

AU/ACSC/0146A/97-03

JOINT OPERATIONS CASE STUDY  
*WESERÜBUNG NORD*: GERMANY'S INVASION OF  
NORWAY, 1940

A Research Paper

Presented To

The Research Department

Air Command and Staff College

In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements of ACSC

by

Major Timothy F. Lindemann

March 1997

## Report Documentation Page

<b>Report Date</b> 01MAR1997	<b>Report Type</b> N/A	<b>Dates Covered (from... to)</b> -
<b>Title and Subtitle</b> Joint Operations Case Study Weserubung Nord: Germany's Invasion of Norway, 1940	<b>Contract Number</b>	
	<b>Grant Number</b>	
	<b>Program Element Number</b>	
<b>Author(s)</b> Lindemann, Timothy F.	<b>Project Number</b>	
	<b>Task Number</b>	
	<b>Work Unit Number</b>	
<b>Performing Organization Name(s) and Address(es)</b> Air Command and Staff College Maxwell AFB, Al 36112	<b>Performing Organization Report Number</b>	
<b>Sponsoring/Monitoring Agency Name(s) and Address(es)</b>	<b>Sponsor/Monitor's Acronym(s)</b>	
	<b>Sponsor/Monitor's Report Number(s)</b>	
<b>Distribution/Availability Statement</b> Approved for public release, distribution unlimited		
<b>Supplementary Notes</b>		
<b>Abstract</b>		
<b>Subject Terms</b>		
<b>Report Classification</b> unclassified	<b>Classification of this page</b> unclassified	
<b>Classification of Abstract</b> unclassified	<b>Limitation of Abstract</b> UU	
<b>Number of Pages</b> 61		

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## *Preface*

*Weserübung Nord*, the German invasion of Norway in 1940, is one of the most thoroughly investigated campaigns of the Second World War due to its noteworthy standing as the first modern campaign “jointly” planned and executed by ground, sea, and air forces. Unfortunately, the more balanced and well-documented accounts of *Weserübung Nord* available in English tend to be too detailed and lengthy for instructional use. The intent of this paper is to provide a balanced account of more manageable size, sufficiently documented to facilitate the search for additional information on significant events or positions.

This examination of *Weserübung Nord* will be primarily, but not exclusively, descriptive. Events and issues have been carefully selected both to provide adequate information for the reader to form judgments of decisions and actions taken and to highlight issues that contributed to or detracted from the success of the campaign.

### *Abstract*

In the history of modern warfare, *Weserübung Nord*, the German invasion of Norway in 1940, occupies a distinguished station as the first campaign “jointly” planned and executed by ground, sea, and air forces. This paper examines the origins, concept, and planning of *Weserübung Nord*, as well as the execution of the landings. Brief attention is given to the defense of the landings against Allied counterstrokes and to issues associated with unified planning and direction. The origins of the campaign are found in the German naval experience in the First World War, interwar naval strategy debates, and the persona of Grand Admiral Erich Raeder, who was determined to secure a decisive role for the German Navy in the Second World War. Raeder capitalized on the fortuitous opportunities the Russo-Finnish War and the Norwegian traitor Vidkun Quisling presented to win Hitler over to his naval plans. Raeder and the Navy heavily influenced the concept development and planning of the campaign in concert with the High Command of the (German) Armed Forces, which also had a vested organizational interest in a military solution of the Norwegian issue. In executing *Weserübung Nord*, the German Armed Forces encountered major problems only at Oslo and Narvik. However, the operational-level success of the campaign tends to draw attention away from fundamental problems regarding unified planning and direction which emerged during the preparation and execution of the campaign.



*When the first [German] mountain troops in parachutes were dropped behind Narvik, it occurred that one fell directly in the water. The General [Dietl] came up to him as a petty officer was pulling him out of the water.*

*So soldier, how do you end up here?*

*With the help of the three branches of the Armed Forces, Herr General, shouted the man quick-wittedly, the Army sent me up here, the Air Force transported me, and the Navy pulled me out of the water.*

—General Dietl: das Leben eines Soldaten

## Chapter 1

### Origins of the Campaign

*The Chief of the Naval Staff [Grand Admiral Raeder] considers it necessary to acquaint the Führer, as soon as possible, with the possibilities for expanding naval operations to the north. It should be examined, whether under the combined pressure of Russia and Germany, the possibility of acquiring bases in Norway exists, with the goal of a fundamental improvement in our strategic and operational situation.*

—War Diary of the Naval Staff  
3 October 1939<sup>1</sup>

### Genesis

By the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, none of the individual German military service staffs or the High Command of the Armed Forces (*OKW*) had developed operational plans for military action directed against Norway. In fact, the Army High Command (*OKH*) and High Command of the Air Force (*OKL*) eschewed any discussion of the concept of operations in this northern theater of war. The officers within the Naval High Command (*OKM*) and its predecessors, however, had been debating the necessity of operations against Norway and the importance of Norwegian bases for German maritime strategy in professional journals and war games intermittently since 1906.<sup>2</sup>

In the interwar years, the debate concerning Norwegian naval bases took on a new significance based on the experiences of the First World War. Influential but controversial

German naval strategists maintained, had the German Fleet been able to operate from bases outside of the confined North Sea, the war at sea would have turned out differently. Bases on the west coast of Norway, specifically at Trondheim, would have been ideal for offensive operations against the Royal Navy and for commerce raiding in the Atlantic. Additionally, senior naval officers who had served in the German Navy (*Kriegsmarine*) during the First World War could not forget Norway's inability to maintain its neutrality steadfastly and Norway's reluctant yet significant role in the economic blockade of Germany.<sup>3</sup>

As German rearmament began in the mid-thirties, the German Naval Staff (*Seekriegsleitung, SKL*) quickly recognized the criticality of Norwegian neutrality in a future conflict with Britain. With the loss of the iron ore mines in Lorraine after the First World War, Germany had become absolutely dependent on iron ore from the Kiruna-Gällivare fields in northern Sweden. Sweden shipped ore to Germany through the Swedish port of Luleå on the Gulf of Bothnia when Luleå harbor was ice free, and by rail through the Norwegian port at Narvik when ice closed Luleå and the Baltic ports (January through April). Approximately half of the Swedish iron ore bound for Germany passed through Narvik, and the Royal Navy could interrupt this traffic without actually occupying Norway.<sup>4</sup> The Royal Navy could mine the channels (leads) along Norway's western coast, forcing German shipping which moved through the leads out into the open sea where vessels could be intercepted.

More threatening would be a British occupation of Norway. From naval and air bases in Norway Britain would be able to challenge German naval supremacy in the Baltic and exert pressure on Sweden to cease all exports to Germany.<sup>5</sup> Air bases in Norway would

also facilitate the strategic bombing of Germany proper, although little thought was given to this danger at the time.<sup>6</sup>

## **Espousal**

Considering these thoughts, it is not surprising that the impetus for military action against Norway came from the *OKM*. Encouraged by a Soviet offer of a base east of Murmansk (*Basis Nord*- Base North) the Commander-in-Chief of the *Kriegsmarine*, Grand Admiral Raeder, first raised the issue of bases in Norway with Hitler on 10 October 1939. At this meeting Raeder proposed a “Siege of England” (*Belagerung Englands*) using sea and air power, as an alternative to the plan Hitler had outlined on 27 September for a land offensive in the west (Case Yellow- *Fall Gelb*).<sup>7</sup> As part of his proposal Raeder stressed how the acquisition of naval bases on the Norwegian west coast with the help of Russian pressure would facilitate submarine warfare against England. Raeder did not raise the argument for securing ore supplies or the specter of British intentions at this time (nor did the *SKL* in initial internal discussions). Naturally, the *Belagerung Englands* strategy would entail a leading role for the *Kriegsmarine* and greater resources for the accelerated production of submarines. Hitler was not disposed to Raeder’s alternative to *Fall Gelb* at this time but Raeder would get his submarines.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, at the very time when the efforts of *OKH* and *OKL* were focused intensely (and reluctantly) to the west, Raeder was pushing *OKM* and Hitler in a totally different direction - to the North. Raeder had attempted to gain *OKL*, *OKH*, and *OKW* support for his proposal just prior to 10 October, but had found little encouragement. The *Luftwaffe* viewed the prosecution of the current war against England as strictly a *Kriegsmarine* task

and judged the occupation of Holland, Belgium, and northern France resulting from *Fall Gelb* as much more critical for future air operations against Britain. The Commander-in-Chief of the German Air Force (*Luftwaffe*), Reichsmarshal Göring, was distressed to find the preeminent role Hitler had assigned to aircraft production becoming undermined.<sup>9</sup> The Army Chief of the General Staff, Generalcolonel Halder, believed the upcoming offensive in the west required concentration on Army requirements and a halt to the submarine program. He cited the military resistance of Norway and Sweden, difficult terrain, bad communications, and long supply lines as tremendous obstacles. In Halder's view the political and economic disadvantages of a campaign in Norway far outweighed any strategic advantages the *Kriegsmarine* might secure.<sup>10</sup> The only positive response came from the Chief of the Operations Staff at *OKW* (Generalmajor Jodl), who thought an invasion could be easily accomplished.<sup>11</sup>

Halder's views closely paralleled the collective view of Raeder's own staff, the *SKL*. The *SKL* voiced concerns over the difficulties associated with both seizing and supplying bases over 1000 km from Germany. Furthermore, the *SKL* noted that the *Kriegsmarine* would not possess sufficient numbers of combatants (surface or subsurface) necessary to exploit the geo-strategic advantages of Norwegian bases until at least 1943, more likely 1945.<sup>12</sup>

As a result of the *SKL*'s opposition to Raeder's proposal, the Norwegian base acquisition issue became closely connected with power struggles within the *Kriegsmarine* regarding organization, strategy, and resources. The individuals and organizations who supported Raeder favored limiting the influence of *SKL* in operational planning, bold

military action such as unrestricted submarine warfare, and the concentration of naval resources on submarine production.<sup>13</sup>

## **Happenstance**

Throughout the winter of 1939 Raeder never permitted the Norwegian issue to recede far from center stage. In his attempt to win the *Führer* over to his strategic concept, two unanticipated events fortuitously advanced his case: the Russo-Finnish Winter War (30 November 1939 - 12 March 1940) and the visit of the Norwegian politician Vidkun Quisling (10 - 18 December).

