

4. It is thought that future operations of this nature will not only need equally efficient and careful preparation and execution, but also adequate air support, if the geographical position is not so favourable to us.

(Signed) L. H. K. HAMILTON,
Rear Admiral (D),
Home Fleet.

H.M.S. SOMALI.
8th March, 1941.

OPERATION "CLAYMORE"—REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

I have the honour to forward the following report of the proceedings of Force "Rebel" in Operation "Claymore".

2. Force "Rebel" consisted of the following ships:—

Destroyers

SOMALI—Captain C. Caslon (Captain (D), 6th D.F.).

BEDOUI—Comdr. J. A. McCoy, D.S.O.

TARTAR—Comdr. L. P. Skipwith.

LEGION—Comdr. R. F. Jessel.

ESKIMO—Comdr. E. G. Le Geyt.

Troop Carriers

QUEEN EMMA—Comdr. C. A. Kershaw.
PRINCESS BEATRIX—Comdr. T. B. Brunton.

3. During the afternoon of Friday, 28th February, Brigadier J. C. Haydon, D.S.O., O.B.E., embarked in SOMALI with his headquarters staff which consisted of Major A. R. Aslett (Brigade Major), 2nd Lieutenant L. M. Harper-Gow (interpreter in Norwegian), and four other ranks.

4. Force "Rebel" sailed from Scapa at 0001 on 1st March, 1941, and proceeded to Skaalefjord, Faroes, arriving there at 1900 on the same day. Destroyers refuelled from WAR PINDARI and the force sailed at 0001 on 2nd March. Course was set for position L ($64^{\circ} 00' N. 3^{\circ} 00' W.$) and thence for position P ($67^{\circ} 12' N. 02^{\circ} 00' W.$).

5. After clearing the Faroes a speed of 20 knots was maintained until 1100 on 2nd March in order to be as far to the northward as possible by that time. It was hoped that, by so doing, the force would evade detection by the Zenit flight.* No aircraft was in fact sighted.

6. After passing through position P at 0130 on 3rd March course was shaped for position Q ($67^{\circ} 09' N. 11^{\circ} 55' E.$) which was reached as planned at 0001 on 4th March, speed having been adjusted as necessary.

7. Up to this time the passage had been uneventful and the weather conditions very favourable. These were particularly so while making the approach to position Q from the westward. The sky was, for the most part, overcast with low cloud and frequent snow showers were experienced which tended to reduce the chances of detection. The weather cleared sufficiently at intervals, however, for navigational observations to be taken to fix the position of the force.

8. During the passage from P to Q the wind was from E.N.E., force 3, and the state of the

Admiralty footnote —

* Zenit flight—a daily meteorological flight flown by the Germans.

sea 24.* It was unnecessary, therefore, even to consider postponing the operation as conditions promised to be excellent. Special weather reports made by Admiralty were received, also reports of air reconnaissance patrols from the Commander-in-Chief, Rosyth.

9. During the approach to position Q, D/F bearings were obtained of SUNFISH at the expected times and these bearings confirmed the position obtained by astronomical observations. It is estimated that the force passed 2 miles south of SUNFISH at 2335. This method of checking the position was most valuable in making the landfall. Had no sights been obtained, it would have been the only means of fixing the position of the force at this critical stage of the approach.

10. From position Q the force moved up Vestfjord towards position C ($68^{\circ} 05' N. 14^{\circ} 29' E.$), continuing in night cruising order until 0300 when ships formed into single line ahead. Position C was reached without incident at 0430 when the force split, SOMALI, BEDOUIN, TARTAR and QUEEN EMMA proceeding to position D ($68^{\circ} 14' N. 14^{\circ} 42' E.$) and LEGION, ESKIMO and PRINCESS BEATRIX to position E ($68^{\circ} 08' N. 14^{\circ} 01' E.$). It is believed that the force was observed by coast-watchers during this passage, but that no reporting message got through to the mainland. This point may be mentioned by the military who gave me the information after our return to Scapa.

11. Passage up the Vestfjord was much simplified by the fact that all lights were burning at full brilliancy and with normal characteristics, with the following exceptions:—Skomvaer, Tennholm, Grytoy. By 0445 the outline of the coast could be distinguished.

12. After the splitting of the force, SOMALI, with BEDOUIN, TARTAR and QUEEN EMMA in company, moved towards position D where the landing craft for X landing were lowered by 0508. These were taken in charge by TARTAR while SOMALI, BEDOUIN and QUEEN EMMA proceeded to position F ($68^{\circ} 12' N. 14^{\circ} 52' E.$).

13. The weather conditions now were—wind E.N.E., force 3, sea 10 to 20.† It was intensely cold, the temperature being between 20° and $25^{\circ} F.$ The weather continued to be fine and very clear throughout the day, with brilliant sunshine.

14. By this time it had become apparent that, in view of the lightness of the dawn and the perfect visibility, the landing of troops could, with advantage, have been made earlier than at 0645, the projected time. No alteration, except in the case of X landing, was however possible owing to the distances to be covered by landing craft after having been lowered.

15. Craft for X landing, covered by TARTAR, were comparatively close to their objective on being lowered and must have been clearly visible to those ashore. To avoid the loss of the element of surprise, therefore, they moved off to Port X‡ at 0530 and arrived there approximately half an hour before the planned time.

Admiralty footnotes —

* Wind force 3—gentle breeze of 7–10 knots; sea 24—slight sea, moderate average length swell.

† Sea 10 to 20—smooth to slight sea with no swell.

‡ For positions of Port A (Stamsund), Port B (Henningsvaer), Port X (Svolvær), and Port Y (Brettesnes), see Plan 2.