
Asen
Battery
Stadsbygd
Trondhjem fjord
Stördalshalsen
TRONDHJEM
Hegra
Malvik
Börsa
Værnes Aerodrome
Storlien
Orkanger
Orkdal
Selbu
Storas
Meldal
Hovin
Stören
Nea
Tydal
NORWAY
SWEDEN

Gudbrands and Oester, towards Oslo. A successful movement towards Oslo would automatically isolate Bergen.

Now a word as to the position of Sweden. With the exception of Italy and Belgium, Sweden is the most powerful of the European neutrals. Her Government was, and is, fiercely anti-Nazi. Her mobilized army comprises nearly 350,000 trained men. The Swedish armament industry is world-famous. For example, the Bofors anti-aircraft gun, adopted by the British Army, is of Swedish design and manufacture. The Swedish Navy is important. In consists of three large coast defence battleships, five smaller coast defence ships mounting heavy guns, two cruisers, one fitted as an aircraft-carrier, sixteen modern destroyers, and twenty-one submarines. After the losses suffered by the Nazi navy in the opening phases of the Scandinavian campaign the Swedish fleet was capable of offering battle on fairly equal terms with the remaining German naval forces. In the north of Sweden are the third richest iron ore deposits in the world, the attraction of which for the German war economy has already been referred to. The Swedish coast defences are powerful and efficient, but her military dispositions and field fortifications are designed for two purposes. The first, in the south of the country, àre to resist German aggression, and the second, on the Finnish border in the far north, are to resist a possible incursion from Russia. The frontier between Sweden and

Norway is unfortified. When the two kingdoms separated by mutual agreement in the early years of this century, the terms of their treaty of separation included clauses prohibiting the fortification of their common frontier except against a third party. With the Germans in firm possession of Norway, all the Swedish defences could be turned. The country now lies open and naked to German invasion.

The Swedish Air Force, consisting of about 500 planes of the first line, would have been strengthened by purchases in America if the Baltic had not been closed by the German invasion of Denmark. Four powerful destroyers built in Italian shipyards for the Swedish Government and delivered to Swedish crews were in the Mediterranean in April of this year when the blow fell on Norway. Unless, therefore, the Allies could establish themselves in Trondheim and secure communications with Sweden, it would be difficult to send effective help to that country in the event of German blackmail developing into an actual attack, while Swedish trade, except for the outlet at Narvik, would be at the mercy of Herr Hitler and his confederates.

With these considerations, it is not difficult to understand the importance both to the Allies and to the Germans of the operations for the recapture of Trondheim by the former.

The Trondheim operations, which I am now about to describe, failed to succeed for a number of reasons, the outstanding one being the strength of the German

Air Force and the disadvantage to the Allies of not having the use of aerodromes. It is calculated on the best available authority that no less than 25 per cent of the total German long-range craft were used in these operations. Had Stavanger aerodrome been recaptured, as could probably have been done if the operation had been undertaken in time, the whole complexion of the campaign would have been different. Leaving aside the air situation, to be examined later, another factor was the heavy reinforcements in men, armoured cars, tanks, and artillery the Germans were able to pour into Oslo. The attempt to intercept this traffic by the use of British and French submarines, and, to a certain extent, by air attack, was only successful up to a point. In the first fortnight of the campaign we had sunk or damaged more than thirty troop transports, munition carriers, and supply ships, and in the process had drowned the equivalent of a whole division of German soldiers. At least another six divisions and a wealth of material had been ferried to Oslo.

I have described how, if our information had been better and our decisions quicker, we could have driven off the German naval forces attacking Oslo fjord during the two days in which the Norwegian batteries were holding out. It must, of course, be remembered that the German onslaught on Norway might have been a feint. The real objective might have been different and could have included a raid in force on Britain. The presence of German heavy

warships as far north as Narvik seemed to give some support to this possibility, and the whole of our available naval forces were engaged on a plan to frustrate any such movement, and to destroy any German naval units met with. There was also the danger of concentrated air attack on our warships from aerodromes in North Germany, and the recently acquired Danish aerodromes, if they had entered the Skaggerak. Actually, in the operations which were eventually undertaken, our warships and transports came under heavy air attack; and because our losses were not greater, thanks to the excellence of our anti-aircraft fire and the gallantry of our defending aeroplanes of the Fleet Air Arm, we were not in a position to forecast such comparative immunity.

The other means used to prevent this flow of German reinforcements to Norway was the laying of minefields. A very large area was mined, but the number of mines actually used was small. Most of them were laid by submarines. The German minesweepers were able to clear passages, losing some vessels in the process, notably when a French destroyer flotilla made a raid on the entrance to the Kattegat. Our patrolling submarines were heavily attacked by the smaller German surface vessels, whenever their presence was detected, and we, in our turn, suffered some loss there. A better plan, though this would have had to be worked out beforehand and all ready to be put into operation,

was to lay a thick minefield between the Skaw, the north-east point of Denmark, and Paternoster Rock. The water is comparatively shallow there, and the actual passage to be mined would only be some twenty-five sea miles in width. To do this effectively we would have had to use surface minelayers, they would have had to be guarded by destroyers and cruisers, we would have had to have heavy ships in support, and then, once again, exposure to air attack would have had to be accepted.

Yet the laying of a minefield and the successful guarding of it to prevent minesweeping by the enemy, would have stopped all ship-borne supplies and reinforcements going from Germany to Norway, and the German troops already landed would have been left 'in the air.'

In the event, other plans were adopted. The bombers of the Royal Air Force carried out a large number of gallant and successful attacks on the German controlled aerodromes in Denmark and Norway. Stavanger aerodrome was bombed again and again, and attention was given to the civil aerodrome at Fornebu, near Oslo, which had been converted by the Germans for military uses, and every other landing-ground received attention.

To carry out these attacks, our men of the Bomber Command had to fly three to four hundred miles across the North Sea, discharge their bombs, and fly back again over the same distance in all kinds of weather. No praise can be too high for the

gallantry and efficiency of these airmen. Many of them were citizens of our great Dominions. That these operations handicapped the German offensive is undoubted. At least 200 German warplanes were destroyed in this critical fortnight. Our losses were comparatively slight. Again and again the ground defences of guns and searchlights of Stavanger aerodrome were beaten and silenced.

One of the lessons of this campaign has been that the putting out of action of aerodromes by bombing attack is more difficult than had been anticipated.

We could not prevent, despite the devotion and heroism of 'the trade,' as our submarine service calls itself, the continual reinforcement of the German troops in Norway.

The German objective was now to force a way through the Gudbrands valley to Trondheim, so that their forces based on Oslo could join hands with their garrison in Trondheim. The situation at Trondheim itself was interesting. The Germans landed secretly from merchant ships, as described in Chapter I, and had been reinforced by soldiers carried in aeroplanes. An enemy destroyer and torpedo boat had managed to slip into Trondheim fjord. Fifteen miles east of Trondheim is the aerodrome of Varnes. A short distance east of this, and twenty-six miles east of Trondheim city, near the vitally important railway line to Sweden, is the comparatively modern fort of Hegre, perched on top of a 1,500-foot hill in difficult country. When, in the

early years of this century, Norway and Sweden, after a long period of bickering, decided to separate into independent kingdoms, the Norwegians remained suspicious of future Swedish intentions. Some of the Norse were afraid that their larger Swedish neighbour might attempt another reconquest. To protect Trondheim this fort was built and its guns were mounted to fire eastward, from which this threat would come.

At the time of the German invasion, it was held by a small garrison under the command of an elderly officer of the Norwegian Army. This old gentleman, feeling the day was lost, was for surrendering; but a party of younger Norwegian officers, and their company of soldiers, managed to escape from Trondheim and insisted on holding the fort. About 160 of them, including fifteen officers and a woman nurse, established themselves there and held out for nearly a month. By superhuman efforts, they dismounted the artillery and remounted it so as to be able to shoot to the westward. These guns denied the use of the Varnes aerodrome to the Germans so long as they had ammunition. Provisions and small arms ammunition was dropped to these heroic defenders by aeroplane, and they maintained their defence despite continuous and concentrated air bombing attacks by the German warplanes for nearly a month.

It has been argued that our correct tactics would have been to force the entrance to Trondheim Fjord

with warships, seize the city and aerodrome and relieve the fort at Hegre from inside the fjord. This course was advocated from early on by the Norwegian Government, and strong representations were made to the Admiralty by Admiral of the Fleet Sir Roger Keyes, and others.[1] On the west side of the entrance is an old fort, Agdenes. This fortress is of interest only to archæologists. South of it, on the west side of the fjord, the entrance of which is some two miles across and the water very deep, is a battery of three old 5-in. guns. On the east side of the entrance are two batteries of three 8-in. guns each. All these nine guns are mounted in the open on naval gun carriages, the guns crews being protected only by steel shields. In modern coastal defences the guns are mounted in armoured turrets or cupolas. The 8-in. guns were of the 1896 Armstrong pattern. The Norwegian soldiers in these batteries resisted for some time, and my information is that they were taken from the rear. What damage the gunners did before finally surrendering is uncertain. They should have thrown their breech-blocks into the fjord when it was seen that further resistance was hopeless, and if this was not done, the explanation may be the same treachery which hampered the Norwegian defences at Narvik and Oslo. But even if these old guns were intact and had plenty

[1] It is known in London that the Norwegian Government made formal representations in this sense on 14 April.

of ammunition, there would have been no difficulty in putting them out of action. A small fraction of the number of bombs dropped on the Stavanger aerodrome would have finished these three small batteries. Modern warships, with their long-range guns, could have lain off at sea and enfiladed the batteries and the German gunners who, presumably, would now be manning them. Full details of how to accomplish this were supplied by the Norwegian naval authorities to the British Admiralty very early on.

For many years at Bergen and Oslo, where the entrances are much narrower, the Norwegians had had mounted on shore hidden torpedo tubes. There were no shore torpedo tubes at Trondheim. Nor was there a Norwegian minefield as at Oslo. The entrance is very deep, over 1,200 feet, and there are physical obstacles to successful minelaying. If the worst came to the worst, a heavily armoured warship, the *Warspite*, for instance, or one of her sisters, could have passed through the fjord, even if the old guns had not been put out of action, covering her movements with smoke screens. Once inside we would have had the run of 100 miles of navigable salt water.

I dare say it will be many years before the real truth comes out as to why this apparently obvious naval operation was not undertaken at the very beginning. The Germans could not possibly have had time to reinforce the batteries at the entrance

with their own artillery. It is a lengthy operation to make the concrete foundations for each big gun position. To drag heavy cannon over the rugged hills and cliffs at the entrance to Trondheim fjord and place them in position would be a matter of weeks. The German artillery specialists could not perform miracles. It was argued at the time that if our ships got into Trondheim fjord they would be exposed to air attack. But so they were in escorting, landing and re-embarking the Allied troops sent to Namsos and to Aandalsnes, Sundals fjord and elsewhere. It was argued that the Germans would have had howitzers on shore and could fire at our ships once they were inside. They mounted some howitzers at Narvik, and how these were dealt with was described in the preceding chapter.

Every day lost added, of course, to the dangers of the attempt. The first days after the news of the German seizure of Trondheim was the time to enter. If in the past a close study had been made of operations to assist Norway, the importance of Trondheim would have been understood earlier. War plans should be prepared in peace ; they can be modified to suit developing conditions ; but the principles must be decided on beforehand. When it was decided to make the direct attack, zero hour was fixed for 25 April 1940, as stated in Parliament. The British Fleet was off the Norwegian coast on 8, 9, and 10 April.

After the plan of attack had been 'mounted' it

was *abandoned* (not postponed !) because the military force landed at Namsos was supposed to be making good progress. According to Mr. Churchill, the presence of German warships in the fjord was 'overlooked.'

There is also this consideration. We know that the Admiralty War Staff saw no great difficulty in warships forcing their way into Trondheim fjord ; but there were doubts in some quarters as to whether the ships once inside would not have been exposed to concentrated air attack. If the situation had become too hot for them, then they could come out again.

Mr. Winston Churchill wrote of the Dardanelles campaign :

> While time is young, while prospects are favourable, while prizes inestimable may be gained, caution, hesitancy, half-measures rule and fetter action.

Was this the same man who took the line of extreme caution when the idea of the direct sea attack on Trondheim was mooted ? If not, there is an explanation for the human change. In the war of 1914–18 Mr. Churchill was largely responsible for two perfectly sound strategical offensives, the Dardanelles in 1915, and the threat to the right flank of the German army driving through Belgium by a landing at Antwerp in 1914. These operations of the last war were muddled in various ways and heavy losses were incurred. Though Mr. Churchill

could not be justly blamed, an ignorant public, suffering from post-war weariness, hung the Dardanelles and Antwerp round his neck like two millstones. The criticism was so bitter that he was defeated in the General Election of 1922, and temporarily driven out of public life. He had difficulty in regaining his Parliamentary foothold; and the experience was so painful that it may be he has been tender of taking risks ever since.

In justice to Mr. Churchill, whose personal and political bravery have been shown on so many occasions, he was one of the first of the Elder Statesmen to recognize the growing importance of the air arm in all warlike operations. For five years prior to the outbreak of this War, he pleaded for greater expenditure on the Air Force. He also tried in vain to awaken his own Party to the Nazi danger. His reward was to be excluded from office, despite his obvious gifts, till war had actually broken out; but, eight months later, to hold the high office of State previously denied to him, that of Prime Minister, and Minister of Defence; and now the very situation he had feared, and attempted to avert, hampered the freedom of action of the magnificent British Navy, for the safety of which he was responsible as its political chief.

Nor must it be forgotten that the War Cabinet, which took the decisions, numbered among its members the two former Air Ministers, Sir Kingsley Wood and Sir Samuel Hoare, who had been for so

long responsible for our air forces, and the two men who, as Chancellors of the Exchequer, had not found the money required, Sir John Simon and Mr. Neville Chamberlain.

Undoubtedly, also, the threats and blusterings of the Fascist Government of Italy at this period had their effect on the minds of the members of the War Cabinet and their principal professional advisers. It might be, of course, that these threats and sinister movements and preparations in Italy were a cheap service being rendered by Signor Mussolini to his Axis partner in Berlin ; but the uneasy feeling existed that if we became too deeply involved in Norway, Signor Mussolini and his Government might take the plunge and enter upon the great gamble of war against the British and French Empires, with the communications of his own East African Empire at their mercy and his trade outside the Mediterranean impossible. However this might have been, it was desired to reinforce the Allied Fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean and the losses to Hitler's warships in these operations made this redistribution easier ; though why the Norwegian operations on a large scale could not be carried out by even reduced British naval forces is not so easily explained.

The plan decided upon was to land troops north and south of Trondheim and advance on the German forces from two or three directions. Considering that the great expedition of 100,000 British

and French troops for the support of Finland had been dispersed, except for certain small advance parties, the collection, equipment and despatch of the troops sent from England and France in little more than a week, was a fine piece of detailed Staff work. A division of British troops was actually landed in two parties, one at Namsos under Major-General Carton de Wiart, V.C., and another at Aandalsnes under Major-General Paget. These two towns are unimportant, and the port facilities only suitable for coastal steamers. The landing-piers were of wood. The Namsos force was landed in the dead of night and the transports then put out to sea again so as to give the Germans as little indication as possible of the operation. Unfortunately, the German espionage system in Norway was efficient and ubiquitous. It was not long before the German Colonel commanding the brigade at Trondheim knew what was afoot.