The Soviet attack on Finland on 30 November definitively determined that neither the Germans nor the Allies could avoid including Scandinavia in their strategic planning considerations any longer.<sup>14</sup> When the subject of economic warfare against Britain was under discussion on 8 December, Raeder again attempted to turn Hitler's attention towards Norway. He argued, by occupying Norway Germany could secure its ore supply, eliminate the very active Scandinavian trade with Britain, and force the Scandinavian countries to route their exports exclusively to Germany. Hitler was not yet convinced but was unmistakably impressed by Raeder's "loyal and offensive spirit," which contrasted sharply with the *OKH*'s dilatory preparations and pessimistic outlook regarding *Fall Gelb*.<sup>15</sup>

Four days later Raeder introduced Quisling to Hitler. Quisling, a former Norwegian Army major and defense minister, was the leader of the small and inconsequential Norwegian nationalistic National Union Party (*Nasjonal Samling*). Quisling's party wanted to save Norway from Bolshevism and forestall an impending British, occupation

by placing bases at German disposal. Quisling claimed to have substantial following within the military and to have bought off key individuals in coastal areas. Raeder now proposed using Quisling's organization as a fifth column in an occupation of Norway and asked the *Führer* to at least examine the concept.<sup>16</sup>

Quisling's exaggerations of his influence and his indefinite and unsubstantiated reports of British designs on Norway probably carried little weight at his two meetings with Hitler.<sup>17</sup> More important was Quisling's memorandum on the "historical significance for the world of an Association of Germanic Peoples" which apparently appealed to Hitler's vision to link ideological expansion and military conquest.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps Raeder knew that a "line of thinking outside of military and diplomatic norms" would be attractive to Hitler and would give him a good chance of winning over the *Führer* to his plans.<sup>19</sup> On the same day as Quisling's first meeting with Hitler, the *Führer* accepted Raeder's proposal and ordered the *OKW* to investigate a German seizure of Norway under two alternate possibilities: "what happens if we are called in" and "what do we do if we have to go in by force?"<sup>20</sup>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Carl-Axel Gemzell, *Raeder, Hitler und Skandinavien: Der Kampf für einen maritimen Operationsplan* (Lund (Sweden): Gleerup, 1965), p. 217. The quote on p. viii is translated from a (posthumous) biography-memoirs of the Commander of the 3rd Mountain Division, Generalleutnant Dietl, which draws heavily on Dietl's reports and papers. See Gerda-Luise (Haenicke) Dietl and Kurt Hermann, eds., *General Dietl: das Leben eines Soldaten* (Munich: Müncher Buchverlag, 1955), p. 119.

<sup>2</sup>For a brief discussion of the Norwegian bases issue in the pre-First World War and interwar years, see Wilhelm Treue, *Invasionen 1066-1944: Eine Studie zur Geschichte des amphibischen Krieges*, Beiheft 1, *Wehrwissenschaftlichen Rundschau*, December 1955 (Darmstadt: Verlag E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 1955), pp. 42-43. For more details, consult Gemzell, *Raeder, Hitler, und Skandinavien* (hereafter, *RHS*), pp. 7-25 and Carl-Axel Gemzell, *Organization, Conflict and Innovation: A Study of German Naval Strategic Planning, 1888-1940* (Lund (Sweden): Esselte Studium, 1973), pp. 7-25.

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<sup>3</sup>On First World War lessons and naval strategy critique (specifically the influence of Wegener), see Gemzell *RHS*, pp. 7-24. For a more brief treatment in English see Friedrich Ruge, *Sea Warfare 1939-1945: A German Viewpoint*, trans. M. G. Saunders (London: Cassell & Co., 1957), pp. 60-61 or Earl F. Ziemke, *The German Northern Theater of Operations, 1940-1945*, Dept. of the Army Pamphlet No. 20-271 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1959), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>An *OKW* study on economic war preparedness and raw materials revealed that 54 % of the Swedish ore was shipped through Narvik in 1937. The results of this study can be found in Klaus A. Maier, "German Strategy," in *Germany's Initial Conquests in Europe*, vol. II of *Germany and the Second World War*, ed. Militaergeschichtliches Forschungsamt, trans. Dean S. McMurray and Ewald Osers (NY: Oxford, 1991), pp. 189-190.

<sup>5</sup>Maier, "German Strategy," p. 190.

<sup>6</sup>Helmuth Greiner, *Die Oberste Wehrmachtführung 1929-1943* (Limes: Wiesbaden, 1951), p. 75.

<sup>7</sup>Raeder's own recollections on this first meeting are accurate and substantiated by documentary evidence. Compare Erich Raeder, *My Life*, trans. Henry W. Drexel (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1960), p. 303-304 with Hans-Dietrich, Loock "Weserübung- A Step Towards the Greater German Reich," *Scandinavian Journal of History*, No. 2 (1977), p. 78 and Maier, "German Strategy," pp. 190-191. Careful evaluation of Raeder's recollections is required since he maintains his role and motives in *Weserübung Nord*, which formed the basis for his conviction at Nürnberg, were incorrectly assessed.

<sup>8</sup>Loock, pp. 78-80 and Gemzell, *Organization, Conflict and Innovation* (hereafter *OCI*), pp. 397-399.

<sup>9</sup>Michael Salewski, *Die deutsche Seekriegsleitung 1935-1945*, Band I: 1935-1941 (Frankfurt am Main: Bernard & Gräfe, 1970), p. 172.

<sup>10</sup>Loock, p. 79 and Ziemke, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup>Gemzell, *OCI*, p. 397 and Salewski, *Seekriegsleitung*, p. 179.

<sup>12</sup>The *SKL* assessment (authored by Reinicke) is reproduced in Salewski, *Seekriegsleitung*, pp. 563-5.

<sup>13</sup>Gemzell, *OCI*, pp. 384-390.

<sup>14</sup>For a discussion of Allied planning see Klaus A. Maier, "Allied Strategy," in *Germany's Initial Conquests in Europe*, vol. II of *Germany and the Second World War*, ed. Militaergeschichtliches Forschungsamt, trans. Dean S. McMurray and Ewald Osers (NY: Oxford, 1991), pp. 197-205 and J. R. M. Butler, *Grand Strategy*, vol. II, Sep. 1939-June 1941, *History of the Second World War United Kingdom Military Series*, ed. J. R. M. Butler, (London: HMSO, 1957), pp. 19-124.

<sup>15</sup>Loock, p. 82 and Gemzell, *OCI*, p. 395.

<sup>16</sup>Loock, p. 81.

<sup>17</sup>Loock, p. 81. On the importance of ideological expansion in Hitler's thinking see also Michael Salewski, "Germany and North Norway: Strategy and Ideology," in *Narvik 1940: Five Nation War in the High North*, Forsvarsstudier 8/1991, ed. Karl Rommetveit (Oslo: Institutt for forsvarsstudier 1991), pp. 36-44. In Maier's opinion, based on the



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available sources, a definitive judgment of the importance of race-ideological factors in Hitler's decision to execute *Weserübung Nord* is not possible (*German Strategy*, p. 194).

<sup>18</sup>Loock, p. 82 and p. 87.

<sup>19</sup>Loock, p. 81.

<sup>20</sup>Walter Warlimont, *Inside Hitler's Headquarters 1939-1945*, trans. R. H. Barry (NY: Praeger, 1964), p. 67 and Ziemke, p. 9.

## Chapter 2

### Evolution of a Campaign Plan

*The Chief of the Naval Staff [Grand Admiral Raeder] is still firmly convinced that England intends to occupy Norway in the near future in order to cut off completely all exports from the Norwegian-Swedish area to Germany and to prevent the later from making use of Norwegian bases.*

—War Diary of the Naval War Staff  
13 January 1940<sup>1</sup>

#### Study North (*Studie Nord*)

The initial investigation *OKW* conducted for an invasion of Norway was designated Study North (*Studie Nord*). Although the original study did not survive, evaluations of the study indicate the Chief of the Operations Staff of the *OKW* (Jodl) directed the work and that the study contained contributions from all three services. How balanced or substantive these contributions may have been is questionable based on an early incident related by the Chief of Section L (National Defense) of the *OKW* Operations Staff (Colonel Warlimont):

... against all established practice Jodl passed this [study] to the Senior Air Staff Officer in Section L, Captain Freiherr Speck von Sternberg. A few days later he [Sternberg] discussed the ‘Norwegian situation’ with the Chief of Staff of the *Luftwaffe*, General Jeschonnek.... It appears that when Jodl reported this conversation Hitler intervened at once and ordered that the ‘Norwegian operation should be kept under our own hand.’ The job therefore came back to the *OKW* Operations Staff.<sup>2</sup>

Even at this early stage, Hitler was determined to carefully control both the content and the process of planning. When the Operations Staff completed *Studie Nord* at the end of December, Hitler ordered the study be held in the *OKW* for the time being, releasing it only on 10 January.<sup>3</sup>

The *OKW Studie Nord* seems to have addressed only the general political and military issues relating to operations in Norway. Solicited or unsolicited, it was the *Kriegsmarine*, the only service with a positive interest in this issue, that worked out the concept of an invasion. The *Kriegsmarine*'s expansion of the *OKW* study (also titled *Studie Nord*, and based on an *SKL* study by Reinicke) formed the conceptual basis for the final invasion plan. It outlined a plan for surprise landings at the major Norwegian ports from Oslo to Tromsø using as an assault force consisting of either the 22nd Infantry Division (airborne or air landing, versus parachute) or a mountain division, delivered by the *Kriegsmarine* and the *Luftwaffe*'s 7th Air Division (airborne and parachute troop transport). To facilitate naval and air operations, the *Kriegsmarine*'s study called for the use of bases at the northern tip of Denmark; but Germany would gain Danish acquiescence through diplomatic pressure not military invasion.<sup>4</sup>

The *OKW Studie Nord* had proposed the creation of a special working group to further investigate this matter. Hitler's original decision regarding the direction and location of this group was that a *Luftwaffe* general within the *OKL* head the group, with a Chief of Staff from the *Kriegsmarine*, and the First General Staff Officer from the Army.<sup>5</sup> On 23 January Hitler reversed this decision, canceling the creation of a working staff within the *OKL*. Hitler now ordered the special staff work to be conducted in the *OKW* under his "personal and immediate influence and in close coordination with the general

conduct of the war.”<sup>6</sup> He directed each of the services to send a qualified operations staff officer to the *OKW*, trained in organization and supply if possible, to begin work on the operation now designated “Weser Exercise” (*Weserübung*).<sup>7</sup>

### **Krancke Working Group (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft Krancke*)**

The special staff was installed within Section L of the *OKW* and began work on 5 February. The senior member of the staff and navy representative, Captain Krancke, seems to have led the staff, which became known as the “Krancke working group.” The staff followed the normal working routine of the *OKW* and reported through Warlimont to Jodl and the Chief of the *OKW* (General Keitel) and on to Hitler. A testament to the keen interest Hitler took in work of the Krancke working group is the fact that the group even prepared some of its documents in a special large print (*Führerbuchstaben*), in light of Hitler’s nearsightedness.<sup>8</sup>

Apart from the proposal contained in *Studie Nord*, the Krancke working group had little basis from which to work. The Army General Staff, let alone the much smaller *OKW*, had never formally studied Scandinavia, nor had the services necessarily chosen representatives based on their knowledge of this region. The group sought to gather information quickly, but materials such as detailed maps were unobtainable.<sup>9</sup> While planning proceeded based on tourist guides and maps, *OKL* directed the air attaché in Oslo to compile aircraft and air defense location data and to produce accurate maps of the airfields which might be used for landings. *OKL* also directed its special reconnaissance squadron to conduct high altitude, covert photography of all ports, navigation channels, and airfields from Oslo to Kirkenes.<sup>10</sup> Although Quisling would provide some useful

information on the Norwegian Army and military installations, aerial photography would become the principle source of information for the planning of *Weserübung*.

