

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940*

*Weserubung Nord Operasyonu:
Norveç'in Almanya Tarafından İşgal Edilmesi, 1940*

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Abstract

Weserübung Nord is the codename of the Campaign in Norway, Germans' second operation after Poland in the Second World War. Characteristic of the campaign is Germans conducted a high risk combined air-sea-land, an overseas operation despite the superiority of the Royal Navy, and they succeeded. Campaign was started seaborne and airborne operations on the key points in Norway, and was continued coastal defense and ground offensive. Allies tried to retrieve the key points; however, they were overwhelmed by the German operation plan. While the campaign was going on, the German general offensive on France and the Benelux hampered the Allied efforts in Norway. In this article, first chain of events is explained, after that it is analyzed and emphasized the significance of the Operation Weserübung Nord.

Keywords: Second World War, Operation Weserübung, Norway, Narvik, 1940.

Öz

Weserübung Nord, İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Almanların Polonya'dan sonra başlattıkları ikinci harekât olan Norveç Seferi'nin kod adıdır. Seferin özelliği Almanların, İngiliz Kraliyet Deniz Kuvvetlerinin üstünlüğüne rağmen, yüksek riskli bir combine hava-kara-deniz harekâtını deniz aşırı icra etmeleri ve başarıya ulaşmaları olmuştur. Sefer Norveç'teki anahtar noktalara yapılan denizden çıkartma ve hava indirme hareketleriyle başlamış, sonrasında kıyıda savunma ve karadan taarruz şeklinde sürdürülmüştür. Müttefikler karşı-çıkartmalarla anahtar noktaları geri almaya çalışmış olsalar da Almanların harekât planının önüne geçememişlerdir. Sefer devam ederken, Almanların Fransa ve Benelüks ülkelerine genel taarruzu, Norveç'teki Müttefik çabalarını baltalamıştır. Bu makalede önce bu olaylar zinciri anlatılmış, ardından da analiz yapılarak, Weserübung Nord harekâtının önemi vurgulanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İkinci Dünya Savaşı, Weserübung Harekâtı, Norveç, Narvik, 1940.

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INTRODUCTION

Germans forced the climate to win for many times during the Second World War. Overrunning Denmark and jumping to Norway they carried through their first overseas campaign of the war. Operation had been coded "Weserübung"¹ and conducted in two parts. First was the Operation Weserübung Süd (Weser Exercise South), invasion of Denmark; and the second was the Operation Weserübung Nord (Weser Exercise North), invasion of Norway. Lieutenant-General Nikolaus von Falkenhorst was put in charge of the newly-formed Army Group XXI for the invasion, planned the Weserübung on 21 February; preparations went on until the beginning of April. On 9 April, the German troops overran Denmark in a few hours, in order to secure the line of communication with Norway, simultaneously started landings on Norway. Combined forces of the Luftwaffe² and the Kriegsmarine³ succeeded airborne and seaborne landings. Perhaps, the most honor of the operation was belonged to the Fallschirmjaeger⁴ battalions, mostly affected the course of the campaign at some critical moments and points.

This article is for keeping the Second World War researchers informed about how the invasion of Norway progressed and its importance. Among the actors as warring states; the Germans', the Allies' and the Norwegians' views are compared. After the developments are given chronologically, an analysis section is taking part and significance of the operation is discussed.

1 Also called Operation "Weser Crossing North" or Operation "W".

2 *Luftwaffe*: German Air Forces.

3 *Kriegsmarine*: German Naval Forces.

4 *Fallschirmjaeger*: German parachute infantry.

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

BACKGROUND

Norway was a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system. Population was about 3.000.000. Norway was neutral, trusted to her edged geography in Europe, as well as an automatic protection of the British sea power. Norwegian economy was heavily depended on the external trade, importing fisheries, mines and forestry, and had world's fourth largest and most modern merchant navy.⁵

Norway was very important for both of the Germans and the Allies in late 1930s. Iron ore traffic in Scandinavia was dense around Narvik, which had a port never be covered ice for twelve months⁶ was an output port of the Swedish Gaellivere iron fields in Northern Norway. Iron ore was very important for the newborn German military industry producing modern war machines. In 1938, Germany had exported % 52.1 of its iron ore from Sweden and % 6.5 from Norway,⁷ so that the Allied politicians concerned on the region. Anglo-French politicians considered Norway as not only an abscess for Germany, but also the road to Finland where the Finnish successfully struggled, but had a fragile defense against the Soviet offensive by 30 November 1939.⁸

Second World War broke out in Poland; however, its political effects quickly environed the continent. In the northwestern corner of Europe, Norway became a question in a very close time. First the British, then the German began to play on Norway. Germany guaranteed to protect

5 I.C.B. Dear, *The Oxford Companion to World War Two*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2001, p. 638.

6 Marc Arnold-Foster, *Savaşın Dünyası*, E Yayınları, İstanbul 1975, p. 65.

7 AJP Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe*, Penguin Books, London 1991, p. 158.

8 Russo-Finnish War had happened between 30 November 1939 and 12 March 1940. During the war Allies had considered military support to Finland via Norway and Sweden because Germany had closed the Baltic. Their plans could not have been activated in time.

the entirety of Norway, with a condition against the violation by a third state on 2 September 1939. On 19 September, an ultimatum of the British Naval Ministry was given to prevent the ore transportation to Germany, over Norway. When the Russo-Finnish War started on 30 November, the Norwegian geopolitics became more of an issue for the Allies. On 11 December, Vidkun Quisling, a pro-Nazi ex-defense minister of Norway, whom Grand Admiral Erich Raeder, C-in-C of the Kriegsmarine, linked with, warned Hitler of the British placements in Norway. Hitler ordered to prepare a northern feasibility to protect the non-belligerency of Norway on 14 December.

On 16 December 1939, the British Admiralty gave the second ultimatum to prevent the ore transportation to Germany, over Norway. On 16 January 1940, the Allies started to prepare for an operation on Scandinavia. Germans were tracing the British' steps, so that the OKW⁹ started deployment plans for the Operation Weserübung, as a German response to the Allied interests on Norway on 27 January 1940. A decision was made of the Allied War Council on sending 3-4 divisions to Narvik, for military support to Finland and invasion of the Swedish Kiruna-Gällivare mines on 5 February 1940.

In the middle of February, the "Altmark" incident made the invasion certain for the German interests, when the British raid on the German support ship Altmark in the Norwegian waters on 16 February 1940. Altmark was carrying 299 British prisoners transferred from the German pocket battleship Graf Spee along with her survivors. Graf Spee had to sink herself in the Battle of the River Plate on 17 December 1939, after she had been cornered by a superior British task force. Altmark evaded the British who pursued her from the South Atlantic to the Norwegian Sea, finally arrived at the Norwegian waters. Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, was decisive to save the captives; ordered the destroyer

⁹ OKW: Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, German High Command.

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

“Cossack” violate the Norwegian territorial waters to save them.¹⁰ Two Norwegian MTBs watched the British violation, hesitated to oppose.¹¹ Norwegian government protested the British. On the other hand, on 21 February, French Prime Minister Edouard Daladier asked for an immediate invasion of the Norwegian ports to show the incident as a pretext.¹² C-in-C of the French Army Maurice Gamelin cited one of their goals was to incite the Germans against Norway.¹³ This is logical. If the war extended to the high seas, the British naval superiority could keep some of the German power busy away from the French borders. Therefore, the French never hesitated to throw a minor country into the fire for her own interest, as did to Poland.

HOW NORWAY BECAME A GERMAN ISSUE?

By the Norwegian issue became significant in Hitler’s eyes, he had mistrusted to the Norwegians who did nothing but protest. In the heat of the moment, on 21 February, Hitler commissioned Falkenhorst for the Operation Weserübung. Hitler explained his own operation plan in his directive on 1 March, and remarked the initial reason for the campaign: “This operation should prevent British encroachment on Scandinavia and the Baltic, further it should guarantee our ore base in Sweden and give our Navy and Air Force a wider start-line against Britain.” In his directive, he also emphasized that “The numerical weakness will be balanced by daring actions and surprise execution”.¹⁴

Hitler still did not order to launch of the Weserübung, nevertheless he accepted to assign eight divisions for the operation on 7 March.¹⁵ Therefore, the Allies threw Norway to the Germans with their activities

10 Peter Calvocoressi vd., *The Penguin History of the Second World War*, Penguin Books, London 1999, p. 119-120.

11 Basil Henry Liddell Hart, *II. Dünya Savaşı Tarihi Cilt I*, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul 1998, p. 63.

12 Hart, *op.cit.*, p. 64.

13 Hart, *op.cit.*, p. 65.

14 *Fuehrer Conferences on Naval Affairs 1939-1945*, Chatham Publishing, London 2005, p. 83.

15 John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Pimlico, London 1997, p. 37.

in the first half of March. Germans received information of the British submarines in the western Norwegian waters, on 13 March.¹⁶ Next day, German signal troops intercepted the Allied orders of being ready to sail. British soldiers' training had already been updated with the adaptation of ice and snow in February.¹⁷ On the 15th, a few French officers arrived at Bergen, Norway. By the Russo-Finnish War ended on the 13th, the Allied policy towards Norway focused on only the iron ore traffic, but it did not sag. Now, the British warships were not hesitating to shell warning shots to the German freighters carrying iron.¹⁸ Abwehr¹⁹ and Germany's fifth column servers in the Scandinavian countries were reporting at least most of the Allies' actions around and in Norway. According to Raeder's report to Hitler in a meeting in the afternoon on 26 March 1940, the British occupation of Norway was imminent, on the data compiled of different sources of the German naval intelligence.²⁰

British geostrategic position had blocked Germany during the First World War. For the second war, the Germans had to control the North Sea to penetrate renewing blockage, beside this it was also necessary for further U-boat²¹ campaigns. Norway and Denmark were vital for Germany both to secure iron ore import and to maintain hegemony in the Baltic as well as her further ambitions protrude to the Atlantic. By this way, both sides needed the Norwegian naval bases for different aims. Vice Admiral Karl Dönitz, Chief of the U-boat Fleet, had sent a memo to the operations staff of the Kriegsmarine, argued that Trondheim could be an

16 Liddell Hart, *op.cit.*, p. 64.

17 Martin Gilbert, *Second World War*, Phoenix Press, London 2000, p. 45-46.

18 William L. Shirer, *Berlin Diary*, Galahad Books, New York 1995, p. 307-309.

19 German military intelligence service.

20 "Fuehrer Conferences on...", *op. cit.*, p. 87.