Before describing the exploits of the Namsos force, let us return to the general military situation. The Norwegians had rallied and were holding the difficult country to the north of Oslo on either side of Mjoesa Lake. Hamar, to the east of the lake, and Lillehammer, to the north of the lake, were held by the Norwegians in some force. It is noteworthy that the Norwegian troops were aided by 500 Swedish volunteers who did splendid service, inflicting heavy losses on the Germans. They captured a whole German transport column pro-

ceeding up the valley to Rena. Among their other exploits was the destruction of a German air field and a dump containing 20,000 gallons of petrol. Their exploits thrilled all patriotic Swedes. An agitation grew in Sweden for open intervention on the side of Norway.

So long as these Norwegian troops could hold out, the Germans could not advance either along the Gudbrands valley to Trondheim, or along the Oesterdal which skirts the Swedish frontier. With reinforcements, they were expected to be able to withstand the German pressure for some time ; and, indeed, when we got our men ashore at Aandalsnes a British force was sent down the Gudbransdal and reached Lillehammer. Furthermore, even if these forces had to retreat, the country is so difficult, the roads and railways pass through so many tunnels and over so many bridges, that demolition work was expected to be effective. Unfortunately for these hopes, enough German reinforcements had reached Oslo to enable overwhelming pressure to be brought to bear on these southern Allied forces. The mountains between the valleys were still covered with snow and the German ski troops, of which they had plenty, all specially trained for the purpose, were able to make flank attacks. It was the German air strength, however, which proved decisive.

The strong Polish armies had been overwhelmed through the new tactics worked out by the German



*Photographic News Agencies*

R.A.F. PERSONNEL WHO TOOK PART IN THE BERGEN RAID



*Photographic News Agencies*

HAMPDEN BOMBER WITH TWO BOMBER CREWS



HAMPDEN BOMBER WITH R.A.F. PERSONNEL

*Photographic News Agencies*



*Photographic News Agencies*

GERMAN TRANSPORT SHIP BURNING AT KRISTIANSAND
Photograph taken by R.A.F. at 9,000 feet, 10 April, 1940

Army. Swiftly moving columns of mechanized troops, working in conjunction with aeroplanes, crossed the flat Polish plains and cut the lines of communication of the opposing armies. This same technique was adapted to Norwegian conditions; and both Hamar and Lillehammer had to be abandoned. The same ruthless methods of deliberate terrorism from the air were also used in Norway as in Poland, Holland and Belgium.

Apart from the special efforts made to bomb the seat of government of the Norwegian King and Cabinet, wherever it could be located or reported by spies, open towns and villages and even single farmhouses quite unconnected with the operations were attacked indiscriminately. Country people in the fields, even children going to school, were machine-gunned from the air. The object was to break the spirit of the Norwegian people whom Herr Hitler declared he had sent his forces to protect. This was not a particularly brave operation in southern Norway where there was no opposition from opposing aircraft or ground defences. It is, however, the kind of operation in which the Nazi airmen excel. It was a different story when they met the few fighting aircraft and bombers used as fighters in central Norway.

This daring advance to Lillehammer was made by three regular battalions, the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, the Yorkshire and Lancashire Regiment, and the Green Howards. The two

former, who got nearest to their objective, i.e., Lillehammer, were heavily attacked by a strong German force with artillery, armoured vehicles and ample air support. Our men had no guns or aircraft co-operation. They stood their ground for forty-eight hours and retired in good order to a position covering Dombaas, prepared by the Green Howards.

When the advance forces were landed at Namsos and, a little later at Aandalsnes, their reserves of ammunition, provisions and medical stores were also landed. The brigade headquarters were also established in these two towns. Directly the enemy knew this, he concentrated on the systematic destruction of these two once prosperous, peaceful and attractive townships. The Allies had not been able to land anti-aircraft guns at the beginning owing to the dearth of unloading facilities, as already described, and a stroke of ill-fortune was the torpedoing on the way across of one of the most important of the supply ships loaded with anti-aircraft guns. The advance troops had only their rifles and Bren machine-guns.

Though, later, opposition in the air was provided by the Fleet Air Arm and by bombers used as fighters, as mentioned above, the Nazi airmen had it all their own way at the beginning. From morning till night bombs were showered on Namsos and Aandalsnes. The whole of the population, the base troops, staffs, etc., had no other course but to take

to the woods. There they had to hide during all the hours of daylight. The little towns were quickly reduced to smoking ruins. The supplies of all kinds and the reserve ammunition were destroyed. The magnificent advance detachment of the French Army, consisting of picked Alpine troops with their skis—probably, with the exception of the Finns, the finest snow fighters in the world—never got to grips with the enemy at all. Their ammunition supplies were blown up in an air raid and they were withdrawn when it was decided to carry out the evacuation. The Polish and Czech troops never reached the scene of fighting. The Polish soldiers, who were from the Carpathian mountains, and expert ski-runners, were transferred to Narvik.

The evacuation from Namsos should have been made simultaneously with the withdrawal from Aandalsnes. It was delayed for twenty-four hours by thick fog which hindered the movements of the transports and their escorts.

The Fleet Air Arm is equipped with 'Skuas.' These are of special design, suitable for flying off from, and landing on, floating aircraft-carriers. Their legitimate work in naval warfare is with the Fleet at sea, and their opponents in the ordinary way would be aircraft of similar design carried in enemy aircraft-carriers or flown from hostile warships. In Norway they had to meet the latest types of Messerschmitt fighters. They did it without flinching, and the pilots of the naval air wing covered

themselves and their Service with glory. Eighteen Gladiators, manned by Royal Air Force pilots, were accommodated on board a carrier taken to near the coast and then flown off to be landed on a frozen lake near Lesjiskoz, a few miles east of Dombaas. The intention was to use this lake as a temporary aerodrome. The ice was levelled and the surface cleared of snow, and the stores of ammunition and petrol provided. These preparations took a week. The Gladiators are an older type of machine than the Hurricanes and Spitfires—so famous in this war—are biplanes, and can take off and land in a smaller space than their faster successors. The aircraft-carrier was lying 180 miles off the coast and the eighteen pilots left her in a thick snowstorm. At seven o'clock that evening they landed on the frozen surface of the lake, and by ten o'clock that night their first patrol was in the air. That night there was a hard frost. The air patrol which it had been intended to send up at dawn could not take off until some time after daylight, at 5 a.m. Immediately a wave of German bombers appeared and an air battle began which lasted three and a half hours. The enemy had had knowledge, through his espionage system, of what was afoot, and during the fifteen hours of daylight eighty German bombers, of the largest size and latest type, took part. All the British machines that could be got off the ice attacked them and it is calculated that thirty German bombers were put

out of action; but they took heavy toll of our fighters and destroyed the surface of the lake. Of the Gladiators which were destroyed, all were hit on the ice. Those able to take off survived the combat in every case, despite the heavy punishment they inflicted on the enemy.

As an example of the type of attacks carried out by the Royal Air Force Bomber Command, I here give details of the raids on Stavanger and Fornebu aerodromes in Norway, and on the Danish aerodromes during the afternoon of 1 May 1940, and the early morning hours of 2 May:

The afternoon attack on Stavanger, the fifth raid on this base within a period of twenty-four hours, was carried out by a force of Blenheim bombers under a clear sky.

Enemy aircraft were observed dispersed around the aerodrome, and as our aircraft approached several of them could be seen either taxi-ing or taking off. Throughout the raid there was no opposition from enemy fighters.

The British bombers launched their attack along a line running from north-west to south-east across the centre of the aerodrome, and their bombs, well distributed over the landing area, were seen to strike the runways, one salvo causing damage over a stretch of 200 yards.

Another salvo exploded on the edge of the aerodrome close to two stationary aircraft which were immediately afterwards enveloped in a thick

pall of black smoke, evidence of a petrol-fed fire.

The night attack, which began shortly after midnight, was made by long-range bombers carrying heavy loads of high explosives and incendiary bombs. Hits were registered on many parts of the aerodrome and several fires were started, both on the landing ground itself and in the adjoining woods where aircraft were known to be concealed.

The first aircraft to reach the target encountered no opposition, but later arrivals found the ground defences ready to receive them and each release of bombs was the signal for an intense barrage of fire from batteries around the borders of the aerodrome.

The gunfire was synchronized with the searchlights and there was a complete black-out before and after each aircraft launched its attack. Despite the intensity of the fire none of our aircraft was hit.

The Fornebu air base near Oslo was subjected to a heavy bombardment by aircraft which attacked singly at intervals and baffled the defences by launching their attacks from varying heights.

Fine weather facilitated the task of the bomb-aimers and in addition to repeated hits on the aerodrome three large fires, two at the north end and one at the south end, were started by incendiary bombs.

Anti-aircraft fire and searchlight activity were intense, but instead of searching for individual

aircraft the searchlight beams came up in fixed positions, converging over the centre of the aerodrome in an attempt to blind the bombers and to confuse their aim.

One of our aircraft suffered a direct hit from a small-calibre shell, but none of the crew was injured and the aircraft returned safely to its base.

Strong opposition from the ground defences was also encountered by the British force which raided the aerodrome at Aaslborg in Denmark in the early hours of the morning, but again our aircraft were successful in reaching their objective and in inflicting heavy damage on the air base.

In the course of this raid one of the British bombers was intercepted and attacked by a Messerschmitt 110 twin-engined fighter, which, after flying on a parallel course to the bomber for several minutes, turned in behind its tail and opened fire from astern.

The British rear gunner returned the fire and as the enemy fighter sheered off to one side two more Messerschmitt 110's appeared on the scene, one of them attempting an attack on the bomber. Under the fire of the British rear gunner, however, the Messerschmitt broke off the engagement and the enemy fighters dispersed.

No casualties were suffered by the British force throughout the extensive operations carried out.

And here is the personal account of his adventures given at the time by a Flying-Officer of the

Royal Air Force, who comes from Calgary, on a flight to Oslo in the search for enemy warships and transports.

This Flying-Officer came to England some five and a half years before these events, to join the Royal Air Force. Previously he had done about 100 hours civil flying, with the Calgary Air Club. He took part in the first British air flight over Germany of the war, on 3 September.

"As a matter of fact," he said, "I was the first casualty of the war, because I was reported missing for three days. All that time I was the guest of a French squadron who fixed my aircraft. When it was ready we flew it back home. Nobody was hurt."

Describing one of his latest night trips over Norway the Flying-Officer said :

" 'Oslo for you,' we were told, and at once we became busy. The captain of the aircraft detailed for the flight got to work, installing flying kit and so on, and seeing to it that everything was checked up before we took off. I wouldn't say that most of us are nervy or het up. We are certainly not.

"The thing you most feel, at least that I most feel, is a sort of eager impatince to get into the air and be off. It's the kind of feeling one has before an important game begins, only far more intense, of course, once you're at it you're all right and the only thought in your head is the job in hand.

"At five o'clock, having tucked in as much tea

as we could, we trooped into the operations room to be briefed. Being briefed means being told your target, what the job exactly is, and so forth.

"At half-past six we began to dress for the trip. We climbed into our Irving suits, leather fur-lined jackets, leather fur-lined trousers, our flotation jackets, and our parachute harness.

"Our bombs and machine-guns were in place, and just before seven o'clock we got into the aircraft. My fellow-pilot and navigator was a Canadian and with us were two Yorkshiremen and a Scot. Oh, yes, there is always a Scotsman everywhere. As a mascot we had a small Canadian flag inside the windscreen. Our average age was twenty-three.

"There was a last check to make sure that our rations were aboard: six flasks of hot coffee biscuits, nuts, raisins, chewing-gum. Then we took off, it was a clear, calm evening with a layer of cloud at about eight thousand feet and up we climbed, heading for the sea. On we went, seeing nothing below us till we were about three-quarters of the way to our target. Then suddenly the Sergeant Observer told us we had reached the Skaggerak, and we became all keyed up.

"It was after midnight when we struck the coast, and keeping out from it we turned and followed the line, peering down at the dim fjords for signs of enemy shipping. All the towns, including Kristiansand, were lit up, there was no black-out

and the snow-covered mountains behind Oslo Fjord showed up beautifully.

"There was a moon to aid visibility, and we came down into air that we could breathe. There was no need now to use our oxygen masks. For the best part of an hour we cruised about looking for possible targets such as enemy warships, naval auxiliary vessels or transports. The inspection was thorough, but no ships were seen and so, disappointedly, we had to turn back for home.

"Anyhow, we did bring back some useful information, though we missed the excitement of bombing a German warship.

"It is always exciting to drop a few bombs ; the upward lurch as you let go heavy fellows : the sight of them hurtling down to earth or towards their target on the sea, the explosion, the flash of light, the growing fire which, looking back, you may see ; yes, these are the visible signs which enable you to go back to your base and report that you have achieved the task set you."

It was while leading a raid on Stavanger that Squadron-Leader Doran, D.F.C., was killed.

Unfavourable flying weather had given Stavanger several days' respite from air attacks, when, in the afternoon of 30 April, Squadron-Leader Doran led a force of Bristol Blenheim bombers across the North Sea on the first of a new series of raids which was to reduce the air base to temporary impotence.

Nearing their objective shortly after six p.m.,

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Squadron-Leader Doran, D.F.C., is now believed to be a prisoner of war.

the British raiders found a cloudless sky. On orders from their leader they broke formation and split up to make individual attacks on the target. It could be seen that much of the damage caused by previous raids had been repaired and that the base was again being used by large numbers of aircraft which were dispersed round the sides and half-concealed in adjoining fields.

Fire from the ground was intense as, one after another, the raiding aircraft attacked the base with high-explosive and incendiary bombs, causing havoc on the aerodrome and among the stationary aircraft. Enemy fighters had taken off to engage the British aircraft. With no cloud in which to take cover, our bombers settled down to fight their separate ways out.

In the series of running combats which ensued one Blenheim, simultaneously engaged by four Messerschmitt 110's, was hit, but the pilot, by skilful manœuvring was able to get away. When another Blenheim was attacked by a Messerschmitt 109 the gunner opened fire and after a short burst saw his opponent fall off on one wing, and, with black smoke streaming from his engine, spin headlong into the sea.

All but two of the British aircraft returned safely to their base and the two missing aircraft were not seen again after the formation broke up on approaching the target-area to deliver their separate attacks.

Doran was one of the most famous aces of this

war. He was the first to win the Distinguished Flying Cross in the war and the first to win a bar to his medal. He led the air attack on the German warships at Wilhelmshaven and Brunsbüttel on 4 September 1939.

Doran's companions were Sergeant R. H. J. Battrick, his observer, and Pilot Officer F. M. N. Searle, his air gunner and wireless operator.

Our special anti-aircraft ships also proved their worth. These little cruisers of only 4,000 tons, built during the last war, had been reconstructed and each mounted the powerful anti-aircraft armament of ten 4-in. high-angle guns. They had been fitted out at the time of the crisis with Italy over Sanctions in 1935. The Nazi bombers gave them a wide berth.