### **The *Altmark* Incident and the Appointment of Falkenhorst**

As the planning work of the Krancke working group was drawing to a close, the *Altmark* incident injected the first real sense of urgency into preparations for *Weserübung*. The *Altmark* was a German supply ship which was returning from provisioning and refueling the (recently scuttled) pocket battleship *Graf Spee* in the South Atlantic. The *Altmark* was making its way home through Norwegian territorial waters when the British destroyer *HMS Cossack*, despite Norwegian protests, boarded the German vessel and liberated its cargo of 303 captured British seamen (16 February).<sup>11</sup> Despite the ambiguous legal status of the *Altmark*, in the words of Raeder, “this incident proved beyond a doubt that Norway was completely helpless to defend its neutrality... now at last the necessity of moving into Norway had to be strongly considered.”<sup>12</sup> Hitler ordered planning for *Weserübung* now to proceed with urgency.<sup>13</sup>

To facilitate Hitler’s order to speed up preparations for *Weserübung* (19 February), Jodl suggested the appointment of a properly organized headquarters, complete with commanding general and staff. The *OKW* bypassed the *OKH* and, acting entirely on its own initiative, proposed General von Falkenhorst, the Commanding General, XXI Army Corps.<sup>14</sup> Falkenhorst’s chief qualification seems to have been operational experience in Nordic conditions, having served as the Chief of Staff for von der Goltz during the German intervention in Finland in 1918. While the *OKW* honestly may have sought the most qualified officer for the task, they turned to the lowest level command organization

which possibly could have been considered. The *OKH* most certainly would have detailed an Army Group or Army Headquarters to plan and direct operations.<sup>15</sup>

On 21 February Hitler gave Falkenhorst control of the planning and, if implemented, command of the execution of *Weserübung*. Hitler placed the XXI Army Corps (soon to be redesignated simply Group XXI) directly under the *OKW*, ostensibly to “avert trouble with the *Luftwaffe*.”<sup>16</sup> XXI Corps Headquarters adopted Krancke and his associates as liaison officers to their respective services and began work with a skeleton staff in Berlin on 26 February.

Almost immediately after Falkenhorst’s appointment two significant decisions lead to extensive revisions of the Krancke working group’s plan. First, *OKW* approved Falkenhorst’s proposal for a military occupation of Jutland (the Danish peninsula). Hitler subsequently added a landing at Copenhagen as well.<sup>17</sup> Thus, *Weserübung* would entail a complete military occupation of Denmark. Second, based on a suggestion from Jodl, Hitler decided *Weserübung* would be planned so that the *Wehrmacht* could execute the occupation of Norway (Weser Exercise North, *Weserübung Nord*) and Denmark (Weser Exercise South, *Weserübung Süd*) independently of *Fall Gelb* in terms of time and forces employed.<sup>18</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Gemzell, *OCI*, p. 385.

<sup>2</sup>Warlimont, p. 70.

<sup>3</sup>Ziemke, p.11.

<sup>4</sup>Gemzell, *OCI*, pp. 404-405.

<sup>5</sup>The substance of this decision was conveyed to the *SKL* on 13 January 1940. The *SKL* War Diary entry is reproduced in Walter Hubatsch, *Weserübung: Die deutsche Besetzung von Dänemark und Norwegen 1940*, Band 5, *Göttingen Beiträge für Gegenseitige Fragen* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1952), pp. 404-406. English translation can be found in United States, State Department, *The War Years, 1939-1940*, vol. VIII,

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Series D of *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945* (Washington, DC.: GPO, 1954), pp. 663-666. The 13 January entry is missing from an otherwise very useful translation of *SKL War Diary* entries found in *Brassey's Naval Annual, 1948*, H. G. Thursfield, ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1948), pp. 74-102.

<sup>6</sup>OKW directive (27 January 1940) reproduced in Hubatsch, pp. 424. German planners believed that earlier in the month aspects of *Fall Gelb* plan had fallen into Allied hands when a *Luftwaffe* major made a forced landing in Belgium. By placing planning work within the OKW, Hitler was also communicating a requirement for maximum security. See Ziemke, p. 14.

<sup>7</sup>Hubatsch, p. 424 and Warlimont, pp. 70-71 for comments.

<sup>8</sup>Gemzell, *OCI*, p. 406.

<sup>9</sup>Walter Goerlitz, *History of the German General Staff: 1657-1945*, trans. Brian Battershaw (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1975), p. 372.

<sup>10</sup>On intelligence and *Luftwaffe* reconnaissance, see Andreas L. Nielsen, "The Collection and Evaluation of Intelligence for the German Air Force High Command," (*Karlsruhe*: Studiengruppe Geschichte des Luftkrieges [USAF Historical Division], n.d.), pp. 113-115.

<sup>11</sup>For a discussion of the impact of the *Altmark* incident on *Weserübung* planning see Hans-Martin Ottmer, "Das Unternehmen 'Weserübung'. Die Besetzung Dänemarks und Norwegens durch die deutsche Wehrmacht im April 1940," in *Ideen und Strategien 1940: Ausgewählte Operationen und deren militärgeschichtliche Aufarbeitung, Operatives Denken und Handeln in deutschen Streitkräften 3*, ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (Bonn: E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 1990), pp. 75-76. See also, Ziemke, p. 16 and Raeder, p. 306.

<sup>12</sup>Salewski, *Seekriegsleitung*, p. 180.

<sup>13</sup>Planning was directed to be completed by 10 March, so that execution could be ordered with 4 days notice. See Loock, p. 84.

<sup>14</sup>OKW also bypassed OKH when it came to selection of *Wehrmacht* units for the operation and dealt directly with the head of reserve forces. Jodl's diary entries give no indication on why Falkenhorst was chosen, although Warlimont and Greiner cite Falkenhorst's Finland experience. See entries in International Military Tribunal, *Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal at Nuernberg: 14 November 1945 - 1 October 1946, Documents in Evidence*, vol. XXVIII (Nuernberg: 1948), p 406 (hereafter *IMT*) and Warlimont, pp. 72-73.

<sup>15</sup>Greiner, p. 78 and Warlimont, p. 72.

<sup>16</sup>The Chief of the General Staff (Halder) doubted this rational and was clearly displeased with the course of events: "Not a single word has passed between the *ObdH* [Commander and Chief of the Army, von Brauchitsch] on this matter; this must be put on the record for the history of war." Halder's diary entries for this time period are translated in Charles Burdick and Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, eds., *The Halder War Diary, 1939-1942* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1988), pp. 102-132.

## Notes

<sup>17</sup>The record seems to confirm Raeder's comment that until February 1940, the German leadership considered the occupation of Denmark as neither "necessary militarily or useful politically," p. 309. See also Ziemke, pp. 16-17.

<sup>18</sup>Ziemke, pp. 16-17.



## Chapter 3

### The Campaign Plan

*The development of the situation in Scandinavia makes it necessary to prepare for the occupation of Denmark and Norway by formations of the Armed Forces (Case Weserübung). This would anticipate English action against Scandinavia and the Baltic, would secure our supplies of ore from Sweden, and would provide the Navy and Air Force with an expanded basis for operations against England.*

—Weserübung Directive  
1 March 1940<sup>1</sup>

### Concept of Operations

The directives ordering the implementation *Weserübung Nord* detailed an operation comprised of two distinct phases. In phase one, assault (landing) groups would effect the sudden and surprise capture of the most strategic locations through sea and airborne operations: Oslo, Trondheim, Bergen, Narvik, Kristiansand, Arendal, Egersund, and Stavanger. All eight cities lay on the coast and possessed harbors in which the *Kriegsmarine* could land troops (although Stavanger would be seized initially through airborne troops alone). To achieve surprise naval vessels would enter the fjords leading to the harbors under the cover of darkness and simultaneously land troops at dawn. Hitler would later set D-Day (*Wesertag*) and H-hour (*Weserzeit*) for 9 April at 0515.<sup>2</sup>

In phase two, reinforcements in troops and equipment would permit these assault groups to enlarge initial positions, link up, and complete the occupation of the country. Reinforcements would arrive by sea transport in Oslo and move inland to establish contact with the widely dispersed assault groups. The *OKW* contemplated no major, direct sea or air reinforcement of the initial landing positions.<sup>3</sup> German forces would first attempt to link up with groups in southern and central Norway, and then with the Narvik group in the distant north.

The *OKW* hoped *Weserübung Nord* would be a peaceful occupation. Hitler, in particular, believed the Norwegians possessed neither the determination nor the capability to resist.<sup>4</sup> He counted heavily upon the psychological impact of the sudden landings and the terrorizing presence of the *Luftwaffe* in the skies over Oslo to convince the Norwegian government that resistance would be both futile and costly. To facilitate Norwegian acquiescence to a peaceful occupation, German representatives would present German demands to the Norwegian government just prior to *Weserzeit*. Due to the supposed presence of British agents and suspected strong pro-British sentiment of segments of the populous (specifically in Bergen), even under peaceful occupation the *OKW* expected to encounter localized pockets of resistance.<sup>5</sup>

If the Norwegian government refused the German demands, Hitler authorized Group XXI to use all military means available to crush resistance and force the landings.<sup>6</sup> The primary objective of the initial landing groups remained the seizure of the eight strategic cities, the destruction of local resistance, and the defense of positions from anticipated Allied counterstrokes. The secondary objective was the occupation of the training centers and depots associated with these cities, thereby thwarting the effective mobilization of the

Norwegian Army. Although the complete destruction of the Norwegian Army was well beyond the capabilities of the small landing forces, if the assault groups simultaneously seized the four cities of Oslo, Trondheim, Bergen, and Kristiansand, the *OKW* expected five of the six Norwegian divisions would be incapacitated.<sup>7</sup>

### **Planning Considerations**

Norwegian geography and British naval superiority constituted the two primary planning factors for the invasion. Norwegian climate and terrain dictated that the primary population and economic centers were concentrated in a few relatively low-lying, hospitable areas which lay scattered along the coast or in deep narrow valleys cutting inland from the coast. These centers were mostly isolated from one another except through sea lines and rail connection to Oslo.<sup>8</sup> The plan for the invasion envisioned taking as many of these population and economic centers as possible in the initial assault (phase one) and establishing contact between them later (phase two). Force constraints limited planners to six primary (Oslo, Trondheim, Bergen, Narvik, Stavanger, and Kristiansand) and two secondary (Arendal and Egersund) centers.

Two other geographic factors further bounded the timing of the operation. First, despite year-round, ice-free conditions in Norwegian coastal waters, ice conditions in the Baltic forced a postponement of any German naval operation until late March or early April.<sup>9</sup> Second, the increasing shortness of nights in the northern latitudes dictated that the operation must take place before 15 April, in order to provide naval forces with adequate night cover for operations (8-10 hours).<sup>10</sup>

Despite the commitment of every serviceable *Kriegsmarine* surface combatant and two-thirds of the submarine force (28 *U-boats*), the Royal Navy remained the most significant military threat to the successful prosecution of *Weserübung Nord*.<sup>11</sup> To minimize exposure to the British naval threat and maximize surprise, speed was essential to the transport phase of the operation as well as to the actual occupation of Norway. To maximize speed the *OKW* decided to transport the initial sea-borne landing force on warships rather than on slower transport vessels. The modest size of the German Navy severely limited the number of troops which could participate in the assault phase of the campaign.

The sea-borne invasion forces, totaling 8,850 troops, were distributed among six naval groups:

**Battle Group 1 (Narvik):** 2,000 troops from the 3rd Mountain Division embarked upon ten destroyers, accompanied by the battleships *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*.

**Battle Group 2 (Trondheim):** 1,700 troops from the 3rd Mountain Division embarked upon the cruiser *Hipper* and four destroyers.

**Battle Group 3 (Bergen):** 1,900 troops from the 69th Infantry Division and naval artillery units embarked upon the cruisers *Köln* and *Königsberg*, two service ships, three torpedo boats, and five motor torpedo boats.

