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UNITED STATES NAVY

WAR DIARY  
OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA



1 OCTOBER, 1942 - 31 DECEMBER, 1942  
PG NUMBERS 31519a - 31522

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WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

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Editorial Note:

The translation of this German War Diary was made in London, England, under the guidance of Commander S. R. Sanders, USNR. When his London Office was closed and the translation project was discontinued, much unfinished material was sent to Naval History Division, (OP-29).

Because the dissemination of the data contained in these documents is important, the translations and stencils have not been checked for accuracy of interpretation, phraseology, and spelling of officers' names or geographical names. Distribution under these conditions seems justified because of the excellent reputation of the London personnel and because translators are not available in Naval History Division. Research to correct possible inconsistencies did not warrant the time involved.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
Office of the Chief of Naval Operations  
Naval History Division  
Washington 25, D.C.



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WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

1 - 15 OCTOBER, 1942

PG/31519a

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1 October, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

According to recent observations, moderate activity of surface forces. Submarine activity increasing. Ten submarines were intercepted in all, one of them some 50 miles south of the southwestern tip of the Crimea. At noon 3 destroyers at sea, position unknown. Air Commander reported convoy traffic as before.

Own Situation:

- A.
1. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 5, 11 and 13 carried out a remote sweep off and inside Sevastopol harbor. No mines swept.
  2. The 2nd FZ-Group swept the area from the approach buoy in the Yeisk Channel along the direct route to Mariupol. No mines swept.
  3. A minesweeping Ju carried out a check-sweep of the coastal route in Kerch Strait and south of the Kerch Peninsula as well as off Mariupol. No mines swept.
  4. 1 October, four mines from a German minefield were found on the shore at Genichesk.
- B.
1. Enemy air reconnaissance and fighter activity diminishing. No reports of bomb damage.
  2. At 2340 on 30 September Ssukko, 4 miles south-east of Anapa, was shelled from the sea. Medium guns fired 10 to 12 rounds. Presumably one of their regular attempts at interference. The coast was being probed to find a site for landing of partisans by submarines or small warships.
  3. According to Air Commander's reports and D/L bearings, only slight transport activity observed off the east and southeast coast of the Black Sea, but large numbers of coastal and patrol vessels.
- D. Minesweeping continued off Mariupol, Yeisk and Sevastopol.
- E. With the exception of 2 vessels, Harbor Defense Flotilla, Nikolaiev will with immediate effect be subordinated for operations to Naval Training Command, for transportation duties along the west coast of the Crimea. Subordinated for

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administration to the Port Commander, Sevastopol. Two vessels will remain with Port Commander, Nikolaiev for ferry service with the out-station.

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Unfortunately the torpedo exercise by the 1st E-Boat Flotilla, scheduled to begin today, had to be postponed owing to the weather.

Difficulties with vessels and crews of the Danube Steamship Company have led to a request from the Company, the Reich Commissioner for Maritime Shipping and the Home Staff for requisition of the above vessels by the Navy in accordance with the Reich Requisition Law. I am of the opinion that, particularly in view of the shortage of personnel, the Navy should not be burdened with duties outside its own sphere which are the exclusive business of civilian offices and army commands. To explain this, I therefore sent a teletype to the subordinate commands:

Radiogram to Admiral, Black Sea, Bucharest, copy to Chief, Naval Training Command, Constantza, Chief Sea Transportation Section, Black Sea. Secret.

Please give your opinion on the following points immediately:

1. Vessels of the Danube Steamship Company, including those dispatched to the Crimea and the Sea of Azov, will remain under the Company's management. They are responsible for insurance, personnel, salaries, choice of suitable personnel, and ship's supplies. In ports which have no Danube Steamship Company representative, the Sea Transportation Office or the Port Commander acting on the Company's behalf will assume responsibility for anything required by the crew or ship.
2. The Army or Armed Forces High Command will be responsible for those Danube Steamship Company ships destined for the Sea of Azov, the River Don, etc. Apart from the duties mentioned in para. 1 the Navy will assume only operational control at sea. Naval requirements regarding efficiency of personnel and material must be met by the Danube Steamship Company.
3. Requests to the Danube Steamship Company on requisition and employment of their vessels over certain routes must go out from Home Staff (Overseas Branch) not from the Navy, except in the case of those vessels chartered by the Navy for purely naval tasks.

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Request answer ready for the discussions in Mariupol on 3 October, signifying agreement or giving other comments by the Danube Steamship Company and Home Staff (Overseas Branch).

Admiral, Black Sea.

In order that traffic may proceed from Kerch to Tomriuk as requested by the Army, I shall, as soon as Tomriuk harbor is ready for occupation, issue the necessary orders for a channel to be swept between Kerch and Tomriuk and for a similar connecting channel between Mariupol and Tomriuk. Because this is a very urgent task it must be given priority over the projected minesweeping operation off Gonichesk. The channel must be buoyed. I am also laying down the order of priority to be observed for the commitments of the FZ-groups.

Today Chief, Sea Transportation Section, Black Sea and Staff Officer Operations, Naval Training Command were at H.Q., also Captain Mimbelli and Commander, Italian Submarine Flotilla, Lt. Cdr. Longanesi, for a conference. All the acute problems of sea transportation and the provision of escorts came under discussion. I have restated my attitude towards the scope of the Navy's duties and the line of demarcation from the other services and the civilian offices. At the same time agreement was reached on the most practical employment of the different types of tonnage, and I pointed out that all Army commands and civilian offices dealing with supplies and transport must always be advised and directed accordingly. With Staff Officer Operations, Naval Training Command, I fixed the basic sailing routes in the Black Sea; the more detailed planning - now an urgent matter calling for immediate attention - will be entrusted to Naval Training Command.

With Captain Mimbelli and Lt. Cdr. Longanesi I discussed questions of U-boat operations and the further transfer of U-boat bases to the east. Since Yalta is too vulnerable from the air, I have had the boats temporarily transferred only as far as Skadovsk. If we are to reinforce the defenses of the South Crimea, we must aim at moving them as soon as possible to a base less open to air attack, yet close to the operational area. For the present this will be Sevastopol. The necessary orders to this effect will be issued. Later it will be Kerch. I am sending Lt. Cdr. Longanesi to Kerch tomorrow to obtain information on conditions and, together with the Port Commander, to find suitable berths for the U-boats.

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In the selection of a base, a crane or slipway is essential so that after operations, the U-boats may be lifted out of the water for any necessary repairs. At the moment these conditions exist only at Kerch. As soon as Kerch is ready for occupation, I intend to transfer the U-boats there.

Subsequent joint operations with German U-boats off the Black Sea coast against Russian traffic were discussed with the commander of U 24 who was also present at H.Q., likewise the possibilities of conveying the boats more quickly to their operational area, perhaps by towing them, thus extending their radius of action. With this same object, Lt. Cdr. Longanesi will during coming operations try to increase the crew from 4 to 6 men (in each case the extra men will be drawn from U-boats undergoing repairs).

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2 October, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

A few observations of the new radio procedure were made but we still failed to discover the underlying principle. Uninterrupted submarine activity; the 3 destroyers reported yesterday are still at sea, position unknown. Air Commander's reports gave evidence of continuous convoy traffic along the Caucasus coast.

Own Situation:

- A.
1. Motor minesweepers (RA) with convoy traffic. No other operations owing to the weather.
  2. Torpedo practice for E-boats was canceled on 1 October owing to the weather. E-boats S 26 and S 49 entered Constantza on 1 October.
  3. On 1 October steamers D 8 and D 11 put out to check Pervomski Channel.
  4. Minesweeping planes were operating off Yeisk. No mines swept.
  5. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 5, 11 and 13 carried out a remote sweep off and inside Sevastopol harbor. No mines swept.
- B.
1. German planes shadowing 2 Russian destroyers in grid square 8144 course west to north. Their purpose is not clear yet.
  2. At 1415 on 1 October the steamer "Salzburg" was torpedoed and sunk by a submarine in approximately 45° 54.5' N, 30° 19.5' E. Sea Transportation Section reported prisoners of war aboard. No further details.
  3. Enemy air reconnaissance and fighter activity again on the increase, concentrating on Taman.

1 October at 1019	Yalta	-	air raid warning
" "	1945 Yalta	-	" " "
" "	2250 Theodosia	-	" " "
" "	2255 Ivan Baba	-	" " "
" "	2022 Yalta	-	" " "
" "	2335 Ivan Baba	-	" " "
2 October at 0220	Taman	-	bombs dropped
" "	0355 Ivan Baba	-	" "
" "	0405 Theodosia	-	" "

No damage reported.



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4. At 1430 aerial mines were dropped from a very low altitude in several places directly off Yalta. The report is being investigated. Check by minesweeping plane planned.
- D. Plans for next minesweeping operations:
1. The Port Commander, Kerch is to employ 5 patrol boats to sweep moored mines and to buoy the Kerch-Temriuk channel, including the approach and harbor.
  2. An FZ-group and minesweeping plane are to carry out a check-sweep of this channel against ELM mines.
  3. Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine will sweep the channel between Mariupol and Temriuk. Check-sweeps by FZ-group and minesweeping plane.
- G. Battle H.Q., Admiral, Black Sea is to be transferred on 2 October from Ivan Baba to Simferopol.

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The enemy destroyers were last sighted on a northerly course. I shall inform all the commands concerned that a raid against the Crimean coast is possible. I disagree with Air Commander, Crimea that the Russians are planning a thrust in the direction of Constantza, as no other forces have so far been sighted.

Three Italian E-boats are proceeding in a reconnaissance line between Theodosia and Ivan Baba 5 miles from the coast, escorted by a boat from Yalta. Despite the fuel shortage, and although I do not expect any particular success from the employment of these vessels against the Russian destroyers, I did not countermand the orders to proceed which Captain Mimbelli issued on receipt of the alarm signal. It is just possible that if the boats do meet the destroyers, the Russians might come to think the coast better defended than it really is and thus desist from their nuisance raids. At 2230 it was reported that Yalta was being shelled from the sea. There are no details since all the local communications of Naval Commander, Yalta were cut at the start of the shelling. Presumably this sabotage had some connection with the shelling.

Owing to inadequate minesweeping forces the projected extension southward of the two mine-fields off Odessa has had to be repeatedly postponed (the mine area must first be swept). The torpedoing of the "Salzburg" forces me to reconsider this question, since under the circumstances it might be preferable to put up

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with a delay in the movement of supplies than incur losses which, in the Black Sea area, would be irreplaceable for the duration. The Naval Training Command was directed to examine the question of minelaying, if need be preceded by minesweeper escort, should there still be insufficient forces to permit the systematic sweeping of the projected mine area. I am, in principle, of the opinion that flanking minefields offer no protection against submarines, they merely impede their freedom to some extent. The Gulf of Finland is sufficient example of how an unusually strong minefield can fail to prevent Russian submarines from attacking Baltic shipping which is far more efficiently escorted.

My orders for the tactical subordination of the Naval Operational Transportation Detachment for the whole period of the operation to the Naval Shore Commanders were rescinded by Group South without my knowledge. I have now canceled my original order and passed on Group South's recommendations to the Naval Shore Commanders that they should demand more motor vehicles if present regulations bring about a shortage of transport. For the information of Group South I enclosed this teletype to Chief of Staff, Group South:

Urgent teletype to Chief of Staff, Group South. Gkdos. - Chief of Staff, Group South Ops. 7519.

- "1. I am also rescinding my orders, so that your direct cancellation - made without my knowledge - now receives fresh confirmation from me.
2. Since according to your teletype, Naval Shore Commander is unable to organize his supplies with the Naval Motor Transport Detachment assigned to him, even with the presence of the Commander of the Detachment, and since no qualified officer is available for this purpose either at Battle H.Q., Admiral, Black Sea or in Bucharest, I request you to send an expert to Battle H.Q., Admiral, Black Sea as quickly as possible. For the present he will take full command of all the transportation duties undertaken by these Transportation Detachments and then train and advise me and those officers chosen as future specialists. Neither Commander (E) Klepp nor Liout. (s.g.) (E) Grindmann are experts since they have only been trained as engineers and know nothing about the organization of land units of this type.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 1141."

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3 October, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

As far as can be discovered, activity of light and unidentified naval forces is slight by day but increases at night. Six submarines have been intercepted. After a long period at sea more submarines are returning from the west. Three destroyers at sea, position unknown. Long-range reconnaissance planes sighted 2 destroyers at 1225, course west, high speed, some 125 miles south of the southern tip of the Crimea. Shadows identified change of course to north at 1445, course then maintained until approximately 1700. Shadows were obliged to break off at dusk. Early morning reconnaissance sighted the destroyers in the eastern Black Sea, heading for Batum. According to reports by the offices concerned, Yalta was shelled from the sea at 2225 this evening. Between 50 and 60 shells were fired. Radio location failed to pick up the destroyers.

Own Situation:

- A. 1. During the night of 1 October, motor minesweepers Nos. 165, 35, 36, 33 swept the coast from Sevastopol to Cape Takil. The examination of the declared areas south of Kerch Strait was begun early on the morning of 3 October. Motor minesweepers Nos. 165 and 166 were equipped in Constantza with degaussing loops and adjusted their compasses.
2. Motor minesweepers (RA) carried out escort duties.
3. During the night of 2 October Italian E-boats Nos. 568, 570, 572 put out for a patrol line between Cape Ili and Cape Atlama 5 miles from the coast. Italian E-boat No. 567 put out to take up a patrol position off Yalta harbor. The enemy was not sighted.
4. E-boats at Constantza on gunnery and torpedo exercises.
5. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 5, 11, 13 and D 12 carried out a remote sweep off Sevastopol. No mines swept.
6. The minefield at Kamish Burun was cleared but for 3 mines. One mine identified as married to a sinker will be exploded as soon as the weather permits.

The Pavlovski minefield has a swept entrance as far as the former navigable channel.

7. Supplementary information to Situation 2 October. Minesweeping plane exploded one mine off Yeisk.
- B.
1. At 1442 on 2 October a long-range reconnaissance plane reported 2 enemy destroyers in grid square 5365, course 260°. Last position at 1700 grid square 4449, high speed, changed to course north, probably because of our shadowing. A raid on the Crimean coast is possible.  
From approximately 2225 to 2245 Yalta was shelled from the sea by 2 or 3 unidentified vessels, course west, later turned away to the south. Distance from the coast at first about 32 km., finally about 25 km. Radar set out of order at first. Switched on at 2235. One vessel located at a distance of 24 km. at first, obviously inaccurate. Between 60 and 80 shells from 13 cm. and 12 cm. guns; investigation not yet concluded. Rate of salvos: approximately 10 seconds. The first shots fell short of the molo and harbor entrance, and then scattered over the western part of the town. Battery 3/147 (10 cm. guns) and four 4.5 cm. guns of Battery I/Naval Gunnery Division 601 opened fire but broke off as the range was too great. Casualties: 1 killed, several wounded, 2 houses set on fire. From the start of the bombardment of the H.Q. of the Deputy Naval Shore Commander, all the lines to local offices were cut, except those to Naval Harbor Master and Battery I/Naval Gunnery Division 601. From 1800 to the close of the bombardment, a signal light could be seen in the mountains; it is thought that there is a connection between the bombardment and the sabotage.
  2. 2 October. At the torpedoing of the steamer "Salzburg" the main emphasis was on anti-submarine measures. After the attack depth charges were dropped against the submarine but no effects were observed. There were 2300 Russian prisoners of war on the "Salzburg". It is reported that 16 Germans and 47 Rumanians have so far been rescued as well as about 200 prisoners. Figures are not yet final.
  3. At 0930 on 3 October the artillery observation post at Livardia sighted 9 ships in 3 groups of 3 about 40 km. away in a northeasterly direction, course west, then southeast, and ultimately disappearing from

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sight. The report seems unlikely, since no other reports were submitted by naval reconnaissance or coastal stations in the vicinity.

4. Increasing reconnaissance and fighter activity on the Crimean Peninsula and Taman, particularly Taman. Air raid warnings:
    - 2 October at 1510 Yalta
    - " " 1515 Kerch
    - " " 1520 Kerch
    - " " 1600 Ivan Baba
    - 3 October at 2200 Taman, bombing attacks continued until 0130, no naval damage
    - " " 0655 Theodosia
    - " " 1053 Taman, anti-aircraft guns shot down Russian reconnaissance planes, no damage reported.
  5. 2 October at 1555 10 to 15 km. from Cape Ili, bearing 040°, two missiles were dropped without exploding. The plane was flying low and mines are therefore suspected.
- D.
1. A minesweeping plane was operating off Cape Ili.
  2. FZ-groups continued to operate off Yeisk and Sevastopol.
- E.
- E-boats S 28, S 72 and S 102 at operational readiness from 1 October, S 51 provisionally ready by 5 October.
- G. No events of importance to report from Novorossisk or Anapa.

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In view of the air raids expected on Yalta, I am canceling the proposed transfer of Italian submarines to Yalta, close to the operational area. Arrangements will be made to move them temporarily to Sevastopol until their final transfer to the east.

I am issuing detailed instructions regarding the transfer of Admiral, Black Sea's Staff. The Staff has six weeks in which to move. In a week at the most I expect the following departments to be functioning in Simferopol: Staff Officers Operations I and II, Communications Officer, Mines Officer, Gunnery Officer, Engineers, Quartermaster, Supplies, Dockyard Specialist, Plotting Room, 1st Adjutant with registry. Some of the necessary arrangements have already been



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made here, others are under way. I consider it imperative that every effort should be made to assemble Admiral, Black Sea's entire staff here and thus ensure the smooth and rapid cooperation so very essential in this area.

I have discovered that difficulties caused by lack of space on the railways have led to the habit of going by steamer and warship as far as Rumania. I have informed all the commands under my authority that leave personnel are on no account to travel by sea. The relevant orders will be issued.

Today I was in Mariupol in conference with Army High Command, Quartermaster General and Quartermaster General, Division South, also the Naval Liaison Officer. I informed all the subordinate commands of the main points in the following teletype:

A. Azov Shipping:

1. The tugs "Hallein", "Höflein", "Haniel XXIV" and "XXV", "Braunkohle IX", "Kehl", with the lighters "Namur", "Tyna V" and 5 Begabarges which put in to Mariupol are to remain in the Sea of Azov for transport duties between Mariupol and Yeisk. No further tugs and lighters will be transferred. Confirmation by Army High Command, Quartermaster General will follow.
2. "Koloszvar" and "Budapest" are to continue to run between Mariupol and Yeisk, as will ships based in the Sea of Azov.
3. At the end of her present voyage "Tissa" will proceed to Mariupol with cargo to relieve "Kassa" which will then be transferred to the Danube for repairs.
4. Division South will be responsible for fuel supplies for vessels in the Sea of Azov; names of vessels will be notified by Naval Supply and Transport Office, Mariupol to Division South.
5. When the ice comes all shipping in the Sea of Azov will be moved further south. Tugs and lighters will be sent to Kerch Strait and ships back to the Black Sea.

B. Black Sea:

1. Quartermaster General will give up Nikolaiev as a supply port in favor of Sevastopol. It is expected that Admiral, Black Sea will open Sevastopol to shipping in about 2 weeks.

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2. Division South will arrange for Sevastopol to be provided with the necessary labor, billets and food supplies, including general supply depots, in the same way as already done for other ports.
3. Supplies for Sevastopol will proceed when conditions 1 and 2 have been fulfilled and Division South gives the word, with some half dozen ships at first. Shipping will be gradually transferred from the Nikolaiev route to the Sevastopol route. Where there are insufficient escorts for the direct route from Rumanian ports to Sevastopol, steamers will be diverted to the coastal route.
4. In exceptional cases escorts may be provided for single steamers proceeding further east to Theodosia or Kerch.

A conference was held on 20 September, 1942 to discuss demands put forward by the Quartermaster General, Armed Forces High Command for the daily transportation in the Sea of Azov area of:

1,800 tons from 21 September, 1942 and  
3,600 tons from 10 October, 1942.

The following officers were present:

For Division of Army High Command,  
Quartermaster General, Stalino: Colonel Pamberg  
(General Staff).

For Naval Shore Commander,  
Ukraine: Rear-Admiral Kopp  
Commander Souchon  
Commander Risch  
Lieut. (s.g.) (E)  
Kohlberg  
Lieut. (Gunnery)  
v. Olschewski.

For Sea Transportation  
Section, Mariupol: Lieut. (j.g.) Schmalz  
(special commission).

The inspection of Yeisk harbor by Colonel Pamberg and Commander Souchon on 20 September, 1942 revealed the following:

- a. At present it is possible to transfer daily from vessel to railway  
Yeisk - 900 tons)  
Azov - 100 tons) 1,000 tons.



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These figures take into account the additional shipping announced for the Sea of Azov area, namely:

11 tugs  
10 lighters.

- b. The maximum daily transfer would be  
Yeisk - 1,200 tons)  
Azov - 300 tons) 1,500 tons.

Conditions for achieving this maximum are:

1. Necessary shipping space:

Raising of the tonnage available in the Azov area (including the 11 tugs and 10 lighters) by approximately 1,500 tons.

2. Constructional requirements: (Army responsibility)

A. Yeisk:

- a. Repair of all railway junctions.
- b. Provision of 5 railway cranes.
- c. Erection of 10 electrically driven derricks.
- d. Provision of the necessary trucks to transport goods from the pier to the trains.

B. Azov:

- a. Restoration of the burnt-out pier for which an allocation of wood will be needed. At least 4 weeks will be required from the time of delivery of the required building materials.
- b. Reconstruction of the railway junctions.
- c. Provision of 3 railway cranes.

Maximum handling of 1,500 tons daily may be expected from Yeisk and Azov given ~~no~~ interruptions caused by bad weather, enemy action (air raids, mines still unswept, or newly dropped), damaged ships or engine trouble.

Turn-round capacity in Mariupol, Berdyansk and Taganrog is sufficient to ensure the forwarding of above-mentioned daily transfers to Yeisk and Azov.

4 October, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

As far as could be observed, activity of light naval forces only. Submarine activity has diminished, probably because relief boats are taking over. There are 4 submarines at sea, position unknown, and some unidentified units. Convoy traffic off the Caucasus coast still continuing.

Own Situation:

- A.
1. On the night of 2 October Italian E-boat No. 567 observed gun flashes from 2 unidentified units off Cape Aitodor. Before the boat could get within torpedo range, the enemy ceased fire and disappeared from sight.
  2. Four motor minesweepers broke off an exploratory sweep - see Situation 3 October - owing to the weather and the enemy shelling off Yalta. They anchored in Laspi Bay. At 0500 on 4 October they continued mine-sweeping operations south of Kerch Strait. For air attack see B, 1.
  3. 2nd FZ-Group did not put out owing to the weather.
  4. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 5 and 11 carried out remote minesweeping operations off Sevastopol. No mines swept.
  5. On 3 October a minesweeping plane operated off Yalta. No mines were swept. Two mines exploded off Yeisk.
  6. The sweeping of the rest of the minefield at Kamish proved impossible owing to the weather.
  7. E-boats postponed their torpedo exercises owing to the weather.
- B.
1. At 1232 on 3 October 2 Russian planes made an unsuccessful attack with aerial torpedoes on 4 motor minesweepers off Cape Meganom. After a brief exchange of fire the planes turned off to the east.
  2. At 1455 on 3 October three planes dropped 20 bombs on the town and harbor of Yalta. Naval casualties: 1 killed, 1 seriously injured and 2 slightly injured. From 2155

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to 0302 planes came in three times and dropped 5 high-explosive bombs at Kerch. Continuous air raids on Taman between 2213 and 0435. No naval damage.

3. Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza and air reconnaissance in a northeasterly direction at noon reported slight enemy activity of light and unidentified forces off the enemy coast. This increased during the evening and night.
  4. On 3 October, between 2019 and 2056, the Aircraft Reporting Center reported air activity in grid squares 5510-5520. Planes flew at noticeably low speed. (180 km. per hour). Mines are suspected to have been dropped in water of 40-50 meters depth.
  5. Supplement to Situation 2 October:  
On 1 October air raid on Rostov, bombs hit the floating crane of Organization Todt and sank it. Fresh attack on 2 October when some of the ships were slightly damaged by splinters.
- G. 1. At Sevastopol a 50-ton crane was salvaged in the south bay and towed to the dockyard for repairs.

General situation at Novorossisk unchanged.

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In order finally to establish the coastal route south of the Crimean coast, certain definite positions have now been chosen which will in future mark the route. The 3rd Minesweeper Flotilla was ordered by Naval Training Command to search this route as soon as possible.

There is no prospect of Operations Staff, Scheurlen being suddenly needed for operations, for according to my most recent discussions with the Army, there are as yet no plans for them. I have therefore suggested to Group South that Admiral Scheurlen should be released and returned to his former command; his Operations Staff should remain with him there available on recall and the officers allocated accordingly.

I have passed on my views and reasons against the Navy taking over the tugs and lighters of the Danube Steamship Company to Group South and requested them to inform me of the ultimate decision of Naval High Command, Naval Staff.

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5 October, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Because of the new radio procedure no information has been gained on the plans and movements of the Russian Black Sea Fleet. Traffic slight, submarine activity less than on previous days. Off the central part of the east coast, only patrol and various small vessels reported; southeastern part 3 destroyers in the evening. According to air reconnaissance, convoy traffic had subsided.

Own Situation:

- A.
1. On 4 October, a minesweeping plane operated off Ycisk. Two mines were swept. A minesweeping plane operated on the convoy route from Cape Ili, in direction of 040° to a distance of 6 to 8 miles, and made 11 covering runs in all; no mines swept. Dropping of moored mines suspected.
  2. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 5, 11 and steamer D 12 carried out a remote sweep off and inside Sevastopol harbor. No mines swept.
  3. Four motor minesweepers in the closed area south of Kerch Strait swept ten MO 8 mines.
  4. Motor minesweepers (RA) Nos. 52 and 54 carried out escort duties between Kerch and Mariupol.
  5. At 1300 on 4 October ferry F 158 struck one of our mines in the Pavlovski gap, was towed in, flooded, total loss. Two men wounded. The gap was closed. The harbor defense flotilla is making a check.
  6. E-boats carried out gunnery and torpedo exercises.
- B.
1. Unsuccessful air raids on Kerch and Taman on the night of 4/5 October, bombs dropped, no damage reported.
  2. Anapa: from 0044 to 0108 on 5 October a plane was continually overhead, 5-6 bombs were dropped but no damage was caused. After the air attack, from 0140 to 0155 shelling from the sea, bearing 250°, with guns of approximately 5 cm. caliber. The enemy was not picked up by the searchlights because of mist. Attack probably according to aircraft observations.

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3. Yalta: at 1135 on 5 October, a DB 3 plane approaching from direction of 135°, altitude 100 meters, range 1,000 meters, released a torpedo. Surface runner towards the center of the mole. Torpedo went to the bottom about 100 meters off the mole, but did not explode. The plane turned away to sea. Our guns fired on torpedo, which lost height possibly owing to a hit. Second plane from 50 meters height dropped 4-6 mines, from 44° 24' N, 34° 10' E to 44° 25.5' N, 34° 12' E. Release of torpedoes possibly intended to camouflage the dropping of the mines.
  4. Relatively quiet at Novorossisk.
  5. According to Air Commander's reports and D/F bearings, slight shipping movements - only coastal vessels - in the northeastern Black Sea, while in the central and southwestern Black Sea greater activity of light naval forces, some submarines also identified.
- D.
1. Minesweeping plane operated off Yalta on 6 October.
  2. Minesweeping operations were continued south of Kerch Strait and in Sevastopol harbor, as well as in the Pavlovski gap.
  3. At 0430 on 6 October four Italian E-boats put out from Theodosia for Mariupol; they are the first contingent for the Caspian Sea.

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I enclose the following survey of the general situation for Group South and the subordinate offices:

"The increasing activity of the Russian Fleet is obviously connected with uninterrupted operations of the Russian Air Force against harbors, convoys and shipping routes. The more frequent appearance of Russian surface forces should be noted; their brief bombardments, endeavors to approach the coast etc. are the first evidence of combined activity of an offensive nature.

I have come to the following conclusions:

1. Escorts for those Russian transports still operating off the eastern Black Sea coast do not make such demands on the Russian Fleet as to prevent the majority of their forces from undertaking other operations. The weakness of our naval forces, of which the Russians are

well aware, enables them, as has been seen, to confine themselves to providing defenses against E-boats. Moreover, troops are probably seldom transported by sea, primarily because of the losses caused by E-boats and the German Air Force, but also because land communications are adequate.

2. A large-scale offensive is not expected at present. Operations are primarily intended to cause interference off the German-occupied Russian coast and to tie down our forces. Both these objects have, to some extent, been achieved. In conjunction with the appearance of Russian naval forces, partisan activity has increased, sometimes in close cooperation. As a result, where the coast is only held by weak forces, sudden attacks and disturbances may be expected by partisans during bombardments, etc.
3. Our own lack of defenses and the accurate Russian knowledge of our position facilitates their systematic air operations against convoys and identified ships in harbor, and the increased use of aerial mines on convoy routes and navigational points (type of mine unidentified, possibly some new small mines, 5-6 from one plane dropped from a low altitude). The appearance of torpedo planes and the cooperation between Navy and Air Force all lead to the conclusion that the Russians are pursuing more energetic tactics against our supply traffic. Strong British influence has probably been brought to bear - an indication that the British are again following developments in the Black Sea with great interest.
4. Our small numbers of escort forces, anti-aircraft defenses and planes will, in the event of intensified Russian activity, one day prove inadequate to deal with the necessary tasks, especially when weather conditions restrict the activity of our light forces. Apart from the necessary operations of our Air Force against Russian naval bases and therefore against the Russian Fleet itself, our offensive must for the time being, be conducted primarily against enemy naval forces and not against his merchant ships which are no longer in use. There will of course be special exceptions, such as troopships, but in general our weak offensive forces will have to be employed to protect us from Russian attacks. In this respect I expect most from our U-boats. In addition we still have the 1st E-Boat Flotilla which may also be profitably concentrated on purely naval tasks immediately the



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opportunity arises, provided the land situation does not call for immediate support by attacks on troopships. At all events the enemy must be harassed. Similarly, but with less practical value, Italian submarines and those Italian E-boats still available may be employed, the latter, however, only in good weather. A German minelaying offensive by coastal minelayers might even be considered as soon as the fuel situation is cleared up, provided we are in possession of a favorable jumping-off base. It is still necessary to reinforce our defenses, i.e. with coastal guns in the ports which need them, anti-aircraft defenses, air cover for convoys, net barrages and minefields, as long as the enemy is at all capable of taking action."

Investigations to date seem to show that the mine in the Pavlovski gap which struck ferry F 138, was married to a sinker which had risen to the surface and whose safety device no longer functioned after long exposure.

Receipt of the preliminary order canceling the movement of Italian units to the Caspian Sea suggests that the Group considers that Army operations in the Caucasus are not after all going to lead to an early settlement in the Black Sea area and for the present the center of naval warfare will remain here. Nevertheless there are many reasons for favoring the transfer of these units to the Caspian. It is becoming increasingly obvious that everything must be done to have German naval forces available as quickly as possible.

Practically speaking the Rumanian Navy will only be valuable for escort duties. Bearing in mind Rumania's post-war maritime status, her Navy will strictly limit the operations of its offensive weapons, submarines and E-boats, or employ them to no purpose.

This undisputed situation forces one to consider whether we should turn our strong labor forces to the completion of such weapons, if they are not to be manned completely by Germans, which seems very unlikely. I propose that the work be continued, but without any concentrated effort, i.e. in the Rumanian fashion, and that at all events our own tasks have priority even over the completion of Rumanian submarines. Any rapid repair performed on our own vessels is more important than the completion of Rumanian submarines and E-boats to schedule. I request a decision from the Group along these lines.



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In order to intensify subsequent German U-boat operations and to shorten the long passage between Constantza and the operational area, I intend to set up a jumping-off base in Theodosia or Kerch, whichever is the more suitable. The necessary steps will be taken.

The fuel situation for Italian E-boats is disastrous; there is at present no fuel for them. I have therefore been compelled to cancel all further operations of these boats.

I had intended to use men belonging to ship's anti-aircraft gun crews who have been idle in Varna for some time, together with the gun crews not required to man the ships, in the Crimea or possibly further east where the anti-aircraft defenses are in urgent need of reinforcement. The gun crews should be transferred to Eupatoria, where there is sufficient accommodation for them, and then be redrafted from there. This intention - by no means equivalent to a final order - was passed on to the Group by my Headquarters Staff in Bucharest. This gave rise to an utterly false impression, confirming the doubts of the H.Q. Staff which were based upon entirely false premises. I do not consider that we can justify any further enforced idleness on the part of ship's anti-aircraft gun crews in Varna (ships afloat are provided with German Air Force anti-aircraft guns which will remain in the area; new shipbuilding of any significance is not to be expected in this sector). I would therefore once again emphasize the advantages of this transfer to the Group, point out that the objections are by far outweighed and request a decision.

The following agreement has been reached with Army Group A:

1. Sections of Naval Shore Commands, Caucasus and Xerkos stationed in the area of Army Group A are to be subordinated to the Army Group for local defense tasks. An assurance has been given that the sections, as naval units, will only be committed to a limited extent, will not be deployed outside their waiting positions and will not be interfered with in the performance of their special duties.
2. The naval shore commanders will withdraw their men from army duties well before arriving at the actual operational area. Naval Shore Command, Xerkos will proceed en masse to air grid square 5560 (Kuma valley).

6 October, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

As far as can be discovered, only slight activity of light surface forces and submarines. Convoy traffic continues along the Caucasus coast escorted by patrol vessels and small ships. Three unidentified units in the southeastern Black Sea. Otherwise nothing to report.

Own Situation:

- A.
1. Motor minesweepers R 165 and 166 carried out escort duties in the Bosphorus.
  2. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 5 and 11 and steamer D 12 carried out a remote sweep off and inside Sevastopol harbor. No mines swept.
  3. On 5 October 4 motor minesweepers checked the declared area south of Kerch Strait. 19 mines were swept in all. They also carried out a check-sweep from Cape Takil to Ivan Baba - point 18 to point 12. On 6 October from Ivan Baba to Sevastopol - point 12 to point 1.
  4. Motor minesweeper RA 51 entered dock and RA 56 proceeded on escort duty.
  5. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 1 and 8 put out on 6 October following the route from the Burunski-Pavlovski directional beacon to Capo Takil and back with noise box and cracker equipment.
  6. Four Italian E-boats put out from Theodosia on 6 October. The advance order from Group South to keep the boats in the Black Sea ready for operations and a corresponding order from Battle H.Q., Admiral, Black Sea failed to reach the boats even during their passage through Kerch Strait.
- B.
1. Increased reconnaissance by enemy Air Force.  
Air raid warnings:  
    - 5 October Kerch 2130 flare.  
Taman 2150 bombs dropped, no damage.
    - 6 October Yalta 0940 reconnaissance planes at high altitude.  
Ak Mechet 0900.  
Kerch 1110.

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2. According to D/F bearings and air reconnaissance, north-south shipping movements off the central part of the Black Sea coast increased during the day. Guard boats, coastal vessels and minesweepers were escorting the convoys, some submarines were also identified.
- D. 1. I intend to allow the E-boats to finish their firing exercises until we know whether the increased shipping movements will persist and also be resumed at night. Thorough training and practice maneuvers are essential for later operational success.
- G. Re A, 3. Declared areas south of Kerch Strait.
1. at 44° 48.2' N, 36° 25' E.
  2. at 45° 01' N, 36° 37.2' E.
  3. at 45° 02' N, 36° 44' E.

No mines found in the remaining areas.

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In support of the remote sweeps, German Air Force Staff, Crimea (Air Commander, Crimea) announced that Commanding General 4th Air Force has now released a minesweeping Ju for operations against our own ELM mines.

In accordance with Group South's directive to German U-boats I enclose the following instructions for the assignment of the next operational boats:

Teletype to 30th U-Boat Flotilla, copy to Naval Training Command, Constantza; Admiral, Black Sea, Bucharest; Group South; U 24 for Lieut. (j.g.) Petersen; Naval Communications Officer, Galatz. Also clear as multiple address message: Emergency 30th U-Boat Flotilla, copy to Naval Training Command, Constantza; Admiral, Black Sea, Bucharest; Group South; U 24 for Lieut. (j.g.) Petersen; Naval Communications Officer, Galatz.

Gkdos. Subject: German U-boat operations.

1. The persistent shelling of ports, minelaying operations and attacks on our convoys by the Russian Fleet in cooperation with the Russian Air Force is beginning to interfere with vital supplies transported by sea for the Army. Since our offensive naval forces consist solely of E-boats and our heaviest escorts are motor minesweepers - Italian vessels cannot be considered for escort duties - the Russians can cause interference with light naval forces alone.

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2. Adopt the view that southeastern Black Sea ports will remain in Russian hands for some time. They are, to a limited extent, jumping-off bases for nuisance raids on our supplies and coast. Traffic of warships and merchant vessels converges off them.
3. This sea area (after the probable fall of Tuapse, mainly off Poti and Batum) is a favorable operational area for our U-boats; attack on warships to be the principal objective, for the moment, down to and including destroyers. Given favorable opportunities, attacks on submarines are likewise unrestricted. U-boats are to regard attacks on enemy supply lines off the coast as a secondary task but should nevertheless take advantage of any favorable opportunities e.g. they might on occasion - for direct support of Army operations - concentrate their attack on supply traffic.
4. On the first operation the commanders will have to devote a certain amount of time to observing enemy warship movements and the naval situation within the operational area. Moreover for subsequent operations after the first surprise attack, enemy reactions will have to be taken into account.
5. The simultaneous employment of German and Italian U-boats in the same area is impracticable. An endeavor will be made to remedy the low operational efficiency of Italian boats by having them towed to the operational area by German U-boats. Such operations will depend on the outcome of discussions. The operational areas should be so divided that the Italians operate immediately to the northwest of our U-boats, primarily against merchant shipping. Italian boats will make the return passage on their own. It will thus be possible to occupy a fairly long coastal patrol line enabling us to observe traffic and at the same time attack warships off the most southerly bases, protect supplies from Russian attacks, prevent interference with merchant shipping off the coast further to the northwest and give direct support to German Army operations on the Caucasus front.
6. Operations would gain considerable support from cooperation with the Air Force. Concentrated air attacks on the principal bases of the Russian Fleet would force it to put to sea and so create an opportunity for our U-boats to attack. There is, however, little hope of this

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until the German Air Force is free of other tasks. The findings of daily reconnaissance could for the time being be utilized for U-boat operations.

7. To extend U-boat operations involving a relatively long approach passage, a jumping-off base is being established in Theodosia or Kerch, so that boats can be put in for a brief spell between two operations for restocking with torpedoes, refueling, reprovisioning etc., and even to relieve certain sections of the crews.

Received 1450 One, Martin - Naval Signal Station, Simferopol.

Admiral, Black Sea, Battle H.Q. Gkdos. 1124.

Teletype Op. 359/42 Gkdos. Chofs. was received from Group South proposing to Operations Division, Naval Staff, that owing to the slow progress of military operations all weapons of offensive and defensive naval warfare remain assembled in the Black Sea for the present, and that the transfer of all Italian units to the Caspian be postponed until the start of the ice period. In my opinion Group South's original decision to transfer the Italian boats, regardless of the naval situation in the Black Sea, is still a practical proposition; however, I have no detailed information about the reasons for the new orders.

Prospects of successful operations for Italian E-boats and assault boats are unlikely because of the weather, the situation with regard to bases and fuel, and the small number of targets. The remaining Italian E-boats, 4 of them at present, will suffice for occasional tasks. It should be pointed out, however, that once the thaw brings the slush, it will be impossible to move them, probably not until the spring of next year. Loading can only be done in Mariupol, where a crane is available for the purpose, but since it is ice-bound from December to March, it would be impossible to effect transportations, however imperative, from there during that period. Thus no naval forces would be available until the spring for tasks outstanding in the Caspian Sea (interference with important Russian supply routes from Baku). German E-boats and U-boats are the mainstay of naval warfare during the winter, not omitting Italian submarines, although these are greatly restricted by weather conditions and by their radius of action. Should the loading and organization of transport

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now in progress be retarded, it would entail recommencing all the laborious and expensive preparations at a later date. I would therefore request the Group to reconsider their decision.

The Group's decision on the inclusion of the western Ukraine with the Crimea has not yet been received. As this is an urgent matter for future dispositions, I am repeating my request.

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7 October, 1942

Simferopol

Own Situation:

- A.
1. E-boat S 102 left for Varna to change a damaged screw, the rest put out for gunnery and torpedo exercises.
  2. Motor minesweepers (RA) carried out escort duties.
  3. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 5 and 11 and the steamer D 12 continued minesweeping operations off and inside Sevastopol harbor.
  4. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 1 and 8 again searched the Pavlovski gap; 3 watching mines swept, the fairway is now clear. No mines were swept at Kamish Point; 3 other mines swept.
  5. Bugaz: remote minesweepers FR 1, 10 and 11 laid extra indicators in the gap in the Ilechevka minefield.
  6. Four motor minesweepers swept route Brown point 12 to 1 (Ivan Baba to Sevastopol). No mines swept.
- B.
1. At 1440 on 6 October there was an air raid on Yalta. Three SB 3 bombers, altitude 3,800 meters, dropped 18 bombs outside the harbor; 3 of the Port Commander's personnel and 2 Russian prisoners were wounded.  
Theodosia: at 2038 enemy reconnaissance planes.  
Kerch: at 0850 enemy reconnaissance planes.
  2. Air reconnaissance discovered that the mouth of the Chobi is the Black Sea Fleet's new base.
  3. Slight activity of light enemy surface forces and submarines.
- G.
1. On 6 October the "Breslau" battery was ferried over. Army Coastal Battalion 358 arrived by rail, the first battery was erected southeast of Anapa.
  2. Sections of Naval Shore Commands, Caucasus and Xerxes have been subordinated to Army Group A for local defense tasks in accordance with teletype 1211 A I dated 7 October.

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Enemy Situation:

The new radio procedure of the Russian Black Sea Fleet introduced on 30 September is still preventing us from gaining any knowledge of its movements and plans. Submarine activity today was brisker than on previous days. According to radio monitoring reports, activity of surface forces is probably to be expected. Visual observation during air reconnaissance reported no change in enemy shipping in port.

During minesweeping operations in Kerch Strait on the recently searched route running inside the main fairway between the Pavlovski directional lights, a minesweeping plane crashed due to the explosion of its own mines, and was a total loss. An air/sea rescue plane searched the scene of the accident until dusk but found only debris and empty life jackets. Two wooden vessels of the remote minesweeping group continued the search until daybreak. Judging from the type of explosion and the way the plane dived, the crew must have all been killed.

Air reconnaissance reported 2 Russian destroyers approaching the south coast of the Crimea. The Naval Shore Commander alerted the area. Both the Italian E-boats in Yalta have been moved from the harbor.

Now that investigations into suitable bases and main harbors for Italian submarines have been concluded, Sevastopol is at present under consideration. It has all the facilities which a base should be able to offer. Theodosia or Kerch or according to the situation, some port on the east coast of the Black Sea will be chosen as the operational base. Arrangements at the operational base can be confined to essentials such as ensuring a brief rest for the crew, fuel, and facilities for taking on torpedoes when necessary. The transfer to Sevastopol will take place as soon as minesweeping operations there are over, probably in a very short time.

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8 October, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Increasing activity of light surface forces; submarines, patrol vessels and convoys were normally active.