21 U-Boat: *Unterseeboot*, German submarines.

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

ideal location for his U-boats.²² Grand Admiral Erich Raeder, C-in-C of the Kriegsmarine, was a vigorous advocate of intervention in Norway, had advised Hitler acquiring naval bases in Trondheim in October 1939, while Hitler had been focused on only France.²³

Although Hitler had been concentrated on revising the plans of the Western Front, the Allied activities forced him to immediately secure the north, brought an unwillingness operation to both Hitler to divide the power of the Wehrmacht.²⁴ Hitler commissioned Falkenhorst who had introduced with arctic warfare, served in Finland in 1918, but he did not know anything about Norway. When Hitler notified Reichsmarschall Herman Göring, Chief of the Luftwaffe; Colonel-General Walter von Brauchitsch, C-in-C of the OKH²⁵; and Lieutenant-General Franz Halder, Chief of the General Staff of the OKH about the operation; they were informed later than it had been planned. Weserübung had to be secretly prepared to avoid breaking the focus of the German armies all concerned on penetration of the French Maginot Line.

There were limited numbers of soldiers could be commissioned for the Weserübung, however among them elite units as of the paratroopers and the mountain troops could be effectively use as vanguards. On the other hand, Germans did not ignore to equip their infantry with motorized vehicles and armored detachments comparing to other early campaigns. Only armored unit deployed for the Weserübung was in the battalion level, Pz. Abt. 40,²⁶ built up with mixing different types of limited quantity

22 James S. Corum, "The German Campaign in Norway 1940 as A Joint Operation", *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 21(4), 1998, p. 50-57.

23 Hart, *op.cit.*, p. 61.

24 *Wehrmacht*: German Armed Forces.

25 *Obekommando des Heeres*: Supreme Command of the German Ground Forces.

26 Pz. Abt.: *Panzer Abteilung*, German armoured battalion.

panzers, some were in limited use in service. Germans could not deploy more armor to the Weserübung before the strategic result taken in France, because the Anglo-French forces had more capable tanks in both quality and quantity than the Germans had.

Kriegsmarine had to go beyond her limits in Norway, because invasion of the western coasts of Norway was very far to the German heartland as well as it was widely open to the British Fleet's approach in bound, which had aircraft carriers. Germans tried to gain on with major reconnaissance effort over the waters west of Norway.²⁷ Luftwaffe managed to keep in step the British fleet. Beside this, success of the German seaborne operations could be possible by well-escorted and quick landings. However, the German battleships were not able to cover the German transports in the North Sea longer, because Royal Navy was strong that the aircraft carriers alone could directly block naval operations. Therefore, Göring warned Raeder about coming shortages of supply in May, and asked him the Kriegsmarine ease the consumption of the diesel oil.²⁸ British fighters could have done more sorties from the aircraft carriers, so they had more time to engage the German aircraft. On the other hand, German superior fighters' range was not enough to join initial battles. They primarily had to deploy to the Norwegian airfields which had to be capitulated by the German paratroopers, as quick as possible.

The most difficult mission had been given to the paratroopers. If they would have been failed to capture the Norwegian airfields in the beginning, further deployment of air units also were out of the question and all long-range fighters would be lost, because the German fighters had very limited fuel to conduct this operation. Return to the Danish and the German airfields were not an option.

²⁷ E. R. Hooton, *Phoenix Triumphant The Rise and Rise of the Luftwaffe*, Brockhampton Press, Leicester 1999, p. 226.

²⁸ "Fuehrer Conferences...", *op.cit.*, p. 89.

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

Germans knew that airborne and seaborne landings had to be conducted simultaneously to seize initial objectives without delay. According to the operation plan, three divisions would depart at the beginning to capture five major ports in Oslo, Stavanger, Bergen, Trondheim and Narvik under the cover of the Kriegsmarine. There was also a sixth, 150-men-strength small group to land on Egersund. German plan was very risky because of insufficient power of the Kriegsmarine, however, the Germans found a trick to realize the operation. German troops embarked to the merchant ships like civilians, drew near the Norwegian fjords.²⁹ Additionally, the Germans sent their two battleships, Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, as decoys to hold the British Home Fleet as far as possible from northwestern landing zones. To conduct landings, six groups were prepared:

Group 1: Ten destroyers, two tankers and three freighters would disembark 2.000 men of the 139th Regiment of Major-General Eduard Dietl's 3rd *Gebirgsjäger*³⁰ Division at Narvik,

Group 2: Heavy Cruiser Hipper, four destroyers, two tankers and three freighters would disembark 1.700 men of the 138th Regiment of the 3rd *Gebirgsjäger* Division at Trondheim,

Group 3: Light cruisers Köln and Königsberg, two auxiliaries, one tanker, three torpedo-boats and five MBTs³¹ would disembark the 159th Regiment's 1.900 men and the 193rd Regiment's 2.500 men as the parts of Brigade-General Hermann Tittel's 69th Infantry Division, at Bergen and Stavanger,

²⁹ Evrim Bilgisever, *Savaş ve Hile*, Işık Yayınları, İstanbul 1992, p. 69.

³⁰ *Gebirgsjäger*: Mountain troops.

³¹ MTB: Motor Torpedo Boat.

Group 4: Light cruiser Karlsruhe, one Auxiliary (Tsingtau), three torpedo-boats and seven MTBs would disembark 1.100 men of the 310th Regiment of Brigade-General Erwin Engelbrecht's 163rd Division at Kristiansand and Arendal.

There were ten freighters dispersed between the third and fourth groups.

Group 5: 3.000 men of the 324th Regiment of the 163rd Division by the support of heavy cruiser Blücher and the pocket-battleship Lützow would capture the capital, Oslo.

Group 6: Four minesweepers would disembark 150 men at Egersund.

Between 11 and 14 April, Brigade-General Kurt Woytasch's 181st Infantry Division, Brigade-General Richard Pellengahr's 196th Infantry Division, last regiments of the 69th and 163rd Divisions, Pz. Abt. 40, 3rd AA, 3rd MG and Göring Parachute Battalion arrived. Later, Brigade-General Max Horn's 214th Infantry Division sent to Stavanger on 17 April and Major-General Valentine Feurstein's 2nd *Gebirgsjäger* Division sent to Trondheim in the beginning of May. *Luftwaffe's Fliegerkorps X* (10th Air Corps) joined the campaign under Major-General Hans Ferdinand Geisler's command, combined of 30 Bf-109s, 70 Bf-110s, 290 He-111s, 40Ju-87s, 500 Ju-52s, 70 Reconnaissance and Coastal Aircraft.³² *Luftwaffe* had great tasks, to keep the sea route between Germany and Norway open, to prevent Royal Navy attack the vital German ports in the south, to prevent Allied ports of debarkation and to suppress the enemy positions.³³ Just before the operation, the *Luftwaffe* heavily bombed the important British naval base Scapa Flow at night of 8-9 April.³⁴ Bergen was 8-9 hours away from Scapa Flow.³⁵

32 Samuel W. Mitcham, Jr, *Eagles of the Third Reich*, Presidio, Novata 1997, p. 78.

33 Shirer, *op.cit.*, p. 326-327.

34 J. F. C. Fuller, *The Second World War*, Himalayan Books, New Delhi 2002, p. 58.

35 Edward N. Peterson, *An Analytical History of World War II Volume 1*, New York 1995 p. 183.

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

Luftwaffe was initially responsible to capture Stavanger with an airborne operation. Then the German paratroopers would go to finish battles in Oslo. By the capitulation of key ports and airfields, German troops could finish the last Norwegian resistance and secure the rural. Failure of the paratroopers could give the way to quick deployment of the British fighter squadrons; means the British rule on the Norwegian skies.

German plan was wise, but very risky. To the German side, there was just a thin curtain between total victory and total defeat. This was a new kind of war, with new instruments and strange tactics in which the paratroopers became an important part of an overseas invasion.

EARLY ACTIONS

On the other side, the Allied plans to invade Norway under cover of the support to the Finnish had been already fresh. Allies demanded Norway and Sweden to allow the Allied troops which were ready to move Finland on 11 March; however, it was too late. Finland surrendered on the 12th. Nevertheless, War Minister Winston Churchill thought another plan called "Wilfred" which was a mine laying operation by two naval groups in the Norwegian waters, off Bud and Stadtlandet. "R 4", an extension of the Wilfred included the Allied landings to the Norwegian coasts, as a quick response to a possible German invasion. On 28 March, the Anglo-French Supreme War Council decided to lay mines along the Norwegian waters on 5 April, but they postponed it to the 8th.

Germans estimated an Allied invasion follow the mine-laying operations.³⁶ Landings were also postponed depended on another issue on mining of the Rhine, in which the French and the British disagreed, despite the Anglo-French intelligence heard about existence of the

³⁶ "Fuehrer Conferenses...", *op.cit.*, p. 93.