**Battle Group 4 (Kristiansand-Arendal):** 1,100 troops from the 163rd Infantry Division embarked aboard the cruiser *Karlsruhe*, a service ship, three torpedo boats, and seven motor torpedo boats.

**Battle Group 5 (Oslo):** 2,000 troops from the 163rd Infantry Division embarked upon the cruisers *Blücher*, *Lützow*, and *Emden*, 3 torpedo boats, two armed whaling boats, and eight minesweepers.

**Battle Group 6 (Egersund):** 150 troops from the 69th Infantry Division embarked upon four minesweepers.<sup>12</sup>

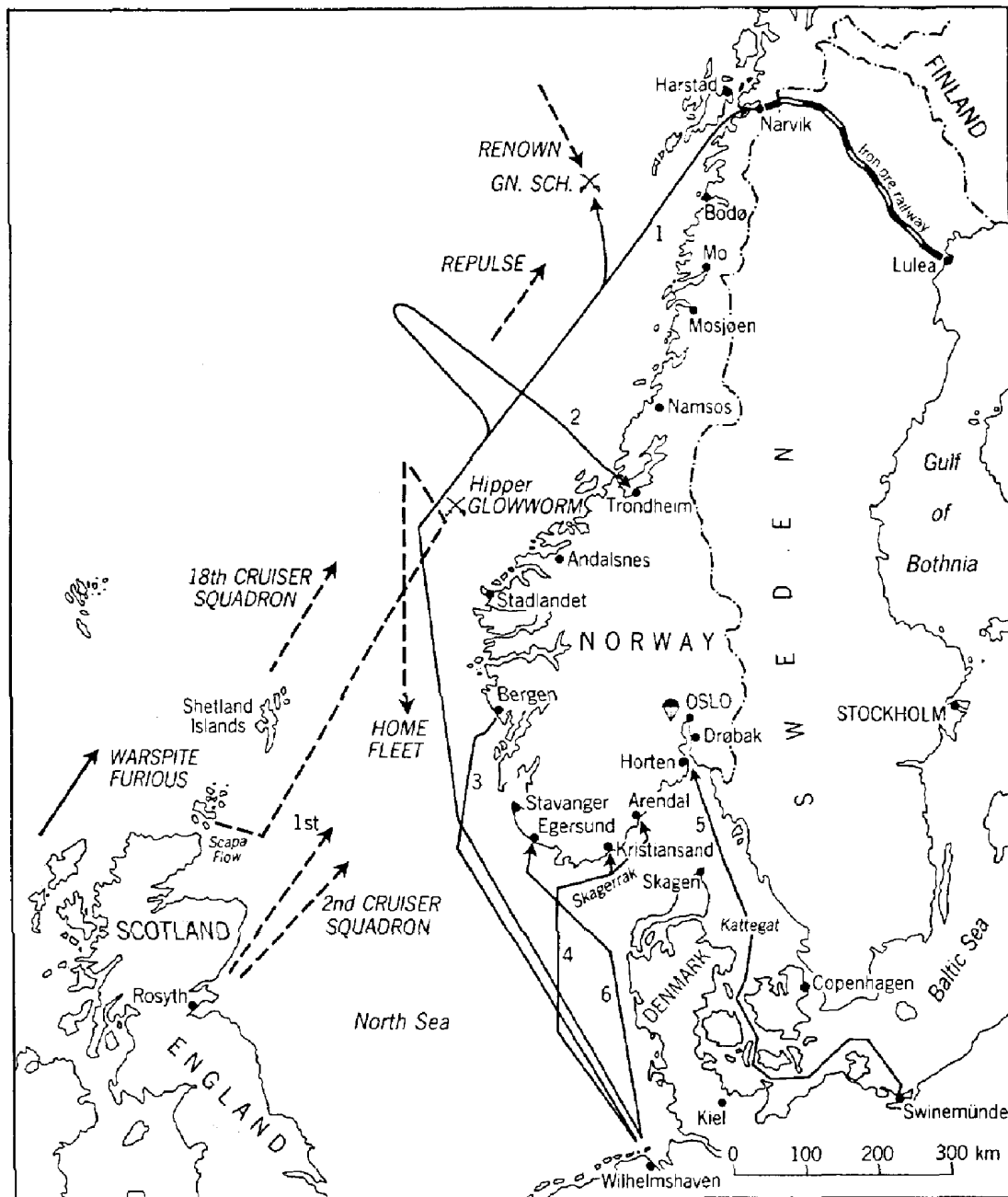


Figure 1. Weserübung Nord: 8-9 April 1940 (Royal Navy Reactions and Sea Engagements also Depicted)<sup>13</sup>

Since the cargo and fuel capacity of the warships was extremely limited, the *OKW* found it necessary to organize separate transport groups (echelons) to compensate for these limitations. The Export Echelon, consisting of seven steamers, would transport the heavy equipment and supplies for the troops embarked upon the warships. The steamers would proceed as normal traffic to Murmansk and arrive in Norwegian landing ports prior to the arrival of the landing force. The Tanker Echelon would transport fuel required both for army and air force operations in Norway as well as for the German destroyers' return journey. The three tankers and five smaller ships of the Tanker Echelon also would proceed unprotected, arriving on *Wesertag*.<sup>14</sup>

Additionally, the *OKW* organized eight Sea Transport Echelons to convey the bulk of the troops and supplies required for sustained operations. With the exception of the fifteen ships of the 1st Sea Transport Echelon, the ships of the Sea Transport Echelons would all arrive in Oslo and only after *Wesertag*. The ships of the 1st Sea Transport Echelon would arrive on *Wesertag* in Oslo, Kristiansand, Stavanger, and Bergen, transporting essential reinforcements (3,761 troops), transportation (672 horses and 1,377 vehicles), and provisions.<sup>15</sup>

In view of the slower speeds of the transport ships and the anticipated increased alertness and threat of the Royal Navy following *Wesertag*, the Export, Tanker, and 1st Sea Transport Echelon would have to sail prior to the departure of the invasion force. The *Kriegsmarine*, however, feared that the capture of these vessels or their very presence in Norwegian ports could compromise the element of surprise, precisely the element upon which the entire operation was so heavily dependent. As a compromise, the *OKW*

permitted transport departures no earlier than six days prior to *Wesertag*. This time period later proved insufficient for many of the vessels to reach their destinations.<sup>16</sup>

To the maximum extent possible, Group XXI would employ air transport to facilitate the sudden and simultaneous seizure of the designated centers and the subsequent supply and reinforcement of the initial assault troops. The *Luftwaffe* placed over 500 transport aircraft under Air Transport (Land), to conduct parachute, airborne (air landing) and transport operations in support of *Weserübung Nord* and *Süd*. Additional transport capacity was available from Air Transport (Sea) in the form of sea planes. *OKW* tasked the *Luftwaffe* to deliver three thousand troops (parachute and airborne) in the initial assault and transport an additional 8,000 troops into the theater within the next three days of the campaign.<sup>17</sup>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Hubatsch, p. 425.

<sup>2</sup>Ottmer, pp. 79-81 and Ziemke, pp. 26-27.

<sup>3</sup>See T. K. Derry, *The Campaign in Norway, History of the Second World War United Kingdom Military Series*, ed. J. R. M. Butler (London: HMSO, 1952), p. 19.

<sup>4</sup>Operations Order for Group XXI for the Occupation of Norway No. 1, 5 March 1940, in Hubatsch, p. 427-428.

<sup>5</sup>*Weserübung* Directive, 1 March 1940, in Hubatsch, p. 425.

<sup>6</sup>Operations Order No. 1, in Hubatsch, p. 427.

<sup>7</sup>In light of the Russo-Finnish Winter War and the war on the continent, the *OKW* expected the Norwegian Army to be at its full peacetime strength of 19,000 men (one-fifth of its mobilization strength). Headquarters and mobilization centers for the six Norwegian divisions were located at Halden, Oslo, Kristiansand, Bergen, Trondheim, and Harstad. Ziemke, p. 27.

<sup>8</sup>Ziemke, p. 26.

<sup>9</sup>Gemzell (*OCI*, p. 374) points out the *SKL* War Diary notes that the ice remained unusually long in the Baltic during the winter-spring of 1940, delaying preparations of the transport fleet. Thus, although all other preparations were complete enough for Jodl to state on 12 March that the invasion could be launched on 20 March, the ice situation did not fundamentally improve until 18 March. *IMT*, p. 412.

<sup>10</sup>Report of the Commander-in-Chief of the Navy to the Führer, 26 March 1940, in *Brassey's*, p. 87. Another factor driving the timing of *Weserübung Nord* was *U-boot*



## Notes

deployment. In order to provide protection for *Weserübung Nord* (Operation *Hartmut*), the *Kriegsmarine* had stood down all other *U-boot* activity. Some *U-boots* had departed for station as early as 11 March. Raeder could not keep the *U-boots* on station indefinitely. See Ziemke, p. 30 and Raeder's report of 26 March in *Brassey's*, p. 87.

<sup>11</sup>Derry notes (p. 6) that the Royal Norwegian Navy was inconsequential, but this made little difference since Norwegians expected the "traditional and almost automatic protection of their coasts by the British Navy." Norway's naval forces were "largely obsolete" consisting primarily of four "antiquated" coastal defense ships, seven destroyers (of which four were of "modern design"), and two minelayers. The Norwegian air force had also been the victim of neglect and consisted of approximately 30 seaplanes serving the Navy, and eight scouting aircraft and six fighters supporting the field armies. Derry, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup>Battle Group organization (and transport group organization in following text) is derived primarily from Kurt Assman, *The German Campaign in Norway*, German Naval History Series (London: HMSO, 1948), pp. 10-13. Battle Group 6 performed a minor role in the campaign and will not receive further attention in this paper. The group landed its bicycle squadron on schedule, which occupied Egersund without trouble and took control of the cable station connecting Norway to Peterhead, Scotland.

<sup>13</sup>Adapted from Bernd Stegemann, "Operation *Weserübung*," In *Germany's Initial Conquests in Europe*, vol. II of *Germany and the Second World War*, ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, trans. Dean S. McMurray and Ewald Osers (NY: Oxford, 1991), p. 207.

<sup>14</sup>Six of the seven vessels in the Export Echelon were lost. Of the eight tankers, three critical vessels were lost: two bound for Trondheim and one bound for Narvik. These figures come from Stegemann, p. 211.

<sup>15</sup>Stegemann also notes that of the 26 ships in the Transport Echelon, 6 were lost. By 15 June, 270 German merchant ships had delivered 107,591 troops, 16,102 horses 20,339 vehicles and 101,400 tons of stores with a loss of approximately 2000 men and 21 ships. *U-boots* also carried out eight transport missions to Trondheim in the critical days following the Allied landings, bringing aviation fuel, anti-aircraft guns, and supplies. Stegemann, p. 211.

<sup>16</sup>Assman, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup>By 30 April, the *Luftwaffe* had ferried 29,280 men and 2,376 tons of supplies (including 1,178,199 liters of aviation fuel) to Norway; 582 transport aircraft flew 3018 missions (1830 for troops, 1188 for materiel). Figures are compiled from Hubatsch, p. 378.