There were 3 unidentified vessels between the central part of the east coast and the area to the southeast, probably 1 cruiser with 2 destroyers. Another group consisting of 2 vessels, 1 of them probably a cruiser, was in the same area. As both groups were in radio communication with the Naval Command in Batum, the frequency used and their position at sea did not give any clue as to which command they belonged to. Air Commander's visual reconnaissance and photographic evaluation both revealed a concentration of M.T.B.s and motor minesweepers between Ghelenjik and Sochi. Otherwise nothing to report.

Own Situation:

- A.
1. 7 October 2nd FZ-Boat Group widened and straightened the buoyed route in the Yeisk Estuary.
  2. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 5, 9 and 11 carried out a remote sweep off and inside Sevastopol harbor. No mines swept.
  3. In the course of operations south of Kerch Strait, at 1605 a minesweeping plane flew over one of our own ELM mines and crashed following the explosion. Air/sea rescue went to the scene of the accident but found only a patch of oil, 2 oars, torn, blood-stained pieces of life jackets and splinters of wreckage. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 1 and 4 joined in the search for the crew for 2 hours, from 45° 9' N, 36° 28' E as far as south of Cape Takil, without result. Adverse weather forced them to return to Pavlovski, where they put in at 2400. Addendum: Signal station on Cape Takil reported that they did not see any members of the crew drop from the plane, which dived and sank immediately.
  4. 1st FZ-Boat Group began to buoy the projected route from Kerch to Temriuk.
  5. Motor minesweepers (RA) carried out escort duties.

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6. The alarm was given along the coast owing to the 2 destroyers reported by air reconnaissance. At 2350 on 7 October, the Army Coastal Battery at Cape Kikenciz opened fire on 2 vessels smaller than destroyers, said to be about the size of naval ferry barges. At 0020 on 8 October the Army Coastal Battery observed an enemy vessel landing troops while a second one was following an easterly course (to Yalta). A company of the Garrison Commander, Yalta and a motorized emergency company were dispatched. At 0330 an engagement took place between the Yalta Company and the enemy, some 20-50 strong. Contact was to be maintained until dawn, when it was planned to eliminate them. No further reports have been received so far. Presumably a nuisance raid for the simple purpose of harassing the coast, interfering with communications and reinforcing partisans. Addendum: at 0650 the troops which had landed were scattered at daybreak and escaped to the mountains.

- B.
1. Yalta: at 1415 on 7 October there was an air raid warning; unidentified plane, otherwise no air activity reported.
  2. At 1502, air reconnaissance reported 2 vessels probably destroyers in grid square 4563, course 250°; alarm given along the coast.
  3. Between 0301 and 0306 on 8 October, 2 Russian M.T.B.s shelled Anapa harbor and then made off to the west. No damage reported.

The shelling of Anapa by 2 Russian M.T.B.s is another example of the activity of Russian light naval forces and their plan to interfere with German coastal traffic and prevent withdrawal of forces in support of land operations.

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The meteorological stations in this area are at Ivan Baba and Yalta. This choice was fully justified as long as Admiral, Black Sea was conducting E-boat operations from Ivan Baba and the Italians operating from Yalta, where Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Crimea/Caucasus could also make use of the reports supplied. But I now intend to conduct E-boat operations from the H.Q. of the General Staff at Simferopol. As a result of the transfer of the Italian forces and of Commander, Convoys and Escorts Crimea/Caucasus, the Yalta meteorological station has also lost its importance. As independent stations



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they were only relatively efficient since both were understaffed. I therefore propose that both stations be combined at the H.Q. of the Staff of Admiral, Black Sea in Simferopol. Thus an efficient meteorological station will be created which, in view of the rapidly changing weather conditions, is of particular importance in winter.

The Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla sent me the following report:

"Two night firing exercises carried out; last night after running in 6 times exercise broken off owing to the weather. Two further night firing exercises planned. Weather favorable again. This afternoon anti-aircraft and target-firing exercises. 3 102 operational again."

I have decided to grant the E-boats the necessary time for their two planned night firing exercises.

During a discussion with the representative of the Staff of Commander, Anti-Aircraft Defenses, Crimea, the demands for anti-aircraft reinforcements submitted by the Navy in the interests of maintaining Army supplies, were again put forward. To sum up, it was established that, with the transport operation "Blücher 2" in progress, the Army considers the defense of Kerch-Taman as a priority at present. The battery in Djankoy-Bahndamm is required elsewhere and has been withdrawn to the Don.

There is also the possibility that a battery may be withdrawn from Taman for the Crimea. This battery might either serve to reinforce the anti-aircraft defenses of Theodosia or, acting in conjunction with the defenses at Theodosia, it might be set up at Ivan Baba, which it would at the same time serve to protect. The erection of a single heavy battery in Balaklava or, subsequently, in Sevastopol, is inadvisable, owing to the slight prospects of any effective result. As soon as Army supply traffic begins to arrive at Sevastopol, the importance of Balaklava will decline, and the Russian attacks on Sevastopol will become heavier than they have been so far. A single battery would thus be able to offer little resistance against such assault. In the case of Theodosia-Ivan Baba, however, by installing the battery at Ivan Baba the chief operational harbor of the offensive forces and the chief transshipment port for ferry traffic in the east would be at least moderately well protected as a result of this concentration of all the available heavy anti-aircraft defenses. Furthermore the focal point of anti-aircraft defense will have to be shifted as supplies move further east.

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9 October, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Lively activity of surface forces and patrol vessels off the entire Caucasus coast. Of the 7 larger vessels at sea yesterday afternoon, 5 were still at sea in the evening, cruisers A and D presumably among them in the southeastern Black Sea. Slight submarine activity. One submarine escort and 4 submarines intercepted. - Convoys normal. Otherwise nothing to report.

Own Situation:

- A.
1. Motor minesweepers (RA) carried out escort duties.
  2. E-boats on torpedo and gunnery exercises.
  3. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 5, 11 and 13, and steamer D 12 carried out a remote sweep off and inside Sevastopol harbor.
  4. Having sighted enemy vessels during the night of 7 October, Italian E-boats Nos. 567 and 569 put out from Yalta to take up reconnaissance positions but did not encounter the enemy. They re-entered Yalta at 0720 owing to lack of fuel.
  5. Four motor fishing vessels continued to buoy the route from Kerch to Temriuk.
  6. 2nd FZ-Group continued to sweep Yeisk channel.
- B.
1. Sulina: on 8 October at 1814 the German Air Force Division sighted an enemy submarine off Snake Island. Explosion at 1820. Landing ground occupied by German Air Force Division.
  2. Anapa: on 8 October at 2230 air raid warning. On 9 October at 0300 two M.T.B.s shelled Anapa. Our return fire was without result. No damage reported.  
Kerch: on 9 October at 0120 air raid warning.  
Kerch: on 9 October from 0200 to 0210 air raid warning. 1 flare, no bombs, no damage.
  3. Northeastern Black Sea slight shipping movements; nothing larger than numerous minesweepers, coastal vessels and patrol vessels identified.



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Group South decided that motorboats should be taken away but that assault boats should remain at operational readiness in the Black Sea; the Italian E-boats will also remain. In order that these problems and the new situation arising out of the necessary hold-up of preparations already in hand may be clarified and the possibilities of operations with Italian E-boats, dependent as they are on weather conditions at sea, may again be discussed, I am sending for Captain Mimbelli to come to Battle H.Q. tomorrow.

I am considering the reply to a query of Naval High Command as to whether it would be possible and expedient to man both reserve boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla with Rumanian commanders and crew under German command, alternatively whether it would be possible to find German personnel from existing crews of the E-Boat Flotilla. I am of the opinion that although we could provide Rumanian commanders and crew, it would not be practical. The E-boat training of Rumanian naval officers which, under present circumstances in Germany, could only be very superficial, is no substitute for the long experience of German E-boat commanders. This is an important factor in the overall operations of the flotilla, particularly when, as in this case, it is working under extreme difficulties. Two boats attached to an experienced flotilla, manned by commander and crew of Rumanian mentality, inexperienced and lacking operational readiness, may well affect the fitness and efficiency of the entire flotilla. One might, however, consider the possibility of using Croats if they should happen to have sufficient training.

In my directive for German U-boat operations, I had planned for Kerch or Theodosia to serve as jumping-off bases. Group South, however, passed me their view that although preparations were going ahead, they did not themselves regard those harbors as suitable since they are exposed to the danger of air attack. To clear the matter up, I shall explain that all the heavy anti-aircraft defenses in the Crimea are concentrated in these two ports, whereas they are lacking in every other port. There are no other anti-aircraft defenses available, particularly since Naval High Command, Naval Staff have refused the request for the transfer of a heavy motorized anti-aircraft detachment from the west.

The provisional dates for the commitment of U 24 have now been fixed. After basin trials on 13 October, she is to be commissioned on 15 October and taken to Constantza on about 17 October in an attempt for her to be operational by 25 October.

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Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea escorted 142 ships and ships in tow totaling 155,900 G.R.T., 16 ships and ships in tow of unspecified tonnage and 12 auxiliary warships during September. This new and admirable performance with regard to increased supplies was achieved despite the seasonal autumn deterioration in the weather.

Since no decision regarding the allocation of Temriuk to Naval Shore Commander, Crimea has yet been received and a ruling is urgently needed, I have issued provisional orders, subject to revision and final decision later, that Temriuk should be subordinated to Port Commander, Kerch.

The representatives of the Staff Officers, Operations I and II today went to Sevastopol and Balaklava for discussions with the Port Commander there. From the talks in Sevastopol it is learned that the Commander of the FZ-Group is tomorrow expected to declare a section of the harbor, including the pier, mincfree.

An inspection of the Army Coastal Batteries on the west coast of the Crimea has shown that, contrary to basic orders regarding the erection of Army Coastal Batteries in accordance with Führer Directive 40, a battery has been constructed for indirect firing. The necessary measures will be taken by Naval Shore Commander, Crimea.

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10 October, 1942

Simferopol

Own Situation:

Situation Report dated 10 October, 1200:

- A.
1. Motor minesweepers and RA motor minesweepers carried out escort duties.
  2. No operations by minesweeping planes owing to lack of gasoline.
  3. On 9 October the E-boats were unable to carry out torpedo exercises owing to heavy seas.
  4. 2nd FZ-Group continued to search the Yeisk channel.
  5. Sweeping of the approach to Sevastopol, bearing towards Inkerman and of a section of the harbor marked off by red and white fairway buoys, from the net barrages to the coaling wharves, was concluded today. Entrance and section searched opened to shipping. At 44° 57.5' N, 33° 28.1' E there is a red approach buoy, which lies 100 meters north as one steers towards the Inkerman light. A strip of 75 meters was searched on either side of the transit. No mines were swept in the course of 30 covering runs at sea and 70 in port over a breadth of sweep of 50 meters.
- B.
1. On 9 October D/F bearings and air reconnaissance reported increased shipping movements in the northeastern Black Sea. There were also several transports outside Tuapse.
  2. On 9 October in air grid square 5510-5540 enemy planes were observed for an hour.
  3. Mines suspected.
  4. Air raid warnings:

Yalta:	9	October	at 1404	air reconnaissance at high altitude.
	"	"	"	1915 unidentified plane.
	10	"	"	0900 two reconnaissance planes at high altitude.
Kerch:	9	"	"	1841-2243 six planes came in three times; 15 bombs were dropped; no damage done.

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- G.
1. On 7 October near Kossa Dolgaya 3 inertia contact mines exploded.
  2. Lower Pavlovski light destroyed; sabotage; lenses smashed. Field Security Police informed; uncertain when it will be working again; no spare parts.
  3. Office of Naval Shore Commander, Crimea to be transferred to Yalta after 11 October.
- 

Since the weather forecast for the next few days is unfavorable, I am breaking off the torpedo exercises of 1st E-Boat Flotilla and have ordered them to proceed to Ivan Baba ready for operations from there. Since the commander of E-boat No. 72 is on sick leave for about a week and Lieut. (s.g.) Büchting is also in hospital, E-boat No. 72 has no commander, so that she is practically speaking out of action. I will inquire whether the Flotilla Commander could take command of her during operations as well as overall command of the flotilla.

The Group informed me that neither they nor Operations Division, Naval Staff consider it feasible to transfer the Italian E-boats to the Caspian yet. The Army's ground organization for transport purposes is to stay as it is; this applies also, as far as possible, to Italian special transport facilities, until some change in the present land situation or the coming freeze-up calls for fresh decisions.

These problems were thoroughly discussed with Captain Mimbelli, who was at H.Q. today. I continue to be of the opinion that in present circumstances 4 Italian E-boats mean a great deal in the Caspian Sea, even as a defensive measure; in the Black Sea, however, in view of the available German E-boats and their greater operational efficiency, and in view also of the additional offensive strength provided by German U-boats, they are of minor importance. On the other hand, Captain Mimbelli considers that to hold on to the transports with a later attempt at gearing up the entire transport undertaking will present considerable difficulties.

Since I consider it important that Group South should be aware of these aspects before reaching a final decision, I have informed the Group both on this matter and on the situation with regard to the assault boats, in the following teletypo:



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- "1. Mimbelli, present here, regrets altered decision owing to the extensive preparations already made, particularly as in Rome, following the policy of the Naval Group, he had himself pressed for transport, and other tasks were given secondary consideration (e.g. transport of Italian E-boats to Finland). This may cause annoyance in Rome but should not sway decision.
2. Agree with Mimbelli that 4 Italian E-boats in the Caspian mean a great deal, if only for defensive purposes, but in the Black Sea, very little. Therefore of primary importance to know whether there is any prospect of achieving target Bennecke within reasonable time. Possibly cancellation of Wesemann will free forces for target Bennecke. Probably this can only be learned from Naval Staff.
3. It may be possible to keep to the original plan since Mimbelli believes that the Italian Admiralty may dispatch a further 2, possibly 4, Italian E-boats to Galatz, thus once again bringing up the total to 6-8 in the Black Sea. The last transport took barely 3 weeks.
4. Should it indeed seem improbable that target Bennecke will be reached this year, then it would be better to abandon the present land transport which, in view of all the preparations involved and the weather, should be undertaken immediately, and look forward to transport by land or rail next spring. This last would be possible, so long as suitable preparations were made - stretches of rail with tunnels could not be used.
5. Motorboats will proceed with Bennecke. There are 4 small assault boats without crew in Yalta. Under present circumstances they cannot be manned because of the way the Russians are treating their prisoners and because they were only unofficially taken along at the time. Mimbelli has already informed Rome.
6. A prompt decision is requested, so that we can decide here regarding the preparations already made, transport facilities, ferry barges loaded for the Italians, Army Engineer Detachments, etc.
7. Request you to inform Italian Admiralty from there. In the case of non-execution of transportation, it would be advisable to send explanation for reasons given in para. 1.

Admiral, Black Sea Battle H.Q. Gkdos. 1445"

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Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea has stated his views on the operational policy I outlined on 3 October; I agree with him on all points. The situation has changed since the above policy was issued because now that Nikolaiev will probably be abandoned and traffic diverted to Sevastopol, the original protective minefields at Odessa will decline in importance while those at Sevastopol will grow in importance. Furthermore, my experiences show that the reorganization of the Ship Reporting Service is extremely urgent, also uniform instructions on channels of communication to be used, to avoid the duplication and triplication of reports. The necessary measures will be taken after the matters have been discussed.

Lieut. (j.g.) Rosenbaum, Commander, 30th U-Boat Flotilla, is at present at Battle H.Q. to take part in conferences and receive instructions on our coming U-boat operations.

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11 October, 1942

Simferopol

Own Situation 11 October, 1200:

- A.
1. Motor minesweepers and motor minesweepers (RA) carried out escort duties.
  2. 2nd FZ-Group escorted the convoy of the "Budapest" along the direct route Yeisk-Mariupol.
  3. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 1 and 4 continue to buoy and search the Kerch-Temriuk route.
  4. E-boats have broken off gunnery and torpedo exercises and have been ordered to make for Ivan Baba ready for operations from there.
- B.
1. Brisk activity of light surface forces in the northeastern Black Sea. Single escorted vessels sighted by day proceeding only from Tuapse to the southeast. Radar located several submarines at sea.
  2. At 1948 on 10 October, the steamer "Carpati" was torpedoed and sunk in 45° 0.5' N, 29° 47' E. 15 anti-aircraft personnel, 3 marines, 29 of the Rumanian crew were rescued; 3 Rumanians are missing. A search of the scene of the accident will continue by day. Secret material was saved. According to the time of origin of the report, the ship must have been torpedoed in a surface attack while still escorted by the motor minesweepers.
  3. On 10 October 12-15 miles south of Theodosia a reconnaissance plane sighted a drifting mine.
  4. On 7 October submarines attacked the Sulina dredger without result. The Rumanians have stopped dredging operations because they are unable to supply adequate escort forces at the moment. It is important that the Danube Division should provide protection for the Sulina area as soon as possible; Naval Special Duties Detachment has been instructed to coordinate their operations so that dredging may be resumed.
  5. Only slight enemy air activity. At 1952 on 10 October Kerch had an air raid warning; reconnaissance planes.
- G.
1. Situation of Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus unchanged.

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2. On 10 October two Russian mines were washed up near Genichesk.

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Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea has issued the necessary orders for continuing anti-submarine operations in the sea area where the "Carpati" went down. The chase will not be broken off unless special orders are issued; planes are also operating throughout the day. The submarine was located several times and attacked with depth charges.

In my opinion the taking on board of Russian prisoners of war is an error on the part of the Main Office of Transportation Section, Nikolaiev. Any exception to existing orders that nobody may be transported by sea should have come from a higher command. Security measures, accommodation and supervision were inadequate. I have therefore ordered a letter of complaint to be lodged against the responsible officer of the Sea Transportation Section, Nikolaiev for gross negligence in overloading a steamer, thus probably incurring losses which might have been avoided. It was the duty of the Sea Transportation Section, Nikolaiev to allow only as many people on board, including prisoners of war, as would ensure that the safety of the ship and more especially that of her crew were not endangered. Admiral, Black Sea was not informed of the plans for this transportation. Whether the Chief, Sea Transportation Section, Black Sea should be charged with negligence of his supervisory duties, must also be investigated.

Today the commander of the German U-Boat Flotilla, Licut. (j.g.) Rosenbaum, arrived at Battle H.Q. Details of operational readiness and U-boat operations were discussed with him. It transpired that the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff had given him a viewpoint on U-boat operations essentially different from that held by me and by Group South. Since it is essential that these basic questions should be clarified before the commitment of the first boat, I have informed the Group of my attitude and requested them to explain my views to Naval Staff:

- "1. In the course of discussions with the commander of the German U-Boat Flotilla, the attitude of Chief of Staff, Naval Staff to U-boat operations came to light. Thus it transpired that contrary to the views agreed upon by the Group and Admiral, Black Sea, the U-boats' main objective should be Russian

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merchant shipping. There was no need to take the Russian Fleet into account since, according to Chief of Staff, Naval Staff, it was no concern of U-boat operations.

2. According to air reconnaissance and radio monitoring service, however, the forces of the Russian Fleet are all being very active. While the object of these operations is not always clear, they are presumably intended to provide cover for the nuisance raids and to pick up the light forces engaged in these actions, which have, particularly of late, been harassing our coast and supply traffic. Furthermore, these groups of enemy forces are probably also acting as a remote cover for the Russian Black Sea coast. With the loss of further harbors, the attacks on German naval communications which have only been sporadic so far, will increase, and with our troops forced to advance from Tuapse by the narrow coastal road to the southeast, the Russian Fleet is bound to use its most powerful vessels to shell our positions and supply traffic.
3. In contrast to the lively activity of Russian forces, merchant shipping activity is at present very slight; if at all, only during the day well under the coast and always with an escort of E-boats, submarine chasers, etc. Apart from naval forces acting as remote cover, previous experience would suggest that flanking minefields, probably against U-boats, should be widely expected. Even when there is no merchant shipping, patrol activity is remarkably lively along this coastal route. The Russian Army's main supply route is a land road.
4. German naval operations in the Black Sea area are primarily intended to safeguard the vital seaborne supplies for the Caucasus front and to maintain a well-protected sea route interspersed with bases. These supplies are not only threatened by the Russian Air Force but also by light surface forces and submarines. Our defense, i.e. direct defense, against them is confined exclusively to small craft of which the most effective are our motor minesweepers. It is already evident that the Russian Fleet possesses considerable means of attack and prospects of success with its mass of small vessels supported by heavy ones such as cruisers and destroyers.
5. Thus it falls to the German U-boat, as the only suitable weapon in the area, to smash



these Russian forces which are serving as a remote cover for the Russian offensive against our German supplies and at the same time protecting the Russian coast. The U-boats can thus provide indirect protection for German naval supplies and prepare the way for better possibilities of attack on the very light Russian escort forces operating off the coast, together with direct attacks or even military operations against the enemy coast itself.

6. Should merchant shipping activity be resumed in the narrow strip of coastal waters available to light vessels, it could be attacked with some prospect of success by those naval weapons remaining in the Black Sea area (E-boats, Italian E-boats and Italian submarines). In view of constant enemy activity and the promise of only minor targets, putting the various light forces mentioned above into operation against possible Russian supply traffic offers greater prospects than wearing out valuable weapons such as the 3 German U-boats.
7. Hence, I am still of the opinion that German U-boats should primarily operate against the Russian Fleet, including and down to the destroyer, plus freedom of attack on submarines. Obviously any favorable opportunity of firing on merchant ships, on troop transports, etc., for instance, should also be seized.

Battle H.Q. of Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos.  
1943 A I"

In connection with the operations of approximately 20 naval ferry barges assigned to tasks other than "Blücher", a fresh order from Army High Command, Operations Division, has been received to reinforce the Kerch/Taman traffic. This recent change of decision by the Army Commands contrary to the conference held on 3 October at Mariupol again calls for an explanation. My point of view which I have voiced everywhere, is that the naval ferry barges will simply be worn out if used for the Kerch/Taman traffic. They are not, in fact, transport barges but vessels with specific naval tasks and really intended for commitment east of the Crimea in an area where steamers cannot be used owing to the continued activity of the Russian Fleet. I have therefore frequently suggested that the "Blücher" naval ferry barges should be replaced by tugs of the Danube Steamship Company towing ferries.



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Since the naval ferry barges of "Blücher 2" have been so much worn out that they are out of the question for operational purposes unless they undergo a long repair period, at least we should see to it that no new ferry barges are employed for this task. Any barges at present employed on operations other than "Blücher" should undergo a running-in period of 8-10 days and be used for military supplies and escort duties alternately. In order to clear up matters, a decision is requested from Group South as to who is responsible for the ferry barges and for what purpose they are to be used. With the present procedure whereby claims are made by different Army Commands, I cannot make any clear disposition.

An enquiry has also been received from the general in charge of supply and transport as to whether urgent troop transports from some 200 trains may be conveyed by sea from Mariupol to Yeisk. In my reply I pointed out that this area was exposed to danger both from the air and from mines. Occasional losses will therefore be inevitable but the Navy is willing, if the Army will take the risk. For reasons of safety the troop transports require at least 2 independently driven ships accompanying them. This would, of course, cause delays in transportation, also for the Chief Quartermaster's transports. If, for the sake of speed, the troop transports are to take place without regard for safety or means of rescue, we shall need the Führer's decision to waive his strict regulations governing such operations. Until a decision has been reached I shall in any case order preparations for this task to go ahead and I have requested Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine to get into touch with the Chief Quartermaster and Out-Station, South in Stalino.

In connection with the inspection of Croat naval vessels by the Croat Naval Attaché, Rear Admiral Jakcin, it was wondered whether all the Croat Naval Divisions could not be brought together under one naval commander. Enquiries were also made into the possibility of transferring the senior and more experienced petty officers and men of the Croatian Minesweeping Flotilla in Mariupol from very small, poorly equipped vessels to slightly larger, newer types, as for example, the motor fishing vessels.

I think the justifiable wishes of the crews and their Croat officers, all of whom make an excellent impression, should be granted as far as possible. Arrangements are to be made to bring them together under one Naval Shore Commander and complete the manning and immediate

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training of the first group of motor fishing vessels (some 3-4). Also extensive leave will be granted to the Croats during the winter. Furthermore, special training in minelaying, anti-aircraft and signals will be provided in Germany for Croat volunteers.

Group South is requested to appoint the Croat Lieut. (s.g.) Lenoeh, who is unfit for service afloat, to the staff of Admiral, Black Sea, Simferopol, as special officer in charge of the operations and general administration of the Croats.

During a conference with the Commanding Officer of the German Air Force Staff, Crimea (Air Commander Crimea) problems of anti-aircraft defenses, transshipment ports and bases were particularly discussed.

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12 October, 1942

Simferopol

Situation Report 12 October 1200:

- A.
1. 2nd FE-Group escorted the steamer "Budapest" along the direct Yeisk-Mariupol route without incident.
  2. On 11 October, motor minesweepers R 33, 163, 165, 166 and 4 D-boats, together with "Xanten", carried out anti-submarine operations between Gura Portitei and Sulina along route Green as far as approximately 8 miles offshore. The commanding officer of the "Stihi" directed the operations. The "Xanten" located a submarine, 38 depth charges were dropped. The chase is being continued. Planes were in operation during the day.
  3. Motor minesweepers R 35 and 36 were ordered to search route Brown from point 10 to 15 for suspected mines out, owing to the fact that the Commander and the Group Commander in the R 35 have contracted jaundice, the sweep was canceled. Reliefs will arrive in 5-6 days.
  4. The Kerch-Tenriuk route has been buoyed. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 1 and 9 and patrol boats Nos. 12 and 15 have searched the buoyed route for moored and non-contact mines. No mines swept.
  5. E-boats left Constantza on the evening of 12 October.
  6. On 12 October motor fishing vessels Nos. 1, 4, 6 and 8 left Pavlovski on a remote sweep via the Burunski and Pavlovski directional lights to Cape Takil and back. No mines swept so far.
- B.
1. Activity of light surface forces off the north-eastern part of the enemy coast continued. On the evening of 11 October a moderately large formation was located at sea by radar, course south to north, probably including 2 cruisers.
  2. Kerch: During the night of 11/12 October 20 enemy planes flew over Kerch Strait via the Kerch-Taman route; they are believed to have dropped mines. All shipping traffic stopped, sweeping ordered. 2000-2045 several enemy planes east of Cape Takil at the southern entrance to Kerch Strait; they are believed to have dropped mines.



Theodosia: From 1516 to 1536 on 11 October 2 planes were over the coastal area south of Theodosia.

Yalta: At 1920 on 11 October planes were sighted near Cape Sichor and Usgiut flying from east to west. At 2010 they were sighted again from west to east.

At 0815 on 12 October a plane was sighted off Yalta flying from east to west; at 0830 from west to east. No bombs were reported to have been dropped.

3. From 0520 to 0530 on 12 October near Varvarovski south of Anapa the Army Coastal Battery 338/1 fired 10 rounds at a range of 7,000 meters at a plane flying at high speed southward. Result uncertain, weather misty.
- D. Minesweeping planes continued operations sweeping the buoyed route from Kerch to Temriuk. After several covering flights and covering runs the Kerch-Temriuk route will be opened to shipping about 15 October.
- G. 1. On 11 October the 520 meter-long breakwaters at Theodosia were completed by the Todt Organization. One automobile salvaged from the steamer "Jean-Jaures". Minesweeping operations continued.
2. On 11 October two drifting mines were sighted at Skadovsk, bearing 120° and 135° from the Dzharuilgach lighthouse, approximately 3-4 miles apart drifting to the south.

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Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea has, as a result of increased Russian submarine activity, temporarily stopped convoys between the Danube and Dnieper. Tug traffic, however, is to be resumed by day only, in about three days' time, with an intermediate station at Bugaz.

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea submitted his survey of the situation covering the events of the past few days. He reported an intensification of Russian submarine activity, an improvement in tactical disposition, more skillful submarine attacks and greater accuracy in firing; he assumes that this is due to British support. He no longer considers that the flanking minefields give adequate protection to the routes. He also states that available forces are numerically not adequate to reinforce the U-boat escorts. To proceed with convoys as

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constituted at present would lead to irreplaceable losses; he therefore recommends that during the present lull in the convoy traffic between Constantza and the Dnieper systematic anti-submarine operations should be carried out day and night using all possible vessels. After that the merchant shipping traffic should be resumed only to Sevastopol. For these tasks he asked for the assignment of 4 boats of the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla.

Both the Group and I are in general agreement with the Commander's survey of the situation; but I do consider that, although flanking minefields offer no absolute guarantee of security, they hamper offensive action to some extent. Furthermore, since they are the only available weapon, additional minefields are to be laid despite their low rate of effectiveness, concentrating on the route to Sevastopol.

With the present means at our disposal it is impossible for submarine chasing to have any permanent effect. The only solution is to dispatch fewer convoys but with increased escorts of all types on alternating courses, etc. The tug traffic from Danube to Nikolaiev will incur losses which will, however, have to be borne if supplies to these harbors become urgent. Adequate escort for this traffic will not be possible once the traffic to Sevastopol has been resumed.

Owing to this increased threat from submarines, Group South has suggested that orders be issued to strengthen the flanking minefields again, particularly where deep water favors submarine attacks.

I have requested Group South to investigate whether the construction of motor fishing vessels with search gear could be speeded up or whether 2 anti-submarine vessels might temporarily be withdrawn from the Aegean. As one of our anti-submarine measures, I am investigating whether it might be of advantage to use Italian U-boats against Russian submarines. The difficulty lies in the limited performance of the small crews in the Italian boats (crew at minimum strength with no relieving watch) and their low speed. I shall re-investigate the matter with the Main Naval D/F Station as to whether there are any reasons to suppose that Italian U-boat operations at definite points or on definite days might prove of value.

In accordance with orders from Group South, Captain Weyner today contacted Army H.Q. 17. Group South will be informed of the outcome and

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of telephone discussion with Admiral Krancke about the operations of Operations Staff, Scheurlen, in the following teletype:

- "1. In discussion with Army H.Q. 17 it was learnt that plans to date concern only minor local operations with Army boats without naval ferry barges. Hence Scheurlen not needed. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus will advise in a limited capacity when necessary.
2. In discussion with Admiral Krancke it was learnt that there are to be new tasks for Operations Staff, Scheurlen at the beginning of November in which the Army will not at first participate. To this end some 20 naval ferry barges are to be run in by Scheurlen at the beginning of November.
3. Have instructed Admiral Krancke that 10 naval ferry barges could be withdrawn at any time, but not 20, as this would mean canceling other naval tasks involving E-boats, etc. New ferry barges cannot be expected until November since they must first be converted in Varna. Admiral Krancke stated that Admiral, Landing Craft and Bases, is sending trained crews in exchange so that they will very quickly gain experience. It is also imperative that the naval ferry barges should be completed as quickly as possible. Whether additional work should be abandoned must also be examined.
4. Commander, Convoys and Escorts will submit suggestions to Group South at once on how best to provide Admiral Scheurlen with the maximum number of naval ferry barges - 20 to be aimed at. In so doing, imminent commitments should be remembered and also that, at Kerch, there are only old "Blücher" barges. Fresh additions over the coming period should be included in any calculations.
5. I propose that both the station and exercise area for the Staff of Admiral Scheurlen should immediately be decided upon. Since exercises can temporarily be carried out independent of the Army, Constantza might be suitable for the initial stage and for the assembly of the squadron, although Bordyansk has more favorable weather.

Battle H.Q. Admiral, Black Sea G 1851."

Since no special liaison officer or staff is required for the operation, I have commissioned Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus to undertake



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advising the Army on naval matters and providing support with naval personnel and materials.

Sea Transportation Section, Group South informed us that Naval High Command has decided that the owners of the river lighters and tugs employed are to retain the management of their own craft. I welcome this decision as it will avoid the Navy becoming burdened with responsibilities which would normally lie outside its sphere.

No decision has yet been received regarding the use of the 20 naval ferry barges not included in "Blücher". The Naval Liaison Officer at Army High Command informed me that the Führer would decide on their commitment within the next few days.

According to a message from Quartermaster Division, Naval High Command is investigating the possibility of using light E-boats, which can be transported by land, in the Caspian. Quite apart from what the final decision may be, I am requesting the construction of 10 light E-boats to be started immediately. Since the problem of crews will create difficulties I suggest they should be manned entirely with Croats, some of whom have experience of E-boats.

A reliable agent's report states that the British are taking Russian freighters with Greek captains and crews from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. Four freighters have so far been reported on their way there.

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13 October, 1942

Simferopol

Situation Report 13 October 1200:

- A.
1. Motor minesweepers R 33 and 163 continued anti-submarine operations off Gura St. George.
  2. Four boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla ready for operations at Ivan Baba.
  3. Motor minesweepers (RA) carried out escort duties.
  4. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 5, 9, 11, 3 and the steamer D 12 continued minesweeping operations in Sevastopol harbor. No mines swept.
  5. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 1, 4, 6 and 8 continued remote minesweeping operations in Kerch Strait from Pavlovski to Cape Fonar and back.
  6. Drifting mine sighted off Alushta.
- B.
1. At 1335 on 12 October there was an air raid warning at Balaklava. Five planes dropped about 20 bombs. No losses. Rumanian anti-aircraft guns probably scored a hit.
  2. The western part of the town of Novorossisk was heavily shelled.
  3. Activity of light naval forces off the north-eastern part of the enemy coast continued. Some submarines were located by radar. Three submarines were intercepted in the western Black Sea.
  4. During the rescue of the crew of the "Carpati", a submarine made a surface attack. The boat surfaced at 150 meter range, was fired at with 2 cm. guns and, after submerging, was attacked with depth charges.
- G.
1. Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes did not occupy the Kums valley (north of Georgievsk) but five villages, Solskaya, Marinskaya, Pssynodach-Bagech, Solukokoash, with H.Q. at Solskaya which occupies a central position 25 miles southeast of Pyatigorsk. Port Commander 26 is remaining in Mariupol as Rear-Detachment and Reception Station.

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2. The Kerch-Taman route has been opened to shipping. One mine swept.

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E-boat operations off the Russian coast are planned for the night of the 14/15th. The following operational orders have been issued:

"Operational Orders for 1st E-Boat Flotilla on the night of 14/15 October:

1. Reports on the enemy:

Air reconnaissance and radio intercept service report Russian Fleet at sea with forces of varying strength up to cruisers. Their object is unknown. It is surmised that they are providing cover for the nuisance raids and picking up the forces engaged in these actions against the German-occupied coast and supply traffic, while also providing remote cover for the Russian coast. Only occasional supply steamers were identified off the coast from Tuapse to the southeast. Lively patrol activity between Ghelenjik and Tuapse. Possibly troop transportations by warship.

2. Own Situation:

Apart from the submarine threat, particularly in the western Black Sea, nuisance raids by light surface forces on our coast and supplies. These are beginning to have a disturbing effect and to interfere with our transport organization. Ships and defense forces in port are in danger of being shelled from the sea. The Caucasus army front is constantly meeting with heavier resistance and the only explanation is that fresh troops and materials are being brought up, probably by the coastal railway. German naval forces not at sea. Sporadic air raids on Russian ports.

5. Object:

To ascertain whether steamers so far not intercepted bring up supplies at night, if so this traffic must be destroyed. Should none be encountered, then harass the patrol vessels in order to tie them down to the Russian coast and thus provide indirect relief to our supply routes. This will compel the Russians to use their forces for the defense of their own coast, and not for additional support to the Caucasus front.

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4. Own naval forces:

The 1st E-Boat Flotilla will be under the Flotilla Commander. He will fix the sailing times in accordance with 5 and report to Battle H.Q. Admiral, Black Sea, to German Air Force Staff, Crimea, to Naval Shore Commander, Crimea and to Port Commander, Theodosia.

5. Execution:

From 1900 on 14 October, the boats will lie in lurking position in the operational area off the Russian coast between grid squares 6666 and 9184 and also carry out a probing reconnaissance. Attack possible supply traffic, failing which attack patrol and escort forces or feign nuisance raids against the coast. The attack to be carried out according to plan and situation, decision rests with the Flotilla Commander. The operation is to be broken off in time to allow the boats to enter Ivan Baba, at the latest, during the course of the morning of 15 October; in view of the projected Army operation it is on no account to extend northwest of grid square 6666.

6. Communications order:

E-boats to use E-boat wave. Battle H.Q. of Admiral, Black Sea will tune in to this wave for reception only between 1200 on 14 October until 15 October to receive message that boats have re-entered port. Break radio silence during engagements with the enemy, etc. Endeavor at conclusion of operations to send short report.

7. Special orders:

Beware of mines off Tuapse. It is surmised that the Russians are constantly strengthening their mine defenses off the coast, particularly since the last E-boat operations.

The execution of the operation will depend on the weather. When his local weather report seems favorable, Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla will telephone Battle H.Q. Admiral, Black Sea regarding plans for putting to sea with the keyword "Going on leave, Commander....." giving date, zero-hour; date denotes zero-hour for putting to sea up to 1100 on 14 October. Any alteration or premature breaking-off of the operation due to altered enemy situation to be decided by the Flotilla Commander.

Admiral, Black Sea Battle H.Q. Gkdos.  
1652 A I."

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An indication of the state of the communications service in the area may be found in the fact that the transmission of this order from Simferopol via Theodosia to Ivan Baba took almost 7 hours.

The Group have informed me that they agree with my review of the situation and with the directive on U-boat operations, and that they have requested Naval Staff for their comments so that the apparent differences of opinion may be clarified. Until a decision is reached Group South's directive stands, i.e. U-boats are principally to be used against the Russian Fleet.

The fuel situation calls for a heavy cutting-down in motor transport vehicles and for the more efficient exploitation of all transport facilities. I shall therefore issue further restrictive orders to this effect and point out the urgency of the matter to all the subordinate commands.

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14 October, 1942

Simferopol

Situation 14 October 1200:

- A.
1. The 1st E-Boat Flotilla put out for operations off the Russian coast between grid squares 6666 and 9184. They are to ascertain whether supply steamers not so far intercepted, are proceeding by night and if so, destroy them. Should no such traffic be encountered, they are to interfere with patrol activity in order to tie down Russian forces to the Russian coast and thus provide indirect relief for German supply routes.
  2. The Net Barrage Group, Black Sea has laid two rows of anti-torpedo net defenses in Balaklava harbor; 60 meters firmly anchored, 90 meters can be lowered when necessary.
  3. The 2nd FZ-Group sailed from Mariupol to the Atachuev lighthouse and swept the Temriuk approaches with motor pinnace gear. No mines swept. They buoyed the route and put in to Temriuk at 1630.
  4. The sweeping of the Kerch-Temriuk route by patrol boats Nos. 12 and 15 was broken off owing to the weather. No mines swept. No operations by minesweeping plane owing to engine trouble. In all probability there will be no more sweeping operations on the mined route until 16 October.
  5. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 1, 4, 6 and 8 swept the routes: Pavlovski - green wreck buoy - Cape Yenikale; Pavlovski - down the line of the Burunski-Pavlovski directional lights - to Cape Chongolek with towed loop gear and noise-box (turbines). No mines swept.
- B.
1. At 1730 at Varvarovski, south of Anapa smoke-clouds sighted moving in a northwesterly direction.
  2. 0912 air raid warning at Balaklava.
  3. At 0055 at Theodosia, anti-aircraft opened fire on enemy planes - 8 flares were dropped probably to guide ships to their target. From 0045 to 0100 2 light enemy vessels, smaller than destroyers, fired some 30 rounds from 7.5 cm. guns, direction 75°, on town and harbor. Range measured by radar 7,000 meters. Anti-aircraft guns opened fire on the target.

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Damage: 1 hit on crew's quarters, 1 wounded. Several houses damaged, otherwise no material damage. At 0147 all clear. Radar did not locate target until after enemy had opened fire and was retreating. No landings observed.

- D. 1. U 24 reported probable arrival at Sulina at 1900 on 15 October.
2. 2nd FZ-Group will sail for Temriuk with towed loop gear, noise-box (turbines) and motor pinnace gear, to buoy route that has been swept of mines.
- E. 1. On 12 October U 9 and crew put in to Galatz.
- G. 1. Since 11 October a submarine has been located at 4440 N 2908 E, the hunt against her is being maintained.
2. No change reported from Novorossisk. Port Commander 21 has been detailed to operate off Shadyskenskaya to safeguard the main approach routes. No engagements so far. During the course of the day, contrary to the weather forecast, the weather to the southeast has steadily deteriorated so that the scheduled E-boat operations have had to be broken off. The flotilla turned back in grid square 6558, because of wind NNE 5, sea 3-4.
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I ordered the Commander of the 1st Landing Craft Flotilla to come to H.Q. in order to discuss and clear up the existing difficulties regarding the present position and distribution of naval ferry barges. The following general picture emerged, which I have reported to Group South in the interests of the expected detailed orders on the coordination and operations of these vessels:

- "1. Nine barges in a state of growing disrepair on ferry duties on the Kerch route, 2 more whose repair will soon be completed, total 11 naval ferry barges available.
2. During the next few days 17 naval ferry barges are to be withdrawn from the Azov traffic, escort duties and training squadron Giele, in addition 2 still under repair or conversion.
3. Once these 19 naval ferry barges have been withdrawn there will be none available during the next two weeks for the actual task of

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supplying E-boats, German and Italian U-boats. We may perhaps at the beginning of November have 7 barges, provided trained crews are obtainable and the boats require no running in.

4. The next ferry barges do not arrive till mid-November.
5. In order to save time it is proposed to assemble the 19 naval ferry barges belonging to Operations Staff, Scheurlon in an eastern port, preferably Berdyansk, and to carry out their exercises there. Constantza not only involves a longer assembly period but also a later and longer advance to the east, at the expense of the time devoted to training and exercises.
6. Expert opinion regards repairs and additions as imperative if the boats are to be used at sea, particularly in view of the deterioration in the weather.
7. I have informed the relevant commands of the coming withdrawal of the naval ferry barges and that, until November, there will be none available for escort duties and supplies.

Group South refused my proposal to remedy the catastrophic shortage of anti-submarine vessels with search gear in the Black Sea by bringing across two anti-submarine vessels from the Aegean. The reason given is the similar submarine menace existing there and the similar lack of resources.

Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine, Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes and the Staff Officer of Naval Shore Command, Crimca were here at H.Q. today for further talks. The discussions were chiefly concerned with matters arising out of the latest orders for organization and supplies. Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes is provisionally obliged to go into winter quarters with most of his units in waiting position. This means that problems of commitment for Army operations have to be cleared up.

Group South has been informed of the results of the discussion with Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes as follows:

"The discussion on 14 October with Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes on his return from the conference with Armored H.Q. led to the following decisions:

1. The main body with staff of Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes to be billeted in villages south of Pyatigorsk, air grid square 3415.

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Port Commander 25 at Cramer Constantinovskaya, air grid square 3578.

Port Command 26 for supply organization at first at Mariupol.