The situation was, therefore, that unless we could acquire an air base, our ground forces were as helpless against the concentrated enemy bombing and machine-gun attacks as were the unfortunate Abyssinians when the Italians invaded their country; and the nearest aerodrome was at Varnes, on Trondheim fjord. In the hope of capturing this, the advance party landed at Namsos, joined hands with the Norwegian forces in the field, and pushed on down the railway and road which run parallel to each other through Grong, twenty miles to the east of Namsos. From there the railway and road take a sharp turn to the south-westward along the shores of Lake Snaasen to the town of Stenkjer.

The British force consisted of two Territorial battalions. As already explained, they had no artillery or anti-aircraft guns and were lightly equipped and provisioned. Having secured themselves at Stenkjer, they then pushed forward along the shores of the upper reaches of Trondheim fjord, and presently found themselves engaged with a German force sent out from Trondheim to oppose them. While this fight was progressing, the German destroyer and torpedo boat in Trondheim fjord landed other troops in the rear of the British forces and opened a heavy bombardment on them with their own naval guns. The Territorials fought with desperate bravery, but soon found themselves in a hopeless position and had to retire again to Stenkjer. They could not hold that town, which was presently bombed to pieces by the Nazi warplanes. It was in this engagement that most of our casualties in killed, wounded, and prisoners were suffered. A British naval force in Trondheim would have made short work of the German destroyer and torpedo boat, would have supported our troops advancing along the shores of the fjord, and, if there had been any German opposition, could have landed British soldiers in the rear of the enemy. The tables would, in fact, have been turned.

Our destroyers, with their anti-aircraft guns, could have fought off the German bombers as they have done on so many occasions in this war. Varnes

aerodrome was still denied to the Germans by the Norwegian gunners in Fort Hegre, and the German garrison in Trondheim had not then been heavily reinforced from the air. That the whole course of these operations would have been different had we had control of the salt water of Trondheim fjord is beyond reasonable doubt. Had we had command of this inland sea instead of the Germans, if our troopships had disembarked soldiers at the various landing-places in the hundred-mile fjord itself, the chances of taking Trondheim and its aerodrome were as good as chances ever can be in war.

The experiences of these troops during their retreat from Stenkjer were appalling. It is a painful position for soldiers to be attacked from the air with no chance of replying. They were short of food, and almost dropping with fatigue. How the survivors of these two battalions were withdrawn is best described by the commanding officer of one of the battalions.

"It would have been fatal to march the battalion in close formation," he said. "I deployed the men over as wide an area as possible, and arranged signals that were to be given as soon as aircraft were heard approaching.

"Every time the warning was given we went to the ground like rabbits. Everyone had strict orders on no account to show himself or move. These tactics were so effective that not one German plane spotted us and we were able to get back to our base.

"We were guided by compass, and during the short hours of darkness by the glow in the sky from the blazing ruins of Stenkjer.

"The trek back was gruelling, but one and all stood up to it in fine style.

"One thing that helped us to escape air observation is that the Boche is such a methodical fellow we always knew exactly what to expect.

"The company was dispersed to avoid identification as a military unit, and every man was told to disguise himself as best he could and look as unlike a soldier as possible.

"As a further precaution against attracting attention orders were given that no one was to fire a shot. We kept bayonets and knives ready in case we came across a solitary German soldier.

"By adopting these tactics we were able to cover miles of open country without being attacked by the German planes." The commanding officer of the other Territorial battalion was captured by the enemy. When they were nearly caught in a trap, owing to the amphibious operations of the German naval units and soldiers, they had already advanced forty-five miles towards Trondheim. To escape from the trap, they had to march fifty-six miles in forty-two hours and, at the same time, to keep out of sight of the German planes trying to locate them.

Those who have argued against the propriety of forcing Trondheim fjord have said that the same destruction from the air would have been visited

on the town of Trondheim itself. But if we had captured the aerodrome, our fighters could have used it, and we would have been able to land anti-aircraft guns where they were most needed. If the Trondheim expedition was seriously meant, as we were assured, then every effort was called for to establish a secure base. We know from the admission of Mr. Winston Churchill, speaking as First Lord of the Admiralty, just before he became Prime Minister, when these operations were discussed in Parliament, that the professional experts on the Admiralty War Staff had drawn up the plans for the direct assault from the sea and were willing and able to carry it out. We also know from the Government spokesmen in both Houses of Parliament that the *Combined* Committee of the Chiefs of Staff of the three Fighting Services advised against the operation.

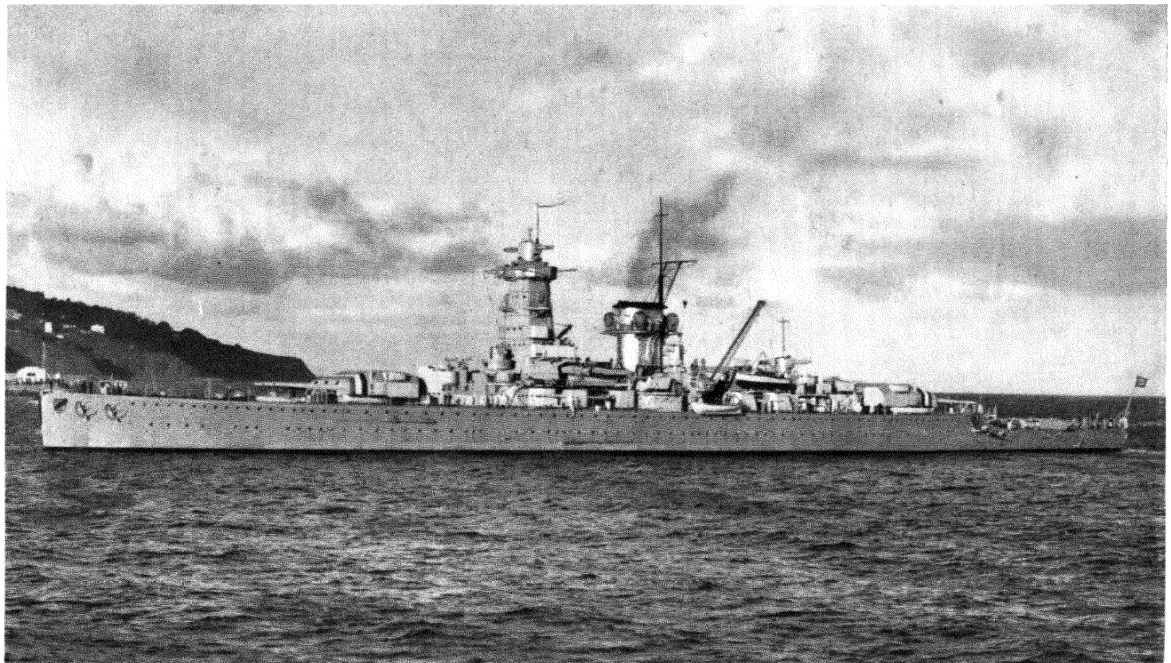
Why was this ?

I can find one explanation, and the evidence supports it. While naval opinion, *by itself*, was favourable, military opinion was opposed, apparently, because in view of the rate of the German reinforcements streaming in through Oslo, despite the efficiency and heroism of the British and French submarine patrols, a large force at least equal to the 100,000 soldiers of the French and British armies it was proposed to send to Finland two months earlier, would have been required to hold this area of Central Norway and keep open the



*Bippa*

AERIAL PHOTO AT 4,000 FEET
BOMBS DROPPING ON STAVANGER AERODROME



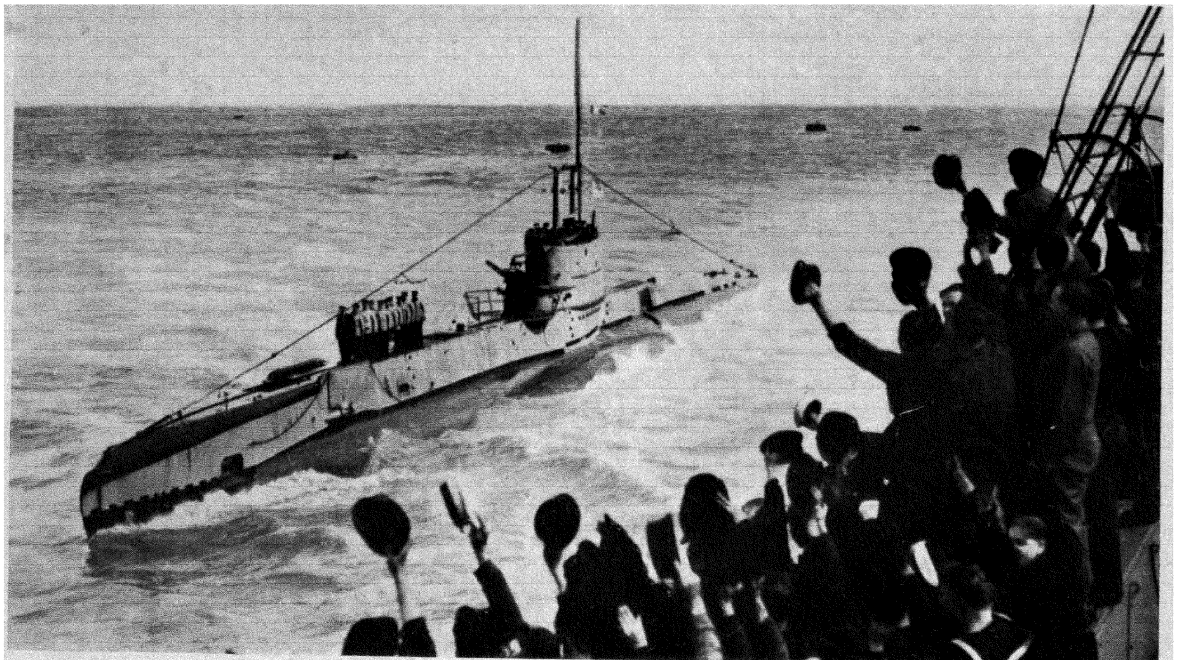
*Fox Photos*

GERMAN POCKET BATTLESHIP *ADMIRAL SCHEER*



*Associated Press*

LT.-COMMANDER J. H. FORBES, CAPTAIN OF H.M. SUBMARINE *SPEARFISH* (right) WITH LIEUTENANT PIRRIE, H.M. SUBMARINE *SPEARFISH*



H.M. SUBMARINE *SNAPPER*

*Topical Press*

gateway to Sweden. To turn the Germans out of Norway would have probably required twice this number of troops. In military eyes, the decisive theatre of war is the Maginot Line, and its extensions along the Belgian frontier. If this theory was correct, if the great German land attack was anticipated either on the Maginot Line direct or by way of an incursion through Belgium and Holland, then every division and all the artillery, anti-aircraft guns, and anti-tank weapons available should be concentrated there. From the purely military point of view, supposing that the anticipations of the grand assault on France were well founded, as proved to be the case, the Norwegian campaign was a sideshow. By itself the separate Narvik campaign would appear to call for comparatively small forces for the geographical reasons already explained.

The expedition into Central Norway meant the employment of large forces of all arms. Yet, supposing even 300,000 French, British, Polish, and Czech soldiers were to be ultimately engaged in clearing Norway of the Nazis, was there not a strong probability of help from Sweden, especially when the tide seemed to be turning against Germany? There were another 500,000 well-equipped Swedish troops for the common cause; and there was a Swedish Navy at least equal to the reduced fleet of Germany to be thrown into the balance. It has been made known that another political consider-

ation was an apprehension that if we had substantial naval losses in the course of such operations, Italy would decide to intervene in the war against the Allies. On the other hand, it has been argued that a success in Norway and a setback to the Nazi military machine for the first time since 1933 would decide the Italians to remain in a state of non-belligerency or even, if given satisfaction in certain directions, to throw in their lot with the Allies.

It is arguable that if we had shown real determination to create a major front in Central Norway the German High Command might have hesitated to invade Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg on 9 May 1940. They would have hesitated still more if the Swedes had shown willingness to intervene against Germany; and there were signs of this prior to the Allied withdrawal. Moreover, the Russians were restive and reported to be opening up negotiations with both Sweden and Finland for mutual aid in the Baltic.

However this may be, the situation of the landing forces in Central Norway became progressively more difficult. When the German mechanized troops approached Dombaas, the junction of the railway lines to Aandalsnes and Trondheim, when certain German light forces approached the other junction at Stoeren, only 30 miles from Trondheim, withdrawal was inevitable. Artillery, tanks, and anti-aircraft guns could not be landed in sufficient numbers after the destruction of the wooden jetties

and piers at the little coastal towns chosen as bases. Under all the circumstances, the withdrawal was accomplished with great skill and comparatively little loss in men. We lost much material and more prestige.

Among the lessons to be learnt from the Trondheim operations is the need of complete advance plans and the necessary material for implementing them to meet just such a contingency. As it was, plans had to be improvized and material got together at short notice.

According to Mr. Oliver Stanley, speaking as Secretary of State for War in the House of Commons on 7 May 1940, about these operations, we only began to seek for landing ports and *survey them* after it was decided to send aid to the Norwegians in Central Norway.

In 1916 I was serving in the recently formed Planning Division of the Admiralty War Staff. Admiral of the Fleet Sir Roger Keyes, then a Rear-Admiral, and Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, then a Captain, were members.

Our particular duty was to make plans and preparations in advance for any and every eventuality. We received news, which we afterwards found to be reliable, that the German General Staff was planning an aggression against Norway. Plans were drawn up for countering it. What the military plans were, I do not know in detail ; but the first requirement from the naval point of view

was a secure base. We chose as alternatives a number of suitable harbours in Norway, surveyed them and obtained all the information we could about local conditions, resources, means of communication and the like. We were not contemplating aggression against Norway, but only the means to counter a German assault, presumably on the invitation from, and with the assistance of, the Norwegian Government. Such a base had to be protected.

We worked out the requirements in anti-submarine booms and nets, the mines to be laid, the guns for the coastal batteries to be landed, the portable piers and barges and all the other stores and munitions required for the establishment of a temporary base. And then we collected the material at a Scottish port and kept it all ready for instant use if required until after the Armistice in November 1918. If the air menace had existed then, to the extent it does now, we would have provided anti-aircraft guns and means of landing them.

When the Zeebrugge attack was planned, everything was worked out in advance as carefully as possible. The officers and men to form the landing parties were drilled and rehearsed for weeks beforehand. Among the alternative schemes examined for taking Zeebrugge and destroying that hornet's nest of U-boats was one for landing soldiers and tanks on the coast on either side, out of gun-range from the Zeebrugge defences. This plan was

superseded by the direct assault which took place on that famous St. George's Day under the command of Sir Roger Keyes, now Admiral of the Fleet. For this alternative plan, I had designed, by our naval architects and constructors, special material for landing tanks. Merchant ships were to be reconstructed with their forward hulls under water cut away so that they could run up on a beach or strand. In the bows were to be suspended strong drawbridges, rather like those in a mediæval castle, which would be lowered to form a gangway for the tanks. The tanks, which could also be amphibian, that is to say they could go through water that was not too deep (most armies have such tanks now) carried in the holds of these reconstructed merchant ships were then to trundle ashore over these drawbridges or gangways even in the face of enemy opposition.

