

concept

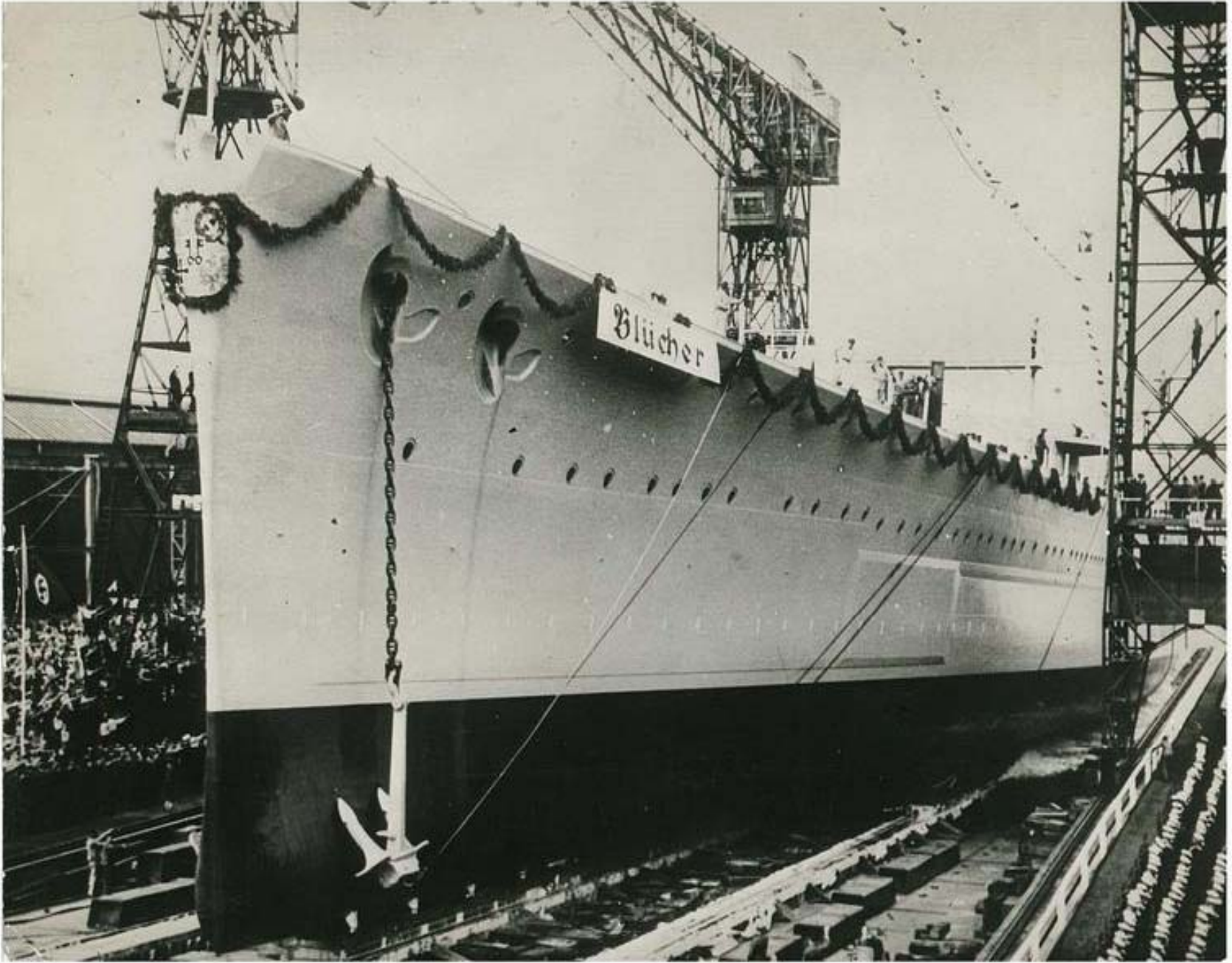
DECISION MAKERS, DOERS AND ADVISORS
– JOINING FORCES TO ENHANCE UTILITY OF INVESTMENTS