2. Armored H.Q. I requested that with the start of the offensive towards the beginning of November the men belonging to Naval Shore Commander should take over a quiet position on the front, so far occupied by a Rumanian regiment, opposite a Russian Armenian division, in order that the Rumanian regiment can be taken into the attack. Since, in spite of the Naval Shore Commander's reference to the special duties and the lack of previous training of his troops, Armored H.Q. I offered instructors for immediate training and placed infantry weapons at his disposal, he could hardly refuse this assignment. On arrival at his quarters this will be arranged immediately. The sector in question lies in air grid square 3436 and will be taken over shortly before the attack begins in the adjoining sector.
3. I have agreed to this arrangement. However as Naval Shore Commander, Kerkes emphasizes the poor average quality of his petty officers, I consider it essential for each Port Commander of the Naval Shore Commands, Kerkes and Caucasus, as the only Naval Shore Commands in the actual front lines, to have at least one efficient officer as company or platoon commander. In these and similar tasks which are at present continually falling to Naval Shore Commands, Kerkes and Caucasus, if reverses are to be avoided which reflect badly upon naval prestige, the troops committed must be supported by good officers. Therefore request you to appoint 10 officers suitable as company commanders for Naval Shore Commands, Kerkes and Caucasus, e.g. reserve officers, junior ordnance officers etc.; older men or officers handicapped in any way are not suitable. Once the Naval Shore Commands have taken up a fixed position these officers can be withdrawn again.
4. Proposed quarters are good and suitable for the winter months.
5. I have no further details of the operations of Port Commander, Cramer who will probably operate later on across the Strait of Elista. In the course of the next few days this matter will be discussed with the newly-formed Don Staff in Rostov, which will probably take over the former tasks of Army Group B and will thus be interposed between A and B.

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6. There is no definite date for target Bennecke. The Army Commands in these areas consider, however, that the weather and snow will still permit the continuance of operations during the winter months.

Admiral, Black Sea Battle H.Q. Gkdos.  
Chefs. 15."

Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine reported that the proposed merging of the Croat naval detachments under one Naval Shore Commander can take place immediately the necessary exchange is arranged. Relevant orders will be issued.

Admiral, Black Sea had already investigated the Group's suggestion that the two sound reserve boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla should be used if possible. Their manning with Rumanian commanders and crews under German command has also been investigated. Having once again heard the views of all the subordinate commands from whom a competent judgment might be expected, I have reached the following conclusion:

1. Manning the reserve boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla with Rumanian commanders and crews is neither feasible nor expedient owing to their inadequate technical training. The superficial E-boat training of Rumanian naval officers cannot replace the long experience of German E-boat commanders, a considerable factor in the flotilla's overall operations, often carried out under extremely difficult conditions. Even two boats manned by officers and crew with the Rumanian mentality, inexperienced and not operationally efficient, and attached to a trained flotilla, may well under certain circumstances affect the efficiency and performance of the whole flotilla.
2. Investigation as to whether reserve boats might be manned with Croats also yielded negative results. Croats are only acquainted with the first Lürssen boats equipped with gasoline-driven engines and would therefore require a period of training for the boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla, so that they would be unable to take an active part in operations for quite some time.
3. Having lost part of the crew of E-boat S 27 and shortly afterward suffered an exchange of crews, the 1st E-Boat Flotilla is no longer in a position to carry out operations with mixed Croat and expert personnel.

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I shall, however, leave no avenue unexplored which might enable the reserve boats to be used, especially since an otherwise serviceable boat must be reported out of action as her commander is on sick leave. The Flotilla Commander cannot take over the command, since with a new and inexperienced commander on the leading boat it is essential for the Flotilla Commander to be there too.

U 24, Commander - Lieut. (j.g.) Petersen, will serve with the 30th U-Boat Flotilla in Galatz.

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15 October, 1942

Simferopol

Situation 15 October 1200:

- A.
1. Motor minesweepers (RA) on convoy duty.
  2. The Kerch-Temriuk route was searched by 3 patrol boats and a minesweeping plane. No mines swept.
  3. Motor minesweepers continued anti-submarine operations off Sulina.
  4. E-boats are ready for operations at Ivan Baba.
- B.
1. At 1413 three Russian bombers attacked the northern slopes of Ivan Baba and the mole from the seaward side. Six heavy and several splinter bombs dropped, no damage or casualties.
  2. According to D/F bearing, a battleship was standing 45 miles southwest of Batum off the Turkish coast at 1906.
  3. According to a radio intercept report an unknown vessel is at sea with the commander of the light naval forces some 155 miles west of Poti.
- G.
- Situation at Anapa and Novorossisk unchanged. 71 men and 1 officer of Port Command 19 are with the 97th Mountain Division. No report from Port Command 21.

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The bad weather continues so that the proposed E-boat operations have been abandoned (see War Diary 13 October).

The attack on Ivan Baba took place as soon as the E-boats had returned to their base, again demonstrating Russia's intention to eliminate naval bases and jumping-off harbors where possible by nuisance raids.

To reinforce anti-submarine operations in the Fidonisi sea area, I have requested the Italian E-Boat Flotilla to investigate the possibility of whether 4 boats, based temporarily on Sulina, could put out two at a time to take up lurking positions in these waters. Should they have to be recalled to Sevastopol, the boats already there would have to take over. In the meantime the other boats in Sevastopol should be in



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readiness to reinforce the defense of the Crimean coast.

Because the situation at sea has changed, Russian forces are not at present expected to break out through the Bosphorus. Hence the maintenance of the U-boat base at Burgas for operations by Italian U-boats in the event of a possible Russian breakthrough is now an unjustifiable expense. I am preparing measures to ensure that in an emergency, however, the base could be made ready for U-boats within 3 days.

Group South's final orders on the composition of the assault squadron for Operations Staff, Scheurlen provide for the immediate assembly of 24 naval ferry barges. I have already commented on the effects of the withdrawal of these barges at present in use. The total strength of 24 naval ferry barges for the Scheurlen squadron will in fact mean that we shall have to wait until November before we have even 2 naval ferry barges available for naval and military supplies for the E-boats, U-boats and Italian vessels and the demands of Quartermaster General. As a result of the stoppage of supplies there will have to be severe restrictions on the operational freedom of the offensive forces over a period of four weeks. Group South will be advised in detail.

Provisional dates for the 2nd U-boat, U 9, as reported by the 30th U-Boat Flotilla, are:

"25 October leave dock; basin trial; 25-27 October fuel and stores to be taken in; 28 October put into commission; 29-30 October passage from Sulina to Constantza; about 7 November at operational readiness."

Shipbuilding, engineering and supply officers of the Dockyard Control Staff are laying down their plans for the shipbuilding yards and naval offices which will have to be built for the winter of 1942/43 in Sevastopol. Given the necessary labor and fuel, the constructions should be concluded by 15 December, 1942.

(Signed) Heye.

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WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

16 - 31 OCTOBER, 1942

PG/31519b

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16 October, 1942

Simferopol

Situation 16 October 1200:

- A.
1. Motor minesweepers R 33 and R 37 put in to Constantza after anti-submarine operations, R 165 in to Sulina, R 164 in to the shipyard at Nikolaiev.
  2. The patrol boats remained at Temriuk owing to the weather.
  3. Three Italian submarines were making for Sevastopol, 2 Italian submarines from Constantza northward.
  4. At 0830 motor fishing vessels Nos. 5, 9, 11, 13 and steamer D 12 carried out a remote sweep of Sevastopol harbor. No mines swept. Made fast at 1615.
  5. Motor minesweepers (RA) on escort duty.
  6. Motor minesweepers R 165 and 166 left Constantza on anti-submarine operations.
  7. At 1200 U 24 escorted the convoy from Sulina to Constantza.
  8. 2nd FZ-Group with 4 pinnaces left Temriuk at 0630.
- B.
1. No reports of enemy attacks.
  2. Activity of enemy light naval forces continued; that of submarines and small craft was slight. Radar located some submarines in the coastal area of the southwestern Black Sea and 1 destroyer at sea.
- D.
1. Motor minesweepers R 35 and R 36 swept route Brown in accordance with the orders of Naval Special Duties Detachment, and then proceeded on escort duty to Kerch. One combined operations craft to Anapa. At the same time a check-sweep of the route was made.
  2. The Ju minesweeping plane has so far made 10 covering runs over the Kerch-Temriuk route to a breadth of 180 meters, north of the buoyed strip; no mines swept. By 17 October route immediately north of the buoyed strip will provisionally be open to shipping. It is intended to widen the route.

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- E.
1. Motor minesweeper No. 32 was restored to operational readiness on 15 October.
  2. Motor minesweeper No. 33 is temporarily not at operational readiness.
  3. The "Xanten"'s search gear is out of order; she will dock at Galatz on 17 October.
  4. Destroyer "Ferdinand" is not at operational readiness.
- G. Ferry F 556 put into commission at Varna.

Supplement to Situation 12 October:

2nd Remote FZ-Group proceeded with 5 pinnaces from Mariupol to Achuyev where they anchored.

Supplement to Situation 14 October:

Some 5 or 6 vessels witnessed the shooting down of a Russian plane by a 4.5 cm. half-battery at Balaklava.

---

E-boat operations have been postponed for another 24 hours owing to the unfavorable weather forecast.

I have issued the following directive to the 30th U-Boat Flotilla for the operations of U 24 planned for the end of the month:

"Directive for operations of the 30th U-Boat Flotilla.

1. Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance and radio intercept service report the ever increasing activity of Russian surface forces: cruisers, destroyers, a large number of E-boats, patrol vessels, even occasionally a battleship, have been identified at sea. Only single steamers sighted, always by day, on the Chelenjik-Sukhum route, generally well under the coast. Destroyers and cruisers identified as far as 150 miles west of Poti. Isolated steamers up to some 60 miles off the coast in the southeastern Black Sea. Enemy light naval forces have carried out several nuisance raids on the south coast of the Crimea, apparently with the object of tying down German land forces to the coast and interfering with German supply traffic, well-known to the Russians. The shelling of the coast and of the transshipment and operational harbors threatens to damage or even eliminate the naval

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and escort forces lying there and to reduce our shipping space.

The purpose of the Russian vessels at sea off the Caucasus coast is not clear. One of their objects is probably to provide cover and escort forces for nuisance raids against our coast and supply traffic, while also acting as remote cover for the Russian coast. An intact Russian Fleet will be a perpetual menace to the vital German supplies, which will be required further eastward later. It is thought that the heavy commitment of Russian forces is the result of British advice, particularly since their raids off our coast with naval forces successfully cooperating with the Air Force are reminiscent of the well-known methods of British naval warfare in the Mediterranean.

The disposition of the Russian Fleet in the ports will be communicated to the U-boats before putting out.

2. Own Situation:

Apart from Russian submarine activity, particularly in the western Black Sea, nuisance raids on our coast and supplies are beginning to have an adverse effect on transport. With the capacity of Novorossisk as it is, after the occupation of Tuapse the transport of supplies by sea for the Caucasus front will be of primary importance. It is out of the question to provide escorts for such traffic, comparable in strength to Russian surface units. German surface forces capable of effectively opposing the Russian Fleet are not available. Our Air Force is so tied to the land front that there is little prospect of concentrated operations against the Russian Fleet. Even concentrated attacks on the remaining Russian naval bases can offer little hope of completely eliminating their surface forces. There is danger of a Russian landing under cover of the Russian Fleet on the very weakly occupied German coast of the eastern Black Sea.

3. Plans:

Disposition of German U-boats primarily against units of the Russian Fleet down to the destroyer, in accordance with Admiral, Black Sea's directive for operations of German U-boats in the Black Sea. Special operations against Russian supplies (e.g. troop transports) if the land situation should



require them, are reserved as secondary objective. All favorable opportunities for attack should be exploited if U-boat operations are to be effective. U-boats must not only achieve the gradual elimination of the powerful Russian surface forces but also tie down the Russian Fleet in the southeastern Black Sea, thus indirectly relieving our supply traffic. Furthermore, in view of the excellent morale and discipline of the Russian officers and crews, we cannot expect that they will allow themselves to be destroyed in their own bases by the Air Force without a struggle, nor will they want to be interned in Turkey. The Russians are far more likely, should naval forces appear to offer no prospects of success, to adapt and use their valuable weapons to defend the land front. Hence the destruction of Russian naval forces would bring indirect relief to the land front.

4. Operational Areas:

Grid squares CL 94, 96 and 98 have been selected as operational areas for the U-boats and grid squares 82, 83, 85, 86, 95 and 97 may be resorted to for evasive action. Should several boats be sent, this area will be divided up among them. Outward and return passage will depend on the situation.

Basic Plan:

U-boats on passage and in the operational area are always to be disposed in such a way that they can treat every surface or underwater vessel sighted as an enemy and subject it to full attack. The outward and return passages are to be used as an opportunity for checking the Russian merchant shipping off the south coast of the Black Sea. Russian naval forces have frequently been observed in this area, some of them on a northerly course making toward the Crimea.

5. German Naval Forces and Direction of Operations:

First U 24, to be joined later by other boats. Admiral, Black Sea's directive may be regarded as a basis on which to plan further operations. Should there be any change in the naval situation or redistribution with reference to targets or promising operational areas, these orders will be supplemented.

The Flotilla Commander has the tactical command. Control of operations and tactical command are always best served when the Flotilla Commander

is present at Battle H.Q. of Admiral, Black Sea. As there is no Base Officer, the Flotilla Commander cannot be permanently at Battle H.Q., he will therefore endeavor to take over the tactical command once the boats have left the base. Principle must be to adapt a mobile command to changing circumstances.

6. Execution:

The outward and return passage of the boats is to be so organized as to pass through sea areas in which the enemy has either been identified or suspected. Since no accurate, exhaustive and overall picture of the local situation in the southeastern Black Sea is obtainable from radio interception or air reconnaissance (by day only), the first operation will have to devote a certain amount of time to ascertaining local conditions in order to discover the most promising disposition. The principal Russian jumping-off ports and naval bases, Batum, Poti, Sukhum, are at once the three most promising operational areas, where outward and return traffic - warships and sometimes merchant ships - is likely to assemble. They must therefore for the meantime be the chief theater of U-boat activity against the Russian Fleet.

Commanders must make their own spot decisions on their operations from their own summing-up of the situation within their assigned area; the general operational purpose should also guide their choice of target.

7. Mines:

Information on the Russian minefields in the southeastern Black Sea, particularly at the approaches to the three main harbors, Batum, Poti and Sukhum, is not available. Previous experience indicates that the Russians have largely safeguarded their harbors and the flanks of their coastal traffic by laying minefields. It may be taken for granted that as soon as our U-boats score their first success there, this defense will be reinforced by anti-submarine barrages. It is not the task of German U-boats to penetrate these barrages, their first duty is to attack the naval forces moving outside them. The lack of data on the mine situation makes it necessary to proceed at a certain distance from the coast and to observe Russian movements closely, bearing in mind the possibility of anti-submarine minefields which can be crossed by surface forces.

8. Communications Instructions:

See communications orders for the organization and expansion of an E-boat and U-boat communications service. Special orders will be given before putting to sea.

9. Special Instructions:

- a. If possible, in order that U-boat operations may be more concentrated, do not put in at Constantza but at some jumping-off base close to the operational area, Kerch or Theodosia for instance. Further orders on this point, which depend on the building up of the necessary organization in that port, will be issued later.
- b. Cooperation with Italian submarines will be dealt with for each separate operation. Towing Italian submarines to their operational area must not be regarded as the rule but as the exception; it must have been tried out first and is only to be done when certain operational and weather conditions obtain.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. Chfs. 17."

Supplement to Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. Chfs. 17:

"Communications order for U-boat operations.

1. Radio Stations:

Control: Naval radio station - Simferopol  
on 5 k/w transmitter.

Repeating  
stations: Naval radio station - Constantza.  
Naval radio station - 1st E-Boat  
Flotilla - Ivan Baba.

2. Frequency:

4,952 kc/s, alternative wave 35.33 meters =  
6,480 kc/s.

3. Serial Numbers:

- a. For E-boats 1-99.
- b. For U-boats 101-199.

4. Radio procedure:

- a. Wartime radio procedure.



- b. Shore radio stations and boats must cover the E-boat and U-boat frequency continuously.
- c. First radio message to be sent immediately on reaching the transmission area.  
To be repeated at two-hour intervals - on the even hour.  
To be introduced by the last serial number previously given, followed by transmission of all new messages.
- d. Naval Radio Station, Simferopol will provide deceptive radio messages by sending routine and deceptive traffic hourly at irregular short intervals.
- e. Each radio message must be transmitted four times in all, two of these repeats at night, more frequent repetition if the situation demands it.

5. Long Wave and Emergency Wave:

Naval Radio Station, Constantza in emergency will switch to a long wave frequency (still to be assigned).

Constantza will keep a receiving watch on this emergency wave from:

0700-0800  
1900-2000  
0200-0300

and, if necessary, will cover the long wave continuously - reporting the fact to Admiral, Black Sea.

6. Very Long Wave:

Naval Radio Station, Bernau will transmit radio messages on very long wave (181.30 meters) at routine times to be announced later.

- 7. D/F transmission frequency for U-boats will be the same long wave frequency as in para. 5. Transmission only by order of Command.

8. Code Tables:

- a. Code "M", reserve code "Henno".
- b. Fleet Short Signal Manual for 1941.
- c. Reconnaissance and bomber table.
- d. Abbreviated weather code.
- e. Procedure outlined in Naval Communications Manual South will not be used on U-boat and E-boat wavelengths."

In conference with Captain Mimbelli the question of transferring the base organization from Constantza to the Crimea was discussed. The following is a written account of the conference:

"Result of the Conference with Captain Mimbelli:

Transfer of the base organization from Constantza to the Crimea:

- a. The Italian base organization at Constantza at present consists of some 80 Italian personnel under Lieut. Comdr. Didero.
- b. This personnel is needed in Constantza to staff the radio station which maintains communications between Constantza and Italian Naval High Command. Transfer to the Crimea impossible since range insufficient.  
  
Past experience shows that the staffing of a German station with Italian personnel creates difficulties.
- c. Other personnel required for the economic organization. Contrary to economic conditions in our area, the Italians have orders to cover their needs as far as possible from the Rumanian zone. Hence a permanent organization of some kind is required in Constantza in order to do the purchasing.
- d. Apart from these two organizations, few stocks in Constantza. Experience shows that rail transport from Constantza to the Crimea takes up to three months. Hence naval transport from Constantza to the Crimea was devised as a quicker method. Transfer of this receiving office for materials coming from Italy to another station would not involve any withdrawal of personnel.
- e. The Italians desire a magazine in Simferopol because it would be in a central position for the Crimean ports. Whether this is possible must be investigated. The transfer of the entire organization to the Crimean ports is impossible owing to the lack of space, and inexpedient owing to the danger of air raids."

Midget Italian submarines are unsuitable for anti-submarine operations off the Rumanian coast owing to the variable winter conditions prevailing there, which limit their use to operations close inshore and near the base. To shift them temporarily to an operational area across 170 miles of sea is not feasible as the transfer would impair their seaworthiness and entail repairs.

It is, however, still quite feasible to use them in areas within reach by coastal passage.

17 October, 1942

Simferopol

Situation 17 October 1200:

- A.
1. At 1450 three Italian submarines put in to Sevastopol.
  2. Two motor minesweepers are returning to Sulina after escort duty Sulina to Odessa.
  3. Remote sweep of the oil harbor and approach to Sevastopol by motor fishing vessels Nos. 9, 11, 13 and steamer D 12. No mines swept.
  4. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 1, 4, 6 and 8 carried out a remote sweep down the line of the Burunski-Pavlovski leading lights to Cape Takil and back. No mines swept.
  5. 2nd FZ-Group checked the buoyed channel Achuyovska-Mariupol with towed loop gear and motor pinnace gear. No mines swept.
  6. Motor minesweeper (RA) No. 52 with 4 motor fishing vessels, entered Kerch. At 1400 she left Kerch for Theodosia.
- B.
1. According to a D/F report, at 1920 cruisers D and E and 2 destroyers, position unknown, were detected at sea. At 2300 a battleship was located some 45 miles west of Poti and, at 0300, a submarine some 58 miles south of Cape Aitodor.
  2. At 0835 on 16 October a Russian reconnaissance plane was over Yalta.
  3. At 0835 at Theodosia, an enemy plane was subjected to anti-aircraft fire.
- D.
1. Motor minesweepers Nos. 35 and 36 will escort the Anapa convoy from Kerch.
  2. Motor minesweepers (RA) Nos. 54 and 568 will be on escort duty from Ochakov to Sevastopol at 0600 on 18 October.
- G.
1. The command of the Danube Flotilla moved back from Odessa to Ochakov on 16 October.
  2. Situation at Anapa unchanged. At Novorossisk on 14 October 1 killed, 1 wounded. At Maikop in partisan fighting 1 killed, 1 wounded, 1 armored scout car lost. Port Command 21 in action near Navayinsk.



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3. Approach and mineswept section of Sevastopol harbor declared open to shipping.
4. Sea Transportation Section, Mariupol: ferry F 135 under repair.

Supplementary Reports:

1. Situation 13 October:

At 0845 a Rumanian plane reported a submarine probably submerged near Cape Midia.

2. Situation 15 October:

a. 1st Landing Craft Flotilla, Kerch: in present prevailing wind without center engine ferry F 558 is not operational.

b. Theodosia: at 1420 an enemy plane was subjected to anti-aircraft fire.

3. Situation 16 October:

As a result of gunfire hits on the docks at Novorossisk 1 soldier and 3 Russians killed, 1 soldier and 2 Russians seriously injured.

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After it had been arranged that the 1st E-Boat Flotilla should put out at 1230, the operation had to be postponed by 24 hours as bad weather set in again (west wind force 4-5).

Motor minesweepers Nos. 35 and 36 escorted 3 combined operations craft on their minesweeping escort duty to Anapa. The minesweepers commenced their return passage to Kerch at 1445 and put in there towards 1800. No mines swept.

Four boats of the 1st FZ-Group made a check-sweep of Kerch Strait from the Pavlovski gap to Cape Takil and back. They swept 2 non-contact mines, one in 45° 8.5' N, 36° 28' E and one in 45° 8.55' N, 36° 28.1' E. The oil harbor and the approach to the oil harbor at Sevastopol were searched by 4 boats of the 1st FZ-Group for non-contact mines. No mines swept. Oil harbor and approach opened to shipping.

Three Italian midget submarines (CB 1, 4 and 6) put in to Sevastopol.

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea proposed that the "Arca" should be escorted on her passage from Constantza to the Bosphorus by 2 motor fishing vessels as far as Varna and from

there to the Turkish border by Bulgarian units, thence she should proceed unescorted within Turkish territorial waters to the Bosphorus; he requested agreement.

I gave my consent in the following radiogram:

"To Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea G 1611 AI No. 2:

No objection to independent passage of "Arca" within Turkish territorial waters. Naval Special Duties Detachment will endeavor to provide air cover during the passage, the planes to observe the limits of territorial waters.

Battle H.Q. Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4416 AI."

In order to safeguard the supply routes against attacks of Russian submarines and surface forces, Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea has worked out a proposal for the expansion of the existing flanking minefields, illustrated in the accompanying diagram.

My comments are given in the following teletype:

"To Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea Gkdos. 1516 AI:

1. With reference to proposed minefields, priority should be given to laying of minefields S 42 to S 46 as flank cover for route Green. The necessary stock of mines is available.
2. Regarding minefields S 40 and S 41, decision can be made after execution of the minelaying tasks detailed in para. 1 since, by the time they are concluded, we shall have further data on the disposition of Russian submarines. The 200 UMB mines required will be requested from home.
3. Of the 1200 EMC mines required for sections S 47 to S 52 only 300 are available in the area. I shall attempt to get another allocation of 900 EMC mines. Once these problems of allocation have been cleared up the question of the position of the minefields will be re-examined. Proposed position not very promising.
4. In order that escort duties may not be altogether abandoned during the process of minelaying, Commander, Convoys and Escorts is investigating possibility of laying minefields S 42 to S 46 with one mine carrier only and small escort (2 destroyers). This would entail a correspondingly larger number of

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shorter minefield sections and a greater time expenditure.

5. Group South is requested to sanction these minelaying operations (outlined in para. 1).

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4447 A I."

On receiving permission of Group South I shall start immediate preparations for laying minefield sections 3 42 to 46 as quickly as possible.

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18 October, 1942

Simferopol.

Situation 18 October 1200:

- A.
1. At 1215 two Italian submarines left Sulina via Tarkhankutzky for Sevastopol.
  2. At 2140 U 24 with the "Stihi", "Smeul" and 2 naval ferry barges put in to Constantza from Sulina.
  3. Motor minesweepers R 57, 165, 166 entered Sulina escorting the northern convoy. R 163 and 164 proceeded to the shipyard at Nikolaiev.
  4. At 1530 motor minesweeper (RA) No. 52 put in to Yalta with ferry F 168 from Theodosia.
  5. At 1855 motor minesweepers R 35 and 36 proceeding with 3 combined operations craft in minesweeper convoy returned to Anapa; no mines swept. R 35 and 36 returned to Kerch.
- B.
1. According to D/F findings, lively activity of light naval forces in the northeastern Black Sea; central part of the east coast to southeastern Black Sea 1 battleship; at 2300 some 45 miles west of Poti cruisers A, D, E and 5 destroyers were identified.
  2. At 2130 three enemy vessels off Cape Utrish were shelled from Varva Kovka. From 2230 to 0055 the coast of Anapa and southeast of it was shelled by ships' guns; no damage. Comment from Admiral, Black Sea: as usual probably light naval forces.
- E. "Smeul" temporarily out of action.

Supplementary Report to Situation 16 October:

1. Italian E-boats Nos. 574 and 575 put in to Galatz on 15 October.
2. Theodosia 0830: an enemy plane was subjected to anti-aircraft fire.  
Yalta 0835: Russian reconnaissance plane at high altitude.

---

The cancellation of the sailing order to the 1st E-Boat Flotilla on 17 October owing to the weather forecast was fully justified by subsequent

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developments. At about midnight last night a storm suddenly arose with a northwesterly wind blowing in gusts up to force 9. A gale of such force which was not anticipated by the meteorological station, would have greatly impeded and perhaps rendered the return passage of the E-boats impossible. This is an example of the great risk attendant upon dispatching E-boats in autumn and winter months to operational areas so far from their base, especially since experience shows that the climate in the Black Sea makes reliable forecasts impossible.

The following teletype to Group South gives my views on possible enemy landings off the Caucasus coast between Anapa and Novorossisk and on the use of E-boats as a countermeasure:

"For information:

1. My reference to a weak spot for enemy landing attempts must not, however, be interpreted to mean that a landing there would be a simple matter. We have taken over the coastal defenses built by the Russians, concrete bunkers and extensive mining of the beaches, these can prevent rapid landings undertaken without artillery support from naval forces. Patrols by Rumanian Cavalry Division are also adequate, but perhaps not capable of resistance against continued attack by naval forces.
2. The experiences gained by E-boats in recent operations and the construction of Russian coastal defenses north of Novorossisk enable us to draw certain conclusions regarding the strength of the Russian defense potential south of Tuapse.
3. The radius of action of E-boats in winter is, practically speaking, very much restricted since they are always obliged to have a great deal in reserve in order to be able to reach the coast in the event of sudden heavy seas. This applies even more to Italian E-boats and U-boats.
4. Unless signs of an attempted landing are detected during the day, the E-boats can only be sent against a landing already in progress. On this point, the E-boat commander considers that it would be difficult to get at close quarters if the enemy has destroyers; moreover, E-boats would have difficulty in evading destroyers on their very long return passage under present weather conditions and nearly always against the seaway.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4453."

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Following the assignment of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla to Staff Scheurlen, naval ferry barges (apart from those operating between Kerch and Taman) are no longer available for transport duties and supply traffic east of Sevastopol will be in abeyance until the arrival of fresh barges, i.e. until about the middle of November. Theodosia, up to now the headquarters of Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Crimea-Caucasus, is no longer practicable in this new situation.

I have therefore ordered him to transfer his headquarters to Sevastopol, since supply traffic to this port will commence in a few days.

Motor minesweeper R 53 is laid up owing to serious damage to the bearings. She will go to Nikolaiev for repairs on 19 October.

Both the Italian E-boats Nos. 574 and 575 which were proceeding to the Black Sea have arrived at Sulina.

Group South has decided, in accordance with my proposal, to form the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla out of 3 groups of 7 naval ferry barges each. Commander, Convoys and Escorts has been instructed to assemble the flotilla accordingly.

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19 October, 1942

Simferopol

Situation 19 October 1200:

- A.
  - 1. One Italian submarine making from Sulina to Sevastopol anchored in Karacha Bay due to damage sustained at sea. Naval Special Duties Detachment was ordered to arrange for her to be towed to Sevastopol by a motor minesweeper of the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla.
  - 2. Two Italian E-boats with craft in tow, proceeded down the Danube to Sulina.
  - 3. FZ-Group made a further check of Sevastopol harbor.
  - 4. E-boat operations were postponed owing to the weather.
- B. According to D/P reports, movement of surface forces and lively submarine activity continues. Some small vessels off the east coast, formation of 3 destroyers and 2 submarines in the central Black Sea, one battleship with Fleet Command aboard, 3 submarines, 3 minelayers and 2 patrol vessels in the southern part. Between the central and western Black Sea 1 submarine escort, 6 submarines, cruiser E, position unknown, and 1 destroyer.
- E. The port engine of motor minesweeper R 33 sustained serious damage to bearings.
- G. Detachments of Port Commands 19 and 21 in action were directed to Kurinski.

Supplementary Report to Situation 17 October:

Yalta: 16 October 2355 unknown plane near Cape Sikkor. 17 October 0740 one PB 100 over Yalta.  
Theodosia: 16 October 2050 enemy plane subjected to anti-aircraft fire.

The 2 Italian midget submarines CB 2 and CB 3 making from Sulina to Sevastopol, lost contact last night west of Tarkhankutzky. CB 3 developed engine trouble and when her Diesel engine failed so far from land, with the small capacity of her battery, she was compelled to hoist her emergency sail and, using the west wind, make for the shore. She entered Karacha Bay early this morning and anchored there. Commander, Convoys and Escorts has been ordered to detach a motor minesweeper to

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tow her to Sevastopol. CB 2 put in to Sevastopol at about 1500.

The experience of CB 3 shows how unsuitable these small vessels are for operations involving a sea crossing during the bad weather season. If their Diesel engine fails and the wind is in the wrong direction they are incapable of reaching even their own ports. The boats' radio equipment is so weak that their signals may not be intelligible at base. The S.O.S. messages sent out by CB 3 were not heard by any station. This incident confirms me in my intention of using the boats, during the winter months, only in defensive operations in our own Crimean coastal waters or, later on, after the transfer to the Caucasian harbors, in the coastal waters there.

During the storm last night CB 6 broke from her moorings in Sevastopol harbor. She was driven to the eastern section of the harbor and salvaged with damage to her hydroplane; now out of action.

The Russian Fleet has latterly been very active in the southeastern Black Sea; it includes a battleship, 3 cruisers, several destroyers. The enemy's operational intention is not clear, especially since his ships have not left the southeastern tip of the Black Sea. I share the views of Air Force Staff, Crimea to the effect that they are exploiting weather conditions unfavorable to air reconnaissance or air attack (low cloud) for exercises.

Continuous rainfall has made the road east of Taman impassable making it at present impossible to forward the supplies taken over to Taman. Army Commander, Crimea has therefore requested the dispatch of supplies stored in Kerch to Temriuk, since the Temriuk-Krasnodar road is still passable. The heavy claims made on the "Blücher barges" during the past months mean that they are now in a poor state of repair, so that only those barges that are completely sound can undertake the long passage of 40 miles between Kerch and Temriuk. The Group Commander reported that 3 naval ferry barges can be used for this purpose, and I am placing these at the disposal of Army Commander, Crimea.

The operations of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla against enemy traffic off Tuapse and the check-sweep of the swept route Kerch-Theodosia by motor mine-sweepers Nos. 35 and 36 will have to be postponed owing to the weather.

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20 October, 1942

Simferopol

Situation 20 October 1200:

- A.
1. The Italian midget submarine which, owing to engine trouble, put in under sail to Karacha Bay yesterday, broke her anchor chain and was driven ashore by a strong sea wind. Attempts to tow her off by motor minesweeper PA 56 had to be broken off owing to the weather. Port Commander, Ak Mechet was sent to the scene of the incident.
  2. Harbor and routes of Sevastopol searched by boats Nos. 3, 7 and 8 of the Harbor Defense Flotilla, Sevastopol. No mines were swept.
  3. Motor minesweepers R 35 and 36 put in to Ivan Baba as they were unable to proceed with their gear owing to the weather.
- B. According to a D/F report, activity of light naval forces and cruiser E was detected in the southeastern Black Sea.

Supplementary Report to Situation 19 October:

A remote sweep down the line of the Burunski-Pavlovski leading lights to Cape Takil was broken off by motor fishing vessels Nos. 1, 4, 6 and 8 owing to the weather. No mines swept. They put in to Pavlovski.

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I conferred with Captain Mimbelli on suitable work for the Italian E-boats during the coming six winter months. I reported our discussion in the following teletype to Group South:

- "1. Captain Mimbelli and Maestranzi reported that the transport of Italian E-boats by land is no longer possible. They proposed that the transport vehicles should be released and only sledges retained for subsequent rail-road transport.
2. Loading for railroad transport only possible from Mariupol owing to the state of the track and loading facilities. It must therefore be decided whether 4 Italian E-boats should, irrespective of the ice situation, wait in Mariupol during the winter for railroad transport or withdraw from the Sea of Azov

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and thus abandon all plans for transport to the Caspian Sea until April or May of next year.

3. Should they remain in the Black Sea, it is planned to hold 4 in reserve in a Crimean port. The port has still to be selected; Sevastopol probably the only possibility. The other 4 Italian E-boats will remain in Crimean harbors for coastal defense or, as soon as the situation permits, in Novorossisk for the same purpose.

The Italians consider Constantza unsuitable on account of the climate and because it will be extremely difficult to transport the boats from there to the Crimea in winter. There are indications that the state of the track will make railroad transport impossible both from Constantza and Sevastopol.

The base at Kerch will probably have to be abandoned because it is unfavorably placed for coastal defense duties - now the only remaining tasks - and also because it will soon be iced over.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4472."

I consider that the 4 Italian E-boats can remain in Mariupol for transportation by rail at the earliest possible opportunity for the following reasons:

1. There are no opportunities for Italian E-boats to carry out offensive operations in the Black Sea during the winter months. The absence of the 4 boats would therefore not be felt.
2. Should the boats be transferred back from Mariupol to ice-free harbors in the Black Sea, it would then be impossible to transport them before the thaw in the Sea of Azov, presumably not before the end of next March. They would thus only be ready for operations in the Caspian towards the middle of April.
3. Since I am informed that the offensive against Makhach Kala will be continued during the coming months, I am reckoning that this harbor will be occupied in the course of the winter. If the Italian E-boats are withdrawn from Mariupol, their arrival at Makhach Kala will be considerably delayed so that during the first months of our occupation of a jumping-off base on the Caspian, we should have no operational forces whatsoever at our disposal.

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Since Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea at present only has motor minesweepers R 165 and 166 of the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla at operational readiness for escort duties, I am placing R 35 and 36 at his disposal, with the reservation that they may be withdrawn at short notice in the event of urgent minesweeping and escort tasks off the Crimean or Caucasus coasts.

The immediate allocation of 21 naval ferry barges of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla (Staff Scheurlen) would mean that no barges would be available for supply tasks until about mid-November. Group South has therefore ordered the build-up of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla with 2 groups of 7 ferries each at first; subsequently, on the arrival of the new boats, to be expanded into 5 groups. I have therefore sent Operations Staff, Scheurlen and Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea the following instructions:

- "1. A new directive of Group South has ordered the build-up of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla, at first with 2 groups of 7 ferries each, to be later expanded to 5 groups on the arrival of the new ferry barges.
2. In accordance with para. 1 fourteen ferries are to be transferred to Berdyansk for the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla. Commander, Convoys and Escorts will make direct arrangements with Staff Scheurlen regarding numbers, etc. and will report decisions.
3. The ferries remaining after the withdrawal of the 14 under para. 2 will be used for important supply tasks in accordance with the previous arrangement. By direct agreement between Commander, Convoys and Escorts and Staff Scheurlen these barges will carry out any necessary transportation to Berdyansk on behalf of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla.
4. It is planned to allocate newly arrived ferry barges in a ratio of 1 : 2 to the 1st and 3rd Landing Craft Flotillas respectively.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4478 A I."

The Italian midget submarine CB 3 which anchored in Karacha Bay owing to engine trouble, broke her anchor chain and was driven ashore by a west wind at force 7. The crew was compelled to abandon her as she was on the rocks and laboring heavily in the surf. Some parts of the boat are flooded, but it is not yet apparent whether her hull is damaged or whether water has entered through the

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conning tower. Motor minesweeper RA 56, specially dispatched to Karacha, can render no assistance in the prevailing weather and is making for Ak Mechet. She has orders, should the weather improve or the present sea wind change, to put out again immediately on salvage operations.

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21 October, 1942

Simferopol

Situation 21 October 1200:

- A. 1. A minesweeping Ju operated between Kerch and Temriuk. No mines swept.
2. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 5, 9, 11 and 13 and steamer D 12 carried out a remote sweep of Sevastopol harbor. No mines swept.
3. The Italian midget submarine CB 3 has been towed free by motor minesweeper RA 56 and is proceeding to Ak Mechet.
- B. Naval reconnaissance was not exhaustive owing to the weather, but the following vessels were identified: sea area Poti to Batum 1 destroyer, south of Sochi 1 minesweeper and 1 merchant ship; south of Sukhum 2 minesweepers and 2 merchant ships and 56 miles southwest of Sukhum 1 cruiser. D/F report stated: 1 destroyer 83 miles west of Ochomchiri, cruisers D and E 60 miles west of Poti.
- D. 1. Remote sweep of Sevastopol harbor to continue.
2. The 1st E-Boat Flotilla will operate off Tuapse, weather permitting.

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When the weather had settled motor minesweeper RA 56 succeeded in towing off the Italian midget submarine CB 3. Owing to the water that had penetrated she was hard down by the stern, but since the pressure hull is not damaged, the water can be pumped out and the boat then towed in to Ak Mechet. She can only be repaired in Constantza. I have requested the dispatch of a tug to Ak Mechet to bring her to Constantza. Near Sulina at 1705 a tanker "Le Progres" (570 tons) escorted by a motor minesweeper and a Rumanian gunboat, was torpedoed by an enemy submarine directly off the mouth of the Danube. She sank in 45° 7.5' N and 29° 45' E. Twenty-one men were rescued by the escort vessels. The submarine attacked from the west in about 12 meters of water.

To attack and successfully hit the small tanker in such shallow water is evidence of the dash and good training of the submarine crew. This new

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and successful submarine attack on supply traffic off the west coast of the Black Sea makes me even more determined to make every effort to further the extension of the flanking minefields. More detailed orders will be issued on the occasion of my conference with Chief, Naval Training Command in Constantza on 22 October.

Today I inspected Port Command Sevastopol, the organization of the harbor, the Naval Arsenal and the Sea Transportation Section. The organization of the harbor as a supply base has made good progress. I outlined a general policy for the winter to the officers, officials and men.

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22 October, 1942

Simferopol

Situation 22 October 1200:

- A.
1. Motor minesweeper RA 56 put in to Ak Mechet with the Italian midget submarine CB 3.
  2. After the torpedoing of the tanker "Le Progres" the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla left Sulina on anti-submarine operations.
  3. The 1st FZ-Group carried out a remote search down the line of the Burunski-Pavlovski leading lights to Cape Takil and back. Two BLM mines were swept after 4 covering runs. Gear slightly damaged. Subsequently entered Pavlovski.
  4. After sweeping route Brown without success, motor minesweepers Nos. 35 and 36 proceeded to Odessa.
- B.
1. The tanker "Le Progres" was torpedoed south of Sulina from the west, exploded and sank. Twenty-one men were saved. Position of the wreck 45° 7.3' N, 29° 45' E.
  2. According to a D/F report, the Fleet was very active and there was slight activity of patrol boats and small vessels; in the southeastern Black Sea cruisers E and D with Fleet Command, in the Batum area several destroyers, 1 submarine escort with 5 submarines ready at Batum, and between the central and western Black Sea 5 submarines were identified. Cruiser A was at sea in an unknown position.
- D.
1. The 1st FE-Group carried out a remote sweep at Cape Takil.
  2. The 1st E-Boat Flotilla left Ivan Baba for operations in the Tuapse area. Re-entered early on 23 October.
- E.
1. The rudder of motor fishing vessel No. 1 was damaged when a mine exploded during the operation under para. A, 3.
  2. Motor minesweeper R 55 will be out of action for several weeks on account of damage to the engine and shaft.
- G.
- The 5rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla's passage from Donau Neubauten was postponed for another week owing to the low water level in the Elbe. The



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first two boats will not be ready to proceed until 1 November at the earliest.

Supplementary Report to Situation 21 October:

On 20 October Commander, Crimea and Caucasus boarded the "Evdokia" at Sevastopol.

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Now that the weather has settled the 1st E-Boat Flotilla was ordered to operate in accordance with operational order Admiral, Black Sea Battle H.Q. Gkdos. 1632 AI (see War Diary 15 September). Four boats of the flotilla put out from Ivan Baba at 1230.

The Italian E-Boat Flotilla was directed, so long as the good weather lasts, to take one E-boat on an anti-submarine operation in the coming night in the coastal waters off Yalta.

Sevastopol's south bay has been swept for non-contact mines by the FZ-Group. No mines swept. The bay has been opened to shipping.

The first steamer convoy from Constantza to Sevastopol proceeded without incident. The steamer "Succava" (approximately 7,000 G.R.T.) entered Sevastopol at 1830, escorted by 2 Rumanian destroyers and 2 motor minesweepers (RA).

In order to strengthen anti-submarine defenses at the focal point of the Russian submarine offensive (between Constantza and Odessa), I am placing the Coastal Minelaying Group, when it has been restored to operational readiness, under Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea.

Group South wired that, according to the Naval Liaison Officer, Army High Command, the Army will itself take over Don supplies. Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine was directed to submit proposals for the transfer of Don supplies, previously controlled by him, to the Army, giving the date of transfer.

From Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A came the message that it was planned to transfer 3 boats of the Løper Flotilla from Temriuk to Anapa. I dispatched the following directive for the purpose:

"To Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A 882 G:

1. Port Patrol Office, Temriuk, by agreement with the Løper Flotilla, will dispatch 3 boats to Kerch.

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2. Port Commander, Kerch will supply pilots and transfer the boats along the coastal route to Anapa. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus should be notified in good time to ensure that the coastal stations can be informed. The transfer must not be made unless the weather outlook is good.
3. Request Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A to ensure that the boats from the L8per Flotilla be employed only in Anapa harbor or, if they should be transferred at a later date by Admiral, Black Sea to Novorossisk, only in Novorossisk Bay. To avoid the danger of an encounter with our own operational naval forces, they are not to operate at sea, even in coastal waters, except with the consent of Admiral, Black Sea.

Admiral, Black Sea Battle H.Q. Gkdos.  
4507 A I."