I have described the early warnings received of German intentions towards Norway in the event of a general war, and it is a pity that material was not prepared in advance for countering them. These tank carriers, as we called them, could have been used to land mechanized forces at any one of a *hundred* points along the Norwegian coast, and the enemy would never know where they would appear next.

There is, I am glad to say, a growing school of thought which realizes that special weapons and special materials are needed for the altered con-

ditions of warfare. The answer to the air menace and the danger of mines and torpedoes in waters near enemy bases can be found. Every weapon has its antidote.

Let us examine the analogy of land warfare. Barbed wire supported by machine-guns made frontal attacks by infantry too costly. That was demonstrated even in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05 when machine-guns and barbed wire were used for the first time on a large scale. The lesson was not learnt till 1916. The tank was the answer to the barbed wire plus machine-gun. We need a new technique of this kind for naval warfare if we are to push our attacks home.

In this war the French and ourselves have between us only 27 ships of the line, though others are nearing completion. They are too precious to risk in the ordinary way. They take three years to build and cost seven to nine million pounds apiece. What is needed is a floating protection for our big ships and for our cruisers as well, for that matter. The battleship entering enemy waters could have secured alongside her on each side a specially converted large cargo ship. There are no technical difficulties in providing a form of cushion between them to prevent damage in heavy weather. The converted cargo ships could be made practically unsinkable by being filled with cork or similar material. They would guard the valuable hull of the warship from torpedoes. I would flatten

out their decks, like aircraft-carriers, and mount a numerous battery of anti-aircraft guns so that in addition to their protective qualities they would reinforce the battleship's anti-aircraft fire. In the event of a naval engagement the protective ships would drop astern and still have the use of their anti-aircraft guns. Torpedoes from submarines and aircraft would not be the only dangers; the minefield would remain. Here we need another type of ship which I would describe as a mine-bumper. She again would be practically unsinkable, have only a small crew and be specially built with her engines and boilers right aft. We need plenty of these ships, and their duty would be to blast a passage through minefields by exploding the mines ahead, just as the French drove pigs in front of them when they entered German territory at the beginning of this war. The pigs exploded the booby-traps and land-mines. What I would aim at would be the building or preparing of many cheap, easily replaced vessels to safeguard my valuable and irreplaceable fighting ships. To use a metaphor, I would wrap my fighting ships in cotton wool until they had to engage their peers. The magnetic mine has been countered already by de-magnetizing our ships.

Another antidote to the air menace is to have enough long-range fighter aeroplanes. During our period of rearmament, and especially after the Munich Agreement with Herr Hitler, which he

broke so lightly, we concentrated on long-range bombers for reprisals if our cities are attacked, and on very fast short-range fighter aircraft for home defence. This policy was right up to a point ; but the need is now obvious for a very large number of long-range fighters, capable of keeping the air for a considerable period, and accompanying the fleet or convoys of troop transports.

The successful evacuation of the great bulk of the Allied troops landed in the attempt on Trondheim was a triumph of daring and resource. The Germans were bluffed ; though forty-eight hours before the evacuation from Aandalsnes the German wireless had announced that we were withdrawing. This might, of course, have been a guess, or there may have been some leakage, probably in Norway itself. The men had to be embarked at night from ruined ports, in constant danger from air attack. The main responsibility lay with the Royal Navy. First in order of honour should be placed the fishermen reservists in their trawlers. These English, Scottish and Welsh fishermen were veritable heroes. Eleven trawlers were sunk by German air attack. The team-work was excellent. The Fleet Air Arm, British, French and Polish destroyers, the small cruisers and sloops fitted as anti-aircraft ships, and the officers and sailors of the merchant ship transports, all co-operated together with the Army command with complete devotion to duty and contempt for death and fatigue. The fight of the

1,200-ton sloop *Bittern* in Namsos fjord on 1 May is typical. Her duty was to protect the port and the means of embarkation and evacuation from the constant German air attacks. At 10 a.m. on that day three Heinkels made a bombing attack from a height of 10,000 feet. They scored no hits and made off. They were followed a little later by three more German bombers, one of which made a dive attack and dropped a bomb on the after-deck in the middle of the depth charges. These blew up, and the explosion was so violent that it destroyed the ruins of the already bombed church of Namsos.

The *Bittern* was covered in clouds of thick yellow smoke. Her guns never ceased firing. She destroyed one German plane and damaged three others. The ship was badly on fire and, as the flames reached her ammunition, that exploded too. The gun crews continued to fire at the German aircraft till their remaining ammunition was exhausted. The *Bittern* was now ablaze from stem to stern and the surviving members of the crew were taken off. She had to be sunk in the deep waters of the fjord by a torpedo from a British destroyer to clear the passage.

Her gallant captain was Lieutenant R. H. Mills, R.N. This little ship was designed principally for protection of convoys against air attack and carried an armament of six 4-in. anti-aircraft guns and five smaller guns. She was completed in March 1938.

During these operations the Fleet Air Arm was continually in action. Three of the 'Skuas' were protecting one of our aircraft-carriers when an attack was made by seven enemy bombers. The three little Skuas attacked without hesitation, broke up the enemy formation, shot down two of the bombers, and warded off the attack on the ship.

It was after the evacuation had been carried out that the German bombers made their most desperate efforts against the returning troopships. They were beaten off by the anti-aircraft guns of the Allied warships. It was in these attacks that one British, one French and one Polish destroyer were bombed and sunk. These were H.M.S. *Afridi* (1,870 tons), the French *Bison* (2,436 tons) and the Polish *Grom* (2,144 tons).

Among those lost on board the French destroyer *Bison* was Commander Robert Rule Graham, who won the Distinguished Service Order in H.M.S. *Exeter* during her fight with the *Graf Spee*. During that action he received more than a dozen shrapnel wounds, but, in the words of the *London Gazette* "he heartened all by his readiness, example and encouragement."

Commander Graham had commanded various units of the Fleet Air Arm. His observation that certain species of birds had slotted feathers led to the development of the slotted wings in aircraft.

A comparison of the relative naval strengths of

the combatants at the beginning of these operations will be useful. The Anglo-French Fleet, which can be counted as one, consisted of the following warships, allowing for all losses to date, and I have tabulated the German Fleet also :

| | *British and French* | *German* |
|---|---|---|
| Battleships .. .. | 20 | nil |
| Battle cruisers .. .. | 7 | 2 |
| Pocket battleships .. | nil | 2 |
| Aircraft-carriers .. .. | 8 | nil |
| Heavy cruisers .. .. | 22 | 2 |
| Medium and light cruisers | 91 | 4 |
| Destroyers .. .. | 130 | say 30 |
| Submarines .. .. | 120 | say 50 |

It must be remembered that we had to keep naval forces in the Mediterranean and other ships in the distant ocean to guard the trade-routes. We also had to be prepared to reinforce our Far Eastern squadrons in case of trouble with Japan. Nevertheless, our margin in the North Sea was a wide one.

Early in the campaign the German fleet suffered heavy loss. One battle cruiser was sunk by the Norwegians in Oslo fjord, the other was badly damaged by the *Renown* off Narvik. The pocket battleship *Admiral Scheer* was torpedoed by H.M. submarine *Spearfish* and at least three cruisers

sunk.[1] Add to this Germany's losses in destroyers (nine were destroyed in the two Narvik battles alone) and it will be seen that there was not much Nazy Navy left after the first fortnight of Hitler's aggression against Norway.

We had six destroyers sunk and some submarines and other losses also; but none of our heavy ships had been sunk during this period. Two battleships hit by bombs remained in service. Two cruisers were damaged by bombs but were able to return to their bases for repairs.

Though the British War Cabinet, when it made up its mind, tried to do its best in Norway, always, perhaps, in the hope of not getting too deeply involved, it is not surprising that important neutral opinion took another view. Thus, on 8 May 1940, when the situation had been explained by the then Prime Minister in Parliament and the reasons for our withdrawal, the influential Swedish paper *Stockholms Tidningen*, examining the Prime Minister's speech, stated that coupling this with the known facts about the quality of the aid sent to Norway it had indicated "a reluctance to take the enterprise quite in earnest which his statements during the first weeks only hinted at." This Swedish paper then went on to suggest that the British Government had tried something like a bluff in order to stimulate the Norwegians' courage and

[1] *Emden*, sunk by *Olav Tryggvason*; *Köln*, sunk by Fleet Air Arm at Bergen; *Karlsruhe*, sunk by H.M. submarine *Truant*.

to inspire respect in the outside world, but they never intended to do the thing thoroughly because of the dangers which they saw in other directions; and, further, that the British Government must not be surprised if the effect of the Prime Minister's declaration amongst the neutrals was an increased realization that it is vain for them to pin their faith to any Great Power. This was a misrepresentation, as we now know. Mistakes there might have been; but there was no bad faith.

That same evening in the House of Lords, Viscount Halifax, the Foreign Secretary, in the course of a long explanation of these events, let fall certain remarks which might be misunderstood, or twisted, to bear the interpretation hinted at by the *Stockholms Tidningen*.

As soon as he sat down, I used the opportunity of the right of reply to my Motion, which had called forth his speech, to make the following observations which drew the expected answer. I will give here the exact quotation from the Official Report:

8.15 p.m.

LORD STRABOLGI: If I may detain you, my Lords, for a very few moments, I should like to say that with most of what the Foreign Secretary has said my noble friends and I would of course agree, but if he will read his speech to-morrow he will see what I venture to suggest is a dangerous implication in it. I refer to his apologia for the Norwegian expedition and the form which it took and the

retreat, and I put this forward in the most friendly way. The impression that will be formed by that exposition is that it was a face-saving expedition, that in order to satisfy honour and to meet the Norwegian desires and so forth and to show that we were going to do something, we sent this little force. If the noble Viscount will look at his words as they appear in the OFFICIAL REPORT, I think he will see that there is that implication in them, and I am sure he would wish to remove that implication. It was not in the least a face-saving expedition ; it was looked on as a matter of life-saving to ourselves as well as to the Norwegians, and was regarded as a matter of the greatest importance.

VISCOUNT HALIFAX : If your Lordships will allow me to say one word again, I am extremely grateful to the noble Lord opposite for calling my attention to that. I confess that the interpretation which he says might flow from that speech is not one that would ever occur to me, and it was never in my mind. I hope that the correction which he has been good enough to afford me the opportunity of making, will effectively preserve me from any danger of being so misinterpreted.

LORD STRABOLGI : I know that the noble Viscount spoke with complete sincerity, and I hope that he spoke with complete understanding, when he said that the Cabinet were united on the question of strategy and that the results will be seen in future events. (*Hansard*, Vol. 116, No. 47, Wednesday, 8 May 1940.)

# CHAPTER VI

## SEA-POWER VERSUS AIR-POWER

WHEN THE FIRST NEWS WAS RECEIVED IN London of the Nazi invasion of Norway, it was described as Hitler's strategical blunder. In the previous chapter I showed the relative naval strengths and, reckoning in warships, the Allies had complete command of the seas. But for the air weapon, it would have been absolute madness for the Nazis to attempt an invasion of Norway using the Kattegat and Skaggerak. There is no doubt that the German High Command relied on its air power for the success of the operations. Indeed, the Nazi amateur strategists, including Herr Hitler himself, apparently jumped to the conclusion that their air-power would redress the balance of their naval weakness. What the professional strategists of the German High Command have to say about this, is not known. It is also believed that Signor Mussolini has similar ideas; yet it is notable that both in Italy and Germany heavy ships of the line are under construction.

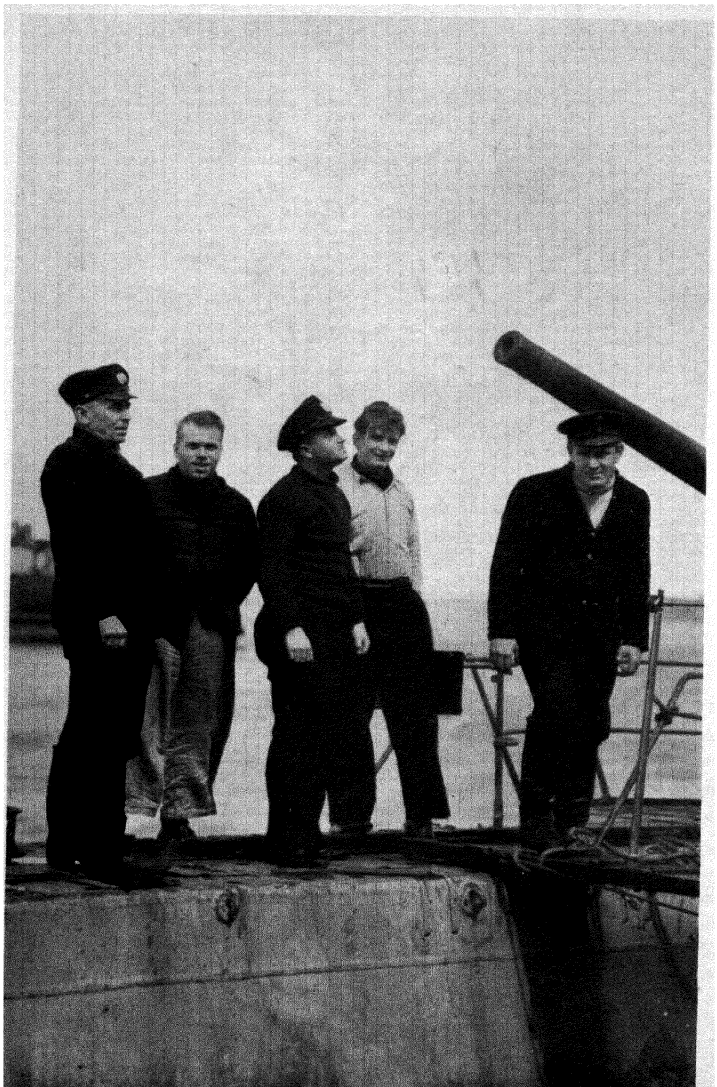
Before this war, there had been no real test of the effect of air bombing on sea targets. Experi-

ments had been carried out on fixed targets in several countries and also on moving targets. For this latter purpose old battleships are generally used. They have no crews on board, but are steered by distant wireless control. All these peace-time experiments were unrealistic owing to the absence of opposition. The actual bombing attacks on shipping of all kinds in this war have upset a good many calculations. There have been scores of such attacks and there are apparently unforeseen difficulties in hitting a ship under way even if there is no opposition. Ships in harbour are a different proposition ; but even there unless the aircraft are prepared to press home their attacks in large numbers and to dive close down to the targets, as in the case of the raids on Brunsbüttel and Wilhelmshaven by the R.A.F. at the outbreak of this war, the chances of scoring hits are far less than was supposed. Furthermore, the near miss, that is, a large bomb exploding under water close to the hull of a warship, is less damaging than had been believed. The Nazi airman who was decorated for his supposed sinking of the aircraft-carrier *Ark Royal*, possibly believed that he had put the ship out of action, for this was a near hit. Furthermore, a well-protected ship of the line, with strong armoured decks, suffers less damage even from hits by the heaviest bombs than had been expected. Two of our battleships were hit by bombs during the Scandinavian campaign, and both remained in