German troops in the merchant ships in the first week of April.³⁷ British military intelligence was watching the ports and wharves as well as the seas collected early data indicated the German activity for a landing, on 3-5 April.³⁸

Raeder submitted the completed plans of the Navy to Hitler on 1 April.³⁹ Next day, Hitler ordered to launch the Operation Weserübung on 9 April. German heavy forces sailed to the sea on the same day and the supply ships for the U-boats followed them on 5 April. In the early hours of April 3, three German supply ships camouflaged as colliers began their voyage to Narvik, about 1.000 miles, carrying coal covered artillery and ammunition. There were 2.000 soldiers had embarked on ten destroyers.⁴⁰ Kriegsmarine ordered the U-boat commanders open their order envelopes for the "Operation Hartmut", the U-boat operation during the Weserübung.⁴¹ Other vessels left their ports on 7 April.

British Expeditionary Forces embarked and the British minelayers also sailed to the sea on 7 April and at the same day, a British aircraft spotted strong German naval forces crossing the Skagerrak strait at 01.25 p.m. British Home Fleet in Scapa Flow immediately sailed at 07.30 p.m. to counter the German fleet. Next day, British destroyer Glowworm left the task force to search someone fell to the sea, and coincidentally encountered the German battle cruiser Hipper, off Trondheim. Had not any opportunity to evade the cruiser, the Glowworm headed towards and rammed the Hipper at full speed and sank. Her sink was at a cost of badly damage on the Hipper which took 528t of water from a 30-meter-length

37 Hart, *op.cit.*, p. 65.

38 Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p. 52-53.

39 "Fuehrer Conferences...", *op.cit.*, p. 90.

40 Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p. 52.

41 Operation Hartmut is the codename of the U-Boat operations during the campaign in Norway.

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

hole.⁴² At the same day, the Polish submarine Orzel torpedoed the German transport Rio de Janeiro. Survived German soldiers did not conceal they were going to Bergen to protect Norway against the British invasion, but the Norwegian government did not do anything. British minelayers laid mines along the Norwegian coasts on 8 April. British announced they mined Norwegian territorial waters in order to stop the German iron ships coming down from Narvik. Germans responded them confidently, they knew how to react.⁴³ Because the Germans had sent their ships before the British operation, the British counter-measure was too late. Thus defense of Norway had been fallen on the Norwegians' shoulders alone at the beginning.

Norwegian Armed Forces had six divisions and had 56.000 personnel on full mobilization. Royal Norwegian Navy had four new escort destroyers, and a new minelayer, two large but outmoded coastal defence vessels, three small pre-1918 destroyers, and about 40 smaller vessels, to protect the longest coastline in Europe. There were partially manned coastal forts and a small naval air force. Navy's total mobilization power was 5.000, at the end of 1939. Army air force had only 16 modern aircraft of all about 40, while the naval air had six modern and 20 older aircraft.⁴⁴

INVASION

On 9 April, the German seaborne and airborne landings began. Overrunning Denmark, the German forces started landings on the Norwegian coasts. In the Narvik sector, the British battleship Warspite under Admiral William Whitworth sighted the German battleships Gneisenau and the Scharnhorst

42 Richard Humble, *Hitler'in Açıkdeniz Filosu*, Baskan Yayınları, İstanbul 1976, p. 85; Hipper lied four degrees on starboard, but continued her voyage. Commander of the Glowworm, Lieutenant Colonel G. Broadmead Roope awarded Victoria Cross by his courage, after his death.

43 Shirer, *op.cit.*, p. 310.

44 Dear, *op.cit.*, p. 640.

under Rear Admiral Günther Lütjens, 80 km off Narvik, in the morning and began to pursuit. Lütjens succeeded to take the Warspite far to the German amphibious forces on their way to Narvik.

After a short shelling, the Renown seriously damaged the Gneisenau by three 380 mm shells, silenced her fire extinguisher system and 280 mm frontal turret.⁴⁵ Her fire-control system and frontal turret was out of action. However, the German battleships escaped under intensive fog. Successes of Lütjens brought Commodore Paul Bonte's 10 destroyers overrun the Norwegian coastal guards Eisvold & Norge to land on, thus the German task force easily captured Narvik. In the Trondheim sector, the Hipper silenced the only Norwegian coastal gun opened fire. Capitulation of Trondheim was not difficult to the Hipper and four destroyers. However, there was a greater resistance in Bergen, where artillery training ship Bremse and light cruiser Königsberg were damaged by the Norwegian coastal guns.

Had panicked when they received the information of the success of the German seaborne operations, the Admiralty ordered every warship join the British Home Fleet under Admiral Sir Charles Forbes.⁴⁶ This brought the Home Fleet gathered as a large target of the Luftwaffe. After a German reconnaissance aircraft spotted Forbes' force off Bergen at 10.30, 41 He-111s⁴⁷ and 47 Ju-88s⁴⁸ attacked the British battleships over three hours.⁴⁹ Battleship Rodney was hit by a bomb, but not damaged. Cruisers Devonshire, Southampton and Glasgow were also hit and destroyer Gurkha sunk.

There was also an expectable development occurred; pro-German Vidkun Quisling declared himself as the new Prime Minister of Norway. On the evening of 9 April, Quisling attempted a coup d'état, announced

⁴⁵ Humble, *op.cit.*, p. 86.

⁴⁶ Stephen Roskill, *The Navy at War 1939-1945*, Wordsworth, Hertfordshire 1998, p. 63.

⁴⁷ A twin-engine German medium bomber.

⁴⁸ A twin-engine German multi-role aircraft.

⁴⁹ Cajus Bekker, *4000 Metreden Hücüm*, çev. Samih Tiryakioğlu, Baskan Yayınları, İstanbul 1975, p. 132.

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

formation of a government of national unity, however his attempt backfired and the Norwegian resistance stiffened much.⁵⁰ Norwegian Army refused Quisling's submission to the Germans and went on fighting, in a case, four busses of German troops trapped and fusilladed, where 200 Germans killed.⁵¹ Germans learned Quisling was powerless and fired him from his post three days after his declaration.⁵²

When the invasion began, the Allied leaders were totally surprised. British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain informed the cabinet about the German landings, but he had doubt about the truth, because nobody expected the Germans dare to land on very far as Trondheim and Narvik.⁵³

GERMAN AIRBORNE AND SEABORNE LANDINGS

A group of twelve Ju-52s⁵⁴ carrying 120 paratroopers under Lieutenant Baron von Brandis headed Stavanger-Sola airfield.⁵⁵ One Ju-52 lost its way due to heavy fog over Skaggerak and returned to Denmark. Other 11 Ju-52s passed over the fog and dropped the paratroopers near Sola. Capitulation of the Sola Airfield was not very difficult to them, although they were seriously lacked of air support. Air support from Sola quickly maintained, and the third naval assault to Kristiansand accomplished after the first two were defeated by shore batteries. At noon, both Arendal and Kristiansand were captured. Thanks to the capitulation of the Stavanger aerodrome, 180 Ju-52s touched down Sola by the evening.⁵⁶ Later, this number increased to 250 bringing 5.000 troops of the 69th Division. Landing on Egersund was also easily and successfully completed without any resistance.

50 Dear, *op.cit.*, p. 639.

51 Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p. 54.

52 Peterson, *op.cit.*, p. 185-186.

53 Hart, *op.cit.*, p. 59.

54 A tri-motor German transport aircraft.

55 Bekker, *op.cit.*, p. 128-130.

56 John Terraine, *The Right of the Line*, Wordsworth Editions, Hertfordshire 1997, p. 115.

In the first day, only events around Oslo threatened the German operation. In Oslo fiord, at Drobak crossing, battle cruiser Blücher had been heavily damaged by two 280 mm shells of old Norwegian coastal guns of Oskarborg Fortress on Kalholmen Island. Blücher tried to creep out of range, but was sunk by two torpedoes at 07.23. Most of the members of the 163rd Infantry Division's HQ, including division Engelbrecht, Gestapo officers, and the administrative personnel intended for the military government of Norway, swam to the land and capitulated by the Norwegian troops. This forced heavy cruiser Lützow and other vessels to withdraw. German troops landed on 10 km away in the fiord.

Raid on the Fornebu Airfield was also very near to cancel due to heavy fog over Skaggerak that 29 Ju-52s of the first group carrying the paratroopers headed back to Germany. Luftwaffe Lieutenant-General Hans-Ferdinand Geisler, commander of the Fliegerkorps X, called all Ju-52s back, but leader of the second group, Hauptmann Richard Wagner ignored his order continued, but his aircraft was raked. Because there were a few Bf-110s⁵⁷ fighting with the Norwegians were nearly out of fuel, they had to land on the Fornebu, before its capitulation with a few Ju-52s continued their way. Strangely, Fornebu was secured by chance, as well as the courage of the Bf-110s' crews from the first flotilla of JG-76⁵⁸ and Wagner's group.⁵⁹

After the capitulation of Fornebu, Ju-52s brought 3.000 soldiers of the 163rd Division near Oslo. This eased the end of the resistance in the capital. Nevertheless, postponement of an early capitulation gave enough time to King Haakon VII and the Norwegian government to flee inner

57 A twin-engine German heavy fighter.

58 JG-76: *Jagdgeschwader 76*, German 76th Fighter Wing.

59 Bekker, *op.cit.*, p. 118-121.

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

Norway, along with the treasury of state. On April 10, German paratroopers from Fornebu captured Oslo. Despite their limited numbers, German paratroopers marched into the city and felt the residents captured, they did not resist.