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23 October, 1942

Simferopol

Situation 23 October 1200:

- A.
1. For the operations of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla see Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4527 AI, paras. 1 and 2.
  2. E-boat S 72 put in to Ivan Baba from Constantza.
  3. The steamer "Suceava" entered Sevastopol with motor minesweepers R 54 and 56 and 2 destroyers.
  4. The 2nd FZ-Group entered Mariupol.
  5. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 5, 9, 11, 13 and steamer D 12 carried out a remote sweep of Sevastopol harbor. No mines swept. The southern part of the harbor was opened to shipping.
  6. Three covering runs by a minesweeping Ju over Kerch Strait revealed no mines.
- B.
1. For Russian M.T.B. attack see Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4527 AI reference 1.
  2. According to a D/F report, a part formation of 1 battleship, cruiser A and 2 destroyers was detected off the central part of the east coast, probably returning south.
  3. Air reconnaissance reported a convoy 13 miles southeast of Tuapse: 1 probable destroyer, 1 minesweeper, 1 merchant ship of 3,500 tons, 1 merchant ship of 1,000 tons, 2 of 500 tons each, 4 motor minesweepers, course southeast, medium speed. Off Poti heavy cruiser was entering port; off the harbor 1 merchant ship of approximately 3,000 tons, 1 destroyer, 2 guardboats, course southeast; 4 miles west of Tuapse 1 transport of 3,000 tons, several coastal vessels.
- E.
1. Motor fishing vessel No. 1, apart from the underwater damage to the steering gear, reported in Situation 22 October, has also a slight underwater leak.
  2. S 49 is not at operational readiness owing to the illness of her commander.
- G.
- Nothing to report from Maikop and Anapa. In the west part of Novorossisk heavy gunfire on the



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newly erected battery which will now be moved to a new site. Two officers of Naval Shore Command, Caucasus slightly wounded.

Supplementary Report to Situation 21 October:

E-boats S 51 and S 47 were towed down the Danube from Linz; expected to arrive at Galatz on 1 November.

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During operations near Tuapse, towards 2130 the 1st E-Boat Flotilla encountered an enemy formation comprising 2 destroyers and a probable cruiser in grid square 9176. In their first attempts at attack the E-boats were repeatedly driven off by the destroyers; they did not manage to fire their torpedoes until they were directly off Tuapse harbor entrance. Each boat fired two torpedoes and two hits were scored, probably on the destroyers. The remaining torpedoes exploded on the harbor mole of Tuapse. Impossible to repeat the attack since the formation quickly put in to Tuapse. The enemy vessels put up no defense although our boats were several times caught in their searchlights.

Ivan Baba was raided by Russian planes between 2202 and 2207 and 0334 and 0305 last night. Anti-aircraft fire prevented the enemy from dropping his bombs on the target and forced him to turn off. Two bombs fell in the water south of Ivan Baba. Immediately after the second air raid came an attack by M.T.B.s. A torpedo struck the bridge leading to the former Russian torpedo-firing range. The second torpedo landed on the shore without exploding. No damage was caused. Fire from the naval shore and anti-aircraft batteries definitely caused the sinking of one M.T.B. The 1st E-Boat Flotilla which was returning from operations had an encounter with the second M.T.B. some 5 miles off Ivan Baba. With regard to the E-boat operation and the raid on Ivan Baba, I submitted the following report to Group South:

- "I. 1. At approximately 2300 on 22 October, the 1st E-Boat Flotilla attacked the enemy, comprising 2 destroyers and probably 1 cruiser at the harbor entrance to Tuapse. Two torpedo hits were scored on the formation. Remaining torpedoes exploded on the mole. Enemy put in to Tuapse.
2. At 0320 two Russian M.T.B.s attacked Ivan Baba. One torpedo exploded on the Russian

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torpedo-firing range, causing no damage. Our own shore guns probably sank 1 M.T.B. Confirmation pending.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4527 A I.

II. Re Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4527 A I:

Re 1: On entering port, Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla reported destroyer probably sunk.

Re 2: a. One enemy M.T.B. definitely observed sinking off Ivan Baba.

b. 1st E-Boat Flotilla which was making for port engaged the second enemy M.T.B. proceeding off Ivan Baba. Several hits observed on enemy M.T.B. The engagement was broken off after an hour's pursuit. The commander of S 49 suffered a severe head wound, 1 man slightly injured. Our own boats were slightly damaged but their operational readiness has not been impaired.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4527 A I 2A.

III. 1. Observations to date show that as a result of repeated losses caused by E-boats attacking at night enemy shipping proceeds off the Caucasus coast only by day. The 1st E-Boat Flotilla did not encounter any steamers in the Tuapse area yesterday either.

2. Warship formation was apparently being employed on a particularly important transport operation since, according to air reconnaissance, the formation again put out from Tuapse today. It is uncertain whether the formation is engaged in supply or transfer operations. Its employment, however, suggests that the situation on the Tuapse front is becoming more acute.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4531 A I."

24 October, 1942

Simferopol

Situation 24 October 1200:

- A. 1. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 1, 4, 6 and 8 carried out a remote sweep down the line of the Burunski-Pavlovski leading lights to Cape Takil and back. No mines swept.
- 2. Italian midget submarines CB 1 and CB 4 entered Yalta from Sevastopol to change their torpedoes.
- B. 1. Air reconnaissance 3 miles west of Sochi reported 1 merchant ship of approximately 1,000 tons and 1 guardboat, 10 miles west of Gagri a merchant ship of 800 tons with guardboat, near Ochemchiri 1 transport.
- 2. According to the D/F report the activity of heavy and light naval forces is decreasing off the east coast. One submarine was located 35 miles west of Yalta and 1 destroyer off Sukhum, 1 off Tuapse and 1 off Gudant.
- 3. During the night of 23/24 October there were continuous air raids on Anapa, Kerch and Taman but no damage was suffered.
- D. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 1, 4, 6 and 8 carried out a remote sweep off Cape Takil.

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The Army's attacks on Tuapse are slowly gaining ground. I take it that the enemy will do his utmost to hold his front line before Tuapse and I expect that, possibly, he will endeavor to land reinforcements at Tuapse by night with the help of his warships. I therefore intend to repeat the operations of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla between Tuapse and Sochi as soon as weather permits.

The enemy Air Force has been remarkably quiet during recent weeks. Attacks on the Crimean ports have had very little success. Air Force Staff, Crimea attributes this inactivity to shortage of fuel at the Russian air bases on the Caucasus front, though renewed operations on a larger scale during the past few nights would suggest that the alleged fuel crisis has now been overcome.



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Group South reports that the F~~u~~hrer has given orders that attacks on Russian merchant shipping in Turkish territorial waters are to cease until further notice. The 30th U-Boat Flotilla will be informed.

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25 October, 1942

Simferopol

Situation 25 October 1200:

- A. The FZ-Group carried out remote sweep for LMA mines in Kasachiya Bay (west of Sevastopol) and in Sevastopol harbor. No mines swept.
- B. 1. An M.T.B. attack on Anapa during the night of the 24th was repulsed. One torpedo exploded on the shore.  
2. Air reconnaissance identified no enemy shipping along a 75 mile wide strip off the Caucasus coast, apart from a patrol boat 15 miles southwest of Tuapse.
- E. On 24 October motor minesweeper R 33 entered dock at Nikolaiev.

Supplementary Report to Situation 24 October:

- 1. 23 October an enemy plane was over the Kerch-Theodosia area; we suspect that she was dropping mines.
- 2. 23 October Yalta: unidentified plane over Cape Sikhor.
- 3. 24 October Theodosia: an enemy plane was subjected to anti-aircraft fire.

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Two M.T.B.s were again off Ivan Baba last night. They were shelled by the coastal guns and turned away. The repeated attack on the 1st E-Boat Flotilla's base shows how highly the enemy esteem our E-boats. I have ordered the torpedo net barrage to be strengthened.

Since mines are suspected on the coastal route near Theodosia, a check-sweep will be carried out by the group of motor minesweepers (RA).

The operation planned for the 1st E-Boat Flotilla will have to be canceled owing to the weather.

Enemy air activity continued during last night. In an attack on Theodosia the harbor defense vessel RF 01 was sunk, RF 02 damaged.

26 October, 1942

Simferopol

Situation 26 October 1200:

- A.
1. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 5 and 9 and steamer D 12 swept Kasachiya Bay, motor fishing vessels Nos. 11 and 13 Sevastopol harbor.
  2. Motor fishing vessels Nos. 1, 4, 6 and 8 carried out a remote sweep down the line of the Burunski-Pavlovski leading lights as far as Cape Takil and back. No mines swept.
  3. Since 24 October Operations Group Schwartz, with 780 men, have taken over a patrol sector as directed by Armored H.Q. I. Slight enemy activity.
- B.
1. Enemy air activity:
    - a. 0748 26 October air raid warning at Theodosia.
    - b. 2310 25 October bomb dropped south of Sevastopol north bay. At 2340 a bomb fell near the "Evdokia".
  2. 0500 25 October two enemy M.T.B.s, bearing 155°, range 15 km., course 220°, were shelled by coastal guns at Ivan Baba. No hits observed.
  3. Message from Air Force Staff, Crimea:  
1315 25 October, 15 miles north of Tirepolu, 15 boats on a southwesterly course at high speed.
- D.
1. The remote sweep of Cape Takil by motor fishing vessels Nos. 1, 4, 6 and 8 planned for 26 October weather permitting, had to be canceled owing to the weather.
  2. The 1st E-Boat Flotilla will operate during the night of 26 October between Tuapse and Sochi.
- E.
1. 24 October auxiliary river motor minesweeper FR 3 sank after a direct hit by bomb.
  2. On 24 October FR 1 sustained splinter damage above the water line; no casualties.



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At 1230 four boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla left Ivan Baba for operations in accordance with the following directive:

"Four boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla will leave Ivan Baba today at approximately 1300 for operations against enemy shipping off the Caucasus coast between Tuapse and Sochi. Focal point in the vicinity of Tuapse. They will return to Ivan Baba early on 27 October.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4582 A I."

The 50th U-Boat Flotilla reported that U 24 would be ready to put out at 1400 on 27 October for operations off Poti and Batum (see Operational Orders, War Diary 16 October). Following teletype was sent to Air Force Staff, Crimea informing them of the operation and requesting them to prohibit anti-submarine operations in her operational area:

- "1. At 1400 on 27 October U 24 will leave Constantza for the operational area in the southeast of the Black Sea.
2. Approach route from Constantza via air grid squares 3370 and 8250. Speed 6 knots.
3. Operational area is east of 40° E. Alternative areas are grid squares 3463, 3475, 3483, 3493, 3462, 3472, 3482 and 3492.
4. Request:
  - a. That in areas referred to under 3 as from 2400 on 30 October anti-submarine operations be prohibited until further notice.
  - b. That all Air Force stations concerned be advised of this and of the route to be followed by U 24.
  - c. Confirm.
5. End of the operation will be announced.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4587 A I."

The minesweeper "Xanten" equipped with search gear, was sent on anti-submarine operations at the mouth of the Danube, at 0645 today located an enemy submarine off Sulina. At 0730 the submarine fired a torpedo wide of the "Xanten". Owing to the failure of the search gear the "Xanten" had to break off the pursuit. The attack took place where the tanker "Le Progres" had been torpedoed (see War Diary

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21 October) and proved afresh the constant danger to supply traffic on the route from Constantza to Nikolaiev.

Last night we observed continuous activity by the enemy air force. Furthermore Sevastopol was attacked, for the first time since its capture. The 5 bombs dropped caused only slight damage to buildings. Taman and Kerch were also unsuccessfully raided.

Owing to the bad condition of the roads near Taman during the rainy period last week, at the request of Army Commander, Crimea, I authorized 3 naval ferry barges still in good repair to undertake the transport of army supplies across the Kerch-Temriuk route. As barges have been damaged on this route as a result of the recent bad weather I am compelled to put a stop to this traffic, particularly as road conditions near Taman have again improved. Commander, Crimea agrees to this measure and to the diversion of traffic from Kerch to Taman again.

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27 October, 1942

Simferopol

Situation 27 October 1200:

- A. 1. During the night of 26 October the 1st E-Boat Flotilla operated against shipping in the Tuapse-Sochi area. No shipping encountered. At approximately 2200 E-boats S 72 and S 102 unsuccessfully engaged a Russian gunboat. 1 man seriously wounded; boats undamaged. The flotilla put in to Ivan Baba early on 27 October.
2. On 27 October the FZ-Group swept the harbor of Sevastopol and Masachiya Bay; no mines swept.
- B. 1. From 0156 to 0403 on 27 October, there were 4 air raid warnings at Ivan Baba. 25 high explosive bombs and some incendiaries dropped. Four men wounded but little material damage.

Message from Air Force Staff, Crimea:  
0901 on 27 October 1 destroyer southwest of Poti, course 260°, medium speed.

Supplementary Report to Situation 25 October:

U 9 to Galatz.  
At 2000 twelve bombs dropped on Ivan Baba.

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Regarding the operations of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla, the following points may be added to the above report:

From 2050 the boats stood in pairs in lurking position southeast of Tuapse. At about 2200 the 2 E-boats, S 102 and S 72 encountered a Russian gunboat. After a brief exchange of fire they broke off the engagement and left the operational area at about 2300 to disembark a seriously wounded man. The 2 E-boats, S 26 and S 28, followed the coast to the southeast as far as Sochi but did not meet with any shipping; they then returned to base where they put in at 0730. The gunfire had alarmed the coast and searchlights continually swept the coastal waters. While the E-boats were at sea, Ivan Baba, their base, was raided four times by Russian planes between 0200 and 0400. 25 high explosive bombs and some incendiaries caused little material damage, 4 men were wounded.

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The attacks were mostly made by 2 planes attacking simultaneously from different directions. The repeated air raids and Russian M.T.B. operations on Ivan Baba during the last week are evidence that the Russians are trying everything to eliminate our E-boats.

Today the weather permits the anti-submarine operations planned for the Italian submarines off the south coast of the Crimea. The Italian E-Boat Flotilla, therefore, received the following orders:

- "1. The Italian midget submarines CB 1 and CB 4 are to leave Yalta today at approximately 1500 on anti-submarine operations. Operational area to be to within a distance of 15 miles from the coast between Cape Sarich and Cape Aitodor.
2. Boats to re-enter Yalta at dawn on 29 October.
3. Request Air Force Staff, Crimea to cancel anti-submarine operations in the area mentioned under 1 between 1500 on 27 October and 0800 on 29 October.
4. Naval Shore Commander, Crimea to inform the coast.
5. Further order for Italian E-Boat Flotilla: You must expect German surface forces to pass through the area of anti-submarine operations.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4594 A I."

Ak Mechet harbor has latterly had to be used as an emergency port of call when the weather has suddenly deteriorated or when the escorts for supply ships have had to be changed. Since Ak Mechet Bay is very open to the sea, the ships anchored there are unprotected against torpedo attacks. In view of the activity of Russian submarines and assuming that air reconnaissance or agents' reports keep the enemy well aware of the fact that the harbor is occupied, I feel compelled to issue the following orders:

1. Laying of a net barrage.
2. Until this task has been completed, supply ships are forbidden to put in to Ak Mechet.

I therefore issued the following orders:

"To Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea, Commander Crimea and Caucasus:

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1. Ak Mechet harbor offers no protection against torpedo attacks from the sea. M.T.B. attacks unlikely owing to the great distance from Russian bases. Submarine attacks, on the other hand, offer no particular difficulty.
2. Anti-torpedo nets are to be laid as soon as possible.
3. Until then supply ships, etc. are not to occupy Ak Mechet. If, in order to change escort or because of the weather, they have to put in to a port in Karkinitzki Bay, then Skadovsk is suggested. They will have to put up with the disadvantage of the longer route.
4. Until the anti-torpedo net barrage is laid, Port Commander, Ak Mechet will direct smaller vessels to mooring buoys on the west side of the bay.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4601 A I."

"To Naval Shore Commander, Crimea:

Copy to Net Barrage Group.

With reference to Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4601 A I (not to Net Barrage Group):

1. Naval Shore Commander, Crimea is, in collaboration with the Net Barrage Group, requested to submit suggestions for the rapid laying of anti-torpedo nets in Ak Mechet.
2. The barrage is to give anti-torpedo protection to the berths by the landing stages as well as the anchorages in the inner bay.
3. Everything possible must be done to speed up the plans and execution.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4602 A I."

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported that one of the landing operations planned by Army H.Q. 17 with army boats (see War Diary 12 October) is to take place on the night of 23 October in Novorossisk Bay. For this purpose E-boats are requested to patrol Temeskaya Bay. The commander of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla will be in Anapa on 28 October in order to discuss the operation and the cooperation with the Army. I suggest that he should take up the following points at the conference:

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- "1. Operational opportunities for the 1st E-Boat Flotilla:
  - a. Boats to take up patrol line positions outside the bay to prevent enemy naval forces from penetrating.
  - b. Feign landing on coast near Cape Doob in order to tie down the enemy troops.
2. E-Boat Flotilla to leave the patrol line at least 2 hours before daybreak.
3. Operations of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla inside Temiskaya Bay are out of the question.
4. Boats are to avoid gunfire from shore. It is not their task to silence enemy artillery.

Extract from Admiral, Black Sea Chefs, 20 A I."

At 1400 U 24 left Constantza for long-range operations.

The commander of the 1st Naval Motor Transport Battalion, Lt. Cdr. (E) Sandel, was here for a conference.

The transport tasks assigned to the two Naval Motor Transport Battalions, namely the conveyance of the staffs of Naval Shore Commanders, Caucasus and Xerxes to their operational station, have been brought to a standstill for the present owing to the general military situation. For this reason the following dispositions were ordered for the Naval Motor Transport Battalions:

1. The 1st Naval Motor Transport Battalion will transfer its H.Q. from Odessa to Melitopol and, on completion of transport assignments now in hand, will assemble the whole detachment there. Company 3 must thoroughly overhaul its vehicles. The other two companies are available for transport tasks as directed by Admiral, Black Sea.

The transfer of the Naval Motor Transport Battalion to Melitopol has been ordered because of the need for such a battalion in the Ukraine/Crimea area during the winter months. The supply situation in this area, particularly the Crimea, may possibly require the use of a Naval Motor Transport Battalion there.



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2. The 4th Naval Motor Transport Battalion will remain in the Caucasus/Caspian area. It has already taken up quarters there; the staff and repair unit is in Kisslovodsk, the other companies are in Chernoleskoye, Essentucki, Novosselizkoye and Alexandrovskoye. They have been drafted into local defense.

Naval Shore Commanders have been directed to employ their own motor transport companies for current supplies.

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28 October, 1942

Simferopol

Situation 28 October 1200:

- A.
1. On 28 October Italian midget submarines CB 1 and CB 4 carried out anti-submarine operations between Cape Sarich and Cape Aitodor.
  2. The Kerch-Taman route was temporarily closed because of suspected mines; suspicion unconfirmed, route re-opened.
  3. Sweeping of Kasachiya Bay concluded. Bay opened to shipping.

Supplementary Report to Situation 27 October:

At 1400 on 27 October U 24 left Constantza for operations.

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The commander of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla reported that during the conference with Army H.Q. 17 in Anapa it was decided that the 1st E-Boat Flotilla should participate along the lines laid down here. The Flotilla will guard the approach to Novorossisk Bay from the sea, at the same time feigning plans for landings southeast of Cape Doob in order to tie down enemy troops. Communications between the 1st E-Boat Flotilla and Army Operational Command have been ensured by the installation on board of a pack radio set. The operation is to take place on the evening of 29 October.

Last night some 20 enemy planes, flying low, came over Kerch Strait between Taman and Kerch. Port Commander, Kerch reported that mines were suspected and closed the Strait and the supply route to Taman. Later messages from the Air Force Staff, Crimea did not confirm the suspicion of mines. The route was re-opened at approximately 1200.

Air raids were repeated last night on the trans-shipment ports Taman and Kerch. No damage reported. In the evening enemy bombers dropped 3 bombs on Mariupol, but achieved no results.

U 9 was commissioned in Galatz today. Her transfer to Constantza is planned for the 30th. She is expected to be ready for operations on 7 November.

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Conference with Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A on:

1. Transportation of German Labor Service men from Kerch to Taman and from Mariupol to Yeisk:

About 1,000 men of the German Labor Service are to be transported from Kerch to Taman for tasks on the Caucasus front and about 2,000 from Mariupol to Yeisk. At the instigation of the Army Group, Captain von Both requested Admiral, Black Sea's support in this matter. By arrangement with Quartermaster General, Army Commander, Crimea, half of the 1,000 German Labor Service men at present in Kerch are to cross to Taman by ferry barge on 30 October and the other half on 1 November. Transport from Kerch to the proposed position near Krasnodar will be undertaken by the 1st Naval Motor Transport Battalion which I have made available for the purpose.

Transport of the men of the German Labor Service from Mariupol to Yeisk can only be accomplished by the available transport resources if other supply tasks are shelved. In my opinion the most practical method would be to use the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla, but I must leave the decision and the question of dates to Admiral Scheurlen. He will be advised of this and requested to investigate the matter at a conference on 30 October at Mariupol with Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A (Captain von Both), Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine and the Commander of the German Labor Service group and, if the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla is able to undertake transport, to arrange details.

2. Transfer of Don Shipping to Field Waterways Commission Division III:

According to Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A, opinions amongst individual Army Commands vary regarding the advisability of handing over Don shipping, previously subordinate to Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine and Port Commander, Rostov, to the Army. I, myself am firmly convinced of the expediency of handing over this task, which is outside the Navy's sphere of duty, to the Field Waterways Commission. Furthermore, I think it would be advisable to carry out the transfer when the Don begins to ice up, that is in about four weeks' time, as it would not then dislocate the current transport traffic. Captain von Both has been asked to secure a final decision from the Army Commands concerned.

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29 October, 1942

Simferopol

Situation 29 October 1200:

- A. 1. 28 October motor fishing vessels Nos. 5 and 13 swept Sevastopol harbor. No mines swept.
- 2. 29 October the Italian midget submarines CB 1 and CB 4 entered Yalta after unsuccessful anti-submarine operations near Cape Sarich and Cape Aitodor.
- 3. 1600 on 29 October 4 boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla left Ivan Baba for the defense of Novorossisk Bay in support of Army operations.
- 4. Italian E-boats Nos. 574 and 575 entered Yalta.
- B. 1240 on 29 October one Russian plane machine-gunned Alushta.
- D. 1. During the night of 29 October, Italian E-boats carried out anti-submarine operations in the area mentioned under A 2.
- 2. The FZ-Group continued sweeping Sevastopol harbor.
- E. Ferry F 470 out of action owing to the failure of her center engine.

Motor minesweeper R 36 out of action owing to damage to her starboard engine.

FR 10 ready for operations.

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The extension of the flanking minefields ordered to protect the supply routes off the Rumanian-Russian coast from submarine attacks is to start today with the laying of the first section south of the island of Fidonisi. I have entrusted the work to Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea and have placed forces at his disposal as follows:

- 1. The "Murgescu" and the "Dacia" as mine-carriers.
- 2. The 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla and 2 Rumanian destroyers as escorts.
- 3. The Coastal Minesweeper Group, the minesweeper "Xanten" and steamboats for anti-submarine operations in the mined area and on the approach route.

Position of the minefield section (S 44) from:  
45° 14' N, 30° 19' E to  
45° 11.1' N, 30° 12.5' E.

200 EMC mines required with contact release, depth-setting minus 3 meters, distance apart of mines in center 50 meters.

The 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla has swept the laying course and the approach route.

The cover name issued by Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus for the execution of the land operation in Temeskaya Bay is "Delphin". The 1st E-Boat Flotilla has received the following orders:

- "1. Four boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla will leave Ivan Baba at 1600 today for the area off Novorossisk.
2. Their task is to defend Novorossisk Bay and to feign a landing on the coast southeast of Cape Doob.
3. Flotilla to put in to Ivan Baba early on 30 October.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4621 A I."

After unsuccessful anti-submarine operations in the coastal waters off the southwestern tip of the Crimea, both Italian U-boats put in to Yalta early today. The operation will be repeated during the night of 30 October. An Italian E-boat is undertaking the same task this evening. The Italian E-boat Flotilla will receive the necessary orders.

The two additional Italian E-boats, Nos. 574 and 575, brought to the Black Sea from Italy, have arrived at their base, Yalta. Thus 4 Italian E-boats are again available for defensive tasks on the south coast of the Crimea.

In order to speed up the work in Temriuk harbor, Technical Division 17 (Technical Emergency Corps) has been put on to the clearance and salvage of wrecks and of the dredging gear.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus, Captain Wesemann, was himself present at a conference at H.Q. of Admiral, Black Sea and gave the following information on the situation in his command:

1. At Novorossisk he has at present put Fort Commands 16 and 18 into action, since one detachment is insufficient while the town

continues to be subjected to enemy gunfire. It has proved necessary to have a relief for whichever Port Command has been operating in the combat area.

2. Near Novorossisk:  
Six 15.5 cm. guns have been temporarily brought into a forward position some 2.5 km. north of Feodorovka.  
Three 15 cm. captured Russian guns and four 7.5 cm. guns have been erected 4-5 km. west of Cape Myshako.
3. Port Commander 20 has occupied Anapa. The harbor is at present being made into a heavily defended base. The Army has provided 2 companies of Army Engineers for the purpose. The Fortress Engineer Staff of Admiral, Black Sea has also been ordered to use all its available resources at Anapa since this place is particularly exposed to the danger of landings.
4. Anapa's sea front is at present only protected by captured Russian guns, namely three 10 cm. and two 15 cm., erected 12 km. north of Anapa. This is very inadequate protection, particularly since the 10.2 cm. battery only possesses 89 rounds of ammunition. Whether suitable captured ammunition is available at any other point will therefore have to be discovered, otherwise Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus will have to withdraw two or three guns for Anapa from his battery of five 10.5 cm. semi-automatic guns really intended for Novorossisk. South of Anapa there is a battery of Army Coastal Artillery Detachment 338.
5. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus must submit information regarding the commitment of the Army Coastal Artillery detachment on the Anapa-Novorossisk coast as quickly as possible.
6. Port Command 21 will be sent to Tuapse. They still have their headquarters in Maikop together with Port Command 19. Both commanders have sent up forward detachments on the road to Tuapse, as they were required for guerrilla fighting.
7. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus will shortly be moving his H.Q. to Slavanskaya.

The situation in August was such that the Army might quite suddenly have occupied Novorossisk-Tuapse-Sukhum, and Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus disposed his formations accordingly. The



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probability then was that the southern ports of the Caucasus coast would likewise fall into our hands within measurable time. The changed situation now necessitates the revision of plans made at that time. Thus, contrary to previous intentions, a Port Commander will have to remain in Anapa, although it was at that time assumed that this would be unnecessary. This means that Naval Commander, Caucasus must receive a substitute for Port Command 17, dispatched to the Caspian, otherwise there will not be sufficient forces available for the occupation of Poti and Batum.

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30 October, 1942

Simferopol

Situation 30 October 1200:

- A. 1. The 1st E-Boat Flotilla carried out scheduled patrols of Novorossisk Bay in support of Army operations there. Only 1 enemy M.T.B. was sighted on a northwesterly course. Lively searchlight activity near Cape Doob and Ghelenjik Bay. The E-Boat Flotilla put in to Ivan Baba at 0430.
2. The minefield section S 44 was laid near Fidonisi by the "Murgescu" and "Dacia". Nothing to report.
3. An Italian E-boat carried out anti-submarine operations near Cape Sarich. Nothing sighted. The boat put in to Yalta at 0700.
4. Minesweeping: FZ-groups operated in Kerch Strait and Sevastopol harbor. No mines swept.
- B. On the afternoon of 28 October a submarine periscope was sighted off Odessa. Depth charge attack had no visible results.
- D. 1. During the night of 30 October Italian U-boats will carry out anti-submarine operations off the southern tip of the Crimea.
2. Sweeping in Kerch Strait and Sevastopol to continue.

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The 1st E-Boat Flotilla covered the landing operation according to plan.

At 2355 the Army's assault boats returned from the operation.

At 0043 the 1st E-Boat Flotilla was released by the radiogram from Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus: "Dolphin finished".

The boats put in to Ivan Baba at 0410 without incident.

At 1359 Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported that the attempt to land near Novorossisk had failed and all the assault boats had returned.

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The Italian midget submarine CB 6 lying in Sevastopol out of action as a result of sea damage, cannot be repaired there since the necessary facilities are not available. She will have to transfer to Nikolaiev. Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea has orders to provide tugs and the necessary escort.

The Italian E-Boat Flotilla received the following orders for the dispatch of 2 boats on anti-submarine operations off the southern tip of the Crimea:

- "1. Two Italian midget submarines will carry out anti-submarine operations during the night of 30 October between Cape Sarich and Cape Aitodor to within a distance of 15 miles from the coast.
2. For this purpose CB 1 and CB 4 will leave Yalta at 1500 today. Having performed their task, the boats will put in to Sevastopol early on 31 October.
3. Air Force Staff, Crimea requested to prohibit anti-submarine operations in the operational area.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4636 A I."

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus informed us that the Army intends to wire and mine the harbor mole at Anapa.

In view of repeated messages warning against enemy plans to land near Anapa, I have consented to the above, subject to the proviso that the obstacles can be removed within a maximum period of 3 days. These defense measures are not at the moment any hindrance, since supply traffic is not yet operating off the Caucasus coast and we are therefore not using the harbor mole at Anapa.

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31 October, 1942

Simferopol

Situation 31 October 1200:

- A.
1. On 31 October four boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla put out from Ivan Baba on operations against enemy shipping southeast of Tuapse.
  2. Italian midget submarines CB 1 and CB 4 put in to Sevastopol after unsuccessful anti-submarine operations.
  3. An FZ-group searched the grid square south of Byelosaraika with towed loop gear. One ELM mine was swept.
- D.
1. The FZ-groups continued minesweeping operations.
  2. A minesweeping Ju again operated in the Sea of Azov.

---

Recent photographic evaluations show that shipping in port at Tuapse has changed daily; it includes steamers of up to 4,000 tons. In addition, naval air reconnaissance over the Caucasus coast during the recent fine spell with good visibility identified lively shipping traffic. From this I conclude that the enemy is bringing up reinforcements by sea for the now important sector of the front east of Tuapse. This supposition is confirmed by references in the situation reports of Army Group A, according to which resistance is stiffening before Tuapse. The 1st E-Boat Flotilla's main task is, at present, interference with this enemy supply traffic. I have therefore decided to make use of the prevailing good weather during this period of decisive fighting and send out the 1st E-Boat Flotilla as often as possible against enemy shipping between Sochi and Tuapse. The 1st E-Boat Flotilla received the following operational orders for the coming night:

- "1. Situation: air reconnaissance and photographic evaluation have, during the last few days revealed shipping heading for Tuapse which included some moderately large steamers. Probably there is constant flow of supply traffic bringing up reinforcements to a now important sector of the front.

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2. Four boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla will operate during the night of 31 October against this traffic. The operational area is immediately off the coast between Tuapse and Sochi; focal point off Tuapse.
3. 1st E-Boat Flotilla will leave Ivan Baba at 1200 on 31 October returning early on 1 November.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4653 A I."

Two Italian midget submarines occupied the reconnaissance lines between Cape Sarich and Cape Aitodor during the past few nights but sighted no enemy forces. I shall nevertheless continue to assign Italian midget submarines and E-boats to the patrol line on the south coast of the Crimea since:

1. Enemy submarines have been repeatedly identified in this area.
2. Operations of enemy surface forces must be expected.
3. At present there are no possibilities for the offensive use of Italian forces.

Now that the route from Kerch to Tomriuk has been swept free of mines by the minesweeping Ju, the plane is again available for other tasks. I have discussed the matter again with the Air Force Staff, Crimea and the plane will again be transferred to Mariupol as from 3 November in order to undertake operations from there over the route Mariupol-Rostov. Following teletype placed Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine in charge of operations:

- "1. Air Force Staff, Crimea will once again place the minesweeping plane at the disposal of Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine for operations in the Sea of Azov.
2. Provisionally the plane will land at the Mariupol North airfield on 31 October or 1 November. The pilot will report to Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine.
3. Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine will determine the priority of the tasks there.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4659 A I."

Army High Command (Army General Staff) reported that Army Group A had received orders to relieve the 50th Infantry Division at present operating in the Crimea by the 5th Air Force Field Division.

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The 50th Infantry Division is to be ferried across Kerch Strait and to assemble in the Krasnodar area at the disposal of the High Command.

On this point Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A informed us that according to Führer orders half the ferry barges of Operations Staff Scheurlen are to be used for this transport operation. Following consultations with Army Commander, Crimea, who is directing transportation in the Crimea, it has been arranged that the transports will only arrive slowly at first, so that until 4 November the 6 naval ferry barges available from the former "Blücher Operation" will suffice for ferry traffic (3 more ferries are being reserved for current supply traffic). Staff Scheurlen will be informed of the new situation and ordered to advise how many ferry barges of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla can be ready for this task in Kerch as from 4 November.

The withdrawal of Operations Staff, Scheurlen's ferry barges simply for a transport operation is regrettable in view of the training necessary for the special duties planned, more particularly since the time available is extremely limited owing to the ice that normally sets in in mid-December in the Sea of Azov. It should also be remembered that the barges are not built for such permanent traffic and that their engines will soon break down, thus disabling them for the military operations shortly planned to take place. Naturally, in view of the significance of the rapid transport of the 50th Infantry Division which is, as far as I know, to reinforce our Caucasus front, this is only a secondary consideration. There are for the time being no other means of transport available since, according to Army Commander, Crimea, there will be no fuel during the coming period for the Siebel ferries which were used at the time of the "Blücher Operation".

1. During October escorts for
  - a. 17 naval vessels and
  - b. 154 merchant ships totaling 114,932 tons, were provided.



2. Sea Transportation Section in the area Black Sea and Sea of Azov transported

a. Supplies:

32,200 tons of military supplies to the Ukraine;  
17,800 tons of other supplies to the Ukraine;  
40,200 tons of supplies back from the Ukraine to Constantza and the Danube;  
24,000 tons of military supplies in the Sea of Azov;  
1,300 tons of Crimean traffic;  
4,800 tons brought by inland lighters to Nikolaiev;  
6,900 tons of supplies from Kerch to Taman.  
Total 127,200 tons.

b. Ferry traffic from Kerch to Taman:

20,100 troops  
7,185 horses  
3,934 vehicles  
3,149 troops returned  
160 horses returned  
543 vehicles returned  
414 cattle returned.

3. Losses sustained as a result of enemy submarine action:  
the steamers "Salzburg", "Carpati",  
"Le Progres", the tug "Oitul".

(Signed) Hoye.

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WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

1 - 15 NOVEMBER, 1942

PC/61520

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1 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance identified 1 battleship, 1 heavy cruiser in Batum, 2 cruisers and 2 destroyers in Poti. Lively activity of patrol vessels and small craft near the coast.

The D/F Station intercepted 1 cruiser and 4 destroyers during the morning in the Poti area.

Own Situation:

Apart from 2 gunboats, the 1st E-Boat Flotilla encountered no enemy traffic last night during operations in coastal waters between Tuapse and Sochi. At approximately 2100 on 31 October E-boat S 72 had to be dispatched to Ivan Baba owing to engine trouble. The remaining boats put in to their base this morning at approximately 0700.

Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla reported that along the coast southeast of Tuapse the enemy was continually sweeping coastal waters with newly erected searchlights, thus making it extraordinarily difficult to attack this area. In forthcoming operations I therefore plan to employ the flotilla farther to the southeast, i.e. north-west of Sochi.

The transportation of the 1,000 German labor service men from Kerch to Taman has been carried out.

Because of the transportation from Kerch to Taman of the 50th Infantry Division scheduled for 2 November, Commanding Officer, Crimea requested that normal supply traffic be again diverted from Kerch to Temriuk. I therefore issued orders that the 3 naval ferry barges detailed for this purpose resume operations on this route as from 2 November.

On 28 October unidentified enemy planes flew by close to Byelosaraika lighthouse, and dull thuds were heard on the water suggestive of mines being dropped. The route has been closed to shipping. As a result of the above observation an FZ-group was ordered to clear the route from Mariupol to Byelosaraika and today swept 2 mines there. In support of the FZ-group operating in the Sea of Azov, Air Force Staff, Crimea at my

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request transferred the minesweeping plane which has been operating over the Kerch-Temriuk route, to Mariupol, to check the routes in the north-eastern part of the Sea of Azov.

Motor minesweeper RA 52 and naval ferry barge No. 170 proceeding today from Theodosia to Yalta were attacked towards 0530 by a Russian torpedo plane. They opened fire on the plane and scored some hits whereupon it jettisoned 2 torpedoes and turned away to sea.

Kerch was again raided by enemy planes last night. Eight high explosive bombs and a number of incendiaries caused no military damage.

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2 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Brisk convoy traffic between Tuapse and Sukhum. The Russian motorship "Ulianov" which was loaded in Trabzon on 31 October with tanning materials for Poti was probably also in Turkish territorial waters.

Apart from 1 submarine located by the Main Naval D/F Station 26 miles north of Ak Mechet, no shipping movements.

Own Situation:

During a conference with Commanding Admiral, Crimea I learned that the first 2 train loads of troops from the 50th Infantry Division will arrive today according to plan. Six naval ferry barges are ready to take them away. From 6 November 4 train loads daily will arrive at Kerch; 5 more barges have been requested for their transport. The Führer Directive lays down that naval ferry barges of Staff Scheurlen (3rd Landing Craft Flotilla) are to be employed for this task. I therefore sent Staff Scheurlen the following order:

- "1. Staff Scheurlen will transfer 5 naval ferry barges of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla from Berdyansk to Kerch on 3 November.
2. The naval ferry barges under 1), together with the barges from the 1st Landing Craft Flotilla will be employed to transport the 50th Infantry Division from Kerch to Taman.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4692 A I."

As a result of the considerations already submitted and of today's information from Air Force Staff, Crimea regarding continued heavy traffic to Tuapse (today 1 tanker of 4,000 tons, 1 steamer of 2,000 tons left, 1 steamer of 1,500 tons, 1 steamer of 1,000 tons entered), and in view of the prevailing good weather I ordered the 1st E-Boat Flotilla to repeat operations against supply traffic to Tuapse in the following teletype:

- "1. Situation: unchanged on the Caucasus coast (see Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4653 A I).

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2. The 1st E-Boat Flotilla will put out with 4 boats at 1200 EET (1100 CET) on 2 November from Ivan Baba for operations against enemy shipping on the coastal route from Sochi to Tuapse, concentrating northwest of Sochi in order to avoid obstruction by searchlights set up southeast of Tuapse.
3. Flotilla will return early on 3 November.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4683 A I."

The Italian E-Boat Flotilla received the following directive to supply 2 small U-boats during the night of 2/3 November for anti-submarine operations and reconnaissance off the south coast of the Crimea:

- "1. At 1200 EET (1100 CET) today Italian midget submarines CB 2 and CB 4 will leave Sevastopol for reconnaissance positions between Sarich Point and Cape Kikeneiz to within 15 miles of the coast.
2. The boats will enter Yalta early on 3 November.
3. Air Force Staff, Crimea are requested to cancel anti-submarine operations over the approach route and in the reconnaissance area.
4. Inform Naval Shore Commander, Crimean coast.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4682 A I."

No mines were swept during the exploratory sweep carried out today by motor minesweepers (RA) between Ivan Baba and Theodosia (Cape Ili) and ordered because it was suspected that mines had been dropped there. Similarly a search of Sevastopol harbor and of the routes to the north-east of the Sea of Azov by FZ-groups revealed no mines.

Two Russian M.T.B.s approaching Anapa were shelled by the coastal guns and turned away.

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NO FURTHER INFORMATION

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3 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Only slight movement of light enemy naval forces off the central part of the Caucasus coast. The area to the southeast could not be observed owing to the weather.

The D/F Station intercepted 6 submarines, some patrol boats and E-boats off the east coast, also 1 destroyer at sea to the south, and 2 submarines between the central and the western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

Neither the Air Force nor the Main Naval D/F Station has latterly identified any large enemy vessels in the southeastern Black Sea. I attribute this inactivity of the Russian Fleet, which until the second half of October had become extremely active, to the presence of U 24 in the Poti-Batum area, which the enemy may have either intercepted or discovered through agents' reports. No messages have so far been received from her. According to air reconnaissance which, when visibility allowed, was daily carried out more or less exhaustively, she can have encountered no targets for attack in the operational area assigned to her. When U 9 puts out on 9 November I therefore intend to transfer U 24 to an operational area farther north and to employ the boat against supply traffic there.

Last night 4 boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla were stationed near Cape Uchdere according to plan. No shipping was encountered. One gunboat passed on a southeasterly course. This shows that the enemy still avoids letting his supply ships follow the Sochi-Tuapse route by night when they are more particularly exposed to our E-boat attacks. On the basis of its observations Air Force Staff, Crimea is of the same opinion as I, namely that enemy shipping is so directed that steamers leave Tuapse at dawn and put in there in the late afternoon, thus contriving to pass through the area imperiled by our E-boats during the day.

Italian midget submarines CB 2 and CB 4 put in to Yalta again today at approximately 0700 from the reconnaissance line to which they had been ordered east of Sarich Point. No enemy forces were sighted.

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The Italian E-Boat Flotilla was ordered to dispatch Italian E-boat No. 575 to a reconnaissance line between Sarich Point and Cape Kikeneiz during the coming night.

Six non-contact mines were swept in the area suspected of mines near Byelosaraika (northeast of the Sea of Azov, War Diary 1 November), 4 by a minesweeping plane, 2 by FZ-boats. The route has been closed until further notice. Minesweeping will continue.

The 1st FZ-Group this morning swept a non-contact mine on the buoyed coastal route through Kerch Strait. Since this route has been continuously checked during the last few weeks and much used by shipping, it is assumed that enemy planes have dropped mines there during the last few days. The route through Kerch Strait has been closed. In order that this important shipping route may be opened as soon as possible I have ordered the FZ-group stationed in Kerch to be reinforced by boats from the Sevastopol group and Commander, FZ-boats to take charge of operations there. The following order was issued accordingly:

- "1. Commander, FZ-Boats will transfer immediately enough minesweepers from Sevastopol to Kerch to enable at least 2 FZ-groups to be ready in Kerch Strait.
2. Commander, FZ-Group will take charge of minesweeping operations in Kerch Strait immediately and for this purpose transfer his headquarters to Kerch on 4 November.
3. The route through Kerch Strait must be swept as quickly as possible.
4. Commander, FZ-Group, on arrival at Kerch, is to send a teletype to Admiral, Black Sea with a report of the non-contact mine situation in Kerch Strait.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4711 A I."

Last night Taman was again bombed. Damage was again negligible.

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NO INFO INFORMATION



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4 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Brisk activity of small vessels off the central east coast. No further shipping identified by air reconnaissance.

According to radio intercept service no activity of larger vessels to report. Off the east coast there were submarine escorts, 2 submarines, single minesweepers, guard boats and small vessels. D/F bearing identified 1 destroyer in the southeastern Black Sea, 2 submarines between the central and western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

Accompanied by the Second Admiral's Staff Officer, I began my tour of inspection of the areas under Naval Shore Commanders, Ukraine, Kerxes and Caucasus. Purpose of the tour: conference with the Naval Shore Commanders, inspection of the operational groups under Naval Shore Commanders, Kerxes and Caucasus and the Port Commanders, and discussions with Army Group A, Army H.Q. 1 (Tanks) and Army H.Q. 17.

While checking Kerch Strait today 2 further non-contact mines were found. As the additional minesweepers requested to check the route to Kerch have left Sevastopol, it will probably be possible to start operations with 2 FZ-groups on 6 November. The route will remain closed until further notice.

Of the 5 naval ferry barges of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla ordered to transport the 50th Infantry Division to Kerch, 4 have arrived. Naval ferry barge No. 127 had to return to Berdyansk owing to engine trouble.

Transportation of the 50th Infantry Division after 5 November will be continued by 10 naval ferry barges. With regard to the course of this operation so far and to its future organization I have informed Group South, copy to Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A, as follows:

- "1. Sections of the 50th Infantry Division which have arrived in 2 trains daily have been ferried across to Taman by the available 6 "Blücher" naval ferry barges without difficulty.