## Chapter 4

### Execution

*The operation in itself is contrary to all the principles in the theory of naval warfare. According to this theory, it could be carried out by us only if we had naval supremacy. In spite of this—on many occasions in the history of war those very operations have been successful which went against all the principles of warfare, provided they were carried out by surprise.*

—Report of the Commander-in-Chief of the Navy to the *Führer*,  
9 March 1940<sup>1</sup>

### Narvik

Battle Group 1 (less battleship escort) reached Narvik on schedule and effortlessly achieved its initial objectives. In the approaches to the harbor, two Norwegian coastal defense ships challenged the intruders, and the German battle group sank the Norwegian vessels when they refused to surrender. The coastal fortifications supposedly guarding the entrance to the harbor had never been built. This development greatly concerned the commander of the 3rd Mountain Division, Generalmajor Dietl, who had counted on seizing the fortifications intact and using their guns to fend off the anticipated British counterstroke. Dietl's concerns mounted when the ships of the Export Echelon failed to arrive with his unit's heavy weapons and supplies.<sup>2</sup>

The landing party disembarked without incident and quickly occupied the harbor area and strategic locations in the city center. The garrison commander (13th Infantry

Regiment) surrendered the city without a fight, although one battalion (250 men) did refuse to comply with the commander's decision and escaped the city amidst the confusion. Fortunately for Dietl, at the Norwegian regimental depot north of Narvik (Elvegaardsmoen) the assault group captured substantial stocks of munitions and food which would provide vital sustenance in the following weeks.<sup>3</sup>

For the Battle Group's destroyers, a missing tanker from the Export Echelon presented the most serious development of the day. Although the single tanker that did arrive had sufficient fuel for all ten destroyers in the battle group, it was impossible to refuel all ten in time for the preplanned evening departure. This fueling delay, coupled with technical failures of torpedoes fired from submarines guarding the vulnerable fueling destroyers, would cost the *Kriegsmarine* the entire destroyer force when the Royal Navy struck on 10 April and again on 13 April.<sup>4</sup>

## **Trondheim**

At Trondheim, Battle Group 2 also met little resistance and quickly secured the city. In the inner fjord leading to Trondheim, the battle group did find the coastal defense forts guarding the approach (Brettingnes) functional and willing to offer resistance. The cruiser *Hipper* returned fire and although not silencing the battery, succeeded in obscuring the view of the gunners with clouds of dust and smoke until the entire battle group had passed. While three destroyers remained behind to land troops to seize the forts, the *Hipper* and the fourth destroyer steamed into Trondheim.<sup>5</sup>

Although the undefended city fell without a shot, the Norwegians defended the three coastal defense forts (Brettingnes, Hysnes, and Agdenes) and the airfield at Vaernes until

the following day. The defense of Vaernes proved particularly inconvenient for the Germans, who were completely dependent on airlifted supplies and reinforcements since the transports of the Export Echelon failed to materialize. The resourceful mountain troops improvised a temporary landing strip on the ice so that transport aircraft could land with their precious loads.<sup>6</sup>

## **Bergen**

Battle Group 3 also encountered spirited defense from coastal defense batteries around Bergen but succeeded in capturing the city without a fight.<sup>7</sup> The group paused to disembark troops to seize the coastal batteries guarding the approaches to the city (Kvarven), but in order to arrive in Bergen on time proceeded without waiting for the capture of the batteries. Both the cruiser *Königsberg* and the service ship *Bremse* were subsequently damaged as a result of fire from the batteries, with the *Königsberg* unable to put to sea. The following morning the coastal battery at Sandviken shelled the cruiser *Köln*, which was at anchor in Bergen harbor after disembarking troops. Sandviken was immediately silenced by German bombers and naval gun fire. By mid-morning the Germans had captured both batteries to include their flak positions, permitting German seaplane transports to ferry in troops. German naval artillery units would require the rest of the day, however, to restore the coastal guns to action.<sup>8</sup>

## **Stavanger**

The only initial objective to be attacked singularly by air assault was Stavanger, which possessed the largest airfield in Norway. After preparatory strafing and dive bombing of defenses, at 0845 the *Luftwaffe* dropped a parachute company (131 troops) to seize

Stavanger-Sola airfield. Paratroopers not only met with stiff resistance but had to dismantle barbed-wire barriers which the Norwegians had erected across the field to render the runway unserviceable. The *Luftwaffe* air landed two infantry battalions in the second wave to occupy the city and port, where three ships of the 1st Sea Transport Echelon delivered heavy equipment, supplies, and reinforcements later that morning. Just outside the port of Stavanger the single ship of the Export Echelon bound for Stavanger (*Roda*) fell prey to a Norwegian destroyer, which in turn the *Luftwaffe* destroyed shortly thereafter.<sup>9</sup>

Also arriving in the second wave were the *Luftwaffe* ground staff and command elements required to convert Sola into an operational base for attack units and into an intermediate landing field for transport aircraft headed for Trondheim. The ground staff and command elements directed 120 airlift sorties into Sola on *Wesertag*, ferrying in fuel, ammunition, and flak units. Although five aircraft were lost due to take-off accidents and collisions, by the end of the day the field was operational and Stavanger was home to 36 aircraft.<sup>10</sup>

### **Kristiansand-Arendal**

Battle Group 4 encountered considerable delays due to fog and resistance but was able to achieve its objectives without loses. Heavy fog forced the single torpedo boat (*Greif*) transporting a bicycle squadron to Arendal to wait until 0900 to enter the harbor, but neither the torpedo boat or landing party met with any resistance. Fog also delayed the mainstay of the battle group's entrance into the fjord leading to Kristiansand by 45 minutes. Although the delay was brief, it cost the battle group the element of surprise, for

under conditions of improved visibility a Norwegian sea plane spotted the group and alerted the defenders.<sup>11</sup>

Subsequently, the coastal batteries protecting Kristiansand at Odderøy and Gleodden foiled three attempts by the battle group to break into the harbor. Even a brief *Luftwaffe* bomb strike following the first unsuccessful attempt did not silence the batteries. The (naval) Commander of the Battle Group 4 canceled a fourth attempt when the fog returned and the *Karlsruhe* nearly ran aground attempting to infiltrate alone.<sup>12</sup> Only after a second more intense bombardment of the batteries did the guns cease fire and when visibility again improved the battle group entered the harbor (1100). The landing party occupied the batteries and city within hours but could not secure the airfield until the following day. This action required the assistance of the troops and supplies which arrived later that afternoon with the 1st Transport Echelon.<sup>13</sup>

## **Oslo**

### **Oslo Harbor**

Despite fog, Battle Group 5 lost the advantage of surprise early in its penetration of the 100 km long Oslo Fjord and later encountered heavy resistance in the narrows (Dröbak) 15 km from the city. Resistance from the Norwegian coastal defense batteries cost Germany its newest heavy cruiser (*Blücher*) and delayed the landing troops arrival in Oslo by over 24 hours.<sup>14</sup>

Since the battle group commander had encountered no resistance at the entrance to the Oslo fjord from either a Norwegian patrol ship or from the first set of coastal batteries, he apparently assumed the lack of activity (searchlights, movement) at Dröbak meant that

the Norwegians would not offer resistance.<sup>15</sup> His assumption proved mistaken when the Norwegians opened fire with gunfire and torpedoes, sinking the *Blücher* (which was both the lead ship and command ship) and damaging the cruiser *Lützow*. The loss of the *Blücher* was accompanied by a heavy loss of troops, including most of the staff of the 163rd Infantry Division.<sup>16</sup>

The central focus of all efforts immediately became the fortifications on the Dröbak narrows. Army Group XXI issued the following directive: “The main point of the operation consists in the taking of Dröbak. It is unimportant whether taken from the sea or the land.”<sup>17</sup> The commanding officer of the *Lützow*, having assumed command of the battle group, landed troops outside the batteries’ ranges to assault the coastal fortifications from land. Reluctant to jeopardize more capital ships, the battle group commander primarily confined the naval vessels to providing protective fire for the landing. The *Luftwaffe* directed wave after wave of bombers and dive bombers against the fortifications throughout the day and by evening all but one (Kaholm) of the forts had been captured or had surrendered in compliance with the Oslo garrison commander’s order. With the surrender of the final fort on the morning of the 10th, the battle group finally could ferry the troops into Oslo harbor.<sup>18</sup>

### **Oslo-Fornebu Airfield**

Similarly, fog and resistance delayed the air assault of Oslo-Fornebu Airfield. The group commander of the aircraft from the X Air Corps aborted the airdrop mission (two parachute companies) after encountering dense fog and losing two aircraft. Upon learning this X Air Corps ordered all aircraft to return to Aalborg (Denmark).<sup>19</sup> However, the transportation group carrying airborne troops (elements of an infantry battalion) ignored

the order because it had not come through their chain of command (Air Transport Chief [Land]) and because the group suspected the order to be a Norwegian deception. Moreover, the pilots assigned to the Air Transport Chief (Land) were predominantly instructor pilots from the flight schools who, unlike the X Air Corps transport pilots, were well trained in instrument flying and had sufficient experience in bad weather flying. For them the fog presented no insurmountable difficulties.<sup>20</sup>

Evidently, Air Transport Chief (Land) was also reluctant to issue a general recall. He recognized that Fornebu was urgently needed as a base for fighter and bomber aircraft which would provide the protection and air cover for German troops as they moved inland. Fornebu was also the only location for unloading troops and supplies which was virtually safe from the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. Furthermore, Fornebu would provide a critical intermediate landing and take-off base for aircraft flying missions in support of operations in central Norway and Narvik. Finally, Air Transport Chief (Land) feared the confusion and disruption which would occur if the different waves of returning aircraft, without regard for the established schedule, all descended on the limited Aalborg airfields simultaneously for refueling.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to the fog, the air assault had heavy flak and ground fire to contend with before the first assault troops could land. X Air Corps bombers and fighters pounded and strafed the defenders. One account indicates that Bf-110s landed prior to the transports and acted as “mobile machine gun nests,” taxing to the corners of the field to provide covering fire for the landing transports.<sup>22</sup> Once on the ground, Lieutenant Colonel Pohlmann, the forward representative of the Group XXI who had been covertly deployed to Oslo on 8 April, directed the work of assault troops in securing the field.<sup>23</sup>



Although three hours behind schedule, Pohlmann quickly had readied the field for the transports. The hazards of a short landing strip, sporadic ground fire, and burning wreckage would take their toll on aircraft throughout the day, but the X Air Corps would maintain a continuous flow of aircraft into the field all morning. Around noon Group XXI diverted to Fornebu six infantry companies en route to Stavanger, to compensate for troops lost by the delay to Battle Group 5. In the afternoon the two parachute companies originally bound for Oslo also returned.<sup>24</sup>

With these forces the Germans were able to expand operations beyond Fornebu. They seized and held Oslo but were too late to influence political developments. A small group of forces reached the city center by mid-day, where aided by confusion and He-111s demonstrating over the capital, the group was able to bluff a city of 250,000 into surrender.<sup>25</sup> German forces also occupied the military airfield, Oslo-Kjeller, which offered no resistance. Kjeller contained stores of some 60 tons of aviation fuel and provided a second field for landing troops and supplies.<sup>26</sup> Nonetheless, the Norwegian Government had ordered a mobilization, and together with the Royal Family, had evacuated the capital well before the first German aircraft appeared over the city or the first German warship entered the harbor.<sup>27</sup>