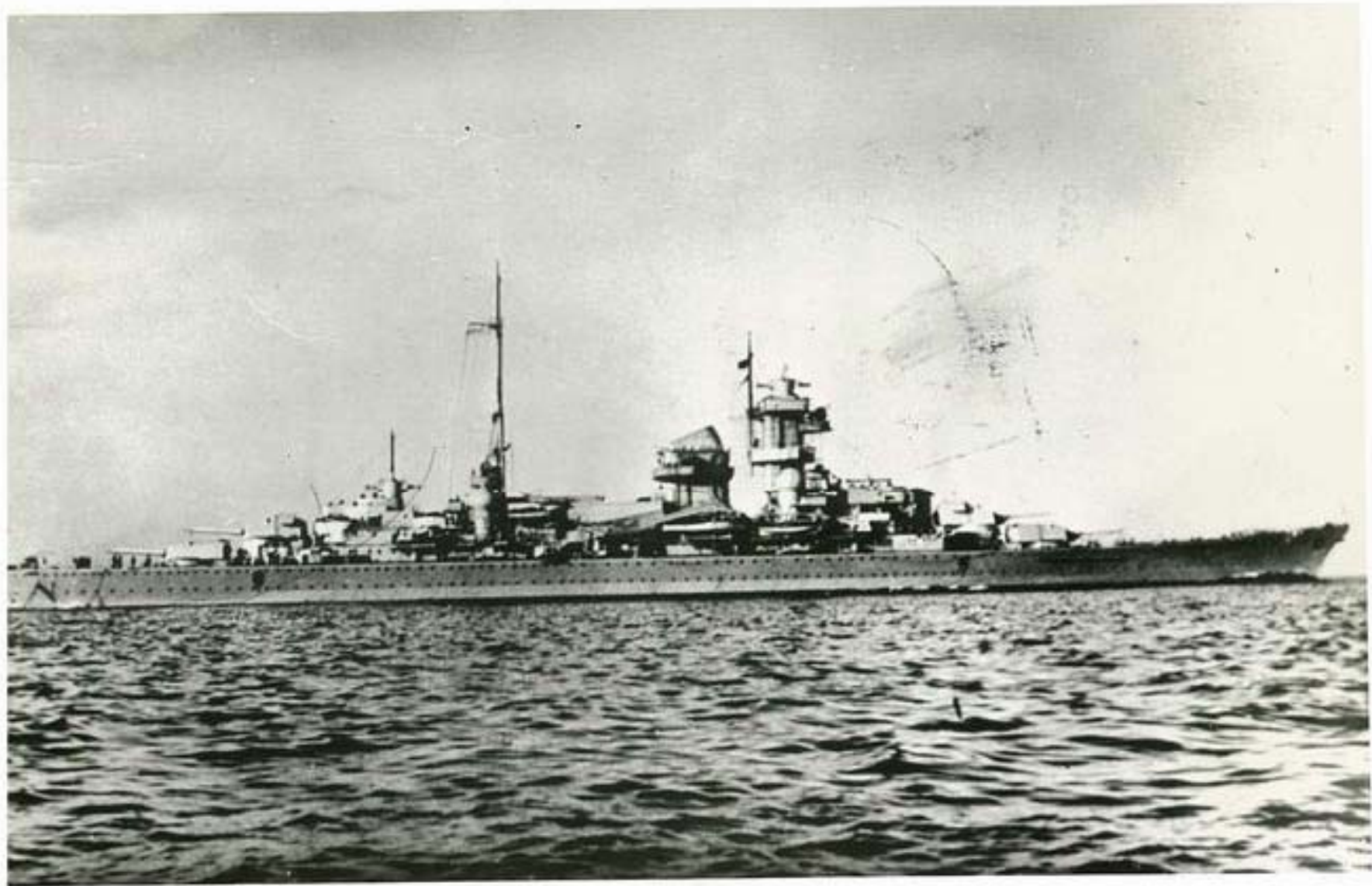
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Oscarsborg, Norway
16 – 17 September 2010

Symposium web-site: <http://www.conceptsymposium.no/>
Concept Research Programme: <http://www.concept.ntnu.no/english/>