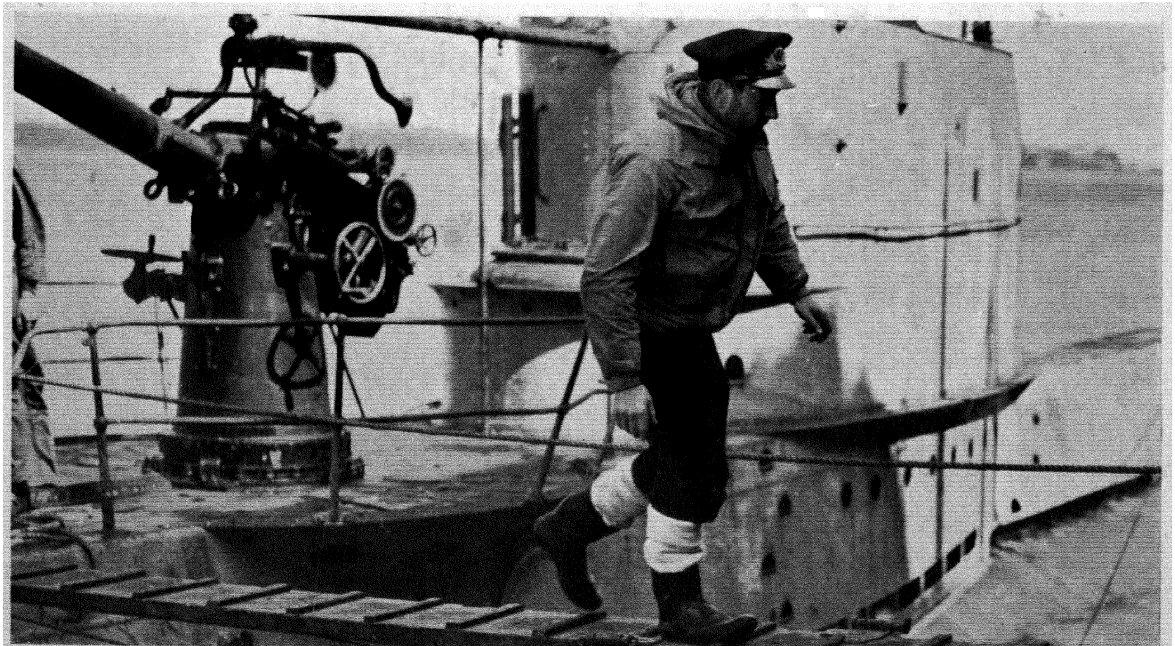
*Central Press*

SOME OF THE CREW OF H.M. SUBMARINE *SNAPPER*



*Associated Press*

4 GERMAN PRISONERS ON BOARD H.M. SUBMARINE *SNAPPER*: a British seaman is leading the way ashore



*Central Press*

LIEUTENANT W. D. KING, R.N., CAPTAIN OF H.M. SUBMARINE *SNAPPER*, COMING ASHORE



*Central Press*

COMMANDER JOHN GRUDZINSKI, OF POLISH SUBMARINE *ORZEL*

service. An illustration of the difficulty of hitting a ship under way is the case of the British cruiser which bombarded Stavanger aerodrome from the sea for 45 minutes. During her approach to her bombarding position, while she was bombarding, and after her withdrawal, she was repeatedly attacked and it is calculated that 115 bombs were aimed at her. Only one hit, and she was able to return to her base for repairs. Her anti-aircraft guns are believed to have shot down at least two enemy raiders and to have damaged three others.

There is this to be said, also. The Nazi Air Force was expanded with great rapidity from small beginnings after Herr Hitler became Chancellor and the Nazi Dictatorship came into power. Field-Marshal Goering was mainly responsible and built up an enormous numerical force. The training given, however, does not appear to have been very thorough, and this is easily understandable. The accuracy of the German bombing has not been of a high order so far as sea operations are concerned. Certainly, our more highly trained pilots of the Royal Air Force and the Fleet Air Arm, with far fewer opportunities, have accomplished a good deal more against ships than the German pilots. Even so, it must be remembered that the enemy ships were trying to hide in Norwegian fjords and were, therefore, not under weigh.

Anti-aircraft gunnery has also made great strides together with predictors and other instruments for

assisting the accuracy of the fire. We have a fearsome weapon for dealing with the low-flying aeroplane, or for countering diving attacks, in the multiple pom-pom. The sailors call it the 'Chicago piano,' and it fires into the air a deadly barrage of small shells.

In discussing the air lessons of these operations also, it must not be overlooked that the full German Air Force was not used in Norway. Apart from the limits set by available aerodromes and the damage done by our own Air Force both to landing fields and the machines on them, the Nazi High Command were mounting an attack on Holland and Belgium, large air forces had to be kept in being near the French frontier, and it is probable that fresh aggressions towards the Balkans were being prepared. If Britain and Germany had been the only two combatants engaged in this war, the story might have been different. It was to meet this very contingency, expected by those of us who, in the years prior to the War, urged the strengthening of our own Air Force, that we were so insistent on priority being given to this necessary form of defence.

I am still of opinion, and I know this opinion is held in responsible professional circles, that it is a better investment for a Navy such as ours, to build a greater number of smaller fighting ships, yet strong enough to lie in the line of battle, than a smaller number of monsters. The big battleship

school, especially in the United States, argue against this that only a very large warship can carry the necessary amount of armour and other protection to make her relatively immune from the three main forms of attack she has to face ; namely, bombing from the air, the fire of her opponents' artillery, and underwater attack by torpedoes and mines. American naval responsibilities are different from ours, and with our duties and interests in so many widely scattered parts of the world, I believe the choice should lie in a larger number of smaller but still powerful warships. The smaller warships, if properly handled, can successfully attack larger and more heavily armed and protected opponents. This was brilliantly demonstrated at the battle of the River Plate, when the Nazi pocket battleship, *Admiral Graf Spee*, was so decisively beaten by three British cruisers with far lighter guns and much less armour protection.

To return to the arguments used by those of us in the years before the present war, who were agitating for a stronger Air Force to assist in the exercise of sea-power, it must be remembered that what we feared was that the British Government would rely too exclusively on naval power and be content with a comparatively small Air Force. If warships can be given adequate air co-operation, especially by the very powerful long-range fighters of good endurance, which now seem to be so necessary, then the whole position is different. If the

'master mariners' had had their way as against the airmen, and Field-Marshal Goering's Air Force had not had a smaller, but still highly efficient, British Air Force to contend with, the situation might have been very much worse.

What happened on land when one side has overwhelming predominance in the air, was shown in the Italian campaign for the conquest of Abyssinia, the German overrunning of Poland and southern and central Norway, and the Japanese invasion of China. The Russo-Finnish war was another example. How great a part air-power can play on land, even when the contending forces are more evenly matched, is being exemplified as I write these words in the German invasion of Holland and Belgium, and the Allied counter-measures. The chief value of air-power, however, is that it is ubiquitous within certain limits. Aeroplanes of all types, bombers, fighters, troop-carriers, can operate over the sea as well as the land. We can be thankful that Marshal Goering had not more time to expand the German Air Force and that Nazi bullying and aggression was challenged in 1939.

I will here quote from my book, *New Wars, New Weapons*, published in 1930, ten years before the events I am describing. *New Wars, New Weapons* received some attention in this country, and it was translated into a number of foreign languages. It was widely quoted from, and received a good deal

more attention in certain foreign countries than in England, and, amongst these, were Germany, Italy and Japan.

For the last two thousand years at least the major wars have been political. William the First's invasion of England only substituted a Norman for a Saxon ruling aristocracy. Yet these great political conquests have usually been made possible by the adoption either of new weapons or new methods of fighting. The conquerors obtained and retained an advantage by reorganizing their forces. Thus the great conquests of Alexander the Great, almost the most spectacular within historical times, were made possible by the invention of the Greek phalanx. The discovery was made that armoured foot-soldiers could be welded together by high discipline into a weapon which was irresistible by any other armies of that day. Alexander's Greek soldiers, fighting in close formation, could and did overthrow all the armies that were ever brought against them in those days. Furthermore, for the first time a highly trained cavalry was brought into the field. Before that the mounted troops were irregulars. Epaminondas of Thebes invented the cavalry arm as we know it, for tactical purposes and 'shock tactics' instead of mere scouting and raiding. Alexander improved this cavalry arm, which was used with decisive results at the battles of Granicus, Issus and Arbela. And the Greek phalanx, combined with the first scientific cavalry tactics, conquered most of the then known world.

The Romans copied, adapted, and developed the phalanx into the legion ; and this, together with their military organization and their capacity for civil administration, particularly for road-building, enabled them to create the greatest empire the world had ever seen before the present British Empire, and to maintain it for centuries. The

legion combined the advantages of the discipline of the phalanx with considerable mobility in the field and power of manœuvre. But the splendid infantry legions were nearly defeated by the Carthaginians in warfare by the use of elephants, combined with a superior cavalry. The elephant, used as a fighting-weapon, was the tank of its day. The Phœnicians, who had achieved greatness by their discovery of the art of ocean navigation, learnt how to tame and train the African elephant and to use it in warfare. They won the first Punic Wars against Rome by their sea-power ; but, when hard-pressed in the second Punic War after their loss of the sea-command of the Mediterranean, they instructed Hannibal to raise an army in what are now Spain and Southern France, and to invade Italy by the back-door over the Alps. Pyrrhus and Hannibal brought elephants to Europe for the first time in the history of warfare. Hannibal's descent with them into the Italian plain almost led to the fall of Rome for the Roman legions could not stand up to the elephants.

To the advantages elephants gave Hannibal in close hand-to-hand fighting in line of battle was added another tactical advantage in the finest light cavalry the world has ever seen, drawn from Numidia, and, combined with a splendid heavy cavalry, out-classing anything the Romans could put into the field. The modern equivalent would be an army provided alone with tanks and also possessing an incomparably better air service than its opponents.

Rome was saved by the jealousies and intrigues of the Carthaginian politicians and the tactics of Fabius in avoiding battle. If Hannibal had been properly supported, the history of the world, including that of our own country, would have been fundamentally different, and all because of the appearance of three dozen elephants and a few thousand superb cavalry soldiers in Italy.

If in the late war the invention of the tank had been

taken seriously at the beginning, and if its use had been postponed until two thousand tanks were ready, the German lines in France and Flanders would have been broken in 1916 and the war ended two years earlier. Now all armies have tanks, and they all have anti-tank guns, and in any case the tank has the disadvantage that it can only move in two dimensions—in other words, on the surface of the ground. The weapon of the future is the flying tank or armoured aeroplane. And its use in some future war on the great scale may have as spectacular results as Alexander the Great's use of his phalanx.

The great Tartar invasions and conquests have received far too little attention from historians and students of war. This is partly explained by the lack of historical documents and the failure to appreciate the significance of these events. Many invading armies that have overrun Central Asia and Europe have started out from the great Mongolian plains. The climatic conditions evolved there a race of nomad horsemen who, from time to time, have been driven by shortage of pasture and increasing population to burst now into China, now into Western Asia. Before Genghis these forays were tribal invasions for loot, and not for the purpose of permanent conquest and colonization.

The efforts of Genghis are comparable to the achievements of Alexander and the greatest of the Roman proconsuls, generals and emperors. The son of a petty tribal chief, he was defeated by a rival clan, became a fugitive, rallied a few horsemen, and eventually, by conquest or intrigue, made himself head of a great Tartar Confederacy. He then set out to conquer the known world. For this purpose he had an entirely novel weapon. His whole army was mounted. The Tartars could, and would, only fight on horseback. Each Tartar soldier had four horses. Their mobility was extraordinary. They lived on the country, and in the last resort on the milk of their mares.

This speed of movement enabled them to concentrate overwhelming forces at any selected point, before the threatened nation could bring up reinforcements. China, all Siberia, and all the nations on the mainland of Asia fell before the irresistible rush of the Tartar hordes. The ancient kingdoms of Samarkand and Bokhara, the states of Turkestan, were all overrun and devastated with fire and sword. Persia and Mesopotamia were conquered, and Baghdad never recovered from the sacking which destroyed it and its glory. The Tartar armies invaded Anatolia, defeating the Turkish armies with ease, and they swept down into India, carrying all before them. All Hindustan could have been conquered, as was done later by Genghis's descendant, the founder of the Mongol dynasty. The Tartars only turned aside from the heat of the Indian summer and advanced to the conquest of European Russia and Poland instead. European Christendom, thoroughly alarmed, closed its ranks. The Tartars found the combined chivalry of feudal Europe a formidable enemy. But the final result would have been the same. For all the armies encountered by the Tartars consisted of infantry and cavalry. The pace of the infantry and the slow movement of the baggage-trains fixed the speed of movement of these medieval armies just as its heavy equipment and ground artillery hamper the speed of movement of the old-fashioned army of to-day. The Tartar armies could cover four times the distance of their adversaries in an equal period of time, and, operating on a wide front, could always concentrate on and destroy their adversaries in detail. So would it be to-day if some Power placed its whole army *in the air*. The development of the fighting air army of the future will be along the lines of providing its own artillery in the form of heavy bombers, its own cavalry in the swift scouts, its own tanks in the armoured fighting aeroplanes, and its own infantry,

represented by the clouds of smaller aeroplanes, each with its own machine-guns and gas-projecting apparatus, and formidable, like ground infantry, by reason of its numbers.

. . . A new and more powerful weapon or method of using weapons employed on a sufficiently large scale and by ruthless men will alter the political history of a continent or even, in certain circumstances, of the world. If some great nation with the requisite engineering and chemical resources threw off the trammels of conservatism and concentrated on the air arm for the purposes of conquest, it could overrun all its neighbours and repeat the great episodes of conquest and imperialism of the past. Only history will tell if this catastrophe happens.

. . . If we took command of the air, we could prevent ourselves being blockaded, use flying-boats as patrol vessels and escorts for our convoys of merchant ships and preserve them from every form of attack. But we must, to achieve this, devote to the air a larger proportion of our peace-time expenditure on armaments.

If we, or any other Great Power, wished to be really aggressive and threw the whole of our expenditure on defence into creating aerial armies and navies we should become invincible. And if we were really out for mischief —which, happily, we are not—we could then impose our will on the whole of Europe and even carry the war successfully across the Atlantic to America, using Canada as our base of operations.

But it is dangerous to prophesy; and some other Power, say Germany and Russia in combination, may be tempted or goaded into great aerial developments, and another world war, involving even greater misery and destruction than the last, would be then upon us.

. . . . .

Have aircraft in their present or immediate state of

development superseded the great battleships as weapons of warfare ? Is the air weapon more powerful than the older type of warship ? For flying-machines can operate over the sea in war-time. Indeed, the flying-weapon is more deadly over water because of the reduced opportunities of evasion and concealment by shipping compared to the chances that ground forces have of remaining hidden, especially in broken country.