### **Defense Against Allied Counterstrokes**

The anticipated Allied response to *Weserübung Nord* demonstrated neither the swiftness nor boldness in execution which had characterized the German invasion. The primary objective of the Allies was the recapture of Narvik. However, the secondary objective, the capture of Trondheim with the military aim of isolating Narvik from German

air support, temporarily eclipsed Narvik due to the political aim of encouraging Norwegian resistance in central and southern Norway.<sup>28</sup>

At both Narvik and Trondheim organizational and command problems associated with a combined, joint campaign plagued the Allied landings. Still, at Trondheim such problems were inconsequential compared to the combined effects of the logistical inadequacy of Allied landing sites and the devastating impact of continuous *Luftwaffe* attacks, which forced the Allies to abandon their operations.<sup>29</sup> With the Germans in possession of all the major harbors, Allied bases (Namsos: 14 April, Ålesund and Andalsnes: 17-18 April) possessed limited facilities for disembarking and supporting troops. Thus, facilities, not the availability of sea transport, limited the forces which the Allies could commit. The size of the landing forces quickly proved insufficient for the task, especially in light of the *Luftwaffe*'s virtually undisputed command of the air.<sup>30</sup> Yet until the evacuation of the land forces (12,000 British and French troops) from the Trondheim area (1-3 May), the *OKW* and Group XXI failed to appreciate fully the effects that the *Luftwaffe* attacks were having on Allied forces and believed the situation to be much more serious than it ever actually was.<sup>31</sup>

Similarly, after the destruction of the German destroyers in the Narvik Fjord Hitler assessed Dietl's situation to be hopeless and the Führer lost his composure. In the following days he attempted to order the evacuation of Narvik and the withdrawal of troops into the mountains, into Sweden, or their evacuation by air. Fortunately, the Army's General Staff Officer in the *OKW* Operations Staff (Lieutenant Colonel von Loßberg) courageously intervened and prevented the transmittal of the evacuation order.

Subsequently, Jodl succeeded in convincing Hitler of the need to defend Narvik as long as possible.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the Royal Navy's frequent naval bombardments and the increasing pressure from both the Norwegians and the Allied forces, it was not until 29 April that Dietl considered his position serious. He correctly surmised that the Allies, having missed the opportunity to strike immediately with their first landings while the German position was weak (14-16 April), would pursue a slow and methodical campaign.<sup>33</sup> In Dietl's estimation the Allies would not undertake a major operation against Narvik proper until they had completed all their preparations for a deliberate siege and until terrain conditions had improved. After 6 May, the Narvik situation steadily deteriorated as terrain conditions improved and the Allies' buildup facilitated an advance on three sides of Dietl's defensive perimeter.

Dietl repeatedly emphasized that he could not hold his position unless the *Luftwaffe* delivered reinforcements and air support. However, with the *Wehrmacht* poised to launch *Fall Gelb* on the continent (10 May), the *OKW* refused to commit additional troops at Narvik; nor could the *Luftwaffe* provide the necessary air support due to the great distance from Narvik to the nearest airfield (Trondheim).<sup>34</sup> Dietl learned to moderate his expectations, fight for time, and hope for a miracle which would save his troops from internment in Sweden. The *Luftwaffe* did deliver a token reinforcement of 66 parachute troops from Group XXI on 14 May and an additional 1,050 men throughout the remainder of the month and the first week in June. In good weather Dietl received several *Luftwaffe* attack sorties a day and essential supplies by airdrop. Unfortunately, in his view the *Luftwaffe* directed too many of the attack sorties at naval forces and not enough at

ground targets, for the immediate support of his troops. Continuous bad weather at the end of May and beginning of June also brought the delivery of supplies to a virtual halt.<sup>35</sup>

Learning from the Trondheim experience, the Allies postponed the major assault on Narvik until additional shore-based anti-aircraft batteries and adequate air power were available to support the attack. Preparations were complete on 21 May, when the airfield at Bardufoss became operational, supplementing the small strip at Skaanland and carrier-based assets.<sup>36</sup> Allied planners set 27 May as the date for the final assault.

In the meantime, on 24 May the Allied Command decided to order the evacuation of the Allied forces after the seizure of Narvik and the destruction of Narvik's port and rail facilities.<sup>37</sup> Although these forces would not influence the outcome of the battle on the continent where the evacuation of Dunkirk was pending, the air, land, and naval forces might be essential to the defense of Britain.<sup>38</sup> Much to his relief, on 8 June a surprised Dietl discovered the Allies had abandoned Narvik.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>*Brassey's*, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup>Concise treatment of the landing at Narvik (other locations as well) can be found in Ottmer, p. 87. For the perspective of Dietl and his staff, see Dietl, pp. 44-77.

<sup>3</sup>The Norwegian commander's assessment and justification for his action, despite orders from the division commander to resist, is printed in Dietl, pp. 64-67. Details on the occupation and military administration of Narvik's facilities can also be found in Dietl, pp. 67-74.

<sup>4</sup>At Narvik alone, the *Kriegsmarine* lost half of its total destroyer force. Casualty figures are unclear, but 2600 sailors were rescued from the vessels (some purposefully grounded) along with communications equipment and some machine guns. Dietl clothed these sailors in any warm clothing he could find (to include women's furs) and formed them into naval battalions to supplement his meager forces (2000 troops). With the clear exception of the battalion lead by Lt. Cdr. Erdmenger, these battalions had very limited combat effectiveness. Dietl initially pressed Group XXI to have the sailors evacuated through Sweden back to Germany and some did make the trip as "shipwrecked sailors," avoiding internment. Dietl later found the naval battalions useful for moving supplies internally (manual labor) and as reserves. In addition to Dietl, see United Kingdom, Air

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Ministry, "The Battle for Narvik," (n.p.: Air Historical Branch, 1950), which is based in part on reports of the Erdmenger Battalion.

<sup>5</sup>Ottmer, p.89.

<sup>6</sup>Sea planes also played an important supply role until the airfield was fully operational. For an operational level discussion of air support, see E. R. Hooton, *Phoenix Triumphant: The Rise and Rise of the Luftwaffe* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1994), pp. 213-238. Hooton's discussion is unique in its level of operational detail; however, specific references to sources are infrequent which makes independent verification of data difficult.

<sup>7</sup>Assman notes (p. 10) that although the *Kriegsmarine* canceled an instruction to use the British White Ensign, German warships were instructed to use British recognition signals. The *Köln* used the recognition signal "HMS Cairo" and replied to signals in English (p. 30).

<sup>8</sup>At 1800 twelve Wellington and Hampden bombers attacked the *Köln* and other German ships in the harbor inflicting little damage. The *Köln* subsequently left the harbor, but British dive-bombers (15 Skuas) sank the damaged *Königsberg* on the following day, claiming the first major warship sunk by air attack. See S. W. Roskill, *The Defensive*, vol. I of *The War at Sea, 1939-1945* (London: HMSO, 1954), p. 172.

<sup>9</sup>Assman, p.32.

<sup>10</sup>United Kingdom, Air Ministry, *The Rise and Fall of the German Air Force (1933 to 1945)*, Air Ministry Pamphlet No. 248 (n.p.: 1948), p. 60; Hooton, p. 223.

<sup>11</sup>Assman, pp. 13-32.

<sup>12</sup>Assman, p. 32 and Ziemke pp. 50-51. On the following day, while returning to Germany (Kiel), the *Karlsruhe* was torpedoed by submarine, abandoned and sunk. Assman, p. 81.

<sup>13</sup>The *Luftwaffe* occupied the field with 20-25 single engine fighters on 10 April. *Rise and Fall*, p. 60.

<sup>14</sup>The German naval attaché in Oslo (Captain Schreiber) describes preparations the attaches undertook to facilitate the landings and their anxiety over the delay: "0400 I am in harbour, ready to receive the German warships. Lt Kempf is in a German ship out in the bay, to serve as pilot. Berths have been arranged... 0930 In the office of the Naval Attaché, the top secret papers are being destroyed, because the position has become tense owing to the delay in the arrival of the German warships." Excerpts of Schreiber's official diary are reproduced in *Brassey's*, p. 92.

<sup>15</sup>Ottmer, p. 97.

<sup>16</sup>Ziemke notes (pp. 51-52): "It was ironical that Germany's newest heavy cruiser was sunk by the guns (Krupp model 1905 [German]) of a fort built during the Crimean War and torpedoes manufactured at the turn of the center by an Austrian firm in Fiume." However, the situation is more than ironic; there was no operational need for the *Blücher* (or *Lützow*) to be included in this battle group, let alone leading the Battle Group. See Assman, pp. 11-12 and p. 34.

<sup>17</sup>Assman, p. 34.

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<sup>18</sup>Admiral Boehm, the Commanding Admiral, Norway, arrived later that day by plane and as senior officer assumed coordination responsibilities for Group XXI. Memoirs from his experience in Norway are available but deal primarily with the political aspects of following events, specifically Group XXI's opposition to a Quisling government and to the appointment of a civilian plenipotentiary (Reichskommissar Terbhoven) prior to the completion of military operations. Hitler later relieved Boehm for his vociferous opposition to Terbhoven's administration and pacification policies. For the period immediately following *Wesertag*, see Hermann Boehm, *Norwegen zwischen England und Deutschland: Die Zeit vor und während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Lippoldsberg: Klosterhaus Verlag, 1956), pp. 68-80.

<sup>19</sup>X Air Corps (*Fliegerkorps X*) under Generalleutnant Geisler commanded the *Luftwaffe* units participating in *Weserübung*; attached to X Air Corps were the offices of Air Transport Chief (Land) and Air Transport Chief (Sea). For a description of air transport operations in support of *Weserübung*, see Fritz Morzik, *German Airlift Operations*, USAF Historical Studies, No. 167 (Maxwell AFB, AL: USAF Historical Division, Research Studies Institute, 1961), pp. 87-105.

<sup>20</sup>Since the *Wehrmacht* conducted paradrops only in clear weather, pilots of X Air Corps were not as skilled in instrument flying. Ottmer, p. 97 and Morzik, pp. 97-99. With the successful completion of *Weserübung Süd* anticipated, Aalborg East and West were designated the return refueling bases for all transport aircraft.

<sup>21</sup>Morzik, p. 97 and Rise and Fall, p. 60.

<sup>22</sup>Hooton, p. 223.

<sup>23</sup>Morzik, pp. 100-101.

<sup>24</sup>Shortly after the assault troop landings had begun, German naval elements in the Oslo Fjord were reporting that the landing operations at Fornebu were successfully underway. Considering the distance and terrain, vessels in the harbor at best could accurately report only the presence of German aircraft in the sky. Nevertheless, upon receiving these reports, X Air Corps lifted the order to return to base. X Air Corps also sent the original paratrooper companies back from Aalborg after the refueling of transport aircraft. See Ottmer, p. 99 and Morzik, pp. 96-101.

<sup>25</sup>The German naval attaché in Oslo provides an interesting perspective on events in Oslo: "0930- ... Panic in the town in consequence of flak defense and the appearance of German aircraft." *Brassey's*, p.92.

<sup>26</sup>See summary of air operations and importance of Norwegian airfields in *Rise and Fall*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>27</sup>Group XXI made one final, desperate effort to seize the Royal Family, now located in Hamar (120 km north of Oslo). The German air attaché in Oslo (Spiller) commandeered buses and drove the parachute companies out to Hamar. Forewarned, the Royal family had relocated again (to Elverum, 80 km from the Swedish border) and Norwegian resistance forced the Germans back after a skirmish. See Halder's 1915 diary entry for 9 April in Burdick, p. 116 and Hooton, p. 223.