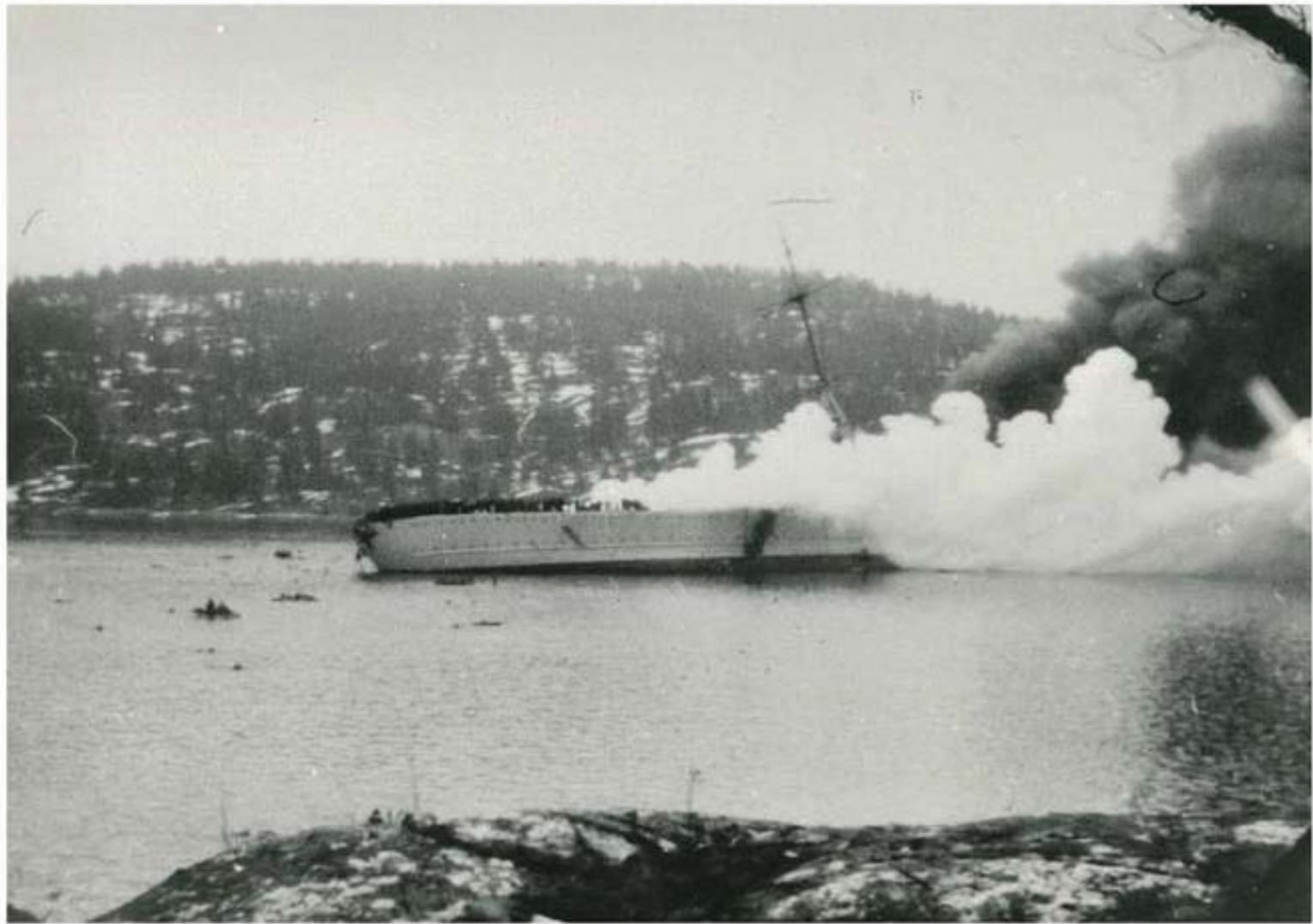
The sinking of Hitler's warship the
Blücher.
The German occupation of Norway
in a broader perspective.

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The war as a German program

Program: The political domination of the European continent

Project (one of many): The occupation of Norway

Implementation strategy: Plan A - Unopposed.
Plan B - In case of resistance.

Tactical accomplishment (from the German point of view)

- Southern Norway occupied by the beginning of May.
- Northern Norway occupied by 10 June.
- Allied relief forces accomplished little except in Narvik.
- Total losses tolerable (5-6000 men, 242 warplanes).
- Naval losses significant (1 heavy cruiser, 2 light cruisers, 10 destroyers, 6 submarines, a number of smaller vessels. In addition many other ships were heavily damaged, including capital ships).