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2. After consultation with the Commanding Admiral, Crimea 4 trains will run daily after 6 November. Their further transportation by the 6 "Blücher" naval ferry barges and the 5 "Scheurlen" naval ferry barges now in readiness at Kerch can be undertaken without difficulty.
3. It is therefore unnecessary to employ any more "Scheurlen" barges at present.
4. If after 10 November troops should arrive in increasing numbers (5 train loads in all) tugs and lighters allocated by the Home Staff (Overseas Branch) will by then be in readiness in Kerch. Alternatively, if required, extra naval ferry barges may be brought from Berdyansk at short notice.
5. Commanding Admiral, Crimea has been informed of the situation.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4735 A I."

During the night the enemy continued to raid the supply ports of Kerch and Taman which he appears to regard as of particular importance. Kerch was attacked by 6 planes, Taman by 8. A total of 20 bombs caused no military damage.

Daylight raids by the Russian Air Force on our operational and supply ports have diminished during the last few days. I attribute this to the transfer of Rumanian fighters to the Crimea.

- 1230 The naval ferry barge group (5 ferry barges) proceeding to the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla at Berdyansk was attacked by torpedoes from an enemy plane off Cape Ayu Dagh. They evaded being hit and fired on the plane without success.
- 1700 The Rumanian tug "Bessarabia", on escort duty from Burgas to Sulina, sighted a submarine that had surfaced off Burnas. Depth charges were dropped where she submerged, subsequently causing an oil patch.

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5 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Apart from 1 submarine 45 miles west of Poti air reconnaissance identified no enemy shipping. The D/F Station intercepted 2 submarines, 1 minelayer, some M.T.B.s and guard boats between the northern and central east coast, 1 submarine, 1 minelayer and some small craft off the southern east coast. According to radio traffic there were no large naval vessels at sea.

Own Situation:

At approximately 1900 on 4 November Rumanian coastguards observed 4 M.T.B.s south of Cape Siz Aul, at 2030 6 M.T.B.s were reported some 4 miles east of Cape Zhelezni Rog. At 2320 Rumanian coastguards south of Cape Siz Aul heard loud engine noises. Since they could not have been our own forces they must have been Russian M.T.B.s operating against our shipping on the coastal route off the southern Crimea. Mines may have been laid. Commander, Crimean Coast has received the following orders about a check sweep:

- "1. At 1900 on 4 November 4 enemy M.T.B.s were sighted from land south of Cape Siz Aul. At 2320 loud engine noises were heard at the same spot. Mines are suspected.
2. Commander, Crimean Coast will carry out a check sweep from Brown 14 to Brown 18 with a group of minesweepers (RA).
3. Report execution.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4755 A I."

According to Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A, statements of prisoners of war, confirmed by agents, maintain that the enemy is at present not carrying out any troop transportations by road along the Caucasus coast but that regular naval transportations take place by night between Sukhum and Sochi. The 1st E-Boat Flotilla has received the following orders for operations against these supply transports during the coming night:

- "1. Situation: According to Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A, naval transports are

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proceeding regularly by night between Sukhum and Sochi.

2. Four boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla will operate from dusk this evening against this traffic southeast of Sochi. In the event of uncertain weather Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla will, at his own discretion, transfer operations to southeast of Tuapse in order to shorten the approach and return passage.
3. The 1st E-Boat Flotilla will put out in accordance with para. 2) at 1300 EET on 5 November, and return to base early on 6 November.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4740 A I."

In the course of extending the flanking minefields off the Rumanian-Russian coast today the second section of the minefield (S 42) was laid according to plan. Position of the minefield is from 45° 14' N, 30° 19' E to 45° 11.1' N, 30° 12.5' E. Mines required: 200 EMC mines with contact release device. Depth-setting: minus 3 meters (average distance apart 50 meters).

0340 Russian M.T.B.s shelled Anapa. No damage or casualties.

The 1st FZ-Group swept another non-contact mine on the buoyed coastal route through Kerch Strait. It is fairly certain that latterly mines have been dropped by Russian planes.

From Army High Command, Army General Staff, Quartermaster General, Division I has come the message that the naval ferry barges available from the "Blücher" operation are to be employed to reinforce the supplies of Army Corps 17 while, by order of the Führer, the naval ferry barges of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla (Group Scheurlen) are to effect the transportation of the 50th Infantry Division from Kerch to Taman.

This would involve the withdrawal of 5 further barges of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla from training in order that the "Blücher" barges, at present detailed to transport the 50th Infantry Division, may be relieved. In conference with Commanding Admiral, Crimea I ascertained that there is as yet no need for this, since the barges now in readiness at Kerch suffice for all the tasks. I have informed the Navy and Army Offices of the present situation in the following teletype:

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- "1. Army High Command, Army General Staff, Quartermaster General, Division I reports that:
  - a. All those "Blücher" barges previously assigned for the Kerch-Taman traffic are required to reinforce current supplies to Army Corps 17.
  - b. For the conveyance of the 50th Infantry Division, in accordance with the Führer's order, naval ferry barges from the tactical flotilla are available.
2. Without causing any delays or difficulties, 3 "Blücher" barges were so far responsible for current supply traffic and 6 "Blücher" barges and 5 naval ferry barges of the tactical flotilla for the conveyance of the 50th Infantry Division.
3. As soon as the increase in supplies calls for further shipping and the "Blücher" barges previously assigned to the 50th Infantry Division have to be used for the task, further naval ferry barges can be transferred to Kerch within 24 hours.
4. In order to prevent any interruption of important training at present in progress, an unnecessarily early transfer to Kerch should be avoided. I therefore wish to be informed when the increase in supply traffic is expected to begin.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4757 A I."

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6 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Slight activity of enemy naval vessels and merchant ships off the Caucasus coast. No enemy shipping identified by air reconnaissance in the southeastern Black Sea. According to radio intercept service, a Russian minelayer reported attacking a U-boat at midnight in Russian grid squares 2997, 2898. According to radio traffic the minelayer was in the southeastern Black Sea.

Own Situation:

U 24 made the following report:

"Operation unsuccessful. Exhausted torpedoes. Definitely 1 torpedo failure and 1 pistol failure, 5 other unexplained misses; exchange of gunfire, 1 hit scored on a tanker. Request return, approximately 10 days needed in dockyard including 6 in dock. Echo-sounder out of order. Grid square 1557, wind E, force 1-2, atmospheric pressure 1,016 millibars, visibility 4 miles.

U 24."

I have issued orders to U 24 to return via air grid squares 34 E 7262, 5537 and 3372 to air grid square 24 E 8426 and to report estimated time of arrival in 8426.

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea will receive orders to escort U 24 from there to Constantza.

I issued orders that the above route along the Turkish coast should be followed in order to obtain data regarding merchant shipping there. During his last escort duties with a Bosphorus convoy on 1 November, Commander, 3rd Minesweeper Flotilla reported that he had observed 5 steamers of about 2-3,000 tons coming from the Bosphorus and steering an easterly course inside territorial waters. Adverse weather compelled Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla to transfer from the operational area south of Sochi to the northwest between Sochi and Tuapse in order to shorten the approach and the return passage. In grid square 0187 the flotilla encountered a steamer of 2,000 tons escorted by 2 gunboats. The first attack by 5 boats resulted in 6 torpedo misses, partly attributable to torpedo failures.

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During the attack the E-boats were picked up by searchlights on land and shelled by 10.5 cm. anti-aircraft guns. On sighting them the gunboats maintained contact with our E-boats without opening fire. The attempt to repeat the attack after hauling ahead again had to be broken off owing to the weather. S 72 torpedoed and sank a lighter at anchor off the coast.

0500

The flotilla put in to Ivan Baba.

Prisoners of war and agents report that on 7 November, the date of their national holiday, the Russians will be very active. On the night of 6/7 November we may, therefore, expect them to carry out operations with strong naval forces against the coasts of the Crimea and the Caucasus. Coastal defenses are ordered to be increasingly on the alert. As a further safeguard the 1st E-Boat Flotilla and the Italian forces will occupy a reconnaissance line along the German-occupied coasts of the Crimea and Caucasus. I have issued the following orders:

"To 1st E-Boat Flotilla:

1. According to available reports, attacks by Russian naval forces are to be expected against the German-occupied Caucasus coast during the coming night because of the Russian national holiday.
2. Four boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla will occupy a reconnaissance line after dark from Utrish Point to Banka Maria Magdalena, about 10 miles off the coast. Should the enemy be encountered send "Most Immediate" report.
3. The boats will leave the reconnaissance line at 0400 EET on 7 November and put in to Ivan Baba.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4766 A I."

"To Italian E-Boat Flotilla; Yalta:

1. Agents' and prisoners' reports state that enemy attacks are to be expected on the night of 6/7 November (Russian national holiday).
2. On 6 November Italian E-Boat Flotilla will occupy reconnaissance lines 15 miles off the coast to operate against Russian forces heading for the Crimean coast and also to ensure prompt reports, as follows:

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- a. 4 Italian E-boats between Yalta and Cape Meganom.
  - b. 2 U-boats between Yalta and Sarich Point.
3. Italian E-boats and U-boats will put in to Yalta on the morning of 7 November.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4767 A I."

Persistent northwesterly winds, force 4-6, which we know from experience cause very heavy seas south of Kerch Strait, have forced me to abandon the reconnaissance line northwest and southeast of Anapa and to transfer it to the south coast of the Crimea between Theodosia and Kerch Strait.

"To 1st E-Boat Flotilla:

1. Owing to the weather, the 1st E-Boat Flotilla, contrary to the order Gkdos. 4766 A I, will tonight occupy a reconnaissance line between Cape Atlama and Cape Siz Aul.
2. Boats will leave Ivan Baba at 1900 EET and return at approximately 0500 EET on the morning of 7 November.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4775 A I."

Six non-contact mines were swept today by mine-sweeping planes in the northeastern Sea of Azov.

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7 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance by Air Force Staff, Crimea reported only slight activity of enemy light naval forces in the southeastern Black Sea and off Sochi.

According to a radio intercept report there is increasing activity of small vessels, but decreasing submarine activity. Furthermore 1 submarine escort and 2 submarines off the east coast, 1 destroyer in the southeastern Black Sea, several minelayers, minesweepers, patrol vessels, some M.T.B.s and motor minesweepers in the coastal area. Two submarines intercepted between the central and western Black Sea. No large naval vessels identified.

Own Situation:

The enemy undertook no operations last night against the German-occupied Caucasus and Crimean coast. They were possibly prevented by the weather.

Italian U- and E-boats returned this morning to Yalta from their reconnaissance line without incident of any kind. The 1st E-Boat Flotilla stationed on a line more exposed to the northwest winds along the coast between Theodosia and Cape Siz Aul, was forced, owing to the heavy sea, to leave the reconnaissance line at about 2000 on 6 November.

The photographs of the Caucasus ports taken at the end of October and received today from Air Force Staff, Crimea revealed a heavy concentration of shipping in Poti and Batum. The entire Russian Fleet is concentrated in these two ports, offering an unusually good target to the Air Force. When this was pointed out, Air Force Staff, Crimea stated that at present no planes were available for this task.

Commanding Admiral, Crimea has informed us that more supply traffic is to arrive in Kerch after 9 November. Hence 5 extra naval ferry barges of Group Blücher will be required and as a substitute for them 3 barges of Group Scheurlon are to be transferred for the transportation of the 50th Infantry Division. Operations Staff, Scheurlon has been instructed as follows:

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- "1. On 8 November Staff Scheurlen will transfer 3 more naval ferry barges of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla to Kerch.
2. Naval ferry barges as under 1), after arrival at Kerch, will be employed for the conveyance of the 50th Infantry Division.
3. The 3 naval ferry barges of the 1st Landing Craft Flotilla thus relieved are then to be used for the regular supply traffic of the 17th Army Corps between Kerch and Temriuk.
4. Staff Scheurlen will report the numbers of the naval ferry barges as under 1).

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4781 A I."

On 9 November U 9 will be ready to proceed on long-range operations. Her operational area will be the area east of 40° E. In order that the commander of U 9 may benefit from the experience of U 24 gathered in that area (according to the latter's last position report she should put in to Constantza on 9 November), I am postponing U 9's departure until 10 November:

- "1. U 24 will probably put in to Constantza on 9 November.
2. U 9'S departure for operations will be postponed until 10 November in order that
  - a. she may benefit from U 24's experiences,
  - b. torpedo failures may be explained so that U 9 may avoid similar occurrences.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4780 A I."

Air reconnaissance reports during the last few days show that enemy shipping between Sukhum and Tuapse, insofar as escorted steamers are concerned, does not proceed immediately off the coast but about 25 miles away from it. I plan to set U 9 on to this supply traffic in the hope that future reconnaissance will show the same results and that the Russian Fleet will remain in Poti and Batum. This would mean that there would be few or no opportunities of attack in the operational area originally proposed.

The Motor Minesweeper Group swept the route from Cape Chauda to Cape Takil (route Brown 14

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to Brown 18, see War Diary 2 November) with 10 meter pendant. No mines swept.

No mines were swept during operations by the FZ-groups in Kerch Strait, the Sea of Azov and Sevastopol harbor.

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8 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance over the coastal area between Sukhum and Sochi observed lively activity of small vessels. No shipping intercepted in northwestern coastal waters.

1000 Reconnaissance was broken off owing to the weather.

According to a radio intercept report submarine activity is decreasing. Movements of small vessels are increasing. The D/F Station made the following locations: 1 submarine escort, 2 submarines off the east coast, 1 destroyer in the southeastern Black Sea, several minelayers, minesweepers and patrol vessels, some M.T.B.s and motor minesweepers in the coastal area, 2 submarines between the central and western Black Sea. According to radio traffic no large naval vessels at sea.

Own Situation:

Bad weather (wind N, up to force 7) has put a stop to all convoy and supply traffic. Transportation of the 50th Infantry Division in Kerch Strait will also have to be abandoned since, despite the stormy weather, an attempt made to land at Taman failed. As, according to the forecast, the weather is unlikely to improve during the next few days, I am warning Commanding Admiral, Crimea that several days' interruption of transportation must be expected at Kerch.

All minesweeping activity will also have to be abandoned because of the weather.

Thus, the opening of Kerch Strait will have to be postponed again.

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9 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance has identified heavy concentrations of merchant ships and coastal vessels in the east coast harbors. Apparently impossible to put to sea owing to the weather. No traffic between Gudant and Poti, only some small vessels in the coastal area between Sochi and Gagri.

The D/F Station likewise intercepted only minor traffic off the northern and southern east coast. Radio traffic very slight, no activity of large naval vessels or submarines intercepted.

Own Situation:

U 24 put in to Constantza from her first operation. At 0105 on 1 November she fired 2 torpedoes at a Russian submarine, type Yakobienetz, in grid square CL 9691, but missed owing to long range. On 5 November U 24 sighted an enemy submarine in grid square CL 9693 diving because of a plane but there was no opportunity to fire. At 1903 on the evening of the same day, in grid square CL 9695, the boat attacked a tanker of 2,100 G.R.T. At a firing range of 300 meters the torpedo passed under the target. At about 2130 in grid square CL 9694 the boat made a second attack on the same target. The torpedo hit but, owing to pistol failure, did not explode. At about 0030 on 6 November a third attack on the same tanker missed. U 24 has now expended all her torpedoes and is returning to base according to orders. Her report has shown that enemy air reconnaissance of the southern Black Sea is continuous and on many occasions she was forced for this reason to submerge. Traffic was lively in Turkish territorial waters.

Persistent bad weather has prevented the resumption of convoy and supply traffic and mine-sweeping activity. The northeasterly gale has damaged the anti-torpedo net off Ivan Baba harbor and driven some of it into the minefield gap. Net Defense Group, Black Sea has been ordered to clear the gap immediately. It will not keep in the 1st E-Boat Flotilla since, if necessary, the net can be sunk in a very short time by shooting up the net buoys.

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10 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Owing to the weather only slight movements of enemy merchant shipping were identified by the Air Force off the central east coast. Compared with previous days no significant changes have occurred in the occupation of the harbor.

According to radio intercept reports, only slight activity of patrol boats and small vessels in the coastal areas; 2 destroyers, 1 submarine escort, 1 submarine located in the southeastern Black Sea and 2 submarines in the central and western area. Radio traffic disclosed no further enemy activity.

Own Situation:

A sudden spell of cold weather in the northeastern Sea of Azov has already caused a light formation of ice in the Gulf of Taganrog and will necessitate the transfer of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla from Berdyansk to ice-free harbors. Operations Staff Scheurlen proposed that the flotilla be transferred in groups (5 naval ferry barges per group) to Theodosia, Ivan Baba and Yalta and the staff of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla be sent to Yalta. One group should be dispatched to Varna for an overhaul. Should short-term operations no longer be needed, Operations Staff Scheurlen thought it feasible to transfer the whole flotilla to Constantza or Varna in order to carry out the training program.

My attitude to this proposal will be found in the following teletype:

- "1. After transportation of 50th Infantry Division and German Labor Service, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla will transfer to an ice-free Crimean harbor.
2. The above proposal that the groups should be dispersed among the harbors of Theodosia, Ivan Baba and Yalta is both impossible and impracticable because:
  - a. Ivan Baba has only a few protected berths already occupied by E-boats.
  - b. Yalta is very confined and possesses no anti-aircraft.

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- c. None of the harbors have repair facilities.
  - d. Dispersal of the flotilla is a hindrance to unified training.
  - e. Since training is only possible outside the harbor it becomes largely dependent on the weather.
3. They should therefore transfer to Sevastopol because of the following advantages:
- a. The dockyard now under construction can undertake regular repairs.
  - b. In Sevastopol Bay training can even be carried out in bad weather.
  - c. Flotilla remains intact.
4. Transfer to Constantza or Varna unnecessary since, by contrast with Sevastopol, they offer few advantages and the following disadvantages:
- a. Training dependent on weather since only possible at sea.
  - b. Long approach route for relatively short operations.
5. Further to 3a): Repair facilities in Sevastopol are being examined by Dockyard Control Staff.
6. Immediate request for shore billets to be forwarded to Sevastopol on behalf of Staff Scheurlen and Staff of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla. Should such accommodation prove difficult in Sevastopol, Bakhchisarai is recommended.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4832 A I."

As a result of the above considerations my instructions are to examine the possible accommodation available for the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla in Sevastopol, leaving open for the present the question as to whether Staff Scheurlen should also move to Sevastopol.

U 9's departure has had to be postponed to 11 November owing to the heavy mist.

Persistent bad weather again prevented all naval activity.



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11 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance prevented by bad weather. Nevertheless increasing convoy traffic identified off the central east coast as far as Sukhum. Eastern sea area not surveyed.

The D/F Station intercepted several patrol boats and small vessels in coastal waters between the central and southern east coast, also 1 submarine escort and 1 submarine. Two submarines identified between the central and western Black Sea. No large naval vessels were located.

Own Situation:

Experience gained during the operations of coastal minelayers either escorting convoys or on anti-submarine operations has shown their engine to be unsuitable for such tasks. Periods of over 5 hours at sea repeatedly result in engine trouble. They are very dependent on weather conditions and therefore cannot be relied on for escorting convoys or submarines. At present, moreover, and during the coming months there will be only limited fuel available for boats equipped with aircraft engines. I therefore submitted the following proposal to Group South:

- "1. Experience has shown that only limited use can be made of coastal minelayers for escort duties and anti-submarine operations over a long period.
2. Weather conditions during the winter months will still further restrict their employment. This implies that the boats and crews will be idle for some time.
3. I propose that coastal minelayers be laid up in the dockyard at Nikolaiev until the end of March and the crews made use of to put other vessels, e.g. armed fishing vessels, into commission.
4. Naval Training Command is of the same opinion.
5. Request decision.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4861 A I."

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Group South reported that the EMC mines required to complete the flanking minefields could not be supplied and that UMB mines were being shipped from Germany as a substitute (some 400 as a first instalment). This entails the alteration of previous plans. I therefore proposed to Group South that:

"1. The following order of priority should be observed when laying the available stock of mines:

- a. S 43: 100 UMB, 100 EMC/KA,
- b. S 53: 140 UMB, 10 UMA,
- c. S 54: 140 UMB, 10 UMA,
- d. S 45: 200 EMC/KA,
- e. S 46: 100 EMC/KA, 100 EMC/ANZ,
- f. S 41: 270 UMA,
- g. S 40: 270 UMA.

Depth-setting: S 43, S 45, S 46 minus 3 meters, S 53, S 54 minus 12 meters, automatic destruction at 10 meters, S 40, S 41 1st row minus 3 meters, 2nd row minus 12 meters.

2. The following UMB mines shipped from Germany are to be laid:

- a. S 55: 270 UMB,
- b. S 56: 270 UMB.

Depth-setting minus 12 meters, automatic destruction at 10 meters. Planned situation of the minefield to be altered accordingly since minimum depth of water required 19 meters.

3. New order of priority to be established for S 55 and possibly S 56 according to time at which UMB mines arrive.

4. The flanking minefields east of Cape St. George adjoining S 46 to be extended by 1 or 2 sections according to the quantity of new UMB mines which come in. Naval Training Command is working on this proposal.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4860 A I."

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Situation of individual sections as follows:

1. S 43 from  $45^{\circ} 22.3' N, 30^{\circ} 05.4' E$  to  
 $45^{\circ} 22' N, 29^{\circ} 57.5' E$ .
2. S 53 (angle-patterned minefield)  
from  $45^{\circ} 17.9' N, 29^{\circ} 51' E$  via  
 $45^{\circ} 17.5' N, 29^{\circ} 48' E$  to  
 $45^{\circ} 15.5' N, 29^{\circ} 42.5' E$ .
3. S 54 (angle-patterned minefield)  
from  $44^{\circ} 58.8' N, 29^{\circ} 45.6' E$  via  
 $44^{\circ} 58.2' N, 29^{\circ} 42.9' E$  to  
 $45^{\circ} 56.4' N, 29^{\circ} 43.9' E$ .
4. S 45 from  $45^{\circ} 2.5' N, 30^{\circ} 14.5' E$  to  
 $45^{\circ} 0.3' N, 30^{\circ} 10.4' E$ .
5. S 46 from  $45^{\circ} 0.9' N, 30^{\circ} 11.8' E$  to  
 $44^{\circ} 56.6' N, 30^{\circ} 6.7' E$ .
6. S 41 from  $45^{\circ} 35' N, 30^{\circ} 25.9' E$  to  
 $45^{\circ} 31.8' N, 30^{\circ} 17.5' E$ .
7. S 40 from  $45^{\circ} 43.4' N, 30^{\circ} 36.2' E$  to  
 $45^{\circ} 39.9' N, 30^{\circ} 26.9' E$ .
8. S 55 (angle-patterned minefield)  
from  $46^{\circ} 35.3' N, 30^{\circ} 56.9' E$  via  
 $46^{\circ} 30.7' N, 30^{\circ} 54.8' E$  to  
 $46^{\circ} 29.3' N, 30^{\circ} 51' E$ .
9. S 56 (angle-patterned minefield)  
from  $46^{\circ} 27.3' N, 30^{\circ} 51.5' E$  via  
 $46^{\circ} 26.4' N, 30^{\circ} 47.5' E$  to  
 $46^{\circ} 23.8' N, 30^{\circ} 49.1' E$ .

0700 U 9 left Constantza today on long-range operations.

Transport and minesweeping activity postponed until further notice owing to the weather.



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12 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance identified lively traffic of small vessels off Sochi. No other reconnaissance results owing to the weather.

According to the radio intercept report no enemy activity off the northern east coast, off the central part 1 destroyer and some small craft, off the southern part 1 destroyer, 1 minelayer, 1 submarine escort, 2 submarines and some patrol vessels identified. Between the central and western Black Sea the D/F Station intercepted 3 submarines, 1 of which was some 90 miles east of Constantza.

Own Situation:

With improved weather conditions today the transportation of the 50th Infantry Division from Kerch to Taman and of supplies for Army H.Q. 17 from Kerch to Tomriuk was resumed. Traffic from Mariupol to Yeisk was also resumed.

In view of the prevailing northeasterly winds, force 5-6, and the length of the approach route, I will again have to abandon operations of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla southeast of Tuapse today. On the other hand a patrol line in the lee of the Crimean coast might be occupied. The Italian E-boat Flotilla has received the following instructions with reference to this:

- "1. At approximately 1700 EET on 12 November Italian E-boats will put out from Yalta in a reconnaissance line for anti-submarine operations between Yalta and Cape Kikeneiz. Boats to return to Yalta on the morning of 13 November.
2. At approximately 1700 EET on 13 November Italian midget submarines CB 2 and CB 4 will put out from Yalta on the same task between Sarich Point and Cape Kikeneiz. They will put in to Sevastopol on the morning of the 14th.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4869 A I."

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea reported that the Command of the Royal Rumanian Navy had issued orders that the minelayer "Murgescu" should

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immediately proceed to Galatz for a dockyard period. This would make it impossible to extend the flanking minefield on the west coast of the Black Sea - an urgent necessity. I have therefore dispatched the following teletype to the Naval Liaison Staff at Bucharest with orders to persuade the Rumanian Navy to postpone the dockyard period:

"During coming period cannot do without "Murgescu" to carry out most urgent minelaying operations. Their postponement would endanger the important supply traffic running between Constantza and Nikolaiev as well as the naval vessels operating along that coast. Request immediate clarification of the matter with the Rumanian Navy and postponement of overhaul of the "Murgescu" until completion of minelaying operations.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4864 A I."

Group South have expressed complete agreement with my proposal to lay further flanking minefields and deep minefields on the coastal route from Sulina - Odessa (see War Diary 11 November).

A telephone call from Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A informed me that the Army offices are under the impression that the transportation of the 50th Infantry Division was delayed owing to lack of transports. This does not correspond with the facts. The following teletype has been sent to Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A in order to clarify matters:

- "1. Instructions regarding transport situation Kerch-Taman were issued in Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4735 and 4757 A I.
2. Until bad weather set in at Kerch those sections of the 50th Infantry Division and the materials that had arrived by rail were continuously transported without delay. Some days the naval ferry barges were not all employed since there was not sufficient cargo for them. Reports to the contrary are a misrepresentation.
3. After 8 November traffic was stopped owing to the weather. Resumed this morning.
4. At present 13 naval ferry barges are in readiness, 10 for the 50th Infantry Division, 3 for current Kerch-Temriuk supplies. Orders for the supply of another 4 naval ferry barges were issued on 7 November. They have been lying in Berdyansk ready to put out since 8 November. Unable to do so until now owing to a northeasterly gale. Departure probably this afternoon.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4865 A I."



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13 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance intercepted lively activity of small craft and patrol vessels off the entire Caucasus coast. Off Sochi 2 small convoys. Long-range reconnaissance reported 1 Turkish merchant ship, course west, in territorial waters west of Trabzon. Visual observation and evaluation of photographic reconnaissance revealed a concentration of merchant shipping in the harbors.

The Main Naval D/F Station identified increasing activity of light surface forces and submarines. Off the northeast coast 2 minelayers and 5 minesweepers intercepted. East coast 5 destroyers and several small vessels, also 1 submarine escort and 7 submarines, between the central and the western Black Sea 4 submarines and, in the afternoon, cruiser D located, probably in the southeastern Black Sea.

Own Situation:

The Italian E-boats left the reconnaissance line south of Cape Kikeneiz for Yalta at about 0700. No enemy forces sighted.

Naval Shore Commander, Crimea reported by telephone that at about 0930 off Alushta, planes attacked the convoy comprising the tanker "Svoyswome", naval ferry barge F 125 and 2 motor minesweepers which had put out from Yalta. The fighters sent up at my request by Air Force Staff, Crimea had to land again shortly after their take-off owing to the weather. The convoy was attacked 5 times by a twin-engined Russian plane at an altitude of 50-100 meters. At a range of 1,500 to 2,000 meters it fired rockets about 10 cm. in diameter, 60-70 cm. long. No hits were scored on our vessels. The convoy put in to Theodosia at about 1700. Our defenses forced the enemy plane to turn away promptly each time. No hits observed on plane.

Group South agreed with my proposal to lay up the coastal minelayers during the winter months (see War Diary 11 November). Commander, Danube Flotilla has received the following orders:

- "1. Coastal Minelaying Group Danube Flotilla will transfer to Nikolaiev and lay the boats out of commission during the winter months.

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2. Boats will be handed over to Naval Station, Nikolaiev. Inventory will be handed to ships' stores.
3. It is planned to use the crews for the commissioning of other ships. Commander, Danube Flotilla will report in good time proposed date for transfer to dockyard. Further orders for the crews that have been released will follow.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4879 A I."

The FZ-group has finished minesweeping operations in Sevastopol harbor and in Strelitzkaya Bay. The harbor and bay have been swept inside the 10 meter line; also the harbor approach from the 40 meter line on both sides of the Inkerman bearing to a breadth of 75 meters on each side. The entire inner harbor up to the 10 meter line is now open to shipping.

Transportation Kerch-Taman proceeded according to plan. The naval ferry barges of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla (Operations Staff Scheurlen), ordered to reinforce transport resources, have put in to Kerch from Berdyansk today.

Adverse weather during the last few days has prevented minesweeping operations in Kerch Strait from making any progress. It is imperative that the coastal route be opened as soon as possible in order to enable those steamers, etc. that have to be transferred from the Sea of Azov when the ice sets in to pass through Kerch Strait. Commander, FZ-Group has received the following orders:

"Remote minesweeping to be started as soon as weather permits streaming of sweeps. Work is extremely urgent so that heavy damage and loss of buoys will have to be risked.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 17349 A I."

The Führer has awarded Lieutenant (j.g.) Werner Thniges, formerly commander of E-boat S 102, the oak leaves to the Knights' Cross of the Iron Cross for his successes in the Black Sea.

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14 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Slight activity of the enemy merchant fleet. Apart from 3 merchant ships and 2 coastal vessels between Sukhum and Ochemchiri, the Air Force identified no enemy shipping in the eastern Black Sea. The D/F Station also reported activity of light naval forces and submarines. Apart from light vessels, no activity off the northern east coast. According to radio traffic, cruiser A and 2 destroyers were in coastal waters between the central and the southern east coast during the morning and cruisers probably off the central east coast in the evening. Several patrol vessels and M.T.B.s were located; also 7 submarines, 4 of them probably off the east coast, 3 between the central and the western Black Sea, 2 of which were located at night, 1 in the Constantza and 1 in the Bosphorus area.

Own Situation:

1630 A submarine attacked the tanker "Ossag" in convoy with the destroyers "Regina Maria" and "Regele Ferdinand" proceeding from the Bosphorus to Constantza, 12 miles northnorthwest of the Bosphorus. The tanker "Ossag" was hit above the water line - the torpedo was a surface runner and the sea caused it to jump out of the water immediately in front of the target. The tanker is drifting with her engines out of action in Turkish territorial waters. Escorting destroyers returning to Constantza. Group South has requested the help of tugs at Istanbul, Naval Training Command has also dispatched salvage tugs from Varna.

2110 A submarine attacked 2 motor minesweepers south of Sulina; torpedo failed.

These two attacks are further evidence of Russia's systematic use of submarines against our supply traffic in the western Black Sea. The attack on the "Ossag" suggests that the enemy was informed by his agents that the ship had left the Bosphorus.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported cruiser A and, on 13 November, cruiser D at sea in addition to destroyers, whereas during the past weeks large enemy vessels have not left their bases at Poti and Batum.

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This new situation has led me for the time being to abandon my plan to transfer U 9 to an operational area farther north as ordered and use her against supply traffic between Sukhum and Sochi. 30th U-Boat Flotilla has been advised accordingly as follows:

- "1. Today's situation report from the Main Naval D/F Station revealed increasing enemy activity in the eastern Black Sea. Apart from small vessels 5 destroyers and cruiser D at sea.
2. In view of the new situation U 9 is for the present not to be transferred to the operational area.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4884 A I."

The Italian midget submarines CB 2 and CB 4 this morning returned from the patrol line off the south coast of the Crimea without incident and put in to Yalta.

The Kerch-Temriuk supply traffic and transportation of the 50th Infantry Division proceeding according to plan.

F 329, who had orders to bring winter clothing for Naval Shore Commanders, Caucasus and Xerxes from Genichesk to Temriuk, ran aground in the approach to Genichesk harbor. Attempts to free her have so far failed.

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15 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance identified only very slight activity of coastal vessels off the central east coast and some gunboats in the eastern Black Sea.

The radio intercept report likewise disclosed decreasing activity of light naval forces. Two destroyers were between the central and southern east coast and according to radio traffic 1 cruiser was in an unidentified position, presumably in the southeastern Black Sea. One submarine escort, 2 submarines intercepted off the east coast, 2 minelayers, some minesweepers and some patrol vessels in the coastal area.

Own Situation:

The tanker "Ossag" was this morning towed in to Istanbul by a Turkish tug.

As a result of the recent cold spell the ice in the northeastern Sea of Azov has rapidly increased. Fast ice has already formed in Taganrog Bay and off Mariupol. The need to transfer the warships and supply steamers in the Sea of Azov is therefore now acute. I am instructing Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine to make all the necessary preparations for their transfer to ice-free Crimean harbors within the next few days.

Continuous bad weather has so far prevented the transportation by naval ferry barges of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla of some 1,500 men of the German Labor Service from Mariupol to Yeisk. Now that the freeze has begun they will have to be transported from Mariupol by motor vehicles. Conveyance of the Woschnik Group from Mariupol to Yeisk will also have to be broken off for the same reason.

Weather conditions today compel the postponement of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla's operations off the Caucasus coast.

Despite the weather the Kerch-Taman ferry traffic was maintained. Various difficulties resulted in reduced quantity of goods shipped.

(Signed) Heye.

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Naval Group Command South

Local H.Q. 14 January, 1943

Serial No. Op. 693/42 Gkdos.

Most Secret

Comments on the War Diary of Admiral, Black Sea

1-15 November

Re page 117, 3 November:

Agree with Admiral, Black Sea's survey of the situation with reference to effect of first appearance of German U-boats off Poti and Batum.

If operations have so far proved unsuccessful, apart from the inexperience of commanders in the new operational area, it may chiefly be attributed to the withdrawal of the Russian Fleet and to the opportunities open to enemy supply traffic directly off the coast.

Furthermore, E-boat operations have compelled the enemy to shift his nightly supply traffic to the daytime. Unfortunately it has so far proved impossible to release any Air Force planes to attack these convoys. Also concentrated attacks on the assembly points and main bases of the Russian Navy and Merchant Fleet might possibly have forced the ships to leave the ports at night and so have offered prospects of success to the light surface forces and U-boats.

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WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

16 - 30 NOVEMBER, 1942

PG/31521

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16 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance identified only slight activity of enemy merchant shipping. Reconnaissance planes intercepted 1 submarine approximately 15 miles west of Sukhum.

The D/F Station reported increasing activity of light naval forces. Northern east coast 1 minelayer, 4 minesweepers, several patrol vessels and M.T.B.s, central east coast 1 destroyer and 1 patrol vessel, at noon south of Tuapse 2 destroyers, 1 submarine escort and in the evening the large destroyer "Charkov". Two further destroyers and cruiser A off Poti. In addition 3 submarines intercepted at sea, 2 of them probably off the east coast, 1 in the central Black Sea.

Own Situation:

As a result of today's consultation with Admiral Scheurlen regarding the future use of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla and its transfer from the Sea of Azov, I would supplement my views, previously expressed in War Diary 10 November, with the following proposal to Group South:

"Sea of Azov already icing over. It is impossible to say how long operations will be delayed. Meantime the operations staff sit idle and a quick decision is imperative. Therefore propose that:

1. Operations staff should be returned to former commands but remain ready at short notice if needed. Some of them should be used to set up an urgently needed flotilla staff for 1st Landing Craft Flotilla. Conditions of discipline, administration, welfare and medical inspection, etc. are so neglected in this flotilla owing to lack of staff that the present state of affairs cannot continue.
2. Operations staff and 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla should be relieved of special duties as soon as possible. Then the flotilla would be assigned to transport of supplies in order to relieve the barges of 1st Landing Craft Flotilla which are in complete disrepair, while one group of 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla could be thoroughly overhauled during the same period.

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3. 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla should be transferred to Kerch and later to Sevastopol; 1st Landing Craft Flotilla to Varna until the spring.
4. 1st Landing Craft Flotilla should be subordinate to 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla in all basic matters and the latter to Admiral, Black Sea. This should ensure the uniform execution of all tactical dockyard and ship-building problems.
5. Since opportunities to transfer grow less frequent every day, request rapid decision.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4907."

Admiral Scheurlen was instructed in view of the progressive icing-up of the Sea of Azov to accelerate the transfer from Mariupol or Berdyansk via Kerch to Sevastopol of those naval ferry barges not in use as transports between Kerch and Taman. They should however be utilized for any transport duties which actually are in progress, such as the conveyance of winter clothing for Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus from Genichesk to Tomriuk.

The Italian E-Boat Flotilla was directed to transfer those E-boats particularly unsuited to ice conditions from Mariupol to Kerch immediately. In this connection Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine has been ordered to provide all possible help towards the transfer of these boats:

"Four Italian E-boats at present in Mariupol will be transferred to Kerch as quickly as possible. Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine will help them to prepare for their transfer and, if necessary, provide towing facilities should they be unable to proceed because of engine trouble. Steamers or naval ferry barges leaving Mariupol for Kerch will be employed for this purpose.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4904 A I."

After consultations between Naval Liaison Officer to Army High Command, Quartermaster General South and Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine the supply traffic from Mariupol to Yeisk has been stopped because of increasing difficulties caused by the ice. The transfer of supply steamers and ships in tow from the Sea of Azov to Kerch will be directed by Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine and will take place during the next few days. The ships' further progress from Kerch will depend on the conclusion of minesweeping operations and the opening of the route through Kerch Strait.



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In order that they may escape the danger of air attack in Kerch it is planned to transfer them as quickly as possible.

Minesweeping operations in Kerch Strait continued today despite the unfavorable weather. I expect the work to be completed on 19 November unless the weather again forces it to be broken off.

Transports from Kerch to Taman or Temriuk today proceeded according to plan.

I have ordered 2 Italian midget submarines to occupy a reconnaissance line off the south Crimean coast between Cape Aitodor and Sarich Point during the coming night. The Italian E-Boat Flotilla has received the following orders:

- "1. Italian midget submarines CB 2 and CB 4 will leave Yalta at about 1100 EET today and put in to Sevastopol on the morning of 17 November.
2. The boats will be stationed from 1300 EET today until dawn on 17 November in a patrol line between Cape Aitodor and Sarich Point.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4900 A I."

17 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Rain squalls and bad weather prevented air reconnaissance over the entire Caucasus coast. There were no reconnaissance results apart from 2 merchant ships sighted within Turkish territorial waters.

At 2100 the D/F Station reported cruiser A at sea in the southeastern Black Sea and 5 destroyers in the coastal area southwest of Batum. The situation report of the Main Naval D/F Station reported continued activity of light naval forces between the northern and central east coast, and the large destroyer "Charkov" in the Poti-Batum area in the evening. The D/F Station also intercepted 5 submarines.

Own Situation:

I discussed the question of the employment and transfer of Italian forces during the winter months with Captain Mimbelli.

1. Weather conditions in the Black Sea offer no possibility of operations by Italian midget submarines during the coming months. This period would therefore be a good opportunity for repair and refit. Constantza is best suited to such work since both the Italian ground organization and the dockyard are there. It is therefore planned to transfer the Italian midget submarines now at Sevastopol to Constantza and while they are under repair to send the crews to Italy on leave until they are put into commission again.
2. Captain Mimbelli stated that the engines of the E-boats now in Mariupol could not be repaired and overhauled there during the winter months, so that it is unlikely that they will be fit for transport tasks to Makhach Kala by the spring of 1943. It has therefore been decided to transport the E-boats by rail to Italy for overhaul, and to return them to the southeastern theater of operations in the spring of 1943.
3. There are limited tasks of a defensive nature available for Italian E-boats in the inshore waters of the Crimea during the coming months. For this purpose half the boats of the Italian E-Boat Flotilla are to be ready for operations

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in Yalta. The remaining boats are to lie in reserve in Sevastopol and, as far as possible, to send their crews on leave to Italy.

With regard to the conference I reported as follows to Group South:

"In consultation with Captain Mimbelli it was decided:

1. To transfer the Italian midget submarines immediately to Constantza for repairs during the winter months. Crews to be sent on leave to Italy. Boats to be re-commissioned about end of March.
2. All E-boats and special E-boats to go by train from Mariupol or Yalta back to Italy. To return in the spring of 1943.
3. All Italian E-boats to transfer to Crimean harbors, 4 of them to be ready for operations in Yalta, 4 to be kept in reserve in Sevastopol, the latter to send their crews on leave to Italy.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4919 A I."

According to Naval Liaison Staff, Rumania the Rumanian Navy has consented to postpone the overhaul of the minelayer "Murgescu" until the proposed minelaying operations have been carried out (see War Diary 12 November).

At 1500 the Italian midget submarines CB 2 and CB 4 put in to Sevastopol from the reconnaissance line assigned to them south of Sarich Point. Nothing to report.

Supplies for Army H.Q. 17 and transportation of the 50th Infantry Division continued to arrive today. There were minesweeping operations in Kerch Strait.



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18 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Only slight activity of small vessels off the northern east coast. In the southern and central part of the Caucasus coast several merchant ships close to the coast and some ships in tow in the Ochetchiri area.

According to radio intercept reports, only slight traffic by day between the northern and central east coast. Apart from 1 destroyer and 2 submarines only a few small vessels intercepted. Submarines were probably between the central and western Black Sea. Radio traffic revealed cruisers A, D and E, the large destroyer "Charkov" and 4 destroyers, probably berthed in the bases Poti-Batum.

Own Situation:

Vice-Admiral Witthoeft-Finden arrived in Simferopol by plane from Constantza at approximately 1200 to take over duties as Deputy Commanding Admiral for Admiral, Black Sea.

At the conference with Group Wetzel I was requested to prevent the landing of enemy troops in Novorossisk harbor by mining the moles. I am preparing the number of FMC mines necessary for this task and in the following radio message am, moreover, urging Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus to examine the possibility of fixing depth charges to the quays:

- "1. 17 FMC mines have been issued to mine the moles at Novorossisk against enemy landings. Report where to be delivered. To be laid according to plan. Depth-setting minus 1 meter. Minimum depth of water required 5 meters. Mines to be marked.
2. Propose fixing depth charges, type F, to quay sides. Activation by a demolition charge controlled from a central point. Depth charges must be detonated when enemy vessels come alongside to land. Investigate possibility of execution in the various places, state views and requirements.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4929 A I."

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported the statement of Russian prisoners that coastal

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vessels with a considerable quantity of supplies proceed from Batum to Tuapse and Ghelenjik. The vessels have either an escort of destroyers or M.T.B.s and are said only to proceed by night. Although this last fact is contrary to previous experience I am nevertheless inclined to employ the 1st E-Boat Flotilla in operations against this supply traffic during the coming night. I am further convinced by a report from Air Force Staff, Crimea which stated that according to a confirmed intelligence report of 15 November 4 troop transports, 3 torpedoboats, 1 cruiser, 2 minelayers and 4 submarines put out in the direction of Novorossisk. These two reports are at least evidence of a regular supply traffic by sea in the direction of Tuapse, even if they do not coincide in every detail. The 1st E-Boat Flotilla has received the following operational orders:

- "1. Situation: Prisoners' statements report considerable supply traffic by night between Batum and Tuapse. Escort of destroyers and M.T.B.s.
2. Order: Given good weather, the 1st E-Boat Flotilla will operate during the night of 18/19 November against enemy traffic between Tuapse and Sochi. Four boats will put out on 18 November at 1300 from Ivan Baba and put in again early on 19 November. Should operations have to be broken off because of the weather, a radiogram will be sent.

