OPERATION HAUDEGEN

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It has been with great interest that I have read your two articles on Operation Haudegen. I did not meet its leader Dr William Dege but we did correspond, I am glad, before his death when he told me of his high regard for the maps drawn particularly by John Wright and Archie Dunlop Mackenzie during the Oxford 1935/36 Expedition to North East Land.

Today our two countries are members of NATO and are trusted allies. Fortyfive years ago tragically we were opposed in a bitter and terrible war. The Arctic was at that time of special significance to Germany both in relation to the damage which could be inflicted by U boat and aircraft from occupied north Norway upon the fragile and dangerous allies' supply route to north Russia, and also because of Germany's vital need of weather information.

Any allied operation, especially in the Svalbard and the Barents Sea, was at extreme range in an area which the Germans should have dominated in the air, and had they been less timid in the use of their capital ships, also at sea certainly in the earlier years.

As it happened imagination and determined operations by a small number of Norwegians on land, supported by outstanding long range Catalina operations by Coastal Command and by ships of the Royal Navy, hampered and at times thwarted the enemy's plans.

Automatic stations were set up instead of manned units and not always successfully. When the latter were essential their siting had to be increasingly remote involving as in Haudegen extensive logistic support by U boat and aircraft, when the need for both in other theatres was increasingly pressing.

In no way would I detract from the achievement of Haudegen but its record would be incomplete if there was no mention of what allied forces in the air, on land and at sea were doing at extreme range to make German operations rather more hazardous than they might otherwise have been.