

8. On the 12th May, I was informed that in view of the situation elsewhere no Fighter or A/A reinforcements beyond those already promised could be provided. It was now expected that Bardufoss aerodrome would be ready by the 19th and I accordingly requested that GLORIOUS and FURIOUS, bringing Fighter aircraft already promised, should be within 200 miles of the Lofoten Islands by that day ready to fly the machines off as soon as they could be received.

9. Every effort was now being concentrated on preparation of the Bardufoss and Skaanland aerodromes, even operations taking second place in importance. At the same time, the mounting of A/A guns was being pressed on. The speedy and efficient work of Lieutenant-Colonel H. R. Lambert, D.S.C., R.M., and his men of the *M.N.B.D.O. in mounting guns under difficult conditions merit the highest praise. Group Captain Moore, R.A.F., who commanded the Air Component was most assiduous in the aerodrome development.

10. On May 17th, I was again informed of the effect of the Western Front situation on the Narvik Force; the message from Chiefs of Staff, stating that my Fighter Force would be limited to one squadron of Gladiators and one of Hurricanes and the A/A artillery to 48 Heavy and 60 Light Guns.

11. GLORIOUS and FURIOUS arrived off the coast on the 18th and 701 Squadron of Walruses flew off and arrived at Harstad, where they remained based until the final evacuation, doing most useful work—ferrying, maintaining communications and daily reconnaissances, ending with a well planned bombing attack on Solfolla most efficiently carried out. Commander R. S. D. Armour, R.N., who was in command of the Fleet Air Arm, is much to be commended.

12. On the 21st of May, 263 Gladiator Squadron was flown ashore at Bardufoss from FURIOUS, 16 machines landed but unfortunately 2, and 1 Swordfish were lost. GLORIOUS had had to return to U.K. on account of shortage of fuel. ARK ROYAL also left for U.K. on 21st May.

13. On May 22nd in reply to a question from the Admiralty concerning possible substitution of Gladiators for Hurricanes, I stated that unless the Admiralty was prepared to provide and maintain a sufficient Air Force in this area, including a Squadron of Bombers, it was my opinion that the whole policy should be reconsidered.

14. On May 26th, the GLORIOUS was back and flew off 46 Hurricane Squadron. The first flight landed at Skaanland and the remainder at Bardufoss from which aerodrome both Squadrons worked for the remainder of the time, taking heavy toll of the enemy whenever they had opportunity. Unfortunately, however, they were upon occasion fogbound at their aerodrome, which gave the enemy working from the South opportunities he was not slow to take. Owing to the distance little could be done to give fighter protection to the troops in the Bodo area. Two Gladiators in that area did, however, destroy 4 of the enemy in one flight before the Bodo aerodrome was completely destroyed.

*Admiralty footnote:—M.N.B.D.O.—Mobile Naval Base Defence Organisation.

SECTION IV.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BASE DEFENCES.

1. A preliminary telegram asking for Guns for fixed defences and for harbour defence *Asdics was sent on 22nd April and on the 28th April the Admiralty stated that the M.N.B.D.O. would be sent to mount guns and asked for site prospecting to be carried out. As a result, the following proposals were made to the Admiralty on the 1st May:—

2. The Main Naval Base to be in Tjeldsundet with a large ship anchorage to the west of Holsflva, other ships in Lavangsfjord and west of Skaanland: advanced anchorages at Bogen and Ballangen. A minefield extending $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles 310° from Baroen Light on Baroy Island. 6 in. Battery south of Lodingen Church. 4.7 in. Battery north of Kvitnes. 12 pdr. Battery on west side of Tjeldsundet one mile south of Staksvollholm. Further batteries are considered desirable for south and north ends of Tjeldsundet. Minefields N.E. and south of Steinvaer. Harbour defence Asdics off S.W. corner of Baroy Island and Rotvaer Island with control station off Lodingen. Port War Signal Station on Rotvaer Island. B.I Indicator Net and Gate west of Staksvollholm. Indicator Net or Mines at northern entrance to Tjeldsundet from Taakeboen beacon to Hella.

3. On the 27th and 28th May, (fictitious) minefields were declared N.E. and S. of Steinvaer Island in Vaagsfjord and between Rotvaer Island and Baroy Island in Vestfjord.

Rear-Admiral Lyster, appointed on the 29th April, arrived by air and assumed command of the Defences and their development on 5th May.

4. M.L.Cs. arrived on the 25th April and (both M.L.Cs., A.L.Cs. on the 29th. These craft, though not always reliable mechanically, were most useful in the heavy work of transporting gear and arms in the development of the Base Defences. The MASHOBRA arrived on 10th May and the work of the Royal Marine fortress unit under Lieutenant-Colonel H. R. Lambert, D.S.C., R.M., merited the highest praise. I have mentioned this also in the chapter of this Report covering the subject of A/A.

5. A scheme for minelaying by Destroyers to be sent from England was prepared but for special reasons was abandoned. Attention was also given to the matter of using a supply of some 200 Norwegian Mines at Tromso but before effective work could be done on this the operations came to an end.

6. From first to last, the maintenance of Destroyers and Trawler patrols to provide effective protection at entrances to all fiords in use as anchorages was a matter of primary importance and, whenever Walrus aircraft were available, air searches were made.

7. The final plan for the defences was as follows:—

INNER DEFENCES.

A. HARSTAD:

A/S Defence of Harstad Harbour is only fully possible against close range attacks. Long range attacks can only be guarded against by

*Admiralty footnote:—Asdics—Anti-Submarine detectin device