Admiral, Black Sea (Gkdos. 4921 A I.)"

Minesweeping operations continued today between Pavlovski and Cape Takil. No mines swept.

Transportation Kerch-Taman and Kerch-Temriuk proceeded according to plan.

Two Italian E-boats and an FZ-group put out from Mariupol for Kerch.

At 1330 the steamer "Varna" put in to Sevastopol from Constantza with an escort of 3 Rumanian destroyers.

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19 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance detected only slight activity of M.T.B.s and some small vessels off the northern east coast. Long-range reconnaissance planes reported 3 large merchant ships in Turkish territorial waters, 1 on a westerly course.

The D/F Station likewise intercepted only slight activity of light surface forces and submarines. No shipping off the central east coast apart from small vessels. Radio traffic intercepted 5 destroyers in unidentified positions, probably in the southeastern Black Sea. Six submarines were identified in all, 2 probably off the east coast, 4 between the central and western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

I have today taken over the duties of the Commanding Admiral, who is on sick leave.  
Signed. Wittthoeft-Eden.

2000- Last night the 1st E-Boat Flotilla was stationed  
0100 in lurking position northwest of Sochi. Except  
for a gunboat which did not discover our E-boats,  
no shipping was encountered. Our boats observed  
lively air activity along the Caucasus coast in  
both directions. S 28 apparently collided with  
driftwood and was damaged. The boat is out of  
0700 action and will have to go to Constantza for  
repair. The flotilla put in to Ivan Baba.

Transportation and supply traffic between Kerch-Taman and Kerch-Temriuk proceeded according to plan.

Of the boats to be transferred from the Sea of Azov the 1st Group consisting of 4 FZ-boats and 2 Italian E-boats arrived in Kerch today.

According to Naval Training Command, after perusing the war diaries of the forces involved, the following picture emerges of the torpedoing of the tanker "Ossag" off the Bosphorus (see War Diary 14 November). "Ossag" arrived at rendezvous point 2½ hours late. During that time destroyer escorts were near the rendezvous point and attracted the notice of the enemy submarine, thus favoring her attack. Moreover the close air cover provided in the evening did not gain contact owing to the delay.

Group South has been requested to direct that ships proceeding from the Bosphorus into the Black Sea should arrive punctually at the rendezvous to meet escorts. The submarine attacked from astern firing 2 torpedoes. Torpedoes had a shallow setting and broke the surface several times. One torpedo hit the "Ossag" on the water line on the starboard side aft.

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The transfer of the Italian E-boats to Italy proposed in consultation with Captain Mimbelli (see Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4919 A I, War Diary 17 November) has not been sanctioned by Group South, whose orders are that the boats are to remain in Mariupol ready to be sent by rail to the Caspian Sea.

According to a message from Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A, Army High Command has released the remaining naval ferry barges of Operations Staff Scheurlen for supply operations. Army Group A intends to employ them between Kerch and Temriuk.

Nothing is known here regarding the alteration of an operational order issued to the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla in compliance with a Führer Directive. The Naval Liaison Officer's message is in no way binding for me, particularly since Army High Command has no authority to direct Admiral, Black Sea. Since, moreover, the commitment of further naval ferry barges is at present unnecessary I replied to Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A, copy to Group South, as follows:

"To Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A Gkdos. 1100:

1. Order for the commitment of the remaining naval ferry barges of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla for the shipment of supplies not yet received.
2. Operations of further naval ferry barges between Kerch-Temriuk unnecessary since according to Commanding Admiral, Crimea it is impossible to remove greater quantities from Temriuk at the moment. Hence some of the Temriuk barges today operated between Kerch-Taman.
3. Apart from a few remnants which will follow on, the task of transporting the 50th Infantry Division will, given favorable weather, have been completed in 5-6 days' time. The naval ferry barges then released will be available for supplies if required.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4955 A I."

Commander, FZ-boats reported that minesweeping operations on the coastal route in Kerch Strait were concluded this evening.

I have advised Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea and Commander, Crimean Coast of this and at the same time directed that those transports proceeding to Kerch from the Sea of Azov should be escorted to Sevastopol as soon as possible owing to the danger of air attack in Kerch. Commander, FZ-Group has received orders to provide a ground mine escort for steamers proceeding from Pavlovski to Cape Takil.

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20 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance over the Caucasus coast was prevented by the weather. No traffic was observed off the northern east coast. South of Gagri 1 convoy with a steamer of 1,300 tons, probably 1 destroyer and 2 patrol vessels on southeasterly course. Two freighters, several M.T.B.s and some coastal vessels off Tuapse. Long-range reconnaissance again reported 3 merchant ships in Turkish territorial waters, 2 approximately 20 miles northwest of Trabzon.

According to a radio intercept report, only slight activity of light naval forces and submarines. Apart from some small vessels nothing intercepted off the northern and central east coast. In the evening, between the southern and central east coast, 2 destroyers, 1 submarine escort and 1 unknown vessel located. Seven submarines intercepted at sea, 3 probably southern Black Sea to east coast, 4 central to western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

Because ice has begun to cause difficulties in the Sea of Azov the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla have been obliged to transfer their naval ferry barges lying at Bordyansk to Crimean harbors. Since, due to the presence there of naval ferry barges employed in traffic between Kerch and Taman, too much shipping is assembled in Kerch, Operations Staff Scheurlen has been ordered to transfer the barges to Sevastopol, weather permitting, at the same time using them as escorts as follows:

- "1. 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla will transfer those naval ferry barges not employed in Kerch-Taman traffic from Kerch to Sevastopol, weather permitting.
2. Ferry barges thus transferred will be used as escorts for steamers proceeding from Kerch to Sevastopol.
3. Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla will make further arrangements directly with Commander, Crimean Coast.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4962 A I."

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The "Kassa", "Koszvar" and motor minesweeper R 51, with 2 Italian E-boats in tow, left Mariupol early this morning for Kerch. It is planned to provide them with ground mine escort through Kerch Strait, then for the motor minesweeper group or the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla to escort them to Sevastopol.

Shipments from Kerch to Taman were interrupted this afternoon by bad weather.

Bombs were dropped on Taman by enemy planes last night but no damage was done.

Two M.T.B.s shelled Anapa last night. The attack was unsuccessful and the defensive fire of our guns ineffective.



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21 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air Force Staff, Crimea reported that air reconnaissance on 21 November was severely hampered by the weather, south of grid square 7570 poor visibility and icing made it quite impossible. Photographic reconnaissance of Poti and Batum on 21 November impossible owing to the weather.

The Main Naval D/F Station reported slight activity of light naval forces and submarines. Nothing identified off the northern east coast, in the central and southern parts on the other hand 3 destroyers, 2 of them west of Sukhum in the evening. Several patrol vessels and small craft in the coastal area. Two submarines intercepted at sea, 1 of them probably off the east coast and 1 between the western and central Black Sea.

Own Situation:

Transport and escort duties proceeded according to plan, otherwise nothing to report.

U 24 will probably be ready for her second long-range operation on 24 November. I intend to assign the boat to the operational area off Poti and Batum; on her approach route she is to keep well in to the Turkish coast and observe the exceedingly lively shipping activity latterly reported there by air reconnaissance.

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22 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance detected lively traffic of small vessels off the entire Caucasus coast. At noon 2 destroyers at sea, 1 south of Tuapse, the second south of Gagri. Again today long-range reconnaissance detected 3 large merchant ships of 3-4,000 tons in Turkish coastal waters some 30 miles west of Ordu.

The D/F Station also reported 2 destroyers at noon coming from the southeast. One destroyer 20 miles south of Tuapse, the other 15 miles west of Gudant. In addition the D/F Station intercepted 1 minesweeper off the northeast coast, 4 destroyers between the central and southern Caucasus coast, including the 2 mentioned above south of Tuapse at noon, all heading for the south again in the evening. Eight submarines and 1 submarine escort were also located. Three submarines off the east coast, the rest between the central and western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

The concentration of shipping in Ghelenjik harbor identified by the Air Force, has latterly been continually changing. This is further evidence that, as previously observed, this harbor is being used for the disembarkation of troops and material for the most northerly part of the Caucasus front. Although, apart from a few large steamers up to 1,500 tons, there are only small vessels, I regard interference with this supply shipping as of sufficient importance to warrant operations by those boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla which are ready. I have therefore issued the following orders:

- "1. Enemy situation: air reconnaissance reports reveal continual changes in occupation of Ghelenjik; on 20 November 3 freighters of 1,000-1,500 G.R.T. in harbor and 25 boats. Assume therefore that supply transports for the Novorossisk front are being disembarked in Ghelenjik Bay. Furthermore Dzhubg is being used as a berthing place by the enemy.
2. Order:
  - a. Between 1800 and 2300 CET on 22 November 3 boats, commanded by Lieutenant (s.g.) Fimmen, of 1st E-Boat Flotilla, will take up lurking position off Cape Idokopas.

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- b. If by 2300 no target found, proceed along the coast as far as Dzhubg.
- c. Boats will break off operations so that they put in to Ivan Baba at approximately 0600 on 23 November.
- d. Boats will leave Ivan Baba for operations at 1400 today.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4997 A I."

Since air reconnaissance has latterly not detected any large warships of the Russian Fleet, and similarly D/F Station, Constantza has reported none at sea, it is fairly certain that the main body of the Russian Fleet is still lying at Poti and Batum. It would therefore be wise to transfer U 9's operational area farther north immediately off the coast so that she could operate against enemy shipping off Pitsunda Point, taking advantage of the great depths of water there where mines cannot be laid.

U 9 will be instructed via the 30th U-Boat Flotilla to take air grid squares 0470 and 0310 as her attack area.

With reference to the wintering of Italian E-boats in Mariupol as ordered by Group South, the following orders have been issued to Italian E-Boat Flotilla and Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine:

- "1. Group South has ordered that the 5 E-boats lying at Mariupol will winter there in order to ensure their transfer to the Caspian at a moment's notice.
2. Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine has been informed that they will be laid up in sheds so that engine overhauls and general maintenance may be carried out when needed. Special German personnel will, if necessary, be detailed for this so that the Italian crews may go on leave in relays.
3. Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine will report measures to be taken with regard to duties in accordance with para. 2).

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4992 A I."

The 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla is proceeding from Constantza to Yalta. This route is being used for a check-sweep through what from prisoners' statements and captured charts is assumed to be a Russian danger area west of Cape Khersonese. They swept 3 mines in 44° 31.7' N,

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33° 7' E and 2 mines in 44° 31.5' N, 33° 20.4' E, one of which exploded in the sweep. It is not intended to sweep the minefield which serves to flank our supply route.

While extending the coastal route through Kerch Strait the FZ-group swept 1 non-contact mine in 45° 12.6' N, 36° 26.6' E in the first covering run, probably an ELM mine.

The 4 Italian submarines to be taken to Constantza for the winter have today left Sevastopol.

E-boat S 28 today proceeded from Ivan Baba to Constantza to put in to dock and have the damage to her screw repaired.

Since the start of the transshipment of supplies from Mariupol (April 1942 to October 1942 inclusive) which has now had to be stopped owing to the ice, a total of 47,135 tons has been shipped - 37,278 tons of this during September and October.

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23 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Very heavy concentration of small vessels in Ghelenjik harbor, further heavy traffic of small vessels between the northern and central east coast. Air reconnaissance reported 1 destroyer, 1 freighter and 2 coastal vessels south of Tuapse. Furthermore, about 10 miles south of Gagri, 1 destroyer and 1 surfaced submarine were detected during the morning. Today again long-range reconnaissance identified two 5,000 ton merchant ships of unknown nationality off the Turkish coast. Owing to the weather the Poti and Batum area were not surveyed.

2000

The D/F Station reported 1 submarine some 40 miles northeast of Constantza. According to radio intercept report lively activity of light naval forces and submarines. The 2 destroyers reported by air reconnaissance off the central east coast were also located by the D/F Station. In the southern Black Sea 2 destroyers, 2 patrol vessels, 1 M.T.B., position unidentified, and 2 other destroyers were intercepted at sea. A total of 8 submarines were located at sea, according to radio traffic 4 of them off the east coast and 4 between the central and western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

At 1900 yesterday evening 3 boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla were stationed, in accordance with orders, in the operational area of grid square CL 6651. It was impossible to take up lurking position owing to heavy northwest swell and wind northnorthwest, force 3-4. The flotilla kept to the coast as far as grid square 6665 and was repeatedly driven off by 3 patrol boats. They met inaccurate enemy gunfire with searchlights playing from the coast. No shipping encountered. At approximately 2200 the boats left the operational area owing to the weather and put in to Ivan Baba at 0310.

Now that Don shipping is at a standstill, it is time to hand it over to the Army Waterways Commission, Division 3. Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine has received the following orders:

"Hand over Don shipping now at a standstill at once to Army Waterways Division 3. Report transfer by 30 November. Submit record here.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 17959 A I."

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Group South reported that on the afternoon of 20 November 2 surfaced Russian submarines were sighted by Turkish steamers some 20 miles east of the Bosphorus close to Cape Zilo. One explanation of the presence of Russian submarines there is to be found in the plan to transfer the tanker "Coleno" from the Bosphorus to Constantza. The "Coleno" at present lies ready to put out in Istanbul.

Kerch-Taman troop transportations, Kerch-Tomriuk supply traffic and minesweeping operations in Kerch Strait were continued according to plan.

An enemy Martin bomber made 4 approach runs at approximately 1000 today and attacked naval ferry barges Nos. 473 and 474 proceeding to Sevastopol southeast of Cape Tarkhankutzi, with rockets. At each low level attack 2 rockets were fired without obtaining hits. At the same time the plane machine-gunned the barges but no hits were scored. Our own defensive fire was not observed to achieve any results.

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24 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance identified only small merchant ships in Ghelenjik and Tuapse. Off the northern east coast no shipping movements. Off the central east coast 3 small freighters, some M.T.B.s and 1 minesweeper, at dawn about 20 miles northwest of Poti, 1 destroyer on a southerly course. Night reconnaissance prematurely broken off. Long-range reconnaissance reported 3 merchant ships of about 3,000 tons, 2 of them off Giresun (one in the roads, one course east), the third off Trabzon in the roads. The D/F Station reported no shipping off the northern Caucasus coast. Off the central east coast during the morning a formation of 2 destroyers, 2 patrol vessels, 2 M.T.B.s coming from the south. At midnight in the area south of Tuapse 3 destroyers, 1 of them west of Ochomchiri during the afternoon on a northwesterly course. In addition 8 submarines and 1 submarine escort were intercepted at sea. Probably 4 submarines between the central and western Black Sea and 4 off the east coast.

Own Situation:

1400

U 24 put out on long-range operations for the second time. Her provisional attack area will be air grid squares 1210 and 1230 unless she encounters large enemy vessels on her approach passage. She will proceed to her operational area via air grid squares 4386 and 9285 keeping well in to the Turkish coast, in order to observe and intercept the shipping off that coast and to find out the approach routes from Trabzon to Batum.

The 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla swept route Brown from point 7 to point 12 with Oropesa gear. No mines swept.

Since the 1st E-Boat Flotilla encountered no shipping during operations on the night of 23 November southeast of Ghelenjik, I have decided to risk the longer approach route and to dispatch 3 boats on operations during the coming night in the coastal area between Tuapse and Sochi. I have therefore issued the following order:

- "1. The 1st E-Boat Flotilla will put out from Ivan Baba under Lieutenant (s.g.) Fimmen at

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1300 today and from 2000 will take up a lurking position off the coast between Tuapse and Sochi, focal point near Sochi.

2. It will operate against enemy supply traffic and warships, from torpedoboats upwards.
3. In the event of unfavorable weather it will transfer to the operational area near Cape Idokopas.
4. Operation will be broken off to enable the boats to put in to Ivan Baba at about 0800 on 25 November.
5. Should the operation be broken off earlier, report by short signal.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5030 A I."

1452

The deputy Flotilla Commander reported that he had had to turn back in grid square 6439 owing to heavy southwesterly swell. At approximately 1700 the boats returned to the base.

Air Force Staff, Crimea has enquired whether the minesweeping Ju stationed in the Sea of Azov will be further needed there.

I consider it necessary to retain the plane in Mariupol until all the supply steamers have been transferred from the Sea of Azov to the Black Sea, and have replied to Air Force Staff, Crimea as follows:

"Reference to radiogram Air Force Staff, Crimea Ia 24 November, para. 3):

As a result of increasing difficulties due to ice, supply steamers and other vessels are at present being withdrawn from the Sea of Azov. The last steamers will probably leave Mariupol on 29 November. Request that minesweeping Ju be left at Mariupol until then so that in the event of fresh enemy minelaying operations minesweeping resources may be immediately available. Otherwise transfer of valuable shipping before the complete icing-up of the Sea of Azov cannot be guaranteed. Request confirmation.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5029 A I."

Air Force Staff, Crimea confirmed that the request would be granted.

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25 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

No reconnaissance results owing to the weather. According to radio intercept report only slight activity of enemy light naval forces. The formation reported yesterday was in the Tuapse area at dawn, and at about 0900 in the Sochi-Cape Adler area, heading south. The large destroyer "Charkov" and 2 destroyers were off the southern east coast this morning, they presumably put in to base before noon. Three submarines detected at sea, 1 of them between the central and western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

0200-  
0220

An enemy gunboat shelled the Taman coast in order to cover a rowing boat which was fetching agents from the coast.

1150

Three enemy planes dropped aerial torpedoes on Theodosia. Two torpedoes were dropped outside the harbor and 1 inside. The former exploded on the moles, the latter on the quay wall without causing appreciable damage. Since at the time of the attack, apart from one naval ferry barge, there were no large warships in the harbor, the object of the attack is not clear. It was possibly intended to damage the mole which is in process of large-scale rebuilding by the Todt Organization and now approaching completion. The attack was conducted at low level from the sea, so that the enemy planes were only sighted very late and a defense put up only after the attack was over.

During the dockyard period of the Coastal Minelaying Group, Naval High Command intend to have the vessels converted and overhauled, and since this cannot be effected in the dockyard at Nikolaiev they have ordered their transfer to Linz. To facilitate work on the engines it would be advisable for the repair ship "Uta", specially equipped for the Coastal Mining Group, also to be transferred to Linz. Commander, Danube Flotilla has therefore received the following orders:

- "1. Naval High Command have ordered that the Coastal Minelaying Group be transferred to the dockyard at Linz for repairs.

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2. Admiral, Black Sea 4879 A I thus canceled.
3. Coastal Minelaying Group will transfer with repair ship "Uta" at once to Linz.
4. Commander, Danube Flotilla will report estimated date of arrival at Linz to Naval Station, Linz, copy to Admiral, Black Sea.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5053 A I."

Transportation of 50th Infantry Division and supplies for Army H.Q. 17 will continue according to plan.

Today I inspected the Port Command at Sevastopol and other naval stations there. I saw for myself the work in progress in the harbor and decided that the most important tasks should be given the following priority:

1. Repair of the dry dock in the north dockyard.
2. Fitting up of the workshop in the small shed of the north dockyard.
3. Repair of the 400-ton slipway in the east dockyard.

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26 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance not exhaustive owing to the weather. One freighter and 1 patrol vessel detected south of Sochi, otherwise nothing to report. Night reconnaissance likewise nothing to report.

The D/F Station reported only slight activity of light enemy forces. No enemy vessels apart from some coastal vessels between the central and southern east coast. One submarine escort and 5 submarines intercepted at sea, one of them probably in the western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

Naval High Command, Naval Staff, Operations Division, Deputy to Chief, Operations Branch has ordered in Ghdos. 29901 that Operations Staff Scheurlen is to be dissolved. Operations Staff Scheurlen will carry on with routine tasks until noon on 29 November, personnel will be released to their former commands on 30 November. The 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla will, from that time, be directly subordinate to Admiral, Black Sea. Sevastopol will be the flotilla's base, with the flotilla staff in the accommodation vessel "Evdokia".

There were only limited minesweeping operations in Kerch Strait owing to the weather. Kerch-Taman traffic proceeded according to plan.

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27 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Weather conditions badly hampered the sole reconnaissance operation; visibility 5 km. One merchant ship sighted off Tuapse and 1 off Ochomchiri, 1 towing formation off Sochi.

According to radio intercept report only slight activity of patrol vessels. According to radio traffic the D/F Station intercepted 1 destroyer off the southern east coast. One submarine escort and 4 submarines also intercepted at sea, 2 of them probably off the central east coast and 2 between the central and western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

0020

Port Commander, Skadovsk reported a surfaced submarine, bearing 100° from the lighthouse at Dzhariulgach. Since the presence of a submarine is unlikely, I am inclined to think there has been confusion with naval ferry barge No. 371 which passed through this area last night.

Commanding Admiral, Crimea has requested that since, according to prisoners' statements, an enemy attack on the Taman Peninsula is to be expected, available naval forces should be employed during the coming period on a nightly patrol of the inshore waters, concentrating on the south Taman coast.

Only the 1st E-Boat Flotilla would be available. The constant use of the flotilla for this task would mean abandoning all other offensive operations since the only remaining forces would be the U-boats. On the other hand I do not consider that we would be justified in rejecting this request outright. I shall therefore endeavor to combine the patrol of the inshore waters of the Taman Peninsula with the offensive operations of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla. I have replied as follows to Commanding Admiral, Crimea:

"Your request will be complied with as far as possible. It must be pointed out, however, that at present only the 1st E-Boat Flotilla is available for this task. The function of this flotilla is to harass and damage enemy supply traffic off the Caucasus coast. During the coming period Admiral, Black Sea intends to employ the 1st E-Boat Flotilla in such a way as to combine both tasks (patrol of the area south

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of the Taman Peninsula and attack on enemy supply shipping). It is further pointed out that E-boat operations depend to a great extent on the weather and are seldom possible during weather such as prevails at present."

The following, Op. 456 Gkdos., has been received from Group South:

- "1. The assumption that the Russian Black Sea Fleet was becoming more active in the south-eastern Black Sea is so far confirmed neither by U 24 nor by the present operation of U 9. The presence of submarines in the operational area was detected by the enemy after the appearance of U 24.
2. The present situation regarding German U-boat operations demands that they be primarily concentrated against Russian supply and convoy traffic and that the previous operational area be extended north approximately as far as Ghelenjik. They must be fitted in with E-boat operations. Operations against enemy naval forces only sanctioned if prospects of success certain.
3. Report plans and allocation of operational area."

Group South's directive coincides with my own attitude (see War Diary 22 November) which led me to suggest the transfer of U 9, then at sea, northward to the operational area in air grid squares 0470 and 0310, so that she might operate against Russian supply traffic there. With 2 boats at sea I plan to extend the operational area further to the northwest. I have reported my plans for the disposition of the U-boats to Group South as follows:

"Plans for U-boat operations:

1. Disposition:  
1st boat between Cape Kodor and Cape Adler.  
2nd boat between Sochi and Olginskaya.
2. If only 1 boat in operational area, then the attack area is to be between Pitsunda Point and Uchdere.
3. Boats in attack areas under 1) will occupy lurking positions as close into the coast as possible and are not to cross the 500-meter line except to attack valuable targets.
4. Targets for attack: enemy steamers larger than 500 G.R.T., naval vessels from torpedo-boats upwards.

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5. Operational area of 1st E-Boat Flotilla while U-boat disposition as under 1) will be north-west of Olginskaya or Uchdere.
6. Commander, 30th U-Boat Flotilla will report his opinion on 1) and 4).

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. Chefs. 110/42 A I."

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea reported that the tanker-lighter "Kosmos" has run aground in the non-contact minefield near Pervomaisk. The lighter cannot be salvaged until the position where she is aground and the approach have been swept clear of mines. I have issued the following orders to Commander, FZ-Group:

- "1. Commander, FZ-Group will transfer the FZ-group from Sevastopol to Ochakov as soon as possible.
2. Task: Sweep route up to position of tanker-lighter "Kosmos" aground near Pervomaisk.
3. Commander, FZ-Group to report numbers of the boats and their estimated time of arrival at Ochakov.
4. FZ-group will receive further orders from Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea in Ochakov.
5. Commander, Convoys and Escorts will report estimated time of conclusion of minesweeping operations as soon as possible.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 20902 A I."

Harbor Defense Flotilla, Sevastopol have so far swept no mines during their search for moored mines in Syevernaya Bay and the approach to Sevastopol. A further check-sweep within the net-barrage is unnecessary. This will at least partly release the flotilla for other tasks. Naval Shore Commander, Crimea has received the following directive:

"Harbor Defense Flotilla, Sevastopol has continued to sweep Sevastopol harbor for moored mines. Having cleared the harbor, further minesweeping within the net-barrage is unnecessary. Suggest that Harbor Defense Flotilla patrol the gap in the net-barrage during the night. Position of guard boats approximately between Syevornaya Kossa and Quarantine Bay. Report plans.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5062 A I."

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Group South reported that it is proposed to transfer 4 naval ferry barges to the Aegean via the Dardanelles. Boats newly arrived or straight from a thorough overhaul should be used. Naval Training Command has been ordered to select 4 naval ferry barges belonging to the 1st Landing Craft Flotilla at present in Varna and start making the required preparations (camouflage, etc.) for their transfer immediately.

1520 The convoy from Ochakov to Constantza consisting of the steamer "Lola" and 3 boats of the 3rd Minesweeper Flotilla was unsuccessfully attacked near Green 24 by an enemy submarine.

1930 The convoy sighted a submarine submerging in 44° 58.4' N, 30° 7' E; the motor minesweepers attacked with guns and depth charges. Result not observed. The captain of the convoy wanted at all costs to avoid a long submarine pursuit as the protection of the steamer "Lola" was the primary consideration.

On 26 and 27 November, accompanied by Naval Shore Commander, Crimea, I inspected the port commands in Theodosia and Kerch and the installations at the bases. The Port Commanders were directed to make every effort to advance infantry training as the troops had been primarily engaged in construction work. Port Commanders have furthermore been instructed to train reserves in the use of machine-guns, sub-machine-guns and 2 cm. anti-aircraft guns.

Having inspected Kerch I visited Commander, Air Force Staff Crimea, General Zander, and discussed problems of cooperation with him.



28 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Naval reconnaissance reported no results except 1 passenger ship 4 miles northwest of Rizeh off the Turkish coast. Coastal reconnaissance identified heavy concentrations of shipping, consisting of small vessels and boats, in Ghelenjik, Tuapse, Sochi and Ochemchiri; also several vessels and 2 submarines off Ochemchiri and Gudant.

2225

The D/F Station reported 1 submarine approximately 75 miles northeast of Constantza and increasing activity of enemy light naval forces and submarines. Off the central east coast 1 destroyer coming from the south was identified in the evening and some patrol vessels. To the south 1 destroyer at sea, 1 submarine escort and 5 submarines, 3 of them between the central and western Black Sea and 2 off the east coast.

Own Situation:

Reports from radio intercept service and statements by deserters unanimously point to increased activity of the Russian Fleet and plans for a landing on the Crimean and Caucasus coasts between Anapa and Kerch Strait. Group South also hint at expected enemy operations. In view of this situation I have adopted the following measures and issued orders that:

I.

"1st E-Boat Flotilla

1. Be ready for attack by Russian Fleet on the Crimean coast during the coming period.
2. If adequate warning is received from sighting or location the flotilla will operate against approaching enemy forces.
3. Flotilla must be at one hour's readiness from 2 hours after dusk until 2 hours before day-break, otherwise operations not practicable.
4. Report whether a state of readiness as under 3) technically possible.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5078 A I."

The following supplementary orders to Admiral, Black Sea Most Secret 5078 A I have been issued:

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- "1. Until the completion of the heating installation 2 boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla will be daily at one hour's readiness from dawn till dusk at Ivan Baba except in the very worst weather.
2. On the completion of the heating installation the number of the boats will be increased to 4 as under 1).
3. In view of the saving in fuel and working hours the completion of the heating installation should be accelerated as much as possible. Report date of completion.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5123 A I."

II.

"Italian E-boats

1. An action by the Russian Fleet against the Crimean coast is expected during the coming months.
2. It is planned to use Italian E-boats based in Yalta against the attacking forces.
3. I therefore request
  - a. that at least 4 Italian E-boats be always at readiness in Yalta,
  - b. that the boats be at one hour's operational readiness from 2 hours after dusk to 2 hours before dawn.
4. Request confirmation.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5077 A I."

III.

"Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla  
Commander, Danube Flotilla

1. A constant watch must be kept against enemy mining of routes immediately off the Crimean coast.
2. The 3rd Minesweeper Flotilla and the Motor Minesweeper Group ordered:
  - a. When proceeding close off the Crimean coast between Cape Tarkhankutzi and Cape Takil boats will have their sweeps out.
  - b. With convoys 1 boat will act as mine-sweeper escort, the others as U-boat escort unless the convoy's speed is too much reduced by this measure.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5075 A I."

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I consider it necessary to transfer the Battle H.Q. of Naval Shore Commander, Crimea from Yalta to Theodosia since the coast at Theodosia is particularly suited to landing operations. My view is, moreover, that a Russian landing on the Crimea will primarily aim at tying down supplies for the Caucasus front on the Kerch-Taman line. The strip of land between Theodosia and Arabatsky Bay will probably be the sealing-off point. Focal point of coastal defense is thus the region between Theodosia and Kerch. The harbor defenses there should, in my opinion, be reinforced, and I have therefore issued the following orders:

"Intelligence of intended enemy landing in the Crimea grows. Orders to commands for the immediate reinforcement of harbor defenses are:

1. Naval Shore Commander, Crimea will transfer Battle H.Q. to Theodosia.
2. Lieutenant (s.g.) Eichenberg and about 100 men will be detailed for special duties for the defense of the harbor at Theodosia. Lt. Cdr. Koch will remain Port Commander, Theodosia.
3. Commander Kastenbauer will be Port Commander, Kerch.
4. Lt. Cdr. von Hertzberg appointed to the staff of Naval Shore Commander, Crimea.
5. Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine will dispatch 150 men by rail to Simferopol to be available for duties with Naval Shore Commander, Crimea. The officer-in-charge of the transportation will be chosen from the remainder of the staff of Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes. Naval Shore Commander, Crimea will order the start of operations.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5111."

Naval Liaison Staff, Rumania stated that the Chief of the Rumanian Naval High Command and the General Staff have, on political grounds, been considering the possibility of immediately transferring the steamers "Bessarabia" and "Transilvania" from Istanbul to Constantza and requested a survey of the situation and whether the proposed measure would further aggravate it. My own attitude is contained in the following teletype to Naval Liaison Staff, Rumania:

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"Re Naval Liaison Staff, Gkdos. 1474:

1. Sudden transfer of steamers to Constantza in present critical circumstances must, in Turkey, be interpreted as weakness or lack of confidence.
2. No intelligence received here could possibly spell danger to the steamers in Istanbul.
3. Unfavorable impression and consequences resulting from hasty transfer regarded here as out of proportion to any advantage to be gained from the steamers being securely berthed in Constantza.
4. As far as the political motives can be judged from here, my views are against transfer plan.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos.Chefs.111 A I."

Owing to lack of fuel U 9 left the operational area today on her return passage to Constantza. No report of the results of the operation has as yet come in.

Escorted by the motor minesweeper group, the "Budapest" today left Kerch for Sevastopol. In Kerch Strait, between Pavlovski and Cape Takil, the FE-group provided ground mine escort.

At about 1400 Kerch-Taman traffic had to be canceled owing to the weather.

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20 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Long distance reconnaissance intercepted 1 merchant ship in Turkish territorial waters.

The Caucasus coast could not be observed owing to the weather. Coastal reconnaissance reported a heavy concentration of merchant ships in harbor again today; approximately 100 craft and 16 coastal vessels were identified in Sochi. Between Sochi and Gagri 2 merchant ships and 1 medium-sized tanker.

According to a radio intercept report, for the first time no patrol activity was detected in the coastal area. One submarine escort was intercepted off the southern east coast, in addition 4 submarines at sea, according to radio traffic 2 of them between the central and western Black Sea and 2 off the east coast.

Own Situation:

Transportation of the 50th Infantry Division from Kerch to Taman ended today.

Commanding Admiral, Crimea reported further army formations to be shipped from Kerch to Taman, they will be taken over on 30 November. These include 5 Turkmenian battalions and Rumanian infantry detachments.

From air reconnaissance reports and D/F messages it is to be concluded that the Russian Fleet still remains at the bases of Poti and Batum. Commander, 30th U-Boat Flotilla has therefore been instructed to employ U 24 which should, according to dead reckoning, have arrived at her operational area today, in operations against Russian supply traffic immediately off the coast between Pitsunda and Uchdoro (see Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 110, War Diary 27 November).

A message received from U 9, now on her return passage, stated that she had scored no successes and that a torpedo fired on a steamer of approximately 1,500 tons had missed.

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30 November, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Long distance reconnaissance reported 2 merchant ships of about 3,000 tons on the roads off the southeast coast of Turkey. Two patrol vessels and 1 M.T.B. off the northern east coast. According to coastal reconnaissance several merchant ships and small vessels were off the northern and central east coast. Four merchant ships and 25 boats were intercepted at Ghelenjik and 4 freighters and 10 boats at Tuapse.

On 29 November Air Force Staff, Crimea reported that the radar gear of Anti-Aircraft Regiment 27 clearly located 3 to 4 rapidly moving objects in Kerch Strait, approximately between grid squares 6673 to 6676. No reply to request for recognition signal, turned away when searchlights were played, objectives located departing. Anti-Aircraft Regiment has been ordered to attack all objectives which have not been notified as German or which fail to use a recognition signal or use the wrong one and in any other way arouse suspicion. Close liaison between Port Commander, Kerch and Anti-Aircraft Regiment 27 regarding our own vessels putting in and out of port has been guaranteed.

The D/F Station reported only slight activity of light enemy naval forces. Three patrol vessels and 1 M.T.B. intercepted in the coastal area. One destroyer off the central and 1 off the southern east coast, further 1 submarine escort and 2 submarines off the east coast. Two submarines intercepted between the central and western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

Air Force Staff, Crimea sent information that according to a Russian deserter, large-scale landings are to be expected on the night of 30 November or 1 December between Novorossisk and Taman or on the Kerch Peninsula. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported that he has received unconfirmed reports of concentrations of shipping having been observed, suggestive of plans for a landing. The Army has ordered the first degree of alarm. Thus repeated messages received about intended Russian landings are now being confirmed and the exact time given. Concentrations of shipping in Ghelenjik are likewise indicative of plans for a landing.

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I have been led by the above intelligence to take additional precautions against Russian attempts to land, particularly in the southern Crimea, near Theodosia, the most threatened area, and have issued the following orders to this effect:

I.

"Naval Shore Commander, Crimea

1. For the defense of Theodosia against invasion of enemy forces FMB mines will be sunk to protect the harbor approach and moles. Activation of the mines to be controlled from an observation center on land.
2. Naval Shore Commander, Crimea will dispatch experts immediately to discuss details with Admiral, Black Sea.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5125 A I."

II.

"Naval Shore Commander, Crimea  
3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla  
Danube Flotilla  
1st Landing Craft Flotilla  
3rd Landing Craft Flotilla

1. In the event of attacks by the Russian Fleet on the Crimean coast and attempts to land, all vessels afloat in the harbor which are not detailed to put to sea for defense purposes will be subordinated for operations to the Port Commander. The Port Commander will include vessels with their crews in his defense plan.
2. The Port Commander will take care that boats are berthed so as to be able to use their weapons against invading forces.
3. Commanders of vessels entering port will obtain instructions from the Port Commander regarding emergency regulations and defense measures and the duties assigned to them.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5125 A I."

III.

"Naval Shore Commander, Crimea

1. Situation:  
Russian landing to be expected. Bay and harbor of Theodosia in particular danger. Prompt warning of the coast essential to successful defense.

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2. Orders:

- a. Naval Shore Commander, Crimea will select from the fishing vessels placed at the disposal of the Industrial Detachment by the Rumanian Navy, 4 seaworthy boats with which to form a harbor defense group.
- b. Boats will be stationed in Theodosia and so disposed that, weather permitting, from dusk to dawn 2 boats are in position at a distance of 2-3 miles from each other at the approach to Theodosia. Crew, armaments and alarm equipment will be provided from there.

3. Report execution.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5127 A I."

Naval Liaison Officer, Army High Command (Army General Staff) reported that Army Group A had ordered the reinforcement of the coastal defenses following receipt of agent reports of plans to launch landing operations on the Crimea. To this end Army High Command have sent a regiment of mountain police to the Crimea for Army Group A and Commanding General, Ukraine has been requested to have emergency units transferred immediately and made available for the Crimea. Naval Liaison Officer, Army High Command enquired at the same time what steps had been taken by the Navy. My reply to his query is as follows:

"To Naval Liaison Officer, Army High Command  
(Army General Staff)  
Naval Liaison Officer / Army Group A

To your Gkdos. 3360/42:

The following additional defensive measures have been either carried out or ordered:

1. From dusk to dawn daily the following vessels will be at one hour's operational readiness:
  - a. 2 E-boats (from 10 December approximately 4 E-boats) at Ivan Baba.
  - b. 4 Italian E-boats at Yalta.
2. Mines will be laid at the entrance to Theodosia harbor and FMB mines on the moles which could be used for landings by enemy vessels.
3. Two patrol boats will be stationed at the approach to Theodosia during the night.

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4. Vessels afloat in the harbors will be temporarily included in harbor defense.
5. Personnel of Port Commander, Thoodosia will be reinforced by about 100 men from the Yalta area.
6. 150 men from the area under Port Commander, Ukraine will be transferred to the Crimea.
7. Battle H.Q. of Naval Shore Commander, Crimea will be transferred from Yalta to Theodosia.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5126 A I."

After sweeping route Green 40 to Green 36 Commander, Danube Flotilla made the following report:

"When motor minesweeper R 30 took in her sweep in 42° 29.5' N, 32° 31.8' E a mine exploded. It is assumed that the mine had been swept on route Red between point 41 and 38 and dragged along in the sweep. Since the dynamo meter was out of order it is impossible to report the exact position. Shape of mine: small and spherical, charge approximately 30 to 50 kg., presumably inertia contact mine."

The route from point Green 36 to Green 39 has been closed to convoys because of suspected mines. Harbor Defense Flotilla, Ochakov will be transferred by Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea to Ak Mechet to carry out a check sweep.

The motor minesweeper group has also been ordered to sweep route Green and route Red between Green 41 and Green 38.

Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine today handed over the Don shipping to Army Waterways Commission Div. 3 as instructed.

The November statistics of supplies shipped in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov are as follows:

	8,828 tons	Armed Forces' supplies for Ukraine
	22,028 tons	commercial goods for Ukraine
	22,688 tons	return transports
	600 tons	Crimoan transshipment
	11,941 tons	Armed Forces' supplies for Sea of Azov
	5,000 tons	Kerch-Taman and Kerch-Tomriuk
Total	<u>71,085</u> tons	



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Plus Kerch-Taman:

18,070 men  
7,071 horses  
4,280 craft.

Return transports:

2,577 men  
113 horses  
193 craft.

With reference to these results it should be noted that owing to the icing-over of the northeastern Sea of Azov supply traffic there had to be stopped after 16 November 1942. Furthermore, results were affected by the weather which repeatedly led to the cancellation or postponement of convoys.

(Signed) Alshooff-Erdon.

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WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

1 - 15 DECEMBER, 1942

PG/31522

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1 December, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Numerous reconnaissance results revealed the bulk of the Russian Fleet to be at sea, in greatest strength in the western Black Sea and near the Rumanian-Bulgarian coast.

Air reconnaissance sighted 1 submarine some 60 miles north of the Bosphorus and attacked with depth charges. Coastal reconnaissance detected lively activity of coastal vessels off the east coast, mainly in the north. There was a fairly large assembly of steamers and coastal vessels in Chelenjik.

Long-range reconnaissance reported lively activity of merchant shipping in Turkish territorial waters.

Own Situation:

The following D/F messages were received in succession at approximately 0900 from Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza:

"Radio intercept report 0810 EET: 0800 EET, according to D/F bearing, unidentified vessel (destroyer?), 59° from Mamaia.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza G 0102."

"Radio intercept report 0835 EET: 0830 EET, according to D/F bearing, destroyer 80° from Mamaia. She sent a short signal to the cruiser "Dora" and to an identified vessel already reported by radio intercept service at 0810.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza."

"Radio intercept report 0915 EET: 0900, according to radio traffic and D/F bearing, 2 or 3 vessels (destroyers) west of Sevastopol as far as Cape Tarkhankutzi.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza G 0104."

In answer to a telephone enquiry the Naval D/F Subsidiary Station on Cape Ili near Theodosia reported that since about 0700 they had repeatedly observed radio traffic from enemy vessels on bearing of between 240° and 260° from Cape Ili.

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It is evident from these messages that parts of the Russian Fleet are in the western Black Sea. Exact position, plan and object of the operation have not yet been discovered. Since I do not expect a daylight landing I assume that the enemy sortie is either being directed against German supply traffic off the Crimean or the west coast of the Black Sea or that it is planned to shell the harbors.

The following immediate measures have been taken:

1. All convoys will be ordered by radiogram to put in to the nearest port.
2. 1st E-Boat Flotilla and Italian E-boats at Ivan Baba or Yalta ordered to stand by ready to put out.
3. All surface forces in harbor ordered to increase their state of readiness.
4. Naval Shore Commander, Crimea is being informed of the situation and directed to take steps for harbor defense.
5. Air Force Staff, Crimea has been requested to make reconnaissance as exhaustive as possible and so identify the position and strength of the enemy forces.

Further D/F messages received during the morning led to the conclusion that enemy forces are divided into 2 groups, the one operating northwest, the other west of the Black Sea.

This supposition is confirmed by messages received about 1200 stating that 5 enemy vessels shelled Fidonisi between 0600 and 0745 and that between 0650 and 0722 some 150 shots were heard at sea from the Bulgarian coast northeast of Kaliakra, 2 of which exploded on land.

This last message was later supplemented to the effect that 2 torpedoes were also fired, one of which exploded on the coast while the other remained jammed between the rocks.

Messages received up to 1100 enabled me to form the following survey of the situation:

1. Light forces of the Russian Fleet made a sortie into the western Black Sea and, having divided into 2 groups, shelled the island of Fidonisi and the Bulgarian coast near Kaliakra at about the same time of the morning.
2. It is not necessarily to be assumed that this bombardment was the actual operational task of the formation.

3. In my opinion the original purpose of the operation was to interfere with German supply traffic between Constantza and Odessa/Nikolaiev or between Constantza and the Bosphorus and to destroy any convoys encountered.
4. Since the sortie proved a failure, that is no shipping was encountered, the northern group shelled the island of Fidonisi where there is nothing but a light and some Rumanian personnel. The southern group shelled the Bulgarian coast probably in the mistaken belief that they were off Constantza (error in fix). The possibility arises, however, that fog caused the Russian forces to lose contact (the Bulgarian stations heard fog signals from the coast) so that they shelled one another. The fact that torpedoes were used points to the correctness of the above conjecture, since even if the fix is accurate, successes cannot be scored with these weapons without a direct target and this, therefore, is the only explanation of their use.
5. In addition to an operation against German supply traffic, the object of the enemy operation may have been
  - a. to mine the supply routes,
  - b. to act as a diversion for the landings planned to take place on the Crimean or the Taman coast during the coming night and which on the basis of messages they have received, Armed Forces' High Command have also predicted for 2 December. In view of the fact that the enemy disclosed his sortie and his position without cause by shelling pointless targets (Fidonisi), a minelaying operation which can only be successful if undiscovered is improbable, but it cannot be altogether ruled out.
6. According to the last D/F bearings from the radio intercept centers the enemy was proceeding on an easterly course.