Same day, the British fleet tried to seize power by the naval attacks. After landing troops, light cruiser Karlsruhe was torpedoed by the British submarine Truant. Another British submarine Spearfish also torpedoed and heavily damaged the Lützow. After a British reconnaissance aircraft reported the Königsberg's presence at Bergen, 15 Skua⁶⁰ dive-bombers taking off the British aircraft carrier Ark Royal, hit the Königsberg's moorings with three 500 lb bombs, and the Königsberg became the first battleship sunk by the dive-bombers.⁶¹ British aircraft carrier Furious also attacked Trondheim, but it did not make a great effect. That day, the British also landed on Faroe Islands. Same day, off Stavanger, U-4 under 1st Lieutenant Hans-Peter Hinsch sank the British submarine Thistle.

Highlight of the *Weserübung* occurred at Narvik. After 2.000-strength German forces captured the city, the British tried to cut their supply routes from the sea, to ease a counter-landing. British reaction to enter the fiord through Narvik brought the first naval battle, in which the German destroyers repelled the British attack. British had underestimated the number of German destroyers according to their information taken from a Norwegian post out of Narvik, so that they had attacked with only five destroyers against the Germans' 10.

60 A carrier-based, single-engine British dive-bomber.

61 Len Deighton, *Blitzkrieg*, Jonathan Cape, London 1993, p. 82.

Hipper reached the Gneisenau and the Scharnhorst on their back route. Finally, they reached Wilhelmshaven in safety. Their temporary absence eased the British make a new plan to attack Narvik. Germans also lost the troopship Alster, carrying motorized vehicles. British air forces sank an ammunition ship, too.

British bombers attacked the German warships and other vessels along with the airfields, harbors and towns during the campaign, in some situation the bad weather was disincensive. British bomber losses were not light. In a case, on the southern sector, RAF's 12 Hampdens⁶² attacked a warship in Kristiansand, were caught by the German fighters and lost half of their numbers.⁶³ British fighters of the aircraft carriers were not a match for the German Bf-109s or Bf-110s, because carrier-based fighters had limited abilities in the sky. Due to the German promptitude, the British could not have found an opportunity to deploy their own squadrons to the Norwegian airfields. Thus the British had a deeply disadvantage in dogfights, so their fighters could not well-escort their bombers. Daily bombings were heavier in losses, while night bombings were not effective enough. Thus the German bombings seem more effective. Germans also found an opportunity and bombed Nybergsund village, supposed to kill the Norwegian king and members of the government who were hidden in the forest near the village. Allied actions were not able to overcome the Germans who had reinforced their post in Norway with 8.500 men, 1.000 horses, 1.500 vehicles and 2.200 tons of material.⁶⁴

Second Battle of Narvik happened on 13 April. Warspite and nine destroyers entered the fiord and sank all of eight remained German destroyers and U-64. There were 2.000 German troops stuck in the city.

⁶² British twin-engine medium bomber.

⁶³ Terraine, *op.cit.*, p. 117.

⁶⁴ Friedrich Ruge, *Der Seekrieg*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis 1971, p. 84.

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

ALLIED COUNTER-LANDINGS

On 14 April, the Norwegian Chief of Defense Major-General Otto Ruge demanded the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, capitulation of Trondheim and bombing of Fornebu, with a telegram. Chamberlain returned him promising five divisions. Same day, "Operation Henry" was launched for reconnaissance with 300 marines at Namsos, 128 km north of Trondheim. A second diversionary landing, "Operation Primrose" was executed with 600 men 240 km south of Trondheim on 16 April. At the same time "Operation Maurice" was started under Major-General Adrian Carton de Wiart, and the 5.000 men of the 146th Territorial Brigade landed on Namsos for the ground attack to Trondheim from the north.⁶⁵ Maurice force had to cross 214 km to Trondheim.⁶⁶ Seaborne landings were done, despite the German air raids on 15-17 April.

A second seaborne landing targeted Harstad. Elements of the 5th Norwegian Division under Major-General Jacob A. Laurantzson eased Wiart's task. On 15 April, Namsos was under three-meter snow and around there temperature was -18°C.⁶⁷ Terrain under snow was not same for both sides; attackers had to spurt against well-trained defenders. In the afternoon, 350 Scots Guards landed at Sjøvegan,⁶⁸ as starting "Operation Rupert" in the north of Narvik.

Same day, the Germans realized a small airborne landing, a Fallschirmjaeger company of 200 men landed on far behind the front at Dombas, halfway between Lillehammer and Andalsnes.⁶⁹ They achieved cutting the Norwegian communication lines, but they were forced to surrender six days later. Between 14 and 17 April, snow and heavy fog hampered Luftwaffe's close support in the Narvik sector.

⁶⁵ François Kersaudy, *Norway 1940*, St. Martin's Press, New York 1991, p. 96.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p. 55.

⁶⁸ Kersaudy, *op.cit.*, p. 123.

⁶⁹ Kersaudy, *op.cit.*, p. 112.

On the other hand, retreating Norwegian 1st Division interned the Swedish soil. After 15th April, "Operation Boots", the naval attack on Trondheim, was enlarged as "Operation Hammer". On 15th April, Supreme Court President Paal Berg and the Christensen Government informed the Norwegian people that a Seven-Member Administrative Council had been formed. Hitler hoped this could ease the operations in the Central Norway but the events were far to Hitler's wishes. Second large German reinforcement, including 6.000 men, 900 horses, 1.300 vehicles and 6.000 tons of material arrived in Norway,⁷⁰ at the same day.

On 16 April, most of the 24th Infantry Brigade with its equipment arrived at Narvik sector but there were too much organization losses, one example was the 203rd Field Battery which had arrived without single cannon, in the following days. There was also chaos in both the British General Staff and Naval Forces that caused sudden change of the landing plans on 17 April. Results badly affected the Allied operations against Trondheim. Much equipment sent back to Britain, while some were sent to Narvik and never delivered true unit.

In addition, some units that were planned to support the operations either postponed or never arrived. For example, the 147th Brigade never disembarked at Namsos. These conditions sharply decreased the Allies' strike power, made all operations against Trondheim tend to be defensive actions in a week. In the south, the 3rd Norwegian Division surrendered in the north of Kristiansand.

Considering the forthcoming Operation Sichelschnitt,⁷¹ Hitler was very anxious with Dietl's situation. OKW decided Dietl evacuate Narvik with his troops and cross border into Sweden. This decision was intervened at the last minute, after Chief of the Operations Staff of the OKW, Major General Alfred Jodl's advice, the führer decided Dietl to take hold as long as possible.

⁷⁰ Ruge, *op.cit.*, p. 84.

⁷¹ Codename of the German offensive on France and the Benelux.

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

The key objective was Trondheim and there the German soldiers numbered less than 2.000, made Hitler panicked. However, the Luftwaffe supplied and reinforced there carrying 5.500 troops.⁷² There were also supplies and 88 mm AA guns sent by three U-boats with a total capacity of 296 tons.⁷³ 148th Territorial Brigade under Brigadier Harold de Riemer Morgan landed on Andalsnes to secure Dombas and proceed to Trondheim, while Ruge's troops making the Germans late with all efforts as "Operation Sickle". Sickle force had 1.000 untrained men, underequipped, and without means of transportations.

On 18 April, British troops landed on Alesund and a British base was formed at Molde. After the weather lifted, motorized German columns resumed their advance; east of Lake Mjosa, Elverun and Hamar fell, while further west Gjovik and Raufoss, with its large ammunition plant, were imminent dangers of being overrun by two tank columns surging forward along the Randsfjord. To block the German offensive, Ruge applied for his last reserves, some 5.000 men of the Bergen Division.

On April 20, Operation Hammer was officially cancelled and Churchill told about new plans that the French 1st Light Division of Chasseurs Alpine was directed to support Wiart's units in the north of Trondheim and a regular Brigade from France to support Morgan's troops around Andalsnes. British continued landings with a French brigade. Three Chasseurs Alpine battalions of the French 5th Half-Brigade which was diverted from Narvik two days ago arrived at Namsos and the 15th Brigade arrived at Andalsnes. The brigade who landed on Namsos suffered during its advance inland because it was equipped neither field nor AA-guns.⁷⁴ From the south, Andalsnes-Trondheim road was 320 km; while from the north, Namsos-Trondheim road was 200 km.⁷⁵

72 Peterson, *op.cit.*, p. 184.

73 "Fuehrer Conferences...", *op.cit.*, p. 96.

74 Anti-aircraft gun.

75 Peterson, *op.cit.*, p. 184.

On 21 April, Lieutenant General Bernard Paget, who was appointed to the command of the Hammer before, became the commander of the Sickle. On the other side, the Germans clashed with the Allies at Lillehammer. German paratroopers were dropped on the flank of the Allies near Stenkjaer. Three German battalions supported by heavy mortars and dive-bombers, struck east of Lake Mjosa and inflicted heavy losses on the British two half-battalions at Asmarka and Lunderhodga. By the evening of 23 April, the badly mauled remnants of the 148th, nine officers and 300 men were evacuated by busses towards Kvam and the Heidal.⁷⁶ Same day, British government had requisitioned the whole Norwegian fleet and gained 1.000 ships and 35 tons of gold.⁷⁷

On 24 April, decreasing Allied resistance around Lillehammer dropped German anxiety, although Paget's 15th Brigade landed on Andalsnes to stem the German advance in Gudbrandsdal. There were 3.000 men with a few Norwegian Ski detachments could not do anything but postpone, because his troops faced with 8.500 highly motorized German troops supported by artillery, tanks and dive-bombers. That day, Gauleiter⁷⁸ Josef Terboven was appointed the Commissar of Norway. Norwegian 4th Division surrendered around Voss shortly after 25 April.

