

H.M.S. PRINCE CHARLES.
H.M.S. PRINCE LEOPOLD.
H.M. Submarine TUNA.*

(b) *Military.*

Operational Headquarters, Special Service Brigade.

Detachment of the Special Service Brigade Signal Section.

All ranks of No. 3 Commando.

Two Troops (less one Section) of No. 2 Commando.

An R.A.M.C. detachment from No. 4 Commando.

An R.E. detachment from No. 6 Commando.

Troops of the Royal Norwegian Army.

Officers from the War Office (M.I.9).

A Press Unit of correspondents and photographers.

Total Military Personnel: 51 officers, 525 Other Ranks.

(c) *Air Force.*

Ten Hampdens of 50 Squadron (for smoke laying and bombing).

Blenheims } Fighter
Beaufighters } protection.

19 Blenheims of Bomber Command (for bombing diversion).

Rehearsal.

6. The Naval Force, with the exception of ONSLOW and CHIDDINGFOLD, assembled at Scapa Flow by 15th December, when embarkation of the Military was completed. A programme of rehearsals followed.

7. The Force proceeded from Scapa at 2115/24th December arriving at Sullom Voe at 1330/25th December. Heavy weather was encountered on passage and on arrival both PRINCE CHARLES and PRINCE LEOPOLD discovered and reported various defects including compartments forward flooded to a depth of about fourteen feet.

8. In order to allow time to make PRINCE CHARLES and PRINCE LEOPOLD as seaworthy as possible, and in view of the latest meteorological reports it was decided at 1615 to postpone the operation for 24 hours.

9. All ships had topped up with fuel and all repairs had been completed by 1400/26th December. The weather forecast was far more promising and it was therefore decided to sail the Force at 1600 that day to carry out Operation "Archery" at dawn, 27th December, 1941.

The Naval Approach.

10. The passage across the North Sea commenced in bad weather but, as anticipated, the weather rapidly improved as the Force proceeded to the eastward and conditions were perfect on arrival off the Norwegian coast.

11. Position by the landfall, which was made exactly as planned, was confirmed on sighting the mark submarine TUNA in the position ordered. She was passed at 0739, one minute late on planned time.

Admiralty footnotes —

* KENYA acted as H.Q. Ship and carried Brigade Operational H.Q.

—Destroyers
ONSLOW, ORIBI, OFFA and CHIDDINGFOLD

—PRINCE CHARLES and PRINCE LEOPOLD—
Infantry Assault Ships, later known as "Landing Ships, Infantry (Small)"

12. The Force entered Vaagsfiord* on time apparently unobserved and it seems possible that the look-out post at Hovdenoes was not manned. KENYA moved over to the southern side of the fiord while CHIDDINGFOLD led PRINCE CHARLES and PRINCE LEOPOLD to the bay south of Hollevik as planned. ONSLOW closed on KENYA's starboard quarter and OFFA closed astern of KENYA. ORIBI remained near the entrance of the fiord to cover the Force from the west.

The Bombardment.

13. Hampden aircraft† timed their arrival in the area perfectly, keeping all the attention well up-fiord and drawing the fire of four or five light A.A. guns.

14. At 0842 PRINCE CHARLES made the signal indicating that Assault Landing Craft were formed up and moving ahead. KENYA was moving ahead slowly and at 0848, just before the line of fire opened, star-shell were fired to burst over Maaloy Island. These were bursting and illuminating the point of aim on the island when, half a minute later, the line of fire opened and the bombardment commenced, ONSLOW and OFFA joining in as soon as clear.

15. The battery on Rugsundo which had already been bombed by Hampden aircraft opened fire on KENYA at 0856. It was erratic and the rate of fire low, but nevertheless proved a great nuisance throughout our stay. The guns were thought to be smaller than 5.1-inch and were more probably about 4.7-inch. On bursting, the shell gave off a purple smoke.

16. At 0857½ the "cease bombardment" signal was made by the Military in the Assault Landing Craft now rapidly approaching their objectives. The Naval bombardment of Maaloy Island thus came to an end and from reports received from the Military who landed on the island, there is no doubt whatsoever that it had been completely successful.

17. At 0858 KENYA, having changed over to full charges, opened fire on Rugsundo. After 2½ minutes the enemy guns were silenced. The smoke bombs, dropped by the Hampdens near Rugsundo, were by now effective and gave cover to our ships in the fiord.

Smoke Laying by Aircraft.

18. At 0858½ on a signal from KENYA, seven Hampden aircraft, showing great skill and dash, came in at very low altitudes to drop their smoke bombs. These were placed with great precision on Maaloy Island, and as a result the landing there was unopposed. The bombs were dropped on a front of approximately 250 yards, and as there was practically no wind, gave a screen of ideal density in which visibility was some 15—20 yards.

19. The smoke bombs dropped at the landing place in South Vaagso were only 50 yards out of the desired position, but one of them most unfortunately struck a landing craft setting it alight and causing some 20 casualties from burns.

Admiralty footnotes —

* Vaagso lies 2½ miles up this fiord, whose entrance is less than half a mile wide

† The aircraft operated from bases on the NE coast of Scotland, a distance of approximately 300 miles