

both H.M.S. PRINCESS BEATRIX and H.M.S. QUEEN EMMA had re-embarked all their troops and were ready to sail.

Inter-communications.

14. Owing to the excellence of the intercommunication arrangements made by Lieut. Sir Marshall G. C. Warmington, Bart., R.N., of H.M.S. SOMALI, it was possible to obtain at all times a most clear and accurate picture of the progress of the operations on shore.

The personnel from the various signal detachments were all drawn from the Home Fleet. They were faced with the task of operating wireless sets to which they were not accustomed, and with but little time to practise with them.

The ease with which they overcame this difficulty and the speed and accuracy with which the many signals were passed says much for their individual skill and for the instruction and training they were given by the naval officer to whom I have referred above.

State of the light at the time of the landings.

15. The original intention was to make four simultaneous landings at 0630 hrs. but, after further examination of the meteorological data, it was considered that such early landings would force the A.L.C.s and M.L.C.s* to make their difficult approaches in conditions of what may be termed "dangerous" darkness.

The time of landing was therefore put back to 0645 hrs.

In the event the morning of March 4th was exceptionally clear and calm. There was no fog, no sea mist, no rain or snow and what breeze there was blew from a favourable though unusual quarter.

Thus the landing craft approached the shore under rather better light conditions than were required or were desirable.

However, it is difficult to see how such rare conditions can be legislated for except by abandoning the idea of making the landings simultaneously and allowing instead a 30 or 45 minutes period during any part of which they may take place.

The obvious danger of such a procedure is that the defences at the point where the earliest landing is made may be given time to warn other points at which landings are attempted 10 or 20 minutes later.

Effect of low temperatures.

16. Even during the short passage between H.M.S. QUEEN EMMA, H.M.S. PRINCESS BEATRIX and the various ports, it was found that weapons had a distinct tendency to freeze up and become hard to operate.

Should such low temperatures be anticipated again in the future, some special arrangements would have to be made to guard against this danger.

Opposition.

17. At no point on shore was any opposition encountered, though some of the enemy personnel, notably those at the air station outside Svolvaer who were armed with a machine-gun and other weapons, might well have inflicted casualties and delayed progress. So far as is known, the only shots fired by the enemy were the three or four rounds aimed at H.M.S. SOMALI by the armed trawler KREBS. No casualties were incurred by our troops.

Reception by the inhabitants.

18. The reports received from the Military Commanders at each port show that in every case our troops were given a welcome, the genuine enthusiasm of which cannot be doubted.

Although it must have been abundantly clear that the demolitions which were being carried through would inevitably have sad effects on the livelihood of many, there always seemed to be the over-riding realisation that they were well worth aiding and abetting so long as they were also the means of retarding and interfering with production urgently required by the enemy.

In many instances, the gifts distributed by our troops were at once matched by presents given to them by the inhabitants. In short, they were welcomed by a people whose natural virility and inherent soundness of character had ridden safely over the many insidious dangers which must follow from months of enemy occupation.

Military action at the four ports.

19. The following were the Senior Military Officers at each port:—

At Stamsund—Major J. F. Durnford-Slater, R.A.

At Henningsvaer—Captain A. S. Ronald, K.R.R.C.

At Svolvaer—Lieut.-Colonel D. S. Lister, M.C., The Buffs.

At Brettesnes—Major M. E. Kerr, The Rifle Brigade.

20. The characteristics which seem to stand out from the operations as a whole are the excellent and frequent reports rendered by the senior officers at each port; the speed with which the detachments carried out their allotted duties, and the initiative shown by junior commanders in seeking for and carrying through useful and important tasks in addition to those specifically mentioned in the operation orders.

I would particularly bring to your notice Lieut.-Colonel D. S. Lister, M.C., The Buffs, who was in command of the operations at Svolvaer and Brettesnes and Major J. F. Durnford-Slater, Royal Artillery, who commanded the troops at Stamsund and Henningsvaer.

21. Lieutenant H. M. Turner, Royal Engineers, and his section of No. 55 Field Company Royal Engineers accomplished excellent work and carried out their tasks in a most skilled and competent manner.

22. Consolidated results of the operation are given in the Annexure

Assistance rendered by the Norwegian troops.

23. It is not too much to say that the operations on shore could not have been carried through within the time limits laid down in the Operation Orders or with the ease or good relations and understanding that existed had it not been for the enthusiastic help and co-operation of the Norwegian detachment commanded by Captain Martin Linge.

This officer never spared himself for one moment either during the preparatory period or during the raid itself.

His enthusiasm and personality were infectious and it is hoped that his most valuable services and those of his detachment may be brought to the notice of the Norwegian authorities.

Admiralty footnote —

* M.L.C.—landing craft for mechanised vehicles.