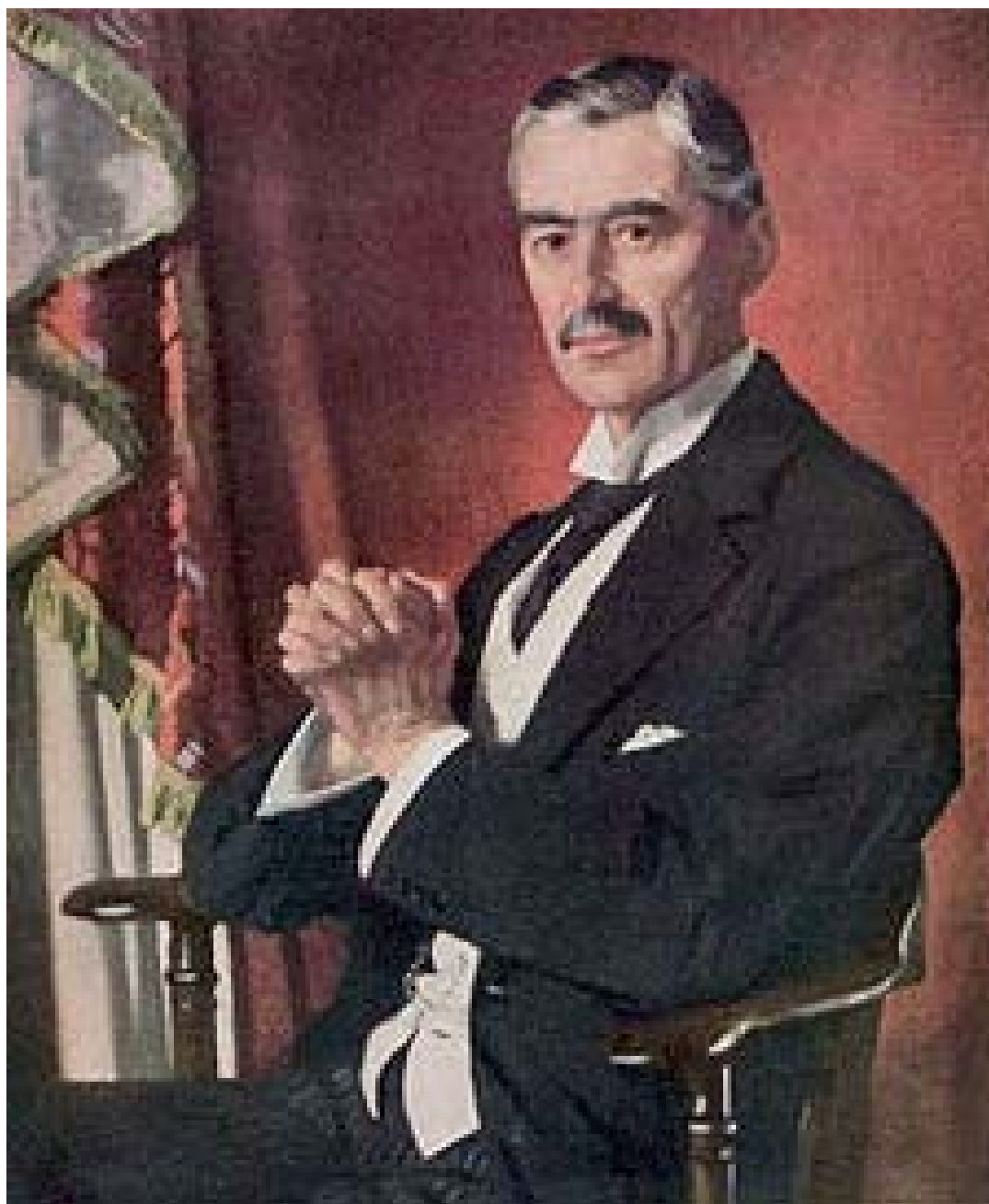
Strategic accomplishment

This is a quite different issue. The key question is how Operation "Weser Exercise" contributed to the total German war effort and - if Germany had not lost the war - to the fulfillment of the Program.

Some benefits were obvious: Securing iron ore supplies from Northern Sweden, and the possibility of building submarine bases for the battle of the Atlantic. But the importance of these factors decreased with the fall of France. With the attack on the Soviet Union a new and unintended strategic opportunity arose: To cut off allied supplies to Murmansk, the only available ice-free port of the Soviets in Europe. But the possibility was only exploited half-heartedly. And there were other factors.....

BIGGEST MERCHANT NAVIES AS OF 1938

	Gross.reg.t.	Pct < 10 years
1. UK	17.7	33
2. US	8.9	10
3. Japan	5.0	35
4. Norway	4.6	46
5. Germany	4.2	28
6. Italy	3.3	11
World total	67	







A plausible conclusion

- Although Germany had to settle for Plan B, and experienced set-backs (of which the loss of the Blücher was the single most important), the tactical execution of Operation "Weser Exercise" must be deemed a success.
- But it was the wrong project. The strengthening of the Western enemies as a response to the defeat in Norway, and the strategic overreach outweighed the benefits in the long run.

Acknowledgements:

- All images of the Blücher, courtesy of the National Archives of Norway.
- The image of the triple gun tower, photograph by Mr. Lars Erik Brattås 2004.