These questions are vital to the safety of the inhabitants of the British Isles, who are paying heavy taxes, more or less cheerfully, for national defence, out of which £53,000,000 is spent on the Navy, but only £17,000,000, allowing for the expenditure on civil aviation and airships, which latter cannot be used for warlike purposes, on Air Defence. Is this money properly expended, and should not a larger portion be spent on aerial preparedness and the development of flying-machines ?

. . . . .

The only real defence against air attack on ships at sea is in the air, by means of fast-flying aeroplanes sent up to fight the attackers. But we have nothing like the number of fighting aeroplanes required available at present.

The aeroplane has so far only come into its own as a weapon of war in the Middle East ; and, to a limited extent, in India and Somaliland. Yet during the Great War the French were able to quell a formidable rising in North Africa by the use of aeroplanes, almost unaided by ground troops, when every available soldier was needed for the European trenches. The cheapness and efficiency of air action over wild and sparsely populated countries has been fully demonstrated, however ; and of its superiority over the old ground forces there is no doubt. But in a major war waged on the great scale not only has massed air action not yet been demonstrated, but, perhaps

fortunately, no real preparations have been made so to use the power of travelling in three dimensions for war purposes.

But it would be foolish to take comfort from the fact that no Great Power has yet developed an aerial army on the grand scale. Great aerial forces can be provided quickly enough, as the events of thirteen or fourteen years ago demonstrated.

There were very meagre air forces in existence in 1914 when half the world went mad. But they expanded at a terrific rate, despite the rival demands on men and material of the huge ground armies and water-borne navies engaged. When the United States of America intervened, *a single American firm* contracted to deliver one hundred aircraft a day (vide *Report of Committee on Aircraft, Washington Conference*, 1921–22 ; Cmd. Paper 1627).

Manufacturing resources are now much greater, and there are more trained pilots available. Also pilots can be trained very quickly, where suitable young men and women are available.

The 'next war,' if it comes, will certainly be decided in the air.

The last great land war that will ever be fought and *decided* on the ground—that of 1914–18—saw three years of 'stalemate' and trench warfare owing to the strength of the defence, principally through the development of machine-gun tactics. The tanks, used in masses and retaining the advantage of surprise, the better organized use of gas on a far wider scale might have restored the initiative to the attackers. Even in the great break-through of the spring of 1918 by the Germans, the attackers were soon brought to a standstill again ; and no decision was possible. In the autumn the Allies broke the Hindenburg Line. But the German armies retreated in good order and, but for the break-up of their 'Home Front' in revolution

and war-weariness, could have shortened their line and held up the attack once more. So complete was the deadlock in ground fighting at the dawn of the Air Age that attempts were made to break through by going into three dimensions *underground*—by tunnelling, mining and counter-mining. But with the coming of the Air Age in warfare, campaigns of manœuvre are possible again, and with them great expeditions of conquest for those with the necessary *power*.

The invention of important new weapons, or methods of using existing weapons, when taken advantage of by a determined people with the necessary resources, and commanded by ruthless leaders, has led to profound political and even national changes through military conquests. If some Power, or group of Powers, to-day, say Russia and Germany in combination, were ruthlessly to scrap and supersede their ground and naval forces by flying armies and navies, such Power, or group of Powers, would be irresistible unless and until possible adversaries followed suit. As it is, Russia is paying great attention to her Air Force ; and the immense plains of Muscovy and Siberia and the great distances are suitable for flying developments. If the old Russian threat to India revives, it will not be by the pushing forward of the railhead to the Indian frontier, but by the intensive development of air lines from Asiatic Russia. There is already a Russian commercial air service from Moscow to Kabul. Improved flying material will one day surmount the physical difficulties of waterless deserts and roadless mountain ranges—the great obstacles to a present-day invasion of Hindustan.

Probably, if she were not so prohibited by the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles, in addition to being short of money and on her best behaviour generally, Germany would develop her air arm ; for she is forbidden to have an army of more than 100,000 men—a mere police force

for a nation in her situation—and her Fleet is strictly limited. If some means is not found of settling disputes between nations by other means than war, a recovered Germany, able to throw off the shackles of the Peace Treaties, and unhampered by the vested interests of a large Army and Navy, may well develop her might into the air, backed by her magnificent chemical industry; and if she obtained a long start, through the other nations concerned wasting money on foot-soldiers and surface battleships, she would have Europe at her mercy. The steel and concrete fortifications, costing so many millions of francs, and now being built by France along the German frontier, would then be as useless for preventing heavy air action as British super-dreadnoughts floating in the English Channel would be for stopping an aerial invasion of Britain.

Fortunately, I repeat, the old-fashioned admirals and generals are still supreme in the Councils of all the nations free to arm in the old way. Even in France, where there is the greatest and most powerful Air Force in the world, the new flying arm is still looked on principally as an auxiliary to the Army and Navy. So it was in the last war, though with more excuse; for the nations were committed to ground and sea fighting and could not disentangle or spare their resources for the new aerial warfare. The flying-machines also were in their early infancy. And then, as now, the aeroplane, when finally accepted as a serious weapon at all, was regarded by the generals as an adjunct to their cavalry for scouting purposes, or as an aid to their artillery for fire observation.

This is still the spirit.

Yet air forces, with the exception of the comparatively unimportant duty of the occupation of enemy territory, can already fulfil all the functions of armies and navies. On land, if the same money and energy were put into the

building up of sufficiently strong air forces, they will defeat ground armies in the field, including mechanized armies, because their extreme mobility gives them the power of concentrating in overwhelming force on the selected point of attack. They can wipe out munition factories and chemical-making works, destroy railways, canal locks, road bridges and so disorganize communal life ; and, above all, they can bring the necessary pressure to bear on the civil population of the enemy, once command of the air has been obtained, to such an extent as to force the adversary to sue for peace. And this is the object of all war since the days of territorial conquest passed for ever.

I spoke of the alleged difficulty in the way of occupying enemy territory by air forces alone. But already we have aerial 'troop-carriers' capable of carrying twenty-five soldiers at a time with their equipment. These were used on active service as recently as during the Palestine disturbances of 1929. It is this type of carrier-aeroplane that was employed to evacuate the High Commissioner for Iraq, Sir Francis Humphreys, and his family and staff by air from Kabul during the Afghan revolution. On that historic occasion six hundred people of various nationalities were carried to India and safety over the mountain snows. Not only were their lives preserved, but a long and troublesome campaign of reprisals avoided. The squadrons which did the bulk of the work were flown, at short notice, from Baghdad to the North-West Frontier, 2,500 miles away, in two or three days—a wonderful example of mobility.

Within certain limits, aerial forces have the great advantage that they are interchangeable for use over the land and sea. Furthermore, they are far more immune to chemical attack than ground and sea forces. For the poison gases and vapours that will be the principal striking-weapon in a future war must be heavier than air in order

to lie near the surface of the ground or sea. Otherwise they would disperse into the upper atmosphere. Poison-gas clouds may be laid in the path of attacking aeroplanes, but the choice of height and direction by the aerial attackers is so wide, and they will pass so quickly through the affected area, that even if the new chemical weapons reach them they will be far more immune than ground or sea forces.

For sea use we have the great flying-boat of the future, of which the Dornier seaplane, capable already of carrying 100 persons, and our own Blackburn Iris flying-boat, are only primitive pioneers. These will be the capital ships of the future war, with cannon and machine-guns for fighting each other, and capable of carrying bombs large enough and powerful enough to sink any battleship that can be constructed. There will be the torpedo-carrying seaplanes, the fast scouts, the patrolling air cruisers of immense radius of action.

To return to the subject of fighting over the land with the new aerial weapon : the military mind always imagines that the next war will be like the last, and makes its preparations accordingly.

In the Crimean War, as the military memoirs of the time show, there were continued complaints about the reliance on the tactics of the Peninsula campaigns.

We muddled the commencement of the South African War by using the tactics of the Crimean War.

When the Great War broke out we were wedded to the methods that had been evolved in the South African War, fifteen years before. And at Whitsun 1930 I found South Wales in a great state of excitement because naval and military manœuvres were in progress in Milford Haven. With the aid of a squadron of battleships and attendant craft and some brigades of Territorial infantry, the leaders and instructors of these ground and sea forces

were engaged in practising the Dardanelles landing! The whole training, indeed, of the Territorials and the other infantry forces in England, no less than that of the French and American Armies, is based on the experience of the last war. Even schoolboys have revolted at being taught nineteenth-century infantry drill in the Officers' Training Corps by military veterans of the Retreat from Mons.

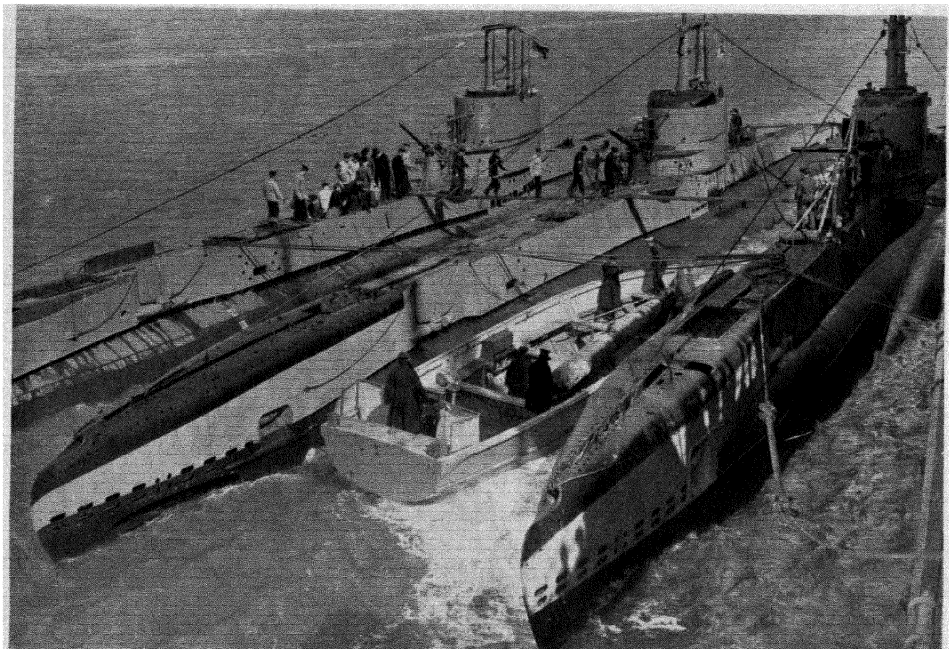
The vast, barely disguised, propaganda of military and naval reviews and tournaments is designed to make the public and, presumably, the unfortunate soldiery and sailors themselves believe that the next war will not even be like the last, but like the one before that! If the admirals and military brass-hats in these countries insist on continuing to waste money and energy on obsolete methods and weapons, and with the political state of the world as it is, we are simply putting temptations in the path of any ruthless and far-seeing nation with the necessary resources and motives of revenge or lust of conquest to develop the air weapon on a great scale and to overthrow us and our Allies.

I had the pleasant experience, two years before this book was written, of going to Tidworth, in the West of England, as the guest of the genial colonel, Sir L. Worthington-Evans, the then Secretary of State for War, to witness the manœuvres of the most modern and up-to-date ground force in the world—the Mechanized Division of the British Army. The spectators represented the 'enemy' and the division, or, rather, the brigade that was ready, developed an attack upon us. The whippet tanks, the gun-carrying tanks and all the paraphernalia of the mechanized force, developed from the tank warfare of 1914–18, painfully and slowly deployed into line and lumbered over the countryside, containing us in front, out-flanking us, and, of course, winning a 'glorious' victory. For all we spectators had were shooting-sticks,

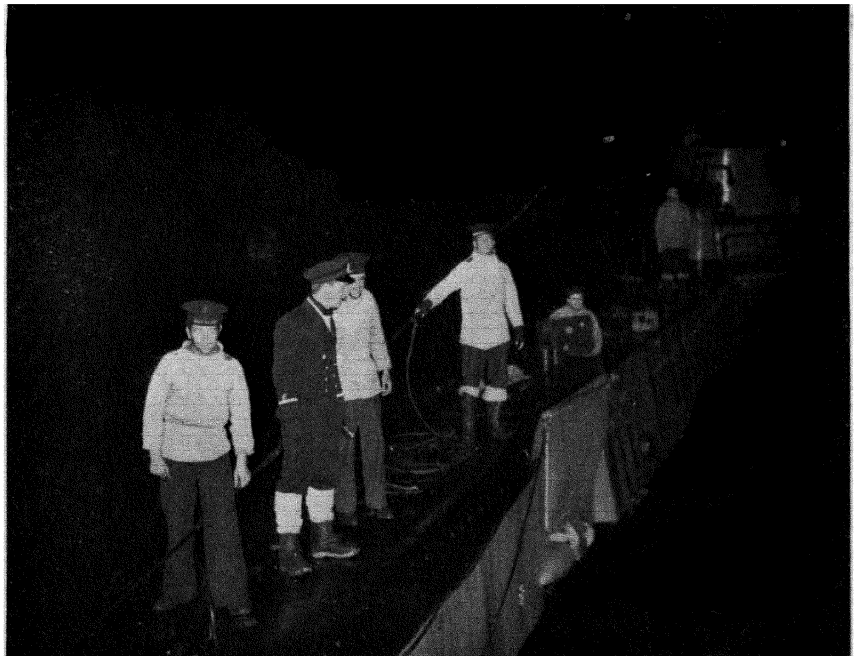


*Sport and General*

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except that some of the ladies of the party carried parasols.

But overhead there appeared three aeroplanes—only three ! They wheeled, turned and darted hither and thither, sweeping low over our heads, then appearing first over the left flank, then over the right flank of the gallant mechanized brigade. They provided a wonderful object-lesson. Not even for the same expenditure, but for one-third of the cost of that mechanized brigade put into air weapons, there would have been an air force able to concentrate on one part of the line, smother and obliterate it and then to 'mop up' the whole of the opposing ground forces in detail.

Aeroplanes have never yet been used in war for mass attacks on armies. Nor am I quite sure that they will be so used, for it will be far more efficacious to fly over the heads of the ground armies and attack the centres of population in the rear.

Towards the end of the Great War in Europe the aeroplanes began direct action against troops in the trenches and on the march ; but there were never enough of them, and their weapons were primitive. The best example of what could happen, though only on a small scale, was the utter rout and destruction of the Turkish Army in its retreat after being defeated by General Allenby's ground forces in Palestine.

It must be remembered that the Turk is a good fighting soldier, that this army was well equipped by the Germans and had German technical experts in plenty with it, including anti-aircraft gunners manning efficient anti-aircraft guns and with plenty of European experience behind them.

Probably the best description of this terrible tragedy is to be found in Colonel Lawrence's *Revolt in the Desert*, as follows :

It was the R.A.F. which had converted the Turkish

retreat into a rout, which had abolished their telephone and telegraph communications, had blocked their lorry columns, scattered their infantry units. . . . But the climax of air attack and the holocaust of the miserable Turks fell in the valley by which Esdraelon drains to the Jordan by Beisan. The modern motor-road, the only way of escape for the Turkish divisions, was scalloped between cliff and precipice in a murderous defile. For four hours our aeroplanes replaced one another in series above the doomed columns ; nine tons of small bombs or grenades and 50,000 rounds of small arms ammunition were rained upon them. When the smoke had cleared it was seen that the organization of the enemy had melted away. They were a dispersed horde of trembling individuals, hiding for their lives in every fold of the vast hills. Nor did their commanders ever rally them again. When our cavalry entered the silent valley next day they could count ninety guns, fifty lorries, nearly a thousand carts abandoned with all their belongings. The Royal Air Force lost four killed. The Turks lost a corps.