My one opportunity of intercepting the enemy on his return passage would be by using U 24, at present in the operational area assigned to her near Pitsunda Point, against the enemy fleet presumably returning to its bases at Poti and Batum on 2 December.

Commander, 30th U-Boat Flotilla received the following radiogram from me at 1121:

"According to D/F reports Russian Fleet at sea. Anticipate its return to Poti and Batum on



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2 December. Transfer U 24's operational area immediately to area off Poti and Batum.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5143 A I."

1249 Air Force Staff, Crimea reported that long-range reconnaissance identified an enemy cruiser and destroyer at 1100 in air grid square 1411 bearing 130° to 180°.

This report confirmed the interpretation of the D/F reports to the effect that enemy forces are on their return passage.

1132 Radio intercept station Cape Ili obtained a bearing of 128° on the old battleship "Parishskaya Kommuna". A cross bearing was not obtained from Constantza, thus the exact position is not known.

It is now certain that the bulk of the Russian Fleet is at sea. The presence of the old battleship cannot be explained as a rendezvous point for returning light forces since the enemy knows that we have no naval forces available for pursuit. I am therefore all the more inclined to expect the landing operation reported by the various stations to take place in the coming night. Those light forces now returning, together with the heavy ships in the central and eastern Black Sea, would cover the operation. In this event, the question arises, however, as to whether the destroyers' radius of action is sufficient to carry out this second operation in immediate succession to yesterday's sortie without refuel.

In order that forces heading towards the Taman or Crimean coasts may be identified as soon as possible and weakened before they reach the coast, I have decided to occupy a patrol line along the coast between Yalta and Anapa after dark with every boat of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla and of the Italian E-Boat Flotilla ready for operations. The following order went out to this effect at 1535:

"1. Situation:

Russian cruiser and destroyer attacked Fidonisi early this morning. According to D/F reports and air reconnaissance, at 1100 the formation was in air grid square 1411, on a southeasterly course. In addition to the above there were other enemy forces at sea including the old battleship in the eastern Black Sea. There was a fairly heavy concentration of steamers and coastal vessels in Ghelenjik. Perhaps the Russians will carry out landing operations off the south coast of the Crimea

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in the coming night, using the fleet already at sea and the transports at Ghelenjit, in which case last night's operations were intended to camouflage landing plans.

2. Orders:

- a. After dark 3 boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla will occupy a patrol line between Cape Ili and Cape Takil, and 2 others a line between Zhelezni Rog and Anapa.
  - b. 4 boats of the Italian E-Boat Flotilla will occupy a patrol line between Cape Ayu Dagh and Kik Atlama.
3. On encountering enemy send "Most Immediate" report.
4. Attack and annihilate enemy.
5. Boats will leave the patrol line at dawn on 2 December and return to bases.

Admiral, Black Sea Ckdos. 5148 A I."

Port Commander, Anapa reported that a group of 1 fairly large and 5 smaller ships, bearing 300° from Anapa, were observed at a distance of 20 km. off the coast. A supplementary report was received from Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A to the effect that the group consisted of 1 cruiser, 3 destroyers and 25 small vessels.

Air Force Staff, Crimea encountered no enemy forces during air reconnaissance over the eastern Black Sea and doubts the accuracy of Anapa's report since a reconnaissance plane examined the Anapa sea area between 1400 and 1500 in good visibility without result.

Between 2000 and 2100 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza detected destroyers north of Cape Sinope: further confirmation that the forces are presumably returning.

At 2145 and 2245 Port Commander, Sevastopol sighted several lights at sea, bearing 280°. Two loud explosions were also heard. These suggest minelaying operations off Sevastopol Bay during which 2 mines exploded. I have therefore closed route Brown 2 to Green 42 and have ordered Commander, Crimean Coast to use the motor mine-sweeper group in Yalta to check the closed route.

1145

U 9 put in to Constantza from her first operation, escorted by 2 motor mincsweepers. Apart from a 1,500-ton steamer unsuccessfully attacked by a

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torpedo in air grid square 1373 (off Poti), the boat sighted no other snipping or larger vessels although for days she lay immediately off the coast. Patrol of the area off Poti and Batum and near Pitsunda Point is weak. U 9 was only once chased from grid square 1350 to 1370 by a motor minesweeper or M.T.B. which was evaded by submerging. On the return passage U 9 sighted a Russian submarine of the "Jakobinetz" class in grid square 5395. In air grid square 12242/12248 U 9 reported a double net barrage more than 400 meters deep suspended from great glass balls. I cannot believe that it is possible to anchor a net barrage in such a great depth of water and in an area, moreover, where there is a surface flow of up to 3 miles an hour. Commander, U 9 added that the observation was accurate and that a mistake was out of the question since he was in the immediate vicinity of the barrage.

0740 U 9 was met by 2 boats of the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla at point CS 1 and brought back to Constantza with minesweeper escort. Two mines were cut. Presumably they came from our own deep minefield south of Constantza. As a precautionary measure Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea closed the southern entrance to Constantza because mines were suspected. The 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla has had orders to make a check sweep.

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2 December, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Reconnaissance revealed that most of the Russian forces are withdrawing in to harbors in the south-eastern Black Sea. At 0746 parts of the fleet were some 25 miles west of Batum; at 0719 reconnaissance intercepted 2 destroyers 60 miles southwest of Sochi. Approximately 2 hours later the same destroyers were 60 miles south of Gagri proceeding at high speed, course eastsoutheast. At 0746 the battleship "Parishskaya Kommuna", 1 heavy cruiser of the "Kirov" class, 1 destroyer and several patrol vessels, with a close escort of 5 planes, were sighted by a reconnaissance plane which was unsuccessfully attacked. Coastal reconnaissance identified 1 torpedoboat, 2 merchant ships, several coastal vessels of about 100-200 tons plus 30 to 40 boats in Ghelonjik harbor; 2 M.T.B.s and 6 coastal vessels off Tuapse, 2 merchant ships in the harbor, totaling in all about 1,500 tons. At 0800, 60 miles west of Sukhum, 2 destroyers course 130°.

According to the D/F Station the 2 enemy groups operating on 1 December in the western Black Sea probably put in to their bases on the afternoon of 2 December. Apart from the vessels reported, cruiser A, which at noon on 2 December was north of Trabzon, was also at sea. The battleship which according to D/F bearing has been at sea since the morning of 1 December, has not left the eastern Black Sea and probably put in to harbor on the morning of 2 December. No further shipping was identified off the east coast apart from some small vessels. One submarine between central and western Black Sea; 3 further submarines intercepted at sea.

Own Situation:

The 1st E-Boat Flotilla and the Italian E-boats last night occupied the patrol line assigned to them between Theodosia and Anapa. No enemy forces were sighted. The boats returned to their bases at about 0600.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza obtained a bearing on the cruiser "Dora" in air grid square 7340/7360.

0704 A long-range reconnaissance plane reported 2 destroyers in grid square 0311 bearing 130°.

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1200 Constantza obtained a bearing on a cruiser in grid square 0232.

These reports are clear evidence that the Russian Fleet is returning to the bases Poti and Batum and will be putting in there in groups during the morning and afternoon.

Hence at 1229 radiogram to all commands:

"Radiogram 0910/1:  
Cancel increased state of readiness. Resume convoy and escort duties insofar as routes not closed because of mines.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5163 A I."

Conclusion:

The landing operation which I had anticipated did not take place last night. Thus the object of the enemy operation, apart from the unlikely suggestion of a minelaying operation, would appear to have been a sortie against German supply routes off the west coast.

By maintaining absolute radio silence during the approach passage the enemy succeeded in advancing unobserved as far as the Rumanian and Bulgarian coasts. That this surprise sortie caused no German losses was a mere matter of chance. Although this first large-scale operation, indicative of British influence, yielded no successful results, I must expect a repetition of similar operations since our lack of every form of defense only encourages the enemy.

Apart from a reinforcement of the flank covering forces off the west coast, already ordered and in progress, I have no naval forces available to repulse similar operations. The only method of frustrating enemy operations against supply traffic in the western Black Sea is by means of exhaustive air reconnaissance over the eastern and central Black Sea. In this way the movements of enemy forces would be promptly identified, thus enabling German convoys to be stopped at once. Events of the last few days have shown that the sea reconnaissance of Air Force Staff, Crimea has failed to fulfill these conditions. I have therefore made the following request to Air Force Staff, Crimea:

"1. Re Situation 1 December:

- a. Early on the morning of 1 December the Russian Fleet appeared in two groups with cruisers and destroyers in the northwestern

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Black Sea and off the Rumanian and Bulgarian coasts. Other naval forces, including the "Parishskaya Kommuna", were in the eastern Black Sea on 1 December.

- b. Air reconnaissance failed to intercept enemy forces which must have left Poti and Batum on the night of 29/30 November at the very latest, on their outward passage.
- c. Harbor reconnaissance also failed to identify the departure of the Russian Fleet.
- d. On the return passage air reconnaissance only sighted cruisers and destroyers in grid square 1411 at 1100 although the position of the enemy forces was approximately known from D/F reports.

2. Consequences:

- a. Surprisingly successful enemy sortie as far as the west coast of the Black Sea in our estimation proves that insufficient planes are available for satisfactory air reconnaissance.
- b. In view of the significance of the supply route off the west coast and off the Crimea and the lack of sufficient naval forces to protect and escort important convoys against attacks by superior Russian surface forces, very exhaustive air reconnaissance of the eastern and central Black Sea is urgently requested if convoys are to be stopped in good time.
- c. Since there are no German surface forces available for operations against the Russian Fleet, it is imperative that planes suitable for attacking naval targets should also be supplied.

3. Request attitude to 2).

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos, 5164 A I."

Steamer No. 10 today swept the closed route from Brown 2 to Green 42 with Oropesa gear. No mines swept. The minesweeper group will continue the check-sweep on 3 December.

FZ-Group, Kerch swept the direct route from Cape Takil to the gap in the Pavlovski minefield with Oropesa gear. No mines swept.

Kerch-Taman and Kerch-Temriuk traffic continued according to plan.

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3 December, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Between the northern and central east coast lively activity of merchant shipping and patrol vessels; average size of the merchant ships sighted about 3,000 tons. In the eastern Black Sea and off the Turkish coast no traffic observed.

Naval D/F Station, Constantza intercepted individually routed small vessels in the coastal area, and in the evening 1 destroyer off the southern and 1 off the central east coast. The large destroyer "Charkov" and an unidentified vessel were probably in the southeastern Black Sea at noon. In addition 1 submarine escort and 3 submarines were identified at sea, 1 or 2 of the submarines were between the central and western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

The closed route Brown 2 to Green 42 was reopened at 1013 after an unsuccessful sweep by the Motor Minesweeper Group and the Harbor Defense Flotilla, Sevastopol.

The Motor Minesweeper Group next swept route Green 38 to Green 41. No mines swept. On the return passage to Sevastopol the group swept two overgrown inertia contact mines outside the route.

Now that E-boats S 40 and S 51 have arrived at Ivan Baba after having completed their refit, I have decided to release S 26 and S 49 for an engine overhaul at Constantza since they have completed the prescribed number of working hours. The boats are expected to be at operational readiness again by 25 December. When the engines of these boats have been overhauled it will be the turn of S 72 and S 102. With this repair schedule there will always be a minimum of 4 E-boats at operational readiness.

The 1st E-Boat Flotilla has received the following orders:

"S 26 and S 49 will be shipped to Constantza from Ivan Baba on the evening of 3 December, weather permitting, for a slight engine overhaul. Submit "out of action" report and at the same time provisional date when operational readiness will be restored.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5173 A I."

Between 2300 and 2400 two Russian M.T.B.s shelled the coast near Anapa without result.



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4 December, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Only slight activity of merchant ships and small vessels off the entire east coast. One merchant ship, 6 coastal vessels and some 60 boats identified in Ghelenjik harbor. During the morning 15 miles northwest of Sochi, 1 destroyer and 1 patrol vessel. Long-range reconnaissance was hampered by the weather but identified a submerged submarine in grid square 6349.

One submarine was detected by D/F bearings during the night south of Theodosia. Off the east coast and in the central Black Sea 1 destroyer, 1 minelayer, 3 minesweepers, 2 M.T.B.s, 1 submarine escort and 2 submarines intercepted. Two more submarines were in the central Black Sea, one has already been mentioned above, and was detected at night off Theodosia. Also 2 submarines in the western Black Sea. Striking lull in radio traffic on fleet waves since 3 December.

Own Situation:

Air Force Staff, Crimea has replied to my request for a very exhaustive reconnaissance over the eastern and central Black Sea (see War Diary 2 December) with the following teletype:

Re Situation 1 December:  
Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5164 A I:

Re 2) a and b:

Only air reconnaissance flown continuously in close formation over the entire Black Sea can ensure an almost exhaustive survey. Even then, during the long nights or on days of poor visibility, there can be no absolute certainty. Reconnaissance of this kind uses up so much personnel, material and fuel that it would probably cost more than the loss or damage by shelling of a few ships.

Request for increased reconnaissance during the present critical situation is out of the question. Long-range reconnaissance which has so far been flown daily even in the worst weather conditions, will be slightly increased as much as forces permit and, as a result of the experience on 1 December, partly re-organized. Harbor reconnaissance by land-based long-range planes is even more dependent on weather and visibility.

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Re 2) c:

The constant readiness of bomber formations for operations against targets at sea is in view of the general situation impossible and not to be contemplated since opportunities to attack are so rare. As before, the forces available in the area must be used as the occasion arises.

(Signed) General Zander.

Air Force Staff, Crimea Ia No. 752 Gkdos.

Since my request for an exhaustive reconnaissance cannot be met, I think the best solution would be to report the movements of the Russian Fleet as promptly as possible by means of a daily harbor reconnaissance, more particularly of the bases Poti and Batum. An afternoon reconnaissance would suffice to ascertain whether most of the Fleet lay in the bases and thus surmise whether a large-scale operation against the Crimean or west coast was being planned for the next night. I therefore made the following request to Air Force Staff, Crimea:

"Re I A No. 752 Gkdos:

Since in view of the strained aircraft situation an increase in your reconnaissance forces is unlikely, I request you to fly a reconnaissance of the harbors Poti and Batum every afternoon, weather permitting.

For operations from these bases against Taman or the Crimea the Russian Fleet must leave at about 1400 at the latest if a landing is to be effected during darkness. If at that time the Fleet is still in port no large-scale operation is likely that night.

Results of harbor reconnaissance must be immediately transmitted to Admiral, Black Sea so that countermeasures can, if necessary, be taken here. Request attitude.

Admiral, Black Sea 5229 A I."

After the 4 Italian E-boats ready in Mariupol for transfer to the Caspian had been sent back to Sevastopol, it had to be investigated whether transportation from there to Rostov and on again to Makhach Kala was possible by rail should transportation to the Caspian have to be undertaken before the end of the difficult ice period in the Sea of Azov.

The Transport Commandant's Office, Poltava informed us, in this connection, that the boats could not travel by rail because they are too

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broad. Thus they will only be able to reach Makhach Kala if they can get to Mariupol by sea.

On 5 December the last steamers leave Rostov and Mariupol for Kerch. Thus, after 5 December, the minesweeping planes stationed at Mariupol can be dispensed with. Teletype to Air Force Staff, Crimea:

"Minesweeping Ju planes no longer needed in the Sea of Azov after 5 December since the last steamers will be transferred to the Black Sea on 4 December.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 21312 A I."

Ferry traffic to Taman was temporarily stopped today owing to lack of cargo. On the other hand the naval ferry barges of the 1st Landing Craft Flotilla were used in the Kerch-Tomriuk supply traffic for 17th Army H.Q. in greater strength.

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5 December, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

In general slight movements of merchant shipping off the entire east coast, on the other hand livelier patrol activity. On the night of 4 December 2 M.T.B.s attacked Anapa; reconnaissance operations in the central Black Sea were broken off owing to the weather. Along the Turkish coast merchant shipping traffic.

The radio intercept report was also suggestive of only light enemy naval forces. Off the northern east coast nothing identified, in the central and southern parts 3 minelayers, 2 minesweepers, 4 patrol vessels and 5 M.T.B.s identified. In the morning 1 destroyer at sea, position unknown, presumably eastern Black Sea. Two submarines between the central and western Black Sea. One submarine intercepted off the east coast.

Own Situation:

While checking the Constantza-Varna route the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla swept 4 mines and 4 explosive floats on the edge of the Bulgarian declared area in approximately 43° 13.2' N, 28° 16' E. According to the Flotilla Commander's report, they are mines from a former minefield laid by the Bulgarians, the exact position of which is unknown. No mines which might have been laid during the Russian sortie on 1 December were swept.

In reply to my request for exhaustive reconnaissance of shipping in Poti and Batum (see War Diary 4 December) the Air Force Staff, Crimea reported:

"Air Force Group, Caucasus has been requested to carry out a harbor reconnaissance of Poti and Batum, and of part of the east coast of the Black Sea.

Air Force Staff, Crimea 768/42 Gkdos."

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza and Subsidiary Station, Cape Ili located a submarine at 0100 in the coastal area off Theodosia. Port Commander, Theodosia reported increased state of readiness as a result of this D/F report.

Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A reported that the Kerch-Taman service is being temporarily

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anceled because it is proving impossible to find transportation for the units which have been brought over. A reply to Commanding Admiral, Crimea's further enquiry stated that a few more formations will arrive by rail in Kerch for shipment to Taman in about 8 days. Since the naval ferry barges of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla which were used to transport the 50th Infantry Division will no longer all be needed, I intend shortly, with Commanding Admiral, Crimea's consent, to withdraw 4 naval ferry barges of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla.

Since the Russian Fleet has returned to the bases Poti and Batum and there are no signs of its putting out again soon, I consider that U 24 should be transferred back to her former operational area near Pitsunda Point against supply traffic off the Caucasus coast.

The boat has been instructed accordingly by the 30th U-Boat Flotilla.

The FZ-Group swept no mines during minesweeping operations between Pavlovski and Cape Takil.

Group South reported that according to intelligence reports, the Russian Fleet plans landings in the Rumanian coastal area and offensive operations with heavy forces against Constantza.

Group South has ordered a check-sweep of the minefields off Constantza to discover whether the mines there are still active. I made the following report:

"Re Group South Op. 4919 G:

1. The minefields off Constantza will probably have been depleted by the ice and heavy seas, particularly the northern and southern wings. No definite data on the actual state of the minefields available, however.
2. Suggestions:
  - a. Before relaying or supplementing the minefields shallow draught minesweepers with indicator gear should check the individual minefield sections.
  - b. The sections discovered during the check-sweep to be insufficiently effective should be supplemented with EMC mines.
  - c. The position, distance apart of mines, etc. of these supplementary minefields can only be decided after the results of the check-sweep have been received.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5227 A I."

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6 December, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

No reconnaissance results apart from 1 Turkish merchant ship some 30 miles east of Samsun. According to radio intercept reports very slight activity of small craft in the coastal area. Southern east coast 4 destroyers in the morning, only 1 in the afternoon. Furthermore, 4 submarines probably intercepted off the east coast, and 1 between the western and central Black Sea.

Own Situation:

0705 Air raid on Anapa, partly by army cooperation planes. One man seriously wounded by machine-gunfire. No material damage.

There were no minesweeping operations owing to the weather.

The Tomriuk traffic proceeded according to plan.

The 4th Naval Coastal Defense Detachment with Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes sent the following report of planes shot down in the last 14 days:

24 November:	1 army cooperation plane
25 November:	3 army cooperation planes
5 December:	4 bombers.

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7 December, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Apart from some patrol vessels and merchant ships off the northern east coast only slight traffic of merchant ships under escort. Adverse weather prevented reconnaissance of Turkish coast. About 50 boats and some small vessels identified in Ghelenjik.

The D/F Station likewise reported no activity of enemy surface forces apart from some small craft. Six submarines were intercepted at sea, 3 of them probably between the central and western Black Sea and 3 off the east coast.

Own Situation:

Between 1200 and 1230 there was an air raid on Ursuf near Yalta. 20 to 30 bombs. 27 Rumanian soldiers dead, 13 wounded; no material damage. Defense by Reinforced Frontier Guard Control Service (Coastal) unsuccessful.

Motor fishing vessel No. 1 of the FZ-Group ran aground in Eupatoria Bay in a southwest wind, force 6-7, and heavy seas, and sank. No personnel lost. Salvage begun and probably possible as sandy bottom.

Motor minesweepers swept route Brown 6 to Brown 13. No mines swept.

Naval High Command, Operations Division has requested views on the threat of enemy landings in the Crimea. In connection with this I have submitted the following survey of the situation to Group South:

"Re your Gkdos. 667 Op.:

A. Survey of the Situation:

1. The attack of Russian naval forces on Pidonisi and the Bulgarian coast on 1 December is evidence of the Russian Fleet's increasing activity. British influence probable.
2. Further operations of this nature are to be expected. Their main objective will be to interfere with and tie down supplies conveyed via the Crimea for the Caucasus army in order to weaken the German front

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there and finally eliminate it during the winter.

3. This objective can only take permanent effect by a landing on the Crimea together with or supported by the Russian Fleet with the chief aim of interrupting German supply traffic via Kerch. Statements by prisoners of war and deserters repeatedly point to Russian intentions to land.
4. Geographically it is to be assumed that the Crimea, between Theodosia and Kerch, will be selected for the landing since
  - a. the land is narrowest there for a complete sealing-off,
  - b. the character of the coast favors landings,
  - c. the harbors of Theodosia and Kerch are suitable for unloading heavy gear,
  - d. it is the shortest route both for approach and for the shipment of subsequent supplies.
5. A landing between Theodosia and Sevastopol is unlikely since the coast there is very steep and the Yaila Mountains, which thrust right down to the coast, prevent the formation of troops into contingents of any size.
6. The coast between Sevastopol and Cape Tarkhankutzi is suitable for landings but has considerable disadvantages since
  - a. the jumping-off position and supply base are very far apart,
  - b. a landing over a wide area would require stronger forces than on the Kerch Peninsula.
7. According to 4) and 6), except for raids and nuisance raids on convoys and ports and possibly small local landings for sabotage purposes, large-scale continuous operations are only to be expected between Theodosia and Kerch. Hence create focal point there.

B. Defensive Measures:

1. Guns for coastal defense see Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5228 dated 4 December.

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2. Additional measures against enemy landings see Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5126 dated 30 November.
3. Measures taken and forces available sufficient, in our estimation, for harbor defense. Weak point ammunition (see Admiral, Black Sea 5112 dated 30 November).

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5247 A I."

The 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla checked the southern exit from Constantza, which has been closed since 1 December because mines were suspected. No mines were swept. The route has been reopened.

At approximately 1645 the steamer "Suceava" from Constantza, escorted by 5 boats of the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla, put in to Sevastopol.



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8 December, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

No reconnaissance results received from Air Force Staff, Crimea because adverse weather and cloud, sometimes as low as 200 meters, hampered ground visibility.

D/F Station, Constantza detected no shipping activity in the northern and central east coast apart from small craft. One destroyer intercepted in the southern part towards evening, 2 submarines between the central and western Black Sea and 1 submarine off the east coast.

Own Situation:

According to prisoners' statements:

1. Supply ships with stores and ammunition will put in to Tuapse and Ghelenjik between 2300 and 0400. Unloading will take place under cover of darkness. Having unloaded the ships will put out immediately.
2. One ship will enter Ghelenjik every night, be rapidly unloaded and leave immediately.

Although these observations date back some time, I consider it imperative that the 1st E-Boat Flotilla, last off Tuapse on the night of 24/25 November, should be put into operation against this supply traffic. Since the weather forecast is favorable, the 1st E-Boat Flotilla received the following orders for the coming night:

1. The 1st E-Boat Flotilla will operate on the night of 8/9 December against enemy supply traffic off the Caucasus coast. Four boats will take part under the Flotilla Commander.
2. Execution:  
The flotilla will put out at 1200 on 8 December from Ivan Baba and be in the operational area between Tuapse and Sochi by about 1900, focal point Cape Uchdore. The operation will be broken off so that the flotilla may put in to Ivan Baba again by about 0800 on 9 December. Torpedoes may be fired at any valuable target. Should the operation have to be prematurely broken off owing to the weather, report by radiogram.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5268 A I."

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- 1200 Four boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla put out from Ivan Baba.
- 1510 A report was received that the operation had to be broken off due to heavy swell and increasing wind at the head of Kerch Strait.

Since all the naval ferry barges held in readiness for the Kerch-Taman transportations are no longer required (see War Diary 4 December), Commanding Admiral, Crimea has consented to the withdrawal of 4 belonging to the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla, which has received orders to transfer 4 naval ferry barges to Sevastopol while using them to transport supplies from Kerch to Sevastopol or intermediate ports.

The following radiogram was received from Group South:

"Naval High Command wired: 'Examine and report without delay how many naval ferry barges can be ready within the shortest possible time for transfer via the Dardanelles to the Mediterranean for use in Italy.' Group South added: 'Send results of investigation and final date as soon as possible.'"

Group South Op. 642 Gkdos."

In reply Admiral, Black Sea proposed:

"With reference to Gkdos. 642 Op.:

1. Propose that the naval ferry barges to be handed over be taken from the 1st Landing Craft Flotilla and leave the complete 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla with its 21 barges and its staff in the Black Sea. This flotilla will thus continue to be ready for tactical operations at short notice.
2. The following can be handed over from the 1st Landing Craft Flotilla:
  - a. Four naval ferry barges at Varna, date of transfer 18 December.
  - b. Four naval ferry barges at present employed in supply traffic.

This estimate does not include the 4 naval ferry barges to be transferred to the Aegean.

3. After supplying a total of 12 naval ferry barges the present quota of transport tasks can be performed by drawing on the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla. Another point is that these

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ferry barges of the 1st Landing Craft Flotilla being used in the Kerch-Taman traffic will shortly have to be withdrawn for an urgent and thorough overhaul.

Admiral, Black Sea 5269 A I."

Group South has agreed to my proposal regarding the renewal of the Constantza minefields (see Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5227 A I, War Diary 5 December) and has issued orders for immediate execution.

Naval Training Command received the following orders:

"Re Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5227 A I:

1. Naval Training Command will carry out task in accordance with directions under 2a).
2. After execution Naval Training Command will, if necessary, submit plans for the renewal or relaying of certain minefield sections.
3. Keep Admiral, Black Sea constantly informed regarding progress of the work in accordance with 1).

Admiral, Black Sea 5152 A I."

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9 December, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

A reconnaissance of the entire eastern Black Sea was carried out. Apart from slight coastal traffic no reports of enemy activity.

The D/F Station likewise intercepted only very slight enemy shipping movements, 1 destroyer off the central and 1 off the southern east coast in the afternoon. One submarine in the north-western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

The Motor Minesweeper Group swept route Brown 13 to Brown 16 with Oropesa gear. No mines swept.

Of the towed convoy lying at anchor in Ak Mechet Bay steamer D 15 of the FZ-Group and lighter No. 1357 ran aground in wind force 9. Hull of steamer D 9 apparently undamaged. She was swamped through cover hatch. Salvage probably possible. Leakage in the stern of the lighter, after compartments full of water. Salvage probably impossible with resources available at Ak Mechet.

The Kerch-Tenriuk supply traffic proceeded according to plan.

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10 December, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance greatly hampered by showers of rain. No reconnaissance results from the southeastern Black Sea. Off the northern east coast some patrol vessels and merchant ships. Some 50 boats identified in Ghelenjik, about 20 in Tuapse and a few in the harbor at Sochi.

0408 On 10 December D/F Station, Constantza reported 1 submarine on the line Mamaia-Perckop. During the morning the D/F Station intercepted 1 destroyer off the central east coast on a southerly course, 1 destroyer off the southern part, during the afternoon on a northwesterly course. One submarine was located between the central and western Black Sea. Otherwise only slight activity of patrol vessels and small craft.

Own Situation:

Naval Training Command proposed that the check-sweep of the Constantza minefields ordered by us (see War Diary 5 and 8 December) be abandoned and that their renewal by laying 5 new sections be undertaken at once.

An investigation of this proposal has shown that the check of the Constantza minefields in question cannot be abandoned. The reason is explained in the following teletype to Naval Training Command (copy to Group South):

"To Commander, Naval Training Command 1665  
Gkdos. Chofs.:

1. Attitude to above reference:

- a. Minelaying in accordance with Commander, Naval Training Command's proposal calls for 900 EMC mines, of which there are only 500 available in the area. At the earliest it will take a few weeks for the missing EMC mines to be supplied from Germany, so that it will only be possible to lay 3 sections. Thus Naval Training Command's basic demand for the immediate relaying of the Constantza minefields can only be partly fulfilled.
- b. In view of the present shortage of materials, unless proved to be the most urgent necessity, the use of 900 EMC mines cannot be justified.

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- c. Laying new minefields would mean that the order to lay the flanking minefields would have to be delayed or even canceled should it prove impossible to obtain further supplies of EMC mines from Germany. The experience of 1 December has proved the importance of such minefields in order to safeguard the supply routes against attacks by surface forces and submarines.
  - d. Thus, in view of the available supplies of mines, the laying of the new Constantza minefields must fall within the framework of general planning.
  - e. Knowledge of the state and effectiveness of the former Constantza minefields is therefore essential. The indirect exploitation of the minefields by the enemy owing to his knowledge of them must also be taken into account.
2. Naval Training Command will make a rapid check sweep of the minefield sections in accordance with Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5251 A I.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. Chofs. 114."

Unfavorable weather hampered convoy and supply traffic. Convoys on passage were compelled to put in to intermediate harbors.

With reference to my proposal for handing over further naval ferry barges to the Mediterranean, in Admiral, Black Sea 5269 A I (see War Diary 8 December) Group South wired:

"Re Admiral, Black Sea 5269 A I:

1. Agree to proposal. Send naval ferry barge numbers and date of transfer.
2. Assume that all the naval ferry barges are able to undertake a fairly long passage.
3. It is planned to transfer the 8 additional naval ferry barges in 2 separate journeys under Lieutenant (j.g.) Grabow (Special Duties).

Naval Group South Op. 742 Gkdos."

Naval Training Command received the following orders concerning this matter:

"Re Group South Op. 742 Gkdos.:

1. Apart from naval ferry barges F 308, 327, 330, 270 already intended for the Aegean, another



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8 barges of the 1st Landing Craft Flotilla are to be prepared for immediate transfer to the Mediterranean.

2. The following have been selected:

- a. F 322, 367, 369, 372 at present at Varna, work completed 18 December.
- b. Four naval ferry barges of the 1st Landing Craft Flotilla in complete state of readiness, at present used for supply traffic.
- c. Or in place of the ferry barges quoted under 2b): F 314, 315, 316, 363, if, including conversion, these can be ready for transfer sooner.

3. Naval Training Command is ordered:

- a. To convert (camouflage) naval ferry barges for the transfer to the Mediterranean.
- b. If necessary to withdraw 4 naval ferry barges from the 1st Landing Craft Flotilla from the supply traffic and transfer them to Varna.

4. Naval Training Command will report:

- a. Numbers of the naval ferry barges mentioned under 2b).
- b. When estimated ready to leave Varna, as soon as possible.

5. Additional note:

A sudden need for the naval ferry barges of the 1st Landing Craft Flotilla for supply purposes will have to be risked. In urgent cases, naval ferry barges from the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla may be used for supply and defense tasks if a request for them is made to Admiral, Black Sea.

Admiral, Black Sea 5306 A I."

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11 December, 1942

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

A reconnaissance was carried out over the eastern Black Sea. Apart from 2 M.T.B.s off Ghelenjik and slight coastal traffic, no reports of the enemy. According to a radio intercept report, in the evening 1 destroyer, 1 submarine, 1 mine-layer, 3 minesweepers, 3 patrol vessels and 3 M.T.B.s were identified off the central east coast, and an identical group in the south-eastern Black Sea. At 1730 a radio intercept report was received that a destroyer was in the southeastern Black Sea; other destroyers probably in the same area or off the central east coast.

Own Situation:

U 24, now 17 days at sea, received the following order via Commander, 30th U-Boat Flotilla:

"You are permitted to return, 48 hours' freedom of attack east of 40° E."

The equipment of steamer D 15, which ran aground in Ak Mechet Bay on 9 December, has been salvaged. The boat has been pumped out and towed to Sevastopol for repairs. Lighter No. 1357 has sprung a leak and cannot be towed with the resources at present available.

Convoys were resumed today now that the weather has improved.

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12 December, 1942

Simferopol.

Enemy Situation:

At 1026 a long-range reconnaissance plane reported: destroyer of the "Genevny" class, course west, medium speed, in grid square 7377. Otherwise only very slight activity of light enemy naval forces. Off the northern east coast a few patrol vessels and merchant ships close to the coast. Concentration of small vessels in the harbors of Ghelenjik and Tuapse. Two destroyers off the southern east coast, 1 of them off the central east coast during the afternoon. Furthermore 7 submarines, position unknown, were continuously intercepted, mainly central to western Black Sea. Slight activity off the northern and central coasts. Apart from 2 minelayers, 2 minesweepers and M.T.B.s, which had already been detected, nothing further to report.

Own Situation:

0905 Three Russian ground attack planes machine-gunned and bombed Anapa. Eight bombs fell near the mole, causing no damage. Our own defenses observed hits on 2 planes.

1247 The Air Force ferry proceeding from Kerch to Taman struck a mine in 45° 20' N, 36° 31.5' E and sank. Position about 1 mile outside the prescribed route. The ferry, which had been employed in the Kerch-Taman traffic for some time and was acquainted with the prescribed route which is clear of mines, apparently left it in order to shorten her passage. There was no evidence that the mine had been recently dropped. The FZ-Group was ordered to sweep the Kerch-Taman route on 13 December with towed loop gear. Until the completion of this task the route will be closed as a precautionary measure.

The first row of contact mines has been laid in the approach to Theodosia harbor (see War Diary 30 November).

According to the forecast, the weather in the eastern Black Sea during the next 24 hours should be calm. I have therefore ordered the 1st E-Boat Flotilla on the night of 12/13 December to carry out the operations assigned to them by Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5258 A I (see War Diary 8 December) against supply traffic between Tuapse and Sochi and which had had to be broken off owing to the weather.



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1200 Four boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla led by the Flotilla Commander put out from Ivan Baba.

As a result of sighting and D/F reports to the effect that at least 3 destroyers were in the eastern Black Sea, their task as yet not clear, the Italian E-Boat Flotilla was ordered to occupy a patrol line between Sarich Point and Yalta from 1800 until dawn.

Supply traffic Kerch-Temriuk had to be canceled today because ice had formed in Temriuk harbor.

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13 December, 1942

Simferopol

0630 The Italian E-boats put in to Yalta from the patrol line, occupied as ordered, between Sarich Point and Yalta. No enemy forces were sighted.

From 2000 during the past night 4 boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla occupied a patrol line between Tuapse and Sochi, focal point Sochi. No shipping or patrol activity identified. The flotilla reported planes to be very active along the coast in both directions; ostensibly transport planes. At 0140 the boats commenced their return passage from grid square 9325 and put in to Ivan Baba again at 0830.

U 24 reported that, owing to fuel conditions, she left the operational area at 0100 for her return passage to Constantza. No report of results available yet. The boat has been ordered through the 30th U-Boat Flotilla to return via air grid square 0215 and 5375 to point CS 1.

1100 Two Russian destroyers carried out a surprise attack on a German convoy consisting of the steamers "Zar Ferdinand" and "Oituz", escorted by 4 boats of the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla and the Rumanian torpedoboat "Smeul", between Gibrieni Bay and Burnas. Between 1100 and 1300 the convoy was fired at by Russian destroyers at a range of 4,000 to 8,000 meters. A smoke screen prevented our vessels from being hit. The torpedoboat "Smeul" returned their fire. The convoy ran in to Sulina again at 1630 without loss or damage.

Air reconnaissance and D/F reports identified 2 enemy groups of destroyers in the northwestern Black Sea in the course of the morning and the presence of further vessels, including a cruiser, was also surmised. One of the destroyer groups stood on and off south of Cape St. George until about 1600. Presumably the enemy forces will return to their bases at Poti and Batum with the approach of dusk. In this case, assuming a passage of 25 miles, the Russian formation will be north of Ince Burun at about 0200. I have therefore decided that the 1st E-Boat Flotilla should occupy a patrol line across the supposed enemy course on the 35th meridian and I have issued the following orders:

"1. Situation:

Four Russian destroyers in the northwestern Black Sea this morning. Presence of other

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vessels probable. It is assumed that the enemy forces are at present returning and will pass through the area between the Crimea and the Turkish coast tonight.

2. Orders:

- a. Four boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla will leave Ivan Baba at 1630 and will after 2000 occupy the patrol line in pairs between  $45^{\circ} 30' N$  and  $42^{\circ} 30' N$  on the 35th meridian.
- b. Task:  
Attack enemy forces from torpedoboats upwards.
- c. Boats will leave the line so as to be at Cape Meganom by dawn on 14 December when, keeping well into the coast, they will put in to Ivan Baba.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. A I dated 13 Dec."

In addition, the 50th U-Boat Flotilla received orders that U 24, at present returning to Constantza from the operational area near Pitsunda Point, was to operate against the enemy formation on its return passage.

- "1. Schöler will operate against Russian vessels returning from operations in the western Black Sea as far as fuel supplies allow.
2. Schöler will be constantly informed of positions intercepted by the Air Force or the D/F Station.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5358 A I."

U 24 has been informed of the E-boat operations, and the 1st E-Boat Flotilla of the return of U 24. The 1st E-Boat Flotilla has been forbidden anti-submarine operations.

For the protection of the south Crimean coast the Italian E-Boat Flotilla was ordered to occupy a patrol line between Sarich Point and Cape Ayu Dagh after 1800.

Survey of the situation:

The enemy has again succeeded in making a surprise sortie as far as the west coast. The clear aim of the operation was to attack German supplies between Constantza and Odessa. Two destroyer groups and probably a cruiser group detached in the east carried out the operation. The

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northern destroyer group encountered a German convoy escorted by inferior forces. Vigorous and skillful tactics might well have annihilated the entire convoy.

Since we were also unable to attack the enemy forces from the air owing to a lack of suitable planes, our forces had no effective counter-measures. This will encourage the Russians to repeat the operation. In my opinion the only method of countering these attacks now that my request, dated 2 December, for Air Force Staff, Crimea to increase air reconnaissance and to provide bombers has been refused, is by immediately laying the minefields proposed north and south of Fidonisi. I am therefore submitting the following request to Group South:

- "1. Further enemy attacks on German supplies off the western Black Sea must be expected, particularly since the enemy encountered no effective resistance during the last 2 sorties.
2. Since the surface forces available are insufficient for safeguarding our convoys against attacks by destroyers, the only way of protecting our supply traffic is by
  - a. adequate air reconnaissance and air cover,
  - b. protecting the shipping routes with flanking minefields.

Re 2a): Admiral, Black Sea's request for increased air reconnaissance from Air Force Staff, Crimea after the enemy sortie of 2 December, was unsuccessful since, with the present shortage of planes, it is impossible to increase the reconnaissance formations. The same applies to the request for the provision of bombers.

Re 2b): The laying of defensive minefields had already been ordered. The new situation calls for an alteration in priority however, i.e. the laying of flanking minefields against both surface forces and submarines must take priority over deep angle-patterned minefields.

3. Propose:
  - a. Alteration of Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 4860 A I. the sections mentioned below will be laid in the following order of priority: S 41, S 40, S 45, S 46, S 43.
  - b. Provide minefields with anti-sweeping devices insofar as materials are available or may be procured in time.

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4. Request consent of Group South.
5. Naval Training Command will immediately start making preparations for laying the minefields in accordance with para. 3.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. Chefs.  
115 A I."

I shall again approach Air Force Staff, Crimea for increased reconnaissance both over the eastern and over the western Black Sea, emphasizing today's experience of enemy operations.

The Kerch-Taman route has been reopened since the motor minesweepers swept no mines.

The torpedo net at Yalta has been relaid in double rows.

Commanding Admiral, Crimea reported that the Air Force Field Division, transferred to the Crimea to replace the 50th Infantry Division, is also to be employed on the Caucasus front. The transfer of the division will start on 15 December. In view of ice conditions already creating difficulties for the naval ferry barges between Kerch and Temriuk, transport operations in Kerch should be accelerated. I have therefore withdrawn my order for the transfer of 4 naval ferry barges of the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla to Sevastopol (see War Diary 8 December) in order that sufficient shipping may be available for the transport operation, especially as I have to remember that the barges of the 1st Landing Craft Flotilla (former "Blücher" barges) are in a state of total disrepair and may not stand up to new operations.

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14 December, 1942

Simferopol

- 0600 The 1st E-Boat Flotilla put in to Ivan Baba. Last night 4 of their boats put out in 2 groups and occupied a patrol line between 42° 30' N and 43° 30' N on the 35th meridian. No enemy forces were sighted.
- 0630 The Italian E-boats put in to Yalta again from the patrol line just off the south coast of the Crimea. No enemy forces sighted there either.

The Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza ascertained that the enemy forces returning from the western Black Sea had been in radio communication with Poti and Batum since 0500 and concluded that the formations had therefore already arrived in the eastern Black Sea. This view has been confirmed by air reconnaissance which sighted 1 destroyer, course 110°, grid square 9221, high speed, at 0815, 2 destroyers, course east, grid square 5372, medium speed, at 0845. The latter group was last identified by long-range reconnaissance in grid square 6372 at 1130. According to this the enemy groups will be in the eastern Black Sea this morning returning to their bases. At 1200, therefore, I countermanded my order for immediate operational readiness of E-boats and Italian E-boats.

According to D/F reports there are at present 11 Russian submarines at sea, 7 of them in the western and central Black Sea. I presume that this strikingly high figure may be attributed at least in part, to the release of submarines operating off the west coast.

After escorting the convoy which had been attacked to Sulina, the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla unsuccessfully carried out an anti-submarine operation between the mouth of the Danube and Fidonisi. Thereupon route Blue and route Red between Kilia and Bugaz were swept with Oropesa gear. No mines swept. A check-sweep was necessary since there was every likelihood that enemy destroyers operating in this area had laid mines.

Livelier activity of the Russian Air Force latterly. Bombs were dropped on Temriuk during the night of 14 December but no military objectives were damaged. Three bombs dropped on Kerch on the same night did no damage. Taman was also attacked and planes were observed dropping mines near the swept channel from Kerch to Taman.



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This attack on our supply ports for the Caucasus front shows the enemy's recognition of their importance; it may also indicate that he is aware of today's transportation of the Air Force Field Division.

On the first day's shipment of this division from Kerch to Taman the following were transported:

755 soldiers  
111 horses  
57 vessels  
67 tons of stores for the armed forces.

The report of U 24, now on her return passage, included the following details of her last operation:

1. Slight traffic off the Caucasus coast.
2. Enemy air reconnaissance in strength off Poti and Batum, moderate north of these bases.
3. Net barrage extending from north of Poti to Batum.
4. Torpedo miss against destroyer now explained.