<sup>28</sup>The Allied plan for landings in Norway (Pan R4) provided for the occupation of Narvik (and subsequently the Kiruna-Gällivare area, the ore railway, and Luleå),

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Trondheim, Bergen, and Stavanger. The Allies would occupy Stavanger only long enough to destroy Sola airfield, which was not only the largest Norwegian airfield but the one closest to Britain (Derry, p. 13). However, when the *Luftwaffe* hit the battleship *HMS Rodney* and sunk the destroyer *HMS Gurkha* on 9 April off of Bergen, the Royal Navy decided to restrict naval activity in the south to submarine operations and employ the surface fleet only in the north, at the extreme range of the *Luftwaffe*. Butler, p. 127 and p. 135. Although a comprehensive assessment of the *Luftwaffe*'s anti-shipping operations exceeds the scope of this paper, in brief, *Luftwaffe* bombing of British surface combatants and support vessels in the face of anti-aircraft fire proved ineffective. See the short discussion of *Luftwaffe* doctrinal and equipment deficiencies (and attempted quick fixes) in *Rise and Fall*, pp. 42-44 and pp. 58-64.

<sup>29</sup>The *Luftwaffe* had been unable to prevent the Allied landings which had taken place at night and under cover of snowstorms and low clouds, but when the Allies attempted to build up for offensive operations, the *Luftwaffe* subjected them to "continuous and energetic" air attacks which were only infrequently interrupted on account of weather. The *Luftwaffe* destroyed harbor installations, supplies, and vessels. German airpower convinced the Allies that their position was untenable long before troops from Oslo linked up with the German defenders at Trondheim (vicinity of Stören, 30 April). Assman, p. 57. For a comprehensive treatment of the Allied plans see Derry, pp. 19-24; for the landings see Butler, pp. 119-150; and for the naval campaign and Royal Navy support of the landings see Roskill, pp. 169-203.

<sup>30</sup>The Allies correctly had recognized that until the German forces from Oslo achieved a land link-up with Trondheim the *Luftwaffe* would be the decisive factor in the operation. Yet, Allied air defense relied almost singularly on specially equipped anti-aircraft cruisers. According to Roskill (p. 184) these cruisers proved woefully ineffective: "Their radar sets were rendered almost useless by the high cliffs and surrounding land; the same cliffs prevented any appreciable warning being received visually; the narrow waters left little room for maneuvering, yet it was essential to remain under way; ammunition expenditure was extremely high yet no stocks were available for replenishment locally." Carrier based fighters supplemented these ships during portions of the campaign but conducted primarily bombing missions. The Allies never succeeded in establishing shore based anti-aircraft batteries and the *Luftwaffe* destroyed the much hoped-for shore-based fighter protection (Gladiators) within hours of its arrival at the operating field constructed on a frozen lake. See also Derry, 19-24.

<sup>31</sup>Assman, p. 57.

<sup>32</sup>On the "crisis in command" in the *OKW*, see Jodl diary entries, *IMT*, pp. 419-424; Warlimont, pp. 73-80; Hubatsch pp. 373-380; and Greiner, pp. 86-87. Hitler ordered that no new forces were to be committed to Narvik on 18 April.

<sup>33</sup>The Allies would build up troop strength eventually to 30,000. Ziemke, p. 92.

<sup>34</sup>This situation would change as elements of the 2nd Mountain Division (Generalleutnant Feuerstein) advanced north from Trondheim towards Narvik. With the seizure of Hatfjelldal and Mosjøen on 10-11 May, the *Luftwaffe* (*Luftflotte 5*) obtained

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staging and refueling bases which permitted Ju-87s and He-111s to fly close air support and interdiction missions. See Ziemke, pp. 95-97 and *Rise and Fall*, p. 64.

<sup>35</sup>Dietl was entirely dependent on the *Luftwaffe* for ammunition, reinforcements, and most types of supplies, all of which had to be delivered by air drop or sea plane. Dietl was so desperate for heavy weapons that 10 Ju-52s brought in a battery of mountain artillery, landing on an improvised air strip on Hartvig Lake (14 April). These aircraft had only enough fuel to make it to Narvik and were to be abandoned and allowed to sink into the lake when the ice thawed. On *Luftwaffe* supply operations to Narvik, see Morzik, pp. 103-105. For the perspective of the troops on the ground, see Dietl, p. 98 f. and *The Battle for Narvik*, pp. 9-13. Ziemke (p. 88) provides information on support received through Sweden via rail, to include rations, medical supplies, ski equipment, clothing, but not ammunition. Also 230 German “specialists” arrived via Sweden during the course of the campaign.

<sup>36</sup>Butler, pp. 142-144 and Ziemke, p. 99.

<sup>37</sup>Dietl had destroyed the piers and ore shipping facilities back on 5 May (Ziemke, p.91); for all intents and purposes, the battle for Narvik was a question of military prestige.

<sup>38</sup>Butler, p. 145.



## Chapter 5

### Epilogue: Precarious Prototype

*That the command and troop contingencies of the three armed forces branches worked together almost without friction cannot be credited to purposeful organization of the commanding staff. It was, instead, entirely an achievement of the personalities involved who knew well how to cooperate closely in order to overcome the inadequacies of organization.*

—Group XXI After-Action Report  
30 July 1940<sup>1</sup>

With the Allied withdrawal from Narvik (8 June) and Norwegian capitulation (10 June), Group XXI had obtained all of the operational level objectives the *OKW* had designated. With the exception of the *Kriegsmarine*, the *Wehrmacht* had sustained insignificant losses and achieved another convincing operational-level success.<sup>2</sup> This success has served to reinforce positive lessons of the campaign—boldness, surprise, tactical air support, and tactical innovation—elements which contributed immensely to *Weserübung Nord*'s satisfactory operational outcome. Success, however, has not encouraged the critical examination of less propitious aspects of the campaign such as unified planning and direction.<sup>3</sup>

## Unified Planning

Early in the development of *Weserübung*, the *OKW* (Operations Staff) emerged as the (joint) agency ultimately responsible for unified planning and direction of the campaign. Ideally, this responsibility required the *OKW* serve as an objective arbiter of military proposals and courses of action, ensuring that the services (and service chiefs) subordinated their individual agendas and interests to overall strategic and campaign considerations. This responsibility also demanded the *OKW* planners address legitimate service concerns in the process as well. In the context of *Weserübung Nord*, the *OKW* failed to perform these functions adequately.

From very early on the *OKW* possessed a strong vested interest in a military solution to the Norwegian problem and thus, could not demonstrate the objectivity required of a unified staff. *Weserübung* would serve as a proof of concept and warning to the Army General Staff and the *OKL*, that the much smaller *OKW* was capable of planning and directing major operations. *Weserübung* would provide the *OKW* with a new *raison d'être*, promising to transform the headquarters from a small, intermediary staff into a working headquarters for Hitler's overall command of the *Wehrmacht*.<sup>4</sup>

Although this new role for the *OKW* directly reflected the intent of the *Führer*, institutionally the *OKW* possessed neither the influence or personnel resources to effectively orchestrate *Weserübung* alone. Not unexpectedly, Jodl found a useful and willing ally in Raeder, whose experience and influence would be a critical counterweight to Göring and Halder. Raeder's staff would also serve as an essential supplement to the *OKW* staff, as in the case of the *SKL* expansion of the original *Studie Nord*. A powerful axis soon developed between the primary proponents of the operation, Jodl and Raeder,

which heavily influenced the course of events and further marginalized the role of the other services.<sup>5</sup>

The impact of the Jodl-Raeder axis is discernible even in the most fundamental of issues, the question of the necessity of military action. On this issue it appears Jodl unquestioningly accepted Raeder's assumption that Britain would take the first step in Norway and force a German response. Since Germany would be under tremendous pressure to react, it seemed unnecessary to weigh the pros and cons which the *OKL* and the *OKH* (and Raeder's own *SKL*) were raising.<sup>6</sup> The question of the usefulness of a better naval strategic situation in light of a shortage of naval forces and the problems of holding bases against a British counterattack, defending the Norwegian coast and shipping lanes, and supporting the population of Norway after all imports were cut off were left unresolved.<sup>7</sup>

The *OKL* and the *Luftwaffe* suffered even more than the *OKH* and the German Army as a result of the Jodl-Raeder axis and service marginalization, for unlike the other services the *Luftwaffe* could not support *Weserübung Nord* without jeopardizing support for *Fall Gelb*.<sup>8</sup> *Studie Nord* proposed utilizing the 22nd Infantry Division and 7th Air Division, a diversion which would have required a complete change to operations planned for Belgium and Holland. Although the OKW changed this requirement after Göring vehemently protested directly to Hitler, *Fall Gelb* still required the fourteen transport groups and eight of the bomber and fighter groups participating in *Weserübung*.<sup>9</sup> Even after Hitler decided to launch *Weserübung* independent from and prior to *Fall Gelb*, there was no way to predict when these units would be available for the offensive in the west or

what their status would be.<sup>10</sup> If the Norwegians were to have presented any organized resistance, the planned timetable for *Fall Gelb* would have been ruined.

### **Unified Direction**

In light of Göring's concerns for *Fall Gelb* and Raeder's influence, it is not unexpected that Falkenhorst exercised no direct authority over units of the other services during the execution of *Weserübung Nord* and that a three-way division of command emerged.<sup>11</sup> Early in March Göring strongly objected to the subordination of air assets directly to Falkenhorst, with the result that Group XXI would have to direct all its tasking for X Air Corps through the *OKW* to the *OKL*.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, the *Kriegsmarine* maintained direct control over the battle groups, through the Commanders of Naval Groups West and East, and over harbors and seaward defenses at the landing sights, through area commanders subordinate to the Commanding Admiral, Norway. In principle, during the initial days of the campaign Falkenhorst was required to direct naval tasking through a XXI Group liaison at the *OKW* (*Heimstab Nord*), to the *OKW*, and then on to Raeder and his operations staff.<sup>13</sup> Even after the Headquarters for Group XXI, *Luftflotte 5*, and the Commanding Admiral Norway were in place in Oslo (mid-April), Falkenhorst remained a *primus inter pares* with little direct control over air or naval assets.<sup>14</sup>

Hitler and his newly empowered *OKW* further complicated Falkenhorst's command arrangements. Hitler used the *OKW* to exercise operational control over Dietl's activities at Narvik and even temporarily removed the 3rd Mountain Division from Group XXI and directly subordinated it to the *OKW*. Hitler also directed the resupply efforts for the Narvik and Trondheim assault groups and the (tactical) execution of the Dombas paradrop

on 14 April, aimed at facilitating the advance of forces from Oslo to Trondheim. In this respect, *Weserübung Nord* served not only as a prototype for future joint operations but foreshadowed the *OKW* Theaters-of-War (staffs) through which later in the war Hitler would meddle in the most minute detail of operational command.<sup>15</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Ziemke, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup>*Weserübung Nord* cost the *Wehrmacht* 1,317 killed, 2,375 lost at sea or otherwise missing, and 1604 wounded; 117 aircraft; 1 heavy cruiser, 2 light cruisers, 10 destroyers, 1 torpedo boat, 15 small vessels, and 6 *U-boats* (Hubatsch, p. 257). Allied combatant losses included 1,896 British killed and 2,500 lost at sea; 530 French and Poles killed; 1,335 Norwegians killed; 112 (British) aircraft, including 25 which went down with the aircraft carrier *Glorious*; 1 aircraft carrier, 1 cruiser, 1 anti-aircraft cruiser, 7 destroyers, and 4 submarines (all British); 1 destroyer and 1 submarine (French); and 1 destroyer and 1 submarine (Polish). Allied figures are found in Ziemke, p. 109.

