

3. *Attack off the Vaga.*—Owing to the Russian forces failing to hold the Vaga front, part of the convoy came under machine-gun fire off the mouth of that river.

An armed naval launch and coastal motor-boats were at once despatched to counter this, and a Royal Marine detachment under Lieutenant C. M. Sergeant, R.M., was landed. A spirited attack dispersed the enemy machine-gunners, killing three of them, and the safety of the remainder of the convoy was thus secured.

4. *Remainder of the passage down-river.*—This was uneventful save for a delay due to the grounding of several barges in the shallow and intricate channel off Khorobritskoe.

The convoy was covered by C.M.B.'s and an armed launch until reaching H.M.S. "Mantis" (Lieutenant H. T. C. Walker, R.N.), off Siskoe. That ship acted as escort to Ust Pinega, where H.M.S. "Moth" (Lieutenant H. A. Simpson, D.S.C., R.N.) was stationed.

Lyavlya was reached on the 22nd September, and here the line was established until the day of the final evacuation of Archangel.

5. *The final withdrawal.*—On the morning of 27th September the British troops left the Lyavlya front and, escorted by "M.31" and "M.33," arrived at Archangel to embark in the sea transports.

With the exception of these two ships, "M.26" and H.M.S. "Fox," the whole of the River Flotilla had already sailed for England.

The final stages of the evacuation were completed in perfect order.

VIII.—Conclusion.

The flotilla underwent many vicissitudes and was called upon to perform as many and varied services as perhaps have ever fallen to the lot of a Naval force of its size.

2. I owed the success it achieved to the unflinching loyalty and support I received from the Captains, officers and men of the ships I had the honour to command and no less to my excellent Staff, whose work in overcoming all difficulties I cannot praise too highly.

3. Lastly, I beg to record the exceptionally cordial relations which existed between the flotilla and our comrades-in-arms of the Sister Service, especially the Volunteer Brigade, under the command of Brigadier-General L. W. de V. Sadleir-Jackson, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., with which we were most closely associated.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

E. ALTHAM,
Captain, R.N.,

Late Senior Naval Officer,
Archangel River Expedition.

Rear-Admiral

Sir John F. E. Green,
K.C.M.G., C.B.

APPENDIX I.

APPRECIATIONS.

1. Major-General Sir Edmund Ironside, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., expressed his appreciation of the work of the Flotilla in the following message to the Senior Naval Officer, River:—

"Will you accept on behalf of myself and the Army our thanks for the co-operation of the Royal Navy? The Army feels that you have never failed to respond, even in our troubles on land, and that a great deal of our success has been due to the efforts of you and your men.

"Will you please be so good as to give my thanks to all ranks of the Royal Navy?"

2. On the return of H.M.S. "Fox" to England, their Lordships caused the following message to be sent to Captain Edward Altham, R.N.:—

"Their Lordships wish to express to you and the officers and men of the Archangel River Expeditionary Forces their satisfaction at the successful conclusion of the operations and the manner in which they were carried out."

3. The Army Council signified their appreciation of the work of the Navy in North Russia in War Office Letter 0149/8281 (C.I) of 31st October, 1919:—

"I am commanded by the Army Council to request that you will convey to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty the Council's appreciation of the valuable services rendered by the Royal Navy in connection with the operations in and the withdrawal from North Russia. I am to refer particularly to the work of the river expedition on the Dwina, which rendered the greatest possible assistance, not only by the provision of landing parties and heavy artillery support, for which, owing to the nature of the country, the military forces were almost entirely dependent on the monitors and gunboats of the Royal Navy, but also by constant and effective minesweeping, and subsequently by the laying of a minefield, which effectively prevented the enemy's pursuit. The Council recall that the Naval Transport Service was responsible for carrying stores and supplies from Archangel to the front, a distance of 200 miles, for the movement of troops up and down the river, for the transport of the special stores required during the preparations for the Dwina offensive, and for the conveyance of troops down the river. The Council also desire especially to express their appreciation of the highly efficient arrangements made for the embarkation of the troops at Archangel and Murmansk.

"Throughout the campaign and during the evacuation the assistance and co-operation of the Royal Navy has been indispensable, and the Army Council desire to take this opportunity of recording their sense of its efficiency and value. Without it, in the Council's opinion, the success of the operations, and especially of the withdrawal, would have been impossible."

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