There were 25 U-boats in action off the Norwegian coasts in 12 April.⁷⁹ However, those precious vessels were limited due to series of dud torpedo experiences. Increasing torpedo failures pushed the OKM releasing U-boats from operation on 26 April. Same day, the German 196th Division succeeded in joining up with the 181st Division on the south of Trondheim. On the Allied side, Paget's forces withdrew in good order to form a new defense line at Kjörem, then at Otta. Germans suffered heavy casualties attacking these positions next two days. Same day, Major

⁷⁶ Kersaudy, *op.cit.*, p. 118.

⁷⁷ Kersaudy, *op.cit.*, p. 121.

⁷⁸ Leader/administrator of a region.

⁷⁹ "Fuehrer Conferences...", *op.cit.*, p. 95.

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

General Maurice Audet, Commander of the French Expedition Forces, and Colonel O. B. Getz, commanding of the 5th Brigade, planned an attack on Steinkjer coordinated with the naval attack on Trondheim. This could not be beyond imagine, because naval attack on Trondheim had been canceled a week ago and the Allied troops were considered taking part in the assault were lack of equipment.

On 27 April, Lieutenant General Hugh Royds Stokes Massy announced Sickle and Maurice had to be cancelled and Allies decided to evacuate Namsos and Andalsnes. Germans arrived on Arendal, immediately. Next day, the French Brigade General Antoine Marie Bethouart landed on Harstad in the morning. On 29 April, the Allies landed on Badö. King Haakon and the Norwegian Government left Molde, embarked on light cruiser Glasgow headed Trömsö. On the German side, elements of the second group met with the main German forces at Dragset.

Ruge's troops began to withdraw Dombas on 30 April. Then the German troops from Oslo and Trondheim met there and the German forces going along Gudbrandsdalen and Österdalen recombined. When the Germans from Oslo achieved to link the Trondheim garrison, Hitler said "that was more than a battle won, it was an entire campaign".⁸⁰ German detachments also began to probe Allied positions near Namsos. In Namsos Harbour, British AA Sloop Bittern sank by German bombers. Some elements of the Norwegian 2nd Division surrendered near the Swedish border.

Now the British began to fear a possible German plan of landing on the British soil and in early May⁸¹ they drove the Norwegian campaign to desperate. On 1 May, the Allies evacuated Alesund. Trömsö, where the Norwegian king and the members of the government rallied, became

⁸⁰ Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p. 58.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

the temporary capital of Norway. Part of the Norwegian 2nd Division surrendered in the southwest of Lillehammer. On the other side, the German elements of the third group met with the fifth group. Between 29 April and 1 May, weather conditions worsened made the German air raids very difficult, however, the Germans had secured inland in the south. Same day, Ruge left Molde aboard a destroyer to join the king and the government at Tromsø, where about 300 km to the Russian border that Raeder had argued in his report to Hitler on 9 March on the issue of the Russians could occupy here.⁸²

On 2 May, the Allies landed on Mosjoen, while they were evacuating Andalsnes and started to evacuate Namsos. When the Germans captured Andalsnes, the Sickles totally ended with a disappointment. Remainder of the Norwegian 2nd Division surrendered at Andalsnes. Next day, the Allies completed the evacuation of Namsos embarked 4.200 men in very early hours. After the evacuation, the Luftwaffe attacked the Allied ships in the open sea and sank two destroyers with 250 men.⁸³ By the failure of the Maurice, the Germans became the only authority in the Central Norway. In the evening, Major-General Jacob Hvinden Haug signed the capitulation of the Norwegian forces south of Trondheim.⁸⁴

On 4 May, the Allies landed on Mo. Next day, two German Ar-196 seaplanes captured 1.520-ton British submarine Seal, which had hit a mine and badly damaged.⁸⁵ Norwegian 5th Division also surrendered at Namsos. Three days later, an interrogation about the ill-commanded operations in Norway started in the House of Commons. On 8 May, there was a British aerial reconnaissance for a landing around Bjerkvik,

⁸² "Fuehrer Conferences...", *op.cit.*, p. 86.

⁸³ Kersaudy, *op.cit.*, p. 180-181.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Germans commissioned it as UB, until the end of war. Bekker, *op.cit.*, p. 134.

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

immediate north of Narvik. In the first month of the invasion, the Allies had achieved nothing in Norway, as the Germans advanced to the north as planned.

On 10 May, Germans launched the *Sichelschnitt*, began to invade Low Countries and France. That day, the British government which was frayed by the mismanagement of the operations in Norway resigned and King George VI commissioned Winston S. Churchill to establish the new cabinet. Same day, the Germans captured Mosjøen. Two German infantry companies landed at Hemnesberget between Mosjøen and Mo to cut the Allies' back route to northward. Polish ship *Chorby* also sunk by the German bombers.

On 12 May, three destroyers and four armored landing crafts with 120 men each, escorted by ironclad *Resolution*, cruisers *Effingham* and *Windictive* and five other destroyers landed at Bjerkvik after a bombardment. Germans slowed their landing as well as possible with a strong resistance. On 14 May, German advance reached Mo. Four days later, the Allies had to evacuate Mo. German advance was not accelerated enough; nevertheless they were continuously on their course.

By the seven German panzer divisions crossed the Meuse on 14 May, increasingly dangerous situation in Northern France shadowed the Allies' remaining operations around Narvik. On 17 May, Churchill told the necessity of transferring the destroyers, AA guns and fighters in Narvik, to France. Same day, a German parachute battalion was dropped to Narvik open the way to the attacking elements of the 2nd Gebirgsjäger approaching the city from the south as the relief.⁸⁶ In May, Lieutenant

⁸⁶ Brian L. Davis, *German Parachute Forces 1935-1945*, Arms and Armour, London 1974, p. 7.

General Claude Auchinleck took over the command of the Allied forces in Northern Norway from Major General Pierse J. Mackesy. On the German side, the Luftwaffe had landed an artillery battalion at Narvik, while the Swedes permitted a shipment of supplies by rail; however, surrounded German troops in the sector were near rebellion by 21 May.⁸⁷

On 27 May, the German mountain troops and the sailors were all compelled to evacuate the city. Luftwaffe also bombed Bodö. At night, the Allies launched the final assault towards Narvik in three ways. Effective bombing of the Luftwaffe hampered some Allied operations. After the Allied vanguards saw there would not German troops remain, they entered Narvik on 28 May. However, the Allies had to evacuate Bodö next day. Two days later, the Allies had to oppose the German relief forces at the east of Bodö.

British cabinet had decided to stop the operations in Norway on 24 May. On 28 May, in the Western Front, Belgian Army capitulated by the Germans. Now, every effort was to save the B.E.F.,⁸⁸ surrounded at Dunkirk. Evacuation of Dunkirk in France successfully completed on 4 June; however, this gave the way to the Germans and at the same day, the German Fleet Commander Admiral Wilhelm Marschall sail from Kiel with the Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Hipper and four destroyers to bombard the British base at Harstad. On 7 June, the Allies began to evacuate Narvik. Norwegian King and government left country on heavy cruiser Devonshire, hoisted anchor for London. On the other side, the Luftwaffe informed Marschall about two Allied convoys.

Next day, the Allies completed the evacuation of Narvik. Same day, Marschall attacked the Allied ships and sank the tanker Oil Pioneer, the troopship Orama and the escort Juniper, ignored the hospital ship

⁸⁷ Peterson, *op.cit.*, p. 184.

⁸⁸ British Expeditionary Forces, situated and defending in the northwest France.

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

Atlantic. At 16.00 he also caught and sank the aircraft carrier *Glorious* within 1.474 personnel, including 39 RAF pilots,⁸⁹ plus destroyers *Acasta* and *Ardent*. *Acasta* achieved to hit a torpedo to the *Scharnhorst* seconds before sinking. On 9 June, the Norwegian 6th Division was disbanded under Ruge's supervision.

Campaign in Norway had ended, but some successive events. On 13 June, the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* were exposed a RAF air raid at Trondheim. On 16 June, the Germans landed at Kirkenes in the Northwestern Norway. On 20 June, the *Gneisenau* and *Hipper* left Trondheim tricked the British suppose those going to Iceland, provided safety to the *Scharnhorst* return Germany. However, the British submarine *Clyde* torpedoed the *Gneisenau* and forced it back to Germany with *Hipper*, following *Scharnhorst*. After Marschall's return, Raeder accused him with insubordination and replaced with Vice-Admiral Günther Lütjens. By mid-June, 270 ships and 100 trawlers of the German supply fleet, totaling 1.200.000 tons of shipping, had carried 108.000 troops, 16.000 horses, 20.000 vehicles, and 110.000 tons of stores and equipment with a loss of only 2.400 men and 21 ships (112.000 tons).⁹⁰

ANALYSIS

Germans gained very much from the campaign in Norway. They captured important air and naval bases. After the invasion, German air wings could threaten Britain from the north as well as the east to force the British distribution of homeland defense power to south and east. Baltic was also secured at all and Norway provided a safety way of connecting the German naval bases to the North Atlantic. This provided easiness for

⁸⁹ Terraine, *op.cit.*, p. 118.

⁹⁰ Ruge, *op.cit.*, p. 91.

further U-boat operations, especially for ocean-going boats. So do the German major warships. By the Operation Barbarossa began, Norway became the main obstacle of the Allied arctic convoys to Russia. Beside those, the British threat to the German motherland from the north was over.

There were many lessons from the campaign. First, the paratroopers became a precious instrument of the war. Second, everybody saw role of the air superiority affected the course of the battle. Although the Luftwaffe lost 242 aircraft (including 80 transports) to RAF's 112,⁹¹ it succeeded in covering the Norwegian skies. This eased the close support and interdiction sorties. He-115s and Ar-196s of the 706th Coastal Squadron patrolled the Skagerrak and the Kattegat to hunt the Allied submarines to secure the sea-route between Germany and Norway. On the other hand, the Allies experienced infantry was not much, but open target, if it was not equipped with anti-aircraft guns⁹² and field artillery. Weserübung also showed the difference between the German and the Allied military personnel quality in training. Its best example was how the elements of the 3rd Gebirgsjäger Division with the strength of 4.000 men, including 2.500 sailors of the sunken ships, equipped with 28 heavy and 60 light AA guns,⁹³ stopped and detained 30.000 Allied troops a Narvik. Battles around Narvik demonstrated the importance and limits of air supply in the tactical level, notwithstanding the Germans would use it in the operational and strategic levels in Russia and Tunisia.