At 0600 on 16 December U 24 will be at point CS 1 in order to pick up a convoy there and escort it in to Constantza. It is thought that it will take 14 days to overhaul her.

The second row of contact mines was laid in Theodosia harbor.

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15 December, 1942

Simferopol

At 1640 EET Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza identified a destroyer in the southeastern Black Sea. No further observations were submitted so that it may now be assumed with certainty that the formation operating on 13 December in the western Black Sea is back in port again.

Air reconnaissance only identified 2 patrol vessels south of Tuapse and off Ghelenjik.

No operations. Nothing to report.

The Coastal Battery Divisional Command, Constantza made available by General Unruh and the Command of Coastal Battery 621 were dissolved on 12 December. The battery "Tirpitz" has therefore become an independent battery.

(Signed) Witthoeft-Emden.

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SECURITY INFORMATION





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WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

16 - 31 DECEMBER, 1942

PG/31522b

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SECURITY INFORMATION



16 December, 1942

Simferopol

0750 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that on the afternoon of 15 December 1 destroyer, 2 submarine escorts and 6 submarines were intercepted in the southeastern Black Sea.

1115 Two planes attacked Yalta.

1158 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza intercepted 2 merchant ships 10 miles south of Gagri.

From the presence of enemy surface forces at the mouth of the Danube, Commander Convoys and Escorts foresaw the inevitable slowing-up of convoy traffic, since

- a. it might well indicate enemy minelaying operations which would make check-sweeps necessary,
- b. the poor striking capacity of most of the vessels in our convoys meant that no greater risk could be run without a destroyer escort.

My attitude is as follows:

1. The primary task of the Navy is to bring through important convoys with supplies for the armed forces etc. This task has to be carried out with the resources so far available in this area.
2. The risk of losses will have to be taken since it is impossible to provide absolute protection against attack by submarines or surface forces owing to lack of forces.
3. Our task is to keep risk of losses down to a minimum by planning the operations of available resources. For this purpose it is necessary
  - a. to accelerate the laying of new flanking minefields,
  - b. to direct all northbound and southbound convoys via the coastal route when the ship's draught permits, bearing in mind the fact that the danger of submarines may be greater,
  - c. to employ Rumanian destroyers primarily as escorts for valuable Crimean and Bosphorus convoys or for deep-draught steamers unable to proceed by the coastal route,





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- d. to plan operations of Air Reconnaissance Group 125 in cooperation with Commander, Convoys and Escorts.

In so doing it should be remembered that previous experience has shown that enemy sorties - because of the long approach and return passage (about 1200 miles in all) destroyers and torpedoboats only - take place only when general weather conditions are calm and settled.

Air reconnaissance is primarily for valuable Crimean and Bosphorus convoys and ships unable to use the coastal route. Furthermore, on the day before the sailing of such convoys an exhaustive reconnaissance of the eastern Black Sea and a reconnaissance of Poti and Batum harbors should be attempted.

The surprise sortie of Russian naval forces on 13 December led me to repeat my request to Air Force Staff, Crimea for increased air reconnaissance since events had shown that:

1. Increased reconnaissance was also necessary in the western Black Sea, hence the need for the allocation of additional forces to Group 125.
2. Very close cooperation between Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea and Group 125 was necessary in order that air reconnaissance might coincide with the sailing date of convoys. I therefore requested that Group 125 be directed accordingly.

Air Force Staff, Crimea replied that the increased allocation of reconnaissance planes was still out of the question. The shortage of fuel and lubricating oil had repeatedly forced them to restrict air reconnaissance.

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17 December, 1942

Simferopol

- 0825 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported only slight naval activity off the central east coast where 2 destroyers were intercepted, also 5 submarines, 2 of them between the western and central Black Sea.
- 2000 Main Naval D/F Station reported that according to radio traffic a destroyer was probably identified off the central east coast.
- 2246 Main Naval D/F Station reported that the destroyer earlier in the southeastern Black Sea was proceeding northward and was in radio communication with Tuapse.
- The following picture emerged from air reconnaissance:
- 0840 Approximately 55 small vessels (boats) in Ghelenjik.
- 0910 Three coastal vessels and single boats in Sochi.
- 0930 One merchant ship, about 3 coastal vessels and single boats in Sukhum.
- 0945 One merchant ship of about 4,000 tons, course 170°, high speed, approximately 10 miles southwest of Ochomchiri.
- 0950 Two merchant ships of 1,500 tons each, 1 mine-sweeper and 2 guard boats, course 300°, moderate speed, off Sukhum.
- 1320 Seven miles southwest of Ochomchiri, 2 tankers of 5,000 tons each, 1 guard boat and 4 anti-submarine vessels, course 310°.
- 1025 Four boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla were ordered to put out at 1200 and to advance into the area between Tuapse and Sochi.

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18 December, 1942

Simferopol

- 0915 The 1st E-Boat Flotilla again put in to Ivan Baba. Hope of encountering one of the convoys reported was not fulfilled. According to dead reckoning an encounter should have been possible. The flotilla only encountered smaller vessels. S 28 sank a lighter of 500 tons; 2 boats fired unsuccessfully, they had surface runners and circle runners respectively, which passed a few meters off the bow of S 28.
- 0900- Off Cape Khersonese a Russian plane dropped 3  
0915 bombs and machine-gunned 2 harbor defense vessels from Sevastopol. No damage.
- 1345 Bombs dropped by 2 planes on Anapa caused no damage.

The day's air reconnaissance reported only very slight coastal traffic. Caucasus harbors were not examined.

From radio traffic in the Tuapse area, Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza identified a formation of 2 destroyers and 3 patrol vessels off the central east coast.

Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes reported that Port Commander 24 and 140 men have been transferred to Balagarechka, 10 km. south of Nalchik, for local defense purposes. On 13 December Port Commander 25, in action near Elista, suffered 5 casualties and 1 man badly wounded when the concrete shelter collapsed. German training, he stated, was very much restricted by necessary duties connected with supplies and the building of fortifications for local defense as well as other army duties. Refusal to perform these duties was out of the question in view of the general military situation.

In the autumn Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes and his Port Commanders had been brought as close to the front as possible as the Army had expected soon to be at Makhach Kala. In view of the muddy season they had had to take the precaution of always having the Naval Shore Commander close to the advancing army. When the advance was halted it was no longer possible to withdraw the Naval Shore Commander, firstly because of the fuel situation, and secondly because the Army was forced to draw more and more on the units of Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes in its operational area, for defense tasks. Thus Port Commander 25 is now in the main defense line in order to occupy the concrete emplacement.

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There is, naturally, the danger that these measures will weaken the Naval Shore Commander's future operational efficiency on the Caspian Sea. Conditions on the front at 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks) make claims on the naval units inevitable. Army Group A has, however, been advised that these naval units can only be put to a very restricted use owing to their limited equipment, lack of heavy arms and of systematic training on land, the very slight schooling of officers and P.O.s in land warfare and the lower stamina of the personnel. Indeed, according to Army standards, only a small proportion of the Port Commander's personnel is fighting fit. The Army Group has been requested to stress this fact to the divisions to which the Port Commanders are being subordinated.

Intelligence Officer, Black Sea has been subordinated by Group South to Admiral, Black Sea for disciplinary purposes, while the Special Naval Operations Units will be subordinate to the Intelligence Officer for special duties and disciplinary purposes.

At approximately 2400 on 17 December FR 2 sighted a surfaced submarine about 8 miles north of Sulina. Supported by "Hanten" the boat was attacked with depth charges. With the approach of daylight an extensive patch of oil was detected. Wreckage was also salvaged. The ground line between the FR-boats became entangled. I have issued orders for a diver to examine the place of sinking where the water is 50 meters deep.

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19 December, 1942

Simferopol

The day's air reconnaissance revealed traffic and harbor movements off the east coast of the Caucasus of 10 medium-sized merchant ships, 18 smaller freighters and 17 coastal vessels. One cruiser, 1 large destroyer and 2 destroyers were also identified at sea.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza ascertained that the large destroyer "Charkov" with 2 destroyers was probably in the Tuapse area.

Port Commander, Kerch reported that at 0640 near Eltigen 2 naval ferry barges struck mines; 1 naval ferry barge sank.

Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla added later that 4 naval ferry barges were proceeding from Kerch to the south. The degaussing equipment of the 2 ferry barges damaged or lost was out of order. The 2 preceding ferry barges had just passed the spot where the accident occurred unharmed. The wreck of ferry barge F 538 is about 100 miles west of the fairway buoy. The second ferry barge F 536 only had a slight leak and was able to be towed in. Of F 538's crew 1 man was rescued alive, 1 man was seriously wounded and the rest of the crew of 13 is either killed or missing.

Port Commander, Kerch has temporarily closed the route to Cape Takil. It is to be swept by the FZ-Group.

1000 The 1st E-Boat Flotilla will make a sortie into the Tuapse-Sochi area and proceed as far south as the radius of action will permit in order to try and intercept shipping south of Sochi if possible. The flotilla will leave at 1200.

1245- Several planes in waves over and near Yalta.  
1315

A gun crew on the mole at Yalta observed several splashes in our mined area. Mines were probably dropped.

1245 U 9 put out from Constantza on operations.

Bombs were dropped at Anapa during the morning. No damage was reported. At 2230 M.T.B.s reported south of Anapa.

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20 December, 1942

Simferopol

During the night of 19/20 December Russian planes attacked Yalta, Ivan Baba and Theodosia. Yalta and Theodosia were simultaneously shelled from the sea. The attack was probably the work of the large destroyer "Charkov" and the destroyers which had been reported at sea during the day. A motor tug was set alight and burned out in Theodosia harbor. Otherwise no damage identified.

When the alarm was given, the Italian E-boats immediately put out from Yalta in search of the enemy that had shelled the harbor. They occupied a patrol line 15 miles off the coast between Ayu Dagh and Yalta. Nothing was sighted, however. During the morning the Italian E-boats put in to Yalta again.

The sortie of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla was unsuccessful since the thrust bearing of the middle engine corroded and the boat could only proceed at 3 to 10 knots owing to the violent vibrations of the midship shaft.

On their return passage, approximately 50 miles southwest of Novorossisk, the flotilla encountered 2 destroyers on an easterly course obviously returning from a bombardment of the Crimean coast. The flotilla did not attack since responsibility for the independent passage of S 72 could not be taken.

1120-  
1145 A convoy off Balaklava, consisting of 4 naval ferry barges and ships in tow, was attacked from the air. Apart from some machine-gun hits no damage was caused. One torpedo passed right astern of a ship. The convoy put in to Sevastopol.

1300 Several bombs were dropped by 4 Russian planes on Yalta. Three boats of the Harbor Defense Flotilla were hit and sank. One of the Italian E-boats undergoing a refit received a slight hit and was beached. The commander of the coastal station, Lieutenant (s.g.) Gartschuk, was killed. The Port Commander and several soldiers were wounded.

The day's air reconnaissance reported 16 freighters of 1,000 to 7,000 tons in the Caucasus harbors or at sea. In addition 4 small freighters and 33 coastal vessels were identified. Finally 2 destroyers were reported at sea at 1038.

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Kerch Strait has not yet been reopened since Port Commander, Kerch thought it advisable to continue the check-sweeps because aerial mines are suspected.

Since, according to the above reports, the presence of enemy forces was still suspected, as also, in view of the moonlight nights, the possibility of the attack on the coast being repeated, the Italian E-boats were ordered to occupy a patrol line between Cape Aitodor and Ayu Dagh during the night.

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21 December, 1942

Simferopol

The Italian E-boats re-entered harbor this morning after unsuccessful operations.

Off the Caucasus coast and out to sea air reconnaissance reported 14 freighters of 8,000 to 8,500 tons and 18 to 20 coastal vessels; at Poti there were 1 battleship, 2 heavy cruisers and 1 large destroyer.

Air Force Staff, Crimea reported that by means of increased air operations at sea, the Russians were endeavoring to interfere with German long-range reconnaissance.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza ascertained that the large destroyer "Charkov" and 3 destroyers were believed to have put in to harbor yesterday evening. In the afternoon 1 M.T.B. and 1 destroyer, the latter probably in the Tuapse area, were intercepted.

During the morning a report was received from Port Commander, Yalta that one to three ships on a westerly course were sighted on the horizon off the coast near Alushta. Type and nationality could not be distinguished. Since they could not have been German ships the report was passed on as "Most Immediate, Most Immediate" to all. Neither the morning nor the afternoon reconnaissance provided any further confirmation of this formation.

Port Commander 16 in Novorossisk reported that according to reports from gunnery observation posts 10 vessels were off Cape Idokopas at 1135 this morning.

Since, according to reliable intelligence from agents, a Russian landing at Anapa-Novorossisk might take place on 22 December, 3 boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla were ordered to occupy a reconnaissance line between Utrish Point and Banka Mariya. The boats will re-enter Ivan Baba one hour before dawn. If the enemy is sighted a "Most Immediate" report will be sent. Owing to increasingly heavy seas the boats had to return to Ivan Baba only 2 hours after they had left.

Anapa was repeatedly bombed during the night of 20/21 December. No damage was caused.

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Naval Shore Commander, Korxes reported that further units were to be used for army tasks in order to free army units for combat operations. Operations concern:

1. Occupation of the localities Baksan-Talbyllim, Nizh-Baksan, Werch-Baksan, Kystyube, between 20 and 30 km. southwest of Gundelen.
2. Defense of Psygansu, 20 km. southeast of Nalchik, behind the fighting line.
3. Defense of the valley of Babugent and Kashkau, 40 km. south of Nalchik. An Armenian battalion under German command there.
4. Transfer re 1) to begin on 21 December, re 2) and 3) on 25 December.

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22 December, 1942

Simferopol

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza was unable to identify any naval activity. In the eastern Black Sea 3 submarine escorts were intercepted. Ten submarines, 6 between the central and western Black Sea, were also identified.

Two planes carried out reconnaissance over the southeastern Black Sea. The Caucasus coast was surveyed, in particular the harbors of Ghelenjik, Tuapse and Sochi. Nothing to report. One plane carried out reconnaissance over the central Black Sea. No sighting reports. Reconnaissance very greatly restricted owing to the weather.

0810 According to the reports of an Army Observation Post, Port Commander, Novorossisk stated that a tug with 2 large barges, presumably 1 tanker with 2 destroyers and 2 gunboats as escort vessels, were proceeding from the south to Ghelenjik Bay. Two E-boats were dispatched to meet the convoy.

1300 Since according to several reliable reports an enemy landing is anticipated off the coast at Anapa and Novorossisk on 22 December, 3 boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla were ordered to occupy a patrol line at 1600 in air grid squares 65265, 7535 and 8557. Should no enemy be sighted then stand on and off in 65265 and 7535. If enemy sighted send "Most Immediate" report. Attack if target valuable. Break off operation in case of fog. Put in to Ivan Baba at daybreak.

The fairway from Kerch to Cape Takil was reopened after the FZ-group had ascertained that no fresh mines had been dropped by the Russians. Naval ferry barge No. 538, which struck mines on 19 December near Eltigen, struck a mine outside the fairway.

During the afternoon Ivan Baba had 2 air raid warnings. The enemy was repelled by barrage fire.

Three air raids on Anapa: 9 bombs in all, buildings damaged, 1 fishing vessel sunk.

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23 December, 1942

Simferopol

0515 The 3 boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla put in to Ivan Baba again. The enemy was not sighted.

No sighting reports of interest from the Air Force. The Caucasus coast and the harbors of Sochi, Ghelenjik and Tuapse were surveyed. One plane carried out reconnaissance over the central Black Sea. No sighting reports there.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza identified a destroyer at noon on 23 December off Batum. Six more submarines were intercepted, 5 of them between the central and western Black Sea. Lively activity of small vessels in the coastal area. Eight patrol vessels, 11 minelayers and 14 minesweepers were intercepted.

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24 December, 1942

Simferopol

On 24 December Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported strikingly slight naval radio traffic. At 1945 2 destroyers were intercepted in the southeastern Black Sea, 3 submarines between the central and western Black Sea.

Air reconnaissance reported that the harbors Ochemchiri, Sukhum, Sochi, Tuapse and Ghelenjik had been surveyed. Heavier traffic from south to north. Focal point between 41° 30' N and 42° 30' N. No larger enemy vessels identified. A single reconnaissance of the central Black Sea was carried out by one plane. No sighting reports. The Russians used fighters in an attempt to prevent the reconnaissance. Two covering sweeps with towed loop gear were carried out over the buoyed route in Kerch Strait. No mines were swept.

At Kerch a Russian fishing vessel ran straight into the Pavlovski minofield at 45° 18' N, 36° 39.5' E, and sank.

1600

In accordance with the Führer's orders a consultation began between Army High Command, Quartermaster General and Admiral, Black Sea, at the latter's H.Q., regarding supplies for Army Group A across Kerch Strait. Major General Zutavern, representing C-in-C Army, presided. The following took part:  
Commanding Admiral, Crimea,  
Representative of Chief of Transport Organization,  
Representative of General, Combined Operations,  
Representative of Quartermaster General, Out-Station, South,  
Naval Liaison Officer, Army High Command.  
Representatives of Army Group A have not yet appeared owing to the weather.

With regard to the Navy, the discussions concerned the expansion of the harbors of Sevastopol, Kerch, Taman, Senaya (Taman Bay) and Temriuk and the provision of all available means of transport in order that supply traffic across Kerch Strait might start as soon as possible. The provision of transports presents no difficulties. The railway on the Crimea, harbor installations for loading and unloading and, above all, transportation from the harbors on the Taman Peninsula, are the bottlenecks.

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25 December, 1942

Simferopol

- 0000 On 25 December a teletype was received from Quartermaster General, Army High Command that the Führer had decided that from now on transshipment via Kerch must achieve maximum efficiency. All possible means of transport are immediately to be placed at the disposal of the supply organization and assembled. Army Group A is to be in charge of the rapid expansion of the harbor. From 30 December at least 2 train-loads must be transshipped and dispatched daily.
- I passed on the Führer's order to Chief, Supply and Transport, Black Sea, to the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping, Bucharest and to the 1st and 3rd Landing Craft Flotillas and ordered the Chief, Supply and Transport to dispatch all available motor tugs and lighters to Kerch. The 1st and 3rd Landing Craft Flotillas were likewise ordered to send naval ferry barges not already in use in Kerch Strait to Kerch.
- Air reconnaissance sighted nothing of importance off the Caucasus coast. The Caucasus ports themselves were not surveyed. Nor was anything sighted over the central Black Sea.
- Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported no movement of naval forces. Three submarines were intercepted, 2 of them between the central and western Black Sea.
- 1505 A formation comprising naval ferry barges Nos. 176 and 341 encountered a large Russian submarine in 45° 16' N, 32° 37' E. Nine depth charges were dropped. No visible success. Position about 8 miles southeast of Tarkhankutzi. This shows how quickly the Russian submarines follow up German convoy activity. Latterly several convoys have been making for Cape Tarkhankutzi.
- 1630 An Italian E-boat put out in order to stand guard on and off Yalta during the night. She will put in again at daybreak.
- Planes flew over Anapa without dropping bombs.
- Two Russian M.T.B.s fired at one another during the night.
- The conference regarding increased supply traffic for Army Group A, at which Major General Zutavern presided, continued throughout the day.

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26 December, 1942

Simferopol

- 0745 Air reconnaissance identified a merchant ship of about 5,000 tons in air grid square 0317 East 44, a destroyer and 4 M.T.B.s, course 320°.
- 0856 Four destroyers reported in air grid square 0317 East 44, course 320°, medium speed.
- 1105 Air reconnaissance reported 4 destroyers in air grid square 8369, course 280°. Air Commander South, long-range reconnaissance, stated that these forces were being shadowed.
- 1345 A report was received that the shadowing had to be broken off owing to a defective engine. The enemy was last sighted at 1230 in grid square 8371, course 270°, in open cruising formation.
- 1259 I issued orders to Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea to recall the convoys immediately. Two convoys proceeding directly from Constantza to Sevastopol are primarily affected.
- 2200 Final report received that the convoys which had been at sea had all put in to port again.
- Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza identified the following activity:
- 1300 One destroyer and 1 torpedoboat in the south-eastern Black Sea.
- 1635 A bearing of 48° was obtained on a submarine from Mamaia.
- 1724 One unidentified vessel at sea.
- 2100 According to an inaccurate bearing another destroyer was in the southern Black Sea.
- All the reports suggest that the Russian Fleet is attempting a renewed sortie into the western Black Sea.
- 1258 Naval Shore Commanders, Crimea and Caucasus were ordered to maintain increased readiness.
- During the morning I was in conference with General Zander (Air Force) regarding the possibility of increased air cover for the protection of convoys in the Black Sea. General Zander maintained that the situation on the eastern front, particularly near Stalingrad,

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prevented any withdrawal of the forces of the 4th Air Force. Weather permitting, reconnaissance was flown daily with the forces available in the eastern, central and western Black Sea - in the west by Reconnaissance Group 125. The reinforcement of these reconnaissance forces was desirable, he said, but they must be provided from outside the area.

I arranged with General Zander to send a request via Group South to Naval High Command to find out whether planes could be withdrawn from Norway or Germany.

With reference to cooperation between Air Force Staff, Crimea, Reconnaissance Group 125 and the Navy, it was agreed that a wide measure of cooperation had been sanctioned and had so far always been maintained. General Zander considered the use of bombers for Black Sea operations to be out of the question since the Air Force was strained to the utmost in all sectors.

For his part he called for the fighter cover in the Crimea to be reinforced in order that the Kerch-Taman area might be better protected. He did not, however, overrate the value of fighters for Kerch since the enemy's approach from the sea does not allow sufficient warning to ensure a prompt take-off.

There was, he continued, a Rumanian fighter Staffel at Kerch on regular operations. The mere presence of the fighters was valuable primarily because it made the enemy far more wary.

It was impossible to station a fighter Staffel in the vicinity of Sevastopol because there was no landing ground there for fighters. The nearest one at Sarabus was too far away for the fighters to be effectively employed should Sevastopol sustain an air attack.

General Zander also thought it essential for Sevastopol to be provided with a heavy anti-aircraft detachment. A request for the detachment has already been submitted by General Zutavern. Commanding Admiral, Crimea had himself also made a direct request.

The result of the conference may be summarized as follows: the available air forces are being strained to the utmost to satisfy the demands made on them, they are inadequate to provide an exhaustive survey of the Black Sea.

It should, in particular, be pointed out that 1 reconnaissance plane is insufficient to

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reconnoiter the central Black Sea. Since with the forces at present in the area there can be no hope of improvement, a decision at top level should be taken as to whether the threat to supplies for Army Group A could be diminished by drawing planes from another area.

This situation has been unequivocally brought to General Zutavern's notice, making the risk entailed in transportations across the Black Sea more than clear.

Negotiations with General Zutavern were concluded as far as was possible without the representatives of Army Group A who had been prevented by the weather from coming to Simferopol by air.

Plans for the Navy are as follows:  
450 tons of merchandise are daily to leave Sevastopol by train to Kerch, 200 tons are to be transshipped by naval ferry barge direct to Taman.

For Kerch and Kamish Burun 2,300 tons will have to be transshipped to Kerch or the Taman Peninsula daily.

Five steamers of approximately 1,000 tons will be needed to carry about 7,000 tons monthly from the west coast of the Black Sea direct to Temriuk.

Unloading facilities at Taman and Temriuk are at present about 675 tons daily.

Within the next few days the Army is requested to commence transshipping 900 tons daily at first, via Kerch. As far as shipping is concerned this should present no difficulty.

The Navy's requests for the expansion of the harbors Taman, Senaya and Temriuk have been handed over to General Zutavern. He and his staff are to inspect the harbors within the next few days.

Thirty naval ferry barges must be made ready for transportation duties from Sevastopol to Taman, i.e. an average of 3 loaded barges must leave Sevastopol daily, returning within 8-10 days.

In addition to 30 Siebel ferries and 5 combined operations landing craft, 7 tugs and 21 lighters are intended for Kerch.

This shipping will be put to gradual use in proportion to the growing facilities for unloading in the eastern ports.

The Navy cannot guarantee that Kerch Strait will be kept free of ice since there are no ice-

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breakers for shallow water available in the Black Sea and those tugs which are available have not been reinforced against ice. The icebreaker "Solombola" has a draught of 5 meters and she is only at 50% efficiency because her engine and boiler installations are in a bad state of disrepair. She cannot be considered for Taman Bay.

At the earliest possible opportunity the Navy will investigate whether it is possible to repair Akhtari harbor, reported to be completely destroyed. This would be of great advantage because Akhtari is a railway junction. The railway can be repaired with comparative speed.

The weather situation deteriorated during the last few days. A wind force up to 7 was to be expected at sea making operations impossible for the 1st E-Boat Flotilla. The weather also prevented the departure of naval ferry barges for Temriuk.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported that 2 Russian bombers raided Anapa at 1100. No damage done.

- 1900 M.T.B.s were sighted close inshore. At the same time planes using the M.T.B. transmission frequency made their appearance to deceive us.
- 2035 Two M.T.B.s were 1 km. off the harbor.



27 December, 1942

Simferopol

0040 I had instructed Chief, Operations Division of Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea and Chief, Supply and Transport to come to the Crimea in motor minesweepers in order to discuss all the necessary preparations for supplies for Army Group A. On the afternoon of 26 December the officers boarded the motor minesweepers R 164 and R 165 respectively and put out from Constantza. At 2100 on 26 December a radiogram was received from Chief, Operations Division of Commander, Convoys and Escorts to the effect that from 0100 the boats would occupy a patrol line at a distance of 60 miles west to southwest off Khersonese. It was planned to put in to Sevastopol at dawn.

Since it was not the 2 motor minesweepers' task to reconnoiter against a possible enemy stationed in the western Black Sea, at 0040 I issued orders that they should abandon patrol and make for Sevastopol by the shortest route which would be via the northern route. The boats did not receive the radiogram promptly since the coastal wave was overloaded. However, the boats did not sight the enemy and arrived at Sevastopol at 0800.

0800 Chief, Supply and Transport, Black Sea and Chief, Operations Division, Naval Training Command arrived at Sevastopol aboard R 164 and R 165 for discussions with Admiral, Black Sea regarding Army Group A's supply problems.

Two Italian naval ferry barges lay overnight in Yalta roads for the protection of the harbor and put in again at dawn.

There were no further reports this morning on the destroyers sighted yesterday since, owing to the danger of icing, air reconnaissance was not flown this morning. I have therefore advised Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea to continue detaining the convoys. Unfortunately it involves a series of important convoys, including the transfer of several steamers from Constantza to Sevastopol. But until there is information on the 4 destroyers proceeding westward, the suspension of convoys will have to be maintained.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza sent only one report at 0845 according to which 1 destroyer and 2 patrol vessels were off Tuapse.

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1130 Air reconnaissance identified the 4 destroyers in air grid square 2446, course 20°. The coast was informed at once since the course led straight to the southwestern tip of the Crimea. Later, however, nothing more was seen of the destroyers. Air reconnaissance had to be broken off owing to the weather.

There was anxiety in the course of the day on account of a convoy which had left early despite the ban. It comprised 2 naval ferry barges, the tug "Kiel" and the lighter "Saone". The convoy was proceeding to Kerch. Having been notified of its departure I ordered immediate return of the convoy, failing which it should put in to Balaklava. This did not succeed since there was interference on the lines to Sevastopol and Balaklava and the convoy had no radio equipment. The Port Commander, Yalta was therefore directed to stop the convoy off Yalta. He succeeded in the late afternoon. The convoy put in to Yalta in the evening but, owing to a broken cable, the lighter "Saone" ran aground off the harbor entrance to Yalta. As a result of this incident I have issued orders that all Port Commanders are in future to be notified of the suspension of convoys so that no convoys will leave port at such a time, and convoys on passage will make for the nearest port.

The sharp spell of cold from the north has enforced the removal of ships and lighters from Nikolaiev. Chief, Supply and Transport has ordered their transfer to Odessa. Shipping to Nikolaiev is expected to stop.

Mariupol reported that the harbor was frozen over.

Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes reported that the vessels set aside for the new escort duties have taken over their tasks.

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28 December, 1942

Simferopol

0820 According to a report received from Naval Radio Station, Bugaz, Russian destroyers shelled Burnas. The destroyers stood well off the coast. The bombardment ended at 0915. Two destroyers were sighted in the fog proceeding southward.

Clearly on the occasion of this sortie the enemy acted differently from previous operations. He did not advance into the western Black Sea on the night of 26/27 but, as air reconnaissance at noon on 27 December revealed, he remained in the central Black Sea in order to start making for the western Black Sea coast on the following night. The enemy may quite possibly have heard about the convoys which had left Constantza making directly for Sevastopol and was trying to intercept them. Only after this had failed did he bombard Bugaz as a diversionary measure.

The way in which the enemy sortie of 26 December has since developed into a thrust into the western Black Sea is but a further opportunity of pointing out to General Zutavern, in a survey of the situation, the difficulties caused by being totally unable to put up any opposition to enemy surface forces threatening our supplies. Furthermore, all the convoy traffic has been idle for 48 hours. It can only be allowed to proceed again when it is fairly certain that the enemy has withdrawn.

1525 The 4 destroyers were identified by air reconnaissance in air grid square 1525, mean course 140°, high speed. The shadowing had unfortunately to be broken off owing to poor visibility and rain setting in. This report showed, however, that the enemy was returning to his bases.

1525 Italian E-boats, Yalta were ordered to occupy a patrol line in air grid squares 3445 and 3325, weather permitting, from 1800 onwards.

1532 Likewise, weather permitting, the 1st E-Boat Flotilla was ordered to occupy a patrol line from air grid square 5459 to 5359 from 1900 onwards. Admiral, Black Sea had received no record of the weather situation at the time of the order since telephone communications with the coast were interrupted at the time. According to the forenoon report there was the possibility that the winds might drop. But at

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the time when the Italian E-boats and the 1st E-Boat Flotilla were to put out, the sea was so heavy that operations were out of the question. Consequently the Russian destroyers were able to continue their outward passage without encountering any interference.

1609 Assuming that the enemy would continue his passage back to the southeastern ports, suspension of convoy traffic was canceled as from 29 December. Orders were given, however, to observe increased radio vigilance, since convoys might have to be recalled at short notice.

1620 Main Naval D/F Station reported the destroyers in air grid square 2440 and at 2310 in air grid square 4320. Commanding Admiral, Light Forces was aboard the vessels. This was regarded as a confirmation of the return of the Russian destroyers to their base.

Commander, 30th U-Boat Flotilla directed U 9 to operate on the formation's approach routes toward the south should they consider themselves in a favorable position.

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29 December, 1942

Simferopol

- 0852 Since there are no further reports of the enemy I have canceled the order for increased readiness issued to Naval Shore Commanders, Crimea and Caucasus on 26 December.
- 1000 The events connected with the sortie of Russian destroyers have constrained me to send the following survey of the situation to Group South:
- "1. According to air reconnaissance and D/F reports enemy on return passage on 28 December. Increased readiness therefore canceled. Convoy traffic released.
  2. Air reconnaissance and D/F reports during the course of the sortie, also shelling of Burnas, present a sufficiently clear picture of the whole operation. According to this the enemy may in future be expected to remain at sea for several days. Thus previous assumption that sorties to the west coast will be completed within 24 hours no longer valid.
  3. Despite three sorties in December no German countermeasures of any kind have been possible. Weather conditions prevented the 1st E-Boat Flotilla and the Italian E-boats from operating on 28 December. The enemy will, therefore, unquestionably be encouraged to make further sorties, so increasing the risks, particularly to convoys from Constantza to Sevastopol. This will slow down sea transportation because it will be essential to withdraw convoys at the slightest sign of such sorties.
  4. The reinforcement of the fighter defenses against air reconnaissance at Poti and Batum should be noted. The war diary of U 24 also reported strong air measures as soon as valuable shipping appeared in the south-eastern area."
- 1300 and 1710 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza again reported destroyers, also the Commanding Admiral, Light Forces at sea. Position presumably south-eastern Black Sea. At 1720 and 2150 a torpedo-boat was sighted off Batum and one off Poti. Thus the enemy seems to have entered port on the evening of 29 December at the earliest.

Air reconnaissance did not intercept the formation again that day. It was to some extent

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hampered by the weather.

An Army observation post near Novorossisk has for some days sent reports of shipping at Ghelenjik. The following report was received today:

- 0535: 1 medium, 1 small freighter escorted by 20 to 30 small craft proceeding from the southeast to Ghelenjik.
- 1000: 1 freighter off Ghelenjik Bay on southerly course.
- 1300: 1 larger ship with 2 escort vessels leaving Ghelenjik.
- 1510: 1 freighter of 1,000 to 1,300 tons with 7 escort boats, approximately 5 miles southeast of Ghelenjik.

Lively traffic of small vessels identified as before off Ghelenjik, only active by day, however. During their last operations E-boats did not identify traffic of any kind in this area at night.

1955 Novorossisk harbor was shelled by an M.T.B.

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30 December, 1942

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1100 The Führer's order for more supplies to be sent to Army Group A via the Crimea and the halting of shipping to Nikolaiev have created a new situation. As a result the main convoy traffic has now been switched from Constantza and the Danube to Sevastopol and Kerch. The available escort forces will be fully occupied. Russian submarines operating close inshore prove the greatest menace to convoys. Convoys proceeding to the Crimea must therefore avoid the coast and constantly vary their route.

The changed situation also calls for a change in present minelaying plans. Naval Training Command, Rumania has been instructed accordingly.

1150 A message has been received from Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A that in order to take certain tactical decisions Commanding General, Army Group A is in most urgent need of information regarding the mined channels in the approaches to Kerch Strait and in Kerch Strait itself. It is also wondered whether Russian vessels possibly wishing to land on the east coast of the Sea of Azov would be able to get through. The reply stated that Kerch Strait was thoroughly mined by both Russian and German mines and that the present channel was guarded by a German minefield. It was added that Russian minefields lay off Temriuk, Achuevski, Akhtari, Kamishevatskaya and Dolganskaya. It was thought impossible for Russian vessels to get through Kerch Strait in order to make a landing on the east coast of the Sea of Azov, particularly since Kerch Strait was well protected by guns.

1230 U-boat operations against Russian naval forces and shipping have so far proved unsuccessful.

In view of the present general situation and of Russian opportunities for interfering with our supplies, U-boat operations against warships continue to be the main task. Sinking merchant tonnage off the central east coast can only bring very slight relief to the Caucasus front. I therefore consider that the U-boats should be transferred back to the area off the harbors of Poti and Batum, if only in the hope of to some extent tying down enemy naval activity. A situation report to this effect has been sent to Group South.

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U 9 has been ordered to proceed at once to the operational area off Poti, to remain there until her return to base, and to attack large merchant vessels and warships from torpedoboats upwards.

1925 . Group South replied that my attempt to concentrate on the Russian Fleet ran counter to Naval Staff's last directive. My orders would not be canceled, however, since the new operational area lay close to that chosen by Naval Staff and the wording of the task did not affect the sense of Naval Staff's last directive.

1600 The consultations in Kerch on supplies for Army Group A, conducted by General Zutavern in command of transport troops, were continued and led to the following results. Railway facilities across the Crimea are at present still so limited that the Navy will have to continue carrying out further transport operations especially as supplies for the 4th Air Force have now also to be undertaken. This means that in addition to a freight of 500 tons by rail, daily transshipment from Sevastopol must be increased to 600 tons by lighter and 100 tons by naval ferry barge. This average daily freight of 700 tons carried by small vessels must be transported along the south coast of the Crimea direct to the harbors east of Kerch Strait. It is further planned to carry fuel supplies by way of the harbors of Genichesk, Temriuk and Taman as soon as ice conditions allow. I accordingly plan to leave the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla in Kerch and the 1st Landing Craft Flotilla in Sevastopol for the time being and both Flotilla Commands will be responsible for all the naval ferry barges present in their respective ports. Transportation across Kerch Strait must for the time being be primarily conducted by naval ferry barges and Siebel ferries until sufficient lighters are available in Kerch.

1945 Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes reported that, owing to the withdrawal of the 1st Panzer Army, the 4th Naval Motor Transport Detachment would have to stand by ready to move away the Naval Shore Command. The Army was ordered to withdraw on the afternoon of 30 December and this was already taking place.

The 4th Naval Motor Transport Detachment is therefore now at the disposal of the Naval Shore Commander.

2240 Air Force Staff, Crimea reported that the day's reconnaissance over the southeastern Black Sea had yielded no sighting reports. Harbor reconnaissance was prevented by the weather. Coastal reconnaissance identified 1 freighter and 2 patrol vessels.



31 December, 1942

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- 1015 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported a destroyer in the Sochi area.
- 1150 A consultation with the commander of "Ship 19", Lieutenant (s.g.) Wolters, took place. It is at present intended to use "Ship 19" as an anti-submarine vessel. She will be attached to convoys with the independent task of chasing any submarines that appear. The convoy is therefore merely a means to an end. Using the ship as a convoy leader is out of the question. This plan is based on the following considerations. All Russian submarines, which have so far made an appearance in the western Black Sea, have been submerged. They have only attacked with torpedoes. Only once, west of the Bosphorus, have they been known to attack with gunfire. If the ship were assigned to this area her presence could not be kept secret for long. Moreover there are political difficulties with Turkey to be considered. Freedom of action on the main convoy routes only offers moderate prospects of success since the ship would soon be recognized as a "Q" ship. The focal point of U-boat warfare is centered off the west coast of the Black Sea and off the Crimean coast. This is where the ship should primarily operate and an attempt is to be made by attaching her to convoy traffic. I have sent the relevant information to Group South.
- 1315 Port Commander, Yalta reported that a submarine surfaced and submerged again 2 miles from the coast near Cape Sicho. The boat turned off to the southwest.
- 1658 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported a destroyer in the southeastern Black Sea.
- 1640 The Naval Artillery Detachment in Ivan Baba reported 4-5 Russian M.T.B.s in 110°, some 4 miles off the coast, escorted by planes, course Cape Chauda.
- 1650 Air raid warning at Theodosia. At 1705 Naval Shore Commander, Crimea ordered increased readiness.
- 1742 Air Force Staff, Crimea reported that one air reconnaissance was flown which yielded no sighting reports from the southeastern Black Sea. Apart from Tuapse, the Caucasus ports have not been surveyed. Likewise no sighting reports from between the western and central Black Sea.



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2200 M.T.B.s off Anapa reported by Naval Shore  
Commander, Caucasus.

Port Commander, Kerch reported that between  
1630 and 1806 an enemy plane flew three times  
over route Brown from Cape Takil to Cape Banka  
Kys Aulskaya and back. Mines are suspected  
and the route has been closed.

2350 Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 2 enemy  
boats, probably M.T.B.s, off Novorossisk.  
They were subjected to gunfire.

(Signed) Witthoeft-Enden.

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December

Simferopol

December was characterized by three sorties of Russian surface forces into the western Black Sea, ostensibly with the object of harassing our supply traffic from the west coast to the Crimea. If the enemy failed in his objective, it was only because on one occasion there happened to be no convoys at sea. On the next occasion when a convoy came into contact with the enemy it succeeded in shaking him off with skillful maneuvering. A determined opponent would probably not have lost contact with the convoy. On the third occasion the enemy was promptly intercepted by air reconnaissance and the convoys recalled or detained.

The activity of the Russian Fleet since the beginning of December has been remarkable. It is a serious threat to our overseas supplies because we have neither surface forces nor bombers with which to counter enemy operations. At present everything depends on the prompt discovery of the enemy's departures from port so that our shipping may be quickly warned. It must, however, ultimately prove of great disadvantage that quite apart from the weather there should not be enough planes available to maintain constant contact with the enemy once he is known to be proceeding westward, let alone to intercept him again the next morning. Every precaution must therefore be taken if we are to avoid losing our merchant tonnage and convoy vessels. This means that by keeping a few vessels in the central Black Sea the Russians can paralyze our entire supply traffic for days. They are all the more encouraged to make these sorties when they encounter no opposition and take it for granted that shipping will be idle whenever they thrust westward into the Black Sea.

Russian submarines continued their activity. In particular, they were identified close to the approach points. On 17 December escort vessels (an FR boat and the "Xanten") succeeded in destroying a Russian submarine. This was announced in the Armed Forces' Report.

U-boat operations off Poti and Batum were without result. There were several torpedo failures. Russian air cover has grown considerably stronger in this area. Air reconnaissance is also continually obliged to face Russian fighters off the southern harbors.

Admiral, Black Sea's main task in the coming period will be to make every effort to safeguard the supply traffic running via the Crimea and Kerch Strait for Army Group A.

Intensified attacks on shipping running from the west coast to Sevastopol, immediately off the Crimean coast

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and in Kerch Strait, are to be anticipated. In addition, numerous sources of intelligence state that the Russians are planning landings between Theodosia and Novorossisk with the object of threatening the supplies for Army Group A.

It is therefore clear that surface forces will have to maintain a state of maximum readiness and Naval Shore Commanders, Crimea/Ukraine and Caucasus constant vigilance. The work of expanding the defenses in the Crimean harbors, Anapa and Novorossisk, continued on an intensive scale throughout the month and is continuing. Theodosia harbor is now better protected as a result of a series of minelaying operations. Protective minefields at Yalta, Balaklava and Sevastopol were likewise reinforced. Contact mines were laid at the landing stages. In accordance with the Führer Directive, equipment at the bases was improved. Work is still in progress.

Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes and all his units worked side by side with the Army in carrying out defense measures. As a result all the forces within the command are feeling the utmost strain in the task of standing by ready to repulse the expected enemy attack.

Efforts to carry out offensive measures during the winter were greatly impeded by the weather since, apart from U-boats, the only available vessels are incapable of operations if the sea is no more than force 3. The enemy on the other hand, with a considerable number of seaworthy vessels, is far less subject to the weather. It will therefore be investigated whether coastal defenses could not be improved by further minelaying operations.

(Signed) Witthoef-Emden.

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Comments on the War Diary of Admiral, Black Sea  
16 - 31 December

Re page 222, 18 December:

A report on the results of the investigation at the position where the enemy submarine attacked by the motor minesweeper FR 2 and the "Xanten" is believed to have submerged, has not yet been received.

Re page 223, 19 December:

It has yet to be discovered why naval ferry barge F 538 was outside the fairway - a fact which was subsequently discovered.

Re page 230, 24 December:

It should be emphasized that the Navy has neither the personnel nor the material to carry out the expansion of the harbors. Indeed it can only be done by collaborating with the Army which could provide the necessary personnel and material.

Re page 237, 27 December:

When assembling convoys care should be taken to ensure that at least one of the escort vessels or escorted vessels is equipped with radio. This is now more important than ever before since with the present activity of the Russian Fleet it will probably often prove necessary to re-route convoys already at sea.

Re page 243, 30 December:

U-boat operations are at present concentrating on disturbing Russian supply traffic off the central east coast. Although there too prospects of success are very slight, at the present time operations in this area and against this traffic seem more promising than operations by one or at most two boats off Poti and Batum, where recent experience has shown Russian air defenses to be especially strong and where the Russian Fleet has been taking the precaution of remaining in harbor even more than before owing to the known presence of our U-boats.

Re pages 246, 247:

Group South fully agrees with Admiral, Black Sea's survey of the situation. Because the situation is so tense on the Southeastern Front, it is impossible to predict when Air Force reinforcements will arrive in the Black Sea, and attacks from surface forces which with U-boats are the chief menace to our convoys, are to be

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