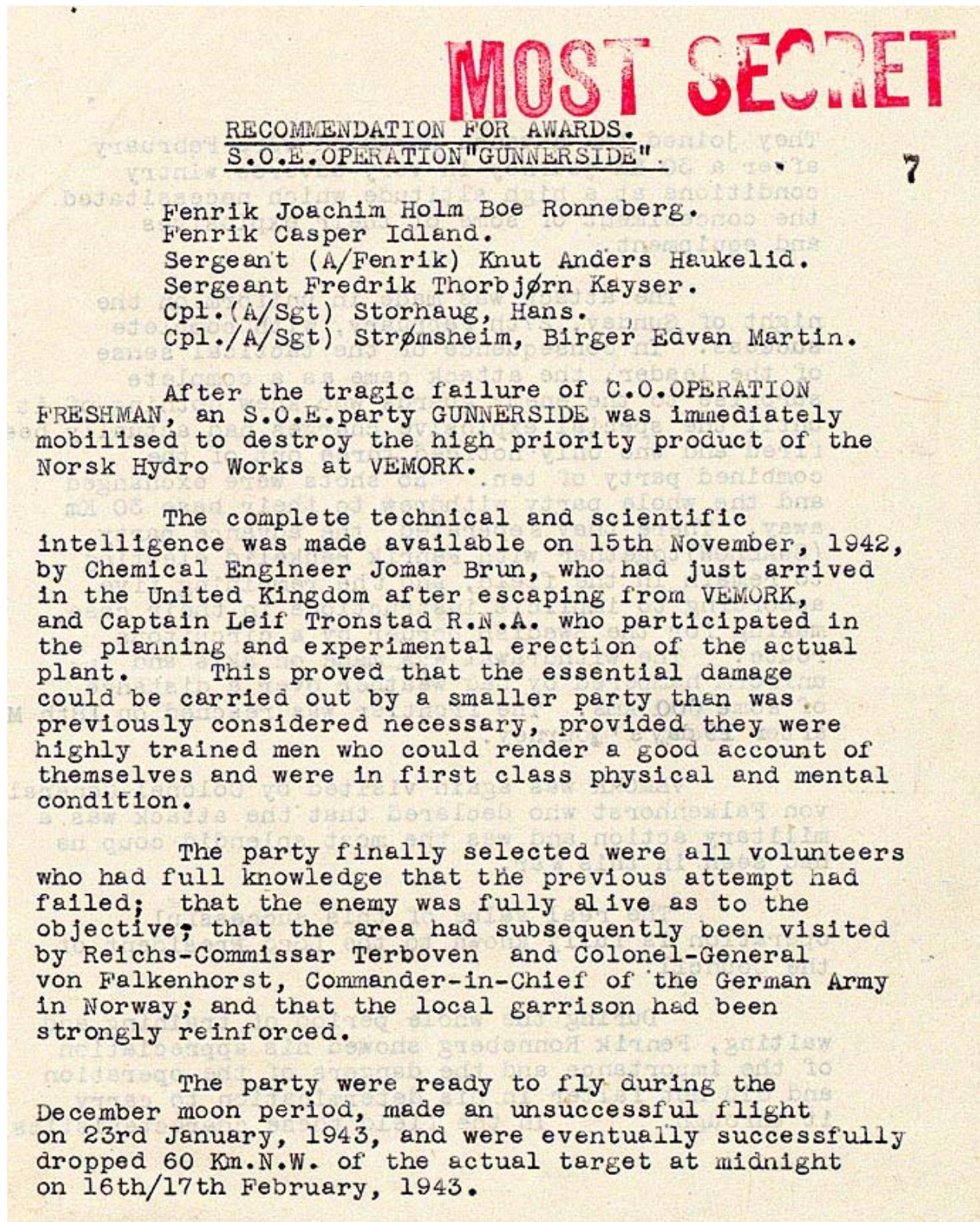


WESTERN EUROPE 1939-1945: RESISTANCE AND SOE

Recommendations for awards for the members of an SOE operation in Norway, February 1943

Catalogue ref: HS 2/185



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What is this source?

This source is part of a recommendation for medals to be awarded to a number of SOE agents for a mission they carried out in Norway.

Many SOE agents were awarded for their actions in the war. They faced terrible dangers and could be treated as spies if captured.

What's the background to this source?

After invading Poland, Hitler's forces invaded Denmark and Norway. Norway was especially important to Hitler. It had aircraft and submarine bases that could be used to attack ships supplying Britain from North America. Norway also had important natural resources, such as timber. Norway also had efficient hydroelectric power plants to generate electricity.

The Norwegians resisted with British help when Germany invaded in April 1940. However, the British were defeated and Norway surrendered in June 1940. Despite this, there was an important underground resistance movement in Norway. This movement had strong links with British intelligence and received supplies and equipment throughout the war.

It's worth knowing that...

As well as resources, Norway had technology as well. The Germans used bases and facilities in Norway to research and develop new weapons and equipment.

One of the German research facilities was involved in the early stages of the German programme to develop a nuclear bomb. However, Hitler cancelled this project.

What do we learn about SOE from this source?

1. Where did the SOE get its information about the Vemork works?
2. Why were the agents involved in Operation Gunnerside Norwegian?
3. In what ways does Operation Gunnerside show the bravery of these agents?
4. What does this source tell you about SOE activities?