Although the British had an absolute sovereignty in the seas, the Germans remained tactical superiority on the ground and achieved their operations by audacity. A well-calculated invasion plan worked on with well-trained and well-equipped personnel.

91 Kersaudy, *op.cit.*, p. 225.

92 In early war, there was a shortage of the British anti-aircraft guns affected all British garrisons, including Malta where the Axis could conduct seaborne and airborne landings as in Norway.

93 Kersaudy, *op.cit.*, p. 196.

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

Beside those lessons, everybody saw that the Kriegsmarine had not been ready to a total war. Naval actions off Norway were costly to the Germans affected the course of the Second World War, especially in two operations: "Dynamo"⁹⁴ and "Seeleon".⁹⁵ Nevertheless, the Kriegsmarine made the best and realized vital landings. Naval losses were mutually heavy, however importance of the campaign made the Germans ignore naval wearing out. Germans lost heavy cruiser Blücher, light cruisers Königsberg and Karlsruhe, 17 destroyers, four U-Boats (U-13, U-49, U-50, U-64), 10 transports and 11 auxiliary ships. Allied naval casualty was nearly almost the British, lost the aircraft carrier Glorious, cruiser Effingham, AA cruiser Curlew, nine destroyers, six submarines, one sloop, 11 trawlers, three troop transports and two supply ships. Allies suffered damage of four cruisers (Penelope, Suffolk, Aurora & Emile Bertin), two AA cruisers (Curaçao & Cairo), two sloops and eight destroyers. On the German side; Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Lützow, Admiral Scheer, Emden, Admiral Hipper, six destroyers and six torpedo boats were damaged. It is clear; the British losses were heavier than the Germans. Germans' all of five "Von Roeder" class and five "Leberecht" class destroyers also sank at Narvik that it was written their tombstones and those classes of destroyers would never built again.

Economically, victory in Norway was very profitable to the Germans that they could receive both Swedish and Norwegian iron ore that reached 600.000 tons in 1941, 1.800.000 tons in 1943.⁹⁶ On the other hand, they cut off the Swedish iron ore to the world. However, there is also a reality; by the fall of France the Germans provided much iron ore from France shadowed economic profit of the campaign in Norway.⁹⁷

94 Codename of evacuation of Dunkirk.

95 Codename of the German landing on England.

96 Kersaudy, *op.cit.*, p. 226.

97 Peterson, *op.cit.*, p. 186.

Politically, Germans gained prestige while the Allies' perpetual losing, and two weeks after Norway fell, surrender of France feared all other countries of Europe much. Germans demonstrated their operation capability in an oversea campaign; they landed on, they advanced on a snowy battleground in mountainous regions and fought terrific at the sea, in the air and on the ground. Thus their abilities in all areas of the warfare made them superior. Germany could not have shown the abilities of their panzers in Norway. There were only Panzer Abteilung zbV 40⁹⁸ consisted of about 50 tanks, mostly Pz-IIs and Pz-IIIs light tanks.⁹⁹ Three prototypes of Neubaufahrzeugs were sent for replacement and latter for impression on the Allies as having heavy tanks, and a few useless type of Pz-III Ausf D medium tanks also assigned the unit. There were also Czech origin 15 Pz-38A light tanks fought in Norway.¹⁰⁰ Wehrmacht concealed the most useful panzers to France.

All of those increased the German pressure over the neutrals, for example, Sweden who had not allowed transporting equipment to Dietl's forces in Narvik, except from a train carrying only medical equipment, changed its behavior by 19 June.¹⁰¹ Between 19 and 22 April, a train with 24 wagons had crossed Sweden, and reached Narvik carrying both food and medical equipment. Another train with five wagons brought 300 health service personnel to Narvik on 25 April.¹⁰²

During the campaign, British politicians failed to see the outcomes of the battles and they misdirected their policies on their faults. Perhaps, this caused to leave Narvik to the Germans. While the battles were dense around Narvik, they rejected the "Mowinckel Plan" of their Swedish

98 Tank detachment for Special Employment 40.

99 Some panzers were lost in the "Antaris H" which was sunk by a British Submarine were not included.

100 Peter Chamberlain et al., *Encyclopedia of German Tanks of World War II*, Arms and Armour, London 1993, p. 18, 43, 60, 147; Bryan Perrett, *Knights of the Black Cross*, Wordsworth, Hertfordshire 1997, p. 59; Peter Mccarthy-Mike Syron, *Panzerkrieg*, Constable, London 2002, pp. 64-65; Samuel Mitcham, Jr, *The Panzer Legions*, Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg 2007.

101 William L. Shirer, *Nazi İmparatorluğu-Yükseliş*, çev. Rasih Güran, Hürriyet, İstanbul 1979, p. 348.

102 Kersaudy, *op.cit.*, p. 202.

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

colleagues. This plan was about the creation a demilitarized zone around Narvik. When the Swedish offered an unoccupied zone in Northern Norway, the Germans tended to accept this idea due to Dietl's worsened conditions in Narvik. If the British politicians had seen that the campaign was lost despite their increasing activities around Narvik, they could provide an independent zone. When the tides turn, the British embraced to their rejected plan but now German had been taking the initiative in the north, and there was not any chance for Hitler accepted it. Besides, Dietl's forces achieved to make the Allied focus divide into two, distracting attention to the furthest north. This retained the Allies capture Trondheim, the key point of the campaign.

During the campaign, German total losses were 5.296. Allied casualty was 1.869 British, 1.335 Norwegian, 530 French and Polish, plus 250 Allied troops at the sea; total 3.984.¹⁰³ Luftwaffe was very effective during the campaign. In the first day, it flew some 680 sorties, including 400 transports, accomplished all missions at a cost of 23 of which 11 were transports and seven more damaged in crash-landings. On the other hand, the Norwegian first line aircraft downed to 54 by several reasons.¹⁰⁴ Between 9 April and 10 June, the Germans lost 260 aircraft, as the British were 169.¹⁰⁵

King Haakon VII and the Norwegian Government left their country and crossed to England. British demoralized and lost reputation, they evacuated both the French and Norwegian coasts in a week. Germans did not provide Quisling post of the Prime Ministry until 1942. He was decreed as traitor after the war, judged and executed on 24 October 1945. Terboven was dismissed on 7 May 1945 and the next day, he committed suicide. After a long disagreement with Terboven, Falkenhorst

103 Kersaudy, *op.cit.*, p. 225.

104 Hooton, *op.cit.*, p. 223.

105 Hooton, *op.cit.*, p. 236.

was dismissed in 1944, was tried and sentenced to death for the German garrison's decimations in Norway; his sentence was later commuted to 20 years imprisonment; later released from prison due to a heart ailment in 1953.¹⁰⁶

IMPORTANCE OF THE INVASION

1930's status quo showed two reality factors in the in Europe. First, none of the countries must have been alienated. Otherwise, political gaps in different regions could become critical issues which created opportunities to the revisionists. Second, both of the punishment and appeasement policies towards the major powers including the countries with a cultural past as major power were radical diplomatic actions which could cause radical responses. Those two factors are short summary of why Europe renewed a world war.

Anglo-French political behavior in the interwar period was not praiseworthy. Miscalculations and national interests shadowed recent realities of the continent, got democracies squeeze to the Western Europe, while the minor countries grasped into the dark. Decline in trustworthiness of consistent political action of the Allies in late 1930s, influenced all minor countries negatively. When the war broke out, those countries could only maintain their neutrality by their own, but most of them failed. Norway was amongst them.

Norwegian reaction to the events was slow, as to the invasion. This may have outcome of some reasons. First, Norway was not neighbor of Germany on the ground. Norwegians calculated the German involvement in the region at a cost of the coming operation to France, like many other

¹⁰⁶ Trevor N. Depuy et al., *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military Biography*, Castle Books, Edison 1992; Mark M. Boatner III, *The Biographical Dictionary of World War II*, Presidio Press, Novato 1996, p. 247.

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

German seniors did. Actually, invasion of Norway was so risky that the Germans executed it when they felt obliged to invade as a pre-emptive issue. Comparing to invasion of Russia in 1941, the Germans had tangible clues of the British actions, such as the Altmark incidence.

Second, the Norwegian government was very cautious on both sides, not to be exposed to a *fait accompli*. In fact, geography and naval power indicated the British were the side conduct landing operations on Norway rather than the Germans. Comparison with the German navy, logically British could fight the Germans down. Norwegians decided to shrink away, such as the Low Countries, even after the capture of the German survivors of the Rio de Janerio. Norwegian reaction could be a decisive opportunity for the British seize the initiative; their hesitation gained the Germans two days in which their earlier cooperation with the Allies could reverse course of the events. This made the Allies land on nearby the enemy control logistic centers under cover of the *Luftwaffe*. British bombings of the German captured airfields in Norway fell flat.

Third, there was a near real time sample in Poland in which the Allies totally failed to obey their diplomatic and military obligations to support Poland. Undoubted, this misevent caused a reputational loss to the Anglo-French cooperation, inferred to European representation of western democracies reveal weakness, made the German power window-dressed. Norwegians easily saw their trust to the Allies could bring a hollow alliance style got the Polish's fingers burnt.