And this was accomplished by a mere handful of aeroplanes, the single spies of what in a future war will be whole battalions, brigades and divisions fighting from the air at 200 and 300 miles an hour. Such an air force will be as invincible to a future ground army as a modern expeditionary force with its lethal weapons would be to an impi of Zulus armed with assagais and hide-shields.

(The above suggestions were submitted by me ten years ago.)

To return to the question of whether air-power can defeat sea-power : the *threat* of air attack on our Fleet led to our defeat in the first round of the campaign in Norway. What would have happened

if the threat had been taken up it is impossible to say. In the absence of a better test, the balance of opinion will probably incline to the view that air-power has seriously hampered the movements of warships within flying distance of enemy bases. As the radius of action of aircraft increases, so will this handicap on sea-power increase also. The answer for local operations would appear, therefore, to be a combination of sea-power and air-power. They are complementary to each other.

In the wide oceans, however, sea-power is still decisive. So long as we can keep the seas and the German warships dare not leave their harbours or the protection of a superior Air Force, economic pressure on Germany through the cutting of her trade routes will continue.

Thus, a small British gunboat which can keep the seas because superior forces will challenge any attempt to interfere with her, can cruise off Alexandria or in the Red Sea and effectively prevent any German trade, even in neutral bottoms, using the Suez Canal. An examination vessel, with only one gun on board, can lie in the Straits of Malacca so long as there is a cruiser or two in Singapore itself and can strangle all German commerce attempting to pass through this vital artery of trade.

Sea-power can prevent Germany sending an overseas expedition beyond flying radius of the German Air Force. Sea-power alone could prevent

the serious invasion of the British Isles ; sea-power plus air-power can make our shores still more secure. Air bombing of towns, the carrying of raiding parties of parachute troops by air have a serious nuisance value ; but sea-power, *so long as it can be exercised*, will remain decisive.

# APPENDIX I

## AUTHORIZED ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE WHITE PAPER ISSUED BY THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT ON 14 APRIL, 1940

### *The German Aggression on Norway*

On 9 April, at 5 a.m. the German Minister in Oslo, Dr. Bräuer, came to the Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and presented to the Minister, Professor Koht, a number of demands from his Government.

Several hours before these demands were presented, German forces had already attacked Norway. About midnight it was learned that foreign warships had passed Faerder and had entered the Oslo fjord; and three-quarters of an hour later a report was received that an exchange of fire took place between these warships and the Norwegian forts of Bolaerne and Rauer. About 2 a.m. it was learned that five large German warships had passed the outer fortifications at Bergen. At 3.30 a.m. it was reported that two warships had passed Agdenes and had entered the Trondheim fjord. At the same time the warships that had entered Oslo fjord—four

large warships and a number of smaller ones—reached Filtvedt and soon afterwards fighting began between these warships and the coastal forts at Oskarsborg. Fighting was thus already in full swing and began also immediately after this outside Bergen.

As already stated, it was at this time that the German Minister in Oslo presented his demands to the Norwegian Government. He handed to the Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs a memorandum which stated that while Great Britain and France in the war with Germany had also consistently attacked the neutral countries, Germany, on the contrary, still tried to defend the rights of neutral countries. The German Government had now received documents which proved that England and France had agreed to extend the war to the territory of neutral countries, i.e., by occupying Narvik and other places in Norway. He further stated that the German Government had undeniable proof that this occupation would occur within a few days, and the German Government was of the opinion that the Norwegian Government would not resist such occupation. It was further stated in the memorandum that even if the Norwegian Government decided to resist the British and French troops, it would not be strong enough to succeed in this resistance. The German Government would under no circumstances allow the Western Powers to make Scandinavia a battlefield

against Germany, or permit the Norwegian people, directly or indirectly, to be used in the war against Germany. The German Government would not wait for the execution of such a plan without taking any action, and had therefore to-day begun certain military operations to occupy strategically important places in Norway. Germany thereafter would take over for the duration of this war the defence of the Kingdom of Norway. The German Government did not desire this development and England and France were alone responsible for it. These two States pretended hypocritically that they would protect the small countries, but in reality they used violence against them, hoping thereby to pursue the destructive war they have directed against Germany and daily proclaimed always more intensively. German troops had therefore not landed in Norway as enemies. The German High Command did not intend to use bases of operation in Norway for an attack against England, if it were not compelled to do so by England and France, as these military operations were only intended to secure Norway against the planned occupation of Norwegian bases with Anglo-French forces. The German Government felt convinced that by this action they also served the interests of the Northern countries, for the security offered the Scandinavian countries by the German military forces was to them the only guarantee that their countries would not become a battlefield and a theatre for, may be,

the most terrible warfare. The German Government therefore expected that the Norwegian Government and the Norwegian people would accept the German action with full understanding and would not resist it. Every resistance would be crushed with all means by the German troops and would therefore only result in a completely useless bloodshed. The Norwegian Government was therefore asked hurriedly to take all steps to secure that the advance of the German troops could take place without friction and difficulties. In conformity with the old-established German–Norwegian relations the German Government declared that Germany by their action neither at present nor in the future had the intention to attack the integrity and political independence of the Kingdom of Norway.

Together with this memorandum followed a so-called 'Note,' which contained a list of those measures which the German Government asked the Norwegian Government to adopt immediately, viz.:

1. The Norwegian Government should issue a proclamation to the people asking them not to resist the German troops during the occupation.

2. The Norwegian Government should order the Army to make contact with the German troops and make the necessary agreements for loyal co-operation with the German officers in command. The Norwegian soldiers should retain their weapons if their conduct made this possible. As a sign of

their willingness to co-operate a white flag of truce should be hoisted next to the national flag on all military establishments approached by the German troops. Further liaison officers should be sent:

(*a*) to the Commander of the German troops that entered into the capital (officers from the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force), and

(*b*) to the local Commanders.

On the other hand the German Commander in Chief would send liaison officers to the Norwegian High Command. These liaison officers should secure a frictionless co-operation and hinder encounters between German and Norwegian troops.

3. Military establishments and fortifications which German troops needed in order to secure the country against enemies, especially coastal fortifications, should be handed over undamaged to the German troops.

4. Exact documents relating to sea minings laid by the Norwegian Government should be revealed to the German troops.

5. In order to secure the air defence a complete black-out of Norwegian districts should be carried out from the evening after the first day of the occupation.

6. All means of communication and intercourse and all intelligence services should be maintained undamaged. The means of communication (the railways, the internal shipping, the coastal trade)

and the intelligence centres were to be controlled by the German occupation-troops to such an extent as might be necessary for the action of the German troops and for their supplies.

7. Warships and merchant ships should be forbidden to leave for abroad, and aeroplanes to start, but it was possible that shipping with German ports and neutral Baltic ports would become free.

8. Norwegian sea pilots should receive orders to continue in service with the German authorities, and the lighthouse establishments along the Norwegian coast should submit to orders from the German authorities.

9. The meteorological service must be maintained and placed at the disposal of the German occupation-troops, but all publication of weather bulletins must cease. All intelligence and postal services for abroad should be banned.

10. The intelligence and mail service to all Baltic States must go through certain centres and be under the censorship of the German Command of the occupation-troops.

11. The Press and radio stations must be ordered to publish military news only with the consent of the German Army authorities, and all radio stations should be at the disposal of the German Command for broadcasting of their announcements.

12. The export of all goods required in war-time from Norway to foreign countries must be forbidden.

13. The issue of all proclamations and orders

which would be made in accordance with the above paragraphs, should in the case of wireless telegrams only be made in a code not known to Germany's enemies. The decision, whether open messages over the radio stations could be released, would rest with the Commander-in-Chief of the occupation-troops.

When the Foreign Minister had examined the German memorandum with the special demands attached thereto, he declared that Dr. Bräuer must naturally understand that he alone was not able to take any decision on such an important matter, but would have to present the demands at least to the Government. Dr. Bräuer replied that the decision must be taken urgently, because the German action had already advanced so much, that if it was to be stopped, the German demands must immediately be accepted. He said that the German fleet had orders to occupy a number of Norwegian cities before 9 a.m. or 10 a.m.

Professor Koht said that it would not take a long time for the Government to decide, since the Government was already assembled at the Foreign Office. The Government had been there during the whole night after the German attack had begun.

Dr. Bräuer then agreed that the demands should be submitted to the Government, but pointed out the urgency of the matter.

When Professor Koht had informed the Government of the contents of the German proposals or

demands, they very quickly decided that no independent country could accept such demands. Professor Koht then informed the German Minister of his Government's decision and reminded him of a statement recently made by the German Fuehrer, that a people who humbly submitted to an aggressor without the slightest resistance did not deserve to exist. And we, continued Professor Koht, will maintain and defend our independence.

The decision was thus taken and the German attack was made within the following few hours. King Haakon, the Crown Prince, the Crown Princess, the Government and the Storting found themselves compelled to leave Oslo already in the morning to avoid capture by the Germans and to avoid a breakdown in the machinery of the Norwegian Government. The Storting met at Hamar on the same day and was there informed of all the latest events. The Government informed the Storting that they placed their mandates at the disposal of the Storting and King Haakon. But the Storting unanimously decided to ask the Government to remain in power. The Government was at the same time empowered to add to their number three consultative ministers.

The proceedings were interrupted in the evening when it was reported that a German detachment was on its way towards Hamar, and the Storting then moved to Elverum.

At Elverum a telegram was received inquiring whether King Haakon would receive in audience Minister Bräuer, in order to discuss certain proposals. Dr. Bräuer declared himself willing to come either during the night or on the following day. The Storting then decided to appoint a delegation who might discuss with Dr. Bräuer the proposals he might put forward. A delegation of four members was elected, including the Foreign Minister, Professor Koht, M. Ivar Lykke, M. Joh. Ludw. Mowinckel and M. Jon Sundby, the last three delegates being members of the Storting.

The Storting thereupon terminated its proceedings and its members were able to leave.

During the night it was reported that the above-mentioned German detachment now was proceeding towards Elverum, and the members of the Government, with the exception of the Foreign Minister, then left this place. Dr. Bräuer had been informed that King Haakon was ready to receive him the following day, 10 April at 11 a.m., a time that was later altered to 1 p.m. For various reasons Dr. Bräuer did not reach Elverum till 3 p.m.

The attacks made on Elverum were then repulsed, with the result that King Haakon was able to return to this place and receive Dr. Bräuer.

During the conversations that followed, first between King Haakon and Dr. Bräuer and thereupon between these two in the presence of the Foreign Minister, the German Minister declared

that the situation was now so altered that the demands presented in the memorandum the previous day could no longer satisfy the German Government. The German Government must now demand the creation of a new Government, in which Germany could have confidence, making possible an amicable collaboration between Norway and Germany. With reference to the contents of the memorandum, Dr. Bräuer stated that it was now necessary to make certain additions. The creation of a new Government was made a condition, and the German Government demanded that Major Quisling should be appointed Prime Minister and that his ministers should be the men he had chosen for his Government, possibly completed by a few other personalities.

King Haakon declared in agreement with the Foreign Minister that he could not appoint a Government which did not enjoy the confidence of the Norwegian people, and at several elections for the Storting it had been made entirely clear that Major Quisling did not enjoy sufficient confidence of the people. His Government in Norway would only become a new Kuusinen Government.

The Foreign Minister declared that the Nygaardsvold Government had declared themselves willing to resign, and he asked whether the German Government could not consider the creation of a friendly Government which could collaborate with Germany, composed of other persons than

those mentioned. Dr. Bräuer declared that he was prepared to make concessions as to the membership of the Government, but that Herr Hitler insisted that Quisling must be Premier.

King Haakon finally said that he would submit the matter to his legal Government, and that he must reserve his final reply till this was done. The German Minister emphasized the urgency of the decision, and it was agreed that when he returned south he would telephone to the Foreign Minister from Eidsvoll, as it was presumed that King Haakon would by then have been able to take the advice of his Government.

Some hours later in the evening the German Minister received in this way a reply to the effect that King Haakon could not appoint the Quisling Government. Dr. Bräuer asked whether this reply meant that the Norwegian resistance against the German invasion would continue, and the Foreign Minister replied: "Yes, as long as possible."

The same evening the Government agreed upon a proclamation to the Norwegian people which was issued the following morning, and started the organization of the military resistance against the attack. During the following days the Government had to move from place to place because they were pursued by German aeroplanes everywhere they settled, and particularly on 11 April fierce bombardments took place in Trysil against King Haakon and the Government. The barbarous warfare the

German authorities have thus started has compelled the Norwegian Government temporarily to conceal their residence. But the fight will be kept up, and the Government have been promised military help from the Allied Western Powers. They feel confident that, in collaboration with these States, they can save Norway for the Norwegian people.



*Central Press*

OFFICERS AND SEAMEN OF H.M. SUBMARINE *SEALION*.
LT.-COMMANDER BEN BRYANT IN COMMAND



H.M. SUBMARINE *SUNFISH*. LT.-COMMANDER J. SLAUGHTER [with hood]

*Topical Press*

# APPENDIX II

The following is the statement which was broadcast to the world on 8 April by the Allied Governments on their action in laying minefields off the Norwegian coast :

In recent weeks the German campaign against the merchant shipping of all nations has been intensified and pursued with even greater brutality than before. The number of neutral ships destroyed by German action is now well over 150, and the number of neutral lives lost is nearly 1,000. These attacks have been carried out in almost every case in defiance of the recognized rules of war, frequently in circumstances of the greatest barbarity, and on many occasions without the slightest justification for interference of any sort with the ship. Germany has announced that she regards herself as entitled to destroy any neutral ship *en route* to any British port, including contraband control harbours, and there have, moreover, been repeated cases of vessels being destroyed on voyage between two neutral ports, when the vessel had no intentions of touching at a British port at all. It is obvious that the German Government are engaged in an indiscriminate campaign of destruction throughout the waters in which their unnotified mines are laid, or in which their submarines are in a position to operate.

While in recent weeks the greatest losses have fallen upon neutral shipping, British and Allied vessels have also suffered from the adoption of this policy of destruction, a new development of which is the bombing from the air of British and neutral trawlers and fishing boats, and the

machine-gunning of their crews. The innocent character of fishing boats has hitherto been universally recognized, but this has not prevented Germany from committing nearly 200 attacks on fishing vessels, aimed at sinking them and murdering their crews. Even lightships, the object of which is to protect shipping of all nations, and which are by international usage treated as non-combatants, have been with their crews ruthlessly attacked by bombs.

It is a fact deserving of constant emphasis that these German attacks have been deliberately aimed at the destruction of neutral lives and property, and it is abundantly clear that the purpose behind them is pure terrorism. The Allies, on the other hand, have never destroyed nor injured a single neutral ship or taken a single neutral life. On the contrary, they have not only saved the lives of many innocent victims of these German outrages, but they have also not failed to rescue from drowning German airmen and submarine crews who have been guilty of the inhumanities in question.

