rescued by the Navy without loss of life, but with the loss of much of their equipment, though the Navy by the most strenuous exertions managed to save much of it, including even some Bren gun carriers, which was taken to Bodo in a small craft. A duplicate consignment of stores and ammunition was at once despatched to Bodo in small Norwegian fishing boats (" puffers ").

I also appointed Colonel Gubbins to the command of the troops in the Bodo-Mo area in place of Brigadier Fraser, who, as already mentioned, had proceeded to Scapa Flow in *H.M.S. Somali*.

32. On 15th May as the enemy had outflanked the Scots Guards in their positions, South of Mo, Brigadier Gubbins ordered them to withdraw.

On the next day this detachment, which was commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Trappes-Lomax of the Scots Guards, evacuated Mo under pressure. Brigadier Gubbins went to Mo to acquaint himself personally with the situation, and asked for the support of fighter aircraft, of which there were none to be had, excepting those in the carriers of the Fleet Air Arm which could not be made available at that time.

On the same day I despatched the Headquarters of the 24th Guards Brigade (for the third time) and half the South Wales Borderers in destroyers to Bodo which they reached safely on 20th May. They were followed on 21st May by two Companies of the Irish Guards in " puffers ", the journey by " puffer " taking about 24 hours against nine by destroyers.

Two more Companies of the Irish Guards arrived the same day at Bodo in destroyers, accompanied by Colonel Dowler of the General Staff, sent by me to make personal contact with Brigadier Gubbins.

The troops at Bodo were bombed that day by enemy aircraft.

Brigadier Gubbins had now at his disposal the three Battalions of the 24th Guards Brigade, three independent companies, one troop of Field artillery and one troop of Bofors guns; and seemed satisfied with the situation for the moment. There is no doubt, however, that the retardation of the reinforcement of the force by the sinkings of the *Chrobry* and *H.M.S. Effingham* had adversely affected the chances of stopping the enemy in the narrow defile North of Mo.

Enemy air attacks on the long and attenuated line of communications of the Scots Guards at Messingletten were causing anxiety to Brigadier Gubbins, who was also in urgent need of small armed vessels to prevent enemy landings at will in his rear. He informed me that he considered the enemy's comparative freedom to move troops by sea the most serious feature of the situation.

33. On 23rd May I formed the troops in the area into " BODOFORCE " under Brigadier Gubbins and amalgamated his Staff with that of the 24th Guards Brigade.

Brigadier Gubbins asked for reinforcements of infantry, field and anti-aircraft artillery and mechanical transport. Arrangements were made to embark these at Harstad, except as regards the infantry, it being my intention to send him three more independent companies which were due to arrive from England on 30th May. A Company of 25 millimetre French anti-tank guns, borrowed from General Bethouart were also embarked for Bodo.

34. On 23rd May reasonably reliable information was received of the concentration in the Mo-Mosjoen area of about 4,000 Germans with tanks and artillery. This day the Scots Guards withdrew from their position and Brigadier Gubbins decided to relieve them by the Irish Guards. On 24th May the Scots Guards withdrew under orders from Brigadier Gubbins towards Rognan.

On 24th May intimation of His Majesty's Government's intention to evacuate Northern Norway was received, and I at once sent Colonel Dowler of the General Staff to acquaint Brigadier Gubbins of the new situation and to concert with him plans for the early withdrawal of all his troops from Bodo.

35. The operations for the stabilization of the position in the Bodo area were marked throughout by an unrelenting pressure on the enemy's part, both on the ground and in the air, and by a steady resistance by our troops, handicapped as they were by an almost complete absence of any support in the air or any means of hitting back at their enemy.

The evacuation of our troops from Bodo is described in paragraphs 72 to 79.

36. The reinforcement of Bodo and the maintenance of troops in that area, caused certain administrative difficulties.

The *Chrobry* conveying the Irish Guards to Bodo having been sunk, the Irish Guards returned to Harstad by destroyer and had to be completely re-equipped, even down to personal clothing of Officers and men. There were sufficient reserves in the Base to carry out 75 per cent. of this re-equipping, with the exception of certain items of personal clothing which were not available.

After *H.M.S. Effingham* conveying the South Wales Borderers to Bodo had been sunk the South Wales Borderers returned to Harstad minus their equipment—although much was salved from the *Effingham* subsequently. This Battalion had to be re-equipped almost completely as they were required at once. Reserve stocks were not sufficient to allow of this and equipment had to be withdrawn from Base Units. Even then the Battalion could not be completed with all items. The chief deficiencies were Mortars, Signalling equipment, Web equipment, Revolvers, Field Glasses, Compasses and Bren guns (these were, however, made up from other sources).

There were considerable difficulties in supplying " BODOFORCE ". Destroyers could take personnel but very small quantities of stores. Puffers could take stores but no guns or vehicles, and had to have guards on board. Even then the reliability of the civilian crews was doubtful. There was only one coastal steamer which was capable of carrying guns and vehicles and this was in constant demand in the Harstad area. Any boat larger than a puffer had to proceed with Naval escort, which was not always available at the time required. This problem of supplying " BODOFORCE " was never solved satisfactorily before the evacuation.

The Establishment of the Air Component.

37. On 13th May the Germans had a powerful air force in Southern Norway and several excellent air bases from which to operate it. We,