Representing the Allies, the British were the arbiter on the politics towards Norway. Norwegian geopolitics allured the British to reach Finland as well as to threat the Germans from the north. However the British made two critical mistakes before the Weserübung. First, they

provoked the Germans adumbrating their movements. Altmark incident was in the middle of this mistake. Germans could not easily decide to attempt such a risky operation on Norway, however, the British maneuvers made it easier. Germans took up the challenge merely the operation was a pre-emptive strike. On the other side, Norway was an opportunity to break the historical British naval blockade. Second mistake was the British not to take action immediately. They were slow to react and hesitated to invade Norway enabled the Germans' daring plan. Germans were able to establish the inner ring of communications, usable airfields and maintained the supply lines, while the British and allies were lack in intelligence and cooperation.¹⁰⁷ German Ju-52s flew 3018 sorties, carrying 29.280 personnel, 259.300 imperial gallons of fuel and 2.376 tons of supply in the course of the whole campaign.¹⁰⁸ British and the Norwegian air forces were not able to cut this line of air supply.

Weserübung Nord was based on initially two steps. First, absolute surprise of pre-emptive strike would take possession of vital objectives, for creation of base areas. Recently, if the US Army invades a country, first the government mobilizes diplomacy to acquire bases from neighbors of the targeted state. A region having large soil is suitable for a superior army, to maximize maneuverability because it expands line of arrival to diversify ways of strike, thus it expands the surface of impact. It is one of the reasons of the ground operation of the Gulf War in 1991 in which ground operation resulted shorter than the War in Iraq in 2003. In Norway, the Germans had to create their own line of arrival for jump to the second step.

107 Peterson, *op.cit.*, p. 187.

108 Terraine, *op.cit.*, p. 115.

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

Second step combined two types of operations, one defensive and one offensive. German units had to defend the line of arrival against the Allied landings. Germans were also under the time pressure that they should expand the line of arrival along with the country. German units which landed on to capture the northern objectives achieved, however they needed the bulk of the group meet them. Divisions of the German Army Group XXI reached to full capacity after the arrival of their missing units in a week, and raised pressure to the north. While they were defending bases, they had to maintain logistics to further units which were not in contact on the ground. German assembly areas were diversified due to geographical structure of the country, extending from the south to the north. Line of supply could not be established on the ground, without contact. Sea routes were under threat of the Royal Navy.

Raeder had reported Hitler on 9 March 1940, "The operation itself is contrary to all principles in the theory of naval warfare" and had pointed out "The most difficult operation for the ships is the return voyage, which entails breaking through the British naval forces".¹⁰⁹ Minimizing naval losses was also as important as carrying out the seaborne landings because of securing the further traffic between the Norwegian and the German ports.

British had aircraft carriers to sweep out the coasts, while the carrier based aircrafts could interdict the ground activity. Germans could only airlift to units out of contact, but it was also risky and fugacious depending on velocity of the Allied response. In the north of the Stavanger airbase, there were not suitable airfields, William L. Shirer noted.¹¹⁰ By the southern regions secured, German units had to march to the north as quick as possible, overcoming the Norwegian divisions, despite rough terrain. Nevertheless, they achieved in both defensive and offensive issues, and

109 "Fuehrer Conferences...", *op.cit.*, p. 86.

110 Shirer, 1995, *op.cit.*, p. 314; Shirer also said that *Luftwaffe* had complete superiority with all air bases in the North, made the British navy hold back. Look at: *Ibid.*

the bulk of the German army established contact with the furthest German units around Narvik, “a harbor too far”. Anglo-American forces conducted a similar operation, with broader participation in September 1944, to seize the German positions in Arnhem, “a bridge too far”, as the furthest objective of the operation. However the bulk of the Allied army failed to reach there at the time. Under those conditions, German Navy fulfilled the tasks, transported troops, penetrated into the harbors and landed troops on,¹¹¹ and successfully captured objectives. Army maintained Navy’s achievement on land, but the seizure of the Norwegian Government.

By the invasion of Norway, the Germans forestalled the British hegemony in North Atlantic and the Allied presence in the north of Germany. Following years, back to Norway became issue under the codename “Jupiter”; however the Allies concentrated on the shortest road to the heart of Germany, they never landed on Norwegian coasts until the VE-day. Norwegian ports gave an enormous advantage to the *Kriegsmarine* that the German vessels of surface and submarine fleets could stand off. *Weserübung* had a great role for U-boats’ successes.

Norway’s importance to the east ended when Finland surrendered on 12 March 1940. Nonetheless, German attack to Russia on 22 June 1941 updated the Norwegian geostrategic importance, when the Great Britain naturally became the partner of the Soviet Union. East Front became the most using and most consuming materials of the war and according to the lend-lease program; the Allies began to send everything including tanks, aircrafts, trucks, supplies and etc, to the Soviet Union. Closest route to reach northern Soviet harbors was through North Sea and Barents Sea made Sea and air bases in Norway made the country checking point. Many Allied merchant ships were sunk by the U-boats, warships and aircrafts operated from the Norwegian bases.

111 “Fuehrer Conferences...”, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

CONCLUSION

Invasion of Norway, initiated by a wise and gallant German plan of *Weserübung Nord*, led the battles in favour of them. Time for an urgent planning was enough; however, the plan was so risky that Germany had not have enough naval power to overcome the British, as well as it was an overseas operation to Norway near the Britain, rather than Germany.

Germans were anxious to conduct combined operations on air, sea and land. Nevertheless, they achieved to surprise the Allies, took the initiative once and conducted operations outstandingly.

Allies made many plans before and during the invasion, however they had to cancel or postpone most of them because they fell behind the Germans' schedule. In this way, the Allied counter-landings were far to realize, due to quick German domination on the supply routes and after that the climate constituted an impediment to the attackers.

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OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ORDER OF BATTLE

GERMAN ORDER OF BATTLE (ARMY GROUP XXI):

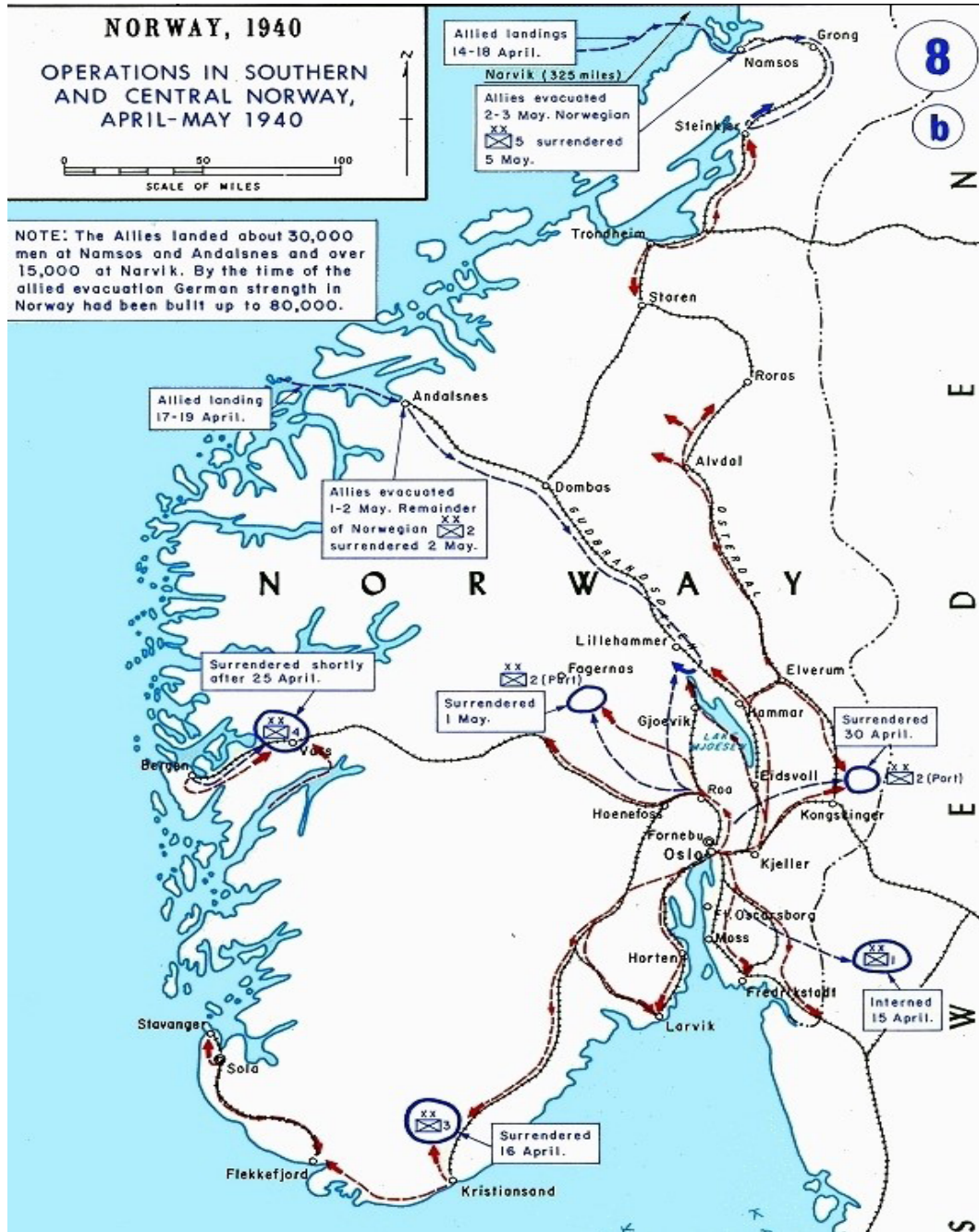
- 3rd *Gebirgsjäger* Division 9 April
- 163rd Infantry Division (two regiments) 9 April
- 69th Infantry Division (two regiments) 9 April
- 40th *Panzer Abteilung* late April
- 196th Infantry Division 11-14 April
- 181st Infantry Division 11-14 April
- 3rd Regiment of the 69th Infantry Division 11-14 April
- 3rd Regiment of the 163rd Infantry Division 11-14 April
- 214th Infantry Division 17 April
- 2nd *Gebirgsjäger* Division 2 May