### Norwegian Policy

The position is therefore that Germany is flagrantly violating neutral rights in order to damage the Allied countries, while insisting upon the strictest observance of rules of neutrality whenever such observance would provide some advantage to herself. International law has always recognized the right of a belligerent, when its enemy has systematically resorted to illegal practices, to take action appropriate to the situation created by the illegalities of the enemy. Such action, even though not lawful in ordinary circumstances, becomes, and is generally recognized to become, lawful in view of the other belligerent's violation of law. The Allied Governments therefore hold themselves entitled to take such action as they may deem proper in the present circumstances.

The Allied Governments have observed that a heavy proportion of the losses inflicted upon neutral countries, both of human life and in material, has fallen upon the Norwegian Mercantile Marine. Yet, while the German Government repeatedly sink Norwegian shipping and murder Norwegian seamen, they continue to demand from the Norwegian Government the fullest use of Norwegian territorial waters for their own commerce, and the Norwegian Government have even felt obliged to provide armed escort in these waters for German ships, while unable to take effective action against German brutality on the high seas, of which their own vessels have been the victims.

Whatever may be the actual policy which the Norwegian Government, by German threats and pressure, are compelled to follow, the Allied Governments can no longer afford to acquiesce in the present state of affairs by which Germany obtains resources vital to her prosecution of the war, and obtains from Norway facilities which place the Allies at a dangerous disadvantage. They have therefore already given notice to the Norwegian Government that they reserve the right to take such measures as they may think necessary to hinder or prevent Germany from obtaining in Norway resources or facilities which, for the purpose of the war, would be to her advantage or to the disadvantage of the Allies. If the successful prosecution of the war now requires them to take such measures world opinion will not be slow to realize, both the necessity under which they are constrained to act, and the purpose of their action. Their purpose in this war is to establish principles which the smaller States of Europe would themselves wish to see prevail, and upon which the very existence of those States ultimately depends. The Allies, of course, will never follow the German example of brutal violence, and any action they decide to take will always

be carried out in accordance with the dictates of humanity.

### Dangerous Areas

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the French Government have accordingly resolved to deny the continued use by the enemy of stretches of territorial waters which are clearly of particular value to him, and they have therefore decided to prevent unhindered passage of vessels carrying contraband of war through Norwegian territorial waters. They accordingly hereby give notice that the following areas of Norwegian territorial waters have been rendered dangerous to navigation on account of mines.

Vessels entering these areas will do so at their peril.

Stadlandet.—An area enclosed by the Norwegian coast and lines joining the following positions: (i) 62° 11′ 06″ N., 5° 06′ 12″ E.; (ii) 62° 09′ 24″ N., 5° 00′ 13″ E.; (iii) 62° 12′ 18″ N., 4° 49′ 30″ E.; (iv) 62° 19′ 30″ N., 5° 05′ 36″ E.; (v) 62° 12′ 00″ N., 5° 09′ 00″ E.

Bud.—An area enclosed by the Norwegian coast and lines joining the following positions :—(i) 62° 58′ 27″ N., 7° 05′ 30″ E.; (ii) 63° 03′ 30″ N., 6° 54′ 00″ E.; (iii) 63° 07′ 12″ N., 7° 04′ 30″ E.; (iv) 62° 59′ 24″ N., 7° 07′ 15″ E.

West Fjord.—An area enclosed by the Norwegian coast and lines joining the following points :—(i) 67° 24′ 40″ N., 14° 34′ 00″ E.; (ii) 67° 27′ 30″ N., 14° 24′ 00″ E.; (iii) 67° 28′ 55″ N., 14° 06′ 45″ E.; (iv) 67° 33′ 55″ N., 13° 51′ 30″ E.; (v) 67° 37′ 55″ N., 14° 02′ 15″ E.; (vi) 67° 26′ 20″ N., 14° 38′ 30″ E.

It will be observed that the laying of mines in these areas will in no way interfere with the free access of Norwegian nationals or ships to their own ports and coastal hamlets.

In order to avoid the least possibility of Norwegian or other vessels inadvertently entering these areas before there has been time to give warning of the mines being laid, arrangements have been made for the limits of the areas to be patrolled by British naval vessels until a period of 48 hours has elapsed from the laying of the first mine in each area. This measure, in conjunction with the broadcast warning, should fully provide for the safety of shipping.

# APPENDIX III

## THE PREMIER ON THE SITUATION IN NORWAY, HOUSE OF COMMONS, 2 MAY, 1940

*Text issued by the Ministry of Information.*

Mr. Chamberlain, in reply to Mr. Attlee, made the following statement in the House of Commons on the situation in Norway.

He began by thanking the House for their indulgence in not pressing for a statement earlier in the week. Members had realized the difficulty of making any statement without disclosing information which would have been of value to the enemy, he said, and had refrained from asking questions to which they and the country had naturally been anxious to have an answer.

He was afraid he must ask them to exercise their patience a little longer before he could give them a full story, for it was impossible to make public as yet plans and movements which were not complete.

"I can therefore," continued the Prime Minister, "make only an interim statement to-day, but I hope that the First Lord of the Admiralty and I may be able to say a good deal more early next week, when

no doubt the House will desire to debate the whole subject in the light of the information before them."

The House will, of course, remember that some three months ago we had made preparations for the despatch of an Allied force to the assistance of Finland.

The possibility of reaching Finland was dependent upon the collaboration of the Governments of Norway and Sweden, and realizing that even their acquiescence in the passage of Allied troops might involve them in an invasion by Germany, we prepared other forces to go to their assistance in that contingency.

It did not escape our attention that in such a case Trondheim and other western ports of Norway, as well as the aerodromes at Stavanger, might well be the subject of attack by Germany and, accordingly, further forces again were made ready to occupy these places.

I should, however, make it clear that the instructions to the commanders of these forces provided that they were only to proceed to the occupation in one of two conditions : either that they were invited to do so by the Norwegian Government, or that Norwegian neutrality had already been violated.

The House is aware that permission to send troops to Finland through Norway and Sweden was refused, and after a certain period the greater part of the forces which had been accumulated were dispersed,

since both they and the ships which were collected for their transport were wanted elsewhere.

About a month ago, however, it was decided that certain small forces should be kept in readiness to occupy Norwegian western ports at short notice, in case of an act of aggression by Germany against south Norway.

It is a curious chance that this date of 8 April, decided upon by H.M. Government for this minor operation, should have coincided almost exactly with that chosen by the German Government for their long-prepared invasion of Norway.

The Norwegian campaign opened on Sunday, 7 April, when we got information that a large German naval force was moving towards and along the west coast of Norway.

That evening the main battle fleet and the Second Cruiser Squadron sailed from Scapa Flow and Rosyth in the hope of engaging the enemy.

On Monday, 8 April, the First Cruiser squadron sailed to join in the operations. On the morning of 9 April, German land forces entered Denmark, and, aided by internal treachery, prepared long beforehand, naval forces seized and landed troops at Oslo, Stavanger, Bergen, and Trondheim.

On the same day, H.M.S. *Renown*, which was accompanying the destroyers watching over the minefield near Narvik, engaged the German battle cruiser *Scharnhörst* off the Northern coast of Norway opposite Narvik, in extremely bad weather conditions

and low visibility, inflicting considerable damage, although full reports of this were not available until 11 April.

In the meantime, our destroyers had discovered a number of enemy vessels which had entered the Narvik Fjord under cover of a snow storm, and the next day they fought the action in which their gallant commander, Captain Warburton-Lee, lost his life, and other losses were sustained, but in which heavy damage was inflicted on the German destroyers and the merchant vessels in the fjord.

In view of the obscurity of the situation in Central Norway and the importance of securing Narvik, our first military forces which we had promptly assembled sailed direct to the Narvik area, arriving there on 15 April.

In the meantime the very successful naval attack on 13 April completely destroyed the enemy's naval forces at that port, and made it unnecessary to utilize for the capture of Narvik all the forces originally earmarked for that operation.

In deciding upon our further action, the objectives which we had in view were :

(1) To give all the support and assistance in our power to the Norwegians.
(2) To resist or delay the German advance from the south.
(3) To facilitate the rescue and protection of the Norwegian King and Government.

It was obvious that these objectives could be most speedily attained if it were possible to capture Trondheim and, in spite of the hazardous nature of the operation, with the Germans in possession of the place and in occupation of the only really efficient aerodrome in S.W. Norway at Stavanger, we resolved to make the effort.

Since any landing would probably be opposed, it was essential that the first contingents should go as light as possible to secure bases to which the heavier equipment could subsequently be transported, and two landing places were selected, respectively north and south of Trondheim.

At Namsos in the North, naval forces landed on 14 April, and were followed by British troops on 16–18 April. A few days later the French Chasseurs Alpins landed, and the arrival of these staunch and experienced troops was a welcome support to our men.

Part of this force advanced rapidly to the neighbourhood of Steinkjer to support the Norwegians, who were known to be holding that place.

South of Trondheim the naval party landed at Aandalsnes on 17 April, followed by troops on 18 and 19 April. These advanced to the important railway junction of Dombaas, and a contingent went on to the South and joined the Norwegians who were opposing at Lillehammer the main German advance from the South.

I cannot to-day give any details of the fighting

which has taken place on both fronts since the landing took place.

All that can be said at present is that our troops fought with gallantry and determination, and inflicted heavy losses upon the enemy. Nevertheless, the Allied forces in these regions were faced, as we had realized that they would be faced, with serious difficulties.

Foremost amongst these was the fact that the available aerodromes were already in enemy hands.

The most effective defence against air attack, the use of fighter aircraft, was thus largely denied to us, and any Hon. Members who have suffered the experience of being bombed from the air by low-flying aeroplanes will know how greatly the supply and movement of troops are hampered.

In the circumstances, it became evident to us some days ago that it would be impossible, owing to the German local air superiority, to land the artillery and tanks which would be necessary in order to enable our troops to withstand the enemy drive from the South.

It must be remembered that, in spite of the magnificent work by British submarines and a French flotilla in the Skaggerak and the unceasing efforts of the R.A.F., particularly in bombing the aerodromes at Aalborg, in Denmark, the starting point, and Oslo, the landing place of German troop-carriers, it has always been possible for the Germans, th their usual disregard for life, even of their own

people, to send reinforcements to Norway at a much greater rate than would be open to us with the inadequate landing-places we have to rely on.

*Accordingly, we decided last week that we must abandon any idea of taking Trondheim from the South, and that we must therefore withdraw our troops from that area, and transfer them elsewhere.*

The operations of withdrawal in face of the enemy is one which has always been recognized as among the most delicate and difficult of military operations, and the action of Sir John Moore at Corunna, though accompanied by heavy loss of life including the commander, has taken its place among the classic examples of British military skill.

In the present instance we have been more fortunate.

Thanks to the powerful forces which the Navy was able to bring to bear, and the determination and skilful dispositions of General Paget, in command of British land forces in the area, backed by the splendid courage and tenacity of the troops, we have now withdrawn the whole of our forces from Aandalsnes under the very noses of the German aeroplanes, without, as far as I am aware, losing a single man in this operation.

I should like to express my profound admiration for the manner in which all ranks have performed their tasks in the area south of Trondheim.

I cannot yet give the House particulars of the casualties which our forces have sustained in the

various operations, but I hope and I have some reason to believe that they have not been heavy in proportion to the scale of operations.

I expect that we shall be able to get more detailed reports before long, and I trust that this most distressing but inevitable period of uncertainty may not be prolonged.

Although, in the face of the overwhelming difficulties of the situation, it has not been possible to effect the capture of the town, I am satisfied that the balance of advantage lies, up to the present, with the Allied forces.

It may be useful if I examine this point in somewhat greater detail.

I have no doubt that the Germans expected a walk-over in Norway, as in Denmark. That expectation has been frustrated by the courage of the Norwegian people and by the efforts of the Allies.

After three weeks of war, in which heavy losses have been sustained by the enemy on the sea, on land, and in the air, Norway is not conquered, while the considerable supplies of ore which she was formerly obtaining from Narvik have been indefinitely suspended.

During the period of just over three weeks the German naval losses amount to a serious figure.

They include two capital ships damaged, certainly three, possibly four, cruisers sunk, eleven destroyers sunk, and five U-boats sunk. Thirty transports and store ships have been sunk, scuttled,

or set on fire, with a loss of several thousands of lives. A further ten transport or store ships have been struck by our torpedoes, and probably sunk.

The losses sustained by the Royal Navy in the same period are :

Four destroyers, three submarines, one sloop, and five trawlers sunk. Five other warships have been damaged by air attack, one store ship has also been sunk by U-boat torpedo.

It will be seen from these figures that, whereas the strength and efficiency of the Royal Navy has been little, if at all, affected, the injury to the German Navy has been so substantial as to alter the entire balance of naval power, and to permit an important redistribution of the main Allied fleets.

In this connection I might mention that it has been thought possible to revert to the more normal distribution of ships in the Mediterranean, which has for some time been affected by our requirements in the North Sea.

A British and French battle fleet, with cruisers and ancillary craft, is already in the eastern basin of the Mediterranean, on its way to Alexandria.

Returning to the Norway campaign, the German losses in men, whether from the sinking of war vessels, from the destruction of transports, or in the course of the fighting in Norway itself on land and in the air, cannot be estimated with any accuracy, but they must have amounted to many thousands.

At this moment, I would say to any who may be

drawing hasty conclusions from the fact that for the present we have not succeeded in taking Trondheim, it is far too soon to strike the Norwegian balance sheet yet, for the campaign has merely concluded a single phase, in which it is safe to say that if we have not achieved our objective, neither have the Germans achieved theirs, while their losses are far greater than ours.

But I would take this opportunity of addressing a warning both to this House and to the country.

We have no intention of allowing Norway to become merely a sideshow, but neither are we going to be trapped into such a dispersal of our forces as would leave us dangerously weak at the vital centre.

We know that our enemy hold a central position. They have immense forces always mounted ready for attack, and the attack can be launched with lightning rapidity in any one of many fields.

We know that they are prepared, and would not scruple to invade Holland or Belgium, or both. Or it may be that their savage hordes will be hurled against their innocent neighbours in the south-east of Europe.

They might well do more than one of these things in preparation for an attempt at a large-scale attack on the Western Front, or even a lightning swoop on this country.

It would be foolish, indeed, to reveal to the enemy our conception of the strategy best calculated to secure their defeat, but this can be said, for it is

obvious, that we must not so disperse or tie up our forces as to weaken our freedom of action in vital emergencies which may at any moment arise.

We must seize every chance, as we have done, and shall continue to do in Norway, to inflict damage upon the enemy, but we must not allow ourselves to forget the long-term strategy which will win the war.

Let me repeat that what I have said is only an interim statement.

Certain operations are in progress, and we must do nothing which might jeopardize the lives of those engaged in them. I would therefore ask the House to defer comment and question until we can have the debate next week, when I anticipate that particular difficulty will not arise.

Mr. Chamberlain's speech was repeatedly punctuated by cheers from all sides of the House.