<sup>3</sup>In this author's opinion, the operational-level success of *Weserübung Nord* did not translate into the grand strategic advantages envisioned by Raeder, but rather into the significant burdens associated with occupying a semi-hostile nation with 300,000 troops. Ironically, the most adversely impacted was the *Kriegsmarine*, which at the end of the campaign had no major warship fit to put to sea and only one heavy cruiser, two light cruisers, and four destroyers operational. Specifically, with the loss of the *Blücher* and *Lützow* the *SKL*'s strategic concept for combined battleship-cruiser-destroyer warfare in the Atlantic was shattered. On this subject, see Salewski, *Seekriegsleitung*, pp. 185-186.

<sup>4</sup>In assigning *Weserübung* to the *OKW* Hitler may have been concerned with the security of the operation and the qualifications of others (the *OKL* and Göring) to plan and command large-scale joint operations, but his overriding concern was avoidance of the *OKH* and the General Staff. The General Staff was the logical choice for the planning and directing of *Weserübung* but Halder's negative response to Raeder's preliminary inquiry and the *OKH*'s continued collective resistance to Hitler's *Fall Gelb* proposals and timetable drove the *Führer* to bypass the General Staff. In practice, Hitler was creating a second general staff and removing operational planning from the General Staff and the other service staffs. In short, Hitler attempted to create a "joint" planning staff for *Weserübung*, but for injudicious reasons. See Warlimont, p. 71 and Greiner, p. 371.

<sup>5</sup>Fundamentally, the influence of the *Kriegsmarine* and *Luftwaffe* within the *OKW* was limited by attitudes, numerical representation, and organizational structure. The *SKL* and the *OKL* bemoaned the dominance of the Army within the *OKW* with its "continental ideas" and "sand-table minded[ness]" (*Brassey's*, p. 77; *Rise and Fall*, p. 421). Raeder's influence on Jodl (and Krancke's seniority amongst the service representatives) alleviated the situation for the *Kriegsmarine*. The *Luftwaffe* was without such subtle means of redress. Proportionally, the *Luftwaffe*'s numerical representation in the *OKW* was barely better than the smaller and operationally less significant *Kriegsmarine*. No *Luftwaffe*

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general officer served at the *OKW*, no *Luftwaffe* officer held the position of department head within the *OKW*, and the highest ranking *Luftwaffe* officer on Jodl's Operations Staff was a major (*Rise and Fall*, p. 412).

<sup>6</sup>Salewski, "Germany and North Norway," p. 41. Warlimont remarks that within the *OKW* the weighing of pros and cons was tantamount to cowardice; boldness was what each new challenge required (p. 69). Warlimont alludes to Jodl's diary entry from 28 March as further evidence of this attitude: "Individual naval officers appear luke-warm concerning *Weserübung* and require an injection. Even the three chiefs of von Falkenhorst are concerned about things which are none of their business. Krancke sees more disadvantages than advantages." Translated from diary entry in *IMT*, p. 417.

<sup>7</sup>Nor did the *OKW* reassess the military and economic necessity of *Weserübung* after Manstein's *Sichelschnittplan* promised more decisive results in France (24 February). Gemzell, *OCI*, p. 412.

<sup>8</sup>With regards to the Army, Warlimont indicates in practice the *OKW* cut only the Operations Section and higher levels of *OKH* out of planning. The *OKW* made full use of the remaining Army Staff Sections, including Intelligence, Supply, and Transportation (p. 73).

<sup>9</sup>Although the *OKW* deconflicted the airborne and parachute forces committed to *Weserübung* and *Fall Gelb*, equally serious was the compromise of the very existence and tactics of these units which had a key role to play in *Fall Gelb*. See Wilhelm Speidel, "The German Air Force in the Campaign in the West 1939-1940" Part One: "German Employment of Strategic Air Forces" and Part III: "Operation Yellow," (Karlsruhe: Studiengruppe Geschichte des Luftkrieges [USAF Historical Division], n.d.), pp. 9-12 and pp. 24-25 and Maier, p. 194. On the non-preplanned use of paratroopers in Norway, which would further compromise the "secret weapon," see Morzik, pp. 101-103 (Dombas operation on 14 April), and Dietl, pp. 154-156 (Narvik).

<sup>10</sup>Speidel, p. 14.

<sup>11</sup>Ziemke, p. 30.

<sup>12</sup>*IMT*, 3 March and 4 March entries, pp. 409-410.

<sup>13</sup>Ziemke, pp. 30-31.

<sup>14</sup>See discussion in Warlimont, pp. 73-75, based on Halder and Jodl's diary entries.

<sup>15</sup>Greiner, p. 80.

## Appendix A

### Chronology<sup>1</sup>

1939

September 1 German ministers in Norway, Sweden, and Finland inform those governments that Germany will respect their integrity, so long as they maintain strict neutrality

27 Surrender of Warsaw; Hitler outlines plans for *Fall Gelb*

October 3 Raeder directs the *SKL* to examine Norwegian question

9 Hitler instructs *Wehrmacht* to prepare for *Fall Gelb*

10 Raeder raises issue of Norway with Hitler

November 30 Soviet Union invades Finland (Russo-Finnish Winter War)

December 11 Raeder receives Quisling

12 Hitler receives Quisling and orders *Studie Nord* be prepared

18 Hitler promises Quisling financial support

1940

January 10 *Studie Nord* released

16 Hitler formally postpones *Fall Gelb* until spring

Allies begin military preparations for aid to Finland

23 Hitler orders special staff formed within *OKW* to work begin on

*Weserübung*

February 5 *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Krancke* begins work

12 Finland decides to negotiate with the U.S.S.R.

16 *Altmark* incident

21 Hitler appoints Falkenhorst

26 Falkenhorst and staff begin work

28 Hitler decides *Weserübung* will be independent of *Fall Gelb*

March 1 Operational Directive 1 for *Weserübung* signed

- 2 Allies request permission for transit of troops through Norway and Sweden to Finland
- March 12 Russo-Finnish Winter War peace treaty signed
- 26 Hitler reaffirms *Weserübung* will precede *Fall Gelb*
- 28 Allies decide to mine Norwegian waters
- April 2 Hitler directs *Weserübung* be implemented on 9 April
- 8 Royal Navy mines Bodø
- April 9 *Weserübung* begins
- 14 Allied troops land in Norway at Namsos and Narvik
- 17 Allies land at Andalsnes
- May 1 Allies evacuate Namsos
- 2 Allies evacuate Andalsnes
- 10 Germany invades Belgium, Holland, and France
- 28 Allies occupy Narvik
- 31 Allies evacuate Bodø
- June 4-8 Allies evacuate Narvik
- 10 Norway capitulates

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Events listed are adapted and expanded based upon tables and chronologies found in Hubatsch, pp. 474-475; Derry, pp. xv-xvi; and Butler, pp. 672-675.



## **Appendix B**

### **Excursus on Allied Intentions and German Intelligence**

Based on their assumption of a long war and their successful experience with economic warfare during the First World War, the Allies recognized the strategic significance of Norway from the very beginning of hostilities. However, divergent national strategies and a reluctance to appear as the first to violate the rights of neutral states constrained Allied planning and activity. The British, prompted by Winston Churchill (the First Lord of the Admiralty), wanted to concentrate on the creation of a blockade and even after the Soviet invasion of Finland maintained the main purpose of any Scandinavian operation must be the defeat of Germany.<sup>1</sup> The French were more interested in creating a northern front to relieve pressure on the western front and to aid Finland. The French were concerned that a Finnish defeat (and Allied inactivity) would have a negative effect on morale in the Dominions and in the U.S. The Allies slowly organized a landing force and flotilla, and intended to put 100,000 British and 50,000 French troops into the northern theater. Attempts to persuade the Norwegian or Swedish governments to cooperate in military or economic measures failed, nor would the governments grant permission for Allied troops to transit their territory en route to Finland.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to Daladier and Chamberlain's public announcement of plans to send military aid to Finland via Norway and Sweden, German naval intelligence provided the

OKW with solid assessments of general Allied (British) intentions. The radio intelligence service provided confirmation of Allied preparations for sending troops to Norway and of the subsequent stand-down of the landing forces (15 March) after Finland signed the peace treaty with the U.S.S.R. (12 March). Equally important, the radio intelligence service (and *Luftwaffe* aerial reconnaissance) confirmed that Royal Navy activity indicated that the plan for *Weserübung Nord* remained uncompromised.<sup>3</sup>

The naval radio intelligence service did not, however, provide further insight into Allied plans. From activity and intercepts it was only clear that the Allies had postponed the Norwegian operation; the service could not determine if the Allies had canceled the Norwegian operation completely. The service was also unable to provide advance notice of the British mining operation in Norwegian waters scheduled for 8 April.<sup>4</sup> Allied planners designed this mining operation (designated Wilfred) to provoke a German military response, which would justify an Allied landing (designated Plan R4).<sup>5</sup>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>British Ministry of Economic Warfare assessments maintained that Germany had two main economic weaknesses: oil and high grade ore. Deprivation of high grade ore from Sweden would be “catastrophic.” Even the reduction in supply equivalent to that shipped through Norway would result in “acute industrial embarrassment.” See Derry, p. 11; also Maier, “Allied Strategy,” pp. 199.

<sup>2</sup>Maier, “Allied Strategy,” pp. 200-201. Also Ziemke, pp. 23-24.

<sup>3</sup>Nielsen, p. 113. On the role of German naval intelligence, see Heinz Bonatz, *Seekrieg im Äther: Die Leistungen der Marine-Funkaufklärung 1939-1945* (Herford: E. S. Mittler, 1981), pp. 87-92.

<sup>4</sup>The Royal Navy changed codes on or about 3 April which reduced the effectiveness of naval intelligence in the days immediately prior to *Weserübung*. Loock, p. 85 and Bonatz, pp. 87-92.

<sup>5</sup>For a detailed discussion of Allied (combined and joint) military planning and preparations, see Derry, pp. 14-15.

## *Glossary*

<i>Kriegsmarine</i>	German Navy
<i>Luftwaffe</i>	German Air Force
<i>Oberkommando des Heeres (OKH)</i>	German Army High Command
<i>Oberkommando der Marine</i>	German Navy High Command
<i>Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW)</i>	High Command of the (German) Armed Forces
<i>Seekriegsleitung (SKL)</i>	German Navy High Command
<i>Wehrmacht</i>	the German Armed Forces
<i>Weserübung</i> [Weser Exercise]	Code name for the German invasion of Denmark and Norway; name adopted from a yearly engineer training exercise conducted on the Weser River in Germany.
<i>Weserübung Nord</i> [Weser Exercise North]	Code name for the portion of <i>Weserübung</i> conducted against Norway
<i>Weserübung Süd</i> [Weser Exercise South]	Code name for the portion of <i>Weserübung</i> conducted against Denmark
<i>Wesertag</i> [Weser Day]	D-day for <i>Weserübung</i>
<i>Weserzeit</i> [Weser Time]	H-hour for <i>Weserübung</i>

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