ALLIED ORDER OF BATTLE (NORTHWEST EXPEDITIONARY FORCE):

- British 24th Infantry Brigade 15 April - 8 June
- British 146th Infantry Brigade 16 April - 3 May
- British 148th Infantry Brigade 18 April - 2 May
- British 15th Infantry Brigade 23 April - 2 May
- French 5th Chasseur Alpin Demi-brigade 30 April - 4 June
- French 27th Chasseur Alpin Demi-brigade 27 April - mid-June
- 13th d/b L.E. 28 April - mid-June
- Polish Brigade 7 May - early-June
- Norwegian 1st Infantry Division
- Norwegian 2nd Infantry Division
- Norwegian 3rd Infantry Division
- Norwegian 4th Infantry Division
- Norwegian 5th Infantry Division
- Norwegian 6th Infantry Division

APPENDIX B: MAPS

Map 1: Ground Operations during the Campaign in Norway¹¹²

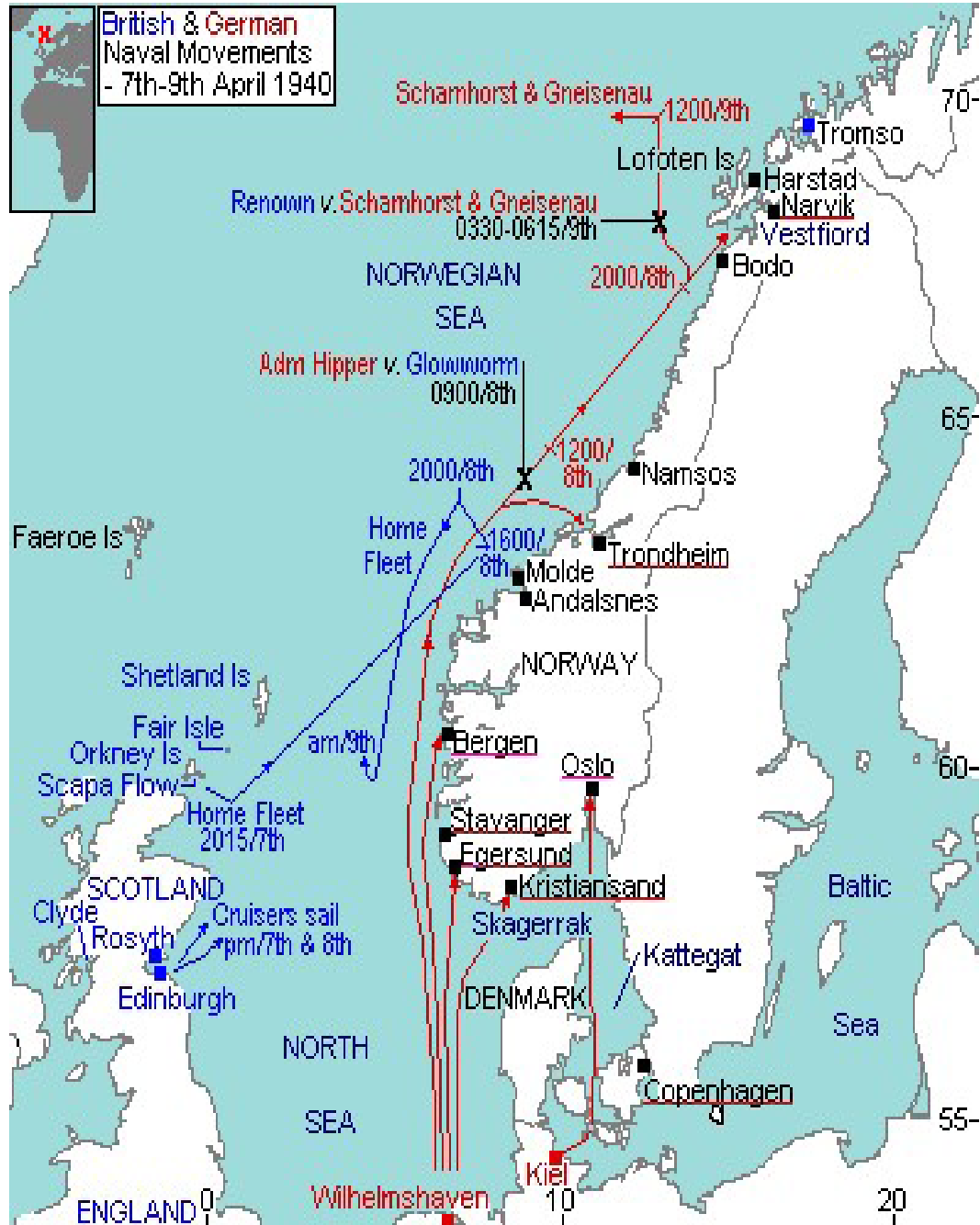


Burak ÇINAR

112 "Norwegian Campaign", Wikipedia, <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/38/NorwegianGroundCampaign.jpg>, (Date of Accession: 30.12.2021).

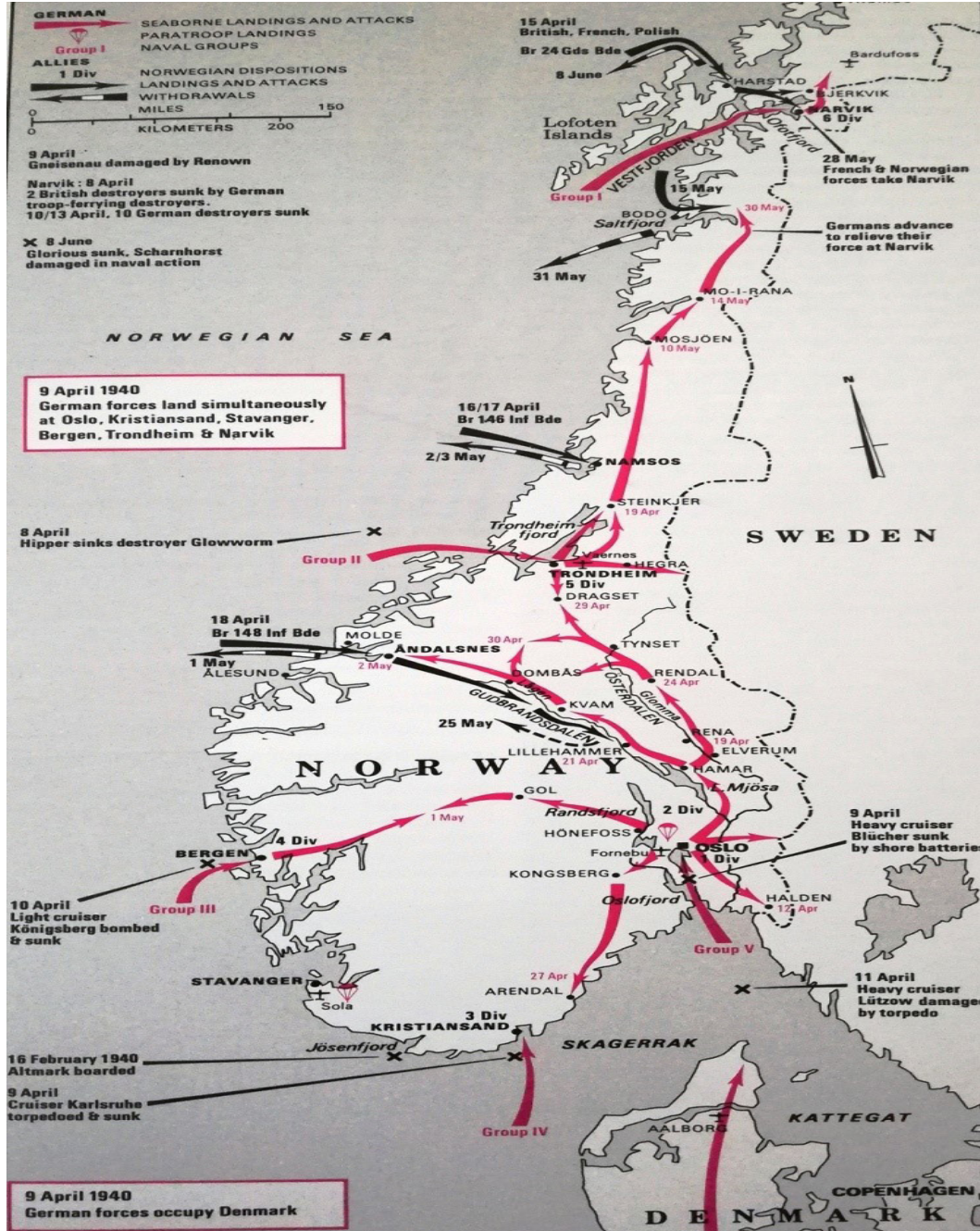
OPERATION WESERÜBUNG NORD: GERMAN INVASION OF NORWAY, 1940

Map 2: Naval Operations during the Campaign in Norway¹¹³



¹¹³ Don Kindell, "British and Other Navies in World War 2 Day-by-Day", *Naval History*, <https://www.naval-history.net/xDKWW2-4004-13APR02.htm>, (Date of Accession: 30.12.2021).

Map 3: General Operations in Norway¹¹⁴



114 John Keegan, *The Rand McNally Encyclopedia of World War II*, Bison Books, Chicago 1984, p.189.