

December 30th 1946.

The Report From Lerken , which was written on return after the mission, needs an addition, which produces ~~quite an interesting~~ background for the mission itself.

In January 1942 , when I was working in a Polish workshop on the development of a radio set more suitable for clandestine work than those used at the time, it was decided that I would under no circumstances go back to Norway, as mostly all the others in the original "Skylark B " group had been arrested and had blamed most things to me, who had been lucky enough to escape through the gestapo-screen that surrounded our house.

One day I was called up to the Admiralty. There I was told by ~~a most~~ ^{an} impressive gathering of people that the Home Fleet had some battle ships in the North Sea, ~~but~~ ^{that} a transfer of naval strength to the Mediterreanean was highly desirable,

Such a move would ~~only~~ be feasible if one with reasonable certainty could know when the bigger German naval units e.g. the Tirpitz moved out of the Trondheim Fjord.

Knowing the decision to keep me in England, I was confused about the reason for telling me this, but as the safety of a few men seemed to be outweighed in importance compared to movement of substantial naval units, I suggested taking this job - and moved off by air some 12 hours later.

This was the Lerken expedition

Briefly, the events preceeding the Lerken expedition, were:

Sverre Midtskou and Eric Welle-Strand who had achieved contact with the intelligence service in England, were landed by submarine on the west coast in 1940.

Midtskou went to Oslo , Welle Strand to Trondheim, where the Skylark B group started to operate under his direction.

Radio contact was at first not achieved, but after Sverre had been to England again, we obtained contact, and about 150 messages were sent (on the same frequency and call signs) - including Naval intelligence and initial intelligence about Heavy Water production.

In September 1941, the Skylark Group was completely broken up by the Gestapo, who detected the radio station by D/F methods.

Most of the people involved, were arrested, except Knut Haukelid and myself. Knut belonged originally to Sverre Midtskou's team,

Militærhistorisk Samling Gausdal

while Egil Reksten and I had been leading the Trondheim Team after Welle-Strand's departure to Sweden.

Haukelid escaped in the mountains, while I escaped from my my home at Vettakollen. The Gestapo had surrounded the house so some shooting was unavoidable. (Sep. 12th 1941)

After escape through Sweden to England, Haukelid took up work with the S.O.E. , while Einar Johansen who had escaped from Trondheim, and I continued with the intelligence group.

This was the beginning of the small unit including also Hugo Munthe-Kaas , Kristian Fougner , and not least Torstein Pettersen , who was awarded the DSO for his work in connection with "nursing" the Tirpitz, and sending the intelligence that contributed essentially to the ultimate sinking of that battleship.
